

*The Bible and*

# OUR TIMES



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# LOOKING AHEAD!

## A New Year Meditation

By T. J. Bradley

★ SOMETIMES nervously sometimes confidently, always with renewed resolutions, we cross the threshold of the dying year into the gleaming morn of the New Year. For a few brief hours we stand firmly in control of ourselves, but most of us have tasted the bitterness of a good resolve broken, vision blurred, a faith forsaken, and a rapid decline in our power to fight to attain the crest of achievement. Too soon we have settled down into the grind of daily toil, pursuing our grasping instead of giving; hating instead of loving, and fouling the stream of our relationships

with deeds which spring from the detestable evolutionary dogma of the survival of the fittest. Could we not plan this time to treat men throughout 1953 with the same uplifting cheer that we have sought to bless them through the Christmastide which has just passed?

It is one of the significant messages of Christmas that in the midst of darkness a light was born—a light that would never go out, a light whose steady, undimmed flame would mean to the world the unchanging, unalterable, eternal affection of God for His creature creation. Not for one moment since that cool evening when the angel carollers sang, "Peace on earth, and good will toward men," have the thoughts of God varied toward His earthly family. They could not, for eternal truths emanate from His divine Mind. And if we are to stabilize ourselves in the path of His example we must needs consider at this time the



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With faith in God we may look resolutely into the mists of the future.

strength or weakness of our links with His divine character.

### What Jesus Saw Ahead

Consider some scriptural examples of looking ahead in faith. First and foremost stands Jesus, our Example as well as our Saviour. Of Him it is written: "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2. Here is the perfect pattern of the One who estimated the eternal worth of an ideal and, looking ahead, pursued after it despite the fact that the trail to glory led Him through the valley of shame and over the hill called Calvary. The soul-satisfying climax of His journey placed Him on the throne of the universe beside His Father in heaven.

Who in the whole of the Roman or Jewish

world would have thought that between the first Christmas and the first Easter there would have been revealed an example to men, which if followed, would be like the morning star in the eastern sky. But it was true, and the ultimate glory to surround that noble life is already promised: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Phil. 2:9, 10.

#### Paul's Great Resolve

Paul, the brilliant student of Gamaliel, was mentally equipped to debate with the keenest brains (Acts 17) and lecture in the leading universities of the Eastern world. But whatever may have been Paul's personal qualifications and attainments there was one resolute, unshakable determination lodged within his heart: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:13, 14.

The path Paul pursued was far from easy; it had to be carved out from experiences which ranged all the way from being classed as among the gods, to being grouped with the most evil of malefactors. Yet he withstood the stresses of unkindly surroundings to win through to ultimate glory. And when at last he lay down his life outside the walls of Rome, Paul could still say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

But other characters are not so exemplary, and reveal a short-sightedness all would condemn. In Acts 5:1-11 is recorded the experience of Ananias and Sapphira, a man and his wife who *thought* they were looking ahead. They represent millions of people who want to walk with both the church and the world, deceiving themselves about the former and destroying themselves with the latter. Their obvious hypocrisy was not only laid bare by the Spirit of God, who revealed that dual plans to win either earth or heaven should one or the other fail, will not bring the hoped-for rewards. To lose both earth and heaven is a fearful price to pay by the one who desires, even deceitfully, to win both.

This raises the important question as to how far ahead we should look! When some great state occasion is celebrated, years are necessary, at times involving tremendous activity to ensure the smooth and perfect progress of every detail. With so much more at stake, even the eternal destiny of our souls, should we not look ahead and plan with even more intense fervour every detail bearing on the eternal future? Of Moses it says: "By faith Moses, . . . choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin

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## New Year's Eve

God took the Book of Years Gone By  
And placed it by my side.  
He traced with finger firm and kind  
Each triumph and each slide.

He looked with me through every act  
Of yesterdays and years;  
He traced with just and loving eye  
The smile marks and the tears.

He took the law's just looking-glass  
And made the words stand out,  
Then with the magic of Christ's blood  
Gave trust in place of doubt.

Oh, wondrous thought, that He who bought  
A world so large as ours,  
Could take the time to plant Year's grave  
With new and sweeter flowers.

God keep this New Year always new;  
God keep the heart from harm;  
God keep the ways of all our days  
Perfect with Christ's own charm.

Mrs. Muriel M. Howard.

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for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward; . . . for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." Heb. 11:24-27.

Should we not then at the beginning of this New Year, reset the sights of our vision and lay our plans not merely for a happy future on earth but for a happy eternity. For, says David, the Psalmist: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psa. 16:11.

If there is a secret to success in our plans for this present life, there is also a secret for extending our present happiness into the future. It is looking forward in faith.

# With Christ in the New Year

By Anker  
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Walking with Jesus makes any path a way of blessing.

★ It is natural for us to look forward at this time and wonder what as yet unfamiliar paths and novel experiences may be ours during the coming year. However sceptical we might be concerning the permanent value of New Year resolutions, the near prospect of another January must surely appeal even to the most unimaginative as a thrilling vista of beckoning opportunities. It is certainly God's purpose for us, as it should be our own endeavour, in the New Year, to go on "from strength to strength" in spiritual attainment. (Psa. 84:7.)

It is also at such a time as this that we invariably take a look backward. Usually we do so with far less complacency than we look forward. Often the waning year carries a heavy record of disappointments and failures—

By Ernest Cox

of ideals proposed but unrealized, of projects enthusiastically begun, but all too speedily forsaken. We have to admit that, considering the loving care and the past providences of our God, we are, at best, His "unprofitable servants." Luke 17:10.

#### A Promise of Companionship

It is encouraging, however, to remember, as we stand upon the threshold of 1955, that we need not contemplate a lonely venture into the New Year. Jesus has promised to be with us "always," or "all the way," until the work of the Gospel is finished and He shall come again. (Matt. 28:20.)

And Jesus does not manifest merely the mild interest of a remote sympathizer. He actively works for us and with us. He is ever close to us as our Brother in adversity, our Helper in perplexity, our Deliverer in distress.

The inspired writer to the Hebrews is careful to insist upon the closeness of the proximity which can exist between our Saviour and ourselves. Paul declares that just as we, the human children of God, "are partakers of flesh and blood, so He [Christ] also Himself took part of the same." Heb. 2:14.

Here, under the term "flesh and blood" it is evidently meant that our Saviour took upon Himself our physical frame. He accepted whatever degree of physical change or deterioration had by that time accrued to the human

race since Adam was created in perfection. But with all the frailties of our physical being, He united an uncorrupted moral nature. The human nature of the first man, Adam, quickly became tragically corrupted. The human nature of our Lord, "the second Man," "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45, 47), remained untarnished. Though He took on Him "the seed [or family] of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16), the angel declared to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore . . . that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

Over and over again throughout the records and comments of the New Testament, those writers who knew Christ most intimately in His earthly life emphatically declare that He was altogether without taint or suspicion of sin. The beloved John, probably His most intimate earthly friend, insists, "in Him is no sin." 1 John 3:5.

The impetuous Peter, who often incurred the Saviour's rebuke, and who might therefore have been expected not to emphasize his Master's unerring judgment and impeccability, nevertheless declares, "Who did no sin." 1 Peter 2:22.

The scholarly Paul, skilled in observation and analysis, viewing the Redeemer by revelation and contemplation, makes the unequivocal assertion, "Who *knew* no sin." 2 Cor. 5:21.

What a Champion then, we have as our Companion through the coming year! No unapproachable recluse He, but One mighty to help us, One "tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15.

The gospels make it clear that for the greater part of His ministry Jesus was in high favour with the people. He was hated only by those who felt that their social prestige or their local influence suffered because of His widespread popularity and unquestioned power.

Jesus, infinitely more than anyone else before or since, "knew what was in man." John 2:25. He knew, not only their weaknesses but also their nobler strivings. He knew what wonders a word of encouragement will often work in the hearts of the despondent and the discouraged.

#### "Be of Good Cheer"

Indeed, one of our Saviour's characteristic-

ally kindly expressions was, "Be of good cheer!" or "Cheer up!" as we would say to-day. (Matt. 14:27; John 16:33; Acts 23:11.)

"Cheer up!" Jesus said once, to a man who was brought to Him for healing—a man who was burdened with a load of physical deficiency and spiritual despair—"Cheer up, thy sins be forgiven thee." Matt. 9:2. Surely such a word from such a One would be more than sufficient not only to heal his suffering body, but also to restore his self-respect and give him a new confidence in the tenderness and goodness of God.

Although Jesus was ever, as the Bible says, "separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26), it was never merely an aloof or distant separateness. It was never a forbidding emphasis on His undoubted moral or spiritual superiority.

Jesus never made people feel inferior. Indeed, the "publicans and sinners" or, more literally the common, and perhaps not-too-religious people had a great liking for Him. They did not shun Him. They obviously liked to be with Him.

In their eyes He was unquestionably a good Man, a mighty Preacher, and a great Prophet. They liked Him though, because with all that, He was not above taking pity on a poor leper, healing a blind and quite unwanted beggar, or restoring a poor, obscure old woman who had been a hopeless invalid for longer than most people could be bothered to remember. You could not help liking Him, because, either by word or deed, He was always cheering somebody up!

And He it is who would go forward with us into the New Year. He is not someone remote, or distant, or altogether unapproachable. Although heaven is His "throne, and the earth is" His "footstool" (Isa. 66:1, 2), He loves to walk, to talk, and to dwell with "him that is poor and of a contrite spirit."

This world in the New Year may hold out before us no promising prospect. We may be under no delusion concerning its vaunted pleasures or the dubious satisfactions it can offer. We may even expect from the world nothing in the future but toil and hardship, unpopularity, or even persecution.

But we can go forward into 1953 with a quiet confidence, if we go with Him. We can "be of good cheer," since with Him, we too, can "overcome the world."



The heavens declare the Being and glory of God.

© Topics

The Bible's Greatest Text.—I

# DOES GOD EXIST?

By J. A. McMillan

★ "FOR 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. So reads the greatest text on the greatest theme in the greatest Book ever written. We hope to survey something of the grandeur and sweep of this wondrous scripture in succeeding articles for in this text are raised, among others, these vital questions: "Is God a loving Father?"; "Is Jesus divine?"; "Who decides our destiny?"; "Is faith sufficient?"; "What is the fate of the lost?"; and "What is the reward of righteousness?"

"For God." So begins this greatest of all declarations. We gaze around us, within us, and above us, and everywhere the mind is confronted with the mysteries of life and death—the meaning of things, the reality of experi-

ence, the how, and above all, the why of existence.

Ah man, so great, renowned and wise,  
Pray tell who hung the azure skies?  
Who built the cavern of the sea  
And guards the waters' boundary?  
What mason's hand built mountains high,  
Whose survey does the sun go by?  
Who lights the stars at eventide?  
Who tells the moon to change her stride?  
And now, O man! in wisdom's throes,  
How gets the perfume in the rose?

—W. Earlington Whitney.

The simple answer of the Bible—and the answer is no less profound because it is so simple—is that "every house is built by some man; but He that built all things is God." Heb. 3:4.

"In the beginning God created." Gen. 1:1. That is the beginning of the Bible, it is the

beginning of the universe, it is the beginning of religion, it is the beginning of faith, for "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Heb. 11:5.

#### The Bible Never Argues God's Existence

It must have struck you that the Bible never once argues about the existence of God. His reality is taken for granted, even as the existence of the sun is taken for granted. But, you may rightly say, "We can see the sun." Even so may God be seen "because that which may be known of God is manifest to them [margin]; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Rom. 1:19, 20.

Augustine grasped this mighty truth and expressed his conviction in eloquent language. "And what is God? I asked the earth; and it replied, 'I am not God'; and whatever is therein made the same confession. I asked the sea and the abyss, and the creeping things therein and they answered; 'We are not thy God, seek Him higher.' I asked the breezy air, and the whole sky with its denizens replied, 'Anaximenes is wrong, I am not God.' I asked heaven, sun, moon, stars; 'Nor yet are we the God whom thou seekest,' they made answer. Then I spake to all that crowd around the doors of sense: 'Ye have told me concerning my God that you are not He: tell me now what ye can of Him.' And they exclaimed with a loud voice, 'He created us.'"

The Scriptures assure us that this majestic and eternal Being who created all things has given us a revelation of Himself adequate to our understanding. Because He created all and we are made in His image, our conceptions of God must be spiritual and personal. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. . . . For in Him we live, and move, and have our being. . . . Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or

stone, graven by art and man's device." Acts 17:24-29. Idolatry, and materialistic views about the universe are both senseless and sinful.

#### What Is God Like?

If God is spiritual, infinite in wisdom and power, and invisible to human sight, the question forces itself to the forefront: "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?" Isa. 40:18, 25. The unknown and unseen must be visualized by comparison. The prophet offered a partial answer. "He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd." Verse 11. Isaiah is but echoing the well-beloved words of David: "The Lord is my Shepherd." This pictures God in His tender solicitude, His unflagging watchcare, His sturdy protection, His eternal security. (Psa. 25.)

Again, the Scriptures compare God to the strongest and most loving relationship known to mankind. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Psa. 103:13. "We are also His offspring."

Then there is the most intimate relationship of all brought in to assure us of God's tender love to us. "Thy Maker is thine Husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: the God of the whole earth shall He be called." Isa. 64:5. To all His wayward and straying children, the Lord appeals: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." Jer. 3:14.

Even with these human comparisons, we may still find it difficult to visualize God. So God has taken the final and inevitable step of coming down from heaven to share our humanity. The final and full revelation of God is found in Jesus. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Heb. 1:1, 2. The greatest and most satisfying demonstration of the personality of God lies in the fact that Jesus was "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person." Heb. 1:3. He was "stamped with God's own character." (Moffatt.)

The prophets pictured God to their generation by calling to their aid comparisons of various human relationships. Jesus, on the other hand, revealed God by becoming man.

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# IS MAN

The First Article of a  
Series on a Vital T

of all issues, the question which merited their supreme concern. "I call heaven and earth to record this day, . . ." he said. "that I have set before you life and death: . . . therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Deut. 30:19.

Life and death! These are indeed the fundamental opposites which have exercised the mind of man from the very beginning. And rightly, for life is the very heart and essence of his existence, while death seemingly is the loss of all being. Only as he can gain an under-

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By A. Dixon © S.P.C.K.  
The expulsion  
from Eden.

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★ At a critical moment in the history of the children of Israel, when their divinely-appointed leader had brought them out of bondage to the border of the land in which the kingdom and throne of the Lord was to be set up, the now aged Moses gathered the people together to receive his final counsels. He spoke, under the guidance of God, of many things pertaining to their material and spiritual welfare and then in his concluding exhortation he set before the assembled congregation the most fundamental

standing of their nature and meaning can he hope to pierce the curtain which bounds and encloses his earthly and temporal sphere.

What is life? Whence came it? What is its purpose?

What is death? Does it really break the continuity of life? What lies beyond?

That there must be something beyond is a well-nigh universal and certainly immemorial conviction. It seems inconceivable that life in all its diversity and wonder can be but a thing



# IMMORTAL?

By W. L. EMMERSON

of a moment, appearing, tarrying for a brief span, and then dissolving into nothingness for ever.

As Edward Arlington Robinson has written:

If after all that we have lived and thought  
All comes to Naught—  
If there be nothing after Now  
And we be nothing anyhow—  
Why live?

"If there be nothing after Now" life is indeed hollow, purposeless, futile. But what is there?

Through the centuries many have sought to answer this question, philosophers, scientists, psychologists, historians; but in these pages we turn at once, as with every subject of our study and meditation, to the authoritative Source of all knowledge and wisdom, to the Word of God which is also significantly designated the "Word of Life." Phil. 2:16. (Compare 1 John 1:1.)

## Whence Came Life?

The first book of the Bible is appropriately called the "Book of Beginnings," for in its earliest chapters we have, categorically stated, the primary facts concerning the origin of the material world and of the living creatures upon it.

"In the beginning," we read, "God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1. And from the earth there sprang forth through His creative fiat, first vegetable life (Gen. 1:11, 12), then animal life (Gen. 1:20-25), and finally man, a "living soul" after God's own "image" and "likeness." Gen. 1:26.

Thus, from its humblest forms to the crown of creation, man, all life had a single source—the creative activity of God.

The second basic fact which emerges from the creation story is that the continuance of the life given to man (and as a consequence the life of the lower creation over which he was

set in authority) was dependent upon willing and perfect obedience to the Giver of life.

To keep this vitally important condition before our first parents, there was placed in the beautiful garden which was to be their home, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Of this tree only, of all the trees of the garden, they were warned not to eat. "For," said God, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:17.

## The Conflict Begins

For a while all went well, but, looking down upon this beautiful world fresh from the hand of God and upon the happy pair in Eden, was a being of a higher order than man, in whose heart had been engendered a fearful enmity against God and all His works. This once-exalted, but now fallen being, who had lost in heaven his first battle against the government of God, now determined to make this earthly province of the divine kingdom a new scene of conflict, and to this end he at once set out to undermine the loyalty of its first inhabitants.

Making contact, through the medium of a beautiful denizen of the garden, with Eve, who had for a brief moment become separated from her husband, Satan spoke. "Hath God said," he began, "Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Gen. 3:1.

The woman, attracted by the appearance and intelligence of the "serpent," admitted that there was one tree of which they had been expressly forbidden to partake, "lest" they "die." Gen. 3:3.

Then "the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." Verse 4. The first round of the conflict of the ages had begun. The first "lie" on earth in opposition to the "truth" of God had been spoken which was to bear so universal and baleful a fruitage.

By way of further explanation of this new and startling thought, Satan went on: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Verse 5.

In effect, comments E. G. White in *Patriarchs and Prophets*: "The tempter intimated that the divine warning was not to be actually fulfilled; it was designed merely to intimidate

them" "lest they should be exalted to equality with Himself."—Page 54.

He alleged that God was "seeking to prevent them from reaching a nobler development, and finding greater happiness" and in opposition to the divine warning of the diminution and final loss of life through disobedience, he made the counterclaim that there was life outside of the will of God, that in fact he could show a way along which they would experience ever-expanding vision and deepening knowledge until they became "as gods" themselves.

Sad to say, our first parents "accepted the words of the serpent, that God did not mean what He said" and following the will-o'-the-wisp subtly proffered by Satan, Eve and her husband ate of the forbidden tree.

To their horror, the outworking of the threatened retribution at once began to be manifest. God had said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," literally "dying thou shalt die," and the guilty pair were immediately conscious of a diminution and restriction of the life which was in them, while in the created things around them they saw the first evidences of decay and death. The satanic deception was only too clearly revealed and our first parents could not but throw themselves upon the mercy of God.

That mercy was at once revealed in the opening of a way back into the life of God through the "Seed" of the woman. (Gen. 3:15.)

### The Two Hopes

Satan's plan was seemingly foiled by the announcement of God's gracious plan of redemption, but insidiously he set his emissaries to work to follow up his initial lie by another even more subtle. Men may seem to be dying, as God said, but, suggested Satan, death is not really what it appears to be. Death may come to man's body, but this does not involve his inner "self," which is unaffected by the death of the body, which survives its dissolution, which, in fact, is immortal and cannot die.

Thus out of the Edenic world there emerged two hopes—one true and the other false, one of life from the dead, the other of life through death. And so attractive to the pride of man was the satanic doctrine of natural immortality that not only did it become the basis of the whole system of paganism, but in its backwash it has permeated the thinking of the greater part of Christendom, so that to-day the doctrine

of life through death has well-nigh supplanted the truth of life from the dead in Christian thinking.

Well, therefore, will it be for us to seek to disentangle the "lie" from the "truth" and exhibit in all its divine glory the one true way of life.

### What Is Man?

To examine the basic premise of the doctrine of natural immortality, we cannot do better than go back again, first of all, to the story of the creation of man to see if there is any justification for the contention that man comprises a mortal and corruptible shell in which is an immortal, incorruptible "self" capable of surviving physical death.

Providentially, in view of the claims of the arch-deceiver, we discover that the facts of man's creation are not only concisely stated in the first chapter of Genesis but are recapitulated in greater detail in the second, enabling us to analyse and understand his essential nature.

"And the Lord God," we are told, "formed man of the dust of the ground." Gen. 2:7. The human body then was fashioned in its entirety from the elements of which every other material object and living thing was made. In all its marvellous complexity the human frame was built up from "the dust" by the wisdom and skill of the divine Artificer.

While perfect in organization, "fearfully and wonderfully made" as David expressed it on a later occasion (Psa. 139:14), man was, however, still inert and lifeless. The inspired account then continues: "And [God] breathed into his nostrils the breath [*neshamah*] of life, [literally, 'the breath of lives']," and man became a living soul [*nephesh chayyah*]." Verse 7.

Right here the advocates of the doctrine of natural immortality set up their first "strong point." Here, it is suggested, man's nature diverges from that of other creatures of the "dust" by reason of the fact that through this act God gave to man a "something" which was not vouchsafed to the animal body.

This assertion, however, is quite unwarranted for the "breath" (*neshamah*) thus introduced into the lifeless human frame was no different from the "breath" communicated to all other living creatures. All, in fact, are associated together in the twenty-first and twenty-second

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# THE MARKS On The Wall

By Mary J. Vine

★ It isn't any use, not even the best of washable distemper can stand being scrubbed in the same spot more than a certain number of times, and there's only one remedy, simply to have the whole room distempered again. Marks—there are marks all over it, marks where the chairs have been pushed back against the walls, the sign of the five fingers where small hands have acted as buffers after a lovely slide over the lino, shoulder-high greynesses where small son, and not only he, leans back against the wall just as he enters the door. I go round and rub and scrub, but in an incredibly short time there are exactly similar marks in exactly the same places, and though I "nag" and "keep on," when those same scalliwags are at last still at night, I can almost smile.

There ought not to be chair marks, of course, but they must clear the decks some time, and away go the chairs, up against the walls, and sometimes not so gently. True, there was a time when there were no marks, but that was long ago, when there were no children either, and the days fly all too quickly and soon there will be no children again, only a group of young people, maybe even more anxious than I to smarten up the home. So I view the tell-tale greynesses with almost sentimental tolerance, for indeed they have a very sweet story to tell. I rub them off, though, as I get opportunity, but, as I have already said, they are quickly applied all over again.

There are some marks, though, that I do not rub off, and even when all the old marks are covered with a coat of new distemper, deliberately and with purpose, we shall again make some similar marks to these. Just little lines they are, small pencil marks, with a small initial and a date by each. And there's more than one mark with the same initial, but always



© Studio Lisa

Up and up the children grow. Soon they will catch up Mummy—perhaps Daddy, too!

the date is different. Sometimes there's a year between, sometimes there's more. Moreover on a certain date, the mark with a certain initial was way up, next to the top, for they vary, those marks, anywhere between three feet and six feet from the ground. Now, though, there are marks inches above that particular mark, and they bear the same initials as marks with similar initials, but with earlier dates, as others that are away below. For these initialled, dated marks are the record of our family's growth, and an interesting record they make. The top one remains stationary. There are no others with that particular initial. It is Father's. Till now he has kept the lead. And that which once was second remains stationary, too. But it has been passed—well passed. And there are others creeping up, and soon, for all the signs seem to indicate it, though I could cry as I think of it, soon that mark which once

was second will be the bottom of them all. For they are growing, and I can no longer grow at all.

Or can I?

I believe they were entitled "Lines for a Bathroom."

So many feet in my stockings,  
So many stone—net weight;  
Muscle is well developed;  
Chest measurement is great;  
Passed all tests with distinction;  
Fine specimen—all agree;  
But when I stand in my naked soul,  
How big shall I be?

Yes, how big shall I be then—*then*? The mark on the wall may even descend, and it is altogether too true that I shall never again look down on those same uplifted little faces. They are not little any more, and I must look up to them. But me—myself—the real me of whom that mark on the wall indicates nothing, is there room for growth there?

It is a good question for us in this year of grace 1953. What are we doing, shrivelling or growing, there in our naked souls?

"Grow," cried Peter, "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"That ye may grow up into Christ, even into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," prays Paul.

"Higher than the highest human thought is God's ideal for His children," writes Ellen Gould White.

Oh, I have a long way to grow, and have not we all? Let us then, this year, by all the means we can, strive to add something to that inner stature.

If we do, daily, momentarily, lift our hearts to Him, we shall grow.

If we will seek the highest and forego the harmful and the base, no matter what the cost, we shall grow.

If we will strive to find whereof to praise rather than to blame, to help and not to harm, to comfort and not to cast down, we shall grow.

If we make sure that every day we make His Word the man of our counsel, we shall grow.

And soon, who knows how soon,  
Our Lord will come and find us,  
Not as we used to be,  
Limping but slowly on the heavenward way.  
But straight and upright, stalwart, pure, and true,  
Willing to dare, courageously to do;  
Grown up into His fullness,  
His love and faith divine,  
And ours will be the welcome,  
"Dear Father, these are Mine."

## Does God Exist?

(Continued from page 7.)

The Word that made the worlds "was made flesh, and dwelt among us," John 1:14. Therefore He could truthfully say: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "I and My Father are one." John 14:9; 10:30.

The Scriptures then reveal the character and attributes of the Supreme Being so that we may "worship Him that made heaven and earth." He is presented to us as a *merciful* and *compassionate* God. (Exod. 34:6, 7.) We have only to think of the cruel and vindictive deities worshipped by the various races of mankind down the ages to begin to appreciate this facet of the divine character. Even the Jews of our Lord's time needed to be reminded of this truth. Jesus said to them: "Go . . . and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," Matt. 9:13.

He is also a *righteous* God. (John 17:25.) Contrast this with the gods of Grecian and Roman thought. Even at their best they displayed all the passions and prejudices of weak humanity. How true it is that these gods were created in the image of fallen man. To them apply the words of Asaph: "Thou thoughtest that I [God] was altogether such an one as thyself." Psa. 50:21. The God of the Bible is "no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him." Acts 10:34, 35.

The Lord is also a God of truth, of justice, of power, and above all, of love. This is His glory, the glory of a character free from any blemish. Such a One we may truly worship, since He is worthy. The word worship stems from this thought of "worth"—worthship.

One day soon the whole sentient universe will acclaim: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Rev. 4:11. The old catechism was essentially true in its first question: "What is the chief end of man? Ans.—To glorify God and enjoy Him for ever."

## Is Man Immortal?

(Continued from page 10.)

verses of the seventh chapter: "All flesh, . . . both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and

of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath [neshamah] of life." Gen. 7:21, 22.

Elsewhere in the early chapters of Genesis another word, *ruach*, is used for the "breath" of life, but it, too, we find, is shared by "all flesh," both man and beast. (Gen. 6:17; 7:15.) This is further confirmed by the writer of Ecclesiastes, who states that both the "sons of men" and the "beasts" have one "breath [*ruach*]." Eccles. 3:19.

If, therefore, the "breath" (*ruach* or *neshamah*) communicated to man was a separate entity or "soul" then all living creatures down to the humblest creeping things of the earth must be equally possessors of independent "souls."

Conversely, if this conclusion is set aside as untenable, the idea that, with the "breath of life," an independent, immortal "soul" was given to man must also be abandoned. Clearly the "breath" given to man and beast was simply the principle of life which animates all creatures, enabling them to develop to the extent which their respective organizations permit.

This essential identity between the lower creation and man in body and in breath is further confirmed when we note, in the original Hebrew, that the expression "living soul" used to describe man is precisely the same term as is used for the other sentient creatures created by God, though this identity is obscured by the diverse renderings of the expression in verses twenty, twenty-one, and twenty-four of the first chapter of Genesis. The expression in every case is *nephesh chayyah*, which means simply "living creature," a "creature that hath life."

Both animals and man are, in fact, grouped together in the thirtieth verse of the first chapter as "every beast of the earth and . . . every fowl of the air, and . . . every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein is a living soul (*nephesh chayyah*)."

Thus whatever a "living soul" means in the case of man it means equally in the case of every other living creature. It connotes no added "something" in man which is not possessed by other living creatures.

Into the creation of man went the same constituent elements as into the creation of the beast of the field—no more, no less. And both Old and New Testaments consistently regard man not as a composite being comprising a special and unique "soul" encased in an animal body but as a unitary being, akin to, but on a higher level than, the animals, as the angels are higher than man. (Psa. 8:5.)

#### The Uniqueness of Man

In what way then does man differ from the lower creation, for differ he clearly does? For answer we note the words used by God when He announced His intentions respecting His crowning work of creation. "Let Us make man," He said, "in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion . . . upon the earth." Gen. 1:26.

Man differs from the lower creation not in his essential nature but in his infinitely higher organization which makes him, on the one hand, capable of dominion over all other created things and, on the other, of knowing and entering into fellowship with his Maker. It further gives him as a child of God the capacity to "seek after" and grow up into the perfections of his Father, including His immortality (Rom. 2:7), though, of course, these perfections will always be derived and not inherent in him.

So from our study of the biblical account of man's creation and later comments on his nature we can find not the slightest evidence of his possession of any inherently immortal soul, which makes him unique in the creation of God and assures him of a survival of physical death in a spiritual world beyond the tomb.

(Next Time: What Happens When We Die?)

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# THE CHILDREN'S Pages



## The Scythe and the Hour-Glass

By P. Burnell

"PLEASE, Daddy, who is Father Time?" asked Michael.

Daddy had been expecting that question ever since he mentioned that Father Time had been good to their family during the past year.

"Wait just a minute," said Daddy, as he rose from his chair and went across to his bookcase. "Now, here's a picture of good old Father Time."

He sat down again, and Father and son together studied the portrait of the old man who so puzzled Michael. He was obviously very old, for his back was bent, and he was so painfully thin. His hair was scanty, and a long white beard hung over his chest. In one

hand he carried a scythe, and between the long, lean fingers of the other hand, he clasped an hour-glass.

"What's that for?" questioned Michael, pointing to the hour-glass.

Michael's daddy explained that Father Time represented the passage of time which we count on the calendar in days and weeks; and that the hour-glass with its sand running from the top to the bottom half, was one year.

He also explained that when the bottom was full, the old man would turn it over, thus showing that one year had finished and that a new year was about to begin. The

scythe—such a dangerous-looking weapon—was for reaping the harvest of all the good deeds of life.

With these thoughts in mind Michael went to bed. In a dream Father Time appeared to him and spoke.

"I don't suppose you know me?" he said.

"Yes I do," said Michael. The old man was surprised.

"My dad said you had been good to us this year," he continued.

"Can you think of any of the good things?" asked Father Time.

But Michael couldn't think of any just then. After all, life was quite ordinary, and he couldn't see where he had been more fortunate than anyone else.

But the old man began to remind Michael about his school, his teachers, his books and pencils, the chances he had had to learn arithmetic, to write little essays, and letters to his friends, and the cricket and football he had played with his pals.

Michael looked, and Father Time waited for him to say something. He wasn't at all sure that school and lessons and teachers were good things. Cricket and football were all right—but the other things!



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than January 22nd.

He didn't know whether to say "Thank you," or not.

Father Time spoke again, and he told Michael that he had wasted some of his time at school. He had let slip a good many opportunities to learn.

"What is the use of giving a boy like you precious time?" he said, with a sad look on his old face.

Michael shuddered as the bent figure clicked his scythe against the wall.

#### MY NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

To be a little kinder every day;  
To guide some weaker soul along life's way;

To bravely smile when things are going wrong;  
To meet my troubles with a cheery song;

To make life happier for those around;

To tell them of the joy and peace I've found;

To lead one precious soul, at least, to Him;

Before whose glory earthly lights grow dim—

These are my heart's desires.  
Lilian G. Heard.

"Thank you! Thank you!" shouted Michael.

"I am glad you want more such days," said Father Time with a smile. "Make use of them my boy. Do your best. But to do this you must serve the One who gives me these days."

"Do you mean God?" asked Michael.

"Yes," came the firm reply.

In the morning—New Year's Day—when Michael awoke, he found a diary on the table by his bedside. On the fly-leaf he read: "To Michael. From Daddy. May he use it well every day of the year."

Michael took up the pencil and wrote. "God helping me, I will."



My Dear Sunbeams,

It is my pleasant task to thank you for all the gifts you sent to me, in answer to my appeal to spare a little for those children who could not expect to receive very much for Christmas. You will be interested to know that I received quite a large pile of books, and also a number of postal orders. These have been used to bring cheer to a number of children who, I know, would like to join me in saying, "Thank you."

Somehow, whenever we make some sacrifice, the Lord sees that we get back more than we give. The boy with the loaves and fishes gave his lunch to Jesus, but when Jesus fed that great crowd of people from his little basket, the boy not only got a good meal like everybody else, but he must have had an extra good feeling inside him. He learned how true is what the Bible says, that "it is more blessed to give, than to receive."

I am sure you Sunbeams have proved this too, and I do trust that this new year, 1953, may be a very happy year for you as you

try to make others happy, and shine ever more brightly for Jesus.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE MARGARET.

#### Results of Competition No. 22

*Prize-winners.*—Gillian Plant, "Gail," Uttoxeter Road, Blythe Bridge, Stoke-on-Trent. Age 6; John Scott, "Quoy-angry," St. Margaret's Hope, Orkney. Age 11.

*Honourable Mention.*—Paul Martire (Bungay); John Dixon (Swindon); James Sparkes (London, S.W.4); Michael Metcalfe (Colliers Wood); John Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Jean Simmons (Torquay); Carol Mines (High Wycombe); Antony Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Kay Sharland (Swindon); Pearl Rich (Launceston); Greta Crocker (Binfield); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Vivienne Ellis (Chelmsford); Margaret Johnson (Rochester); Stuart Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Adrienne Edwards (Torquay).

*Those who tried hard.*—Amy Randlestone (Stockton); Jilda Sleeman (Torquay); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Myrtle Green (Salisbury); Valerie Lewis (Folkestone); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Brenda Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Muriel Forder (Norwich); Trevor Goddard (Iver); George Meyers (Skewen); Peter Howell (Wakefield); Alec Dawson (Glasgow, W.1); Beryl Jones (Birmingham, 23); Audrey Callaghan (Wakefield); Ann Powell (Skewen); James Groundwater (Orkney); Ann Metcalfe (Colliers Wood); Valerie Davies (St. Leonards); David Simmons (Torquay); Joseph Laws (North Ferriby); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Davina Reed (High Wycombe); Paul Coupland (Birmingham, 9); Susan Barker (Huntingdon); Nigel Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Phyllis Innes (Watford); Jill Plummer (Coventry); Brian Ashby (High Wycombe); Margaret Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Heather Payne (Bishops Cleeve).

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# Straws in the Wind

## Meaninglessness and Despair

"It is not an exaggeration to say that to-day man experiences his present situation in terms of disruption, conflict, self-destruction, meaninglessness, and despair," asserts Paul Tillich in the first volume of his *Systematic Theology*. The Bible, however, can give man a sure hope if he will only open it and read.

## Space Ships Coming

"In my opinion," recently stated Von Braun, who developed the V2 rocket, "within the next ten to fifteen years we shall see huge cargo-and-man-carrying rockets speeding into the alien vacuum of space to establish a man-made satellite or 'space-station.'"

## Soon Half Desert

"ROUGHLY a half of South Africa's area—mainly in the west—is desert or semi-desert," says A. T. Steele in the *New York Herald Tribune*, "and this area is expanding year by year. A report issued recently by a committee of experts shows that if encroachment continues at the present pace more than half of South Africa will be within the desert and semi-desert zones fifty years hence."

## New Iraq Pipeline

SINCE the stoppage of oil deliveries from Iraq through Israel to the Mediterranean, alternative routes through Syria are being developed. The latest and largest thirty-inch

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## A New Year Prayer

Dear Lord, by this new calendar  
My New Year has begun;  
Each hour and day and week and  
month

I give Thee one by one.

Let me be faithful in my work,  
Unselfish in my play,  
And willing, cheerful, at my best  
Through every hour and day.

When all these days and months  
have brought

Another lovely year,  
May I have grown to be like  
Christ

In love and help and cheer.

Shirley S. Still.

---

pipeline to Baniyas recently opened delivered 1,100,000 tons of oil in its first month of operation and will have a total capacity of fourteen million tons a year.

## More Drunkards

THE latest Home Office statistics reveal a further increase in the incidence of drunkenness in Britain. After a drop between 1938 and 1946 to 20,505 convictions, the number has since then increased year by year. In 1951 it reached 53,676 convictions, or two and a half times the 1946 figure.

## Sixth Column Protestantism

WRITING in the *Osservatore Romano*, Cardinal Schuster of Milan urges the curbing of Protestant activity in Italy on the grounds that it is promoting "a sixth column under the command of foreign leaders."

## American Morals

ACCORDING to *Intelligence Digest*: "In America alone, 750 dollars are spent on amusement, etc., for every dollar given to church work. . . . In America alone, a murder is committed every forty minutes. One million American girls are suffering from venereal disease. There are sixty suicides per day. One million illegitimate children are born annually. Fifteen million copies of sex magazines are printed monthly. There are more barmaids in America than college girls."

