



THE BIBLE AND



OUR TIMES



By F. N. Blashfield

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"The Gospel bells are ringing."

★ "AND there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." Luke 2:8.

"My! it's cold tonight, and the sky so clear; perhaps on a night like this came the promise to our father Abraham. Those stars set so firmly on high link us up with all the ages of the past, and what a chequered past that has been. The Lord Jehovah has been very patient with His wandering people. . . ."

"Just like we have to be with these," rejoined the second of the little group. "Look after them, just as if they were children, nurse them, feed them, protect them! How much longer can He be patient?"

When the Angels Sang

By E. W. H. Vick

A third voice broke in: "Not much longer; Jehovah will not wait much more. But what will it be when His Servant comes? Ah yes! we have waited now long, very long." He spoke with faltering voice: "Above fourscore years have I seen; and threescore have I watched over these plains, these same plains where King David sang His psalms to God, and where, sick of heart, Ruth gleaned her father's field in the days of Boaz. Long, ah long, but I have never lost hope of seeing Him," and from his breast he pulled a well-used scroll and began to read:

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of His roots: . . . with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. . . ."

"My little life is almost spent, but one thing have I desired above another; the hope of my years has been to see Isaiah's Servant."

There were four of them in the little group; the fourth was silent. All was silent save for the occasional bleating of a restless sheep. Then he voiced what was in the background of their minds; slowly and deliberately he quoted:

"From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks."

"But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Near so near, the time and the place!"

And then they prayed together: "O Lord Jehovah, God of our fathers, Thou who hast guided and forgiven, grant Thy servants, Thy humble servants patience and vision. When, O

Lord, wilt Thou fulfil Thy promise? We have waited long. Send Thy King to David's throne."

Fervent Amens punctuated the petitions. "Give us, we pray, understanding of Thy Word, which Thou hast sent through Thy prophets and make us . . ." The prayer was never finished.

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. . . ."

The prayer of the shepherds was answered and the answer was set to music. Jesus came to this world to the accompaniment of celestial singing. Heaven opened its gates for just a moment to give man a taste of its rapturous joy. Heaven came very near to men that evening long ago.

The Angels Sang at Creation

But it was not the first time that the angels had sung together for joy. Our world's greatest events, it seems, have been set to music, and the harmony of the other world has come down to men as successive stages in the human drama have been enacted.

The angels sang at creation. It was a hymn to God's power, a glorious song of anticipation, the pæan of an accomplished work. God asks Job to tell where he was when God laid the foundations of the world, and to explain the mysteries of creation. "Where were you," He asks, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job 38:7.

But the enemy came to disrupt the Creator's plan, and to inject disharmony into the joy of heaven, to choke on their very lips the song of the angels. "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God"—this was his aim.

Then God took an unexpected step, and the song returned to the lips of the angels. In due time the Messiah, Jesus, was born; and the heavenly host bent low over the plains of earth to pour out their welcome for the baby Redeemer. "On earth peace, good will toward men." Our hearts are made heavy, as we remember that mankind has not yet caught the theme of the great song. It was a song of announcement.

The Angels' Welcome

Again heaven's song is hushed as a Saviour bows His head to die. Yet not defeat, but victory, comes from Joseph's tomb. His work on earth completed, Jesus ascends to His Father's right hand. The

angels sing their song of welcome: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Psa. 24:7.

But since that day years have rolled on and the message of song seems to have been quite forgotten by men. That is why Jesus must come again to restore to its first beauty the heart which He has given to man. When Jesus comes, He comes with singing. God the Father joins in the song of corporate joy: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Zeph. 3:17.

The last song of the Bible is the great redemption chorus; it tells of trials successfully overcome, of conquests made for Jesus' sake. Simply the prophet says: "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne." Rev. 14:3.

Why, of course. No company such as this has ever told the story of how they were redeemed on earth before. Heaven is hushed as the moving song is sung.

The Final Chorus

All beings in the universe join in the response: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Rev. 5:13.

The universe is back to its former beauty and purity. The sad, discordant keys, have been transformed to graceful harmonies. Never again will discord enter the universe.

The story of the progress of the plan of salvation is told in the music of heaven. First, the angels sing alone. They sing again and a few of the human family hear them. They sing again and a few of the human family are with them. Then God joins the singing and all the human family hear Him. Finally, the redeemed of earth sing of their experiences and the grand finale is sung in chorus.

May I wish you, patient and hopeful reader, a really happy Christmas. I wish that you, too, may know what it is to have the song of heaven in the human heart.

"Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels' song. Humanity is still as much the object of heaven's solicitude as when common men of common occupations met angels at noonday, and talked with the heavenly messengers in the vineyards and the fields. To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 48.



Iona, where Columba introduced Christianity into Scotland. © Newton & Co. Ltd.

Did the Celtic Church Keep Saturday or Sunday?

★ THE religion of Christ penetrated the British Isles soon after the Roman occupation. Time and space forbid our dwelling on the inspiring history of the early church of these islands. Of the introduction of Christianity to these lands, of its primitive and pure character, on its arrival and during its early history, of the coming of the monk Augustine from Rome and the subsequent massacre of Bangor, the interested reader will find ample information elsewhere.

One of the earliest and greatest missionary leaders of the Celtic Church (for so the early British church was named) was Columba, the founder of Iona, a training school for missionaries in northern Scotland. Born in Ireland, of noble lineage, he accepted the Christian teaching, and on completing his training he sailed for his field of missionary labour with twelve companions. It was in A.D. 564, on the lonely island of Hii (Iona) near the mainland, that the party established a

religious centre which was to become instrumental in the conversion of Scotland. So highly has his life and work been esteemed that he has been included even by Roman Catholics in the category of saints.

It is in some of the last words of Columba that an important doctrine and practice is first identified in the Celtic Church. I quote from Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, article, "St. Columba:—"

"Having continued his labours in Scotland thirty-four years, he clearly and openly foretold his death, and on Saturday, the ninth of June, said to his disciple Diermit, "This day is called the Sabbath, that is the day of rest, and such will it truly be to me, for it will put an end to my labours."

By the late E. E. Craven

(Reprinted by Request)

Some have attempted to explain this away as meaning Sunday, but the best biographer on the life of Columba says in a footnote, "Our Saturday."—*The Ancient Church of Britain*, by Adamnan, page 230.

This position, that Columba referred to Saturday as the day of rest, is supported by a host of authors, including Skene, in his *Celtic Scotland*, Lucy Menzies, in *Columba of Iona*, Killen, in his *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, Hurst in his *History of the Christian Church*, Hill, in the *Story of the Scottish Church*, and Montalembert, in *Monks of the West*. Of Adamnan's same passage, T. R. Barnett says:

"From that passage it is plain that, according to the Columban rule, what we call Saturday was considered to be the day of rest before the Lord's day, and in this way the uncanonical custom of working on the Sabbath and resting on the Saturday, may have arisen in the Celtic Church."

—*Margaret of Scotland*, page 98.

And again, in a footnote of Blair's translation of the Catholic historian Bellesheim, we read:

"We seem to see here an allusion to the custom, observed in the early monastic church of Ireland, of keeping the day of rest on Saturday, or the Sabbath, while Sunday was distinguished by special religious celebrations."—*History of the Catholic Church in Scotland*," Vol. 1, page 86.

Such evidence must remove any lingering doubts that might be entertained on the question of Columba's observance of Saturday as the Sabbath day. But that is not all; in several of the above quotations allusion is made to the fact that this was also the custom of the whole Celtic Church of the British Isles, not only in the days of Columba, but also preceding and following his time. We shall now, in the story of Queen Margaret of Scotland, substantiate this fact by additional quotations and references.

The Queen Attempts to Reform the Church

Margaret was a young Saxon princess, born in Hungary during the exile of her father, Edward Aetheling, caused by the invasion of Britain by Canute, the Dane. Having received her training in the court of King Stephen I of Hungary, and being an ardent advocate of Roman Catholicism, she set out for Saxony on the accession of her uncle. But the land was soon invaded again, this time by William the Conqueror. The royal family escaped and fled to Scotland to King Malcolm, an enemy of the invader. When Malcolm returned from his invasion of Northumbria, in which he pillaged its

great Roman churches, he found the Aethelings at his court. The Scottish king soon became enamoured of the princess, and made her his queen.

Very soon after her marriage Margaret wrote a letter to Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury. By this time the Roman Catholic Church had become established in the south-east of England. His reply shows clearly that Margaret was considered to be the very medium of God. Of the purpose of this correspondence Barnett says:

"The correspondence had very evidently to do with the spread of the Roman faith in Scotland, and the object of both archbishop and queen probably was the suppression of those monasteries that did not altogether conform to the Roman rule. . . . Whatever the exact date of this letter from Lanfranc may be, it makes us realize that Margaret very soon after her marriage is setting about a movement to Romanize and Anglicize the ancient Celtic Church in Scotland."—*Margaret of Scotland*, page 40.

And Skene thus describes her new aim in life:

"Her attention, however, appears to have been soon directed toward the state of the Scottish Church generally, in which she naturally found many practices peculiar to the old Celtic Church, which differed from those she was accustomed to see in the church in which she had been reared."—*Celtic Scotland*, Vol. 2, page 346.

In harmony with this purpose the queen began a great conciliar movement to have these "errors" in the Scottish Church rectified. The greatest and most important of these sessions has ever since been known as "The Council of the Five Points," so named because in it Margaret submitted five points of grievance on the doctrines of the Celtic Church. For present purposes we shall mention only the fourth, the matter of observing the Lord's day. The Catholic historian, Bellesheim, gives the claim of the queen and describes the practice of the Scots:

"The queen further protested against the prevailing abuse of Sunday desecration. 'Let us,' she said, 'venerate the Lord's day, inasmuch as upon it our Saviour rose from the dead. Let us do no servile work on that day.' The Scots in this matter had no doubt kept up the traditional practice of the ancient monastic Church of Ireland which observed Saturday, rather than Sunday, as a day of rest."—*History of the Catholic Church in Scotland*, Vol. 1, pages 249, 250.

Notice that this writer admits that there is no doubt that the Celtic Church kept the seventh day
(Continued on page 7.)

THE "ADVENT" STORM

By A. S. Maxwell



Presidents of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948.

★ THE editors of *The Christian Century* are becoming increasingly worried about the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held at Evanston, U.S.A., next August. Instead of anticipating a meeting of peace and harmony—as one might expect of such champions of ecumenicity—they are freely predicting a storm of conflict.

About what? Nothing else than the second advent of our Lord. They are frankly concerned lest discussion of the main theme of the Assembly—"Christ—the Hope of the World"—will turn into a debate about eschatology or the "last things."

"Of course," they say, "it is impossible at this time to forecast the course which the Evanston consideration of this central theme will follow. But it is certain that it will be largely concerned with eschatological questions. Already we have seen enough comment on this central topic of next year's Assembly to know that discussion of 'the Christian hope' may turn out to be so eschatological in tone that, to the rank-and-file membership of the American churches, news reports from Evanston will sound like reports from a convention of millennialists. We do not predict that this is going to happen, but we know that it easily could."

After warning of the "damage" which might be inflicted on the churches by a revival of "rampant millennialism," and remarking that individuals who preach about the imminent personal return of Christ "clutter the church scene," these modernist brethren go on to say:

"We are not suggesting that Evanston should evade or soft-pedal the eschatological issue. Under its central theme as adopted, it could not if it would—and it should not.

But every pastor should be aware of the dangers to his congregation which the Evanston consideration of the Christian hope may leave for him to face. If the Evanston formulation of the World Council's message takes a verbal form which plays into the hands of millennial evangelists—something that will be hard to avoid—it will not be long before the shock is felt in the local congregation. The time for the pastor to perceive this danger, and start preparing against it, is now."

So this is the storm they fear!

But it is coming anyway. And let it come! Let its thunderings roll on to the ends of the earth. In our opinion its coming is in the providence of God. For if our Lord's return is indeed at hand, as all the signs of the times most surely indicate, how reasonable that He should seek, by every possible means, to lead men and women everywhere to discuss the subject! And what better way could have been devised to bring this vital matter to the attention of all Christian people than to throw it into the midst of the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches?

We can be sure that the modernist elements in the Council would never have agreed to "Christ—the Hope of the World" being chosen as the

theme of the Assembly if they had had the slightest idea that matters would have taken the turn they have. Indeed, some of them have openly stated they wish the theme could be changed, even at this late hour.

But they cannot change it. The World Council is committed. It cannot back track without raising more discussion than is certain to take place anyhow. It must proceed with the debate. And powerful theologians are coming to Evanston determined to present their conviction that Jesus is coming again personally, gloriously, and soon.

So the storm is on the way. Nobody can stop it. Not even the editors of *The Christian Century*. And when it comes, millions of people all over the world will be led to think of Christ's second advent as they have never thought of it before. They will be faced with the challenge of their personal duty in the light of the tremendous truth that the Lord of heaven is soon to return in judgment to this earth.

Surely this is the Lord's doing "and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Did the Celtic Church Keep Saturday or Sunday?

(Continued from page 5.)

as holy perpetually throughout its history. His translator further says in another of his footnotes:

"The Celtic Church, as has already been pointed out, while observing the Lord's day as a religious solemnity, appears to have followed the Jews in resting from labour on Saturday."—*Ibid.*, page 249.

We inferred in a previous connection that Columba was not alone in observing the Sabbath on Saturday, but that this was the practice of the whole Culdee and Celtic Church at, before, and after this time. As additional evidence (to that already given above) that this is a fact, Skene comments on the work of Queen Margaret as follows:

"Her next point was that they did not only reverence the Lord's day, but in this latter instance they seemed to have followed a custom of which we find trace in the early monastic Church of Ireland, by which they held Saturday to be the Sabbath on which they rested from all their labours."—*Celtic Scotland*, Vol. 2, page 349.

And Flick, a standard authority in the field of sacred history, contrasting the observances of the militant Roman missionary Augustine with those who withstood his invasion, says of the latter that

"they kept Saturday as a day of rest, with special religious observances on Sunday."—*The Rise of the Mediæval Church*, page 237.

A Universal Practice

That this practice was universal is very evident from a concession made by Moffatt, Princeton professor of church history. In his book *The Church in Scotland*, he says:

"It seems to have been customary in the Celtic churches of early times, in Ireland as well as in Scotland, to keep Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labour. They obeyed the commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week."—Page 140.

And Andrew Lang, also writing of the general practice of the same church, declares:

"They worked on Sunday, but kept Saturday in a Sabbatical manner."—*History of Scotland*, Vol. 1, page 96.

We have found quotations from fourteen different authorities on the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath by the Celtic Church. Several of them are Roman Catholics and none observers of that day. That this was the practice of the church is certainly substantiated by history.

It remains to be said that the church of these islands exerted a remarkable influence, not only at home, but in the very remote regions where its missionaries penetrated with their message of a redeeming Saviour. Through the labours of Columbanus and his followers, especially, who taught in many parts of the present France, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy, many converts were won to their faith. Even in Iceland, far to the north, the missionaries laboured; and wherever they went they took with them the Sabbath truth.

Though the Catholic faith made great inroads on the islands forming the home base, history provides traces of many survivors of this faith to the close of the fourteenth century and even then some of them found refuge in the mountains, and for much longer maintained the same beliefs. Their doctrines remained in the hearts of the people of these regions, to burst forth again in new brightness on the appearance of the Reformation. The historian Newman indicates their permanent contribution to the heritage of true Christians of all succeeding ages when he writes:

"It is a remarkable fact that those very regions in which the Iro-Scottish mission work was most successful during the sixth and seventh centuries were precisely the regions in which the evangelical (Concluded on page 12.)

The Endu

By W. L. I



"Thy Word is truth."

★ THE evidences which have been adduced that the Bible is the Word of God should have been sufficient to convince all but the irreconcilably prejudiced. One final evidence, however, may be mentioned—its indestructibility.

No book has been attacked with such virulence throughout its history, yet it has survived all opposition and is today accomplishing the final work for which it was sent forth by its divine Author, that of giving the last Gospel message to all the world before the end shall come. (Matt. 24:14.)

God declared that His Word would be more enduring than the material earth itself, that it would abide "for ever" (1 Peter 1:23), and the indestructibility of the Bible demonstrates that it is the living Word of the ever-living God. (Heb. 4:12.)

Lost and Found!

Before the days of Josiah the children of Israel had so departed from the counsels of God that the part of the sacred Book which had been written up to the time was forgotten and lost. But God had His hand over His Word and in the days of this good king it was brought forth by

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Hilkiah, the high priest, to produce a reformation throughout the land. (2 Kings 22, 23.)

One wicked king of Israel, Jehoiakim, determined that he would counter the divine Word addressed to him by destroying the record of condemnation. He tore up the prophetic roll and dropped it into the fire. But before very long a new roll had been penned and "many like words" had been added to it! (Jer. 36:32.)

When the Jews were led captive to Babylon, Jerusalem was given to the flames, and the temple, with all its sacred records, was razed to the ground. But the Scriptures survived the fires of destruction and rose phoenix-like from the flames to continue their witness.

When Antiochus Epiphanes overran Palestine he vented his wrath upon the Jewish Scriptures when he heard that his own life was condemned by them. A decree was issued pronouncing death upon any found in possession of the sacred rolls. But again the Word outlived its assailant.

The Bible Survives Scorn and Persecution

The sceptic Celsus about A.D. 150 anticipated nearly every argument of the modernists of our day against the authority of Scripture, but his efforts utterly failed to stem the advancing tide of the church of the Bible.

A century and a half later, Porphyry had no better success when he took up the cudgels against the Christian Scriptures.

In the last of the great persecutions levelled against the early Christian church in A.D. 303, Diocletian bent every endeavour to destroy the sacred writings. Many under threat of death gave up the manuscripts they possessed, and in so doing earned the opprobrious name of *traditores*. Diocletian actually erected a monument to commemorate his destruction of the Christian church and struck a medal to celebrate his destruction of the Scriptures. But the Scriptures still lived on after his passing!

OUR TIMES

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During the later Roman empire the pagan philosophers again turned their pens to the work of destroying the Word, but the message of the Bible continued its conquering way while the philosophies of ancient Rome sank into oblivion.

During the Dark Ages the Roman Catholic Church sought to keep the Bible out of the hands of the common people, but not even the threat of death by the vilest tortures could prevent earnest Christians from printing, distributing, and possessing the sacred Book.

It was secreted by itinerant Waldensian merchants in their cases of merchandise. Wyclif's men carried his version throughout the length and breadth of England, and Bibles from Holland, smuggled by the linen merchants of Edinburgh in packages of sheets, started the Reformation in Scotland! The Word of God could not be bound.

Enemies Foretell Bible's Doom

In the eighteenth century the Encyclopedists of France promised the early doom of Christianity and its Bible. Voltaire declared that the Bible would be an unknown book in less than a hundred years from his time. Hume predicted the extinction of Christianity within two decades, and Thomas Paine boasted, when he landed in New York, that within five years there would not be a Bible in the United States.

Hume died in 1774, Voltaire in 1778, and Thomas Paine sank into a dishonoured grave in 1809. According to their prophecies the Bible should have been a forgotten book soon after the middle of the nineteenth century. But what actually happened?

Five years after Paine died the British and Foreign Bible Society was organized by a group of devoted Christians in London "to encourage the wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment." In 1806 the Dublin Bible Society was inaugurated, in 1809 the Edinburgh Society, and in 1812 the

Glasgow Bible Society. With appropriate irony the first meeting of the Edinburgh Society convened in the very room where Hume died!

Soon Bible societies began to spring up on the Continent, beginning with one in St. Petersburg in 1812 and one in Paris in 1818. The house where Voltaire died was taken over as a depository by the Geneva Bible Society and the press on which his infidel publications had been printed was used to print copies of the Bible.

Of America the same story can be told. The Philadelphia Bible Society was formed as early as 1808, to be quickly followed by societies in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New York, and New Jersey, and other states, and in 1816 the American Bible Society was established.

As a result of the work of these and many other societies which came into existence in the nineteenth century, the entire Bible had been published by the end of 1951 in 195 languages, the complete New Testament in 252 more, and some part of

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Right.—An African student examines a Bible in the Ragoli tongue.

Below.—A conference on Christian broadcasting in the Far East.



the Bible in no fewer than 1,049 out of the 2,796 languages and dialects of the world. And new languages are still being added at the rate of something like ten more every year.

Burst of Missionary Activity

Contemporary with the rise of the Bible societies the great missionary societies came into existence. When William Carey, the first missionary of the first of the modern societies, reached India his first concern was to put the Bible into the language of the peoples of India. And all who followed in the noble succession have had as their prime object, the placing of the vernacular Scriptures in the hands of every nation, tribe, and people to the earth's far ends.

As a consequence of the parallel activities of the Bible and the missionary societies the Bible has been scattered far and wide in every continent and island, and today is going swiftly into the last un-reached corners of the earth.

Unprecedented Circulation

The American Bible Society reported 1951 as the greatest in its history, the total of 6,000,000 volumes in 1950 being passed in the first nine months of 1951, and the production programme for last year was no less than 14,599,750 Bibles, Testaments, and portions.

The British and Foreign Bible Society likewise reported, in spite of all Britain's economic problems, the production and distribution during 1951 of 3,629,752 Bibles and portions, while almost an equal number were printed for the Society in Australia, Canada, Europe, Cairo, Hong-kong, and elsewhere.

In the 147 years of its existence this society has circulated 580 million copies of the whole or a part of the Bible. This works out at 10,000 copies for every day since 1804.

The *Bulletin of the United Bible Societies* reports that during 1951 an all-time record total of 23,267,050 Bibles and portions were distributed, and the figure for 1952 was only a little less.

So in spite of all the assaults of infidelity, pseudo science, and higher criticism, the number of copies of the Bible circulated throughout the world soars higher and higher, and nearly 1,600 years after the first fifty copies of the complete Bible were prepared at the request of Constantine the Great, this wonderful Bible is still the "best seller" of all!

For more than a hundred years, too, the entire Bible has been available to the blind in Braille

and other types, and recently the whole Bible has become available as a Talking Book on 170 double-sided gramophone records.

The Inextinguishable Light

As H. L. Hastings wrote many years ago: "The Bible is a book which has been refuted, demolished, overthrown, and exploded more times than any other book you have heard of. Every little while somebody starts up and upsets this book: and it is like upsetting a solid cube of granite. It is just as big one way as the other: and when you have upset it, it is right side up, and when you overturn it again, it is right side up still. Every little while somebody blows up the Bible; but when it comes down, it always lights on its feet, and runs faster than ever through the world."—*Will the Old Book Stand?*, page 11.

A poet has also finely written:

*Steadfast, serene, immovable, the same
year after year . . .
Burns on for evermore that quenchless flame
Shines on the inextinguishable light.*

In the light of all these facts about the Bible, what only can be our verdict concerning this amazing Book?

Can its contents be regarded as the product of human genius? Can its effects be paralleled by the influence of any human composition? Has any other book met such opposition and survived? The answer in each case must be, No. Then the reason must be because the Bible is derived from a Source different from all other books. It is because it is the very Word of God. May it be the Book of books to you.

The Outstretched Arms

Behold those arms outstretched in love
To all by care oppressed;
Heed now His invitation kind,
"Come unto Me, and rest."

Behold those arms, in love once more
Stretched out on Calvary;
His voice is speaking to us still,
"I did it all for thee."

And when our Saviour comes again,
Those arms outstretched will be
In loving welcome. And He'll say,
"Come, blessed, dwell with Me."

ELSIE PRATT.



What Is Jesus Doing Now?

By Victor H. Hall

★ WHAT heart failed to be stirred with loyalty, love, and respect as our young Queen came to her crowning. "Sirs, I here present unto you, Queen Elizabeth, your undoubted Queen." As an earthly monarch, she was robed and invested with all the symbols of earthly authority. She was crowned. And then, as a woman, she knelt with her husband in the service of communion, bowing before a greater Monarch.

He, King Jesus, our undoubted King, is worthy of all our worship and loyalty. "God . . . hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Phil. 2:9, 10. All that Adam lost when he sold himself and his realm, the perfect earth, into the slavery of sin and its resulting misery, suffering, disease and death, Jesus has won back for us by His sinless life, His vicarious death, and His victorious resurrection. He has bound us to the Father's heart by taking our nature upon Himself. We are loved the more for His sake. Can we doubt His right to our homage?

On the Right Hand of the Majesty on High

But what is Jesus doing now? "When He had by Himself purged our sins," Jesus "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3); not in rest after a task accomplished, but in an act of dedication, of which our Queen's solemn anointing is an apt symbol. The Father addressed His Son with these words: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore

God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Heb. 1:9. Jesus was thus dedicated to the office of our great High Priest.

You remember how Aaron was anointed as high priest and set aside to conduct the services of that portable tabernacle which God commanded Moses to make "according to the pattern showed thee in the mount." That earthly tabernacle "made with hands" was a miniature copy of the true tabernacle in heaven, "which the Lord pitched, and not man." Heb. 8:2-5.

The rituals Aaron performed pictured for us the service to which Jesus was dedicated when He became our High Priest. Aaron's position was that of a mediator, standing between God and man, making peace, bridging the gulf that man's sin had put between him and his God, and as he carried out his office, he typified what Jesus was doing in heaven.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

There were two distinct phases in the work of making man at peace with his Maker in the ancient sanctuary service.

First, the worshipper brought an animal sacrifice, and in the presence of the priest laid his hands upon its head and then killed it himself. In this way he showed that he acknowledged his sin, confessed it, and expressed his faith that God would some day send Someone to pay the death penalty due for his sin, that he might go free.

Second, the priest took some of the blood of the

slain animal into the sanctuary and sprinkled it in front of the thick curtain which veiled the presence of God. When the priest came out again, the man could go on his way rejoicing in the peace of forgiveness, because the priest had approached God on his behalf and his sacrifice had been accepted.

It was not sufficient that innocent blood had been shed. It had to be taken within the sanctuary, sprinkled, and accepted. The mediator's work was then complete.

Now, of course, "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Heb. 10:4. These ceremonials were only symbolic, pointing forward to the work that Jesus was to do for our redemption.

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh [beareth] away the sin of the world," declared John the Baptist of Jesus. He was the Innocent Sacrifice. He "was once offered to bear the sins of many"—your sins and my sins. (Heb. 9:28.) But His redemptive work did not finish upon the cross. He rose from the grave, ascended into heaven, where the Sacrifice was further anointed as High Priest to perform the second part of the mediator's work.

"Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man [Jesus] have somewhat also to offer." Heb. 8:3. Our Saviour, not "by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood . . . entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9:12.

A Merciful and Faithful High Priest

How perfectly Jesus was prepared for His high priestly work by His earthly experiences. We should be more willing to place our lives in His care "for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. 4:15. What sympathy His earthly life gave Jesus with our trials and temptations, "that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest."

We need not fear that we are too deeply sunk in sin for Jesus to be able to rescue us. "He is able . . . to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:16. The throne of grace has been established just for sinners. That is why we are to approach it boldly. "If any man sin, we have

an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation [complete payment] for our sins." 1 John 2:1, 2.

When we come confessing our sins and by faith laying them upon the Lamb of God, Jesus our High Priest stands before the Father to plead our case: "Father, this man has sinned and is worthy of death; but I died in his place. He is graven upon the palms of My hands. Accept My sacrificed life on his behalf. Father, pardon him; let him go free." The moment we believe God's promise of forgiveness for our sins we are at peace with Him; we stand before Him as though we had never sinned. We have obtained mercy, full and free.

There is yet a greater provision, "grace to help in time of need." It is one thing to be forgiven for a wrong act; it is another to be sustained in doing right. For the times when temptations press hard, when circumstances are forbidding, when suffering and loss weigh heavily, our gracious High Priest has made available to us the power of the Holy Spirit. He works within us, His creative power renewing the mind and invigorating the body. It is our privilege not only to be forgiven when we fall, but also to be strengthened from within so that we shall not fall. What more can Jesus do for us than He has done and is doing now?

But not for ever will He plead the cases of men, for soon He is due to return to the earth as King and Judge. As certainly as He ascended into heaven, there to serve His people, will He return as King of kings and Lord of lords. Let us then, while there is time, send our sins ahead for pardon that when He comes we may be among those who will meet Him in peace.

Did the Celtic Church Keep Saturday or Sunday?

(Continued from page 7.)

sects of the later times flourished most."—*A Manual of Church History*, Vol. 1, page 414.

To the Celtic Church we indeed owe a debt of gratitude.

Marks of the True Church

In determining the practice of these Christians in relation to the Sabbath command, we have a valuable indication of the identity of God's church in the Middle Ages, for true Sabbath-keeping becomes almost the test of the true church. Why

is this so? Because no one commandment of the divine law has been so universally disregarded and trampled upon as the fourth. Thus, to find a communion which will, in the face of opposition and in spite of the stigma attached to it, observe the day commanded by the Scriptures, is usually to find a church that is willing to obey every other command of God. Such a church is thus invariably a commandment-keeping church, and the Scriptures evaluate the merits of any Christian group of which this trait is characteristic in these terms: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Rev. 14:12.

A commandment-keeping church is a true church, for its members are designated saints; and conversely (according to the light received) a commandment-breaking church is an apostate church.

But this is not all. Of this practice as an acid test the inspired Word says: "Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Ezek. 20:12. The

Sabbath is a sign which determines the sanctity of a church.

St. Patrick—the apostle of Ireland (A.D. 373-c. 463) laid a good foundation. Joceline, the Romish writer, says "that he [St. Patrick] used to read the Bible to the people and expound it to them for days and nights together."

St. Columba (A.D. 521-597) found the early Celtic believers rejoicing in the truths of the Bible, one of which was loyalty to the law of God, which included the observance of the seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath. It is obvious, then, that St. Patrick must have imbedded these truths in the hearts and lives of the people and that he too was an observer of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Roman Catholic Growth

CARDINAL GRIFFIN has stated that during the past century the Roman Catholic church in Britain has trebled its membership and increased by five times the number of churches; while there are nearly nine times as many priests, 7,000 as against 800.



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THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

Presents for Everybody

By Lilian G. Heard

"PRESENTS for everybody," shouted eight-year-old Nancy Grant, as she passed through the dining-room where her mother and twin brothers sat reading. She was on her way upstairs with her arms full of parcels.

"Oh dear, they are a bit heavy," she sighed depositing them all on the table.

"I've got a present for everybody. You're not going to see them now, though." "Wouldn't

you like to know what's inside?" she added teasingly.

The twins looked up from their books, pretending that they didn't care.

"Not a bit of it," said Tim. "It's just some rubbish, I expect."

"I've half a mind not to give you your present at all," retorted the little girl indignantly. "It's something lovely, too."

"Now, now, children," said

Mrs. Grant gently. "Don't start quarrelling on Christmas Eve. Nancy is a very generous little girl to spend her money on Christmas presents for us all, I think; and I'm sure she has something very nice for us. Did you say you had a present for everybody, Nancy?"

"Why yes, Mummie," exclaimed the little girl, laughingly. "There's you and Daddy"—counting on her fingers—"Grandma and Uncle Joe, Tim and Jack—six altogether."

"I think you have forgotten one, Nancy," her mother said quietly.

The twins who had again buried themselves in their books looked up in surprise, and Nancy shook her head.

"I can't think of anyone else, Mummie," she said with a puzzled air.

Mrs. Grant smiled. "Have you a present for Jesus, Nancy? It's His birthday, you know."

"Oh Mummie what could I give Him?" the little girl exclaimed in surprise.

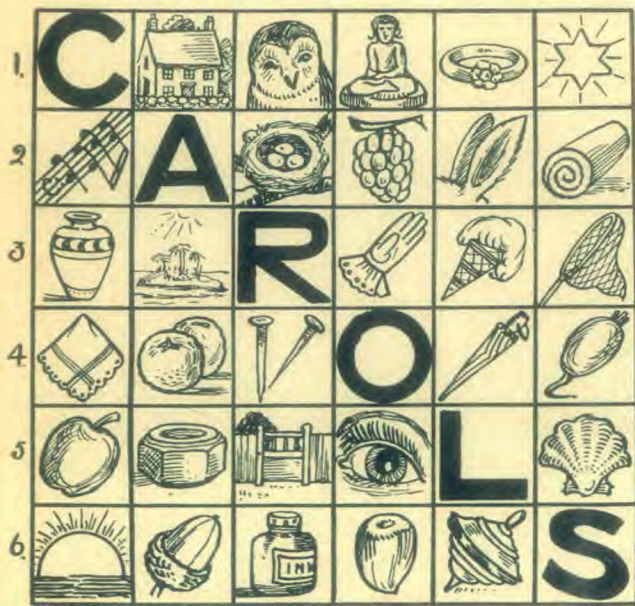
"There's only one thing He asks from you, little maiden," her mother said, tenderly stroking the bright curly head. "That is your heart. Won't you give it to Him this happy Christmas time?"

"I will, Mummie," said the little one reverently. "For I do love Him. I'll give it to Him right away."

As she spoke she gathered up her parcels, and, running upstairs, knelt down by the side of her little white bed, whispering very softly.

"Please dear Lord Jesus will you have my heart for Your birthday present? It's not worth much, I know, but I do love You and it's all I have to give."

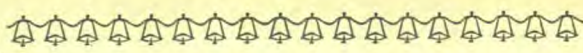
"Mummie," the little girl said the next morning when everybody had received and admired the presents she had bought for them, "I've given seven presents altogether now, and I believe I loved giving to Jesus best of all."



By taking the initial letters of each object see if you can solve the puzzle, then neatly paint it, and send with your name, age, and address to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than January 7th, 1954. (In case OUR TIMES arrives late, still send your entry. All attempts will be considered.)

WORDS FROM WELL-KNOWN CAROLS.

CAN YOU SOLVE THEM ?



King Jesus

By Gwen Yeates

O little children come and see
 The lowly infant King,
 And listen with attentive ear
 As shining angels sing.
 What glad and welcome mes-
 sages
 Of joy and peace they bring!

For Jesus Christ, this tiny Babe
 Who in a manger lies,
 And who around our grateful
 hearts
 Love's cord of wonder ties,
 Is God's own Son, the Lord of all,
 The earth, the sea, the skies.

And He has come to set us free
 From every chain of sin,
 To make our lives as good as His,
 All clean and pure within,
 And that He might in our own
 hearts
 His reign of love begin.

Then, children, worship at His
 feet,
 And pray that He will take
 All that you are and hope to be,
 And help you to forsake
 All that is wrong, and of your
 lives
 A light to others make.

A Calloused Conscience

Did you ever notice the hand of a man who has done hard work all his life? The palm, instead of being soft and sensitive, is very hard. The skin has thickened till it is almost like leather. We say that it is calloused.

A hard hand may be a great benefit to a man who has a certain kind of work to do. If it were not for that thick skin, he would be continually blistering his palms. The callous is one way nature has of protecting him from discomfort and suffering.

Sometimes the conscience hardens much as the hand does. The first time a girl tells a falsehood, or a boy utters an oath, each one is likely to be very unhappy. But if the wrong act is repeated again and again, it is done almost without thinking. There is no more discomfort. The conscience has hardened so that it no longer feels pain. A calloused hand is useful, sometimes, but a calloused conscience means danger.—*Selected.*

THE Sunbeams' CORNER



My Dear Sunbeams,
 Our little story reminds us that the gift Jesus wants more than anything else, is our hearts. Our very fine poem speaks of Him as the King; and we know that just like a king, so He will rule our hearts, if we let Him.

I do hope that every Sunbeam—and every boy and girl who reads my letter—will be sure that his heart is given to Jesus, so that He, and not Satan, may be the King of our lives.

John the apostle gives us a very lovely picture of Jesus standing at our hearts' door, knocking. His promise is: "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." This promise is found in the last book of the Bible—Revelation 3:20. It's worth learning, for it's such a good promise to have.

Until Jesus comes into our hearts, they are much like old, dusty houses, with dark, dark rooms. This darkness is like sin, but Jesus promises to bring the golden light of His goodness, if He is allowed to rule in our hearts.

I once read of a poor, sinful man who was very worried. He said: "I want Jesus to come into my heart, but I have so much sin to clear away first." A Christian friend said to him: "But if in the morning your room is dark because the blind is down, you simply lift the blind and the light comes in. You don't say: 'But I must first get rid of the darkness before letting the light in.' In the same way, if you just open your heart to Jesus, He will come in, and the sin will be driven out without your worrying about it."

I think that friend had the right idea, don't you?

As we face the New Year, we know that it will surely be a happy year if we give Jesus our hearts—and make sure every day that He is really at home in them.

Don't forget to write to me, Sunbeams—I'm very anxious to get all your Christmas news. And why not begin the New Year by asking your friend to join our Sunbeam family?

Yours affectionately,
 AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition, No. 22

Prize-winners.—Antony Peart, "Livorno," Two Hedges Road, Bishop's Cleeve, Gloucester. Age 10; Dawn Jones, Stanton Lodge, Fleet Road, Fleet, Hants. Age 9.

Honourable Mention.—Robert Vine (Watford); Eleonora Baron (Acerington); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Miriam Harris (Chesterton); Trevor Goddard (Iver); Richard Payne (Woodmancote); Anders Karlman (Edgware); Christine Watson (Coventry); Siegfried Baron (Acerington); Ruth Campion (Torquay).

Those who tried hard—Amy Randlestone (Suffolk); Stuart Payne (Woodmancote); Carole Birch (Birmingham); Heather Payne (Woodmancote); Graham Hardy (Derby); Margaret Peart (Gloucester); Nigel Payne (Woodmancote); Marion Paget (Wokingham); Colin Doggett (Norwich); Peter Ray (Wolstanton); Janice Vale (Newport); Judith O'Kelly (Newport); Martin Jones (Cardiff); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Janis Bellringer (Lymington); Kathleen Umpleby (Yorks.); Diane Middleton (Hanwell); Lydia Harris (Chesterton); Marsden Evans (Treharris).

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Straws in the Wind

Ultimate in Peril

☒ "The forces of destruction, largely in terms of atomic and hydrogen bombs, are being developed on a scale which threatens the survival of civilization as we know it," asserted U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in a recent speech. "That is an ultimate in peril which mankind has never had to face before."

Increasing Crime

☒ Figures quoted by the Home Secretary in a recent speech in Liverpool indicated a rise in the daily prison population in England and Wales from 14,700 in 1945 to 21,800 in 1951, and the number of juvenile offences from 35,700 in 1947 to 47,500 in 1951.

Millions on Comics

☒ Mr. A. B. Paterson, Glasgow City Librarian, states that £6 million are spent annually on comics compared with £2½ million by libraries on new books.

Drink Bill

☒ Writing in the *Christian World*, Angus Watson states that one-third of the population of the British Isles habitually take intoxicants. The national drink

bill has risen from £230 million in 1930 to £770 million today, and works out at £68 a year for an average family of four.

JUST BEYOND

Although the clouds hang dark
and dense,
And look so still and high;
Although the light is dull and
grey,
Just beyond's—the sky!

Although dark clouds hang o'er
our lives
And bring us tears and sighs;
Just beyond is peace and calm,
To banish all our fears.

Let's look in steadfast faith "be-
yond"
When trials seem to harm;
And as we look, the clouds will
pass,
And bring us peace and calm.

Just beyond life's mystery and
grief
Is new and throbbing life;
When Heaven's joys will greet
our sight
And end all earthly strife.

Mrs. G. L. Brown.

New Exaltation for Mary

☒ Roman Catholics have already pronounced the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception of Mary and her Assumption into Heaven. Now some Spanish theologians are asking that she be dogmatically declared Mediatrix of all graces.

Church-Going America

☒ The latest *Yearbook of the American Churches* reveals that three in every five Americans are members of Christian churches. There is one church for every three hundred and twenty-five members.

"In My Lifetime"

☒ "There is no foretelling what American ingenuity will offer the nation in the next few decades," declared President Eisenhower in a recent speech. "In my lifetime have come the automobile, television, electronics, home freezers, widespread use of the telephone and electricity on our farms, good roads, power machinery, vastly improved fertilizer and insecticides and, not the least, civilian and military aircraft, some flying beyond the speed of sound, some with a range of 10,000 miles. With such startling developments in our recent past, who can foretell the promise of the future?"

