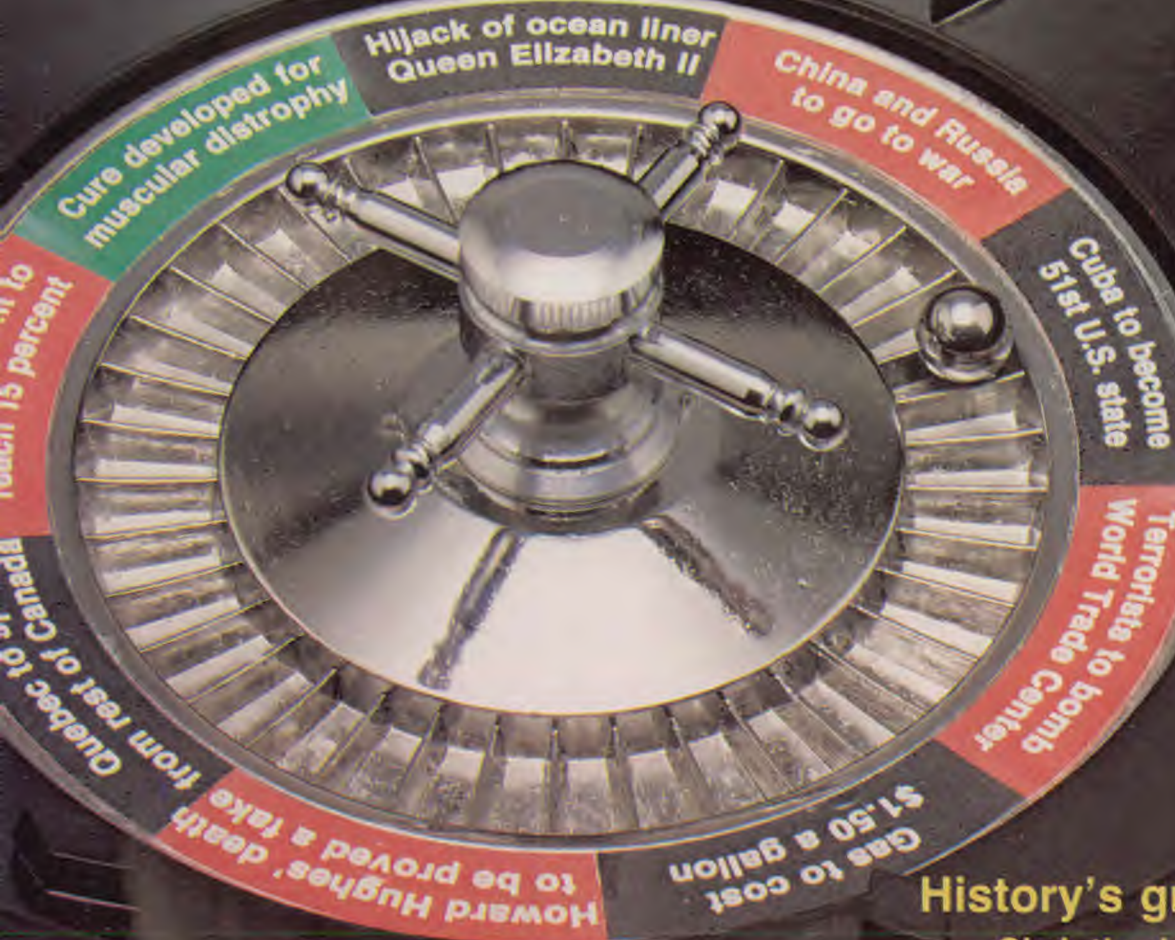


THESE TIMES

March, 1979

Supermarket psychics spin the roulette wheel again



History's greatest event
—Christ's death on Calvary

Welcome home, Mother!
A daughter opens the door
to her aging mother



Someone stood at my door. Who?

When strange (or familiar) spirits come knocking, what should be our response? by Marye Trim

I AWOKE, alert and aware. The midnight moon shone into the bedroom of the home I was visiting, splintering silver sheen over the door.

I noticed the door move, slowly, slowly, until opened fully. Then someone, a vague silver shadow, stood at my door. I stared back with numb fear, but mustering strength, challenged, "Who is it? What do you want?"

The reality of my voice injected me with courage to shout the name of my host. Then I switched on the bedside lamp.

But nothing—and no one—was there. Yet I knew that someone had stood at my door. Who?

Next evening, before retiring, I half-jokingly suggested to my host that he lock the house well. "I don't want any midnight visitor tonight," I explained.

"Oh? But I always lock the house securely," he insisted. "You don't need to worry about anyone's breaking in."

Then I related my experience of the previous evening and told how I had called his name for help.

"Didn't hear a thing," he told me. "Once I go to sleep . . ."

Now his Gaelic wife spoke up. "I know whom you saw. That was Mr. McGregor. He used to own this house and lived here for thirty-odd years—a dear old man with a store in town. He died last year, but he's reluctant to leave his old home; so he's still here. I'm certain he's still about."

There must have been an expression on my face that caused her to add hurriedly, "But you mustn't be afraid. He

won't hurt you at all. He's a dear old chap and just doesn't want to depart for the other side. He'll go there in time. It's harder for some than others."

The incident with the supposed Mr. McGregor caused my memory to rediscover a vivid experience of childhood. On that occasion I had been visiting the home of a great-aunt. She was a widow whose husband's funeral I clearly remembered for several features—the freely flowing tears, great-aunt's impressive black attire, and the feast after the church and cemetery services (damask linen cloth, scones with strawberry jam, seedcake, fruitcake, pikelets). Yes, I knew for certain that her husband had died and had been lowered into the earth.

But some months after his death, on the night when Mother and I visited her home, great-aunt suddenly stopped our bright conversation with a raised hand and listened with an aloof look on her face. Wind rustled outside, and a sudden chillness pervaded the room.

Then she spoke. "I hear him now. He comes about this time. Don't you hear him at the gate?"

Somehow I instinctively knew she meant her dead husband. My mother seemed to know too. We both sat motionless, intent and listening. We heard the gate click open, click shut, then the tread of feet.

"He's coming now . . . along the path. . . . Hear him?" My great-aunt's voice rose a little, and her eyes glowed with a strange color. "He'll be at the door soon."

Gooseflesh erupted all over my body. (Would he be all dirty with soil? How had he waked up and climbed out of the deep hole?) I raced for refuge under a table with low-hanging tapestry cover. But even there I could not escape the wail of the wind, the blanketing chillness, and the certain sound of steps.

"He's at the door. Oh, my beloved!" What happened then I am not sure.

Probably my mother whisked me off to bed. But I have never forgotten that eerie night, though it lay deep in my mind until my midnight encounter.

Can the dead return? On both occasions someone stood at my door. Who was it?

Great-aunt believed that her husband came, and this conviction whetted her desire for further contact. So she went to a spirit medium for assistance. And once again I became involved because my mother went, too, for company and curiosity's sake.

Memory paints a perspicuous picture of the event for me—a blind-shaded room, crushed velvet cushions on a drab settee where I clung to Mother, a tasseled lampshade, and a heavy perfume of lavender.

Questions nagged in my young mind. Would great-aunt *really* see and talk with her husband? Could dead people *not* be really dead, despite the sure evidence of a funeral, mourning bands, and feasting?

"The little girl will please play outside in the garden," insisted the medium. And so I never knew what was said or appeared in that shaded, scented room, despite my coaxing. Mother remained tight-lipped, except for some stray remarks about fortune-telling. But it did not stop me from wondering, remembering, and ultimately seeking the solution.

Countless others have joined in the quest to discover the truth about death. Either the grave spells *finality* or there is some form of existence beyond. But someone stood at my door! Who was it?

Rosemary Brown of London, author of *Unfinished Symphonies: Voices From Beyond*, has the answer settled in her mind; she is visited regularly, so she claims, by a group of composers who previously inhabited this earth—Liszt, Chopin, Schubert, Beethoven, and twelve others, including Albert Schweitzer, who comes only briefly—

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What the Bible teaches about life after death

By what figure does the Bible represent death?

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are *asleep*, * that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13; see also 1 Corinthians 15:18, 20; John 11:11-14).

Note: In sound sleep one is wholly lost to consciousness; time goes by unmeasured; and mental activity is suspended for the time being. This is how the Bible describes death.

Where do the dead sleep?

"Many of them that *sleep in the dust of the earth* shall awake" (Daniel 12:2; see also Ecclesiastes 3:20; 9:10).

How long will they sleep there?

"Man lieth down, and riseth not: *till the heavens be no more*, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep" (Job 14:12).

What does one in this condition know about his family?

"His sons come to honour, and *he knoweth it not*; and they are brought low, but *he perceiveth it not of them*" (Job 14:21).

What becomes of man's thoughts at death?

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; *in that very day his thoughts perish*" (Psalm 146:4).

Do the dead know anything?

"The living know that they shall die: *but the dead know not any thing*" (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

Do they take any part in earthly things?

"Also their *love*, and their *hatred*, and their *envy*, is now *perished*; *neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun*" (verse 6).

Note: If one remained conscious after death, he would know of the promotion or dishonor of his sons; but in death one loses all the attributes of mind—love, hatred, envy, etc. Thus it is plain that his thoughts have perished and that he can have nothing more to do with the things of this world. But if, as taught by some, man's powers of thought continue after death, he *lives*; and if he lives, he must be *somewhere*. Where is he? Is he in heaven, or in hell? If he goes to either place at death, what then is the need of a future judgment or of a resurrection or of the second coming of Christ? If men go to their reward at death, before the judgment takes place, then their *rewards* precede their *awards*.

How much does one know of God when dead?

"In death *there is no remembrance of thee*" (Psalm 6:5).

and these guide her mind and hands into complex piano compositions that reflect the composers' own particular styles, for all of which she is untrained. High-fidelity records of this amazing music are obtainable, and music critics and scientists are impressed that this is a phenomenon that demands attention.

Someone at the door. Who was it? Who-oo?

The view held by Spiritualists is one possible solution and is growing in acceptance the world over. In a large, white-painted Georgian house in London's Belgrave Square is the center of the Spiritualist Association in Britain. The association is said to be the largest in the world, and its secretary, Tom Johanson, claims that there are about three million Spiritualists in Britain alone. He says of spiritualism: "It is a philosophy of life. A Spiritualist believes that earth life is a preparation for the real life in the spirit world. Earth is a sort of schoolroom."

Americans are experimenting in this "schoolroom," too, fascinated by the claims of the late Episcopal Bishop James A. Pike, the writings of Ruth Montgomery (*A Search for the Truth*), and many

others. Will this obsession precede a worldwide decline in true Christian values, as it appears to have done in Britain?

Should we trust the spirits? Recently I met a curly-headed, pink-cheeked, and dimpled baby. "What is her name?" I inquired about the enchanting child.

"Honey."

"Honey? A pet name, surely. And her real name is —?"

"Her real name is Honey. We called her that because the spirits spelled it out to us when we asked what her name should be."

Honey-sweet happiness and satisfaction may come to some who trust in spirits, yet to countless others these powers are the source of slavery and misery.

Like Sarah Winchester of Winchester House. Today, half a century after her death in 1928, the remains of her unique home, Winchester House, are on view a few miles from downtown San Jose, California. Here for forty years the crack of rifle fire and the haunting screams of dying men echoed in the passages of her mind as she feared the spirits of those

who had died by the Winchester repeating rifle. In the years following the Civil War the rifle had played a prominent role in the opening of the West and, valued by Indian and settler alike, had become a byword for lethal effectiveness.

Terror of these supposed spirits of the dead impelled her to spend millions of dollars on a bizarre scheme of escape. Her plan was to build a house so elaborately designed that she would be protected. Thus she followed the advice of a Boston Spiritualist to never let a day go by without adding to or altering the house in some way and, by continuous ring of hammers and buzz of saws, be safe.

As many as twenty carpenters at a time were employed, working relentlessly through weekends, holidays, and even Christmas, in obedience to the Spiritualist's dictum. They worked through the 160 rooms, leaving fascinating intricacies of construction; stairways that rose to a ceiling of a room but led nowhere; doors that opened at the touch of a secret button or swung back to expose a blank wall; some rooms that could be entered only through one door and exited through another; peepholes;

Note: As already seen, the Bible everywhere represents the dead as *asleep*, with not even a remembrance of God. If they were in heaven or hell, would Jesus have said, "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*" (John 11:11)? If so, calling him to life was really robbing him of the bliss of heaven that rightly belonged to him. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16) teaches not consciousness in death but that riches will avail nothing in the judgment and that poverty will not keep one out of heaven.

Are the righteous dead praising God in heaven?

"*David is not ascended into the heavens*" (Acts 2:34).

"*The dead praise not the Lord*, neither any that go down into silence" (Psalm 115:17).

What must take place before the dead can praise God?

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust*: for . . . the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isaiah 26:19).

Where did Job say he would await his final change?

"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, *till my change come*" (Job 14:14). "*If I wait, the grave is mine house*: I have made my bed in the darkness" (Job 17:13).

When did David say he would be satisfied?

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, *when I awake, with thy likeness*" (Psalm 17:15).

Were there to be no resurrection of the dead, what would be the condition of those fallen asleep in Christ?

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. . . . *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished*" (1 Corinthians 15:16-18).

When is the resurrection of the righteous to take place?

"*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first*" (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

*Italics have been supplied in Bible texts.

seven flights of stairs that carried one only nine feet up because each step was only two inches high. In another place carpenters fashioned a bar twelve inches above the floor to trip any evil spirits that might want to slip into her séance room.

That séance room was Mrs. Winchester's holy place. Hidden among a warren of surroundings on the second floor, the room had special safeguards and trick entryways. Here she spent many hours.

Winchester House today, with its uncanny labyrinth of rooms, is a memorial to one person's terror of spirits that stood at her door.

And someone stood at my door. WHO?

The source of truth. Because I want to be honest with myself, and because I seek truth, I turn to the Book of Truth for the answer. That Book, the Holy Bible, which from its own evidence is indeed God's Word to mankind, tells us, "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). And I want to be free! Life is complex enough without bondage.

Concerning death, the Book of Truth explains: "The living know that they

shall die: but *the dead know not any thing*. . . . Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished. . . . There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10). "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; *in that very day his thoughts perish*" (Psalm 146:4).

So it was *not* dear old Mr. McGregor, nor my great-uncle, who stood at my door. They sleep in their graves, knowing nothing.

Then *who* were they?


If anyone, they were impostors! They were followers of the devil, evil angels who were cast out of heaven at the time of Lucifer's rebellion and who work today to deceive and ensnare. They are like their master, whom the Bible entitles "wicked one," "unclean spirit," "tempter," "prince of demons," "deceiver of the whole world," "father of lies," "murderer." Together they perpetuate the lie of the serpent-medium in the Garden of Eden: "Ye shall not surely die," in defiance of God's promised penalty for disobedience.

Through centuries the lie has persisted—especially with enslaved pagans—but today in our society it is

perpetrated under sleek, modern guise by way of glossy paperbacks; impressively but deceptively documented articles; neon-lit entrances to shadowy séances; as well as by the respectable cloak of some clergy.

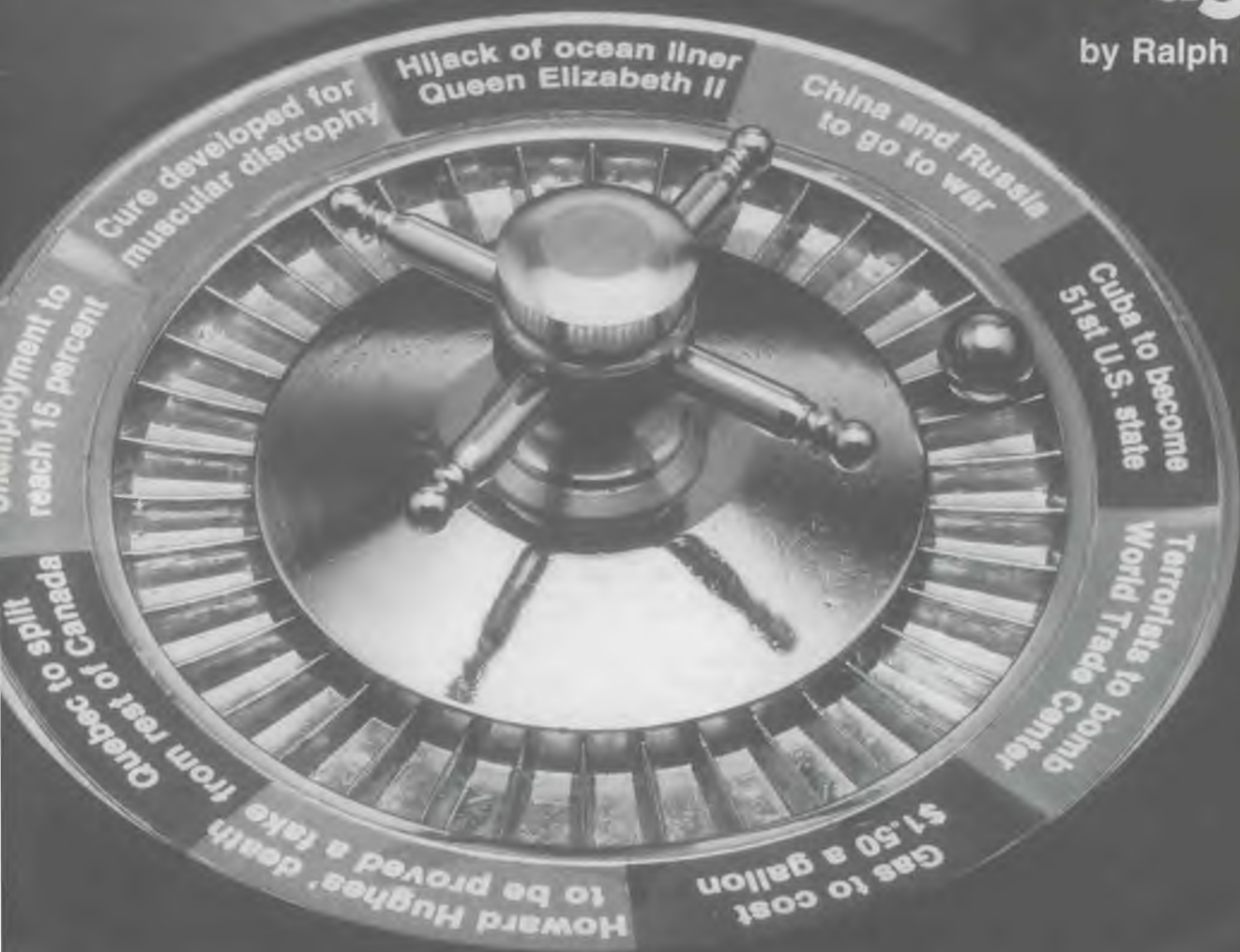
But to those who are sensitive to the great controversy between good and evil the warning resounds clearly: "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them" (Leviticus 19:31). And again, "When they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?" (Isaiah 8:19, RSV).

So, get behind me, Satan, you wily deceiver! I will not be taken in by your hoaxes and subterfuge!

Someone else at the door? Yes, indeed, gentle, wooing, and true. As I open to Him, I am free from fear, safe in faith. He is the Light of the world who will raise the sleeping dead at His second coming (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). He says to me and to you, "I stand at the door and knock. . . . *he that hath an ear, let him hear*" (Revelation 3:20-22). 

Supermarket psychics spin the roulette wheel again

by Ralph Blodgett



Headlines featuring predictions by the nation's "leading psychics" have become an annual New Year's ritual for supermarket tabloids all over the country. But how accurate are these yearly forecasts? And should Christians lend any credence to the claims of these psychics to divine illumination and heavenly guidance?

EACH January newspaper headlines claiming "Startling Predictions for New Year" greet supermarket shoppers

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at the periodical racks next to checkout counters all over the nation. The front-page stories contain amazing forecasts of major disasters and key world events, as well as medical and scientific breakthroughs. They also contain a lot of speculative trivia about political, film, and TV celebrities.

Most of us have heard past reports about these psychics and astrologers who claim to have foretold the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, the Watergate scandal, the resignation of former President Nixon, the deadly earthquake in Guatemala, the Mideast

Psychics bomb out on 1978 predictions

THE FOLLOWING are samples of the more than 250 specific predictions for last year made by thirty of the nation's leading psychics and astrologers. Each of these forecasts appeared in print in one of the nation's three largest tabloids at the beginning of 1978 and is on file for public record in the office of the author.

Of the 250 specific published predictions for 1978, less than 3 percent (i.e., six) could we list as reasonably fulfilled. The remaining 97 percent (244) missed the mark completely.

To these much-publicized forecasters we should apply the Biblical warning, "When a prophet speaketh, . . . if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22).

Events

- Red China and the Soviet Union to go to war
- New miracle drug to be developed that doubles the human life span
- Ocean liner Queen Elizabeth II to be hijacked
- Violent and bloody war to erupt in Mideast in summer involving a nuclear bomb blast in Egypt
- Cure for muscular dystrophy to be announced by Jerry Lewis on his telethon
- Fire to ravage the White House
- Quebec to split from rest of Canada
- Cuba to apply and become 51st U.S. state
- One of the big four U.S. car manufacturers to suspend operations for one year over labor dispute
- Vaccine will be developed that will prevent the common cold
- Terrorists to kidnap Sadat's traveling entourage in an attempt to end Israeli-Arab peace negotiations
- Worst air crash in history to occur in February when two major jetliners collide in midair
- New pocket device eliminating stress to be marketed that will bring relief to millions of Americans
- Terrorists to bomb World Trade Center in New York
- Terrorists to bomb Panama Canal
- Terrorists to destroy Statue of Liberty
- Terrorists to take over Eiffel Tower
- Collapse of stock market and failure of banks to drive unemployment to 15 percent
- CIA and FBI to merge

- Scandals worse than Watergate to force restructuring of the Constitution
- Jumbo jet to crash in Texas in late summer, killing hundreds
- Crash of UFO to create worldwide sensation
- U.S. Senate not to ratify Panama Canal treaty
- "Charlie's Angels" TV show to be canceled (5 different psychics)
- U.S. space shuttle disaster to set program back 10 years
- Another major power failure to hit New York City early in 1978
- Carter to impose mandatory nationwide four-day workweek in January
- Price of gas to reach \$1.50 a gallon
- Bread to cost \$1.50 a loaf
- Nationwide postal strike to halt all Christmas packages
- Draft for armed services to be reintroduced in September
- Remains of Atlantis to be discovered in Mediterranean off Turkey
- Miniskirts to make a dramatic comeback in fashion world
- Big foot to be captured and found to be a harmless ape
- Russian scientists to receive powerful radio signals from an extraterrestrial civilization
- Huge quantities of oil to be discovered off coast of Scandinavia

People

- Patty Hearst to be rekidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army (2 psychics)
- Howard Hughes' death to be proved a fake

- Queen Elizabeth to abdicate the British throne (2 psychics)
- Prince Charles to marry and become king of England
- Ted Kennedy to resign his position in the Senate
- Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to resign because of a new war that hits Mideast in the summer
- Carter to resign Presidency due to serious accident
- Billy Carter to host his own TV show, which captures top ratings
- Billy Carter to become "born-again Christian" and give up drinking
- Nixon to return to Washington as a Senate adviser
- Nixon to run for a major office in November
- Muhammad Ali to produce new comedy TV series
- Idi Amin to die from a heart attack
- Idi Amin to be assassinated in October
- Jacqueline Onassis to mysteriously disappear
- Marie Osmond to convert from Mormonism to Catholicism
- Governor Wallace to marry an Alabama faith healer who helps his paralysis
- Burt Reynolds to marry Sally Field (he didn't)
- Princess Caroline of Monaco not to wed (she did)
- Lindsay Wagner to become superstar rage of TV, replacing Farrah Fawcett-Majors (instead, her TV show was canceled)
- Fidel Castro to be overthrown by Cuban exiles from the U.S.

oil crisis, the election of Jimmy Carter, and major air disasters around the globe.

Do such claims of fulfilled predictions prove that these people have supernatural powers not possessed by "normal" human beings? Powers from God? from the devil?

Or are such amazing prognostications simply the result of blind chance? Are these visionaries simply playing a game of psychic roulette upon unsuspecting readers who never get to hear the other side of the story? Who never read about the

huge number of erroneous forecasts by these modern-day prophets?

Test the spirits. The Scriptures counsel us to "believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits* whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1, italics supplied).

The apostle Paul adds, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

By saying we should test the prophets and spirits and should hold fast that which is good, the Scriptures

also mean we should reject that which is false, the counterfeit.

Moreover, we know from Christ's own mouth that would-be prophets and seers will increase in number as we enter the final days of earth's history. "There shall arise . . . false prophets," He warned, who will "shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24).

Apparently these counterfeit prophets, psychics, and astrologers of earth's last days will be so masterful

with their predictions and other wonders that they will deceive many. They will capture the beliefs and imaginations of people the world over.

In view of these warnings from the Scriptures we think it is time the readers of THESE TIMES have an opportunity to "try [these] spirits whether they are of God." It is time we discover the truth about this extensive game of deception being foisted upon the human race by these "supermarket psychics" each year.

So as a service to our readers

we devised a special test of the predictions given by thirty of the nation's most famous psychics—including such well-known

personalities as Jeane Dixon, Sybil Leek, Uri Geller, John Manolesco (author of fifteen astrology books), Robert A. Ferguson (a famous California psychic), and Anthony Norvell (Hollywood's most famous psychic).

The test. At the beginning of 1978 we purchased copies of three different leading tabloids-containing predictions for the year. One of the tabloids was *National Enquirer*—the newspaper which boasts of having "the largest circulation of any paper in America"—some fifteen million copies sold each week.

From those three newspapers we compiled a list of 250 specific predictions for 1978 by thirty of the nation's leading and most acclaimed psychics and astrologers.

Then throughout the year we compared those 250 different predictions with actual news events published in the newspapers, *Time*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Science Digest*, and several other leading national magazines.

In our test we excluded a few broad, all-encompassing predictions made by some of the forecasters. For example,

"The quality of life in America is about to take a real turn for the better" (Clara Schuff), and "1978 will be very rough on the Carter family" (Miami astrologer Edie Zuckerman).

We also discounted predictions that could not be verified, such as Jeane Dixon's forecast regarding President Carter that "one of his children will be much in his thoughts, especially during the first half of the year" (*The Star*, December 27, 1977).

Moreover, we should point out that this article limits itself to the discussion of astrologers and psychics

Christmas mail; Carter to reintroduce the draft in September; discovery of a cancer cure; Red China and the Soviet Union to go to war; CIA and FBI merge into a super spy agency; and remains of Atlantis discovered in Mediterranean off Turkey (see box of inaccurate forecasts on page 7).

Why did thirty leading psychics bomb out so dramatically in over 250 specific predictions? And four that they did predict correctly, most anyone could have guessed: a record snowfall for the northeast in early 1978; another scandal in Washington involving "sex

and improper spending" (the General Services Administration fraud involved money kickbacks, but not sex); and weddings for two leading personali-

ties (out of about forty wild wedding guesses that didn't take place). The other two predictions involved activities of two celebrities.

Additional failures. However, even more spectacular than all the specific supermarket predictions that failed to take place in 1978 were the major 1978 news events *none* of the thirty psychics foresaw.

This list includes such major disasters as train wrecks in February, which killed twelve in Tennessee (propane explosion) and eight in Florida (chlorine gas blanketed a highway); thirty-eight-ton tanker truck exploded in San Carlos, Spain, killing 144 in July; 41 handicapped people drowned in August as bus plunged into Quebec lake; August earthquake in Iran killed 25,000 and destroyed 40 cities and towns; worst airline disaster in U.S. history occurred when a Boeing 727 crashed head-on with a Cessna 172 on September 25 near San Diego, killing 150; monsoon floods in northern India drowned 1,200 in September; tidal waves from a cyclone swept away five hundred in India in November; and 912 Americans committed mass suicide in a temple

Counterfeit prophets annually fire prophetic buckshot into tomorrow's clouds, hoping to bag an occasional stray duck as it passes overhead.

that make annual predictions about the new year and then twelve months later claim one of their predictions came true. We are not dealing with mediums and psychics who resort to spiritualism to discover unknown facts about the dead. (The Scriptures repeatedly denounce anyone who consults with "familiar spirits"—Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; Deuteronomy 18:10-12.)

Psychic inaccuracy. What we found for 1978 completely shatters the oft-publicized myth of psychic accuracy. Out of 250 specific published predictions, we found less than 3 percent (i.e., six) that we could list as reasonably fulfilled and 97 percent (244) that missed the mark completely.

What kind of predictions are we talking about? Here are a few for 1978 that flopped: U.S. space shuttle disaster sets program back 10 years; another major power failure to hit New York City in early 1978; a fire ravages the White House; the price of gas to reach \$1.50 a gallon in U.S.; Quebec to split from rest of Canada; Carter to impose mandatory nationwide four-day workweek in January; Cuba to apply to become fifty-first state; nationwide postal strike to halt all

cult service in Guyana five days before Thanksgiving, 1978.

The psychics also forgot to mention the death of Pope Paul VI (one did say he would announce his resignation, due to failing health—a prediction also made for 1977); the modern record thirty-four-day term of Pope John Paul; and the election of the first non-Italian pope (John Paul II) in 450 years.

They somehow also didn't know about the world's first "test tube" baby; the worst grasshopper infestation in 20 years in the western U.S. plains; the sharpest stock market drop in more than 80 years (104-point loss in the Dow Jones averages in the last twelve days in October); the January 1 crash of a 747 jumbo jet in the Arabian Sea, killing 213 (the third worst air disaster in civil aviation history); and the assassination of San Francisco's Mayor George Moscone in November.

The verdict? We could go on, but space prohibits the attempt. Needless to say, all the evidence for 1978 points to a unanimous decision of "guilty" to the charge of psychic deception on the part of the leading prophets of today's world. Not one of these forecasters proved himself capable of peering even twelve months into the future and predicting anything significant, and they *all* missed twenty of the major news events of 1978.

In addition, (in case some reader thinks the record for 1978 might be just a fluke in the astrological time chart) let me point out a few other older erroneous predictions that also received wide publicity in the *National Enquirer*: **1972**—New York's Mayor John Lindsay to defeat Richard Nixon in November elections, and America to be out of Vietnam by October; **1974**—fighting in Middle East will trigger World War III, and Fidel Castro will be assassinated; **1976**—Jeane Dixon predicted the November election would be between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan (then later in the year she, along with twenty other psychics, predicted Gerald Ford would win the election); **1977**—terrorists would blow

up a New York skyscraper, and a Concord jetliner would crash at the New York Kennedy Airport.

Jesus warned His people in all ages to "beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing. . . . Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:15-17).

What are the fruits of these thirty prophets? Not the fruits in regard to their life conduct but the fruit of their predictions? Having tasted, did we find their fruits for 1978 sweet or sour?

"Try the spirits," Jesus, speaking through John, commanded, "whether they are of God." Could God fail us utterly as did these thirty psychics? Would God lead them into erroneous predictions for 1978 like: one of the Big Four U.S. car manufacturers to suspend operations for one year; terrorists to bomb World Trade Center and Panama Canal; Carter to fly to Moscow to avert world crisis; Idi Amin to be assassinated in October; Billy Carter to be converted to Christianity and quit drinking; Bigfoot to be captured; and the Vatican to announce approval of ordination for female priests?

Four tests for a genuine prophet

1. **By their fruits.** "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity," "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:22, 23, 20).

2. **By fulfilled prophecy.** "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22).

3. **By their belief in Jesus.** "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God" (1 John 4:1, 2).

4. **By their support of God's law.** "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:19, 20).

God warned His people in the Old Testament, "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, *if the thing follow not, nor come to pass*, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22, italics supplied).

The evidence speaks for itself. The more than 97 percent failure rate of these contemporary prophets and astronomers proclaims to all who will honestly look that not a single one of these psychics received any messages from God. They made wild stabs in the dark, repeatedly missing the marks they sought. They fired prophetic buckshot into tomorrow's clouds, hoping to bag a stray duck as it passed overhead.

The Scriptures declare, "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known . . . what shall be in the latter days" (Daniel 1:28). Unfortunately, these thirty leading supermarket psychics can't seem to tune in on His broadcasts.

Prior to my six-year research into psychic predictions I used to think psychics had to be led by either God or the devil. Now I'm convinced that they are being led most of the time by no one at all.

Why is Anita hated?

COLUMNIST PATRICK BUCHANAN has some observations worth sharing concerning Anita Bryant, rated in some surveys as the most respected woman in America, in others the most detested.

After puzzling over why Anita is the subject of concentrated fear and loathing when her most celebrated opinion—that parents and private school officials have the right not to hire or retain as teachers professed and practicing homosexuals—is an opinion shared by the great majority, Buchanan writes:

"Miss Bryant is abhorred, I believe, because she takes the issue beyond the realm of the civil rights of parents versus the civil rights of teachers and over into the realm of morality, of right and wrong.

"She challenges one of the pivotal dogmas of the secular humanism that has displaced Christianity as the religion of our governing elite. In this, our new national religion, it is supposedly self-evident that each individual should be utterly indifferent to that choice.

"She speaks with a moral certitude formerly heard in church pulpits which are given over today less to discussions of sin, death and resurrection than to the redistribution of income, the evils of nuclear power and the necessity for non-intercourse with the Republic of South Africa.

"Miss Bryant enrages because she insists that there is a Biblical distinction between good and evil, that homosexuality is not an 'alternate lifestyle,' but a sin against nature and against God, and its practitioners are, pardon the expression, going straight to hell if they do not change their ways.

"The passions she arouses among militant homosexuals are the passions associated with a religious war.

"What Anita Bryant threatens, then, are not the jobs, housing or constitutional or civil rights of homosexuals—but something more important. She is a threat to their sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Hers is the voice crying aloud that gay is *not* beautiful, but base.

"To the individual truly confident in his political, moral and religious convictions, a contradictory position is a cause for rebuttal, not grounds for ranting and

rioting in the streets.

"This leads me to suspect that 'Gay Pride Week' celebrations are not really celebrations at all. They are masquerades where men and women 'put on a happy face' to cover up doubts, insecurities or a sadness inside."

Seventh-day Adventist Church approves \$126-million budget

Meeting in Annual Council, top leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted a \$126-million budget for the denomination in 1979. Treasurer of the church's General Conference, Kenneth Emmerson, says the figure represents a 10 percent increase over this year's budget.

According to the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, Adventists have the highest per capita rate of giving among all denominations in North America. "This is the reason we're able to do so much with so few members," explains Emmerson. The three-million-member church operates a network of hospitals and schools in addition to its vast evangelistic enterprise.

Holiday Inn executive quits over gambling project

L. M. Clymer, president and chief executive officer of Holiday Inns, Inc., has quit his job in protest against his organization's decision to build and operate a \$55-million casino in Atlantic City. Clymer, No. 2 man in the motel empire, while loath to criticize his colleagues' business decision, nevertheless boldly declared: "It is my overriding regard and respect for my Lord Jesus Christ which has led me to this decision."

Holiday Inn's No. 1 executive is Wallace Johnson, also an evangelical, who is currently heading Campus Crusade's billion-dollar fund-raising campaign.—*Evangelical Newsletter*.

Enforced celibacy called key to shortage of Catholic priests

The dramatic decline in the number of Roman Catholic priests and nuns continues to perturb the church's leaders. In a ten-year period ending in 1975, nuns dropped from 180,000 to 135,000, but

even more striking is the enormous decline in seminarians—priests in training: from 50,000 to fewer than 8,000. The celibacy requirement appears to be the major hurdle to enlistment.

Auxiliary Bishop P. Francis Murphy, of Baltimore, said, "We must rethink some fundamental issues about the nature of the priesthood." Another report shows fewer Roman Catholic overseas missionaries from America than any time since 1958. There are currently 6,601 abroad compared to 7,010 two years ago, according to the U.S. Catholic Mission Council.—*Evangelical Newsletter*.

Factors involved in college student suicides

Robert J. Stalcup's article "Student Suicides and Christian Faculty" (*U.S.A. Today*, September) is prefaced with this statement: "The unpleasant fact is that only accidents exceed suicide as a cause of death among college students." He refers to a study which concluded that 32 percent of student deaths are by their own hand, that the rate is rising, that for every successful attempt ten are unsuccessful, and that among those who are successful 80 percent had made at least one previous attempt.

Why do so many students commit suicide? Grades, money, career goals, personal relationships, unrealistic expectations, frustrations, anxiety. "They complain bitterly about the administration and what they perceive to be indifferent teaching, unrepresentative student government, poor housing, and the cafeteria."

And what can be done? "Attention must be given to passing on society's basic values. . . . A Christian faculty member can influence not only his own students but perhaps his colleagues as well. He can become the 'filter' for their approach to reality. . . . We can help by demonstrating that the guidelines we have for our lives are not uncertain, but precise; not out of reach, but readily available; not limiting, but broadening and creative."

Stalcup asserts that fundamental concepts ("such as God, holiness, righteousness, sin, grace, and love") "must

be introduced throughout the university curriculum if we are to have an educational enterprise that is intellectually, socially, and morally complete." He is associate professor of higher education, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

Theologian criticizes "easy believism"

A historian of evangelism says there's too much "easy believism" in evangelism today. Dr. Edwin Orr of Fuller Theological Seminary says that in true repentance people change their way of thinking and behaving. He criticizes modern evangelism for making it easier for people to accept Christ than to change their ways. Though "born again" is an in phrase today, says Orr, too many born-again persons haven't really been born to a new life of turning away from sin and toward God.

Dependence on God stressed by Kenya's new president

Kenya's new president, Daniel Arap Moi, has acknowledged his dependence on God for the success of his rule. During his service as transitional president following the death of Jomo Kenyatta in September, the former vice-president declared, "All Kenyans, including ministers and civil servants, are answerable to me, but I am answerable to God. If I do not rule fairly, I will be judged of God."

According to a report by Beverly K. Hubble in *Christianity Today* magazine, the fifty-four-year-old Mr. Moi "has been deeply influenced" by the Africa Inland Church, one of Kenya's largest Protestant denominations. Addressing an AIC memorial service for the late President Kenyatta, he urged his audience to "continue preaching the Word of God to maintain peace, love, and unity."

Evangelical leader warns of rise in permissiveness

The prevalence of marital infidelity among Christians in both North America and Britain is "alarming," according to Gordon Landreth, general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance,



Church-related schools fight government regulations

Church-related schools, like this Lutheran day school in Pennsauken, New Jersey, are facing a multitude of regulations and standards imposed by state and federal agencies. In many cases school officials are opposing these requirements on the ground that they violate the principle of church-state separation. Although some fundamentalist Protestants assert that the government should not regulate their schools in any way, the issue in most cases is what kinds of standards may appropriately be imposed on private schools.

which embraces more than six hundred churches, societies, and fellowships throughout Britain.

Mr. Landreth made the remark in the latest issue of the Alliance's quarterly bulletin as an illustration of how Christians often follow the swings of fashion in secular society, and he said the present generation is in danger of letting the world squeeze it into its mold.

"Christians," he says, "can follow the swings of fashion as much as secular society. In each generation certain themes and emphasis are 'in' and are pursued to an extent that can be positively unhealthy. Often Christian fashion owes much to secular fashion, too." Mr. Landreth adds, "In social morality, evangelicals of an earlier generation subjected themselves to a rigid code of behavior and were accused of being legalistic and thus denying the gospel of grace. The present generation emphasizes Christian freedom and is in danger of letting the world squeeze it

into its mold.

"Permissiveness in society can invade the church, too, and Christians become 'soft' on marriage discipline, sexual morals, and telling 'white lies.' The prevalence of marital infidelity among Christians in both North America and Britain in recent times is alarming. A common reaction, when faced with one of these swings in fashion, is to push the pendulum vigorously back the other way."

What are the qualifications of a good pastor?

Here's one version:

"Must have small family, if any, and be able to furnish a horse and come to church unassisted. Must not be afraid to work, have no hobbies, have a good clear head, a warm loving heart—and big feet." That was an advertisement in the *Methodist Recorder* of Pittsburgh on September 17, 1903.

DICK JEWETT

Everybody needs a home

MY GRANDMOTHER could get away with stuff that nobody else would even try. She didn't know you couldn't tell kids anything while they are going through the adolescent conflict period. She never learned the permissive theory of child rearing. She would actually ask me where I was going when I left the house . . . and expect a courteous answer.

She was meddlesome and nosy, never content just to mind her own business. But I loved her in spite of her faults. In fact, I used to make allowances for her. I figured she was too old to change, so it would serve no purpose to get on my high horse and defend my rights or to argue and talk back. I early discovered the best way to handle my grandmother was by pretending to listen and trying to cooperate the best way I could.

She wasn't really bossy. If she figured you were bound and determined to go ahead and do something dumb anyway, she wouldn't stand in your way after she had her say and told you exactly what she thought of the whole idea. Then she would back off.

Like I said, you had to make allowances for my grandmother. I went all the way over Fool's Hill figuring it wasn't her fault that she didn't know how to handle youngsters. You can't blame somebody for getting old.

I remember one time trying to argue with her about popular music. But how can you argue with someone who knew Lawrence Welk personally when he was just getting started in South Dakota? "Now, there's good music," she would say. And even though I knew better, I got to where I could actually sit with her on Saturday nights and begin to enjoy

"her" kind of music.

There was one rule upon which Grandmother always insisted. And that was church. You always went—whether you felt like going or not. Wanting to go didn't have anything to do with anything. You needed to go. It was good for you, sort of like vegetables. And you didn't get there late. I was always the first teenager to be waiting on the porch for my chums.

The Sabbath was God's day. And it involved more than just going to church. The whole day belonged to God. After church and a good dinner, it was into the garden to pick a few bouquets of fresh flowers to take on our rounds to visit shut-ins and some of Grandmother's "old" friends. Grandmother never figured she was old, because she was always helping "old" friends and acquaintances.

You can imagine how much fun all this was for me. But it was kind of the way I paid some of my dues. After the visits we would go to the cemetery where my mother was buried. For a quiet hour we would read character development stories in that special place and share our hope of the glorious resurrection morning.

Then it was time off for good behavior. As long as she knew my destination and my activities, I could go with my friends and do what I wanted. I suppose I could have kicked against the pricks. And fussed and fumed. But nothing would have changed. Grandmother didn't have very many rules. The ones she did have didn't change. So I learned early in the game to play it her way. If I gave her a fair amount of my time, she was happy.

Later I went away to boarding school. But I always enjoyed coming home on vacations. It was more than the good food. The thing about Grandmother and her house was that it never changed. Things in my life were changing so fast that it was nice once in a while to touch base with the reality of the way things had always been. I truly loved that old place—the fruit trees, the chicken house, the woodpile. All places where I had chafed under the responsibility of chores. All places from which I wanted

to grow up and get away.

I think the most important thing of all was knowing that no matter how bad things ever got in my life or what kind of trouble I ever got into, I could always go home to Grandmother. For as long as I can remember, the idea of being able to go home was a sort of subliminal security blanket for me. I think it was her way.

She never asked what I had done. She only asked what I was going to do. "The past is past," was her famous comment about my mistakes. At least it was famous to me. She saw no reason to moan about failure or worry about what might have been. She had had a hard life and made the best of it. Which seemed to be enough of a philosophy of life for her—as long as you remembered that a big part of "making the best of it" meant letting God make the best of it for you.

I think when she died last year, it was the first time I really stopped to think what "being on my own" meant. For a while I reverted to childhood thoughts and wondered what would happen now if I ever needed a place to go. I lingered at the old place on the day of her funeral. I could never come "home" again.

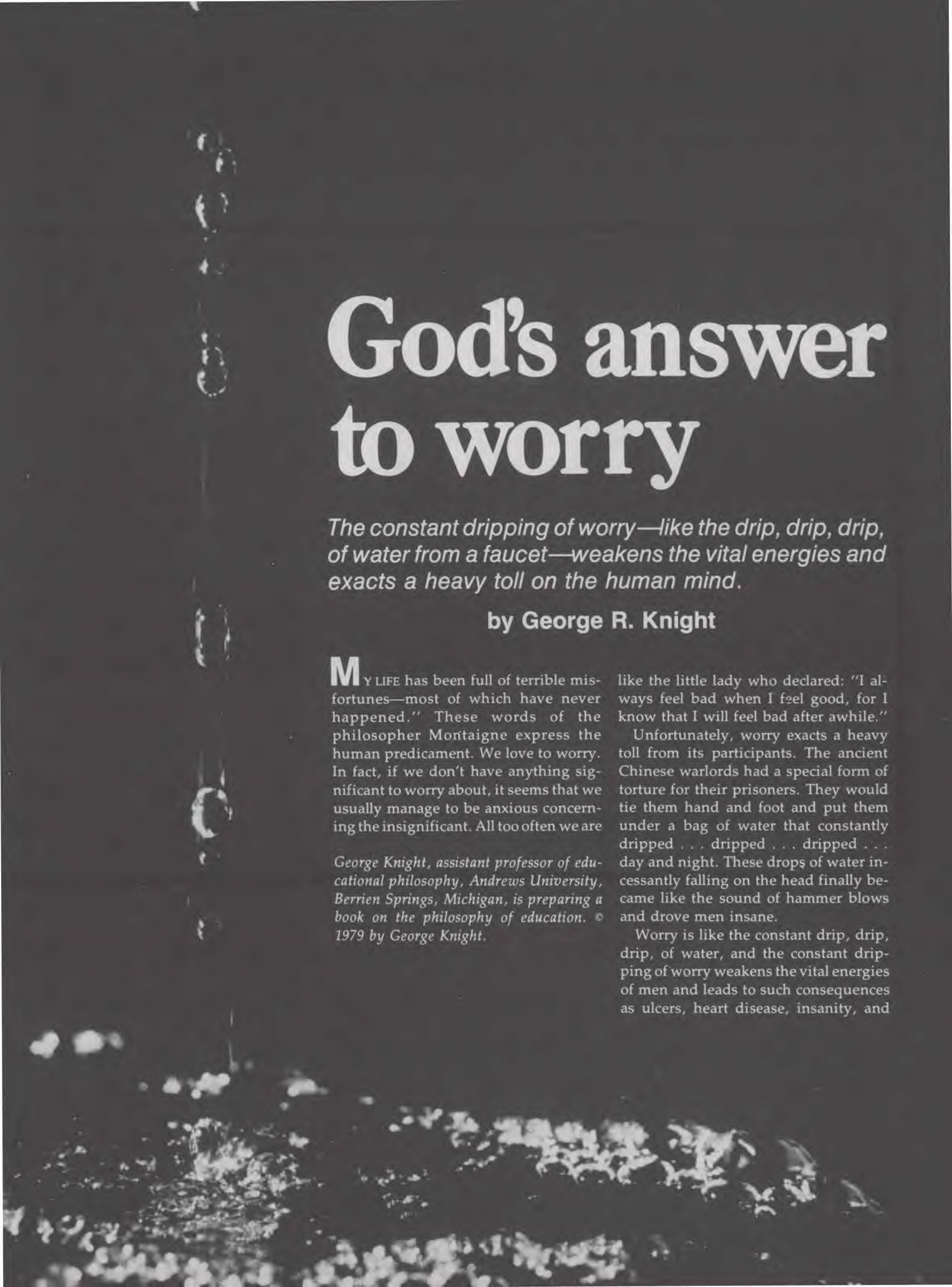
Then it came to me that Grandmother had left me in good hands. I don't have to be alone no matter how tough things may get. Most of it was that even with the intrusion of death and the knowledge that the old place would shortly be razed to make room for a set of modern apartments, nothing had really changed.

Grandmother's legacy could never be taken away from me or destroyed. A way of life and looking at things. A faith in God. Respect for other people. The idea that hard work is a good idea. And a strong feeling that family comes first.

Just before she died she said, "Dick, I'm proud of you." Which was so characteristic. You had to take Grandmother's compliments with a grain of salt, because she was always proud of you, even when you weren't. I guess I always knew in the back of my mind that she and God wouldn't change their collective opinions about me. So I usually caved in and submitted to the changes they wanted to make in me. Fortunately, when Grandmother died, God didn't!



Dick Jewett is the pastor and special youth counselor of the Auburn Academy Church, Auburn, Washington. Those wishing to submit youth-oriented problems or problem situations for possible inclusion in this column, or for a personal response, please write to Dick Jewett, THESE TIMES, Box 59, Nashville, TN 37202.



God's answer to worry

The constant dripping of worry—like the drip, drip, drip, of water from a faucet—weakens the vital energies and exacts a heavy toll on the human mind.

by George R. Knight

MY LIFE has been full of terrible misfortunes—most of which have never happened." These words of the philosopher Montaigne express the human predicament. We love to worry. In fact, if we don't have anything significant to worry about, it seems that we usually manage to be anxious concerning the insignificant. All too often we are

George Knight, assistant professor of educational philosophy, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, is preparing a book on the philosophy of education. © 1979 by George Knight.

like the little lady who declared: "I always feel bad when I feel good, for I know that I will feel bad after awhile."

Unfortunately, worry exacts a heavy toll from its participants. The ancient Chinese warlords had a special form of torture for their prisoners. They would tie them hand and foot and put them under a bag of water that constantly dripped . . . dripped . . . dripped . . . day and night. These drops of water incessantly falling on the head finally became like the sound of hammer blows and drove men insane.

Worry is like the constant drip, drip, drip, of water, and the constant dripping of worry weakens the vital energies of men and leads to such consequences as ulcers, heart disease, insanity, and

What, me worry?

by Steve Lawhead



I USED to be a worrier. I worried about everything—big things like bombs and wars, and little things like tests at school. My stomach would knot up; I'd fume and fret, making myself and everyone else touchy and miserable.

One time I planned to go swimming with friends. It started out a beautiful day, but when clouds blew in I was

tormented by the possibility of rain ruining my plans. I worked myself into such a state that when I did go swimming I didn't even enjoy it.

I worried about other things too: whether I would have enough money to do what I wanted to do, or buy the things I wanted to buy. I even agonized over matters far beyond my control, like

what the world would be like when I got older. I thought by worrying I could stop the world and keep everything exactly as it was, or arrange it to suit me.

I don't worry anymore, partly because I found I never accomplished anything for all my worries, and partly because I found something else to take the place

of suicide. Hospitals are filled largely with people who have collapsed under the crushing burden of worry and anxiety. Worry is a killer, both directly and indirectly.

The Bible meets the problem of worry head on, and its advice still forms the foundation of the best psychological, medical, and spiritual counsel. Jesus tackled this universal problem in Matthew 6:25-34, where He put forth three arguments against worry and two ways to overcome it in our personal lives.

Worry accomplishes nothing. *First*, noted Jesus, *worry is useless* (Matthew 6:26-30). A French soldier in World War I carried with him the following recipe for

worry: "Of two things, one is certain. Either you are at the front or you are behind the lines. If you are at the front, of two things one is certain. Either you are exposed to danger or you are in a safe place. If you are exposed to danger, of two things one is certain. Either you are wounded or you are not wounded. If you are wounded, of two things one is certain. Either you recover or you die. If you recover, there is no need to worry. If you die, you can't worry. *So why worry?*"

Jesus illustrated the uselessness of worry by declaring that no man could add a cubit (about eighteen inches) to his stature through anxiety. I once had a late-developing teenage friend who fretted constantly about being too short.

Charles worried day and night about the problem. He eventually grew to be almost six feet tall, but it was quite evident that something besides worry had stimulated his belated growth spurt.

There are two things we should never worry about. First, the things we can't help. If we can't help them, worrying is certainly most foolish and useless. Second, the things we can help. If we can help them, let us set about it and not weaken our powers by worry. Jesus pointed out the uselessness of worry, which not only prostrates our energies but also diverts us from the field of action.

A second reason not to worry, according to Jesus, *is that life itself is based on*

of worrying. I can't explain how it happened, but looking back on it I can see a very big difference. There was a change in my attitude.

My new attitude? Gratitude. It's something most people experience at least once or twice in their lives. It's the thankfulness one feels when he receives some big present or honor he didn't deserve, or when something bad didn't happen that might have. Like when your car swerved out of control on an icy patch of road and slid off into the ditch without hitting another car or slamming against an embankment. At times like those we feel grateful without even thinking about it.

The gratitude attitude is very much like that, but instead of a fleeting, one-time feeling, it's a continuing life-style.

It's curious that people with relatively little seem more grateful than folks who are able to indulge themselves. Why is that? I think it's because people living close to the ragged edge of poverty are often more aware of how really bad it can be.

People on the "ragged edge" appreciate anything which keeps them from toppling over. They're sensitive to subtle shifts in their balance. They have to be in order to survive.

The gratitude attitude is a survival tactic too. It is for me. Worrying wasn't able to keep me from toppling over the edge into despair or depression. Something would come up—even a little thing like rain—and completely knock me over.

With an attitude of gratitude I relax a lot more. I enjoy each day as it comes, aware of all the possibilities for happiness.


That was the greatest shock to me—realizing that possibilities for happiness were all around but I wasn't seeing them. Worrying had stripped me of my ability to enjoy life, just like it killed my swimming trip. Instead of feeling grateful for the chance to swim, I was depressed because it wasn't exactly like I thought it should be.

The key to developing the gratitude attitude is realizing that nothing belongs to you. The food you eat, the clothes you wear, your ability to see, hear, talk, move, your talents and skills, the money you spend—none of them belong to you. The world and everything in it belong to the one who created them, God. You are His and everything you have is His, created by Him.

That isn't an easy concept to understand—some people never figure

it out. The Bible points out that life and everything in it belong to God, we deserve none of it. Once you know this, gratitude comes easily. You won't have to remember the wide-eyed skeleton children starving in Africa or the homeless refugees in war-torn Lebanon to be grateful for food or shelter. You'll see those things automatically. And other things—the beauty of nature, a friend's help, your parents' love—you will no longer take for granted.

Even so, it isn't easy to change an attitude; you have to want to do it. Why I persisted so long in being miserable, I'll never know. The secret was there inside me; it just took some practice to bring it out. Somewhere along the line I made the effort to change, and it's done a world of good for my outlook.

Worrying focused all my attention on me. Gratitude took me out of myself to others and ultimately to God. Now God is my source of happiness. And that's what gratitude is—a thankfulness toward all God has given us. 

Steve Lawhead is a free-lance writer. Reprinted by permission from "Campus Life" magazine. Copyright © 1976, by Youth for Christ International, Wheaton, Illinois.

trust and dependence on God for its most essential properties (Matthew 6:25). Every person has life and a body. We never received these by being anxious. They came as gifts from our Loving Creator. Therefore, says Jesus, if God provided us with such marvelous attributes, why worry about such mediocre things as food, clothing, and shelter?

He who provided the greater—life itself—is certainly capable and willing to provide the lesser—material goods—without man's constant fretting. God's love and care are illustrated by the birds and the flowers. Jesus pointed to the birds who managed to make it through life without being anxious.

Some years ago the United States Public Health Service issued a statement in

connection with the prevalence of nervous disease and the tendency of worry to weaken and shorten life. In this statement was the following observation (no doubt suggested by the words of Jesus): "So far as is known, no bird ever tried to build more nests than its neighbor. No fox ever fretted because he had only one hole in which to hide. No squirrel ever died of anxiety lest he should not lay by enough for two winters instead of one, and no dog ever lost any sleep over the fact that he had not enough bones laid aside for his declining years."

The points that Jesus made in referring to God's care of the birds was not that they don't work. No one works harder than the sparrow to make a liv-

ing. They certainly don't sit around on fence posts waiting for someone to drop food into their mouths. The proposition that Jesus put forth is that they don't worry. They don't strain to see a future that they cannot see or seek security in things stored up and accumulated.

Obviously, claimed Jesus, men are of more value than birds. If the Creator cares for them, you can trust that He will care for you.

The beautiful, delicate, but short-lived flowers were used to illustrate a similar insight. The author of "When to Worry" caught the Biblical message when he wrote:

"When we see the lilies spinning in distress,

Taking thought to manufacture
loveliness;
When we see the birds all building
barns for store,
'Twill then be time for us to
worry—not before."

Jesus' third argument against worry is that it is paganistic, if not atheistic (Matthew 6:31, 32). To worry about material goods, reputation, or even salvation is to act like those who have no faith or trust. A characteristic of gentiles or nonbelievers is that their whole life centers around their possessions. They are made happy or unhappy by their gain or loss of things. The heathen are those who have no faith in God and are therefore given over to worry. They don't understand that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); they haven't comprehended the actuality that the Creator is a loving Father who cares for each person with a love far exceeding human love (Luke 15:11-32); and they have not yet grasped the fact that Jesus is coming back to this earth to put an end to the problem of sin and to prepare for His people a new earth where there will be no more pain, illness, destruction, and death—a place where the sources of human worry will no longer exist (John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-4).

Worry is essentially distrust in God. The worried Christian is a contradiction. The believer cannot be overcome with worry because he knows and believes in the God of love.

"Said the Robin to the Sparrow:
'I should really like to know
What makes these anxious human
beings
Rush about and worry so.'

"Said the Sparrow to the Robin:
'Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me.'"
—Elizabeth Cheney

How to overcome worry. Jesus did not come to condemn us for worrying.



Rather, He came to show us the way out of the problem so that we could be healthier and happier. He put forth two simple, yet profound, suggestions for conquering this crippling habit.

His first suggestion is "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Most of our worries stem from the fact that we are all too often heading in the opposite direction from that indicated by Jesus. We seek and worry about material "things" and hope that God will somehow sneak us into His kingdom. On the other hand, says Jesus, for true success we must put first things first.

Only as we seek and understand the lovingness, caringness, and righteousness of God will worry be dispelled. When we really see what God is like, we will not be able to worry. This is the crux of the matter.

In effect, Jesus is saying that if you must worry about something, then be concerned about your relationship to God. Perhaps you are seeking the wrong thing in life. If you put the most important thing first, the lesser things will follow as natural by-products. It was Jesus' conviction that when we really trust,


love, and understand God, anxious worry can have no place in our lives.

Living one day at a time is Jesus' second suggestion for defeating worry. "Do not be anxious about tomorrow; tomorrow will look after itself. Each day has troubles enough of its own" (Matthew 6:34, NEB*).

Twenty-one words. In the spring of 1871 a young man picked up a book and read twenty-one words that changed his life. A medical student at Montreal General Hospital, he was worried—worried about passing his final examinations, worried about where to go after graduation, how to build up a practice, how to make a living.

The twenty-one words that this young medical student read in 1871 helped him become the most famous physician of his generation. He later organized the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, received the highest medical honors of the British Empire, and was knighted by the King of England. His name was Sir William Osler, and here are the twenty-one words that he read in the spring of 1871: "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand." These words from the pen of Thomas Carlyle helped him focus his energies on present tasks and freed him from the wearing burden of anxious care.

We are standing at the edges of two vast eternities—the past and the future. We live, however, only in the present. If we are going to live successfully in the present, then we must handle each moment and each day as it arrives. This is not to negate the value of intelligent planning for the future, but it does suggest the futility of worrying about events not under our control.

God's answer to worry might be summed up in one word—*trust*. Trust in a God who cares beyond measure for the welfare of His created beings, who sees the end from the beginning, who has infinite power, and who wants the most satisfying life for each of us. 

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JUNE STRONG

Is your mothering all wrong?

GRADUALLY, through pleasant banter, my young-mother ear caught the muffled, persistent sound of sobbing. A group of adult friends had gathered about our kitchen table for a Sunday afternoon of Scrabble. Graciously, our little one had napped the hours away, but he had now awakened, fussy and irritable. Ten or fifteen minutes of quiet rocking would restore him to his usual sunny self. Excusing myself from the game, I settled into the living-room rocker with the unhappy toddler.

Rising from the table, Kay followed me. Kay and I had been friends from childhood, and she felt perfectly free to voice her opinion of my actions. "You're making a mistake, June. You're putting his interests ahead of your own, and don't think the little tyrant won't soon be wise to that fact. Why should you leave your guests and rockaby him? When he finds out that no one comes running, he'll dry his tears soon enough."

Her argument, stated so well, sounded valid; yet somehow the soft head tucked under my chin spoke a silent testimony in its own behalf.

"You're probably right, Kay." I bowed verbally. After all, she was raising four apparently problem-free children.

Our guests drifted away, two by two, until at last only Jeff and Ellen were left. Jeff, perhaps in his role as a pastor, or perhaps because he is by nature a person of deep insight, understood I had been shaken by the criticism.

"Kay meant no harm," he said gently.

"I know, and her children are lovely. I must be spoiling ours miserably." I fought back foolish tears and wished I were not so vulnerable.

He sat pondering a few moments before going on. "I've never really thought much about this before, but I have a



feeling we each must rear our children in our own way. Rocking, or the lack of it, isn't a vital issue. The child comes to know if we are true to our own convictions, and he thrives in the particular environment we provide for him, as long as we are consistent and temper all our methods with love. Maybe Kay's son will grow up hardy and yours will be tender," he added, rising to go. "But it doesn't really matter. They'll both be solid citizens with something to contribute because they had caring mothers."

From that brief conversation, I went on to raise a large family. I wish I could report that I was never again intimidated by the open criticism or gentle hints of friends and relatives, but the truth is, it's always unnerving to have one's child-raising methods challenged. However, Jeff's wise counsel enabled me to stay on course—my own course. And he was right. Our now-grown children, though they have plenty of prob-

lems—as do all the rest of us—are kind, compassionate young people. They do not like to hear a child cry or see an animal suffer. Nor do they needlessly offend their fellow humans with sharp and tactless remarks.

Perhaps some of the troubled youth of our age spring from parents who tried too hard to be all the experts asked of them instead of just being themselves. We must, of course, give our children strong moral values and a clear view of God, but beyond that, surely our own personalities are free to come into play in the parenting game. Indeed, it is surely this very variety that peoples the earth with those dear wonderful creatures we count as friends and lovers. How dull if we were all the same.

Kay's children? Well, eventually she moved across the country, and I did not have the joy of watching her children become adults, but I'm sure they're delightful young people—different from mine, but just as dear.

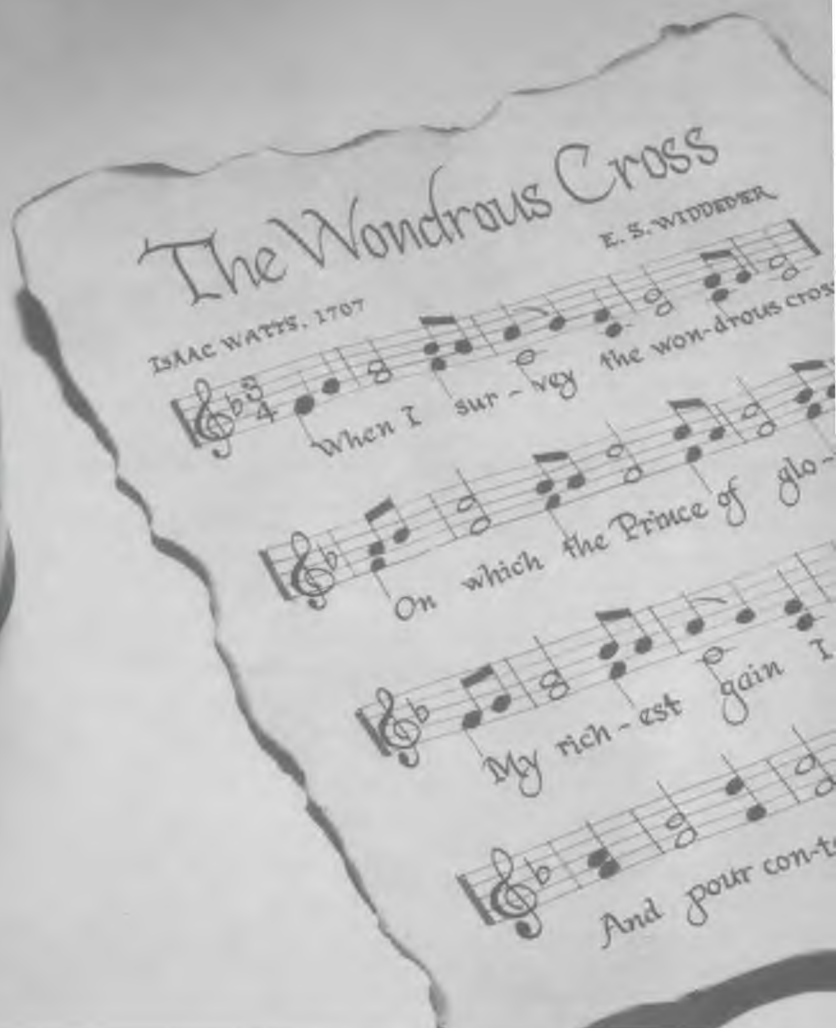


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History's greatest

According to the testimony of the Inspired Word of God, the single event that towers above time and eternity is the cross of Jesus Christ.

by Gordon M. Hyde



ONE OF THE best loved of the 600 hymns written by one of the greatest British hymn writers, Isaac Watts, who died 230 years ago, is entitled "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Charles Wesley said of it that he would gladly

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exchange all the 6,500 hymns he had written for this one hymn by Isaac Watts.

Written in 1707, it was based on Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Many contemporary people have long since decided that the Christian faith does not really need the cross, because they have also decided that there really

is no such thing as sin, and even if there were, that it does not need the cross of Christ to take care of it. Of course, during the earliest days of the Christian church, the Greeks already had decided that the cross was foolishness, and for the Jews it was something to stumble over (1 Corinthians 1:23).

History's greatest event. But according to the testimony of the inspired Word of God, the event that towers above time



speaking to a man who, from fear of being seen, came to Him by night. To Nicodemus Jesus said, " 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life' " (John 3:14-16, RSV).

Peter declared to the rulers, elders, and scribes of Jerusalem, just a few weeks after Calvary: " 'Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well. . . . And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' " (Acts 4:10-12, RSV).

Greater than the resurrection? It is sometimes said that the greatest fact of the New Testament is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And certainly that was central to the apostolic witness. But there can be a resurrection only after there has been a death. All of eternity and all of history pivot around the cross of Calvary.

Ellen G. White wrote: "The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God" (*Education*, p. 263).

Look at Calvary's cross as long as you wish, write poems to the glory of the cross with all your skills, let the artist paint his conception of what happened, or the sculptor sculpt his impression, but you cannot begin to capture it all. Your deepest insights into the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross are only a little glimpse of the pain that has existed in the heart of God ever since the first sin was committed.

The Gospels make it evident that the events clustering around the cross are the all-essential element of the gospel of salvation. It has been estimated that if the Gospels told as much about the whole three and one-half years of Christ's ministry as they tell about the last three days of that ministry, we would have a life of Christ 8,400 pages long! Surely Scripture intends us to understand the centrality of the cross in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Who demanded that Jesus die? But there is a persistent question that is asked: Who required Jesus to go to the cross of Calvary? Who demanded the

death of Christ on the cross? Was it the Roman governor Pilate, intent on saving his own neck and his own position? Was it Herod Antipas, "that fox" (as Jesus once spoke of him), who made friends with Pilate over the condemnation of Christ? Was it the Jewish council, which met repeatedly and illegally in its efforts to silence the voice of Him who claimed to speak from God? Was it the Roman soldiers who actually drove the nails?

Or was it Satan, that liar and murderer from the beginning? Was it *he* who demanded the death of Christ? Was this the price he exacted from God in order that man might be released from the devil's prison house of death? Was it God the Father who required this of His Son? Was this the price, as some say, to save sinners from the hands of an angry God? Let me ask, Did Jesus pay any actual penalty at the cross, or was the cross merely a beautiful demonstration of the fact that God loves us?

We have already quoted, " 'For God so loved the world, that he gave,' " so there is no question from the Biblical standpoint that the cross is a supreme revelation of the love of God—no question at all. But to make such a statement provides no adequate idea of eternity. Have you ever sat down and tried to think back through eternity? How far did you get? Perhaps it would be possible to unbalance the mind if a person tried specifically and definitely to conceive of eternity.

Look at Calvary's cross. There God the Father and God the Son were separated for the first time in all eternity.

Perhaps you have experienced separation from a loved one through death. Perhaps you are grievously missing someone today. We hear of tragedies and accidents, and our hearts go out to those involved. But who has ever been separated from someone for the first time in all eternity? We really cannot understand it.

In a way, God the Father and God the Son were on opposite sides at the cross for the very first time in all eternity. What put them on opposite sides? Had Jesus ever gone against His Father's will? Had He ever done anything contrary to His Father's will? Hebrews 4:15 says that He "was in all points tempted like as we are," so at times when He was here as man, He faced the temptation to go contrary to the will of His Father.

But the writer of Hebrews goes on, in that same verse, to say "yet without sin." Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yes, but without sin. He never yielded, and temptation is not sin until

and eternity is the cross of Jesus Christ. There is no greater commission given to Christians in their gospel outreach to the world than to make known by words and deeds that the cross is the supreme event of history.

To His apostles—His sent-out ones—Jesus said, " 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, . . . teaching them, . . . and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age' " (Matthew 28:19, 20, RSV). Hear Him

The blood of Christ, shed on Calvary's cross, provides complete atonement and full remission for our sins.

there is a yielding to the temptation.

It is true that Pilate, Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, Judas Iscariot, the Sanhedrin, the devil and his evil angels, all had some part in preparing the way to Calvary's cross and in putting Jesus there. Even the Father, in one sense, gave His unwilling consent for His Son to be there. But it was your sins and mine, actually, that put Him there.

In Gethsemane the cross was presented to Christ in the symbol of a cup—a bitter cup—that He was to drink. See Him in Gethsemane, aware of what it means to drink that cup, knowing it will put Him and His Father on opposite sides for the first time in all eternity. He will come to feel the wrath of God against sin, our sin.

See Him pleading with tears and, as the scripture says, sweating drops of blood in the intensity of His agony at the coming burden of sin—not His, but ours. See Him pleading with His Father, "Isn't there some other way?" But each time He adds, "Not My will but Thine be done. Father, I know that back in the ages of eternity You and I agreed this was the only way. I still wish You could find another way, but if I must drink it, I will drink it."

In *The Desire of Ages*, page 686, Ellen White says about this experience of Christ in Gethsemane that He was "now standing in a different attitude from that in which He had ever stood before." Christ had never had this experience before, and neither had anyone else, for that matter. "His suffering can best be described in the words of the prophet, 'Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts' (Zechariah 13:7). As the substitute and surety for sinful man, Christ was suffering under divine justice. He saw what justice meant. Hitherto He had been as an intercessor for others; now He longed to have an intercessor for Himself."

How understandable that He came to the sleeping disciples and said, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

(Matthew 26:40). How He needed the strength that would have come from heaven in answer to their prayers!

Can you see Him? He feels sin tearing Him away from the Father for the first time in all eternity. He begins to feel the wrath of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—against sin, and clings to the earth as though the very ground itself might be able to prevent Him from being pulled farther away from God.

Can we not begin to see an answer to this question, Who demanded the death of Christ at Calvary? Who required the cross? Obviously He was not *forced* to bear the cross. Otherwise there would have been no meaning to His prayer in Gethsemane and to the decision He had to make under such awful circumstances. If He could not have laid the cup aside, the pleading would have been meaningless. But the anger against sin under which Jesus suffered in Gethsemane and on Calvary was not the anger that you and I have when we lose our tempers—not petulant, petty, or selfish. The wrath of God against sin is the consuming presence of His holiness. Sin cannot exist in the presence of God (see Exodus 19).

But it helps us to understand God the Father's love for us a little better when we understand that the Father Himself would have gone to the cross as willingly as He permitted His Son to do it. That is evidently the meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:19, RSV: "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them."

God was in Christ. In one sense, Christ was not alone on the cross. Yet in another sense He was, because sin forced the Father to hide His presence in that phenomenal darkness surrounding the cross. However, in still another sense God was in harmony with Christ, as together they carried out the agreement they had made in eternity.

Unquestionably the blood of Christ, shed on Calvary's cross, provided reconciliation, atonement, and remission


for our sins. For some 4,000 years the offering of blood sacrifices in the Old Testament era had proclaimed the unchangeable truth: "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Hebrews 9:22, RSV). When John the Baptist saw Jesus he declared: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The wondrous cross does reveal the love of God. Not because the cross turned a God who hated us into a God who loves us, but because in the cross we see a God who shows His love for us in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). But the cross was also the God-agreed means whereby God could count us righteous without the members of the Godhead making themselves unrighteous. The cross made it possible for God to be just and the justifier of them who are in Christ Jesus.

After an angel stayed the hand of Abraham as he was about to take the life of his son in obedience to God's instructions, "Abraham called the name of that place The Lord will provide" (Genesis 22:14, RSV). God provided a ram caught in a thicket, and the ram was sacrificed in Isaac's place as a substitute and a surety. Jesus took that place for us on Calvary's cross.

We can never exhaust the theme of the wondrous cross. But we must keep in mind that there would have been no wondrous cross without a wondrous life, and the wondrous cross would have been inadequate for us without a wondrous resurrection from the dead, and the benefits of Calvary would still remain unappropriated were there not a wondrous Intercessor, our High Priest, standing at the right hand of God, holding out His hands and pleading His blood before the Father in behalf of penitent, believing sinners (see Acts 7:56; Hebrews 2:11-14). Those words must describe our experience, for only as we are penitent and believing will the salvation wrought in Christ's life and death and resurrection be ours.

"Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed' " (*ibid.*, p. 25).

Who nailed Christ to that wondrous cross? You did. I did. 

Welcome home, Mother!

"It's been almost two years since Mother came home to live with us. And although the adjustment period hasn't been easy, I'd be the first to admit that I have no regrets."

by Roseanne E. Burke

AT FIRST my calls were routine—morning, noon, evening.

"Hi, Mom. How are you? What are you doing? Good! Well, have a good day. Be sure to eat. Maybe I'll see you for dinner." And I did—when I could. But I had my own life.

Why did we live apart? Why not? We always had, ever since I left home at twenty-one. That was a while back when Elvis was singing "Don't Step on My Blue Suede Shoes" and Ike was our leader; when I traveled the world from the Sinai to Indochina. Before everything changed. Before I changed. Before she changed.

It all began on the streets of New York—the busy, hectic, frenetic life of "the Big Apple." She was a businesswoman, widowed at forty-one, mother of three children. She worked, she provided, she raised us; and when we grew up, she let us go. For good measure, in her later years, she accepted a position to help raise a child who lost her own mother. Now she too is grown. Then everyone moved away and now Mother was alone. After the traveling I came to California, to the good life, to write and settle down. Mother followed, got her own apartment, did her own thing. But it wasn't the same—no one needed her, she didn't make friends as

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she once did; older people often don't. Time marched on. I grew older; so did she.

Then came the changes, subtle at first. She would lose her keys, but don't we all? She forgot things, but don't we all? She was afraid at night, but aren't we all, at times? She felt unwanted, but don't we all, at times? She just couldn't make it on her own anymore. She was getting old, but won't we all?

Finally the telephone-call pattern changed. Some came at midnight or after. At two and three in the morning. She'd call sometimes, then again a few moments later, not remembering she'd called. I'd go over in the middle of the night, find the door unlocked. She couldn't find her keys. She would forget to feed the dog or to eat her own meals. Wouldn't remember to do a number of things one of the most self-sufficient persons in the world had always taken for granted.

Something had to be done. But what? Perhaps another apartment, closer to mine, next door. A residence for senior citizens (how I dislike that term!)? Move in with me? It took some soul searching to arrive at the only solution for us.

"Watch it, Roseanne," my friends advised. "Once you do it, there's no turning back."

"You'll lose your independence," said another.

And yet another: "She'll cramp your style." Well-meaning advice, all of it, and to some extent, true. In the end no one offered a panacea. I had to find the solution myself. So one day, I said to her, "Ma, how'd you like to move in with me? We'll get a big apartment, near the ocean. For just you and me and the dog. Would you like that?"

"Oh, yes," she answered.

"Well, then, come on, put on your coat," I said. "We're going to look for a place right now!"

There was no turning back. When I signed that lease and called the movers, I had committed myself. But isn't that what it's all about—commitment, love? Like it or not, we're all committed from the day we're born until the day we





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die—to something, someone, an ideal, a religious belief.

A period of adjustment. We found a place within shouting distance of the ocean, and against all that well-meaning advice, Mother came home. Ahead lay that "period of adjustment" that all of us face, in one form or another. How did we cope? Did she cramp my style? Was it easy? Yes and no.

Consider a free spirit with its wings clipped. Consider the physical presence of another person, asking, wondering, caring—someone whose needs must be satisfied along with your own. Needs that cannot be satisfied without your help. That's where the commitment comes in, the realization that you can do your own thing only by helping someone else do his or hers.

In the beginning you're too protective—overly concerned—perhaps do too much. Inevitably you both lose a certain independence. You experience agonizing moments, wondering if you've done the right thing. You learn tolerance, respect.

Your life-style does change. I couldn't take off at the drop of a hat. I was afraid to leave her alone. I was restricted.

Consider this. She wasn't a joiner, a senior citizens groupie. She had a mind and will of her own. She didn't make bright, witty conversation as she once did. She couldn't. I worried that she didn't do enough. She didn't read, didn't socialize with the neighbors. I tried too hard to make her do what I thought she should do. I agonized, got uptight, until I finally realized that she was happy just *being*. All she wanted was to be left alone to do her own thing. And that's when things began to change, when I realized we'd both survived our period of adjustment.

Now there are no calls at midnight and 2 AM. She sleeps in a room next to mine. Now I don't ask that she do what I think she should. If she wants just to sit and think, then I let her sit and think and remember the way it was. If she didn't want to join a senior citizens group, then I respected that wish. It was her privilege. If she got fed up with hooking rugs,

fine. In the final analysis what makes you worry about their occupation is a sense of guilt, a nagging guilt that makes you ask yourself, "Am I doing enough?" Don't worry about it, you are.

To most of us the process of aging remains a mystery. In the end we all face up to our mortality in different ways. Some, as Dylan Thomas wrote, "rage, rage against the dying of the light." Others "go gentle into that good night." It's no secret that in America we live in a youth-oriented society—a society that often says when you're past thirty you're a has-been, and over forty, over the hill. It's odd, isn't it, in an age when we're all living longer.

A couple of years ago I wrote a story for children, "What Is Old?" I sent it to my agent. It made the rounds of publishers. It captured high praise, but no buyers. It was, they said, a concept book. There wasn't a wide enough audience out there to justify the cost of publication. Not enough parents who wanted to say to their children, "All things grow old. A mother and father will grow old. Love is old. Art is old. Song is old. Old is wisdom. Old is an age to cherish and love. Leaves grow old and fall from a tree. Old is what you one day will be."

It's been almost two years since I said, "Welcome home, Mother." Things have come full circle. The period of adjustment is behind us. Things are not the same as they were before we came together.

I have two brothers—one in Florida, one in Illinois. She would like to travel to see them, stay with them. But she can't; she becomes disoriented, wants to come right back "home."

I can't leave her alone overnight anymore, but I still travel. Someone else who cares comes in. I call her my "mamma-sitter." They talk and laugh and enjoy, while I go on doing my own thing—writing, traveling, enjoying.

In our own way we worked it out, but for others like myself, I offer no panacea. Could it work for a single daughter or son, married daughter or son? Can just anyone bring that aging parent home? I can't answer that. But I do know this, that I am not alone; there are legions out

"I'd be the first to admit that it hasn't been easy. I'd also be the first to say I have no regrets. Would I do it again? Yes. Because now when I go on a trip I know she's safe and happy at home. That alone makes it worthwhile."





there who right now face the same problem. I cannot say, "Do as I do." But I can throw out a few tips, for what they're worth.

Some practical suggestions: Examine your own situation, your needs, your parent's. Are you compatible? That's important. If not, maybe you can work at it. If you're poles apart, surely there must be a common ground. Look for it, cultivate a mutual respect and tolerance.

In this age of "self"—self-help, self-improvement—when everyone seems to want it all now—it takes some doing, this sharing bit. There are sacrifices to make. By all means make them, but be sure they are necessary, meaningful. "To thine own self be true." Parents don't ask that you give it all up for them.


Don't believe everything you hear about the roles being reversed—that you become the parent, the parent the child. If you treat them as children, they become children, and you've made your first mistake.

Lend that helping hand, though. Do for them what they can't do for themselves. Never rob them of that last shred of independence and dignity. If they are joiners, see that they join. See that they go to church, and if you usually don't go, let them take you along. Include them with your friends once in a while; younger company makes them young again. Remember, whatever you do to help them helps you.

Then, when you've done all you can, cut the cord, and go out and do your own thing. In the end, through sharing, loving, lending that helping hand, your own life becomes more meaningful.

It can never be the way it was, but then that's all part of growing.

What happens if they become sick, incapacitated—what do you do then? Well, that's another ball game. I don't have those answers. But if I should ever have to come up with them, I'll share them.

I'd be the first to admit that it hasn't been easy. I'd also be the first to say I have no regrets. Would I do it again? Yes! Because now when I go on a trip, I know she's safe and happy at home. That alone makes it worthwhile. 

EDITORIALS

Wanted: Enthusiastic Christians

MOST OF US have too low an opinion of our Christianity. We have failed so many times. The United States is filled with Christian dropouts. We fail at something once in the church, and we give up. I see it every day in my editorial work. People get one rejection slip, and they say, "I'm no writer. I'm no good." They forget that the best writers in the world could plaster their walls with rejection slips.

So many times we are ashamed of having problems in our Christian experience. We feel we should be above difficulty, forgetting that the Old Testament is full of people who didn't expect God to protect them from struggles and were not embarrassed by them as we are today. They experienced victory. Yes, but only because they fought for it.

Our basic problem is that we're not following the example of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the most enthusiastic person who ever lived. Consider for a moment why He was so enthusiastic:

First of all, Jesus never entertained the notion of failure. He felt that way because He was in constant touch with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Further, He knew He was up against Satan, a created being. It was no contest; Satan was a loser from the beginning. Imagine a created being like him trying to do battle with the Son of God. It was ridiculous. No wonder Jesus never thought of failure. Neither should we Christians! Jesus has already won the battle for us.

Besides, Jesus looked at life from the vantage point of eternity. There was no uncertainty about the future. The realities of eternity dominated His mind every minute. And Jesus is trying to get this point across to us: that this present life is only an incident. It is to be lived, with a due sense of responsibility, of

course, as a preface to sharing the timeless life of God Himself. We are only temporary residents here; our rights of citizenship are in the unseen world of reality.

Heaven was real to Jesus. The singing of the angelic chorus around the throne of grace echoed through His mind. The sound of the silver trumpets ringing through the streets of gold vibrated in His soul. Jesus had no illusions about this world. He was fully aware that He was a misfit here, just as those who would take His words to heart would be. He didn't consider this world His home—His mansions were in another country, a place of resplendent love and unspeakable joy, where rust could never tarnish or evil men defile.

Jesus taught His disciples to view their present ministry with the same anticipation. He wanted them to have His long look, to live in the radiance of His coming glory. So the disciples lived and died in the joy and enthusiasm of the certainty of the kingdom, giving themselves without reservation to its proclamation.

The King is coming! Looking toward that glorious event, we can live like a young bride waiting for her wedding day. Every moment hastens the happy union soon to be consummated. Excitement fills our common toil. We walk on tiptoe, laughing and singing and praising God. To think that soon we shall be presented to our Beloved in eternal wedlock! Just the thought makes the heart almost skip a beat in wonder. We can endure energy shortages for a little while. We can put up with sickness, defeat, tragedy. Our life here is but grass anyway. O God, restore unto us the joy of our salvation.

The Bible gives us marvelous little clues as to how God feels about us. Zephaniah 3:17, for example, says that God sings over us. Moreover, after creating parts of His great universe in each of the first five days, God's pronouncement was always the same: "It is good."


But after creating man and woman on the sixth day, God exclaimed, "It is very good!" God cares about you and me. That truth alone ought to make us enthusiastic Christians.

We ought to be enthusiastic over the fact that God forgives our sins. The text reads, "Thou [God] wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). The word *cast* suggests being thrown with intent to lose. Writer Sanford Whitman points out that God doesn't daintily drop our sins into the sea. He throws them intentionally with such vigor that they hit the depths like a torpedo, and they'll never be heard from again.

We human beings, with our scientific brilliance, know more about the surface of the moon than about the bottom of the ocean. Maybe that's why the Bible didn't say that God casts our sins on the rocks of the moon. God is never caught short. He knew we'd be messing around up there, even playing golf. By throwing our sins into the depths of the sea, however, God is telling us that no date is kept of our sinning, no record on microfilm, no reference marks on the graves of the waves. Nothing. Our sins will be just as though they had never existed. All we've got to do is believe all this is true because God said it. I can get enthusiastic about a God like that.

In these last days God has called us to be uncommon Christians. We've got to be salesmen for Christ. We've got to be super Christians, first-class Christians, by becoming enthusiastic. We've got to look better, feel better, get a new lease on life.

It takes something to be an enthusiastic Christian these days. Christ has got to be in your thoughts all the time—or He is not your Lord. When you became a Christian, you changed from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness. He is everything, or He is nothing.

You live to please Him.—K.J.H. 

The roar of silence deafens me

I AM NOT a member of your church but have evidently been given a gift subscription to THESE TIMES and have thought about writing to commend you for the general moral tone and also for your warning about the occult. The November article on the possible diabolical nature of UFOs is excellent and timely.

I also commend you for your continued defense of the unborn. With abortion-killing of children now taking place on the average of one every thirty seconds, the carnage is more than the mind can properly comprehend. Your articles give the lie to the claim that only Catholics oppose destroying God's little images. Why don't more religious leaders speak out about the issue?

The roar of silence deafens me, and it is sad, so sad!—Russell S. Pond, Manchester, New Hampshire.

Kudos from American Cancer Society

As a subscriber to THESE TIMES, I compliment you on your fine publication. As executive director of the American Cancer Society, Lawrence County Unit, may I tell you how impressed I am with the October, 1978, issue, most especially the article "Cancer by the Carton." I find it one of the finest collections of material I have seen and plan to use the information often in our Anti-Smoking Campaigns. Your staff has done an outstanding job on the cover. It gives smokers much food for thought.—Barbara Reiber, New Castle, Pennsylvania.

Thanks, Dad

My father sent in my name for a subscription to THESE TIMES just a few months ago, and I'm glad to say that because of your article on cancer in the October issue I have quit smoking. Thanks, Dad.—Bryan L. Driscoll, Alameda, California.

Brainwashing your readers

"My Journey Into the Occult" (September issue) was well written but lacked originality. It reminds me of the horror comic books I read as a child, so the first time I read it I laughed my way through. But then it hit me that the ridiculous piece of fiction was labeled as

a true experience in a religious magazine and intended for people to take seriously! Such obvious attempts to brainwash your readers is no laughing matter.

You have greatly insulted all your readers. Don't you realize that if people did fall for it and abstain from evil cults out of fear, they would be obedient due to self-love, not love of God?—Mrs. Harry Maxon, Lancaster, Texas.

If you reject the existence of the devil and devil possession, would you also accuse Jesus of brainwashing the people of His day when He talked about the devil and devil possession? (See, for example, Matthew 4:1-11, 24; 8:16; 15:22; Luke 4:33; 8:26-36.)—Editors.

Superbly done

I understand why your fine publication won its recent awards. It is well done—superbly done. As a preaching journalist (or a journalistic preacher), I am blessed both by its excellent content and its sharp format.—Gene Shelburne, Amarillo, Texas.

One plus two equals . . .

I have been receiving THESE TIMES for three months now and have enjoyed the magazine very much. I do not know who was so kind as to give me this glorious gift, but I would like to spread your good news on to two of my friends. Enclosed please find a check to cover two gift subscriptions.—Tina Rex, Glen Gardner, New Jersey.

A well-deserved award

Since my retirement from Butler University a year ago I have received THESE TIMES and read its contents with considerable interest. You are to be complimented upon receiving the Award of Merit for General Excellence from the Associated Church Press. The magazine not only fulfills its function in an admirable manner but is outstanding for its photography, printing, and format.—Gene V. Chenoweth, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Speaks to the heart

I can't tell you how much your THESE

TIMES means. It's great—applying the Bible as it does and yet speaking to the heart. Thanks for your helpful work.—Dr. Ross Rhoads, minister, Calvary Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Timely topics and truthfulness

Recently we began getting your magazine THESE TIMES which, after reading, we find to be a very excellent and knowledgeable magazine. We are very grateful and wish to thank whoever submitted our name. Yes, we do like this magazine for its timely topics, sincerity, and truthfulness.—Henry Breitenbuecher, Rochester, New York.

Thanks to my unknown benefactor

I am so pleased and thankful for a subscription to THESE TIMES provided by an unknown benefactor. I have been raised Methodist, but I agree with most of your doctrine and certainly find a lot of the articles so interesting that I share them with family and friends.—Mrs. Levon Pitts, Swartz Creek, Michigan.

That horrible snake!

I think it's horrible to put such a picture on the front page like you did for August. That horrible snake! I have such a terrible fear of snakes, and here that picture came. Maybe others hate such things too. My landlady told me about the picture before she handed the magazine to me, so I told her to turn the cover back so I couldn't see it, and then she handed me the rest to read. Maybe, being a Christian, I shouldn't be afraid of them, but I can't help it.—Mrs. Lila L. King, Howard, Ohio.

How do the rest of our readers feel about that cover? Care to make any comments pro or con?—Editors.



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.



The rugged odyssey of the Holy Bible

by H. N. Ferguson

More than one and a half billion Bibles, Testaments, and Scripture portions have been distributed by the American Bible Society since it began to function in 1816. Their work is one of the most magnificent accomplishments ever undertaken by man.

IN A dramatic endeavor to spread the Word of God, ingenious methods are being devised to smuggle Bibles into Communist nations. Millions of Scriptures have been sealed in plastic bags and floated to the shores of these countries. Scripture couriers frequently sneak in Bibles hidden in secret compartments of special cars. Women smugglers carry Bibles by disguising themselves as being pregnant.

Michael Wurmbrand, a pastor and general director of Jesus to the Communist World, explains, "Christ commissioned us to preach to everyone. He didn't say to stop at the Iron Curtain or the Bamboo Curtain.

"We place millions of Bibles in plastic bags and toss them into waters near the country we want to reach. We put straw in the bags to help them float. We have to send millions of packages because only about 20 percent arrive. And only half of these are picked up. Our couriers risk arrest—and even death—to smuggle in God's message."

The work that these dedicated Christians are carrying on, along with their counterparts throughout the world, is the end result of a meeting held over 160 years ago when a band of concerned ministers and laymen met in Manhattan's Garden Street Reformed Church to discuss a spiritual dilemma. Their problem stemmed from a serious lack of Bibles in this new land that had so recently gained its freedom, a lack created by the Revolution and the War of 1812, which had shut off the British supply of the Holy Book.

The sixty men attending this conclave were a varied collection of energetic and responsible citizens—men of strong moral fiber. Among those present were novelist James Fenimore Cooper and preacher Lyman Beecher. There were also U.S. Senator DeWitt Clinton; Henry Rutgers, who was later to found the university bearing his name; Dr. Jedidiah Morse, father of Samuel Morse, who invented the telegraph; the Honorable

William Gray, president of the Bank of the United States; and "The Star Spangled Banner" author, Francis Scott Key.

Out of that historic gathering emerged the American Bible Society. Elias Boudinot, of New Jersey, one-time president of the Continental Congress, was its first president; its vice-president was John Hay, first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Boudinot guided the society through its precarious early years, then later left it 4,500 acres of rich Pennsylvania land. He was succeeded in office by Hay.

In the more than a century and a half since that memorable occasion the American Bible Society has gradually extended its activities to all parts of the globe. Supported by private contributions and grants from fifty-five Protestant denominations, it has published at least one book of the Bible in 1,550 languages and dialects and has arranged for distribution throughout all seven continents. Nevertheless there still remain almost as many tongues which have yet to be introduced to the Bible.

The society distributed only 6,410 Scriptures in its first year. But before long it was providing Bibles for the floodtide of pioneers moving West—150,000 a year. And as immigrants stepped ashore in this new land they were handed Bibles in their own language.

The society's distribution increased steadily each year, but not until 1861 did it hit the one million mark. During the Civil War some five million Scriptures were supplied free to both Yankee and Rebel troops. And after Lee surrendered at Appomattox, tens of thousands of copies were rushed into the South as gifts for the ex-slaves.

Even as this was being accomplished, thousands of other Bibles were being poured into India, an undertaking which influenced the Muslims to begin printing the Koran—theretofore written out by hand.

During World War II, eight million copies were given to chaplains for distribution among the troops; another quarter million copies were distributed

to Russian prisoners in Germany. Five years later, in Korea, some six thousand North Korean and Chinese prisoners of war eagerly attended Bible classes, studying Scriptures supplied by the society.

More than one and a half billion Bibles, Testaments, and Scripture portions have been distributed since the American Bible Society began to function in 1816. Today it distributes more than 170 million Scriptures annually; it is one of the most magnificent accomplishments ever undertaken by man. There are more than five thousand full- or part-time distributors scattered throughout some fifty nations. The most picturesque of these are the colporteurs, whose name stems from a French word meaning "those who carry from the neck."

These devout men work strange, sometimes almost impossible, beats—poling dugouts up unfriendly jungle rivers, traveling across sun-blistered deserts and through snow-covered north country, into isolated rural and mountain areas. These hawkers of Holy Writ carry Bibles and pamphlets on foot, by subway and plane, and by jeep, camel, and donkey.

Their effrontery in attempting to pass the Word of God along to their fellowmen has often resulted in their being mercilessly ridiculed, thrown into filthy prisons, tossed over cliffs, slugged into unconsciousness, robbed, tortured, and killed. And yet these indomitable men and women carry on. With the knowledge that Christian literature is the hammer of God, the weapon of the Lord, these colporteurs penetrate behind every iron curtain and into the most inaccessible parts of the globe.

Down in Bolivia a colporteur trudges lonely mountain trails to remote mining camps in order to offer his Bibles to the miners on payday. In Japan, since the war, two hundred diligent colporteurs have boosted the sale of the Bible until it now heads the nation's best-seller list.

Often the Bibles are ripped to pieces by those of other religions. An Armenian Christian colporteur once overcame this obstacle by pasting a page of

H. N. Ferguson is a free-lance writer living in Brownsville, Texas. © 1979 by H. N. Ferguson.



A team of Catholics and Protestants work to translate the New Testament into Quechua for Bolivian Indians.

the Bible on the back of each page of the Koran. Since no Muslim would dare destroy a single page of the Koran, the Bible was preserved intact for the readers.

Better Beef and Bible. One of this nation's most unique Bible salesmen is twenty-six-year-old Jon Heil, of Portland, Oregon. Jon, a graduate of Portland State University, runs an unusual store, housed in a small red building. The sign outside reads: "Better Beef and Bible." It's probably the only establishment anywhere that specializes in good beef and the Scriptures. For alongside lockers containing the best cuts of steaks, ribs, and roasts are shelves filled with Bibles and other religious books. And business in both commodities is booming.

Heil, a former Montgomery Ward salesman, explains: "It was all the Lord's idea—suddenly everything just fell into place one day."

It is an ironic commentary on the foibles of humanity that about 20 percent of the Bibles placed in motel and hotel

rooms by the Gideons are stolen each year—and 35 percent of those placed in hospitals meet a similar fate, the organization reports.

"When a Bible is missing, we figure the person responsible really needed it, so its purpose is served," says Dave Hofer, Jr., past president of Gideons International.

Bible translation. Of the nearly fifteen

bly primitive circumstances, who devote their lives to studying little-known, previously unwritten languages, transcribing them in written form, then producing a Bible to fit.

Once that has been done, the natives must be taught to read and write their own language with the Bible as the text. The Wycliffe people take their name from John Wycliffe, who completed the translation of the first complete Bible into English about 1384.

The work of these Christians is complicated because they are continually subjected to accusations by some people in the countries in which they work that they are collecting information concerning minerals and oil potential for the benefit of foreign governments, setting up U.S. air bases in isolated areas, smuggling gold or diamonds or drugs or whatever the region may produce out of the country, propagandizing the native cultures, or sterilizing the Indian women.

Sometimes, too, the translation of the Scriptures leads to a ludicrous situation. When the New Testament was being translated into the Pidgin English dialect of New Guinea the scholars committed an intellectual error. They translated the word *love* into the expression "givim bel." Unfortunately the literal translation of this phrase in the Pidgin dialect is "make pregnant." As a result, the entire edition of the New Testament had to be reprinted and "givim bel" changed to "laikim tumas."

The American Bible Society has published at least one book of the Bible in 1,550 different languages and dialects.

hundred tongues around the world that still have no Bible, many are located in the most-isolated areas imaginable. Translating the Scriptures into these difficult dialects is a tedious, and often dangerous, chore.

Most of this work is done by the Wycliffe Bible translators, living in incredi-

To any human anywhere. In spite of all the adversities they encounter, the intrepid translators persist in their task of supplying enough forms of the Bible to make that Book comprehensible to any human being anywhere. Consequently, a Filipino farmer on the island of Mindoro can read a Bible in Tagalog, and in

How to get the most out of the Bible

Too many people approach the Bible out of a sense of duty or with the mistaken notion that only learned theologians can understand it. As a layman who has been enjoying his Bible by following a consistent pattern of daily reading which began more than thirty-three years ago, I would offer the following hints:

1. Make time to read your Bible every day. If possible, set aside a regular time to do this, so that you will cultivate the habit. We have so many bad habits that we fall into easily that it is good to deliberately institute a good habit which becomes part of your life.

2. Read enough of your Bible at one sitting so that you develop some continuity of thought. Under my system, I read the Bible through once a year, which means that I divide the number of pages in my Bible by 365 and arrive at somewhere between three and four pages a day.

3. Read consecutively. Don't get into any elaborate systems which call for consulting schedules or programs. It's far more comfortable to pick up your Bible at the place where you left off the day before. If you should be forced to miss a day or two, you can always catch up by reading a little extra. If you have a complicated system you fall behind, you become discouraged and stop reading altogether.

4. Keep your mind on the subject. When I first began reading my Bible I found my mind wandering. I corrected this by keeping a ball-point pen in my hand and underlining words or sentences or whole paragraphs whenever I felt they deserved emphasis. I find this marking business is very important in achieving continuous alertness as I read my daily three or four pages. Without it, my mind wanders.

5. Read your Bible selfishly. By this I mean that you should expect to find in your daily reading something which improves your own spiritual life.

Too often Sunday School teachers and others refer to the Bible in order to give them material with which to address other people. The Bible is a very personal Book and abounds in warnings and promises and instruction which, like good medicine, are valuable only if taken personally.

6. Read while your mind is alert. I have found that because the Bible is such a profound Book, I appreciate it more when I read it in the morning before I leave for the office. I know that some people cannot devote the time in the morning, and there are many who like to read in the evening. I suggest that if you find yourself too tired in the evening, you get up a little early in order to get the best use of your mind in your Bible reading.

7. Read your Bible confidently. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is available to us to teach us. I usually bow my head for just a moment as I begin reading and ask God, the Author of the Book, to open my mind to the messages contained in it. I may not understand everything I read in the three or four pages, but I am confident that I will find at least one tremendous thought to add to my cumulative store of knowledge.

8. Read with simplicity. Go on the assumption that the Bible is true. As you read the whole Bible through, you will find nothing unbelievable in it. The so-called contradictions are not as numerous as critics would have you believe. Furthermore, when honestly studied most of the difficulties disappear.

9. Buy yourself a Bible with type that is large enough to be read comfortably and with a binding that makes handling it a pleasurable experience.

10. If you have a little extra time, keep a diary in which you enlarge your own thoughts on some passage that you have found in your daily reading. In other words, write your own daily devotional.

Copies of this material are available in tract form from The American Tract Society, Oradell, New Jersey 07649. Article by Richard Woike.

the Congo a missionary can pass out Gospels printed in the Tshiluba dialect and illustrated with photographs of local scenes. The reading in many tongues ranges from Annamese (Indo-Chinese) through Bulala (African) to Zoque (Mexican).

The American Bible Society is nonsectarian and nonprofit. If necessary, it gives its Bibles away; others are sold at cost or less. In this country Bibles sell for as little as \$1.25. In less fortunate nations these same Scriptures may be exchanged for fish, chickens, eggs, or a night's lodging.

Since 1835 the society has provided Scriptures for the blind in both the Braille and Moon systems, and since 1944 it has produced an 83½-hour recorded version of the Bible, which is available to the blind.

All this Scriptural activity flows from a new four-million dollar Bible house located near Lincoln Center in New York City. The task is never-ending, as the society continually seeks out new areas for the distribution of God's Word.

Are the results worth all the efforts and hazards involved? President Woodrow Wilson once answered this question

with these words: "The colporteurs, tramping through countrysides or traveling by every sort of conveyance, in every land, carrying with them little cargoes of books containing the Word of God, are like the shuttles in a great loom engaged in weaving the spirits of men together. The miracle cannot be accomplished in a hundred years. But if the weaving goes on and men do not lose heart, the task will some day be accomplished, and a light will shine upon the earth in which men cannot go astray."

This is what it's all about!



FRANK ANSWERS

Was the Sabbath kept before Moses' time?

I would like some Biblical evidence that the Sabbath was kept before Moses' time.

Since the account of Moses does not appear until the Book of Exodus, your question resolves into another: Is there any evidence for Sabbath observance in the Book of Genesis? The answer is both yes and no. If you ask for specific instances, for example, a text that would say: "And Noah kept the seventh-day Sabbath and his sons in their generations . . ." the answer would be that no such statements are recorded. If you ask whether there is any evidence that God instituted the seventh-day Sabbath for mankind to observe, the answer would be a positive yes.

In other words, modern man who would like to have certain kinds of information served up in a certain manner can't ask the ancient Scriptures for data it never intended to give. The Book of Genesis is a very brief historical sketch, or prologue, preceding the accounts dealing with the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery and her organization into a nation under God. This sketch spans nearly two and a half millennia of time. Consequently, only the briefest references are made to many things a modern Christian would like to know more about.

As far as the Sabbath is concerned, Genesis provides a clear-cut statement regarding its institution: "On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had

rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:2, 3). Adam and Eve, who had been created on the sixth day, witnessed the consecration of the seventh-day Sabbath. God Himself not only ceased His creative work, but He especially blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; that is, He set it aside for a holy use—obviously for Adam and Eve and their descendants to observe. More important than a simple record of patriarchal observance is this declaration setting forth the divine origin—the divine acts—of the Sabbath.

The New Testament testifies to the fact that Christ was the active agent in the Godhead who created this earth (see Hebrews 1:2; John 1:1-3, 10, 14; Colossians 1:16). Therefore, it was Christ Himself who blessed the seventh-day Sabbath and sanctified it at the close of creation week. He leaves us in no uncertainty as for whom it was set aside. He said: "The sabbath was made for man [the Greek can also be rendered "on account of man" or "for the sake of man"]" (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath was not for God, but for mankind, for man's blessing and good. It was instituted before the entrance of sin. This fact shows that if even in Paradise God saw that man needed sacred time to reflect on his Creator, holy time for spiritual refreshment, how much more we need it now in our sin-exhausted world.

Those who teach that Christians should not eat pork never refer to all the texts. For example, Matthew 15:11: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." Isn't this clear that the question of what we eat is a matter of indifference?

This statement of our Lord is both plain and simple if it is read in its context (verses 1-20). It is also recorded in the parallel Gospel of Mark (Mark 7:1-23).

The disciples were challenged for not performing one of the rabbinical ritual washings. "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" demanded the Pharisees of Jesus, "for they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (Matthew 15:2). This "wash-

ing" was not for sanitary purposes, but was ritualistic in character (see Mark 7:3, 4).

The Pharisees were more concerned over *ritualistic* defilement than they were over the weightier problem of *moral* defilement. But Jesus focused on basic issues. In this case He pinpoints the matter: *It is sin that defiles and stains the soul.*

Jesus is here speaking about soul defilement, not physical well-being. Whatever is eaten goes through the digestive tract and is gone. Failure to participate in a ritual washing in connection with eating this food in no way mars the spiritual faculties of the eater. Instead of being so particular about the ritual, these religious leaders should have been more cognizant of the true nature of sin, for the soul of a man is corrupted by his sinful thoughts and not by a lapse in ritual.

The Saviour closes His discussion by saying, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (Matthew 15:18-20).

Obviously Jesus is talking about the nature of sin. He is not speaking directly to the question of man's dietary. The dietary affects physical health. When He says, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth" (verse 11), He says it in the context of the Pharisees' insistence on ritual purity.

It would be doing violence to Christ's statements in this context to construe that He is telling His Jewish hearers that from then on they could ingest anything! A little poison taken into the digestive tract would quickly defile the physical man. Would Jesus have approved of that? And if not, would He then be here approving of a dietary of unclean food that had been divinely declared as unfit and hurtful for thousands of years prior to this occasion?



In this column Pastor Frank B. Holbrook answers questions about 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.



THIS TIME

WHAT shall we say about the cross of Jesus Christ that hasn't already been said? Corrie ten Boom, celebrated author of *The Hiding Place* (Guideposts Associates, Inc. [Carmel, New York], 1971, pp. 178, 179), the dramatic Christian adventure of the Dutch underground in World War II, tells the following incident of her sister Betsie's appreciation for Jesus' sacrifice at Calvary:

At the inhuman prison in Germany every Friday the Nazis made the prisoners completely undress for medical inspection. They were humiliated, the women, at having to march by grinning guards. On one of those mornings, Corrie says, "yet another page in the Bible leapt into life for me.

"He hung naked on the cross.

"I had not known—had not thought. . . . The paintings, the carved crucifixes showed at the least a scrap of cloth. But this, I suddenly knew, was the respect and reverence of the artist. But oh—at the time itself, on that other Friday morning—there had been no reverence. No more than I saw in the faces around us now.

"I leaned toward Betsie, ahead of me in line. Her shoulder blades stood out sharp and thin beneath her blue-mottled skin.

" 'Betsie, they took *His* clothes too.' "

"Ahead of me I heard a little gasp, 'Oh, Corrie. And I never thanked Him.' "

Please turn to page 18 for Gordon Hyde's masterful piece, "History's Greatest Event."

Kenneth J. Holland

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"O God, I'm so lonely"

Many persons play a continued game of solitaire with life, isolated from meaningful relationships and plagued by a loneliness that eats away at their souls.

by Morris Chalfant

CARVED forever on a sandstone boulder in a secluded spot high above Lake Austin, near Austin, Texas, are the haunting words, "O God, I am so lonely!"

The author of that wail of despondency could have been one of the more than 40,000 young people crowding the campus of nearby University of Texas. Or it could have been the lament of any one of millions of victims of an increasingly mechanized, regimented, secularized, impersonal society.

Geographical separation, bitter alienation, lack of personal awareness, broken fellowship, preoccupation with inanimate things—all contribute to the massive loneliness of our time.

Affluence, the population explosion, and the rapid expansion of entertainment opportunities have failed to banish loneliness from the earth. Many persons play a continual game of solitaire with life, completely aloof from meaningful relationships and contacts with other human beings.

Several centuries before modern psychology probed into the plight of the solitary individual, the writer of Ecclesiastes recognized his predicament: "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:10).

Morris Chalfant is pastor of the First Church of the Nazarene, Norwood, Ohio. He is author of seven books and is a regular contributor to many religious and secular periodicals. © 1979 by Morris Chalfant.

What is loneliness? It is not just being alone, for all of us have been lonely in a crowd. It is perhaps a lack of communication with others around you. But it can also be estrangement from God.

When you have no friends to talk to, when you have forgotten how to pray, when you lose all trust in people and finally in yourself—this is loneliness.

Loneliness is watching a ball game and being unable either to cheer or to play. Loneliness is walking by a family gathering in a strange city and realizing that those you love and are loved by are hundreds of miles away. Loneliness is having a dream and finding no one who can say, "I understand."

Loneliness, in some form or another, is an experience that comes to all of us. We crave companionship. We desire recognition. When these are denied, life becomes lonely, whether we are lost in the Sahara Desert or on Broadway. The psalmist expresses the feeling of a lonely person: "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top" (Psalm 102:7).

The world knows more than its share of loneliness. Some are lonely because they have not cultivated friendships. Others have experienced the deepest and richest of love and companionship, only to have these taken away by separation or death. And there are those whom Providence has led into lonely ways.

We find the cure for all loneliness in the blessed thought that God never forgets us and never considers us unimportant. When the psalmist contemplated this comforting truth, he exclaimed, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me" (Psalm 40:17).

If loneliness does overtake us, let us not pine or become discouraged. Instead, let us send out the feelers of our faith and make fresh contact with God, who has promised, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the best cure for loneliness. Although He mingled with many men and women in various fields of life, He also knew the meaning of loneliness. One of the prophets foretold that loneliness when he wrote of Christ: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53:3). On the cross our Lord cried: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

Because He knew the agonies of loneliness and because He died for our sins, Christ said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

The writer to the Hebrews quotes Him as saying, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). With this blessed assurance of His abiding presence, the believer can sing:

"On life's pathway I am never lonely;
My Lord is with me, my Lord divine;
Ever present Guide, I trust Him only;
No longer lonely, for He is mine."*

The cure for loneliness? There's only one: Jesus. Praise His name!

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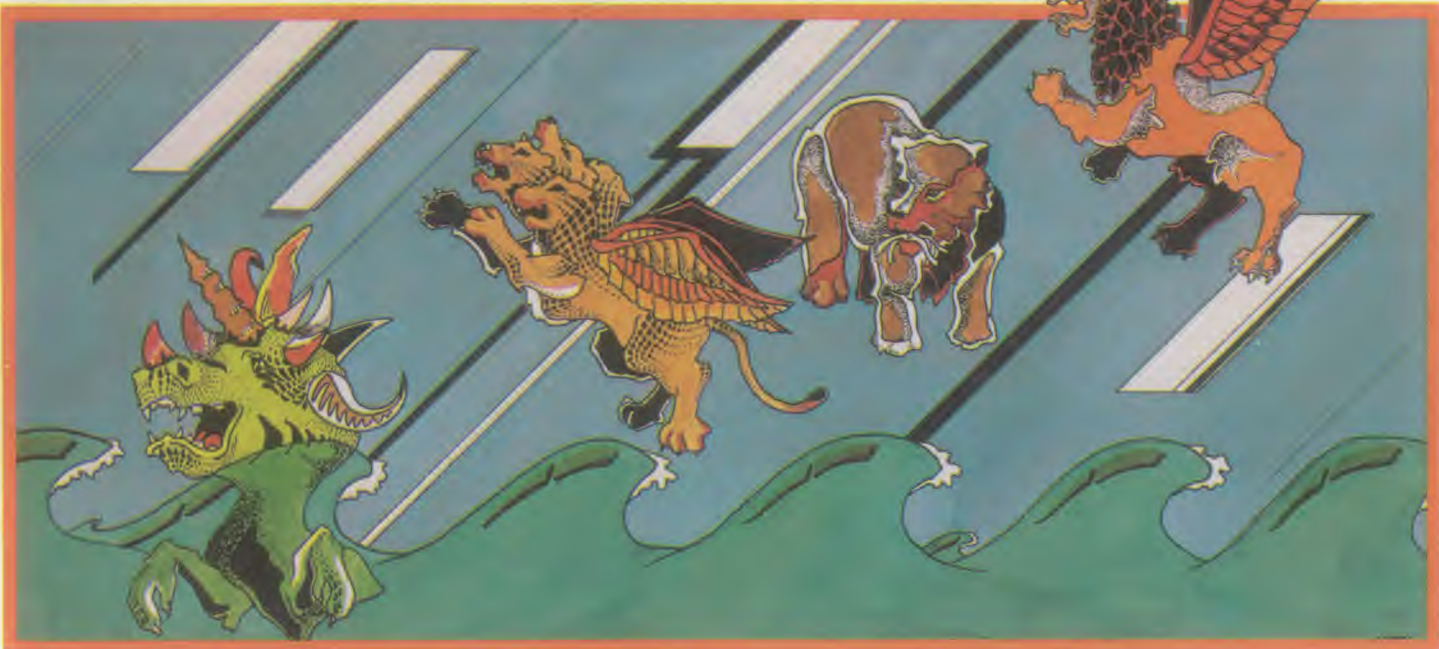
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