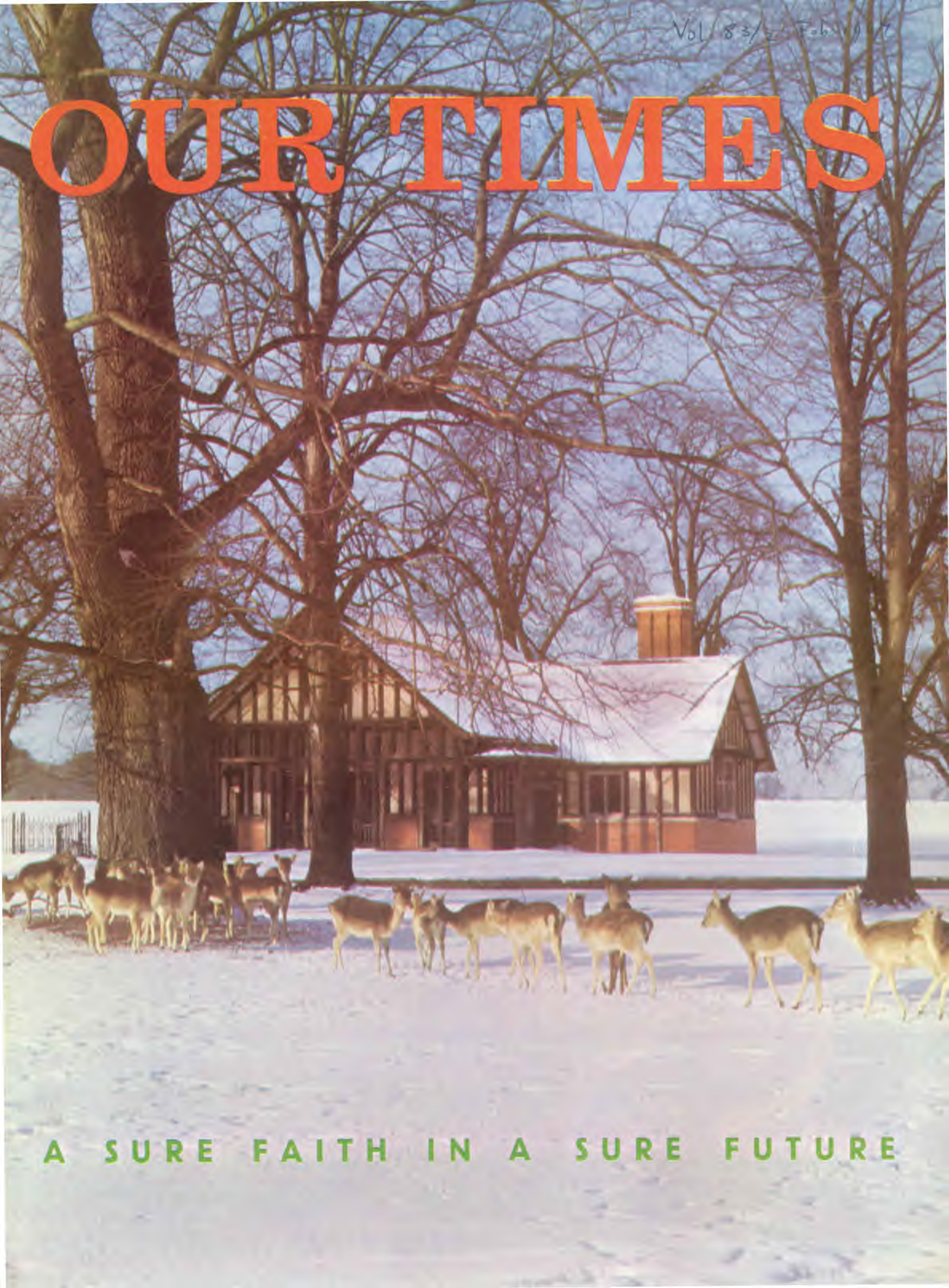


Vol. 83/2 Feb. 1997

OUR TIMES



A SURE FAITH IN A SURE FUTURE



KINDNESS

On one occasion a painter asked Einstein to sit for a portrait and was told, "No, no, no. I do not have time."

"But I need the money I'll get for the picture," the painter said candidly.

"Well, that's different," Einstein replied. "Of course I'll sit."

—Thomas Lee Bucky and Joseph P. Blank.

PARENTS

More parents ought to straighten out their children by bending them over.

WORST ENEMY

Pity is our worst enemy, and if we yield to it, we can never do anything wise in the world.

—Helen

DEDICATION

Whatever I have tried to do in this life, I have tried with all my heart to do well; whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely; in great aims and in small, I have always been thoroughly in earnest.

—Charles Dickens.

THE BIBLE and OUR TIMES



A FAMILY JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN LIVING DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION OF THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL. PRESENTING THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD AND JESUS CHRIST AS OUR ALL-SUFFICIENT SAVIOUR AND COMING KING

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MANY are the grown-ups who still live in a world of "make-believe." A "Fool's Paradise" is the term often used for it. They feel comfortably lulled by its intoxicating "bliss."

Rather like the French officer in Alphonse Daudet's story, who, in that fateful year 1870, continued to dream that Prussia, not France, was on the way out. He insisted on not believing the facts.

In reality, the very opposite of his conviction was true. The cataclysm initiated by Bismarck swept France, not Prussia, into defeat.

Not till the conquering Germans stormed into Paris was the cruel unreality of that Frenchman's "paradise" revealed. His dream was shattered. His ill-founded "bliss" was engulfed by despair.

Ancient Rome's celebrated Cicero was another example: "If I am mistaken," he said, "then I am content to remain mistaken; nor do I wish to have wrested from me the mistake which cheers me."

His particular "mistake" was belief in automatic and happy survival beyond the tomb, for everyone. Believing such as this, must weaken one's resolve to "fight the good fight," to uphold principle in the face of ridicule and abuse, or to jeopardize personal safety and security (as did the Scottish Covenanters—see article on page 10).

Only God's Book gives the facts that really matter. The Bible alone reveals the truth worth living for, and, if need be, worth dying for. Here alone is shown and described the authentic details of God's Paradise, and the all-exclusive conditions for inheriting it.



DISCERNING THE TIMES...

CURRENT EVENTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE



BY THE EDITOR

WHY LIVE?

RECENTLY a well known BBC dramatist and producer, in a train compartment with three other people, got up, politely apologized for brushing against one of them, opened the window, then deliberately fell to his death just past Surbiton station in Surrey. He is described as a prolific writer and thorough craftsman, happily married with two sons, but who had "an almost frightened apprehension of the modern world and its ailments."—*The Times*.

Such self-inflicted tragedies are

on the increase. In the U.S.A., whereas in 1920 they were the twenty-second cause of death, now they have risen to the tenth place. Britain's rate is slightly higher. Although the actual suicide rate is one in ten thousand, attempted deaths are extremely high—one in a hundred. (U.S. figure as reported in *Time*.) The unhappy list includes such famous names as U.S. Defence Secretary Forrestal, Novelist Virginia Woolf, "He-Man" Ernest Hemingway. H. G. Wells often talked about it.

Why did they do it?

In the main there is one answer: failure to appreciate life's main purpose; and the fact that life—our own personal life included, is sacred.

One popular view is that life is purely for self indulgence and pleasure. A philosophical view holds that life is really quite mean-

ingless, and that true nobility consists in rebelling against this fact by positive living. Suicide, according to this view, is cowardly submission.

The Bible condemns the taking of life, whether our own or anyone else's. "Thou shalt not kill," is the Sixth of the eternal Ten.

Elsewhere, God's Word says: "Ye are not your own. . . . Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

What an ennobling view of life this is!

We are God's own property; created by Him; purchased by Him; answerable to Him.

Rejection of this fact is the cause of the world's trouble. Ignore or deny the place of God, and life becomes a gaping emptiness which all the success and money in the world cannot begin to fill.

This present life is a time of probation, a time of testing, a time of preparation for the life to come. Accept this truth and life's pleasures are enhanced: even its greatest setbacks and heartaches can be serenely contained. As for life's purpose, Jesus clearly declared it. It is that we should "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Matthew 6:33.

If this were universally done, the problems of Rhodesia, of Vietnam, of crime, etc., would vanish. We would have heaven on earth.





Cow worshipping is an annual festival for most Hindus all over India. Here, cow-worshippers near Calcutta, offer foodstuffs to cows on the special day in November dedicated to veneration of these creatures, known as "Gopastami."

Sincerity and truth

ZEAL and sincerity are essential virtues, but unless they are related to truth, they can be disastrous.

As was the case recently in India. The trouble was—cows! So-called "sacred cows"!

Sixty-five million cows, all "sacred," freely roam the country, many of them diseased and dying. They eat wherever and whatever they like. Instead of the valuable asset they might be, they are, in fact, a huge liability to that great country; for they cost the government £200 million annually.

The reason is simply that Hindus—which most Indians are—revere and protect the cow because of its "sacredness."

Protesting against the Government's order for selective slaughtering of cows, in a wise and heroic effort to help feed the hungry millions of the population, Hindu "holy man" Brahmachari went on a fast from which he died. Devotees

promptly sainted him as "a martyr to the cause of the cow." Religious fervour was stirred to fever pitch, for protection of the cow has been a main doctrine of Hindu teaching since Lord Krishna adopted the cow as "mother supreme."

On November 30th Hindu anger exploded. Rioting reddened the streets of New Delhi. Police did their best to protect Parliament from the hostility of hundreds of thousands of zealots. People died, and many were injured. Property suffered. All because of the sincerely held belief in cow-worship.

Which illustrates how vital are our ideas concerning truth. How important it is that these ideas be shaped aright.

Some think it doesn't really matter. "Believe what you like," they say; "the essential thing is that you be sincere!"

A few months back we heard a world famous preacher in an equally famous London chapel support this very view. "All ways lead to heaven," was his message, "whether that way be Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, or anything else."

Despite his persuasive eloquence, he was wrong—abysmally wrong!

All ways do not lead to heaven.

The Bible is emphatic about that. Christ said: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, *that leadeth to destruction*, and many there be which go in thereat. . . ." But "narrow is the way, which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13, 14.

Truth, we see, is not a matter of opinion or human reasoning. Truth is embodied in Jesus Christ, and presented in His Word, the Bible.

On anything else, zeal and sincerity are wasted virtues, and may, in fact, be damaging and disastrous in their consequences.

CHRIST FOR ALL

PEACEFUL co-existence! An appealing term! One that is fervently urged by the "peace-makers" who, like everyone else, are sick of strife and sabre-rattling.

But "peaceful co-existence" is too often a euphemism for giving error a free hand. The so-called peace of co-existence spells decline and death for the good. Death and peace are not exactly synonymous, but in death there is no further conflict.

Good must either struggle for supremacy or it will perish; for error in its numerous forms, is so militant today.

Christ's commands are for all, in both East and West, whether in or outside of the church. Jesus came to establish not just another "school of thought," but to reveal the one and only, all-exclusive way of salvation which leads to happiness here, and bliss hereafter.

Hence He came not just for a fragment of the world, or a fragment of society. His final command to His followers was: "Go . . . teach all nations." Matthew 28:19.



EARLY on the morning of August 25, 1966, persons standing on the dock at Nanaimo, B.C., were shocked to see the brand new ferry *Queen of Barnaby* break her moorings and sail out into the bay, without captain or crew.

Engineers who had been working on the engines all night had failed to notice, when they turned them on, that the propeller was in the forward position. Fortunately one man had the presence of mind to lower the anchor just in time to save the three and a half million dollar ship from disaster.

A modern parable

What a parable for our time! Civilization, mechanized and beautified with all the latest inventions, is moving onward into ever-increasing perils. Unless someone lowers an anchor, it will surely go on the rocks.

The Secretary General of the United Nations revealed his growing concern when he made his annual report on September 25th.

ROCKS of DISASTER or ROCK of AGES?

by **ARTHUR S. MAXWELL**

Civilization is moving onward into ever-increasing perils. Unless an anchor is lowered, nothing can save it from the rocks of destruction

"Escalating hostilities in Vietnam and the deteriorating international situation," he said, "have inevitably intensified the arms race in both the conventional and the nuclear fields."

After mentioning that both France and China have conducted nuclear tests in the atmosphere and that the United States, Britain and Russia have continued to conduct such tests underground, he went on to say, "The possible consequences are alarming. If there should be a unilateral technological breakthrough by one of these powers in either offensive or defensive nuclear weapon capability, it could upset the existing uneasy balance of terror and lead at once to a new and greatly accelerated nuclear arms race."

Dangers of nuclear proliferation

"The dangers of nuclear proliferation are very real and very grave, more so than may be generally recognized. The use of nuclear reactors produces plutonium which, when processed in a separation plant, can be used to make nuclear weapons, by techniques that are no longer secret. According to some estimates, by 1980 nuclear power reactors throughout the world will produce more than 100 kilograms of plutonium every day.

"It is always possible that cheaper and simpler methods of producing fissionable material may be discovered and that their availability for warlike purposes will increase astronomically. The risks that now exist of the further spread of nuclear weapons hold such peril for humanity that international safeguards should be established not only over nuclear power reactors but also over other nuclear plants which produce, use, or process significant quantities of fissionable materials."

The perils mentioned by the Secretary General involve the fate of the whole human race. International safeguards are desperately needed, but how are they to be provided, and by whom?

Certainly not by the United Nations, which is bogged down in disunity and bankruptcy. As U Thant said in the same speech: "The stark fact which emerges intact from all the studies, reports and discussions in 1966 is that international aid is stagnating." Again: "We are still far from agreement on basic principles."

The ship of civilization is indeed moving fast toward the rocks of nuclear disaster. And there's nobody on board with strength or sense enough to cast an anchor and stop the stupid race to destruction.

What really matters?

Will catastrophe come this year or next? In the 1970's or the 1980's? Who can tell? Perhaps in

God's mercy, peace may be extended a little longer. But the situation is of such seriousness that all should begin to think solemnly about what really matters in a time like this.

Beyond question the fearful portents looming ahead are the very signs Christ said would herald His return—events fraught with such awesome consequences that they will cause men to "faint with terror." Luke 21:26, N.E.B.

One hope alone remains. Not the United Nations, or the World Court, or any other human organization, but Christ, Lord of history and King of kings. Deliverance lies with Him. The anchor is in His hand.

As He said long ago: "When all this begins to happen, stand upright and hold your heads high, because your liberation is near. . . . Be on the alert, praying at all times for strength to pass safely through all these imminent troubles and to stand in the presence of the Son of man." Verses 28, 36, N.E.B.



CHURCH IN FERMENT

Significant changes are taking place in Christendom's largest church — changes which could help millions in their search for real truth · by ARTHUR S. MAXWELL

MOST religious conferences are forgotten within weeks of the final benediction. Not so with Vatican II. It has left a whole church in ferment.

"The self-criticism within the Roman Catholic church is the great phenomenon of our time," says Allen Spraggett, religious editor of the *Toronto Star*. "The Roman Catholic ferment is more profound and more far-reaching than that of any other denomination. . . . It is the most exciting story in religion today."

Writing on "The Catholic Thaw" in *Maclean's*,

of August 20th, June Callwood says that Catholicism doesn't even look the same. "In the few years since Pope John called for fresh air, the newest Catholic chapels and churches have taken on an uncluttered look, with a stark, slender cross hanging in the bare sanctuary, impressionist wood carvings for the Stations of the Cross, a single candle burning. Communion rails and stained-glass windows are disappearing and the lurid, bleeding statues banked with candles are out of style.

"A high-church Anglican, consulting a Roman Catholic friend about conversion because he feared his richly ornamented rituals will be scrapped in the concessions to Protestant church union, was advised cheerily, 'Better not come to us. We're getting rid of all that stuff.'

Language of the people

"And Roman Catholicism certainly doesn't sound the same. The once all-Latin mass chanted cosily by priests and altar boys has been translated in part to what is called the vernacular dialogue mass, using the language of the congregation."

Even the ancient tradition of confession is undergoing scrutiny. "There is even talk that Catholics in the future will confess more commonly to the

Whenever the Bible is honestly read, the Holy Spirit will bring conviction of what is the will and purpose of God.



people they have wronged, their families and neighbours, rather than to priests."

Some Catholic publishers are now producing books which would have brought severe condemnation from their religious superiors a few short years ago. The Paulist Press, for instance, is bringing out a series written by clergymen of other faiths to explain their religions to Catholics. Already in print are books about the United Church of Canada, the Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Jews.

"At the University of Toronto the Roman Catholic faculty of theology has joined with the Toronto Graduate School of Theological Studies, putting Catholics in the same lecture hall, writing the same exams, as such disparate theologians as Pentecostals and Baptists:

"Next year, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and United Church supporters will be building a single church in Matagami, Quebec, to be shared by all."
—*Maclean's*, August 20, 1966.

Toward Protestantism ?

No wonder Father Eugene E. Ryan, writing in *Christianity Today* of March 18th, raised the question: "Is the Catholic Church Going Protestant?"

Enumerating some of the evidences for an affirmative answer, Father Ryan says: "Because his church now seems to be placing less emphasis on the sacramental principle (at least in its effects), to be clearing away the complexities of legalism, and to be stressing personal faith and responsibility, the thoughtful Catholic observer sees a drift of his church toward Protestantism.

"Another factor convincing him that this drift exists is the new emphasis on the Bible. It is a truism that Catholics generally are not familiar with the Bible. Catechetical programmes formerly considered it in a fringe way, perhaps in a class called

"Bible History." Little stress was placed on regular reading of, and meditation on, Scripture. . . . Now Catholics are being told that they must not only respect the Bible as the Word of God, but also read it and grow to know and love it. It is to be used more and more in worship, and is to provide the pattern and spirit of church renewal. At the same time, Catholic theologians are announcing that they are taking a new look at the *sola scriptura* rule. And they are saying, in effect, that there is something to it."

In his conclusion Father Ryan states that in both internal and external ways "the Roman Catholic Church is indeed assuming characteristics ordinarily associated with Protestantism" and "there is some truth in the statement that this church is becoming Protestant." However, he feels that this is a somewhat superficial judgment, preferring to ascribe the amazing changes to "dynamic vitality" within the church.

The hand of God

Whatever the correct reason, the fact remains that the changes are taking place. The church is indeed in ferment and who dare predict what the outcome will be?

In our opinion the hand of God is in all this. The Holy Spirit is at work leading millions of devoted godly people to search for truth that the truth might set them free to enjoy a more satisfying spiritual experience. With increasing earnestness He pleads: "Come out of her, My people." Revelation 18:4. Out of the old into the new. Out of medieval, legalistic bondage into the glorious freedom of the children of God. As a result thousands will find their way into the Remnant of the True Church who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.



TAKE HIS HAND

by Joseph Auslander

WORLD, oh world of muddled men,
Seek the peace of God again;
In the humble faith that kneels,
In the hallowed Word that heals,
In the hope that answers doubt,
Love that drives the darkness out.

Frantic, frightened, foolish men,
Take God by the hand again.



AND that February day is still commemorated by many in Edinburgh today. We can go back into history by leaving Princes Street and walking up the steep slope of The Mound into the old Edinburgh. As we cross the bottom of Lawnmarket we glance to our left at St. Giles Cathedral where the first protests had been lodged the previous July. Next we cross George IV bridge, and a few yards further on we look down on our right to the grim Grassmarket with its gruesome memories. How many were brought here to die and "glorify God at the Grassmarket," as their martyrdom was referred to in those days. However, we must not anticipate the outcome of that fateful February day when a great concourse of people were seen at the Greyfriars Church. Just a few paces now and we shall be there in that famous churchyard where, in imagina-

in the year 1638 by us noblemen, barrons, gentlemen, burgesses, ministers and commons."

Church/state relationship

We may well ask, what was the reason for such an event? who was involved? and how does it interest us today? The experience of the Scottish Covenanters has a greater significance than a mere local issue in one small country in the seventeenth century. The crucial issues are still with us today in this twentieth century world. They concern the relationship of church and state.

The Covenanter movement was born out of a high regard for the kingly rights of Christ Himself which the Stuart monarchs were unfortunately opposing in their concept of the divine right of kings. The tragedy is that so many loyal citizens died for their principles and their faith before the majority of public opinion was changed. For, what the Covenanters thought of the Stuarts at the outset

for CHRIST'S CROWN and *Covenant*

tion, we can turn back the clock 329 years and view the scene of February 28, 1638.

On that cold wintry morning, crowds of every class had been gathering. They had come from every Lowland county and some even from beyond the Tay, for this was the day when the Scottish National Covenant was to be sworn and signed. Here the stand was taken for religious liberty and the freedom to worship God according to one's conscience.

At two o'clock in the afternoon the solemn proceedings commenced. After an address by the Earl of Loudoun and Alexander Henderson's fervent prayer, Archibald Johnston, Lord Wariston, lifted the "fair parchment" of ramskin and read the contents clearly and distinctly. The oath to keep the Covenant was sworn while tears were seen on many faces. First inside the church, and later outside on the flat tombstones, the Covenant was "subscribed

Scotland's seventeenth century Covenanters set an example of spiritual integrity, unflinching courage, and loyalty to God, which is worthy of being followed in this modern age of "easy morals" and widespread forgetfulness of the things which matter most

by D. P. McCLURE

of their struggle, the rest of Scotland, and England too, thought not many years later.

We see these devout people signing not a national secular petition, not a narrow religious document to abolish the form of episcopal government and certain rituals in worship, but a wider charter of freedom both civil and religious. These were people who said with the apostles: "We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29. They resolved in the Covenant "to labour by all meanes lawfull to recover the puritie and liberty of the Gospell."

Moreover, it was a personal dedication of their lives to their Lord and Saviour: "And because wee cannot looke for a blessing from God upon our proceedings, except with our profession and subscription, wee joine such a life and conversation as besemeth Christians who have renewed their Covenant with God: Wee, therefore, faithfully

die for what I have done this day, but I cannot die in a better cause."

This is typical of the zeal, piety, devotion, and determination of those soldiers of the cross. We must follow this intrepid warrior quickly to his final battle. After the restoration of Charles II the storm broke, and Guthrie was one of the first martyrs. At his trial he declared valiantly: "My conscience I cannot submit."

What led up to this fervent movement which could breed such stalwarts as James Guthrie? The work of the Reformation in Scotland came in two stages: the work of John Knox, and the testimony of the Covenanters.

The great reformer John Knox built on influences from the time of John Wycliffe, two centuries earlier. Wycliffe, the "morning star of the Reformation," had drawn attention to the errors of doctrine and



promise, for ourselves, our followers, and all other under us, both in publick, in our particular families, and personal carriage, to endeavour to keep our selves within the bounds of Christian libertie and to be good examples to others of all Godlinesse, Sobernesse, and Righteousness, and of every duety we owe to God and Man."

We can see that with such a spirit why many who signed the Covenant, wrote "unto death" after their names, and some even drew their own blood with which to sign. One of the later great leaders of the Covenanters, James Guthrie, went to sign just before he was ordained to the ministry. On the way along the road he met the town's hangman, "which did move him somewhat, and made him walk up and down a little before he went forward." He considered it a prophecy of what would befall him. Nevertheless, dismissing any personal fears, he resolutely marched forward to sign the Covenant, and when he signed, he said: "I know that I shall



Glens such as this one near Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire, where the Declarations were made, were the places where the conventicles were held.

Left.—Pledging loyalty to the National Covenant in Greyfriars Churchyard, Edinburgh.

evil practices of the Church of Rome, and had sought by translating the Bible into English to place the tools of understanding in the hands, or rather the minds, of the laity. His followers, who were known as Lollards, and who took these Scriptures to eager readers, had an influence which extended far and wide, including Scotland.

One Englishman, John Resby, who came to Scotland to spread Wycliffe's teachings, was burned at Perth in 1407. The witness was not silenced even though twenty-five years later another martyrdom was deemed necessary by the authorities to deter the spread of Lollardy in the University of St. Andrews. This was of Paul Crawar, a Bohemian who had embraced Wycliffe's principles through John Huss, the continental reformer.



Martyrs' Monument, Greyfriars Churchyard, Edinburgh.

Below.—Monument in Sanquhar commemorating the Declarations made by R. Cameron and J. Renwick.

At the close of the fifteenth century we hear of the witness of the Lollards, or "Bible men" of Kyle, Ayrshire. These gentlemen of landed property were accused of denying such items of faith as the mass, purgatory, praying to saints, the Pope's vicarship, etc. There were about thirty or more who were summoned to appear before the Archbishop Blackadder at Glasgow, and only with difficulty could the King, James IV, procure their release.



"The great teacher"

These were significant rumblings which made the Scots realize the need for a reform in religion. The nation was ultimately to rally to the appeal of John Knox in the next century because of their basic regard for the Bible. Wylie states that: "The Bible was emphatically the nation's one great teacher; it was stamping its own ineffaceable character upon the Scottish Reformation; and the place the Bible thus early made for itself in the people's affections, and the authority it acquired over their judgments, it was destined never to lose."—*History of Protestantism*, Book 24, Chapter 1.

But before Knox would be able to lead the people, there had to come the shocking burning of Patrick Hamilton, the cousin of the King, James V. Hamilton had studied in Germany and was honoured with the friendship of Luther and Melancthon. When he returned to Scotland he was received enthusiastically by all. Going out into the fields he would speak to groups of labourers during their lunch break, and explain to them the "mysteries of the kingdom." He also preached to members of the royal family and noblemen in St. Michael's church, Linlithgow. However, the enemy of truth, Archbishop Beaton, was so perturbed that he contrived to have this scion of earth's royalty and member of heaven's more important royal family, finally silenced.

The accusation consisted of thirteen articles alleged to be heretical. An example of the supposed heresy is seen in articles five and six: "That a man is not justified by works, but by faith alone," and "that good works do not make a good man, but that a good man makes good works." Here we can see the straightforward way of salvation being blockaded by the might of Rome and her minions.

Martyrdom kindled fire of zeal

Now this good man was to show by his martyrdom where lay his faith. On that same fateful date, February 28th, when a later hapless generation signed the Scottish Covenant, Patrick Hamilton was led to the stake at noon. This was in 1528 when this fearless youth was not quite twenty-four years old. This fire was one of the most powerful forces that made Scotland burn with zeal for the truth of salvation by faith, and paved the way for the dauntless testimony of John Knox.

Under Knox, the Reformation went well, but unfortunately it receded somewhat after his death when later monarchs did not consider a monarchy to be compatible with a democratic Presbyterian form of government. They had no doubts as to which institution was to be abolished, and when James VI of Scotland became James I of England,

he was more able to press his ideas of an Episcopal government.

Next came Charles I who pursued a stronger policy in the direction of restoring bishops, completely disregarding the will of the people until eventually in 1637, when he tried to force the obnoxious elements of the Popish liturgy on the unwilling Scots, they vehemently protested in St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh.

This second stage of the Reformation under the subsequently signed Covenant of 1638 was to see a greater spilling of faithful, innocent blood than Scotland had seen before in the cause of truth.

Oppression under Charles II

When Charles II came to the throne finally in 1660, things took a turn for the worse. Over 300 ministers were ejected from their pulpits because they would not be re-ordained by, and submit to the bishops, or hold services of the accepted pattern. This pattern was too much like the errors that had been protested as unscriptural since Wycliffe.

The people rallied to their ministers in open-air conventicles, and many a fine spiritual feast was had among the hills. As Charles fulminated against these sincere, Bible-loving saints, he employed the most barbarous men and methods to exterminate them. At one stage the Covenanters were afforded no trial and could be shot at sight by any trooper who met them—their only evidence often being that the victim was simply carrying a Bible! The last public martyr in 1688, James Renwick, said: "The moors and mosses of the west of Scotland are flowered with martyrs."

Many are the thrilling incidents that could be told of the staunch and valiant stand that was taken by the Covenanters in their upholding the truth of the Gospel. There was John Brown of Priesthill, Ayrshire—shot dead in the presence of his wife and children outside their isolated cottage by Claverhouse. Just three short years before, John Brown had been married to Isabel Weir by Alexander Peden. After the ceremony the godly minister with prophetic insight said to Isabel: "You have got a good man; but you will not keep him long. Prize his company, and keep linen by you to be his winding-sheet; for you will need it when ye are not looking for it." The mist lay thick on the moors that awful morning when Claverhouse and his troopers surrounded the cottage. John Brown had a stammer in his speech which had prevented him from entering the ministry, but he had always been a good witness in his neighbourhood. However, when Claverhouse ordered: "Go to your prayers for you shall immediately die," the godly man knelt down on the grass beside the door and spoke to his Friend in heaven without any stammer. In his concern for

the state of the church in those troublous times, his prayers went on too long for the ungodly Claverhouse, who exclaimed angrily: "I gave you time to pray and ye've begun to preach." Taking leave of his wife and babies, he was immediately shot. Tauntingly the callous officer asked the new-made widow: "What thinkest thou of thy husband now, woman?" "I thought ever much good of him, and as much now as ever," she loyally replied. With that, Claverhouse threatened to shoot her too, but eventually rode off.

Soldiers of the cross

Scenes such as this being enacted on every hand led some of the Covenanters to take up arms in self-defence. While twentieth century Christians may frown upon such a militant move, the seventeenth century of necessity viewed things in a different way. We remember the indomitable Richard Cameron who fought and died for his faith on Ayrsmoss only one month after having led twenty men on horseback into Sanquhar to proclaim a Declaration of determination to stand firm for King Jesus and disowning the authority of King Charles.

These soldiers of the cross held high the banner of Prince Immanuel. The banners used in their battles had written on them: "For Christ's Crown and Covenant." They had pledged themselves in covenant relationship with their Lord. The Psalmist has written: "We will rejoice in Thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners." Psalm 20:5. Again in Psalm 60:4 we read: "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."

The banner proclaims allegiance to the sovereign. We must declare our personal allegiance to the King of kings as valiantly as those Covenanters of old. It is prophetically revealed in the Scriptures that the principles of the separation of church and state; and of civil and religious liberty, will be an issue as vital in the twentieth century as it was in the seventeenth. How do we stand today? We do well to consider how strong is our contact with Christ.

The Covenanters had sworn a personal allegiance to King Jesus; they had dedicated their lives to serve their Lord; they had surrendered their hearts in love for their Saviour. Does Christ require any less surrender in this generation?

Have you, dear reader, made a covenant with Jesus of complete dedication to His service? Will you not, just now, determine by His grace to serve Him faithfully and follow Him closely—even unto the end?

Let us heed the words of Jesus in this text which is inscribed on the Martyrs' Monument in Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."



BENJAMIN BRITTEN, whose Chester Miracle play: "Noyes Flude" has been so widely performed recently, has revived interest in that terrifying catastrophe, the Deluge.

Interest in the Flood of Noah's day is timely. The sceptics who denied the event are being silenced by the discoveries of evidence of the historicity of the flood. Geologists with their more up-to-date knowledge of earth upheavals, anthropologists with their knowledge of the early days of mankind, and archaeologists with wagonloads of artifacts from the Near East and elsewhere, have thrown much light on events connected with the coming of the Flood.

The torrential downpour of rain in Italy which flooded the Po valley, leaving one hundred thousand people homeless, was wholly unexpected. Not for a thousand years had there been anything like it. By contrast, the Noachian flood was given widespread publicity beforehand. This widespread pub-

THERE IS MASSIVE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE TODAY TO SUPPORT THE BIBLE RECORD OF THE FLOOD. THAT GLOBAL CALAMITY CAME BY DIVINE DECREE, BECAUSE THE WORLD HAD REACHED THE LIMIT OF DEPRAVITY, AND OF INDIFFERENCE TO THE CLAIMS OF THE CREATOR. THE LESSON IS FOR TODAY. MODERN ATTITUDES PRECISELY PARALLEL THOSE OF NOAH'S DAY

by **J. R. LEWIS**

licity given to the coming of the Flood merits a much fuller understanding than usually given to it.

Disasters often cast warning shadows before them. A dozen thistles in a meadow are themselves a warning to the farmer of what will happen to the field if they are not destroyed. The Munich beer hall meetings of 1932 led Sir Winston Churchill to view them as omens of disaster about which he never ceased to warn us. Coming events do cast their dark shadows before them as well as after

they have happened. It is true to say that the disaster of the Deluge was portended in the life of the antediluvians for a thousand years before the disaster struck. One cannot watch depravity and inhuman brutality continue for long in a civilization without being aware that retribution in some form is inevitable—even though the manner of the retribution may not be evident.

"Men of renown"

There was a great civilization on the earth in the days before the Flood. True, the Bible record is brief, but its references are particularly vivid. The record needs no corroboration, yet corroboration there is in plenty from the tablets of Babylon, the legends of the Indies and the South Seas. All records agree. There were on the earth men of great brilliance and intellect, men who were great leaders. "There were giants in the earth in those days; . . . mighty men, . . . men of renown." Genesis 6:4. The meaning is not so much that of physical size, but of dynamic personality, leadership, great mental powers. There was "every artificer in brass and iron," as well as such that "handle the harp and organ." Genesis 4:21. There were men with an ability never since equalled. Something of their technical and engineering skills, their knowledge of metallurgy and medicine, can be witnessed in the great works of their posterity, the works of the Egyptians, Mexicans, and Peruvians.

Total depravity

Brilliant as was that early civilization, it was evil, violent, depraved, and godless. The Bible tells us that "the wickedness of man was great," that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil," that "all flesh had corrupted his way on the earth." Genesis 6. Moral laxity was such that they "took them wives of all that they chose," the one interest in life was "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," and with every lust gratified, the earth was "filled with violence."

Inevitably, the ravages of evil led to untold suffering. There were those whose cries of pain and anguish rose continually to heaven. Then as now, there was the perpetual question, Why does God allow such things to happen? Those who feared God were to learn a lesson in the forbearance of God, that God is most wondrously kind, that He will wait an almost endless time for an evil man to change his ways rather than destroy him. So it was that men of good character groaned at the evils of those days while God bade them be patient.

Nevertheless, even God's patience cannot be trespassed upon for ever; and there came a day when holy angels revealed to the man, Enoch, that it was

God's purpose to destroy a perverse generation by a flood of waters. God who "revealeth secrets," who "speaketh by the mouths of prophets," who "maketh known what shall come to pass," appointed Enoch as a great preacher whose voice not only warned of the coming of the Flood, but pleaded with all wrong-doers to change their ways.

Thus began a work of warning that was to continue for almost one thousand years, a period comparable with the era from William the Conqueror to the present day. Through a population comparable with that of today (Prof. Rehwinkel), the message of entreaty, warning, and destruction began to percolate.

Significant names

The trend of a man's mind is sometimes shown by the name he gives to his child: the "Winstons," the "Alberts," and the "Abrahams" prove that. Enoch named his eldest child Methuselah, thereby revealing the intensity of his belief in the coming of the flood. Methuselah means: "When he dies, it [the Flood] shall come." The result: wherever the father introduced his son, wherever the son made his own appearance, there was the living witness to the message: "The Flood will come!"

Subsequently, for a longer period of time than any other man has ever lived, Methuselah, with many associates, preached and publicized the messages of warning. He laboured to keep alive the knowledge of the true God. He rebuked the evils of his day—the lust, the killings, the drunkenness, the polygamy, bearing a straight testimony that to continue in such a way of life would bring only sorrow and the destruction of their civilization.

Deeper grew the tide of evil, darker the apostasy, greater the unbelief. Stronger grew the cries of the oppressed to heaven. More wonderful was the mercy and forbearance of God. These were the days when "the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah." 1 Peter 3:20.

Noah prepared an ark

After the passage of many years, there came to maturity the grandson of Methuselah, Noah. Once again God revealed His will. The Flood could no longer be averted. The message was: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man. . . . His days shall be one hundred and twenty years," "The end of all flesh is come before me; . . . I will destroy them. . . . Make thee an ark." Genesis 6:13.

Of Noah, it is written: "Being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark; . . . by the which he condemned the world." Hebrews 11:7.

Noah, a man of muscle and character devoted all he had to make widespread this additional

warning. He hammered home his words with blows on the timbers of the great ship. The Ark took 120 years to construct.

The thousands of sightseers who visit Southampton's "Ocean Terminal" each summer to gaze on the great "Queens" and other trans-ocean liners, are as nothing compared with the vast multitudes who travelled from all parts to watch the amazing spectacle of the Ark under construction. To each visitor the warning message was offered, and every messenger took back home to his people the words of this great preacher and his singular activities.

The Ark was no clumsy boat. Many who sketch it as such, offer insult to its designer. It was built to withstand fierce shocks and powerful destructive forces. Those who examined it received silent testimony as to its purpose.

Every felled tree bore testimony to Noah's faith; the massive keel, the lofty sides, the great roof, all aroused the minds of men to listen to Noah's preaching. And the aged, but still vigorous Methuselah bore the most powerful testimony of all. True to his name which he had borne for over 900 years, he died the year the Flood began. His passing was the sign that the Flood could be delayed no longer.

Later there came the strange stillness after the last hammer blows had been struck. God waited that at this late moment, men might find safety. There came the moment when the stillness was broken by the flight of the birds to the Ark. There came the noisy, but strangely ordered procession

of animals to the door of the Ark. Still God waited. Still the mocking and jeering continued. At last it happened. "After seven days, that the waters of the Flood were upon the earth . . . all the fountains of the great deep" were "broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." Genesis 7:10. The antediluvian world perished with the coming of the flood.

Jesus Christ made it clear that all the events of the Deluge were a warning for our own generation. He said: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:37.

Like radio waves and programmes which cross all boundaries, and enter every home, and impinge on every ear, the Spirit of God speaks to every heart in these last days. He entreats us to yield up our sinful practices, He warns us of coming judgment, He tells us that Christ is coming soon. Like the falling leaves of autumn which tell us that winter is around the corner, like the colourful bulbs of spring which herald the approach of summer days, so there are around us today many wonderful signs of the Coming of the Lord.

The wise man who prepared for the coming of the Flood obeyed the voice of the preacher. He gave up his injurious habits, he subdued his shameful lusts and passions, he upheld the sacredness of the marriage institution, he sought the righteousness of Heaven.

The wise man of the twentieth century will do likewise.



SAFE

by Elizabeth Rosser

THE winter winds blow loud and shrill,
The bare trees shiver in the cold;
The flock that fed upon the field
Are gathered in the fold.
There naught of winter can they know,
Nor how the grass and streams are froze;
Each morning brings them food and drink,
Each evening, safe repose.

So, in the anxious ways of life,
When skies are dreary, grey, and cold,
May I, just like a wandering sheep,
Be gathered in the fold.
Then, racking storms I will not fear,
Nor wind, nor frost, nor winter snows;
But take my portion at Thy hand
And on Thy breast repose.

PORTENTS

"MISFITS OR SINNERS."—At a Methodist youth rally, speaker Rev. E. Rogers said: "We do not say there are any **sinner**s nowadays. If people offend against society very badly indeed, they are **social misfits**, victims of the social order, unfortunates who need psychiatric treatment. But if they are just adulterers, liars, greedy, and self-centred, then they are perfectly normal. We do not talk about sin. We offer instead other explanations of why people nowadays are behaving as they were not behaving two or three generations ago."

The lost sense of sin, as the Bible affirms, is one of the greatest signs of the last days.

DOWN WITH DAD.—Addressing the Institute of Directors in the Albert Hall, London, Cardinal Heenan truly assessed the modern situation: "Today the fatherhood of parent, priest, or employer is dismissed as paternalism. Students claim the right to appoint the teaching staff, police to frame the laws they guard, and the clergy—being children of their generation—to rewrite the Ten Commandments."

"One of the Ten Commandments, that about honouring thy father and thy mother, has not so much been rewritten as dropped. Yet there can be good as well as bad paternalism, and the conception of the authority of the father is one of the fundamentals of human society."—"The Tablet."

ANTI-UNIONISTS.—In all denominations are those who value Bible truth above all else, people who are unprepared to compromise in the interests of so-called Christian unity. Speaking at a rally of such in Durham City, Dr. Franz Hildebrandt, Professor at Drew University, made the following points against Anglican-Methodist union: 1. There is no need for a service of reconciliation. 2. We have no call to the priesthood, not in the fullest sense of a sacrificing and offering priesthood. 3. We have no use for the historic episcopate. 4. We have lost confidence in the present leadership of the Methodist Church. 5. The "closed table" is the greatest scandal of the Christian church. 6. Re-ordination is downright impossible for

any Methodist minister. 7. We are not the lost defeated crowd we think we are.—"Methodist Recorder."

SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENT BILL.—Moving the second reading of the Sunday Entertainments Bill in the House of Lords, Lord Willis said: "The present [Sunday] law . . . is based on a mishmash of ancient and hoary statutes brought in after the Reformation. The churches today do not believe that church attendance can be compelled by law. In other countries which do not have the same restrictions on Sunday sport, church attendance is as high as in Britain, if not higher. Opposition to Sunday sport on moral grounds is clearly indefensible."

Lord Willis was right. There is no moral law which commands Sunday observance; but there is one which commands Sabbath observance. God's Law—which all the great Confessions of Faith accept—says that "the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Exodus 20:8-11. The seventh day is not Sunday, but Saturday. This day should, in fact, be kept for church attendance and worship. It was appointed by the Creator for our rest and refreshing—a weekly "holiday" which we are morally obliged to observe.

SOVIET WAR ON DRINK.—Alarmed by the rise of crime among youth, Russia's Kremlin has set up a new national ministry of public order. The increase in crime is directly related to strong drink, and bad homes. It is suggested that there be a ban on the sale of drink to a person who is obviously drunk, that there be a restriction on the period of sale, and that wider police powers be provided against drunks.—"The Times."

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READERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO KNOW more about the great truths of the Bible, are earnestly invited to avail themselves of the special, free, HOME BIBLE STUDY GUIDES advertised on the back cover. Editor

NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE

ALLEN ANDREWS writing on the question: "Has God been elbowed out?" tells of a woman who had decided not to bring her baby up in the Christian faith. She spoke with unconvincing confidence about how much happier she felt now she didn't have to struggle to make herself believe in a God simply because she thought she ought to. "It's a great relief to me," she said, "to have come to the conclusion that nobody is sitting around somewhere looking into my mind and knowing all I'm thinking." Which is very much the same sort of attitude a school inspector described. The Religious Instruction teacher had put over a very convincing lesson on the text: "Thou God seest me." During the playtime, the inspector saw a boy with a bow and arrow shooting up into the sky, a very determined look on his face. When asked what he was doing the boy answered grimly: "Shooting!" "Shooting at what?" "I'm shootin' at God 'cos He's up there lookin' at me, and I don't like it."

Of course, there were reasons for Mrs. Dee's rebellion and the murder in the boy's heart. What had bothered Mrs. Dee most was all the misery in the world. She had been shocked, as a social worker, at the appalling things done to poor wretches who had staggered out of Hitler's concentration camps. Andrews also shrewdly opined that her relief at getting rid of this "spying" God might not be a freedom from guilt so much as a feeling of guilt. Perhaps the playground Robin Hood had secrets he preferred to keep strictly to himself. But what made Mrs. Dee really kick over the traces was that no one had offered to baby-sit for her—prams and babies were not welcome at her church.

They say there's no smoke without fire; Mrs. Dee did not shake the dust of the Church off her feet for nothing. Maybe the reasons she gave were superficial and illogical, but they were reasons. And I suppose Mrs. Dee's baby will soon be clutching at her skirts with a whole battery of whys about everything under the sun. It's instinctive. We never get out of the habit; it's the way the child learns; it's the way we go on learning. As soon as we can lisp the words, we ask: "Where did I come from?" When we grow older we ask: "Why am I here?" When the mysterious waters of death begin to sound in ageing ears we falter: "Where am I going?" We look at the wonderful world beneath our feet and say: "Where did it come from? What set it spinning? What made it give birth to me and my kind? What will be the end of it all?" If I get a thumping pain in my body and it doesn't go off, I rush off to the doctor to find what is causing it—it just doesn't come for nothing. When the poor wrecks of humanity stumbled into the world again there were plenty of Mrs. Dees bothering bewildered



THERE ARE FAR BETTER ANSWERS
TO THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL
WORLD DISASTERS, THAN THE
DENIAL "THERE IS NO GOD!"

by A. J. WOODFIELD, M.A., Ph.D.





Scotland's most famous lake, Loch Lomond, serene and calm in its beautiful setting of tree-clad mountains and fertile fields.

heads with asking: "Why? What had they done to deserve all that?"

This tracing back from effect to cause is extremely fascinating: there's no telling where it may lead you. The egg gave birth to the chicken, which laid the egg, which produced the chicken, which must have begun some time. It can be disconcerting too, if we get a puzzle and are not very good at unravelling things. For years, not a clock ticked a second in our house when I was a child, because I had poked probing infant fingers into their works to



Aberfan—a name that will always live in the annals of major tragedy and disaster.

discover what made them go. I can still *stop* clocks and watches, but I can never make them go again.

Of course we smirk knowingly at the apocryphal story of the Irishman who, puzzled why his watch had suddenly stopped and having opened it up to discover why, found a dead fly inside and exclaimed: "Well! well! no wonder it's stopped; the driver's dead." When things go well we let them and don't ask any questions, but when they go wrong we shout angrily "Why?" and when things get all mixed up and we get fuddled and frustrated and we cannot find a good reason in it all, we shout wild words about "no God." The mess might easily be caused by our own ineptitude.

Better answers

It's more than likely something's wrong with our reasoning when it makes us kick God in the face and shout: "Get out of here." It's one thing to puzzle over the mess God's world is in, and another to conclude from the mess there's no God at all. If there isn't how did the world itself get there in the first place? Who started it off, never mind about what has happened to it since? Who keeps it going, who keeps your heart pumping, your food digesting, your potatoes growing, and your apples ripening? It takes a mighty big gulp of credulity to decide it just began all on its own—and keeps going on its own. There are better answers to the "whys" about world and personal disasters, than "no God." *That sort of answer is too much like throwing the inventor of automation out because a stupid saboteur has thrown his clog into the works. The wrecked machine still tells you it has an inventor, and if you have any sense you'll call him in to get it going again.*

I doubt very much whether any intelligent man, in his heart of hearts, really thinks the whirl of life suddenly began without a God to start it up somewhere along the line. Even the embittered Mrs. Dee doesn't. She confessed to Andrews that she is still seeking God. He asked her why and she said: "I have five children. What sort of a world have we brought them into? What hope have they got with all our hatred and destruction? If there is no superior thought at all, no one interested in what we're getting up to, then we really will finish ourselves off. I would like to find a God who would stop it."

And if Mrs. Dee goes to it with an open mind she'll soon find the God to do that. She's only to open the Book that starts: "In the beginning God." As she reads, she'll sense that He is not very far from her. If she reads on, she'll find that He has everything in hand and that almost his last word is: "See, I am making all things new." She'll find too, that the Bible's First Cause is so great that the final outcome is bound to be exciting.



CHRISTIAN BELIEFS IN A SCIENTIFIC AGE

by D. C. UFFINDELL

MANY people who in the past believed firmly the biblical story of the earth's origin, now find their former faith completely shattered by the new "evidence" presented by science, of the apparent great age of the earth. Has science proved the Bible (or our interpretation of it) to be wrong on this point?

In order to answer this question we must first understand clearly just what both the Bible and science do have to say on the question, regardless of what some people may have thought they said. We will turn first to the Bible and then to science.

Tracing Old Testament genealogies

Surprisingly, the Bible has very little to say about the actual age of the earth and its inhabitants. It

BECAUSE THE DATE OF THE EARTH'S ORIGIN IS NOT SUSCEPTIBLE TO SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION; BECAUSE WHAT EVIDENCE THERE IS, POINTS TO A RELATIVELY SHORT AGE FOR THE EARTH; AND BECAUSE GOD WAS THE ONLY EYE-WITNESS OF CREATION—WE ARE WISE TO ACCEPT WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT IT

The important point to notice is that whichever way one looks at it, from a biblical point of view it is very difficult to extend the age of the earth beyond a mere handful of thousands of years.

Because this has appeared ridiculously short compared with the many thousands and millions of years required for even the most conservative scientific estimate, some Bible students have sought an answer for their dilemma by suggesting that the

HOW OLD IS THE EARTH?

certainly provides no exact date for creation. There are two methods of deciding from biblical information the approximate age of the earth. The one most commonly used is to trace the genealogies and history of the Old Testament.

Because the information available is incomplete it has so far proved impossible to decide exactly when the earliest events took place. What can be said with certainty is that the date of creation cannot be less than about 3,900 B.C., or a little over 5,900 years ago. It would also be difficult to extend the time very much beyond this approximate date.

Bible symbolism

The age of the earth has also been estimated on the basis of Bible symbolism and prophecy. The seven year cycle given to ancient Israel for farming the land, and the Jubilee year when all land reverted to its original owner and slaves were freed, are seen as symbols of the earth's total history.¹

The Jubilee is the time when former slaves of sin are finally and for ever free to enjoy this earth as an eternal inheritance. The fallow seventh year is seen to parallel the 1,000 years of desolation on earth prophesied in Revelation chapter 20, which begins at the return of Christ. According to this, the earth would once again be just a little short of 6,000 years old.

6000? 600,000?
60,000,000?

date of creation and the age of the earth are not the same thing. Genesis chapter one and verses one and two, it is assumed, are separated from the story of creation week, having taken place many thousands or millions of years earlier. It is very doubtful that this is what the writer of Genesis has in mind, however, and it is certainly not an obvious or natural inference to be taken from the passage.

Methods of assessing age

Scientists, on the other hand, have used so many methods to try and establish the age of the earth that it is impossible here to discuss them all. We will therefore have to content ourselves with mentioning only the two most important methods, and those typical of many others that have been used.

The foundation stone of all dating methods is the belief that the processes of nature have been operating uniformly in all ages.² A careful measurement of the present rate of progress resulting from any one of these processes (bearing in mind any possible modifying secondary factors), and of



the total accumulated product of the process, is therefore thought to provide a reliable dating method.

There are serious scientific reasons for doubting the absolute uniformity of any of the processes used to date the earth. Examples of this will be given later, along with the approximate dates obtained, which demonstrate the tremendous disparity in the results obtained by applying this principle and *proving how utterly unreliable it really is.*

Furthermore the Bible denies that natural processes have continued uniformly without interruption, by telling of a universal flood which interrupted them all. It also prophesies of the misleading nature of the uniformitarian principle which will be believed in the days just before the return of Christ.² Christians can therefore be certain that dating methods based on this principle are valueless.

Things created in mature forms

A further factor affecting all dating methods is the inevitable *appearance* of great age possessed by the earth and its contents immediately after creation week. Huge trees towered into the air which normally take hundreds or thousands of years to mature. Rivers flowed in beds that would otherwise have taken many years to cut into the landscape. Minerals and isotopes would be present currently

only produced by the slow decay or change of the parent elements.

All these and many other things would *appear* to be the result of slow processes continued over many thousands of years. But they were not so. *They had existed for only one week, yet no possible scientific dating method could ever have revealed it.* This is where science must give way to revelation and man must listen to the voice of God as He tells us that He made this world a mature, fully functioning planet in an instant of time.

The fossil method

We will now consider some of the methods used by scientists in attempting to discover the age of the earth. The principal method, and that by which the original lengthy time scale of millions of years was developed, is biological.

"The only chronometric scale applicable in geologic history for the stratigraphic classification of rocks and for dating geological events exactly, is furnished by the fossils. Owing to the irreversibility of evolution, they offer an unambiguous time scale for relative age determinations and for world-wide correlations of rocks."⁴

Fossils found in the earth are compared with living plants and animals. The simplest and most primitive forms being considered the "oldest," and each advancing life form being considered pro-

gressively younger, until man, the most developed and therefore the "youngest," is reached.

Guesses and assumptions

Guesses are then made regarding the time required for the various stages of development. They are all assigned to their various "ages" in the earth's history upon the assumption that evolution actually occurred.

In spite of the fact that this is still the *only* "exact" method of dating geological events, leading authorities are becoming increasingly uneasy about its validity. Zeuner describes it as "somewhat hazardous," and goes on to say that "As a matter

of principle, however, the time scale should be obtained by some non-biological means."⁶

The difficulty of finding a more truly scientific and accurate dating method is demonstrated in that although dozens of methods have been tried, none of them have agreed with each other satisfactorily, and serious doubts have been cast upon the validity of all of them by different authorities. Even the methods still in use are no exception to this.

To be continued

¹ Exodus 23:10-12. Leviticus 25.

² *Principles of Geomorphology*, page 17, by W. D. Thornbury.

³ 2 Peter 3:4.

⁴ *American Journal of Science*, Vol. 255, June 1957, page 394.

⁵ *Dating the Past*, pages 310, 312, by Zeuner.



★ WHEN THE LORD SAID, "LET US GO DOWN, AND THERE CONFOUND THEIR LANGUAGE" (GENESIS 11:7), WITH WHOM WAS HE SPEAKING WHEN HE USED THE WORD "US"?—N.F.B.

VERSES 6 and 7 read as follows: "And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let Us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

The answer to the question is found by comparing similar use of plural pronouns in the first chapter of Genesis. There we find God speaking in the same way: "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." Verse 26. Again, after man's fall, He said, "Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil." Genesis 3:22.

The Hebrew word for God in the first chapter of Genesis is *Elohim*, a noun in the plural form but singular in meaning as applied to the Godhead. In the third and eleventh chapters the name of God is given, Jehovah; and in these passages He speaks in the same way, using plural forms of the pronouns. We read that the Spirit of God was present in the work of creation (Genesis 1:2), and in the New Testament we learn that Christ was co-Creator of the world with the Father. Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2. So when God said, "Let Us make man" and "let Us go down," it was the Son and

the Holy Spirit with whom He was speaking. Thus in the first chapters of the Bible is clearly revealed the threefold nature of the Godhead, a truth declared in its fullness in the New Testament.

★ PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT CHRIST MEANT BY "AND NOW IS," IN JOHN 5:25.—L.H.T.

THE verse is as follows: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

Christ here was referring to spiritually dead—"dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1)—who would hear His voice and be spiritually resurrected. This thought follows logically from that expressed in verse 24 of John 5: "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." This is a present experience.

However, Christ's statement could also refer to the physically dead, a few of whom He would restore to life (see Luke 7:14, 15; 8:54, 55; John 11:43, 44) as evidence of His divine power. Their special resurrection was a pledge of the future general resurrection when "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29.

If you have any questions about the Bible, the Church, or Christianity which you would like answered in these columns; or if you have some religious problem to which you would like an answer, you are invited to send to:

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Divine Safeguards

by MARY J. VINE

OUR Bible lesson for the day was entitled: "Jesus, the Physician," and the texts were the old familiar ones, the stories those which we have read—and told—repeatedly over the years.

And it is good that we should be thus reminded, for what Jesus did, He can still do. He who healed the sick in Galilee is equally able to heal the sick today. His Word is still as powerful in 1967 as it was in the days of His earthly ministry.

"He healed them," the Scriptures said (Matthew 4:23, 24), "all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people, . . . those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy."

"And do you think," asked one, "that He can still do the same, and still does?"

Do I not!

There will always be those, of course, who will refuse to acknowledge that there is any Higher Power behind the miracles of modern medical science, and that our magnificent hospitals are but another evidence of man's progress as he pulls

THE AGE OF MIRACLE-HEALING IS BY NO MEANS PAST, BUT WE ARE MORALLY OBLIGED TO DO ALL WE CAN TO AVOID SICKNESS. IN HIS MERCY GOD HAS PROVIDED EFFECTIVE SAFEGUARDS

himself up by his own shoe-strings so to speak. It is to be hoped that we are not among those who fall into that kind of presumptuous error.

Not that we would by any means underestimate the incalculable magnitude of the human contribution.

"If my hand slacked, I should rob God," said old Antonio Stradivari, so, at least, the poet says he said,

*Leaving a blank behind instead of violins,
He could not make Antonio
Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio.*

And the same goes for every worth-while human achievement.

We in 1967 have a great deal to be thankful for that there have lived such benefactors of mankind as Louis Pasteur, whose memory we celebrate every time we "drinka pinta"; or Edward Jenner, the originator of vaccination; or Joseph Lister, whose advocacy of the use of antiseptics undoubtedly worked one of the greatest advances in the history of surgery; Alexander Fleming too, the discoverer of penicillin, or Ronald Ross who exposed the malarial misdeeds of the anopheles mosquito. To any one of those five only we could all of us have owed our lives at some time or other. But not to them alone. Primarily to the One "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:3.) But whereas, while on earth, the great Healer could lay His hands on comparatively few, now through the indefatigable efforts of such men as these—and their name is Legion—the whole world is benefited. Praise be for their God-given curiosity and the dedication that enabled them to attain such coveted ends.

It is an encouragement to our faith, however, that there are oftentimes such miraculous cures as can only spell immediate, personal, divine interven-



tion. I am glad that I know, and have known, such. They prove the veracity of the Sacred Word.

She should have died

Hannah should have died when she was a slip of a girl. There was no hope whatever for her. But she and the members of her communion believed profoundly in Bible procedure, and James says: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." James 5:15.

And in her case the prayer of faith did raise her up. She didn't die at fifteen, but at well over eighty, after a full, strenuous and profitable life.

And I remember Jacob—Jacob in Abua, in the heart of the Ibo country in West Africa. At that particular time there were no old men in that whole neighbourhood. None lived till they were old, and ultimately the Government sent in a medical unit to try and discover the cause therefor.

It was found to be sleeping-sickness, and after every man, woman, and child had been examined, it was discovered that 98% of the population of the area were affected. Jacob was obviously too far gone to respond to any remedial treatment. In his waking moments food would be put in his mouth, but he would fall asleep again, the food still unchewed and unswallowed. He didn't present an attractive picture. He was past any mortal help.

Jacob, however, had been the mainstay of his little church, the membership of which had already been terribly decimated. "We can't afford to lose him," cried the few who remained; "Please take him to the doctor for the injection," they begged. Nor was it any use arguing with them. Only try, that was all they asked.

Reluctant doctor

So, to please them, the inert, lifeless Jacob was loaded into the car, and the doctor, when we arrived, only confirmed our fears. We were wasting both our own time and his, and certainly it would be wasting a valuable injection. The good doctor made it perfectly clear that he thought us greatly lacking in just plain common sense.

Nevertheless, for the sake of our pleading followers—for the whole congregation had trundled along in our wake—he came over to the car and gave the unconscious Jacob an injection, muttering under his breath the while at the stupidity of it, and calling himself a ninny for his weakness.

We were scarcely awake on the following morning when there came a knock on our door, and there stood Jacob, a bit gaunt it was true, but he had been dallying on the margin for a long time.

Yet he was upright, and there was the light of health in his eyes, and the smile on his face was such as to make one feel very humble. He knew that God had laid His hand upon Him, and such an experience had never been known in Abua before. We didn't bundle him into the car this time. Though we invited him to get in and ride, he gently refused. He wanted to walk. So we walked with him, together with the same group who had followed the day before. The doctor could scarcely believe his eyes. He could hardly credit that it was the same man. There were no thanks due to him, he said.

"Man," he breathed, "it's a miracle."

God's preference

It was of course, and thank God He does, even in this day and age, still as necessity arises, perform this type of miracle, spectacular, obviously beyond the ability of any man. But while it is true that our Lord both can and does "heal our diseases" and is still known, at the call of faith, to make whole, even as He did in Galilee, there is something that He would much rather do. He would rather *keep* than *heal*. As He says through the apostle John (3 John 1:2): "Beloved, I wish *above all things* that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

That's plain enough, isn't it? *Above all things* the Lord wishes for our well-being. Even as He reiterated again and again to the Children of Israel through His servant Moses: "Thou shalt keep therefore His statutes and His commandments, which I command thee this day, *that it may go well with thee.*" (Deuteronomy 4:40.) Through those first chapters of Deuteronomy that little phrase occurs repeatedly, "that it may go well with thee." Moses very much wanted Israel to know the loving nature of God's desires toward them. And it is just the same today, and the same divine preventative measures are as appropriate to us today as ever they were to God's people then, and just as efficacious.

His day of rest, for instance

As, for instance, the keeping of His day of rest.

After His six days of creative labour at the beginning of our world, Jehovah Himself, we are told, called the seventh day the Sabbath, and kept it and was refreshed. (Exodus 31:17.) And so that we, the crown of that creation, should never forget His right of possession therefore in our lives, He told us to keep it too. In His infinite wisdom He saw it as a prime necessity to man's health and well-being.

There is nothing so sustaining as the knowledge that "underneath are the everlasting arms," that "God is able, and He will," but let us neglect that

day of particular remembrance and the evil one finds it very easy to snatch that confidence out of our hearts. Solomon knew what he was talking about when he wrote: "A broken spirit drieth the bones." It is well known today that worry and inner stress is very often responsible for the pains and torments of arthritis and rheumatism, and indeed for more of our bodily infirmities, mental, vascular, muscular and gastro-intestinal, than most of us have hitherto dreamed.

But there is no need that we should be bedevilled by the worry that has this dire effect. God is our *Father, your Father and my Father*, ours, our own, and His shoulders are more than broad enough to carry any and all our burdens if only we will let Him. "Don't worry over anything whatever;" the Sacred Word says, "tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God, which transcends human understanding,

will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6, 7. (Phillips translation.) It was of His mercy that the Lord provided the Sabbath that He might be better able to lift our burdens and release us from the weight of them. "My yoke is easy," He said, "and My burden light."

The fifth commandment is called "the first commandment with promise." The promise runs: "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." We can be pretty sure that when the Lord promises length of days, He also intends them to be good days, and the answer therefore to our problem seems obvious. Keep His commandments—and they cover every phase of our experience and all our relationships, and trust Him for the rest. We can be sure that He will not let us down.

May that be our experience, for His Name's sake.



PARABLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

JACOB'S LADDER

One of the many impressive and colourful stories of Old Testament times is that of "Jacob's Ladder." The vision which the fugitive patriarch had as he disconsolately rested one night in the hill country of Bethel, was a symbol. Its lesson is of direct consequence and importance to us today

by J. A. McMILLAN

HE was leaving home in disgrace. A short time before, he had tricked his aged father by pretending to be his brother. Deceit and duplicity had marked his progress—if progress it could be called—from the days of his youth to manhood. Catching his brother at a disadvantage, he had forced him to surrender his birthright. He was his mother's "darling boy," and in her eyes he could do no wrong.

You might be tempted to say that altogether he was "a wrong 'un," but you would be misjudging him.

Jacob was his name—it was almost a nick-name. It is recorded of him: "Is not he rightly named Jacob? [That is, A Supplanter. (Margin)]" Genesis 27:36. So Jacob was regarded as a cheat—a wide boy who drove a sharp bargain and was well worth watching in any business transaction.

The events we are going to consider did not transpire in the youth of Jacob. Actually, he was of a very mature age when he deprived his brother of his aged father's blessing and was forced to flee from home. It was not, therefore, an impetuous

act on his part, but a deliberate plan to deceive his father and deprive his brother of the paternal blessing, that drove Jacob to deception and deportation.

Opposite characters

When we study the relative qualities of Esau and Jacob, we see that Esau lacked the character to qualify him for spiritual leadership. He was unstable, erratic, and unpredictable in disposition. The New Testament calls him "worldly-minded" and condemns him for selling "his birthright for a single meal." Hebrews 12:16, 17. N.E.B.

On the other hand, Jacob was tenacious, having a due regard for spiritual values, and despite his crafty machinations, a man of strong loyalties. When God looked for a man of stability with whom and through whom He purposed to advance His kingdom and truth, He selected Jacob in preference to Esau. Paul calls attention to this basic choice, that "in order that God's selective purpose might stand, based not upon men's deeds, but upon the call of God, . . . 'The elder shall be servant to the



During his vision at Bethel, Jacob heard God's voice assuring him of guidance and protection.

younger;' and that accords with the text of Scripture: 'Jacob I loved and Esau I hated.'" Romans 9:11-13, N.E.B.

Whom God calls, He qualifies, so Jacob had to be refined and polished by hardship and suffering. He had to learn in the school of experience that a man reaps as he sows.

Encouragement from God

But before these lessons were commenced, God gave encouragement to His servant.

Following his cruel deception of Isaac, and while Esau's anger was hot against him for the wrong he had done him, Jacob was sent away to Padan-aram, the home of his uncle Laban.

Jacob had a unique experience on the way to Haran in Northern Mesopotamia. He camped out under the stars and fell asleep. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." Genesis 28:12.

While Jacob continued to dream, he heard the God of Abraham speaking to him and confirming to him the covenant blessings promised to the patriarch. Thus at the outset of his pilgrimage, divine assurance was given to him of God's protecting care and providential leadings.

There are two New Testament comments on this experience that lift it out of the ordinary run of events, and set it among the great pregnant passages of Scripture as a parable of the Gospel.

A ladder is "a set of steps . . . to serve as a means of ascending buildings."—*Oxford Dictionary*. The dictionary recognizes that there are many figurative meanings attached to the word, but scripturally the significant idea is given by Jesus to Nathanael: "In truth, in very truth I tell you all, you shall see heaven wide open, and God's angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." John 1:51, N.E.B.

Exclusive means of communication with heaven

The application is plain. Jesus is the divinely appointed means of communication between earth and heaven. It is by Him that we ascend to the throne of grace. "Since therefore we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, . . . Let us therefore boldly approach the throne of our gracious God, where we may receive mercy and in His grace find timely help." Hebrews 4:14-16, N.E.B.

The ladder which Jacob saw in his dream was "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven." As we consider this ladder to be a means of communication and approach, it is vitally important that it should not fall short.

The New Testament is explicit in its teaching that Jesus was truly human and truly divine. A Messiah who was less than human would not provide a worthy example for frail human beings to follow. A Saviour who was not truly divine would fail to provide an adequate atonement for our sins.

A vast gulf

A vast gulf had been erected between heaven and earth as a result of sin. The word put into the mouth of Lazarus expresses it thus: "There is a great chasm fixed between us; no one from our side who wants to reach you can cross it, and none may pass from your side to us." Luke 16:26, N.E.B.

Jesus is the appointed medium to bridge this gulf. "No one has ever seen God; but God's only Son, He who is nearest to the Father's heart, He has made Him known." John 1:18, N.E.B.

With His divine arm, Jesus encircles the throne of eternity, and with His human hand He lays

hold of the weakest and lowest of the human family. The angels of God, those "ministrant spirits, sent out to serve, for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation," ascend and descend between heaven and earth because of the incarnation of the Son of God. (Heb. 1:14.)

The humanity of Jesus is spoken of in Hebrews as a "new, living way which He has opened for us." Because of this we are encouraged to "make our approach in sincerity of heart and full assurance of faith, our guilty hearts sprinkled clean, our bodies washed with pure water." Hebrews 10:19-22. N.E.B.

Untenable positions

From time to time Christians have arisen who, in a desire to enhance the deity of Christ, have denied His real humanity. On the other hand, are others who have denied His true deity in order to stress His real humanity. Both positions are unscriptural and untenable.

We have a Saviour who has been "made like these brothers of His in every way." He is "not a high priest unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who, because of His likeness to us, has been tested every way, only without sin." Hebrews 2:17; 4:15, N.E.B.

Jesus suffered hunger and thirst. He was wearied by toil and troubled by grief. He was really "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The shortest text of Scripture is also one of the most profound—"Jesus wept." John 11:35.

But there was the other nature, the divine. And Christians throughout the ages have accepted by faith, what theologians have tried to define by reason, that in that one Person there was a fusion of two natures, deity and humanity. "And great beyond all question is the mystery of our religion:

'He who was manifested in the body,
Seen by angels;
Who was proclaimed among the nations,
Believed in throughout the world,
Glorified in high heaven.'"
1 Timothy 3:16, N.E.B.

Practical results of union

The practical results of this union of God and man are infinite. "Had He not with His own merits bridged the gulf that sin had made, the ministering angels could have held no communion with fallen man. Christ connects man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 184.

The everlasting Covenant made by God with Abraham was renewed and confirmed with Jacob. "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 28:14.

Paul's interpretation of this is clear. "And

Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith, declared the Gospel to Abraham beforehand: 'In you all nations shall find blessing.' Thus it is the men of faith who share the blessing with faithful Abraham."

Again, he refers to this Abrahamic covenant, with the comment, "Now the promises were pronounced to Abraham and to his 'issue.' It does not say 'issues' in the plural, but in the singular, 'and to your issue'; and the 'issue' intended is Christ." Galatians 3:8, 9, 16, N.E.B.

Jacob's ladder was a symbol

All these promises and statements of the Old and New Testaments tie up to this, that the ladder revealed to Jacob in a dream was an intimation of the incarnate Son of God who would bridge the gulf between God and man, providing both the means of communication and the living way by which we may approach God and find ourselves accepted in the Beloved.

The blessing conveyed to all the families of earth is the saving feature of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, through whom our sins are forgiven, our weak resolves are strengthened, our hearts are cleansed, and our wills so fortified that we are enabled to do the will of God.

As God promised a new nature and a new earth to Abraham, so He confers the same blessings on all those who share Abraham's faith. "But if you thus belong to Christ, you are the 'issue' of Abraham, and so heirs by promise." Galatians 3:29, N.E.B.

May each of us use that mystic ladder to bring our prayers and petitions before the throne of God, and find sweet communion with our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our Lord.



EXTILED • Chapter four of her true life story by Serpouhi Tavoukdjian

SO FAR.—This true story carries us back fifty years to the First World War. The author was born and bred in a happy Christian home in Armenia. Her wealthy family were members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. With the war came severe hostility against Christian Armenians. Uprooted from their homes, they found themselves joining what proved to be not only a march into exile, but for many of them, a march of death.



IN THE THROES OF STARVATION

STARVATION is a dreadful thing! We heard of some who turned cannibal and ate human flesh. One day when I begged for food, Mother said to me: "Serpouhi, will you ever complain of dry bread if we get home and have food again?" And I cried out in my hunger: "Oh, no, Mother, never! I will never complain of *anything* ever again!"

Walking day and night, without food or drink, my whole family became sick, with the exception of myself. We had eaten hardly anything but grass for days. My older brother, Lazarus, and my two sisters, Ahavne and Rebecca, were so sick they could hardly go on, and it seemed that each step must be their last. But urged by oaths and bayonet points and gun butts and frequent beatings, they managed somehow to crawl along.

One night, when our guards allowed us to stop for a little rest, we all dropped down by the roadside. We knew the respite would be short. Mother arose from the ground, and tears streamed down her cheeks as she did what she could to ease our sufferings.

I was lying on a great rock, with my face turned up to the stars, and there I talked over our great trouble with my heavenly Father. He alone could help us in our distress. I spoke out loud to Him, and then trusted Him to answer as He saw best. But still I could not sleep. So I repeated Bible verses which father had taught us to know and love. Most prominent among those I remember were: "All things work together for good to them that love God," and: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

Before daylight dawned, the dreaded signal to march came. Neither Lazarus nor my sisters could stand, so we hurriedly gathered a few of our belongings and slipped out of sight in the darkness. We would join the group of our countrymen that would be stopping there the next night, and thus have a day of rest. Arasig and I gathered some grass to eat, but we were careful to keep hidden behind the

rocks so that no chance Turk passing by would see us. We knew that would mean more trouble, and probably death.

My brother was dead

As evening brought other refugees, I, the only one who was able, slipped out of our little tent and around our rock shelter, and into the crowd to listen and carry back to Mother whatever news I could gather from the camp talk. While I was listening, I saw one of the Turkish guards peel an orange and throw the peeling on the ground. I made one dive and grabbed it, and hurried back to my dear sick ones.

Brother Lazarus was lying so still on the bare earth. He did not answer when I spoke to him, so I ran to his side and said: "See, brother, what I have brought for you to eat." Still he did not move nor answer, nor make any sound. His eyes were closed. I tried to open them, but could not. I tried to open his mouth, but his teeth were tightly shut. I could not understand what had happened to this jolly, big brother, who had always been so loving and kind to me. I turned to Mother and asked: "Why doesn't Lazarus speak to me?" She came close to us then, and her eyes were wet with tears as she took my hand and stroked it and said: "My dear Serpouhi, brother is dead—starved!" We knelt and prayed beside him, my mother, Arasig, and I—the girls were too sick to move, we prayed that we who were still alive might be faithful, even as he had been, and meet this dear one again in a better, happier, fairer land than this.

Then mother called in some of our camp neighbours, and they helped us to carry his body out into a near-by field, where they placed it in a shallow hole, with his limbs bent, just as he had died, and covered it over with stones. He was just a few months past eighteen! I sobbed my heart out there beside his pitiful grave. Mother finally took me away, and we left our beloved Lazarus alone among those wild, wind-swept, rocky foothills—yet not alone, for does not our heavenly Father

keep watch over His faithful children, living or dead?

On with the march

Very early in the morning we were ordered to march again. Because we did not move fast enough, the Turkish guards came and pulled up the stakes and let our tent down, and shouted at us to "Hurry, hurry!" Mother spoke to them and told them that my sisters were not able to raise their heads as they lay there on the ground, to say nothing of marching. She begged a little respite for them. Could we not please stay there a little longer—another day?

The soldier in charge was a big, burly, hard man. Mother's plea did not interest him at all. What were *two* dying Armenian girls among all those thousands? His fierce-looking face flushed, and his big moustache, twisted to long points at the ends, fairly bristled. He raised his hand and struck my mother. This was too much for me, and I ran to him crying: "Oh, please, please, do not strike my mother! She is so good." But he paid no attention to me, and struck her again, as he spoke an oath. It was his privilege to beat us and abuse us if he chose, and he did. Why not? The more of these Armenian "pigs" who died from starvation and abuse along the way, the fewer there would be to murder outright at the journey's end.

Poor Mother gathered our few belongings, weak and sick as she was. We rolled up the tent, and now that Lazarus was gone, my little brother undertook to carry this heavy load so that we might have shelter.

But my sisters could not stand up. They were too weak. It was impossible. And still it seemed that we just *could not* leave them and continue alone. I ran out to look around for help. But every one was busy with his own troubles. Others on every side were as sick as Ahavne and Rebecca. Others everywhere were dying. Many were already dead, and there was no time permitted to bury them. No one would listen to me.

Humane Aid

And then, at last, I heard some one mention carriages that would carry those who were most sick and could not walk. This humane aid did not come from the Turks, but from others. Among the few Armenians who renounced their Christianity and accepted Mohammedanism in order to save their lives, were rich merchants, some millionaires. Their hearts were touched by the sufferings of their fellow countrymen, and they were able to arrange to give them this help.

I rushed back to mother and told her. Then we

went and found the carriages. And when those in charge heard our story, they tenderly lifted my two sick sisters in, one at a time, and drove on out of sight with our precious ones. Of course, we could not walk fast enough to keep up with the carriages. In fact, mother could hardly walk at all. I had really to *pull* her forward, step by step, as I walked backward, facing her and holding both her hands. We were in fear and suspense for the safety of the girls, but no mercy was shown us, save that which came from the hand of God.

We walked, and walked, and walked, through sunshine and rain, through heat and cold. Two days passed, and we had not caught up with them. Weary and starved and thirsty, we prayed for rest, no matter how.

My foster brother, the young man who had been betrothed to my sister Miriam, and who seemed like one of our family, was also in the caravan. He had been for a long time an officer in the Turkish army, but when the deportation started, and he learned that his two sisters were among the exiles, he felt that he must be with them and help them as he could. Also he was very anxious to see my sister Ahavne, to whom he was now engaged to be married. He therefore ran away from the army, and escaped capture and punishment by joining us on the march. He was now sick from long starvation, and after Rebecca died, we were separated and did not see him again. We found his sisters a long time afterward, and they told us he died from hunger.

As we journeyed through the night, we heard voices at the side of the road in the darkness, speaking the dear familiar words of our own tongue. These Armenians had a tent, and invited us to stay with them until the morning. This we were glad to do. We hoped that we could snatch a little rest, and join the long line again before our Turkish guards missed us. It rained very hard just after we stopped, and our clothing was soaked, because the tent was small, and there were many people, and we could hardly get inside. Morning came, and when the sun arose, we tried to dry out, but the wind was cold, and how we shivered!

"This is the last we have!"

The people who had asked us in were preparing a little food. For the first time in her life, mother begged just a few bites for her starving little ones. They refused to give us even a crumb, though my brother and I cried pitifully at the sight of food. "This is the last we have," they said. "When this bread is finished, we will never have any more." When mother tried to turn our attention away to the drying of our clothes, she broke down and burst into tears and cried with us. We were all *so* hungry.

Not long afterward, these people went on and

left us, and we were alone by the roadside. Why did we not slip out of sight and try to escape? But where? There was no escape. Wild Bedouin tribes and roving bands of soldiers roamed through the hills. There were only Turkish villages near, and we could not hope for kindness from them. Death was on every side.

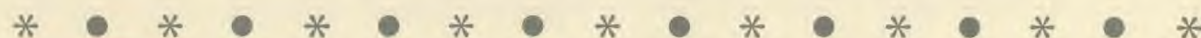
And then the thought of the two sick loved ones who had been carried on ahead, spurred us to join the forlorn ranks of the exiles again. It seemed that we had no strength with which to move, but sometimes love is more powerful than human energy. We struggled to our feet, and once more I began to pull mother along by holding her hands. She begged us to leave her to die, but that we could

not do. Long ago our shoes had worn out, and now our feet were tied in rags. My brother Arasig could walk faster than we, and he said now that he would go ahead and try to locate my sisters if they were at the next camping place, and be ready to take us to them when we arrived.

Poor little brother! I can see him yet as he stumbled away—his swollen abdomen, his body only skin and bones, his eyes sunken, and it seemed the very apathy of death on his face. How he lived and walked on I do not know!

To be continued

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focus on favourite texts

by E. B. PHILLIPS, M.Th.

"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.

IT is the glory of our Heavenly Father to pardon the penitent.

This wondrous truth was announced in the Old Testament, for it is clearly stated in Proverbs 28:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. In the New Testament it is emphasized repeatedly, and the way by which our guilt is removed is made clear. There is but one, exclusive, infallible way—and that is through the Blood of Jesus. (1 John 1:7.)

In former times God spoke fragmentarily through the prophets, but to us He has spoken directly through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Yet even in primeval times the Lord did not leave Himself without witness, for the honest in heart have always been accepted by the Supreme Judge of mankind. The fact that God is no respecter of persons, is clearly brought out in the first two chapters of Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

The first requirement of pardon

But how thankful and happy we should be

because by the grace of God we have had the benefits of the Gospel! According to our text, the prime requisite for pardon is confession. This of course means more than saying we are sorry, and glibly acknowledging what we have done wrong. It implies a heart-felt desire and resolve to turn from sin.

There are instances in the Bible of pseudo-confession—of owning up to transgression from the wrong motive. We can consider, for example, the case of Achan, recorded in Joshua chapter seven. The circumstances are detailed at length. The Israelites had been plainly warned not "to take of the accursed thing" from the defeated city of Jericho. (In other words, they were not to loot or plunder.) That fortress city was miraculously given over into their hands; but the next stronghold they attacked, successfully resisted them, and thirty-six of the children of Israel were slain. And this, despite the fact that it was a smaller and much more vulnerable place than Jericho.

God revealed to Joshua that this ignominious defeat was because one of their number had stolen and dissembled. Thereupon the tribes were brought up, group by group, family by family, and eventually man by man, in the process of discovering the guilty person. Eventually Achan was identified as the guilty one. Not until then did he own up to what he had done; but his "confession," literally forced from him as it was, by no means averted the merited punishment. Confession which comes after the wrong-doing has been publicly revealed, is not what our text means.

Confession of Judas

Another instance of forced confession is that of Judas Iscariot. We read of this in Matthew chapter 27: "Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented

himself, and brought again the thirty pieces . . . saying, I have sinned." It has been discussed, whether if he truly repented, he might have been forgiven. But to what did his "repentance" lead? He went and hanged himself. We might refer to Hebrews 10 verses 26-31, in the case of Judas Iscariot.

We cannot do better than quote from the book *Steps to Christ* to show what true confession really means. In the chapter on "Confession," the author states: "The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin" . . . (such as making long and wearisome pilgrimages, or performing painful penances) "to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression."

"Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt, and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. . . . Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin."

"God is faithful"

Our text declares that God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us. What does it mean, that God is faithful? Surely we are thereby assured that He keeps His promises. So many times throughout the Bible we are told He is a prayer-answering God: "It is a faithful saying . . . if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny himself." 2 Timothy 2:11-13. Time and time again throughout the Scriptures we have the assurance that He will pardon our trespasses. We have encouraging examples in Psalm 103:3, 12; Isaiah 38:17; and Micah 7:19. He has pledged Himself to pardon us when we truly repent. But not only is He faithful, but He is also just. From this we gather that there is a legal basis for our forgiveness: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . . for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:1, 2. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Verse 31.

Some have been troubled by the fear that their frequent falling into the same sins, and asking forgiveness over and over again, may weary God beyond endurance. But while we have all been guilty of trying God's patience, yet there is comfort and hope for even the worst of us in the teaching of our Lord about forgiveness, as spoken to Peter, in Matthew 18. Peter asked: "How oft shall my

brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus replied: "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven." Then Jesus contrasted the readiness of God to forgive us, with the hardhearted behaviour we exhibit toward our debtors, by telling the parable of the two debtors.

One owed his lord ten thousand talents (a fabulous sum, its modern equivalent running into millions of pounds.) When he craved time to pay, his lord freely forgave him. But, incredible as it may seem, this pardoned servant went out and began to throttle a fellow-servant, because he could not immediately pay a debt owed to him, which amounted to a mere trifling amount. He showed no compassion, even though the fellow-servant besought mercy in the very same terms in which the wicked servant had himself pleaded with his lord. In fact, he threw him into a debtor's prison. We are aghast at such inhuman treatment, and feel that the ungrateful, unfeeling servant richly deserved to be delivered to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due to his lord. But if we are honest with ourselves, are we not constrained to admit that the Lord is right when He actually points to us and says: "Thou art the man"? 2 Samuel 12:7.

When we meditate on the love, compassion, and forgiveness of our Lord, "which passeth knowledge," we are constrained humbly to bow at His feet, confessing our unworthiness, and pleading for mercy and grace to follow more closely in His steps, and to show a more Christlike spirit in our relations with others.



We hope you have enjoyed reading this issue of "OUR TIMES." We invite you to join our large family of regular readers.

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THE CHILDREN'S PAGES



ONE of the FAMILY

by L. V. PAYNE

SHEP was no ordinary dog. From the time he first entered the Lane home as a tiny puppy he seemed to understand almost everything that was said to him. Mr. Lane found him easy to train, and in a few months he was following his master all around the farm.

Shep grew rapidly. By the time he was six months old he would go with Mr. Lane to bring the cows or horses from the pasture. Mr. Lane would point to the cows and command: "Go get 'em, Shep!" Off Shep would go, running around the cattle, nipping at their heels to start them homeward. When at last he had rounded them up and was walking beside Mr. Lane, he would look up with a pleased expression on his doggie face as if to say: "Look what I did!"

Later Mr. Lane could stand in the farm-yard, point in the direction of the cows, and say: "Go get 'em, Shep!" Off Shep would go alone, and return triumphantly in a few minutes with the cows.

There were two animals on the farm, however, who looked on Shep with a certain amount of contempt. They absolutely refused to be chased by a dog. Whenever old Shep came near them Dolly, the chestnut mare, and Beauty, her year-old colt, would start after him. The moment Shep came within Beauty's reach, the colt would strike at the dog with his front feet. Beauty was a very spoiled colt; he seemed to be aware that he was admired by Mr. and Mrs. Lane and his mother more than any other animal on the farm, so he became very naughty. As he

grew older he would strike down everything that came within his reach. He even struck at Mr. Lane once when his master tried to pet him.

"Dolly's colt, Beauty, will be a nasty one to break," remarked Mr. Lane to his wife one day. "He is growing so fast that I'm almost afraid of him now. Why, he even tried to strike me with his front feet today. He won't let Shep get near his heels, but wheels and comes at the dog with his forefeet. That Beauty is a bad one!"

Another year passed; Shep was a full-grown dog now. More and more duties fell to his lot. The next summer Mr. Lane said to his wife one day: "Shep is almost as essential as another farm worker; I couldn't do without him. Why, he is just one of the family."

Beauty too was growing rapidly; his glossy chestnut coat shimmered in the sunlight. True to his name, he was very beautiful in appearance, but not in disposition. His temper grew steadily worse. Mr. Lane was kind to his animals. He gave them the best of food and care. His horses were the admiration of the neighbourhood. Beauty was no exception. More than one farmer had offered to buy him at Mr. Lane's price, but Mr. Lane had steadfastly refused to sell.

Summer passed into winter, and winter into spring. With the first days of spring new joy came to the Lane home; Baby Jean was born. Even Shep seemed to feel the happiness that is sure to come when a tiny baby enters the home. From the very first he was her

guardian and playmate. As the days stretched into months Jean grew rapidly. At first she could only coo and clap her baby hands when Shep came near. But it was not long before she could sit up and reach her chubby hands for the dog's thick golden fur. By the following summer she could walk and say: "Nice doggie."

After work in the morning that summer, Shep would come to the steps and lie in front of them to watch for Baby Jean. As soon as she awoke she would toddle to the screen, put her chubby hands on it, repeating over and over: "Nice doggie."

One summer morning Mr. Lane awoke as usual, dressed, and started for the barn with his milk pail slung over his arm. That was

Shep seemed to understand everything that was said to him.



Shep's cue to get the cows. Off he dashed, and soon each cow was ready to be milked. Work went fast that morning. In half an hour Mr. Lane, with Shep at his heels, stepped out of the barn, carrying two pails of foaming milk.

What he saw caused him to freeze to the spot. At the same time Shep saw it too. Neither man nor dog moved a muscle. Directly in front of them, with his back to them, stood three-year-old Beauty in the open gate, striking at a tiny figure in a little white nightgown. It seemed that at any moment the little figure would be struck to the ground by the heavy hoof of the colt.

Baby Jean had awaked early that morning, and while her mother was working around the house, unaware of what she was doing, Jean had pushed open the screen and toddled toward the barn. The heavy gate, which Mr. Lane had failed to fasten securely, swung open; and Beauty, taking advantage of the opportunity to run away, had started through—but there stood Baby Jean in his way. One blow of the hoof, and she would be removed. But try as he might Beauty could not seem to strike her. Each blow fell a few inches short of the golden brown head.

Mr. Lane did not move, but he

remembered that God could protect his child, so he began to pray. While he was praying Shep, who had been trained to run at the heels of animals, walked quietly toward the tank, then like a flash, jumped the fence and leaped between Baby Jean and Beauty. He nipped Beauty on the nose, backing him straight through the gate. Surely an angel of the Lord guided Shep as he acted his part in the scene.

Jean is a grown woman now, happy in the service of the Lord. She is certain that God spared her life that she might have a part in taking the knowledge of Jesus' love to others.



YOUR LETTER

My dear Sunbeams,

FOR our competition picture this time the artist has drawn some tropical fishes. This will give you a lot of scope for some really gay colour. So get out your paints and crayons, and see how attractive an underwater scene can become. There are some lovely prizes for the very best entries!

Have you noticed the little verse under the picture? God is made happy when we remember to thank Him for all the wonderful things he has made for our delight: colourful birds, butterflies, flowers, fishes; graceful animals; fruits of every shape, colour, and luscious flavour. I am reminded of a little grace said when I was at school.

Perhaps you, too, know it well?

"Thank you for the world so sweet,
Thank you for the food we eat,
Thank you for the birds that sing,
Thank you God for everything."

Goodbye for now, and God bless you.

Yours affectionately,

Auntie Pam

RESULTS OF NOVEMBER COMPETITION

Prize-winners.—Valerie Nicholson, 39 Park Grove, Huntington Road, York. Age 12.
Roslyn Ann Tuson, 1 Rays Road, Edmonton, N.18. Age 10.

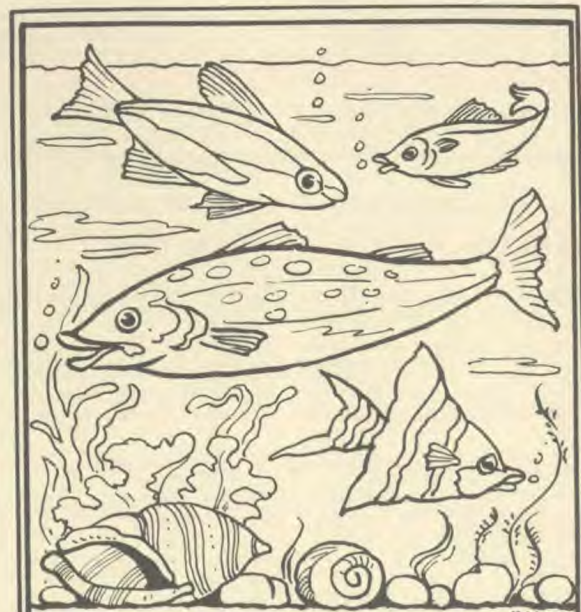
Honourable Mention.—Margaret Lacey (Gt.

Missenden); Malcolm Coombs (Watford); Dean Edwards (Southend-on-Sea); Anne Crawford (West Moors); Susan Lusty (Gloucester); Jayne Dilks (Croxley Green); Sylvia Peters (Banwell); Denise Kilgore (Londonderry); Pauline Leonard (Londonderry); Anita Saxby (York); Pamela K. Sheldrick (Shoeburyness); Rosemarie Jenkins (Aberdare); Andrew Robson (Stanley); Martin Sharp (Hornchurch); Sally Hawkins (Worcester); Susan Sikes (Portsmouth); Roderick Crawford (West Moors); Helen Susan Kater (London, E.1.).

Those who tried hard.—Lester Taylor (London, N.W.2.); Carol Rendall (High Wycombe); Richard Behennah (West Moors); Rosemary Pearson (Westcliff-on-Sea); Susan Jones (Luton); Paul Allen (Lowestoft); Paul Nelson (Manchester, 16); Karen Burton (Norwich); Lorraine Burton (Norwich);

Ian Whiting (Brimscombe); Sharon Rose Stewart (Larne); Sheila Beavers (York); Garry Girdlestone (Norwich); Lydia Roberts (Nottingham); Irene Dougherty (Ballymoney); Dawn Pleyer (Chard); Margaret B. King (Ipswich); Sally Freke (Bristol 7); David Burgess (Newport, Mon); Rachael Reynolds (Taunton); Elizabeth Oliver (Larne); Valmae Graham (Bracknell); Ian Davidson (Banbridge); Michelle Beere (York); Carolyn Walker (Londonderry); Margaret Bacchus (Birmingham); Erica Ann Marie Perkins (London, S.E.25); Joy Price (Newport, Mon.); Janice Clark (London, N.15); Christine Pursall (Wolverhampton); Kevin McMail (Pontypool); Rosemary Thompson (Aberdeen); Sarah Martin (York); Philip Woodfield (Bearwood); Jayne Hackford (Barrow-on-Humber); Jacqueline Saunders (Peterborough); Melvyn Davies (Leeds, 12); Diane French (Norwich).

FOR YOU TO COLOUR



See how nicely you can colour this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Pam, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Alma Park, Grantham, Lincs., not later than March 10th.

Thanks be
to GOD.

1. COR. 15. 57.

"THINK ON THESE THINGS"

PAUL BOESE: "Knowledge is the back door to God. Faith is the front door."

ROBERT J. HASTINGS: "Faith is a daily necessity whether one is getting married, taking a job, struggling with an illness, or overcoming a handicap. And faith in God is the cornerstone of all other faiths. As one psychiatrist says, 'When I learn a patient has no faith in God, I dismiss the case. There is nothing to build on.'"

RUSSELL KIRK: "Boredom, I think, is the greatest affliction of affluent and secure societies. It is a principal cause of suicide, violence, unnatural vices, drunkenness, addiction to narcotics, even revolution. Man can endure almost anything better than he can sustain boredom, the fatigue of having nothing interesting to do. And the more rational a creature becomes, the more susceptible he is to boredom. . . . The great cures for boredom are satisfying work with purpose and dedication to service—the service of God or of other people, including people not yet born. Leisure that is mere idleness must become worse, in the long run, than even the most exhausting labour—if that labour has a good purpose."

E. G. WHITE: "The cross of Calvary challenges, and will finally vanquish, every earthly and hellish power. In the cross all influence centres, and from it all influence goes forth. It is the great centre of attraction, for on it Christ gave up His life for the human race. This sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his original perfection; yea more. It was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror. Those who in the strength of Christ overcome the great enemy of God and man, will occupy a position in the heavenly courts above angels who have never fallen."

ROBERT V. OZMENT: "How do we go about finding the power to meet and master life? If I wanted to excel in golf I would find the greatest golf player and study his swing and watch him play. He would be my example. If I wanted to become a skilled surgeon I would attend the best medical school and seek out the greatest surgeon and watch him work and study his methods. If we are really interested in mastering life we must study the life of Jesus Christ and make Him our Example." —"Putting Life Together Again." (Revell.)

Editorial in "Church and State," April, 1966: "Church leaders today exhibit a passion for what they call 'involvement.' The church must be involved in everything to show that it is 'relevant.' In the name of the church these men plunge into almost every kind of interest, activity, programme, concern, that one can name, thus proving that the church is aware of the problems of the day.

"Participation in politics and the use of public funds are a part of this development of 'involvement.' Indeed, the church of today is busily engaged in the performance of virtually every kind of task save those assigned to it by its Founder."

GEORGE WHITEFIELD: "Whole days and WEEKS have I spent prostrate on the ground in silent or vocal prayer."

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