



THE BIBLE AND

OUR TIMES



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It matters a great deal whether man has ascended from the ape or is a direct creation of God.

The Basic Issue

By Arthur S. Maxwell

★ ASKED to name the most important issue of the twentieth century, most people would suggest the East-West tension growing out of the irreconcilable antagonisms between communism and capitalism.

Such an answer, however, would be superficial, revealing a lack of perception of the much more fundamental conflict which cleaves mankind in twain.

This basic issue was recently underlined in an address in San Francisco by Dr. Mortimer Adler, world-famed philosopher. He pointed out that all the major controversies that divide peoples and nations spring from two mutually exclusive views concerning the origin of man.

In Dr. Adler's opinion a person's views on this question are much more important than his views on communism or capitalism, or any

other ism of the day. For a man's opinion concerning his origin will colour his opinion of, and determine his attitude toward, every political and social issue.

The philosopher's argument ran like this: Behind every form of class struggle, every revolutionary movement, and all international strife, may be traced the age-old controversy concerning the dignity of man. Where the dignity of man is acknowledged, upheld, and exalted, there true democratic government evolves and fair labour-management arrangements prevail. On the other hand, where the dignity of man is denied—or ignored—there slave conditions develop and all man's elementary freedoms perish. This can happen, said Dr. Adler, at any time, in any part of the world, east or west, according as belief

in the dignity of man is in the ascendancy or otherwise.

Vital Importance of Our Conception of Man

What determines a person's attitude toward man's dignity? His concept of man's origin, said this philosopher. If—as many believe—man is merely a product of a materialistic evolution; if he is nothing more than a member of the animal kingdom; if he is only a *thing* like a tree, or a rock, or a quadruped, then there is no argument against slavery, there is no argument against exploitation of the weak, there is no argument for right against might, and killing is no murder. On the other hand, if man was made in the image of God, if he was created by a holy Being for a holy purpose, then he is different from all other forms of creation. A moral element is interjected. Moral standards direct his thinking. The moral law outlines his responsibilities to his Maker and his fellow-creatures. He is under obligation to have a care for his neighbour's well-being, to respect his life, his family, and his property.

Dr. Adler is so sure that a correct understanding of this fundamental issue would go far to solve the world's major problems that he has embarked upon a long-term project of philosophical research, the first subject of his investigation being the origin, history, and destiny of man. He feels that if enough people could be convinced by well-founded scientific and philosophical proof—that man was made in the image of God, then the present rivalries and contentions which threaten to bring the world to ruin would gradually be eliminated and a new and happier era of mutual understanding be ushered in.

What the Scriptures Reveal

We wish Dr. Adler every success in his project. And we humbly submit that his research could be facilitated by a careful study of the Holy Scriptures which, as he of course is well aware, are devoted to this very theme. They give the facts regarding man's creation in the image of his Maker. They tell of his history through all the sad millenniums from that day to this. And they reveal his destiny in the outworking of the divine plan for setting up a kingdom of righteousness on this earth.

Best of all, they tell of the coming of One—

the greatest Philosopher of all time—who, more than anyone else, strove to restore the dignity of man, to remind him that he is a son of God, greatly beloved, for whom was God prepared to give His most precious gift for his redemption, and for whom the richest treasures of heaven are held in store for his enjoyment throughout all eternity.

At a time when human life was at its cheapest, and human beings were treated with incredible callousness and cruelty, Jesus said: "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Luke 12:7. And again: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke 15:10.

When women and children were reckoned only as "goods and chattels," to be bought and sold like cattle, the Lord of life declared: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Matt. 18:6.

The heart of God, He said, is moved with compassion for even the least of His creatures. Every single one is precious in His sight. "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.

Jesus understood the basic issue beneath all the troubles of His day. He saw that man had forgotten both his origin and his destiny. Consequently he either grovelled in humiliation beneath cruel overlords or, if power was his, inflicted horrible indignities upon his fellows. The remedy, Jesus saw, was to remind man of his kinship with God, to convince him of the love of God, and to restore within his soul the image of God. This was His message, His Gospel, His solution for all the world's troubles and sorrows.

Heirs of God

And it is this same message which the world needs now. Again, as in the days of old, our tensions stem from the fact that men have not only forgotten God but forgotten also that they came from God, and belong to God, and could have a glorious destiny if they would but return to God. Forgetting all this, they have forgotten their responsibilities, their privileges,

(Continued on page 12.)

When Christ Comes Back

By Victor Hall

given to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger," said Jesus, "and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side." John 20:27. Those marks would for ever identify Jesus as their Lord; they were the supreme proof of His divinity.

He Has Promised to Return

But Jesus had soon again to leave His disciples. He had work to do in heaven. Before He left, however, He promised to return. On the ascension morn "while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:10, 11. Since then this promise has been the "blessed hope" of the true church in all ages. "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," Peter declared to the early Christians. (2 Peter 1:16.)

Indeed, throughout the history of the human race this blessed hope has set afire the inspired pens of prophets. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, saw the Lord coming (Jude 14). The Psalmist cried, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence." Psalms 50:5. Isaiah took up the strain: "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand." Isaiah 40:10.

But whereas the ancient prophets viewed from afar the coming of the Lord in triumph, and often did not distinguish between the coming of the suffering Saviour and His return as King and Judge, the New Testament writers looked forward to the second coming of the same Master whom they had known personally.



By F. Booth "The Lord shall descend." © R. & H.

★ THEY expected a king—He was bound as a criminal. He would free them from Roman rule, they thought—Roman chains held Him; a Roman lash tore His flesh; a Roman cross was laid upon His shoulders.

Under the shock of the crucifixion the disciples' dream became a cruel nightmare. Their hopes died with their Lord.

But Jesus came back to them from the tomb. At first they believed not the miracle for very joy. But they looked, they listened, they watched, they touched Him. Yes, it was the same Jesus. The proof beyond all doubting was

or whose teachings and acts had been recounted to them by His disciples. To preach its certainty was their work; to prepare for it their daily aim. No wonder that one in every twenty-five verses of the New Testament mentions it.

But what a difference to-day! We live nineteen centuries nearer the advent; the signs of the times speak daily of its approach. World conditions cry out for Christ to intervene, yet how little His coming is preached, talked about, prayed for!

Why is not the coming of Jesus now the "blessed hope" of every professed follower of His? Is it not strange that there are those who, professing to love the Saviour who died for them, do not even want Him to return?

Is it our unreadiness to meet Him which makes us afraid to face the crucified One? Do we, like the ostrich, bury our heads in the sands of indifference and the busy affairs of every day, refusing to face the reality of our danger? The Lord will come, however, whether we be ready or not.

Pageant of the Ages

This crowning act in the drama of salvation will take place with befitting majesty and brilliance. The apostle John sees Jesus as a mighty Conqueror riding forth from heaven with His armies, to rule the nations as "King of kings and Lord of lords." Rev. 19:16. "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:27, 30.

We can form no conception of the dazzling brightness of this event. The countenance of that angel who called the Son of God from the tomb that resurrection morn "was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of of him the keepers did shake, and become as dead men." Matt. 28:3, 4. Yet around God's throne circle "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" of these beings; and Jesus, when He comes "in His own glory, and in His Father's" (Luke 9:26) will bring "all the holy angels with Him." Matt. 25:31.

The Trumpet Shall Sound

It will be a gloriously happy errand on which Jesus will come to redeem His faithful followers from the earth. (Matt. 24:31.) "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16.

Christ will spoil the prison-house of Satan and gather home His waiting ones. Can you hear their ecstatic shout of joy? "This is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; . . . we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9.

To Every Man His Reward

But all will not be happy in that day. As Jesus faced His farcical trial before Caiaphas He predicted: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matt. 26:64. John saw the same event: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him." Rev. 1:7.

It will be a day of terror to those responsible for the death of Jesus, and for those, too, who to-day "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Heb. 6:6.

The Bible describes this terror when, "after a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." Matt. 25:19. "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, when they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." Matt. 24:30. "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Isa. 2:19. Then will they say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the face of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:16, 17.

In which group will you be? Even now, by His Spirit, Jesus is seeking entrance into our hearts in preparation for that day. "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." Rev. 3:20. To receive this Guest to control and direct our daily living is the only way to readiness for His soon return. "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh," urges the Word of God. (Matt. 24:44.) I want to be ready, don't you?

Does Giving Impoverish?

By J. A. McMillan

★ "For God so loved the world, that He gave." John 3:16. "One can give without loving, but no-one can love without giving." This is a very true saying, and it is supremely true when applied to God. He so loved that He gave His only begotten Son. Self-sacrifice lies at the heart of the atoning death on Calvary's cross. It had its source in the self-sacrifice of God. "Infinite was the sacrifice on the part of the Father; infinite the sacrifice of the Son! The highest gift that Heaven could bestow was given to ransom fallen humanity. Oh, what divine benevolence! It would have been far easier to crush the world out of existence than to reform it. But Christ declares, 'The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them!'"

If we are to be saved we must share in this self-sacrificing spirit of God, our Saviour. It is a contradiction of terms to think of being saved and remaining selfish. "I am crucified with Christ, . . ." cried the apostle Paul, "and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20. God loved and gave, Jesus loves and gives; if we love, we also must give!

Our human spirits shrink from self-sacrifice. Yet reason and experience tell us that misery is closely linked with miserliness. This is expressed most succinctly in the proverb: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Prov. 11:24. Moffatt renders it: "One gives away, and still he grows the richer: Another keeps what he should give, and is the poorer."

Whether one applies this to material goods or to the spiritual wealth of affection and kindness, it is true beyond question. The self-centred life is a self-impoverished life, however much it may be surrounded by "things." Even the life of God will be enriched as "in the ages to come" He shows "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us

through Christ Jesus." Through His infinite gift there is to be displayed "to the powers and authorities in the heavenly realms the innumerable aspects of God's wisdom. Such was the eternal purpose which He had formed in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have this bold and confident access through our faith in Him." Eph. 2:7; 3:10, 11. (Weymouth's translation of 3:10, 11.)

Giving in Ancient Israel

The ancient Israelites provide an impressive testimony to this principle of generous giving. They were required by their religious regulations to render very liberal support for the service of God in the tabernacle and temple ritual and ministry. Altogether, they gave about one-quarter of their income to maintain the religious, philanthropic, and educational requirements of the social system developed under the leadership of Moses. It might be considered that this would have been a crippling, if not a crushing burden, to carry. On the contrary, whenever they were most faithful in discharging their obligations, then were they most prosperous.

On the other hand, when the Israelites forgot the blessings of God, and walked in ways of selfishness and self-interest, they suffered not only spiritual declension, but also material loss. No-one presented a more vivid lesson on this principle than did Haggai, one of the post-exilic prophets. The Jews had returned from captivity and were rebuilding their homes. In the midst of this preoccupation with the rehabilitation of their towns and cities the prophet delivered this message: "Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways." Hag. 1:5.

"Consider Your Ways"

What were they to consider? The prophet soon enlightened them. "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with

drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways." Here was a situation that demonstrated the truth of Proverbs 11:24. They were neglecting the service of God because their own material needs were considered paramount. How similar was their attitude to that of so many to-day. "Look after number one," is the slogan of multitudes. And the result? Poverty of spirit and leanness of soul! Not only that, but material blight accompanies spiritual blindness. "Consider your ways, saith the Lord of hosts."

Parsimony begets poverty. Misers are habitually miserable. The prophet continues: "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit." Hag. 1:9, 10. Since the fundamental law of the universe is self-sacrifice, and the divine characteristic is one of giving, a contrary spirit is out of harmony with its environment and blessings cannot be expected.

As a result of the prophet's message "the people did fear before the Lord" and revival

and reform speedily transformed the situation. The people were then called on to consider that from the moment they turned to God and adopted the principle of giving instead of getting, the Lord's blessing had been bestowed. "Consider now from this day and upward, . . . even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you." Hag. 2:18, 19.

In a similar way, Malachi stressed the connection between the spirit of loyal generosity and God's prospering hand. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. 3:10, 11.

God or Mammon?

It may be thought by some that this was an Old Testament conception that is contrary to the spirit of free grace as taught in the

New Testament. But the Bible is consistent throughout both testaments on this principle of giving. Jesus commended the scribes and Pharisees for their scrupulous payment of tithes, even though He condemned their neglect of more spiritual graces. (Matt. 23:23; Luke

(Continued on
page 12.)



The widow woman places her precious gift in the Lord's treasury.

ARE THERE "SPIRITS"

By W. L. EMMERSON

or

★ IN view of the clear Bible testimony to the fact that death is a state of complete dissolution and that a disembodied personality is inconceivable on any known psychological basis, the question at the head of this article may seem unnecessary.

As, however, there are quite a number of passages of Scripture which have been claimed by the survivalists in support of their teaching it will be well, before we proceed any further, to show that the arguments based upon them are in every case false to the natural meaning of these passages and to the context of Scripture in which they are found.

The most important of these supposed Bible proofs of survival are as follows:

1. The alleged statement in the first epistle of Peter that during the three days that Christ was "dead" He "preached unto the spirits in prison" (1 Peter 3:19, 20), supposedly "spirits" in the prison house of death.

With this passage is usually coupled another statement in the next chapter of the same epistle in which it is stated that the Gospel has been preached to "them that are dead." 1 Peter 4:6.

2. The words of Jesus to the penitent thief: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," which is taken to mean that while sinners are shut up in prison, with or without the possibility of further evangelization, the righteous dead enter "paradise" preliminary to their reception into the full glory of heaven.

That Paul expected immediately after death to enter into fellowship with Christ, presumably in paradise, is claimed on the grounds that he expressed willingness "to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8) and elsewhere that he had a desire "to depart, and to be with Christ." Phil. 1:25.

Further proof of the reception of the saints into the presence of God at death is said to

be found in Jesus' committal of His spirit to God on His death on the cross, "Into Thy hands I commend My spirit," (Luke 23:46), and Stephen's dying words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59).

The writer of the book of Hebrews, it is pointed out, also makes reference to "the spirits of just men made perfect." Heb. 12:23.

3. Finally, there is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16) which is regarded as drawing back the curtain on both the prison of the wicked and the paradise of the saints.

Well, let us look at these supposed proofs of the conscious existence both of the wicked and the righteous in an intermediate state.

"Spirits In Prison"

Volumes have been written on Peter's declaration about the "spirits in prison" and many ingenious attempts have been made to try to make it teach not only the consciousness of the dead, but the possibility of their being evangelized beyond the tomb.

In view of these interpretations, let us assume for a moment that the passage does mean what the survivalists say it means, and see if it makes sense.

While Jesus was put to death so far as His "flesh" was concerned, it is alleged that He was "quicken'd" in spirit. (1 Peter 3:18.) But if the soul lives on anyhow it did not need "quicken'g." Surely it continued to be "quick" while the body was "dead."

Furthermore, if Jesus was "quicken'd," or literally, made alive, by the Spirit immediately after death, what took place at the "quicken'g" of the resurrection on the third day? If He was already alive He could not be made alive again!

Clearly, there was only one "quicken'g" of Christ by the Spirit, and that was at His resurrection on the third day. Between this death and His resurrection He was not "quick"

PRISON" "Paradise"?

but "dead," and so also were both sinners and saints of the Noachian generation. The argument that Christ preached to the dead thus falls to the ground when the very first test is applied.

But let us go on and see whether the argument fares any better when the succeeding verses are examined. The "quick" or living Jesus, it is stated, "went and preached" to "spirits in prison" who were "disobedient" in the "days of Noah."

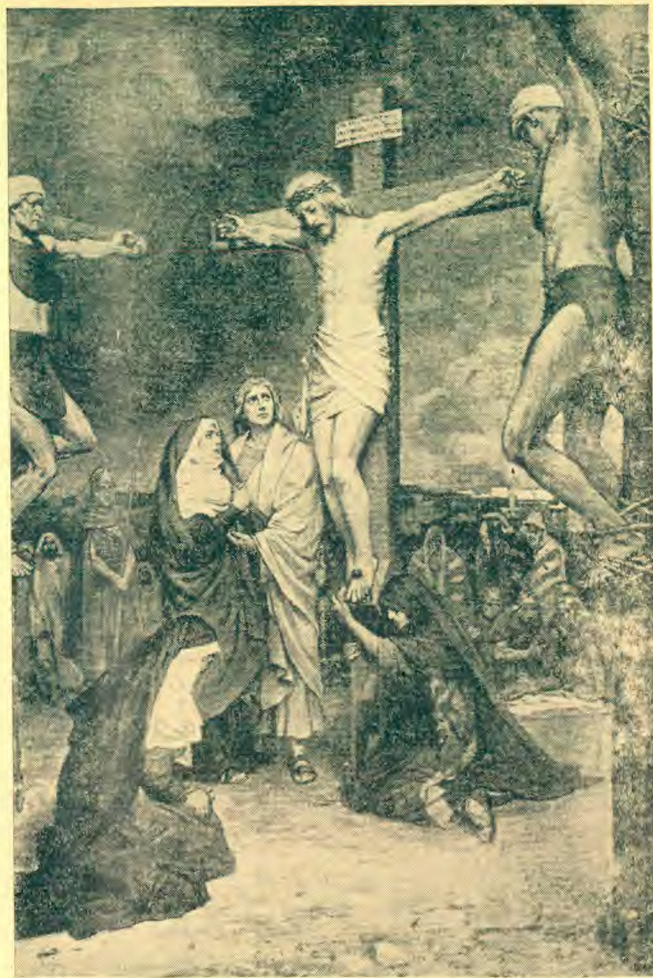
To assume that this incident took place during the three days Christ's body was in the tomb raises a further crop of problems.

Why did Jesus confine His preaching to the sinners of Noah's day? Surely that would be unfair to the sinners of other days? It would also necessitate that the dead be kept in special compartments according to the time when they lived; otherwise the disobedient of Noah's day would, after more than two thousand years, have been mixed up with those who lived in other periods of earth's history!

If this preaching was only an initial gesture on the part of Christ, why do we not read elsewhere of the systematic evangelization of the dead? The answer is, of course, that the Scriptures do not teach the evangelization either of the Noachic sinners or any others after death. If it did, it would make nonsense of the urgent appeals, "Now is the day of salvation" and, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment."

Thus the more minutely we examine the passage, the more foolish the survivalists' interpretation becomes.

Now let us look at the passage without any such presuppositions.



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The penitent thief talks with Jesus on the cross.

Jesus, we are told by Peter, was put to death in the flesh, but was quickened by the Spirit to become again what He was before His incarnation. This quickening took place at His resurrection on the third day. Between the time of His death and the time of His quickening therefore, He could do no preaching at all. That must be obvious.

When was the preaching done then? In his prophetic descriptions of the work of Christ, Isaiah on two occasions declares that Christ would, through the Gospel, "bring out the prisoners from the prison" (Isa. 42:7) and open "the prison to them that are bound." Isa. 61:1. What He did personally while He lived among men He did through the Spirit before His incarnation and He has continued to do

through the Spirit since He ascended again to heaven, the Spirit in turn using chosen messengers of God. Peter is thus telling us that the "living Christ" by the Spirit preached to prison-bound sinners in the days of Noah.

In the account of the corruption of the antediluvian world, we have the specific declaration of God, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3), and we are also told that Noah was God's appointed "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5) as long as the mercy of God tarried.

With this obvious interpretation agrees Dr. Adam Clarke, who, commenting on the phrase, "He went and preached" says: "By the ministry of Noah one hundred and twenty years."

As a result of this evangelization by Christ through the Spirit in Noah's day, eight souls altogether passed safely through the baptism of the waters on which the ark floated and the waters which poured down from above, and were saved.

In the same way, Peter says, we in the ordinance of baptism symbolize our passing through the waters and rising to new life in Christ.

The reason for Peter's selection of this particular incident is thus clear—because of the striking parallel between the rising of Noah and his family out of the baptismal waters of the Flood and our rising out of the baptismal waters into resurrection life through Christ.

This passage, therefore, lends not the slightest support either to Jesus' consciousness during the three days that He was in the tomb or the consciousness of the sinners of Noah's day or any of the dead.

As Dr. S. D. F. Salmond has said, therefore:

"The conclusion to which we are led, by a careful consideration of the terms of these two paragraphs, the connections in which they stand, and the purposes with which they are introduced into this plain and practical epistle, is that they give no sufficient ground for ascribing to Peter the doctrine of an extension of opportunity into the other world."—*The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, page 485.

Dr. Newman Smyth emphasizes that "the burden of the Scriptures is the utter urgency of a right moral decision now before the cross; . . . they hold out no promise of the hereafter

to any man who here and now determines himself against the Spirit of Christ."—Quoted in *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, page 521.

It is a fact that many of the early fathers who came under Hellenistic influence like Polycarp, Ignatius, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Hippolytus refer to this passage as teaching Christ's mission to departed souls, but the interesting thing is that the Roman Catholic Church, which of all sections of Christendom might have seized on this interpretation to promote their views on the state of man in death, actually rejected it as untenable. Rome's greatest teachers like Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and others, all explained the passage as referring to the preaching of Christ, through the Spirit, to prison-bound souls in the days of Noah.

If the earliest Catholics did not attempt to strain the natural meaning of Peter's words to make him teach the conscious existence of the dead, Protestants certainly need to think carefully about venturing "where Catholics feared to tread"!

The survivalist interpretation of these verses in the third chapter of Peter's first epistle, being dispelled, the disputed verse in the fourth chapter, 1 Peter 4:6, will present no difficulty. The Gospel has indeed been preached "to the dead" not, however, since they have died, but while they were yet alive, just as Noah's generation had the Gospel preached to it for one hundred and twenty years. But none of the dead have had a "second chance" since they have passed away.

The point Peter is here stressing is that the martyrs of past days had the Gospel preached to them and they accepted it by faith. We need not worry, therefore, about them. What we should concern ourselves about is that we exercise similar faith that we may gain a like reward.

Are the Saints in Paradise?

Having seen from the Scriptures that the sinners of past generations are all unconscious in death and completely beyond reach of any further efforts for their conversion, we ask whether the Scriptures support the idea that the saints are enjoying the bliss of "paradise" preparatory to entrance into heaven itself. The

(Continued on page 15.)



The "Queen Mary" by night in Southampton dock.

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Anything to Declare?

By Daphne Cox

★ We had reached the end of our journey, and we found ourselves facing the customs official. Around us flocked fellow-passengers with worried expressions. At the other side of the barrier were the happy ones, those who had passed through the customs and had been reunited with their loved ones.

Next to us was an unfortunate man who had apparently been untruthful in his statements, for the official was searching each case with diligent care, feeling in corners, testing linings, leaving no possible hiding place in his expert examination.

Suddenly a voice spoke, "Anything to declare?" Our turn had come. I had been thinking hard in preparation for this minute. There was my typewriter; would that be dutiable? And there were a number of lengths of new material that I had meant to sew, but had procrastinated, with the result that I was now liable to pay duty on the material. The official listened as I told him what I had. Then he smiled at me and said, "I'll just mark these for you, and you may pass through the barrier." I was amazed, he had not opened one of my cases. I thought immediately of the words of the apostle John, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. As I passed by, I glanced at the man next to me. He was looking extremely uncomfortable as the official opened yet another case, and proceeded to examine it.

The Great Examination Day

One day we will all have to face the Great Official and will hear the solemn call, "Anything to declare?" And the amount of preparation we have made for that moment will decide what we will have to pay. For it is written: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27. So it is very necessary to make our preparation while we have the opportunity.

The suddenness, the unexpectedness, with which a man's life can be taken from him was brought home to us all in the terrible rail disaster not long ago when in a split second and without warning over a hundred lives were lost. Under the station clock which had been stopped by the force of the impact was the significant text, "Prepare to meet thy God." Amos 4:12.

How many people in that train crash had made their necessary preparation? How many people had committed themselves to God before they went to work? We shall never know. They had all doubtless taken their coats, their sandwiches, or money for lunch, they had made the necessary arrangements for the day ahead, but had they made arrangements for eternity?

And how about you, my friend? Have you made any arrangements for eternity? There are a few simple ways of going about it. Paul says: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." 1 Cor. 11:31. Peter tells us:

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3:19. We can feel the presence of Jesus if we want to; we can ask forgiveness for all the wrong things we have done, for the wrong thoughts we have harboured, and if we are truly sorry, we can be conscious of His forgiveness. It is a comforting thought to know that your sins have been blotted out, never to be referred to again by God. There is wonderful consolation in the knowledge that we are on the right side of the barrier.

The Divine Test

To help travellers in their future customs examination they are supplied with a list of articles which will be called into question to help us to understand what sin really is, John wrote: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." The Ten Commandments that God wrote with His finger on stone, before handing them to Moses, are as binding to-day as they were then, and constitute the law by which we shall be judged. Many sincere Christians claim that this law has been done away with on the grounds that we are now under grace.

True we are under grace when we accept the fact that Christ died in our place, and when we accept Christ. But we must still keep the commandments, all ten of them. The difference when we are "under grace" lies in the fact that then we have His promised help to become law abiding. Twenty-six years after Christ died, James wrote, "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:8-12.

There we have it. If we offend in one point of the law, we offend in the whole. It is no use keeping nine-tenths even and expecting to get away with it, for we shan't. On the judg-

ment day God will take one or other of two possible attitudes toward us. If we now confess our sins and accept the merits of Christ's sacrifice we will at that day hear the words: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34. But if we go on heedless of the coming judgment we will surely be faced with the requirements of divine justice which we will be utterly unable to meet and which will result in the eternal forfeiture of our lives in everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

Which side of the barrier will you find yourself on in the day of the Great Examination? The choice is yours. You will be able to say, "Nothing to declare," if you make the preparation now.

The Basic Issue

(Continued from page 3.)

their *dignity* as sons of the eternal Creator, as "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." Hence, all the strife, all the crime, all man's inhumanity to man.

What is needed most to-day is Christ's solution, Christ's remedy, Christ's Gospel, offered anew to the world. The "everlasting Gospel" must be proclaimed "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," declaring: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that hath made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:6, 7.

More effectively than all the research that the wisest philosophers could embark upon, the preaching of this Gospel will bring the world face to face with the basic issue of our time—man's relationship to God. And it will offer the one solution of its problems, the one way out of its troubles, the one hope of better times. For, marvellously and mysteriously, because it emanates from the heart of infinite love, is enveloped in love, and radiates love, this Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation." Rom. 1:16.

Does Giving Impoverish?

(Continued from page 7.)

11:42.) He commended the widow, not for the amount that she gave, but because of

the spirit behind her giving. (Mark 12:42, 43.) His dictum, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," was spoken to expose the sin of covetousness. (Luke 16:13, 14.)

"More Blessed To Give"

There is one saying of Jesus that is not found in the gospels. Paul tells us that we are "to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35. This is the principle underlying the teaching of Jesus that in dispensing hospitality, there should be no spirit of grudging calculation—giving only when there are reasons to expect exact returns, but giving because the spirit of sharing and friendly fellowship was its own reward. (Luke 14:12-14.)

Another parable that exposes the futility of hoarding is that of the prosperous but self-centred farmer who, in the face of a bumper harvest, intended to increase his barns rather than remember the plight of his needy neighbours. When death knocked at his door and he had to depart from this life, leaving everything, Jesus commented: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Paul devoted an entire chapter to this grace of giving. He makes the point that, as in farming, so in living: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity. For God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9:6, 7. Here is the very core of this whole question. Giving cheerfully and liberally of one's wealth, of one's time and talents, of one's affections and thoughts, tends not to poverty but to true prosperity. And all giving, whether it be much or little, is to derive its incentives from the giving of God Himself. "For God so loved the world, that He gave." In heartfelt gratitude and appreciation we say: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." 2 Cor. 9:15.

Are There "Spirits in Prison"?

(Continued from page 10.)

supposed proof of this is Jesus' promise that the penitent thief would be with Him in paradise that very day.

To force such a meaning on to Jesus' words again makes nonsense of them. The Bible distinctly says that Jesus "descended into the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. 4:9); it nowhere says that at His death He was caught "up" to "paradise." Even after His resurrection, Jesus declared that He had "not yet ascended" to His "Father." John 20:17. How could He then be in "the lower parts of the earth" and in "the paradise of God" at the same time and in contradiction of His actual statements?

The fact is Jesus did not say what the survivalists declare He said. It should be realized that while the words of Scripture are all inspired, the punctuation is not, and by merely moving the comma in the sentence from its erroneous position in the Authorized Version after "thee" to its proper position after "to-day," Jesus' words will be clearly understood, and are in harmony with the rest of Scripture. Jesus said to the thief: "I say unto thee to-day, Thou shalt be with Me [hereafter] in paradise." The construction of the sentence is precisely the same as in Zechariah 9:12: "Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee." The word "to-day" refers in both cases to the time of declaration not to the events that were to transpire.

Neither Jesus nor the thief were in paradise the day they died. They were both in the grave that day, and the day after, and the day after that. The thief, in fact, will remain in the grave until the time of God's appointing when, with the rest of the righteous dead, he will be privileged to be with Jesus in the paradise of God.

(Next Time: "Jesus and the Resurrection.")

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THE CHILDREN'S Pages



Retaliation

By Inez Brazier

This long word we are talking about to-day means a lot to every boy and girl. We do not use it often; instead, we say we'll "get our own back," or we'll do to another as he has done to us. The dictionary says that "retaliation" means to return evil for evil. That is, when someone has been unkind to us we are unkind to him.

I am wondering, though, if this is the best plan for us. You remember the story of Joseph. His brothers were unkind to him, and finally they sold him to be a slave. He was taken to Egypt, far from his home. You remember how he worked for a rich man and then was put into prison. At

last, he was taken from prison to tell the king what his dreams meant. God was with Joseph, and the king made him a great ruler. Then came the time when there was nothing to eat and everyone was

Never Say No

Never say no to Jesus—
 Whatever He bids you do:
 Remember He walked to Calvary,
 In sorrow and pain for you.
 The task may be hard—He knows it.
 But strength will be given you.
 Then go where He bids you gladly,
 And do what He'd have you do.
 —Lilian G. Heard.

hungry. Joseph's brothers were sent to buy food.

Here was Joseph's chance to get his own back. He might have been unkind to his brothers. He might have paid them back for all the cruel things they had done to him. But he did not do this. Instead, he gave them food for their families, and then he had them and his father come to Egypt where he could care for them. This was the best way.

Daniel was another man who became great. He was placed next to the king in the land of Persia. The other great men did not like him. They wanted his place. They talked and worked and finally had him thrown into a pit where lions were kept. But Daniel prayed, and God saved him. He said, "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths." Daniel knew the Lord could take care of this trouble far better than he could, so he would not repay his enemies by being cruel to them.

Many times while Jesus was on earth the priests and rulers tried to harm Him. They did many things that were unkind, and even His brothers were not good to Him. When He was taken a prisoner, the wicked soldiers struck Him



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 March 5th.

and spat on Him and made fun of Him. But not once did He answer back.

One day when Jesus was preaching to many people, He talked to them about getting even with those who did things to hurt them. He said, "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you."

We are children of our heavenly Father, and since we are His children we want to be like Him. Instead of trying to get our own back, we will do as Jesus would do in our place. We will do to others as we want them to do to us. As Jesus said, "Whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Doing to others as we want them to do to us! That means paying back the mean and unpleasant things with something kind and helpful. That is the Jesus way.

Moses

By E. A. Butters

DADDIES do not generally know whether a dolly is a boy or a girl, but I insisted on calling one of Irene's, "Moses"—and I'll tell you the reason.

When passing by a dust bin one day, Irene's mummy saw a doll's head. She looked further and saw the body and legs. It was quite a nice dolly, but it was badly damaged by fire. We found out afterwards that a little boy had thrown it in the fire, and his mother had thrown it in the dust bin. It seemed such a shame to destroy a nice toy, so asking the lady's permission, Irene's mummy took the badly soiled thing home.

We found an old stocking, and with the help of needle and cotton covered the scarred body and part of the legs. Out of an old dress, a new dress

was made, and soon the dolly looked almost as good as new.

Now although it had a dress on, I suggested that it should be called "Moses." Do you know why? Because the name "Moses" means "drawn out." You see, the great Moses himself was drawn out of the water by Pharaoh's daughter. That was why she called him "Moses." Irene's dolly was drawn out of the dust bin, re-made, and re-clothed.

If you read Psalm 40:1, 2, you will learn that David was lifted "out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay." This pit

Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

Have you noticed how loudly and cheerfully the birds are singing just now? Spring is on the way, and very soon nest building will be in full swing. I want you to read this letter in plenty of time, so that you can think about it during the nesting season. Every Spring I feel very sad to think that many poor parent birds, after working so hard, will never have the joy of feeding their babies, or teaching them to fly. You ask, "Why?" Surely you can guess. Yes, it is because some thoughtless boys and girls think it fun to collect bird's eggs. Sunbeams, please remember Promise No. 5, in which we pledge that none of God's creatures shall be unkindly treated.

A strange thing happened last Spring. In the machine room of the press here, where all the big machines are whirring away with such a noise, two little birds built a nest. We marvelled how they could brave the bustle and noise. Then I wondered, "Could it be that they feel safer in here than in the fresh green woods where there are also boys with big pockets?" Perhaps I was wrong, but I would like you to think about it. Birds are such cheerful little people to have around, and such friends to farmers and gardeners, so you will promise to do nothing to lessen their numbers this Spring, won't you?

Yours affectionately,
AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition No. 25
Price-winners.—Anne Howard, 43
Tavistock Drive, Mapperley Park,

of miry clay is what grown-ups call sin, but with children we call it, being naughty. You can't save yourself from being naughty any more than the doll Moses could get out of the dust bin, but Jesus will help us and lift us up.

If we ask Him, He will make us good. He will give us His goodness to cover our bad ways, in just the same way that Irene's dolly was given new, clean clothes. And just as it was taken home to live with Irene, so, if we are good, Jesus will take us home to heaven to live with Him.

Nottingham. Age 9; Hugh Jones, "Iona" Bethel Road, Caernarvon. Age 14.

Honourable Mention.—Gwendolyn Coon (Mevagissey); Sheila Walters (Cardiff); Margaret Peart (Bishop's Cleeve); Sally Behenna (Cardiff); Nigel Payne (Woodmancote); David Phillips (Eastleigh); Rita Moss (Southampton); John Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Norman Curragh (Belfast); John Winfield (Binfield); Ann Garland (Taunton); Pearl Rich (Launceston); Nigel Payne (Bishop's Cleeve); Norma Franks (Fulham); Adrienne Edwards (Torquay); Brenda Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Eileen McManus (Leeds 9); May Goudy (Lame, Co. Antrim); Jilda Sleeman (Torquay).

Those who tried hard.—Patsy Pollock (Southampton); Jean Simmons (Torquay); Stuart Payne (Woodmancote); John Gregg (Hayes); Heather Payne (Woodmancote); Gillian Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Helen Webster (Diseworth); Martin Cooper (York); Barry Collard (Hayes); William Garrard (Rochford); Ruth Owens (Leeds); Rita Pinder (West Drayton); Robert Tait (Upper Norwood); Trevor Goddard (Iver); Anthony Peart (Bishop's Cleeve); David Godden (Folkestone); Ian Latham (Rothwell); Ronald Cole (?); Sandra Pearce (Bethnal Green); Sandra Parker (Darlinton); Richard Laversuch (Winchester); Mildred John (Swansea); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Brenda Jones (Manchester); Mavis Russell (Glasgow); Robert Kennedy (Manchester 14); Mae Smith (Edinburgh 9); Diane Johnson (Bristol 5); Mary Fitzgerald (Kensington); Mary Rankin (Newcastle-on-Tyne); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Myrtle Green (Salisbury); Sylvia Hood (Hayes).

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Straws in the Wind

Secularist's Vain Hope

In spite of the tragic evidences of our time, there are still some secularists who cling to the idea that man can, if he really tries, reform the world in which he lives. "There is a third way between Utopianism and despair," writes A. J. P. Taylor in *Rumours of Wars*. "That is to take the world as it is, and to improve it; to have faith without a creed, hope without illusions, love without God. The western world is committed to the proposition that rational man will in the end prove stronger and more successful than irrational man."

National Armaments Expenditure

It has been stated that the Soviet military expenditure last year represented twenty-five per cent of the national income compared with eleven and fourteen per cent respectively for Britain and America, the two chief nations of the West.

Hebrew Christians Keep Sabbath

Writing in *The Hebrew Christian*, the Rev. Max Enker states that the strong Hebrew-Christian community in Haifa "holds its services every Saturday morning." So also, he says, "do other Christian

groups in the country, since Saturday is the official day of rest, and it is very difficult for working people to join a service on Sunday, which is a working day." Through expedience, therefore, if not conviction, they have been led to return to the true Sabbath of the Bible.

SOMEONE!

Does no-one see when I weep alone?
Does no-one hear my plaintive moan?
Does no-one know of my cares so great?
Can no-one help with the sins I hate?

Yes!—Someone!

His name is Jesus!

—Mrs. Geoffrey Brown.

Warning of End Real

"Nor long ago," writes Dr. Garbett, Archbishop of York, in his book, *In An Age of Revolution*, "the church with the rest of the civilized world assumed that millenniums would pass before the end of man's existence on earth." But to-day, he goes on to say, the

"old cries for vigilance and the warnings of impending catastrophe so often heard both in the Old and New Testaments . . . have again become real." He adds that "if the catastrophe comes it will be the day of the Lord for which the church should be ready."

Protestant Propaganda "Plague"

The latest outburst of Cardinal Segura, Archbishop of Seville, against Protestant activities in Spain is a warning against "underestimating a so inoffensive this horrible plague of Protestant propaganda." He describes Protestant books and leaflets as "like little infectious mosquitoes carrying the germ of a deadly plague."

Space Rockets Coming

THOMAS K. FINLETTER, U.S. Secretary for Air, foresaw in a recent speech rocket engines with 500,000 pounds thrust and capable of a speed of 20,000 miles per hour, which will make space travel really possible.

Annual Double Number

According to our usual practice, the next two issues, Nos. 5 and 6, will be combined as a special double number.

