



THE BIBLE AND

OUR TIMES



The United Nations Assembly in session at the recently completed New York headquarters. © Keystone

The Crisis of the Nations

By T. S. Walker

★ ONCE more our world is in a crisis-time. So often in our generation it has been crisis-time for the nations. Now, more than ever, the international situation is grim in the extreme and that, even while the United Nations Organization on Manhattan Island, New York, is assiduously seeking a way out of the morass of war, or threat of war, into the paths of peace.

But while the United Nations Organization has set itself the task of finding a formula for peace, the prospects of achievement were never so dismal.

Indeed, the very nations whose representatives are supposed to be seeking the way of peace are, at the same time, busily creating a war machine whose potential is more frightening and more devastating than man ever dreamed possible.

Strategic areas, vital for the defence of the freedom-loving nations, are in jeopardy. The Suez, the Sudan, and the Mediterranean, all

are threatened, and so magnifying the crisis.

The Iron Curtain still effectively divides the world and separates the two most powerful nations in the world to-day—U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. These two view one another from either side of the Iron Curtain with fear and suspicion.

And behind the "curtain" the innumerable millions of Asia are awakening from the sleep of centuries to pit their unlimited resources against those of the Western powers. Not only are the Asiatic millions awakening, but also those of the "dark continent" of Africa.

This very awakening, with all its implications, is the subject of divine prophecy. Says the prophet Joel: "Let the heathen be awakened . . . assemble yourselves . . . all ye heathen. . . . Prepare war; . . . beat your ploughshares into swords. . . . Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision . . . the day of the Lord is near." Joel 3:9-14.

The day is fast approaching when man's day will end and God will arise "to shake terribly the earth," when Omnipotence will exert itself against the powers and peoples of evil, for ever to rid the universe of all its woes.

Such are a few of the critical situations that to-day spell C-R-I-S-I-S for the nations. But there are other factors in the developing crisis.

Horrors Never Dreamed of Before

Feverish activity—on a highly secretive basis—continues to characterize the development of atomic power. Experimental bombs have revealed a terrible potency, whose use in another global war would bring, to use Winston Churchill's words: "Horrors of a kind and on a scale never dreamt of before by human beings; . . . the torments which would fall in increasing measure on the whole civilian population of the globe would be indescribable."

No wonder we speak of the "crisis of nations"! Unfortunately, few, comparatively, perceive the crisis. Few seem to realize that we are drawing near to God's own crisis-time when the delayed power to destroy the devil, his dupes, and all his works, provision for which was gained by the triumphs of Calvary, will be released. Far too few, even of those with a Christian background, believe this or understand that the revealed plan of God is to make an end of war as well as an end of sin in all its many manifestations. One of these days it will be finally true that "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth." Psa. 46:9.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of the Watchman to whom a question was put: "Watchman, what of the night?" Isa. 21:11. The essential part of the reply was: "*The morning cometh.*" Which is God's way of saying that not for ever will man have to live in a sin-cursed and sin-riddled world. That grand message: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoso-

ever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" means just what it says and conveys the hope that should inspire us to look beyond the darkness and death of our day to the day of life "more abundant," eternal, and free. For God gave His Son to "seek and to save that which was lost." And in this great mission Jesus succeeded, returning to His Father with the assurance, "I go to prepare a place for you." But He also promised: "If I go . . . I will come again." Then it will be, that the nightmare occasioned by sin and the devil will be finally terminated.

Even the devil knows "that he hath but a short time" (see Revelation 12:12) to deal out death to men and nations. And for that reason we are told that he "is come down" unto us with "great wrath." That is why, to-day, we have another crisis—a crisis graver than ever before. But as the Watchman revealed, dire as the situation is, at least it serves to remind us that "the morning cometh!"—the glorious eternal morning when all earth's shadows will flee away.

Light in Darkness

The voice of prophecy is a voice to be trusted—it is "sure" and one to which we do well to take heed: "a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn." 2 Peter 1:19.

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At the other side of the world the seemingly unresolvable Korean war drags on.



IS THERE NO BALM in GILEAD?

By H. Humphries

★ "Is there no balm in Gilead?" Anxiously men look for some method of healing the world's troubles. The whole world is wounded and suffering and desperately needs a remedy for its ills.

For more than two years hot war has been waging in Korea, and two million men, women, and children are either dead or missing. Seoul, once a proud capital with 2,000,000 inhabitants, is reduced until all but 125,000 are fled. These tragic souls live among the devastation in abject human misery. This city has suffered more destruction of property than did Hiroshima. Many other cities are known only by name, for not a single building remains; and there are 5,000,000 refugees.

This is Korea, the unhappy; but, reader, it is more: it is a portent that is casting a sinister shadow over our minds. Are the darkening clouds of war ever to lift? Are we indeed on a trap door which can at any moment drop to plunge the world into its first atomic war? This is a question that challenges our thinking continually.

Unless the nations alter their ways they must inevitably bring to pass elsewhere what is happening in Korea, for these are judgments for the refusal to apply God's guide for human relationships. The disasters will multiply; the wars, pestilences, famines will be accumulative in human misery, crushing poverty, and death.

The Root Cause

The vision from the living, supreme God that Isaiah, the prophet, saw so filled him with terror at the catastrophes this world would stagger under, that he wrote in ever-to-be remembered words, graphic and powerfully moving: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it



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A few of the world's refugee millions in search of shelter and sustenance.

upside down and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof." Isa. 24:1. Sadly he notes the cause: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof: because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate." Verses 5, 6.

Day by day the newspapers of all countries are writing an alarming commentary on this passage. The transgression of God's law is so universal that prisons are full of overcrowding; aged people and children are murdered, highway robberies are carried out in broad daylight; there is fearful corruption of morals; an enormous increase of juvenile delinquents; and the fear that has caused the drain on the resources of the world in a colossal armaments drive speaks of the curse.

This is madness; it is cursing the world and casting an influence of dread, worry, and anxiety on every family. Why is this insanity of lawlessness spreading?

John the Revelator provides the clue in

Revelation 16:13-16: "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon. . . . They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

The dragon is the devil (Rev. 12:9) and John plainly tells us that the spirit of evil is abroad in every kingdom, influencing every government to prepare for war which will bring its reward of ruin. We must expect, as now the world is receiving, lying propaganda, misrepresentation; so that instead of the Gospel of peace, there is spread the gospel of suspicion, hate, and revolution.

Even where the religion of Christ is recognized, with its foundation of love, we find so lukewarm an application of His teaching, that millions of Christians are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:4, 5) in their everyday life.

Only One Remedy

"Is there no balm in Gilead?" There is no remedy in Gilead, nor in any country; there is no remedy outside of the faith of Jesus Christ and the keeping of the commandments of God. Nothing can heal the social ills of our age but the blood of Jesus, and the love that keeps His commandments.

Earthly remedies are external, social orders change only outwardly; there is no inward change of the heart. It is only Christ who can write the law on the heart, and give the inward grace to love its keeping.

The prophet Isaiah who saw, in vision, the breakdown of human society through the transgression of God's law, heard the Almighty God say: "I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Isa. 48: 17, 18.

The Scriptures reveal that the world will not receive this remedy and be saved as a whole, but millions from every nation will take it to their souls and be saved from the final destruction through the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Reader, this message

is for you; there is nothing more important to which you can apply your mind. Our Lord's appeal is: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

God Is Love

(Continued from page 7.)

No-one can separate the actions of Jesus from those of God in this work of redemption. They acted together in such a blending of love and atonement that it is set forth in the Scriptures as a demonstration of divine mercy. As a keenly spiritual writer has expressed it: "The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.' 2 Cor. 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of infinite love paid the price of our redemption."—*Steps to Christ*, page 10.

This then is the message of John 3:16, "God so loved." He loves you and He loves me. His love for us is eternal and unchanging.

You may not understand the answer to life's dark mysteries. You may grieve over the sufferings that involve the innocent with the guilty. You may cry out of a tortured heart, "My God, why!" But if you can learn to trust Him even when you cannot trace Him, you will know something of the peace of God, and the love of God will be shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit of truth.

Grasp the mighty fact that "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. . . . For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Rom. 5:8-11.

Joy in God! What an amazing experience. Only in Christ is this feasible and possible. Accepting the atoning death of Jesus, we enter into a more excellent way of life than is offered by human learning, skill, or philosophy. The way of the cross leads home and in the heart of this eternal home is a loving heavenly Father.



By E. H. Orlik

The Sermon on the Mount.

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The Bible's Greatest Text.—2

GOD IS LOVE

By J. A. McMillan

★ JOHN 3:16 tells us that "God so loved the world." This puzzles the modern mind more than any other teaching of the Scriptures. How can it be true that God loves us, it is asked, when there is so much suffering? If God loves us, why do wicked men go unpunished in spite of their violent and evil doings? Why are so many good intentions thwarted and gentle people crushed by apparently implacable forces? This bewildering sense of sinister power overthrowing the good is well expressed in the lines:

My son, the world is dark with grief and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the heavens.

Before we attempt to give the Christian answer to these questions, it would be well to remind ourselves that these are not merely modern questions, nor is it only the non-

Christian who asks them. It may surprise some to learn that the Bible presents these very problems to our minds as well as offering a soul-satisfying solution. The Psalmist cried out in agony of soul:

But as for me, my feet were almost gone;
My steps had well nigh slipped.
For I was envious at the foolish,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
For there are no bands in their death:
But their strength is firm.
They are not in trouble as other men;
Neither are they plagued like other men.
Their eyes stand out with fatness:
They have more than heart could wish.

Psa. 73:2-7.

Job, afflicted both with diseases and despairing comforters, declared: "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: He covereth the

faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is He?" Job 9:24. The prophets were keenly conscious of this problem. None expressed it more clearly and forcefully than Habakkuk, who wrote: "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save! Why dost Thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention." Hab. 1:2, 3.

A Soul-satisfying Solution

It should be clear from these and similar Scriptures that faith is not blind acceptance of a fantasy, but a thoughtful solution of the problem of suffering and evil. The Psalmist found God's remedy by entering the sanctuary and meditating on the lessons provided by the ceremonial system of Judaism. There he grasped the truth of God's enduring character, of the immutability of God's law, of the tenderness of God's grace, and of the final irrevocable reckoning that God will demand of all, both good and bad. He concludes that "it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Thy works." Psa. 73:28.

Job thought his way through the baffling calamities that well-nigh overwhelmed him, and won a clear victory for faith in a Providence that overrules all for ultimate good. "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." Job 42:10.

Habakkuk—the doubting Thomas of the twelve minor prophets—contributes his own personal solution to the problem of evil. He learns that the proud and conceited heart is incapable of interpreting events aright, but that a calm and abiding trust in God's providence brings its own satisfaction. (Hab. 2:4.) Like the Psalmist, he perceives that the judgment of God will reverse the fortunes of the evildoer and that rewards and retribution will more than compensate for the misfortunes of this present life. His expression of faith is one of the loftiest written in the holy Scriptures. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Hab. 3:17, 18.

Suffering and Sin

When we turn to the New Testament, we see the same mixed picture of trust amid turmoil, of peace amid perplexing problems, of love overcoming hate, and life triumphing over death. At the cross we witness the death struggle of sin and suffering in the outstretched arms of the Son of God. Are you troubled and distressed by the existence of evil, by the apparent power of sin and suffering? Are you tempted to think that God is aloof and indifferent to your problems? Listen: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Mark 15:34.

What lessons may we learn from this poignant cry that burst from the lips of Jesus? I suggest two that bear on our subject. First of all, that sin and suffering are linked together. Now Jesus was sinless in Himself, but on the cross He bore our sins. The Word declares: "He [God] hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21.

Here we touch one of the Bible's most profound lessons, namely: Once sin has been conquered and expelled from the universe, suffering will automatically cease. The problem of suffering is therefore really the problem of sin. What has God done about that? Is He doing anything about it?

God Suffered in Christ

The answer to these questions brings us face to face again with John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." When Jesus suffered for our sins, God suffered. When Jesus made atonement on the cross, it was divine atonement. Ponder the following Scriptures: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5:18, 19. Jesus shed His blood for us, for "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God." Therefore Paul exhorts: "Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Col. 1:14, 15; Acts 20:18.

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE

By W. L. EMMERSON

★ FROM the biblical account of man's creation and animation, we turn to the descriptions of the death of man in the Scriptures to see if we can find there any hint of a part of man surviving his physical dissolution.

The Psalmist describes the death of man thus: "His breath [*ruach*] goeth forth." Psa. 146:4. In another passage the wise man declares that the "breath" or principle of life "shall return unto God who gave it." Eccles. 12:7.

There is no suggestion in either of these statements that the *ruach* has acquired personality during its sojourn in the flesh and that it has become an entity capable of a separate and independent existence in some place determined by God. "The spirit" or *ruach* which "returns" is precisely the same spiritual principle which God originally "gave."

What is left after the withdrawal of the life-principle or spirit of life God declared in His pronouncement of death upon our first parents in Eden, would dissolve into its original "dust." Gen. 3:19. With this agree the Psalmist and the writer of Ecclesiastes. "He returneth to his earth." Psa. 146:4. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was." Eccles. 12:7.

Job, under inspiration, writes similarly: "If He set his heart upon [or against] man, if He gather unto Himself His spirit [*ruach*] and His breath [*neshamah*]; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." Job 34:14, 15.

In regard to death, therefore, the Scriptures consistently teach that man has no more advantage over the animal kingdom than in the animation of his physical being. "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts," asserts the writer of Ecclesiastes; "even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath [*ruach*]; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast." Eccles. 3:19.

By Jacomb Hood

Jesus frequently referred to death as a sleep from which the sleeper would awaken at the call of God.



Death the Complete Dissolution of Being

The language of Scripture can thus bear no other meaning than that death, whether of man or beast, involves a complete dissolution of being.

And this, of course, is in complete harmony with the threat of death given to our first parents before they sinned. God did not say: "In the day that thou eatest, thy body shall die, but thy soul shall live on." He said: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou [the whole man] shalt surely die." Gen. 2:17.

So Adam must have understood his sentence before the way of escape from this fate was made known to him. So also believed every other Bible writer, including Ezekiel, who warned, "The soul [*nephesh* or personality, not



merely the body] that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20), and Paul who categorically stated, "The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23.

The apostle Paul, in fact, used the very strongest word that he could find to describe the dissolution of death when he said that apart from God's revealed plan of redemption those who have died are "gone to nothing [apolonto]." 1 Cor. 15:18.

However, that there should be no shadow of a question in any mind as to the survival of any part of man in death the inspired Word takes the constituent elements of human personality and categorically declares that each and every one has been extinguished by the dissolution of death.

1. The essence of the life of a living person

is *thought*. So it is declared that the dead are incapable of thinking. The Psalmist, for example, says: "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psa. 146:4. "The living," asserts Solomon, "know . . . ; but the dead know not any thing." Eccles. 9:5. Then, itemizing some of the typical "thoughts" of man, he says concerning the dead: "Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished." Verse 6.

2. Life expresses itself not only in thought but in *activity*. The dead, on the other hand, have not "any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." Eccles. 9:6. A few verses later Solomon links together these two aspects of life, thought and activity, declaring them both to be totally absent in the state of death: "There is no work, nor device," and there is neither "knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Verse 10.

3. Linking man's inner thought-life and his outward activity is his faculty of *speech*. The dead are devoid of any such capacity. They "go down into silence." Psa. 115:17.

4. Highest of the capacities of living man, and the one which is not shared in any degree with the lower animal creation, is his capacity for a knowledge of, response to, and fellowship with God. This faculty would surely be the part of man which survived if indeed there was any part of him which was immortal. But the Scriptures forestall any such suggestion by declaring: "The dead praise not the Lord." Psa. 115:17. "The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee." Isa. 38:18. The dead in fact have no "remembrance" of God (Psa. 6:5), they have no present experience of God, and they "cannot hope" for any future contact with God. (Isa. 38:18.)

The conclusion cannot therefore be resisted that the state of death is the antithesis, in every respect, of the state of life, and that in death everything connoted by life is absent; man dies wholly and completely.

How Was the Bible View Obscured?

In view then of the consistent testimony of Scriptures to the complete dissolution of the being of man in death, one cannot but help

asking how it has come about that Judaism and Christianity have both been almost entirely won over to the idea of the survival of the "soul" of man in death. History provides a ready answer as we note the gradual modification of the Bible view through the influence of the pagan conceptions of the state of the dead among the peoples by whom ancient Israel was surrounded, and by the popular thought of the Græco-Roman world into which the infant Christian church was born.

It is surely one of the most striking evidences of the inspiration of the Mosaic writings that, though they were composed by Moses after he had been educated in all the "wisdom of the Egyptians," their references to the subject of death stand out in striking contrast with elaborate speculations of the Egyptian religion on the after-life.

Equally evident is the inspiration of the later books of the Old Testament when one considers the close contact which Israel had during and after the second captivity with Babylonian and Persian conceptions.

As Dr. S. D. F. Salmond remarks: "This aloofness of the Old Testament from ways of thinking of a future life which are familiar to us in other literatures, demands the first attention of the student. It is a thing of utmost moment."—*The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, page 185.

It is likewise a matter of the greatest moment to note the change which begins to appear in Jewish thinking in the centuries immediately preceding the birth of Christ, when the philosophical conceptions of Greece which had gathered up the thinking of both Egypt and the ancient East came to bear upon the Jews through the Hellenizing of the Mediterranean world.

According to Plato the "soul" had an eternal pre-existence as well as a future immortality, while the body comprised no more than a shell in which the soul came for a period to dwell. At death the soul left its temporary abode to assume a succession of other forms, ever ascending until it once more reached the sublime heights from which it originally descended. According to this teaching, therefore, life in the body was an imprisonment. The soul's real life began again when it succeeded in divesting itself of its "muddy vesture of decay."

Intimations of the intrusion of these new

ideas on the after-life and immortality first begin in the Jewish apocryphal writings of the Hellenistic period, and the virtual capture of the greater part of Jewish thought by them is evident in the New Testament references to the Jewish sects in the time of Christ and in the fuller descriptions of these groups in the writings of Josephus.

Of the two principal sects, the Pharisees had almost completely capitulated to the teachings of Plato and Philo. "The doctrine of the Pharisees," states Josephus, "was that every soul is imperishable."—*Wars II, viii, 14*.

The Essenes, another important Jewish sect in the days of Christ, though not specifically mentioned in the New Testament, also accepted the Greek teachings on the immortality of the soul, and in its most extreme form.

The Sadducees, on the other hand, opposed the Pharisees and the Essenes on the immortality of the soul. "Their doctrine," said Josephus, "is that souls perish with their bodies," or literally: "Their doctrine makes souls to vanish together with the bodies."—*Antiquities, xviii, 1, 4*.

To this extent they were truer to the Scriptural teaching than the Pharisees, but not much credit can be bestowed upon them for this, because, following the Aristotelian rationalists, they denied also "the resurrection." Mark 12:18; Acts 23:8. Jesus bade His disciples beware of the leaven both of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. (Matt. 16:11, 12.)

Influences Introduced by Jewish and Gentile Converts

Like the Jewish people, the early Christian church was exposed to the pagan philosophies of the Græco-Roman world and of the Eastern mystery religions, and indeed the first Gentile converts were drawn from the adherents of these faiths. It is easy to see, therefore, how the popular doctrine of the immortality of the soul began early to modify the biblical teaching, just as, for precisely the same reasons, the Sunday of the pagan world began to displace the true Sabbath of the Bible. Not without reason did the apostle Paul warn the young minister Timothy against the oppositions of "science" (*gnosis*) "falsely so-called" (1 Tim. 6:20), and portray the Christian teachings of the after-life in terms diametrically opposed to

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FOOTBALL POOLS

★ THE other day the writer was surprised to receive a letter enclosing some football coupons. Not being interested in football coupons our inclination was to throw them away: however on second thoughts they were read and I learned that it was possible to win £75,000 on what is called "a treble chance" at a stake of one shilling to one pound. Also, for a stake of one penny to one shilling, £40,659 could be won, which amount several people had won the previous week. On the face of it, it seemed worth while to have a few guesses, since to win £75,000 or £40,000, or even a lesser sum is by no means to be despised in these difficult days, and there did not seem to be any snag in it.

But there is. We are faced here with a moral and social problem and in this realm the one sure test is the one given by Christ, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

In fairness we ought not to bring isolated cases of demoralization which have come to some who have won large sums, as an argument proving the evil of football pools. Such isolated cases prove nothing. It is rather the general trend, the cumulative fruits, which are the fair test of the value of any institution to the community.

Let us ask then of what value are football pools to the community? It may be argued that they provide a cheap pastime for millions, if moderation is exercised. But at the same time they place large sums of money in the hands of a few. This cannot be in the best interests of the nation; indeed, recent governments have been imposing taxation for the purpose of taking money from the few and distributing it among the many.

Well, is it an uplifting and ennobling pastime? No pastime is neutral in its effects; it is either a benefit or it is not. The answer we give to this question will depend upon what value we place upon the human soul. If man is just an animal who should eat, drink, and be merry for to-morrow he dies and is done for, then obviously it does not much matter how he

By R. T. Bolton

spends his time, and to deny him the pleasure of a flutter on the "pools" is to lay oneself open to the charge of being a kill-joy. But if we believe he is made in the image of God and that there is open to him, if he will choose it, an eternal destiny, then such a pastime as the football pools provide cannot in any sense help him toward his high destiny.

Let us now inquire what is the effect of this indulgence upon the mind? In other words, what are its fruits in the realm of the intellect? "Oh!" one may say, "It is only a pastime, not an intellectual refresher." It is proper, no doubt, to call it a pastime; it is certainly not a recreation, because it in no sense re-creates; rather it causes a deterioration of mind. The human mind develops and strengthens according to the subjects which engage its attention. If the mind dwells upon the pure and holy and seeks to comprehend the character and will of its Creator, its powers of reason and judgment will expand with every effort to gather knowledge. On the other hand, if the mind is allowed to dwell upon the trivial and common, it becomes dwarfed to the level of the things it contemplates, its powers are weakened and its judgment impaired. Thus when the mind that is capable of comprehending the mind of God is permitted to descend to the plane of such things as the "pools," it becomes incapable of fulfilling the purpose for which it was made.

But since we desire to be fair to the football pools, let us see whether there are any arguments in their favour. It is said that they do good in providing employment for thousands of workers in the "pools" offices and in the Post Office. This, of course, is true. However, because a pastime provides work for thousands surely it cannot be cited as a proof of its inherent good! Crime finds employment for many thousands of police officers, but that does not make crime a social asset.

It is also said that through the football pools

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there is brought about a circulation of money to the tune of a million and a half pounds every week; thus the "pools" are an asset to the economic life of the country. If it is supposed that this amount of money would not have been in circulation but in the bank, in other words would be being saved, then this is the very thing we are being asked to do at this time. But suppose it were spent, it would have purchased household or other goods mainly produced in this country to the enrichment of both buyer and producer, instead of leaving millions with nothing for their money, while a few are enriched. The following quotation from *Gambling in English Life*, by E. Benson Perkins, is to the point here:

"The conclusion, therefore, of this examination of betting from the point of view of economics is that it is without economic justification. The gross cost is sheer waste; the redistribution of money is devaluated wealth; the net, or production cost is mere profiteering."—Page 55.

It would appear from this brief examination of the subject of football pools that instead of its being difficult to find arguments against them, it is almost impossible to find a single sound argument in their favour. Such indeed is the conclusion of the "Royal Commission on Gambling," which stated in its 1933 report:

"Except in so far as gambling in moderation can be regarded as containing some element of amusement, we are not aware of any positive advantage that can be claimed for it."

When so many millions of one's fellow countrymen find pleasure in the football pools it will be hard for the great majority to accept this verdict, but, the wise will surely drink no more from this "pool" of social and moral poison. There is a better way and the prophet Isaiah points us to it. His words, though written in the dim ages of the past, are a clarion call to us in the twentieth century: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? . . . Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isa. 55:1, 2, 7.

What does the greatest of all the prophets—our Lord Jesus Christ—say? Speaking of His return and the climax of sinful human history He declared: "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. . . . Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, . . . men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:10, 11, 25, 26.

Is this not a true picture of our day? Are not disasters occurring with sickening regularity? Are not "fearful sights" greatly on the increase? Nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom, oh, how true of our day! All these developments are part of the crisis time of nations, yet, too, they are omens of a better day that is coming—God's glorious day of relief and release for all His dear children, to those who love Him and "seek" first the kingdom of God, "and His righteousness." But how many are ready to do this? The quiet confidence, the peace and joy, which characterizes the humble child of God, is to-day a rarity. Would to God that mankind could see the wisdom of following the "old paths" trodden by their forefathers!

Does it occur to you, friend, that these frightening days in which we live have a definite relationship to the modern forgetfulness of God? For, turning from Him we become dupes of the devil and so lose our Defender.

Do you remember Jesus saying: "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man"? Yes, so like Noah's day is our day! And because our generation is so like Noah's it means, as it meant then, that God will say, "The end of all flesh is come before Me." How terrible and how bleak was that far-off day! But there was redemption there to those who chose it. There was a bright relief to the otherwise sombre darkness of Noah's day, for we read in the divine record a lovely revelation: "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Gen. 6:8.

Yes, and so can we!

Is this picture of Noah's day anything like that of our own? Here is the picture: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great, . . .

every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil . . . the earth" was "filled with violence, . . . it was corrupt." Gen. 6:5-13.

Can you see the likeness? To-day, godless homes provide a plentiful supply of juvenile delinquents. These in turn provide a growing army of criminals—of violent men and women. Standards—ethical and moral—are shattered. Life is cheap, sacred ties are treated with contempt. At the basis of it all is the outstanding fact, that man has turned away from his Maker and rejected the only begotten Son, the proffered Saviour of the world.

And when we recall the words of Jesus: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of man," we are forced to the conclusion that these days of crisis mean that we are nearing the climax of human history.

While there is time, while the day of grace lingers, why not turn to the Lord with repentant hearts and seek Him while He may be found? For the "crisis of the nations" tells us that "the great day of the Lord is near, . . . it hasteth greatly." Zeph. 1:14.

What Happens When We Die?

(Continued from page 10.)

those of philosophy and the mysteries. "Many," says E. G. White, "who professed conversion still clung to the tenets of their pagan philosophy, and not only continued its study themselves, but urged it upon others as a means of extending their influence among the heathen. Serious errors were thus introduced into the Christian faith. Prominent among these was the belief in man's natural immortality and his consciousness in death."—*The Great Controversy*, page 58.

Most potent of all the influences which fixed the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in Christian thinking was, of course, the Roman apostasy, which entirely deserves the designation which it has received of "baptized paganism."

A comparison of Roman Catholic teaching with the corresponding teachings of the Græco-Roman world reveals, in fact, that it has often been lifted almost bodily from the philosophy of Plato and the mystery religions of the East.

According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, for example: "The human soul is a substance or substantial principle. It is a simple, or indivisible, and also a spiritual being, that is, intrinsically independent of matter. It is naturally incorruptible. It cannot be annihilated by any creature. . . . Finally, the evidence all leads to the conclusion that the future life is to continue for ever."—Vol. 7, page 688.

This teaching bears absolutely no relation to Bible doctrine. It is nothing but a rehash of the speculations of the Greek philosophers.

So powerful, however, was the authoritarian teaching of Rome during the Middle Ages that in Christendom as in Judaism, the biblical teaching of the nature of man was practically obliterated. And not until the Reformation movement of the sixteenth century did the Bible truth of the nature of man re-emerge with other vital teachings of the Christian faith.

So we find during that momentous period in the history of the Christian church great reformers like Milton, Tyndale, Luther, and others reaffirming against the Roman doctrines of purgatory and the invocation of saints, the unconsciousness of the dead and new life only through Christ. Luther, in fact, went so far as to say that the immortality of the soul was a "monstrous opinion" to be relegated to "the Roman dunghill."

Sad to say, however, the reformer Calvin, in his book *De Psychopannychia*, held rigidly to the Catholic and pagan view of the state of death and the Protestant groups stemming from Calvinism have, as we shall later see, for the most part followed this false lead. Nevertheless, since the Reformation, one of the most vital distinctions between Catholic and true Protestant theology has been in their teachings on the state of man in death and the after-life.

(Next Time: "The Sleep of Death.")

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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

Mary's Little Pink Socks

By Mrs. J. H. Craven

MARY was cross. She really shouldn't have been, because it was her birthday, and she had received lots of nice presents and pretty cards from Mummy and Daddy and her various aunts and uncles—that is from all except Aunt Amy. And that was the reason for her crossness.

She had been quite sure, somehow, that Aunt Amy was going to send her that nice new dolly she was wanting so badly; but instead, all she had sent was a pair of little pink socks. It wouldn't have been so bad, thought Mary, if they had been white, or even pale blue, but pink!—she just hated pink socks.

She supposed she would have to write and say "Thank you," even though she was so disappointed. She fetched her pen, and some notepaper and envelopes, which had been a present from Uncle John, and prepared to write. She wondered just what to say.

"Dear Aunt Amy," she began. "Thank you for the little pink socks you sent me for my birthday."

What next should she put? She couldn't say she liked them, for that wouldn't be true. And she couldn't let Aunt Amy know how disappointed she was with her gift.

She thought for a while and then wrote again: "I shall

think of you whenever I wear them. Lots of love, from Mary."

The letter was put with all her other "Thank-you" letters and posted by Mummy when she went shopping. The socks Mary put away right down at the bottom of a drawer underneath everything else, so that she wouldn't see them and be reminded of her disappointment.

A few days later she came home from school, threw her satchel down on the table, and said: "Mummy, you know Jane's mother has had to go to hospital for an operation. Well, it's Jane's birthday next week, so all the girls in our form are going to try and take her a little gift, to make up for her not being able to have a birthday party."

Mummy said that was a lovely thought, and told Mary that she, too, would send a gift. She would make Jane a layer cake, with pink icing on top.

The word "pink" reminded Mary of something. She jumped up from her chair.

"O Mummy," she said, "I know what I'll give Jane. Those pink socks Aunt Amy sent me, and which I don't like."

"Mary, I'm surprised at you," said Mummy. "To think



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 February 5th.

that you want to give away to someone else something you don't like yourself! That wouldn't be very nice, would it?"

Mary looked rather miserable. "No, I suppose it wouldn't," she said.

She wandered off upstairs and decided she would have a look at the pink socks anyway.

She took them from the drawer and looked at them. She thought perhaps she had better put them on, and then she wouldn't be tempted any more with the thought of giving them away.

So she put her foot into one of the socks, and as she wriggled her toes down into it they touched something crinkly. She pulled it off again, and put her hand in and drew out a little piece of paper on which was written: "Dear Mary, I'm sure you'd rather choose your own doll, so I am sending you the money with which to buy her."

When Mary had read the note, she put her hand back inside the sock. No, there was nothing more there. She put her fingers into the other sock. Yes, there right in the tip of the toe was something. She pulled it out. Two pound notes, neatly folded together.

She ran down the stairs, two at a time. "Mummy," she shouted, "look what I've found in my little pink socks."

She gave Mummy Aunt Amy's note to read, and held up the two pound notes.

"Well, Mary, I'm not sure you deserve such good fortune. You know you were really very ungrateful for the little pink socks," said Mummy, "but you had better sit down right now and write a nice letter to Aunt Amy."

Mary, who now was feeling very ashamed of herself, was only too happy to do so, and it was a very different kind of

letter from the first one she had written.

When she had finished it, she sat thinking for a while.

"Mummy," she said presently, "will you take me to the shops to-morrow to buy my dolly?"

"Yes, dear. If the weather is good, I will," replied Mummy.

"But first of all, Mummy," said Mary, "I want to buy something really nice for Jane's birthday, because it's through her that I found the money in my little pink socks."

THE Sunbeams' CORNER



Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

I WONDER if you read in the newspaper some weeks ago, about a man who was blind? One day he received a sharp blow on the head, and from then on his sight began to return, until after just a few days he was able to see perfectly. I wonder if you can imagine how thrilling it must have been for him to see new things each day—just ordinary things to us, perhaps, but things which he had never seen before in his life.

I also read of a lady who had been deaf for years. Then a wonderful operation restored her hearing. She says that if ever she woke in the silence of the night, her first thought was to listen for the ticking of the clock. If she could hear that, she was very happy, for she knew she had not become deaf again.

I wondered, as I read about these people, if we are as thankful as we should be for such wonderful gifts as hearing and sight. It is so easy to take them for granted. Just to-day, try to count all the beautiful sights you see and sounds you hear. I am sure that if we daily counted our blessings, it would make us grumble less. Jesus has given us so many things to make us happy, and He is pleased when we try to appreciate His gifts.

God bless you, Sunbeams.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition No. 23

Prize-winners.—Eric Huggins, 2 Minver Crescent, Aspley, Nottingham. Age 11; Greta Fellows, 90 Kingswood Road, Watford. Age 10.

Honourable Mention.—John Dixon (Swindon); Jean Sparkes (London, S.W.4); Lucille Hamblin (Watford); Carole Westwood (Watford); Marlene Groundwater (Orkney); David Simmons (Torquay); Valerie Westwood (Watford); John Hines (Nottingham); Brenda Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Myrtle Green (Salisbury); Amy Randlesome (Stockton); Pat Armstrong (Liverpool).

Those who tried hard.—John Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Jean Simmons (Torquay); Antony Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Mary Porter (Plymouth); Greta Crocker (Binfield); Peter Bailey (Oxford); Valerie Bond (Hayes); Margaret Graham (Ballymoney); Patricia Lucas (London, S.W.19); David Hollister (Keynsham); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Robert Lacey (Bristol); Hilary Jones (Rawdon); Jean Barlow (York); Holman Hunt (Ryde, I.O.W.); Gwen Merriday (London, N.18); Roy Evans (Oldbury); Jane Porter (Plymouth); Keith Hayles (London, N.5); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Ian Milton (Folkestone); Margaret Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Gillian Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Roy Davies (St. Leonards).

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Straws in the Wind

Joad Accepts Christian View

PROFESSOR C. E. M. JOAD'S latest book, *The Recovery of Belief*, reveals that his spiritual pilgrimage has at last brought him to the Christian view of the world and of history.

"The rationalist - optimist philosophy," he says, "by the light of which I had hitherto done my best to live, came to seem intolerably trivial and superficial - a shallow-rooted plant which, growing to maturity amid the lush and leisured optimism of the nineteenth century, was quite unfitted to withstand the bleaker winds that blow through ours. I abandoned it, and in abandoning it found myself a Christian."

Is the Church of England Protestant?

DISCUSSING the Coronation oath in a recent sermon in Westminster Abbey, Dr. Morris, Bishop of Monmouth, argued that its Protestant bias is to be attributed to parliament and not to the Church of England, which he asserts is Catholic and Reformed not Protestant and Reformed. Many Bible students will not fail to see in this another sign of the emerging "image of the beast." Rev. 13:14, 15.

Trans-Polar Airways

THE successful flight of a commercial air liner across the Arctic ice cap from Los Angeles to Copenhagen has blazed the trail for regular trans-polar airlines in the near future, cutting the distance from the American west coast

Be My All!

O Jesus be my all to-day—
My wisdom, strength, and power,

My King, my Friend, my Saviour,
too,
Each moment, day, and hour.

If Thou, O Jesus, art my all—
Then I must nothing be—
Content to always go Thy way
And lean my weight on Thee.
Mrs. Geoffrey Brown.

to Europe by 1,000 miles. The route has been made possible by the great new air base at Thule in Greenland.

Atomic War Annihilation

DISCUSSING the catastrophic destruction likely in any future atomic war, Dr. Hans Thir-

ring, a one-time Vienna professor, said recently: "While at the end of some wars in the pre-atomic age, triumphant victors enriched themselves on conquests and booty seized from the defeated, at the end of a full-fledged atomic war the difference between victor and vanquished will be only that the latter is 100 per cent annihilated and the other ninety-five per cent."

Million Bibles in Two Months

It is reported that in the first two months of sale of the American Revised Standard Version of the Scriptures, a million copies were sold. It was expected that another half million would be purchased by the end of 1952.

Thermo-Nuclear Weapons

THE latest term to be added to the vocabulary of the atomic age is the "thermo-nuclear weapon," which indicates a nuclear explosive which needs a heat of millions of degrees centigrade to set it off. The hydrogen bomb is of this type because it requires a primary atom - fission detonator to generate the necessary heat to cause the fusion of hydrogen nuclei and resultant energy release.

