

The life of families such as ours was very full in those days - it was rewarding and stimulating and satisfying; there was happiness and constructive activity, and a feeling of security and well-being. But how could this have been! We didn't have radio or television, motor cars or airplanes, cinemas or comic strips, hot dogs or hot rods. And yet I think we had more fun - more satisfying fun - than today. I must be getting old!

During the 25 years of your new church building - and the 70 years of your church history - the changes that have taken place in our way of life, that is the material changes, have certainly been startling. Indeed, during the years of this church's history, more, I suppose, has been done to unlock the secrets of science and of nature than in the previous 2000. It was James Harvey Robinson, I believe, who said that if man has developed from the apes, it is because of his incurable tendency to "monkey around" and investigate things. I'm not sure that one can get much comfort out of this zoo analogy; especially if you compare the quiet dignity and the untroubled strength of the lion in his cage with the scurrying and aimless excitement of the monkey in his. But it is true that man's "monkeying about", his inveterate curiosity, his determined inquisitiveness, the "and yet it moves" insistence of Galileo - all this has brought us from head hunting to the Red Cross, from pictorial scratches on the rock to Michael Angelo, from a tin whistle to a Beethoven symphony. But it has also brought us from a stone club to the hydrogen bomb.

So we must ask ourselves: what has all this material advance meant to the other and more fundamental side of human development - in social and moral and spiritual progress? Its most obvious result has been the creation of a great chasm between man's conquest of science and his conquest of himself. In that chasm, if something is not done to bridge it, man may perish, destroyed by his own inability to direct to constructive ends the forces that he himself has unloosed.

I think this must have been what President Eisenhower had in mind when he spoke in his inaugural address last January in these terms:

"In the swift rush of great events, we find ourselves groping to know the full sense and meaning of the times in which we live. In our quest for understanding, we beseech God's guidance. We summon all our knowledge of the past and we scan all signs of the future. We bring all our wit and will to meet the question, 'how far have we come in man's long pilgrimage from darkness towards light?' Are we nearing the light - a day of freedom and of peace for all mankind? Or are the shadows of another night to close in upon us?"

This question is one which, in the last resort, can only be answered by the faith that is in each of us.

Today we certainly need such a strong faith. We live in a time of tension and danger, and in a world where political and moral indifference are the passports to slavery. The sky above us is overcast with the menace of military aggression which has already broken