

the
honest truth

FIRST ISSUE





The voice of one

The Honest Truth

"The Speaker, in his wisdom, continued to teach the people what he knew. He turned over many maxims in his mind and sought how best to set them out. He chose his words to give pleasure, but what he wrote was THE HONEST TRUTH. The sayings of the wise are sharp as goads, like nails driven home; they lead the assembled people, for they come from one shepherd" (Eccl. 12:9-11, NEB).

In choosing the name, *The Honest Truth*, for our publication, we recognize there are several other religious publications with "truth" in their titles. However, in view of the foregoing text and our own intended purpose, we feel "the honest truth" is needed as never before, and we have, therefore, chosen this name.

Our name is a challenge to us. With no axes to grind, no committees or boards of directors to try to please, we can present the truth of the Bible in a free and unhindered way. We do not pretend to understand all God has revealed, but we are desirous of telling what we know from God's Word.

In choosing to publish the honest truth of God's Word, we trust his Word will bring pleasure to the people of God; some of whom may be starving in the pews. At the same time, God's

wise words are like sharp goads; pricking our consciences when we are believing or doing wrong, and prodding us on to greater zeal and service. God's wise words are also like nails driven home by a master carpenter; providing a firm foundation of faith to all who will heed.

Above all, the truth must be honest. We have grown weary of a church system that holds back, covers up, or delivers only half-truths, as long as that practice serves the vested interest of the leadership. Surely, God is honest. Surely, we cannot picture Jesus or Paul presenting a "fixed" gospel—a prearranged, predigested pabulum—to the people. In Acts 20 Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that he had "kept back nothing that was profitable" (v. 20); that he had declared unto them "all the counsel of God" (v. 27). That included the message of the Kingdom and Jesus, but it also included the warning that some of their number were "grievous wolves" (v. 29). Now, some people would like to suppress that last truth!

In these days, when people are insisting on "truth in lending," "truth in packaging," and other guarantees to the consumer, we think it is not asking too much to insist on the honest truth in matters pertaining to the most important area of life—man's relationship to God, and God's

revelation to man. We have said this many times in our ministry, do not accept or believe what we say merely because we say it, but be like the Bereans of old and search the Scriptures daily to see if the things said agree with the Word of God. If they do, accept them, but if not, reject them. The Apostle John said, "Beloved! believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1, Diag.). If we print anything you consider not to be truthful, please write and let us know.

A Faith Work

It has been our determination from the start to send out *The Honest Truth* free of charge to all interested parties. It is our idea that to put a price on the publication may be an attempt to put a value on God's Word. Too, many religious publications with which we are acquainted, charge subscription prices, but still can't make it. We do not want to limit God! If our work is worthy, we trust God will bless it, and it may have widespread circulation. If it is unworthy, it deserves to fail.

Naturally, good print costs money, and postage is an important item. We solicit your prayers and support for this endeavor.

We have not yet developed a plan to regulate the mailing list, but we are sure that will come with time. If you have friends, loved ones, or associates whom you would like to have receive *The Honest Truth*, please send us their correct names and ad-

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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dresses, and we will send a sample copy, or send it for a stated length of time. Too, if you do NOT wish to receive *The Honest Truth* please notify us, and it will be discontinued. Fair enough?

We Are Incorporated

In order to better carry out the business of publishing *The Honest Truth*, we applied for, and have received, a charter as an eleemosynary (of, relating to, or supported by charity) corporation.

This means, that as a recognized nonprofit religious organization, our work is exempt from corporation taxes. Too, it means that any contributions made toward our work of publishing are deductible on your income tax. These are not the only reasons for incorporating. We also wanted our readers to know we intend to firmly establish this work, and to show ourselves worthy of support.

Please join us in this important ministry of publishing *The Honest Truth* as a witness! □

What is Truth?

YOU WILL recall in the record of Jesus' trial, he was led to Pilate's judgment hall after being examined by Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest. In attempting to determine if Jesus was trying to usurp the throne, Pilate asked Jesus if he was the King of the Jews. Jesus did not answer the question. Pilate then asked him, "Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?" (John 18:37, 38).

Pilate's question is still being asked today. How can we be sure what we believe is truth? Is it possible to know the truth?

What is truth?

In the New Testament the Greek word for truth is *aletheia*, and means, "truth, as the revealed reality lying at the basis of, and agreeing with, an appearance; the manifested, veritable essence of a matter..." (*Bullinger's Lex.*). According to Webster, "Truth may apply to an ideal abstraction conforming to a universal or generalized reality or it may represent a quality of statements, acts, or feelings of adhering to reality and avoiding error or falsehood" (*Seventh Collegiate*).

God is True

The "revealed reality" at the basis of all truth is God. Among his attributes is truth, and it is "impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). Paul was inspired to

say, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). King David, upon receiving the covenant-promise concerning the kingly line, said, "O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words are true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant" (2 Sam. 7:28). The Psalmist said, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth. . . . Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth" (Psa. 119:142, 151). Jesus said to his Father, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). This makes everything God has said the truth.

Yes, it is impossible for God to lie, he is true, and his words and Word are truth. Beyond this is the fact that there is a BODY of revealed truth termed THE truth. Those who believe the truth and accept it will be saved, as they have been chosen "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). Loving not the truth and believing lies will cause some to "be damned who believed not the truth" (vv. 10-12). Erring from the truth is contrary to true faith, and is to be avoided as it leads to ungodliness. (See 2 Tim. 2:16-19.) Those who "err from the truth" need to be converted to the truth to save them from death. (Jas. 5:19.)

Man, Source of Error

While the source of truth is God, the source of error is man. This all started in Eden. The sin of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 was: 1) adding to the Word of God, "neither shall ye TOUCH it" (v. 3); 2) taking from the

Word of God (bracketed words they left out), "we may [freely] eat . . . lest ye [surely] die" (vv. 2, 3); and 3) changing the Word of God, "Ye shall NOT surely die" (v. 4).

Man has been contradicting God ever since. The Old Testament is full of references to the false prophets. Especially notable were those in Jeremiah's time. In the face of the God-predicted Babylonian captivity, the false prophets said, "The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you" (23:17). God condemned them for their lies, their light and chaffy words, and their perversions of his truth.

How Can We Know?

How can we know we have the truth? Jesus said, "Seek, and ye shall find" (Luke 11:9). Just as we believe we will receive answer to our prayers when we ask, so we believe if we truly seek to know the truth, we will. Jesus told the apostles that the "Spirit of truth" would guide them into "all truth" (John 16:13). We believe they were inspired in all truth, and we have their record today in the Bible. So, we can know all truth, IF we read, study, and understand what has been written for us.

There is no substitute for STUDY! Only as we study as a "workman . . . rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), can we hope to be approved of God. We can have no trust in a man who would tell a congregation of God's people, "Quit studying; you know too

much already!" The day we think we know too much of God's Word of truth, we're dead!

How can we know if others have the truth? Deuteronomy 18:21, 22, gives the test of a prophet: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." Isaiah said, "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (8:19, 20).

Effect of the Truth

If we know the truth it will have an effect on us. What should we expect?

1) Contrary to the world's way of hiding its sinful works, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:21).

2) We will not be as the ancient Samaritans who did not know what they worshiped, for, in knowing God, we "shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:22-24).

3) We will be sanctified or set apart from the world, as Jesus prayed to God for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The reason so many so-

called Christians are not truly separated is that they do not know the truth of God's Word.

4) We will have on the complete Christian armor, and will be able to withstand the fiery darts of our adversaries, having our "loins girt about with truth" (Eph. 6:14). Many fail to stand because they lack this important defence.

5) We will live lives free of fear and superstition, as Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

We know of NO DRAWBACKS to truth. We know of no way a person could be worse off for acknowledging the truth of God's Word. What we believe affects what we do.

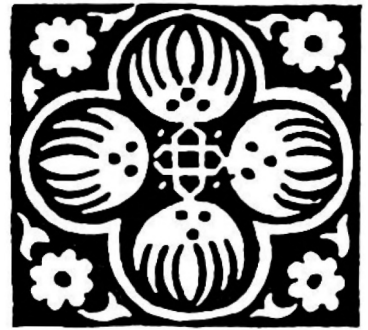
The Last Days

There are many indications that these are "the last days" spoken of by the prophets. One of the evident signs is the massive turning from truth on the part of those numbered among the people of God.

Paul charged Timothy, "Proclaim the message, press it home on all occasions, convenient or inconvenient, use argument, reproof, and appeal, with all the patience that the work of teaching requires. For the time will come when they will not stand wholesome teaching, but will follow their own fancy and gather a crowd of teachers to tickle their ears. They will stop their ears to the truth and turn to mythology" (2 Tim. 4:1-4, NEB).

Peter told us there would be false teachers in the church in
(Please turn to page 14.)

The God of the Bible



THE GOD of the Bible is apt to be quite different than the God of human theology. The Bible itself contains a graphic picture of man's corruption of the whole concept of God. Romans 1:18-32 tells how man originally knew God, because God revealed himself to man through the things he had made, as well as directly by his Word.

Steps Away From God

The Apostle Paul lists in the passage cited the steps involved in man's abandonment of the God of the Bible: 1) they glorified him not as God; 2) neither were they thankful; 3) they became vain in their imaginations; 4) their foolish heart was darkened; 5) professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and 6) they exchanged the glory of the uncorruptible God for images of man and the animals. For these things God gave them up to NATURAL lusts. But, the seventh, and final, step man took in his degrading theology was to exchange the truth of God for a lie, and to worship the creature rather than the Creator. For this cause God gave them up to UNNATURAL lusts.

These steps away from the God of the Bible are not descriptive of a one-time event in the distant past, but are an outline of

the general and repeated rejection of the God of the Bible throughout the ages.

A Pagan God

The God of man's theology is a result of man's vain imagination, outlined in the steps, and is a pagan God. When one investigates the heathen religions, he will discover that it has been an ancient practice to arrange the gods in threes, or triads. An example of this practice is this triad in Assyrian theology: "Below Ilu, the universal and mysterious source of all, was placed a triad, composed of his three first external and visible manifestations, and occupying the summit of the hierarchy of gods in popular worship. Anu, the Oannes of the Greek writers, was the lord of darkness; Bel, the demiurge, the organizer of the world; Ao, called also Bin, that is, the divine 'Son' par excellence, the divine light, the intelligence penetrating, directing, and vivifying the universe. These three divine persons, esteemed as equal in power and consubstantial, were not held as of the same degree of emanation, but were regarded as having, on the contrary, issued the one from the other—Ao from Oannes, and Bel from Ao" (*Story of the World's Worship* by Frank S. Dobbins). (more)

Adolph von Harnack (German theologian, 1851-1930) contended that "the doctrine of the Trinity, as professed by the Church, is not contained in the New Testament, but that it was first formulated in the second century and received final approbation in the fourth, as a result of the Arian and Macedonian controversies" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*). A short review of the history of the doctrine of the trinity will bear out Harnack's contention.

According to Roman Catholic writers, "The word *trias* (of which the Latin *trinitas* is a translation) is **FIRST FOUND** [emphasis ours] in Theophilus of Antioch about A.D. 180. He speaks of 'the Trinity of God (the father), His Word and His Wisdom'" (*ibid.*). Tertullian, a Roman theologian (160-230 A.D.), and Origen, a Greek theologian (180-254 A.D.) further developed the doctrine of the trinity. The first creed in which the trinity occurs was written by Gregory Thaumaturgus between 260 and 270 A.D.

A great controversy on the trinity raged in the church in the fourth century over the teachings of Arius and Athanasius. Constantine the Great called a council at Nicaea in 325 A.D. to try to settle the question. The council decided in favor of Athanasius, with the Nicene Creed the result. Notice the similarities in theology between the Assyrian triad cited and the Nicene creed.

The Nicene Creed

The Nicene creed says: "We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things

visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father [All right thus far, but watch it!], that is, of the substance of the Father, [Ouch!] God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of the same substance of the Father, through whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and for our salvation descended, was incarnate [Not a Bible word.], and was made man, suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven and cometh to judge living and dead. And in the Holy Ghost. Those who say: There was a time when He [the Son] was not, and He was not before He was begotten; and that He was made out of nothing; or who maintain that He is of another hypostasis or another substance (than the Father), or that the Son of God is created, or mutable, or subject to change, (them) the Catholic Church anathematizes" (*ibid.*).

There has been opposition to the trinity all the way down through history, but the major reformers failed to do any reforming when it came to the trinity. However, the almost universal acceptance of the pagan idea of the trinity of God does not make it a Biblical truth. It is just so much gobbledygook!

The God of the Bible

While the Bible is silent on a trinity of gods, it is full of references to the one, true, and living God, whose personal name is *YHWH*, or Jehovah. The God of the Bible is the same from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22; the same God for Israel and the

church. Whatever is said about God in the Old Testament is repeated and verified in the New Testament.

A key text in reference to the oneness of God is Deuteronomy 6:4, the so-called *Shema*, as that is the Hebrew for the first word in the verse: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD." The Authorized Hebrew Version of this verse reads, "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one." (The word "LORD" here, as well as hundreds of other places in the Old Testament, is written in all capital letters by the translators to indicate the presence of God's name, Jehovah, in the Hebrew text.) The simple unity of God—the true thrust of the word "one"—stands in stark contrast to the pagan multiplicity of gods, of which the trinity is an expression.

These references in Isaiah are strong in showing that Jehovah is God alone: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, . . . I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (44:6); "I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself" (v. 24); "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me" (45:5). (See also 46:9, 10.) The Psalmist said the same thing, "Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth" (83:18).

In the New Testament

Christians naturally place great importance on the words of Jesus. Jesus' words did not con-

tradict the teachings of the so-called Old Testament. When a Jewish scribe asked him which was the greatest commandment of all, Jesus answered, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29). (The word "Lord" is not all capitals here, because the Greek word *Kurios*, "Lord," is used. It is noteworthy that Benjamin Wilson, in his *Diaglott*, substituted "Jehovah" in this verse, because it is a quotation of Deuteronomy 6:4.) Jesus did not teach as truth a trinitarian God, but reemphasized that Jehovah is the only true God.

The Apostle Paul received his teachings from the Old Testament, and by revelation from Jesus. It is not unusual that his words should agree with Moses' and Jesus' concerning God. "There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him" (1 Cor. 8:6). "There is . . . one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6). "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). All things came from the Father, and he is above all. Jesus is not the one God, as he is the mediator BETWEEN God and men. It takes a third party to mediate, and Jesus could not be God and do this.

Practical Implications

The truth that there is but one Almighty God has its practical implications. Have you ever tried to work for more than one boss at the same time? It is frustrating and impossible! Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23),

but "the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). At his second coming, Jesus will reign till he has put all enemies under his feet, but he, himself, will still be subject to God. (1 Cor. 15:23-28.) Only one person can be "almighty," and that is the one, true, and living God, Creator of all, and our Father. Our service must be to him alone!

As God's people, Israel, moved him to jealousy with their idols—"that which is not God" (Deut. 32:21), and he was displeased and punished them for it, we cannot believe he is any more pleased when the apostate church worships an idolatrous pagan trinitarian God!

Life or Death

We are not here dealing with a matter of no consequence, but a matter of life or death. Jesus said in prayer to God, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). The only true God will not give eternal life to those who worship false gods.

But, he will give life eternal to those who really know him; those who believe what he has revealed about himself—his oneness, his purity, his power, his truth, his love—and have a personal and true relationship with him.

We do not like to emphasize the negative of the preceding thought, but God does. Therefore, we must remind all that those "that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . shall be punished with everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. 1:8, 9). These are his words, not ours.

We appeal to you by the Word of God to recognize the importance of knowing the honest truth about God—the God of the Bible. Don't be satisfied with what you have always been told, when it doesn't agree with the Bible. God wants you to be saved, but he will destroy those who do not know and acknowledge him—the only true God.

Is the God of the Bible YOUR God? □

A CRITIC MUST HAVE STANDARDS

"A critic to criticize, must, very simply, have standards. To have standards he must pretend there is some optimum against which like creations must be measured. By the nature of his process he is eventually forced, often inadvertently, to accept as absolute those conditions for analysis which he has only tentatively proposed. To be himself significant he needs law and revealed order . . ."—*Rocking the Boat*, by Gore Vidal (Little, Brown and Company). A *Country Beautiful* book review, of which this quotation was a part, considered Vidal's assertions plain wrong, shocking to be shocking, or lacking perception—in other words, contrary to his own standards of criticism. The standard of judgment used by the Christian in matters of doctrine, faith, or morals must be the Bible—the only true measure. □

Q&A

THE SEVENTH DAY

Question:

In Genesis 2:3 it says, "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Does this verse indicate **AT THIS TIME** God blessed and sanctified the seventh day? If so, why shouldn't we keep the seventh-day sabbath? If not, what is the meaning of this verse, and what is the true purpose of the seventh day?—O.H.

Answer:

Your first question concerns the **TIME** of God's blessing and sanctifying the seventh day. In attempting to answer this question, we ask another: When was Genesis 2:3 written? Obviously, it was written by Moses during the wilderness journey, some 1400 years before Christ. Although the subject is the creation and God's resting, there are several reasons to believe this verse is parenthetical.

1) The verse says, "God **HAD** rested," indicating Moses was speaking in the present of something God had done in the distant past.

2) It does not say God **THEN** blessed the seventh day, but **FOR THAT REASON**.

3) "The **ORDER OF CONNECTION** and **NOT** of time, introduced the mention of the sabbath in the history of the subject which it was ordained to commemorate."—Dr. L. C. Thomas, *The Law, the Covenants, and the Sabbath*.

Another parenthetical statement similar to this is in the latter part of Genesis 2. God had made the woman and brought her to the man. Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Women, because she was taken out of man" (v. 23). Moses then added this parenthetical statement: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (v. 24). These words were not spoken at this time, because there were no fathers or mothers to leave, but the **CONNECTION** involving the word "flesh" caused Moses to insert the words in verse 23 at this time.

It is evident from the construction in Genesis 2, that God did not bless and sanctify the seventh day on the very day he rested. Rather, God **HAD** rested at the conclusion of his work, and for this **REASON** he blessed and sanctified the seventh day in the days of Moses.

Sabbath Given at Sinai

There is no record in the Bible of the giving of a sabbath to any man until God gave it to Israel at Sinai, or thirty days prior to the encampment at Sinai. (See Ex. 16:4, 5, 22-26.) Under the reforms in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, "the law of Moses" was read to the people, and the people repented and separated themselves from the strangers. The people were exhorted by the Levites, who reviewed the history of God's dealings with Israel. In Nehemiah 9:13-15 the Levites said to God, "Thou camest down also upon mount

Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: and MADEST KNOWN unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant." It is evident from this text that the "holy sabbath" had not been made known to anyone until Sinai. Even then it was made a part of the Mosaic, or old, covenant given to Israel, and was never given to the church.

Purpose of the Sabbath

We feel the sabbath—"rest"—had more than one purpose. Its purpose when given to Israel was a test to see if they would obey God and keep his commandments. (Ex. 16:16-29.) Another purpose was to provide a day of rest. This principle of one day in seven for the Lord is alright, but we learn in the New Testament that we should esteem every day. (Rom. 14:5.)

We feel the greatest value of the seventh day is in types and shadows. In Colossians 2:16, 17, it says: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (See also Heb. 8:5; 10:1.)

Typically speaking, Moses—the lawgiver—could not lead the people into "rest," the Promised Land, but Joshua—"Salvation of Jehovah"—did. "Joshua" in Hebrew is the same as "Jesus" in the Greek. We know the rest

under Joshua was not the ultimate fulfillment, for Hebrews 4:8 says, "For if [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."

Rest in Christ

Jesus is the body that cast the shadow; that is, the law shadow led to Christ. Rest in Christ was predicted in Isaiah 11:10. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). When we enter into Christ's rest, we cease from our works of flesh, and depend wholly on him to be our righteousness. (Heb. 4:10.) "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16).

The seventh day is also a type of the coming Kingdom of God, when God's work will be finished; when he will have completed his planned perfect earth, peopled by a perfect people. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. . . . Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest" (Heb. 4:9, 11).

Number of Completeness

Seven is considered the number of perfection or completeness, just as God completed his work in six days and rested the seventh day—not from fatigue, but accomplishment. Because of these words in 2 Peter 3:8, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," many feel that "man's day" will end at the completion of 6,000 years of human history, or near the year
(Please turn to page 14.)

Worth repeating

“The church was built to disturb the peace of man; but, often, it does not perform its duty for fear of disturbing the peace of the church. What kind of artillery practice would that be which declined to fire for fear of kicking over the gun carriages, or waking up the sentinels asleep at their posts?”—*Beecher*.

Pulling Together

I've heard all kinds of excuses from people not attending church. Some say that it isn't necessary—that they can be just as religious worshipping by themselves. If you ever tried it, though, I'm sure you found that something was missing—something for which there is no substitute.

A story is told about a minister who noticed that one of his faithful members had not been present at church for quite awhile. He went to see him one night, and was shown into a room where the man was sitting before a roaring fire in a grate. They sat without talking for a long time. The minister took the tongs and lifted a red, live coal out onto the hearth. As they sat looking at it, it gradually turned a little black. The minister didn't say a word, but got up quietly and left the house. The next Sunday the man was back in church.

We gain strength and inspiration from worship. And, by pool-

ing our talents and gifts, we accomplish together what no single believer could do. If our faith is a glowing, vital thing, then we must share it with other people.—*Author Unknown*.

A Pattern for Youth

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Eccl. 12:1). Every young person should memorize and remember this verse, and always let God's Word guide him. The knowledge of God is of much greater value than material resources, so we should follow God each day, letting him rule our lives. “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her” (Prov. 3:13-15).

God used young men for his work, and two very important ones who are commended in the Scriptures as examples of youthful piety are Samuel and John the Baptist. (1 Sam. 2:26; Luke 1:80.) Our supreme example of growth in grace and virtue is Christ Jesus, for he as a child “grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace

of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40).

We should honor God first, and our parents second. This is one of the great commandments. If only the youth would heed it, there would be fewer heart-broken families.—*Grover Gordon*.

A Sure Thing

The vicar of St. Mary's at Chard, an Anglican Church in England, recognizing the gambling rage in his country, is giving parishioners stake money to bet with. If they win, they give the winnings to the church, and if they lose they return the stake money. It's a sure thing for the parish.—*Anderson Independent*.

It is also a pretty sure thing that the vicar wouldn't dare preach on the evils of gambling! —Ed.

Selected

"Do WHAT God says, the WAY he says to, for the PURPOSE he says, just BECAUSE he says to. Anything short of this is not saving faith."

"Say this for the automobile—it never takes people away from church against their will." □

WHAT IS TRUTH?

(Continued from page 6.)

the latter days, and that MANY would follow them, "by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Pet. 2:1-3).

We are living in crucial times! We are facing a famine of the Word of God. There is life in hearing, believing, accepting, obeying, and living the truth. We must love the truth or lose it. When Jesus comes we want him

to find us in the truth; living it and giving it to others! □

Q&A

(Continued from page 12.)

2000 A.D. Our Watchtower friends have arrived at the year 1975 for the end of all, based on their computation of the 6,000 years. We would rather not set dates, as God has never revealed to anyone when Christ will come to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

The Bible does speak of the coming millennium, or 1,000-year reign of Christ: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6). In a sense this will be the seventh day of one thousand years. Even here the type is not completely fulfilled, as the endless Kingdom-age will be the final rest that the people of God will enjoy.

In Summary

Genesis 2:3 does not indicate God blessed and sanctified the seventh day on the very day he rested from his work, but he later blessed it for that reason. Genesis 2:3 is parenthetical. The so-called "holy sabbath" was not made known to anyone until Sinai, when God gave it to Israel as part of the old covenant. The main purpose of the sabbath was to foreshadow Christ and the rest that is available through him. The seventh-day sabbath is not for us; we don't want to live in the shadow! □

Among the brethren

NEW TRACT

The article on page 7, "The God of the Bible," will soon be available in tract form. For a sample, address: The Honest Truth, Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, S. C. 29604.

SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE NOTES

The Southeast Conference of the Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith met for its Fifth Sunday meeting at Lenoir, N.C., January 30, 1972. Influenza of near epidemic proportions kept many from attending.

Action taken during the business meeting included the adoption of a budget of \$2200.00; \$700.00 for camp, \$1000.00 for aid to new churches, and \$500.00 for miscellaneous expenses. The treasury now has a balance of \$1300.00. The Greenville, S.C., Church was accepted into the Conference. An Executive Committee is to be formed, which is to include the present board, the pastors, and two members from each church.

The Executive Committee plans to meet before each Fifth Sunday meeting, and will meet April 22, 1972, at Anderson Chapel, Hendersonville, N.C. at 10:30 a.m.

"BIBLE TRUTH" RADIO LOG

Pastor Z. B. Duncan

(All programs heard on Sundays)

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WJRI 1340 AM—Lenoir, N.C., 9:00 a.m.

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WJJJ 1260 AM—Christiansburg, Va., 9:30 a.m.

WVVV 104.9 FM—Blacksburg, Va., 9:30 a.m.

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BEREAN SUNDAY SCHOOL OF THE AIR

George Brown and Paul Duncan

WJRI 1340 AM—Lenoir, N.C., 9:15 a.m., Sundays

CALENDAR

April 22—Southeast Conference Executive Committee meeting at Hendersonville, N.C.

April 30—Southeast Conference Fifth Sunday meeting, Hendersonville, N.C.

June 4-10—Southeast Conference youth camp, Tellico Mtn. Camp, Coker Creek, Tenn.

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A black and white photograph of a mountain landscape. In the upper right, a waterfall cascades down a rocky cliff. The middle ground shows a valley with a river or stream winding through it, surrounded by dense trees and vegetation. In the foreground, a person is visible on the left side, looking towards the landscape. The overall scene is rugged and natural.

the honest truth

SECOND ISSUE



The voice of one

A personal note

We are gratified with the response to our first issue of *The Honest Truth*. We thank all those who took the time to write us their reactions to, and opinions of, our effort for the Lord. We are also thankful for those who shared their substance with us, so that the expenses of printing and mailing would be taken care of. We feel blessed of the Lord.

We appreciate receiving the names and addresses of interested persons who wish to be on our mailing list. Too, we encourage our readers to send us the names and addresses of families, friends, and associates whom they would like to have hear the honest truth of God's Word.

There is no subscription price to *The Honest Truth*. It is supported by the tithes, offerings, and gifts of interested people. Receipts will be sent for all gifts, and all contributions are tax deductible.

We invite letters of inquiry and questions on Biblical subjects. We will attempt to answer every one, either by letter, or through the pages of this publication.

Contributing editors

Appearing in this issue are the writings of three contributing editors: James W. McLain, William M. Wachtel, and Richard

Worley. Bro. McLain is a former national evangelist for the Church of God General Conference, and a deep student. Bro. Wachtel is a former president of Oregon Bible College, and is a student of the original languages. Bro. Worley is an active pastor, and one of the best Bible students among our younger men. These men will have differences of opinion, especially on future things, but each has a love of the truth, and something to contribute to a greater knowledge of God's Word.

We invite your careful consideration of their writings. As with all matter that appears in these pages, do not accept what they say just because they say it, but study and compare it with God's Word. Tradition is a poor master!

Omitted

The "Among the Brethren" page, carried in our first issue, does not appear in this issue, and will be omitted from future issues. Although it is published in the southeastern United States, this publication is distributed in many states and foreign countries. It is impossible, and not practical, for us to try to carry news from everywhere, and the news of this area is not of general interest.

We are interested in what is happening on the local scene, and among the brethren. But, in

the future we will attempt to do that through other means. Write, or visit, us at any time, and we'll try to do the same!

We get letters!

Our ministry is not a one-way affair. True, we publish and send our offering to many people. How our readers think and feel is often expressed in their letters. We plan to share some of these with you from time to time. Generally, we are encouraged and uplifted by what our family of readers has to say, and we hope you will be, too.

The religious picture

From what we are able to read, observe, and hear, the current religious picture is a muddled one. We are told, "We belong to the church victorious," and yet, the battle is not won. In fact, almost every denomination—almost every local church—has its problems.

Frankly, while the church is attempting to present a good face to the world, and reach nonChristians for Christ, it is "going to pot" internally. We recently read of a church convention that dismissed one of its bishops for misuse of church funds, and severely reprimanded three others for the same thing. Add to this the sharp rifts in most all churches, mainly between liberal and conservative elements, and the waters get muddier.

Our "sick" society

Our "sick" society seems intent on carrying its sickness into the church, so the church is becoming a reflection of this

the honest truth

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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Our cover, Yosemite Falls, Calif.	

corrupt world. For example, consider the rise of the homosexual church, homosexual ministers, and homosexual marriages. Some of the popular churches have responded to such by recognizing such a lifestyle as “normal,” and extending their ministry to this group of deviates!

Where the problem is not one of outright worldliness, we see a strong movement of the churches back to reunification with the Roman church. There is no doubt that the Roman church, itself, is liberalizing, but much of that is on the surface. We find the Roman church cooperating in ventures of church endeavor that it would not consider a few years ago. For example, the Roman church is pushing the “Key 73” nationwide evangelistic campaign.

Our work

While our work is the *calling out* a people for God—the separation and sanctification of a people for God—some of our “brothers” are working in the other direction. They are immersing trinitarians, participating in ecumenical councils, conferences, and crusades. In one church bulletin we received there were three “invitations” given by the pastor to attend interfaith services. And the ministers wonder why their members leave “the faith”! It is a simple case of sowing and reaping.

We have observed that the truth is diminished from the pulpit to the pew, but that misinformation and error are multiplied from the pulpit to the pew. Therefore, the truth must be preached stronger than ever, if it is to affect the hearers. We dare not preach liberality!

The religious world is in such a muddled mess because ministers have forgotten that they are **FIRST** of all servants of God. As such, they will not teach or preach that which is expedient or popular, but what God knows the people *need!* The “itching ears” mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:3 often belong to both preacher and people. It’s a vicious circle, but it has to be stopped somewhere.

A compliment

One of the best compliments we ever received was from a young man who thought we were “independently wealthy,” because we spoke up on issues that were sure to make us unpopular. The Apostle Paul said, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16).

The only way we can see clearly what is happening in the current muddled religious world is to stay “on the foundation” of the Word of God. Then, as we see what is happening, we must remain close to God, so we will remain separate from this present politico-religious “Babylon”! □



“Management of self” is the meaning of “temperance”—self-control. Paul was temperate in all things, lest having preached to others he himself should be a “castaway,” or disapproved. (1 Cor. 9:27.) □

THINK!

Some meditations
by James W. McLain



SOLOMON said, "Man hath no preeminence above a beast, . . . all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Eccl. 3:19, 20). It raises the question, Is there, then, no difference between man and the beasts?

Well, this much is evident, that God has given man a different kind of brain; a different means of thinking than he has given to any beast. The animal has a set pattern of thinking—action and reaction, a response to all the stimuli. When he is frightened, he puts up his claws, and takes up an attitude of defense. As far as reasoning is concerned, it is limited to some very simple procedures.

The mind

With man it is entirely another thing. God has equipped every man with a mind, which is like a laboratory, in which everything about him is being responded to, studied, evaluated, accepted or rejected, used, or discarded.

The sum total of a man's personality is really not what he *appears* to be, but the sum total of his thinking; the development that has come out of the laboratory of his mind. The reason God has given man this equipment is because man has only one function on the earth, and that is to learn the truth. His days are

limited, his time is limited, and his opportunities are limited. If he doesn't make use of them, then his time spent here is without purpose.

There is no intention that we should live purposely without committing any mistakes. Experience—the making of mistakes—is the very basis of knowledge and understanding. Without this experience of life—taking into our laboratory of the mind, evaluating the experiences, and profiting by our mistakes—there would be no purpose. We're all like little children learning to walk. If a child never tried again after he fell down the first time, he would be immobile, and incapable of ever walking. If, because we made a mistake, we quit, and didn't evaluate and learn and try, then we would become practically vegetables. When we resist experience, we resist the means of learning, of profiting, of doing better.

There's nothing that inhibits the development of truth in our minds more than tradition. We accept many things blindly without even questioning where they came from, or why we accept the statements. We have never tested some things, never evaluated them; we blindly accept them. If we were to be scientific in our

laboratory in the investigation of the truth, we would approach every question with a question: Now, from where did this come? What is its origin? Who espouses it? What is the purpose of it? What is the end-result of it? Will it accomplish what it says it will do? Thus, we become scientists in our acquiring truth.

How God sees us

There is a statement in the Scriptures concerning man, "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). We wonder just what our appearance is before God—how does he see us? I'm sure he doesn't look at us and say, My, that's a handsome one; he's six-feet-two, nice looking, strong, healthy, and able. Things that seem to be important to us, I'm sure are not as important to God. He looks at us to see whether or not we have used the opportunity, the time, the probation that has been extended to us; to see whether or not we have made any bid for eternity. I'm sure that as he looks, he finds there are few who have made any preparation; few have made any bid for eternity, other than to believe some traditional thing, which they think takes care of everything.

Now, if God were simply to detach the package of our mind, which is our work laboratory of life, what would he find there? He might begin to question as he evaluated what he found there, and say, Well, does he believe in me as I revealed myself? Or, does he believe in some god that men have devised? Does he believe in my creation? the manner in which I created it? Or, has he

accepted some tradition, or some scientific theory? Concerning my purposes, does he believe what I have promised to do? Or, has he accepted something that has been invented? Concerning the future, does he believe what I have said I will do? Or, like so many, does he believe that man himself is capable of solving, and will solve, all of these problems eventually? What is his "paradise" like? Does he believe in the paradise on earth I have promised? Or, again, has he invented his own paradise to serve his own purposes? When he considers himself, does he believe what I have said about man's creation, his nature, the length of his days, and his future? Or, has he devised something that suits his vanity more? What is man, if it is not the sum total of what he believes?

The many, the few

Esdras said, "The most High hath made this world for many, but the world to come for few" (2 Esdras 8:1). Why *are* there so few? Can it be because they have rather believed in traditions—what everybody else believes? The few who are there, WHY are they there? Can it be because they have taken the time and trouble, and made the effort to answer the question, What is truth? Have they sorted it out, weighed it, evaluated it, tested it, and believed it? What other means is there of attaining the world to come than by belief? Belief is a thing of the mind.

The mind, then, makes up the sum total of all that is important for salvation; what one believes. This, then, becomes our work-

shop, in which we test, and try out all the things that make up what we are, and what we are to become. For, "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Or, "He that believeth . . . shall be saved." "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." Or, "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Stop and wonder

This causes me to stop and wonder about myself; what's going on upstairs in that laboratory? Is there any activity? Or, is it just crammed full of something someone else has put there? Is there research going on—evaluating, accepting, rejecting, trying to find out what is truth? If there is no activity there at all—no investigation, no appraisal, I would say that individual is like the little child who never tried his second step, because he fell down once. Maybe he is too lazy to investigate; would rather let someone else do it, hand it to him in a package, and have him buy it without even seeing what is inside.

It was the diligence of the early Bereans that should inspire us; "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures daily*, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Paul told Timothy to *study*. (2 Tim 2:15.) The word "study" there is also translated "give diligence." We mustn't become lazy in the workshop of our minds. Maybe that's one of the reasons why

this world is for the many, and the world to come for the few. So very few people like to think about these things.

Amusement

Did you ever study the word "amusement"? What it really means is "against thinking," or "not to think." Why do people spend so many hours watching television, going to shows, going to sports events, or participating in these things? Why do people have to be amused? The reason is obvious, they don't have to think about these serious things when they are being amused. When I was a young man I spent all of my spare time reading western, police, and adventure story magazines. Amusement, that's all! I finally came to the conclusion that I was wasting my time on something that had absolutely no meaning.

It takes effort to think, to learn, to progress, and to do. Few people are willing to pay the price that it takes to study, to know, and to believe.

One doesn't often think of religious beliefs as being "amusement," but when you take the strict meaning of the word—not to think, some of the beliefs that are held by people become some sort of an opiate; they actually keep them from thinking. Such a belief requires no investigation, and lulls the individual with a sense of security; the individual doesn't have to think. So, it becomes a form of a-musement—not to think.

"Instamatic"

The popularity of the Instamatic-type camera is evidence of

what the public really wants in everything, *including religion*. With the Instamatic camera you don't have to estimate or measure the light falling on the subject. You don't have to worry about setting the lens. These things are taken care of automatically. The same thing is becoming true in all electronic instruments, such as TV and electronic organs; whole elements are plugged in, and it doesn't require any technical knowledge to fix a certain part. That's what people want; they don't want to be concerned with technicalities.

So with religion. It has to come in a package. It is plugged in, and is "instamatic." As far as most people are concerned that takes care of everything. Again, that's the real problem; people do NOT want to think!

So, then, what separates the few of the world to come from the many of this present world? What separates the child of God and heir of salvation from the masses of humanity who are not to be saved? Well, the one and only thing that separates him from the rest is that he thinks.

A further step

Beyond the mere acquiring of information by study is a further step, which is to be *creative*. We cannot make new truth, but we can certainly use truth to evaluate and be creative in its presentation, and in its understanding.

The artist who is learning is concerned only with how to hold his brush and how to stroke it, how to mix his colors and what colors to use, and how to organize his material to make a picture. So it is with the student who has not yet acquired enough of thinking, of studying, and of using the things God has provided for him to become creative. Those who have become mature, and of age, have learned to become creative and to use the tools of truth that have been placed in their hands.

So, it is not simply a matter of learning to drink milk from the bottle, or to take the few faltering steps of learning to walk. But, there is progress that can be made, and a growth that can be obtained, IF the individual is willing to pay the price of the effort of thinking. THINK! □



WHAT THEN?

When the choir has sung its last anthem,
And the preacher has made his last prayer,
When the people have heard their last sermon
And the sound has died out on the air;
When the Bible lies closed on the altar,
And the pews are all empty of men,
And each one stands facing his record—
And the Great Book is opened—WHAT THEN?

—Selected.

□

The Logos of John 1

By William M. Wachtel

YOU ASK what I think about John 1:1-14. I have touched on this to some extent in an earlier letter. The Logos (Word) is, of course, the heart of this passage. If the Logos was personal before “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (v. 14), then Christ’s personal preexistence is established.

The word *logos* itself tells us nothing about its being personal or impersonal. For example, the *logos* of Hebrews 4:12 is clearly impersonal, as would be conceded by all. But the *logos* of John 1:14 is personal (or, rather, as I would say, has *become* personal).

The question is, is the *logos* of John 1:1 personal? The pronouns “him” and “the same” in versus 2-4 prove nothing about personality, since *logos* is masculine in Greek and all pronouns must agree in gender with their antecedent. But as you know, in Greek inanimate and impersonal things may be either masculine, feminine, or neuter.

Meaning of Logos

Logos may mean word, saying, speech, reason, purpose, or intent, as shown by usage in the English versions and also in Greek lexicons. God used his *logos*—his word, his reason, his purpose—in creating all things.

“He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psa. 33:9). Genesis 1 is the basis behind this statement and also behind John 1. So, the *logos* was *with* God, and as his outward expression and instrumentality it *was* God. And through his *logos*, God created all things (v. 3). Further, the *logos* contained for men the promise of life and light (v. 4).

John the Baptist appeared on the scene, a man “sent from God” (v. 6). (Notice, incidentally, that being “sent from God” does not prove preexistence, else John preexisted his birth—an idea few would accept.) John bore witness to the Light—Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). John’s mission was to point men to the Messiah (v. 7). The Light, Jesus the Saviour, was in the world, and as he said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). Thus, this refers to the historical appearing and ministry of Christ in this world.

Made through him

The world was made “*through* him” (v. 10)—Greek *dia*, improperly translated “by” in KJV. Check the lexicons and grammars. *Dia* with the genitive may mean either *through* or *because*

of (Arndt and Gingrich lexicon, p. 179). *Through* represents means, agency, or instrumentality. It was through Christ, or in reference to him, that God created all his works: Christ “came unto his own possessions” (v. 11, Greek), and he is “heir of all things” (Heb. 1:2). It was also *because of* Christ that God made all things. The Father’s intention or purpose was that he might perfect a race of men who would be “conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). To those who received him, he gave authority to become sons of God.

Verses 6-13 are generally recognized as a parenthesis, or explanatory interlude, between verses 5 and 14. Verse 14 takes up again the theme of the Logos, which was left unfinished in verse 5. But now, with what has been said about the Light—Jesus—in verses 6-13, verse 14 shines with great luster in stating that the Logos used of God in the beginning, ultimately was made flesh, *became personal*, in the man Christ Jesus, the only begotten and literal Son of God. And it is this Son who alone hath declared, or shown, or revealed, *God* (v. 18). “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father” (John 14:9), declared Jesus. No other man could ever say that.

Express image

Only Jesus is the “express image” of God’s person (Heb. 1:3). But, again, the *image* of something or someone is not that someone, but a representation of him or of it. Jesus is the *image* of God (2 Cor. 4:4), not God. If Jesus is in essence or substance God in person, then why or how is he called the *image* of God? Noting again Romans 8:29, we are to be conformed to the image of Christ, but we will not become in essence or substance the same being as Christ! We will be *like* him. Similarly, Jesus is *like* God, with a perfect likeness.

When the fullness of the time was come, “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). This Son had a mother as well as a Father, and he did not personally preexist his mother. The trinitarian formulation that states he was “begotten before all worlds” is pure nonsense, without a shred of Scripture to back it up. God says, “Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten thee” (Psa. 2:7). Christ’s begetting by the Father took place in *time*—a historic event. It was not some precreation event or a phenomenon of eternity past. Scripture knows nothing of such philosophical or metaphysical abstractions! □



A former congressman told of a bishop who advised a politician to go out into the rain and lift his head heavenward. “It will bring a revelation to you.” Next day the politician reported, “I followed your advice and no revelation came. The water poured down my neck and I felt like a fool.” “Well,” said the bishop, “isn’t that quite a revelation for the first try?”—*See You in Church*. □

Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

Question:

In Luke 23:43 Jesus promised one of the thieves that he would be with him in paradise. Why do people insist upon baptism if Jesus made the promise to the thief without requiring him to be baptized?

Answer:

There are several parts to this question and most of them are based upon assumption.

We need to observe at the start of this consideration the various scriptures stating positively the need for baptism. In Mark 16:16 we have the record that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." This gives a twofold requirement for salvation, belief and baptism. Acts 22:16 recounts Ananias' telling Paul to "be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Romans 6 agrees with the thought that the rite of baptism is that which washes and cleanses from sin.

Beyond this, baptism is the means by which all people are adopted into the household of God and are made heirs of the promises made to Abraham. (Gal. 3:26-29.) From these plain statements of Scripture, which are by no means all that are in the Word, we maintain that baptism is essential.

The thief's request

Now let us consider more closely the thief and his request. The thief asked to be remembered when Jesus would come into his Kingdom. The thief was better versed in the plan and purpose of God than many religious leaders of today. He did not ask to go to heaven, or to have Jesus take his soul, but he asked to be remembered, in the future, when Jesus received his Kingdom. Not knowing anything about this man except what he asked of Christ, we *might* assume that he had heard Jesus preach and *may* have been baptized. This is, of course, conjecture on our part, but so is the belief that he was promised life without baptism.

A possibility

Another area we might consider is the possibility that Jesus *did not* promise the man eternal life when he came into his Kingdom. All four gospel writers mention that there were people crucified with Jesus and all four state definitely that there were only two crucified with him, one on the left and another on the right. (Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:32, 33; and John 19:18.)

Both Matthew and Mark go into detail about the bystanders' attitude toward Christ as he was on the cross. Not only was Jesus verbally abused by the observers, but Matthew and Mark record that the *thieves* reviled Jesus. (Matt. 27:44; Mark 15:32.) Luke gives us the dialogue of the thieves. Was the one sincere when he asked Jesus to remember him, or was this sarcasm on

his part? If we harmonize Luke's account with that of Matthew and Mark, then we would conclude that he was sarcastic and not sincere in the request.

In the garden

If this is true, then what about the promise Jesus made? Read it again from Luke 23:43: "Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee. To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The word *paradise* means "a park or a garden," and it is generally *assumed* that Jesus promised the thief a place in the Kingdom of God. If we follow the events of the day of the crucifixion, we read that the day ended with Jesus in a garden or a park. In John 19:41, 42a we read, "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus."

John 19:32 records that the soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves, but when they came to Jesus, he was already dead, so it was not necessary. The legs were broken to hasten death. If the one being crucified could not take the pressure off his arms by standing, it would cause suffocation and death. Since the day was ending and the criminals could not be left on the crosses over the sabbath days, they hastened their deaths by breaking their legs, and the promise to the thief was fulfilled that night. Jesus and the thief both died, and Jesus was placed in the garden tomb. We do not know the disposition of the thief, but Jesus said that he would be in the garden or paradise with him.

Punctuation

Since we are considering all of the possibilities concerning this passage, there is one more possible explanation. In the original (oldest available) manuscripts the words were not separated and there was no punctuation. This was probably done to conserve space on the valuable parchment. However, the words were run together as we would write, "Verilyisayuntothee todaythou shalt," etc. Since the punctuation was added at a later date, the meaning could have, in the minds of men, changed from the time it was written to the time when punctuation was added. Consider that Jesus was asking a rhetorical question, rather than giving an answer: "Amen, I say to you today, shalt thou be with me in paradise?"

"Today"

It is worthy of note what Dr. Strong says about the word "today": "On the (i.e., this) day (or night current or just passed)." With this meaning it is evident that one of two things was meant by Christ. Either the thief obtained his request or Jesus was just saying that he was speaking on that day. It would seem redundant for Jesus to say, "I say to you today." I would believe the thief received what he asked on that day.

It would be utter foolishness for a person to reject, or at least ignore, the plain statements of Scripture concerning baptism and trust in a supposition.

Put *your* faith in the definite commands of God, and don't try to circumvent a single one!

(Please turn to page 16.)

What is man?

By the Editor



THE PSALMIST said, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psa. 8:3-5).

What IS man? This question has agitated the philosophical and religious worlds for ages. Unfortunately, men have sought the answer among themselves, rather than from the true Source—the God who made man. This has led to many erroneous ideas and teachings concerning man's nature; many of them based on wishful thinking.

It is a natural thing for a man faced with death to seek ways of avoiding its finality and its "sting." Hence, man has so wished he could survive death, he has convinced himself that he shall. A close examination of the popular view of man's natural immortality will show it originated with man himself, and not with God.

Man, as God made him

The Bible, as God's divine record, tells how God made man in the beginning. According to Genesis 1:26-28, God proposed to make man in his own image and likeness; that is, in his own outward appearance and in his own moral likeness. In Genesis 2:7 God tells HOW he made man. "The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul [a *nephesh*]."

There are several items of interest in this latter reference. First of all, it was Jehovah who made man, and he is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa. 139:14). The more we learn about each part of man's body, the more we are led to recognize that such a marvelous organism could not have just happened.

Another point that is emphasized by this text is the connection between man and the ground. The Hebrew word for "man" in this verse is *adam*—"of the ground" (Y.C.). The word "ground" in this same verse is from the Hebrew *adamah*. Man was formed of the elements of

the ground, and even today our bodies are composed of the same elements as the earth upon which we live, and the earth-borne foods we eat.

Man, inanimate

Although completely formed, the man was still inanimate; he did not have life. What did it take to make him live? Breath! Simply breath? That's what it says. Man is so constructed, with all his tissues and organs, that breath is the animating force. Man has this in common with the beasts, according to Ecclesiastes 3:19—"That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; . . . yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast." This is not saying men are no better than beasts, but that in this one thing—in which both are breathing creatures—they are alike.

Now, some would try to say here that God gave man something more than breath—perhaps a "never-dying soul or spirit"? This latter is foreign to the Bible. Although James Kidd from Arizona left his fortune for the purpose of proving the soul or spirit survives man at death, and many have tried their best to obtain evidence that something substantial leaves the body at death, no person or group has yet been able to claim his large estate. Even science is no help in supporting this man-made theory!

Became a living soul

Please notice that it does not say man was GIVEN a soul, but that he BECAME a soul. The Hebrew word for "soul" is

nephesh. The word is translated several ways in the Old Testament, but it means primarily "animal life" (B.L.), "animal soul" (Y.C.), or "a living being" (R.S.V.). The King James translators recognized this meaning, when they twice translated *nephesh* as "living creature" in Genesis 1:21, 24. It is used repeatedly of the living person, and not as being a PART of a person. Plainly, it is the body plus the breath that equals a living soul or being. Take away the breath, and the soul is unmade.

That man, this living, breathing creature, was subject to death—mortal—when God made him, is plain from the Scriptures. God told the man if he disobeyed he would "surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Before Adam sinned he was subject to death, but afterward he was destined to die. In cursing the man, God told him, you shall "return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (3:19). As a result of Adam's transgression, all men—all souls—are destined to die. Through Ezekiel God said, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (18:4).

Mortal man

It is revealing to notice that the word "man" in our text-question, Psalm 8:4—"What is man?"—is from the Hebrew word *enosh*. *Young's Concordance* defines this as, "a man, a mortal." Dr. Bullinger notes that the four different Hebrew words used for "man" in the Old Testament represent different views of him. For instance, "Adam, denotes his *origin*, as being made from the

‘dust of the ground [adamah].’ ”
“*Enosh*, has regard to his infirmities, as physically *mortal*, and as to character, *incurable*.” (C.B.) *Enosh* is used in Job 4:17, “Shall mortal man [enosh] be more just than God?” While the Bible is silent in regard to the natural immortality of man, it is plain in picturing him as a death-destined mortal creature; still in need of morticians and mortuaries!

Man, as he is

Although Jesus Christ, our Savior, has come, has died for our sins, been buried, raised again, and has ascended, nothing has changed concerning man’s present mortal nature. Paul was inspired to say, “It is appointed unto man once to die” (Heb. 9:27). He further said, “In Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:22). The Roman letter is plain in showing all men are sinners, and all must die. (3:23; 5:12; 6:23.)

What did Jesus do for us, then? He has “indeed rendered death powerless [unprofitable, B.L.], and who has illustrated life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings” (2 Tim. 1:10, Diag.). He was plain in showing that God “only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto” (1 Tim. 6:16). God is “the King eternal, immortal [incorruptible], invisible” (1 Tim. 1:17).

Seek immortality

Because Jesus was raised from the dead to incorruptibility and eternal life, we are given hope that we, too, can some day inherit eternal life; either by being changed to immortality at

Christ’s coming, if we are alive, or changed to incorruptibility if we are dead at his coming. Because we do not now possess eternal life, we, “by patient continuance in well being seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (Rom. 1:7).

It is by patiently continuing to do well that we show we are seeking immortality and life. The knowledge that we are now children of God by faith and baptism into Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26, 27), and that we hope to be made like Jesus Christ in his perfection, is the reason we now purify ourselves in this life, even as he is pure.

The miracle of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection is reflected in the changed lives of those who have imitated his act by putting to death the old way of life, burying it in a watery grave, and rising up to walk in newness of life. He has done much for us!

Man, as he shall be

We have reviewed what the Bible says about man as God made him. We found that God made him a soulical creature; possessing temporary and mortal life. We found, in reviewing what the Bible says about man as he is, that Jesus did not remove sin and death from the earth, but that he died for sin, and will some day destroy death through his reign.

The hopeful aspect of our question—“What is man?”—involves man as he shall be. The great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, presents the beautiful truth concerning man’s future—if he is in Christ. God’s plan for perfect men on a perfect

earth will be realized, when those mortal living Christians will be changed to immortality, and those corruptible dead Christians will be changed to incorruptibility at Christ's second coming. Then, death itself will be destroyed. (V. 26.) God will have a desire to the work of his hands, as Job said in speaking of the resurrection of the dead. (14:13-15.) "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). What a wonderful hope!

Believe the truth!

Someone may still say, What difference does it make whether we believe we already have an immortal soul or spirit, and don't really die? Or, whether we believe what God says about man's nature in his Word? Well, it made a difference to Adam and Eve, whether they believed God or not. They thought they wouldn't die for disobeying, but they did! It's that important today!

Too, our views concerning man's nature affect our hope in the resurrection, Christ's second coming, the Kingdom on the earth, and our own preparation for the life to come. Our days are short, and death is real. If we are to live again we must prepare now. Believe the honest truth about man as God made him, man as he is, and get ready to share the glories of man as he shall be!

The foregoing will soon be available in tract form. Write to this office for a sample or a supply.

Q&A

(Continued from page 12.)

DAVID'S FIVE STONES

Question:

Why did David choose five stones when he went to battle with Goliath? If he had faith in God, wouldn't one have been sufficient?

Answer:

There always has been, and always will be, speculation why David chose five stones. Many types have been formulated ranging from five being the number of grace to each stone representing a book of the Pentateuch.

There is nothing in the Scriptures to lead us to believe that there was any significance in David choosing five stones rather than six or four.

Preparation

In regard to the thought that five stones might have shown a lack of faith in God, we should realize that David was just "well prepared." In Jesus' Parable of the Virgins in Matthew 25, five virgins are mentioned (no type intended) who were well prepared, but in the sight of the other five they were over prepared, and were maybe showing a lack of faith in the bridegroom because they brought so much *extra* oil. Yet we know that these were the ones that went into the marriage.

If there was a purpose in the choosing of five stones I think it would be to show the great faith of David. One stone for Goliath and one for each of his sons. (2 Sam. 21:15-22.)

Note: Questions may be sent to this office, or directly to Pastor Richard Worley, State School Rd., Gatesville, TX 76528.—Ed.

the honest truth

THIRD ISSUE





The voice of one

Our third issue

We are pleased to present our third issue of *The Honest Truth*. It has been some time since we sent out issue two, but we were involved in building a modest home and office in the rural upper piedmont of South Carolina. We are moved in, and, although not completely finished, are ready to get on with the more important business of publishing God's truth.

We believe the intervening months have not been wasted, as we have been in close contact with friends of truth, and supporters of this faith work. Too, we have made an important addition to our equipment in the form of a model 1950-VV Addressograph, which we purchased used, along with over 3,000 plate frames for the machine. When put into use, this machine will be a big help in our mailing.

We remind each of our readers that we solicit the names and addresses of friends and loved ones whom you would like to have read *The Honest Truth*. Too, we are happy to provide extra copies on request. Several pastors use bundles of each issue, and others have sent us their membership lists.

McLain booklet

Accompanying this issue of *The Honest Truth* is a just-pub-

lished booklet by James W. McLain, and entitled "The Covenants of God."

Although not in its final form, it has been considered important that this booklet be put into print as soon as possible because of the events taking place in the crucial Mideast region.

Although necessarily brief, the booklet contains the outline for study of the most important subjects of the Bible. Look up the texts, and STUDY for yourself! You will find some things different than you have heard them before, and some cherished traditions exploded—we have, but, again, STUDY!

The publishers of *The Honest Truth* consider this work important enough to place in your hands. The future and extent of distribution of this work depends on our readers.

Articles in this issue

Of several articles worthy of consideration in this issue, we feel there are two that need a note of explanation.

"The Promises of God" by Beth Briggs on pages 8 and 9, form but a part of a devotional booklet written by her, and containing seventy promises in all. They were written for all Christians everywhere, as help and inspiration for these times of trouble. We would appreciate hearing from our readers to help

us determine, if possible, the interest in such a booklet.

"The Mythological Devil" by Allan P. Greif on page 13, is included at the request of several persons from different parts of the country to help counteract the growing acceptance of a superhuman personal devil among Church of God ministers and members.

We say with all candor that the acceptance of a superhuman devil has lately come into the church, except perhaps in Minnesota where the church came out of the Advent Christian body. We consider it a form of apostasy, and a result of lack of study. We all recognize the need to study such words as soul, hell, and baptism; why not such words as devil, satan, and demon? The results will be as enlightening. More on this later!

A new "dirty" word

There is a new "dirty" word being widely used by the liberal establishment in and out of the Church of God. If a person is old-fashioned or conservative enough to insist that God means what he says about the importance of truth, and the necessity of correct belief in order to make baptism valid, he is a "legalist." To insist that there is a body of truth—the gospel—to be believed before a person can be saved is "legalism."

This ploy of the liberals is their way of accommodating their friends in the denominations and worldly churches who do not believe the truth. We doubt that this name calling helps their position in God's sight! □

THIRD ISSUE

the honest truth

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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Our cover, Mt. Rushmore, S.D.	

The Promised Land outlined

By Samuel J. Humphreys, Campbell, Calif.

IN DEUTERONOMY 3:27, 28, we find God saying to Moses concerning the Promised Land: "Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see."

Promised to Abraham

In Genesis 13:14, 15, we find God saying comparatively the same words to Abraham: "The LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

Then again we find the promises verified to Jacob when God appeared to him on his journey to Padanaram: "The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the

east, and to the north, and to the south" (Gen. 28:10-15).

Now as by vision and actual seeing of the Land of Promise, we see that these patriarchs of old were actually shown the land. But, to detail the description of the land directly included in the promises, we read Genesis 15:18, "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt [the Nile] unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

These two great rivers are a portion of the northern and southern boundaries of the land God promised to Moses, and to Abraham and his seed, which includes Isaac and Jacob, and all those who claim a right to inheritance in those promises by being believers and confessors of life only through Christ, and being baptized into his name; becoming members of the church of God, and thus heirs in Christ according to the promises. (Gal. 3:27-29.)

The boundaries

In Exodus 23:31, God said to Moses concerning the boundaries of the Promised Land: "I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philis-

tines [the Mediterranean], and from the desert [Arabia] unto the river [the Nile]." Thus, the Red Sea and the Nile form the southern boundary, and the Euphrates River on the north the northern boundary.

In Deuteronomy 11:24 God said to Moses, "Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea [Sea of Oman, or east sea] shall your coast be." As we are considering the extending of the northern boundary eastward, we see that the Persian Gulf is an extension of the Sea of Oman. So, it also forms that portion of the boundary of the Promised Land from Ur eastward to the Sea of Oman of the Chaldees, as Abraham journeyed from Ur of the Chaldees when he started for the Promised Land.

Thus, we follow Abraham north of the Euphrates and back south to Canaan. Then we follow the children of Israel—his descendants—on into Egypt, and back around Sinai, out into Arabia at Pisgah, and north and east of the Dead Sea. If we notice, we have almost completely encircled all of Syria and Arabia.

God's land

God's love for his land is seen, and his love for his people is told, as in the Beatitudes,

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). The Lord's Prayer also says, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). In Isaiah 66:1 God calls the earth his footstool, and he says, "I will make the place of my feet glorious" (60:13).

Then, should we not expect an about face by the nations, and should not the LORD and his Chosen People in fullness of joy "reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (Isa. 24:23)? As the Word of the LORD through Zechariah says: "Thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem" (1:16, 17).

The regathering of the seed of Abraham, and the fulfillment of the promises made to them through Abraham and his seed—which is Christ, if left out or eliminated, as involved in the covenants of promise, would completely invalidate the gospel message. From Acts 1:6, 7 we know that at the most propitious time God will restore the Kingdom to Israel. □



"Do the best you can with what you have, and in the situation in which you find yourself."—L. E. Conner. □

Εξανάστασις:

The out-resurrection

By William M. Wachtel, Cashmere, Wash.

IF BY ANY means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:11).

In this verse occurs a word found only once in the Greek New Testament, *exanastasis*. This compound noun combines two main elements: *ex* (from *ek*, "out from") and *anastasis* ("resurrection" or "standing up again"). It means literally an "out-resurrection."

The King James rendering is a little misleading here, as though all Paul desired was to be resurrected. However, knowing the teaching of his Master that ALL will someday be raised either for life or for judgment (John 5:28, 29), we can be sure that Paul did not desire MERELY resurrection.

A special resurrection

In fact, Paul used the strongest language possible in Philippians 3:11 to express his hope in a SPECIAL resurrection. The best Greek texts of this verse describe this resurrection as *ten exanastasin ten ek nekron*, literally, "the out-resurrection, the one out from among the dead ones." Could words express more plainly the truth of a special resurrection, one that takes some who are dead "out from among the dead ones"—i.e., leaves the dead in general to remain dead

while a select few (comparatively speaking) are raised?

Hinted at by Christ

The doctrine of a special resurrection had been hinted at by Christ in Mark 9:9 and later passages. As he and three of his disciples came down from the mount of transfiguration, "he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead" (Greek: *ek nekron*).

The reaction of the disciples to this statement shows that the idea of a special resurrection was not altogether clear to them at that time: "And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean" (verse 10). The original word order shows that it was not the mere idea of resurrection that puzzled them, but the idea of a resurrection "out from among" the dead ones.

Old Testament belief

Israel had long believed in resurrection. The Old Testament contains the teaching of a rising of the dead to live again, even though the word "resurrection" itself is confined to the New Testament. Job had expressed his hope of resurrection (14:11-15;

19:25-27). So had Isaiah (26:19) and Daniel (12:2, 3, 13). The writer of Hebrews shows that even Abraham had a faith in resurrection (11:19). But the idea of a SPECIAL resurrection, a resurrection that would raise some and leave others behind in death, remained to be developed by Christ and his inspired apostles.

Probably Christ's clearest statement regarding the special resurrection is found in Luke 20:35, 36: "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [Gk., "age"], and the resurrection from the dead [*ek nekron*], neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." The age to come will be inherited

by those raised out from among the dead ones to inherit it. By implication, those left dead will not inherit it.

The fullest explanation

The fullest explanation of this doctrine is found in Revelation 20, where the special resurrection is named the "first resurrection," the age to come is called "the thousand years," those raised in the first resurrection are not subject to "the second death," and the rest of the dead do not rise again until the end of the thousand years. The latter rise to face judgment, as Christ warned they would (John 5:29).

In light of these realities, may we—with Paul—prepare and long for the day of the out-resurrection, the first resurrection, the rising of those who are Christ's "at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:23)! □



Wonderful Bible Words—R. H. Judd.

The shortest word in the Bible is "I," but it is remarkable in many respects. It speaks of life, for one must have life to say it. It speaks of individual personality, for it shuts out all others. It speaks of will and purpose, for both are required before utterance can be made. It pledges, in fact, the whole personality, and the very life one possesses as the guarantee of his statements.

Please note the following interesting passages. "Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will help thee; yea, I will strengthen thee; I will uphold

thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41:10, RV). "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions" (Isa. 43:25).

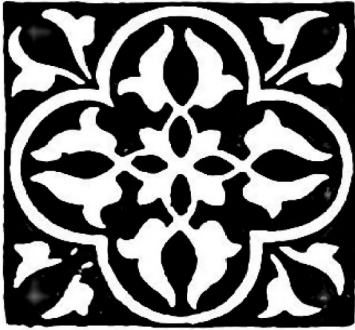
Note, please, how in the above-quoted verses the speaker, God, is as truly an individual as the one spoken to.

Oh, let us take God at his word
(Psa. 119:130-160)

And believe his statements true
(Psa. 12:6),

That he himself alone is God
(Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:21)

That no other can be, too
(Isa. 44:6; 45:5, 6). □



The promises of Go

PROMISE NUMBER ONE

GENESIS 15:1—"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

A shield is a broad piece of defensive armor which was carried on the arm, or in the hand, when there was war or danger; at one time in general use.

This text tells us that God was Abram's shield and exceeding great reward. He is also our exceeding great reward; a reward so great that we cannot possibly comprehend it with our finite minds.

With God as our shield we can confidently go forward in his service with the faith and conviction that Paul possessed when he stated in Philippians 3:8: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

God is my shield and my reward,
I am protected by my Lord,
Why should I fear? he is my guide,
And ever walks close by my side.

PROMISE NUMBER TWO

GENESIS 18:14—"Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"

The angel of the LORD had promised a child to Abraham and Sarah, when Sarah was far past the child-bearing age. According to nature's laws, it would have been impossible for these elderly people to have a son. But, there never is anything too hard for the LORD to accomplish, and in due time Isaac was born.

This promise, like many others in the beautiful Old Testament Scriptures, is also for our blessing and comfort today. God can—and will—do the seemingly impossible for us, IF we have faith and believe that he will.

God made the mighty universe,
The holy cherubim,
Each marvel in the earth and sky,
What is too hard for him?

And yet he loves each child of his,
And if we watch and pray,
He will perform great things for us,
Each hour of every day.

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

PROMISE NUMBER THREE

GENESIS 28:15—"Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest."

Jacob, to whom this promise was given, must have been a little lonely after he left his home and family and had begun traveling to an unknown country. But, he was willing to face an uncertain future because he knew that no matter what happened God would be with him, because he had promised to be.

So it should be with us. We can be certain, if we belong to God, that he will be with us in every place we are called upon to go. This does not mean that we shall always be immune from trouble of every kind. But, this we do know, that if God is taking care of us, nothing shall befall us that he has not permitted for our best good.

Through all the years he is with me,
Whether asleep or awake,
In danger or peaceful pastures,
In all that I undertake.

Dear Lord, I accept your promise,
Pray give me the faith to know
That those showers of tears bring blessings
Wherever my steps may go.

PROMISE NUMBER FOUR

EXODUS 33:14—"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

Rest, or assurance of help, was given to Moses, who was to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Rest was essential to him in this very difficult task.

It is also essential to our bodies and minds, as we go about the tasks we must daily perform. When perplexities bear heavily upon us, God will be as close to us as an earthly father, walking along beside us. Will he not be more able to take care of us than even our beloved parent would be?

If we make God's presence a living reality, we will never fail to find "rest unto [our] souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).

My presence shall go with thee,
And I will give thee rest,
There may be grief and sorrow,
But every day is blest.

Look up to me, my dear one,
Though clouds obscure the view,
Rejoice, the night is ending,
The sun will soon shine through. □

Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

THE "OTHER SHEEP"

Question:

Does John 10:16 teach that Jesus will accept many people into the Kingdom of God, even though they believe false doctrines?

Answer:

The verse referred to reads: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

There are many attempts made to justify people who have religions contrary to the Scriptures. To many, as long as you worship a God SIMILAR to the one in the Bible, and accept a Savior who has the NAME of Jesus, you are doing all that is required for salvation.

Worship God in truth

God has revealed himself to us, and the scriptures are abundant that command us to worship him in truth. Study the following verses: John 8:31; Ephesians 1:19-23; 2 Timothy 2:15; and 1 Timothy 4:13-16.

Jesus was just as emphatic in his teaching the people as to their way of approach to God. In Matthew 7:21-23 we have a group of people who will say

they have done many wonderful works in the name of Jesus, but he will say to them, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." There are two ways of looking at this scripture, and each one might have a lesson for us.

1) There is a danger in knowing the truth of God's Word and misusing it in our preaching and teaching.

2) Or, not having the truth, and going about zealously teaching error.

Neither will be accepted in the sight of God.

What Jesus meant

Now, what was Jesus teaching in John 10:16? He was trying to tell this people—the Jews, that they were not going to be the only ones to find favor in the sight of God; that he would enlarge the scope of people that would have the opportunity of becoming "children of God." This would eventually include the Gentiles.

The writer of the Hebrews said, "That [Jesus] by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (2:9b). Paul stated in Ephesians 2:13-17 that those who were afar off, Gentiles, were made nigh (brought into the fold) by the blood of Jesus Christ. The same idea is expressed in Galatians 3:28b: "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

It is a dangerous practice to try to find scriptures that might give a hope to people who will not accept the truths of God's Word; at best, it is a false hope. It may even be a detriment to OUR salvation, because we have not maintained the gospel of Jesus Christ.

LONG HAIR

Question:

Isn't it true that it is a shame for a man to have long hair? (1 Cor. 11:14.)

Answer:

The question of long hair was relatively obscure until the advent of the "Hippie" culture, and hair became longer. To some, long hair is an effeminate trait, and to others it is another form of Communism exerting itself.

Ever since the beginning of time there has been long hair and short hair, or longer hair and shorter hair, because "long" is not a definitive word, but relative. To a foot a yard is long, but to a mile a yard is short. So, how do we determine what is long hair? What is the standard we should use?

Many schools have set a standard that when the hair touches the collar or comes down over the ears, it is too long. To many of the people today, hair is short if it "just" covers the ears. These are a few of the problems that are encountered in trying to understand what Paul was saying in 1 Corinthians 11:14.

A shame to God?

It is worthy to note what Paul used as a basis for the statement that long hair is a shame unto a man; it is nature. Does this mean, then, that it is shameful to God for men to wear long hair? Considering this possibility, we would notice some of the laws God gave Israel that they might glorify him. In Numbers 6:5 we have a portion of the vow of the Nazarite, and it says in part, "All the days of the vow of his

separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow." Many people, such as Samson, were Nazarites for life, and, therefore, could never cut their hair. Were these men with long hair a shame to God?

In a recent periodical there was an article showing that Jesus probably had short hair, because it was the custom of the day to wear the hair short. This is probably true, and we would agree with the article on the basis that it was worn that way because it was the CUSTOM of the day to have short hair. It was not in regard to religious belief, but it was the custom of the day. Does this have any bearing on the length of hair today?

"Nature itself"

Let us consider a bit more the statement of Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:14; he said, "Doth not even nature itself teach you...?" This is difficult to understand, because Paul said the authority for this "shame" is nature. The word "nature" is used in many places in the Scriptures, and it always refers to knowledge or characteristics that are inherited, or that come out with no cultivation.

Paul said that some were "Jews by nature" (Gal. 2:15), and that "uncircumcision which is by nature" (Rom. 2:27), are conditions over which a man has no control. It is something with which he is born. Another place

where Paul used this word is in Romans 11:24, when he spoke of the olive tree being wild by nature. This is not something learned, but an inherited characteristic.

Now, if nature teaches that it is a shame for a man to have long hair, this would be true the world over, and in every culture, but we find this is not the situation. Even among some of the most primitive peoples, where masculinity is greatly desired, men wear their hair long. This, then, leaves us a little confused as to what Paul was saying here. Could he not be referring more to custom than to nature?

What is "long"?

Let us consider for a moment the word "long." Strong's Concordance traces the word *komao*, which means to "wear tresses of hair; have long hair," to the word *kome*, which refers to "locks, as ornamental." Was this the thought Paul was trying to impress on these people? Was it the wearing of the hair as an ornament that was a shame? Possibly the braiding of the hair? It is possible.

It is also strange that much has been said and written about the shame of a MAN having long hair, but the comments of Paul about the length of a WOMAN'S hair has been overlooked in the

past few years. He said, "If it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered" (1 Cor. 11:6). There was a time, when women first began cutting their hair, that the women that did so were looked upon as women of low morals. This changed as time went by and more women cut their hair, and now it is accepted.

Do these women who have their hair cut wear hats or cover their heads when they go to worship, as commanded by Paul? No, customs change, and Paul says that as to the length of a man's hair, and probably the length of a woman's hair, "we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (1 Cor. 11:16).

Rather than being offended over the personal appearance of an individual, we should be concerned about the spiritual nature. This cannot be determined by the outward appearance. We should learn the lesson that God teaches in 1 Samuel 16:7, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as a man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." □

Note: Questions may be sent to this office, or directly to Pastor Richard Worley, State School Rd., Gatesville, TX 76528.—Ed.



"Laymen are being swayed by higher learning. We have come to the place of our having a sliding scale of morality. God wants man to conform to a fixed standard of morals. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5."—Curtis Simpson in the Lawrenceville bulletin. □

The mythological devil

By Pastor Allan P. Greif,
Mayfield Heights, Ohio



LOOKING AT the ever-besetting problems of mankind, we find his earthiness or natural proneness toward corruption in all things is contrary to the glorious new spiritual attainments of regenerate man through Christ. An investigation of the history of man's moral nature from the beginning, brings us to the same observation as Paul: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:15, 18, 19). He further said, "There is none righteous, no not one" (3:10).

All of these factual judgments of man's moral corruption have led disturbed theologians to conclude that there **MUST** be a supernatural force that constantly tempts man to do those things contrary to the precepts of God. While the absurd notion that there is a supernatural being—having horns protruding from its head, and having a sharp spear-shaped tail—can be relegated to the dark ages, there is still enough dread of the unknown, and ignorance of the truth of God, for the superstitious minds of men to conclude there must be some force, a

super being with the power of a god, who is at work constantly to keep men from doing God's will.

Devil in mythology

While there is no foundation for such a supposition in the Scriptures, it has been prevalent since Adam and Eve sought an excuse for their disobedience. In Babylonian mythology, and also in Persian writings of about 1000 B.C., a general belief existed that sometime before the creation of man there was a very proud angel in heaven who caused a rebellion against God. In the resulting war God cast him out of heaven, and he took over the dominion of the underworld, called "Hell."

To such an extent does the imagination of man go that Milton wrote that the distance between heaven and hell was so great that it took nine days for the devil to reach his new kingdom!

This absurd theory stems from a false and ignorant interpretation of Revelation 12:7-9. Sounds pretty good doesn't it? That is, until we put reason to our interpretation. In Revelation 1:1-3 we are told that this book

is a prophecy of things that were to take place AFTER the time John recorded it. If this is true, the world had no devil from the creation up to A. D. 96!

Philosophy and theology

How men delight in their own philosophies and imaginations! Only 130 years after Christ brought the revelation of God's plans and purposes plainly to mankind, Irenaeus put forth the fantastic lie that the ransom in Jesus' death was paid by God to the devil. This error was augmented by Origen, and substantiated by Tertullian (222 A.D.), who was the first to propose that Isaiah 14:12-15 was speaking of the devil. He claimed the devil was a powerful supernatural former angel fallen from heaven.

Even modern theologians bask in the self-excusing theory that our sinfulness comes from harassment of this relentless foe. But, when we read the context of this text in Isaiah 14 with the knowledge that man needs no help from a supernatural being to do evil, we realize that Isaiah was giving a prophecy concerning Nebuchadnezzar—tyrant and king of the world, who reigned over a great empire. (Vv. 4-6, 16.) As we read further, we see it was God's purpose to destroy this scourge of the earth. (Vv. 26, 27.)

Another reference that is used to support the theory of the devil being a dispossessed angel is found in Ezekiel 28:13-15. This sounds like the popular devil, but verses 2 and 12 explain to whom the prophet was referring. How the logic and simplicity of the

truth lets us see clearly that the kings of Babylon and Tyre were no more supernatural beings than Hitler, Stalin, Mao, or any other oppressor that should arise. But, error seeps easily into the crevices of men's minds, and so this false theory of a superhuman tempter crept into the Jewish commonwealth through intermarriage and trade with heathen nations. That's why God caused Isaiah to write what he did in 45:1-7. Man would do well to remember at least this one great truth: God is supreme; there is no god beside him!

Temptation of Jesus

But, men delight in their own reasoning. So, when they come to the New Testament they say, Look at Matthew 4:1-11. We cannot dwell in detail concerning the testing of Jesus, but we can be sure that inasmuch as our Lord was tempted in all points as we are, these temptations were not of a supernatural order, but such as are common to all men.

Jesus had just been baptized. He had heard the most precious words that any man could hear; a voice from God in heaven declaring: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). With the sudden affirmation that he was truly the promised Messiah, and with the sudden awareness that he had all of God's power at his command, the thoughts that tempt all men to sin came into his mind—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (1 John 2:16.) Jesus showed how God's Word can overcome all of these evil thoughts that can cause men to sin.

The New Testament also may give credence to the belief that supernatural forces are at work in our bodies, by the many references to demons or evil spirits which were cast out through the Holy Spirit. This erroneous belief was much in vogue during Jesus' ministry, being brought from the mythology of Persia and Greece. Yet, it was one of their own, Hippocrates, the founder of Greek medicine, who wrote a book to prove that epilepsy, a common affliction of the times, was not a sacred affliction—or of divine origin—as many imagined. In the cases where Jesus is said to have cast out demons or devils, or loosed those bound by satan, all were incidents where Jesus healed normal diseases of the body or mind. We have the same diseases today, but we never doubt that they are the result of natural infirmities of the flesh.

But to what lengths men will go to support a theory they want to believe! In spite of advanced medical science, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in an article on Demonology records: "Some theologians have abandoned the primitive idea of demons causing diseases in these times, but still maintain that because of certain scriptures the same diseases which occurred in the first century were caused by demoniacal possession of the person." How thankful we should be every moment of our lives to know the value of the Word of truth which we possess. It not only agrees in all parts with itself, but by logic and scientific exploration proves itself true.

What is the truth?

What then is the truth? Just who or what is the devil? Hebrews 2:14 declares that, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Now, beloved, what has the power of death? Romans 5:12 tells us: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." When Adam transgressed God's law he brought upon himself its consequences: God's punishment; so do all men. The simple statement in Romans 6:23 declares: "The wages of sin is death."

Of whom was Jesus speaking when he said in John 8:44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it"? This is none other than Adam, the progenitor of all men. Ezekiel 18:4 informs us that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Paul wrote: "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. 15:56). James agrees by saying, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (1:15).

By logical reasoning, and the revelation of God, we know that sin has the power of death, and therefore is the devil! Adam was the devil in the garden of Eden, and every man since is his off-

spring—with the one exception of Jesus Christ. Although he was born “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3), because he overcame his flesh he became the progenitor of a new creation; a creation without sin because it is begotten of God.

So, when we consider God’s purpose in Christ, there can be no doubt that Christ’s death on the cross was an atonement for our sins. Hebrews 9:26 tells us, “He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” 1 Corinthians 15:3 says plainly, “Christ died for our sins.” Isaiah 53:5 declares, “He was wounded for our transgressions.” So, Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb, an offering for our sins, bearing them in his own body, and atoning for them on the cross.

Sin in the flesh

The devil, therefore, is nothing more or less than sin in the flesh; not a supernatural agent of evil, but everything that is adverse to God in whatever form of manifestation among mankind.

Jesus showed that man needs no outside agent to help him to do evil. He told Peter in Matthew 15:19, 20, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man.” James understood this

perfectly. (1:14, 15.) So did Paul. (Rom. 8:5-8.) Jeremiah wrote, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (17:9).

Our appeal

Beloved, let us not err in becoming deluded by the mythology of the world. The disbelief of God’s Word, which was disobedience, resulting in sin, which brought forth death to Adam and Eve, did not come from any outside influence of evil. From one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. That “old serpent” has been the cause of death to all mankind, for wherever and whenever man sets up his own will in opposition to God’s will, he becomes an adversary, a satan; the spirit of adverseness in the nature of man!

Beloved, let us thank God that, although all men have sinned and come short of eternal life, God has provided an antidote, decreeing that all who put on Christ’s name are begotten again. They die to their old Adamic nature, and are alive through the sinless nature of Christ, and therefore free from the consequences of sin. So, Paul concludes the matter in Hebrews 2:14, through his death Jesus brought to nought “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” □

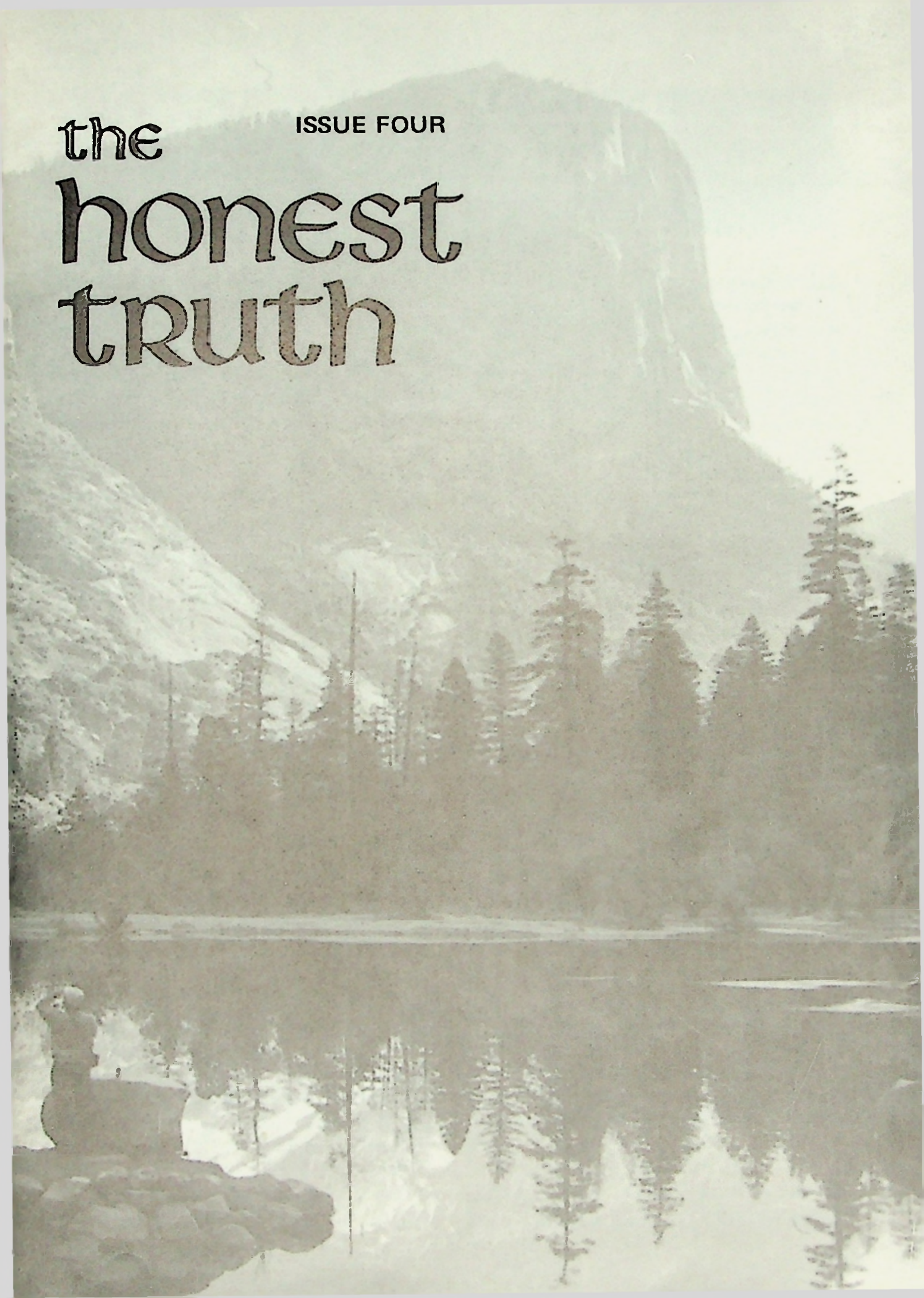
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the

ISSUE FOUR

honest truth





The voice of one

In this issue

We present in this issue—in addition to our regular features—an article by J. W. McLain on the Book of Mormon. It is meant to be a review, including the basic issues involved, but not considering the details of the book.

Also in this issue is a study by the editor on the spiritual gifts. This answers a request of long standing from one of our younger ministers for an “honest evaluation of 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.” We hope it will prove a help to others who may be wondering if we might not be failing to claim gifts that God intends us to have.

A reminder

We remind our readers that we are interested in sending *The Honest Truth* to friends and loved ones anywhere in the world. Just send us their names and addresses.

We appreciate the regular support of interested friends in the Lord, that permits us to go forward in this work we are trying to do for the cause of the truth.

Israel's 25th anniversary

The State of Israel was born twenty-five years ago, on May 14, 1948. The event stirred Bible students everywhere, and caused a renewed interest in the prophecies relating to the return of the Jews to the Promised Land.

Of those who saw in Israel's rebirth a sign of the last days, many have apparently lost interest because of the lengthy interval. Others have become disenchanted with Israel, because of her military attitude, and her demands of “eye for eye, and tooth for tooth” in every incident involving Israeli nationals.

“Israel watching” may prove uneventful at times, but never dull or uninteresting! At times we are asked what a particular event means in the light of prophecy. There isn't always a pat answer, but the event, we may be sure, contributes to the over-all picture in the last days.

Israel must be

It was fulfillment of prophecy that the Nation of Israel came into being again. The prophecies dealing with Israel concern her as a nation. The individual Jews who have accepted Jesus as Messiah through the centuries do not constitute the nation. The image of Nebuchadnezzar represents the Gentile dominion over the *people* of Israel, the *nation* of Israel, and the *land* of Israel—all at the same time. She must be in existence at the time of the end, when she will be dominated by the last great Gentile power.

The people we know of as “Jews” today represent all twelve tribes of the original nation of Israel. A close reading

of the record in 2 Chronicles shows that a remnant—those who had their hearts set on serving the LORD—came out of the northern ten tribes and moved to Jerusalem. When the northern kingdom fell, the remnant survived. Even in the New Testament we read of individuals who belonged to the ten tribes; for example, Anna of the tribe of Asher. (Luke 2:36.)

This leads us to the conclusion that when it speaks of God dealing with the nation of Israel, it must be the nation we know as Israel today.

What Israel is doing

Just because we recognize the nation of Israel as being a reality does not mean we approve of everything she does. Her recent anniversary celebration was heavy on military display.

One of the reasons God must bring Israel into judgment yet once more is her refusal to trust in him, and her trust in her own arm. (Deut. 32:21-36; Jer. 17:5.) She is trusting today in her military might—rather than in God, and is ready at any time to make a covenant with her neighbors to guarantee her national security. This is against God's wishes, and will prove to be the abomination that will make Israel desolate. (See Deut. 7:2, Jer. 22:17.)

When God's disciplinary judgment has its effect, Israel will turn to him in repentance, and she will begin to fulfill the wonderful role as head of the nations, that God had in view for her from the beginning. Continue to watch Israel! □

the honest truth

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35), the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4), Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15), the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5), and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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Spiritual gifts

By the editor

MUCH IS being said these days concerning the charismatic movement in the churches. The reference is to the Greek word *charisma*, translated “gift” several times in the New Testament, and used especially of the so-called spiritual gifts—healing, tongues, etc.

To say there is confusion in regard to this subject, is to put it mildly. Of the many studies we have read concerning the theological aspects of the subject, few have been any real help in determining the nature, purpose, and duration of the spiritual gifts.

Giver and gifts

One area where we see a problem is in the confusing of the source of the gifts with the gifts themselves. This is well considered by the late E. W. Bullinger in his book, *The Giver and His Gifts*. Although Bullinger probably believed in the trinity at the time he wrote the book, he was honest enough to admit that the Holy Spirit “is never called a ‘Person’ in Scripture; and we only create a difficulty when we use the language of theology instead of the words of God.” (Page 39.)

In other words, the Holy Spirit—the power of God—is the SOURCE of the spiritual gifts, but the gifts themselves were various. Some think the Holy Spirit—the source—was given, which is a paradox. It is helpful

to determine the difference between the giver and the gift.

Scriptural usage

Thankfully, there is different lingual construction used in the Bible in reference to the giver and the gift. The Greek word *pneuma* has about fourteen usages in the New Testament, including reference to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit of God, man, the new man, character, feelings, angels, and the resurrection body.

The usage especially helpful to us here is when *pneuma* is coupled with *hagion*—“holy.” It seems when the giver is meant, the construction includes the definite article “the”—*to pneuma to hagion*, “the spirit the holy (spirit).” When the gift is meant, the definite article is absent in the Greek. It is impossible with the King James Version to tell when the definite article is present or absent in the Greek, so we must depend on helps, such as *The Emphatic Diaglott*, to know for sure.

Application

In applying this “rule” of the presence or absence of the definite article with *pneuma hagion*, some misconstrued texts are clarified. For example, Luke 11:13: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give [*pneu-*

ma hagion—spiritual gifts] to them that ask him?” The nature of the givers and their gifts is enhanced here by the Greek construction. The emphasis is on the evil parents and their good gifts, and the heavenly Father and his spiritual gifts. The Spirit, the holy Spirit of God—the giver—is not said to be given here; but the spiritual gifts.

Another interesting example is the section of Acts embracing Pentecost; chapters 1 and 2. Jesus said, “John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with [*pneuma hagion*] not many days hence” (1:5). The promise was that they would be immersed in spiritual gifts. On the day of Pentecost, “there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. . . . And they were all filled with [*pneuma hagion*—spiritual gifts], and began to speak with other tongues, as THE Spirit gave them utterance” (2:2-4). The ability to speak in other languages was the gift; the giver was God.

Another example

Another important text is Acts 2:38, 39: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of [*to pneuma to hagion*—the spirit, the holy (spirit)]. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” The gift is not named here; only the giver. It is plain from other scriptures that the gift God has

in store for all whom he calls is eternal life. (Rom. 6:23.) There is no promise here that the spiritual gifts will be given to everyone.

The story of the twelve men at Ephesus is clarified when we note that they had not only not received the spiritual gifts since they believed, but they hadn't even heard about the spiritual gifts; *pneuma hagion*. They had certainly heard of the Holy Spirit of God; the source. (Acts 19:1-6.)

Space fails us to enumerate the nuances of thought and usage throughout the Acts, as compared with the Pauline epistles. But this “rule” seems to emerge: “Whenever spirit is said to fall, or to be given, or to fill, or be baptized with, it is always *pneuma* without the article, or *pneuma hagion*.”—Bullinger's Lexicon.

Nature of the gifts

According to 1 Corinthians 12, there were different gifts given by the Spirit; different serviceable labor, but the same Lord; different effects produced, “but it is the same God which worketh all in all” (vv. 4-6). All were for the total profit of the whole church.

There are nine gifts listed in verses 8-10: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. The gifts are listed differently in verse 28: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, helps, governments, and tongues. They were all *charisma*, but some were “best” (v. 31).

It seems sad and ironic that the gift that is listed as last—and least, that of tongues, is the most cherished and associated with the charismatic movement.

Gift of tongues

Because the gift of tongues seems to be the one most sought after—and misunderstood, we will take a closer look at it.

It is plain that the present-day ecstatic speaking or glossolalia is not the same as the Biblical gift. On the day of Pentecost the disciples spoke in other languages (*glossa*), and dialects (*dialektos*). The men assembled heard their own language and dialect spoken, were amazed these Galileans could speak their language, and UNDERSTOOD what was said. Linguists say modern-day glossolalia cannot be classed as “language.”

“Unknown tongue” is not a Biblical term, as the word “unknown” in every instance in 1 Corinthians 14 is supplied by the translators.

In an attempt to justify the ecstatic speaking going on today, we recently heard a man on TV say God had given him a completely new language with which to praise him. What’s wrong with our vernacular language for this purpose?

Purpose of the gifts

The purpose of the spiritual gifts has a bearing on their duration. In Mark 16:20 it says, after Jesus’ ascension, the disciples “went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.” CONFIRMING the Word of God was

the purpose of the signs—including tongues—which accompanied the preaching of the apostles. In Hebrews 2:2-4 Paul said, “If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward [a reference to the Mosaic law]; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him [the disciples]; God also bearing them witness, both with signs [*semeion*] and wonders [*teras*], and with divers miracles [*dunamis*], and gifts of [*pneuma hagion*], according to his own will?”

It is a matter of history that the Word of God was inspired, recorded, and confirmed during the lifetime of the apostles.

Duration of the gifts

There is no historical evidence that the spiritual gifts succeeded the death of the last apostle. In the light of their purpose, Paul predicted the discontinuance of the spiritual gifts when he argued for the “more excellent way”—love. (1 Cor. 13:8.) The wane of spiritual gifts was evident in the apostolic age, as Paul left one of his co-workers behind because he was sick (2 Tim. 4:20), and prescribed “a little wine” for another’s weak stomach and other “infirmities” (1 Tim. 5:23).

In conclusion

There is no Scriptural basis for the modern-day charismatic movement, unless we consider it a sign of the times; among the latter-day deceptions! God’s pur-

pose for the spiritual gifts was long ago fulfilled, and they ceased. The charismatics are not to be envied as though they have something we don't have! Supposed possession of the gifts has

not made the charismatics closer to the truth, or better Christians.

The greatest miracle extant today is that of the changed life, and the greatest gift is that of love. □



LETTERS

USE OF THE APOCRYPHA

Dear Brother,

We have been taught since childhood (I am 88), to seek truth by the study of God's Word. It is true we have used other books, etc., to assist us in our study, but not as a basis for such study. I am familiar with those books known as the Apocrypha, books of disputed authority, included by some in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

Now I note that in J. W. McLain's booklet [The Covenants of God] he uses several chapters in 2 Esdras in support of God's covenants. . . . It appears to me that it were better if reference to this disputed book was omitted. Surely there is an abundance of supporting evidence on the covenants and prophecy in the Scriptures, without making reference to 2 Esdras, which was discarded by the King James translators. Your brother in Christ, S.P.G., Ohio.

■ Thank you for your letter. We appreciate your concern for the truth, and the importance of Bible study. Like you, we were raised in the truth, and were not accustomed to the use of the Apocrypha. We were even taught that the word "apocrypha" meant "spurious."

Through the years we have noted that some of our more able Bible students, such as the late Grover Gordon, used the Apocrypha to a

certain extent. We have used the historical sections of 1 Maccabees for years, because of the light the record of Antiochus Epiphanes, and his covenant of apostasy with many in Israel, sheds on Daniel 9.

We are not arguing for the use of all of the Apocrypha, although we recognize there is much of value in it. It is interesting to us to note that the Apocrypha was a part of the King James Bible. Robert H. Pfeiffer, in his introduction to the King James Version of the Apocrypha, Harper & Brothers edition, notes that all English editions of the Bible prior to 1629 contained the Apocrypha. After 1629 some omitted it because of objections by the Church of Scotland and others. The British and Foreign Bible Society continued to include the Apocrypha in its King James Bibles until 1827, and then omitted it from all but its pulpit editions. Possibly our "Protestant ethic" is so strong it prohibits us from using what might be profitable—those parts of the Apocrypha that are valuable, being found nowhere else in history.

Actually, the word "apocrypha" means "hidden" (Webs.). An Encyclopaedia Britannica article notes that "The Greek word *apocryphos* was originally used of books the contents of which were kept hidden, or secret, because they embodied the special teaching of religious or philosophical sects; it was only the members of these sects who were initiated into the secrets of this teaching." So, what is "apocryphal" is not necessarily
(Please turn to page 16.)



The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

PROMISE NUMBER FIVE

DEUTERONOMY 31:8—“The LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.”

This is practically the same promise that was given to Moses, only this time it is repeated to Joshua who was to take the place of Moses in leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land. There were real giants in the Promised Land; giants that would cause the stoutest heart to quail. But in the strength of the promise that God would be with him, Joshua went fearlessly ahead to accomplish the great work that was given him to do.

We can conquer our giants also if we have the faith that Moses and Joshua had. God has assured a “goodly land” to all his faithful children, so let us travel onward in his strength and earnestly strive to enter in. “His hand is not shortened that it cannot save” (Isaiah 59:1), even in these dreadful times in which we live.

*Be not dismayed, your Father
Is there with outstretched arm,
The giants that beset you
Can never do you harm.*

*He never will forsake you,
For he will always share
The dangers on your pathway,
You are always in his care.*

PROMISE NUMBER SIX

DEUTERONOMY 33:25—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

Do we sometimes become so weary that we feel it is impossible to face another day? If so, perhaps we are unconsciously carrying the burdens of previous years, and the imagined terrors of those to come, as well as the cares of the present time. God forgave the mistakes of the past when we gave ourselves into his keeping. Even if past incidents are a source of present grief, no amount of remorse can change anything that has taken place, and our regrets will but bring discontent and unhappiness into our lives today.

The future is made up of days, weeks, months, and years, which arrive one day at a time. God has promised to sustain us for that particular twenty-four hours, and for the next twenty-four hours, when they arrive.

Let us close the door firmly on the errors of the past, except insofar as they may keep us from making similar mistakes in the years to come, and live **THIS ONE DAY** blessedly, to the glory and honor of God. There is no tomorrow, and Jesus has told us that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:34).

*As our days so our strength shall be,
God is a tower for you and me
Where we may fly when things go wrong,
Though we are weak, he makes us strong.*

*Yes, he is with us on the way,
He guards us lest we go astray,
We ask and have his promised grace,
When weary, he is our resting place.*

*Why worry what the past may hold,
Or what the future may unfold,
TODAY his blessings overflow,
And that is all we need to know.*

PROMISE NUMBER SEVEN

2 SAMUEL 22:2—"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer."

David sang this song when he had slain four giants, a feat which he could not possibly have accomplished unless he had built his faith upon the Rock, Jehovah God.

In years past, armies often entrenched themselves in fortresses, and if the fortresses were strong enough (which sometimes they were not) the enemy could not take them, especially if they were built upon a rock. But David needed no earthly fortresses, and neither do we. In times of stress we can always retreat to our heavenly stronghold, which, unlike an earthly fortress, is always strong enough to hold before the enemy. If we place ourselves within it, the forces of evil cannot, and will not, overcome us.

*Oh, may I dwell in God's high tower
That overlooks the plain,
Where warring nations fight for power,
And leave their bloody stain.*

*And may my shield of faith keep me
From evil's wily darts,
Until at last the host of sin
Is conquered and departs.*

*All claim to pride and self-esteem
I ever will disown,
For glory, power, and righteousness
Belong to God alone.*

[]



A review:

The Book of Mormon

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

AT THE REQUEST of my son, Jim, who is in police work, I have reviewed the Book of Mormon to set forth the likeness or difference between it and our faith, the Abrahamic faith.

I have had the Book of Mormon among my books for many years, but have never made such a thorough study of it, as I have at this time. I have not seriously considered the Mormon faith for myself, because of some of the "minor differences" that I saw between it and the covenant made with Abraham. This review troubled me a little bit, in fact, it made me a little sad because I expected more from it than I found.

I have notes enough for a lengthy lesson, but have decided to hold to the main principles involved.

Identification

In the language of police work, ID or identification is of very great importance. Whenever you are trying to solve a crime, you must identify every thing that is related to it before you can approach the court with it. You must identify each person,

the place, the time, circumstances, weapons, or any other thing that has any relationship to the event. If a burglar should go all through a house and leave his fingerprints on everything, and the man were apprehended, there would be no question of the man's guilt in the minds of the authorities, because of his fingerprints.

Fingerprints

In reviewing the Book of Mormon I found "fingerprints" all the way through it, which are marks of identification. It is reported to have been written by a number of different people over a long period of time, and then engraven on plates which Joseph Smith is reported to have found and have translated. Strangely enough, the identification of the language of the speaker, or the writer, is the same throughout the books.

Well, someone will say immediately, that is proof of inspiration, because it speaks with one voice. Well, it would be if it spoke with the voice of God, which it doesn't!

Whoever the author was, he was a "Romanist," which indi-

cates not only his wide knowledge of the Bible—because he uses it all through his writings, but that the interpretation he puts on everything is the Roman interpretation. Being the Roman interpretation it is a corrupted interpretation. It is the very fact that the writer has ascribed to these Romish doctrines that indicates his ignorance of the true interpretation of the Scriptures. He is not so concerned with the original Scriptures, because he is writing something to take their place! Still, in all, it identifies the man for what he is.

“Romanist”

When I say “Romanist,” I do not necessarily mean he was a Roman Catholic before he began this way of teaching. He may have been a member of most any of the modern churches, because they all teach the Romish doctrine. Now what are these Romish doctrines by which I identify the writer of this book? They are: the trinity, the immortality of the soul, the soul in heaven or paradise, or the wicked ones in hell, and the discarding of the true position of Israel.

The offspring of Abraham—Jews, the tribes of Israel, or the Arabs, who are the natural seed—will not accept the doctrine of the trinity, because the doctrine of monotheism has been handed down from Abraham to his children, and his children’s children, and is their belief today.

It was the Romans who corrupted the idea of the one God—beside whom there is none else. At one time they had three

separate gods. Then, because of opposition and difficulty in explaining how God could be one and still be three, they made a “mystery” out of it and combined these three separate gods into one person and gave us what is known today as the trinity. This doctrine is all through the Book of Mormon; that Jesus is God, and in one place that God, the Holy Ghost, and Jesus are all the same person. This is Romish doctrine.

Immortality of the soul

It was in the garden of Eden that Adam came to the conclusion that God was wrong, and that he would not surely die if he ate of the tree, because of the inference that he was like God and couldn’t die. That has been a doctrine of people outside of Israel and the seed of Abraham down through time, and is one of the strongest parts of the doctrine of all the Romish churches.

In direct contradiction to half of the book of Isaiah, and text after text that indicate God’s interest and desire to build a Kingdom in the earth, the Romanists all put the real reward in heaven. And, of course, hand in hand with the idea of the immortality of the soul, some place has to be found for the wicked ones. Thus, the invention of the literal “burning hell”; a corruption of the original use of the word, which simply is grave, or the translation from another word, *Gehenna*, which indicates a place where refuse was burned up at the edge of Jerusalem. The torments that the priests have devised for this hell are nowhere in the Scriptures in that way.

So, since these doctrines are all through the Book of Mormon, it is very apparent that I have been misunderstanding all these years; we don't have anything in common.

A stumbling block

Even if I had to live with the forenamed doctrines for some reason, there is one thing that becomes a stumbling block. That is, that the God-given position of Israel to bless the nations, to teach the nations, and to be above all the nations, has been usurped in this so-called extension of the Scriptures, the Book of Mormon, and has been given to the House of Mormon.

The Mormons believe that **THEY** will be the ones to go to all the nations and enlighten them, and bring them into God's Kingdom in salvation.

This is the same thing that is done by most all the modern churches, whether it be the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Seventh Day Adventists, who believe they are the "spiritual Israel" that has taken Israel's place. Or, whether it be the other churches, such as those who believe that old Israel is finished—is dead, and that the church has taken over all the prerogatives of the House of Israel. That is why there is no real study of the Old Testament anymore. It is because of this belief that the church has taken over, and all in the so-called Old Testament is fulfilled and done.

Guidelines for faith

Now how can I be so bold as to make such strong and plain

statements? We have guidelines for our faith in the Scriptures, and I have measured what I have read in the Book of Mormon against these guidelines.

1. The one gospel

In the New Testament, the whole book of Galatians deals with the subject of the gospel. Paul said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed" (1:6-9).

It is in this same letter that Paul sets forth plainly what the gospel is. "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. . . . The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. . . . Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made" (3:6, 8, 16).

Whatever God promised to Abraham is sufficient for all gospel, and needs no addition.

2. The book of the law

Now for an Old Testament guideline, by which all truth may be measured. Isaiah 8:20 is one of the most important texts in all

the Scriptures: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

We are talking here not about the Ten Commandments, but about the Torah—the book of Moses, or the book of the law. It makes no difference what the subject is, whether we are talking about evolution and the beginning of things, or whether we are talking about the gospel, it can all be measured by what is written by Moses in the book of the law. And, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

There is nothing in the book of the law that will support the claims of the Book of Mormon. There is nothing there that will allow someone to take the blessings promised to Abraham and his seed, and apply them to another people in another land. There is nothing to allow anyone to take the Holy City away from the land God has selected, and put it in another land. There is no one who is given authority to speak with the voice of Moses, and give power or authority to an extension of what was said to Moses.

The Book of Mormon does not agree with these guidelines, and does not set forth the plan that was given to Abraham, and does not carry out the inheritance that God promised to Abraham and his seed.

In summary

By way of the hope of the gospel, I think Isaiah well sum-

marizes it: "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (59:20, 21; 60:1-3).

Here is the true picture of who will be the light of the world in the day of God's Kingdom. The position of Israel is set forth even in the 12th verse here, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." God describes the glory he will bring to the land of Israel and unto Jerusalem, and he says, "I will make the place of my feet glorious" (v. 13).

I am sure that if God is going to make the place of his feet in Mount Zion, it could hardly be in Utah. (The whole book of Isaiah deals with this theme, but notice especially chapter two.)

We trust these guidelines and evidences will be a help to anyone who wants to study this question for himself. □

Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

INTERFAITH COOPERATION

Question:

Many Christians will not associate or cooperate with people of other churches because they do not believe exactly alike. Isn't this much like the attitude of the Pharisees in the time of Christ?—D.W., Tex.

Answer:

We could answer with a short and concise "yes," but we would like to explain our answer.

One of the worst things to happen to the church in the last fifteen years has been the drive for ecumenism. The church has become popular, and, in doing so, has lost a great deal of its effectiveness. We see this drive for ecumenism not only among so-called "Christian" churches, but it is branching out to include various other religions.

Many Churches of God have been caught up in this, and have given their support—financial and moral—to various crusades and joint church ventures.

To overlook or ignore the commands of the Scriptures and rationalize the good we can accomplish by cooperating with other faiths, borders on the asinine.

The Scriptures command the church to "Come out from

among them, and be . . . separate" (2 Cor. 6:17a). Paul was instructing the Corinthians about their relationships with believers in idols or false gods. Is the "trinitarian god" a false god? If not, we should accept it and teach it. If it is false, we should separate ourselves from those who serve or teach this false god or idol!

John, in talking about the doctrine of Christ, said, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10, 11).

What is "the doctrine of Christ"? The verified statements that he is the Son of God; nothing more, and certainly nothing less. How can we, as members of the Church of God, knowing the truth of Jesus, join and support programs, ministerial associations, and crusades, where we bid God speed to people believing and teaching the idolatry that "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God," and other kindred doctrines? Scripturally, we cannot do this and remain separate.

This is tried many times, and it is the reason the Church of God is growing "fat" with public favor. (Cf. Ezek. 34.) We are possibly like some people in the day of Jesus, who "among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42, 43).

We mentioned that this attitude of remaining separate mirrored that of the Pharisees. According to Strong's Concordance the word "Pharisee" means "a separatist." This is exactly what we are to be, separate!

"NEVER SEE DEATH"

Question:

John 8:51 states that if a man keeps the sayings of Jesus he shall never see death. How can this be, since we know that all people die?—B.H., Ind.

Answer:

It is pointed out many times and many ways in the Scriptures that there is only one group of people that will not experience death, and that group consists of the people who will be doing the will of God at the second coming of Christ.

First Corinthians 15 says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (vv. 51, 52).

In First Thessalonians Paul said, "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (4:16, 17).

Another passage that confirms the fact of people not dying, but being changed at the second coming of Jesus, is John 11. In this passage Jesus is speaking to Martha about the death of her brother, Lazarus. Martha's con-

fession of faith was that she knew her brother would be resurrected at the last day. (V. 24.) Jesus then restated the events that will happen on that day when he returns. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live [spoken of the dead saints of all the ages]: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (vv. 25, 26).

Thus, we have the testimony of Jesus that those who are alive at his coming, and are doing his will, shall not die, but will experience a change to immortality.

The key

These scriptures, however, concern only those who are alive at the second coming of Christ, while John 8:51 seems to be all-inclusive of the people who keep the sayings of Jesus.

The key to this verse in John 8 is the word "see." This word means more than just visually seeing something. It carries the thought of looking upon something with deep interest, or being very much aware of something.

This is the word Peter used after he had healed the lame man at the gate Beautiful. He pointed to him and said, "His name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know" (Acts 3:16). The people were not just looking at the man, but were visually examining carefully to ascertain every aspect of his healing. This is the thought of the word "see" in this instance; it is to be completely absorbed with details. *(more)*

No fear of death

The person in Christ, then, will experience death, but he will not spend his life in horror of it. Death will not be the primary thought of his mind, because he has faith in Jesus Christ, knowing Christ has overcome the power of the grave. With the promise of life eternal at the second coming of Jesus, why should we ponder or worry over death? Notice the term Paul used to describe death to the Christians at Thessalonica, "asleep . . . in Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:13, 14).

David, in Psalm 23:4, said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." Death was a real threat to David, but it was not something about which he worried.

The person who keeps the sayings of Jesus will possibly die the Adamic death, but he will not spend his days pondering and worrying about death. □

Note: Questions may be sent to this office, or directly to Pastor Richard Worley, State School Rd., Gatesville, TX 76528.—Ed.



LETTERS

(Continued from page 7)

spurious. Certain parts of Daniel were "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (12:9); that is, hidden, or revealed only to the initiated.

As to 2 Esdras itself. We have read the book in the Revised Standard Version, and compared it to the King James Version. We don't understand all we read, but we find no radical differences in doctrine from the canonical books. The section in chapter 7, verses 36 to 105, missing in the King James, but restored in later versions, contains teaching similar to the Rich Man and Lazarus. Of course, this

does not cause us to reject Luke 16.

Of 2 Esdras, Robert H. Pfeiffer says, "The first and the last of the Jewish apocalypses, Daniel and 2 Esdras, were written by men of genius and are unsurpassed" (op cit).

We considered for some time the use of 2 Esdras in Bro. McLain's writings, but since the weight of his teaching does not depend on this book, we do not consider it objectionable. IF the book proved to be uninspired, we would still rather see it quoted than Billy Graham or Dwight L. Moody!—Ed. □

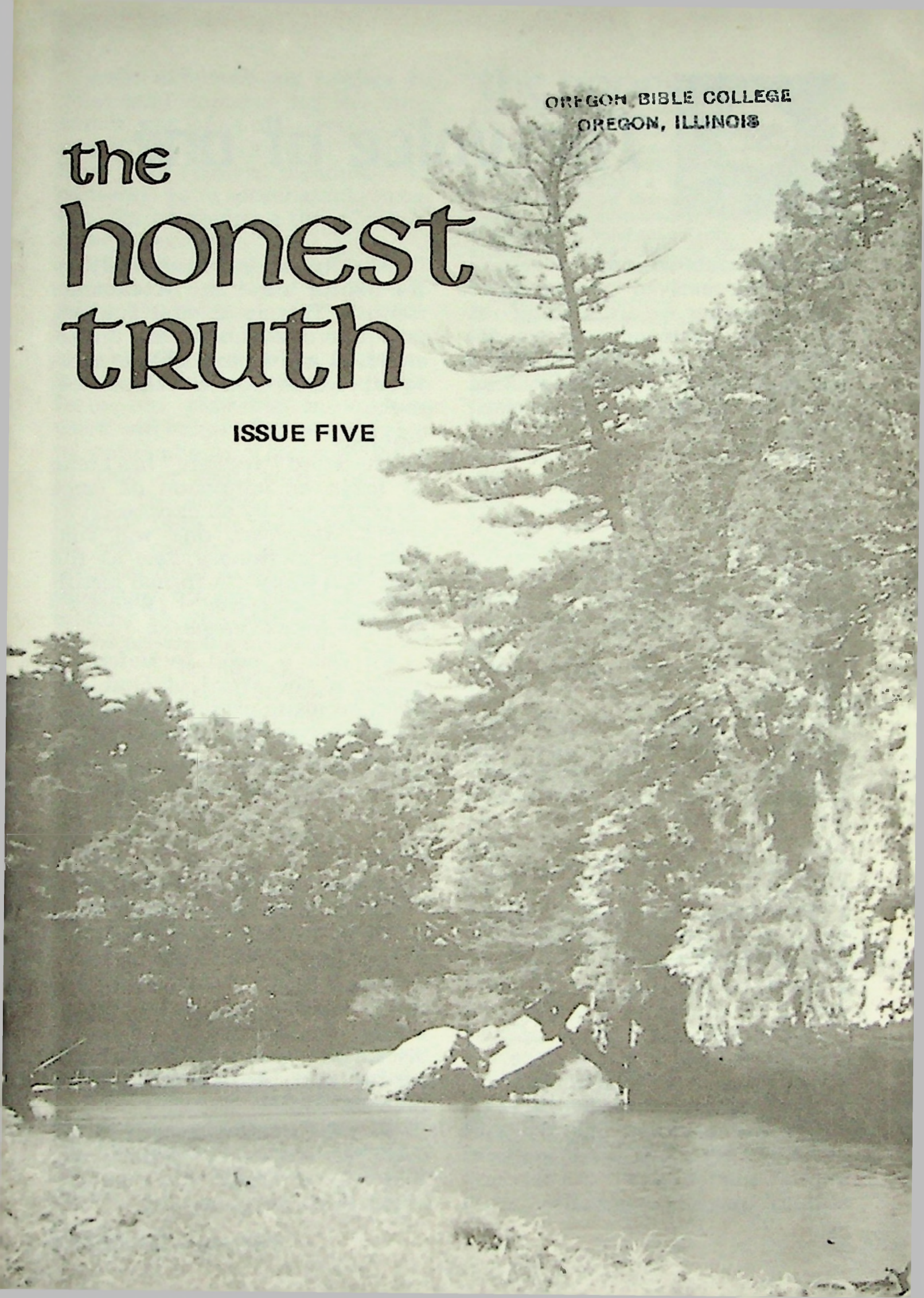
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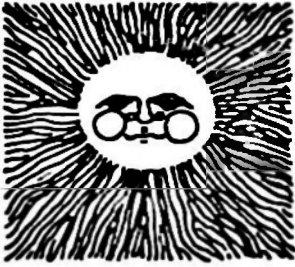
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OREGON BIBLE COLLEGE
OREGON, ILLINOIS

the honest truth

ISSUE FIVE





The voice of one

No other publications

Having received two inquiries as to whether we are sending out any other publications, we decided others may be asking the same question, so we are making the following statement for clarification.

The Honest Truth, Inc., does not publish or distribute any other publications than *The Honest Truth*, or those clearly marked as being published by us. All of our material is mailed on a nonprofit permit from Piedmont, S. C., and is always sent with return postage guaranteed. We disclaim any other connections.

In this issue

In this issue you will find another installment of "The Promises of God" by Beth Briggs, a fine Christadelphian lady from California. Her contribution fills the need for "devotional" literature with the truth in it.

Bro. Richard Worley does his usual fine work in "Q&A." He solicits your questions for his feature; no matter how controversial or simple they might be. Please notice his change of address at the end of the feature.

Bro. James W. McLain begins in this issue a consideration of God's vital relationships. We will attempt to present them in close enough sequence that our readers will not lose the connection.

Also in this issue is a study by the editor on "The Abrahamic Faith." This is a vital subject, and one we should all understand. It will be available in tract form; watch for an announcement.

Apology

The word "apology" has come to mean an admission of error accompanied by an expression of regret. However, one will find that the dictionary lists as the first definition: "A formal justification: defense" (*Webster's Seventh New Collegiate*).

We feel a need to defend a study of the Word of God, because so many evidently consider it useless, or even unchristian!

We remember when conferences and ministerial conferences were a time to confer on the Word of God. Surely, there were sometimes arguments or heated discussions. But, people were studying, and they had convictions; and we received the benefits of this varied study!

Today, our conferences are really conventions, and our ministers are more apt to be found discussing insurance, Social Security, and retirement benefits than the Bible!

We have been told many times that we shouldn't discuss the Bible in a frank way; people might think we're arguing.

the honest truth

Jude exhorted his readers to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (v. 3). "Contend" here is from the Greek meaning "to contend as a combatant upon (i.e. for or about) a thing" (*Bullinger's Lexicon*).

But, the trend today is NOT to contend, or stand up for the faith. The "Jesus only" doctrine has so pervaded the church, that anyone who says he is a Christian is accepted. The average bulletin from our churches in a given week will exhort the membership to political action, to contribute to this or that world benevolence, to attend a church of another faith in the community on one pretext or another, but precious little is said about being separated by our faith, or contending for the truth in the face of the advancing apostasy.

"It's different"

It is common to have people reject the truth, as they utter the simple statement, "It's different." With some that is enough to condemn a deep and great exposition on the Bible. I probably would not be in the faith today if my paternal grandmother had failed to accept that different doctrine that her baby was dead, not in heaven, there in Texas so many years ago.

Our sole object in study is not to constantly try to bring forth something different. But, we must constantly weigh what we are told by what we find in God's Word. It can bolster a well-founded truth, or completely destroy an unfounded tradition. We must be ready for either! □

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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God's relationships

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

THE SUBJECT of this discussion is the relationship of God to the important elements of his Kingdom. It will consider his relationship to Christ, as concerns the throne; his relationship to the church, as concerns her glory; his relationship to Israel, as concerns her redemption; his relationship to restitution; and his relationship to the nations. This subject cannot be pursued without taking issue with the traditions that have practically nullified a true understanding of God's relationships.

Foreword

There is a view of the Kingdom of God which puts God in his rightful place in that Kingdom, which is of such grandeur and power, and so personal to the Christian, it makes any other traditional view seem insignificant by comparison. No one who has ever discovered the true relationship of God to his Kingdom can ever follow the traditional line which puts him out of his place. The emphasis has been on CHRIST'S Kingdom; the church made like Christ; Israel redeemed unto Christ; David's throne as Christ's throne; and restitution as solely the work of Christ.

This emphasis leaves God in heaven—not personally present, and not having personal relationship to the activities of that traditional Kingdom; not having God make an appearance until

the Kingdom of Christ is filled with rebellion, and God **MUST** appear on his great white throne to destroy the enemies and recover what is left of the Kingdom. It is said that Christ will **THEN** turn over the Kingdom to God, and from that time God will rule, and will be all in all. This is a weak view of the Kingdom, and is pale by comparison with the Scriptural picture that puts God in his Kingdom, and in his rightful place, **FROM ITS VERY INCEPTION.**

The correct view concerning the reign of Christ in its proper relationship to God does not minimize Christ's importance, but it gives to him a power and a glory and a success that the traditional view could never do.

The scriptures will be fulfilled that say: "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be **NO END**" (Isa. 9:6, 7); "I will stablish the throne of his kingdom **FOR EVER**" (2 Sam. 7:12-17); "he shall reign over the house of Jacob **FOR EVER**; and of his kingdom there shall be **NO END**" (Luke 1:33); "his dominion is an **EVERLASTING** dominion, which shall **NOT PASS AWAY**, and his kingdom that which shall **NOT BE DESTROYED**" (Dan. 7:14).

God's relationship to Christ

Jesus was constantly being attacked by the Pharisees and other critics, saying he blasphemed

—that he made himself equal with God, because of his statements that God was his Father, or that he would sit at the right hand of power. Jesus never made any claim about himself that was not previously written in the Scriptures. He never claimed to be equal with God, but said, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing” (5:30). At no time did Jesus assume authority that was not given to him, or make claims that were not specifically set forth concerning himself.

We are almost as lacking in understanding of the relationship between God and Christ as were the Pharisees, not knowing the Scriptures, but having interjected tradition which has made the Word of God of noneffect.

There are many Scriptural evidences that clearly set forth the relationship between God and Christ. The Book of Hebrews is peculiar in that it deals largely with this subject; especially the first two chapters, which are made up almost entirely of quotations from the Old Testament that show what Christ’s relationship must be.

Basic to this consideration are two Old Testament studies. One is a study of the relationship of Pharaoh and Joseph in Genesis 41, and the other Psalm 110, written by David. Strange (?) that both of these examples should come together in 1 Corinthians 15, where the traditional interpretation makes it mean just the opposite of what the original texts say.

Pharaoh and Joseph

The story of Pharaoh and Joseph is a true type-study of the relationship between God and Christ. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou” (Gen. 41:40). “Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt” (vv. 42, 43).

There was no limit to the authority Joseph exercised in Egypt; he exercised all the authority of Pharaoh. Only one exception was made, and that was authority over the person of Pharaoh himself; nothing else was left out.

It is this principle that is used in 1 Corinthians 15:27, “It is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.” Pharaoh was not in some remote place while Joseph was exercising the authority of Pharaoh in the land of Egypt, nor did Joseph exercise his authority at a different TIME from that of Pharaoh. God will not be in heaven, or some other remote place, while Jesus exercises his authority, nor will Jesus exercise his authority at a different time than when God exercises his authority. *(more)*

Here, again, is the duality of which we speak, in which they are both present. It is the power of Pharaoh behind Joseph—they are together, and it is the power of God which is behind Jesus, and they are together when this power is exercised by Jesus. Even though every living thing in Egypt was subject unto Joseph—except Pharaoh, Joseph was at ALL TIMES subject unto Pharaoh, who put all things under him. Pharaoh was king of Egypt, without question. Joseph sat at his right hand, and, as his regent, he exercised the authority of Pharaoh.

God and Christ

God is to be the ruler of the Kingdom of God, without any question, and Christ will sit at his right hand and exercise all the authority of God in that Kingdom. We see this principle set forth in Revelation 11:15, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” This duality cannot be “walked around” or put aside. It is there in plain sight for all to see, who will not by tradition put God out of the picture.

The emphasis upon God’s importance in this scene continues in the same text: “O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned” (v. 17). These plain statements do not leave Christ out of it, nor do they leave God out of it, but they are both here present, just as Pharaoh and Joseph were.

That both God and Christ share the throne is indicated in Revelation 22:1, 3, “proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, . . . the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.” John said, “I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (21:22). This dual reign is essential to the New Jerusalem; without it there is no New Jerusalem.

In the psalms

David meditated often about the relationship his Promised Seed would have to Almighty God. In God’s covenant with David, God said to him, “I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my son” (2 Sam. 7:12, 13).

Many of David’s psalms are reflections on this covenant God made with him, promising the Messiah. The Pharaoh-Joseph relationship is indicated in Psalm 2: “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. . . . Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (vv. 6-9). In this picture God is on his holy hill of Zion, and the king that he has established is exercising his authority over his enemies; over the uttermost parts of the earth.

Psalm 72 is another meditation of David concerning Messiah. “In his days shall the righ-

teous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (v. 7). David didn't see any rebellions in the Kingdom under Christ. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . and his enemies shall lick the dust" (vv. 8, 9).

Psalm 110 says, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." This statement, "Sit thou at my right hand," was one of the principal texts of Paul in writing about the coming glory of the church, which we will consider in another section. This is the Old Testament background for 1 Corinthians 15:24, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

This text, as taken from the Psalms, means exactly the OPPOSITE of what the traditional view makes it mean; that while this is taking place—and enemies are being subdued—he is sitting at the right hand of the Father. There is NOT a separation between them when all enemies are put under his feet.

Subject to the Father

Becoming "subject" unto the Father is not an EVENT that takes place at a certain time, but is something that is true every step of the way. As Joseph was

always subject to Pharaoh, so Christ is always subject to the Father. It is simply a review of the truth, that having received such great authority, and having such a great mission, he does not exalt himself either to be equal with God—or greater than God; that he is subject unto the Father.

Jesus was subject to the Father when he walked the earth as a man. He was subject to the Father when he was raised up to sit at God's right hand. He is subject to the Father today. He will be subject to the Father throughout all the future time.

In Zion

In Psalm 110 it is notable that the scene of this activity is in Zion, which indicates that both God and Christ are in Zion; "The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion" (v. 2).

This is in agreement with Psalm 2:6, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." It is in agreement with Isaiah 2, showing that the house of the God of Jacob is in Zion, that the Word of the LORD and the Law will go forth from there, and that all nations will come up there to worship the king, the LORD of hosts.

Here is an exercise of authority on the part of Christ far beyond the traditional view. Here is a story of success without any rebellions. Here is a story of glory for our Christ, which his benevolent Father has bestowed upon him beyond our comprehension. This relationship MUST be grasped for us to understand the true glory of the church. □

(To be continued.)



The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

PROMISE NUMBER EIGHT

2 KINGS 6:16—“Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”

These words were spoken by Elisha to his servant who was filled with fear when the great hosts of the king of Syria came to Dothan to take Elisha. The prophet knew that God was protecting him in a miraculous manner, and prayed that his servant's eyes might be opened to see the horses and chariots of fire which were round about the city. The great Syrian army was smitten with blindness and defeated.

So, no matter how many enemies may confront us, “they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” Invisible powers will fight for us, and the hosts of evil destroyed.

*There are many that be with us,
We need fear no evil powers,
Pray to God, and his protection,
For the asking, may be ours.*

PROMISE NUMBER NINE

Psalm 9:18—“The needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.”

It is a sad, but nevertheless true, fact that the poor and needy are often forgotten by the majority of people, and even at times by some of God's children. True, there is organized charity for the poor, but there is a saying that “Charity is as cold as the grave,” and anyone who has experienced it knows that usually this is the case.

God's children should always endeavor to assist the poor, the needy, and the sick, and say to them as did the Apostle Peter: “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee” (Acts 3:6). Yes, we can give them the most precious thing in the world, the water of life that Jesus offered to the woman at the well (John 4:6-15), so they need never thirst again.

*O sad and weary, lift your heads,
Your troubles will soon end,
God sees you and remembers you,
He always is your Friend.*

*The oppressors soon will vanish,
Their place will be no more,
And you will know his peace and love
When his blessings shall outpour.*

PROMISE NUMBER TEN

Psalm 27:1—“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

The LORD is my light. Through the deepening distress that overshadows the world today, my life is illuminated by God’s Word, and light streams forth on my daily path.

The LORD is my salvation. I have been redeemed by the Savior, and have been given a new existence in his love and divine protection, and some day I shall know his greater salvation which will be for all the ages to come.

Since he is the strength of my life, no weakness need overcome me, for he has promised to bear me up, whatever trials may overtake me. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). When we feel our strength failing, we need only to go in prayer to our Savior, who is a loving, tender and merciful high priest, with his blessed hands always stretched out to help and save us. We need not travel in this arid desert; for springs of water are ever there to refresh us if we will but partake of them. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

<i>God is my strength, my light, what then Is there for me to fear? He fills the dusky night with stars, The shadows disappear.</i>	<i>Though whirlwinds fill the ravished land, Secure within his love, The tumult cannot dim my hope, I lift my eyes above.</i>
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PROMISE NUMBER ELEVEN

Psalm 30:5—“His anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

God’s anger endures but a moment, and if, for a period of time, we may have forgotten him, we have only to turn to him in true repentance, and his forgiveness is instantly ours.

We will weep when grief overtakes us, when our loved ones are lost in death; and, as sometimes happens, when youth is gone and life has seemingly left us all alone.

But our tears need not be despairing, for earth’s sad night will soon be over, and the dawn that is just beyond the horizon will be ushered in. God’s glorious morning will then envelop the entire earth, and tears and sorrow shall be no more. (Rev. 21:4.)

*Joy comes when the night is over,
When hope of day appears,
For the Lord shall banish sadness,
And joy will shine through tears.*

□

The Abrahamic Faith

By the editor



THE MAJORITY of churches of our faith call themselves the "Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith." While we recognize that "Church of God" alone is the scriptural name of the church, there are at least two reasons why the church has added "of the Abrahamic Faith" to its name.

First, it distinguishes this church from about ten other organizations which also call themselves "Church of God"; the majority of them being so-called "pentecostal" churches.

The second—and main—reason for the addition of "of the Abrahamic Faith" is it emphasizes our belief in the importance of the Abrahamic covenant, and the faith of Abraham as a man of God.

The Abrahamic covenant

We emphasize the Abrahamic covenant—the promises made by God to Abraham, because the Bible teaches the only hope of blessing for all mankind comes through this covenant. It is true there are probably at least seven other important covenants mentioned in the Bible—styled "the

covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12), but they basically elucidate or enlarge on the Abrahamic covenant.

The promises God made to Abraham some 3700 years ago are termed "the gospel" in Galatians 3:8. The same two central elements of the gospel in the New Testament were present; the seed of promise, and the land of promise.

The seed of promise

Although Abraham and Sarah were childless in their old age, God promised them a son, Isaac. In due time he was born, fulfilling God's promise. Isaac in turn begat Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel; the progenitor of the nation of Israel.

God further promised that in Abraham's seed "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). The people of Israel have been a blessing where they have been blessed by others; history verifies this. When one considers that Jesus is the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16), and the church is the spiritual seed of Abraham, this promise of blessing through Abraham's seed is greatly multiplied!

The land of promise

The other central element of the Abrahamic covenant—gospel—was the promise that Abraham and his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan as an “everlasting possession” (Gen. 15:18; 17:1-8). God has never promised his people heaven, but land—from Eden to Eden!

The fact that Abraham did not receive the Promised Land in his lifetime (Acts 7:5; Heb. 11:13), does not nullify the promise, and Abraham will yet receive what he was promised when God raises the dead and sets up the Kingdom on this earth. (Matt. 8:11.)

The other precious truths and promises we consider gospel, were also present in the Abrahamic covenant: the one God, justification by faith (Rom. 4), and the hope of resurrection and eternal life; to name a few.

The Scriptures record that Abraham signed and sealed the gospel-covenant with God by the token of circumcision. (Gen. 17:11-14; Rom. 4:11.) Without this signature the divine contract would have been invalid.

Our hope

Recognizing that the Abrahamic covenant is the hope of Israel and the Gentiles, we must also realize it is the only hope of blessing for the church. We can be heirs of the Abrahamic covenant by coming into the family of believers through Jesus Christ. When we “put on Christ” in the waters of baptism, “then are [we] Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (3:26-29).

The person outside of this relationship is without hope and

without God, according to Ephesians 2:12. We had best understand, believe, and enter this holy contract with God!

Abraham’s faith

When we believe and accept the promises God made to Abraham—the gospel, and have sealed that faith in baptism, it is then that the faith of Abraham should show in our lives. While it is true that Abraham was as human as we are, that he was subject to sin, and did sin, he also exhibited some outstanding works to prove his faith.

He obeyed God

Abraham’s home was civilized, idolatrous Ur in Chaldaea. God called him to leave his country, relatives, and his father’s house to travel to a land God would show him—Canaan in far-off Palestine. Although Genesis records the steps involved in the process of carrying out God’s commands, Hebrews 11:8 says it briefly: “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”

Abraham’s faith in Jehovah, the one, true, and living God, separated him from his city, country, and idolatrous family. This same belief in the oneness of God has kept the people of Israel separate throughout the centuries.

Members of God’s church (*ekklesia*) are still being separated by this faith. Separated from unbelieving family members, the world, and other churches which do not share this faith. Abraham

could not please God without separating himself, and neither can we!

He sojourned

According to Hebrews 11:9, 10, Abraham by faith, "sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles [tents] with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Abraham and his descendants in the faith lived as sojourners—temporary residents—in the land, because they knew they could not inherit it everlastingly in this mortal life. They looked forward to resurrection and the Kingdom on the earth.

As Abraham's children, we, too, must live as sojourners; not becoming entangled in this world and its cares. (Phil. 3:17-20.) Also, we must seek **FIRST** the Kingdom of God, knowing our daily necessities will be added to us. If we seek **LAST** the Kingdom, we'll probably gain present monetary things, but the Kingdom will be subtracted from us!

Offered Isaac

God later proved Abraham by asking him to offer Isaac—the seed of promise—as a sacrifice. Abraham was willing, but God prevented him at the last moment. Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead if he offered him. (Heb. 11:19.)

God will probably never ask us to offer one of our children in sacrifice on an altar, but we are asked—everyone of us—to present ourselves as living sacrifices

to God. (Rom. 12:1, 2.) Thereafter we may be called upon to sacrifice many things in order to follow Christ. We can do this because we believe God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

Abraham tithed

After the defeat of the kings who had taken Lot captive, Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek, God's high priest. It was his faith in the "most high God, possessor of heaven and earth" that Abraham **VOLUNTARILY** gave tithes. He believed God owned all things and could provide him with all his needs, so he could return the sacred portion to God easily.

As the children of Abraham by faith, we also tithe; not because of a law, but because we want to. The giving of tithes and offerings out of faith and love is the only scriptural method and motive of finance. (Matt. 23:23; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2.)

Commanded his children

In Genesis 18:19 God said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the **LORD**, to do justice and judgment."

That Abraham "charged his children," and transmitted his faith to succeeding generations, was an important part of his faith. This has long been a sacred duty of the Israelites; to teach their children the way of truth and righteousness. (Deut. 6:4-12.)

This is a hypothetical question, but we wonder how many

there might be in the household of faith today, if members of the Church of God had faithfully charged their children in matters of faith and truth?

Means much to us

Yes, "the Abrahamic Faith" means much to us. May this hope in the unchangeable promises of God be "an anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6:19) to us in these days of change, fear, and doubt.

At the same time, while we glory in being made partakers of these promises of God through

Christ, may we also realize that we must "also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Rom. 4:12)!

We must bring forth a measure of the faith, the obedience, the separateness, the sacrifice, the trust, and the devotion to godly instruction that was displayed by Abraham, in order to prove that we are his children—of the Abrahamic Faith. Jesus said to the Jews, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39). And so will we! □



By Pastor Richard Worley

A TRINITY?

Question:

Isn't 1 John 5:7 a scripture that states definitely that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit form a trinity?—D. W., Ohio.

Answer:

First John 5:7 reads, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

Most authorities agree that this verse should not be included in the Scriptures. It is found in only one manuscript of authority written before the invention of

the printing press, and it is omitted from 112 other manuscripts. But, to say it should be cast out could cause a great deal of disrespect and doubt to be reflected upon the veracity of the Scriptures.

To be consistent

To be consistent we would have to stop quoting Mark 16:15, 16, which is the so-called Great Commission, because Mark 16:9-20 is classed as spurious by many authorities. Also, the confession made by the eunuch in Acts 8:37b is omitted in the oldest manuscripts. Where would we stop if we started deleting texts?

Looking at 1 John 5:7 and asking a reasonable question, we find it does not present a problem when compared to the rest of the Scriptures.

Unity

The basis of the work of Jesus was to unify people in their worship of the one true God,

Jehovah. Paul concurred with this when he stated in Ephesians 4:3, 13 that we should "keep the unity of the Spirit," and all come into the "unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God."

First John 5:7 is actually an extension of the prayer of Jesus in John 17, when he prayed that God would make the apostles—and then all of the people that would ultimately accept him—"one, even as we are one" (v. 22).

Jesus was not saying he wanted all people to become one physical person, but that there should be a unity of thought and purpose. This is the oneness shared by God and Jesus. Jesus said, "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

This text in First John does not teach a trinity. It teaches nothing more than a unity of thought and purpose between God and his Son, Jesus Christ. We endeavor to develop the same type of oneness with God, Jesus, and the brethren in the faith.

"AS GOOD AS DEAD"

Question:

What does it mean in Hebrews 11:12 when it says Abraham was "as good as dead" when Isaac was born?—L. W., Ohio.

Answer:

God had promised Abraham that his seed would be greatly blessed, and would be recipients of the promises made to Abraham. This was not a promise to just any of Abraham's seed, but it was to be the seed through his wife, Sarah.

Abraham had natural seed through the bondswoman, Hagar, but this seed was not acceptable in the sight of God. According to Genesis 16:16, Abraham was 86 years old when Ishmael was born. When Abraham was 99 years old the LORD appeared to him and stated definitely that the son of blessing would come from Sarah.

In Genesis 17:18 Abraham pleaded with God on behalf of Ishmael, but the LORD said, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant" (v. 19). Thus, we see that Sarah was a part of the covenant that God made with Abraham.

Sarah was barren

It is stated several times in the Scriptures that Sarah was barren, and it was because of this that Hagar was given to Abraham, that he might have natural seed. But, there is evidence that Abraham was not past the age of begetting children when Isaac was born.

In Genesis 25:1 it states that Abraham took another wife, and from this union there were born six sons. There are varying opinions about the meaning of this verse. Some feel it is just out of chronological sequence, and the marriage took place early in the life of Abraham. If this were true we wonder why Abraham and Sarah used the bondswoman, Hagar, to bear children for Abraham? Another possibility is that Keturah was the same as Hagar,

but the two are so plainly distinguished this would be very improbable.

The problem, then, is the verse that stated that Abraham was dead as far as gendering children when Isaac was born, and he was, therefore, a "child of promise."

Not Abraham alone

Let us state again, the promise was not made to Abraham alone, but to him and his wife, Sarah. "Lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son" (Gen. 18:10). Also speaking of Sarah, God said, "I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her" (17:16).

Seeing the promises were made to Abraham AND Sarah, we look at the New Testament texts that speak of Abraham AND Sarah's faith. Romans 4:19a says, "being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead." Hebrews 11:12a says, "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead."

This statement is not made of Abraham alone, but of the union between Abraham and Sarah. "They two shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:25).

In the Diaglott the personal pronoun "him" is not used in Hebrews 11:12. It says, "Therefore also were born from one who even as to these things had become lifeless."

God DOES fulfill his promises, even though they may seem impossible. May we share the hope of Abraham!

"SAVED IN CHILDBEARING"

Question:

According to 1 Timothy 2:15, why is childbearing supposed to give salvation to a woman?—J. F., S. C.

Answer:

The verse in question reads: "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

The thoughts of the Apostle Paul in this discourse were concerned with the sin of Adam and Eve. This verse is a summation of the hope offered to women.

God cursed the man by decreeing that his life would be spent in labor for the necessities of life, and that his existence would be maintained by the sweat of his face. (Gen. 3:19.)

The curse put upon the woman was a twofold curse:

- 1) she was to be in subjection to her husband;
- 2) she was to bear children in sorrow. (3:16.)

Preposition "in"

Most translations, however, agree that the preposition "in," in 1 Timothy 2:15, should be "by" or "through." Thus, the verse would read; "she shall be saved by childbearing, if they continue." This, then, is not expressing the conditions by which she may obtain salvation, but the existing conditions IN SPITE OF WHICH she can be saved. In other words, in spite of the part of the curse that is her lot in life, she can be saved.

To add a little more light to this verse we quote from the *New English Bible*, adding their footnote in brackets: "Yet she

will be saved through motherhood [or saved through the Birth of the Child]—if only women continue in faith, love, and holiness, with a sober mind.”

The promise of salvation by the means of childbearing originated when God said that the seed of the woman, a child, would bruise the head of the serpent. (Gen. 3:15.) This was the first installment in God's great plan of salvation. The promise is further described as

being fulfilled in Jesus when Paul said, “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4).

Women, then, obtain salvation by the same means as men: through Jesus Christ, their sinner-bearer, and continuing to live a life of faith, love, and holiness. □

Note: Questions may be sent to this office, or directly to Pastor Richard Worley, 6375 S Kessler-Frederick Rd, Tipp City, OH 45371.—Ed.



ANNOUNCEMENT

Bro. Richard Schaen of the Church of the Blessed Hope, Cleveland, Ohio, has been working for some years, along with others, to reprint the late Bro. Robert G. Huggins' book, "The Bible: Its Principles and Texts." We have had our copy for some years, and consider it a valuable work, especially the large section devoted to difficult texts.

The book is being reproduced exactly by offset—a photographic process. To the original has been added a list of corrections, and an index; making 320 pages in all. It will be hardbound in blue cloth.

The book is due off the press in April, 1974, but the number of books must be ordered by October 1, 1973. The cost of the reprint was originally estimated at over \$5.00 per copy, but is now estimated at between \$2.25 and \$2.50 per copy, depending on the number printed.

THE HONEST TRUTH is offering to distribute these books at cost, on an advance order basis, plus postage estimated at 25c. Send payment for the desired number of copies to us, and we will forward it to the publishing brethren. Books will be sent when ready. Send your order TODAY!

(Note: Bro. Schaen is interested in obtaining information on the original printing of the book; where, when, and by whom it was published. We will pass it on to him, if anyone has such information.—Ed.)

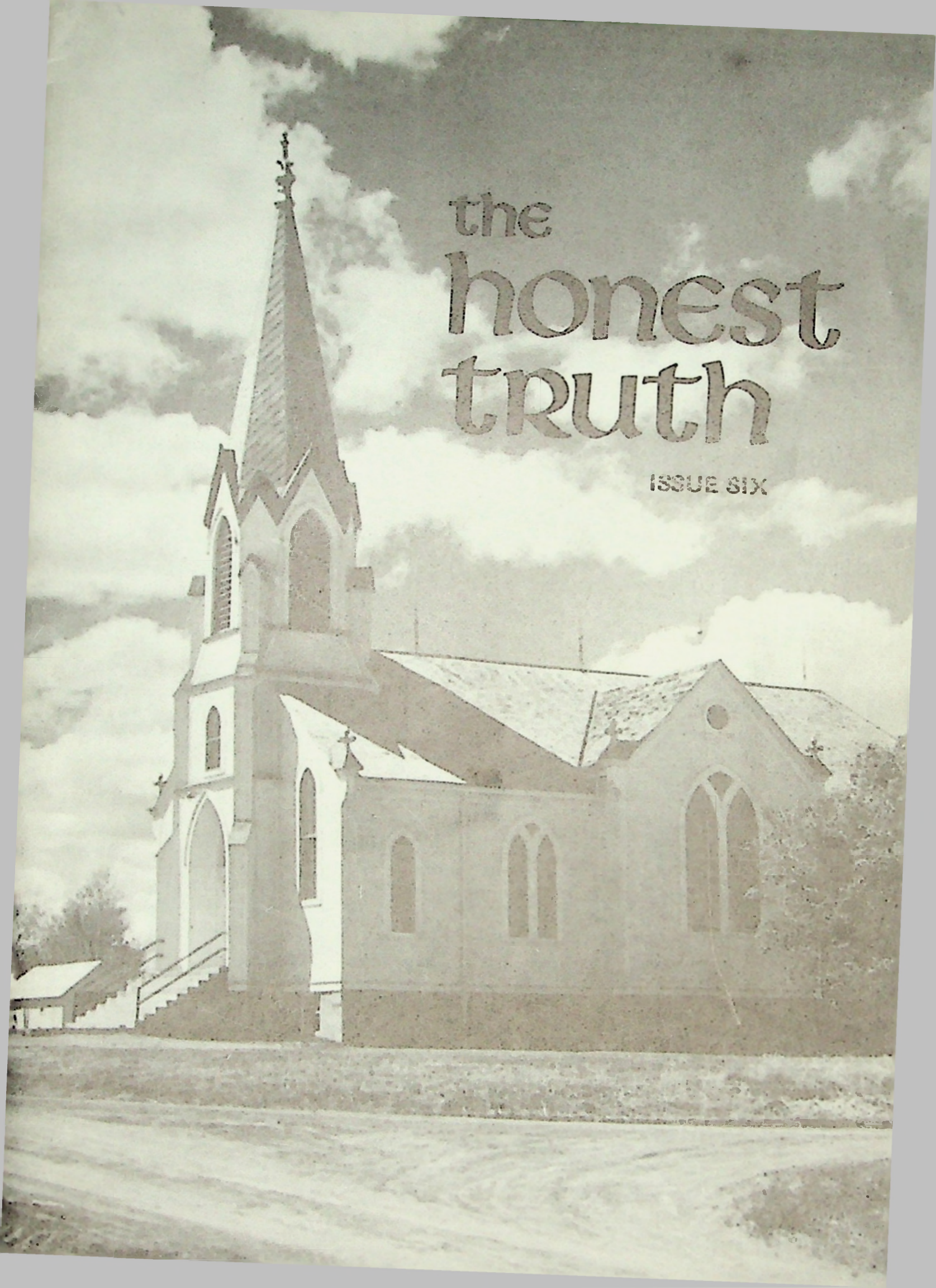
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the
honest
truth

ISSUE SIX



the
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ISSUE SIX



The voice of one

Since our last issue

Since we last came into your home via these pages several important events have taken place in the United States and overseas. We will offer comments on a few of these in this editorial offering.

In this issue

Bro. James W. McLain considers God's vital relationship to the covenants, to the advent, and to the church in part two of his study, "God's relationships." This is a very thought-provoking series.

In addition to the regular features, we include an article concerning "The angels that sinned," by R. G. Huggins, author of *The Bible: Its Principles and Texts*. We believe this is the correct interpretation of this problem text.

Noncontroversial?

It is inevitable in the course of communicating through speaking or writing that controversy, or difference of opinion, will arise.

The aim of *The Honest Truth* is not to be controversial for the sake of controversy. It is also not its aim to be noncontroversial. We honestly don't know of any subject that is noncontroversial.

If the search for—and exposition of—truth proves controversial, let it be! But, let it be in love; love for God and his truth,

and love for one another. It is not love to remain silent on important issues, and let others go to their ruin through disbelief of the truth.

We believe there is a need for an independent voice in the area of our endeavors; one with the freedom to investigate, as well as promote, the truth in its fullness.

Mideast war, again

On October 6, 1973, war broke out between Israel and her Arab neighbors for the fourth time in 25 years. The details of the war are a matter of record.

The attack on Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement—of Israeli positions along the Nile and in the Syrian Golan Heights gave the Arab forces a distinct advantage; one which was being overcome by Israel as time passed, until stopped by the cease-fire.

While the battles were being fought over familiar territory, there were some major differences between this war and the previous wars.

1. The Arabs fought well in sustained battle. The previously superior—technologically—Israeli armies did not make their usual quick work of the Arab forces. The Arabs had equipment and knew how to use it!

Rise of Arab power

2. This outbreak saw the rise of Arab power in the world;

unknown for centuries. Not only was there amazing Arab cooperation in sending troops—Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Iraq, and Jordan joined in the battle, but the oil-rich Arab countries were ready to take on the rest of the world by economic sanctions in curtailing oil production.

This show of strength and unity by the usually fractured Arab world cowed Europe into outright opposition to the American resupplying operation of Israel. Only Portugal, of all of America's "allies" in Europe, allowed U.S. planes to fly over or land on its soil during the resupplying effort. Oil-sensitive European countries refused to take any stance that could be considered pro-Israel for fear of offending Arab oil suppliers.

Even the energy-hungry U.S. is trying to appear more even-handed toward the Arabs, because of her estimated future need to import up to 50% of her oil needs from the Mideast.

No victors or losers?

3. Another seeming difference between this Mideast war and previous ones, is there are no clear-cut victors or losers. Egypt regained large sections of the Sinai east of Suez, but Israel gained new territory on the west bank of the Suez. Syria lost more territory on the Golan Heights, but effectively stopped Israel from getting closer to its capitol.

President Anwar Sadat of Egypt seems to have emerged as the new Arab strong-man of the Mideast. He was in many ways superior to his predecessor, Nasser.

(more)

the honest truth

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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Our cover, A country church, Western Nebraska	

Israel lost no territory, but did lose some psychological superiority in not defeating the Arabs as before.

Disposal to bargain

4. The Arabs' newly-gained self-esteem and power, and Israel's economic and psychological losses—plus worldwide worry of a confrontation by the superpowers over the Mideast—have served to make the parties involved more willing to meet and devise means to de-fuse the war. Attempts to bring the warring parties together at the table, which have been unsuccessful in the past, seem to be about to materialize.

President Richard Nixon's vow to negotiate a lasting peace in the Mideast during his administration is still top drawer. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's visits in Egypt and other Arab countries, on his way to China and Japan, early in November indicate the importance in bringing about a negotiated settlement.

There is no doubt the superpowers have a vested interest in the outcome of any peace moves in the Mideast. However, the Arabs and Israel are the ones to make or break the peace.

Prophecy being fulfilled

While there seems to be no grand and complete fulfillment of prophecy in each action taken in the Mideast, particular prophecies are being fulfilled.

Just as the Six-day War in 1967 saw Israel regain Jerusalem—which she had to according to prophecy, we believe one of the results of this war will be the making of a false covenant be-

tween Israel and her neighbors. Daniel 9:27 says such a covenant will be made by "many" in Israel: "The prince that shall come [not Messiah] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary . . . and he shall confirm [a, *marg.*] covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

First Maccabees contains the record of the Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes who held Israel tributary. "In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow" (1:11). We have always heard the covenant in Daniel 9:27 was one to restore temple worship to the Jews. We find no such suggestion in the Scriptures or history.

That the covenant of Antiochus was one of unJewishness is spelled out in 1 Maccabees 1:15. They "made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and were sold to do mischief." The remainder of the chapter tells how "many"—not all—in Israel went along with this false covenant. Those who didn't were persecuted and killed.

Peace and security

The whole idea of the false covenant is to guarantee peace and security to Israel. It is called a "covenant with death," an

“agreement with hell,” in Isaiah 28:15, 18. That is, Israel by means of a false covenant was trying to make sure she would be spared when “the overflowing scourge” passed through.

The thing that is wrong with the false covenant is it is a denial of God’s holy covenant; he would be their God, and would fight their battles, IF they kept his commandments. God plainly told Israel she was not to make covenants with the nations dwelling in the Promised Land. (Deut. 7:1, 2.)

Abomination

That such a false covenant is an abomination to God is clear from the commandments given of God through Moses, as it is a “work of men’s hands” (Deut. 4:25-28). Moses said, “I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands” (Deut. 31:29).

It is when Israel thinks she has security by means of her false covenant that she will be judged by God through her “lovers,” the nations round about. As Paul put it, when they say “There is peace and security” (1 Thess. 5:3, RSV), then sudden destruction will come upon them, as surely as a pregnant woman will not escape childbirth.

Particulars

We wish we could provide the particulars on coming events, but, not being a prophet, we are

unable to do so. We can say what we expect. We have thought for years that the United Nations would be the last great world power to be reckoned with, and the one with whom Israel would make her covenant of apostasy. It seems more likely that the Arabian Empire fits the picture. Even here it should be noted that the U.N. is the “vehicle” for the negotiations leading to the heralded “peace and security.”

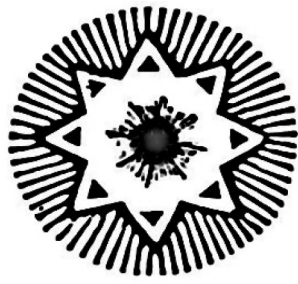
As to what concessions Israel will make to gain a guarantee of peace, we do not know. We have long felt she would give up the city of Jerusalem; something her leaders have hinted at through the years. It should be noted that all parties concerned make mention of the U.N. partition plan of 1947, which included internationalizing Jerusalem.

Although Rome may have something to say about access to the “holy places” in Israeli-held territory, we see no way that the Pope, or the Roman church, or a restored Roman Empire figures into the picture of the end-time. Biblically, they are not mentioned. Russia and the U. S. are probably not, either.

Conclusions

Because of the four reasons stated earlier—Arab willingness to stand and fight, the rise of Arab power, no winners and no losers, and Israel’s new willingness to negotiate, this last battle in the Mideast was extremely important from a prophetic standpoint.

Lord, quicken our understanding! Open our eyes! Prepare our hearts! The end is near! □



The angels that sinned

By R. G. Huggins

THE HEBREW word *malak*, generally translated "angel" in the Old Testament, means "a messenger, agent." The Greek word *aggelos* has the same meaning. The word angel is like the word general, judge, president, etc.; it states position and not nature. It is an office—one sent, a messenger—hence, one may hold the office whether mortal or immortal. God may send a mortal man as a messenger to tell glad tidings, or he may send an immortal being as an agent to perform his behests. An angel, therefore, may be mortal or immortal.

Mortal messengers

That mortal men whom God honors as messengers or agents are called angels is evident from the fact that angels are said to have sinned. (2 Pet. 2:4.) Ninety-eight times the word *malak* is translated messenger in the Old Testament, and applied to mortal man. (See Hag. 1:13, Mal. 2:7.) It is used in reference to John the Baptist (Mal. 3:1; Mark 1:2), and its Greek equivalent—*aggelos*—of some of John's disciples (Luke 7:24), and the spies whom Rahab received are called angels—messengers. (Jas. 2:25.)

In looking for the angels that sinned (2 Pet. 2:4), it is well to remember that immortal angels

are immaculate and deathless. (Luke 20:36.) God has, in his law, made death the penalty for sin. (Rom. 5:12, 6:23.) An immortal angel cannot die, therefore an immortal angel cannot sin.

If we will consent to be taught by divine authority, we can easily find out who the angels were that sinned and left their habitation. Jude said, "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this" (v. 5). The brethren to whom Jude wrote were not wise above that which is written, surely; and since he presumes they once knew about these angels, it is fair to infer that there was something written about them in the Holy Scriptures. Whoever the angels were, whatever their sin and fall, it was a matter known to those to whom Jude wrote, and therefore the same to us.

It is a matter as easily for us to ascertain as that "the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not" (Jude 5b); a great and memorable event, a sad story pathetically told in the sacred writings.

Illustrations

Now the sin and fall of the angels is one case among many

other cases showing that God “knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pet. 2:9). Note his illustrations:

1. God did not spare the angels that sinned.

2. He did not spare Sodom and Gomorrha. (2 Pet. 2:5, 6.)

3. Nor did he spare the people who sinned after coming out of the land of Egypt. (Jude 5.)

“Ye once knew this.” He only wrote to jog their memory; to call attention to what they once knew.

Mileposts

Now we take God’s Word and read about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the unfaithful Israelites after they came out of Egypt. Using these remarkable historic events as mileposts in the great highway of the past, we expect to find within reasonable proximity to Israel’s fall after their deliverance from Egypt, angels who sinned and fell.

So we ask, What other remarkable fall, fall of messengers, took

place in the neighborhood of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt? Read Numbers 13. God said, “Send thou men” (v. 2). “And Moses sent them” (v. 17). They were sent—were messengers, and these spies are called angels. (Jas. 2:25.)

The angels found

Undoubtedly we have here found the angels that sinned! These spies were made messengers by divine command. They were carefully selected as representative, intelligent men. But they “sinned,” “left their habitation,” “first estate,” etc. They spied out the “land flowing with milk and honey.” It was theirs by promise (Gen. 15:18, 19), and they were told to go in and take it. But, they “left” it like cowards, and were cast down into the darkness of death, there to be held with “chains of darkness” until the judgment of the great day.

Dear reader, take this lesson to yourself. Let us not fail to enter into God’s rest, through unbelief and sin, as they did. (Heb. 4:1-11.)—*The Bible: Its Principles and Texts.* □

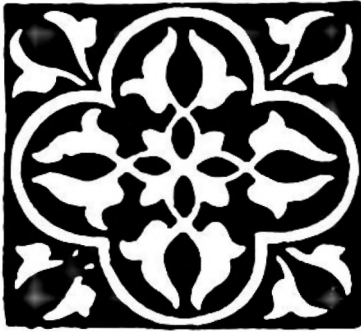


O GIVE US PEACE AND FAITH

O give us peace when tumults rage around us,
That we in confidence may rest in thee;
Teach us thy truth, that nothing can confound us
And in a servile world we may be free.

Increase our faith; we would not grope in blindness,
But, turn to thee from all this earth’s alarms;
And feel around us still thy loving-kindness,
And underneath, the everlasting arms!

—C. I. Miller. □



The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

PROMISE NUMBER TWELVE

PSALM 31:24—“Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.”

He will strengthen the hearts of all those that hope in the Lord! How then do we obtain this hope? We obtain it by searching the Scriptures, by earnest, persevering prayer, and by placing ourselves in God's hands when we know his will.

Fame and recognition might draw us away from God, and thus he sometimes permits us to go through deep valleys of sorrow and privation, that we may learn to live closer to him.

But when we have this hope in the Lord, none of life's most alluring treasures could possibly take us away from him, for we have found the pearl of great price for which we had unknowingly searched for many years, and at last we have peace and happiness in our hearts.

*A hope that whispers at nightfall,
Of joy that is to be,
Faint gleams of hope through the portal,
Your eyes of faith may see.*

*Have courage, the time is coming,
When clamorous voices cease,
And the dawning of God's presence
Shall bring sweet rest and peace.*

PROMISE NUMBER THIRTEEN

PSALM 32:8—“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.”

There is solace in the realization that we need not stumble uncertainly through life, for, if we are willing, God will lead us in the way we should go. But even he cannot do this unless we fully surrender our wills to him, and how difficult this is for the majority of us to do! So often we are determined to follow our own inclinations until, finally, we come up against a wall where we must pause, because there is no way over or around it. Then we will reach out to the God who can guide us, and will know that, if we continue to follow him, the path we are taking is the right one.

*Oh, let me trust God as a child,
And give my life to him,
And follow in my youthful days
Before my eyes are dim.*

*But even if my years are few,
Let me walk close to thee,
And Lord, forgive the barren years,
And come and dwell with me.*

PROMISE NUMBER FOURTEEN

PSALM 34:19—“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”

The righteous do sometimes seem to have more difficulties than others, for God is polishing them as a rough diamond is polished, and we know that some rough diamonds need much more polishing than others.

The Scriptures tell us of the afflictions of those who have voluntarily entered the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-7), and put their hands to the plow (Luke 9:62). “Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:11).

When we thus put ourselves in God’s hands we must never look back at any thing left behind, for nothing can compare with the joy of having Christ dwell with and in us. In a spiritual sense, and sometimes literally, we will then be delivered from all of our afflictions.

*Are you afflicted, dear one,
From every avenue?
Have patience, I have promised
That I will deliver you.*

*As a diamond is polished,
So its beauty will shine through,
Your trials are the means I take
To make you lovely, too.*

PROMISE NUMBER FIFTEEN

PSALM 37:4, 5, 23, 24—“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.”

The Psalmist states that if we delight in the Lord and commit our way to him, he will bring it to pass. In other words, he will give us the desires of our hearts. But we see there is a condition attached, we must first delight ourselves in him. When we do this our desires will be in accordance with his will and for good only. God always blesses our spiritual aspirations, and material things are bound up in this promise: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and God delights in his way. If we are fighting the “good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12), we are assured in this verse and many others that if we fall in a moment of weakness we shall not be utterly cast down. We need only to hold fast to the Lord’s dear hand and he will lift us up.

*I shall delight myself in God,
Entrust my life to him,
And he will fill my cup with joy
Right to the very brim.*

*My steps are ordered by the Lord,
I may not understand,
But when I walk in paths unknown,
He holds me by my hand.* □



God's part 2 relationships

By James W. McLain

IN OUR first installment we emphasized the relationship between God and Christ, concerning the throne.

The common traditional view emphasizes the reign of Christ, and leaves God in heaven—out of the picture. God, according to that view, does not make an appearance until the Kingdom of Christ is filled with rebellion, and God must come to destroy the enemies and recover what is left of the Kingdom. Also, Christ “turns over” the Kingdom to God, and then God rules. This is a weak view of the Kingdom, and is pale by comparison with the scriptural picture that puts God in his Kingdom and in his rightful place from its very inception.

The story of Pharaoh and Joseph is a true type-study of the relationship between God and Christ. Pharaoh said, “Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou” (Gen. 41:40). Pharaoh was king of Egypt, without question. Joseph sat at his right hand, and, as his regent, exercised the authority of Pharaoh. God is the ruler of the Kingdom of God, without any question, and Christ will sit at his right hand and exercise all the authority of God in that Kingdom.

1. God and the covenants

Inherent in all of God's covenants is the principle that God himself will be with them and be their God, and they shall be his people. There is varying phraseology of this statement, but the principle is there in every covenant God has made. One cannot pursue a study of the covenants of God without coming to the conclusion that God must be **PERSONALLY PRESENT** for the fulfillment of the covenants he has made.

In the Abrahamic Covenant: “I will be their God” (Gen. 17:8). This is not amplified here as it is later, but in Abraham's vision in Genesis 15 the smoking furnace and burning lamp pass between the parts of the carcasses of Israel; which is indeed the personal presence of God in judgment, reflecting the application of the Law of Sinai. In the Mosaic Covenant, particularly the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, God will come in vengeance, and in that advent he will be merciful unto his land and unto his people.

In the Davidic Covenant God said, “I will be his father, and he shall be my son” (2 Sam. 7:14). This is not a distant relationship separated by time and space, but has as its purpose affection, closeness, and a side-by-side rela-

tionship; as David expressed it, "Sit thou at my right hand" (Psa. 110:1). So, David himself thus amplified the covenant God made with him by showing Jesus sitting on the right hand of the Father.

The New Covenant

The very heart of the New Covenant is as expressed in Jeremiah 31: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (vv. 31-33). Ezekiel also commented on this: "Ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (36:28). Again, "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (37:27). Joel 3:17 says, "So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain."

2. God and the advent

It was Jesus himself who suggested a dual advent of God and Christ: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64). It should be obvious that if God stayed behind they could not see this thing, but Jesus in his coming in the clouds of heaven is sitting on the right hand of power.

The advent of God is something I have never heard discussed or preached, and yet it is all through the writing of the prophets, and is prominent in the New Testament, IF we do not read another meaning into the texts that are given. Among those who spoke of the advent of God

were: Moses, Isaiah (many times), and Ezekiel. Zechariah said plainly, "The LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (14:5). Jude told of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who saw the Lord coming with ten thousands of his saints. (V. 14.)

Advent of God and Jesus

What remains is for us to find an association of the advent of God with the advent of Jesus Christ. We have already cited Matthew 26:64, which speaks of Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven and sitting at the right hand of power. Paul expressed it in Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

While the text is commonly ascribed to Christ, I am convinced that 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is speaking about God's appearance in relation to Christ's appearance: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." The description here of the Lord descending reminds us of the descent of God upon Mt. Sinai with the sounding of the trumpet, and all the great demonstrations that attended his appearance upon the mountain.

Jehovah's feet

Zechariah 14:4 describes Jehovah's feet standing upon the Mount of Olives. Hebrews 12:18-29 is a description comparing God's appearing on Mt. Sinai to his later appearing to shake the heavens and the earth.

Isaiah's description of it is in chapter 24:19. "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly." It goes on to say in conclusion, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem" (v. 23). Peter was discussing the day of God when he suggested the scoffers would say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" He continued to show how the heavens and the earth will pass, and the heavens being on fire will be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat when God appears. (2 Pet. 3:3-12.)

Dual advent in Revelation

The Book of Revelation begins with an exposition that shows the impending advent of BOTH God and Christ.

In reference to God: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which IS TO COME, the Almighty" (1:8). This is carried forward to 4:8, where the four living creatures are saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and IS TO COME." Carried forward to 11:17, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and ART TO COME; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."

In reference to Christ: "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him" (1:5, 7).

The culmination of this dual advent is seen in 11:15, "The

kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ," and in 22:3, "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." They are together in the New Jerusalem. They are together when he comes in the clouds of the heavens. They are together when the nations are angry, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; the time of the dead that they should be judged. The Pharaoh-Joseph relationship is maintained throughout all this picture.

3. God and the church

In Ephesians 1:18 Paul prayed that the eyes of our understanding would be enlightened. He wanted us to understand what mighty power is working in the church; the same power God wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand.

This is the beginning of our own understanding of the church's glory as it is directly related to God. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). If we can comprehend the glory of Christ at the right hand of God, exercising all the power and authority of God; then we can in a measure understand the promised glory of the church; to reign with Christ, to sit on the throne with Christ, to be in the presence of God, and to see his face.

Sons of God

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world

knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:1, 2).

The persons involved in this text are God and the children of God, and it is clear and plain that when he shall appear we will be like him, for we shall see him as he is. "As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). The same thing is true of the church, that the same life and the same glory that God wrought in raising Christ from the dead and setting him at his own right hand would be wrought in the salvation and glory of the church; they shall see him as he is.

First Thessalonians 4:14 says "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." I see no difference in this text from the one in Zechariah of the LORD coming with his saints, or in Jude quoting from Enoch about the Lord coming with ten thousands of his saints, or the statement in Titus 2:13 that this is the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Paul exhorts us in Colossians 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." It is this relationship between God and Christ, with Christ sitting on

the right hand of God, that is set forth as the inspiration to the church.

The divine nature

In 2 Peter 1:4 we are told of great and precious promises, "that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." This is what John was talking about in 1 John 3, when he said if we are the children of God we shall be like him when he appears, for we shall see him as he is. How can we see God face to face, unless we are partakers of the divine nature; made like God himself, even as Christ was made like God in the divine nature?

It is the blessed hope of the church that we look for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. We shall become the household of God. We who follow will be brought near. We shall see God face to face. We shall be kings and priests unto our God. This is the reason that is set forth for us to look for the appearance of the great God, because it is unto him that Jesus will bring us, and show us the glory of God, our Father.

It is summed up well in these words, "Keep this commandment . . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Tim. 6:14-16). □

(To be concluded.)

Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

“THE MYSTERY OF GOD”

Question:

What is “the mystery of God” in Revelation 10:7?—B.H.

Answer:

To understand what is being said in this verse, it is necessary to look at some of the other places in the Scriptures where the thought of a “mystery” is mentioned.

In speaking to his disciples, Jesus said, “It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 13:11). Compare Mark 4:11 and Luke 8:10 with this statement of Jesus. In the series of parables Jesus gave in Matthew 13 he was teaching the disciples about the time of which they were totally ignorant; the age in which we live.

The parables of Matthew 13 are not concerning the future age of the Kingdom, but the preparation men must make TODAY in order to gain entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God. This was something about which the people of Israel were totally ignorant; that the Gentiles would have an opportunity to be in the Kingdom as the children of God.

Gentiles, fellowheirs

The Apostle Paul spoke of this mystery, and explained in detail to the Ephesians what is involved: “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (3:3-6).

Paul stated in definite terms that this mystery is the fact that the Gentiles are to have an opportunity to be the heirs of the promise through Jesus Christ, and it is, in a sense, the age in which we live, the age of grace. Paul told the Romans that “blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (11:25b).

Israel was not aware of the age in which we are living. It was a mystery to them that God would call a group of people out of the Gentiles—nations, but that is what he is doing and will continue to do, UNTIL the mystery of God—the dispensation of grace—is completed. It is interesting to notice exactly when this will come to pass.

Seven trumpets

According to Revelation 8, 9, and 10, there were seven angels with seven trumpets, which John saw. At the sounding of each trumpet some calamity came upon earth. It is in the days of

the sounding of the seventh trumpet that the age of grace—the mystery of God—comes to an end.

This is correlated with what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the LAST TRUMP: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

Joy and sorrow

This will not only be a time of great joy, because the resurrection will take place and we shall then be with Christ, but it will also be the closing of the door of salvation.

We are living in the “mystery of God,” and it is our responsibility to reveal God’s plan of salvation to as many people as possible, so when this age comes to an end we will not have to say to Christ, “They are not in your church because I did not tell them.”

“FATHER”

Question:

Does Matthew 23:9 mean it is wrong to call our earthly parent, “father”?—T.H.

Answer:

This verse is only a small part of a discourse by our Lord, in which he denounced many of the practices of the Pharisees. (Matt. 23:1-36.) The first twelve verses point out the badge of the Pharisees, and warns them against trying to feed the ego of Jesus by calling him Rabbi, Father, or Master. The prohibition in verse

nine does not include the respect we give to our earthly fathers.

In verse 32 of the same chapter, Jesus used the term “father” in reference to the physical ancestors of the Pharisees of his day, and said that if they continued in the way they were going they would be as bad as their fathers who killed the prophets.

The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:2 we are to honor our fathers and mothers, thus declaring we have a right to call our earthly parent “father.”

Lesson in humility

The truth Jesus was trying to teach was that of humility. This was not a problem of the Pharisees only, but is something each person has to confront. It comes in many subtle forms, and some of the most ruinous forms have been experienced when ecclesiastical authority has been allowed to infect the minds and hearts of Christian believers.

The practice of various branches of Christendom in calling different men “Father” violates not only the letter of this commandment, but also the spirit. It is possible to add many titles not specified by Jesus, but do the same thing, glorify an individual.

Recognize the principle

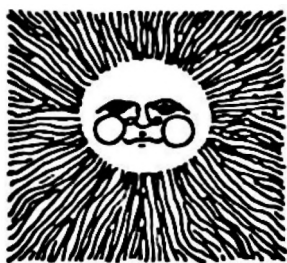
We need to recognize the principle behind this warning of Jesus, and apply it where it is required. “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Pet. 5:5).
(more)

the

ISSUE SEVEN

honest truth





The voice of one

Appreciation

Our special thanks to those of you who responded recently to the needs of *The Honest Truth*. Regardless of the frequency of publication, this ministry continues daily, as we correspond with friends of truth throughout this country and overseas, and answer questions or otherwise encourage God's people to stand in these perilous times.

Extra copies

Extra copies of each issue are available for the asking. We also have a good supply of the booklet, "The Covenants of God," by James W. McLain. We would like to see this material in circulation, so let us know your needs.

Growing

Our mailing list is growing. How much it grows depends on you. Other than published addresses and some membership lists supplied by pastors, we depend on individuals to send in the names and addresses of relatives and friends to receive *The Honest Truth*. Isn't there someone whose name you would like to add to the list? There is no subscription price.

In this issue

Bro. James W. McLain's study of "God's relationships" is concluded in this issue with consideration of the important posi-

tions of Israel and the nations. Many problems in the Scripture are created by failing to recognize the different relationships God has with various parties in his plan. For example, think of the many religious bodies who are fooling themselves by appropriating the blessings God has promised to redeemed Israel!

Included in this issue is another installment of "The promises of God," by Beth Briggs. And Bro. Richard Worley does another fine piece of work in answering questions sent in by our readers.

Read it through! Study it out! Apply the message of truth! Pass it on!

Israeli-Egyptian pullback

The eyes of the world continue to be focused on the Mideast for several reasons. As was noted in this column in our last issue, there appears to be a greater willingness on the part of the warring factions to negotiate a settlement of differences.

At the time of our last issue Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was just beginning his active role in negotiating a settlement between Israel and her neighbors.

On January 18, 1974, Chiefs of Staff Lt. Gen. David Elazar of Israel, and Lt. Gen. Mohammed Gamassy of Egypt signed an agreement to separate their

the honest truth

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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forces on the Suez front. Israel will remove its forces from the west bank of the Suez, and establish a new line in the Sinai several miles east of Suez, but retaining the strategic Mitla and Giddi Passes. This will permit the entrapped Egyptian Third Army to be freed, and the eventual re-opening of the Suez Canal.

In exchange for Israeli concessions the Egyptian armies and tanks will be thinned considerably on the east bank, and surface-to-air missiles will be removed from that sector. A United Nations force will patrol a neutral zone between the two forces.

A first step

All concerned with this negotiated pullback admit this is a first step in an attempt to solve the Mideast problem. However, most are optimistic that it is a step toward permanent peace in the area.

While we do not underestimate the effort involved by the negotiators in accomplishing this first step, there are huge differences yet to be resolved. Syria seems more reluctant than Egypt to negotiate a pullback and separation of forces on the Golan Heights. There are problems yet ahead involving Jordan, the West Bank, and the Palestinian refugees. These latter unfortunate souls fled their homes in 1948 after the Jordanian-British leaders assured them they would soon be back, as they would make short work of Israel. They have been purposely kept unsettled by the Arabs and used as pawns in international politics.

Ultimate problem

The City of Jerusalem is the ultimate problem facing the world. Leaders on both sides have said possession of the city is not negotiable. The city is dear to the world's great religions, and each has held her. But, Israel—the most ancient of the religious tenants—now holds the city. What she will do to hold the city, and what the others will do to gain the city are the subjects of prophecy, and may well signal the end of the age.

God said through Zechariah, "In that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it" (12:3). In the nearly thirty years history of the United Nations over half of all its deliberations have concerned the Mideast and Israel. Many lives have been spent and lost in attempts to solve the problems of the area. Conflict cannot be averted in the end, but the solution is in God's hands, and he will give it to the heirs of promise—Abraham's seed; redeemed Israel, Jesus Christ, and the true Church of God.

Disunity

Arab disunity through the years has been proverbial. It is said there is only one area of agreement among them, and that is common hatred of Israel. The various Arab strong men have attempted to unify the Arab nations, but with little success. The latest attempt to band Libya and Tunisia has little hope of success.

Not so well publicized is the disunity that exists in Israel. In the Israeli election of December 31, 1973, Golda Meir's ruling Labor party lost seats in the parliament. The seats were lost to the center-right Likud bloc, which has been critical of the conduct of the October War and peace negotiations with the Arabs. The Likud party takes a tough stand on the return of land captured from the Arabs, as compared with the conciliatory stance of the Labor party.

A coalition

In order to have a working majority in parliament, the Labor party must bring into a coalition other parties holding seats. These include the Liberal party, and the National Religious party. This latter party favors retaining the West Bank of the Jordan, with its sites important to the Jewish religion.

We have seen no recent count of the political parties in Israel, but they number over twenty, and cover the political spectrum from left to right. The two main parties hold about ninety of the 120 seats in parliament.

Besides the diverse political makeup of the nation, the people themselves are different in national origin, which often creates difficulties. The technologically advanced European Jews have little in common—but race—with the backward immigrants from the Arab countries. We are not trying to underestimate the task Israel has had in assimilating the Jewish people from the many nations of the world. Israel IS a modern miracle, but the seeds of

civil war are present in her make-up. Some believe her common defense against the Arabs is the only thing keeping civil war from breaking out!?

Rough times of negotiating lie ahead for the Mideast, and all sides are in need of unified backing at home, but there is little to suggest they will get it. Any settlement of the Jerusalem question is bound to affect the whole world. Watch!

"Who is a Jew?"

This question is not unrelated to the foregoing consideration concerning Israel's internal problems. Since the recent elections in Israel the National Religious party is calling for more strict requirements in determining who is a "Jew," and eligible for full citizenship rights under Israel's "law of return" for immigrants.

Present Israeli law defines a Jew as "a person who is born of a Jewish mother or who has converted." The Orthodox party wants to further strengthen the law by saying the conversion must be according to *halakah*—the ritual code of the Jewish law; especially the supplementary laws of the Talmud.

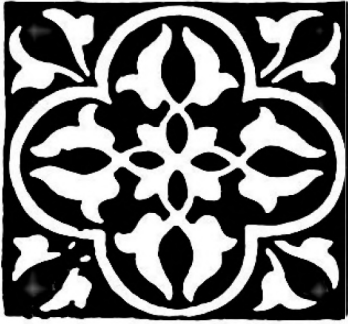
Halakah calls for the circumcision of the convert, acceptance of all ritual laws of the Torah—the first five books of the Bible, and undergoing *mikveh*, a ritual immersion. Rabbi J. H. Hertz in *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* notes that *mikveh* was to be performed through total immersion in a fountain, or a "gathering of living water" of not less than 24 cubic feet. (Pp. 452, 492.)

This call by the Orthodox wing for more rigid standards is causing quite a stir among the Reformed and Conservative groups, who represent the majority of Jews in the world. Many of these do not adhere to the dietary laws and other rituals. So, charges are flying that the Orthodox are endangering the much-needed unity of the Jewish nation.

Not a new question

What constitutes a Jew is not a new question. Technically, a Jew is a member of the tribe of Judah. In 2 Kings 16:6 the term is used of the two southern tribes. Later, the term was applied to all twelve tribes by the figure of *synecdoche*—a part for a whole. The same figure is used when the northern ten tribes were called "Ephraim" (Isa. 7:1-9). Remnants of all twelve tribes were in existence when the temple was destroyed by Titus, and the genealogies were lost. So, no "Jew" today knows from which tribe he is descended.

The words of Paul in Romans 2:28, 29 are often used by those who think they are "spiritual Israel." A close study will show that those who are born Jews and don't practice their religion are EXCLUDED, but there is nothing in the text to INCLUDE nonJews. From this we would gather that being a real Jew involves being born one—or a convert to Judaism, and then practicing one's faith. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19a). □



The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

PROMISE NUMBER SIXTEEN

PSALM 41:1—“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.”

We should consider the poor—literally poor, or the poor in faith and love toward God. We must clothe and feed them if they need it, and “preach the word; . . . in season, out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2) wherever we may go. We never know when the seed we have sown may be watered by someone else—if not by us, and may in due time blossom forth in faith and obedience to God.

The world is so full of trouble and suffering; we have it on every side. It is our privilege to go forth with love and a helping hand, and, “as we have therefore opportunity, . . . do good unto ALL MEN, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

We repeat, we must preach the Word ALWAYS, but, many times, performing little acts of kindness will help us to more effectively preach the gospel, and thus lay the foundation for the spoken and written Word.

*If we cast our bread upon the waters,
It will return to us some day,
For our God will deliver and bless us,
As we travel on life's highway.*

PROMISE NUMBER SEVENTEEN

PSALM 42:5—“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”

The followers of Jesus should strive never to be disquieted, even in the midst of the uncertainty and dangers that exist today. They know from the blessed Word that they are privileged to partake of the quietness that God has said he will bestow upon those who love him. (Job 34:29.)

When on the main streets of a large city, where automobiles and buses rush headlong, with perhaps an emergency vehicle adding to the confusion; where throngs of people dash here and there as if their lives depend upon getting somewhere as quickly as possible, we sometimes

have an almost unconquerable longing for a quiet, peaceful spot where there are no discordant noises. Perhaps, one day, we discover a lovely park, which is like an oasis, to which we can retreat and be rid of the restless city.

God is our "oasis" in this worldly desert, when the heat and confusion are about to overcome us. We can, in faith, close the door upon the tempestuous world and drink of the celestial stream of hope and peace which will quench out thirst and give new life to our yearning souls.

Let us not be cast down or disquieted, but hope in God and praise him for the help he is willing to give us.

Why be disquieted, my soul?

Look up, believe in God.

You are afflicted, I know,

With his chastening rod.

You will praise him for his help,

It may seem long, it's true,

But do not be cast down, my soul,

He loves and cares for you.

PROMISE NUMBER EIGHTEEN

PSALM 46:1-3—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

The earth in some places has actually been removed by earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes. In rare instances islands and mountains have been shaken and submerged by roaring waters.

Today we quail before the conditions that exist in the world: crime, immorality, uncertain financial conditions, dishonesty, addiction to drugs, and, above all, the fear that our earth may be desolated and its inhabitants destroyed by nuclear war.

All of us are inclined to be frightened by these things, but God tells us he is the strength and refuge of those who believe in him; a very present help in time of trouble. So, when the earth begins to rock, the floods roar, and things about us are being uprooted and carried away by hurricanes or tornadoes, or, worse still, by devastating war, let us not become panic-stricken and seek wildly for an earthly refuge of some kind. Stand still, be quiet and unafraid, and pray for the help that God promised to give. It will be forthcoming if our faith stands firm.

The waves roar, the mountains shake,

With darkness everywhere,

But our dear Lord is in command,

Why fear when he is there?

□

God's

Conclusion

relationships

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

IN OUR previous installments we considered the relationship of God to several elements of his Kingdom.

1. His relationship to Christ, concerning the throne, is best illustrated by the relationship of Pharaoh and Joseph. They ruled together, but Pharaoh said, "only in the throne will I be greater than thou" (Gen. 41:40).

2. In his relationship to the covenants, God must be personally present for the fulfillment of the covenants he has made.

3. In relation to the advent, a dual advent of God and Jesus is suggested in many familiar texts; e.g., "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). According to Zechariah 14:4, it is Jehovah's feet which stand on the Mount of Olives when he comes to deliver Israel.

4. In relationship to the church, God is the Father of his beloved heirs, the sons of God. As joint-heirs with Christ, they will behold God's face, and sit on the throne with Christ in the Kingdom.

5. God and Israel

It can be stated as an axiom that wherever redeemed Israel is God is in the midst of her. These two events cannot be separated; that is, having the restitution of Israel at one time, and having a very belated appearance of God at another time.

One has to be unmindful of the history of God's dealings with Israel to put the appearance of God in the midst of Israel at such a far-distant future. He led them out of Egypt, and his cloud of glory covered them. He led them through the wilderness, and his glory stayed over the tabernacle as a pillar of fire at night and a cloud by day. He was in Solomon's temple, and his glory stayed over the temple till the whole world wondered. God was very present in his dealing with Israel in the past; he talked to Abraham face to face, and to Moses face to face on Mount Sinai.

The whole story of the redemption of Israel, the restitution, is in God's returning to Israel and assuming his former relationship to her, dwelling in the midst of Israel forevermore.

This is the burden of the covenants. It is the burden of prophecy, and is plainly spelled out throughout the major prophets.

The story comes to its conclusion and summary in Revelation 21:3, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

This text is made up of quotations from Ezekiel and Isaiah, the promises of the covenants, and from many places. It is a composite statement, and the time in the original text is very pertinent to the time of the day of the Lord, his defense of Israel, his recovery of Israel, and his establishment of Israel as his people when his tabernacle will be with them forever.

While not fully expounded there, this principle had its beginning in the Abrahamic covenant: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (Gen. 17:7, 8).

A few choice texts

This subject of God dwelling forever in the midst of Israel is a large one. A few choice texts where it is plainly shown will suffice.

In Ezekiel 43 is a description of the new Jerusalem and the

temple in it. Just as the tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon's temple were dedicated by the personal presence of God, this will be true also of the new Jerusalem. "Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: and, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east . . . and the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. . . . and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house" (vv. 1-4). "Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. . . . And, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD" (44:1, 4). The Book of Ezekiel closes with this statement, "And the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there" (48:35).

Restitution

Ezekiel 37 is a vision of the valley of dry bones, and of the reliving, restitution, and redemption of the house of Israel. He sums up the picture: "So shall they be my people, and I will be their God. . . . Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my tabernacle in the midst of them for evermore. My

tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (vv. 23, 26-28).

The appearance of God is essential to save the remnant of Israel in the day of the LORD. "So shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof. As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem" (Isa. 31:4, 5).

Probably the clearest statement is in the end of the Book of Isaiah, "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire" (66:15). (This, by the way, is a quotation from "the song of Moses," the covenant of judgment in Deuteronomy 32.) "By fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh" (Isa. 66:16). That favorite text concerning restitution in Isaiah 35 is based upon the appearance of Almighty God, the LORD of hosts: "Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you" (v. 4).

Resurrection

In Isaiah 26 God gives the hope of resurrection to the children of Israel, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. . . . For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabi-

tants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (vv. 19-21). "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (24:23).

When I read this I think of the statement in the New Testament, which speaks of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob coming and sitting down in the Kingdom of God. (Luke 13:28, 29.) It is summed up in Isaiah 25:8, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces." All of this is summarized in the beginning of Revelation 21.

Daniel's picture

One cannot be unmindful of Daniel's picture of the Kingdom in Daniel 7:9. 1. The Ancient of days—God—is there. 2. His throne of judgment is established. 3. It is at this time that the books are opened. 4. It is at this time the one like the Son of man will receive his dominion and glory and kingdom. 5. It is at this time that the dominion of the beast will be taken away. 6. It is at this time—AFTER God and Christ have both appeared on the scene—that the Kingdom will be given to the saints of the most High, for the beast prevailed "until the Ancient of days came" (v. 22).

Zechariah's testimony

It is only the advent of God that will end the persecution of Israel, and it is not something in far off, remote times, and unre-

lated to the appearance of Christ and the redemption of Israel.

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain” (Zech. 8:2, 3). Review this subject in Isaiah 2, how all nations will go up to the mountain of the LORD. Review it again in Micah 4, where it plainly says the LORD will be there.

Zechariah again says, “Behold, I will save my people from the east, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness” (8:7, 8).

Effect upon the nations

The effect upon the nations is indicated in Zechariah, as well as many other places. “Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD” (8:22). The next verse says the reason they will take hold of the skirt of the Jew is, “We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (v. 23).

The 14th chapter of Zechariah is a review of the day of the LORD, when he goes forth to fight against the enemies of Israel as he fought in the day of battle: “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives”

(v. 4); “the LORD shall be king over all the earth” (v. 9); “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts” (v. 16).

In the Psalms

To continue the relationship of God to Israel, David, the psalmist, saw the same things as the other prophets. It says in Psalm 46, “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge” (vv. 4-7).

There is no way we can take this weight of evidence in all the prophecies where it speaks of God in the midst of Israel forever, and apply these terms to Jesus Christ. We could do this only if Jesus is God—which he isn’t; if he is “the LORD of hosts”—which he isn’t; or if he is the one who fought for Israel in the day of battle—which he isn’t.

Let us give God his proper glory as King of his Kingdom, as the Savior of Israel, as the God of Israel, and as the one who will dwell in Mount Zion before his ancients gloriously.

6. God and the nations

God’s relationship to the nations was established in the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12

when God said, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (v. 3). It is true that sometimes this refers to blessing through the singular seed, Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:16.) But, it is also said of the multitudinous seed of Abraham, who should be as the sands of the sea for number and as the dust of the earth; "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:17, 18).

As Isaiah had pictured it, God said of Israel, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD." Or, as Zechariah said, "Men shall take hold . . . of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you." Or, as Isaiah 2 says it, many people will say "let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob," or Israel. Isaiah said God would take of the children of Israel "for priests and for Levites."

The whole house of Israel becomes what Moses predicted in Exodus 19:5, 6: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Then they will, indeed, be the ministers of the blessing of God; the priesthood chosen of God to bless all families of the earth.

Blessing to the nations

This blessing to the nations is pictured in Isaiah 25. Chapter 24:23 shows this is referring to the presence of the LORD when he shall reign gloriously in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem.

"In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us" (25:6-9).

Restitution, as it deals with the people of the earth, the teaching of the nations, the taking away of the veil that has caused them not to see the truth, will follow the appearance of God. This is the hope of the world, the appearance of Almighty God to redeem Israel, to set Israel as a priesthood to lead the nations, and to bring this blessing to all families of the earth. This is the whole purpose of God. This is the Kingdom of God. □



"Recipe for perpetual ignorance: Be satisfied with your own opinions and content with your own knowledge."—*Brush Creek bulletin.*

Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

CHRIST, THE CREATOR?

Question:

I would like an explanation of Colossians 1:15-17. It sounds as if Christ is the creator. Also, Colossians 2:9. Why not "God" instead of "God-head"?—M. H., Ill.

Answer:

To understand these verses it is necessary to grasp the basic tenor of Paul's letter to the Colossians. Evidently, Epaphras had come to the city of Rome to tell Paul of the situation that had developed in the church, i.e., that Christ was not the head of the church and the leader of the body. This would explain the opening remarks of Paul as he speaks about the position of the believer as he is "translated . . . into the kingdom of his dear Son" (1:13).

The basis of this letter, then, was to impress upon the Colossians that Jesus was the head of the church. To impress this upon the Colossians, Paul spoke of the NEW creation, which came about in Jesus Christ; that which Paul described in verses 15-17.

Jehovah created

Even though many believe this is speaking of the original cre-

ation, we know from an abundance of scriptures that it was Jehovah who created the world and all that is therein.

As an example, Genesis 2:7 states that it was *Jehovah Elohim*—"the LORD God"—who created man. This man is referred to as "Adam," or "the first man" in various places. Consider First Corinthians 15:45, where it says, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [the firstborn of every creature] was made a quickening spirit."

It is our understanding, then, that Paul was not speaking of the original creation when he spoke of Christ as being the one by whom "were all things created," but of the new creation, especially the church and the things of this age.

Again, in the Corinthian letter, Paul used the same terminology in reference to the resurrection of Christ, when he referred to him as being the "firstfruits" or "firstborn" of them that slept. (1 Cor. 15:20.)

Jesus, the focal point

Jesus is the focal point of the age in which we live. It is as Paul states in Colossians 1:16, that "in him were created all things . . . whether thrones or lordships, or governments, or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him."—*Diaglott*. It is these things Christ will overcome and replace with a perfect Kingdom when he returns to this earth.

With this background of the problem of the church at Colosse we can understand the thinking of Paul as he exalts Christ and affirms his authority as coming

from God. In Colossians 2:9 he said, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

"Godhead"

The word "Godhead" is used only once in the Scriptures; both as an English translation and as a Greek word. It simply means "deity." It is in Jesus that the authority of God is manifest; not in type, shadow, or partially, but fully, literally, or "bodily," as the text says.

God has chosen his Son, Jesus, to be the means of salvation, and has invested him with power, authority, and majesty that he might be recognized as the head of the church today and as the king that is to reign in the future.

We ought not to ascribe to him more than God has given, but we should be willing and eager to give him that which God has authorized; i.e., that he is the one through whom the perfect age will be established.

SHALL KNOWLEDGE VANISH?

Question:

What is meant in 1 Corinthians 13:8 when it says, "Whether there be knowledge, it will vanish away"? I understand what it means when it says tongues shall cease and prophecies shall fail, but it is frightening to think that knowledge will also be done away. How then can we perfect our knowledge, and know God and the truths of his Word?—J. S., Ark.

Answer:

The verse in question seems to be in direct conflict with a number of Scriptural admonitions concerning our responsibility to know God and the teachings of his Word. Paul told the Ephesians

that the reason for having apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers was that they might come into the unity of the KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God.

The verses are manifold that tell of the importance of obtaining a knowledge of the Scriptures, and therefore of God. Consider 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8, "Jesus shall be revealed from heaven . . . in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that KNOW NOT God." Also, 2 Peter 3:18, "Grow in grace, and in the KNOWLEDGE of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." To list all of the texts would be redundant, as these few show that to increase in knowledge is ESSENTIAL. Therefore, we must look for the true meaning of 1 Corinthians 13:8 when it says knowledge shall "vanish away."

Not an interlude

It is impossible to separate 1 Corinthians 13 from chapters 12 and 14, and still correctly understand the chapter. This chapter is NOT an interlude on love, separate from Paul's discourse on spiritual gifts, but an integral part of it.

In chapters 12 and 14 he explains how the speaking in tongues must be regulated—even discouraged. Speaking in tongues was a mark of immaturity on the part of the Christian, and actually a detriment to the edification of the church, because it had become a matter of pride.

The practice of prophesying in the church was important, because this was the means by which God made known his de-

sires to the people. Consider the events of Acts 20:22, 23; 21:9-11.

Prevailing conditions

The 13th chapter deals with the early church and the conditions that were prevalent concerning spiritual gifts. The great manifestation—love—was missing in the church at Corinth, so Paul was trying to put the gifts in their true perspective. In doing that, he used the illustration of a child growing to manhood. Paul said the church is to grow in the same way. And, as the growth takes place, the immaturity and practices of childhood will be replaced.

To Paul, this immaturity included the speaking in tongues—"I spake as a child"; prophecy—"I understood as a child"; and knowledge, or the imperfect reasoning of a child—"I thought [reasoned, marg.] as a child" (13:11). In chapter 14 Paul confirmed this when he said, "Brethren, be not children in understanding" (v. 20).

Gifts superseded

These gifts and actions were to be developed and superseded as the church—and the individual believer—became mature. Paul said, "I put away childish things" (13:11). He had already rebuked the Corinthians because of their lack of maturity as far as love and knowledge were concerned when he said, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1).

As the early church grew in years some of these gifts were

taken away, as there was no longer a need for them. The gift of prophecy—direct revelation from God—was no longer needed when God's Word was given to the apostles and recorded for our reading and understanding.

Tongues are no longer required for a sign for those who believe not. (1 Cor. 14:22.) We should no longer require the sign of speaking in tongues than we should require the sign of the fleece and the dew as did Gideon, the sun going back on the sundial as did Hezekiah, or the sign of the rod turning into a serpent and his hand becoming leprous as with Moses.

We have the open testimony of God's Word, and this former type of manifestation was for the "childhood" of the church, and has been replaced by the maturity of Christian growth.

Build upon knowledge

By the same token, knowledge is to be built upon as maturity is reached. The knowledge of a "babe in Christ" will be superseded as he grows and this knowledge is put into practice as a love of God, a love for the brethren, and a love for the truth.

Let us endeavor to be full grown in the body of Christ; endeavoring to attain "the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [full grown] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). □

Note: Questions may be sent to this office, or directly to Pastor Richard Worley, 6375 S Kessler-Frederick Rd, Tipp City, OH 45371.—Ed.

DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN THE NEWS MEDIA

U. S. pollsters regularly announce their findings on the "average American's" declining confidence in President Richard Nixon's ability to govern the nation. They are finding at the same time there is a declining confidence in all politicians.

A few are willing to express themselves concerning their declining confidence in the news media.

In the February, 1974 edition of *The Reader's Digest*, Edward Jay Epstein writes concerning "The strange tilted world of TV network news." He reveals how the news is "created" by the network news staffs in their New York offices, and how the news footage is drawn from a limited geographical area, with over 80% of the networks' domestic correspondents stationed in New York, Washington, D. C., Chicago, and Los Angeles.

The way the news is "organized," in Epstein's view, favors the "eastern liberal" point of view, and puts the conservative view on the defensive.

James J. Kilpatrick (*Greenville News*, 5-22-73) commented on an interview with Walter Cronkite of CBS by a Chicago TV critic. Cronkite was asked if there is "some truth to the view that television newsmen tend to be left of center." Cronkite said, "Well, certainly liberal, and possibly left of center as well." Kilpatrick went on to discuss the system which spawns liberally-integrated reporters.

Performing well

That the liberal news media is performing well we must admit. Even conservative religious publications such as *Present Day Events* have been led to conclude that American government officials are Mafia-type characters, and that our "Government has come to a standstill."—Issue 327.

With the major network news being so "managed," the true believer is called upon more than ever to trust in God, and to use common sense and judgment in every area of life.—*The editor.* □

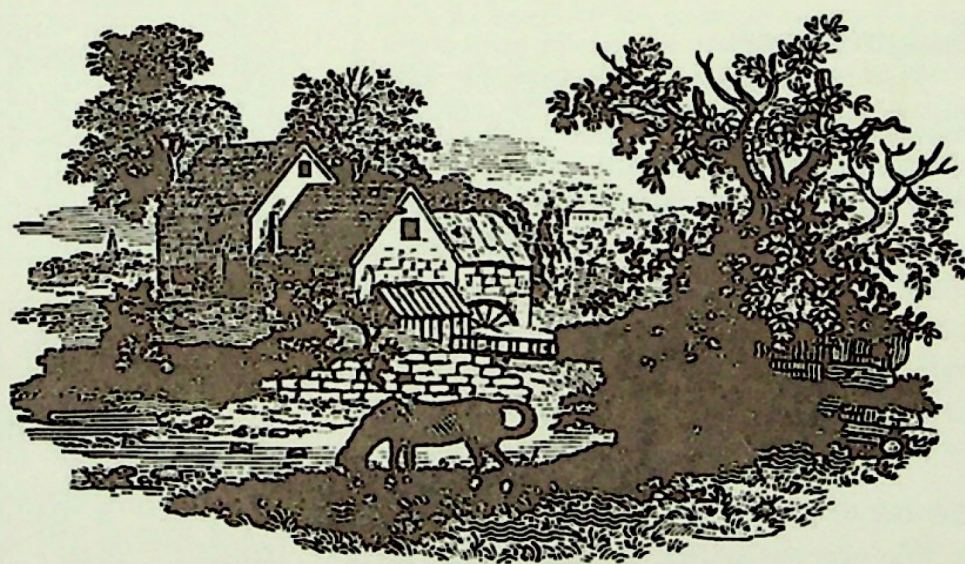
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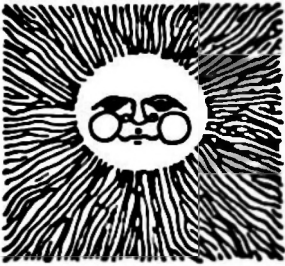
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ISSUE EIGHT





The voice of one

At this writing

This issue is a little delayed due to pastoral activities. We just recently concluded a prophetic conference, with a series of ten lectures by Bro. James W. McLain. It was a timely, deep, and important series. The studies were recorded on cassette, and may be made available if enough interest is shown. Let us know.

In this issue

Besides our regular features, we present in this issue an interesting study by James W. McLain on the thing that will cause all nations to gather against Jerusalem. Your editor includes a basic consideration of the steps toward salvation. We trust you will find something to encourage you, exhort you, and challenge you.

Huggins book

The reprint of Robert G. Huggins' book, *The Bible: its Principles and Texts*, has been delivered by the printer to the publishing brethren in Cleveland, Ohio. We expect the pre-publication orders to be filled soon. We will accept orders for the book for \$2.65 postage paid, when payment accompanies the order.

We have a message

We remember a tract of this title published years ago by the General Conference. The gist of the tract was that we have an

important message of God to present; one not being presented by anyone else, and one contrary to popular theology.

The tract is no longer in print, and its purpose seems to have gone out of style. Somewhere along the line the distinctive message we considered important has been given up for a message that is a "blah" look-alike of that proclaimed by every church down the street. This assessment is not ours alone, for we are being told this by laymen in our different churches across the country.

Signs

We see signs everywhere that the message has been relegated to a secondary position. Examples include: the number of our ministers and churches taking part in union services in the community, including so-called "Good Friday" services; so-called "visitation Sundays," when our members are encouraged to attend different churches in the community; or the many times we see in church bulletins where the members are encouraged to try to influence legislation on different issues.

Only a belief that "It doesn't make any difference" could cause our ministers to go to Jack Hyles' "pastor's school," or Campus Life's headquarters in Cali-

fornia! One would have to disregard the important doctrines of the Bible, and accept a "Jesus only" doctrine to be able to "stomach" what these organizations teach.

It is a sure sign of a lacking somewhere when our ministers and members run to and fro looking for something. It is evidence the "famine . . . of hearing the words of the LORD" (Amos 8:1, 12), is here now.

Presenting a message from God with conviction demands that we personally STUDY God's Word until it is inside us, and we see the importance of truth for salvation. More and more, as the days of spiritual famine descend upon us, we must rely on our own personal study of God's Word to sustain us in difficult times.

We have a message, and that is why this journal exists!

The day Christ died

So-called "Good Friday" has long been observed by the Roman church and her daughters as the day Christ died. Even common sense should tell us the "three days and three nights" of the sign of Jonah could not be fulfilled in the interval from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning.

The alternatives to this belief are having Christ crucified on Wednesday or Thursday.

We have studied the Wednesday crucifixion theory, but cannot see how it can be supported by Scripture. Having him placed in the tomb before sunset on Wednesday precludes that he had to be raised before sunset on

the honest truth

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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Saturday. This would contradict Mark 16:9, "And having risen early on the first day of the week" (*Diag.*).

Too, if Jesus died on Wednesday, and the Passover began at sundown that day and ended at sundown on Thursday, there would have been a "free" day before the seventh-day sabbath began. Why would the women feel compelled to come to the tomb so early on Sunday morning to anoint the body of Jesus if they had all day Friday to do it?

It has been our observation that those who teach a Wednesday crucifixion usually have a motive for doing so, and that is to promote their idea that Jesus was raised on Saturday. This they use as a "club" to chastise the "Sunday keepers." (Notice the literature of most seventh-day groups, including A. N. Dugger's *Mount Zion Reporter.*)

A Thursday Crucifixion

The week of Jesus' death is outlined simply in Scripture, beginning six days before the Passover when he came to Bethany. (John 12:1.) He was anointed after sundown on Saturday at a supper at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. The next day—Sunday—he did enter Jerusalem to the shouts of the people. He spent that evening at Bethany, and went into Jerusalem the next day—Monday, cursed the fig tree and cleansed the temple. He spent that night out of the city.

On Tuesday he went back to Jerusalem, was tested by the sects of the Jews, and spent the evening at Simon's. On Wednes-

day he gave instructions to the disciples for keeping the Passover—a day early. The communion was instituted Wednesday evening.

Then followed Gethsemane, arrest, trial, and crucifixion. He died at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday at the exact hour the Passover lamb was slain. He remained in the tomb three nights, and was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures. (Matt. 20:19; Luke 24:21, 46; 1 Cor. 15:4.)

All questions and arguments, and all Scriptural requirements are met by a Thursday death.

Roger Rusk article

A recent article by Roger Rusk in *Christianity Today*, March 29, 1974, reinforced our conclusions of long standing.

Using computerized information worked out by Herman H. Goldstine at the Institute of Advanced Studies, in which the new moons and full moons from 1001 B.C. to 1651 A.D. were figured, Rusk was able to pinpoint the day Jesus died as Thursday, April 6, A.D. 30. A Wednesday or Friday crucifixion could not have occurred anywhere near the year Jesus died, based on the NEW moons, which determine the date of the Passover. (The Passover is not set by the FULL moon as suggested by the *Mount Zion Reporter* as quoted by George E. Davison in an article in the April, 1974, *Restitution Herald.*)

Of course, the important thing is that Jesus died for our sins, but isn't the truth concerning his death more beautiful than fiction!? □

The controversy of Zion

By J. W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

FOR YEARS we have heard various speculations as to what will draw all nations against Jerusalem in the latter days, as predicted in Ezekiel 38, Zechariah 14, etc.

Bible students have theorized that the mineral deposits in the Dead Sea would be the attraction. Fantastic figures have been produced to show the monetary value of such a spoil.

Possession of unprocessed natural materials is not the same as having money in the bank. Consider the huge shale-oil deposit in the western United States, which, until now, no oil company has found it profitable to process.

Extracting minerals from the Dead Sea is a similar kind of operation. Only Israeli scientists seem to have the technical ability to make the operation feasible. They have been at it for many years. If the Bible students had been right, these minerals should have made Israel the most wealthy nation on earth. Their output still leaves much to be desired. High operating costs and narrow profit margins make this a very unlikely attraction over which a nation would wage a major war.

It would be a bit ridiculous to latch onto the oil crisis and suggest it is oil that will gather the nations against Jerusalem. Israel is not one of the oil-producing countries.

Jerusalem, the prize

It was Jesus who really told us the secret, but we have long failed to recognize it. He said, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20).

It is the HOLY CITY, OLD JERUSALEM, that is the prize, the spoil. It is the controversy over possession of this ancient city that will make it the focal point of a bitter struggle.

The question arises, What is there about Jerusalem that makes it so important to so many people?

To Israel

A study of its history shows why the Old City is so important to Israel. Father Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedek at Salem, an earlier, or poetic, designation for Jerusalem. (Gen. 14:18-24.) It was in the land of Moriah, on a mountain designated by God that Abraham offered Isaac, his son of promise. (Gen. 22:2.) Jewish tradition pinpoints the

Temple mount as the place of this important event.

It was David who made Jerusalem the capitol of Israel. "In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah. And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David" (2 Sam. 5:5-7).

Zion

The original city which David took is only about a mile square. The maps show this Mount Zion, which was the castle and stronghold, in the lower southwest corner of the square. In the middle toward the northeast was Mount Moriah. The encyclopedia and Young's Concordance say there are four mountains in that square where the Old City was.

David strengthened this fort and built up the walls all around. (2 Sam. 5:9.) This is how Zion came into possession of the Israelites.

Now without Zion, "Zionism" among the Israelites would be empty and dead. To them Zion represents the throne and David's house, and there can be no re-establishment of David's throne and David's house without possession of Zion.

Moriah

I see a difference here between the political and the spiritual,

because the Temple was built on Mount Moriah, but the throne—the house of David—was on Mount Zion. The LORD comes to Zion, and his Word goes forth from Zion, according to prophecy.

Now, Mount Moriah—where the Temple of God stood—is another matter, a spiritual matter. It involves everything from Abraham on down through the Arabs, and to our own time.

First Chronicles 21:18-30 tells of David purchasing the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. Some of the Jebusites continued to live in Jerusalem after David took it. David built an altar on the threshingfloor, and presented offerings to the LORD. Because of God's acceptance of his offerings there David determined to build the Temple on that spot on Mount Moriah.

That the Temple was built on that spot is brought out in 2 Chronicles 3:1, "Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite."

To Israel this is the most holy place on earth.

Sacred to the Arabs, too

To the Arabs Mount Moriah is equally important. They believe Mohammed ascended to heaven from there. To celebrate and perpetuate the belief, they built their most holy mosque, the Dome of the Rock, on the site of Israel's Temple ruins.

This information helps us to understand some of the statements recently made by Israeli and Arab leaders. The king of Saudi Arabia said, "It is our holy city, and we will never give it up." Golda Meir has said, "The question of Jerusalem is not negotiable."

The various claimants to the Old City are equally adamant in their determination to possess it at all costs.

Even if the Arabs and Israel solve their differences over the lands captured by Israel in the various wars, the problem of Jerusalem will remain. And when it comes to the question of Jerusalem the Pope has said he wants in on the discussions.

Besides the Jews, Arabs, and Roman church, Jerusalem is sacred to the Eastern Orthodox Church, and Armenian, Coptic, Jacobite, and Abyssinian sects hold rights to the shrines, and maintain convents, monasteries, and churches. Many Protestant sects also have interests in Jerusalem. So, Jerusalem becomes involved with ALL peoples of the earth in regard to religion.

Cause of controversy

It has been the practice of various nations and religions that have held Jerusalem to make it solely their own, and shut out other people, nationalities—other religions.

When the Israelites had their Temple, no stranger could go into certain important areas. When Hadrian, the Roman, possessed it, he made it a pagan city and shut out anyone else. When the Moslems held it, and later the

Turks—who are Moslem, they shut out all foreigners from that area. This was the reason the Crusaders went there and seized Jerusalem from the Turks, in order to open the city again for Christian visitation of the sacred shrines. In more recent times, until the Six-Day War, the Jews were forbidden to go beyond a certain place on Mount Moriah, because it was Moslem sacred land. On reclaiming the city, the Israeli soldiers rushed down to the Wailing Wall, and kissed the very dirt of the ground, for they had reclaimed the city of the Temple.

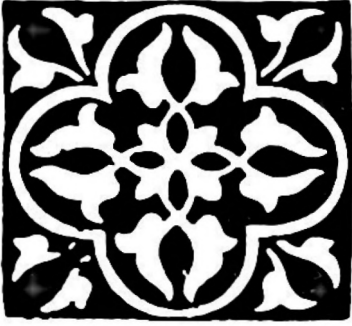
Possibilities

Have you considered what the repercussions would be in Arabia—and in all the world, if Israel should gain undisputed possession of Jerusalem by peace agreement, and should choose to shut out from Old Jerusalem all other religions?

Can you imagine the consequences if Israel should undertake to tear down the Dome of the Rock, in order to rebuild their Temple on its original site?

Here is an explosive situation that could involve Israel against the Moslems, the Catholics, the Protestants, and all who regard Old Jerusalem as their very own holy place.

It has to be something more than wealth—oil or minerals—that will so incite the nations of the earth that they will WANT to have a part in going down to seize the city of Jerusalem. Religion seems to be the answer, and the prize is Jerusalem; the spoil is Jerusalem itself. □



The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

PROMISE NUMBER NINETEEN

PSALM 55:22—"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

We need never suffer from unbearable burdens, because the LORD has told us to cast them upon him, and he will sustain us. But, so many times, after we have turned our burdens over to him, we unconsciously take them back again. Our verse does not mean we should be UNCONCERNED about our daily affairs, but that we should have no ANXIOUS concern about them. After we have done all we can to help ourselves, we must wait patiently for God to finish the work.

When we begin to think we have more burdens than anyone else could possibly have, let us call to mind the story of the man who thought he had the heaviest cross in the world. An angel placed a number of crosses before him, and told him he might choose one of them in place of his own. But, after trying them all, he decided he preferred his own, and took it up without further complaint.

God knows what is needed to change a child of his from a self-centered, perhaps unlovely, person into one who will reflect the tenderness and compassion of Jesus Christ. How, indeed, could we sympathize with the tribulations of others if we had not suffered from them ourselves? When we think of the heavy burdens countless others bear, our cross—in comparison—will sink into insignificance. We will realize how much we have for which to be thankful, and will praise God every day for our many blessings.

*Why falter in our daily task,
Why bow beneath the load,
Why toil until our courage fails
Upon a rocky road?*

*Let us cast our burdens on the LORD,
Who has promised to sustain,
And when we see his face some day,
All things shall be made plain.*

PROMISE NUMBER TWENTY

PSALM 62:6—“God . . . only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.”

God is my rock. We all remember the Bible story of the two men who decided to build houses. One built his house on the sand, and when the winds and rain came, it fell. The other erected his home on a rock, and even the most tempestuous storm could not demolish it. This is a valuable lesson for the people of God.

God is my salvation. There is no other way to God except through faith in Christ Jesus. We must, of course, demonstrate our faith by works. Only faith will bring us the answers to our prayers, and give us the joy and peace for which we long.

He is my defense, and I shall not be moved. Other defenses, even the strongest, may be destroyed. But if God is our defense, nothing, let us repeat NOTHING, can move us, unless we allow ourselves to be moved. Let us be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

*I will build my house upon the rock,
And not upon the sand.
When roaring floods sweep on the shore,
It will not fall, but stand.

And when I build my house of faith,
I have my great reward
For building on the mighty rock
Which is the blessed LORD.*

PROMISE NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

PSALM 72:4—“He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.”

We know there are not many judges who mete out justice to the poor and needy. More often the man who can afford high-priced attorneys, or the one who is powerful in the political or financial world, receives all the favors. The poor and needy are oppressed and forgotten in their vain struggle against the great. So many times it seems the oppressor goes unconcernedly on his way, oppressing still others, and receiving no punishment for his acts.

But God takes note of these things, and the time is coming when he will break in pieces the oppressor, whose punishment will be swift and sure. Let the oppressed take courage, for the God who sees all and knows all will eventually save him.

*God shall break the oppressor in pieces,
He shall not have mercy, or spare,
He shall judge all the needy with mercy,
With love and his unfailing care.*

□

Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

SPIRITS AND ELDERS

Question:

What are the seven Spirits of God, and who are the four and twenty elders?—P. P., Ohio.

Answer:

The seven Spirits of God are mentioned four times in the Book of Revelation, but in none of these places are we specifically told who or what they are, unless we determine that Revelation 4:5 and 5:6 are literal. Then we would conclude that the seven Spirits are “lamps of fire” and “eyes.”

The Occurrences

In chapter one we have the introduction to the Book of Revelation, and we see the throne of God in verse four. A part of this scene consists of the seven Spirits which are “before the throne.” I believe this is an illustration of the work they have to do; the bidding of God.

In chapter three we are in the middle of the message to the seven churches, and in verse one Jesus is described as having the seven Spirits of God. I *assume* that, from this verse, these seven Spirits are ministers of God that

can and will be used also by Christ in accomplishing the work of God.

In chapter four

In chapter four John saw a view of the throne of God once again, and there was an activity of lightning, thunder, and voices. In the fifth verse the seven Spirits are described as being “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne.”

Fire is used in three distinct ways: 1) cleansing, 2) destruction, 3) giving of light. It is possible this description of the seven Spirits as fire is typical of their work in the remainder of Revelation.

In chapter five we see the little book that has seven seals. Finally, Jesus—the Lion of the tribe of Judah—comes to open the book. In verse six he is described as “having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

We recognize this as being a figurative description of Christ; the horns signifying great power, and a multiplicity of eyes implying the ability to judge fairly and accurately.

The language that tells us the most about them is the last phrase of verse 6: “sent forth into all the earth.”

Seven angels

We notice that on two different occasions there are seven angels set forth to do the work of God on the earth. In Revelation 8:2, after the seventh seal of the book was opened, John saw the “seven angels which stood before God,” and these angels went forth with seven trumpets.

As each trumpet was blown some great calamity came upon the earth. These events were for a definite purpose—cleansing, as the seven Spirits which were lamps of fire might indicate in 4:5.

After the work of the angels with trumpets, in chapter 15, John saw another vision of seven angels having the seven last plagues. I think these could be the same as those that had the trumpets, and, therefore, possibly the seven Spirits of God. The work of these angels is similar to the work of the trumpets, but the severity is amplified.

My opinion is that the seven spirits are seven angels; the same ones that are given the seven trumpets and, finally, the seven vials of God's wrath.

TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

The four and twenty elders are mentioned only in Revelation, and there is no definite explanation of who they might be. We can surmise, but special care must be exercised lest we assume they represent a special group—or groups, and build or reinforce a doctrine simply upon this assumption. Let us look at the description of these elders and their comments, and see if we can arrive at a logical conclusion.

The elders are mentioned about ten times, and little is explained about them except what they do and how they are dressed.

In the majority of instances (7) they are described as worshipping God. In two instances (5:5; 7:13) they were used to reveal information to John. On

one occasion (14:3) they had a song sung unto them by the 144,000.

By looking at their service we would recognize the elders as worshipers and servants. In the majority of instances they are joined by the four beasts, or "living creatures."

Most popular idea

The most popular idea of who the elders are is probably that expressed by H. A. Ironside: "The elders in heaven represent the whole heavenly priesthood, that is, all the redeemed who have died in the past, or who shall be living at the Lord's return."—*Lectures on the Revelation*.

It is extremely doubtful that these twenty-four elders represent this group described, because they are recognized as being in heaven on thrones BEFORE Jesus made his second advent or return to earth.

White raiment

The elders are described in two places as singing a song, and being dressed in a certain way, which may help us determine who they are. They were "clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold" (4:4). Because of this description of their clothing, it is sometimes assumed that this automatically makes them members of the bride of Christ. However, white raiment and white robes are used several places in this book. In 6:11 it is used in reference to those "under the altar." In 7:9, 13 it is used in reference to those who "came out of great tribulation" (v. 14).

In 3:4 it is used of those who have not "defiled their garments."

In 19:8 a description is given of fine linen as "the righteousness of saints." This evidently has reference to this instance, but not to every place "fine linen" is used. For example, in chapter 18 we have the fall of Babylon described. In verse 12 one of the commodities of Babylon is said to be "fine linen," but it certainly does not infer that this was "righteousness of saints." It may also be noticed that angels are said to be clothed in fine linen. (15:6.)

Angel's "uniform"

Returning to the twenty-four elders, however, we see they were just clothed in white, and it is not specified whether it was linen or some other material. It should be recognized that this was the "standard uniform" of the angels. Consider the angel at Jesus' tomb (Matt. 28:3), and the angels at his ascension. (Acts 1:10.)

We conclude, then, that because the elders were around the throne BEFORE Jesus was even given the seven-sealed book, and because they were dressed in white raiment—as other angels, and are so often connected with the "four living creatures," that these are angelic beings as well.

A problem

One problem with this viewpoint is found in Revelation 5 where the four and twenty elders sing a new song unto Christ. They testify, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed US to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made US unto our

God kings and priests: and WE shall reign on the earth" (vv. 8, 9).

According to these verses, then, if the four and twenty elders are angelic beings, Jesus died not only to redeem mankind, but also all angelic creatures. And, these angels were at some time classed as "all kindreds of the earth." Of course, we know this is not the case, but that Jesus died for mankind, and has redeemed them.

Other translations

In looking at other translations, however (Diag., NEB, S&G, RSV, Williams, and probably others), we find this verse translated in this manner: "Thou art worthy to take the scroll and to break its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst purchase for God MEN of every tribe and language, people and nation; thou hast made of THEM a royal house, to serve our God as priests; and THEY shall reign upon earth" (NEB).

Thus, we see the four living creatures (beasts), and the twenty-four elders were not singing of their own inheritance, but the inheritance of someone else; those who were redeemed from the earth by the blood of Christ.

I believe

I believe the bulk of information infers the twenty-four elders are the same as the four beasts (living creatures), angelic beings that worship God and do his bidding. □



Note: Questions may be sent to this office, or directly to Pastor Richard Worley, 6375 S Kessler-Frederick Rd, Tipp City, OH 45371.—Ed.

Steps toward salvation

By the Editor

FROM THE time the first man, Adam, fell short of God's glory, and brought sin and death upon his posterity—all mankind, God set in motion his plan to deliver fallen man from sin and its consequences.

The Bible is plain in showing that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). It is also plain in showing that we do not have to do anything to be condemned, because we are "condemned already" (John 3:17, 18). We conclude, therefore, that we must **DO** something to escape condemnation—to obtain forgiveness, and to be in a right relationship with God.

Though ignored by the majority, the Bible is plain in showing there are steps to be taken **TOWARD** salvation. The steps are: hearing the gospel, believing the gospel, repentance, confession, baptism, and living the Christian life. No **ONE** of these steps is conversion, but combined they detail the **PROCESS** of conversion; the turnabout from walking in our own way to walking in God's way.

1. Hearing

The Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of this step when he said, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not **HEARD?** . . . So then faith cometh by **HEARING**, and **HEARING** by the word of God" (Rom. 10: 14, 17). This step emphasizes the importance of the message, and the importance of proclaiming the message.

In answer to the Philippian jailer's question, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they **SPAKE** unto him **THE WORD OF THE LORD**, and to all that were in his house" (Acts 16:31, 32).

Philip, the deacon-evangelist, went down to Samaria and "**PREACHED** Christ unto them," and "they believed Philip **PREACHING** the things concerning the **KINGDOM OF GOD**, and the name of **JESUS CHRIST**" (Acts 8:5, 12).

The gospel message is from God, and it is twofold, embracing the good news of God's coming Kingdom on earth and

remitted or forgiven: "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for [Greek *eis*, for, in order to] the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). (Note: We are not baptized BECAUSE our sins have been remitted, as some claim. If this were true, baptism would be reduced to a meaningless form.) If we say we do not need to be baptized, we say, in effect, we do not need Christ; we are self-righteous.

Baptism into Christ is a seal, a sign, and a signature. It is a seal of faith in the gospel (Rom. 4:11); a sign that we have been buried with Christ, and have risen to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-6); and a signature to the contract or covenant of promise. (Gal. 3:29.)

6. The Christian Life

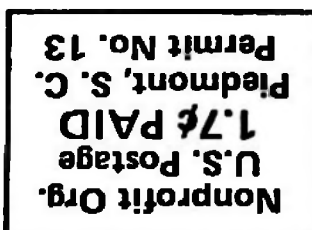
Baptism is the BEGINNING of the Christian life. The journey of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land is a great type or example of this. They believed in

God, came out of Egypt—a type of sin, were baptized in the sea, and began the wilderness journey. The journey of life was full of testing and trials, but was also a time of close relationship to God. He revealed to them his will and law, and led them day by day. They learned to trust and obey him. Sad to say, they were not all successful in reaching the Promised Land. (See 1 Cor. 10:1-12.)

As the late R. H. Judd said it, "The end of right learning is right living." If we have rightly learned God's Word, and rightly apply it to our lives, our steps will lead to a life of service to our God. The fruit we bear through God's help will abound to his glory, and will be proof of our faith. (Jas. 2:14-26.)

The steps we have taken to free ourselves of sin, the steps we take daily in God's service, will prove to be steps toward eternal salvation in the Kingdom, if we endure faithfully unto the end. □

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ISSUE NINE





The voice of one

In this number

We call your attention to an article by James W. McLain on page 4, in which he provides the Bible key to prophecy concerning the dominion. What determines which nations are represented in the man-image of Daniel 2? Is Russia's role in prophecy as large as we have been taught? Does Rome fit into the picture? Where was Eden? And so on. **STUDY** this important article!

Richard Worley does his usual fine job with questions from the readers.

By request, your editor presents a study of the Bible meaning of the text in John 3, "Ye must be born again."

We appreciate the response we get from our readers. Extra copies are available, and we are always happy to send to your relatives and friends. There is no subscription.

"The 'New' Middle East"

An editorial in *The Greenville News* of June 21, 1974, under this title, presented the opinion of the editor that there is a "new" situation in the troubled Mideast.

Cited were the diplomatic victories in the shuttle negotiations by Henry Kissinger in bringing about pull-backs in both Egypt and Syria. Also noted was President Richard Nixon's historic

swing through the Mideast, in which he traveled from country to country without the previous barriers to such travel. We do not underestimate the importance of their diplomatic triumphs.

To Americans it was a welcome change to see our leaders well-received in formerly hostile areas.

At the same time, it is not a little baffling to us laymen in world affairs to hear that we have promised to share our nuclear technology with both Egypt and Israel. Too, we have promised military aid to Saudi Arabia and Jordan, as well as to Israel. And we have promised economic aid to Syria. This is a real risk for the United States, and a great responsibility.

Ingredients for peace

The editor of *The News* went on to list the four ingredients necessary for "lasting peace" in the Mideast: 1) Israel must give up sovereignty of the Old City of Jerusalem, and the City be internationalized; 2) Israel must restore most of the lands taken in the 1967 war; 3) Israel must restore the Palestinian refugees to their land; and 4) the Arab states must recognize the State of Israel.

There may be a "new" willingness to negotiate by the Mideast countries, but the old problems still exist.

the honest truth

Israeli leaders have said at times they would be willing to give up land taken in the 1967 war. The strategic Golan Heights are always excepted. Actually, this is a bizarre situation, in which a victorious army or country is expected to give up what it has won, and act like a loser! It is unparalleled. World opinion is strong, and biased in favor of the Arabs.

The so-called Palestinian refugees have been purposely kept unsettled so they can be used as a club. The rich Arab countries could have permanently relocated them years ago, but have chosen not to. If Israel accepted them into their country the Arabs would outnumber the Israelis, as Israel already has a million Arabs inside its borders. Perhaps the creation of a separate Palestinian state on the West Bank will become a reality.

In some senses the Arab states recognize the existence of Israel, but it is not a popular thing for them to recognize her officially. No doubt they will eventually do this.

The Old City

As Bro. McLain presented so well in his article, "The controversy of Zion," in our last issue, the Old City is the real issue in the continual struggle. "Solution" of that problem may well mark the beginning of the end.

We expect to see an apparent solution to problems in the Middle East, but it will be only apparent. Each positive step toward "peace" is a step toward the end of this age, because God is being left out. Watch! □

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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The Dominion

OR, EDEN, THE GARDEN OF GOD

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

THIS SUBJECT has become one of the most intriguing of any I have pursued in the Scriptures. I stumbled on it quite by accident. After reading my booklet, "The covenants of God," someone asked me what I was going to do with Russia in Ezekiel 38, and with Rome in Daniel 7.

In the course of searching for evidence in answering these questions I read Ezekiel's prophecy against the king of Tyre, "Thou hast been in EDEN THE GARDEN OF GOD" (28:13). In 31:3-17 he told Pharaoh about the Assyrian dwelling in Eden, in the garden of God. He called the nations dwelling in the Bible lands, "the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God" (v. 9).

This aroused my curiosity as to what and where is Eden, the garden of God. Studying the map accompanying this article, I was suddenly aware that all the nations against whom Ezekiel prophesied were in the area of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Arabian Empires. This was the "meat" I was after in the preparation of a study of the man-image of Daniel 2. So, it seems best to reveal the story of Eden, the garden of God, first.

Eden, the garden of God

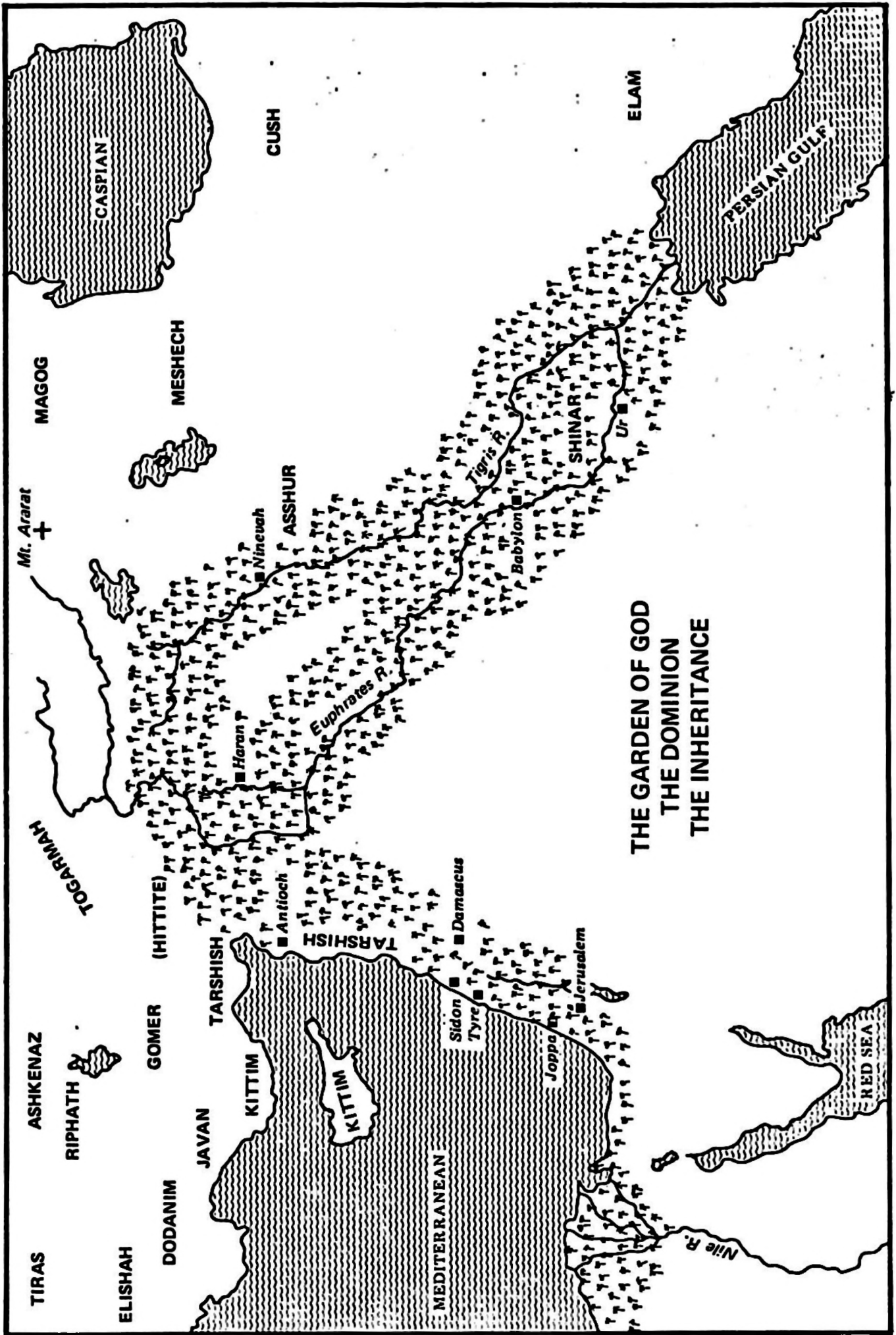
On the map furnished you will note the shaded section, stretching from Egypt through Palestine to upper Syria, making a right turn southeastward, down the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to the Persian Gulf. The historians call this "The Fertile Crescent." The Scriptures call it Eden, the garden of God. (Ezkl. 28:12, 13; 31:3-9; 36:35.)

Perhaps it is only a coincidence that the shape of this garden is like a boomerang. Standing on its tail, it is the Hebrew letter *resh*. It is also representative of *rosh*, the head, the chief, or the beginning. We are familiar with the Jewish New Year, "Rosh Hashanah," beginning of the year. Genesis begins with the Hebrew *reshith*.

In this garden of God are the beginnings of three worlds: the Adamic, the Noahic, and the Messianic. There are great similarities about the three. The same dominion seems to be under consideration in each of the three.

The dominion

The word "dominion" has at least two meanings that have an application in this study: 1) the exercise of authority; 2) domain, the place where it is exercised.



Reflect on this. Adam was the king. God told Adam to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air," etc. (Gen. 1:28.) God gave him authority to rule, and a domain.

We see a succession of dominion. Probably at the death of Adam, Methuselah or Lamech received it. It was passed on to Noah—a select person, to go from the old world to the new, which gave him dominion in the new world: Noah was king.

I believe Noah passed the dominion on to Shem. You will note in Genesis 9:25-27 that it says, "Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." If this be true, then this dominion would perpetuate itself until the time of Abraham. Then, God's covenant with Abraham would continue the dominion, so that it would be under the covenant that the Israelites would go into the land of Canaan and possess it.

The first Eden, Adam's

Our mental picture of the garden of Eden is usually that of a squared-off plot of ground like a park, in which was the most luxuriant growth, and everything beautiful and abundant.

But, let us consider Genesis 2:8, "The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden." It is a bit difficult to put a fence in the middle of the word "eastward." There is motion and direction in the word. There is the suggestion that, likely, the whole Tigris-Euphrates valley was the garden of Eden. "A river went out of Eden to water the garden" (v.

10). One of the rivers named was the Euphrates. This river courses from Syria to the Persian Gulf. As it watered the whole valley, it would seem this is the garden of Eden.

Paradise to wilderness

What happened to the first garden was repeated in the second. It began as a paradise, but was made a wilderness because of sin. Adam sinned. A sentence of life at hard labor was pronounced upon him. The ground was cursed, and henceforth it was to yield thorns and thistles. (Gen. 3:18, 19.) Adam had to move out and grub around for a living.

Adam may have traveled over quite a bit of the "dominion" God gave to him, during the 930 years he lived. There is a tradition in Arabia that Adam built his first altar at Medina. Joshua 3:16 speaks of a city named after Adam, on the Jordan River.

The sons of Adam were of two kinds. Abel served God acceptably. Cain did not. Cain became jealous of Abel and killed him. The elements of this drama have been repeated in the second Eden, in the attempt of the Gentiles, beginning with Babylon, to destroy the people of God, Israel. It is being repeated today, in the attempt of the Arab nations to destroy Israel. The Arab guerillas are based in Eden, in Syria. The drama will have its climax, in the time of the end, with a final attempt to destroy Israel.

The second Eden, Noah's

The Flood removed the curse upon the ground and cleansed it.

Historians describe the paradise that was in the whole Euphrates valley during the early empires. They say the land would yield two to three hundred per cent above normal growth. In order to get wheat to head, they cut it down twice and pastured it once. Fruit trees and vegetables were in abundance everywhere. The land was full of wild game. Food was no problem to the marching armies of the early empires.

Coincident with the abundance in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, was the abundance in the land of Canaan. It took two men to carry one cluster of grapes. It was a land that "floweth with milk and honey" (Num. 13:17-27).

History tells us that invasion and war destroyed this paradise. Trees and crops were destroyed, and the land was salted. The people were killed or terribly disfigured. Modern man knows this former paradise only as a waste and a wilderness. Again, as it was in the first Eden, the ground brought forth only thorns and thistles.

Down from Ararat

When Noah and his sons came down from Mount Ararat they entered Eden, the garden of God. At the first they all dwelt together. They moved gradually the length of the garden to the region of Persia. They were of one language and one speech. "They journeyed from the east," and came to the plain of Shinar, where they built the Tower of Babel. (Gen. 11:1, 2.)

After the confusion of tongues they were scattered abroad. They

took up residence throughout the garden of God. There was no need and no incentive for them to go elsewhere at the first. Each gave his name to the region in which he dwelt. The tribal names and territories were well known to the early prophets, and to the historians of earliest times.

I have several maps which show the disposition of the sons of Noah. True, they did migrate at a later time, after the garden became a wilderness. They spread to China, Russia, Germany, Scandinavia, Britain, America, and many other places. You could probably find more Gomerians and Magogians in America than any other place today.

Sons of Noah

The sons of Japheth were called "Gentiles." The Scripture says, "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations" (Gen. 10:1-5).

The early manner of life of the sons of Noah was tribal. The rule was patriarchal. As they became populous, they built cities. The patriarch became the king of the city and the immediate area where the tribe dwelt.

Ambitious city kings sought to extend their power by conquest. This led to the beginning of empires. The Egyptian was the earliest. Soon after came the Chaldean, Hittite, Assyrian, and Babylonian.

Israel's kingdom

Under Saul, David, and Solomon, Israel's kingdom de-

veloped, surrounded on three sides by the Babylonian empire. The captivity was the end, for awhile, of Israel's opportunity to exercise dominion over the garden of God. Only at the end of "the times of the Gentiles," in the restitution, can they realize their hope, and have possession of the garden of God. At that time God will fulfill his covenants: the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the Mosaic; the promise of the land. Then he will make with them a new covenant. (Jer. 31:31.)

Adam's world ended by judgment; by the Flood. Noah's world, this present world, will end by judgment. The world to come will have a paradise, a garden of God, for "the people of the saints of the most High" (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27). It is the same dominion that has been in question throughout.

"The desert will rejoice"

When God comes with a vengeance, then the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose. Parched ground shall become a pool. (Isa. 35:1; 60:13.) Consider the map. What will it be like when God makes all of the Arabian desert, the Sinai peninsula, the Egyptian desert, all inhabitable and beautiful?

Dominion of the garden

It is the dominion over the garden of God that is the secret of understanding the man-image of Daniel 2, and all prophecy concerning the time of the end.

The dominion was offered to Adam, with the potential of eating of the tree of life, and living forever. Dominion was

withheld from him because of his transgression.

The dominion was offered to Israel, but because of their sins, and the sin of King Solomon, it was withheld.

God gave the dominion to the Gentiles, for the duration of the times of the Gentiles. Nebuchadnezzar was the first of the Gentiles. The Gentiles of prophecy are the eastern empires residing in the garden of God. Study the map. Each successive empire to have the dominion may be found within these boundaries. The dominion is God's, and he gives it to whomsoever he will. (Dan. 4:28-35; 2:36-45; Gen. 15:18-21; 22:17; 26:3; Deut. 11:24.)

The third Eden, Messiah's

David's description of Messiah's dominion is an accurate representation of the garden of God, and is in accord with the enlarged promises of the land. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psa. 72:8).

Daniel pictures "one like the Son of man" receiving the dominion after the destruction of the last Gentile beast. (Dan. 7:all; esp. 13, 14.)

Messiah's dominion signals the beginning of the third Eden, the new world, the new heavens and new earth. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet. 3:13).

So, the fulness of the dominion is yet future; reserved for Messiah. May we be accounted worthy to share it with him! □

Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

"FAITH PROMISE"

Question:

Is the so-called "Faith Promise Plan" set forth in Oswald J. Smith's tract, "How God Taught Me To Give," a scriptural method? unscriptural? or antiscritural?—E. D., S. C.

Answer:

To determine if something is scriptural is one thing; and to determine if it is right or wrong is another. Webster says that scriptural is, "Of, pertaining to, contained in, or according to, the scriptures; Biblical."

If this says what I think it says we do many things that are not scriptural, or are not commanded or okayed in the scriptures. For example: Sunday school is not mentioned; the use of pianos, organs, guitars, hymnals, etc.; the use of radio, television, and the printed word to spread the gospel; and the list could go on and on.

To determine if something is scriptural does not necessarily mean that it has to be mentioned and sanctioned in the scriptures. It means it must not conflict with the basic principles set down in the scriptures.

Faith Promise Program

Now, the Faith Promise Program. It is my understanding that God intended his work to be supported through the tithes and offerings of his people. If the Faith Promise Program will help you go beyond the tithe, and if you receive a definite blessing, I do not see that it would be wrong. Once again, it should be stressed that this would not be a tithe, but it is something completely separate and beyond the tithe.

One question in my mind, however, is the way it is handled. I feel this should be between God and the individual, and not put on record to what extent God is going to bless you. This can do three things:

- 1) destroy faith because God did not meet your expectations;
- 2) could possibly limit God;
- 3) it could be a matter of pride when we bring a third party into our commitment.

Faith Promise giving is not antiscritural, and, depending upon the attitude of the person, it can be a blessing or a detriment.

"MYSTERY OF GODLINESS"

Question:

Would you please give a Biblical exposition of 1 Timothy 3:16, especially concerning the part, "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh"?—E. P., S. C.

Answer:

In 1 Timothy 3 Paul was instructing Timothy in the workings of the church, and the responsibilities and qualifications of the officers. In verse 14 he said these were but instructions

to last him until Paul would be able to be with him, further instruct him, and set things in order. In verse 15 he again stated his purpose: "that you may know how one ought to behave himself in the household of God" (NASB).

In verse 16 it seems Paul left his discussion on church polity and spoke of the work of Christ. In reality, he spoke of Christ as the REASON for the church in the first place.

Reference was made to the "mystery of godliness." There are varied opinions as to what this has reference to, but I am convinced the term is used in reference to Jesus; he is the "mystery of godliness." After this statement was made, Paul went into a poetic-type description of Christ that constitutes this mystery.

Revealed in the flesh

"HE WHO WAS REVEALED IN THE FLESH." This is another of the verses that handicap the exclusive King James reader. The oldest manuscripts and versions do not have "God" in this verse, but "he who." Those who feel this should be a *theta* in the Greek also admit that it is so obliterated in the manuscripts they cannot tell for certain what the first letter is.

In many places the KJV translators let their own thinking and theology show through, and this is one of those places.

Paul and John certainly agreed on this doctrine. Paul said Jesus was revealed in the flesh, or "took part of the same" (Heb. 2:14). John said if we do not confess that Jesus came in the

flesh we are practicing deceit and the spirit of antichrist. (2 John 7.)

Jesus was "revealed in the flesh," "made like his brethren," that he "might taste death for every man"; an important part in "the mystery of godliness."

Justified

"JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT." This description of Christ covers the scope of his ministry. How did he heal the sick, feed the multitudes, calm the sea, and raise the dead? By the power of God. By God's spirit he was justified or vindicated. It was by this means that the people were to accept his message.

To put on the finishing touches, he was "justified by the spirit" by being raised from the dead. Paul said, "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4). By his resurrection we are assured that he was accepted of God.

Seen

"SEEN OF ANGELS." This could refer to two different classes of people, and I am at a loss to know which group—possibly both—is referred to here. If the word "angel" here means a celestial being, we know Jesus was seen and recognized of them on different occasions. At his birth the angels recognized him as the Son of God. After the temptation the angels ministered to him. At his ascension and after the resurrection there were angels around telling the disciples what they should be doing.

The word "seen" might also mean "made known," and according to Hebrews 1:6, Jesus was not only to be known of the angels, but they were to worship him also.

If we look at the angels as being the apostles, or simply messengers of God, we realize that they, too, saw Christ. Not only did they see him during his ministry, but more importantly, after his resurrection.

Preached

"PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES." This was accomplished by many of the apostles, but especially Paul. He referred to himself as an apostle to the Gentiles. This is still being done by the church today.

Believed

Because of the preaching by the church, Christ is **"BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD."** This is one of the necessities of salvation; belief in the Son of God. Acts 4:12 states it is only through him that salvation can be obtained. John said one of the purposes of his gospel was that people might believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

Received up

"RECEIVED UP INTO GLORY." There are two explanations that can be given for this statement, and either one—or both—could be accurate and correct.

1) The term "taken up in glory" (Diag.) could refer to the fact that Christ ascended into heaven in full view of his disci-

ples. Because of his ascension and the appearance of the angels urging the disciples to greater service, it was recognized that he was accepted of God.

2) The term could also refer to his resurrection from the dead to a new and glorious condition. He was now a partaker of the "divine nature," or eternal life. By his resurrection the disciples recognized the fact of Jesus' sonship.

Of course, we acknowledge that each of the foregoing conclusions depends upon the other.

First Timothy 3:16 tells of the work and nature of Jesus Christ. This is an essential part of the "mystery of godliness."

BILLY GRAHAM

Question:

Can you tell me why so many "Church of God" people can support Evangelist Billy Graham, when he consistently gives unbiblical answers to important questions in his newspaper column, and preaches untruths on radio and TV?—S. D., S. C.

Answer:

Yes. They are not rightly dividing the scriptures that command that we are to separate ourselves from those who are preaching a gospel that is foreign to the one in the scriptures. Or, they are remaining willingly ignorant of these things. Consider the commandments in the following texts: 1 Corinthians 6:15-17; 10:20, 21; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Galatians 1:6, 8; 2 John 7-11. □

Note: Questions may be sent to this office, or directly to Pastor Richard Worley, 6375 S Kessler-Frederick Rd, Tipp City, OH 45371.—Ed.

Begotten from above

By the editor

JESUS' WORDS to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," are often quoted and much appropriated by the Christian community. That they are as much misused as used, and more misunderstood than understood, is a fact. But, properly understood, Jesus' discourse proves to be a great insight into the means of becoming a child of God.

Nicodemus

Nicodemus is mentioned three times in the Book of John. In those three references we see him transformed from night inquirer to bold disciple. As a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, he probably came to Jesus at night for fear of losing his position. He was, nevertheless an honest inquirer and respectful of Jesus as a teacher sent from God.

In John 7:50-53 we find Nicodemus questioning the proceedings of the rulers in trying to dispose of Jesus. He said, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" Though not proof that he was a disciple, it could be interpreted that way, and it did stop the meeting.

In the final mention of Nicodemus, in John 19:38-42, we find him boldly aiding Joseph of Arimathaea in the burial of

Jesus; Nicodemus providing the spices.

Born, or begotten?

In John 3:3 Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." A correct understanding of this whole passage depends on the use of the word "born."

The Greek word *gennao* is used 97 times in the New Testament. It is translated "beget" 49 times, and "born" 39 times, as well as by the words: bear, bring forth, be delivered of, conceive, gender, be made, and spring; all related to begettal or birth.

Whether this word means "beget" or "born" is determined by usage. Simply, it means "To beget, of the father; to bring forth, of the mother."—Bullinger's Lexicon.

Applying the rule, we read, "Abraham begat [not bore] Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob," etc. (Matt. 1:2-16.) It is for this reason that we read that God said of Jesus, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten [not born] thee" (Acts 13:33).

This rule is followed in the translation of *gennao* "born" in Matthew 1:16, where it speaks of "Mary, of whom was born

Jesus.” Also Matthew 19:12, “Some . . . were so born from their mother’s womb.”

That there is begettal before birth is brought out in Matthew 1:20, where the angel spoke of Mary’s pregnancy, saying “that which is conceived [*gennao*, begotten, margin] in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

Begotten from above

The word “again” in John 3:3 should be translated “from above,” according to the margin, and Young’s and Strong’s concordances. That it is from above—of the Father—indicates *gennao* should have been translated “begotten” here. One is not BORN from above, but is BEGOTTEN from above, by the Father.

That Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus meant by being BEGOTTEN from above is plain, according to verse 4, when he asked Jesus, “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” He missed the whole point!

Water and spirit

Jesus then said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be begotten out of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (v. 5). The definite article “the” does not occur in the text in relation to water and spirit. This is an indication that one thing is meant, not two. Dr. Bullinger showed this to be a common figure of speech: *Hendiadys*—two for one. (*Figures of Speech, & Companion Bible.*) How this singular begettal takes place follows.

Granting that a person must be begotten of the Father or he cannot enter the Kingdom of God, the question arises as to how this begettal takes place. In verse 6 Jesus mentioned the fleshly life and the spiritual life, indicating there is a parallel between the two.

The begettal process of a child of God begins with the receiving of the “seed.” Peter said the elect had obeyed the truth, “Being born again [begotten again, v. 3, Greek *anagennao*], not of corruptible SEED, but of incorruptible, BY THE WORD OF GOD” (1 Pet. 1:22, 23).

Begettal in natural life is by sperm or spores, also called seed. It is no mere coincidence that the New Testament words for “seed” are *sperma* and *spora*, or *sporas*.

In the Parable of the Sower, it was the seed—“the word of God,” that fell on good ground, representing those, “which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, kept it,” and brought forth Christian fruits a hundred fold. (Luke 8:1-15.)

It was Paul who said, “In Christ Jesus I have BEGOTTEN [*gennao*] you THROUGH THE GOSPEL” (1 Cor. 4:15). In James 1:18 we read, “Of his own will BEGAT [*apokueo*] he us WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH.” According to 1 John 5:1, “Every one who believes that Jesus is the Anointed one, has been begotten by God; and every one who loves the begetter, loves the one begotten by him” (Diag.).

God has no other plan or way of begetting Christian sons than

by the seed of the Word of God being received into the hearts and minds of men, and causing them to do according to his will.

The next step

The next step in the Christian begettal is being "begotten out of water and spirit." Acceptance of the Word of God will lead one to the waters of baptism. After hearing the Scripture explained by Philip, and believing it, the Ethiopian eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

Baptism is the act of burying the old man, and the beginning of the new man in Christ. (Rom. 6:2-6.) Baptism is "the washing [*laver*] of regeneration" (Titus 3:5), the washing away of one's sins. (Acts 22:16.) The same act is called begettal of "spirit" because it is opposed to the "flesh." "Flesh" is one of the synonyms for the old nature, as "spirit"—without the definite article—is a synonym for the new nature. (See Bullinger's booklet, "The Two Natures in the Child of God.")

The Christian growth

As after the natural begettal there is growth, so with those who are begotten of the heavenly Father. As long as we are in this mortal flesh we shall have to cope with the flesh. We are no longer in our sins, but sin is still in us. Though not sinless, "No one who has been begotten [*gennao*] by God PRACTICES sin" (1 John 3:9, Diag.).

Our duty is to nurture and feed the new nature so as to strengthen it, and starve and subdue the old nature. In 1 Peter 2:2 we are told to, as "babes,"

"desire the sincere MILK OF THE WORD, that [we] may GROW thereby." The Greek word for "babe" here means "a child while yet in the womb, the new-born babe."—Bullinger's Lexicon. (See Luke 1:41, "the babe leaped in her womb.")

In a sense, as begotten but yet unborn babes in Christ, we must abide IN him and his Word in order to live and grow. (Cp. John 15:1-6, "no more can ye, except ye abide in me.") If there is no miscarriage or abortion, there will be a birth.

The Christian birth

In this extended comparison between the natural and the spiritual, the Christian BIRTH would answer to resurrection or the change to immortality. We doubt that "birth of the Spirit" is the name for this. It will be like a birth in that from this moment on the Christian's life will be underived. He shall be given that eternal life, which the Father possesses.

It will be a time when the creature "shall be DELIVERED from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). It is then that God's children will be raised, never to die again, and will be called the "children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36).

As the wind?

In John 3:8 Jesus is recorded as saying to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit."

Of the 385 occurrences of the Greek word *pneuma*, this is the only place the translators rendered it "wind." No doubt it was done because this is a near quotation of Ecclesiastes 11:5. Jesus foresaw Nicodemus' next question—"How can these things be?"—and answered it with this Old Testament verse. It says, "As thou KNOWEST NOT WHAT IS THE WAY OF THE SPIRIT [Heb. *ruach*, "wind" in v. 4], nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; EVEN SO THOU KNOWEST NOT THE WORKS OF GOD who maketh all."

The subject here in verse 8 is still the begetting of the child of God. When we consider God's wonderful plan for the begetting of sons for himself, we, too, ask how these things can be. Then we are reminded of the wonders that exist in nature, the way of the wind and the child in the womb, and we say with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

We see no justification from this text for the teaching of some, that those "born of the Spirit" in the resurrection will be able to come and go as the wind, or to appear or disappear at will.

Some even claim that Jesus, after his resurrection, went through solid doors without first opening them, but there is no record that he did this. That would contradict all the demonstrations by Jesus to prove he was physically real after his resurrection, as in Luke 24:36-43.

Nicodemus' response to Jesus' teaching indicated he did not understand. He did not understand the earthly things like begetting and the way of the wind, so it was not unusual that he could not understand the heavenly things Jesus was trying to teach. This is typical of the natural man.

As a teacher in Israel, Nicodemus should have known such texts as Ezekiel 26:25-38, which speak of the cleansing of the people of God, their new heart, their new spirit, and their repentance. He should have known that the Kingdom of God will not be of the fleshly world order (John 18:36), and that those who would inherit that Kingdom must be like their King; begotten of God, and ultimately changed to immortality and incorruptibility.

Summary

The Bible tells us how to become the begotten children of God. The begetting process begins with receiving the "seed" of the Word of God—the truth concerning Jesus and the Kingdom. Being "begotten out of water and spirit" is one act—baptism. Being "born again" cannot be the subject of John 3, as it is speaking of the Father in every case. Fathers do not bear children; they do beget them.

We must be begotten of God in this life, grow and develop as unborn infants, and remain steadfastly in him and his truth, in order to be his children in the resurrection.

The plan of God to save sinful man is a great wonder! May we have a part in it! □

**WHAT HAST THOU IN THINE HAND?
By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.**

“Lord, I have no gifts or talents,
Nothing that I can command.”

“Look and see, dear one, and tell me
What is that within your hand?”

“When the widow poured out the oil,
It increased and multiplied,
And five loaves and two small fishes
Fed crowds on the mountainside.

“See! You have at least one talent,
Do not bury it in the sand,
For the Father needs, beloved
what you hold within your hand.

“What you give will keep on growing,
Like the seed it will expand,
And will bless all those around you . . .
Use what you have in your hand!” □

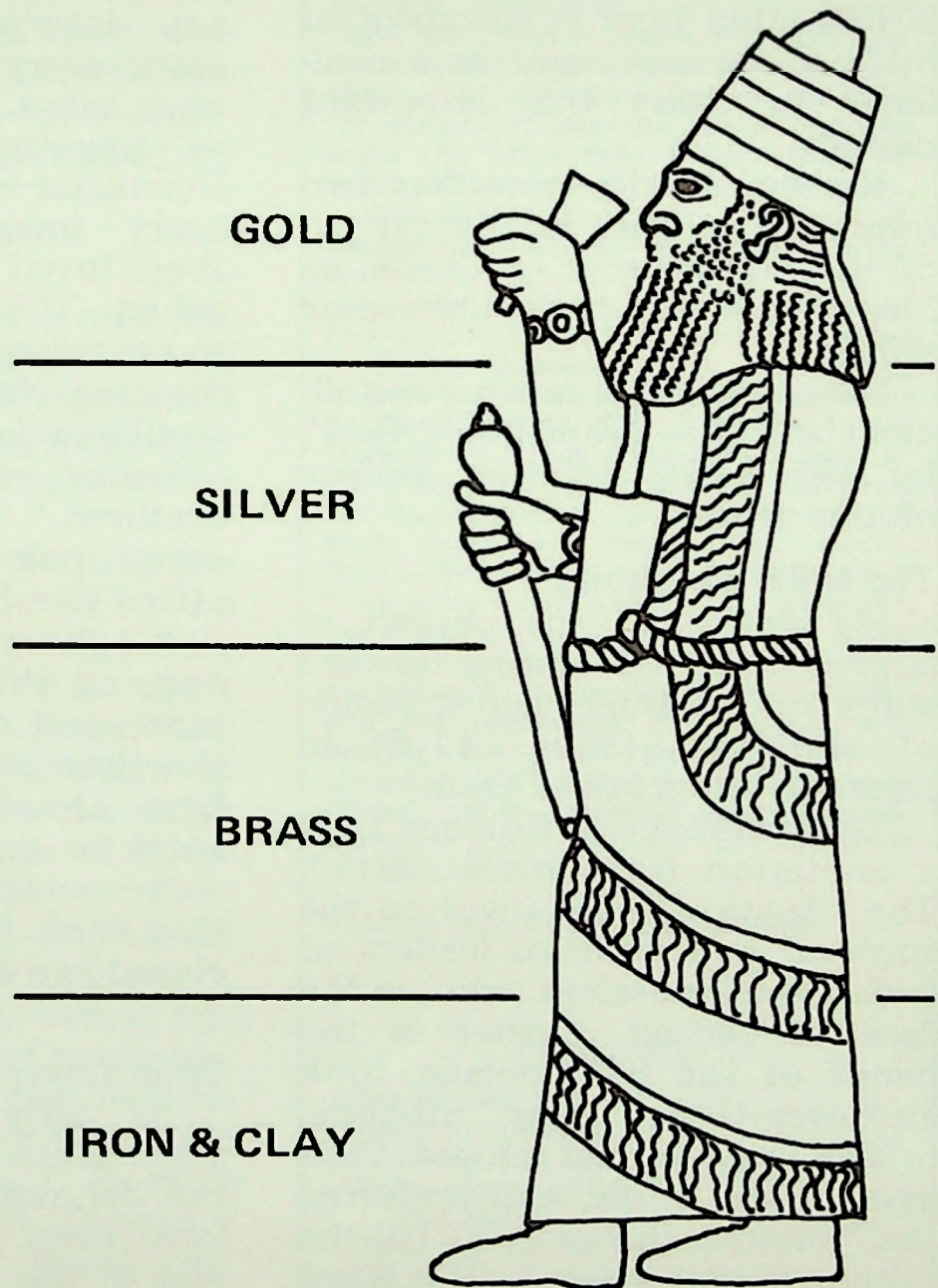
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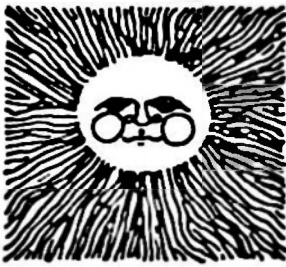
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ISSUE TEN



THE MAN-IMAGE OF DANIEL 2



The voice of one

In this issue

On page 4 begins an in-depth study of the man-image of Daniel 2 by James W. McLain; complete with maps and illustrations. This study is a sequel to his article on "the dōminion" in issue nine. It is presented here in the spirit of biblical research, and as a challenge to study this important passage.

Richard Worley considers two questions related to the subject of the preexistence of Christ; an idea that seems to trouble some minds.

We return with another installment of "The promises of God" by Beth Briggs, after an absence of one issue.

The spirit of inquiry

We detect in the church at large a spirit of apathy toward study of the Bible, and a "spirit of slumber" (Rom. 11:8) in regard to the truth of God.

This reference in Romans 11 is a quotation from Isaiah 29:10. The situation there involved the spiritual and political leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, who, in the face of certain disaster at the hands of the Babylonians, took an "everything's okay" attitude.

The people had closed their eyes to the truth, and preferred the "smooth things" (30:10) the false prophets spieled. The Word of God had become a "sealed" book to them.

Approaching that again

We are approaching that stage again. The only solution to the spirit of slumber is the spirit of inquiry and watchfulness so typical of our forefathers in the faith. They were not bound to any interpretation, so investigated everything with a free and open mind. They were not afraid to investigate anything. They discussed—yes, even argued—every imaginable subject, but they loved the truth and each other. It was not considered "unchristian" in those days to disagree. Now one is branded as a troublemaker, and accused of "sowing discord among the brethren," if he doesn't agree in every point with the systematized theological standard.

Prophecy, especially, is an ongoing thing. God is revealing more and more as we approach the time of the end. But, if we have already decided how it's going to be, and quit searching, we're going to "miss the boat"! God can't reveal anything to the closed eye or the deaf ear!

What then?

As early as the January 8, 1968 issue of *Awake!* magazine, the Jehovah's Witnesses faithful have been told to look for the end of the age in the autumn of 1975. "Evidence" was put forth in favor of that date, including:

1) "those who were old enough to witness *with understanding* what took place" in 1914, when Gentile times ended, were about to pass away; 2) the end of man's 6,000 years of history was due to be reached in 1975, according to their figures.

The so-called "day-for-a-year theory" popularized by William Miller in the early 1800's, led C. T. Russell and his followers to place excessive importance on the year 1914. Russell was not alone in this, but all of the schemes involving the time measures of Daniel and Revelation—interpreted a-day-for-a-year—have fallen dead and expired by any measure.

No need

We see no need of world history continuing exactly 6,000 years just to fulfill someone's idea of typology. Anyway, who can unerringly determine when Year One started?!

We have no desire to delay the Lord's coming, and we're no prophet, but we can't "buy" the Watchtower dates. We can't believe God would reveal the date of the end of the age to some group that does not cherish the truth in other areas of Scripture.

God purposely did not reveal to ANYONE the date of the end, so true believers in every age would live in a spirit of readiness.

From whom did the inspiration come for setting the 1975 date? If, and when, it doesn't happen, what then? Pick another date? Make another event "secret"? Or, realize "the prophet" was a false prophet! Watch! □

the honest truth

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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The man-image of Daniel 2

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

THE MAN-IMAGE of Daniel 2 represents a period of time. It is called in Luke 21:24 "the times of the Gentiles." The times of the Gentiles is that period when the nations have possession of God's dominion—the Promised Land; the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others.

This image begins in Judah, concerns Judah, and will end with Judah and Jerusalem. At no time, nor in any sense, does it concern the ten tribes of Israel.

INTRODUCTION

It seems a bit pointless to discuss "the times of the Gentiles" in relation to the man-image if we have no clear information who the Gentiles are.

"Gentile"

The meaning of the word "Gentile" may best be found through the translation of the Hebrew *goi* into the Greek word *ethnos*. The concordances and lexicons give the meaning of either word to be, "an organized people, distinct by language, customs, or genealogy." It may be equally translated as Gentile, nation, people, or heathen.

The word "Gentile" has no special meaning above that of "nation." One would have to have a closed, unreasoning mind

not to know that the Jews are as much a distinct ethnic group as the Romans. The Jews are as much entitled Gentiles, in the strict meaning of the word, as any other nation. It is only in the sense that Israel is a chosen nation, distinct and separate from all other nations (*ethnos*), that we make the distinction Jew and Gentile, Israel and the nations.

Let us develop the habit of mentally saying "nations" every time we come across the word "Gentiles" in the Scriptures. It will cease to have the special meaning the "Roman theorists" have attached to the word.

Traditional interpretation

We are slow to admit the interpretations established by the earliest "Protestant" churches still saturate our thinking. The churches of the Reformation considered the Roman Empire, the Roman Church, and the Pope to be the real enemies of the Christian Protestant Churches. They saw this as a continuing struggle until the persecuting Beast would be destroyed in the last days. They laid the foundation for the interpretation that the Roman Empire must be revived to become the Beast, and to be finally destroyed. They laid

the groundwork for the idea that it is the church that must face a great tribulation in the last days at the hands of the Roman Beast.

The ten tribes of Israel

In our opening statement we indicated the image does not concern the northern ten tribes of Israel. Why? According to 2 Kings 17:6-23, the northern ten tribes were carried into the cities of the Medes by the king of Assyria, because of their idolatry. "So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day" (v. 23). These people went into the land of the Medes and died there. Their children did not carry on the faith, so it died with them.

So, other than a few from the northern tribes who joined Judah, the ten tribes of Israel are in their graves in Assyria. Ezekiel 37 is graphic in showing the valley of dry bones represents "the whole house of Israel" (v. 11). But, God said "Prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel" (v. 12). The ten tribes are not lost, and neither are they the so-called Anglo-Saxon peoples, as some contend. The return of all Israel awaits the destruction of the man-image.

Image & Israel's idolatry

Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image had a two-fold purpose. It apprised him that God was giving him the dominion. It gave Israel the reason for giving the dominion to the nations. The reason was the idolatry of Israel.

The man-image was an idol. Nebuchadnezzar so interpreted it, for he immediately set up an image of gold, and commanded all people to worship it. (Dan. 3:1-30.) The man-image was representative of God's judgment upon Israel for her idolatry. They chose idols, so he gave them an idol—"the times of the Gentiles"—to indicate that they could not possess the dominion until this time had run its course. The dominion was given into the hands of their enemies—the nations, whose idols Israel worshiped.

Metals in the image

The choice and arrangement of the metals in the image is significant. They represent all the gods of Babylon. At Belshazzar's feast, "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone" (Dan. 5:4).

The wealthy made their gods of gold. The less affluent made them of silver. The very poorest made them of miry clay, and baked them into earthenware.

History affirms this deterioration of affluence, wealth, and power in the nations represented in the image, until, in the feet of the image, the nations are much poorer, and much diminished in power from the time of Babylon. While the present inhabitants of the dominion are a far cry from the original, and the land is full of poverty, ignorance, unemployment, refugees, and suffering, there is no change of attitude among them. They have one mind, and that is **TO DESTROY ISRAEL.**

There is no warrant by anything that is said in the Scriptures for making the PARTS of the man-image mean anything. Two legs or ten toes mean no more than two arms, ten fingers, two eyes, or two ears.

The ONLY application made in the Scriptures pertains to the four metallic divisions of the image. There were four metallic divisions, and there were four distinct empires to rule the dominion.

A qualification

Not according to the Roman theorists does the possession of Palestine qualify an empire for a place in the image. Many powers have possessed it: Babylon, Persia, Greece, Assyria, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, the League of Nations, and England.

The ONLY rule of qualification is to POSSESS THE WHOLE DOMINION that was given to Nebuchadnezzar, "Wheresoever the children of men dwell" (Dan. 2:38). Only four great empires in history have qualified by possessing the WHOLE dominion. They are: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Arabia. Rome never possessed the dominion. (For a full study of "the dominion" see issue nine, page 4.)

THE IMAGE

1. The head of gold

"Thou art this head of gold" was the interpretation of the dream given by God to Nebuchadnezzar through Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar was also the first beast—the lion—in Daniel 7. He made the first image to the beast. (Ch. 3:1-7; Rev. 13:14.)

Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt Babylon with its hanging gardens; one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Nebuchadnezzar was quick to take credit for all he had; "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built...?" (4:30).

He possessed the whole dominion, which God gave unto him. His empire was pretty much confined to the dominion. This was not true of empires which succeeded him, as some possessed not only the dominion, but vast areas beyond it. (The maps accompanying this article show the empires that held all the dominion, and those which held only part of it.)

Nebuchadnezzar carried away the Jews into Babylon, beginning "the times of the Gentiles." They were in captivity for seventy years, until the Persian empire under Cyrus and Artaxerxes. (2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 6:14.)

The power and glory of the Assyrio-Babylonian empire is evidenced in the Scripture, when Nebuchadnezzar was advised that "After thee shall arise another kingdom INFERIOR to thee" (2:39).

2. Breast and arms of silver

In another vision—the ram and the he goat of chapter 8—the second kingdom is named as Media and Persia, or Medo-Persia. (v. 20.) In the night of Belshazzar's feast, when the hand wrote on the wall, the kingdom was given to Darius the Mede. (5:30, 31.)

The Medo-Persian empire not only possessed the whole do-

H. A. IRONSIDE'S DRAWING OF THE IMAGE

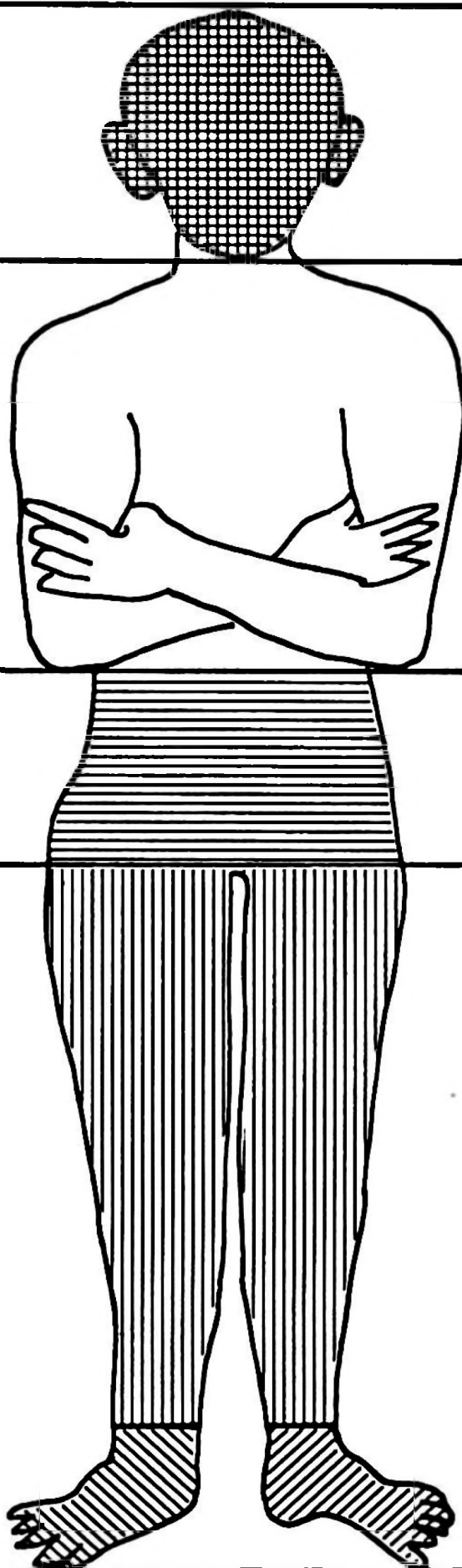
GOLD—BABYLON

SILVER—MEDO-PERSIA

BRASS—GRECIA

IRON—ROME

IRON & CLAY—REVIVED ROME



minion, given to Nebuchadnezzar, but built one of the most expansive empires the world has seen. It reached from North Africa to India and China. The empires of Alexander and of the Arabs were almost identical with the Persian empire. It was the Persians crowding against the gates of Macedonia that inspired Alexander to make his campaign against the Persian Empire and to take it.

3. Belly and thighs of brass

This is the Grecian empire. At the time of Nebuchadnezzar's dream there was no Greek empire, as such. It was only after Alexander's success in the east that Macedonia, Greece, and other feudal states fought it out and became the beginning of the Greek empire of the West, that produced its great philosophers and leaders, who influenced the future of Europe.

Alexander's father, Philip II of Macedon, and Alexander himself had their interests eastward. Alexander's empire was an eastern empire. He possessed the whole dominion that God gave to Nebuchadnezzar, as well as the whole Persian empire. Being on the march continually, in the brief time of his life, he did not have a specific capitol city. He became sick and went to Babylon, where he died.

No division

There was no division in Alexander's empire until after his death. How do the Roman theorists explain the two thighs of brass? Do they maintain that the two thighs represent a division in Alexander's empire, as they

maintain the two legs are the two parts of the Roman empire?

It should be noted that the thigh extends to the knee. The Roman theorists have the legs extending from the hips to the feet, which is contrary to anatomy and the Scriptures.

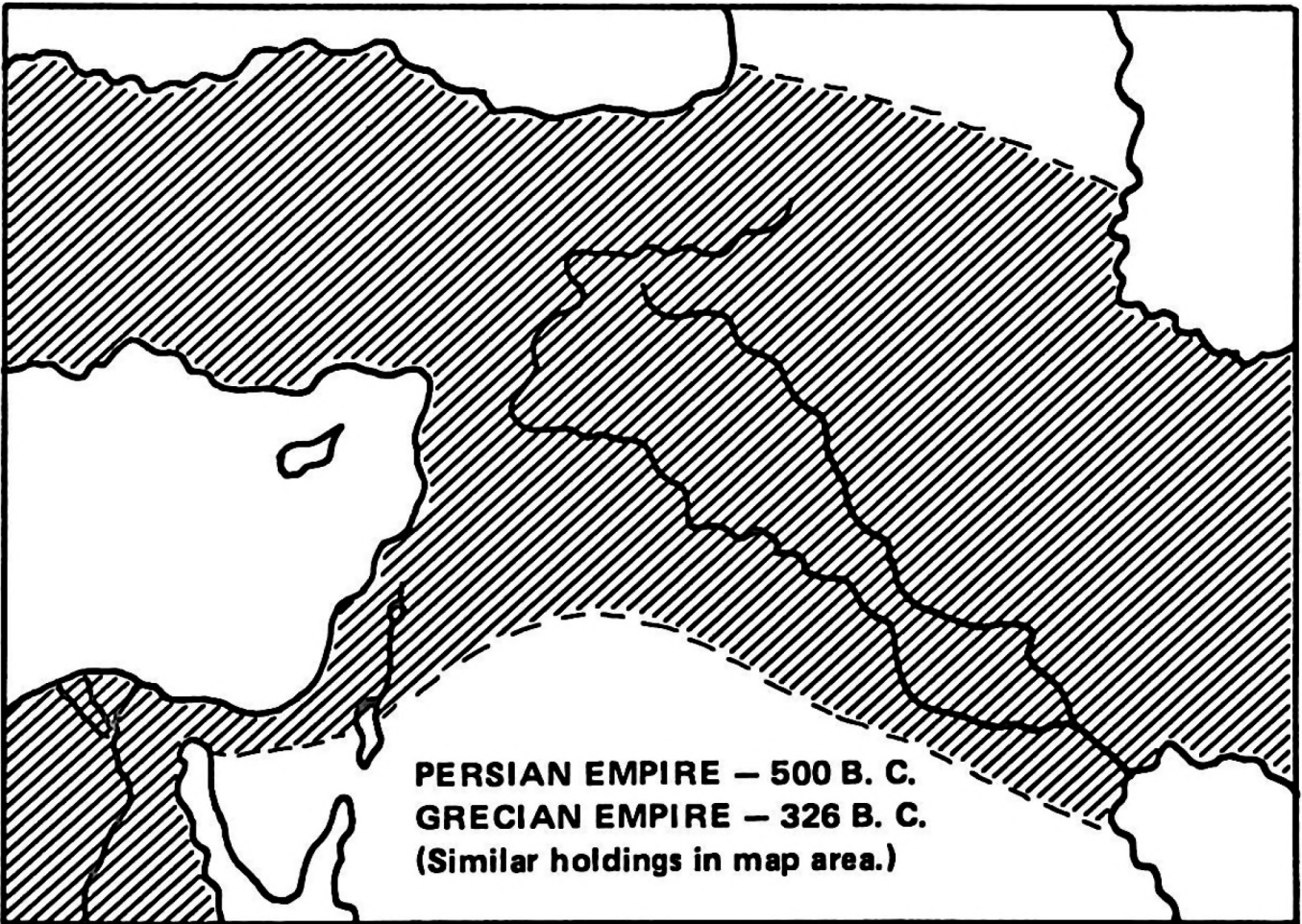
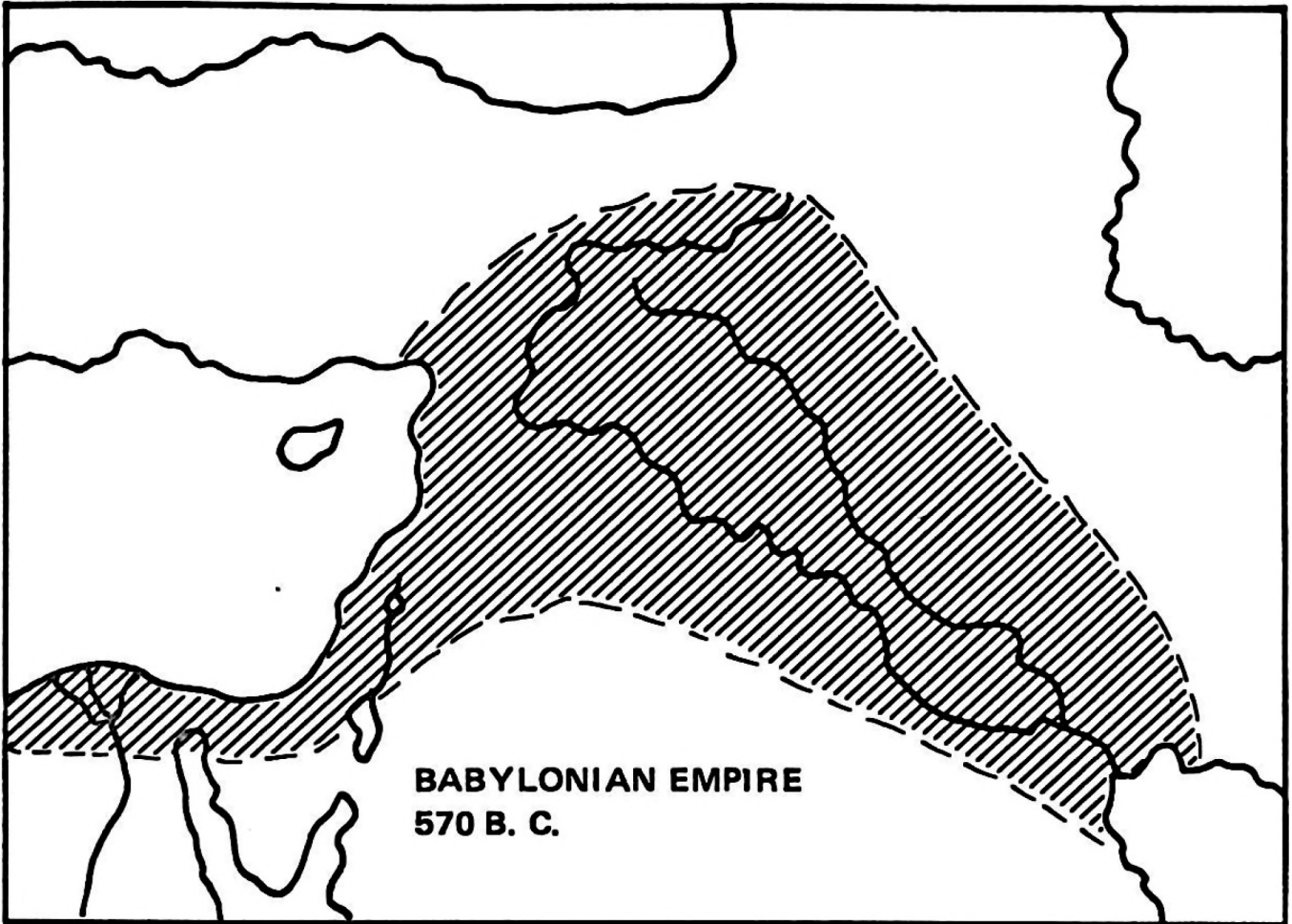
Alexander was totally the ruler until his death. His empire was never divided into two parts. The vision of the ram and he goat of Daniel 8 indicated after Alexander's death "four notable" horns would replace his "notable horn" (v. 8). A scramble for rulership resulted after his death, with much intrigue and murder. The final result found Lysimachus in control of Asia Minor north of the Taurus; Cassander held Macedonia; Ptolemy held Egypt; and Seleucus held Mesopotamia and Syria. The Seleucid empire, especially under Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, persecuted the Jews in the times of the Maccabees.

There were numerous wars between the generals, particularly between the Assyrian Seleucids and the Egyptian Ptolemies for the possession of Palestine. Each held it for a time. They held as much as the Roman empire did later, but none held the whole dominion after the death of Alexander.

4. Legs of iron

The legs of this image are of iron, and called "the fourth kingdom" (Dan. 2:40); there are only four. Is the fourth Rome?

Proponents of Rome being the iron kingdom say there can be no time breaks in the image. One has to be ignorant of history not to know that no great power



successfully held Palestine during the period of the Maccabees, let alone the dominion.

Rome did not gain Palestine until less than a century before Christ. All the empires that qualify by possessing the whole dominion had eastern capitols. Rome never had an eastern capitol. Rome never possessed even Babylon. The Emperor Trajan made two successful campaigns into Mesopotamia, but both times withdrew because of the Parthians. Hadrian proclaimed the River Euphrates as Rome's eastern boundary, as the maps show. Rome did not possess the dominion.

If the two legs represent the division of the Roman empire, where is the UNITED Roman empire under kings, republic, or emperors? Which leg is the leg of prophecy, the western or the eastern?

If there is to be a revival of the Roman empire, which leg is it to be? If there is to be reunion, then the Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and Moslems must be all one. Who would rule? The pope?—over the Moslems?! And shouldn't there be just one foot in the image to show the division in the legs is no longer there?

The Arabian empire

Since Alexander's empire only one power has qualified for a place in the image by possessing the territory of the whole dominion, and that is the great Arabian empire. It possessed all the territory held by Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Grecia. It went beyond these empires, possessing North Africa and Spain.

The Arabian empire stood a thousand years. It was the most extensive empire the world has ever seen. We can't shut our eyes and say it never existed! It did exist, and it does have to do with Biblical history and prophecy.

The feet

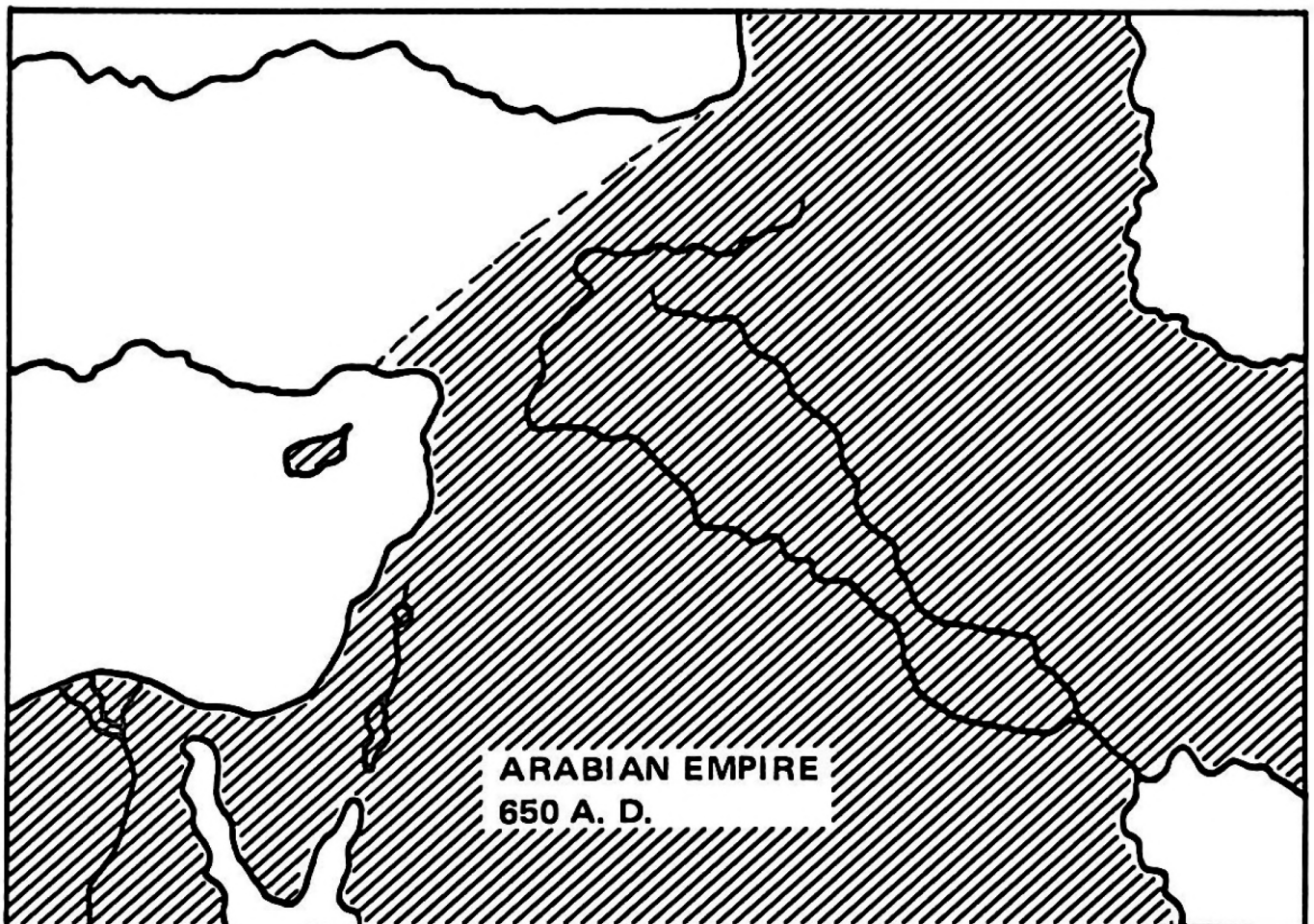
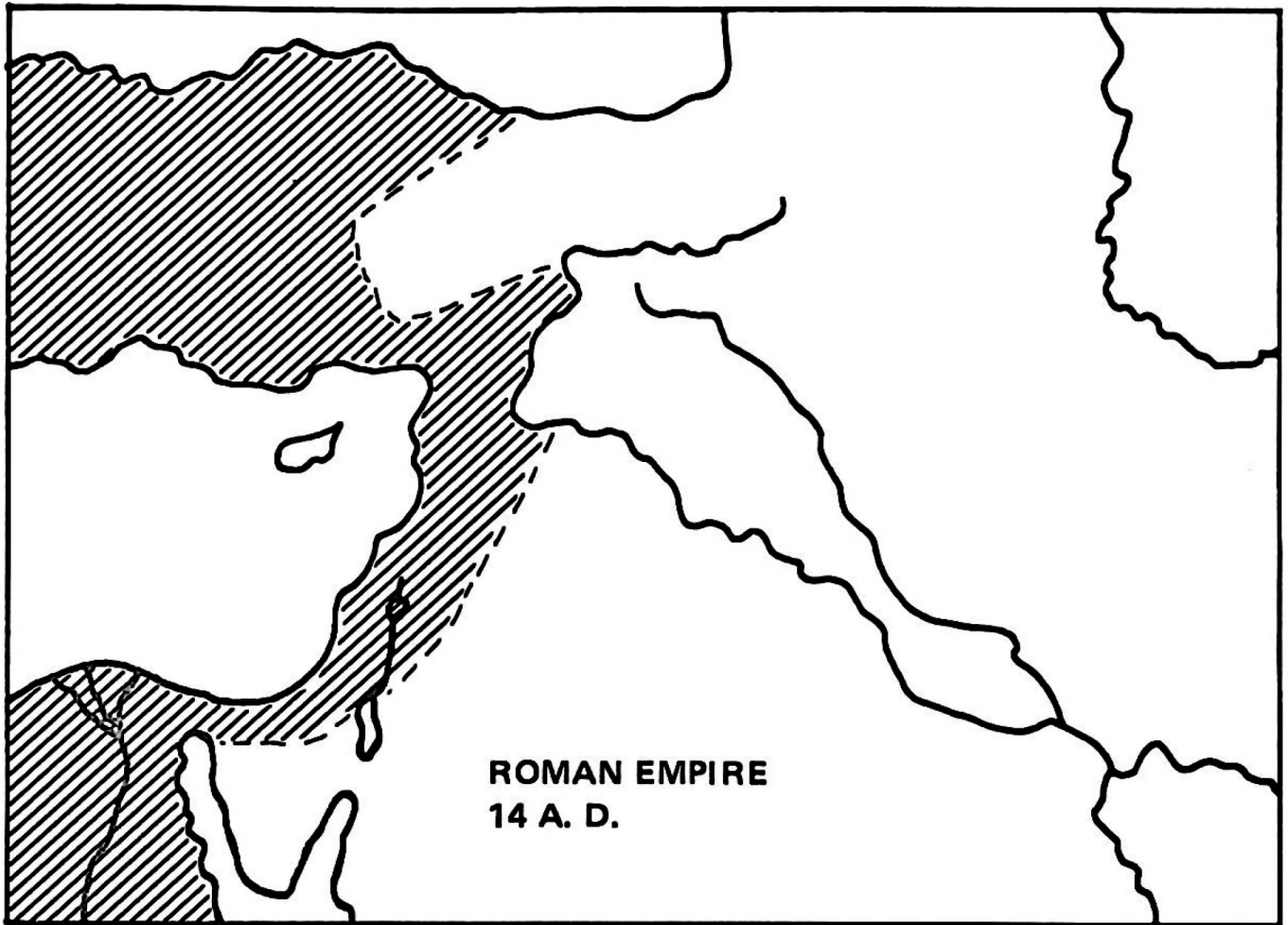
In the feet of the image another element is introduced—miry clay. The Septuagint (LXX) renders it "earthenware." The meaning is clearly given, "the kingdom shall be divided"—"partly strong, and partly broken." "They shall not cleave one to another" (Dan. 2:41-43).

Disunity is the key to this picture. There is no description of a world-dominating league or confederacy, such as Roman theorists describe. This is the most accurate picture of the Arabian empire that could be made. The only overall unity present today is their Moslem religion, and their hatred of the Jews.

CONCLUSION

The whole image is Babylonian. Even in the closing pages of the Bible there is conflict between Babylon and Israel. The Book of Revelation is full of Babylon. The gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron are all there. They will be broken down together by the stone, and become as chaff.

Not until the Babylonian power that began at the head is overthrown in the earth will God's Kingdom come, will Israel be restored, and will restitution come. "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44a). □





The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

PROMISE NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

PSALM 112:4—"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness."

Have you ever been out on a pitch-black night, with no moon or stars to guide you? Most likely you had to grope uncertainly about, feeling your way, and using your memory as to where you were and how far it was to where you wished to go. And then the moon came out, perhaps giving just a feeble light. But, how thankful you were for that faint gleam! And, what magnificence when we behold the full moon, along with the stars, shining with a light that penetrates the deepest gloom! "The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:1). How marvelous, indeed, are God's works; the works of his hands that declare his glory!

Today, spiritually speaking, our path is illuminated by celestial light that not only shines, but streams through the darkness that is in the world. Like the Israelites of old when God led them out of Egypt, the pillar of fire lightens our way, while the ungodly look with fear and trembling on "those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:26). If we are followers of the light, the darkness need never overtake us.

*There ariseth light in darkness,
To those who are upright;
Oh, may the light shine through for me,
Dissolving all my night.*

PROMISE NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

PSALM 121:3, 8—"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber . . . The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

"He that keepeth thee will not slumber." What a consoling thought this is! Since God never slumbers, he watches over us night and day. If we are sick, the doctors and nurses cannot take care of us every minute, but God preserves our going out and our coming in—even forevermore.

We are told in the Scriptures that if we dwell "in the secret place of the most High," we need not be afraid of "the arrow that flieth by

day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness" (Psa. 91:1, 5, 6).
IF we dwell in the secret place of the most High!

How much more we could receive of the Lord if we but had the
faith to take him at his word!

*We may securely fall asleep
Without a care,
For in the watches of the night,
The Lord is there!*

*When engines of destruction rage,
Peace! be aware
Through all the maddening wrath of man
The Lord is there!*

*On land or sea, if we are his,
Then we shall share
The love that holds us to his heart—
THE LORD IS THERE!*

PROMISE NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE

PSALM 126:5—"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Here is a glorious promise for those who are struggling with
oppressive burdens. But we must take note, it is those who SOW
in tears that shall reap in joy. If those distressed with illness,
loneliness, poverty, or sorrow, rise above their adversities and
sow seeds of kindness, faith, love, and cheer, they will someday
reap the reward of their labors, and shall be joyful in so doing.

We should regard our tribulations as stepping-stones to a life
of gladness in helping others less fortunate than we. If we do
this, God has promised a special blessing, not only in the life to
come, but through all our days in this alien, warring world.

Let us never forget a time is coming when there will be no
more tears. (Rev. 21:4.) When we come to that longed-for day,
our trials will seem as nothing in comparison with the blessedness
that will be ours.

Beloved, let us really trust in these promises with all our
hearts. They belong to us. God gave them to the faithful of old;
to the prophets, apostles, and disciples. He has also given them
to his people today. He means what he says. He WILL help us!
He WILL be with us to guide every step of our earthly way,
IF only we will let him! "Weeping may endure for a night,
but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30:5).

*Let us sow when tears are falling,
When our hearts are grieved and sad,
Forget sorrow, help a brother,
Make some other person glad.*

*Joy will come from out the shadows,
Joy for us, for others, too,
Rainbows shine when showers are falling,
And God blesses us anew.*

Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

PREEXISTENCE

Question:

What is the explanation of John 17:5, "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was"?—E. R., Calif.

Answer:

The preexistence of Christ, whether as a member of a triune God or as a distinct personality, is seemingly a great problem with many people. It seems more questions are submitted on this subject than any other. Therefore, we will try to answer John 17:5 and some other questions and problems that would be caused by this teaching.

First of all, I would like to say that the doctrine of the preexistence of Christ makes null and void many great doctrines of the Scriptures that are plainly taught, and are essential for us to believe. Consider the following:

1) Jesus is often called the "Son of God." We realize there are other people called God's sons: e.g., Adam (Luke 3:38), and Christians (1 John 3:1). We also realize that Jesus is the only one who is called God's "begotten Son" (John 3:16).

If Jesus preexisted, and was also the only begotten Son, a door is opened for speculation and the possibility that each individual human existed in some form or condition prior to his begetting by his earthly parents. The idea is ludicrous to us, but no more so than the idea that this is what happened to Jesus.

2) If Jesus preexisted and was an immortal being with the Father, was he a son at that time as well? If so, did Mary also preexist her birth, that in the beginning of the beginnings she could bear the Father a Son, and then at a later date bear the same Son on earth?

Did Jesus voluntarily give up his immortal nature to die for mankind, or did God require this of him? What we have is a possibility that when eternal life is given to us, we can either give it up or it can be taken from us. Such a possibility is foreign to the hope of the Scriptures.

There are simply too many wild possibilities for us to believe, or even consider, that Jesus—in some form or another—preexisted his birth, other than in the mind and plan of God.

Our text

In John 17:5 Jesus made a request of the Father, that the Father would glorify him with the glory he had before the world was. What glory did Jesus personally share with God before the world was?

In Isaiah 44:24, God said he created these things by himself. In chapter 40 he is described as the Creator, possessing all under-

standing, and such stamina that he is never weary. This is speaking of the Creator! This can be contrasted with Jesus, who, during his ministry upon this earth, showed a lack of all these things. He grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52), and he was weary (John 4:6).

In supposing Jesus was a glorified being with God in the beginning, and laid aside this nature to become a redeemer, we have two possibilities that are foreign to other portions of God's Word.

1) If Jesus COULD NOT have failed in his redemptive work, his sacrifice was no more than a "put-on," and did not really call for any genuine effort or sacrifice on his part, because he was an immortal being.

2) On the other hand, if he had failed to fulfill the part of the redeemer, he would have been cast out and would have lost the immortality he had personally enjoyed with God "before the world was." This puts us in a dubious position, since we are seeking this same immortality that Jesus COULD HAVE LOST had he personally preexisted!

A future glory

However, it was promised that God would provide a redeemer, and that he would be bruised by the power of sin. (Gen. 3:15.) In the same passage we have the promise that this "seed of the woman," Jesus, would ultimately conquer evil and then be glorified.

I understand from the Scriptures that in Jesus' death he was glorified, and that this glorification will finally be completed at his return. This is when his saints

are resurrected to new life, and, as Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 1:10, "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints."

The glory Jesus had in the beginning was a future glory by promise, and not a personal possession.

HEBREWS 1:10

Question:

Hebrews 1:10 is the most difficult scripture to understand without accepting the preexistence of Jesus. Can you help?—M. H., Ohio.

Answer:

The text referred to reads, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands." The question, then, is, Who laid the foundations of the earth? Was it a preexistent Jesus? Or, was it God?

Consider the following verses: Genesis 1:1; Psalm 8:3; 33:6; 136:5-9; Isaiah 40:28; 45:8, 18; Revelation 4:11. To explain this verse I will quote at length from an article by J. W. McLain in *The Restitution Herald*, volume 37, number 24, March 23, 1948.

The speaker

"The ASSUMPTION is that God is the speaker in the whole first chapter of Hebrews, and that he is addressing Christ in verse 10, 'And, Thou, Lord . . . ' Analysis: We have in this text a number of speakers. To solve the problem, we have but to locate each speaker. In doing so, verse 10 does not teach what it seems to; that Christ is the Creator.

"The text contains a number of quotations from the Psalms.

Interspersed, is the running comment and interpretation of each text by the apostolic writer to the Hebrews. In 1:8, 9 we read, 'Unto the Son he saith.' This is a comment of the apostle. 'Thy throne, O God,' quoted from Psalm 45:6, 7, is the voice of God. This quotation ends with the close of verse 9.

"Verse 10 begins a quotation from Psalm 102:25-27. The speech is not continuous between these two texts, nor is God the speaker in the quotation from Psalm 102. David was praying to God. David addressed God, 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning.' The theme of the tenth verse of Hebrews 1 has returned to that of the opening verses.

"There are two prominent themes in this first chapter of Hebrews. The first, and the greater, is the review of the greatness of God, who appointed

his Son to preeminence. The other theme is the preeminence of the Son over the angels, and, in fact, over all God's creation.

"Thy throne"

"'Thy throne' (v. 8) has reference to Christ's throne, which is the throne of David, and which he has not yet taken. Study Hebrews 1:13; 9-24-28; Acts 3:19-21; Revelation 3:21; and Matthew 25:31. There are two thrones.

"Christ must sit at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:13), until the time to take his own throne. Christ's throne will be forever from that point onward. (Rev. 11:15.)

"To interpret our problem text—Hebrews 1:10—we need only apply the simple rule, 'Who is speaking, and to whom?'" □

Note: Questions may be sent to this office, or directly to Pastor Richard Worley, 6375 S Kessler-Frederick Rd, Tipp City, OH 45371.—Ed.

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ISSUE ELEVEN





The voice of one

In this issue

On page 4 begins a short article by James W. McLain, with reflections on the Mideast today. Things may change there overnight, and we need to keep studying and watching.

Pastor Allan Greif of the Church of the Blessed Hope (Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith), Cleveland Heights, Ohio, considers the provoking question, "Have you been saved?"

On page eight your editor presents a study of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Some think it is a record of literal, historic fact. Most Church of God students consider it a parable. There is a third alternative, which we consider more truthful. Study all three, and make up your own mind about it!

"The gospel according to man" by the late Grover J. Gordon, is short and to the point!

This installment of Beth Briggs' "Promises of God" continues her strong devotional consideration of the promises in God's Word.

Arab oil

Americans face another round of raises in the price of fuel as the result of tariffs being imposed on foreign crude oil im-

ports, as well as additional taxes on American crude oil.

There has been considerable grumbling about the tariffs, and some civil suits brought in an attempt to stop their imposition. From what we are able to hear and read, we have come to the conclusion this may be the least distasteful way of cutting oil consumption in the U. S., so we will be less dependent on Arab oil.

We must reduce our consumption of foreign oil! Because of the rise in the per-barrel cost of OPEC oil, the American import bill rose from \$8.3 billion in 1973 to \$25 billion in 1974. It is projected that at this rate the OPEC countries will have amassed currency reserves of \$653 billion by 1980. This would be three times the total currency reserves of all the countries of the world today!

Arab money

Something bothering many Americans is, what will the Arabs do with this money? They are doing different things with it; upgrading their standard of living, depositing it in banks, buying factories and equipment, etc. Some of their money recently bought an island on the coast of South Carolina, and controlling interest in a bank in Detroit, Michigan. The fear is that this

money might soon begin to "talk," and that its influence might be brought to bear in America's role in international affairs.

Certainly, there are at least two sides to every issue, but in view of our own country's future, and in view of our long standing relationship with Israel, we need to do all we can as a people, and as individuals, to maintain our independence.

As stewards

We have little love for the so-called ecologists who are blocking the development of our offshore oil reserves, the use of nuclear power, the strip-mining of coal, and development of oil shale deposits. But, in a sense, we are all stewards—managers—of the earth and its resources. It is certain that God placed everything needed for food and fuel in this earth, but man has consistently done a poor job of managing earth's resources.

We don't worry about fuel reserves not lasting for future generations, like some world leaders. We believe what we are seeing in the Mideast in regard to Arab oil—and the power of that oil in their hands—cannot be other than fulfillment of Bible prophecy. As such, we believe things are shaping up for the end of the age!

Meanwhile, let us realize we have some things in common with our brothers in the world, and do what we can to conserve energy. After all, this is an economic war! Whether there will be any real "winners" we don't know!

Trust in God! □

the honest truth

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The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

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The Mideast today

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

IT SEEMS TO ME things are developing rapidly in the Near East. The issue of *Time* for November 4, 1974, had an article on the Shah of Iran. As an aside, there were some quite revealing things about the other characters in the Near East—Egypt, Iraq, the Arab Emirates, Oman, etc., and the part oil is going to play.

On page 38 of that issue was a short article on the Arab summit meeting at Rabat, Morocco. It is almost a quote from Daniel 2—the image “partly strong, and partly broken” (v. 42), and shows both the strengths and the weaknesses in the divisions of the Arabian states.

An item in the newspapers, about the same time as the article on the Shah, reported that some cabinet members in the Israeli government had resigned because the new premier had included the religious party in his cabinet. They withdrew in protest.

To me this means that in government circles they are including the people who want to reinstate the Law of Moses, and all the old festivals and religious practices. The religious party also opposes ever giving up the Old City of Jerusalem, even if they

gave up the rest of the West Bank.

The PLO

Then, too, this giving the Palestine guerillas full recognition is quite a development. Arafat will represent them, and, if Israel can be forced to give up the West Bank, they will form a new state of Palestine. Of course, they will want Old Jerusalem. Nevertheless, it puts people you can't deal with right against the doors of Israel.

Also, it will be something to watch with interest, because Daniel shows that the final man of trouble will “become strong with a small people” (11:23). That could hardly apply to Iran, Iraq, Egypt, or Syria. It's just like something being developed out of “new cloth.”

Inflation

In reading the article about the Shah of Iran in *Time*, I read between the lines and get a completely new concept about the inflation problem. When you read the article on Henry Kissinger in the same issue you may see some suggestions of the same thing. Actually, there is an ECONOMIC war going on. The only weapon Europe and the United States have against the

Arabs and their hold on oil is INFLATION.

I read that the Arabs are actually in trouble in buying the things they want—new equipment and new industries, because of the inflationary pressures.

Maybe I read that wrong, but I see that, and I see that our leaders have come up with a possible formula; that they will trade the inflationary balance of payments with the Arabs for a better deal on oil. If this is true, you can see that our government is not too much interested in completely eradicating inflation; that it has a purpose.

Our leaders' talk for "home consumption" about fighting inflation, and their seeming inadequacy to deal with it, may be all part of a plan; a plan not revealed to the public because of world politics.

So, put all of the things together that are rapidly shaping up, and it seems to me there is real trouble ahead, especially for Israel.

Persia=Iran

According to world history, when the empire of Alexander the Great was divided to the four winds—or four horns, the last remaining part was Parthia, which is Persia. If that be true, then Persia is the eastern horn, probably Syria the western horn, Assyria the northern, and Egypt the southern horn, that took Alexander's place.

It says in Daniel 8:9, "Out of one of them" shall come forth the last ruler. So, I'm wondering. According to Ezra's vision of the eagle, there is a struggle for power between the three remain-

ing monarchs, and one will survive and be the final ruler. (2 Esdras 11:1 to 12:38.)

I don't know where this will lead, but the rise of a new Palestinian State may well represent one of the heads of Ezra's eagle? Parthia (Persia) may well represent the horn that is revived?

I'm just watching, but the potential for any one of the fulfillments is right at hand. They are sowing the seeds of everything that contributes to the final picture, and it does not have to be a great length of time away.

Famine and pestilence

We were talking recently about the prospect of famine and pestilence—a shortage of food around the world. It isn't that there can't be enough food. This nation is able to feed a good part of the world's population. The difficulty is in the division over the raising of this food—the economic war. Cattlemen won't raise cattle. Farmers won't plant crops. Wheat men won't sell their wheat.

We may see some real difficulties at large in the world, but these may apply especially to Israel.

Instead of looking at the military around the world, we ought to take a closer look at this economic war that's going on. Even the European Common Market, which some observers consider a major key in prophecy, seems to have collapsed over this very thing, and they have lost the battle. They are begging, not only for oil, but for food in many areas. (more)

Whether President Ford is wise enough to fight as a general in an economic war—to satisfy people at home and abroad—remains to be seen.

Undoubtedly, dire circumstances have to come, in which there will be a famine, and

pestilence; “Men’s hearts failing them for fear” (Luke 21:26a).

Notice, we are not dealing with Rome in all of these matters, but almost directly with the Arabs on all fronts, concerning oil, food, commerce, and industry. Watch! □



The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

PROMISE NUMBER TWENTY-SIX

PSALM 145:18—“The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.”

The majority of people seldom call upon God except in times of dire calamity. Many so-called Christians do give him lip service, but their lives are such that they cannot be called Christians in the true sense of the word.

All who wish to be heard by God must call upon him in truth. That is, they must approach him with reverence, faith, and love. They must ask him first for spiritual blessings, so they may in all things glorify him always. Material things, as needed, will be added if we put God first. (Matt. 6:33.)

*Oh, let us call upon our God,
And he will hear,
And draw us with his tender love
So very near.*

*If he withholds what we request,
We still may know
That in his wisdom he knows best
What to bestow.*

PROMISE NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN

PROVERBS 3:24-26—“When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when

it cometh. For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken."

It is really remarkable the number of times the Holy Word tells God's people they have nothing to fear. God understands our weaknesses, and knows our faith may waiver in times of stress and strain. That must be the reason he assures us again and again that we may be free of this deadly foe.

Have you ever gone to bed at night and been unable to sleep because of the fears that haunted you—fears of sickness, poverty, helplessness, old age, death, and many other things? If you have, then you may have endeavored to banish fear by repeating over and over again statements something like the following: "I must NOT feel this way. I will NOT be afraid, I simply WILL NOT." But, such an attempt in our own human strength merely allows the enemy to get a stranglehold upon us.

It is only by letting go and turning our thoughts to God and his readiness to assist us, and allowing him to take over and fill our lives to the exclusion of all else, that fear will vanish utterly and faith and trust take its place.

"Fear knocked at the door; faith opened the door and there was NOTHING THERE."

*Though war may rage, be not dismayed,
The wicked die, be not afraid,
Though many in affliction weep,
Safe in his arms his saints may sleep.*

PROMISE NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT

PROVERBS 10:22—"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

Are some of us among those who possess but few of life's material blessings? Do we occasionally fret and worry about it? Do we secretly—or openly—envy the seemingly more fortunate ones? If this is the case, let us reason with ourselves for a moment: would we be willing to exchange the love and fellowship of our Savior, and our promise of eternal life, for anything these people possess?

Earthly treasures will be of no benefit to any of us when our span of life is ended. We cannot take them with us, but we can—and will—take the "blessing of the LORD" that "maketh rich." And, this blessing will remain forever with us, both in this world and in the glorious life to come.

*May I have thy joy, dear Father,
Though this life is wearisome,
May I glimpse some of the glory
Of the life which is to come.*

*So my faith may never falter,
And I need no longer roam,
As a pilgrim in the desert,
But may turn my steps toward home. □*

The Rich Man and Lazarus

By the editor

THE STORY of the Rich Man and Lazarus is considered in some religious circles to be God's greatest revelation concerning what happens to man after death. Truly, if it is a literal, historical record, it could well live up to that claim.

Literal, historical view

Taken literally the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is used to prove two doctrines: 1) that man is conscious between death and the resurrection; 2) that men go to their reward or punishment as soon as they die.

In the effort to bolster the literal idea the rich man is given a proper name, "Dives," which means simply "rich" in Latin. Dives is pictured as a great sinner, and as wicked and cruel. On the other hand, to build up their case, Lazarus has to be pictured as a "saint" in order to be worthy of a place in Abraham's bosom.

Problems

The literal view has some real problems. 1) The rich man is not pictured as a sinner by Jesus, unless it is a sin to be rich. It would be paradoxical to condemn a rich man to torment in hades for being rich, and then

send a beggar away to reward in the bosom of Abraham, an extremely rich man in his time!

2) Lazarus is no pinnacle of virtue. There is not one good thing said of him, unless being a beggar is virtuous. David's words in Psalm 37:25, if applied universally, would indicate Lazarus was not God's seed, because in his lifetime David had "not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

3) Believers in the literal interpretation don't seem to bother to say whether these characters were in an embodied or disembodied state. The rich man apparently had eyes and tongue, and Lazarus a finger. Besides, Abraham is pictured as having a bosom.

To say that any of these characters was a disembodied soul, you would find yourself having to add the word "soul" or "spirit" to the text, because the record is silent here.

4) Add to the preceding problems in the story itself the fact that consciousness in death, immediate reward at death, and torment in hades are contrary to the teaching of the whole Bible, and we realize the literal interpretation is untenable.

Parabolic view

Having rejected the literal, historical view of the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus we turn to the allegorical view; that it is a parable. This view is much more Scriptural than the former, and does not contradict the Bible teaching concerning death and the state of the dead, and future rewards.

A parable is, "a placing beside, or side by side for the purpose of comparison. . . . A parable illustrates by what is wont or possible to happen; an example illustrates by what has happened; a fable transfers the case in point to a lower sphere in which it could not happen."—*Bullinger's Lex.*

While, among the writers we consulted, there is a consensus that the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a parable, there is a wide difference of opinion on what each character and part of the story represents.

Generally, the rich man is said to represent the Jewish nation, its leaders, or priests. Their position before God was rich, but they had little concern for their own poor, or for the Gentiles. Their national demise occurred in 70 A.D., and they have been "buried" among the nations and suffered ever since.

Who Lazarus represents

There are more divergent opinions concerning who Lazarus represents. Those who say he represents the Gentiles make no attempt to identify the dogs in the narrative. Some see Jesus represented as the beggar—as become poor for our sakes, and his sores as being the wounds he

received. These see the dogs representing the Gentiles who gave him comfort. Others see Lazarus as representing the poor and outcasts of the Jewish nation, who yearned for the crumbs of accepted religion.

Other features of the story cause some to identify Abraham as God, the five brethren as the ten tribes of Israel, the great gulf as Jesus, unbelief, death, or the Pharisee's attitudes.

We are sure Jesus never intended his parables to be completely dissected, or forced to the extent that some are. While we would rather believe this story is a parable, and not a record of history, we cannot accept the uncertainties of that view, while acknowledging that the message of Jesus' other parables is clear and unequivocal. What other view is there, then?

The satirical view

After studying and rejecting the two preceding views of the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, we now present to our readers our reasons for believing that Jesus told his story as a satire. That is, he was censuring and ridiculing the beliefs and practices of the Pharisees through irony and sarcasm.

Method of teaching

Jesus' method of teaching varied with his audience. Roughly, there were four different groups he taught. 1) The three—Peter, James, and John—shared Jesus' most intimate teachings and experiences. According to Mark 9:2-10, they saw him transfigured. On the way down the mountain Jesus told

the three not to tell anyone else what they had seen until he should be risen from the dead.

2) The disciples were taught plainly by Jesus. If they happened to be in a multitude when Jesus was speaking in parables, he would take them aside and explain the parable to them. For example, the parables of the sower and tares in Matthew 13:10, 18, 36.

3) Jesus did not teach the multitude in plain language, but always in parables. "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them" (v. 34).

4) Jesus used direct denunciation, satire, and sarcasm when speaking to the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees. An example of this is Matthew 23:13-33, where he called them hypocrites, blind guides, and a generation of vipers! As a rule, Jesus did not speak to these by parable unless they were part of the multitude. An example of this is Luke 15:1-3. In this passage he ironically called the Pharisees and scribes "just persons, which need no repentance" (v. 7).

(For other examples of satire see Jotham and the trees in Judges 9:8-15, and the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:27.)

Two satires in Luke 16

It is plain there are two satires in Luke 16, and they should not be separated. The story of the Unjust Steward is the first. The story goes like this: A bank president had a teller whom he found to be dishonest. He told

the teller to get his things in order for he was being fired. The teller reasoned with himself that he didn't have other skills and he was too proud to beg. He devised a plan to insure friends for himself. He called the bank's debtors in and reduced their notes. On learning of this the bank president commended him and gave him a raise in pay. Then Jesus said, "Use your worldly wealth to win friends for yourselves, so that when money is a thing of the past you may be received into an eternal home" (v. 9, NEB).

That this was spoken for the benefit of the Pharisees is plain from verse 14, "the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him" (v. 14).

Not a parable

The story of the Unjust Steward defies interpretation as a parable, because such a story just could not happen. Too, Jesus never would tell people what he did in verse 9, either as a parable or as straight teaching. It has to be irony. This is also true of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Remember, a parable illustrates by what is POSSIBLE to happen. Neither of these stories lies in the realm of the possible. Only in verses 10-13 does Jesus return to straight teaching for the instruction of the disciples. But, beginning in verse 15, Jesus returned to his denunciation of the Pharisees, "And he said unto them." The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus follows.

The reason

The reason Jesus so denounced the Pharisees and satir-

ized their beliefs was that they were in direct opposition to the teachings of God.

1) The scribes and Pharisees sat "in Moses' seat" (Matt. 23:2). They were in the position of teachers and defenders of the law, but they made it of no effect by the traditions they added to it. (See Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13.) In the story, Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29), when the Rich Man asked for someone to go to his five brothers.

2) The Pharisees kept the poor in place by telling them their position would be reversed in the life to come. That is why Jesus had their positions changed in the story, to expose such a ridiculous teaching. Simply being poor could not insure one a place in "Abraham's bosom." Nor is simply being rich a reason for consignment to "torment" in hades.

3) The name Lazarus was chosen by Jesus on purpose. We believe, by comparison with the book of John, that Lazarus had already been raised by Jesus. But, did the Jewish leaders believe in Jesus because of that miracle? No, "the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death" (John 12:10).

In the story, the Rich Man begged Abraham to send someone from the dead to his brothers, but Abraham said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (v. 31). They weren't!

Pagan beliefs

4) One of the main reasons for the satire of the Rich Man and Lazarus was the pagan beliefs of the Pharisees on the hereafter.

It is plain from history that by the time of Jesus the Jews had absorbed Plato's philosophy on the immortality of the soul, and from contacts with the Egyptians and Babylonians had developed a doctrine of "purgatory" in a subterranean hades.

What the Pharisees believed concerning hades is well documented in *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus*. He was a contemporary of the New Testament writers; a Jewish historian who witnessed the fall of Jerusalem under Titus. He was a Pharisee.

When you read the extract from his discourse to the Greeks concerning hades, you would think you were reading the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. His subterranean hades has two compartments; one called "The Bosom of Abraham," and the other the neighborhood of hell itself. The just repose in constant delight in the former, while the unjust are dragged to the edge of the fire and feel the hot vapors. The two groups can see each other, but cannot reach one another because "a chaos deep and large is fixed between them." Sounds familiar doesn't it?

The lesson

In telling the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus was not reinforcing the warped teachings of the Pharisees. Neither was he declaring the greatest revelation of all time concerning the inter-

mediate state to his enemies. This is not the place to learn what the Bible teaches about death, the state of the dead, future punishment, or future bliss.

These two stories in Luke 16 are inspired satires, given by our Lord to expose the teachings and deeds of the unbelieving, self-righteous Pharisees. They are not "gospel," as such, and there is no life in them, except as we profit by the lessons of the Master, and believe the truth.

Bible truth says "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing" (Eccl. 9:5), that "there is no work, nor

device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [*sheol*], whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10). There is no "purgatory" where one can change the outcome of a wasted, sinful life; NOW is the only time we have to prepare for God's coming Kingdom.

Those in the grave—hades—are unjudged and unrewarded. As Revelation 20:13 says, "The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [*hades*, the grave] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were JUDGED every man according to their works."

Let us so live and believe that the rebuke of the Master will not fall on us! □



Count that day lost

If you sit down at set of sun
And count the acts that you have done,
And counting, find
One self-denying deed, one word
That eased the heart of him who heard;
One glance most kind,
That fell like sunshine where it went—
Then you may count that day well spent.

But if, through all the livelong day,
You've cheered no heart, by yea or nay—
If, through it all
You've nothing done that you can trace
That brought the sunshine to one face—
No act most small
That helped some soul and nothing cost—
Then count that day as worse than lost.

—George Elliott. □

The gospel according to man

1) Man has changed God's condemnation of death to man (Gen. 2:17) to a promise of life, just as the serpent did in the garden of Eden. (Gen. 3:4.)

2) Man has substituted heaven, which is God's (Psa. 115:16), as the inheritance of the meek, in the place of the EARTH, which is declared to be their inheritance. (Psa. 37:11; Matt. 5:5.)

3) Man has made God a trinity, when God has said of himself: "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I KNOW NOT ANY" (Isa. 44:8). Also, in the New Testament, Jesus speaks of God as "the ONLY true God," and of himself as "Jesus Christ whom thou [God] hast sent" (John 17:3). Paul testified to the same: "There is ONE GOD, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

4) Man has changed the mode of baptism by immersion (Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:38, 39; Rom. 6:4) to sprinkling, etc.

5) Man has eliminated the need for the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:12-23) by attributing to man an immortal soul, even though the Bible refers to the fact that God and Christ ONLY have immortality. (1 Tim. 6:13-16.)

6) Man has made it unnecessary to believe God's Word by saying, "It makes no difference what one believes." (See John 8:47; Deut. 18:18, 19; Acts 3:22, 23.) The Scripture says, concerning those who RECEIVE

NOT the love of the truth in order to be saved, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

7) Man has changed the wages of sin, from death (Rom. 6:23) to an endless life of torment in a burning hell.

8) Man has lowered the moral standard by saying, "Let your conscience be your guide." But God's Word says, "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior, deportment]; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15, 16).

9) Man has changed the gospel of the Kingdom of God, which Jesus preached (Mark 1:14, 15), into a social gospel.

10) Man has made the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13) into the word of men by denying the inspiration of the Bible.

Therefore, man has changed the glorious gospel of Christ into another gospel, in the face of the curse which is pronounced on any who pervert it. (Gal. 1:6-12.) Paul said the gospel he preached was NOT AFTER MAN, nor received of man; neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Is the gospel you believe of man, or of God?—*The late Grover J. Gordon.* □

Have you been saved?

By Pastor Allan Greif
Mayfield Heights, Ohio

WHILE WE WERE visiting in a hospital room one Sunday afternoon, a clergyman came in and asked, "Have you folks been saved?" I answered, "We hope to be when Jesus comes." He said, "The Bible says if you believe on the Lord Jesus you are saved." I answered, "Only if we are faithful to our commitment in bearing Christ's name." Without another word he walked out.

This inference that salvation is instantaneous and permanent when we acknowledge Jesus as our Savior is quite prevalent in the religious world today. The most accepted evangelists all give salvation by this confession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Thus, millions of God-fearing people are deluded by this false theology.

While this is sad in itself, even sadder is the apparent fact that some of our own people seem to have this same idea. They take the lessons with a ready acceptance. They are baptized with the joy of their new beginning. But, then their attendance at the Lord's table becomes a once-in-awhile thing. There develops a lukewarmness, a tendency to give second place to our meeting around the Lord's table, that is

all out of proportion to the value of our inheritance. Such an attitude of heart and mind must come from the same false theology that if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you are saved!

Paul, an example

I feel safe in saying there has not been one person in the past century—yes, for many centuries past—that has had a more productive, more consecrated ministry of preaching the gospel than the Apostle Paul.

We remember as he finished that ministry and was about to relinquish his life, he said with conviction, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. 4:8a). But, while he was conducting that ministry, all through his life, he worked out his salvation with fear and trembling; that is, with concern for his salvation. As he told the Philippians, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (3:11).

No man has ever believed on the Lord Jesus Christ with more ardor, but he knew he wasn't saved just because of that! He knew that after his baptism he

couldn't just go about his tent-making and forget who had given him the chance for salvation!

Christ's redeeming work

Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

Although Jesus opened the way for our salvation through his sacrifice on the cross, his redeeming work is not done! Constantly he is interceding to God for us. Constantly he is at hand to heed our prayers for help. Constantly we are in danger of perils from without and within ourselves, until we hear those welcome words, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21).

The redeeming work of Christ will never be finished until the Kingdom is set up, because only then will we be saved. People are not predestined to be saved, but the gospel was predestined to save people. That is why Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God until salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16, 17).

Peter's exhortation

In Peter's masterpiece of exhortation we read, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy

prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour" (2 Pet. 3:1, 2). If we are already saved there would be no need for Peter's concern that we might forget the gospel.

God is not standing idle. He is constantly, actively, engaged in our redemption; unnecessary, if our confession of faith in his Son has already saved us!

Acts 2:41-47 records how about three thousand people were evoked to be baptized following Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, as they "gladly received his word." Let me call to your attention the last phrase in the passage, "such as should be saved." It does not say "such as WERE saved." They had heard the gospel. They had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. They had been baptized. But, their salvation had not been assured!

Our salvation is assured if we keep in memory the gospel message. It is assured if we attain the resurrection of the just. It is assured if we walk not after the flesh but after the spirit! Salvation is a CONTINUOUS PROCESS, going on throughout the life of the disciple.

"He that endureth"

When Jesus sent out his twelve disciples to preach the Kingdom, he warned them of the persecution that awaited them. (See Matt. 10:16-22.) Notice the last phrase, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." He was speaking to all of us, of course, but expressly to his own disciples. We know one of them, Judas, did not endure to the end!

In First Timothy 4:13-16 Paul admonished his beloved son in the faith to "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." Timothy had to do a little more than believe to be saved!

Summing up

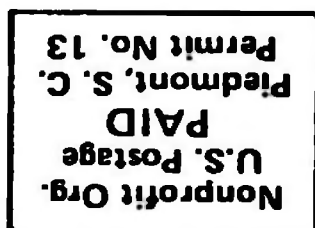
Paul sums up our conclusion very well I think in Philippians 3:4-14, where, after reciting all he had been and done and given up for Christ, he acknowledged he still had not been saved. In this same vein of thought he wrote to the Hebrews, "Hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (3:12-14). He further said, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (4:1). Certainly, then, there must be the danger that we may not be saved! Salvation has always been conditional!

The false assumption that if we believe on the name of Jesus Christ we are saved is closely akin to a growing prevalency to seek to excuse our absence from church services with the aphorism, "You don't have to go to church to be good." No, beloved, in fact we don't go to church to be good.

Our primary purpose in coming together the first day of the week is in response to Jesus' command to show forth his sacrifice for us, to manifest our thanksgiving to God for his Son, to strengthen ourselves by fellowship and remembering what we have professed in obedience to the gospel, and to grow and be nourished thereby. Beloved, none of us is an island. We need each other!

Peter has rightly reminded us that God has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). Let us be diligent, through his grace, to make our calling and election sure! □

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