

The Bible and

OUR TIMES



*Begin the new Year
with God*

Let's have A Funeral!

An Intriguing
New Year Message

By T. J. BRADLEY

It is impossible to approach the closing moments of the old year, and face the opening of the new without mixed feelings. A sense of relief, a sense of remorse, a sense of regret, a sense of rebirth, a sense of opportunity returned, a sense of opportunity lost—all these impressions make their claims upon us, as we see the grey evening shadows of the dying year or awake with the gleam of golden sunlight flashing down the heavenly paths of morning.

January the first! Three hundred and sixty-five days stretch away into the future, some tinted with the gaieties of spring, while others are adorned with the warm, golden hues of autumn. We watch the death of a year and the birth of its successor, and what shall we say as 1950 closes? My suggestion is, "Let's have a funeral!"

"A funeral?" you say. Yes, a funeral. The best one we've ever had. A funeral without fears; a funeral without any consciousness of a vacant chair; a funeral without wreaths and crosses; a funeral that we shall not even want to remember once it's over.

But let us be specific. When 1950 began probably most of us decided to make each day a stepping stone to higher achievements, an avenue to greater usefulness, an open door to more loving, helpful, cheerful service.

Stepping Stones or Slipping Stones

But with what chagrin have we seen many of these stepping stones become slipping stones! With what deep heart concern can we now look back and see many of those days, as



© Reece Winstone

A curious old hour-glass beside the pulpit of Pilton church, N. Devon. Its purpose was to keep the preacher's sermon within bounds!

pages of a book, stained, torn, and unlovely. Some of these days have been marred by actions on our own responsibility, while others have been marred through our allowing others to superimpose their feelings and attitudes upon us. But all of us out of our fateful fortunes will find much that can profitably be entombed.

Let us bury worry and fear. "It is not work that kills men, it is worry. Work is healthy, worry is the rust upon the blade." The tension of life has been greatly increased by our being enslaved to fear and worry. Our judgments have become distorted and our decisions hasty and ill-considered. Fretting and restlessness have captured the quiet places of our lives. It has been said that fear is the tax that conscience pays to guilt. Nothing so demoralizes the forces

of the sane as fear. Surely we need the counsel of Isaiah 30:15: "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." Psa. 37:7.

Let us bury our regrets. How often do we hear people saying, "If only I had done this or acted this way—I!" "If only I had made another decision—I!" Perhaps it's ever so true, but one must learn anew that words spoken and deeds done are beyond recall. Better to refrain than to regret, but if in the secrets of your memories you have a store of regrets, why not bury them deep beneath a heavenly Father's forgiving love and trust His wisdom and guidance more in the New Year?

What to Do With Hates and Grudges

Let us bury our hates and grudges and intense dislikes. Nothing is more negative, especially in the Christian sense, than hate or dislike of a thing or person. Even hatred of sin is negative, for it's far better to learn to love the good, which is positive. When we love the good we will shun the evil, but too many people are creatures of moods, ruled by their own narrow slant on life. They judge others without trying to understand them. They condemn others by their own faulty standards. They would despise and banish others for crimes far less important than their own! And thus the world has suffered violently from riven friendships and feuds, and the bleeding hearts become the symbol of our age.

The simple remedy was long ago given to men in the words of earth's greatest Teacher: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34. "Beloved, If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. . . . If we love one another, God dwelleth in us." 1 John 4:11, 12.

Let us bury our procrastination and tendency to indecision. We often set the future against the present in the hope of greater gain or the vain chance of being released from clear duty. The voice of God's providence calls us to accept the moment of opportunity, yet we seldom act as those would, under clear, intense conviction. Have we prayed that we may see His will clearer and act thereon, or have we prayed that the sound of our own words may encourage us in our own wants? Have we idolized our wishes rather than having His will idealized in us? If God has called you

through this year to accept Him and follow Him, to yield your life in obedience to Him, to become His born-again child, why not bury your indecision and come to Him now? (Luke 15:18.)

Those Pet Sins

Then let us bury "the sin which doth so easily beset us." Heb. 12:1. "What is that?" you say. I don't know. But each one has some tendency to nurse and pet a fond weakness in their make-up. We know what it is, but we go on happily excusing ourselves, because we feel that, being human, God will grant us sufficient latitude and laxity to include one or two indulgences and sins. The apostle Paul says: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset

(Continued on page 12.)

Memories

Let us forget the things that vexed and tried us,
The worrying things that caused our souls to fret;
The hopes that, cherished long, were still denied us,
Let us forget.

Let us forget the little slights that pained us,
The greater wrongs that rankle sometimes yet;
The pride with which some lofty one disdained us,
Let us forget.

Let us forget our brother's fault and failing,
The yielding to temptations that beset,
That he perchance, though grief be unavailing,
Cannot forget.

But blessings manifold, past all deserving,
Kind words and helpful deeds, a countless throng,
The fault o'ercome, the rectitude unswerving,
Let us remember long.

The sacrifice of love, the generous giving,
When friends were few, the handclasp warm and strong,
The fragrance of each life of holy living,
Let us remember long.

Whatever things were good and true and gracious,
Whate'er of right has triumphed over wrong,
What love of God or man has rendered precious,
Let us remember long.

—Selected.



© Fox Photos

Begin the New Year with God.

THE New Testament makes it very plain that Christ was not only intensely interested in the prophecies, but also in prophetic time. This was bound to be so, for Daniel's prophecy had specified the exact year of His anointing as the Messiah, and also the termination of His work on earth. He was to be "cut off, but not for Himself." "It is finished," He cried from the cross.

So it was that when He began preaching the Gospel, after John had baptized Him in the waters of Jordan, His first proclamation was, "The time is fulfilled." It was not that in some vague sort of way He was intimating that the times were propitious for His advent, that the affairs of nations were favourable to His coming, though this was, in a large measure and in many ways true, but that the definite time indicated in the Scriptures had arrived. He was, in fact, stamping and sealing the prophecy of Daniel as literally true, and at the same time showing unbelievers, and especially the Jewish nation, that they

PAGE FOUR

1951 and Christ

By A. B. Cheesbrough

were without excuse in not receiving Him as the Messiah.

Years after, the apostle Paul, writing to the Galatians, said: "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." Note the expression: "The fullness of the time." As the definite time set approaches, its fullness appears, just as, when filling a glass or container, someone will say, "Be careful, it's nearly full." The time was nearly full when Jesus was born, but when at the age of thirty He began His public ministry, then indeed did God send forth His Son. "And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending on Him: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mark 1:10, 11.

Heaven-sent messengers and prophets there had been before Him—the final messenger being John the Baptist—but now, "God sent forth His Son." As in the parable of the vineyard, "last of all He sent unto them His Son." Knowing full well that He was "despised and rejected of men," yet He came. Knowing full well that His own people would put Him to death, yet "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son."

The death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary is fundamental to Christianity. All our worship, our hymns and our preaching, our prayers and our praise, call to mind the sacrifice of the Son of God "who loved us, and gave Himself for us." We sing of the blood of the Lamb, and when we partake of the communion we "do show forth the Lord's death, till He come."

Let no one in any way detract from the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Nevertheless, is it not true that this part of the

OUR TIMES

plan of salvation has been emphasized to the detriment of another part equally as important and without which the other would have availed nothing? Is it not true that we worship and serve

A Living Christ?

The great apostle puts it this way: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Ought we not to remember more often than we do that Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God? Ought we not to preach more than we do that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is just as interested in everything that goes on in this world of ours as He was when He wept over Jerusalem? It was not for Jerusalem only that He shed those tears and uttered the lamentation, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

"This thy day" is appropriate to this day in which we live. This year of 1951, this mid-century year, these days of marvellous scientific knowledge, these wonderful days of invention, these days of materialism and pleasure-seeking, and yet days of fear, suspense, and anxiety for all thoughtful people who see dark clouds looming on the international horizon.

Did Christ not look forward, through the ages, to this day? Did He not say there would be wars and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom, famines and pestilences and earthquakes? Did He not say that men's hearts would fail them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth? Of course He did. Is it not essential then that, on the threshold of this year, we should remember those words: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death"?

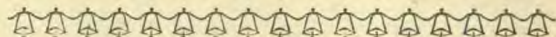
The apostle linked the crucifixion with the resurrection: "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." There is no need to wait until Easter to sing, "Christ the Lord is risen to-day."

I serve a risen Saviour,
He's in the world to-day;
I know that He is living,
Whatever men may say,
I see His hand of mercy,

I hear His voice of cheer;
And just the time I need Him,
He's always near.

Therefore, rejoicing in everything that the death of Christ means for us and to us, let us go forth remembering also that "the Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty." "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: . . . for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: . . . with righteousness and the people with His truth."

Of that day and hour Jesus said, "no man knoweth." But He did say that we should know it was near by the fulfilling of the signs He enumerated. It is a good thing that God has kept secret the day of Christ's coming. We must, therefore, occupy till He come. The world's destiny was not in Hitler's hands and neither is it in Stalin's hands. The coming King, Jesus Christ, is at the door. The time of the fullness of the Gentiles is near. Christ lives! He is coming again!



Ring in the New!

As all the bells of Christendom peal out their joyous message on New Year's Eve, they say to all the world, "Ring out the old, ring in the new." They remind us that, as the old year passes, it carries with it all its joys and sorrows, its hopes and disappointments; and that, with the dawning of the new year, there come to all men great possibilities for good and ill.

But how new will the new year be? For most people the routine of life will continue as in the year gone by. Changes may come, of employment, of living quarters, perhaps of income; but few of these altered circumstances will be radically, fundamentally new. Only to those who have a change of heart, a broadening of spiritual vision, a deepening of spiritual life, will real newness come. Indeed, nothing will make the new year so completely, so satisfyingly different as the illumination of the soul with light from heaven.

If we want the new year to be new in a great and glorious way, we will ask God to make it so. We will pray for the transforming power of His Holy Spirit; we will seek His counsel and instruction as we read the Holy Scriptures. And when our praying and our seeking are answered, we shall know what Jesus meant by saying that only when a man is *born again* does he enter the kingdom of God.

Nothing will so "ring out the old" and "ring in the new" as acceptance of Jesus and His saving power. As nothing else ever can, it causes old things to pass away and "all things" to become new.

How new, then, will the new year be? As new as you will let God make it by a full and free surrender of your life to Him.

A. S. MAXWELL.



© Keystone

Senator Warren Austin shows a Russian tommy gun captured in Korea to the Security Council at Lake Success.

THE SPECTRE OF FEAR

And Its Antidote

By S. George Hyde

BACK in the days of Babylonia, some two and a half millenniums ago, a message came from God concerning the kingdoms of Kedar and Hazor in which occurred the prophetic observation: "They shall cry: . . . Fear is on every side."

How applicable that observation would be to our modern world! For, in a world grown out of all recognition, compared with those far-off ages, the occasions for fear have multiplied until its nations and teeming millions

live in fear and torment unprecedented in human history.

That it should be so, after enjoying the cumulative benefits which civilization and Christianity have conferred upon mankind, seems inexplicable. The barbaric and dark ages knew fear, it is true, but explanation for it is offered on the grounds that the lamp and light of Christian civilization had not had time to dispel the darkness with its consequent fear. But to reach the twentieth century of the

Christian era and find "fear on every side" to an unprecedented degree, is disconcerting. Yet even this grim situation was foreseen, and is the subject of one of our Lord's great prophecies.

Speaking of His second coming—an event to whose certainty and literality He gave unquestionable assurance—He indicated the world condition as it would be found after the last of the heavenly signs—the falling of the stars in 1835—had been fulfilled. This condition, He declared, would be a sure sign of His coming: "Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity. . . . Men's hearts failing them for fear, . . . looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:25, 26.

What a true and graphic portrayal of our world—a world which, in spite of its growing benefits and its amenities, has steadily worsened as far as its peace and security are concerned!

A Frightened World

Two world wars have literally frightened mankind. The discovery of new and fearful means of destruction, steadily mounting in lethal potency, makes man live in a continual atmosphere of impending disaster. The atomic age into which the world has now come, has accentuated that fear. The use of atomic power over the cities of Japan with horrible and catastrophic results, has filled the world with dread so that nations are to-day feverishly planning with the hope that the initial advantage in another world conflagration may be theirs.

Russia, the enigma of the great nations, is to-day the greatest single fear-producing unit in the world. By the annexation of weaker border-land nations, by propaganda, by inspiring nations to war against those she holds in suspicion and hate, aiding and abetting them in their aggressions, by fifth-column activity, and by many other means—the objective of which is to weaken and sabotage the potential strength of those she wishes to overcome, fear is generated and maintained.

The spectre of fear haunts the world to-day, haunts every national cabinet, every parliament, and all peoples. And in it all one sees a sign, a sign of the return of Him who, as Prince of peace, will destroy fear and the fear-mongers.

Meanwhile there is genuine distress, anxiety, and apprehension. Fear of a formidable enemy

destroys the economic foundations aimed at giving man a better way of life. Plans and projects of politicians for better amenities and material comforts, fail. The cost of living and the cost of being alive, mounts steadily. Sons are snatched from homes and industries, and prepared for the calamity that threatens. Yes, this is the day of which Jesus spoke when He said there would come a time, toward the close of human history and just before the appearance of the "sign of the coming of the Son of man," when there would be "*distress of nations with perplexity; . . . men's hearts failing them for fear!*"

Antidote To Fear

And why has it come? Because mankind has steadily turned away from God to serve and worship other gods, to worship at the shrine of materialism and self-exaltation. And as mankind continues to throw off allegiance to its Maker, so the situation worsens and fears grow. In those who acknowledge God, this fear complex does not exist. They have accepted the divine counsel: "Neither fear ye their fear nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear." Isa. 8: 12, 13. They have learned by experience that "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." For them "He is a Refuge and Fortress." In Him they trust "for He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." They are able to say: "I will trust and not be afraid."

The fear of God—reverent fear, and respect—acknowledging God in all one's ways, believing that "in Him we live and move and have our being," is the "fear" that is wholesome and peace-producing. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And failure to enjoy that experience produces the kind of fear that holds the world in torment to-day. The burden of the reformatory message which is to be proclaimed, along with the "everlasting Gospel" to all the world in these last days is, "Fear God and give glory to Him; . . . worship Him that made heaven and earth." Rev. 14:6, 7.

Would that men and nations would respond to that divine call and enter into a covenant with the omnipotent God and Father of all mankind. "Great peace have they" who so do, and "nothing shall offend them."

I VISIT THE

By R



You are a Christian!

© R. & H.

WE felt we had plumbed the depths of gruesomeness when we visited the church of Santa Maria della Concezione. For here, in four underground chapels, are the piled-up bones of over four thousand Capuchin monks. We shuddered with horror at the sight of the masses of skulls, ribs, femurs, vertebræ, etc., which are fastened to walls and ceilings as decorations. An effort to arrange this macabre assemblage artistically has been made, but not very successfully.

We were gripped and fascinated by the very hideousness of it all. It seemed like a Roman Catholic version of Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors. Around the walls also

—some standing, some lying beneath arches of leg bones and skulls—were mummified monks, still enveloped in their brown cowls and equipped with crucifixes, knotted cords, breviaries, and withered posies.

These, we discovered, were the more distinguished of the Capuchin fraternity, whose identity, unlike that of the masses of skulls and bones on every hand, has been preserved. The floor of these diminutive chapels serves as a cemetery where the Capuchins are buried for a maximum period of ten years. Their bones are then dug up and utilized to embellish still further the walls and ceilings. Thus are the monks of this peculiar order assured of a burial place in ground which is regarded with special sanctity—for the earth was brought from Jerusalem. The privilege of disintegrating in such "holy" soil is looked upon as ample compensation for the eventual losses of both grave and identity.

Life to be Restored

On one of the walls was a motto in Latin, to be regarded, of course, as the message of the bones: "To-day it is I; to-morrow it is you." The English monk who showed us round regarded the whole set-up as a huge joke. The possibility that his own bones might one day provide a further grisly decoration for the chapel walls seemed neither to alarm nor solemnize him. The whole scene was a grim reminder of Ezekiel's "valley of dry bones." Ezek. 37. We stated such to the English priest, but he just looked blank. Further comment on the subject increased the blankness, and seemed to suggest he had never heard of such a valley, or had forgotten about it. As we climbed the stairs to the church above, we felt fascinated but disgusted by what seemed to us to be such disrespect for the dead.

On our left, as we prepared to leave, we saw Guido Reni's famous painting of Michael vanquishing the dragon—the great Life-giver in mortal combat with the satanic death-dealer. We thought of the bones below,

CATACOMBS

VINE

rendered hideous and lifeless because of the great adversary. But we rejoiced as we were reminded of the day when Michael's miracle-working power will, in a moment, appropriately arrange and revivify all human remains, no matter how unrecognizable or scattered their present condition may be. The fetters of death, forged and applied by Satan, will prove feeble and unavailing indeed when resisting the power of the great Emancipator in the final day of reckoning. (1 Cor. 15:51-54.)

We were glad to emerge once more from the somewhat depressing atmosphere of that Capuchin charnel house into the refreshing sunlight. We were grateful for this brilliant reminder of the divine "Sun of righteousness" who one day soon, according to the prophetic Word, "will arise" on behalf of all, both living and dead, "that fear My name," "with healing in His wings." Mal. 4:2.

The Church on the Appian Way

As we drove toward the catacombs we came across an insignificant and dilapidated looking church at the beginning of the Appian Way where the road forks. There was nothing whatever to indicate that right at this spot, according to tradition, one of the most momentous incidents took place.

This church, which our guide said was the oldest in Christendom, is named Domine Quo Vadis, meaning, "Master, where goest Thou?" Tradition explains that after the burning of Rome by the emperor Nero, for which the Christians were blamed, such bitter persecution arose that the Roman believers pleaded with the

apostle Peter to flee from the city lest the church be deprived of the valuable counsel and leadership which he alone could give. He at last agreed, and fleeing toward the Appian Way was met by the Saviour who seemed to be heading for the city. "Master, where are You going?" asked Peter. Looking with mild sadness the Saviour replied: "I go to Rome to be crucified a second time," and then vanished. Peter accepted what seemed to him to be a gentle rebuke, steeled himself, and returned to Rome to be crucified in the Vatican Circus.

This church marks the traditional meeting place of Christ and Peter, and inside it contains a copy of the Saviour's footprints in marble. We saw the "original" footprints a little later in the church of St. Sebastian which is built above the Sebastian Catacombs.

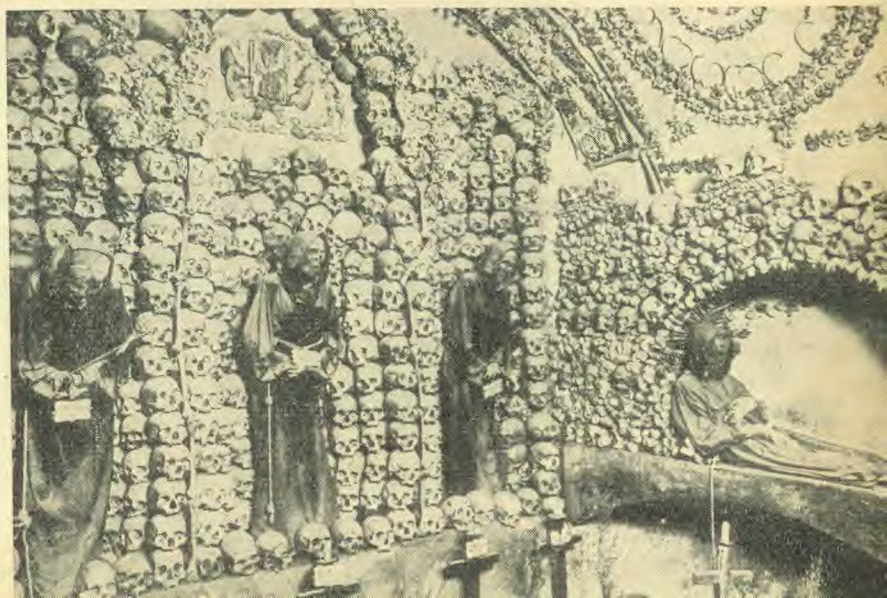
Inside the tumble-down Quo Vadis church was a stall of photographs guarded by a diminutive school-girl. When she saw us, her dark, glistening eyes assumed added lustre at the prospect of a little trade.

Grotto of Tragic Memory

Instead of proceeding directly along the Appian Way we forked right along the Via Ardeatina. Just over half a mile along, we stopped at the Ardeatine caves. Guarding their entrance is a gigantic statue of three young people with agonized expressions. This grotesque monument has been set up as a reminder of the tragic happenings at this spot in March, 1944, when, by way of a reprisal, hundreds of young persons were indiscriminately dragged from the streets of Rome, herded

Relics of the Capuchins in the gruesome crypt of the church of Santa Maria della Concezione.

JANUARY 11, 1951





A typical funeral gallery in the Roman catacombs.

into the cave, and shot. The entrance was then blocked by mine explosions which caused part of the roof to collapse. Sadly we walked into the death chamber. We looked through the gaping hole in the roof to the blue sky above. With heavy hearts we spent some time in the unique necropolis beside the cave, where the mutilated remains of those innocent young people are now resting. Each concrete covered grave has a photograph of its victim, and a small electric light perpetually burning.

Man's Inhumanity

Here indeed, was an emphatic answer to those who claim that man's inborn goodness, developed as a result of centuries of civilization, would never again allow such atrocities as characterized the Dark Ages. Man's inhumanity to man has been more barbarously manifest in our time than ever it was in past ages.

The growing indifference to God and His claims by the people of this "enlightened" twentieth century, is manifestly having the effect of brutalizing human nature. Men are becoming callous and headstrong, and wholly intolerant toward those who cross them. On every hand is ever-diminishing evidence of sympathy, courtesy, forbearance, and kindness.

Such virtues are more and more regarded as softness.

Such was the precise condition, described by the apostle Paul, of those who would live in the "perilous times" of "the last days." They should be "lovers of their own selves, . . . proud, . . . trucebreakers, . . . incontinent, . . . fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady. . . ." 2 Tim. 3:1-4.

The Ardeatina Grotto is unquestionable evidence of the truth of Paul's description. How, indeed, could it be otherwise where the Spirit of God is rejected? The apparent goodness and decency of many to-day is largely due to the restraints of their country's laws. Release folk from such restrictions, or let them be placed in circumstances which seem to be beyond the reach of the law, and their inner moral strength becomes conspicuous by its absence.

Whom Shall We Choose?

"No man can serve two masters," said the Lord. But we must serve one. For us is reserved the right to choose, not whether we shall serve, but whom we shall serve. And the fact is that either we serve God or Satan. There is no other choice. There is no neutrality. The extent to which the kindly influence of God's Spirit is spurned determines the depravity of the heart. The tragedy of this otherwise enlightened age, is its "couldn't-care-less" attitude toward the influence and claims of a God whose very existence is questioned and denied.

This condition is, of course, one of the great signs that we are living in the last days.

At the Catacombs

One of the most amusing figures was the monk who received the entrance fees from visitors to the Sebastian catacombs on the nearby Appian Way. Whether or not business had been slack that day, we could not determine. But he seemed intent on extracting as much as possible from us. Having passed slowly by the inevitable trays of mementoes, we prepared to pay the dreamy-eyed cleric who sat waiting.

"A thousand lire," he demanded. Fortunately our Italian guide was with us, and he succeeded in getting the figure reduced to one hundred and twenty lire—the correct amount, as we saw by the tickets which were eventually produced. We followed our guide down into

(Continued on back page.)

From Lofty Scorn to Humble Faith

A DOCTOR'S STORY

By H. F. DeAth

ONE half of the world is avowedly atheistic. It wages relentless war against religion and against the concept of a Creator. The other half, despite its professions, seems woefully apathetic in its attitude toward God. It sadly neglects and does little to revive the things of the spirit.

Beginning With God

Of course, God cannot be proved like a mathematical equation. "But if we consider the physical universe in its mystery and wonder, its order and intricacy, its awe-inspiring immensity, we cannot escape the notion of a primary Creator."

Men may reject with scorn the biblical account of God shaping the world with His own hands in six days. They may accept the theory of evolution, with its fossils and elementary species, its doctrine of natural causes. And still they are faced with the same mystery, primary and profound, nothing can come of nothing.

After all, the key to an understanding of the universe is God. "In the beginning God." We must begin with Him. And, thank God, there are still men of ability and courage who are bravely resisting the rising tide of infidelity, and are witnessing strongly for the faith that is in them.

"Some years ago in London, where I had organized a working-boys' club," writes Dr. A. J. Cronin, of literary fame, in *Woman's Home Companion*, "I invited a distinguished zoologist to deliver a lecture to our members. To my concern, my friend chose as his subject, 'The Beginning of Our World.' In a frankly



© Keystone

"For nearly twenty years she had nursed single-handed in this district."

atheistic approach he described how, æons ago, the pounding prehistoric seas upon the earth's primæval crust had generated by physico-chemical reaction a pulsating scum from which there had emerged—though he did not say how—the first primitive form of animation, the proto-plasmic cell. When he concluded, there was polite applause. A youngster rose nervously to his feet.

"'Excuse me, Sir,' he spoke with a slight stammer, 'you've explained how these big waves beat upon the shore, b-b-but how did all the water get there in the first place?'"

"There was an awkward silence. The lecturer turned red. Then, before he could answer, the whole club burst into a howl of laughter. His elaborate structure of logic had been crumpled by one word of challenge from a simple-minded boy."

Seeing God at Work

"The truth is," writes Dr. Cronin, "There is no valid basis for denying the existence of God." But this is by no means all he has to say on the subject. The doctor has written a most moving story of how he was led out of scepticism into a firm faith in the over-ruling providence of God in human affairs. He reasons his case well. But he wisely recognizes that reason alone never determines the great

things of life. So he shows from his own varied experience how God may be seen at work in human lives.

As a medical student in the University of Glasgow, Dr. Cronin tells us, he was no different from the usual run. "When I thought of God," he says, "it was with a superior smile, indicative of scorn for an outworn myth."

It was in a South Wales mining community that he got his first vivid impressions of God's power working in the hearts and lives of brave men and women.

"As I assisted at the miracle of birth, sat with the dying, heard the faint inexorable beating of the dark wings of death, my outlook became less self-assured. I realized that the compass of existence held more than my textbooks had revealed. *In short, I lost my superiority and this, though I was not then aware of it, is the first step toward finding God.*" (Italics ours.)

Then came a mine disaster, which carried him still further along the road to faith. A heavy explosion entombed fourteen miners. "For five days the men remained buried, while the village prayed. Then, as rescuers hacked their way underground, they heard faintly, from deep in the collapsed workings, the strains of singing. It was the hymn, 'O God, our Help in Ages Past.' Thus had the entombed men chosen to keep their courage high. And when they were brought out, weak but unharmed, the great crowd gathered in the pit-yard took up the hymn which, sung by a thousand voices, echoed joyfully in the narrow valley. As I came to the surface with the liberated men, this great volume of sound caught me like a tidal wave—a demonstration of human faith moving beyond words."

The doctor's story then carries us forward to his contact with one particular person, a district nurse, who assisted him in another South Wales mining community, where work was hard and facilities inadequate.

"She was a plain woman with a solid figure and a lined face. Yet there was a steady frankness in her clear, grey eyes which lit up her quite ordinary features. For nearly twenty years she had nursed, singlehanded, in this district. Her work was hard, a ten-mile round, a never-ending day. She was never too busy to speak a word of sympathy, nor too tired at night to rise for an urgent call.

"Her salary was most inadequate and late one night after a particularly strenuous case

I ventured to protest to her as we took a hot drink together.

"'Nurse,' I said, 'why don't you make them pay you more? You ought to have an extra pound a week at least. God knows you're worth it.'

"There was a pause. She smiled, but her gaze held an intensity which startled me.

"'Doctor,' she said, 'if God knows I'm worth it, that's all that matters to me.'

"I realized that her whole existence, in its service and self-sacrifice, was a perpetual testimony to her belief in God. And in a flash of understanding I sensed the rich significance of her life and the comparative emptiness of my own.

"A mine disaster, the chance remark of a simple country nurse, these brought me out of the morass of scepticism to the firm uplands of faith."

Thus it is that through the centuries, a host of believing men and women have built their lives on the solid rock of faith in God. Their eyes were open to see Him at work in nature, through His providence, and, above all, in the hearts and lives of His believing children. So they committed their lives to Him, held fast to God by faith, and finished their course with Him as their Father, Friend, and Guide.

May those who read these lines seek grace to follow in their train.

Let's Have a Funeral!

(Continued from page 3.)

us." We are called in the words of our Lord to high and holy living. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48. And the apostle Paul reminded Timothy that he was "called with an holy calling." 2 Tim. 1:9.

Yes, let us bury with rejoicing the things that have despoiled our lives and kept us from God and from the enjoyment of His full purposes for us. But then what? Let us pray the prayer of the poet John Oxenham:

Lift me O God above myself,
Above the lesser things;
Above my little gods of clay
And all their captivings.

And grant my soul a glad new birth,
And fledge it strong new wings;
That it may soar above the earth
To nobler prosperings.

We may be tempted to think that the New

Year will be as disappointing at its close as the old one is. But that cannot be if we have taken Jesus Christ into full partnership for the journey. Start to think constructively. Paul said: "Whatever things are true, . . . honest, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . of good report, . . . think on these things." Phil. 4:8. Count your blessings not your losses and your disappointments. (Eph. 2:4-7.)

Be controlled by loving sympathy and Christian charity, lift the fallen, help the weak, defend the erring, and love the lonely into the family of God. Practise selflessness and generous giving. Rejoice in the success of others,

and make light of your own misfortunes. Remember that all heaven is at the disposal of him who seeks after perfection. And above everything else, remember Jesus, the One altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousand, the All in all. He reveals not only a life-pattern for 1951, but He provides the power to attain to it. (Matt. 28:18.) He not only says, "Come, follow Me," but He also says, "Lo, I am with you always."

Christ's hand in ours will make 1951 the best year of our lives.

Will you take Him to-day? Will you accept Him for every day?

A Treat for All the Family

FREE BIBLE COURSE



Now you can find for yourself the Bible answers to these and many other questions:

- Does God have a plan for our lives?
- Does God hear our prayers?
- Why does God permit sin and suffering?
- What is beyond this life?

SEND FOR YOUR
FREE BIBLE COURSE TO-DAY

SPECIAL FEATURES:

It is designed for busy people. Takes only 15 minutes a day.

- ★ The Bible—your only text-book.
- ★ Question and answer method.
- ★ Absolutely free—no obligation at any time.
- ★ Attractive diploma awarded when course is finished.

Listen to Radio Luxembourg every Tuesday at 4.15 p.m. and every Friday at 11.00 p.m. (1,293 metres.)

Voice of Prophecy Bible School,
780 St. Albans Road,
Watford, Herts.

ENROL NOW

To the Principal,

As a reader of OUR TIMES I wish to avail myself of the FREE Correspondence Course on "GREAT TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE" offered by the Voice of Prophecy Bible School, it being clearly understood that I place myself under no obligation whatsoever. Please send me the first two lessons and instructions.

Name ^{Mr.}.....
 ^{Mrs.}.....
 ^{Miss}.....
(Please use block letters)

Address

Age (if under 21)

THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

A Glad New Year

May all the blessings of the glad New Year be yours, little friends, all over the British Isles, and far away over the sea. But remember, that of all the gifts that Heaven sends to you, there is nothing better than a glad and thankful heart, and a cheerful, winsome, happy face, for this gift will help you spread sunshine and happiness all around you, and the world will be a better place just because you are in it.

Grandmother's Little Story

By Netta B. Sheley

HANS Nilsen had gone to spend the night at the home of his grandfather and grandmother.

When Hans' grandfather had settled himself down to read for the evening, Hans put a little stool close by his grandmother's side and said: "Please, Grandmother, I want a 'really-truly' story. You know what I mean—something that really happened."

After Grandmother had thought a minute she said, "All right; but Grandfather mustn't listen." Then, smiling a very pleasant smile, she began:

"Once upon a time quite a few years ago a little boy named Hans lived in a country where there was always deep snow in the winter-time. The name of this country was Norway, and Hans lived in a small village just outside the town of Narvik. This little boy had a beautiful red sledge which he brought to school almost every day.

"The little girls at school liked very much to ride on

Hans' sledge, but there wasn't room for all. One day Hans brought a big red apple to school. He said to the girls: 'Now line up! I'm going to throw this apple as far as I can, and when I do, all of you run after it; and whoever gets it may ride on my sledge all the winter.'

"Away went the apple and away went the girls after it. In a few minutes a little girl who could run very fast, came back with the apple.

"And, sure enough! Hans kept his word and let that little girl ride on his sledge every day, though she often let other girls take her place or ride beside her.

"The years slipped along and one day Hans became twenty-one years of age. By this time the little girl who earned the privilege of riding on his sledge had grown to be a tall young lady. Hans, who now owned a sledge and a team of horses, decided he would go to call on this young lady. When she came to the door he asked her to go with

him for a ride in his new sledge. To please him she said 'yes.' He helped her into the sledge and they drove away. And where do you suppose they went?"

"I don't know," answered Hans, with a look of wonder in his eyes.

"Well," said Grandmother, "they drove to a minister's house and that little girl who had grown so tall promised that she would care for Hans and his sledge all the rest of her life." Hans clapped his hands in glee. "Oh! I can guess who," he laughed. "Grandfather was Hans, and the little girl was you."

"Yes, you guessed it right. Now run to bed, and tomorrow you may tell Mother and Daddy all about it."

1951

An open book before you lies,
Its pages clean and white,
Oh! strive to keep its pages pure,
By doing what is right.

Ask God to guide you through
each day,

That you may this attain,
For God will never, never fail,
And you'll the vict'ry gain.
Auntie Eva.

Results of Competition No. 23

Prize-winners.—Valerie Freeman, 40 Alexandra Avenue, Sutton, Surrey. Age 13; Stanley Coombes, 7 Compton Place, St. Marychurch, Torquay, Devon. Age 10.

Honourable Mention.—Pearl Rich (Launceston); Patricia White (Plymouth); Veronica Law (Greenock); Victor Williams (Dublin); Maureen Walsh (Hove, 4.); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Barbara Clayton (Woodley); Ronald Wick (Stromness); Derek Kerr (Edinburgh, 9.).

Those who tried hard.—Howard Tilly (Bournemouth); Dilys Waterhouse (Langley Adbury); Jean Taylor (Leeds); Margaret Moden (Bristol, 4.); Doreen Pearce (London, N.17.); Valerie Tomkins (Oldbury); Michael Wright (Cheltenham); Robert Johnson (Watford); Eileen J. Pickering (Pickering); Alex Bowman (East Howdon on Tyne); Colin Glenister (Leicester); Lydia Harris (Maxey); Geoffrey Trigg (Churham); Elizabeth Wilson (Co. Antrim); Jacqueline Dowell (Lowestoft); Eleonore Baron (Church); Ian Nunn (Liverpool, 22.); John Rich (Launceston); Molly Rich (Launceston); Beryl Norman (Southampton); M. Pollard (Rowlands Gill); Peter E. Kirby (Bugthorpe); Ivan Tann (Fareham).

Whate'er is Worth Doing is Worth Doing Well

*Oh ye who are now on the threshold of life,
Just donning the armour to wear in the strife,
This counsel respect if you wish to excel,
Whate'er is worth doing is worth doing well.*

*The folk that just creep through the world like a snail,
And care not to conquer, are certain to fail;
Be up and be doing and doing you best,
This, this is the way to the high mountain crest.*

*Whate'er be your work if it only be right,
Then worthy your labour and work with your might;
The sluggard you cannot respect if your would,
And those that are careless are not of much good.*

*Some youths I have known who would small things despise,
Yet surely such conduct could never be wise;
For those that are careless in things that are small,
Are sure to betray the same habit in all.*

*On driving a nail hit it right on the head,
And in writing be sure that your words can be read;
And carry this out in whatever you do,
In washing your face, or in tying your shoe.*

*The Old Year has gone, and the new one is here,
Ask Jesus to help you, He always is near;
And strength for each duty the children may claim,
Who tread in His footsteps and honour His name.*

—Selected.

Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,
New Year Greetings to you one and all! Have you noticed our new heading for the Children's Pages?

I know you will forgive us if we do seem a little proud. We really have done it specially for you.

The postman is keeping me very

busy each day, bringing me your names for enrolment in our Sunbeam Band. You will find that I have had a list printed of our new members. Is your name there? Look and see!

I am so glad you are remembering to write to me. During October I received thirty-four letters, and during November forty-one. Our family is growing so fast that I shall be unable to

write often to you just as I would wish; still I do promise always to reply. I do really enjoy hearing from you.

Three girls gave me a lovely surprise, they are Miriam, Lydia, and Hazel Harris of Cambridge. Thank you ever so much for the good parcel. Can you guess what was in it, Sunbeams? Why! A beautifully dressed dolly, a dolly's woolly set, some Kit-Kat bars and some money too. I am just wondering what you have sent along for the girls and boys who are less fortunate!

I hope you will all shine brightly for Jesus all the year and be brave and loyal as Daniel was.

Yours affectionately,
AUNTIE EVA.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW SUNBEAMS!

4884 Dorothy Rowden, 4485 Jean Kennedy, 4886 Anne Missin, 4887 Robert Missin, 4888 Malcolm Pim, 4889 Gloria Charles, 4890 Barbara Case, 4891 Ruth Campion, 4892 Valerie Tomkin, 4893 John Williams, 4894 Tony Williams, 4895 Janet Wells, 4896 Maureen Robins, 4897 Tony Tomkin, 4898 Carol Tomkin, 4899 Jennifer Harvey, 4900 Stanley Coombes, 4901 David Downer, 4902 Peter Kirby, 4903, Monica Jenkins, 4904 Bridget Jenkins, 4905 Diane Eadie.

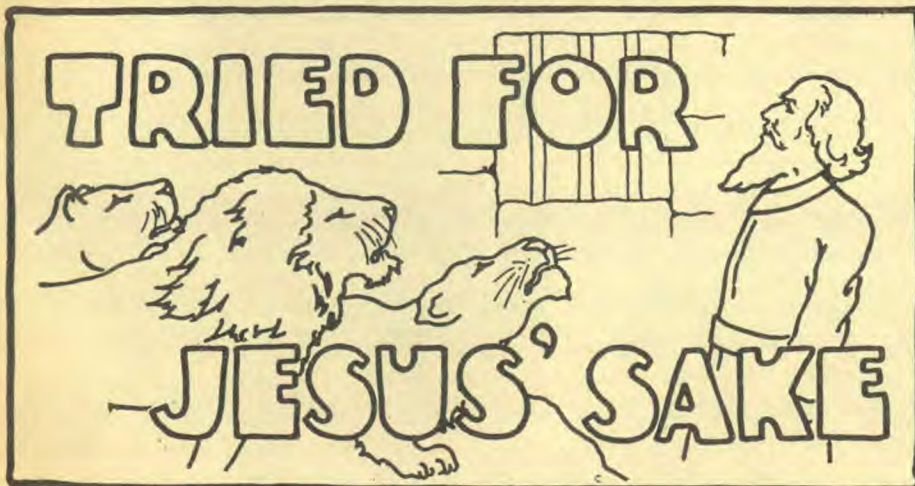
The Bible and OUR TIMES

(Formerly "Present Truth")

Vol. 67. No. 1. Price 3d.
Printed and published in Great Britain fortnightly on Thursday by

THE STANBOROUGH PRESS LTD.,
WATFORD, HERTS.

EDITOR: W. L. EMMERSON
Six months 5/6 post free
Twelve months 8/6 post free



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Eva, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than January 25th.

STRAWS



WIND

CHEMICAL AGE

"If this age survives long enough to be called anything," says *Public Opinion*, "it will probably be known as the chemical age. No sooner does some sad, scientific sage announce that we are desperately short of something than up pops a chemist and reveals that he has produced a perfectly good synthetic substitute."

EXPLOITATION OF CHANCE

"REFUSE to countenance anything which has to do with the exploitation of chance," urges Dr. Wand, Bishop of London. "This is an evil thing."

I Visit the Catacombs

(Continued from page 10.)

just a part of a vast network of underground caverns and tunnels. Some estimate the total length of these gloomy passages to be nearly six hundred miles. How, or why, they were made, has never been adequately explained. Doubtless part of them at least, were quarries. But they were used by the early Christians to bury their dead, and as places of refuge when persecution raged.

Tradition has it that owing to a Jewish attempt to steal the bodies of Peter and Paul, they were, for a time, deposited in a niche in these Sebastian catacombs, just below the church which Constantine built above.

Desiring to save the graves of the first martyrs from desecration, the Christians sealed up many galleries, which, in time, were forgotten. By the fifteenth century none remained save this of St. Sebastian. In recesses here and there, from which the sealing stones have been removed, we saw the bones of those

who sought refuge in these gloomy caverns so many centuries ago. Typical of the inscriptions which mark the resting places of these valiant saints are the following: "Here lies Gordianus, deputy of Gaul, who was executed for the faith with all his family. They rest in peace;" and: "Primitius in peace. After many torments. A most valiant martyr."

"In Dens and Caves"

We thought of the moral worth of the teeming thousands who sought refuge here. Already in Paul's day they were driven underground by the persecuting pagans. He described them as having "wandered . . . in dens and caves of the earth." Men and women "of whom the world was not worthy." Heb. 11:38. All around us we saw remains of folk who had deep convictions, and whose faithfulness to God meant more to them than life itself. What a rebuke to the spiritual flabbiness which prevails to-day!

It was peculiarly refreshing to be among these mortal remains of the primitive Christians. In spite of all their bitter privations, how infinitely happier they were than the bulk of their spiritual successors who lived in an era when paganism gave place to the Papacy; when the church rapidly lost its primitive purity in its endeavours to popularize its message and convert the pagan, and when it had, in fact, become as great a persecutor of those who resisted her, as ever Nero was.

As we left this place of such hallowed memories, I thought that surely, in the resurrection day, there will be no greater a concentration of glorified saints anywhere than here in the catacombs beside the Appian Way.

(Next Time: "Among Rome's Ruins.")

