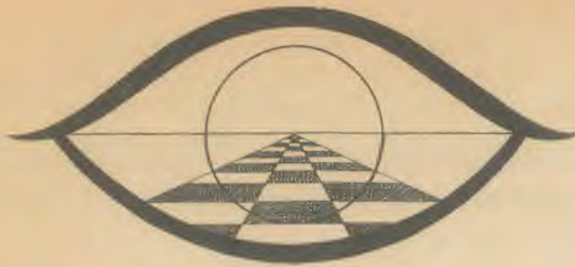


JANUARY 1969

OUR TIMES





IN PERSPECTIVE

by W. G. JOHANSSON

IT WAS October 4. The newspapers were full of the speeches of statesmen within India and abroad as the father of the nation had been eulogized from Bombay to Rio de Janeiro. October 2 was not only Gandhi Jayanti; it also marked the commencement of the Gandhi centenary celebrations. And everywhere the theme was the brotherhood of man and the renunciation of violence.

Some boys found a sun-bird's nest, low in a hedge. Thoughtless fingers quickly tore it apart, while a well-aimed stone put an end to the mother-bird. There was one survivor—a beautiful, yellow-breasted male. But it was hardly two inches long and scarcely able to flutter its wings. It eventually found its way to our home, cradled in the hands of seven-year-old Terry.

"Can we keep it?" he asked.

"Well, we will at least try to keep it alive. If it stays outside tonight, the ants or a cat will get it. But don't be disappointed if it doesn't survive—wild birds often quickly die in captivity," father replied.

So a home for the little bird was prepared: a basket with some cotton-wool for a nest, a perch, a saucer of water, and some bread-crumbs.

"Listen to him squeak! We'll call him 'Pipsqueak'," exclaimed Terry.

That night, Pipsqueak slept in his basket by Terry's bed.

Morning found Pipsqueak wide awake and glad to swallow two droppers of milk. Then he became restless, emitting plaintive "Pip! Pip's;" finally he ruffled his feathers and flew right out of the basket to the window-sill. There he sat, looking through the wire screen and answering the bird-calls from the neighbouring trees.

Terry picked up Pipsqueak. For a long time he held him close; then he took him outside to the lawn. At last, very slowly he placed him on the grass. Pipsqueak looked this way and that, pecked at a blade of grass and suddenly flew up to a nearby shrub. Then across the road he sped, and up to a wire under a large *gulumohr*. Two other sun birds flew down to him. There was an animated conversation in bird-language, and finally all three flew deep into the recesses of the *gulumohr*.

Terry stood for a long time looking up at the *gulumohr*. At last he returned to his room; a few tears flowed. But out in the *gulumohr* tree the birds were having a gay time.

"Listen to those 'Pip! Pip's! Do you think you can hear Pipsqueak's voice?" asked father.

Terry rose from his bed. "Whenever I find a bird or an animal that is wounded, I'm going to keep it until it's better and then let it go," he said.

It was October 4. The newspapers were full of the speeches of statesmen within India and abroad as the father of the nation was eulogized from Bombay to Rio de Janeiro. Everywhere the theme was the brotherhood of man and the renunciation of violence. But, while so much was said about the dignity of the individual, the right to freedom, and ahimsa, a little child came closest to these ideals.

It is often thus in life: we read and hear, and we think we have learned. Then, in the crashing impact of a life situation, the truth bursts upon our narrow world. Then we indeed know. Then we see the data of life in meaningful relationships—in perspective.

We shall endeavour in this column to set forth, month by month, perspectives of God, man and the world. As we draw upon the data of human existence, we shall be at times philosophical, sometimes theological, at times homespun. And we shall always bear in mind the truth, as the Holy Scriptures put it, that "A little child shall lead them."

A

LITTLE CHILD

SHALL LEAD THEM

only one issue a variable. Rest of the numbers are missing

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JANUARY 1969

THE WORLD



AROUND

Worthington Foods, Inc., producer of vegetable protein foods, has launched its own war on hunger in the world. Run in the United States by Seventh-day Adventist laymen, the company's fight against hunger resulted from requests by UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and the High Protein Committee of AID (Agency for International Development).

As a first step, Worthington Foods will provide to developing countries technology with which a variety of protein-rich vegetable foods may be produced.

*

World population continues to increase at the rate of about 70 million per year. In the developing countries, the death rate is dropping, and half of the population is below the age of fifteen.

*

"Eyes of Faith and Hands That Serve—The Rediscovery of Humanity" will be the theme of the Christian Pavilion at Expo '70 to be held in Osaka, Japan. Sub-themes are (1) harmony by reconciliation and (2) progress by creation. In a statement of intention, the organizing committee of the pavilion says, "The Christian pavilion will be the 'eyes' for the whole exposition—for that huge 'body' which will show the progress and harmony of mankind. The eyes are eyes of faith, eyes of hope, eyes of love. It will also symbolize Christianity as 'the hands' that serve and pray for mankind—hands lifted in prayer for justice, hands extended in service, hands joined in reconciliation."

PICTURE CREDITS

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Editorial

TIME, YOU AND I

Time is a concept that we are almost constantly aware of; time as measured by our watches and calendars, by the sun and seasons, and in many other ways.

If we work in offices or shops, we may gauge our labours in terms of hours of time. If we are farmers, we watch the time of the monsoons, and of sowing and harvesting. Our very bodies measure time for us, in their rhythms of need for food and rest, for example.

There are no people so primitive but are in some measure aware of time.

But in all the world there is probably no period when time has more significance for more people than New Year. For them it is a transition from a perhaps dissatisfying past to a fresh, unsullied future. It brings new anticipations and attitudes; it seems to offer fresh opportunities, a new start. Its coming is something like putting on new clothes. The experience gives us lift, a new feeling of confidence, of capability.

The feeling, of course, is in ourselves. The movement of a minute hand past the midnight mark, the mere hanging of a new calendar, the act of writing a new date on our letters, can affect us only as symbols. Nevertheless, the frame of mind these things engender may be made meaningful and helpful to us in a practical way. For we may ride the waves of impulse for new and better things to some solid ground of action if we go about it properly. It all depends on whether we are dissatisfied enough with ourselves and our past, whether we want deeply enough to do better, whether we are willing enough to make determined improvements, and whether we will accept help to make a change.

Of these four requirements, the last is the most important. For we are not morally strong enough, and our best resolutions not sustained enough, to make lasting changes, no matter how deep or desperate our desires may be. We must have outside help. And we must have the kind of help that can aid us on the inside. For defeat, shame, weakness, failure spring from within. Therefore, it takes more than a man to give us the kind of strength and confidence we need. For while man may temporarily bolster up our moral walls from the outside he cannot repair the foundation or strengthen the beams. Only God can do this. "Fear not," is His message, "... I will strengthen thee; ... yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

What we must do is sincerely ask Him for help and strength.

— T.A.D.

Our Times

$$2 + 2 = \underline{\underline{5}}$$

Nothing Adds Up

by KNUTE LARSON

EVERY CLOCK is a time bomb. Every tick is a warning there may not be another tock for you. Life goes that quickly.

Seconds become minutes; minutes, hours, days; years—a lifetime. And where did it all go? Why it seemed like only yesterday!

What's it all about? If the answer to that question is not found, life is one large carton of zeros. Nothing adds up.

Every thinking man wants the answer. Life can be just one big ball of frazzled nerves unwound a bit each day, then snipped off when your time is up. Another day, another dollar.

What's it all about? Even the psychiatrists aren't sure. Who knows?

Solomon does, for one.

Who?

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. A king given special wisdom by God. A writer who with that wisdom searched every spot "under the sun" in an effort as a committee of one to find meaning in life.

Solomon tried everything—everything on earth.

He tried pleasure. You know—wine, women, and song; eat, drink, and be merry. "I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure."

And, believe the Bible, Solomon had it to try. For instance, take the women part; he had 300 concubines and 700 wives.

But it's just a lot of vanity, said the searching king.

The fact has been proved again daily. Those movie stars who have pleasure, pleasure, pleasure, but admit life isn't good. The increasing number who go the suicide route. Or the socially up-and-in people who are down-and-out as far as meaning to their life is concerned.

Or just the ordinary man who has tried all kinds of ways to make life fun but must conclude that there's more to it.

You may be one of them.

But Solomon didn't stop with pleasure.

He tried material possessions. Riches.

Now everybody knows you can't take it with you. But that doesn't mean you can't make it your goal while you keep it here. Solomon did.

Let him tell you about it: "I made me great works, . . . gardens and orchards, . . . pools of water; . . . I got me servants and maidens, . . . great possessions, . . . silver and gold. . . . And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them." What was the meaning of all this?

Is this what gives meaning to life? Ask the wealthy president of the—no, don't. He hanged himself last week.

Ask Solomon. His words are frank and honest because they are part of the inspired Word of God. When he looked at all that he had, he cried, "Behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

Did all this discourage the searcher? Yes, but he went on.

He tried knowledge and human wisdom.

"I turned myself to behold wisdom," Solomon reported. Maybe a know-it-all could know what life is all about.

But brains in themselves didn't do much more for him than the booze or the belongings. You guessed his conclusion: "Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity."

Even Wernher Von Braun wouldn't be happy about life with just the facts. "Man needs what no system of human thought can give him," claimed Psychiatrist Carl Jung.

Solomon tried labour. Really. He must have

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FORETASTE OF HEAVEN IN

1969

BY the grace of God we have come to another January. With some nostalgia we take the old calendars down, and put new unfamiliar ones up.

As each new year dawns it is perhaps natural to indulge new hopes. This present "old year," like all its predecessors, began in the same way. We gave, and received, many sincere good wishes for a "happy new year," and we fondly hoped that in some measure, these kindly desires might come true.

But the "old year" has brought its problems, its anxieties, and its losses. Social and perhaps economic perplexities have come and gone. The well-loved faces of some lifelong friends we shall see no more till Jesus comes. We have been reminded again that "change and decay" are the more constant concomitants of our lives, rather than seasonable renewals of fleeting happiness.

Is hope vain?

Is it then vain to hope that we may have a foretaste of heaven in '69? Not at all.

Indeed, given some fulfilled conditions, we may, with certainty, expect such an experience as we pray for it. For did not our Saviour Himself instruct us to petition the Father: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"? If, during the next twelve months, that purposive prayer is a meaningful part of our daily devotions, then we may expect the blessings of an ever-increasing foretaste of heaven. Matthew 6:10.

The Bible speaks of heaven as a place of unimaginable beauty and of unalloyed felicity. 1 Corinthians 2:9; Revelation 21:4. It is also, as our Saviour from His own previous experience knew, a place of loving and implicit obedience to the will of God. For the psalmist reveals that its angelic inhabitants "excel in strength, . . . do [God's] commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." Their perpetual delight is simply to be "ministers of his," and "do his pleasure" (Psalm 103:20, 21).

This, then, is what heaven is like. Happiness is its atmosphere, and joyful obedience, its law. And to

live, as it were, within this heavenly atmosphere, and according to this heavenly rule, is the priceless privilege of every trusting child of God on earth.

Loyalty in a rebellious world

We may feel, however, that to live daily and implicitly according to a heavenly law when we are surrounded by so much that savours strongly of earthly rebellion, is well-nigh impossible. On every hand today the Christian religion is discounted. Even when it is taken at all seriously, it is often regarded as a mode of thought which may well vary with the individual; rather than as a dependent and obedient relationship to a higher Being. Our spatial research has discovered "no place for God." Our scientific achievement, generally speaking, has little time for ventures and experiences of faith.

Yet faith and obedience have distinguished and ennobled many men of old, and that usually amid the most testing and discouraging circumstances. Noah, for example, was born among, and brought up with, people whose every thought and imagination "was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). As in these days, the people of Noah's day were prosperous and pleasure-loving. They were quite content to exclude God from their culture, and they chose cynically to scoff at His worship, His purity, and His power.

Unswerving purpose

But Noah was no religious simpleton. As a remarkably persevering "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), he was a man of strong faith and unswerving purpose. Under God's guidance he developed a genius for mechanical construction, and a capacity for faithful obedience which proved more than a match for his sneering enemies. Concerning the Ark's preparation, we are told: "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Genesis 6:22). And after the completion of the tremendous vessel, seven days before there was any sign of the downpour, when the Lord told him to enter without

*We need not sink in the failures
of the past. In Christ there is hope
for a new beginning again.*



delay, we have the further word: "And Noah did according unto *all* that the Lord commanded him" (Genesis 7:5).

We know how Noah's faith and obedience were eventually vindicated, and how the "worldly wisdom" and the arrogant scepticism of his contemporaries were tragically punished.

We should ever remember that it was none other than Jesus Himself who supremely stressed our duty of implicit and unconditional obedience to God. He urged upon us the obligation that we ourselves fulfil the petition of our prayer, when He added: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will of my Father* which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Active possession of faith

Clearly then, it is not just the passive profession of faith which has saving value, but its active possession. It is not lip-service, but life-service which will

bring us to the kingdom. It is those who practise what they preach, and who never neglect to preach what they practise, who find favour with God. They not only pray that God's will be done on earth, but they themselves set about *to do it*. In this way they bring heaven to earth, at any time, and in any place.

Wherever our Saviour went while He was on earth, men felt that He carried with Him something of the atmosphere of heaven. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God," said Nicodemus. "I have need to be baptized of thee," said John the Baptist. "What manner of man is this?" asked the wondering disciples. "Truly this was the Son of God," said the alarmed centurion. John 3:2; Matthew 3:14; 8:27; 27:54. Wherever Jesus was, in the quiet garden, in the dreary wilderness, on the tossing ship, on the final, cruel cross, there was also something of heaven.

This was because our Saviour's own devotion to His Father's will brought heaven to earth. Indeed, He constantly declared that His own filial obedience to His Father was ever His first consideration. "My meat," He said, "is to do the will of him that sent me. . . . I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father. . . . I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. . . . I must work the works of him that sent me" (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 9:4.) Thus the whole life of Jesus was one of constant attention to, and constant fulfilment of, His Father's plans for man's redemption.

Many people today are confused and uncertain as to what it really means to be a Christian. They realize that true Christianity involves obligations, but they are not quite sure what those duties are. High on their list of priorities usually stand church-going, almsgiving, habits of prayer, and acts of charity. These, of course, are important, and should not be neglected.

But the true Christian, like his Master, is surely he who seeks first to *know* as fully as he may, and then to *do* as completely as he can, the Father's revealed will. This was ever the Saviour's prior purpose. "The Father which sent me," He declared, "he gave

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Is Christ Relevant to Modern Man?

by M. D. KODAN

WE are living in a grand and awful time in the history of the world. Science and technology have advanced with incredible rapidity. Within a brief space of a generation, we have been catapulted from the steam age to the electronic age, and from the electronic age to the nuclear age and thence to the space age.

In the last days, says the Bible, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). We are, doubtless, living in such a time as that. Men and women travel and run to and fro as never before. Knowledge has put on its seven-league boots. With rapid strides, it marches on.

Because of this wonderful and seemingly limitless growth in knowledge, man has become arrogant and Godless. He thinks he has no need for God. He soars into space and proudly boasts: "I have been looking for God in space. I could not find Him there." Can arrogance and impudency go any further?

The increase of knowledge has brought in its wake danger to the very existence of man on this planet. Man now possesses in his hand deadly weapons capable of annihilating the human race from this planet.

The increase of knowledge has also resulted in an unparalleled wave of crime and violence, surging with relentless force and fury all the world over. Coupled with this are the unprecedented decay of spiritual and moral standards, comparable only to the days of Noah and to the times of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Man, with all his scientific and technologic skill and with all his carefully laid out national plans, is at his wit's end. He is baffled with problems of providing people with the bare necessities of life and of bringing them peace, prosperity and happiness.

For, there is no real and lasting happiness and satisfaction of soul among the people; no peace and rest among the nations and individuals. Uncertainty and frustration reign supreme in the heart and mind of modern man.

Out of such despair comes the cry: "Is there no remedy for the ills of the world? Is there any way out of this imbroglio?"

Yes, there is. The answer is found not in man, but in God who became Man. In Jesus Christ. This is the message of the Incarnation. Christ is relevant to modern man. He can supply all his needs.

What does modern man need? In the first place, the modern man—be he rich or poor, prince or peasant—needs *rest* of body, mind, and soul. Crushed under the burden of cares and worries, men and women with woebegone faces greet us at every turn. Man tries to find a solace in pictures, TV, dances, and worldly pleasures. These things might help him spend some time in dreamland and make him forget the grim realities of life, but they offer no permanent cure for the ills of life.

Christ says to such, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). The rest that Christ gives can be

better experienced than explained. His rest is eternal in nature, all-sufficient in character, rewarding in its effects.

Second, modern man needs *peace*. The world is torn by war and turmoil. Trouble spots plague the world and the threat of a nuclear war hangs in the air. Fear and uncertainty make people's hearts fail. And peace is receding and elusive.

But Christ is relevant to the modern man. He says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27). This He said while standing in the deepening shadow of the cross. His last legacy to His followers was a legacy of peace.

But the world can neither understand nor offer the peace that Christ gives. He has spoken the word of peace for every soul. His grace that reconciles the soul to God quietens the strife of human passion, and in His love the heart is at rest.

Third, modern man needs happiness. But he vainly seeks it in wealth, fame, position and power. None of these things bring lasting joy and happiness.

Ask Tiberius Cæsar, the Emperor of the mighty Roman Empire, if his position, power and wealth gave him happiness. He would say, "Alas, no. I had to abdicate my throne and go to the lonely island of Cypri to spend my last days in the hope of finding joy and happiness in solitude."

Ask Lord Clive, if wealth and fame gave him happiness. He would say, "Yes, it did for some time, but it was fleeting. So, utterly dejected and depressed in mind, I had to take my own life."

Turn now to Lord Byron upon whom the three muses showered their favours and blessings vying with one another, and ask him if he found happiness in his position, wealth, and sinful pleasures. He would say, "Read what I wrote in my thirty-sixth year and you will understand that happiness eluded me like a slippery eel. This is what I wrote: 'My days are in the yellow leaf. The flowers and fruits of love are gone. I have nothing left but the worm, the canker and the grief.'"

Ask Solomon, the wise man, if he found joy, happiness and satisfaction in his wisdom, wealth and women. He would say, "Vanity of vanities...; all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 12:8).

But Jesus says to the modern man, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

Those who follow Jesus may have the joy of communion with Him; they may have the light of His love, the perpetual comfort of His presence. The follower of Jesus is not left to vain regrets and disappointments. Heaven's resources are at his command and the Christian's life is to be one of joy, peace and happiness. His tears are wiped away, his pain soothed, his fears dispelled, his wants supplied, and he is a new man.

This Christ promises for all. "Come unto me," He invites. And He will make us new. He will make our lives meaningful, promising, and richly rewarding. ***

Religion--

The Only Basis for Society

by WILLIAM E. CHANNING

Written more than 150 years ago, this article has a strikingly modern, even prophetic, sound.

RELIGION is a social concern; for it operates powerfully on society, contributing in various ways to its stability and prosperity. Religion is not merely a private affair; the community is deeply interested in its diffusion; for it is the best support of the virtues and principles on which the social order rests.

Few men suspect, perhaps no man comprehends, the extent of the support given by religion to every virtue. No man, perhaps, is aware how much our moral and social sentiments are fed from this fountain; how powerless conscience would become without the belief in a God; how palsied would be human benevolence, were there not the sense of a higher benevolence to quicken and sustain it; how suddenly the whole social fabric would quake, and with what a fearful crash it would sink into hopeless ruin, were the ideas of a Supreme Being, of accountableness and a future life utterly erased from every mind.

And, let men thoroughly believe that they are the work and sport of chance; that superior intelligence concerns itself with human affairs; that all their improvements perish forever at death; that the weak have no guardian, and the injured no avenger; that there is no recompense for sacrifices to uprightness and the public good; that an oath is unheard in heaven; that secret crimes have no witness but the perpetrator; that human existence has no purpose, human virtue no unfailing friend; that his brief life is everything to us, and death is total everlasting extinction; once let them thoroughly abandon religion, and who can conceive or describe the extent of the desolation which would follow?

We hope, perhaps, that natural laws and human sympathy would hold society together. As reasonably might we believe that were the sun quenched in the heavens, our torches would illuminate, and our fires quicken and fertilize the creation. What is there in human nature to awaken respect and tenderness if man is the insect of a day? And what is he more, if atheism be true?

Erase all thought and fear of God from the community, and selfishness and sensuality would absorb the whole man. Appetite, knowing no restraint, and suffering, having no solace or hope, would trample in scorn on the restraints of human laws. Virtue, duty, principle, would be mocked and spurned as unmeaning sounds. A sordid self-interest would supplant every feeling; and man would become, in fact, what the theory of atheism declares him to be—a companion for brutes.

A professor of theology
takes stock of a disturbing question.
First in a two-part serial.

Which is the True Church?

by EDWARD HEPPENSTALL, PH.D.



Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" ((Matthew 16:16-18).

THE GOSPEL message asserts that God has a church in this world; that against God's church "the gates of hell shall not prevail." Here is a divine promise that he who truly belongs to this church will escape the judgment of hell, What reasonable person does not wish to escape such a woeful destiny? It should not be difficult to make up one's mind to join such a church.

But which church is the true church? What church would Jesus recognize today as the church victorious against the powers of darkness? Do all church bodies and denominations belong to the one true church? All churches lay claim to the truth that points the way to the kingdom of God and to eternal life. But do all churches in fact do that? That is the important question.

There is a great deal of cheap religion in the world. It is possible to have a counterfeit. The kind of church one chooses matters a great deal. It is possible for a church to ally itself with those forces which are opposed to the truth of God while all the

time professing to teach and to preach it. When this happens, men actually worship and serve the doctrines of men and the creations of men's thinking and opinions. Since a man's salvation is at stake, he ought to be sure of the way he is taking. To permit oneself to be deceived in such matters is folly of the worst kind.

No one denies that God has His children in every Christian body of believers. Jesus said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). If this is so, then can the answer to the question, Which is the true church? be that important? But that is hardly the point. This is what many people find difficult to comprehend and to accept. They start from the wrong idea of what a Christian really is, of what a true disciple of Christ is supposed to be. The true church must make it perfectly clear what it means to be a loyal disciple of Christ. This is not the same as repeating the Apostles' Creed. The true church begins with Christ. "Upon this rock I will build my church." That is the believer's starting point. Jesus is not asking for a financial contribution to religious enterprises or even for a morally respectable life and all that. The issue is one of total commitment and involvement to Jesus Christ and to the revealed truth of God. Every church must be tested by this.

Is the church committed to the truth of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures? There is no sub-



stitute for this. Does the church lead its adherents to the truth which is in Christ and in the Bible? Christ promised that through the work of the Holy Spirit He would guide His church into all truth. John 16:13.

It is God's purpose to communicate to the world through His church the revelation of Himself—His character, truth, love, and mercy. The church cannot be truly the church until it fulfils that purpose. This is not defined in terms of ritual and externals. When baptism is carried out by immersion, that is in harmony with the Bible. But this is not sufficient to determine this particular body of believers as the true church. To speak of apostolic succession is acceptable providing that succession means loyalty to the truth of God's Word. Without that, we have nothing but a self-styled claim to ecclesiastical privilege and authority.

A denial of the faith means setting up one's own word and tradition against that of the word of God in the Bible. The responsibility of every church is to test every doctrine and theological position it holds by the Word of God and not by some "ex cathedra" statement of a religious hierarchy.

The church needs to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," and then to make the fulfilment of that prayer possible by searching the Scriptures to discover the will of God in doctrine, in faith, in morality, and in Christian living. The difference between the true and the false lies just here. A compass will naturally point to the magnetic pole every

time unless it has been tampered with. The true church of God will likewise point to the magnetic pole of truth found in the Bible. When any church fails to stand that test, it denies the faith once given to the saints. Throughout its history the church has been continually assailed on this issue. Satan has succeeded time and again in causing the church to depart from the truth of the Bible.

The all-important question is, What church can really be trusted? The answer is unmistakably plain: The church that confesses the truth of Christ and of the living Word of God. The true church is where the vital truth of God can be found. The ultimate issue today is, Can my church be depended upon as a safe guide in matters of faith and doctrine? Is my church true to the Word of God in every respect?

Time and again the Word of God has been tampered with. Men have set their own tradition against God's truth. Jesus knew that and warned against it, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men. . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:7-9).

Therefore all churches, regardless of size or station, need continually to test themselves by that given norm of truth, the Bible. There can be no hedging here if the church is to remain true to her Lord. When we say that Christ instituted the Christian church, we do not mean that He created an organization and then left it to be run by pastors and bishops and archbishops. Christ is always Lord of the church. God rules the church in truth and in love. Where Christ is Lord and where the Spirit directs, the church must be led into the truth. Christ would never deny the Scriptures. He Himself declared, "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Christ makes it plain that accepting or rejecting His revealed Word is a very serious thing. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32).

On this basis men will find themselves either for God or against Him. The tragedy of the church is the possibility of its departure from the Scriptures and the consequent deception of its own followers. Thus men may be led away into error while all the time claiming to believe the truth. For this reason no church can declare a man to be "in the truth" or "to be saved." Only God can do that. Only the Word of God can reveal that. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13).

Every professing Christian is personally responsible for asking himself the right questions: Do I really want to know the truth? Do I seriously intend to obey the truth revealed in God's Word? In the

The true church begins with Jesus Christ

Holy Scriptures, God has done everything possible to lead sinners to the light. The Word of truth is the light that shines in the darkness of this world. It is available to all who read and study it. There is one thing God will never do. He will never compel people to study it or to obey it. That is man's responsibility, regardless of his church affiliation. Every minister likewise of every communion is under sacred orders to know the truth and to guide his hearers into the way of truth. It is when men are thus confronted that they say either Yes or No to God.

A church can move so far from the truth that its very message is darkness, its very ritual and formal proclamations and worship only a veneer and a substitute that hide its departure from the faith. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23). These words sound incredible and hard to believe. But our Lord spoke them. He declared that many of the people who will ultimately be cast into outer darkness will be those who have preached and taught from the sacred desk in the churches and those who have sat and listened in the pews.

Many church people today have come to believe in their particular church without knowing or examining the truth of that church's position; whether they themselves are really living obediently to the revealed will of God. Departure from the Word by any church that claims to follow Christ is every bit as serious as a departure from the right track on moral issues in our world today—probably more so.

To be committed to the full light of truth found in Christ and in His Word is to be truly a believer. No genuine Christian can afford to confront the truth of God in His Word and then say No to God because it cuts across his own selfish will, or because he hates to disagree with the church of which he is a member. God is running no popularity contest. Only the minority have stood with Christ. The majority have taken the broad road that leads to destruction. No one can palliate his conscience by join-

ing any church simply to avoid choosing the truth for himself before God.

The true church will continually lead its followers into the light of God which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18.) In this way the church is continually winning the victory over the forces of error and darkness. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:19-21).

The church of the future—what is it? Because the church had a beginning, it will have an end. The church of God will triumph. The gates of hell shall not prevail. Christ will rule His church forever. The Bible declares that He will come for His church; but the church must be ready. The church ready to meet her Lord will be a Spirit-led church, a church that lives by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

But not all members of the church will be ready for that final day. Christ spoke a parable of His church and represented it by the ten virgins. "And five of them were wise, and five were foolish" (Matthew 25:1-12). Christ said that it is possible to be a respectable church member, to look like all the rest of the believers, and yet to belong to those foolish ones who at the last will be shut out from God. They had the outward form; they had church membership but had no living truth inside. Spiritually, they were dead.

Where the living truth is, there is the true church. Church members may not have arrived at the goal that God has set for them. This does not mean that believers can be careless and indifferent to the truth of God. God shows Himself in and through His true followers. In the true church one understands and obeys the truth of God. This obligation is gladly accepted because of the gift of salvation in Christ. Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ must seek to follow the light as God reveals it. The church is not something that men make. It is something that God makes by the power of His Holy Spirit and His truth. This is the church we can trust, a church tested by the Word of God and the living Christ and not found wanting; a church tested by its fruits, the fruits of loving obedience to the truth of God. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

This must be the assurance that the believer has in his church. Without that, no church, however great, can be trusted. When the church is continually reaching out to grasp and to proclaim and do the will of God out of loving loyalty to her beloved Lord, there is the church of God, and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." ***

ANSWERS FROM THE BOOK

Conducted by the Voice of Prophecy

Questions related to Bible subjects or personal spiritual problems are invited. Address to "From the Book", Box 35, Poona 1, India.



After Death

When a person dies, we place the remains in the ground, but what happens to the spirit? Does the Bible have anything to say on cremation?

In answer to the latter question, cremation is not a Semitic custom. It is rarely mentioned in the Scriptures. The bodies of Saul and his three sons were thus cared for, and their bones buried. 1 Samuel 31:12, 13. Amos predicts the removal of famine dead in a similar manner, Amos 6:9, 10. Although no stigma is attached in thus disposing of the human body, the usual custom was burial in graves or in rock sepulchres.

The problem of death has perplexed aching human hearts since the entrance of sin. But Jesus Christ holds the key to unlock both its mystery and its reality. He declares, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [the grave] and of death" (Revelation 1:18). When Christ as Creator made man (see John 1:1-3, 14), the record describes the simple act thus: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Note that the Scripture does not say that the Creator put some immortal soul or spirit entity into the body of dust, but that He joined with the body of dust His "breath of life"—the life principle.

The union of the life principle and the body produced a living, thinking, intelligent soul or person. Sometimes the Bible refers to this life principle as "spirit" or "spirit of God." See Job 27:3; 33:4. When death occurs, the life principle returns to the Creator, who gave it, and the body returns to dust. Ecclesiastes 12:7. The psalmist declares, "His breath [life principle] goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:4). According to the Scriptures, death is just the opposite of life. It is not life in another form. It is the complete cessation of life.

Death is an unconscious condition. "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not

any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence" (Psalm 115:17). The Scriptures consistently refer to death as a "sleep." Jesus said of Lazarus, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth" (John 11:11). "If a man die, shall he live again?" was the ancient question of suffering Job. Job 14:14.

Our victorious Lord Jesus by His own resurrection has answered this cry of the ages: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:28, 29). And when will that climactic summons be heard? The apostle Paul points to the second coming of Jesus. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Not a natural, inherent immortality but the resurrection through the power of Christ is the Christian's hope!

Trinity

How do you explain the word "Trinity"?

The term "Trinity" is applied to the Christian doctrine of God. A simple dictionary definition is that the word denotes the union of three Persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) in one God-head, so that all three are one God as to substance or essence, but three persons as to individuality. The Scriptures were designed of God for practical living and not for speculative theorizing. Hence they contain no systematic exposition on the nature of the God-head. The Christian statement regarding the Trinity is an attempt to state the Biblical paradox (which Scripture never attempts to resolve); that there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; James 2:19) yet existing in three Persons. Matthew 28:19. While this matter is a mystery above human comprehension and explanation, it is not contrary to reason. It is becoming for the creature to believe and to adore. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).



TWO WORSHIPPERS

Only one of them did worship.
Last in the series of
ten great parables of Jesus Christ.

by M. E. CHERIAN, PH.D.

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS and spiritual arrogance constitute one of the most dangerous attitudes in the search for *mukti* or salvation. Those of us who are spiritual pilgrims seeking God, His truth, and ultimate reality in our existence must learn to trust God implicitly. This attitude of trust, however, cannot develop in us as long as we are possessed of self-righteousness and self-trust. *Mukti marga* and self-righteousness are incompatible.

Gandhiji once remarked, "We must completely surrender ourselves to Him [God] ... in a spirit of utter self-effacement." A spiritual pilgrim, seeking after truth, must deny self and only then can the Spirit of God permeate his life. The Lord Jesus expressed this truth in these arresting words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, . . . and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

Man by nature is selfish and self-centred and is prone to develop self-trust and self-righteousness. This hinders spiritual regeneration and emancipation. Self-righteousness develops spiritual complacency and soon

the individual becomes subject to a spiritual illusion and deceived into believing that he lacks nothing spiritually.

Gandhiji used to say so often, "My trust is in God." He, who had attained a unique position in modern times as a leader of men and a great soul, felt the need to trust in God and was convinced that this was the secret of his spiritual powers. Note his clear affirmation of this great religious principle: My trust is in God. We can but work, and then be careful for nothing. I know that if we trust in God when we are weakest, somehow He makes us strong."

Gandhiji advises us to trust in God implicitly and cry to Him for help and guidance. According to him "That cry must not be from the lip. It has to be from the deepest recesses of one's heart. And, therefore, such a cry is only possible when one is in anguish. My heart continually says:

'Rock of Ages, cleft for me;
Let me hide myself in Thee.'

The danger of self-trust and self-righteousness was well illustrated by the Lord Jesus Christ in a parable.

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:9-13).

This parable given by the Master in the setting of a Jewish community portrays two individuals in an act of worship. The first one is a Pharisee, a Jewish religious teacher and leader. The second one is a publican, a tax collector, considered to be an outcast, unjust in dealings, and corrupt in life.

Even though both of them are engaged in a spiritual dialogue with God, they manifest diametrically opposed attitudes. Let us carefully note the differences.

First consider the attitude of the Pharisee: "The Pharisee goes up to the temple to worship, not because he feels that he is a sinner in need of pardon, but because he thinks himself righteous and hopes to win commendation. His worship he regards as an act of merit that will recommend him to God. At the same time it will give the people a high opinion of his piety . . . His worship is prompted by self-interest."—E. G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 150.

The Pharisee, self-righteous and spiritually arrogant, displays a type of spiritual casteism. "He is full of self-praise. He looks it, he walks it, he prays it." He moves away from others as if to say, "Come not near to me; for I am holier than thou." Christ

described his prayer as praying "with himself." The Pharisee's self-righteousness prevents him from fellowship with his fellow-beings even in his seeking after God. He is wholly self-satisfied; quite confident that both in the sight of God and of man he is without blemish, and lacks nothing.

Thus in his spiritual pride born out of self-righteousness, he boasts to the supreme God of the universe, "I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." He does not measure his character with the standard of God but compares himself with his neighbours.

That's not all. The Pharisee glories in his self-righteousness by enumerating his good deeds and contrasting them with the misdeeds of his fellowmen—he fasts twice a week, he gives one-tenth of his income for religious purposes. In this he measures the depth of his religious experience by mere outward deeds without reference to an inward life, betraying the shallowness of his spiritual experience.

A fair evaluation of the religious experience of the Pharisee thus leads us to agree with this comment of a well-known writer: "The religion of the Pharisee does not touch the soul. He is not seeking Godlikeness of character, a heart filled with love and mercy. He is satisfied with a religion that has to do only with the outward life." *Ibid.*, p. 151.

It may be pointed out here that the Pharisee claimed righteousness for himself because he engaged in certain good deeds and because he did not commit certain misdeeds. Yet true righteousness is the result of God entering into our lives to give release from the bondage of sin and to grant us *mukti* by His grace—thus a mystical union being established by the divine with the human, resulting in the transformation of the human life to a divine pattern. Where this union takes place there is no room for self-righteousness or spiritual arrogance, only nobility of character, humility of spirit, and distrust of self become dominant.

In clear contrast to the Pharisee stands the publican. He too went to the temple to worship. He went because he realized his own spiritual needs. He had done many wrongs. His life had remained an illusion. His soul was in spiritual bondage. And he longed for emancipation.

But the publican considered himself unworthy even to unite with others in their devotion. So standing afar off, he "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast." It was an act of anguish and self-abhorrence. He realized that he had not measured up to the standard of God. He acknowledged his sins. In utter self-despair and contrition of heart, he poured out his soul, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Significantly, and in contrast to the behaviour of the Pharisee, the publican did not compare himself with others. "Overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, he stood as if alone in God's presence. His only desire was for pardon and peace, his only plea was the mercy of God." *Ibid.*, p. 152.

Here is no self-trust; no boastful assertions of self-righteousness; only self-abnegation.

The reward for such spirit of humility and trust in God is clear: The Master says, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

It is the publican who found God and entered into a spiritual communion with Him, "The prayer of the publican was heard because it showed dependence reaching forth to lay hold upon Omnipotence. Self to the publican appeared nothing but shame. Thus it must be seen by all who seek God. By faith—faith that renounces all self-trust—the needy suppliant is to lay hold upon infinite power." *Ibid.*, p. 159.

Fleeing away from self-righteousness and spiritual pride, the publican turned the searchlight inward and saw his need, and in desperation cried out: "Save me in spite of myself, my weak unchristlike self. Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Mould me, fashion me, raise me to a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul." *Ibid.*, p. 159.

The life of this publican is no different from the lives of other men. All through the ages great men who have walked close to God Almighty in spiritual enlightenment and fellowship have first of all recognized the polluted condition of their inner self. Then by turning to God in faith and humility they obtained peace of mind and *mukti*. Anyone who thinks he is good in his own merits is living in deception. The

spiritual condition of our natural self is pitiful. As an ancient sage has lamented: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6).

Equally true are the words of another great religious thinker. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9). The great disciple of Jesus Christ, Saint Paul, confessed: "For I know that in me . . . dwelleth no good thing. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:18, 24).

We cannot of ourselves be truly righteous. As the Holy Scriptures point out: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23).

Therefore when we come to God it must be not in the spirit of self-satisfaction as in the case of the Pharisee, but in full recognition of our unworthiness as did the publican. It is such a spirit that will lead us into the *mukti marga*. Our attitude and prayer must be like that of the great religious poet-king David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me (Psalm 51:10).

We must come to God in a spirit of surrender in order to receive the riches of salvation He offers so freely:

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.

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FORETASTE OF HEAVEN IN 1969

From page 7

me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. . . . whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:49, 50).

All the Saviour's *words* then, were directly inspired of God. "As the Father gave me commandment," He added, "even so I do" (John 14:31). All the Saviour's *deeds* then, were, in essence, also directly inspired of God.

But, without question, the most moving instance of our Saviour's devotion to His Father is seen amid the sombre shadows of Gethsemane. As Jesus neared the crisis of His mission, His sensitive spirit shrank from all the spiritual and physical suffering He knew would come.

In harmony with God's will

Deserted by friends and surrounded by foes, He knew He must face the taunts and jibes of priestly bigots, the coarse brutality of Roman guards, the proud arrogance of wily Herod, the shameful fickleness of powerful Pilate. He knew that while bearing humanity's guilt, He would hang by the hands and feet between earth and heaven, shrouded in darkness, separated by man's sins from the holy Father He loved so much and had served so well.

"Then cometh Jesus . . . unto a place called Gethsemane, . . . and began to be sorrowful and very heavy . . . And He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. . . . He went away again the second time, and prayed, . . . thy will be done" (Matthew 26:36-42).

Both in the peace of the Mountain, and the agony of the Garden, He could say, "Thy will be done" (Matthew 6:10; 26:42).

May we also, both in prosperity and adversity, be able to say the same. For this simple prayer, repeated daily with sincerity and purpose, will ever keep us close to Christ, and here and now will furnish us with a glad foretaste of heaven.

NOTHING ADDS UP

From page 5

been getting desperate in his search to get to the bottom of it all. Or maybe to the top.

He realized that life "under the sun" lacked that Something with a capital "S" that gives Meaning with a capital "M."

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." Thus began Solomon's most meaningful sentence.

He ended it. "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

When man forgets or neglects God and tries life without its Creator, he scores one big fat zero. Nil.

All this is because man was created to know God. To glorify Him. But when he fails to meet God and honours only himself, even the good things in life, the things God gave to enjoy, don't give peace of heart.

You can't buy or work for heaven in the future or even for a bit of it on earth.

But you can accept it as a gift from God given through His Son Jesus Christ. He came to provide Meaning.

He died to pay the penalty for your sins so you by believing could know forgiveness. The Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

He rose again to prove that His death accomplished what He said it would.

Those who know Him by believing, by trusting Him as a personal Saviour, are fearing God and keeping His commandments. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (John 14:11), said Jesus. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Verse 6).

The one who knows Him personally realizes that pleasure and possessions and knowledge and labour are secondary—number two.

The number one duty of man is to find God through Christ. And with that to discover an island of meaning in what seems otherwise to be an ocean of meaninglessness.

Tick. Time does march on. Tock.

But it is a parade without a purpose for people who do not know the Son of God in a personal way via faith.

Learn from Solomon.

Learn from your own past.

Then learn more about the new life of eternal Meaning that you can know through receiving Christ as your personal Saviour.

Now is the time.

Money Will Buy...

A bed but not sleep.
Books but not brains.
Food but not appetite.
Finery but not beauty.
A house but not a home.
Medicine but not health
Luxuries but not culture.
Amusements but not happiness.
A crucifix but not a Saviour.
A church but not a heaven.

FOR JUNIORS



"I Said I'm Sorry"

by ELLEN E. MORRISON

RAVI did not mean to play rough, but many times he hurt his playmates. He usually said, "I'm sorry!" But still he kept on playing too rough.

One day Ravi was playing with his next-door neighbour, Balu. They were taking turns riding in Ravi's wagon. "You get in, and I'll pull you," Ravi said to Balu.

So Balu climbed into the wagon and sat down. Ravi pulled the wagon down the front walk. At the end of the walk, he ran faster and whipped the wagon in a fast turn.

"Watch out!" yelled Balu. But it was too late. Balu fell out of the wagon onto the grassy lawn. He got up, rubbing a bruised elbow. "You go too fast," he complained. "Don't go so fast. That hurts!"

"I'm sorry," said Ravi. "Get back in the wagon, and I'll pull you again."

"No, I don't want to ride in the wagon any more," Balu answered. "Let's play in your swing."

"All right," Ravi agreed. They ran around to the swing in the back yard. Balu had the first turn. Ravi pushed him. Then Ravi took a turn and Balu pushed him. Then it was Balu's turn again.

Ravi gave Balu a hard push that sent him high up in the air and back. As the swing started forward again, Ravi grabbed the seat and playfully held it. The sudden stop of the swing jerked Balu out of the swing. He fell to the ground and turned a somersault on the hard dirt. "Oh-h-h!" he exclaimed, holding his knee, which was skinned and bleeding.

"I'm sorry, Balu, honest I am!" Ravi said sadly. "I didn't mean to hurt you." Balu got up and started to limp home. "Please don't go home," Ravi begged, but Balu kept on going without saying a word.

Ravi walked slowly back to the swing and sat in it. It was no fun swinging alone. He went back to the front yard to ride in the wagon, but that was not any fun, either.

After a while, Ravi saw Balu come out doors again. "Hi, Balu," he called. "Won't you come over and play?"

"No!" Balu answered shortly.

"May I come over to your yard to play?" Ravi asked.

Balu shook his head. "You play too rough!"

"But I said I was sorry," Ravi said.

"That's not enough," Balu said. "You always say you're sorry." Then Balu turned around and went back inside his house.

Ravi was unhappy. He was lonely, too, because he wanted somebody to play with. He sat down on the steps. He thought for several minutes about what Balu had said. Then he said to himself, "Balu's right, I guess. It doesn't do any good to say I'm sorry if I keep right on playing rough and hurting people. I'm going to ask Jesus to help me be a better playmate. I know He can help me to be more careful so I won't hurt my friends any more."

The next morning Balu came back to play with Ravi. Ravi was happy that his friend was not angry with him any more. They played together all morning. Whenever Ravi was tempted to do something too rough, he remembered that "being sorry isn't enough," and he was more careful. At lunch time, before Balu started home to eat, he said, "It's been fun playing this morning. Can you come over to my yard to play this afternoon, Ravi?"

"Sure!" Ravi said joyfully. Then, as he ran up the back steps into his own house, he thought a little prayer: "Thank You, Jesus, for helping me learn how to be a good playmate! It makes me so much happier."

Our Happiest Day

We can do anything for one day. So just for today let us be unafraid of life, unafraid of death, which is the shadow of life; unafraid to be happy, to enjoy the beautiful, to believe the best. Just for today let us live one day only, forgetting yesterday and tomorrow, and not trying to solve the whole problem of life at once.

Lincoln said that a man is just as happy as he makes up his mind to be. We can adjust ourselves to what is—our family, our business, our opportunities. To try to make the world over to suit us is a larger order. If we cannot have what we like, we can like what we have.

So, just for today, let us be agreeable, responsive, cheerful, charitable; be our best, dress our best, walk softly, praise people for what they do, not criticize them for what they cannot do. And if we find fault, let us forgive it—and forget.

—Sunshine



I KNOW

This I know: I have planted a garden, so I know what faith is. I have seen the tall trees swaying in the breeze, so I know what grace is. I have listened to the birds singing, so I know what music is. I have watched little children playing, so I know what entertainment is. I have seen mornings without clouds, after showers, so I know what beauty is. I have seen the miracle of the sunset, so I know what grandeur is. And because I have perceived all these things, I know what wealth is.

—*Author Unknown.*

THE WOODS AND I

Tired of sifting false from true,
Debating what I ought to do,
And trying to make what I should be
Of an inharmonious me,
I must rest awhile among
Things that have no thought or tongue;
Shapely trees that do not know
Human bafflement and woe,
Forthright birds that do not feel
Emotions manners must conceal,
All living things that do not strive
To be otherwise, that thrive
With competence no tensions mar,
Being simply what they are.
I, whose nature is to choose
What I shall be, learn here to use
My heritage, and fix my goal
As a calm, unhurried whole.

—*Jane Merchant.*

What we are is God's gift to us.
What we become is our gift to God.

—*Nizer*

TODAY

Today is the very best day of your life. Tomorrow is not here. Yesterday is gone. Today is the day. What will we do for the Master today?

Do more than exist—live.
Do more than touch—feel.
Do more than look—observe.
Do more than read—absorb.
Do more than hear—listen.
Do more than listen—understand.
Do more than think—ponder.
Do more than plan—act.
Do more than talk—say something!

The prophets of old would change places with us if given a chance. Today is the day of opportunity, of fulfilment, of hopes and promises. Jesus will soon appear. Do we see the signs? Are we living and acting selfishly with our time, or selflessly in service to and for others?

—*Victor J. Rice*

LOVING WORDS

Loving words will cost but little,
Journeying up the hill of life;
But they make the weak and weary
Stronger, braver, for the strife.
Do you count them only trifles?
What to earth are sun and rain?
Never was a kind word wasted,
Never one was said in vain.

—*Lydia Yeaple*

Kindliness and loveliness
Hand in hand do go,
So kindly be
And you will see
That lovely you will grow.



Strength for the New Year

by D. P. McCLURE

NEW discoveries and new frontiers of knowledge—here on earth, and beyond the earth, present a stirring challenge to our thinking in these momentous days. Anything new has a certain fascination. Now we have a New Year. As we stand at its threshold, what are we led to consider?

The thought of "newness" evokes different pictures in our minds; the freshness of an opening rosebud, for instance. Perhaps cleanness comes to our mind, as we think of a newly-painted white door, free from finger-marks. Maybe we think of something "untouched," like an isolated beach without a footprint on it. But when the New Year arrives there is always the thought of the unknown, which so frequently is mingled with fear and anxiety. We feel as if we are on a trackless moor beset with treacherous bogs; or perhaps on a mountainside with dangerous precipices, when a fog comes down making us fearful to take the next step.

What of this New Year ahead? Before trying to look into the future, it is helpful to take a backward glimpse. Of course, the old year is past and unalterable, but as we look back we can see our mistakes in perspective and determine to avoid the same pitfalls—those petty jealousies, that malignant grudge, that lack of principle, that overbearing spirit, or that weakness of faith. We must also remember the instances of God's leading in our lives and the many blessings He has showered upon us. These will inspire us to go ahead with greater assurance.

Turning to the unknown New Year we realize our need of something to give us new confidence and new strength. In these uncertain times there is really only one source of strength and security. "God is our

refuge and strength" (Psalm 46:1). Again we read: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). In fact: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).

Our love for God and our trust in Him will take away all fear. We shall have a new outlook—the Godward uplook to fortify us in every experience.

There was once a farmer who asked the local blacksmith to make him a new weathervane, designed with the words "God is love." When it had been completed and erected on the corner of the barn roof, a neighbour called and remarked: "You don't mean to say that God's love is as changeable as the wind surely?"

"Oh, no! You've missed the point," replied the farmer, "God's love is sure, whichever way the wind blows."

With such an uplook we may have a new confidence in the love and guidance of God, the One who knows the future and the end from the beginning.

Considering the need to improve our previous record, we can be thankful that Christ has promised us a new heart, which will bring us greater power and a new and closer relationship with Him. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The presence of Christ within will help us to live each day as He would live.

May we this New Year, live with confidence in God's guidance, and with the power of Christ's presence, ever looking to the day when all things will be made new, and fear and evil will be no more. Revelation 21:5.