



The Bible and

OUR TIMES

Contact With GOD

By R. D. Vine



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Evangelist Billy Graham, whose great London mission is drawing many nearer to God.

★ IT would take volumes to contain a detailed record of the world's needs. Section one, dealing as it would with the individual, would naturally list such basic needs as happiness, contentment, and those essential personality factors which make for full and successful living. Other sections would deal with the needs of the family, of the community, and finally of the nations. Yet all these needs are transcended and embraced by that which undoubtedly is the greatest need of all—that of regaining a living, working contact with God. Partnership with God is the unailing solution to every human problem.

Our Insufficiency

Of one thing we are repeatedly assured in God's Word—that we are insufficient of ourselves to

solve our problems or to provide for our needs. The global picture generally, is not unlike that of a large family of boisterous and quarrelling children who are, for a while, left in the house to themselves. In most cases the picture shapes up to a well-known but somewhat ugly pattern. With the temporary lapse of parental control and discipline, the tranquillity of the home gives place to varying degrees of pandemonium.

Turmoil in the family without the paternal presence, aptly parallels the turmoil of a world divorced from God. The Psalmist is most emphatic: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain." Psa. 127:1. Here is but one of many reminders that the world's really great need is that of the presence of the Lord. Vain is the planning, vain is the attempt to labour and to build, if God go not with us.

The thought of human insufficiency is a sobering one. It hurts our pride to admit it. Yet it is completely true. Indeed, the first rule for truly successful living is that the truth expressed by Jeremiah be humbly recognized, that "the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10:23. Whether the problem be sin in the life, or international discord, the only successful, lasting solution is in seeking the power and wisdom of God. Many a hopeless victim of some enslaving habit has proved how complete and permanent is the power God gives when contact with Him is sincerely sought.

It may rightly be contended that problems which affect whole communities and nations are rather different from those which are purely personal. Whatever may be our views on the prospect of peace on earth, the fact remains that conditions

will be better if responsible leaders seek God's guidance in their planning, remembering that "unless the Lord build, . . . they labour in vain." There was a time when parliamentary sessions began with prayer; and great things were achieved by leaders who were keenly and humbly aware of God's sovereignty, and of their own insufficiency. We can be sure that whether they are solved or not, the great problems of national leadership will be handled more easily and with a greater degree of success if God is consulted.

All Things Possible With God

We know not how, we make no effort to explain—we simply and gladly take at its face value that stupendous claim of Christ that "with God all things are possible." Matt. 19:26. In these days, as never before, Jeremiah's inspired and sublime message is needed, that "there is nothing too hard for Thee." Jer. 32:17. God's power is sufficient for every human need. How tragic that it is not tapped more often.

What would we think of the printer who laboriously writes his publications by hand, even though he has machines that could produce them more quickly and incomparably better? His production is low, and of poor quality. It is displeasing to the eye, and full of mistakes. He worries because, though working feverishly from morning till night, he cannot produce enough to make ends meet. Yet how could we sympathize? He would be judged a foolish man. Even more tragic and pitiful is the condition of those men and women who face their problems in their own meagre strength even though the infinite power of God is at their ready disposal.

What God has to offer is not a mere supplement to human resources, not a trifling addition of wisdom and power for the purpose of just tipping the scales in our favour. Its limitless nature is suggested by His promise of help to ancient Israel: "Five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight." Lev. 26:8. Why, here indeed is just what our world needs. So many of our problems, both personal and national, seem as impossibly great as a foe of ten thousand to a feeble handful of one hundred. Though, according to human expectations and standards, the odds may be weighted heavily against us, God's power will prove as adequate now as in Moses' day. "For," as Isaiah says, "in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." Isa. 26:4.

Well might we ask, Why are men and women, and nations generally, so void of divine power? How is it that vital contact with God has been virtually lost today?

A previous article suggested one infallible contact breaker, and the one which is most evident—sin. If sin is cherished, condoned, or rationalized, instead of being shunned for the deadly thing it is, then God cannot help us. Contact with God is impossible, and hence we are deprived of our greatest need. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that is cannot save; . . . but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, . . . that He will not hear." Isa. 59:1. This sombre statement of Isaiah's confirms the Psalmist's testimony: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psa. 66:18.

Acts, and even thoughts, of dishonesty, fraud, spite, double-dealing, lying, covetousness, selfishness, and lust, etc., break or prevent contact between us and God. Yet for success here, and inheritance of bliss hereafter, contact with God is vital. Not that God waits for us to attain perfection before supplying strength, but He does expect and require an honest recognition that sin is sin, and a desire to be freed from it. The promise, through Jesus Christ, is: "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.

Another essential means of contacting God is described by Paul: "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. 11:6.

First, we see that to know God, we must believe in His existence—a timely and necessary reminder for this spiritually bankrupt age, whose plausible theories would rule God out of His universe. It is an age of militant atheism with a completely undue emphasis on human planning, power, and resources. And of those who do not actually deny God, altogether too many claim uncertainty on the matter. Such an attitude can never unlock God's storehouse of power which alone is able to cure human ills, for "he that cometh to God must believe," positively, that God lives, and that He is keenly interested in us.

Secondly, this contact with God demands a sincere belief that "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Two things are generally believed among those who give any thought to the

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By B. Plockhorst

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"What must I do to inherit eternal life?" asked the rich young ruler.

Life's Greatest Question

★ A RICH young man once came running to Jesus, eager for an answer to life's greatest question. "Good Master," he asked, "what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Mark 10:17, 18. You and I must find the answer too, or this brief life will be worse than wasted.

"Why callest thou Me good?" inquired Jesus. How easy it is for us to answer, living two thousand years later! Did He not leave the heavenly courts for the manger and the poverty of the carpenter's shop in Nazareth? He lived a perfect life. His love for you and me led Him to meet the penalty for our sins in the death of the cross, that we might go free. He conquered death, ascended to His Father, where He "ever liveth to make intercession" for us. (Heb. 7:25.) Soon He is returning to take His people home. Surely the

"goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Rom. 2:4. He who has done so much prompts within us the question: "What good thing shall I do?" Jesus has the answer.

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matt. 19:17. Jesus was teaching a fundamental principle that while obedience cannot earn us life, obedience is the condition of life.

The young man's rejoinder is revealing. "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" He was proud of his conduct. Like many youth of God-fearing parents today he was clean-living and upright. "Jesus beholding him loved him." But mere morality cannot satisfy the hungry heart.

"One thing thou lackest," declared Jesus, a statement as true of you and me as of the young

man. In telling him to sell all he had, to exchange earthly treasure for heavenly, to take up his cross and become a disciple, Jesus laid bare the need of every human being. He needed a new heart, loving and unselfish. Without that, even the bestowing of all his goods to feed the poor would profit him nothing. (1 Cor. 13:3.) Salvation is free, but discipleship costs all. The rich young ruler "had great possessions." He "went away sorrowful" because he was not willing to pay the price.

Saul Surrenders to Christ

On the Damascus road was another young man in a hurry. Like the rich young ruler, Saul of Tarsus was proud of his moral uprightness. "Concerning the righteousness which is in the law," he was "blameless." But his heart, too, was hungry. He longed for the peace of mind so evident in the face of Stephen when he was stoned to death. How confident these accursed Christians were of eternal life! Unlike the rich youth, however, Saul was fighting the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. How could the true Messiah allow Himself to be crucified? But in the blinding light from heaven Saul came face to face with Jesus Himself, and Saul surrendered: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Acts 9:6.

Nobody can really meet Jesus without feeling that urge to surrender to His claims. For in the moment of meeting and in the act of surrender we grasp the gift of eternal life. Saul wanted life, and he was willing to pay the price. He discovered that "whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him; not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith." Phil. 3:7-11.

Here was the secret of Saul's confident Christian life as Paul the apostle. He had trusted in his own goodness and ancestry to recommend him to God, and had known the emptiness of heart which is the lot of the natural man. When he came face to face with Jesus he realized that he had no goodness to assure himself eternal life, and he came to trust in the merits of Jesus' perfect righteousness that

God placed to his account—the title-deeds to his heavenly inheritance. He did not go away sorrowful like the rich young ruler, but rejoicing until his dying day in the confident hope: "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Tim. 4:8.

You and I must take one or other of the two courses pursued by the rich young ruler and Paul. There is no third path.

Justification By Faith

What is it that arouses the conscience to its guilt and leads the will to surrender itself to Christ?

When the Jews listened to Peter's preaching, "they were pricked in their hearts, and said . . . Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37. In the sermon that produced this response Peter laid the blame for the crucifixion squarely on his listeners' shoulders. "Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Verse 23. His resurrection proved Jesus to be the Messiah and those men cried out as they realized that they were responsible for the death of the Messiah. When you realize that Jesus is God's only Son and that your sins made His death necessary if you are to have another chance, you too will cry with every other convicted man and woman, "What shall I do?"

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ," declared Peter. (Verse 38.) Repentance is the only way to life and the only act by which we can obtain it. It means sorrow for sin and a turning away from it, a set determination never to repeat it. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." 2 Cor. 7:10. It is one thing to be sorry for the unwelcome consequences of wrong-doing, but entirely another to have that heart-felt sorrow for the suffering and grief that our sin has caused God. The latter is the only acceptable repentance.

If we truly repent, "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. Forgiveness means that Jesus takes our sins for which He has paid the penalty on Calvary and gives us in exchange the merits of His own perfect life. They are reckoned to our account, as it were. They are His, but are counted as ours. Thus we are given the standing of righteous men before God.

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By Victor H. Hall

THE SHED BLOOD

By George D. Keough

★ "WITHOUT shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. 9:22. Metaphors are a part of our everyday speech. They are common in all languages, and I suppose it would be impossible, even if it were desired, to speak without them. Like the pictures in a book, they serve to vivify the thought and make it clear to the mind.

"The shedding of blood" means death and the whole phrase asserts that without death there is no forgiveness of sins. That "the shedding of blood" is a metaphor for death is made plain in the very first use of the term in the Scriptures. Laying on man the duty of punishing by death the crime of murder, the Lord says, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Gen. 9:6. In other words, the murderer must be put to death. The blood is the life (Gen. 9:4), so that the shed blood is a symbol of life poured out—and lost.

When we read that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7), we are to understand that the death of Jesus, the life that He poured out on Calvary, expiates all sin.

Symbols of the Sanctuary

To illustrate and emphasize the truth that death is the inevitable consequence of sin, it was ordained in olden times that the sinner who desired forgiveness must bring an offering, an animal, to die in his stead. The penitent put his hands on the head of the animal he brought, and having thus consecrated it as his substitute he proceeded to slay it with his own hands, testifying by this act that he himself who had committed the sin was worthy of death. If he did not bring an offering, some animal to die in his stead, he must expiate his sin by his own life, for "without the shedding of blood," there is no expiation of sin. "The wages of sin" cannot be refused by the one who has earned it.

In the Levitical system, the priest put the blood of the victim on the altar. In doing this he showed that death had taken place, and the sin was, there-



By A. Van Der Werff

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On the cross of Calvary Christ paid the price of our redemption.

fore, expiated. The Lord explained it this way, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls." Lev. 17:11. The blood put upon the altar, or taken into the sanctuary, was a demonstration that the penalty had been paid, and the sin purged.

This principle is further exemplified in the law of the expiation of murder. In Numbers 35:33 we read: "For blood it defileth the land; and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." The shedding of innocent blood, or in other words the crime of murder, defiled the land, and the guilt incurred could be expiated, and the land

cleansed, only by the blood, the death, of the murderer. It is the death of the guilty that cleanses the land. The blood of a righteous person could not cleanse it. To put a righteous person to death would only add to the defilement, and could avail nothing for its cleansing.

Some years ago a series of horrible murders were committed in London. Everyone was shocked when the cruel details became known, and a hue and cry was raised for the arrest and punishment of the criminal. The public seemed to take a personal interest in his being caught. The police were on his track, and all London followed the pursuit breathlessly. They seized the various editions of the newspapers as they came off the presses and read with avidity the details of the hunt. Traces of him had been found in certain localities, and he might be arrested at any moment. After some days of intense excitement and suspense the murderer was found. He was dead. He had taken his own life to escape justice. But he did not escape; he had executed it by his own hand, and the law could do no more than kill him, if he had been taken alive. The excitement died down immediately. Death had expiated his crimes, and nothing more could be done. What a terrible thing this sin is that only death can expiate it!

The Divine Substitute

But the sacrifices accepted as substitutes in olden times could not of themselves expiate a man's guilt. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." Heb. 10:4. But they revealed the fact that God was willing to accept, nay, to provide a Substitute for the sinner. Expiation, however, was not enough. The sinner must be given life, and no-one could give him life save He who had life in Himself. (John 1:4.) No created being has life in himself. There is the stark, the terrible reality. Only the Creator could expiate man's sin, and give the sinner life. And He has done it. The Son of God became a man, and lived as a man a spotless life, and the Lord laid on Him "the iniquity of us all." He expiated our sins by the shedding of His blood on Calvary. Now He lives and says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." John 14:19.

We should ever keep before us the inevitable consequence of sinning. It will help us to realize its true nature. It will help us to appreciate what God has done for us. It will make our fight against sin more earnest, and it will urge us to seek continually the help of the only Power that can keep us from sinning and being destroyed by sin, the

power of the indwelling Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Contact With God

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matter at all—either that God will not reward us, and that the whole picture of future judgment and eternal bliss is a myth; or that whatever lies ahead, God will automatically give to all, whether they "diligently seek Him" or not. The former view is that of the atheist and infidel; the latter, that of the universalist and spiritualist. Ours must be a simple yet positive belief that the future blessings of Christ's coming kingdom, as well as present blessings, are sublime certainties to those "who diligently seek Him."

We repeat, the world's greatest need, the most urgent need of every man and every woman, is to regain contact with God. This great, omnipotent God promises: "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Jer. 29:13. "He is great, and therefore He will be sought; He is good, and therefore He will be found."

Life's Greatest Question

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When we believe and accept the terms of this wonderful transaction we are forgiven and accepted as sons of God.

This change of standing we call justification. To the one who senses his personal responsibility for the death of Jesus and deeply repents of his sins, forgiveness brings a wondrous sense of release and peace. The heart is full of gratitude and determination to live a different life. He has accepted Jesus into his life to guide and empower. No longer does he ask, "What lack I yet?" "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. 5:1, 2.

The very moment our faith grasps God's promise, He accepts us as though we had never sinned. By virtue of Christ's perfect life, now reckoned as ours, we have the right to eternal life. The rich young ruler never knew the peace and joy of forgiven sins and the reality of a new life. He could not pay the price. Saul of Tarsus believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness; he knew the release of the new-born soul. One or other of these experiences will be yours. You alone can decide. Faith determines the answer to life's greatest question.

WATCHING FOR THE

AT Boston in Lincolnshire is the famous "Stump," a great church tower without a spire. It dominates the flat landscape and can be seen many miles away from each direction. It is a great landmark. One day I was travelling by train on a journey I had never made before and naturally was rather curious to know just where we were. A quick glance out at the window, and the Stump came into full view. It was Boston. The landmark gave me my location.

Multitudes of men and women today in their journey through life are puzzled to know where life is taking them. In an unsettled world such as ours, people are saying more than ever, "I wish someone would tell me where we are." Are there landmarks on our journey that show us clearly and unmistakably just where we are? Is God interested enough in this speck of His creation to make known to us what is in store? Is He good enough to take us into His confidence by showing us the landmarks and saying: "Now, you can understand where you are."

A Wonderful Dream

It is night. Babylon, the golden city of a golden age, mistress of the world, peerless in wealth and splendour, is wrapt in slumber. Its king, conqueror of the world, sleeps. In a vivid picture earth's empires pass in survey before him. Nebuchadnezzar thought, dreamt, and forgot. He thought of the future—why not? He had conquered the world and he enjoyed the flush of proud rulership as the earth lay vanquished at his feet. Would he, as victor, be the head of an endless dynasty? Would his successors rule the world for ever? He hoped as he lay on his bed, and yet he wondered. And sleep folded his thoughts in unconsciousness.

Then—as if an echo to his musings—there appeared before him a great image of dazzling brightness and tremendous size. It was made of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, and clay. The head was of gold, the feet were of iron and clay. Then suddenly a great rock, mysteriously cut out from the mountain smashed against the feet of the image and crushed the whole to powder, which



By T. K. Martin

In the prophetic Word the whole panorama of the age

the wind blew away like chaff; then strangely the rock grew and filled the earth. Nebuchadnezzar woke, harassed and troubled. A tremendous impression of the dream's importance urged itself upon his questioning mind, but he had forgotten what had caused that impression. He had forgotten the dream. But God who gave it waited and worked.

The astrologers and magicians and the greatest of Babylon's wise men were called to aid the king in solving his mystery. When they had proved themselves unable to do so, Daniel, a Hebrew captive who had risen to some eminence in the royal household, was called into the king's presence. And under the guidance of God he was able to do what the wise men were impotent to do—recall the dream to the mind of the king.

WAY-MARKS



is displayed from ancient Babylon to the close of time.

"Thou, O king," said Daniel, "sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Dan. 2:31-35.

As Daniel spoke, the dream came back to the king with the clarity of fresh remembrance. But what did it mean?

Daniel made it clear that it was not his own keenness of mind that enabled him to unravel the mystery. Rather, he said: "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." Dan. 2:28.

What It All Meant

What connection does this dream have with us and our twentieth-century troubles? We are in no danger of putting our own invented interpretation upon this forgotten dream, for here is God's own interpretation, given by this same Daniel the prophet. Listen:

"Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. . . . And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." Dan. 2:38-44.

To put it in other words Daniel said: There will be four world kingdoms one after the other; your kingdom is the first of these. After the fourth there will be a group of disunited kingdoms until the God of heaven establishes His own kingdom. That is what prophecy said 500 years before Christ. What does history reveal today?

There have been precisely four kingdoms since Babylon's time that have had the world under their rule. Babylon, whose hanging gardens and splendid palaces were wonders of the ancient world, was succeeded by the kingdom of the

By E. W. H. Vick

Medes and Persians, greater in extent but inferior in splendour as silver is inferior to gold.

On that fateful night of drunken carousing recorded in the fifth chapter of Daniel, the ominous words appeared on the wall of Babylon's banquet hall: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Then the blood of the feasters mingled with the spilt wine as Cyrus and Darius overthrew the kingdom. The record is touchingly simple: "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." Verses 30, 31.

Next in the ordered march of empires across the stage of history came Greece, experiencing the first flush of conquest under Alexander the Great, of whom it is said that when the world lay at his feet that he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer.

His death marked the beginning of the break-up of Greece, and then slowly on the banks of the Tiber the iron monarchy of Rome began to expand. The year 168 B.C. marked the transference of world rulership. Rome became the fourth world empire.

Why All Dictators Have Failed

After Rome there has never been another world empire. Notice the prophetic word: "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay." Dan. 2:41.

Today, true to the prophecy, the divided nations of modern Europe occupy the territory of the once united Roman Empire. "And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken." Verse 42.

The history of Europe has been the history of emerging nationalisms. Now and again this or that ruler has tried to weld together the separated fragments, but always they have found it impossible. They could not build their dream continent because they were fighting against God.

"And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Verse 43.

Can you imagine iron mixing with clay? No! So it has been in Europe. Attempts have not been lacking, but none has been successful. Charle-

magne tried it, Louis XIV tried it, Napoleon tried it, Kaiser Wilhelm tried it, Hitler tried it, but all failed. And now our former ally, the great bear of Russia, is making the old attempt in a new way; but God's purposes are stronger than the armies of men.

The same prophecy that paints this panoramic picture of world history also reveals the ultimate outcome. It does not leave us in the midst of disunity; it gives us the complete picture. Seven-eighths of the prophecy have already been fulfilled; obviously the remainder will be fulfilled also.

The Final Scene

The next great event in the history of this world is the coming of Jesus Christ. The stone that crushed the image to powder represents Jesus. It smote the feet. Not the head, that was Babylon; not the breast, that was Medo-Persia; not the belly, that was Greece; not the legs, they were Rome—but the toes. In our age, the King will come.

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Verse 44.

The coming of Jesus as King is the only hope for a lost, bewildered world. In our day and age the King will come.

Jesus is the stone. Listen to the testimonies of Peter and Paul. "This is the Stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." Acts 4:11. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." 1 Cor. 10:4.

What do we think of Jesus as a King? What do we imagine about His kingdom? Since we live on the very borders of that everlasting kingdom, what are we doing about our citizenship?

You and the King

One of the touching scenes of Jesus' life brings us face to face with this all-important issue. Two men meet, one with power to rule a small space of Roman soil; the other the mysterious Son of God—the compromising Pilate and the noble Jesus. For the only time in his life this Roman judge has Jesus' company for a few moments, moments fraught with possibilities such as no moments before or since in his life; and he asks

Jesus the all-important question. "Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." John 18:37.

Jesus was born into this world for the purpose of being a King. Was He born in vain so far as you are concerned? He may not seem to be a King when He knocks at the door of your heart, He may not seem to be a King when His soft voice pleads for you to accept His love, but: "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.

Would you have peace and confidence that is worth more than the world can give and which can never be taken away from you? It is yours for ever if you will have it. It is to be found in Jesus and in Him alone.

Know Your Bible

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whose name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father,



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to questions vital to each one of us such as ● Why does God permit sin and suffering? ● Will Christ come in our day? ● Is there life beyond the grave? ● Will there ever be lasting peace? etc., etc.

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THE INCARNATION

How does John introduce the incarnation to us?

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14.

The Latin word "incarnation" is derived from the Greek word for "flesh" and means to be "embodied in flesh." It refers to the coming of our blessed Lord into our physical environment in order to share our experience.

In what way does Paul describe the incarnation?

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels." 1 Tim. 3:16.

The descent of the Son of God from His eternal majesty to the infirmities and sorrows and temptations of this mortal condition, is so transcendent a revelation both of the love of God and the possible greatness and blessedness of man that we need not be surprised that to many profound Christian thinkers the incarnation has seemed to constitute the whole of the Christian Gospel.

Was the incarnation premeditated in the counsels of God?

"Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared Me. . . . Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God." Heb. 10:5-7.

We have in the life of Christ a flesh and blood translation of the holy will of God which he who runs may read.

How early in history was this plan intimated?

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed:"

It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Gen. 3:15.

What other prophecy is linked with this woman's seed?

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isa. 7:14.

Was this prophecy fulfilled?

"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matt. 1:22, 23.

How does Luke record this miraculous event?

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

God was manifest in the flesh: in Christ we behold the union of the Godhead with humanity—the divinity not destroying the humanity, the humanity remaining in its integrity in order that the divinity might be revealed by it.

In what other words was the incarnation predicted?

"And in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:18.

Abraham is assured that his "Seed" shall provide blessings for all mankind. We are not left

in any doubt as to who this Seed of Abraham is. "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ." Gal. 3:16.

The whole teaching of Holy Scripture places the incarnation at the centre of the methods of God for a sinning race. Toward that incarnation everything moved until its accomplishment, finding therein fulfilment and explanation.

What important truth is contained in this prophecy?

"For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Heb. 2:16, 17.

For what reason did Jesus share our humanity?

"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.

This scripture teaches us clearly that our blessed Lord did actually take upon Him our nature and share our experiences. As another has expressed it: "The problem which, in the assumption of fallen human nature, Christ proposed and accepted for Himself, was none other than this—namely, by personally identifying Himself with all its ill fortunes, and sharing the very lameness superinduced by sin, to master, in it and for it, the infernal power which had wrought all the mischief and woe."

Does the reality of our Lord's incarnation imply sinfulness?

"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Heb. 7:26. *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."* 1 Peter 2:22.

The revelation of the love of God in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ and His death

for the sin of the race, and the wonderful blessings with which the Christian life is enriched even in this world, are but the assurance of other manifestations of the divine grace in the golden ages of the endless future. We have only told half the story of the divine love when we have spoken of the descent of the Son of God from His greatness and majesty to the sorrows and conflicts of this earthly life; and that half of the story is incredible until we make it clear that He came in order to lift up the race to the heights of God.

What results accrue to us from the Incarnation?

1. *A revelation of God.* "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." John 14:9.

2. *To deliver man from sin and offer an atoning Sacrifice.* "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might . . . deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2:14, 15.

3. *To destroy Satan and all his works.* "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. 2:14.

How will this fulfil the first prophecy?

"It shall bruise thy head." Gen. 3:15.

So God declared to the serpent—Satan's first medium. And Paul comments on this promise: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Rom. 16:20.

What reunion is effected by the Incarnation?

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." 1 Peter 3:18.

"God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is 'the Son of man' who shares the throne of the universe. It is the 'Son of man,'

(Turn back to page 11.)

By J. A. McMillan

THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

The Lost Bible

By Inez Brasier

THE mountain trail was rough and steep in a certain part of Guatemala. The missionary who was hurrying along as fast as his horse could climb, was very tired. He stopped his mount at a spot where the path was not so rough.

"You need to rest, and so do I," he said.

He opened the saddlebag to get his Bible. He felt in one side of the bag and then in the other side.

"It is gone! It must have slipped out hours ago. And I can't go back now, for the trail is much too dangerous after dark."

The tired missionary leaned against his horse for a few minutes, with his eyes closed. "Dear Father," he prayed, "You know where my Bible is. If I never see it again, may someone find it who will read it and learn of Thy love for him."

He opened his eyes and jumped into the saddle. "Come, Pedro!" he said to his horse. "We must not stay here. They are expecting us before dark in the next village."

He followed the trail that wound around great rocks and on down the mountainside until he reached the town where he was to talk to the people about Jesus.

Oh, how he missed his Bible!

But he knew many, many verses and whole chapters by heart, so day after day he taught the people about Jesus and of His great love for them. Then, many weeks later, he started back over the mountain.

He asked about his lost Bible at every town on the mountainside, but no-one had ever seen a book and none had ever heard of a Bible.

The missionary knew that God was watching over that Bible, so once more, in the last village—the smallest and poorest of all on the mountainside—he asked about the missing Bible.

Now, there was an Indian

One Lone Violet

Humblest of God's messengers,
Though clothed in royal hue!
So far away from earthly sound,
I found you clinging to the
ground,
All damp with morning dew.

A hallowed spot, beneath the
trees,
Close to a deep ravine:
You showed your little purple
face
Just one lone flower in all that
place,
Content to grow unseen.

The ground seemed holy where
I stood.

God's Spirit spoke to me;
My soul was filled with reverent
awe,
I bowed my head as ne'er before
In deep humility.

Mrs. E. A. Robinson.

farmer living in this village. He had been along the trail after the Bible had fallen from the saddlebag. He had picked it up. But he could not read, so he took it to the only man in the town who could read.

The people gathered about this man as he read from it. How good the Bible stories sounded to them! Each evening

See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Pam, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than May 13th. In case OUR TIMES arrives late, still send your entry. All attempts will be considered.



they had this man read more to them.

When the missionary stopped and spoke about his Bible, all the people of the village came running to him.

"We believe the words of the Book! Stay with us! Teach us about the God of the Book!"

So the missionary stayed for a while. He helped them build a chapel. He taught them more and more of God's love for them.

"God meant you to lose the Book. God meant one of us to find it so that we could learn of Jesus," they said.

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jer. 15:16.

THE CROSS ROADS

By C. E. Sutton

It was raining, and I was carrying a shopping basket in one hand, and an umbrella in the other, when it seemed as if a *third* hand would be useful!

A small boy, with a rosy, smiling face, came up to me and said: "Please will you see me across the road?"

Of course, I was delighted. With umbrella and shopping basket now in *one* hand, I took the small boy *firmly* in the other hand, and when a lull came in the traffic—we crossed the road to safety.

Just then, a workman coming home to dinner, got off his bicycle.

"That's my daddy," said the small boy, with pride.

It was then that I slipped away, but the child's daddy had seen us both and he said to the child: "Did you thank the kind lady?" to which the little boy replied, "Thank you very much."

I went on my way feeling really happy, and forgot it was still pouring with rain.

Jesus once said: "I am the Way." When the path of life just seems too difficult, we must ask Him to "see us across the road." He is always there, and ready to help us. Difficulties often crowd cross our path, and worries and fears seem as if they would run over us and knock us flat, just like the busy traffic. We feel bewildered, and begin to panic. It is so silly to trust in our own strength, and run the risk of danger and disaster when we have a friend to take us on our way.

Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

How beautiful the world looks this morning! As I look out of the window of the Sunbeam office what a glorious view meets my eyes. The sky looks like a lovely blue dome over all, the trees are wearing their very new garments of green, and the wild flowers are springing up everywhere. The birds are singing so merrily, as if they too are full of joy, and wish to thank their Creator for making the earth so beautiful.

Yesterday all these things were there just the same, but one thing was missing, which today lights up the countryside, causing every colour to appear more brilliant. You can guess what has made the difference, boys and girls. Why, it is the sunshine! Even the dark corners have their sunbeams, as the world has its boys and girls who, like the rays or beams of the sun, do their part each one to bring a little sunshine into the lives of others. There are such a lot of ways in which a Sunbeam can shine for Jesus—it may be by helping Mother to do the dishes or by helping Father in the garden. Just a smile, a kind word, or a letter will scatter sunshine too, you know.

Sunbeam Constance Savage wishes to be remembered to all the Sunbeams. She has been in hospital for a very long time now, but she has started to walk again and hopes to be running around soon. We are so pleased to hear this, Constance, and hope that very soon now you will be well and strong and back home with Mother.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE PAM.

Results of Competition No. 4

Prize-winners.—Patricia Ann Williams, 26 Aldridge Road, Kinson, Bournemouth, Age 12; Carole Westwood, 85 Kingswood Road, Garston, Watford, Herts.

Honourable Mention.—Eleonora Baron (Accrington); Valerie Westwood (Garston); Leslie Hardy (Derby); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Helen Beatty (Cheltenham); Pat Tait (Upper Norwood); Ruth Campion (Torquay); Kathleen Tickner (Handsworth); Valerie Lewis (Folkestone); Jennifer Marvier (Streatham); Maureen Woodman (Southampton); Maxwell Thompson (Bricket Wood); Marion Russell (Glasgow); Richard Payne (Woodmancote); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Siegfried Baron (Accrington); Trevor Goddard (Iver); Maureen Walsh (Sussex); Pearl Rich (Cornwall); Stephanie Port (Torquay); Ronald Grant (Edinburgh); Rita Busliell (Northampton); Marion Paget (Wokingham); Colin Doggett (Norwich); Gary Ashton (Watford); Joy Winterton (East Leake); Eunice Ginbey (Godmanchester); Sheila Sharman (Aberdeen); Roy Davis (Sussex); Linda Walsh (Birmingham); Pamela Jones (Barnes); Eileen Maunder (Bodmin); David Forster (Lowestoft); Megan Phillips (Chelmsford); Pamela Coles (Hayes); Diane Ralph (Chatham); Rosemary Dymond (Bodmin); Charles Munn (Carlisle); June Grady (Norwich); Ann Culbert (Merton Abbey); Doreen Pearce (Tottenham); Valerie Edwards (West Wickham).

Those who tried hard.—Irene Mullett (Yarmouth); Richard Godden (Folkestone); Olive Swift (Lynton); David Herbert (Bristol); John Gunthorpe (Northampton); Robert Tait (Norwood); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); June Smith (Evesham); Margaret Peart (Cheltenham); Dorothy Voort (Selby); Derek Hendersen (York); Sylvia Hesketh (Erdington); David Birch (Radford); Stuart Payne (Woodmancote); Rita Hawes (Norfolk); Graham Hardy (Derby); Dawn Mountford (Stoke-on-Trent); Yvonne Meekoms (Dorset); Beryl Line (Southampton); Heather Payne (Woodmancote); John Kent (Hull); Richard Bushell (Northampton); Janet Kenning (Birmingham); Brian Chapman (Rhonda); Jane Lennon (Leicester); Brian Garnett (Sedburgh); Glenys Bruce (Hayes); Brian Maher (Cardiff); Heather Price (Usk); Ann Gittins (Wirral); Jennifer Brown (Nottingham); Heather Chapman (Lowestoft); Antony Peart (Cheltenham); Maureen Whitethread (Merton Abbey); Adrienne Edwards (Torquay); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Esther Dunstan (Bodmin); Jean Hocking (Cornwall); Amy Randlestone (Suffolk); Paul Hobbs (Birmingham); Jilda Sleeman (Torquay); Yvonne Holmes (Swinefleet).

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STRAWS IN THE WIND

Thermo-Nuclear Horror

⊕ U.S. Secretary of Defence Wilson described the results of the latest hydrogen bomb tests at Bikini as "unbelievable." The most recent explosion was 600 times as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb, and developed six to eight times the energy of all the bombs delivered by the U.S. Air Force in World War II put together!

Idolatry of Progress Declining

⊕ "Our forefathers became victims of a lamentable cult—the idolatry of progress," said the Bishop of Peterborough in a recent sermon at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London. "They clouded their conception of progress with such irrelevant things as wealth, and comfort, and speed of travel, and, wandering farther into the fog, supposed that man was the architect of his own progress and fortunes. Today I hope we are wiser just because we have learned to be humbler. The old text, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' no longer tinkles monotonously in our ears as the dictum of an outworn creed. We are coming to see that there is a depth, a reality in it, and that when men break the Second Commandment something goes wrong with their moral lives."

Vast Increase of Divorce

⊕ In 1921-1925 divorces averaged 2,848 a year. According to

the latest statistical review issued by the Registrar-General, the average for the five years 1946-50 was 38,901, the peak annual figure being 48,501 in 1947.

Promises For You

Just take the precious promises,
That God holds out to you;
What things soever, that you ask,
His love for you will do.

He bends from heaven, to hear
thy prayer
Commingled with thy faith,
For all things promised, He will
do,
So boldly ask and wait.

What things soever, matters not
If they be great or small,
All will He do, so press right
through
For longingly He waits.

Lily Winder Gale.

Gambling "Squandermania"

⊕ The total gambling turnover in 1953 of £602 million was £27 million higher than in the previous year. The increases were £30 millions more on horse-racing and £4 millions on football pools. Betting on the "dogs"

dropped 6 millions and funfair receipts fell by a million pounds.

China Population

⊕ Communist China has just made the claim that her population, which was 475,000,000 when the Communists took over in 1949, has passed the 500,000,000 mark.

Uranium From Gold Mines

⊕ New life is coming to some almost worked-out gold mines in South Africa by reason of the uranium content of the hitherto useless slimes and dumps. Some mines are actually now making more profit out of uranium than gold.

World Population

⊕ According to the Population Reference Bureau, the world's population may reach 4,000,000,000 by the year 2000.

War Across Arctic

⊕ "If any world conflagration should arise," writes Col. B. Balcher in the *New York Herald Tribune*, "it is reasonable to assume that the Arctic and the sub-Arctic regions might be the areas from which the first, and maybe most decisive, aerial attacks will be initiated. Three of our most densely inhabited continents—North America, Europe, and Asia—meet at the Arctic Ocean and the northern extremities of these continents, on which the world's greatest military and air powers are located, comprise the chief land areas of the Arctic."

