

GOOD NEWS

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CHRIST IS RISEN

Your Savior Is Real!
—Desmond Ford

**When Good Things
Happen to Bad People**
—Brad McIntyre

**The Key to Every Door
Worth Opening, Part II**
—Desmond Ford

April 1987

WAVE AFTER WAVE of huge Soviet bombers screamed overhead. Colonel Charles Taylor felt the great flying shadows must soon overwhelm him. And his country.

As U.S. air attaché to Moscow in 1955, Colonel Taylor had anticipated a routine celebration of Red Air Force Day at Tushino Airport. But what he saw when Soviet aircraft passed in review stunned him. He counted fully **twice** the number of Bison bombers he had seen at the May Day parade earlier that year. The USSR had four times more heavy bombers than Strategic Air Command had B-52s!

When his report reached the United States, senate hearings declared a dangerous "bomber gap." President Eisenhower was forced to order many more B-52s than he thought wise.

It was all a shrewd hoax. After the first ten Bison had flown overhead, they doubled back and were joined by eight more. Every M-4 that could get into the sky that day flew over and over the reviewing stand. The Russians apparently wanted the Americans to think they had more bombers than they actually had. (The ruse backfired. It caused a weapons spurt in the U.S.)

In this age of superpower posturings and competitiveness, accurate military intelligence is of crucial importance. National security cannot be built on rumors or ruses. Each side needs to know **exactly** what the other is up to. The West has reconnaissance and surveillance systems already in place that have cost over \$100 billion. Facts are vital; intelligence is crucial.

As we enter the season of Easter bunnies, chocolate eggs and marshmallow chicks, we might justifiably be confused as to what facts are important in Christianity. This prompts the question, "What is truly crucial to the Christian faith?"

The answer is in the question.

"Crucial" is defined as "marked by final determination, decisive, acute." It comes from the Latin "crux" meaning cross (in fact, an archaic meaning of crucial is "cruciform"). Embedded in the word "crucial" is a cross.

What is crucial to the Christian faith? The answer is in the question: The cross is crucial to the Christian faith.

Not that Christ's cross is to be separated from his resurrection. Christ's death was not **more** important than his resurrection; he did not rise as a mere afterthought to his death. Neither did he die just so he could rise. The two events are united (though not fused). The Sabbath holds together Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Nevertheless, the two events are distinct (though not separate; Saturday comes between Friday and Sunday). Christ died on the cross for our sins (1 Cor 15:3). That is crucial. He was raised for our justification (Rom 4:25). That is life-giving. The amazing miracle of his resurrection confirmed that his death—in appearance like many another death—was actually another amazing miracle. His death brought forgiveness of sins!

In Texas, the middle of the road is where "there ain't nothin' but yellow stripes and squashed armadillos." This magazine is not interested in striking some middle-of-the-road position. We come down firmly on the side of the historical, factual gospel as that which Christians really need to know.

This fresh, daffodil time of year is a supportive season. Christians everywhere are celebrating what is **crucial** to the Christian faith: the death and resurrection of their Lord. This intelligence is ours: Our sins are forgiven in Christ. We truly are justified.

Be sure to read:

When Good Things Happen to Bad People

Brad McIntyre is bold enough to tackle the toughest question in religion and philosophy: Why suffering?

The Key to Every Door Worth Opening—Part II

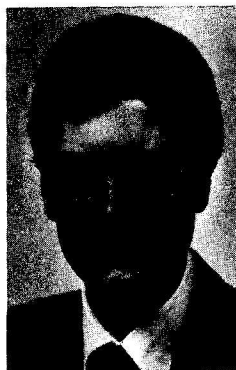
Our prejudices prevent us from opening doors into new and exciting avenues of life. Dr. Desmond Ford investigates how saving faith challenges our prejudices.

Your Savior Is Real!

Dr. Ford reassures us that we can be sure of the facts of the gospel. We do not believe myths and legends. We believe in an historically authentic Lord.

At the Museum

Marley learns lots of things your editor never knew before, about holy horns, star fighters in heaven, and mole subways!



by Roy Gee

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[This article is excerpted from Chapter 6 of Dr. Desmond Ford's book, *A Kaleidoscope of Diamonds: Finding a Pattern of Beauty in Life's Chaos, Pain and Passion*. Volume One. Both volumes are available from: Desmond Ford Publications, 7955 Bullard Drive, Newcastle, CA 95658. Vol. 1, \$7.80 + \$1.50 shipping and handling; Vol. 2, \$8.95 + \$1.50 s&h.—Ed]

YOUR SAVIOR IS REAL!

by Dr. Desmond Ford

The Historical Reality of Jesus

The battle over the historicity of Christ has been fought and won. No historian of note today denies the facticity of Jesus. The evidence from ancient documents has been marshalled by F.F. Bruce in his *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*. Sir J. G. Frazer, no friend of evangelical Christianity, declared "The doubts which have been cast upon the historical reality of Jesus are, in my judgment, unworthy of serious attention." He cites the hostile evidence of Tacitus (Ann. xv. 44), and the younger Pliny (Epist. x. 96) as confirmatory of the Gospel record. In the fifteenth edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the many independent secular references to Christ are referred to, and then this conclusion is drawn:

These independent accounts prove that in ancient times even the opponents of Christianity never doubted the historicity of Jesus, which was disputed for the first time and on inadequate grounds by several authors at the end of the 18th, during the 19th, and at the beginning of the 20th centuries.¹

In addition to the twenty-seven documents of the New Testament, we have comments from Tacitus (Roman

historian of the first century), Josephus (Jewish contemporary), Lucian of Samosata (second-century satirist), Suetonius (early second-century Roman historian), Pliny the Younger (governor of Bithynia early in second century), the Jewish Talmud, and the church fathers, Polycarp, Eusebius Irenaeus, Ignatius, Justin, Origen, Tertullian, and others.

The Authenticity of the New Testament Documents

The manuscript evidence for the authenticity of the N.T. far exceeds that which can be marshalled for any other document of antiquity. Over 5,300 Greek manuscripts of the N.T., 10,000 Latin Vulgate and more than 9,300 manuscripts of other early versions are in our hands, in contrast to the next most authenticated work: Homer's *Iliad*, which has but 643 manuscripts surviving. Furthermore, in no other case is the time interval between the original work and the earliest extant manuscripts so brief as in that of the

N.T. For example, the famous John Ryland's papyrus containing verses from John's Gospel is dated at approximately 120 A.D. Says Hort, "in the variety and fullness of the evidence on which it rests the text of the N.T. stands absolutely and unapproachably alone among ancient prose writings." As for the original N.T. text, the words of Westcott and Hort sum up that situation:

If comparative trivialities such as change of order, the insertion or omission of the article with proper names,



and the like are set aside, the words in our opinion still subject to doubt can hardly amount to more than a thousandth part of the N.T.²

The Reliability of the Gospel Records

But what shall we say about the reliability of these ancient records about Christ? How historical are the Gospels? In answer to Bultmann and those sympathetic with him we would mention the dictum of Dodd: genius never comes out of a committee. Those who wish to repudiate Jesus as the author of the

words put in his mouth in the Gospels have to settle for a group as unique as the central figure they reject. Not only are we challenged by the Gospels to consider this story of a miracle, but there is also the miracle of the story. It would take a Christ to invent a Christ. His words come to the unprejudiced heart today as the genuine expressions of One who was equal with God. And those words match the majesty of the events associated with Christ, and both together harmonize with the Old Testament prophecies and types. To quote the reformers of the sixteenth century, the words of Jesus are self-authenticating. They are attended by the witness of the Spirit to every humble listener.

The Honesty of the Gospel Writers

There are grave psychological problems for those who accuse the Gospel writers of being liars. The evidence is that they ran the risk of martyrdom for their "lies." While men often lie to get out of trouble, few men lie in order to get into it. Consider the many evidences of the frankness of these men who chronicled the life of Jesus. Paley summarized some of these centuries ago in his *Evidences of Christianity*. He cites, for example, the comments of Lardner, Beattie, and Duchal as follows:

Christians are induced to believe

the writers of the Gospel, by observing the evidences of piety and probity that appear in their writings, in which there is no deceit, or artifice, or cunning, or design. "No remarks," as Dr.

Beattie hath properly said, "are thrown in, to anticipate objections; nothing of that caution, which never fails to distinguish the testimony of those who are conscious of imposture; no endeavor to reconcile the reader's mind to what may be extraordinary in the narrative."³



For examples of the candor of the N.T. writers consider the following:

(1) There is no collusion among them for they appear to differ in many details. This applies not only to the ministry, but the death and resurrection of Christ.

(2) The account of the cross is staggeringly unadorned. There is no attempt to underline the cruelty of the death of Christ, or to lay blame on specific contemporaries. There are no exclamations of horror or contempt. We are just given the plain unvarnished facts about the most significant event in all history.

(3) The same is true of the resurrection. Christ is never presented as appearing to any but those who believed in him. What an impressive story it could have made to have had Christ visit Pilate or Caiaphas in the dead of night. While we are told he spent six weeks on earth after leaving the tomb, we are only given an account of a tiny percentage of his deeds and words in that time.

(4) Again, Christ is always presented as speaking on practical matters affecting conduct rather than esoteric matters of interest such as the nature of heaven, etc.

(5) Many of the "hard sayings" of Christ almost defy invention. Those anxious about audience reaction

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men lie in
order to get
into it.***

would have omitted them. Such sayings as moving mountains by faith, and eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God abound, and are never fenced about by elaborate explanation.

(6) Again and again we read of failures among his own followers. At his resurrection he is met by unbelief repeatedly, and even the closing verses of Matthew refer to that fact. John the Baptist is said to have had his doubts and sent enquirers to Jesus. Jesus' own relatives thought he was mad (see Mk 3:21).

(7) While John the Baptist is said to be the greatest of the prophets, no miracles are ascribed to him, yet many are credited to Christ.

Will Durant in his *The Story of Civilization* says of the Gospel writers: They record many incidents that mere inventors would have concealed—the competition of the apostles for high places in the kingdom, their flight after Jesus' arrest, Peter's denial, the failure of Christ to work miracles in Galilee, the references of some auditors to his possible insanity. . . . No one reading these scenes can doubt the reality of the figure behind them.⁴

The Gospels Written by Christ's Contemporaries

The scepticism now associated with

the name of Bultmann was common last century when many suggested that the N.T. accounts of Christ may have been written at least 100 years after his death, enshrining the imaginary sayings of some dead Messiah. But more recent scholarship discounts all such theories. Observe the words of W. F. Albright: "In my opinion, every book of the N.T. was written . . . between the forties and the eighties of the first century A.D."⁵

The late Bishop John A.T. Robinson, author of the controversial *Honest to God*, surprised many with his book *Redating the New Testament*. His dating of the N.T. documents proved even more conservative than Albright's. Such men thus provide us with an answer to a question which has long plagued some scholars: "Why does not book after book of the N.T. refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70?" The answer is, because the books were written *before* A.D. 70! Yes, Jesus Christ lived and the N.T. records are authentic documents. Your Savior is real! □

1. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 3:145.
2. Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1:2.
3. *The Words of William Paley*, pp. 378-379.
4. Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, 3:357.
5. "Towards a More Conservative View," *Christianity Today*, 18th January, 1963, p. 3.

Jesus Christ lived and the N.T. records are authentic documents. Your Savior is real!



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RABBI HAROLD KUSHNER has my admiration for his courageous book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.¹ This best-seller addresses in a personal and frank way the question, "Why do the righteous suffer?" Kushner suggests three reasons:

1) Randomness exists in the universe, thus some things happen for no reason at all, and it is pointless to wonder why.

2) Natural laws exist which God does not overrule, thus when we transgress these laws, we suffer for it; and it is stupid to curse God or others because we were the ones who shot ourselves in the foot.

3) Freedom of choice exists, thus we are free to choose evil rather than good, and we often do. Evil choices mount up over time and gain momentum, producing terrible consequences which God does not (cannot?) prevent.

These three reasons assert that God is **not** directly responsible for the evil in this world. We should think first

before shaking our fists at heaven.

Rabbi Kushner deserves credit for stimulating the mass market to think more seriously about the mystery of evil, and to rethink certain caricatures of God's power and providence. While only the rabbi will affirm everything he says, this book deserves a serious, open-minded evaluation by all. This is a book worth reading.

Is Anyone Good?

Harold's title raises the question, Is **anyone** truly good? If the answer is No, then we have no right to complain when bad things happen to us, and we are forced to admit that all good things are undeserved.

George Bernard Shaw confronts this issue in his play, *Major Barbara*. Barbara belongs to the Salvation Army while her father, Andrew Undershaft, owns and operates a munitions factory. The question of morality arises:

UNDERSHAFT. Indeed? Are there any good men?

BARBARA. No. Not one. There are

WHEN GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO BAD PEOPLE

—by Brad McIntyre



neither good men nor scoundrels: there are just children of one Father; and the sooner they stop calling one another names the better. You needn't talk to me: I know them... They're all just the same sort of sinner; and there's the same salvation ready for them all.² [Shaw's punctuation.]

Major Barbara's theology of human nature echoes the Christian position: all are guilty and in need of salvation. The apostle Paul said it best: "We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written, 'There is no one righteous, not even one'" (Rom 3:9,10 NIV).

Apparently, humanity cannot be separated into two compact groups:

No one is free of self-interest, and self-interest (egocentrism) is the root of sin.

the Good and the Bad. This works in cowboy movies and Saturday morning cartoons, but reality is more complex. Each of us is ambiguous—a mixture of good and evil. When we stare into the face of the demonic, we see an image of ourselves. We all share in the universal tragedy of sin and are capable of demonic behavior.

Greater and Lesser Sins

Nevertheless, I hesitate to put my Grandma in the same group with Adolf Hitler, though both were sinners! All are guilty, but are all guilty to the same degree? Can we distinguish between the greater and lesser sins, or sinners? Are we to equate cold-blooded murder with gossip or gluttony and judge them with the same moral outrage?

It seems we need to think in terms of *relative* goodness, or badness. Yes, my Grandma was a sinner, but she was not as bad a person as Hitler. Still, neither was she wholly good in the absolute sense.

If we are to exercise any moral discernment whatsoever, we must acknowledge two things: there are greater and lesser sins, and not everyone is under the control of evil to the same degree. But it's only a matter of degree, for no one is wholly good; and greater and lesser sins are all manifestations of the one great rebellion "in the beginning." As Emil Brunner wrote years ago, "So far as primal sin is concerned, there is no 'greater' or 'lesser.'"³

Thus, while we may acknowledge that some sins are worse than others, and some people are less bad than others, no one is really "good."

Suprapersonal Sin

This offends us until we come to terms with what Brunner called "primal sin." I prefer to call it the "suprapersonal" aspect of sin. Sin preceded us, is bigger than us, and dominates the moral atmosphere we breathe. "Guilt has roots which go far deeper than man's personal and conscious will."⁴ Sin is inevitable, though not necessary, and that is why we are still responsible for it!

Let me give you an example. Our daughter, Gloria, sometimes scowls at me for disciplining her. There she sits, arms crossed, lips pursed tightly

together, forehead wrinkled in anger. Then comes my tongue-in-cheek warning, "Gloria, that scowl's going to get fixed on your face forever if you don't smile pretty soon."

We all wear Adam's scowl! It is permanently fixed on our foreheads. We may smile from time to time, but the scowl is always present. There is no way to erase the scowl of sin from our brows, no matter how righteous we appear. Even good people scowl like Adam, though they may not realize it.

A Look at Good People

Usually when we say someone is good we mean they don't do cruel, evil things, such as intentionally hurting other people, or lying, cheating, stealing, etc. We also mean they do good things, such as sharing their personal resources with others, lending a helping hand, acting unselfishly, showing mercy and gratitude, encouraging those who mourn, etc.

This view, however, fails to see that good people who do good things retain an inordinate amount of self-interest (and the more saintly the person, the more he or she will confirm this fact). No one is free of self-interest, and self-interest (egocentrism) is the root of sin. It was self-interest that enticed Eve to take the fruit from Satan in order that she might escape death and be like God. She disobeyed God in order to achieve something by her own power, for her own self-interest.

No one is naturally good, and the most noble person in the world will agree. We can talk only of *relative* goodness, a reduced form of goodness which pales in the light of God's standard.

Willpower

Let's dispense with the notion that we can change our evil hearts through willpower—by training the will to choose the good, and shun the bad. Again, sin is more than a personal choice; it has a "suprapersonal" aspect. Everything we do—even our good ideas—proceeds from a corrupt heart, and is thus corrupt in some way. Only this truth can save us from the delusion of sinless perfection, as if we could achieve total goodness through a right use of the will—and a

God allowed something dreadful to happen to good Jesus, that something incredible might happen to bad people.

**God does not
enjoy
punishing the
wicked, for
the wicked
are also his
children.**

converted will at that.

No, absolute goodness will elude even the loveliest saint, until that final day when Jesus returns, and we experience the full redemption of our bodies. Until then we groan inwardly to be everything we know we should be; and to be reunited at last with our original destiny: the unsullied image of God (Rom 8:23).

The Offensive Grace of God

If no one is righteous, what about our opening question, "Why do the righteous suffer?" Who are these righteous, if they exist at all? Who among the human race has a right to expect favors from God, based on personal morality? Can we seriously believe God is indebted to bless us because we possess a superior morality when compared to Adolf Hitler, or Jim Jones, or other "bad" people? The most impeccable morality still falls short of God's ideal, and is even likened to polluted menstrual cloths, or "filthy rags" (Is 64:6).

Truly righteous persons have never expected good things to come their way as a result of their goodness. They have always acknowledged their sinfulness, and given credit where credit is due, namely, God's grace. They realize all good things are undeserved, even when they happen to "good" people.

The Mystery of Goodness

With all our concern about bad things happening to good people, we ignore the opposite problem: Why do good things happen to bad people? We ache and weep when bad things happen to good people. But aren't we offended—even revolted—when good things happen to bad people?

We are confronted with the problem of indiscriminate goodness, goodness so good it seems indulgent; blind, extravagant goodness that does not take a person's moral status into account; goodness so good that it offends our sense of justice.

Try as we might, we fail to understand why God blesses bad people, or at least people who are

worse than we are! We are offended by God's extravagant grace.

Examples

Think of the first murderer, Cain, who deserved death. Instead, God put a mark of protection upon him and included a threat to anyone who might murder Cain for revenge (Gn 4:15).

Think of the Ninevites whom God wanted to save despite their evil ways. In grace, God sent Jonah to preach repentance. The mission succeeded, and the great city of Nineveh was spared. But Jonah seemed to prefer death over the salvation of pagans! He pouted over God's extravagant grace. God asked the prophet, "Have you any right to be angry?" (Jon 4:4). A sobering question for us all.

Think about Jesus' words: "He [God] causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Mt 5:45). Be honest, doesn't something irk you about this verse? Of course. It goes against our sense of justice. Why should God bless the evil and unrighteous?

Think of the parable about the workers in the field who received equal pay even though some worked longer and harder than others (Mt 20:1-16). Try teaching this passage to a group sometime! It flies like a wounded duck. Nevertheless, the landowner says, "Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?" (v.15).

Ouch! "How blindly we offer our legalities in protest against God's free grace!"⁴

And who cannot think of the parable of the prodigal son—or is it really about the elder brother? (Lk 15:11-32). The impertinent youngster blows everything on booze and prostitutes, and is then welcomed home with a banquet. Meanwhile, the elder brother stands outside stewing over the injustice of it all. We can hardly blame him.

But his father is more interested in redemption than justice: "We had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (v.32).

Jesus, too, was dead, and is alive again. God became human and was lost at Calvary, only to be found again upon his resurrection. God allowed something dreadful to happen to good Jesus, that something incredible might happen to bad people.

God's grace is rooted in the demand of his own love upon himself. God's divine love far exceeds our human idea of justice, contaminated as it is with a spirit of vindictiveness. God does not enjoy punishing the wicked, for the wicked are also his children. God knows that all are wicked to some degree and, as Major Barbara said, the sooner we stop calling one another names, the better. God's goodness is out of proportion to our merits. Blessed are those who do not fall away on account of this.

Conclusion

When then shall we do when good things happen to bad people? Shall we be like Jonah, or the elder brother, and complain to God about his indiscriminate goodness? Shall we automatically assume that we are good and have a clear understanding of justice, and are able to discern what is fair and unfair?

Or shall we rejoice in a God who is gracious towards the undeserving in order to win them to himself? Lest we forget, we, too, are undeserving; and it is God's grace, not his punitive justice, that leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4). □

1. Harold Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.
2. George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara*, p. 238.
3. Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, p. 153.
4. Louis Berkof, *Christian Faith*, p. 202.
5. George A. Buttrick, "Exposition of Matthew," *Interpreter's Bible*, 7:493.



BRAD McINTYRE

Welcome Quest — occasional writings submitted by friends of GNU. This month's article is from Stan Bisel, technical engineer in the GNU office.

READY OR NOT

by Stan Bisel

TEACHER STOOD, and called for attention from the front of the classroom. Quiet and order rippled back from the front row, row by row, bounced against the rear wall for a moment—then class was still.

"How many believe Jesus will return soon?" she asked. A forest of arms poked at the sky.

"How many believe he could come within the next year?" Only a lonely tree here and there remained of the forest.

"How many would like Jesus to return tomorrow?" A barren plain.

The very thought struck cold terror to my young heart. Sins in my life that had not been decisively dealt with rose up before me like an overwhelming wave.

Class discussion continued, centering on the need for readiness and the perfection of Christ's character in the life. I knew these were the goals of all honest Christians, but did our salvation depend upon the achievement of these goals? Could I overcome even my tendency to sin?

A Serious Question

Why is it that the most glorious impending event in history—the return of Christ in glory—is frightening to many Christians? The worst nightmare of large groups of Christians is the Second Coming, for which they are not 'ready.' Many Christian parents have warned their children they would be lost if Jesus returned while they were in the theater. Preachers from the pulpit have bemoaned the fact that God's people are not ready.

The concept of the 'need for readiness' has been so devastating that many have abandoned their faith, knowing they were not 'ready' and could never make themselves 'ready.' How could they overcome even their tendency to sin?

What John 3:16 Says

Does John 3:16 say "whosoever getteth ready should not perish"? Of course not. It clearly says "whosoever **believeth** in him." Good works are the natural result of saving faith, but good works in order to 'get ready' have nothing at all to do with our salvation. From the point of view of worthiness for heaven, our good works are as filthy rags (Is 64:6). Only the perfect good works of Jesus count with God.

What Paul Says

In Romans 8:15 Paul says believers have been adopted by God. Modern conceptions of adoption can lack the intensity of meaning for ancient Romans. In Roman law an adopted son could never be disinherited. Only the adopted child could sever the relationship—and **not** by accident!

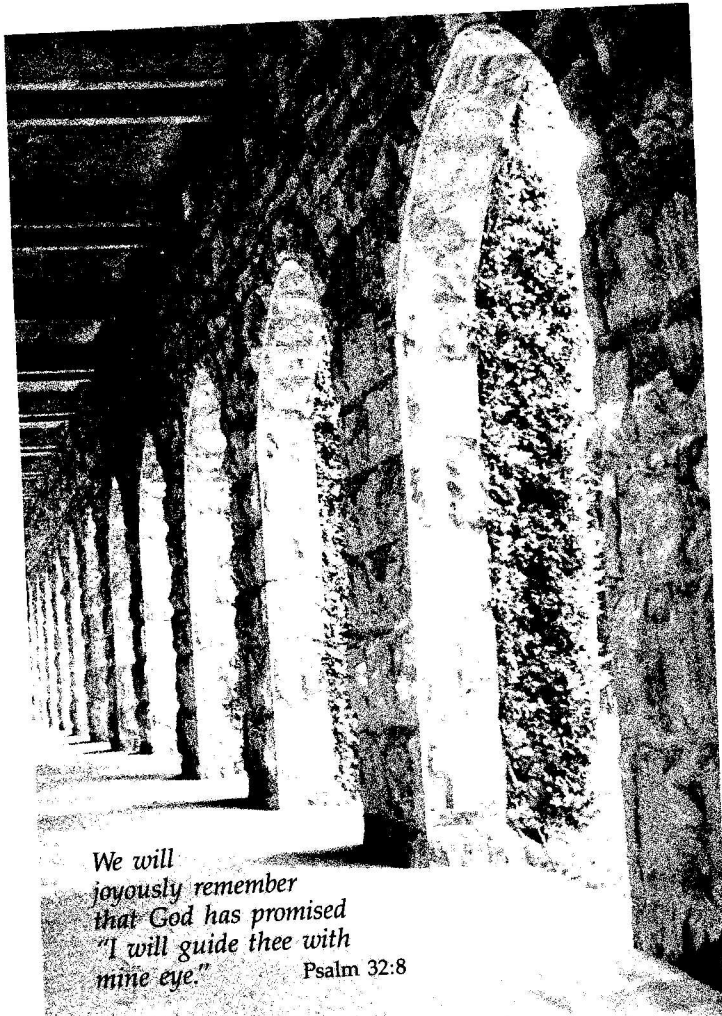
If you ask a parent, "How many children do you have?" that parent does not stop to think, then say, "Let's see, how many are being good right now?" The number of our Heavenly Father's children does not fluctuate up and down according to their sinful condition, but remains firm according to their position as family members.

An Appeal

Jesus admonished us to be "ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt 24:44). Clearly he is appealing to us not to put off the day of salvation. Christians have already chosen to believe the gospel, and are covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. We are, therefore, fully ready for Christ's appearing. God's people are ready. It is the unregenerate sinners that are not.

Long after he became a Christian Paul complained, "I know that in me... dwelleth no good thing" (Rom 7:18). That "no good thing" continues to dwell in us. Are we going to let that tendency to evil put off—postpone—our day of salvation? Or are we going to trust **now** that "whosoever believeth" in Jesus, the Righteous One of God, shall inherit everlasting life?

[In Part I Dr. Ford used stories from his recent European travels to illustrate how life is filled with change and unexpected dangers. Only saving faith in God can see us safely through life's hazardous journey. Saving faith is the key that unlocks the mysterious doors in the hallway of our lives.]



We will joyously remember that God has promised "I will guide thee with mine eye." Psalm 32:8

What is the practical bearing of all of this? We shall begin each day as little children, confessing with Solomon that we know not how to go out or

and "you shall put ten thousand to flight" (Lev 26:8). We will joyously remember that God has promised "I will guide thee with mine eye" (Ps 32:8). "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it" (Is 30:21).

At each new stage of life's experience, at each turning point in the day, I will look to him who is Truth and Wisdom and Strength. I will distrust my own wisdom. Self-distrust creates a special vacuum which the Holy Spirit rejoices to fill.

Foolish Prejudices

How else can we be emptied of our foolish prejudices, except we distrust self, and trust instead in God? We have all inherited prejudices. Others we have cultivated. All of them injure us in areas most vital to our well-being. People cherish delusions in religion, in matters of the soul, and in matters of physical health.

Physical Prejudice

Did you know that it was a seventeenth-century writer, Nonnius of Antwerp, who first wrote a book setting forth diet as important for the maintenance of good health? Only in this decade, after millennia of human existence, has it become clinically established that Nonnius was correct. Faulty diet is the main cause of disease. All the chief chronic diseases have their origin and development in faulty habits of eating and drinking. There is no major form of cancer which is not related to what we put between our lips.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer declared, "Where there's no civilization there's no cancer." As a generalization this is true, and has deep significance. Until this century infirmities prior to death



THE KEY TO EVERY DOOR WORTH OPENING, Part II

by Desmond Ford

how to come in. Like Jehoshaphat of old, we shall confess we have no might against the armies that threaten us. Like David, we will go forth to our Goliaths in the name of the Lord our God, while cherishing the promises that "the weak shall be as David"

averaged about 1 percent of a person's life. Now in our day they can occupy as much as 10 percent. Since we learned to divide asunder what God has put together, since we learned to refine our grains, oils, sugars, etc., we've opened the Pandora's Box of

disease. Right at the time when infectious diseases were beginning to die away as a result of better hygiene and eating habits, the great deceiver led civilization back into the valley of death by another route.

In the last few weeks I have eaten in several countries and at many tables, including hotel tables, airline tables, etc. While eating and watching others eat, I reflected how we in the West consume an exorbitant amount of saturated fat and cholesterol products. Any or all of these would do us little harm if used in minute amounts, as garnishes rather than as main dishes. But we are too deluded to act thus wisely. We are so self-confident that our habits of diet and exercise and rest are correct that we rarely stop to test them or inquire concerning them. The same is true of our racial prejudices, our religious prejudices, our political prejudices, etc.

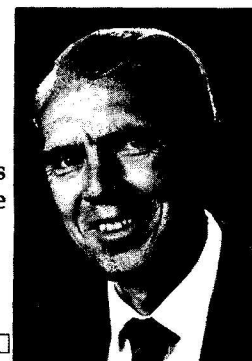
Prejudices Come from Self-Trust

In most debatable areas, people end up believing what they want to believe. Being too trustful of ourselves, we have confidence in decisions reached by mere caprice or desire, with hardly a shred of rationality. It was Bobby Burns who prayed that some power might give us the gift of seeing ourselves as others see us. If we could see ourselves as heaven sees us, how different a place this world

might become! If we inhabitants of this universe's insane asylum, the earth, could come to suspect our great need of instruction from the Almighty rather than continuing to cherish traditional human behavior, how soon we might foretaste heaven!

Faith Leads to Something Greater

Although faith is the key to all the treasures of this life and the next, although it is the first of all the virtues, it is certainly not the greatest. It is great in that it leads to the greater. For faith is both a self-emptying and receiving of the Divine Spirit, and when he comes faith becomes perfect in love. Thus, though faith is the first, love is always the best. How glorious are the believer's privileges! Confessing his or her own emptiness, poverty, and inability and folly, the pleading outstretched hand takes hold of the Almighty whose name is Love. And now the world is transformed and everybody in it. The world becomes our Father's school, and all the other students are our brothers and sisters. Life's hardships and joys, as well as the Scriptures of truth, are our lessonbooks. As long as we are in this age of sin, there will be sorrow and error and tensions. On the other hand, through faith in God's leading, there is glorious light, and power, and the best of all fruits: enduring, invincible love. □

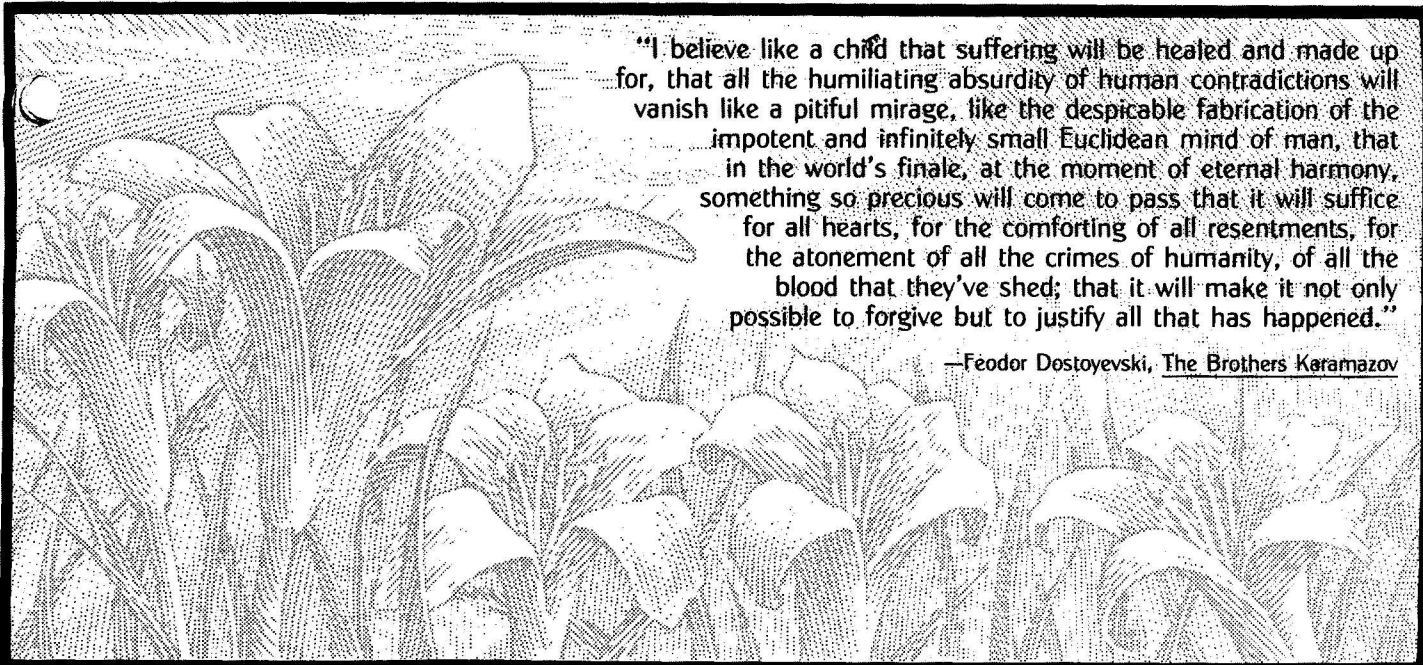


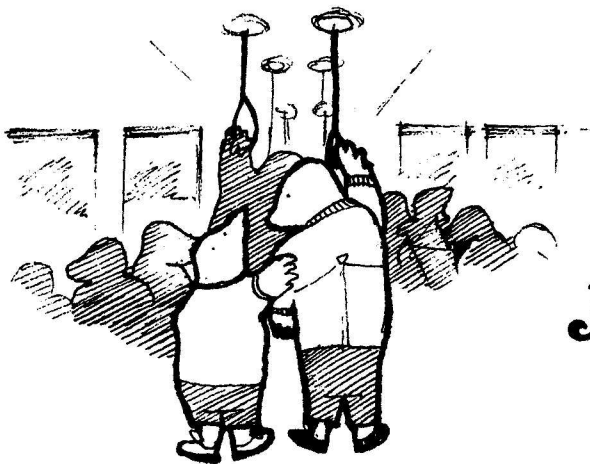
DESMOND FORD

If we could see ourselves as heaven sees us, how different a place this world might become!

"I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for, that all the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions will vanish like a pitiful mirage, like the despicable fabrication of the impotent and infinitely small Euclidean mind of man, that in the world's finale, at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity, of all the blood that they've shed; that it will make it not only possible to forgive but to justify all that has happened."

—Feodor Dostoyevski, *The Brothers Karamazov*





AT THE MUSEUM

Chapter 9

[Marley's jealous cousin Sam had plotted for Marley to lose the sack race, and fall in the flooded river. A huge bird knocked Marley over and saved his life. Willy Wolverine, who was to lure Marley to his doom, is missing, presumed drowned.]

FROM THE MOMENT that Marley's dad reconstructed what had probably happened, Marley stopped feeling so guilty and began to get better. He couldn't go to school until the inquiry took place, so his father decided to take him to the local museum. To get to the museum, which was some distance away, they had to use the underground railway. Marley was pretty excited because it was a long time since he had been on it. At the crack of sunset he was up, washed, dressed, and ready to eat breakfast. Twenty minutes later, gorged on worms, he and his father left, each with a lunch box under his arm.



by Gillian Ford

"Goodbye, sweetheart," said Mr. Mole to his wife.

"Bye, Mom," piped up Marley. "See you in the morning."

To get to the subway, they had to walk past the school to the village. It wasn't like the villages that you are used to. We think of sunshine and cottages, shops and a church steeple. Here it was all underground with little or no lighting. You'd have found it very gloomy—row upon row of black gaping holes. Soon they came to the subway station. It was the equivalent of early morning, so many of the village moles were on their way to work in the bigger towns. Mr. Mole bought tickets and they headed towards platform number two, just as the train came in.

"I'll hold onto the strap from the ceiling and you hold onto my arm," said Mr. Mole to Marley. There were so many moles and shrews packed into the compartment that Marley thought he wouldn't be able to breathe. He held on tight, swaying back and forth as the train went racing on, tic-a-tac, tac-a-tac, as though it was being chased. It was very fast, and soon they arrived in town and got off at the station near the museum.

The museum had been built many years before. There had once lived in that town a famous mole archaeologist who had been on many digs. He had discovered, near the city limits, ruins of the ancient Molk settlements and battlegrounds. Almost all the items in

the museum had been donated by this mole, so the town council called the museum after him—the Digger Mole Museum, for Digger Mole was his name. The building was painted a moldy green color which didn't enhance it one bit; but Mr. Mole said that the things in it were so interesting that Marley would soon forget the color. Once inside, they headed for the battle room.

As they entered, Marley sucked in his breath, for there high on the wall in front of him was a magnificent and huge painting of a great battle with so much happening it made you dizzy. The fight was between the ancient Molks and Shrewds, but above the earth, in the skies, there seemed to be another war raging. Two lots of angel-like moles and shrews were fighting up there, and some seemed to be falling to the earth.

And like the king, God was often pictured as a warrior. You can read lots of passages in the Old Testament Scriptures about God as a warrior with armor on, riding a battle horse, using the rainbow as his bow and lightning as his arrows, hailstones as weapons....

"What's it all about, Daddy?" asked Marley.

"Well, let's have a look at some of the smaller paintings first, Marley, and it will help you understand this big one," said Mr. Mole. "We'll start at this picture," he continued, pointing at a portrait of a mole in royal costume and crown. "Is that King Maon himself?" asked Marley excitedly.

"Yes," said his father. "Here he is in his royal finery. Have you notice what he's carrying, Marley?"

"Why, it looks like a whip and a stick," said Marley. "What on

earth are they for?"

"Actually," said his father, "many ancient kings used to carry them. They're a flyswatter and a shepherd's rod. You see, they represented the king's role as a shepherd over his flock of people. He was meant to be a good shepherd—to lead them gently, feed them and take care of them. Each king was supposed to be patterned on God, and he, of course, is the Good Shepherd."

"Look over here, Dad. Here's another picture of Maon with his battle clothes and armor on. Doesn't he look absolutely splendid?"

"Yes, he does," agreed Mr. Mole. "Here you see the king as a warrior, protecting his people from their enemies. And like the king, God was often pictured as a warrior. You can read lots of passages in the Old Testament Scriptures about God as a warrior with armor on, riding a battle horse, using the rainbow as his bow and lightning as his arrows, hailstones as weapons, and so on."

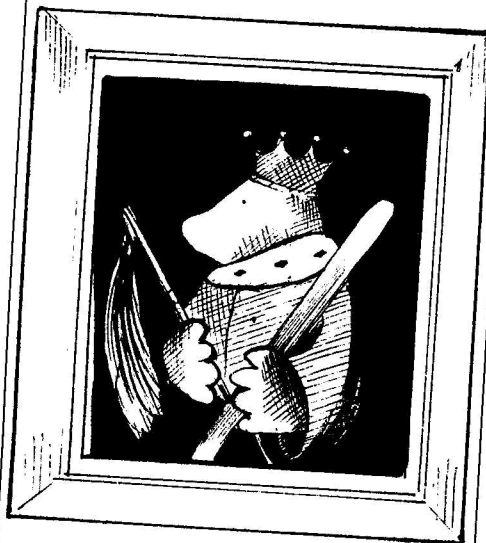
"Now, here, son," Mr. Mole continued, pointing at yet another picture, "is a court scene. It's quite a famous historical event in Molk history—the trial of Mishma. We'll read about it some time soon. But see King Maon there with his little white wool wig. In the old days, the king was also the judge and his word was law, sort of like God's."

"Now, let's look at this one, Daddy," Marley said, pointing to the picture of the huge battle. "This is the battle between the Molks and Shrewds we just read about, isn't it? Let's spend a lot of time looking at it—there's so much to see. What's all that happening in the skies?"

"It's a picture of stars and angels, son," said his father. "The stars were symbols of angels. You'll remember that the One who walked among the candlesticks in Revelation, chapter one, held seven stars, and it says that these stars were the seven angels of the churches. Lucifer took a third of the stars from heaven when he fell, and that meant a third of the angels. The ancients believed that the planets—the sun, moon and stars—were living beings, because they moved around in the sky."

They didn't understand back then that the earth moved too.

"You'll remember that we talked of the different offices of the king. He was like God, a shepherd-warrior-judge-king, a great responsibility, you'll agree. On earth the king was the shepherd of his flock (his subjects, or people). In heaven, God was the shepherd of the stars. The idea was, Marley, that what happened on earth also happened in heaven. As the two sides fought down here, they took those little boxes you see there into battle with them. The boxes were 'arks,' containing relics of their



gods (in the case of the Molks, the true God).

"You may remember in the Bible the story of the Israelites fighting the Philistines. Israel at the time was very wicked but thought that taking the ark of God into war would protect them. The Philistines captured it. (You see, the box was a symbol and Israel had lost God's protection by their unfaithfulness.) The Philistines took it back to their own city and placed it in their temple in front of their god, Dagon. Do you remember how Dagon fell over as though worshiping the ark of God? And then the next night, it not only fell but had its head and the palms of its hands cut off. And the Philistines were struck with tumors for stealing Israel's ark. They had to give it back to Israel in the end. The story illustrates what I mean, Marley—the ark represented the presence of God or gods, depending which side you were on."

"Not only was God present in the symbol of the ark, but they believed that spirit beings warred up in heaven at the same time the troops fought each other on earth. The Bible even calls the stars the heavenly host. The word 'host' was a military term used about soldiers in battle. The stars were thought to be spirit forces—angels and demons, if you like—fighting each other. God, represented by the sun, was their king, the shepherd of the stars, as I've mentioned before. This was why the ancients were never surprised to see strange signs in the skies, like stars falling, the moon turning red and so on. These were natural events—for example, eclipses—but they were often interpreted as omens or signs."

"While up in heaven, God (represented by the sun), was the shepherd of the stars. On earth the king was represented as a herd-leader, shepherding his flock. Some words for leader in the Old Testament literally meant 'bull' or 'goat.' You may have seen pictures of Egyptian pharaohs who were portrayed as bulls. That was how kings came to wear crowns. Originally, they were crowns of horns. Later, they were made of iron, then more precious metals like gold and silver. But the idea in the beginning was animal horns. You'll see pictures of some Babylonian kings, for example, with crowns made from tiers of bull horns laid one above the other."

The stars were symbols of angels. You'll remember that the One who walked among the candlesticks held seven stars, and it says that these stars were the seven angels of the churches.

"You'll see here in the picture Maon, the Molk king, with little iron horns on his head and over there a Shrewd with similar headgear. He also is a king. In earlier times, as I've explained,

crowns were made of animal horns, a symbol of power and great strength. Later they made these of iron, which was also symbolic of strength. Come over here to this exhibit and I'll show you some examples."

In a glass-covered case were several of these crowns, some made of real horn, some of iron. Beside them were curious drawings of goats and bulls with unusual headgear. One goat looked like a unicorn with a single horn jutting out of the middle of its head. Another had one horn raised and the other turned down. Yet another had multiple horns, and nearby was a broken horn.

"How did those horns grow those funny ways, Daddy?" asked Marley, for he had never seen any animals with more than two horns, or for that matter with only one horn.

His father replied, "The ancients used to operate on baby animals and make these things happen. They made the unicorn by taking the horn buds out of the sides of a baby animal's head and placing them in the center of the forehead. Then they could grow together and form a single horn jutting out of the forehead like a unicorn. At other times, they would raise one horn and lower the other. They also sometimes split horns and could make them grow into many horns. A missionary mole told me there are still some tribes in Africa which do this. In the books of Daniel and Revelation you'll remember references to animals with horns like the ones I've mentioned."

Not only was God present in the symbol of the ark, but they believed that spirit beings warred up in heaven at the same time the troops fought each other on earth.

"But, why would they want to change the horns, Daddy?" asked Marley.

"Quite interestingly, Marley, to make the animals bossy."

"What do you mean bossy, Dad? That sounds so silly—to make them bossy."

"It's not silly, Marley. From being just one of the regular animals, doing what it was told and chasing its tail, it became a leader of the herd and stopped playing follow the leader. The operation did something to the hormones and made the animal dominant, that is, a leader, even though that seems hard to believe. The Bible pictures a nation that had become too big for its boots as having exalted its horn. The book of Daniel speaks of a pagan power whose horn grows up to heaven. Apparently it's a good thing if God exalts your horn, but bad if you do it yourself. When that happened, God was likely to let some power come along and break that horn, and that was a symbol of defeat.

"The ancients were shepherds and got used to watching fights among their animals. There would be clashing of horns, charging, pawing the ground, throwing each other down, crushing and stamping. This is how some of the words often used in the Bible to describe battles came into being. You'll often see words like 'thrown down,' 'trampled,' 'cast down,' 'crushed,' 'scattered,' applied to human battle and even war in heaven, where stars were cast or thrown down to the earth."

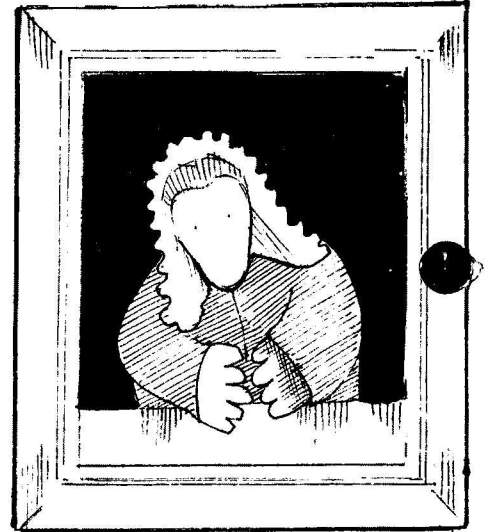
Marley was having such an interesting visit, but time came to go home. He and his father left the museum, but not without writing in the visitors' book such things as 'superlucious,' and 'very interesting.' I am sure you can guess who wrote which one!

Then it was back to the train which was no longer crowded, since the rush hour was long over. They were able to sit on the red leather seats and look outside the window. Of course it was night and a mole's sight is so poor they couldn't see much anyway.

Marley told his father it had been very interesting, but what did it have to do with Creation

and what did stars and animals symbolize?

His father replied, "The planets were given to give light and guide by day and night. The sun became a symbol for Jesus—he is the light of the world and was called the Sun of Righteousness in Scripture. The moon became a symbol of the church, giving light to a dark world. The stars became symbols of angels and even earthly teachers.



"As for animals, they became symbols of people, even kings and nations. Israel was always represented as sheep, which are quiet, peace-loving, nonviolent animals. Enemies, by contrast, were portrayed as wild, violent and cruel animals.

"When Israel was first made a nation, they were made many promises if they'd obey, but threatened with curses if they were disobedient. One of the curses was that wild animals would tear them. It did not mean real wild animals, but enemy nations. The prophet Hosea spoke of Israel being attacked by the lion, the leopard, and the bear. These animals were natural enemies of sheep. So in the book of Daniel, chapter 7, you have the enemies of Israel—Babylon, Persia and Greece—portrayed as a lion, bear and leopard.

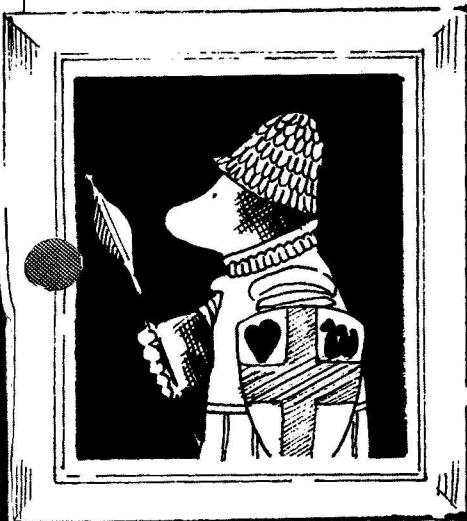
"Now, what has this to do with Creation? Well, in the first chapters of Genesis, you have the first shepherd-king and his flock. In the second chapter, there's the first battle."

"But Dad, you've read it to me—it's about the making of the stars, the planets, the plants, the animals and Adam and Eve—and how they fell into sin."

"That's right," said Marley's father. "All the animals were made and Adam was given dominion over them and the land. He was the first king, you see. He was also the first shepherd, and the animals, fishes, and insects were his flock."

"But I don't remember any battle," said Marley, scratching his head.

"Oh, yes, you do," said his father. "There was even a sword there." Now Marley was even more mystified, so his father told him how in the book of Isaiah it tells about Lucifer, the 'light-bearer,' a beautiful angel close to God who became a rebel. "There was war in heaven, and he was cast down to the earth with many angels who rebelled with him. Then in Genesis it tells how Lucifer—in the form of a beautiful serpent—came into the garden of Eden and tempted Eve, sowing seeds of doubt in her mind about God. And Adam loved her so much, he also doubted God; and that was how sin came into a perfect world."



"How could they believe a silly snake, Daddy?" asked Marley.

"Well, Lucifer must have been a very pretty creature, and Adam and Eve didn't know what the word 'sting' meant. And they were tempted by the fruit and the idea of knowing as much as God.

"So you see there WAS a battle right there in the garden of Eden,

over good and evil. And the battle was lost. Adam and Eve lost their righteousness and the garden.

Unlike the first Adam, Jesus did not sin. He was put to death, but rose again. And because of this, he is able to save us.

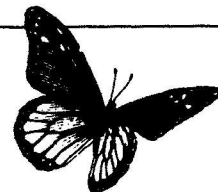
They didn't even get the special knowledge the serpent promised them—just the sting of death in the end. They were put out of the garden and an angel with a sword stood guard to keep them out.

"The Bible uses that story to explain about sin and the salvation of the world. It writes the story of Jesus, calling him the second Adam. He was made a king. He was the Good Shepherd. He was tempted in the wilderness in a similar way to Adam and Eve. But unlike the first Adam, Jesus did not sin. He was put to death, but rose again. And because of this, he is able to save us.

"Marley, Jesus did two wonderful things for us. In his death, he made up for the terrible curse of death that came on mankind. That's why Paul says death has no sting anymore. Second, Jesus' spotless life makes up for our spotty, sinful lives. What a king, and what a shepherd he is. He makes us fit for heaven by exchanging his life for ours. Why, when God examines us, he sees Jesus instead of us. Isn't that amazing?"

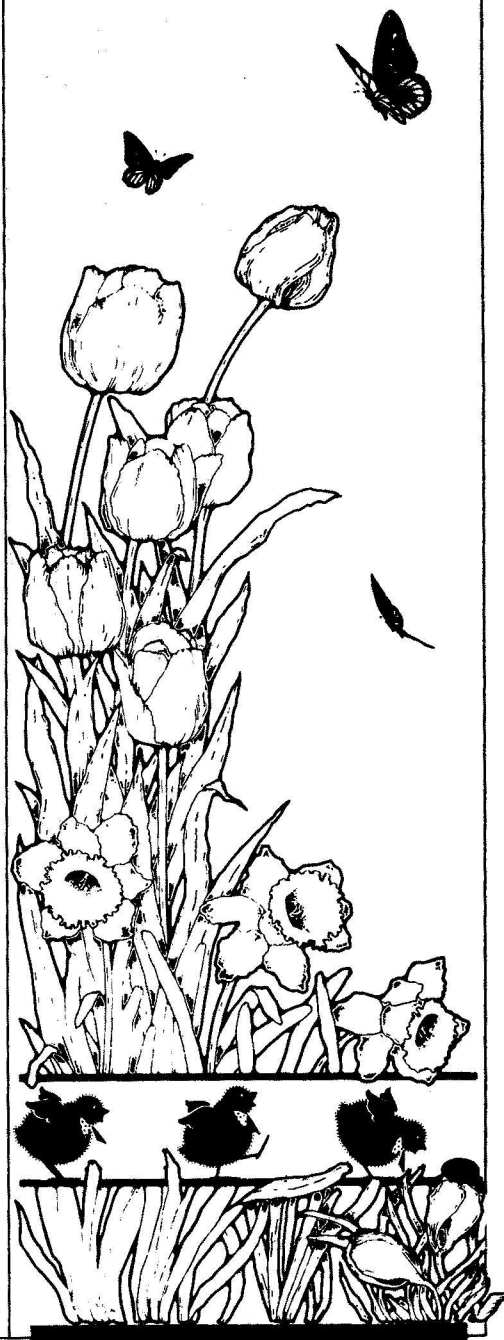
"Yes, it's so good it's almost unbelievable, Dad," said Marley. "But I believe it. And now I can see that to live in this world means to battle between good and evil. Sometimes it's our own fault, like Adam's; sometimes it's not our fault, like the poor little lamb that was sacrificed to cover Adam. I had been wondering 'Why me?' over this business with Sam and Willy. Now I'll never expect life to be free of problems."

Reaching home, Marley started to tell his mother all about their adventure, but fell asleep in the armchair in the middle of a sentence, and had to be carried to bed. □



Have a Joyous

SPRING!



Letters

Dear Mr. Gee,

I want to tell you how much the Mesa Christian Fellowship appreciated the publicity you gave to Smuts van Rooyen's recent visit to Grand Junction. Although the weather made it impossible to come from very far, the phone calls I received were very gratifying. I even received calls from Oregon and South Dakota. We did have a number of people come from out-of-town.

Some of the people who called were disappointed that the weather was so bad they couldn't make it and stated they would like to have another weekend of meetings at a better time of year.

I was certain we were the only gospel people for hundreds of miles around, but now that I know there is such interest in the area, we want to schedule another weekend of meetings during the summer. Smuts has agreed to come back this summer; however, we do not want to conflict with anything you folks have planned for the western states.

When we do get a date set, I will let you know in hopes you will put the information in the **GNU NET WORK**. Please remember Dr. Ford is scheduled to come to Grand Junction May 8 and 9, and we would like to have that notice go into the next newsletter.

Sincerely,
S.B., CO

[Glad you had a great ses-

sion with Smuts, S.B. How could you do otherwise with Smuts? It would be great if there was so much going on that we had a few conflicting dates! However, if you will be kind enough to allow us July 17-19 for Summer Congress in Santa Rosa, CA, we'd appreciate it!—Ed.]

Dear Editor,

In the last issue of GNU by outgoing Editor Noel Mason, Noel said his good-byes, and I want to wish him God's blessings in his new ministry.

I believe in the GNU ministry, and expect to support it all I can.

I feel sure he [Dr. Ford] is teaching the truth regarding Christ's ministry since 31 A.D.; Christ's truly righteous human nature; also the sanctuary. . . .

It has always puzzled me why God would have created a Levitical priesthood ministry in heaven's sanctuary pointing forward to Christ's coming to earth as a Melchizedek priest-king. . . .

I am retired. I want to connect with a Sabbathkeeping institution to volunteer my services. . . . Have lots of strength for 78.

Sincerely yours,
L.J.C., OH

Dear Friend Gee,

GNU was supposed to be a nondenominational organization as indicated on the front inside page.

During the past year I have noticed that Des would sneak in a word here and there about the Sabbath. I felt that GNU would honor its commitment, and I wouldn't have to read the Sabbath being promoted.

Any good theologian knows that the Sabbath was given at Sinai for Israel's use as a type of Jesus our real Sabbath. Even though the Sabbath came about at creation no mention was made that man was to observe it. My "eternal Sabbath rest" began with Jesus WHEN He took my burden of sin at the cross.

Sincerely,
H.L., FL

[You're correct, H., it does say we're "nondenominational" on the front inside cover. That means we are not a denomination, nor affiliated with one. I don't see how Des' Sabbath convictions (or mine) make us a denomination (there's no way you can **belong** to GNU); nor affiliated with one (millions of Sabbathkeeping Christians around the world belong to a variety of denominations, and some to no denomination at all). "Nondenominational" does not mean "nondoctrinal." Other nondenominational organizations don't hesitate to promote Sunday, or Easter. We hope our mention of Easter in this edition does not offend you. I agree, Jesus is our true Sabbath rest. Does he thereby deprive us of a

much-needed weekly rest day? Jesus is also the true light, bread, water, etc. I hope California sunshine, Jill Mason's streusel, and Perrier spring water, are not done away with too.—Ed.]

Dear Dr. Ford,

I do enjoy your correspondence, and sincerely appreciate the time that you have taken to personally respond to me.

I do appreciate the books that you recommended. I have heard of "The God of All Comfort." I believe Dr. Dobson recommended it on one of his programs.

A couple of the books that I've found to be encouraging are: "You Gotta Keep Dancin'" by Tim Hansel, and "Healing for Damaged Emotions" and "Healing of Memories" both by David A. Seamands. I guess like you I have a fondness for books.

Please have us remembered in prayer as we are being "attacked" on all fronts, and I am having a real struggle with the "world" right now. . . . One just never knows how much longer the battle is, being a soldier; or what and how one's battles fit in the overall battle plan. Just how many others are depending on my feeble resistance to give them either time or support or rest or encouragement?

GOD BLESS YOU AND
YOURS.

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