

THIS WEEK'S SIGNED ARTICLE.

I'm Still Muddle-Headed About God . . . says Trevor Lane

BEFORE my boarding school days I was packed off regularly every Sunday at a quarter-past two to St. Michael's on the banks of the River Avon in Christchurch. One day I hit on the bright idea of playing truant, but there was one thing that worried me. What to do with the sixpence intended for the school collection? Buy some sweets? Take a punt on the river? A bottle of fizz?

I did none of these things. In my small mind I knew that that sixpence was God's money; I didn't feel at all guilty about staying away from Sunday school, but my conscience would have smitten me good and hard had I bought sweets or ginger-pop. And so I laid the coin under some stones that were a part of the foundation of a new building and went home.

Looking back now I think that was the first time that I was really conscious of God. I said my prayers every night—"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild"—kneeling as near to the gas heater as I could conveniently manage, but they were just a part of the evening round. For years God was a fearsome apparition who watched with baleful eye my misdeeds, and subsequently recorded them in a large book "for future reference."

But it is only within the past year that God has entered into the everyday scheme of things in my life. A year ago when people talked about God in matter-of-fact tones I felt uncomfortable—the sort of feeling one has when sex is suddenly sprung into the conversation in a drawing-room. I argued at the time about the Hon. Miles Phillimore, the young Cambridge man who came out to New Zealand as an apostle of the Oxford Group.

"It's a rummy business," I said, "to hear a chap talking about God as if He was the next-door neighbour, or the fellow you drink a bowl of tea with in the middle of the morning."

AOTS AOTS

IT is estimated that Dunedin has not seen such a crowd as visited the city during Show Week, since the exhibition.

AUCKLAND'S Transport Board is determined to have the 40-hour week. Higher fares or a levy are probable.

AMATEUR dramatic societies in Dunedin find that there is a serious shortage of experienced male players.

THE Labour Government has given a 40-hour week to the workers—and 16 hours a day to Ministers of the Crown. Ask the Hon. "Bob" Semple.

QUITE a number of boys have been displaced in Dunedin, the employers saying that it would be ridiculous to keep them on at the high wages they would receive.

ple, by sweeping the smell of incense from their nostrils and peering beyond the flowers and the candles, say they have found something real, the God who, when you go down on your knees in all humility and say, "I've been a fool. I'm sorry for it—and I need Your help," will understand and give you spiritual and mental comfort.

And yet, without wishing to turn what I have already written into paradoxical nonsense, I must confess that I'm still muddle-headed enough not to know whether I believe that God actually exists, or whether the "Thou shalt nots" in my life spring from my own conscience—that the New Testament is really an appeal to the conscience of mankind. Quite frankly, I don't know that I want to meet God face to face. If I were to die tomorrow and ascend to the traditional heaven, would I expect to be formally introduced to God? "This young man has just arrived here."

"How do you do," God might say. "I'm pleased to see you. I hope you had a pleasant journey."

(Please don't think I'm being frivolous about this. I'm deadly serious—but I am trying to fit God into the modern person's conception of what goes on after death. I'm not a Rationalist, I'm not a member of the Oxford Group; I'm merely a young man who is becoming increasingly aware of a something in his life that is slowly increasing his powers of logic and reason, tempering his judgment with sympathy and common sense. You say that it is merely a growing maturity, natural to anyone? I don't think so. I'm still fully capable of enjoying the things I've always enjoyed. Beer hasn't gone sour on me since I made a place for God in my life—I can still quaff a mug with the best of 'em. I still get a kick out of the twirl of Joan Crawford's eyelashes—in other words I haven't "gone religious" in the fanatical sense.)

Do you remember that line from an Ibsen play—"Without a fixed point outside myself, I cannot exist." In a world of change and rebellion, millions of people are turning to God as the only fixed point. Religion is a unifying and ever-present force which can help to solve the inevitable moral and intellectual complaints of parents, children and society at large. Even if the Bible doesn't mean very much to you—after all it did grow up in a piecemeal manner, with one person after another rewriting certain parts and adding his own trimmings—you can still make God a part of your everyday life: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake will find it.

Looking Round . . .

"THE youth of the nation is looking round for a philosophy of life that offers something more satisfying than the material outlook it has inherited since the war. It is beginning to realise that jazz of itself is not sufficient," said the Anglican bishop of Wellington, Rt. Rev. H. St. Barbe Holland, when he arrived in New Zealand recently. This article sets forth some of that "philosophy of life."

AOTS AOTS

£700 a foot was paid by a Palmerston North firm recently for its street frontage.

DUNEDIN'S canny Scots councillors have ordered a special burglar-proof safe for the council office.

READING a special notice about the attempt on the King's life pasted outside an Auckland newspaper office, a woman collapsed.

DESTITUTE, and charged with vagrancy, a French explorer appeared for the third time in an Auckland Police Court. He is staying with the Salvation Army.

"**AH**, ambergris!" said two young men and a girl when they found a curious object on the Rakaia beach the other day. But it was only a piece of chemically-preserved fish!

Next week's signed article, decrying intolerance toward American English, has been written by Keith Gunn.