



The
Restitution Herald

October
1983

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and the
Supreme Court**
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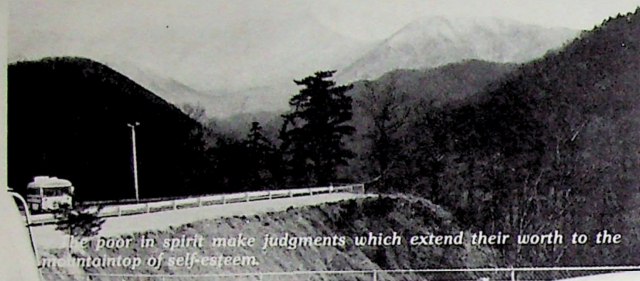
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Editor's Viewpoint



The poor in spirit make judgments which extend their worth to the mountain top of self-esteem.

Judgments, Self-Esteem, the Poor in Spirit

The three lead articles of this issue might confuse you. What do they have in common? How can I have both an attitude of self-esteem and an attitude of "poor in spirit"? What part does leadership and correct judgment play in the scenario?

Pastors Millard and Hoffman remind me of the biblical concepts for proper attitudes toward life. Such attitudes are of a higher nature than is common among man's experience. I can understand where they are coming from.

But Shropshire's call for self-esteem seems contradictory. Yet after you read what she has to say, you can't help but see Christian implications in the concept.

The way to self-esteem is through the "poor-in-spirit" attitude. To go at it via the one-upmanship course invites calls of prudishness and me-ism. Jesus implied that by serving one another man comes to appreciate the worth of the individual and attains self-esteem. Likewise a healthy respect of one's own weaknesses avoids the trap of judging others and allows spiritual leaders to make proper decisions regarding programs and people.

Judgments. Self-esteem. The poor in spirit.

The three correlate perfectly.

Prayer in Public Schools

What's wrong with prayer in school? Sounds like a worthy cause; let's fight for it.

What looks like good reasoning on the surface resembles something else once you get down to the nitty-gritty.

That's the way it is with the issue of prayer in public schools. Read Pastor Michael Mattison's treatment of this issue beginning on page 10. You'll be glad you did.

Restitution Herald Sunday

On October 30 you have opportunity to renew your subscription to THE RESTITUTION HERALD during a worship service of a participating Church of God congregation. Information regarding THE RESTITUTION HERALD Sunday is in the hands of Church of God pastors. Subscription cards will be distributed to their congregations on that Sunday.

Of course, you don't have to wait until October 30 to renew your subscription. You can renew now by using the form on page 20 of this issue. If you need to renew, do it today before you forget.

The subscription year begins with the February issue. If you have already subscribed for 1984 and beyond, thank you. If you have yet to subscribe, please do it TODAY.



New Church in Colorado Springs

Praise God for the work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope that has gone into the new church at Colorado Springs. Pastored by Don Needham, a frequent contributor to our pages, Pleasant View Bible Church has averaged 49 in attendance during its first four weeks of worship services.

For six weeks during the summer an eight-member church-planting team surveyed neighborhoods in the northeast section of the city, making over 500 contacts. As a result, 64 different persons have attended services and a total of

93 individuals have worshiped God at Pleasant View during its early days.

Lebanese Conflict Fires Religious Friction

A few months ago religious leaders were in opposite camps regarding the Israeli push into Lebanon to rid it of PLO forces. Mainline denominational leaders decried the offensive as murder in violation of international law. But theology professor F.H. Littell at Temple University and Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell defended Israel's actions.

A resolution strongly supporting Israel was withdrawn at this summer's Southern Baptist Convention because it would undermine SBC'S mission work in the region.

Now Israel has bowed to financial pressure, moving its forces to more defensible locations in extreme southern Lebanon. Prime Minister Menachem Begin has resigned and the country is retrenching under his successor.

What is the right stance regarding Israel?

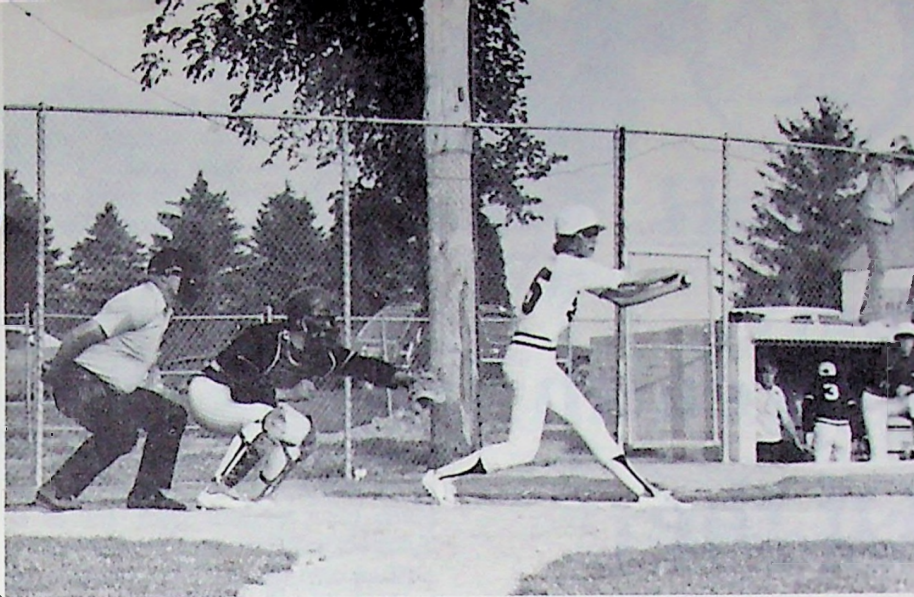
Granted, the Jewish people are still God's chosen people. Also granted is the continued operation of the blessing-curse promise of Genesis 12:3. God will not change his word. But does the promise cover all the actions of the current Israeli government unconditionally?

While that question may seem unnecessary to Bible students, perhaps another series of queries relating to it should be considered.

While the promise of Genesis 12:3 has never been nullified, shouldn't it be taken in light of New Testament teaching? In the days of the early church the Jewish Sanhedrin violated the rights of the apostles to preach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18; 5:18, 40). Jewish leaders imprisoned Christians who disobeyed the state's injunction. But Peter defied the Jews' charge, claiming that it was right for him to obey God rather than Jewish men. With such reasoning he preached Jesus (Acts 5:29-32, 41, 42). In doing so, did Peter come under the curse of Genesis 12:3? Was he "cursing" God's people by disobeying them in preaching Jesus?

Do the demands and implications of the gospel and missions transcend the promise of Genesis 12:3? Is it right for Israel to support the Lebanon "Christian" faction in its fight against Lebanese Moslems? Should anyone sanction the "holy war" in Lebanon which pits "Christians" against "Moslems"?

Label such questions as oversimplified and absurd, but are there easy answers to the war in Lebanon?



Who's the first to note the umpire's bad call?

Judging Decision Makers

The other night, while watching the sporting news of the day, the award for the baseball player of the week was given to an umpire who actually called not one, but *two* close calls *correctly!* Those who are in positions to make decisions are often criticized . . . whether they be umpires, presidents, church board members, parents, children, employers, or employees. It's not easy to make decisions when people are waiting for you to make a mistake. That is one reason why so few are willing to take on positions of responsibility.

The big-league umpire remarked that he could never understand how crowds in the grandstand, hundreds of feet from the plate, could see better and judge more accurately than he, when he was only seven feet away. I have to admit that there has been more than one occasion when I have questioned the officiating at a sporting event. But sometimes that is possible, because the play is visible to all.

In life, however, we are not privileged to all the behind-the-scenes activities of those around us. We seldom know the hopes and aspirations, the fears and heartaches of people we make judgments about. Like the criticism of the umpire towards the fans, we call strikes against others, when we may be just too far away to see clearly. Perhaps, if we had a closer view of the person and his/her problems, we would reverse our decisions.

I suggest that as Christian human beings, we be cautious about the judgments we make about others. The Bible warns us similarly. "As you judge, so shall you be judged." "Take the log out of your own eye." "Man looks on the outward *appearance*, but God looks upon the heart."

Maybe it's time we question the value of our judgment statements about others. Do they really serve any purpose? Do our assessments of other *people's* character and action help either them or us? Realize this, "just possibly, we may have an inadequate or prejudiced perspective about the other person, which clouds our vision of reality."

A motorist was telling about the trouble he's had driving to and from work lately. It used to be easy, he said. No traffic problems, no mad rat race. But now—wow! Cars coming from all directions. "And it's been that way, ever since I got my new glasses."

Maybe that's what we need. New glasses colored with compassion which will give us a new perspective in understanding these "crazy people" around us.

—Pastor Scott Millard.

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The Restitution Herald advocates: the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6); the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8); Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16), the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4); the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through him (Col. 3:3); the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28); the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54); the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8); the final restoration of Israel as the Kingdom of God under the Kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32), the church to be joint heirs with him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3); the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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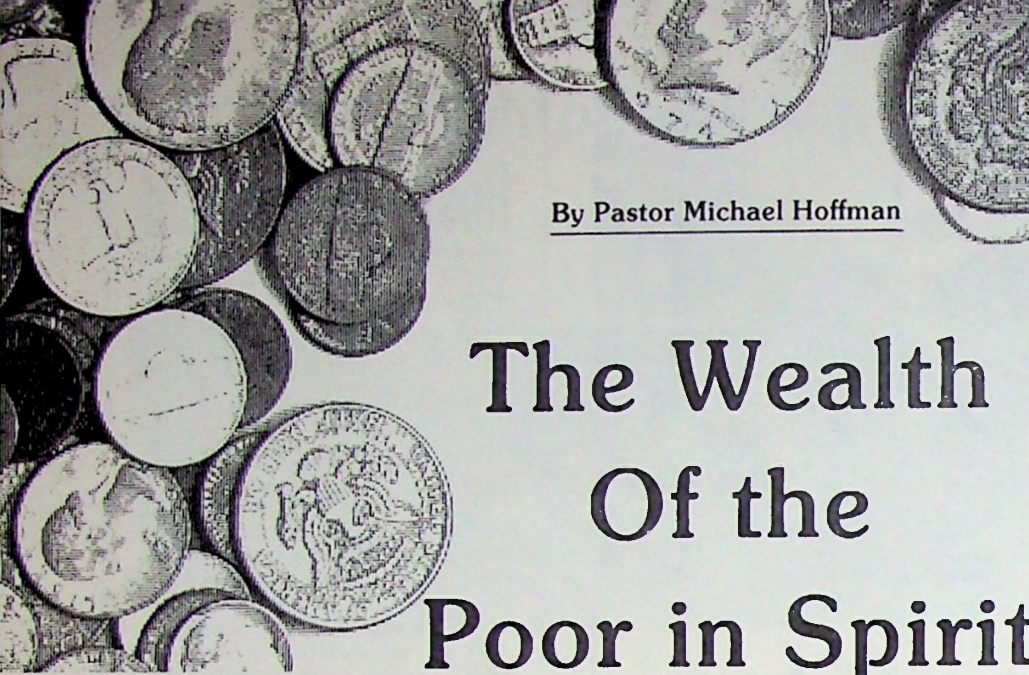
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By Pastor Michael Hoffman

The Wealth Of the Poor in Spirit

SWEEPSTAKES OFFERS darken the door of my mailbox on a regular basis. Always very colorful and attractive, they offer big money, big homes, and big prizes that most people only dream about. The hype says, "Go ahead and enter . . . you have nothing to lose . . . and if you win you are assured of a lifetime of happiness and security." I keep hoping to win enough to cover all the postage I have used entering sweepstakes.

These offers are typical of how our society associates happiness with material wealth. But such happiness is a very fickle friend. The word happy has as its root "hap" which means chance or fortune. Society offers to us chance contentment or satisfaction that can so quickly change. A business collapses, bad health strikes, ambitious plans fail, or even a change in the weather easily chases away the fleeting happiness of the world. Far more stable and lasting is the happiness promised in the Bible.

In Matthew 5:3 we find this promise: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven." Vastly different from the sweepstakes hype, this verse also offers far more. Upon first glance it seems to refer either to those who are in poverty or to those who are depressed and troubled emotionally. Neither is a pleasant prospect, so let's look closely at what is being said.

The Greek word used here for "poor" describes absolute and abject poverty. The root word it comes from means "to crouch." So we have the picture of

poverty which is beaten to its knees. The word describes the man who has nothing at all. Originally, however, these words spoken by Christ were not said in Greek but in Aramaic, a language close to the Hebrew. The Jews had a special way of using the word "poor." William Barclay describes how two words for "poor" underwent a four-stage development of meaning.

- 1) They began by meaning simply poor.
- 2) They went on to mean, because poor, therefore having no influence or power, or help, or prestige.
- 3) They went on to mean, because having no influence, therefore down-trodden and oppressed by men.
- 4) Finally, they came to describe the man who, because he has no earthly resources whatever, puts his whole trust in God. So the Hebrew word for "poor" was used to describe the humble and the helpless man who put his whole trust in God.¹

If we put together the ideas of both the Greek and Hebrew words we can say that "Blessed are the poor in spirit" means, "Blessed is the man who has realized his own utter helplessness and who has put his whole trust in God."² "This verse speaks of absolute unvarnished humility. It speaks of the person who sees himself as spiritually bankrupt, deserving of nothing, capable of nothing without God's help, so he turns to God in total trust."³ It is a portrait of great surrender and dependency upon God.

In his book "Improving Your Serve," Charles Swindoll makes this comment: "This spirit of humility is very rare in our day of strong-willed, proud-as-a-peacock attitudes. The clenched fist has replaced

the bowed head. The big mouth and the surly stare now dominate the scene once occupied by the quiet godliness of the "poor in spirit." How self-righteous we have become! How confident in and of ourselves! And with that attitude, how desperately unhappy we are!"⁴

We read and hear a great deal about depression today. It is a real struggle for many. This is admittedly a grossly oversimplified statement, but I believe much depression is caused because people do not have a biblical "poor-in-spirit" attitude of reliance upon God, rather than self. Many have a "poor spirit" caused by trying life on their own terms and relying on their own strength. That quickly leads to the "chance" or "fortune" happiness that is so common and so unfulfilling.

With recognition of our own utter helplessness and dependency upon God, we are promised the gift of the kingdom of heaven. That is Matthew's terminology for "kingdom of God" which the other writers most often use. The promise is that of eternal life for those willing to surrender to God and live his way through Christ.

Vast amounts of time and energy are spent achieving "independence," striving to "be all that you can be," trying to accumulate all the "things" that society says count. It goes against our grain to declare our dependence and need of direction in even the smallest matters of life. But such is the lifestyle of "the poor in spirit." He puts his whole trust in God. He seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and lets God add all those other "things" to him. In an age of assertiveness training, where self-reliance is admired and humility is thought of as a weakness to be taken advantage of, Christians must learn that dependency upon God is never a weakness. It can only make a person stronger.

You may never be rich or highly successful according to the world's standards. But if you strive to maintain a biblical "poor-in-spirit" attitude you are assured of greater wealth than any human can bestow: citizenship in the eternal kingdom of God. Why leave that wealth to sweepstakes-like chance? "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

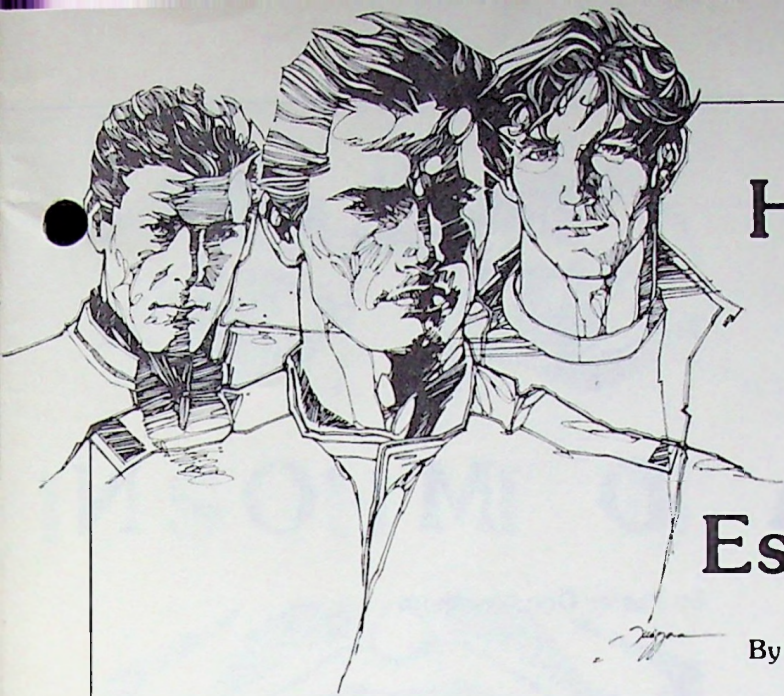
Footnotes

¹William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. 1*, (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1977) p. 91.

²Ibid.

³Charles Swindoll, *Improving Your Serve*, (Waco, Texas, Word Books, 1981) p. 100.

⁴Ibid., p. 101.



How Is Your Self-Esteem?

By Marie Shropshire

ARE YOUR FEELINGS of self-worth at basement level? If so, God is wanting to lift those feelings and show you your real self, the person he created you to be.

A healthy self-esteem enables us to accept ourselves as God accepts us—unconditionally. God is patient with us while he works in us to bring us to greater spiritual maturity. A wholesome self-esteem equips us to be patient with ourselves on our journey to fullness.

How Our Self-Image Is Formed

From the time we were conceived, we have been absorbing attitudes about ourselves. German doctor Monika Lukesch followed 2,000 women through pregnancy and childbirth. She found that the mother's attitude during pregnancy had a significant effect on how her child turned out. The accepting mothers had healthier babies—emotionally and physically—than the rejecting mothers. Mothers who were intensely anxious throughout the nine months had babies who gave evidence of feeling rejected. From the beginning, those children developed a poor self-esteem.

The first year of life was important in the formation of our self-esteem. In infancy we began measuring our success in terms of our parents' responses to our cries.

Throughout childhood we continued forming our self-image by how others treated us. Everything we felt, saw, or heard is stored in our subconscious

mind. If the events were painful, we suppressed them. As a result, we may now react in ways we do not always understand.

During our teen years we were particularly vulnerable. We went through physical and psychological changes which were sometimes embarrassing and confusing. When I was eleven, our family moved, and for a brief period I attended a new school where I was known as "that tall girl." No insult was intended, but I was sensitive and the label stung. My self-esteem was threatened.

In the past few years I have counseled women whose self-esteem has been damaged by thoughtless husbands. These men have not meant to be thoughtless, but their lack of sensitivity to their wives' needs (or in some cases, their own lack of self-worth) has contributed to their wives' low self-image.

Why a Healthy Self-Esteem Is Important

Obviously we need to feel good about ourselves in order to live joyously as God intended. Poor self-esteem causes us to compare ourselves with others, which Scripture says we are not to do: "When they measure themselves with themselves and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding and behave unwisely" (2 Cor. 10:12, Amp.).

When an insecure person compares himself with another, he usually measures his weak points against

another's strong points, or he looks for weaknesses in the other in order to feel better about himself.

Our fellowship with God is determined, to a large degree, by our belief of what he thinks of us. We tend to measure God's attitude toward us by our attitude toward ourselves. If we don't accept ourselves, we have difficulty believing that God will accept us. If we believe God accepts us just as we are, we enjoy fellowship with him, knowing that we can come to him on the basis of the shed blood of Jesus.

A healthy self-esteem helps us to relate more maturely to God and also to others. We can stop competing and be who God intends for us to be—uniquely ourselves. Accepting ourselves, we are able to accept others. More importantly, self-acceptance sets us free to fulfill the purposes God has for us.

Moving to a Better Self-Esteem

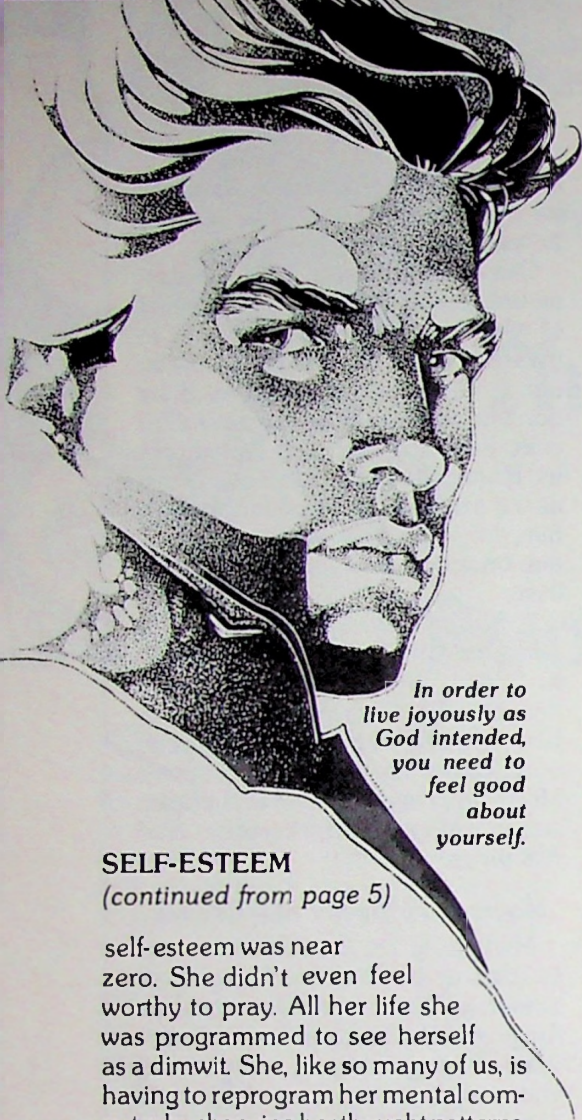
Meditating on God's love for us enables us to think more highly of ourselves. We may pray for ourselves the prayer Paul prayed for the Ephesians—"I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power . . . to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge" (Eph. 3:17-19, NIV).

The more securely we're grounded in his love and in the knowledge of our identity with him, the better our self-esteem becomes. Of course, we realize that apart from him we are nothing. But he says, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29, NIV).

We are already heirs—heirs of all the promises given to Abraham! Our problem lies in learning how to move into the promises. First, we must believe that we are who the Father says we are—"the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

A few weeks ago I met a lovely woman with both inner and outer beauty. She is poised, quiet, and reserved, a Christian having every reason to think well of herself. But her

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In order to live joyously as God intended, you need to feel good about yourself.

SELF-ESTEEM

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self-esteem was near zero. She didn't even feel worthy to pray. All her life she was programmed to see herself as a dimwit. She, like so many of us, is having to reprogram her mental computer by changing her thought patterns.

Paul says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2, NIV). My friend's world told her she was a dummy. But she doesn't have to accept that thought. The Lord says she is his own beloved child. She needs to take time for reading and meditating on uplifting passages of Scripture. Seeing how they relate to her will help renew her mind.

Recognizing that the Creator of the universe loves me raises my self-esteem. However, it's up to me to keep tuned in to him. I exercise my will to do that. He created us with a will, intellect, and emotion. I like the way George Sanchez defines the use of these faculties. He says our emotions respond; our intellects evaluate the response; and our wills choose how we will respond.

Let's choose to respond God's way by letting his Word help us evaluate ourselves. And watch our self-esteem soar!

A D M O N

by Pastor Don Needham

IMAGINE the following "unlikely" circumstance: a young lady seeks and finds employment as a secretary. But instead of filling her eight daily hours with company business, she spends three-quarters of her time on the phone to friends, doing her nails, writing personal letters, even typing her boyfriend's term paper. This greatly frustrates her boss. He's hired her to work but is afraid to confront her—for fear she might work even less or just quit and walk away.

"Utterly ridiculous!" you say. "No employee could get away with that. She'd get canned in a minute." Probably you're right. Anyone who doesn't fulfill the expectations of a job should expect to be fired. Most workers need their job and will toe the line to keep it. Threat of dismissal is the boss's lever of control.

But now consider the situation the typical church faces: **Being thought of as a "voluntary organization" that has little leverage—a congregation is often slow to confront and discipline its members.** This is not to suggest that the Bible does not give authority and procedure to a local body for correcting its constituents—it clearly does! The words of Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18 deal with policy for private confrontation through excommunication. Yet we are hesitant to face up to incompetency in teachers or board members, to carnal habits

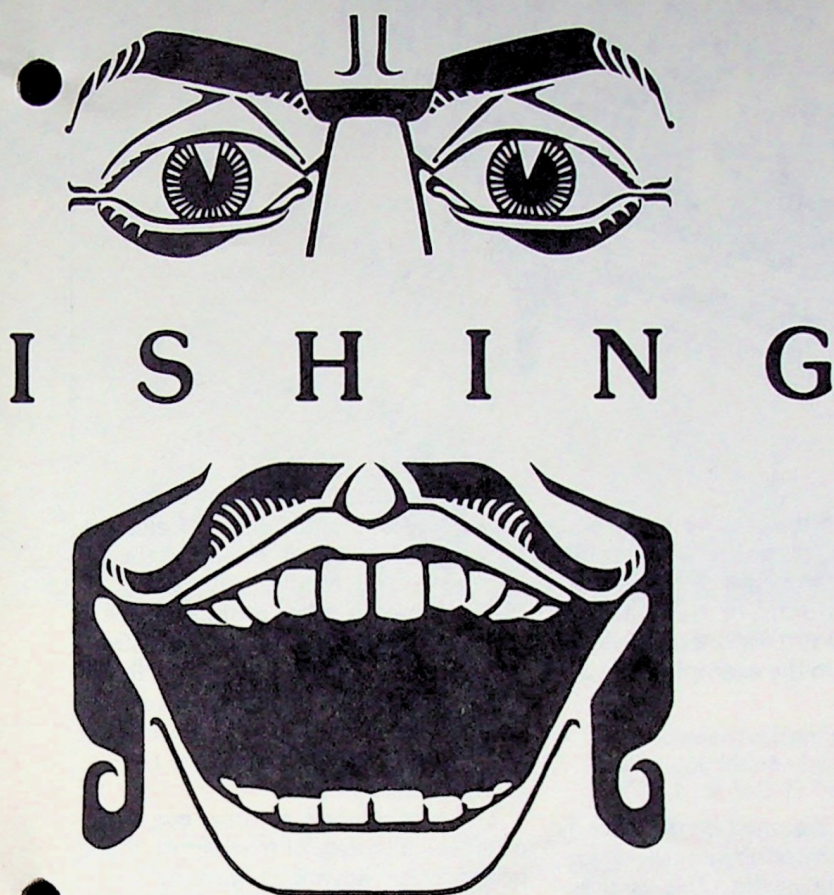
and unchristian attitudes in laypersons, even blatant sin—for two reasons: 1) *fear that correction will drive them away and,* 2) *not desiring to appear Pharisaical, we question who among us is qualified to admonish.* And sin unchallenged is the leaven that pollutes the whole lump. It taints the spirituality of the entire body. Avoidance does not help the person or the reputation of the church.

On those rare occasions when exhortation does come, it is usually of the public variety. In a class or sermon, a leader will attack the problem in a general way—hoping the offending party will pick something from the barrage and apply it to his life. But seldom is much accomplished with this random "shotgun blasting" approach.

There must be a better way! For sure there is. Called "**admonishing,**" it is one of the planks of Koinonia. Probably the most difficult to put into motion, admonishment must be done delicately and scripturally—or it becomes judging, gets ugly, and makes enemies.

In his book "Building Up One Another," Gene Getz says, "*There is no greater sign of love than to risk rejection and broken relationships with others. And if admonishment is done in the right spirit, with the right motive, using an appropriate method, the person who is not living a life*

Admonishing must be done delicately



worthy of the Gospel of Christ usually senses the risk you're taking. Though that person may have difficulty acknowledging it at the moment, deep down he really knows. Some day he will probably thank you for your love."

The Authority for Admonishing

"And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge, and **able also to admonish one another.**" (Romans 15:14, NASB).

The Greek word *noutheteo*, from which "admonish" is translated, doesn't refer to casual conversation or normal teaching. It implies a direct exhortation, correction, and warning. However, this confronting is not to be done with a "grape-stomper's" fervor. Ephesians 4:15 relates that Christians should be "speaking the truth in love." *For truth without agape can be hard, cold, and prickly.*

Qualified to Admonish

With Jesus' words ringing clear—"First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye"—most Christians shirk away from cleaning out another believer's closet. The last thing they desire to appear is hypocritical.

But notice Paul's words in Galatians 6:1:

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are **spiritual** should restore him gently" (NIV).

Directions about *who* should confront (*you who are spiritual*) and *how* the confrontation should be handled (*gently*)—plainly emerge.

But who are "those who are spiritual"? They are Christians living a holy and righteous life before God—those who are sensitive about their relationship and example. Nowhere in their lives are they deliberately

violating Scripture, for if so, they instantly lose their credibility to admonish. They have earned the right to warn those who display characteristics that violate the direct teachings of the Bible. Though a difficult exhortation of Scripture to obey, admonishing is necessary for the body of Christ to mature and grow.

Preparing to talk to someone about his shortcomings usually causes one to scrutinize his own life with a more perceptive eye. One must be certain his own house is in order before beginning to straighten another's! If the admonisher does his personal introspection and correction in advance, he should not come across as a hypocrite.

But can this "constructive criticism" ever be done gently? As medicine still tastes like medicine no matter how it is flavored or sweetened—isn't correction always hard to accept? Much depends on the **person** doing it and the **spirit** and **motive** for which it is done.

The Person

Some people have personalities which are just too rough, too hard, and too irritating for them to admonish others effectively. They walk past a cat and it humps its back and hisses—or non-biting dogs run up and nip them! This is not the prime candidate for encountering others about making lifestyle changes. On the other hand, some individuals are gifted with a kind expression and gentle style that allows them to pick someone clean—and the victim actually feels good about what's happening! It is a rare gift but frequently found in the person who is most mature in the "fruit of the Spirit." *So here is the ideal admonisher: a godly person who is both spiritually mature and kind in personality.* How convenient when this person is also an elder, or deaconess, or fills some respected leadership position in the congregation!

The Spirit

The Apostle Paul showed the proper spirit when he wrote, "For three
(Continued, page 8)

and scripturally—or it becomes judging, gets ugly, and makes enemies.



ADMONISHING—Continued from page 7

years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31, NIV). He didn't come on like a steamroller, flattening and devastating—nor with a chainsaw, leaving his victims mutilated and bleeding—but with such concern that it frequently left him in tears! He did not come across with arrogance, self-righteousness, or a sense of superiority. His unmistakable message was, "I really, really care!" Though confronted people may initially show anger that someone called them on a shortcoming—they are far more likely to hear and consider what the person has to say if they believe he is sincerely concerned.

Early in my ministry I had occasion to talk with a church member who consistently demonstrated a habit that stained his testimony for Jesus. In preparing to confront him, my anxiety level increased, for I had no idea how he might choose to react. Anger. Retaliation. Departure. All these possibilities entered my mind. However, when I finally confronted him—using reasons that this habit was bad for his health and prevented him from being elected to the position of elder—he replied with tears in his eyes. "You're the first person that ever cared enough to talk to me about it." Together in tears we prayed that he would find the strength to be unshackled from this problem.

The Motive

The goal of admonishment should be **TO HELP PEOPLE WE LOVE BECOME MORE MATURE IN JESUS.**

Never should the motive be to retaliate against someone who once hurt us, to throw the weight of a church office around, or to embarrass someone in return for once shaming us. Notice again the example of Paul. He writes:

"I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn [admonish] you, as my dear children" (1 Cor. 4:14, NIV).

Getz says, "We must do all we can to avoid embarrassing people—even those who are guilty. This is why personal confrontation should precede public confrontation. If an erring brother or sister is admonished privately and in Christian love, the need for public admonishment is often eliminated."

Preventive Admonishment

To this point we have talked about corrective admonishing—confrontation and correction—after a problem arises.

But it is wiser to close the barn door "before" the horses get out—or to be more accurate—before Satan gets in. A keen eye can often spot trouble coming and give warning.

I am indebted to an older seasoned pastor who came to me earlier in my ministry with a caution (*preventive admonishment*) about a circumstance which was not a problem for me then, nor ever has been. But he cared enough to give me some good advice, which I have since given to every intern with whom I have worked.

The advice dealt with being discreet in my conduct with ladies. His counsel included such directives as: "Watch

physical contact;" "Don't visit women when they are home alone;" "Realize how vulnerable they are when they come seeking marital counseling." He had known other pastors whose ministries were destroyed or greatly restricted by bad judgment on this volatile matter—and he wanted to warn me of such dangers in advance. For his courage and concern I am eternally indebted.

The experienced, spiritual eye can often see a variety of troubles on the horizon. An advanced warning will often save a lot of unnecessary heart-break.

The Next Step

Frequently it is not sufficient to merely admonish. Often the person confronted needs help in breaking free from the quicksand of his problem. Therefore, the confronter must be willing to invest himself for as long as necessary in getting this person beyond his difficulty.

The next lesson—and step of *koinonia*—BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS deals with helping one move past his sin. This study on admonishing is incomplete unless that is also considered!

Beware

One final caution lest this subject be misunderstood. The right of admonishment does not give authority for a church vigilante committee to be formed for brutally attacking other members of the body. It is a procedure of discipline to be gently, lovingly administered to Christians whose conduct is outside the fence of God's will.

The Two Sons

By Rachel Carr

Would football practice bar him from an important afternoon with Dad?

"I just can't do it, Dad," said Stan. "I've already got my day planned. First there's football practice. Then this afternoon I promised to help out at the school fair. And tonight is Tom's party. Sorry, Dad."

It was Friday night and Mr. Grayson had just asked his son Stan to help him clean out the garage the next day. For months it seemed, things had been piling up in there.

The box in which the boys collected aluminum cans was full and overflowing. There was a huge stack of old newspapers that also needed to go to the recycling center. Empty canning jars were stacked on the shelves. Piles of old magazines were in one corner. The boys' old toys and spare bicycle parts were scattered along one side. On the other side the workbench was piled high, so no one could work there if he wanted to. It was quite a clutter with barely enough room for the family car.

It really was a job that needed to be done and Mr. Grayson needed help with such a big pro-

ject. Soon the door banged and his other son Phil came in.

"Hi, Phil. You're just the one I'm looking for. I've got a project I need help with tomorrow. Will you help me clean the garage?"

"Sure thing, Dad. When do you want to start?"

"How's 8:00 sound?"

"Great! We'll get an early start and get this job over with."

Eight o'clock the next morning found Dad in his work clothes ready to tackle the mess in the garage. But Phil was nowhere to be found. Dad noticed that his bicycle was missing from its usual spot.

"Now I wonder where that boy has gone. He promised he would help me this morning. Oh, well, I'd better get started."

So Mr. Grayson started hauling things out of the garage. Without any help he knew this could be an all-day project.

After a couple hours of work Mr. Grayson decided to take a break. He went into the house for a big glass of cold water and stretched out in a chair to rest a

few minutes.

"Well, the work's not getting done this way. Guess I'd better get back to it."

But much to his surprise, when Mr. Grayson got to the garage, he saw Stan sweeping away with the big patio broom.

"Hi, Dad,"

"Well, hello, son. I didn't expect to see you here."

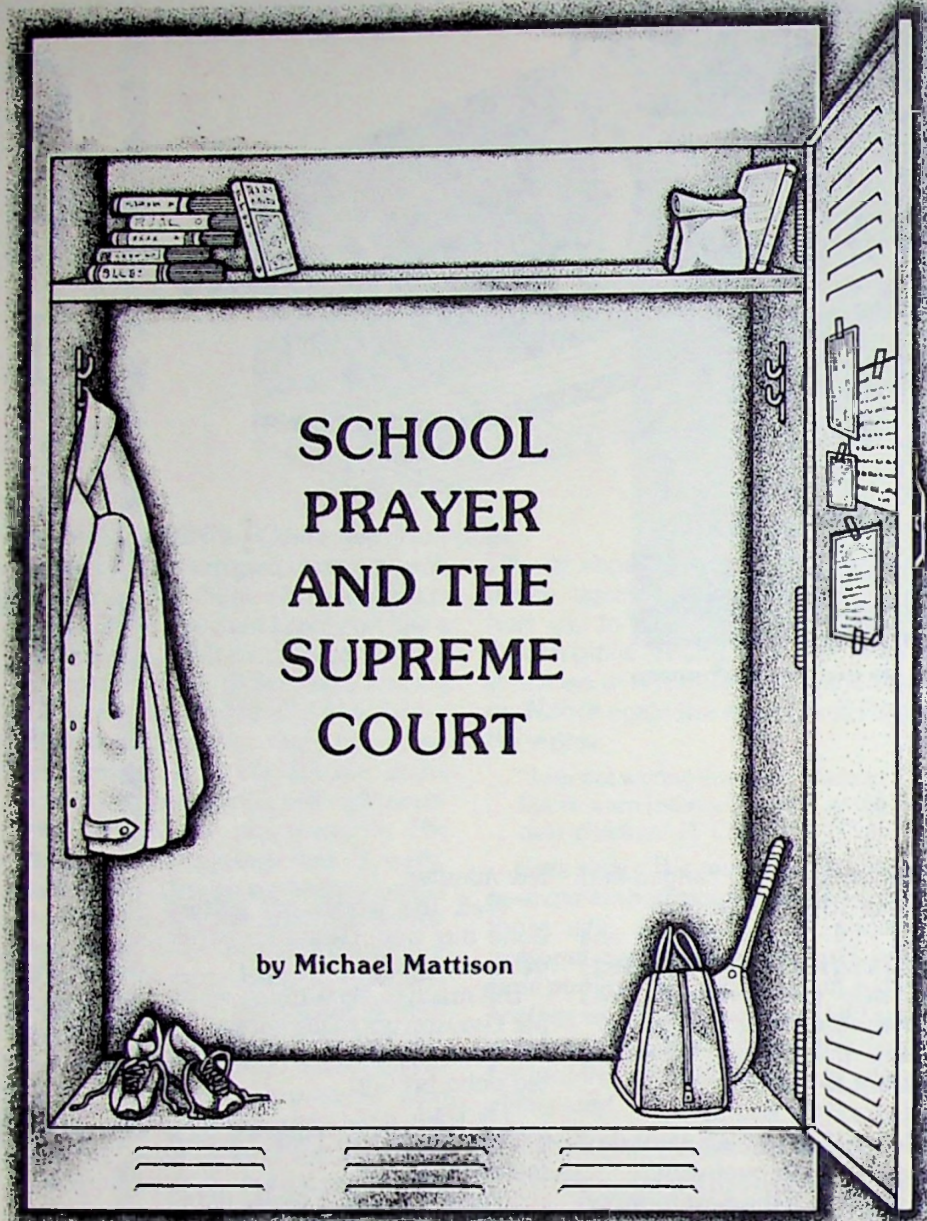
"Yeah, I know. I really didn't expect to be here either."

"What happened?"

"Well, I got to thinking about you working out here all day. And the more I thought, the more I felt like I should be helping you."

"Thanks a lot, Stan. I appreciate your coming back to help me out. Let's get busy here and maybe you can still make it to the school fair."

When Jesus was here on earth he told a similar story. You can find it in Matthew 21:28-30. When he finished he asked this question, "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" What do you think?



SCHOOL PRAYER AND THE SUPREME COURT

by Michael Mattison

Test yourself to see how informed you are on this controversial issue. (Answers at end of article.)

QUIZ

1. What two constitutional amendments were blended together to use as a reason for prohibiting prayer in public schools?
2. Are all opponents of prayer in the classroom atheists?
3. What is the logic given for allowing daily prayer by a chaplain in the House or Senate yet not allowing that prayer to be read from the Congressional Record in the classroom?
4. Does the proposal to allow voluntary prayer in the classroom mean a verbal prayer would be given, with those who wished allowed to leave the room, or a silent time would be observed for individual prayer and meditation?
5. Do your children or school-aged relatives experience school prayer in violation of the Supreme Court ruling?

The Decisions

"Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country." This prayer, developed by the New York State Board of Regents in consultation with the clergy of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, and other faiths, was recommended to local school boards, with individual students free to excuse themselves from participation. In a 6 to 1 vote in 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that such voluntary prayers said in public-school classrooms violated the U.S. Constitution. In 1963, it outlawed the recitation of the Lord's Prayer in schools in a case from Pennsylvania. A Maryland law was then struck down that provided for reading the Bible and/or reciting the Lord's Prayer in schools. The Supreme Court let stand New Jersey State Court decisions which ordered that students not be allowed to come to school early for a "period for free exercise of religion" as authorized by the First Amendment, or to read the daily prayer of the House or Senate Chaplain as printed in the *Congressional Record*.

The Original Intent

America's founding fathers would be aghast if they could know the Constitution would be twisted to try to wring every trace of religion out of public life. The First Amendment says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." In 1789, when it was drafted, five states had established churches and others had recently disestablished or refused to establish churches. James Madison assured Congress that this amendment would bar the national government from involvement in these state and local decisions. It was a national State Religion that was being prohibited, with the free expression of religion on a national scale specifically guaranteed.

A Reversal of Direction

Two factors have changed all this. One is a new theory advanced by Justice Hugo L. Black. He held that the Fourteenth Amendment restriction on the states, that no state shall "deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law," extends the prohibition against Congress establishing a religion to the states. Furthermore, any traces of religious

activity would be establishing a religion, so a "wall of separation between church and state" must be maintained along with strict "neutrality" between religion and irreligion.

The Constitution does not call for total "separation of church and state," and the early Congress did not envision such a thing. The very Congress that approved the Bill of Rights asked President Washington on the same day to proclaim "a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God." Today's Supreme Court logic would force us to say they violated the First Amendment they had just adopted! Earlier, in 1777, the Continental Congress spent \$300,000 to buy copies of the Bible and distribute them throughout the country. In our day, however, the Supreme Court has made a decision which, in effect, forbids the Gideons to GIVE AWAY New Testaments to the school children on public school property.

The second factor that, in my opinion, has prompted this type of ruling is a zealous protection of the minority. I have read of concern for the harm that would be done to a child who was exposed to religious ideas foreign to his home teaching, or to a child who was made to feel different by leaving the classroom to avoid such exposure. Somehow, the sight of his friends exercising their religion becomes akin to the forced conversions at the point of the sword in the Middle Ages. American adults do not give children enough credit! Persecution has always strengthened faith. If public school prayers were indeed persecution, the convic-

tions of an atheistic child would be strengthened against religion.

Diluted Devotion

However, the real danger that a religious person sees in public school prayer is not that it's too strong, but that it's not enough. James Nash, chief executive of the 17-denomination Massachusetts Council of Churches, says voluntary school prayer is an offense to true religious practice because it fosters "innocuous, diluted, demandless" prayers.

A prayer that would be neutral enough to not offend the local preacher,

Courts have prohibited schools from reading the Senate chaplain's prayer which is printed in the *Congressional Record*.

priest, rabbi, guru, ayatollah, and medicine man would not be strong enough to do anybody much good. It could not address the biblical God of holiness, jealousy, vengeance, and judgment who is also forgiving, understanding, and patient.

Therefore, what the politicians and judges are doing with school prayer doesn't matter much. Attempts are being made to restore local control over prayer in the schools by removing the issue from the court's jurisdiction or by a Constitutional amendment. However, we live in a post-Christian society, and a 10-second recited prayer led by an agnostic teacher is not going to turn America around. On the other hand, thousands of Christian teachers have defied the Supreme Court ruling

and continued to conduct classroom prayers, probably with more consistency and intensity than if they had not been challenged.

The Court decisions on prayer did not start irreligiosity and immorality. One study showed that before 1962, 91% of the schools in the Far West and 74% in the Mid West had no prayers. Tom Braden, a national television commentator, said on February 2, 1983, that "there is an attempt to 'put prayer back into the public schools,' although they weren't there in Iowa back when I was in school." This writer never heard a prayer in class in Texas or Louisiana in the 1950's or early 1960's. The only Scripture I ever saw a teacher read was a Bible chapter in a poetry section of a sixth-grade literature book. The teacher missed the symbolism, as many public school teachers would fail to grasp spiritual principles.

The True Power of Prayer

It is our job, as Christians, to reach out as yeast in our society, not to force public employees to try to do a job they can't do (and we won't). It is our job to make our own children realize that in school, movies, music, and indeed any segment of modern society, they are often face to face with hollow emptiness and futility and sometimes staring right down into evil blackness.

This is when true prayer comes into focus. Anytime, anywhere, a person can cry out inwardly to God for strength and comfort. He can pray for that bully on the bus, for that teacher who believes in atheistic evolution, for that concerned principal who is trying to stem the drug problem on campus. A

(Continued on page 12)



SCHOOL PRAYER

(Continued from page 11)

church could send a letter of appreciation and promise of prayer support to every teacher at the local school. Concerned parents can pray about the invasion of evil influences into a school and spearhead the conversion of neighborhood youngsters who would otherwise fall into the latest evil trend.

The hard fact is that without "closet prayer," a Christian becomes powerless.

Must the courts protect atheistic schoolchildren from "forced conversion" when they see their Christian friends praying? Isn't the shoe of persecution on the other foot?

Public prayer then becomes anemic. Prayer is simply a conversation between two people who love each other—a human being and his God. If an individual does not have that intimate communion with God on a regular basis, he has not recognized his need or else is not living where God answers prayer.

God does not hear every prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66:18). We could become guilty of making prayer too cheap. The right to be accepted and heard by God was bought on the cross. Those who have not accepted Christ's salvation cannot pray for others, only for themselves. "God be merciful to me a sinner" is a prayer that always gets a response.

But as we move beyond that level into prayer for our other needs and for the physical and spiritual needs of others, an investment is required which few are prepared to make. All the

familiar stipulations of praying in the will of God, in Jesus' name, and in faith are summed up in this promise of Jesus: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). This makes it clear that a prerequisite to effective prayer is regular Bible reading and meditation and a concentrated effort to find and follow God's will. When everything in our living and thinking flows into our praying and confirms that our conversation

with God is genuine, our prayers can move mountains.

Removing Barriers to Prayer

The measure of our prayer power is calculated by the limitations we bring from our daily living. For some bizarre reason, we humans wonder why God is so weak or so remote when we do not see immediate and spectacular results to prayer. We have it backwards. "The LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1, 2).

God has no choice but to mete out his response in proportion to the limitations of what we can receive. The plainest formula was Jesus' measure of belief by two blind men: "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matt. 9:29). Other formulas that measure how much

response we can expect from our prayers are just as important. The Lord hears the prayers of the righteous, so he must look at the boundaries of our participation in evil (1 Pet. 3:12). A man can only love God as much as he loves the person he dislikes the most (1 John 4:20). Our normal thinking says that even the most ornery person has at least one good friend, and that relationship trains him how to reach out to God—but that's not the way God measures our ability to love him! Similarly, our measure of living in God's will is not marked according to our most inspired moments, but our most shameful. And this is what determines how near God can come to us and respond to us (Jas. 4:8).

Perhaps the most familiar measurement of limiting our receipt of spiritual power is in the Lord's Prayer. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." In other words, one is forgiven only as much as he has forgiven the person against whom he holds the biggest grudge. Is it any wonder that so few people are "of a contrite and humble spirit" who can "dwell in the high and holy place"? Fortunately, God recognizes we cannot meet his minimum standards and initiates renewal and spiritual response in us. He says, "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him" (Isa. 57:17, 18; read also vv. 15, 16).

Finding Unlimited Prayer Power

If it weren't for God's merciful extension of a helping hand to us, we'd have



precious little prayer response. The only one who deserved unlimited prayer power got it. "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:34, 35). Fortunately, this is the train of thought God follows when he makes his final decision on answering prayer: through his Son he extends his benevolences to us. We, after all, are condemned only as much as the one who *loves us most* condemns us! (John 3:17; Rom. 8:34.) Once we are counted worthy of coming under Christ's shadow, God's blessings begin to come to us as they did to Christ. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32.) This potential unlimited channel of prayer is only blocked off when we quench the Spirit and grieve the Spirit. The theoretical and the actual prayer power we have will become more and more identical as we let Christ transform our life into a miniature of his.

Intensifying Our Prayer Experience

When it comes to actually developing a prayer life, most people wait until some major crisis or overwhelming need is felt. When a person is so involved in a crisis he doesn't remember to eat or refuses to eat, he often somehow finds time to pray. Fasting has become synonymous with intensified and effective prayer. The most basic selfish need is temporarily given up while the person seeks God's help or God's will, which has become more important than the instinct to eat to survive. In fasting, the senses are heightened as the blood is freed from

its digestive chores to keep the brain alert.

Moses and Christ both fasted and communed with God for 40 days and returned to their people with powerful messages of divine guidance. As a group of prophets and teachers fasted and prayed in the church at Antioch, they received guidance to send out Barnabas and Saul to harvest the Gentile world for Christ.

This year, the thousands in the Church

lowed it with the example of Elijah stopping and starting the annual rains by prayer. The Bible abounds in spectacular examples of answered prayer and tremendous promises, with the climax being the power of prayer in conversion. Hebrews 7:25 shows Jesus praying continually for this right now. "He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (NASB).

A 10-second recited prayer led by an agnostic teacher is not going to turn America around. But thousands of Christian teachers who offer classroom prayers in defiance of court rulings are a testimony of faith to their pupils.

of God were invited to fast and pray for Mary Helen Mattison on March 27 as she battled cancer. Even though the Lord's answer was "no" to sparing her life, it is her family's fervent hope that this outpouring of intensified prayer will start a trend throughout our churches of regular fasting and prayer. It was easy to fast and pray for one so widely loved, but it needs to become commonplace to also fast and pray for our fellow church members, prospects, and unconverted family members. There is no better way to "humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord" (Jas. 4:10), and acknowledge it is in his control alone to alter people and circumstances.

Mighty Prayer Promises

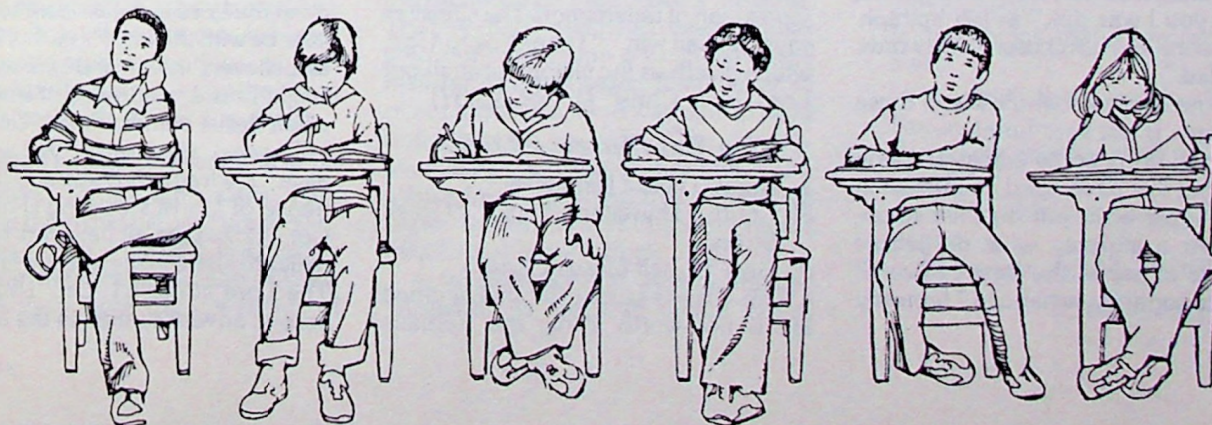
The measure of the potential power of prayer is the same as the actual power of the Almighty. When James said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," he fol-

There could be no greater use of your prayer power than to focus it on one or more of your acquaintances who needs to receive salvation to be preserved in his position in Christ. Make a list in the back of your Bible of people you will resolve to pray for until you see those results. A lifetime of prayer would be worth the investment to join hands with them in the eternal kingdom of God.

One of these prayers is worth a thousand of the diluted prayers being haggled over in the courts.

Answers to quiz at beginning of article:

1. *The First and Fourteenth.*
2. *No.*
3. *The Congressman can continue or stop the practice by a vote, whereas school-children would have no voice in being exposed to the same prayer.*
4. *Both are being proposed.*
5. *Ask them!*





The E P I T A P H Of Unbelievers

WHAT WOULD YOU like written on your tombstone? That is not the most joyful thought, but it is a sobering one.

On one tombstone in new England are these words:

"Here lies the body of Helen Trent, She kicked up her heels and away she went."

Dr. James Dobson's mother suggested, "I told you I was sick," as her epitaph.

Someone else has chosen these words: "I goofed."

To sum up one's whole life in these two words is not very funny.

I hope I don't come across as being weird, but I've developed an interest in what people want put on their tombstone. As a minister, what do people want me to say at the time of death? More importantly, what can I *honestly* say?

Another epitaph in New England says:

"Here lies the body of Helen Young, On May 22, 1926, I learned to control my tongue."

Yet another tombstone reads:

"You can't win." That tells you something about the person sleeping at the foot of the tombstone. He had a negative attitude and had not comprehended God's plan of redemption. The Christian says, "I shall win." "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

The Three Greatest Axioms

1. Know Thyself (Socrates).
2. Control Thyself (perhaps the Greek Stoics).
3. Give Thyself (Jesus Christ).

The Greeks taught the unexamined life is not worth living; the Romans

taught the unordered life is not worth living; Jesus Christ taught the uncommitted life is not worth living. Said he: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

Our Lord also said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The Roman, Greek, and Jewish cultures met in the Holy Land during the earthly ministry of Christ. The Romans emphasized the way. They were great builders and organizers. The Greeks emphasized truth. They have influenced the world's cultures more than any other people. Jesus Christ emphasized life, "the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Yes, he holds out eternal life to all who believe in him. Since the three cultures mentioned earlier met in Palestine during the past earthly ministry of Christ, it's no small wonder that the title "THE KING OF THE JEWS" was written over his cross in three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (John 19:19).

No Hope for Unbelievers

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Thes. 4:13). NO HOPE! These words could be written on the tombstone of every unbeliever. That's the cold brutal truth: Evidently there is a class of people who have NO HOPE. That's the epitaph of all unbelievers.

In contrast, Paul the apostle wrote of the Christian's hope: "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. 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" (vv. 16, 17). Yes, as believers in Christ Jesus we have a bright future: assurance of immortality when Jesus comes. Praise God!

Observe, Paul says: "We which are alive." He frequently stresses the imminence of Christ's coming (Phil. 4:5; 1 Cor. 7:29). Like all believers he hoped to live to share in the event. *Maranatha*: The Lord comes (1 Cor. 16:22). The second advent centers in the activity of

by Pastor

the Lord himself. The dead in Christ are raised first. Dead believers will precede living ones in putting on immortality. Both are then snatched up suddenly and forcibly together to meet Christ. One group does not prevent (precede) the other group (1 Thes. 4:15).

Another Epitaph

In an old cemetery in England, there appears an epitaph which is remarkable for the inspiring history it relates in such a brief manner.

I have sinned.
I have repented.
I have trusted.
I have loved.
I rest.
I shall rise.
I shall reign.

That is an expression of deep faith based on sound theology. It says so much about the person's life.

The word "hope" appears about 60 times in the New Testament alone. It was Alexander Pope who immortalized the words: "Hope springs eternal in the human breast" What is life without hope? Yet Scripture makes clear that some have no hope. Praise God for the sure hope that we have in Christ Jesus.

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust in earthly fame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
"When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne."

A little boy stood with his father looking at a group of puppies in the window of a pet shop. "Which one would you like?" the father asked. Pointing to one that was wagging his tail, the boy replied: "I'd like the one with a happy ending." Christianity has a happy ending. We have our struggles today in one area or another, but with the Holy Spirit guiding us and the blood of Christ covering us, we'll make it.

Paul Speaks to the Ephesians and to Us

In writing to the Ephesians, Paul reminded them that before their conversion they "were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of

promise, having NO HOPE, and without God in the world" (2:12). This is indeed a dark, bleak picture, but a true one of all without the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible pictures all creation under the curse, even believers who have the firstfruits of the Spirit. The term probably refers to blessings and changes which the spirit has already produced in the lives of believers. Then Paul says, "We are saved by hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24, 25). God has promised deliverance from the grave as well as from sin: "redemption of the body," that is resurrection, reliving of the dead. There is no such thing as life without a body. The concept of life without a body is based on paganism and superstition.

What is hope? Paul says it is confident expectation of promised blessings not now present or seen. You don't hope for something you already have. This hope is real and distinct, but not now a possession of believers. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable [pitiably]" (1 Cor. 15:19). Show me a man who is not serving God, and I'll show you a man that is not fulfilled. He is to be pitied. Friend, stand for something or you'll fall for anything.

As believers in Jesus, we stand "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

Choices Open to Us

There are three attitudes one may take toward the future:

1. Indifference
2. Fear
3. Hope

No intelligent person would take the first. There is no need to be ensnared by the second. You may possess the third. The \$64 question is, which one describes your outlook? Hope is to life what the mainspring is to a watch. It motivates all of our ambitions. God wants us to have hope through his Word. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

As followers of Christ, we have imputed righteousness. "Imputed" means "added

to my account; to credit to a person or a cause." Notice the word "put" is in the middle of the word. God has put the righteousness of Christ on us on our account. Suppose we sin? Romans 4:8 takes care of that "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute [reckon] sin." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1b).

Epitaph of Old Testament Saints

After recording an impressive list of men and women who served God faithfully in times past, the writer of Hebrews says this of them: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off. . . and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). DIED IN FAITH! That's a great epitaph which speaks well of them.

Another epitaph reads "The resting place of a traveler on his way to the New Jerusalem." This one reflects some good sound theology also.

While God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:21, 23, 32), there is life only in Christ. One has to personally choose Christ, the source of life. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12). Scripture recognizes two conditions: life and death. When all is said and done, one will either have eternal life or eternal death. There is no other possibility. The Bible clearly teaches the mortality of man. Conditional immortality is a cardinal doctrine of Scripture. The songwriter has put the issue in perspective:

If I gained the world but lost the Saviour,
Were my life worth living for a day,
Could my yearning heart find rest and comfort,
In the things that soon must pass away.
"If I gained the world but lost the Saviour,
Would my gain be worth the toil and strife?
Are all earthly treasures worth comparing
With the gift of God, eternal life?"

(Continued, page 16)



THE EPITAPH OF UNBELIEVERS
Continued from page 15)

To choose Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the way of life eternal. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Since he is "the way," why waste time following any other way?

The Gift of Life

Life is precious! Have you ever seen an infidel at a funeral or by a grave? I have, and it is a pitiful sight. He stands there in the presence of something that he doesn't understand and in which he sees no hope. He is "most to be pitied" (1 Cor. 15:19, NASB).

However, as believers in the Lord Jesus we identify with Paul the apostle: "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12b). Feel the confidence of this servant of God. His Old Testament counterpart is Job. Said he: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25). This old patriarch looked down the corridors of time and through faith saw the Son of God, our Redeemer.

Doubtless, Jesus Christ is the only hope man has of life beyond the grave. Friend, don't look into the sunset without the Savior.

Congregation Vs. Church

By Pastor Joe Good



During the time I have spent in church over the years I have noticed the many ways a congregation is built. Some congregations are built around the personality of the pastor. Some are built in reaction to false teaching. Others are committed in a joint effort to build a congregation for the purpose of political, social, and humanitarian involvement. There may be a thousand different reasons to build a congregation, but there is only one way to build a church.

Jesus Christ is what makes a church. The Bible says that he is the church's one foundation, one leader, and one purpose. Jesus said our strong commitment of love for each of its members was to be the single identifying mark that would cause the world to know who we are.

Is that love identifiable in you? Does it show in the way he said it would? Are you a member of a congregation or are you a member of the church? In both the congregation and the church there is diversity, but the church has one thing holding it together that a congregation does not: Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews 10:25 Paul warns us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Attend church each Sunday and let the kind of love that Jesus described be identified in you. If you believe you are in the church that God wants you to be in, then be faithful to him there.

The Gospel

What Is It ?

By Anthony Buzzard



Like autumn leaves, the meaning of the gospel transcends creation's present agony in anticipation of God's beautiful kingdom.

A WIDESPREAD confusion prevails about the meaning of that most important of all words—gospel. Few words are so misused and bandied about, but almost never defined. It is time for Bible students to go back to first principles and ask the fundamental questions.

What do you mean “gospel”? Good news, certainly. But about what? The answer to that question will change your life, if you will be honest with the biblical facts. One thing is clear. The gospel is Christianity. It is the message which Christ proclaimed. We all agree; but we have been surprisingly slow to grasp what that message is about. This is less remarkable, however, since spokesmen for religion constantly avoid Jesus’ own definition of the gospel.

A reaction of disbelief to this last statement is understandable, but the facts will show that the gospel, as Jesus taught it, is generally *not* being preached.

One has only to listen to sermons and examine tracts purporting to offer salvation to detect a glaring difference between popular evangelism and the Bible on this vital matter of the gospel. The difference is very simple. Jesus spoke always of the gospel or good news of the *kingdom of God*. Popular evangelism speaks of the gospel of salvation, or grace, of Christ, but almost never of the gospel of the *kingdom*.

Word Association

Once this fact is pointed out, there will be ample opportunity to verify it, especially in America where the public is deluged with invitations to accept “the gospel.” Simply ask yourself: What word do I associate with the gospel? If your immediate reaction is “kingdom,” you are

a rare person—rarer still if you have heard anyone invite his audience to be saved by believing in the gospel of the kingdom of God. Yet in Jesus’ language the gospel was always the gospel of the kingdom of God. It is that message, as we shall see, which you must believe to be saved.

In Matthew, Mark, and Luke this is plainly stated in verse after verse. But the churches seldom refer to those books in their preaching of the gospel. They begin in John, or Romans, or Revelation. In these books the gospel is clearly defined and is therefore more open to misunderstanding. But in Matthew, Mark, and Luke there can be no possibility of mistake. The message of salvation is the gospel of the kingdom of God. It is that message which you must understand and believe in order to be a Christian. It is possible, however, to sit in a church for years and never once hear the message about the kingdom of God.

Get the Facts

Here are the New Testament facts. They are not complicated. It is well known that Jesus compared the preaching of Christianity to the sowing of seed in a field. The Christian message, he said, is an idea sown in the mind. That idea he called the message of the *kingdom*:

“When anyone hears *the message of the kingdom* and does not understand it, the devil comes and snatches away the message which is sown in his heart, so that he may not believe and be saved” (Combining Matt. 13:19 with Luke 8:12). What a wealth of critically important information is here. The message of the kingdom, when believed and *held fast*, (Luke 8:15) leads to salvation. Satan knows this and does his utmost, therefore, to prevent that message from taking root in your mind. He does not want you to believe and be saved. As you read those vitally important words of Jesus, there are forces at work to divert your attention away from the message. No wonder Jesus raised his voice and cried out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Luke 8:8.)

The parable of the sower (Matt. 13; Mark 4; Luke 8) describes the process of conversion as Jesus taught it. He did not just say: “Believe in me.” He said in effect: “Believe my message about the kingdom of God. Beware lest Satan diverts your attention from the message. If he does you will not believe and you will not be saved.”

We can see, then, why Satan does not want the message of the kingdom to be known. He has done everything possible to suppress it. He is quite willing to have the word “gospel” in circulation, but not “gospel of the *kingdom of God*.” In this way people may be convinced that they are preaching the gospel, when they

(Continued on page 18)

THE GOSPEL—WHAT IS IT?

(Continued from page 17)

really never mention it. It is time to see through the great gospel hoax.

Jesus Defined the Gospel

That hoax is perpetuated by our simply not paying attention to Jesus' own definition of the gospel. In any textbook you should begin at the beginning. Matthew, Mark, and Luke describe in detail the beginning of Jesus' proclamation of the good news of the kingdom:

Mark 1:14: "Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God . . . is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel." There is no doubt here that the gospel is about the kingdom of God. That is the message you must accept and believe. "Jesus went about in all Galilee proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God . . . and they pressed around him to hear the *message of God*"

by the lie. We must develop a *love* of the truth to be saved (2 Thes. 2:10). The great Christian virtue of love is characterized by its joy at the truth (1 Cor. 13:6).

Unfortunately most churchgoers do not give themselves wholeheartedly to the pursuit of truth. They seem content to believe whatever they are told. They exhibit very little of the spirit of the Bereans who "searched the scriptures daily" to see if what Paul was saying was true (Acts 17:11). As a result of their diligence, they became genuine believers.

Revival Needed

What is needed everywhere in churches is a revival of interest in the Parable of the Sower. Jesus himself said that this parable provides the key to understanding all the parables (Mark 4:13). Its great importance lies in its description of the genuine conversion experience. It shows what Jesus preached as the gospel. We learn from

The message of salvation is the gospel of the kingdom of God. It is that message which you must understand and believe in order to be a Christian.

(Matt. 4:23 and Luke 5:1). There is no doubt that the message was about the kingdom. "To you [disciples] it has been granted to know the secret of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11). So there is knowledge to be acquired in the good news, a secret about the kingdom to be learned for conversion. The preaching of the gospel is evidently first and foremost an appeal to the mind, a demand for wholehearted acceptance of the facts about the kingdom of God. Unless that vital information about the kingdom passes from the preacher to his audience, no conversion can take place. There is a subtle danger here.

False Evangelist

Satan is also a great evangelist. So Jesus warned: "The enemy [the devil] sowed tares in the field" (Matt. 13:25, 38, 39). The devil is also busy sowing his pseudogospel. According to the marginal note in the New American Standard Version, tares resemble wheat—the product of the good seed. In other words, Satan's evangelistic effort parodies and mimics the evangelistic activity of Jesus. Satan, too, makes his converts—and on a large scale—judging by John's remark that the "whole world lies in [Satan's] power" (1 John 5:19). Our task is to distinguish the true from the false, the genuine from the counterfeit. All this demands effort on our part, a determination by prayer and study to know the truth and not to be taken in

him that conversion is based on the acceptance of the gospel of the *kingdom*—and no other gospel.

Having said that, it is obvious that we must define the kingdom of God. It is simply this: God is going to send his Son to rule the world. He is to be the first world governor. To be converted and saved you must begin by believing that stupendous fact! The good news about the kingdom allows you to know what God is planning to do. There will be universal peace on earth (Isa. 2:1-4) and Jesus will be here with us to bring it about.

We are to pray for that day to come—"Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will awake from the sleep of death to take part in it (Dan. 12:2; Luke 13:28, 29). It will arrive at the end of the age, following a series of cataclysmic events (Luke 21:31). The kingdom of God will supersede all existing national governments (Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 22, 27). The power to rule over the world will be given to Christ, *and to you*, if you will accept the message and act on it (Rev. 2:26; 3:21; 2Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:27).

How You Respond to the Gospel of the Kingdom

The gospel of the kingdom is much more than a message about Jesus' death to secure forgiveness of sin (although that is an essential part of it, added later—Acts 8:12). Jesus preached the kingdom of God long before

he said a word about his death for our sins or his resurrection (compare Luke 4:43 with Luke 18:31-34). The good news about the kingdom is a statement of God's intention to put an end to the world's insoluble problems. He will send his Messiah to abolish international warfare (Isa. 2:4), to cure the incurable, and to eradicate famine and poverty.

Conversion is your response to that supremely significant piece of good news. The parable of the sower lets you into the secret of Christianity—the secret about the kingdom (Mark 4:11). Satan stands ready to “snatch the message from your heart so that you may not believe *and be saved*” (Luke 8:12). His intention is to interfere with your reception of the message about the kingdom, and thus with your salvation!

If you accept the gospel message about the kingdom, and receive forgiveness in the blood of Christ, you enter upon a period of training and testing in this present life in

must believe, of course, in Jesus, the Son of God, in his death, resurrection, and return to establish the kingdom on earth. Obedience is crucial for success in the Christian life: “Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father” (Matt 7:21). Obedience can be costly, for Christians must be prepared to turn the other cheek (Matt 5:39), love their enemies (Matt 5:44) and separate themselves from the machinery of warfare which threatens the lives of their enemies *and their fellow believers* in other lands. Christians are to be nonviolent “He who takes the sword will perish with the sword (Matt 26:52).

In Summary

Such in brief is the Christianity of the Bible. It begins and ends with belief in the coming kingdom of God and in Jesus, the King of that kingdom (Acts 8:12; 28:23, 31). Belief in any other gospel (and Satan has his “gospel” and

Accepting the gospel of the kingdom implies that Christians must turn the other cheek (Matt. 5:39), love their enemies (5:44), and obey the Lord.

preparation for royal office in the age to come. The army's slogan applies exactly: “Training today for leadership tomorrow.” There could be no more accurate description of New Testament Christianity.

Following your acceptance of God's message of the kingdom of God, you must be baptized in water as a responsible and intelligent believer. That is part of required obedience for salvation: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16). (Infant christening and baptism in ignorance of the message of the kingdom do not count as biblical baptisms—Acts 8:12.) Communion, commemorating the death of Christ and looking forward to the kingdom, should be celebrated following Jesus' instructions. (1 Cor. 11:23-26.) With the help of the Spirit of God, you must persist as a Christian to the end: “He who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13).

In order to worship God successfully you must lay aside traditional beliefs which conflict with the teachings of Jesus. It is important to believe in “one God, the Father” (1 Cor. 8:4-6), “him who alone is God” (John 5:44, NEB), “the only true God” (John 17:3), “the only wise God” (Jude 25). Any other creed distorts belief in the first commandment, that none is absolutely God but the Father (Deut. 6:4; Eph. 4:6). God is looking for those who will worship him in Spirit and truth (John 4:24). You

his pseudo-Jesus—2 Cor. 11:4, 13-15) will not lead to the desired result, but to tragic disappointment “when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom and yourselves being cast out. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Luke 13:28). So said the one who spoke with the full authority of his Father, and who invites you, through belief in the gospel of the kingdom, to share rulership with him when he comes to reign on the earth (Rev. 5:10).

In the gospel message of the kingdom, Jesus, on behalf of his Father, invites you to be a king—quite literally. You may never have thought of yourself as an administrator in a world government, but God's intention to honor you in this way is plainly declared in the Bible. As a disciple of Jesus you are entitled to know what purpose there is in following him, often through trial and tribulation (Matt. 19:27, 28; Luke 22:27-30). Jesus will answer you as he did Peter, and his church as a whole:

“I tell you truly, in the New World when the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me shall also sit on twelve thrones to govern the twelve tribes of Israel.” “The conqueror I will allow to sit beside me on my throne . . . I will give him authority over the nation” (Matt. 19:28; Rev. 3:21; 2:26).

We have heard what Christ says. Careful note should be taken of Luke 8:12!

The Glorious Sunset

Scene at Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan, Canada.

It is wonderful to be young with clear sight, acute hearing, elastic step, and pulses drumming to the march of exhilarating health. But old age has its glories which youth cannot know. Old age celebrates the harvest—youth the sowing. For youth will not always last—it stays only long enough to strengthen our shoulders for the burden-bearing ahead, and arm us for fighting life's battles. Life's pathway without exception leads to the eventide; and the years which will be

are but the reflections of all the years that have gone before. Like fruit in the fall, the harvest of old age will either dry up and wither, or grow mellow and be filled with sweetness as it ripens. It is a blessed old age, if it ends brightly at eventide.

You cannot escape the advancing years. If the time has come for you to be old, do not attempt to cover it up by acting young. The best things are the oldest things, which have endured and stood the test of time. God himself is said to be OLD and is called the Ancient of Days! Everything that ABIDES must become old. Think of old things: old mountains, old rivers, old oceans, old stars, and an old eternity. Don't be ashamed to own to your age unless you are older than the mountains and the stars.

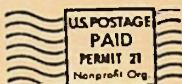
A Christian should never grow old—only older. The fall of the year is as beautiful as the springtime. Every season has its own beauty. The frost of autumn upon the brow of the aged is as becoming as the kiss of springtime dew on the cheeks of the young. God has made "everything beautiful in its time." To make every age beautiful, one must act one's age. There is something ludicrous and depressing about a precocious child who acts older than he is, and there is something obnoxious about silly old people who are ashamed of their age and seek by every foolish method to hide it. A visitor once met a very gracious and cultured lady and remarked impulsively, "You are beautiful." The gracious lady replied with dignity, "Why shouldn't I be? I am seventy-five years old." Yes, the Christian should grow sweeter with the years. Fruit does not ripen until autumn. The sugar is not made in the grape until the nip of frost is in the air. A persimmon is as bitter as gall until after a frost and then is as sweet as honey. Age means mellowing.

There are some things we cannot see until a certain maturity is reached. "For age is opportunity no less, than youth itself, though in another dress—And as the evening twilight fades away the sky is filled with stars, invisible by day." To make the evening bright, one needs to think of the NEXT morning, not the past NIGHT. To brood over the past, to envy the years of youth brings only bitterness. But looking for the new morning puts the soul at rest, and gently rocks us to sleep with dreams of that day when we shall awake in HIS likeness.

Handout at the National Conference on Aging, 10-27-76.
Author unknown. Contributed by Cecil Smead.

THE RESTITUTION HERALD

Church of God General Conference
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The
Restitution
Herald

Thanksgiving, Page 7
Missions, Pages 9, 19

Bible Sunday
Pages 10-13

November, 1983



Thank God for faithful people in his churches which are represented by the Royal Village choir.

Your RESTITUTION HERALD Subscription

It's time to renew your HERALD subscription. As you know, the subscription year begins with the February issue, just two months away. Christmas will soon be here. Send in your renewal today before it gets lost in the holiday rush. Use the enclosed postage-paid envelope for making your renewal. Complete instructions are on it regarding payment options and number of years for which you wish to renew.

Perhaps you have already renewed in conjunction with the October 30 RESTITUTION HERALD Sunday. If so, thank you for taking advantage of that opportunity. Please disregard this reminder.

Again, you may have renewed for several years into the future. We thank you for your faithfulness to the ministry of THE RESTITUTION HERALD. Several of our readers have extended their subscription through 1986! Of course, these persons need not be bothered with this reminder.

Yet many of you have yet to renew. Today is the best day to take care of that matter. Use the enclosed postage-paid envelope and renew right now. Thank you and God bless.

Happy Thanksgiving

Crouching in the darkness on the outskirts of the city, two men allowed

themselves the joy of waving furtively to the small group of believers returning to the glow of lamps in homes lining the streets of the metropolis.

Then they turned away from the lights and noises of Thessalonica and trudged the mountain road leading to Berea. A loud uproar behind them quickened their pace through the countryside. No words were exchanged as their grim faces lifted again toward the mountains and the distant hamlet which promised rescue from the storm they created in the city.

Meanwhile, back in Thessalonica, several believers meeting in the house of Jason suffered the wrath of the authorities who tried to quiet a mob of protestors from another faith. Jason and his friends were imprisoned briefly because they trusted in Jesus of Nazareth.

But Paul and Silas moved on to Berea to keep spreading the good news of Jesus and the coming kingdom of God. They met more success in the mountains than on the seacoast, which only incited the residents of Thessalonica to make the journey inland to persecute them more. (See Acts 17 for the complete story.)

Yet churches were established in both cities. Faithful brethren worshiped the true God and his Son Jesus—all

because they learned determination and love and hope from Paul and Silas.

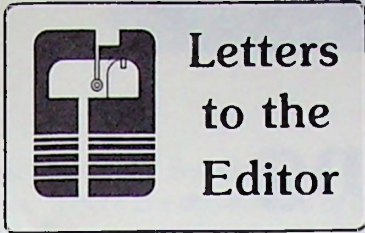
Later Paul penned two letters to the Thessalonians. What did he recall most about his visit to bring them the gospel? Oh, sure, he remembered the persecution. Naturally he warned that a time of general lawlessness will prevail in the last days (see 2 Thes. 1 and 2).

But his most important memory centered on an attitude we celebrate in November in modern times: THANKSGIVING.

Read it from Paul's pen. "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers" (1 Thes. 1:2). "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God?" (1 Thes. 3:9.) "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thes. 5:18). "We are bound to thank God always for you" (2 Thes. 1:3; 2:13).

In spite of situations and circumstances, Paul found spiritual reasons for which to thank God for the early Christians. Today we can do the same; untold thanksgiving ascends to God for you—remembering your faith and love and hope. God bless you with a Happy Thanksgiving.

Editor's Viewpoint



Letters to the Editor

We continue to appreciate the "R. H." and to pass it on to others of our family. We recently were told by a member of our Baptist church that her brother used to have the HERALD and also took the Systematic Bible Study Course. We have just received the June issue dealing with marriage and divorce. We outsiders look at the USA with some bewilderment. Is the MORAL MAJORITY in fact a majority? We here do not think that Christianity should wear a political face, only insofar as it has a "caring" face for the poor and neglected.

—Victoria, Australia.

I hope that the letter from Raymore, MO, canceling his subscription over the Moral Majority article, will not discourage you. It is going to take organizations like Moral Majority and the Jerry Falwells, who are willing to literally sacrifice themselves to such causes, to help swing us back from the depths of Socialism and secular humanism, which were gaining momentum to the point that it scared me.

It is my contention that you cannot publish any periodical and stay completely clear of all controversy. If you do, you stand for nothing. I see and read many Christian publications, and I believe that THE RESTITUTION HERALD is among the best. I hope we don't get in a rut of no controversial articles, and I hope we don't get too deep into controversial subjects. Keep a good moderate position. However, we must stand up for something, or we are no credit to the Lord and his work.

I have enjoyed Anthony Buzzard's articles, and have passed some of them along to the trinitarians for their enlightenment. I realize these articles are too deep for some people, but we need them.

—Warsaw, IN.

I've noticed a lot of good articles coming from THE RESTITUTION HERALD lately. Some of the articles are about the kingdom, divorce and remarriage, and many other subjects. Although I

may not agree with everything that is being said, at least, because of the articles, I research that area more. One of the articles which interested me very much was the one on "Moral Majority Morality" in the June, 1983, issue. This article opened my eyes more about the subject and in turn I looked into it more by reading other articles. Because of this article and others, I've decided to subscribe to THE RESTITUTION HERALD. Thanks for such great articles and I hope you'll keep up the good work.

—Oregon, IL

Thanks and praise for an increase in the good, spiritually healthy articles in THE RESTITUTION HERALD. A church is awake when it recognizes and upholds Christian leaders such as Jerry Falwell. With his tremendous task and outreach he is trying to bring America, which is speedily growing into a godless nation, back to God. He is earnestly working to get our nation back to the Christian standards and principles on which it was founded and blessed thereby. Every Christian should see it as his duty to work toward that goal also. Let us pray it will not be too late.

—Grandville, MI.

Needs Bundles of HERALDS

I am working among the tribes of Kerala in hilly areas with few workers where there is no transportation at all. Will you please uphold us in your valuable prayers? If you have back issues of HERALDS and any other suitable Christian periodicals, please send us several parcels of them.

—Kerala, India.

September Articles Relative to Times

Articles in the September, 1983, issue by Don Needham, Jeremy Rifkin, and David Wilsterman were very good and relative to the times. The ideas presented by Rifkin were talked about when I read Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" years ago. His predictions upset me so that I was glad to loan the book out and was not unhappy when it wasn't returned.

Few people know the power of nuclear bombs; they seem to think they can get far enough away and be unhurt. They don't realize no place in the United States is safe. There could not be a limited or winnable war with the use of nuclear power. But I don't know of any easy solution from a human political viewpoint.

—Minneapolis, MN.

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates: the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6); the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8); Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4); the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through him (Col. 3:3); the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28); the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54); the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8); the final restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32), the church to be joint heirs with him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3); the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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Bearing One Another's

BURD

TO CONSIDER "ADMONISHING" last month but not follow it up this month with "BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS" is like putting one shoe on, or brushing half one's teeth, or putting a contact lens in only one eye. Correction shouldn't be applied without assisting one with his burden.

Notice the marriage of these two subjects in the following verses:

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should **restore**, [i.e., requiring confrontation and admonishment] him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. **Carry each other's burdens**, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1, 2 (NIV).

When someone is admonished, he should also be supported to break free from the jungle of his problem.

Entangled in Sin

How convenient it would be if a "sin-immunity drug" could be developed for administering to all new Christians immediately upon their exits from the waters of baptism. This inoculation could shield believers from the temptation germs of immorality; the bacteria of carnality; the epidemic of peer pressure. But would that be wise?

It's not God's plan that his disciples be quarantined from the reality of evil, or live in a sterile environment. In fact, Christians are to be "*penetrators*" into the domain of unrighteousness; "*lights*" piercing the darkness; "*salt*" biting and putting immorality on edge. So it is inevitable that some believers will become entrapped by the lure and seduction of sin which still surrounds them.

So subtly one can sink into the quicksand of iniquity: lunch with a secretary that grows into a clandestine affair; social drinking that slides into the addiction of alcoholism; a tendency for spreading news until one becomes a reputation-destroying gossiper. . . *From their quagmire of self-destruction these weak Christians must be rescued—for their own sakes, and the health of the church.*

The Rescue Operation

To the leaders of the church at Thessalonica, Paul wrote, "Brothers, warn [admonish] those who are idle" (1 Thes. 5:14, NIV). "Idle" comes from a Greek word meaning disorderly. It is a military term that originally



referred to a soldier who is out of step or out of rank, or to the army moving in disarray. What an appropriate description of the carnal Christian's life!

by Pastor

In his book "Building Up One Another," Gene Getz says, "There are three levels of disciplinary action in the New Testament. First, we are to warn a Christian about his sin, attempting to restore him and release him from Satan's trap. If a person does not respond and turn from his sin, then we are not to fellowship with that Christian. The final step is excommunication—to actually consider this person as if he were an unbeliever." Let's consider each.

PRIVATE CONFRONTATION. The authority for a

E N S

private personal confrontation is found in Matthew 18:15, where Jesus instructed:

"Go and show him his fault, *just between the two of you*. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over."

It is amazing what can frequently be accomplished through this procedure. If one comes with a gentle, compassionate, kind, and patient approach—as opposed to harshness, bitterness, and insensitivity, which only threatens the person who is at fault—the atmosphere is right for progress.

The one confronted often knows he is "out of bounds" in his conduct. Possibly unaware of exactly why he feels more distant from God, his burden of guilt is likely growing. Being faced with his sin may provide just the opportunity he really wants to experience a catharsis—to be unburdened and purged—and to experience forgiveness. Simply being confronted may give him the incentive to face up to and correct something he wants repaired—but hasn't found the courage to change.

As a pastor many times I have listened as individuals came and laid bare the deepest, darkest, rottenest secrets of their souls. Their sharings will go with me in confidence to my grave. But they have gotten a psychological boost. First, because they have poured it all out—and in their confession experience forgiveness and freedom from guilt. Second, because someone else knows their concealed and hidden sin. They feel an accountability—not only to God—but to the individual who knows of their failure. This accountability gives them strength to pull away from their sin.

Instead of a wedge being driven between two people after a "private confrontation," often an unbreakable bond will be formed—cast because these two have left the superficial plane at which most communication occurs. They plunge together to the struggle level of life, sharing together their hurts, failures, guilts, and weaknesses. This experience forges them together as common pilgrims.

BREAKING OF FELLOWSHIP. More severe than the first, but less harsh than excommunication, discontinued fellowship is the second level of disciplinary action the church is authorized to enforce.

Support for this can be found in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15, where Paul writes (NIV),

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle [leading a disorderly life] and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. . . . If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. **Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.** Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother."

Some background to illuminate this text: At the end of the previous letter (1 Thes. 5:14) the Thessalonian church, and probably its leaders in particular, received a charge to confront those members who were living unruly and undisciplined lives. It does not appear that the initial warning had much impact on those people, for in this second letter a fuller and more serious charge is given for dealing with them. It was important that the other residents in the city should not look at these carnal members and conclude their behavior was characteristic of all Christians. The church and its leaders were instructed to disassociate themselves from such people. *Such a person, while not guilty of extreme conduct which called for outright and formal excommunication, must nevertheless be treated in a way that might bring him to his senses—shame and embarrass him—and teach him to live as a responsible member of the believing community.*



Bearing One Another's Burdens

(continued from page 5)

Though some might question if positive results could come from this "black sheep" strategy, there is evidence that such "shock treatment" does produce change. A modern application can be seen in some congregations' decision to send warnings to irregular attenders—informing them that they will be dropped from the active membership role unless they are more frequent in attendance and active in involvement. Shaken up, many are activated and increase their participation.

EXCOMMUNICATION. Sounds hard and cold, doesn't it? Severed! Amputated! Discarded!

The sin has to be extreme to merit such a severe censure. First Corinthians 5 is a vivid case in point. Committing adultery with his stepmother—while getting a warm welcome when he showed up at church—Paul sternly instructs the excommunication of this sleazy character. And he roundly chastises the congregation as well, for tolerating this situation without taking action to correct it.

It appears excommunication was exercised in three situations. *First*, on moral grounds as previously stated (1 Cor. 5:1-8). *Second*, for doctrinal reasons. Paul tells of excommunicating Hymenaeus and Alexander because

he must then be supported in his effort to make change.

Note the direct instruction about assisting in this passage:

"We who are strong ought to **bear with** the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, **to build him up**" (Romans 15:1, 2, NIV).

These two verses carry over a theme from the 14th chapter in which Paul is repeatedly warning the "strong" Christians to abstain from any practice that would cause a weaker brother to stumble.

"Bear" in this text is significant. It does not mean "to put up with," but "to carry." It is the same word used of Jesus "bearing" his cross.

Let's apply this. If a member is confronted about a drinking problem, then fellow Christians must support his attendance at A. A. meetings. They must be willing for their phone to ring at any hour of the night, as he desperately needs to hear reasons why he must avoid that lethal bottle.

Perhaps the admonishment was necessary because of sexual immorality. This person is hesitant in returning to church fellowship, for everyone knows of his mistake. If he has genuinely acknowledged and repented of his sin, then the church should be quick to accept him back.

There should be no ostracizing, no looking down self-righteous noses, no shooting of the wounded.

of their false teaching (1 Tim. 1:20). *Third*, it could be enforced in the case of a divisive person who was splitting the church (Titus 3:10).

It is never pleasant for a congregation to "come down" on an errant member. An ugly, accusing scene usually ensues. Supporters of the "guilty" person frequently leave too. But such radical measures must sometimes be enforced to purge and purify the body. When members are living in open immorality, it's time to give them the alternative of "shaping up or shipping out." When one is causing schism in the church by teaching doctrines contrary to the beliefs of the body—he must be told to change his teachings or more on. When a person is intentionally sowing the seeds of division, which fractures the unity and inhibits the growth of the body—if he refuses to change—it's time to show him the door.

YET REMEMBER: THE PURPOSE OF ANY DISCIPLINARY MEASURE IS TO RESCUE A STRAYING MEMBER FROM HIS ENTRAPMENT. On no occasion should the motive be revenge or retaliation.

An Arm on His Shoulder

Confrontation (at any of these levels) must always be followed by an offer of assistance. If one is admonished,

There should be no ostracizing, no looking down self-righteous noses, no shooting of the wounded.

There but for the grace of God go I" is a healthy attitude for a body of believers to possess. If a congregation has it, they will readily stand behind the victim traumatized by divorce; the parolee working to make a new life for himself; the young person busted for drug usage. *They will throw a rope to one drowning—instead of throwing rocks at him.*

Entrance, restoration, and acceptance back into the body should not be made a difficult, embarrassing ordeal—but made as uncomplicated as possible.

Restoration at Corinth

Scripture provides a clear model for treatment of one confronted who chooses to change. This is the same man who had been excommunicated for immorality with his stepmother. Notice:

"Now instead, you ought to **forgive** and **comfort** him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, **to reaffirm your love for him**" (2 Corinthians 2:7, 8).

WE EXIST TO SALVAGE SINNERS, NOT CANONIZE SAINTS!

Bearing One Another's Burdens

(continued from page 5)

Though some might question if positive results could come from this "black sheep" strategy, there is evidence that such "shock treatment" does produce change. A modern application can be seen in some congregations' decision to send warnings to irregular attenders—informing them that they will be dropped from the active membership role unless they are more frequent in attendance and active in involvement. Shaken up, many are activated and increase their participation.

EXCOMMUNICATION. Sounds hard and cold, doesn't it? Severed! Amputated! Discarded!

The sin has to be extreme to merit such a severe censure. First Corinthians 5 is a vivid case in point. Committing adultery with his stepmother—while getting a warm welcome when he showed up at church—Paul sternly instructs the excommunication of this sleazy character. And he roundly chastises the congregation as well, for tolerating this situation without taking action to correct it.

It appears excommunication was exercised in three situations. *First*, on moral grounds as previously stated (1 Cor. 5:1-8). *Second*, for doctrinal reasons. Paul tells of excommunicating Hymenaeus and Alexander because

he must then be supported in his effort to make change.

Note the direct instruction about assisting in this passage:

"We who are strong ought to **bear with** the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, **to build him up**" (Romans 15:1, 2, NIV).

These two verses carry over a theme from the 14th chapter in which Paul is repeatedly warning the "strong" Christians to abstain from any practice that would cause a weaker brother to stumble.

"Bear" in this text is significant. It does not mean "to put up with," but "to carry." It is the same word used of Jesus "bearing" his cross.

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Let Us Give Thanks

—Thanks for What?

DO YOU BELIEVE you have anything to be thankful for? Some days as I meet with people and hear their problems I wonder if anyone takes any time to think about their blessings. What about you? Do you concentrate on the blessings or the problems?

Take a few minutes to write down the special ways that God has blessed you today. Did you list life itself? What about your friends and loved ones? How about that warm house and the food in the pantry? Are you thankful for your eyes that are used to read this page? How about the hands that hold it before your eyes? I could go on but I think you are getting my drift. God has given us more than we deserve and we need to be thankful for these blessings.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:3 of the Amplified Bible are these words: "Yet the Lord is faithful and He will strengthen (you) and set you on a firm foundation and guard you from the evil (one)." This promise to his followers is a special gift we must also be thankful for.

God's faithfulness to us cannot be called into question. Though many do wonder if God cares about them, the problem is not God's caring about us, but our caring about him. Do God and his values influence you and your values? Are you as faithful to him as he is to you? If we are his children it must be seen in our lives. We must be faithful to him and the

sharing of salvation with all men everywhere.

We are all aware of our weaknesses. Not a day passes but we are reminded of them. Those who have no weakness are not thinking. Thus their weakness is not using the mind that God has given them. I fail, you fail, we all fail. What we do about that failure can make the difference between guilt and forgiveness. God is willing to forgive if we confess our faults.

He has also promised to strengthen us. Our weaknesses don't have to control us. We have the power of God to overcome our weaknesses. The question remains, What will we do about our weakness? Will we let God strengthen us so we can overcome? I hope so.

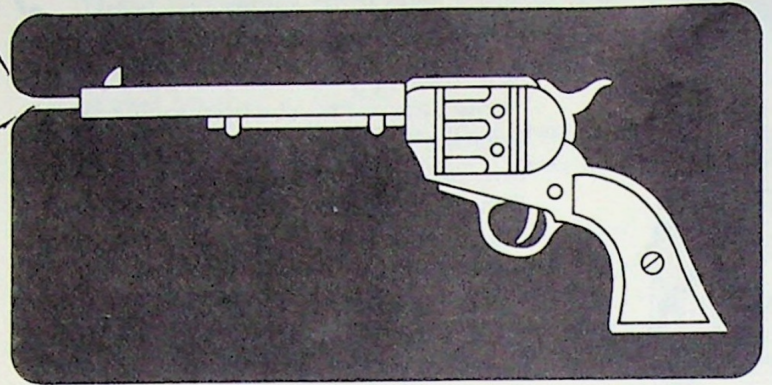
The firm foundation that God will put us upon is Christ Jesus himself. When we are living for Christ we are strong and firmly grounded. It is only when we walk away from Christ and go our own way that weakness and failure returns to our lives.

Do you want strength to overcome the evil one? Do you want to be strong and victorious? Do you want to be thankful for your salvation and new life in Christ? Then accept this promise from God and direct your life to following that Christ. Then you will be able to see that there is much to be thankful for, even in this life. Don't forget to express that thanks. Not just on Thanksgiving, but every day of the year.

By Pastor David W. Cheatwood



I Believe In WAR



I BELIEVE IN WAR! If a person comes to another person proclaiming those words, one might begin to conjure up a picture of Robert Duvall, standing in the middle of devastated terrain in *Apocalypse Now*, proclaiming, "I love the smell of napalm in the morning!" However, the Christian is involved in war. The *real war* for the disciple of Jesus is the Cosmological War that Jesus began when he proclaimed, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world; no, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34, GNB).

Jesus seems to contradict himself when he says, "Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does" (John 14:27, GNB). The answer to this apparent contradiction is the clue to determining war and peace (with apologies to Tolstoy) for the Christian. Jesus says both that we should have peace and that we should have war (i.e., "sword," "division"). The contradictory puzzle begins to unravel as one attempts to determine the object or enemy of the Christian war.

The object of the struggle for the Christian is a particular *cosmos*, almost directly from the Greek, *kosmos*. Webster defines *cosmos* as "the

world . . . as an orderly, harmonious system." Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). He is offered the kingdoms of this world (Matt. 4:8) and yet refuses. One needs to clarify the world, or *cosmos*, that is the root of the war that the Christian is engaged in.

"World" in the New Testament comes basically from two Greek words, *ges* and *cosmos*. Both have multiple meanings even as they are both translated "world." They can mean dirt, the inhabited earth, mankind, this order of things, etc. Our word "geology"—a study of earth—comes from *ges*. "Cosmetics" comes from the root *kosmos*, and means the rearranging of the order of the face. One is sure Revlon and Avon, as well as the reader, can appreciate the humor that some faces could stand a little order to them. The usual meaning in the preceding passages is the world, or *this order* of things, in *opposition* to God.

Jesus is calling for war against the present order of things, this *cosmos*. He will establish the kingdom of God in opposition to the kingdoms of this *cosmos*. Remember, his kingdom is not of this world; it is from God! James 4:4 is very pointed in establishing sides in the war: "a friend

of the world is the enemy of God." Through Jesus, God is doing battle with the *cosmos*—not his creation, but man's order of doing things. While in the body of Christ (the church), God expects us to be doing battle against his enemies! The peace that Jesus gives us (John 14:27) is the peace that comes from knowing we have joined with God through his Son. Note, it is not a peace that this *cosmos* can give!

Therefore, we are in a cosmological struggle—a real war. The war is against sin, man's way of doing things. The Christian should be in the forefront of battle. In the love chapter (1 Corinthians 13) one reads, "Love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth" (verse 6, GNB). The Christian, through love, is warring against "this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4, GNB; King James uses "world" for *aion*).

On the other hand, the peace that Jesus leaves us is peace from God (cf. Rom. 1:7; Phil. 4:7; Titus 1:4, etc.). The peace that Jesus leaves us is knowing that God's kingdom will come, that we may enter it, and that we can share in the Spirit until that time, knowing our salvation is sure. The *war* that Jesus leaves us is the cosmological war against a world

by Pastor Joe

that places itself in opposition to the righteousness of God, that attempts to secure peace without righteousness, that will be destroyed in the reordering in the kingdom of God when Jesus returns.

This peace, for which Jesus was born (Luke 2:14), is directly tied to the gospel of the kingdom. Peter is plain in "preaching peace through Jesus Christ" because Jesus is "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). Peace by any other means is a false or temporary peace. The enigma that Jerusalem, the "city of peace," is constantly at war with practically everyone in the world, is only resolved by the gospel of peace. That gospel will be culminated in the return of Jesus Christ, his rulership, his kingdom, and the righteous—having overcome sin through him—being kings and priests.

The Christian should want war, but a very particular war, the cosmological war through which God will initiate his righteousness on the earth. The war will not be won by the weaponry of man or the genius of generals. It will be won through the Son of God. The Christian should want peace, the "peace that passes all understanding" that comes only from God. This peace will not come by arbitrating with evil, but by eradicating evil.

In eradicating evil, bringing peace to creation, waging war with evil and unrighteousness, the main battle is over! It is the battle of the Son of God on the cross dying for our sin. *It* is finished. Now we continue the conflict by choosing sides. Let's be on the side of true peace: peace through righteousness; peace by Jesus Christ.

The cosmological war, that every believer must be involved in is the real war. It is the war that will determine eternal peace within the cosmos and within ourselves. It is an ongoing battle for eternal life for that portion of humanity that is willing to do things God's way. *I believe in war!*—not man's war, but the war for righteousness that will bring the peace of God to this cosmos.

Martin

NOVEMBER, 1983



BRUCHKO

by Bruce Olson; Creation House.

Bruce Olson began running against the current early as a teenager. He challenged the fierce Lutheran God of his father, the stale powerless messages at church, and his friends' unquestioning acceptance of whatever the minister said. He sought a personal relationship with God and recognized that Jesus had called all to preach the good news. Immediately he desired to tell others of his spiritual awakening. Eventually that desire became a burning fire, a force that drove him to read books on missions and the history and culture of South America. Unable to resist any longer, he boarded a plane with only \$70 in his pocket and headed for Venezuela.

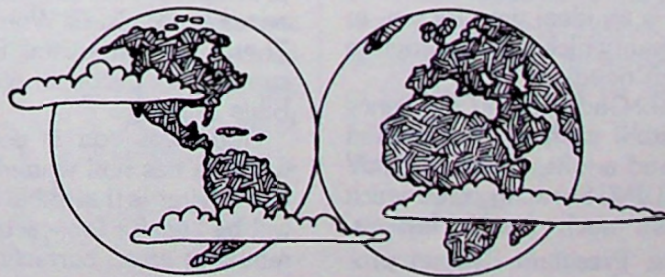
What happens when a 19-year-old boy leaves home against his parents' wishes and heads into the jungles to evangelize a murderous tribe of South American Indians? In

Bruce Olson's experience it meant capture, disease, terror, loneliness, torture. Near death after being shot full of arrows, he recovered, and without help from any missionary society, and all alone, he began the difficult task of ministering to the savage Motilone Indians.

One day, upon discovering a man desperately shouting into a deep hole, "God, God, come out of the hole!" he was told it was as good a place as any to look for God. Suddenly he knew that was why God had let him live. After five years of waiting and praying, the opportunity to open the gospel to the Indians was upon him.

This remarkable story of a young man's single-handed evangelization of the stone-age Motilonos will revolutionize the reader's thinking about traditional missionary activity.

—Alaine Schmidlapp, reviewer.

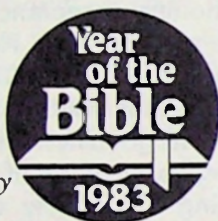


To All the World...

OH,
GIVE THANKS
TO THE LORD,
FOR HE IS GOOD!
BECAUSE HIS
MERCY
ENDURES
FOREVER.

Psalms 118:1 NKJV

A Message of Love Sponsored by



For more information write: 1983 YEAR OF THE BIBLE
460 Woodcrest Ave., Nashville, TN 37210, Telephone (615) 254-7759 or 254-7750

Read Your Bible—Begin Today



In this "Year of the Bible," all sorts of helps exist to assist you in selecting your own Bible reading program. And since November 20 is the American Bible Society's annual BIBLE SUNDAY, this month is an ideal time for you to make a decision which reading program best fits your needs.

In Church of God General Conference Sunday school curriculum prepared for Teens and adults, specific DAILY BIBLE READINGS are suggested which dovetail with each week's lessons.

Of course, President Reagan proclaimed 1983 as the "Year of the Bible;" the ad above this column offers

an address where you may secure study helps. And in conjunction with Bible Sunday, the American Bible Society will assist you in yet another reading program.

On the next three pages of THE RESTITUTION HERALD you'll find helpful articles in honor of the important emphasis on Bible reading at this time of the year. Marie Shropshire shows you the value of a consistent Bible reading program. Pastor S. O. Ross provides additional insight into the necessity of God's Word in our lives. Then the American Bible Society supplies an historical piece regarding Bible Sunday.

God bless you in your pursuit of what he has had written in his Word. Our prayer is that Bible study for you will be "useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living" (2 Tim. 3:16, GNB) in your life.

—Russell Magaw.

You
And
Your
Bible

I asked my troubled counselee

"Oh, I just read anywhere. I don't have much time to read," she replied. "It would take me forever to get through the Bible."

"Did you know you could get through the New Testament in four months by reading two chapters a day Monday through Saturday and three chapters on Sunday?" I asked.

"No," my friend answered, surprised, "And what about the Old Testament?"

"Two chapters a day plus Psalms and one chapter in Proverbs will take you through the Old Testament in 12 months. This schedule also puts you through Psalms and Proverbs once a month."

My visitor did a quick calculation. "That's 10 chapters a day. Remem

ber, I have a full-time job and three children to care for," she objected.

People who don't understand God's loving purpose in his written Word find reasons for not reading it consistently. But when we discover that the Bible is given to us to set us on a path of victory, we want to read it. We make time for it.

Why read through Psalms and Proverbs every month?

The book of Psalms is the praise book. Praise is a door to spiritual triumph. The book of Psalms teaches us how to praise the Lord for who he is as well as to thank him for what he does. Meditating on Psalms takes our eyes off our problems and prepares us for worship. When we focus on God and his love instead of our problems, the problems often fade into nothingness.

Proverbs is the book of God's wisdom. In other places in the Bible, wisdom often speaks of skill or human intelligence. In Proverbs wisdom is used as a moral quality and stands for virtue. The book is loaded with gems of truth worth memorizing and applying to life.

Most of us know Proverbs 3:5, 6—"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (RSV). Scores of other verses are just as noteworthy.

Nourished by the Word

Reading a smattering of Scripture is no more sufficient to give guidance

than merely snacking satisfies the physical appetite.

It was not until I began to read whole books (or at least a few chapters) at one sitting that I saw the real meaning of such passages as the following: "[He] gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age. . . [he] raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. . . He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and translated us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:6; Col. 1:13, RSV).

All the years I spent reading the Bible piece-meal, I thought the foregoing verses applied only to the future kingdom and our meeting with Christ at his coming. Now, it is clear that we have already been delivered from the present evil, even though we still live in the midst of it. Knowing that I am seated "with him in the heavenly places" enables me to look through and beyond my "evil" circumstances to our Deliverer. By reading the Word, we find that through Christ we can rise above circumstances.

Distinctive Needs Met

Since every word of the Bible is inspired of God himself (2 Tim. 3:16), it has power to speak to our individual needs. God created us all differently, and our needs are unique. His Word is meant to meet us on a personal level just as God is

a personal God. We each live on different levels of awareness. The Word contains layers of truth which we assimilate according to our particular needs. If you and I read the same Scripture passage and each receives a different lesson from it, that doesn't necessarily mean one of us is in error. Our experiences leave us with different requirements which God is endeavoring to meet through his Word.

Paul says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2, RSV). The best way for us to renew our minds is to keep ourselves steeped in his Word.

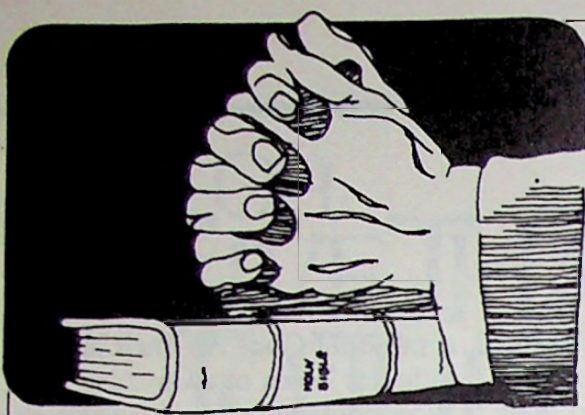
God can show you by his power what your Bible-reading program should be. The schedule best for me might not be what is most suitable for you. The important matter is to keep reading in faith that you will be blessed.

Bible reading in itself cannot guarantee blessings. Mere intellectual understanding of Scripture does not suffice. As God is Spirit, so his Word must be taken into our spirits and interpreted by his Spirit. Comprehension of more than a historical Jesus is necessary for our Bible reading to be profitable. Christ must be living in us so we can be "partakers of Christ" (Heb. 3:14, KJV). Only then can the written Word produce life within us.

© by Marie Shropshire

Truth for Today

by Pastor Stan Ross



IN THIS ARTICLE we intend to base our statements and facts on the Bible, the Word of God. I believe the Bible is the Word of God.

Furthermore, I believe the Bible is the *inspired* Word of God.

The Bible was written by men of God who were moved by the power of God to write. John the Revelator was in the spirit on the Lord's day and heard a great voice as a trumpet (Rev. 1:10, 11) which said, "What thou seest, write in a book." The result is the Book of Revelation.

Peter tells us that these writers did not follow cunningly devised fables when they made known unto us the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but, he says, "We... were eyewitnesses of his majesty." He was with Christ on the holy mount when God declared to the disciples, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Peter then adds, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (See 2 Pet. 1:16-21.)

Clearly, the Bible is the Word of God. But the proof of prophecy is in its fulfillment. The prophets of the Old Testament must surely have been directed of God, because so many of their prophecies have already been fulfilled in the New Testament. Predictions of the birth of Christ, the Son of God, were fulfilled in the most minute detail. He was born of a virgin and in Bethlehem, as foretold by Isaiah (7:14) and Micah (5:2).

Many prophecies have been and are being fulfilled in our time. The establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 is a partial fulfillment of many prophecies, especially so of Ezekiel, chapter 37. Those people who were scattered worldwide as dry bones, are brought back and put together as Ezekiel predicted.

Many other prophecies are yet unfulfilled. These will just as surely come to pass.

The Bible in Our Nation's History

How important is this Book?

How important is this Word?

Andrew Jackson, a patriarch of our nation, said, "That Book, Sir, [the Bible] is the rock upon which our Republic rests."

Daniel Webster said, "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will prosper. But if we and our posterity neglect the instructions and authority in this book, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overtake us and bury our glory in profound obscurity."

Yes, the Word of God is important.

In the 1800's when the pony express was carrying the

mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, the trips were to be made as quickly as possible. The horses used very light shoes, the saddle bags and all equipment had to be as light and little as possible so the mail could move swiftly. Even though they traveled through very primitive, unexplored, and dangerous territory, the riders were not allowed to carry any firearms or weapons of any kind—too much weight.

Yet every pony express rider was required to carry a full-sized Bible. They believed the Bible to be important

The Bible in Today's World

The Bible is still the best seller of all books by a wide margin, yet is it really used? Are we familiar with its contents in our fast-moving lifestyle? Do we know what the Word really means?

In this day of unrest, trouble, demonstrations, wars, etc., we need to take a good long look at this Book.

But modern man allows other things and feelings to usurp the Bible's authority. God foretold through Paul's letter to Timothy the dire conditions of men in the "last days"—days similar to our times. He wrote that men will be lovers of their own selves, covetous, disobedient to parents, without natural affections, having a form of godliness and much more. He added that men will be "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (See 2 Tim. 3:1-5.)

Today there are more people in schools of higher learning than ever before. Men are doing great things in research, medicine, and technology. We are able to send men to the moon, make heart transplants in human beings, and much more. We are ever learning, yet, according to Paul, "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

We need today to diligently study God's Word. We need to reevaluate our priorities. We need to keep our priorities straight.

In this country we spend about \$1,000 per year per family for defense. At the same time we spend per year per family \$4.00 for missions. We give \$130 million for missions per year, which counts up. But at the same time we spend \$175 million per year for dog food.

Some priorities need to be reversed.

Our Nation Needs to Get Back to God

Our nation was established on Christian principles. The laws of our country are based on the 10 Commandments. Most of our older major universities and colleges began as theological institutions.

As a nation, and as the people of this nation, we need to return to the hearing of the words of God's Book, the Bible. I fear that often the leaders of our country and many of its citizens have veered from Christian principles in our day.

We need to return to God with repentant and humble hearts nationally and personally. What is required of us is

to turn to God's Word again and obey it. We need to heed the plea God gave to Solomon for Israel:

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

I believe we live in the greatest country of today's world. I have been privileged to travel considerably, visiting some 25 countries of the world. Make no mistake; we live in the greatest nation on this earth.

But we need to be concerned that we keep it that way. We need to be on our guard.

What Can Be Done?

How can we return to the God of the Bible? Are there specific steps to take? If so, what are they?

I believe that through Bible study and a renewed faith in God, we will be led to discover five steps to get our country going again.

1. Renew the dignity and sanctity of the home. The family is the basis for human society.

2. Decrease the need to rely on public monies for daily needs and wants. Social programs must be supported by loving Christians; not by the taxations of governments.

3. Persons must become excited by great ideas which benefit society. This will eliminate the craze for professional sports which has gotten out of hand.

4. The need for individual responsibility based upon civil law must be emphasized rather than a trust in the building of great armaments.

5. True religion based upon a saving faith must guide the lives of individuals. When faith becomes mere form, the power is gone.

The reason why I list these five principles is because historian Edward Gibbon set out these factors as the ones which were diminished in the Roman Empire. The lack of these factors in society allowed Rome to fall.

All these principles are inspired in the hearts of men when they read the Bible. But there are other reasons why the Bible is important.

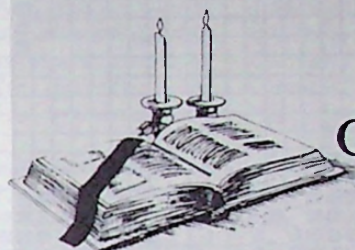
The Bible Saves

The Word of God leads the reader to appreciate Jesus Christ and accept him as God's Son, the world's Savior. Already we've seen how men of our country have been influenced for the good of the nation because of the contact the Bible made between them and God through Christ. Now we need to look at another life to see this connection in the era the Bible was written.

When an official of the ancient Ethiopian government returned home after a Jewish feast, he was confounded by what he read in Isaiah's prophecy (See Acts 8). He didn't know who the prophet referred to when he wrote, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter" (v. 32). When God sent Philip the evangelist to the chariot, the preacher explained the passage by proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth as the sacrificial lamb (v. 35). Upon hearing this good news, the Ethiopian requested to know Jesus as God's Son and asked to be baptized (vv. 36-38).

Even as God's Word was used to convince the Ethiopian of his need, so the Bible still does its task today. Therein lies its importance for you and me today. Used correctly, the Bible saves.

Will you accept the Bible's message of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God? Will you receive him as Lord and Savior, be baptized in his name for remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and hope for eternal life in his coming kingdom?



Origins of 69th Bible Sunday

"Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them."

With those words, King Edward VI's Archbishop Cranmer, through his Prayer Book published in London in 1549, instructed the Christian faithful to make Scriptures an integral part of their daily lives and central to worship in the churches.

He was reminding people that God "caused all holy Scripture to be written for our learning."

The Prayer Book provided worshipers with a schedule for reading the entire Bible on an orderly basis throughout the year, and the instruction appeared as a collect, a formal prayer for worship.

The collect was inspired by the 15th chapter of Romans, verses 4-13.

The Sunday on which it was included in the service came to be known as Bible Sunday.

Since 1900, the year in which it inaugurated the celebration in this nation's churches, the American Bible Society has kept the Bible Sunday tradition strong in America. Its purpose, quite simply, is to remind Americans that there is a desperate need for Scriptures everywhere throughout the world and that it is increasing as populations grow.

ABS Bible Sunday has been observed every year without a break since 1915, making this the 69th annual Bible Sunday.

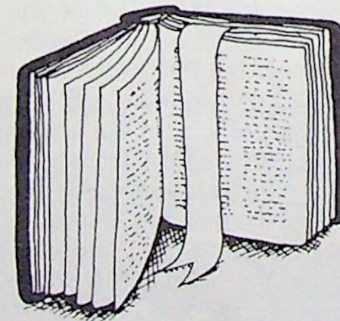
Most churches will celebrate it the Sunday before Thanksgiving—November 20—although a few are planning to do so on a Sunday nearby.

Every U. S. President since 1900 has either endorsed Bible Sunday, recommended reading of the Scriptures, or received a commemorative Bible. As early as 1917, Woodrow Wilson indicated his enthusiastic approval of the national celebration with a letter to the Society.

ABS Bible Sunday takes on added importance this year because of President Reagan's February proclamation that 1983 be observed as the Year of the Bible.

The American Bible Society was founded in 1816 with the one idea of making Scriptures accessible to everyone, without either profit or doctrinal note or comment, and in the language of choice.

When Was The Gospel Of the Kingdom Introduced Into the United States?



by David Graham

THE RESTITUTION HERALD

Our first consideration is the historical article written by W. H. Wilson, author of *Pine Woods Bible Class*.¹ In 1906, Wilson published an article in the *Restitution Herald* entitled "How, When, Where, and by Whom Was the Gospel of the Kingdom Introduced into the United States?" This article stirred the interest of many church-related people in the left and right wings of the main body of the Church of God.

In his article, Wilson emphasized that it was his uncle, Benjamin F. Wilson (1817-1900), who introduced the Gospel of the Kingdom into the western states. However, when he then stated that it was Dr. John Thomas (1805-1871) who introduced the "same" gospel into the eastern states, we had to stop and hesitate. We perceived that there was a misunderstanding somewhere, either by us in our reading of the material, or by him in misunderstanding the facts at his disposal.

In order to understand the context of his statement, we found it quite necessary to clarify his broad use of the expression, "Gospel of the Kingdom." Whenever we think of the phrase, "Gospel of the Kingdom," our minds immediately fix upon the "restitution" of Acts 3:21, or the millennial reign of Christ upon the earth (Revelation 20). But this is a loose term, and not very satisfactory to designate the dogma of a single church. However, it is not as surprising as we thought, since the "church" herein referred to (1844-1864) was, of course, nonsectarian, or similarly non-denominational (in a very narrow sense—even at that time).

Moreover, it was integrated with a "constellation" of reformers, some of whom

were (after 1860-64) to move away from the fellowship of the Age to Come brethren. Thus smaller groups of Bible students (not perfectly aligned with Marsh) quite gradually replaced them, only to become more snugly embraced in the Age to Come. The "constellation," if you please, during the 1850's and 1860's (which is the time-frame, we believe, Wilson is referring to) was so diversified that cliches were invented to indicate what main tenet was held by which class of Bible students. (Those coined designations were not always invented by "friendly" associates.) We are referring to such names as the Thomasites,² Storrites,³ Benjamites,⁴ Millerites,⁵ Come-outers,⁶ Soul sleepers,⁷ Age to Come,⁸ and others.

From this we were able to surmise that Wilson had intended to address, not just "one" class of Bible students as we had previously thought, but all of those evolving "schools" meshed together under the same household of faith, commonly referred to as the Church of God. There may be some still living among us who remember what the Church of God was like before 1921 when it was not quite so highly regimented as it became after 1921, when it was reorganized. Some of the small theological schools that we now recognize as separate denominations were still cooperating, in some quarters of the country, with the Age to Come even later than 1910.⁹ We are referring to the following denominations and nondenominations:

- 1.) The Advent Christian Church;
- 2.) The Church of God (Seventh Day), Denver, Colorado;
- 3.) The Christadelphians;
- 4.) The Church of God (Abrahamic Faith),

Oregon, Illinois;

5.) The Church of God (Abrahamic Faith), Richmond, Indiana;

6.) The Church of God (Abrahamic Faith), Cashmere, Washington;

7.) The Life & Advent Union (merged in 1954 with Advent Christian Church).

In this broad context of the terms, then, we may fondly admit that Dr. Thomas and Benjamin Wilson did, evidently, preach the "same" "Gospel of the Kingdom." But times have changed and so has the church. Therefore, we need a much more explicit understanding of our narrow theological strain, and of our deep historical roots. The first real question, then, that still puzzles most minds remains: who introduced our Bible doctrine of the Age to Come into the United States? Who was it that restored the ancient "waymark" of our wholesome tradition which we and all of our predecessors have enjoyed for nearly two hundred years on this continent and still partake of its abundant blessings?

In our close analysis, we have come to an obvious conclusion, that John Thomas was never an "Age to Come" advocate. As early as 1850, Thomas was emphatically preaching a limited resurrection and the necessity of rebaptism upon every turn in conversion, in connection with John T. Walsh.¹⁰ Consequently, his influence was very limited in Rochester circles, at least as much as it was in Geneva, Illinois, at the same time. Therefore, we should make it clearly understood that Our Gospel in the eastern states (between 1843 and 1860) emanated not from Hoboken, New Jersey, but rather from Rochester, New York.¹¹

In the western states (from 1853 to 1869), Benjamin Wilson was the catalyst who engaged in the spreading of the truth through HIS own publication concerning the Gospel of the Kingdom, or more specifically, the Age to Come. We cannot pinpoint exactly when he came to understand the whole truth but, as early as 1853, articles from the *Gospel Banner*¹² concerning the Kingdom of God and other rare theological documents began to appear through the *Advent Harbinger*.¹³ Since to date we have no sufficient evidence upon which to state the progress of the Geneva Brethren prior to 1853, we may, therefore, studiously assume that Joseph Marsh (1802-1863) preceded Wilson in discovering all of the truth under the caption "Age to Come" and should in consequence be considered the earlier father of the faith, both in the eastern and the western states.

Recently we have discovered new and concrete evidence which proves that neither Marsh nor Wilson was the earliest herald of

the Age to Come Dogma. Furthermore, we were mistaken to presume that the Age to Come had started with the Millerite Movement.¹⁴ It is still very true, nevertheless, that Joseph Marsh will always be remembered as the vanguard of the faith movement which he developed from its infancy during the 1840's. He was responsible for uniting those of the same faith during the worst times, and even made extensive evangelistic tours at his own expense. His only remuneration came from the satisfaction of keeping the truth alive. This was undoubtedly his only concern in life.

In recapitulation of just some of the more important facts of our research, we would like to begin with Marsh. We learned that Benjamin Wilson came to the United States in 1844, with some new-found truths on the promises; and that by 1853, as we lately discovered, was already publishing expositions on the Kingdom of God and other important Adventist beliefs.

Our discovery reveals another layer of history lying dormant beneath the record heap of the Millerite Movement of the 1840's. This discovery should set the time-clock of our early history in reverse of up to fifty years or more!

Elias Smith (1769-1846) spurned the Baptist church in 1801 after a thorough, personal examination of all of the corruptions of orthodoxy that came through the Baptists of New England.¹⁵ Within months of the aforementioned date, Smith was preaching and publishing the true Gospel, or Age to Come in all of its splendor and beauty. He went from place to place throughout the State of New Hampshire, organizing churches in the name of the Christian Church; and spoke wherever they would listen. Smith became perhaps the most influential reformer in all of the United States before he slid into Universalism in 1817. Thus ended his brilliant career. But before he left the old ground, he produced many valuable writings that still demand a hearing from all of the friends of truth.

For example, Smith published his firm belief in the resurrection and destruction of the wicked, following the Millennium; restoration of the Jews; second coming of Christ; the mortality of man; the unity of God; sonship of Christ; and many other theological writings included in his 22 sermons on the prophecies.¹⁷ Most of what he wrote was published prior to 1808!

In 1803, Elias Smith founded his first church.¹⁸ He is noted to have founded the Christian Movement, which denomination (Christian Connection) was organized in 1820.¹⁹ This was the same organization

(spreading all the way across New York State) that Joseph Marsh ardently defended for up to twenty years! Here, then, we have found a continuity in the Church of God that began with Smith (1803-1817) and continued through Joseph Marsh (1844-1863); continuing through Thomas G. Newman, H. V. Reed, Thomas Wilson, and J. M. Stephenson; down to Stedman Chaplin, Arthur Underwood, W. H. Wilson, L. E. Conner, F. L. Austin, J. S. Lindsay, and the General Conference in 1921! A tradition of nearly two hundred years is seen through this line when brought up to the present day. We have attempted in this discussion to examine the entire question concerning how, when, where, and by whom the Gospel, or Age to Come was brought to early America. We believe we have succeeded in completing this phase of our task.

Notes

¹ See *Restitution*, November 28, 1906 (this article was reprinted in *The Restitution Herald*, August 31, 1961, pp. 8, 9, 11).

² Represents the founder of the Christadelphians, prior to the name given them who followed his teaching.

³ Refers to George Storrs and his students, who emphasized Life & Death, or Life only through Christ.

⁴ Name indicates the Geneva Brethren who followed the teachings of Benjamin Wilson.

⁵ Refers to the followers of William Miller and his teaching that Jesus is coming soon. These students were famous for setting dates, (however, Miller quietly refrained after his first mistaken time-theory failed).

⁶ Referred to Millerites who left their churches, after a sermon was delivered on "Babylon" referring to the churches, delivered by Charles Fitch (1804-1843).

⁷ The term may have originated at Old Union as early as 1852. Used in reference to all those who were sanctimonious "materialists."

⁸ Refers to all those who advocated a specific body of belief, upheld by Joseph Marsh, and articulated in a digest that was published in 1851. It became a rally-point for its adherents. Age to Come is a very distinctive caption which designates the foundation doctrine of the Church of God, upon which it rests.

¹⁰ See the *Herald of the Future Age*, 1848-1851.

¹¹ First, see *Restitution Herald*, Aug. 31, 1961, p. 9; cp. *Voice of Truth*, or publications of Joseph Marsh, with those of Thomas' *Herald of the Future Age*, and *Herald*... & etc.

¹² Benjamin Wilson's publication entitled *Gospel Banner & Millennial Advocate* (1853-1869).

¹³ See *Harbinger*, August, September, December, 1853; February, 1854, under such titles as "Sure Word," "Signs of the Times," "Will Jesus Come Again?" and "Kingdom of God."

¹⁴ *Restitution Herald*, August, 1983, "Who Are the Age to Come Theologians?"

¹⁵ See Marsh's testimony, *Advent Harbinger*, January 6, 1850, "Age to Come."

¹⁶ *Morning Star & City Watchman*, Smith, Vol. II, pp. 3-8, Boston.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 3-8.

¹⁸ *Christian Magazine*, Smith, Vol. I, 1805.

¹⁹ *Herald of Life*, Storrs. See Nov. 25, 1863, Memory of Joseph Marsh.

The Christian's Destiny — Rulership With Jesus In the Coming World Government



by Anthony Buzzard

FEW STUDENTS of Christianity seem to be aware that believers in Jesus are destined for royal office. An extraordinary conspiracy of silence hides from churchgoers the very point and purpose of the Christian life. Yet the biblical writers knew very well what was involved in discipleship.

Our New Testament documents record that Jesus came heralding the Messianic kingdom of God (Matt. 4:23;

9:35) and recruiting executives for the universal government which the Father had promised to entrust to him. If any truth is calculated to inspire and embolden, and humble the people of God, it is that the Christian believers—those properly instructed in the truth and baptized according to the New Testament pattern—are now ambassadors residing in the alien territory of the present evil world-system (2 Cor.

5:20; Eph. 6:20; Gal. 1:4) awaiting the return of their Master to take them as co-rulers in the new world system of tomorrow. For this astonishing privilege the faithful are to strive now with the help of God's Spirit.

This, patently, is what the Bible teaches and the reader is challenged to reconsider any other view which he may have accepted without careful consideration of the biblical facts.

It cannot be denied that Jesus was preoccupied above all with the message about the kingdom of God (Matt. 13:19) as the dynamic tool by which converts were moved to abandon all for him and the kingdom. Entrance into the kingdom of God was the supreme goal at the end of the Christian road. That goal inspired early Christian sacrifice, even of life itself: "Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). All present trials were to be borne cheerfully in view of the spectacular prize awaiting the faithful believer at the return of Jesus to inaugurate the kingdom. This theme underlies all the New Testament writings.

Jesus cannot be understood apart from his background. His mind was saturated with the words of the Old Testament prophets. For him it was axiomatic to believe that God had revealed to his servants the prophets the secrets of the future (Dan. 2:45), NASB; Matt. 24:15). The Book of Daniel, for example, had conferred on the faithful in Israel an outline of world history in which the Son of man (Dan. 7:13), the Messiah, was to play the leading role. Jesus knew himself to be the Son of man (his favorite self-designation), a figure whom Daniel had seen in a remarkable vision. The Son of man was seen appearing before the court of heaven to receive a *kingdom* and *Kingship* (Dan. 7:14). Daniel's seventh chapter provides us with a fundamentally important insight into Jesus' mission and the destiny of his followers. The meaning of this chapter is in no sense difficult. Neglect of the Old Testament has long deprived the average churchgoer of these basic building blocks of Jesus' gospel message. It is unfamiliarity with this material, not the material itself, which may create difficulty. Christians are everywhere in the Bible urged to search and study.

All scholars agree that the kingdom of God was the central topic of all Jesus' teachings. What Jesus meant by the kingdom of God may be readily understood by tracing the kingdom to its Old Testament source in Daniel 2:44. Looking at the close of the present era of human history Daniel foresaw that "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left to another people; it will crush and put to an end all these [previously mentioned] kingdoms, but it will itself endure for ever." Its location is to be "under

heaven" (Dan. 7:27)—on this earth.

This kingdom to be set up by the God of heaven quite naturally became known as the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God (the terms are synonymous—Matt. 19:23, 24), and it was that kingdom which Jesus came to announce as good news, the gospel. (Matt. 4:23; Luke 4:43.) Jesus evidently believed, with Daniel, that the vision "made known to the king [Nebuchadnezzar] what will take place in the future" (Dan. 2:45). Christ knew that he, of all members of the human race, was the chosen King appointed as ruler in that great future kingdom of God.

There is further vital information about the kingdom of God to be found in Daniel 7. In verse 11 the dominion of the "beast," clearly an evil ruler, is taken away when he is "slain and his body given to the burning fire," whereupon "a Son of man," the Messiah, is presented before God "and to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, such that all peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away and his kingdom one which will not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13, 14).

As is well known, Jesus always referred to himself as the Son of man described in Daniel 7, thus claiming to be the King to whom the kingdom of God would be entrusted. Before the high priest of Israel, Jesus affirmed that he was indeed "the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed" (i.e., the Son of God, Mark 14:61). In the same breath Jesus quotes Daniel's vision and promises that the Son of man will be seen "coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62). Evidently the title "Son of man" is an equivalent for the titles "Son of God" and "Messiah"; and this is exactly what we would expect from reading about the Messianic function ascribed to the Son of man in Daniel.

Matthew 16:16 had already equated Messiah with "the Son of the living God" ("You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"). All these titles are purely Messianic and have nothing whatsoever to do with the post-biblical theories about the so-called two natures of Jesus, a concept which both Jesus and Paul would have found baffling. It was only when the Messiahship of Jesus was misunderstood by the Greeks who began to dominate the church after apostolic times that the reality of

the coming Messianic kingdom of God on earth was largely lost. Contemporary theology continues to weary itself in an attempt to pry apart the titles "Son of God" and "Messiah." In the Bible these are equivalents, designating the same royal office.

There is an underlying problem with Christianity as it has been generally understood. This has to do with Jesus' Messiahship. People have long been taught that Jesus rejected the "Jewish" expectation that the Messiah would overthrow the political power of present human government and set up a real kingdom; that Jesus expected that the kingdom would be established only in the hearts of men and not externally as a real government. All this is a dangerously misleading half-truth. It is true that Jesus did not, *at his first coming*, make any attempt at all to overthrow the existing political system (John 6:15). He came to *proclaim* the kingdom (Luke 4:43) and to die. This, however, does not alter the fact that *at his second coming* he fully intended to take up the political role of Messiah in the Old Testament and "Jewish" sense (Mark 14:62). Not for one moment did Jesus deny his function as King of Israel and ruler of the world. To have claimed to be Messiah and yet to have disclaimed the right to sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem and govern the earth would have been nonsensical. It would have been to reject the Bible's view of Messiahship, while claiming to uphold the Scriptures!

Jesus always looked forward to the second coming when he would assume his full role as King of the world. It was not that he was not already Messiah. He was always Messiah; and it was the essence of the Christian faith to recognize this (Matt. 16:16, 17). To make this known publicly too early in his ministry was, however, to ask for unnecessary trouble—hence the so-called Messianic secret (Mark 1:34). Theology departs from the New Testament when it tries to convince us that because Jesus did not in the first century take up the position of Messiah in the expected sense, he will never do so! This is simply to reject the gospel of the kingdom which contains a promise that the kingdom will be inaugurated when Jesus returns. Jesus and the apostles constantly make their appeals for repentance on the basis of belief in the future kingdom. (Mark 1:14; Luke 9:2;

(continued on page 18)

THE CHRISTIAN'S DESTINY
(Continued from page 17)



Matt. 24:14; Matt. 13:19; Acts 8:12; 28:23, 31). E. Earle Ellis is right when he says that "the term 'Kingdom of God' is used only of a future event" (New Century Bible Commentary on Luke, p. 13).

Now the knowledge of the kingdom of God as a vital part of the gospel is in no sense an academic acknowledgment of a remote future event. It is the key to the believer's involvement with Christ. Daniel 7 provides information not only about the individual Son of man, to whom the kingdom is granted, but also about all those who are to be associated with him in rulership. Daniel 7:22 speaks of the time to come when "the saints took possession of the kingdom." Jesus echoes this prediction exactly when he says to believers: "Fear not, little flock, for your Father is delighted to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Daniel 7:27 is even more explicit

"Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Supreme God, their royal power will never end and all rulers on earth will serve and obey them" (see NEB, RSV, and Good

News Bible). This is the Bible's certain answer to the menace of Communism. Let it be carefully noted, however, that no political power is to be asserted by the saints until Jesus returns.

In 1 Cor. 6:2 Paul makes an appeal to a recognized fact, a basic principle of Christianity: "Do you not know that the saints are going to manage the world?" (See Moffat's translation.) The remark is made in the context of settling disputes and recalls the passage in Isaiah 2:1-4 which foresees the Messiah as arbiter of international disputes.

In the book of "the Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:1) where the mind of Jesus is disclosed continuously for 22 chapters, the coming reign of the saints is a principal theme. The two elements of the gospel—the death of Christ and the subsequent reign of the Messiah and the saints—are combined in the jubilant outburst of chapter 5:9, 10:

Worthy art thou [the Lamb, Jesus] to take the book and to break its seals; for thou wast slain and didst purchase for God with thy blood men from every tribe, tongue, and nation. And thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they shall reign on the earth."

This central importance of the kingdom of God and the co-rulership of the saints should put beyond doubt the need to proclaim the kingdom as the heart of the gospel message. The announcement of the kingdom serves as an invitation to royal office in the coming reign. This is both the goal of human history and the destiny of the church. No wonder, then, that Jesus urges his church on with the promise of the supreme reward:

"He who overcomes and keeps my deeds to the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I have received authority from my Father." This is an echo of Psalm 2 (cited earlier), of Daniel 7:27 and, of course, Luke 22:28-30:

"You are those who have stood by me in my trials, and just as my Father has granted me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and you will sit on thrones to administer the twelve tribes of Israel." ("Judge" is equivalent to "administer" or "rule," according to Hebrew usage—see, for example, the Good News Bible, Moffat, and Inter-

national Critical Commentary on 1 Corinthians 6:2.)

Jesus insists also in Revelation 3:21: "He who overcomes, I will grant him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father in his throne."

It is in Revelation 20 that we find the ultimate denouement of the Bible's constant anticipation of effective divine rule on earth. Once again there is the promise of royal office for the faithful:

"They came to life and began to reign with Christ" (Rev. 20:4).

On the firm foundation of Christ and his teaching—on the message of Christ, not only on the messenger, a believer is assured of a place of responsibility and privilege in the coming kingdom. It remains a fundamental truth of the New Testament that the gospel of the kingdom was preached to Abraham (Gal. 3:8). And to Abraham was promised an inheritance of the world (Rom. 4:13). To his spiritual descendants will be granted an inheritance of the earth (Matt. 5:15). With the Messiah, King of Israel, and Savior of the world they will reign as kings on earth (Rev. 5:10). To that honor and service they are summoned by the good news of the kingdom. In their blessing lies the power to bless others (Gen. 12:1, 2).

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An Adventure in Africa

Alex and Carol were visiting their relatives in Africa. Their aunt and uncle were missionaries in the country of Uganda in East Africa. They were teaching the Bible to people who had never even heard of the Bible or of Jesus Christ. Alex and Carol were very excited to be there, but a little scared, too.

This country seemed so different from the United States. It was very green and lush and looked just like the jungle pictures in their story books. There were wild animals, too, like monkeys and elephants. They had seen some from the car as they drove there with their aunt and uncle. The people they met were very nice, but they spoke a different language called Swahili. Uncle Wilbur and Aunt Ruby had learned Swahili and could easily talk with the people. Alex and Carol

couldn't understand a word. They wished they could speak that language, too.

Their cousin Ralph was home from boarding school. He and Alex and Carol became very good friends. Ralph knew Swahili, too, so he helped them learn some new words. It was fun to be able to say hello to the Ugandans in their own language. Alex and Carol started to feel more at home.

One night Alex, Carol and Ralph were playing a game in the living room. Uncle Wilbur and Aunt Ruby were out visiting friends. They played a game called charades. One of them acted out a person or thing, and the others tried to guess what it was. They were having a good time until suddenly Ralph let out a yell. And then they all saw it. A small black snake had crawled into the living room from under the front door. It was a good thing Ralph had seen it and moved away. Ralph said it was a baby cobra and very poisonous. The three of them stood back, watching the small snake raise its head at them. On each side of the snake's mouth the skin fanned out like a balloon. Ralph told them that's how a snake looks when it is angry.

The three cousins were scared, but they decided to catch the little snake so it couldn't hurt anyone. The snake was only about eight inches long and couldn't move very fast. After a few tries Alex and Ralph were able to scoop it into a bucket. Carol

watched nervously as they quickly put a lid on the bucket. They had the snake trapped.

Just then Uncle Wilbur and Aunt Ruby came home. The three cousins rushed to tell them what had happened. Both Uncle Wilbur and Aunt Ruby had serious looks on their faces. Uncle Wilbur took the snake outside. Then Aunt Ruby sat down with Alex, Carol, and Ralph to talk to them.

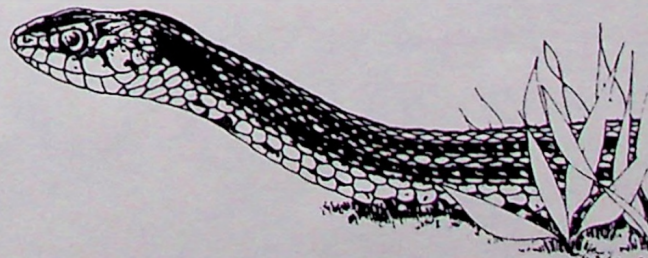
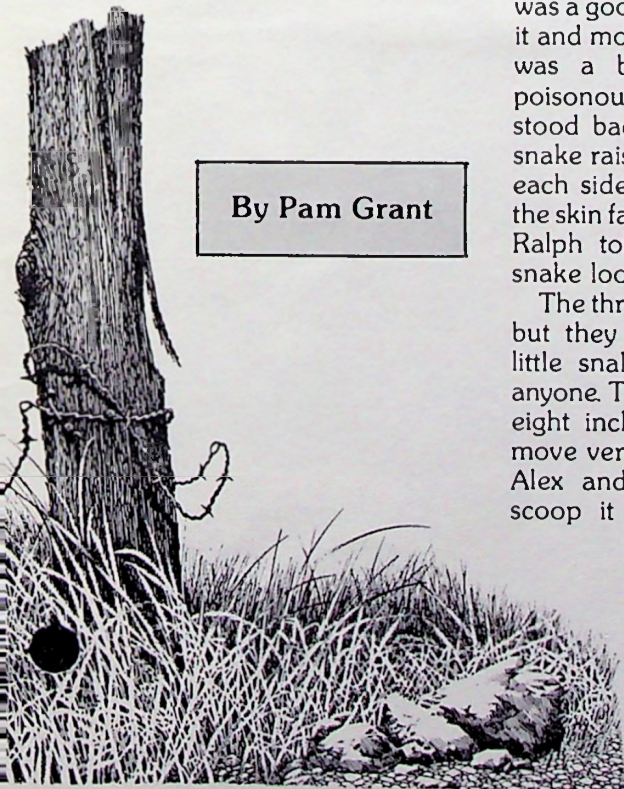
She told them what they had done was very dangerous. The baby cobra could have hurt them very badly. She said there was a lesson in this for them to think about. Aunt Ruby explained how many people in life are just playing games. They don't know that there is danger lurking nearby, like the snake. They are the ones who don't know Jesus and who don't have him as their Lord and Savior. Life without Jesus in their hearts is like walking around with a poisonous snake nearby. They may be bitten and lose their chance to know Jesus and to be saved.

Jesus is the only antidote, or remedy, for the poisonous sins in our lives. Without him, people would die in their sins with no hope for the future. As Christians, we have hope for eternal life with Jesus in his new kingdom that he will create. That's why more Christians need to tell people about him, so they will understand the dangers of living without Jesus.

After Aunt Ruby told them this lesson, they all knelt down to pray. They thanked God for protecting them from the snake and asked him to help them tell others about Jesus. They also prayed for more missionaries to tell people all over the world.

(This fictional story is based on a true experience Steve and Pam Grant had in Mbale, Uganda.)

By Pam Grant



"He followed him out, with no idea that the angel's intervention was real. . . . Then Peter came to himself. 'Now I know it is true'"
 Acts 12:9-11 (NEB)

Meditation Moments

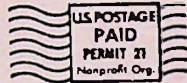
One day passes into another,
 Life becomes a frantic race
 or a humdrum pace.
 We work.
 We eat.
 We sleep.
 We play.
 And through it all, sometimes
 We feel that God is
 far away,
 uninvolved.
 Then in a particular moment,
 A moment of awareness—
 We come to ourselves
 and we realize,
 "He has been here through it all.
 He has protected, pardoned,
 sustained, strengthened.
 And we had no idea."

by Shirley McQuinn



The Lord sustains us through each day.

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TROUBLES

When the troubles of the world
 seem to bring you down,
 You can always count on Jesus Christ
 to always be around.

Just because you can't see him
 with your very eyes,
 Keep your love in your heart
 and get rid of foolish lies.

What good does untruth and unkindness bring
 except a bitter pain?
 Why not choose Christ over these things
 so that with him we may remain?

But you have to choose today—right now!
 for tomorrow may be too late,
 Please do it now, today if you can,
 What is making you wait?

You see, I can tell you this—
 When you need a friend right then,
 and it's the world's hate you fear,
 You can look to the Lord to show you the way,
 for HE is always near.

—Brenda Ziebro.



The
**Restitution
Herald**

December, 1983
January, 1984

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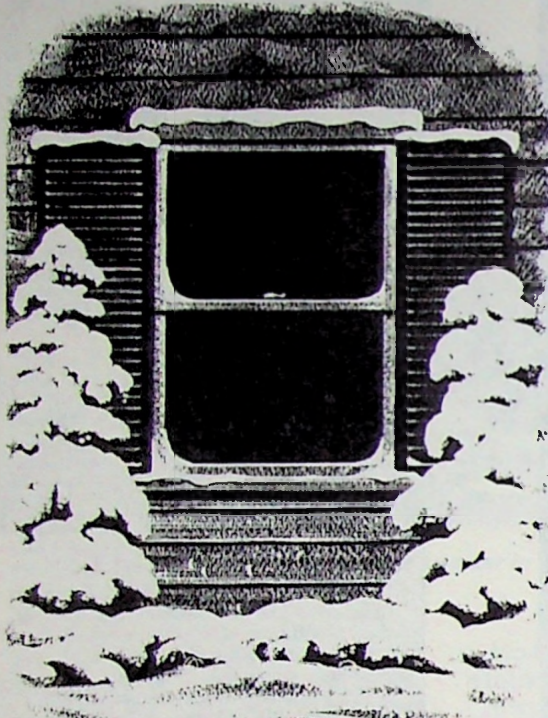
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Let It Snow!



by Pastor Scott Millard

I guess, contrary to many Christians, I'm excited about what I see going on in the world around me today. Oh, I'm not talking about the world's corruption, the hatred between people, the rise in violence, or the bad economic conditions. I'm talking about those cold little "crystals of frozen water formed directly from the water vapor of the air when its temperature at the time of condensation is lower than 0° (32° F)." (*Webster.*) You got it . . . SNOW!

I love snow . . . I love snowballs, snowbirds, snowfalls, snowflakes, and Snow White. I like to walk in the snow, play in the snow, and yes, even drive in the snow. You may be thinking that this writer is suffering from snow-blindness, or is a real snow "FLAKE" . . . but I've lived in the south for so long I get excited seeing that white stuff again.

TO BE TRUTHFUL with you, I get sick when I look at the world around me and I see the condition it is in. All the beautiful snow in the world can-

not hide the facts. Our world is like a runaway train on a down-hill turn. And when I look inside people, including myself, it gets even more frightening.

If we are honest with ourselves, we all have to admit that sin is crouched at our door. We blame the world for its sorry condition, and accuse others . . . but we too are in bondage. WE are also guilty of hatred, apathy, insensitivity, and unrighteousness. "Let him who is without sin cast the first snowball!"

But there is hope for us, nonetheless! That is what the Advent and Christmas Seasons' proclaim "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow!" (Isa. 1:18). How can that be? Because the Christ has come into the world announcing that forgiveness and grace and mercy are given to US. As we come together for worship, let us discover the Good News of the Christmas Message: "Christ Has Come."



This story's been told many a year
How the Lord's angel did appear
Before the virgin Mary and
told her of a child she would bear.
He would be named JESUS,
God's Son, the chosen one.



GOD'S SON

The star shown bright and showed the way
To the manger in the barn where a baby lay.
There was Mary and Joseph with their faces aglow,
Gazing upon the child who whimpered so low.

People came from far and near, to see the child who was
lying here
In a manger of hay for a bed.
They said, "He is the Messiah;
See the star of light above his head."

From a far distant land three wise men came
Bringing gifts to the new-born King.
A hush of silence fell all around
As everyone bent on their knees to the ground
To thank God their Father for sending them
"HIS SON JESUS, SAVIOR OF MEN."

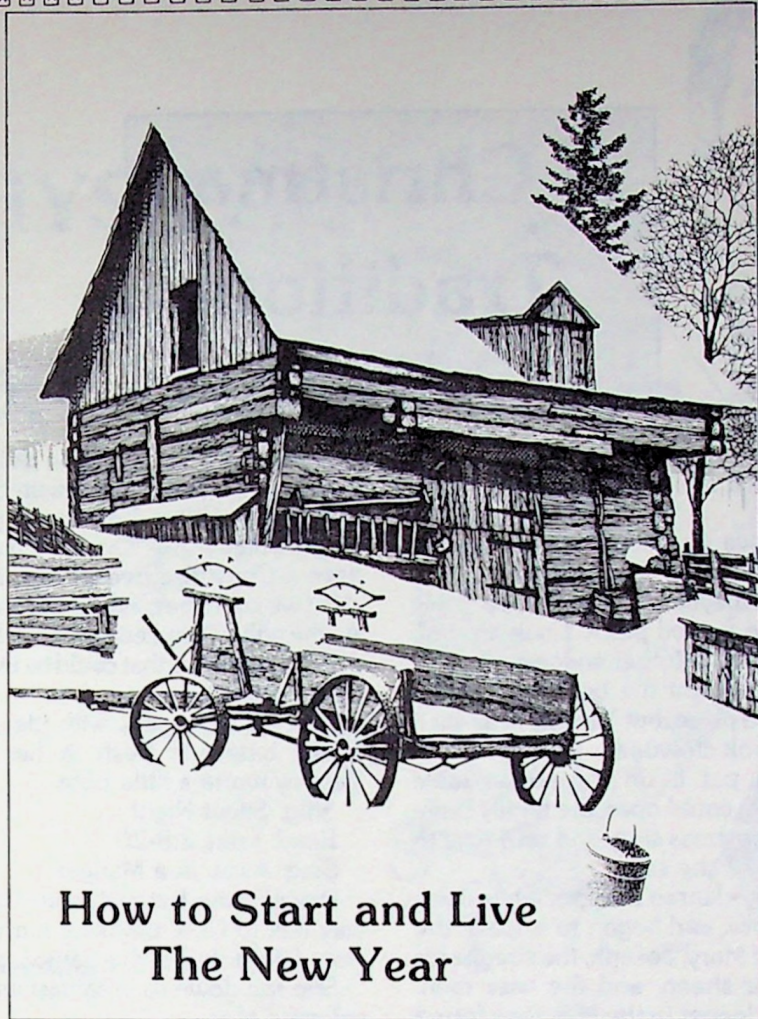
—Mary Hoffman.

Mary and Joseph had to travel to a distant land
To pay taxes that the king did demand.
When they arrived in the town of Bethlehem
The found no room for them at the inn.

Mary's time of birth was almost near,
The innkeepers wife saw how weary she did appear.
"Follow me to the barn," she said;
"You'll find shelter from the cold and hay for a bed."

Some shepherds tending their sheep on this cold winter's
night
Saw in the sky a huge bright light.
An angel appeared, and said to them,
"Follow the star to Bethlehem."





How to Start and Live The New Year

January 1984

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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29	30	31				

IT IS PRETTY EASY to sit down and write what we want to change in our lives for the coming year. It is not so easy to put those written words into practice. What have you decided to do

differently in your life for 1984? What spiritual goals have you set for yourself? What are your plans as far as reaching these goals are concerned?

When planning for the future we

must never forget about eternity. It too must be planned for. Your future rests in your hands. You can trust it to God and find salvation, or work it out for yourself and miss the presence of God when he returns to this earth following the Kingdom Age.

Hosea has asked: "Who is wise, that he may understand these things? Prudent, that he may know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the [uncompromisingly] just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall stumble and fall in them" (Hos. 14:9, Amplified).

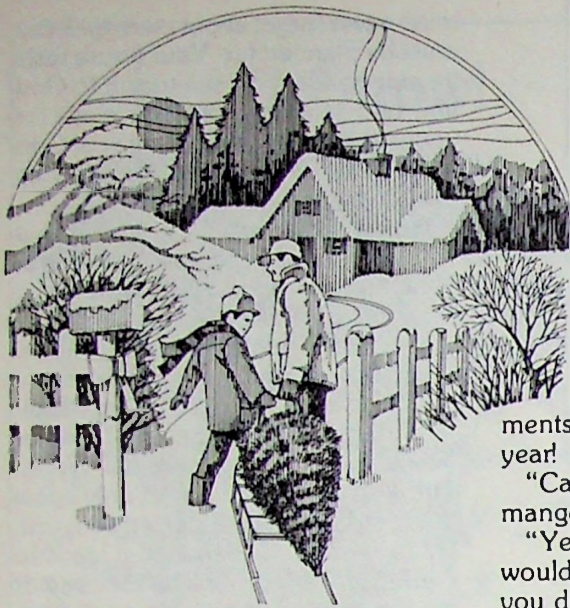
Are you walking in the will of God, or falling or stumbling over his Word? The wise are those who not only know the Word of God but obey that Word. He presents to us a way that leads to eternal life. We can follow that way or go the way of the world and man. Which are you following? What does God have to say about your life and the way you live?

My prayer for you in 1984 is that you will be wise and prudent; that you will choose the ways of God over the ways of the world. Without his direction for your life, you travel a one-way street to nowhere. It is only in his care and following his directions that you have any hope of eternity with God.

Compromise should not be found in the Christian's vocabulary. We cannot compromise with the world and expect God to be pleased with our actions. If we are going to survive 1984 and live eternity with our heavenly Father it will be because we are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. Without Christ as our Savior, we are without hope. With Christ in our lives we not only have hope, but a reason to follow the directions of his Word. The Bible is to be our guide and, if we make that our guide everyday this next year, we will be surprised at the results when 1984 arrives.

What will you do? Will you read God's Word every day for 1984? Will you let that Word change your life? Will you reach your spiritual goals because you are in touch with Christ? The decision is yours. My prayer is that you will give him room in your life so that 1984 might be the greatest experience you have ever known. Be wise and prudent. Follow the ways of the Lord without compromise so that you don't stumble and fall.

By Pastor David W. Cheatwood



A Christmas Tradition

By Lois Pryor

"'Tradition'; what's that word mean?" asked Tammy.

"Well, tradition means you do something the same way time after time. It is sort of a habit handed down from the past; for instance, we always go to Grandmother Smith's house for Christmas dinner. Why do you ask?" her mother wondered.

"I just wondered what it meant. Suzie said she couldn't come over today because it was tradition for her family to go out to the retirement center and sing carols exactly one week before Christmas and that is today," answered Tammy. "I guess each year the people look forward to their coming."

"Mother," burst in Johnny, "can we decorate the tree tonight? Can we get out the manger scene? Can we?"

"You know, when I was your age we would always wait until Christmas Eve to do that," explained Mother. "Tammy, that is an example of tradition—it was passed on down from my great-grandparents."

"Are you going to make us wait that long?" asked Johnny. "I don't think I can wait!"

"No, I think we can do it this evening. It will give us more time to enjoy it," nodded Mother.

Tammy and John carried the boxes of ornaments out of the storage closet and neatly stacked them in the living room while Mother progressed with supper. What fun peeking at the orna-

ments that lay in storage for a whole year!

"Can we go ahead and set up the manger?" called the children.

"Yes, maybe on the coffee table would be a good place. Look around; you decide," Mother suggested.

John thought the bookshelf would be a good place, but Tammy thought it would look crowded.

"If we put it on the coffee table maybe we could open the family Bible to the Christmas story and set it next to the scene," she said.

Tammy cleared the spot while John got the box and began to unpack the figures of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds with their sheep, and the wise men. Digging deeper in the box, they found some more animals and the manger. Baby Jesus was so tiny he almost got lost in the wrappings.

John ran out to the rabbit hutch and brought in a small handful of straw. "This will really make it look like a scene in the barn," he said.

They put all the characters in place and finished just in time to hear Mom call for dinner.

While Mother and Tammy cleared the table, John and Dad set the tree in place. With strains of Silent Night and Joy to the World coming from the record player, the whole family had a delightful time decorating the tree. Dad told stories of the way his family prepared for Christmas when he was a boy. Attending Christmas Eve service at church was a special thing to do for Grandpa Tim's family. Baking lots of cookies and inviting the neighbors in was a yearly activity for Grandma Smith.

As Tammy prepared for bed that night, she began to think, "What could

be something new to begin doing this year for our family?" The excitement of the approaching holiday kept her awake a little while. "Our church doesn't have a Christmas Eve service, so why don't we just have a little family service?" As she drifted into sleep she was thinking of different things that could be included in the service.

The next morning, with ideas for a family time still fresh in her mind, Tammy wrote a little note:

Sing: Silent Night

Read: Luke 2:8-20

Sing: Away in a Manger

Prayer Time: Let each one in his own way talk to God, thanking him for his Son, Christ Jesus, the Savior.

She ran down to breakfast with this splendid idea.

"Mom, I've thought of a new tradition to start this year for our family," she said.

"What is it?" inquired Mother.

"We could have our own family Christmas Eve service," Tammy answered as she handed her note paper to Mother. "We could sit on the floor around the coffee table. Dad could light a candle so we could see the Bible and manger scene. Our family could sing the songs together. You could read the Bible passage of the Christmas story. Wouldn't that be fun?"

"Yes, Tammy, what a great idea—this could be our own family tradition."

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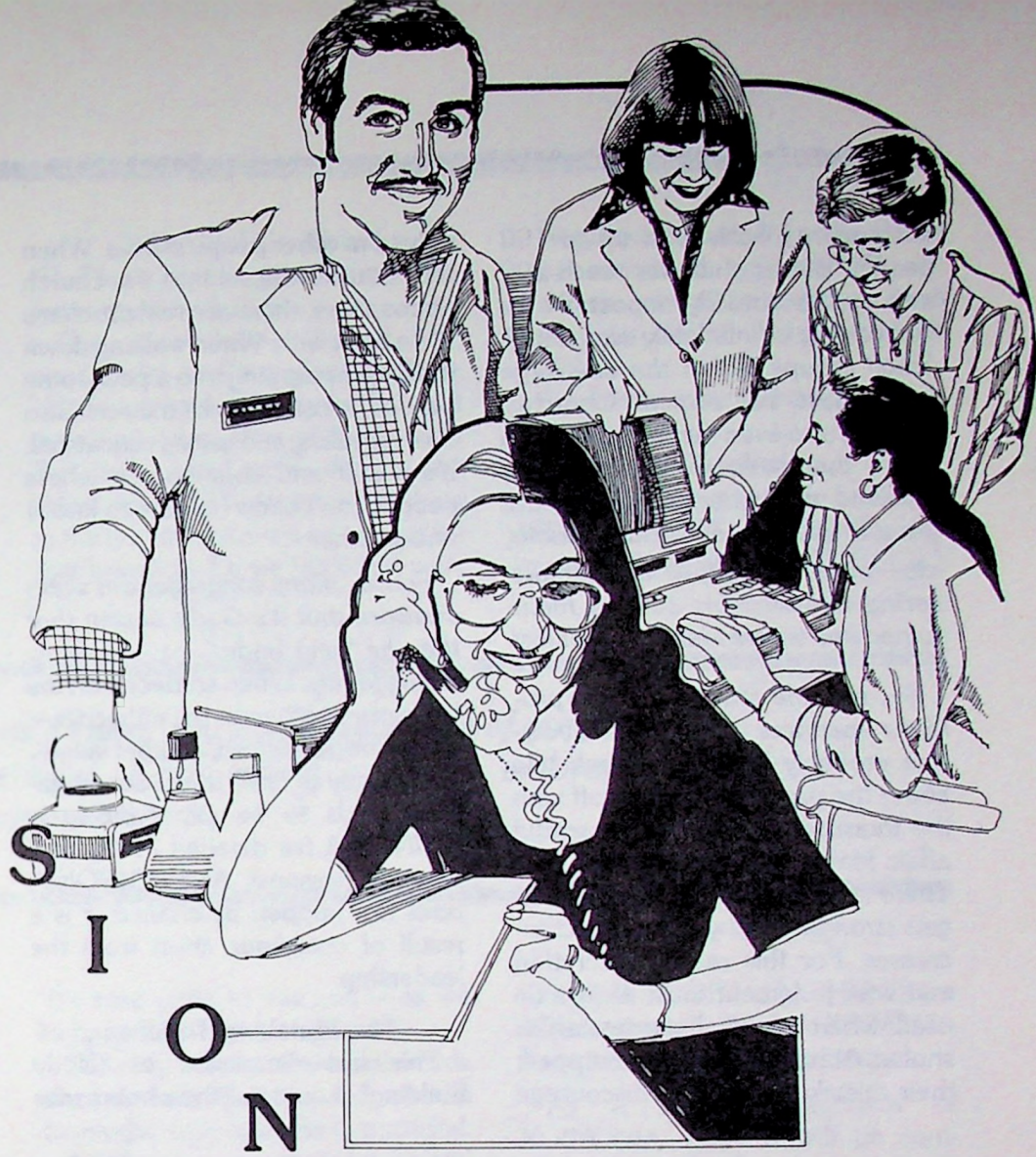
Sit down with your family and look at the holiday traditions you practice. Is there any special way you celebrate that has been handed down from one generation to another in your family? Try something new this year—perhaps a Christmas Eve service like Tammy planned for her family.

C h i l d r e n ' s P a g e

Rachel Carr,
Editor

PHYSICAL E X P R E S S I O N

by
Pastor
Don Needham



HOLY KISSES. . . Affectionate Embraces. . . Hugs and Touches. . . This is the lesson the lecherous old men have been waiting for! Perhaps a few love-starved female soap-opera fiends, too. But lest the title promises too much, let me establish its course immediately.

Jesus did not intend for the church he commissioned to change the world to become a glacier. It was not to be a refrigerator dispensing icicles and ice cubes, but a stove distributing warmth, acceptance, and love.

However, it's not uncommon to find in the fellowship of today's typical congregation that "many are cold and a few are frozen." Some congregations are little more than frigid museums displaying frost-bitten polar bears!

When the New Testament church met, it had a glowing, sunny atmosphere. They were Hawaiians, not Icelanders! *Believers were thrilled to*

be gathering to praise their risen Lord. They embraced, smiled, kissed, hugged, and rejoiced in their precious faith. No room was found for parkas, mufflers, gloves, or snow boots when those people got together.

Why the Air Conditioning?

Trying to pin down the reasons why today's churches lack New Testament warmth is a bit like trying to put one's thumb on frog eggs. They are slippery and tough to corner. But consider these for starters:

First, as churches grow larger, they lose their closeness. It's not difficult to be on a first-name (know all the kids—remember the details of your

last surgery) basis with up to 100 people. But as churches reach 200 and up, it's virtually impossible for everyone to be intimately acquainted. *Small groups within the one large body must be formed.* Churches growing into even the thousands can retain their warmth if people are involved in shepherding groups, cell groups, Bible study groups, choirs, etc.—*any small body where intimate, caring relationships can be maintained and where identity is not lost.*

Second, the fear of scandal prohibits openness of affection. Everyone probably knows a church tale about the preacher running off with the treasurer, or some other sordid affair. Many of these stories are true. There is no doubt that temptation gets stronger as physical contact increases. For this reason discretion and wise judgment must always be used when physical expression is shown. Although a few have slipped, their mistakes shouldn't discourage

involved in other peoples' lives. When this attitude sneaks into the church atmosphere, there are real problems to be dealt with. When walking down the aisle or slipping into a pew, some evade eye contact—for they can also avoid speaking and getting acquainted. It's a stiff and cold church where people don't know (or care to know) one another.

Fourth, many congregations seem unaware that it's God's design that they be "one body," i.e., a happy, loving family. When someone on the left hurts, another on the right cries—when one gets tickled, another laughs. This "Body of Life" that a congregation needs to be experiencing is *KOINONIA* (as detailed in the previous 12 lessons). And *KOINONIA* does not happen by chance; it is a result of conscious effort from the leadership.

The Finishing Touches

This last dimension of "Body Building" should pull the whole series

hurt feelings or the improvement of a fractured relationship as the direct result of an embrace? How many have found acceptance and involvement in a church and the beginning of spiritual growth because someone exhibited love through a physical expression? Think of the ugly walls of hatred and division that have crumbled because of the mending powers of human touch. Or the strength and encouragement that can come from an arm on one's shoulder. The forgiveness and forgetting of grudges that result from clasping hands and looking deeply into a set of tear-filled eyes . . . that's healing!

On many occasions my wife has said, "I need a big hug; I just need to be held." Bumper stickers remind us of our children's emotional needs with the question, "Have you hugged your child today?" **There must be physical expression with the family of the church, just as there must be in the family of the home. These are needs we never outgrow!**

Many leave work rushing home to suburbia and the seclusion of their eight-foot privacy fences. They don't want to get involved in other peoples' lives.

the rest from demonstrating *agape* and caring through touch.

Third, many people are not at ease expressing their feelings. They are inhibited isolationists. Many leave work rushing home to suburbia and the seclusion of their eight-foot privacy fences. They don't want to get in-

together. It is the last shingle on the roof. But a *vital* shingle it is! *Discreet physical expression conveys so many messages. It communicates love, compassion, and acceptance. Physical touch even brings about spiritual and psychological healing.* Who has not experienced the softening of

Now About Those Kisses

In the conclusion of the Roman letter—the 16th chapter—the words "greet" or "greeting" can be found no less than 21 times (New International Version).

Considering everything we know about the atmosphere of those first

congregations, Paul is giving instructions to do far more than just "say hi." These Christians were very demonstrative. They genuinely loved and cared about one another, and it showed! Romans 16:16 goes so far as to say, "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (NIV).

Five times in the New Testament (four by Paul, one by Peter), Christians are told to welcome one another

Two Final Cautions

(1) *These greetings, whatever the form, must be honest.*

Our vocabularies abound with empty, trite, hackneyed expressions: "Have a nice day" may be the most overused expression of the decade! But how many times do we say, "How are you?"—yet the last thing in the world we want is an answer for that question. Or we burst out with,

away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death" James 1:14-15 (NIV).

Contact must be sensible, sensitive, and prudent.

In Conclusion

A congregation which proclaims JESUS CHRIST AS LORD, and moves in the POWER OF THE HOLY

Kissing was a culturally acceptable form of greeting in the first century. Even today a gentle embrace is certainly appropriate.

with a "righteous peck." Kissing was a form of greeting very common in the first century. It was also culturally acceptable. The custom can frequently be seen in Eastern European and Asian countries yet today. The Russians are well known for their "bear hugs"—which involve holding their host by both arms with a kiss on either the right or both cheeks.

Perhaps we might better understand this text if Paul had said, "Demonstrate affection toward your fellow Christians in a way that is both pure and culturally acceptable." In our society, shaking hands, a kiss on the cheek, a gentle embrace are certainly appropriate. *But this kind of affection must always be based on clean motives, discretion, and, above all, true Christian love.* This is not giving consent for the dirty old men to get their paws on the ladies—or the contrary!

"It's sure good to see you"—as we begin to plan our escape.

Not only are the worn-out words often meaningless; they can also be downright dishonest and hypocritical.

As Christians we must be careful that our greetings are more than shallow rituals and hollow phrases. They must be real and sincere.

(2) *One final look at discretion.*

Perhaps you're thinking, "This point is wearing a little thin." It is with planned intention that it has surfaced several times in this lesson. There is a difference between a "spiritual" kiss and a "sensual" kiss. There is a variation between a "righteous" hug and a "carnal" hug. **KOINONIA CAN UNRAVEL IN A HURRY WHEN PHYSICAL EXPRESSION IS BEING CARRIED ON WITH IMPURE MOTIVES!**

"... each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged

SPIRIT WILL BE HEALTHY! There will be a vibrant body where **KOINONIA** is understood and implemented.

As a natural outgrowth of **KOINONIA**, **AGAPE** will be compounding. The fellowship atmosphere will be **ACCEPTING, FORGIVING, and ENCOURAGING**. Believers will gather in **UNITY**, and will show the depth of their commitment by **SERVING** one another. Irritating tendencies will be overlooked as Christians **BEAR WITH** one another.

When discipline is necessary, **ADMONISHMENT** will come from gentle, caring people—who will then stand beside the corrected person to help him **BEAR HIS BURDEN**.

Finally, the body will be bound together with the warm, spontaneous showing of **PHYSICAL AFFECTION**.

LET'S BUILD UP OUR BODIES!

—by Kent Ross

The Be.



Temper-Temper-Temper

anticipation, Zachary would try to work up the courage to slip out from behind me and look around the corner. Time and again he would slip out to peer around the corner and time and again as quickly slip back to his place of protection.

Finally the waiting became too much and Zachary headed around the corner to see what had happened to the "avenger." He just couldn't believe that Seth, who is bigger and stronger, wouldn't come and pay him back for what he had first done.

Zachary's character is echoed in many, perhaps most of us. It doesn't make us happy, but we spend an inordinate amount of time looking back over our shoulders warily watching for someone who may be coming to get even with us. That's no different from Joseph's brothers. They could never be sure that the favored brother might someday get even with them for all they had done to him.

Setting the Scene

To properly understand Joseph's brothers with their uneasiness at Jacob's

death, we need to look back at the history of their dastardly deeds. The story isn't a very nice one and seems strange when we realize these are the progenitors of the 12 tribes of Israel.

The story begins with their father Jacob, and his relationship with those around him... especially his brother Esau. With his mother's cooperation he successfully cheated his father and brother, and was given the rights and privileges of eldest son. With that history, perhaps it isn't so surprising to find that same sort of characteristic in his own sons. In fact, the surprise may be that Joseph is able to successfully resist that sort of character development. The jealousy of Joseph's older brothers begins early when Joseph eagerly—albeit unwisely—relates to them and to his father the dreams and visions he has been given. Already suspect because of his father's favoritism, Joseph is further disliked and even detested by the rest of his family. This dislike soon turns to active hatred and retaliation over the coat of many colors. Planning to kill their own brother, they are deterred from this crime and, instead, sell him into slavery. This accomplished and their father grieving over the reputed death of his favorite son, the brothers are sure that they no more will be troubled by Joseph.

The scheming brothers never suspect that God's hand is upon them and in history! Joseph is sold into slavery in Egypt, and through a series of seeming misfortunes, is exalted to the second position in the kingdom of Egypt. Only Pharaoh himself remains as a power above his ex-slave.

ZACHARY, my four-year-old, came whipping around the corner of the living room and quickly thrust himself behind the protection of my legs. Peering between my knees, he watched and, with wariness, waited for his oldest brother to come and retaliate for Zachary's "first-strike" effectiveness.

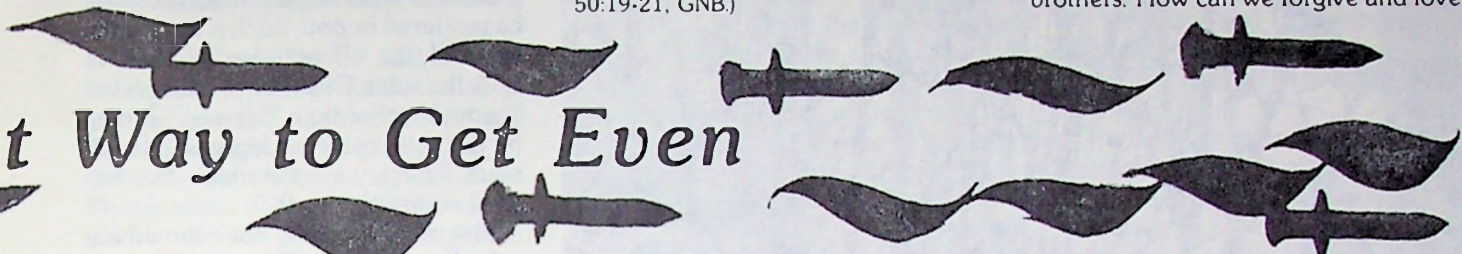
Strangely, nothing happened... Seth didn't come. Almost quivering with

Seven years later, as a result of famine and starvation that have brought Jacob and his surviving sons to the brink of disaster, Jacob sends his sons to Egypt for relief. To their deep consternation they come to find out that it is Joseph that greets them and, in fact, holds their fate in his hands—hands they are sure

But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid: I can't put myself in the palce of God. You plotted evil against me, but God turned it into good, in order to preserve the lives of many people who are alive today because of what happened. You have nothing to fear. I will take care of you and your children." So he reassured them with kind words that touched their hearts. (Gen. 50:19-21, GNB.)

executioners, Jesus says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Our immediate reaction is, "It's too much!" Too high!" What we mean is that our own character, our own nature is still too much like that of Joseph's brothers. How can we forgive and love



st Way to Get Even

must be hungering for revenge.

Their own characters continue to be revealed as they move to Egypt at Joseph's invitation. They can't believe that Joseph doesn't have some nefarious scheme to get them into his clutches to exact revenge. They harbor that fear about Joseph because that's the way *they* would think in his position . . . that's the way they are . . . unforgiving and vengeful.

But Jacob dies and there is no one left to protect them. Now they fear that Joseph, no longer having to honor and respect his father, will avenge himself.

They are so sure Joseph is practicing duplicity that we see them scheming and lying—providing words for Jacob's "dying request." Their own guilt wouldn't let them rest or trust in Joseph, so Scripture records their protective scheme:

After the death of their father, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still hates us and plans to pay us back for all the harm we did to him?" So they sent a message to Joseph: "Before our father died, he told us to ask you, 'Please forgive the crime your brothers committed when they wronged you.' Now please forgive us the wrong that we, the servants of your father's God, have done." Joseph cried when he received this message.

Then his brothers themselves came and bowed down before him. "Here we are before you as your slaves," they said. (Gen. 50:15-18, GNB.)

With these lying words reputedly from Jacob, Joseph's brothers threw themselves on his mercy, begging for forgiveness and "fair treatment" . . . treatment they would never give another.

Joseph's reaction is to weep. He has long since forgiven them, having understood his place in God's plan. He has told them they are forgiven. He has shown them that they have been forgiven. What more can he do? They still show an inability to trust in him . . . to really believe that they are completely, wholly, and unreservedly forgiven and accepted.

Again, with kind words he reassures them of his love and forgiveness.

Can We Handle the Passion to Get Even?

How we wish to identify ourselves with Joseph, but how we fear that our characters are more accurately revealed in his brothers! When wronged, our immediate reaction is one that cries for vengeance . . . for getting even. With the recent tragedy in Lebanon, wherein over 200 Americans died, few Americans refrained from a desire for revenge and retaliation.

And yet, as the moment of passion passes, hopefully we come to a deeper appreciation of our Christian calling in situations such as this. Forgive . . . trust . . . forgive again. Christ's own words reverberate in our ears. When asking Jesus how often to forgive, . . . Peter suggests that seven times should be the limit. We instead hear the Lord say, "No, but 70 times seven." Impossible! It can't be done! It isn't reasonable! of course not. If it were reasonable it would hardly be part of the higher calling.

And it isn't as if they were just words to Jesus, but as he hung on the cross, oblivious to the taunts and cries of his

and treat kindly those who have mistreated us, who have not acted lovingly toward us, who have not lived according to our standards of what is right and wrong? We judge and desire to mete out punishment fitting our perception of the crime. But dare we be that way? Dare we not change . . . allow God to change us?

Of him it is said, in Psalm 103, quoting Leslie Brandt's free rendering of it,

"He [God] does not give us our just deserts/or pay us what we well deserve. He is grieved when we so miserably fail,/ but He quickly draws us to his forgiving heart/and accepts us just as it it never happened. He looks with tenderness upon his faltering children;/He knows and understands our fallible natures."

Forgiveness

Joseph or his brothers? Forgiveness and acceptance, or mistrust, suspicion, and the inability to truly believe in others?

An honest, objective examination of ourselves is called for. We know ourselves, if we can admit it. When we do and in shame confess our sins to God, he in love and gentleness draws us to himself and we feel the total and complete acceptance of divine loveliness. It is in that spirit of love and acceptance that we become the change agents in our world—Josephs to unbelieving, unaccepting brothers. It is not an easy way, but it is God's way of bringing to pass the good which is for the salvation of many.



attempt to describe the meek, let's first note the word *blessed*. In several instances where we find the word *blessed*, the Greek word might just as accurately be rendered *happy*. Such is the case in each of the "Beatitudes." In James 5:11 the same Greek word is translated "happy" rather than "blessed." It may be just a bit more understandable if it reads, "Happy are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

The meek certainly have something to be happy about. They may be poor, of humble circumstances, gentle in this life, but just look at the promise. Such an inheritance! One can usually endure lesser circumstances if there is hope that such will not be the case forever. Jesus is the supreme example of humility and meekness in Philippians 2:5-8. A newer translation such as the New International Version will give a more accurate rendering. But notice also verses 9-11. As a result of Jesus' meekness, God exalted him above every name. The result of the believer's meekness is the promise of the earth as an inheritance. No wonder we have reason to be a happy people!

Just what does it mean to be meek? Who is it that will inherit the earth?

THE MEEK SHALL

WHO WOULD even want to inherit the earth? The popular theory is that you go to heaven when you die. In heaven you are not only with Jesus, but reunited with loved ones who preceded you in death. It's a paradise! All things are perfect. There are neither tears, pain, sorrow, nor death. Who cares what's happening on the earth, and who would want it?

This third of the "Beatitudes" has much meat for those who truly are hungry for the Word. In addition to an encouragement toward a meek Christian life, we also find reference to that foundational scriptural teaching that God's promised inheritance for his people is the earth.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). Before we

These are fair questions which certainly should be addressed. Meekness is the opposite of malice, vengeance, boastfulness, rebellion. It is, however, neither a surrender of rights, nor cowardice, nor weakness. The meek are gentle, mild, humble. In W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, our meekness in relation to God is described as "that temper of spirit in





which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting." He further states, "It is closely linked with the word humility."

There is much to be said for our willingness to accept God's dealings with us as good. Many believers are mature enough not to blame God for the evils and tragedies in their lives. Those same believers will, however, blame him for not answering their prayers. He could have cured the disease, or prevented the accident, or saved the marriage. Our meekness must not only include a humble attitude, but an acceptance of God's dealing with us. Certainly at the moment, a disease or accident is of gigantic consequence, and yet from where God is sitting, looking at the overall picture, it is of no eternal consequence.

In John 12, Jesus has just predicted his death. As he contemplates this, we find him in verse 27 thinking out loud. "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say?" He is pondering what sort of prayer he should pray. He offers one option almost as a question. "Father, save me from this hour?" Should this be his prayer? He then responds to his

Let's move on now to that promise Jesus made to the meek. They will inherit the earth. This alludes to the truth that God's eternal kingdom will be established upon the earth. Jesus didn't give the chapter and verse, but he was quoting from Psalm 37:11. Actually, the earth is promised as an inheritance at least three times in Psalm 37. In verses 9, 11, and 22, the earth is promised to "those that wait upon the Lord," "the meek," and "such as be blessed of him," respectively. Verses 10 and 11 sum it up well: "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be. . . . But the meek shall inherit the earth."

Of course, this is no new thought to those who know that the dead sleep until resurrection, at which time Jesus will come and begin to establish the kingdom of God on the earth. God promised to Abraham the land as far as he could see as an eternal inheritance. Abraham is dead and has not yet received the promise, but not even his descendants have received the promise. It's a future event. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven."

Believers today are also heirs of the

heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Just as Christ was the supreme example in humility and consequently God exalted him, so will the meek also come to their day of glory, when Jesus returns.

Perhaps it seems strange that such a great inheritance is offered to the meek. In the Psalms alone we see several promises. Psalm 22:26 says, "The meek shall eat and be satisfied." Psalm 25:9 reads, "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." Psalm 76:9 says, "God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth." Then in Psalm 147:6 we find, "The LORD lifteth up the meek"; and then over in 149:4, "He will beautify the meek with salvation."

It would appear obvious that the meek are precious in the eyes of God. This alone should be enough to challenge us to develop those characteristics of the meek—gentleness, mildness, humility, and an acceptance of God's workings with us. Be assured that God's promise will one day be fulfilled. The meek shall inherit the earth!

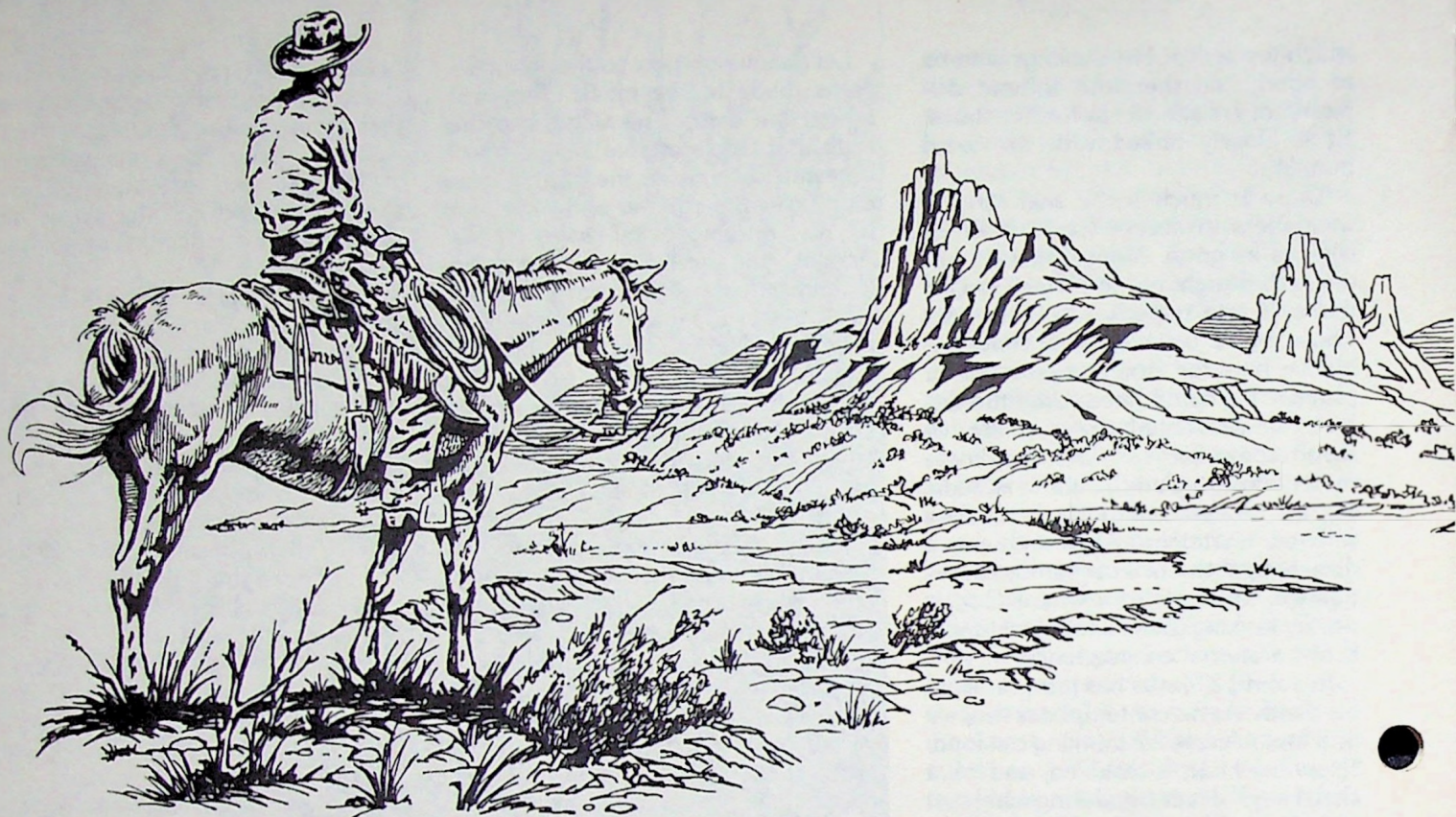
INHERIT THE EARTH!

own thoughts. "No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour." Jesus knew his mission and in meekness he submitted to it. This must certainly be considered a strength rather than a weakness. In verse 28 Jesus offers the prayer he would bring before God, "Father glorify your name!" Should not this also be our response and prayer when difficulty arises?

promise to Abraham. Galatians 3:29 reminds us, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The kingdom of God is neither in heaven, nor is it going on somewhere today. We are awaiting an inheritance. Romans 8:16 and 17 add to this thought "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then



by Pastor John A. Railton



By Donald G. Nunemaker Jr.

IN RECENT YEARS, the Church of God has been declining in numbers of members at an unprecedented rate. Therefore, this raises a very important question: Is the Church of God like the fig tree found in Matthew 21:19? Jesus, "seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only. And he said to it 'May no fruit ever come from you again!' and the fig tree withered at once" (RSV).

Obviously, Christ was angry because he could not find figs to eat. As a result he destroyed the tree. This was a demonstration of what Christ meant when he declared later, "Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he

takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes that it may bear more fruit. . . . If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown in the fire and burned" (John 15:2, 6).

These passages can mean but one thing. That which does not produce fruit will be destroyed. Therefore, the question is, If the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith were compared to the fig tree found in Matthew 21:19, would Jesus curse it or bless it? And if we are cursed, what must we do to restore our growth and regain God's good will once again?

To begin with, Christ gave every

baptized person, who calls himself Christian, the GREAT COMMISSION; that is, we are to "Make disciples of all nations." This commissioning is not something to be applied when convenient, and then set aside; it is a 24-hour-a-day job. We must be doing God's work no matter where we are, or what secular work we are involved in.

It is very clear, our church must start intensive work now because just having *TRUE DOCTRINE MAY NOT GET US INTO THE KINGDOM*. Consider James 2:17, which states, "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (RSV). With this statement in mind, let us consider the facts.

Church of God the Fig Tree of Matthew 21:19?

Since the early 1960's the numbers of people in the body of the Church of God has been near 5000 members and declining. Last year 33 percent of our churches had no baptisms and 20 percent had two or less baptisms. This means that over half of our



congregations have shown very little growth (in other words, they have produced very little fruit). An even worse figure is that 12 churches have closed their doors in the last five years. For the most part the remaining churches have not had spectacular growth. In fact, 58 percent of our churches have declined in attendance in the past two years. Finally, very few of our churches are growing at an acceptable rate. Only two churches have shown a yearly attendance rate of above 10 percent. These figures are absolutely discouraging.

Fourteen years ago I became a member of a very *LOVING* church body and I was very happy to be a part of the church. But, as time progressed, I was required to move several times. Those times in which I was able, I and my family became members of the local Church of God. In some cases, the church body we joined was quite small and not growing. Becoming part of these church families was quite easy. However, in many of our churches where no growth is noted, a common problem is usually quite apparent. That problem is that two or three families "*dominate*" the church.

Any time an "*outsider*" comes into these churches, that person is just that—an outsider. As a result, to penetrate the family-imposed barriers is almost impossible. *Generally*, these barriers are not deliberately imposed. But, rather small groups just naturally tend to remain tightly knit to each other and a "*NEWCOMER*" then has real trouble getting to know the *OLDER* church members. As a result, an "*UNWELCOME SIGN*" is always posted. Net result: no one wants to be in a church where he has no friends. Therefore, there is no growth. If your church has shown little or no growth in the past years, it would be wise to see how many "*unwelcome*" signs you have posted . . . Then tear them down.

By the way, have you ever thought what impact you would have if you invited a visitor to dinner? Odds are he and his family would feel very welcome and would soon be an active part of your church.

You might think that there is no danger as far as producing no fruit is concerned. However, let us now turn to the case of the Jews. The Jews knew God and held onto his *TRUTH* for nearly 2000 years. And of course they had the Abrahamic promise found in Genesis 12:2, which basically states: "I will make of you a great nation." But they failed to take note of the last part of Genesis 12:3, which states, "And by you all the families of earth shall bless themselves." This is one of the first mission statements found in the Bible. But the Jews failed to do any real mission work. They considered all Gentiles unworthy to hear the Word of God. Therefore, there was no mission work by the Jews to save the Gentiles.

But when Christ came onto the scene, he did not come to reestablish the covenant with the Jews; he came to revoke it. Consider what John the Baptist said when the Sadducees and

the Pharisees came to him for baptism. "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? *Bear fruit that befits repentance*, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; *every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire*" (Matt. 3:7-10).

Can that passage of Scripture be applied to the Church of God? John uses some very strong language in regard to the Pharisees, but the point was they were not producing fruit. And we are not doing a very good job ourselves. Personally, I shudder to think that God might use those same words in speaking to me at the Judgment if I do not bear fruit that befits repentance!

But the fact is, we lay claim to the same covenant as did the Jews. "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:29, RSV). Therefore, we have the same obligations and responsibilities as did the Jews . . . bear fruit, produce, grow.

I realize the following may be a very harsh statement, but please consider it. If we have failed to do God's work, we are in grave danger. Because of our adherence to God's doctrines (they are his doctrines, not ours) we are considered by many to be a cult and, therefore, false prophets. Now consider the words of Jesus: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their *fruits*. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So, *every sound tree bears good fruit*, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut*

**IS THE CHURCH OF GOD
THE FIG TREE OF
MATTHEW 21:19?**

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down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits' (Matt 7:15-20, RSV).

Although this is taken out of context, I have used it to illustrate a point. We

are considered false prophets and those who consider us such point to our small numbers as proof that we are indeed a cult. I know we do not produce *evil fruit*, but the fact is we produce so little fruit it is hard to tell if we are a good tree! However, a parable that is not taken out of context was uttered by Jesus. Basically, a man sows his seed in different types of

ground. Some seed never matures, other seed is eaten. But "Some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold. . . . And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:8, 15).

Brothers and sisters, I ask you this question, Which seed are we? Are we the seed which has been eaten or never matures? Can we in all honesty say we have produced a great yield for God? **NO WE CANNOT.** We have done so little as a church in the last several years we could be in danger of God's judgment.

As most of you are well aware, there is a day of judgment coming and all people will be judged. Although we are saved by grace, we still will be judged by our works (Matt. 16:27). The point here is, we must do God's will. We must *produce good fruit* as opposed to *NO* fruit. I don't think we are guilty of producing bad fruit. But we sure are short of good fruit production! In the judgment, I would rather hear God say to our church, "WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; you have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master" (Matt 25:21), rather than, "Depart, I knew you not."

We of the Church of God must stop the *withering* of our church and return to growth. Here are two ways to begin the growth process:

1) Follow Mark 12:29-31.

2) *Every* person in the Church of God must work hard for the glory of God. We must talk with our families, friends, and anyone willing to hear about the saving grace of Jesus. And, yes, it even means going from *door to door* telling *all* about Christ.

I believe that there are many people in our communities who believe as we do. But, because they belong to other churches they feel that they are alone in their beliefs. Some stop going to church because of these conflicts. Let us change our growth pattern and find those people who are alone in their beliefs. And also let's find those who have never heard.

If we do not start producing fruit, what will Christ say to US, THE CHURCH OF GOD?



The Sower



Some fell along the path



Some fell on rock



Other seed fell among thorns

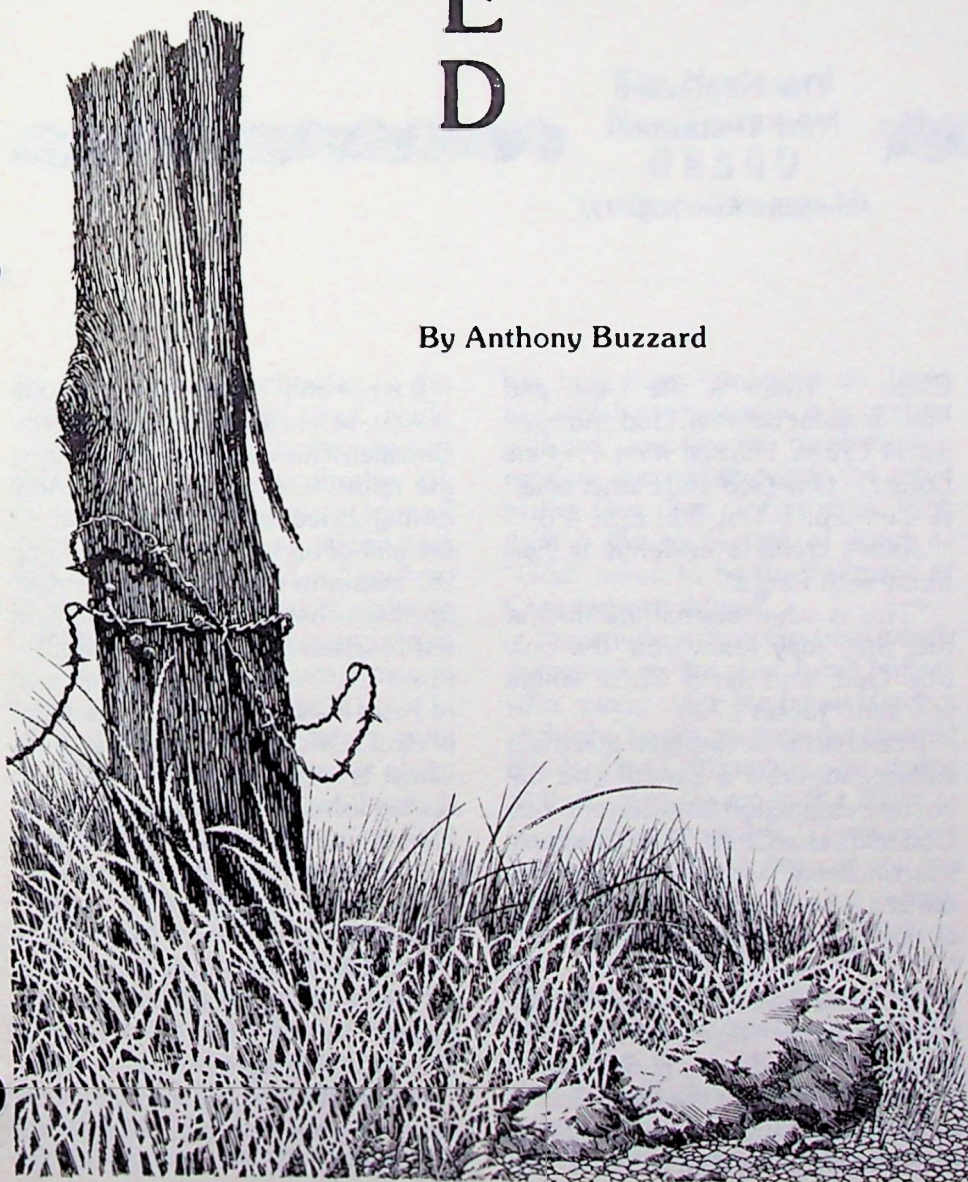


Still other fell on good soil

The Neglected New Testament

C R E E D

By Anthony Buzzard



“Within the Christian tradition, the New Testament has for long been read through the prism of the later conciliar creeds. . . . Speaking of Jesus as the Son of God had a *very different* connotation in the first century from that which it has had *ever since* Nicea (325 A.D.). Talk of his pre-existence ought probably in most, perhaps in all cases to be understood on the analogy of the preexistence of the Torah (the Law), to indicate the eternal divine purpose being achieved through him, rather than preexistence of a fully personal kind.” (*The Remaking of Christian Doctrine*, Maurice Wiles, SCM Press, Ltd., emphasis mine.)

The current debate in theology is doing much to expose the weakness of the traditional Trinitarian dogma of “three coequal, coeternal persons in One God.” Such exposure can only encourage the widespread interest in a return to the faith of the New Testament. Attempts to recover the teachings of the apostles will, however, be frustrated unless students of the Bible first become fully aware of the danger of reading the Scriptures through spectacles tinged with the traditional understanding of the person of Christ which they have acquired from “orthodoxy.” A realization that the process of “reading back” is ever at work is perhaps the single most important key to learning from the apostles. In this connection the eminent evangelical scholar, F. F. Bruce, makes a significant observation when he says:

“People who adhere to ‘sola scriptura’ (‘We go by the Bible only’), as they believe, often adhere in fact to a traditional school of interpretation of sola scriptura.” (In correspondence with the writer.)

How many evangelicals have honestly subjected their view of the person of Christ to a rigorous examination, without presupposing the doctrine of the trinity? How much more effective our Bible study would be if we were to take full account of the remarks of Maurice Wiles about the heritage we have received, probably without

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question, from the Reformation:

"The Reformers, for all their recasting of the tradition and insistence on the New Testament as the sole authority, *remained fully traditionalist* in Christological doctrine. Leonard Hodgson points out that in the debates of the 17th and 18th centuries the unitarians as well as their opponents accepted the Bible as containing revelation given in the form of propositions, and concludes that 'on the basis of the argument which both sides held in common, *the unitarians had the better case.*'" (ibid. p. 55, emphasis mine.)

Professor Wiles then notes that despite the fact that the unitarians had Scripture on their side, it was not they who won the day: "Christological


conditions not founded in Scripture is to worship in vain?"

What then does speaking of Jesus as Son of God mean in the New Testament? We will avoid misunderstanding if we bear in mind Professor Wiles' warning that ever since the council of Nicaea it has meant something "quite different." There is not the slightest hint in the New Testament that "Son of God" means "coequal, coeternal God." The New Testament contains its own simple credal statements which, if adopted with conviction, relieve the mind of the inexplicable mysteries, or rather mystifications of the trinity. Paul could not have made his position much clearer:


"For us [Christians] there is *one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus*

revealed in the Old Testament, to whom Jesus prayed. The attitude toward Jesus in the early sermons of Acts is that Jesus was a man attested by God (2:22), and that God preached to Israel through Jesus (10:36). Throughout most of the New Testament there tends to be a distinction between God (= the Father) and Jesus."

The writer then illustrates this by citing a number of passages which draw a very clear distinction between God, who is numerically one, and Jesus Christ, who has God the Father as his God. For example: "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God..." (Eph. 1:17; 2 Cor. 13:14.)



The Neglected New Testament CREED



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doctrine has never been derived simply by way of logical inference from the statements of Scripture. . . . The Church has not usually in practice (whatever it may have claimed to be doing in theory) based its Christology exclusively on the witness of the New Testament." (ibid., p. 54).

The question must therefore arise: Are we being honest with the Bible when we claim it as the sole rule of faith (as the 39 Articles do) while accepting an understanding of the nature of Christ derived from church councils three centuries after the completion of the New Testament? If, as Maurice Wiles says, the Reformers remained fully traditionalist—and as F. F. Bruce claims, evangelicals adhere to traditional schools of interpretation despite claims to be following the Bible only—how sure can we be that our worship does not fall under the uncomfortable New Testament stricture that to worship holding tra-

Christ . . . There is *one God, and one Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, Himself man. . . . One Lord. . . . One God and Father of all*" (1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 4:6).

John's creed is evidently in harmony with Paul's:

"This is what eternal life means: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent" (John 17:3).

It can hardly be disputed that these statements draw a careful and deliberate distinction between the one God and Jesus Christ. They are simply irreconcilable with the notion that Jesus is to be included in the Godhead as coequal with the Father.

"It is quite obvious," says the Roman Catholic writer Raymond E. Brown (*Jesus, God and man*, p. 6), "that in the New Testament the term 'God' is applied with overwhelming frequency to God the Father, that is, to the God

It is not only, however, in the Book of Acts, where the foundations of the Christian church were being laid by the apostles, that Jesus is carefully distinguished from the one God. At the end of his life, Paul in 1 Timothy 2:5 insists, in view of the impending apostasy, that "there is *one God, and one Mediator. . . the Man Jesus Christ.*" From the earliest pronouncements of Peter in Acts to the last statement of Paul in his letter to Timothy, Jesus Christ is designated as "man" and distinguished from the one God, the Father. The same distinction between God and Jesus is invariably maintained by all the apostles when at the opening of their letters they convey blessing from the two divine persons:

"Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This enumeration of the divine persons is repeated some eighteen times and surely must be taken to represent the original Christian view of the

Godhead. It is beyond question, therefore, that the New Testament credal statements are strictly "unitarian." This is hardly surprising when Jesus himself cites with approval the great foundational text of Old Testament monotheism: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29). Will anyone question Paul's loyalty to Old Testament monotheism in view of his conviction that "There is no other God but one" (1 Cor. 8:4)? One might well ask what possible assertion could state more clearly that the apostles believed in "the only wise God," the "One God and Father of all" (1 Tim. 1:17; Eph. 4:6).

When Jesus is accused of making himself God, he is quick to point out that the term "god," in a sense quite

judge (Acts 17:31); when he arrives to establish the kingdom he is likewise designated as "the second *man* from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47). Most significantly of all, Jesus is still *man*, in clear distinction from God, the Father, even in his present exalted office as Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). It is here of all places in Scripture that Paul could have given a hint of his belief in the trinity. This he stubbornly refuses to do. His statement in 1 Timothy 2:5 is entirely consistent with his matured thinking in Philippians 2:9, where he describes precisely the exalted "name" which has now been given to him by God, his Father. Paul upholds the distinction which is characteristic of his doctrine of God: The name which

numerically one, and therefore one also in person. First Timothy 2:5, 'There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' Here the mediator, though not purely human, is purposely named man . . . lest he should be thought equal to the Father, or the same God, the argument distinctly and expressly referring to one God. Again 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, to those 'Who are called gods, whether in heaven or earth, God the Father, of whom are all things' is opposed singly, he who is numerically one God to 'many gods' (Milton on the Son of God and Holy Spirit, pp. 17, 19).

It is an obvious fact that the term "God" (i.e., "O Theos," with the definite article in the Greek text) is

The Neglected New Testament CREED

(continued from page 18)

different from its application to the One and Only God of Israel, could properly be applied to human leaders invested with divine authority. He argues that the judges were termed "gods"; he could have added that Moses was designated a "god" to Pharaoh (Ex. 7:1). Thus to claim to be "Son of God" was not to claim to be "God" as trinitarianism seems to imply. (See John 10:34-36.)

The New Testament data is quite clear. When basic statements about the Godhead are made, Jesus is always distinguished from the One God, and is frequently designated "man." It is this prevailing New Testament information which trinitarianism ignores entirely, while it makes an appeal to a handful of passages in which the term "god" is applied to Jesus. Trinitarianism makes no allowance for the fact that Jesus is described as "man," even in his future function as eschatological ruler and

has now been conferred on Jesus and which every tongue is to confess is "Lord," and this title he elsewhere carefully distinguishes from the name of the One God (1 Cor. 8:6). Why then is the confession of Jesus as "God" taken to be the hallmark of Christian orthodoxy?

The simple unity of God was clearly perceived by the poet John Milton, who, along with Sir Isaac Newton and John Locke, perhaps the greatest minds of the 17th century, was unable to find trinitarianism in the Bible:

"In Ephesians 4:4-6, 'There is one body and one spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Here there is one Spirit, and one Lord; but the Father is one, and therefore *God is one in the same sense as the remaining objects of which unity is predicated*, that is,

reserved in the New Testament for the Father alone. We may say, therefore, that God in the absolute and unrestricted sense applies to the Father only. Any credal formula which fails to take account of these facts is liable to distort the New Testament data. Trinitarianism sweeps away the hundreds of passages in the New Testament in which Jesus is distinguished from God and relies on a very small number of texts, some of which are disputed for textual or syntactical reasons, in which the term "god" is associated with Jesus. It makes very little sense that these verses only should be taken to represent the apostolic mind while the large majority of passages in which Christ is distinguished from God are ignored.

It is well known that the Hebrew mind can speak of an agent of God as bearing the name of God. The angel who conveys the message of

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the God of Israel can legitimately be named "god" (Gen. 21:17, 18; 22:11, 12, 15, 16; Judg. 13:21). The judges of Israel can be termed "gods" (Ex. 22:28). Even the house of David can fulfil the function of "god" (Zech. 12:8). No one suggests that the status of these agents was coequality with God. Thus also in the New Testament the one who is preeminently the Son

of God, who represents God more perfectly than any previous agent of God, who "stands for" God in the sense that Old Testament prophecies describing the activity of God will be carried out by him, can rightly be addressed as "god" (John 20:28; Heb. 1:8). Indeed the Father himself addresses the Son as "god" in his function of ruler of the coming age (Heb.

1:8; 2:5). This is in line with Isaiah 9:6, where the future King is addressed as "god." (Note the LXX, 'Mighty God, Father of the Coming Age.') Indeed the Psalm (45) refers to the coming King. That the King was addressed as "god" would not, however, have caused a Hebrew to abandon his strictly unitarian understanding of the Godhead. Nor should it mean the adoption of a trinitarian formula which, as well as being impossibly complex, interferes with the unity of the two Testaments. The single passage in which God addresses his Son as "god" should not be taken as a springboard for the proposition that Jesus is "very God of very God." Should not the fundamental doctrine of the Godhead be based on a balanced view of the New Testament evidence rather than on a fraction of the data?

Maurice Wiles maintains, along with a large number of scholars, that all the New Testament writers "(even the 4th Gospel which comes nearest) stop short of the assertions that have come to characterize the later doctrine of the incarnation." (*Myth of God Incarnate*, p. 4.) "If we avoid reading the New Testament with spectacles colored by later dogma, we find emerging a Christological picture, or pictures quite different from later orthodoxy." (Frances Young in *Myth of God Incarnate*, p. 14).

The discovery of that New Testament doctrine of Christ, which has been so effectively buried by the later traditions, is well within the power of any seeker for Truth, and it will lead to the abandonment of the unnecessary trinitarian mystification in favor of the simple creed of 1 Corinthians 8:6.

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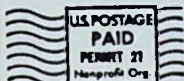
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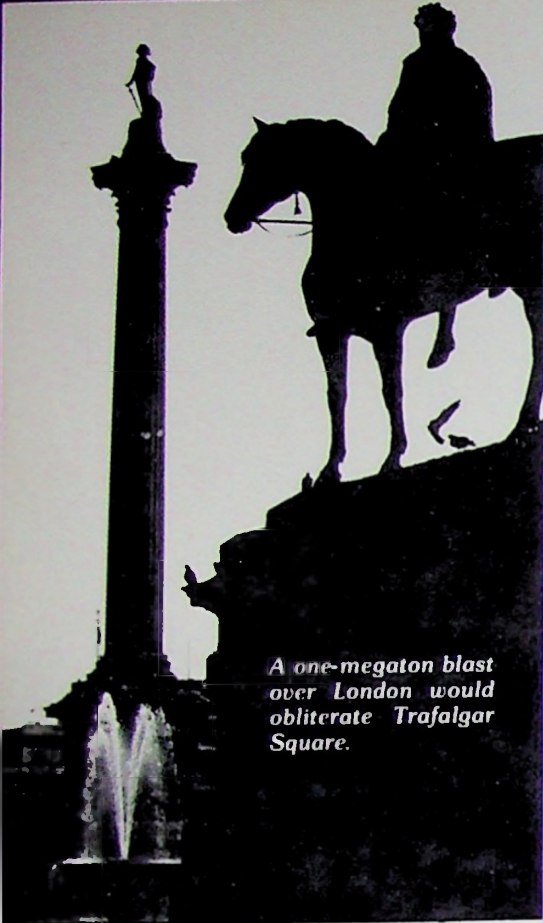
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FREEZE OR DEFUSING THE



A one-megaton blast over London would obliterate Trafalgar Square.

IMAGINE YOURSELF as a mid-thirties middle class citizen of London, England, coming home from a hard day's work in mid-November, 1983. While dinner cooks you snap on the television to catch the news of the day.

Hard News

Things aren't good.

The United States has shown up at Greenham Common Airbase with the first of 41 medium-range cruise missiles destined for Western Europe. It's just the first load of a total of 572 missiles the U.S. plans to install in Britain and Europe over the next five years.

The next scene on the screen shows police dragging away dozens of British protestors outside the airbase. That's followed up with a short clip of Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock charging in a news conference that Britain has become a "saturation bombing" target and "a lackey to the Americans." The camera then records Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher retorting an angry, "You are talking absolute rubbish."

Next the London anchorman tells of bobbies arresting hundreds more anti-

nuclear protestors in the capital. Then newsreel footage shows students in Manchester squirting Defense Secretary Michael Heseltine with red paint while shouting, "Better red than dead!"

Disturbed and frightened by the news, you walk over to shut off the set, but before you can reach the OFF button, Thatcher flashes back on the screen with her summary—almost more upsetting than the determination of the protestors.

"The United States is our ultimate defensive shield," she says, adding, "the guarantor of Western freedom and the best hope for the world's oppressed."

Desperate for a diversion, you grab the daily paper. Tossing aside the headlines and news section which repeats what you just saw, the entertainment pages splash into view.

Movie News

What's offered at the movies is just as perplexing as the news.

Almost all the theatres are showing political statement films, challenging viewers to take a moral position on war and/or nuclear weaponry.

For instance, in the film "Under Fire," Hollywood producers urge sympathy for the Sandinista cause in Nicaragua. Then the movie "Hanna K." states that Palestinians can't expect justice from the Israelis.

The morality of sending young men to battle undeclared wars is questioned in "Streamers." And "Deal of the Century" does a satire about arms merchants.

Is it true that even in Hollywood-styled America nothing is sacred? Another flashback to the movie section of the paper reveals that film makers are involved in the freeze-deterrence nuclear debate.

The "Testament" movie illustrates the tragic aftermath of nuclear war, but "The Final Option" portrays antinuclear leaders as villains. Then the adventure story, "War Games," shows a young computer genius decoding missile programs in the American defense system to involve the whole world in a nuclear holocaust.

Slamming the paper down in disgust on the coffee table, you snap on the tele again, only to intercept a telling report. "The Day After," a feature-length movie of nuclear doom, is coming to American television.

"Unreal. How can they do this to me?" you utter, throwing a shoe at the OFF button. "Blight from coming nuclear war is everywhere . . ."

In exasperation you lift your weary bones, shuffle to the waiting drinks cabinet stocked with whiskey and soda, determined to create an antidote to the nuclear news.

* * *

Nuclear News

If you think the foregoing was somewhat staged, just take a look at what is happening in the real world. The debate over nuclear freeze-deterrence has escalated in the last few months. With the step-up of terrorism globally against American embassies and Marines, the United States has retaliated by invading Grenada, staying in Lebanon, and beefing up nuclear missiles in a show of the "peace through strength" doctrine.

By contrast, antinuclear forces in pockets of the U.S. and throughout Europe have become even more active, thanks to Hollywood's emphasis and media exposure. And when America won a victory in a crucial four-year-old contest with Russia by beginning

Unravelling the psycho-theological fear-faith-fate dilemma.

DETERRENCE? NUCLEAR DEBATE

placement of cruise missiles in Europe, the Kremlin retaliated with a flurry of words. It fired off warnings to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and walked out of the two-year-old arms-limitation talks in Geneva. Russian bosses also promised the placement of new tactical nuclear weapons in East Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Nuclear Poker

It appears that America and Russia are playing a poker game where millions of lives are the stakes. With the U.S. move in November to up the ante, persons the world over expect the Soviets to increase its 250 missiles already established in Eastern Europe.

Given the circumstances of the superpowers squaring off in a nuclear war with Europe as a backdrop, it's understandable why citizens of the continent rally in antinuclear protests. Even in the United States, California politician Alan Cranston is bidding for his party's presidential nomination largely on an antinuclear platform. Persons the world over are attracted to this cause when they view with fright the stockpiling of missiles by both superpowers who obviously believe in the nuclear deterrence doctrine.

Coincidentally, both nations seem to be driven to stockpiling by similar fears. Spokesmen from each nation indicate they would not favor a nuclear freeze because such a plan would lock their country into a position of inferiority and thereby increase the risks of nuclear blackmail by the other country. Thus defense analysts in both lands contend that the danger of nuclear war can best be avoided by a strategy of deterrence. This aims at convincing the opposition that the risks of resorting to war are prohibitive.

By Russell Magaw

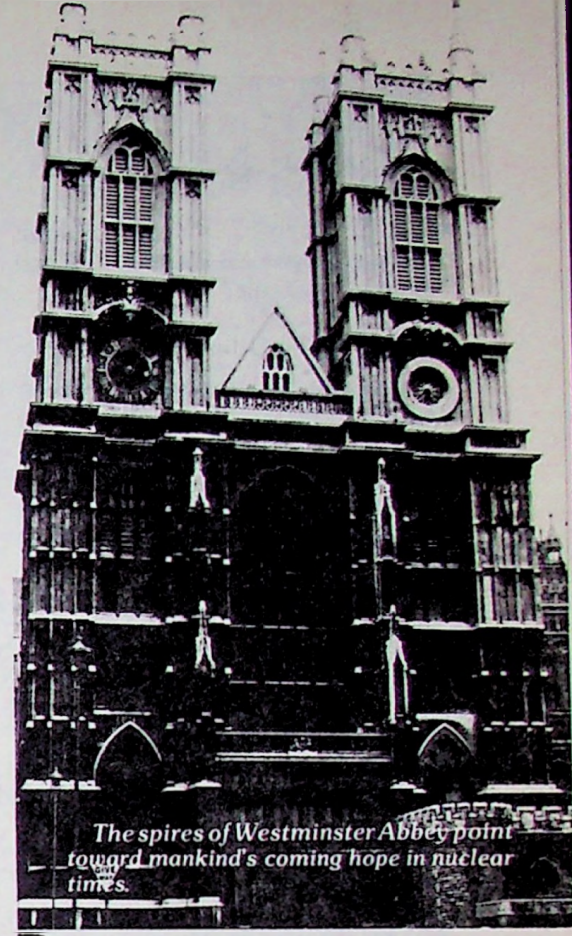
So stockpiling continues. Arms-limitation talks are allowed to subside. Caught in the middle of the buildup is the average citizen of both lands. He somehow attempts to disguise his fears and limps on in existence, realizing he lives in the twilight zone of human experience.

Fear

Fear. That seems to be the motivator on both sides of the West vs. East superpowers' struggle. It also governs the ideologies of the nuclear freeze and the nuclear deterrence proponents. Both sides accuse the other of the fear motivation, yet each is guilty of its own accusation. The freeze adherents work for a bilateral, verifiable freeze of existing arsenals in the U.S. and Russia because they fear nuclear war. Already 40,000 warheads exist—enough to incinerate mankind from the planet. At the same time proponents of deterrence through nuclear buildup keep escalating the weaponry because they fear the opposition will have more firepower if war is declared. Thus, to avoid nuclear blackmail, the deterrence people advocate more strategic missiles to compensate.

Fate

While the nations play the fear game, persons in those countries play the game of fate. Nobody, they reason, has the answers. What the freeze people advocate looks like wishful thinking. Who could ever believe anyone would get both sides to freeze nuclear arma-



ments and trust each other? No freeze is verifiable, they reason.

At the same time these persons resign themselves to the war of words carried on by leaders of both powers. Arms buildup is inevitable. There's no end in sight. Even though military strategists might decry the "War Games" scenario as foolishness, these persons hope that surely both nations are humanitarian enough to not pull the trigger. But if it happens . . . well, that's the worst of all worlds. We'll all go up in smoke anyway. The specter of fate haunts our every day.

Is there no hope to paint over this bleak nuclear wasteland? Must we be prisoners of both fear and fate at the same time? Can we rationally expect the nations to bring peace through either freeze or deterrence? Will the

(Please turn to page 4)



RUSSELL MAGAW serves as Editor of THE RESTITUTION HERALD. He is a student of world events and communications.

Defusing the Nuclear Debate

continued from page 3

world truly go up in a mushroom cloud of radioactive gasses? Is there no escape from the inevitable?

The Dilemma

Those are tough questions. Given the controversy over nuclear deterrence as opposed to nuclear freeze, it seems that a whole world of persons has experienced instant polarization from each other. Either you believe in burning the world or you believe in pacifying communism/imperialism. There's no middle ground. Twin opposing organizations are drawing persons and people groups into their folds via debate and diatribe aimed at disgracing the other view.

The result is more fear and resignation. Questions arise about the activities of the opposition. Another power struggle is created. More fear is generated which ends in the abject query, "Is it worth it all?"

An unreleased frenzy which is the product of fear can ultimately drive persons into unstable action. On the other hand, the fickle finger of fate can fade persons away where they are numb to all experiences and hope.

Faith

What is desperately needed is a genuine case made for *FAITH*.

Faith in what? Humanity? Hardly.

Faith in a higher power? Hopefully.

Now the suggestion of faith as an antidote to the dilemma is not a new idea whose time has come. Both sides of the debate have proponents of faith. In the deterrence camp there are Moral Majority types who mix flag-waving patriotism with trust in God. In the freeze camp there are pacifists who mix Sermon on the Mount idealism with political activism.

But the efforts of both sides tend toward more polarization, creating more enemies instead of friends. What's needed is a fresh approach to faith which takes a longer view, sees the end from the beginning, and encourages opponents to embrace ideologically.

This springlike breeze of faith would exalt the higher power capable of changing human nature. Such faith would anticipate an end to present dilemmas. It would be so bold as to make use of the best ideas offered by the Moral

Majority types and the pacifist types. It would confidently step forward in the power of the one who gives it strength. Ultimately, he who imparts his Spirit for strength today would create the truly final solution, bringing lasting peace.

FAITH'S SOLUTION

We've outlined this new dimension in faith. Let's take a look at some suggested operational procedures of this bold adventure.

Faith Requires a Healthy Respect for God

Our view of God from planet Earth has to be limited, confined by our environment. In spite of this handicap, we have a source from which we can know God: the Bible.



True, God speaks to us through the creative/changing witness of nature and the universe. Our vistas of him are enlarged as we study the ongoing results of his activity. Persons in the scientific disciplines constantly update our awareness of him by their discoveries.

But the unchanging God is best revealed in his eternal Word. While all flesh is grass, the word of our God shall stand forever (Isa. 40:68). By his Spirit God spoke through holy men to transmit his word (2 Pet. 1:20, 21) for the salvation and benefit of mankind who would discover God through the Bible and the ministries of the word made

flesh (see 2 Tim. 3:14-17; John 1:14).

Thus we must learn to respect this eternal God of the universe and Savior of our lives. His viewpoint regarding mankind and hope for the future must be heeded.

Recapture the Predictive Element

Since largely one-fourth of the Bible, when written, was prophetic of future happenings, we must recapture the predictive element couched in its pages. Many scenes from Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah in the Old Testament, our Lord's discourses during his earthly ministry recorded in the Gospels, and visions from the New Testament Book of Revelation have yet to be lived in human history. Someday their prediction will become fact.

Now many of these prophetic passages are overlaid in symbolic language. Granted, a separation must be made between the symbolic and the literal. Yet the predictive tenor of these selections cannot be hidden.

It's clear from such records that conflagrations resembling nuclear catastrophes will take place during a final time of this age (see Ezek. 38; 39; Dan. 9:27; 11:40-45; Zech. 14:12-15; Rev. 6:12-17, 9:13-19; 14:9-11; 16:12-21; 19:11-21; 20:7-10). When reference is made in the text to sulphur, fire, and brimstone, many Bible students have associated these elements with those resulting from atomic fusion.

The implication is that the end of all things appears to take place, according to these texts. But the Bible doesn't leave us drenched in tears of grief as this world explodes in flames. The predictive Word also foretells a "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13, RSV). At the conclusion of this present order, God sends forth a renewed creation, complete with what was missing in the former. In Revelation we understand that when the universe and planet Earth are purified, then God comes to dwell with men (21:3). He personally will wipe away tears, pain, and mourning; there shall be no more death (21:4).

That God will create this new day is guaranteed by his own faithfulness. In

telling us this he urges us to accept a part in that new life.

And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life. He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. (Rev. 21:5-7, RSV.)

Truly the future looks bright when God takes control of it. He invites you to share it with him. By placing faith in his Son, Jesus Christ, through whom God will "unite all things . . . things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:10, RSV), you will share this glorious future (see Eph. 1:11-14).

So the world will be dissolved—someday. But God will take control by sending his Son back to Earth. [Other articles in this issue elaborate on this hope which is realized at Christ's return.]

At least we are guaranteed a future. But what about the present? What about the anguish of a possible nuclear catastrophe? How do we handle fear and concern now?

A Guaranteed Future Enriches Lives of Faith Today

Because we know a future awaits us, our lives are truly lived in faith today. Whatever we decide to do to serve God and humanity is valuable, needful, meaningful, and helpful. The Lord will give us stamina, courage, and enthusiasm for the labor. Lives will be blessed and encouraged.

Therefore . . . be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58, RSV).

What works of love and encouragement can be accomplished in view of our nuclear age? How can we help alleviate fear and worry in the lives of those around us? What one characteristic should radiate from us to those without hope?

First of all, much needs to be done to spread the good news that we are assured a future. As you read the other articles contained in this issue, be sure

that others you know become aware of these messages. Pass this magazine on to them. Subscribe to THE RESTITUTION HERALD for the 1984 publishing year by sending in your subscription remittance. (See the masthead for subscription information.) Be a carrier of the good news of the gospel of the coming kingdom of God.

Then get involved in spreading hope to people in despair. Impart to them warmth, compassion, and courage for today. If doing such work means you must become involved with a movement, then call upon your newfound trust in God to give you a sense of direction and commitment. Whatever you do for Christ's sake and your neighbor's good is not in vain.

Most importantly, become a peacemaker. Know in your own life the



peace and serenity Jesus offers (John 14:27; 16:33). Share that quiet composition of heart and mind wherever you go (Phil. 4:7).

Jesus Christ, God's Son, has said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9, RSV). One of the goals of every futurist is to sow peace in troubled hearts. If this aim is realized, then a great harvest of inner peace results. The message of James promises that "the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (Jas. 3:18, RSV).

When you find persons upset by world conditions, make every attempt to help them understand today and anticipate a future. Practice what you preach. "If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all" (Rom. 12:18, RSV). Settle every disappointment, disagreement, discouragement, and despair with actions of peace.

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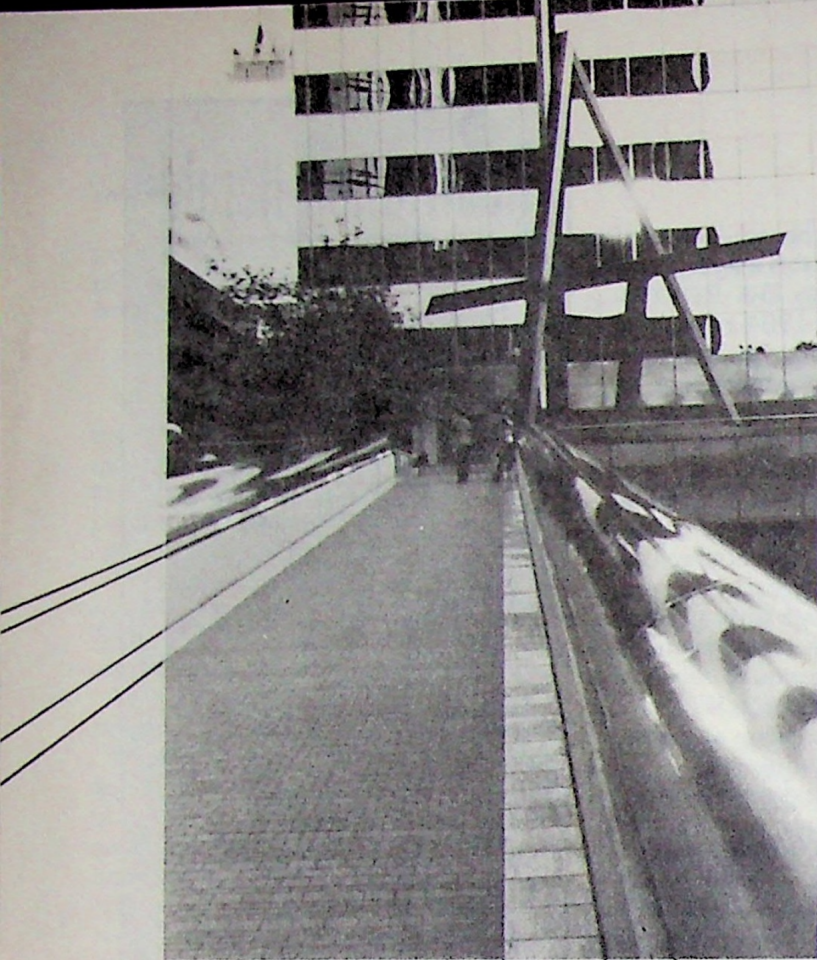
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THE SHAPE of the FUTURE

by Anthony Buzzard

A MAJOR THEOLOGICAL TRAGEDY occurred when “the predictive element in prophecy was minimised, and Messianic prophecy was largely explained away.”¹ In 1929 R. H. Charles wrote with confidence, “Prediction is not in any sense an essential element of prophecy.”²

Little did scholarship seem to understand that it was busy destroying the message of the gospel, the message of salvation. Nor did it grasp the awful fact that its Jesus was no longer the Jesus who fulfilled the hopes and predictions of the Old Testament. How indeed could Jesus be a fulfillment of prophecy which had not predicted anything?!

Scholarship has continued to approach the New Testament, not as it should—by way of the Old Testament—but by way of alien Greek and Roman thought patterns which as early as the second century began to corrupt the pure apostolic faith.

Hybrid Gospel

The enormous problem of traditional Christianity was seen by T. E. Lawrence when he pointed out that “Christianity is a hybrid faith compounded of the Semitic as to its origin and the non-Semitic as to its development. It therefore carries within itself a problem, which as yet it is unwilling to resolve, and of which indeed it is not correctly aware.”³

An Anglican scholar also lamented the loss of the biblical spirit in traditional religion: “When the Greek and the Roman mind, instead of the Hebrew mind, came to dominate the church’s outlook [in the second century], there occurred a disaster from which the church has never recovered, either in doctrine or in practice. . . . If today another great age of evangelisation is to dawn, we need the Jews again.”⁴ The Jews are nowhere better represented than by the Hebrew writers of the Bible.

The Messianic Programme

The loss of the Hebrew mind in traditional Christianity will explain why the ordinary churchgoer knows little about the Messianic programme which is the principal theme of all Scripture. The teachings of Jesus and the apostles are saturated with hope for the future of our world. The gospel itself, which Jesus called the gospel of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43) contains a divine statement of intention: God’s solemn purpose to establish peace on earth by sending back from heaven his Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who now sits at the Father’s right hand waiting to take up his office as governor of the world. (Psa. 110, quoted some 18 times in the New Testament.)

No doubt all that will sound regrettably “sectarian,” not at all the sort of thing a churchgoer ought to believe. The fact remains, however, that the Christianity of the Bible is built on a promise that God will one day send his Son back to rule the world. Indeed, the whole point of becoming a Christian is to undergo discipleship in this life in preparation for an administrative position in the world-government of the coming new age. That truth is well summarised by a text in the Book of Revelation;

"[Jesus] bought men for God of every race, language, people, and nation and made them a line of kings and priests to serve our God and rule the world" (5:9, 10, Jerusalem Bible; see also 1 Cor. 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:12).

The Biblical Promise of World Peace

The British people have a reputation for fair-mindedness. A massive revival of biblical Christianity can occur in Britain if citizens from all walks of life will bring that excellent national characteristic to their personal study of the Scriptures. But the words of Jesus must be fairly heard, not explained away because they are inconvenient. Firstly, Bible students must come to accept the fact that

*Like the city's dazzling lines of glass and steel,
Christianity promises a sparkling future to those
who believe and obey.*

Jesus' teaching is dominated by the expectation that God intends to intervene in the affairs of mankind. There will be a catastrophic end to present systems of government and a new society will dawn on earth. War will be abolished and peace will reign. These predictions form the underlying theme of the Bible. They appear first in the Old Testament, and are applied to the *Second* coming of Jesus in the New. (Compare Isaiah 11:4 with 2 Thessalonians 2:8; and Psalm 2:9 with Revelation 2:26, 27.)

"Nation will not lift up sword against nation, never again will they learn war" (Isa. 2:4). "The government will rest upon His [Messiah's] shoulders . . . there will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace." "The Lord will be king over all the earth in that day" (Zech. 14:9).

This bright picture of the future can be filled out from a thousand texts in the Hebrew Scriptures, every jot and tittle of which Jesus claimed as divinely authoritative (Matt. 5:17, 18). The Jesus proclaimed by Paul was God's agent to confirm the validity of these promises (Rom. 15:8).

The Predictive Element Needed

Why then is so little of the Messianic programme understood in Britain? The answer is that the predictive element of Scripture, its orientation towards the future, has been silently dismissed. David Baron noted in 1918 that commentaries on the Bible "are more or less vitiated by the allegorising principle of interpretation by means of which all references to a concrete kingdom of God on earth, a literal national restoration of Israel and the visible appearing and reign of Messiah are explained

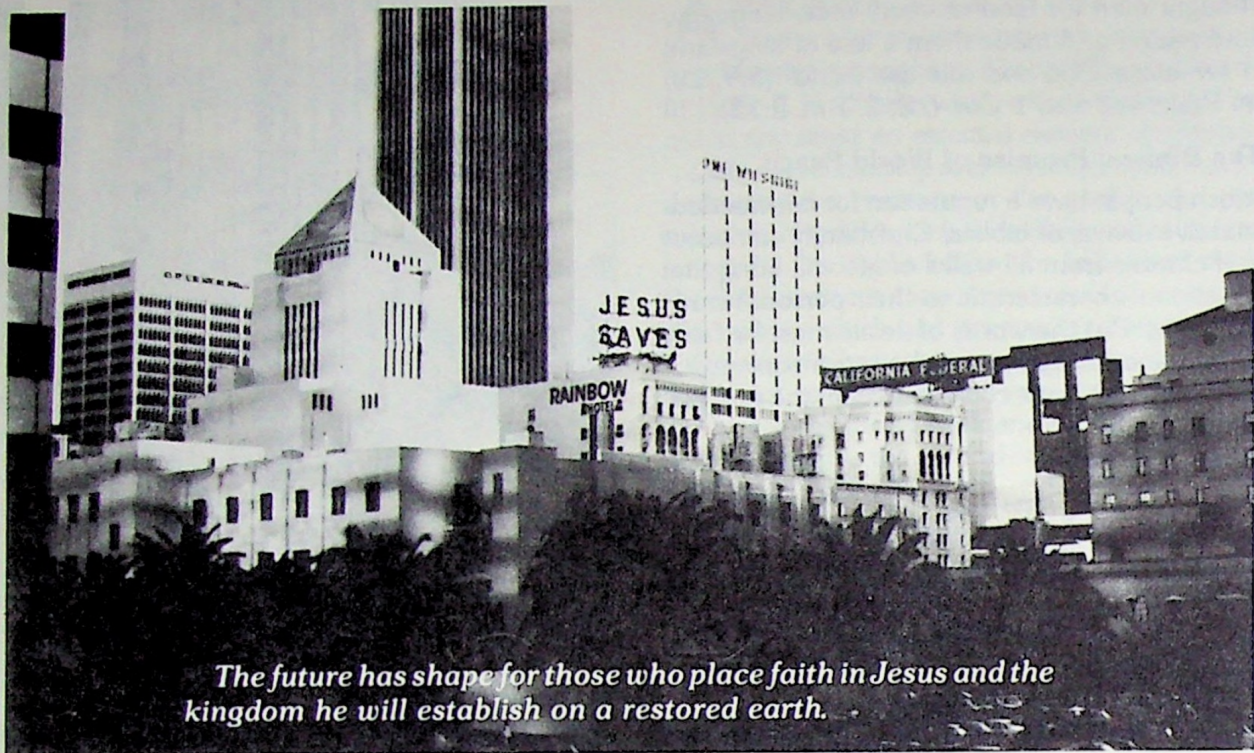
away."⁵ The result is that the hope of the New Testament writers is not shared by twentieth-century churchgoers who expect some sort of "heaven" when they die. This hope for heaven is quite foreign to the teaching of Jesus. A leading New Testament scholar explains that "in the New Testament, the point around which hope and interest revolve is *not the moment of death at all* but the day of the Second Coming, or the appearance of Christ in the glory of His Kingdom . . . the centre of interest and expectation continued right through the New Testament to be focused on the Son of Man and the triumph of His Kingdom in a renovated earth."⁶

The expectation of Jesus' return and the establishment of peace on earth is Christianity's mainspring, its very *raison d'être*. The gospel message is an announcement of the future and an appeal for a response to the facts about the divine programme in history. The gospel of the kingdom contains a decisive statement about future judgment, and it demands a reaction here and now (Mark 1:14, 15). There is no middle ground. Each of us must declare himself for or against the coming kingdom.

(Continued)



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(Continued)

The Loss of the Bible's Vision of the Future

If information about Christ's future rule on earth is greeted at first by some amusement and amazement that anyone in the scientific age could really believe anything so crude and "Jewish," it will be little different from the reaction of the Greek philosophers in Athens who found Paul's hope for resurrection bizarre (Acts 17:32). Churchgoers do not realise how much their thinking is dominated by the Greek Platonic teachings which entered the church in the second century A.D., and have remained ever since. While Sunday schools and funeral sermons constantly reinforce the nonbiblical notion that the souls of the dead have disappeared, fully conscious, to a "realm beyond the skies," there is no hope at all that the Christian view of the future will come into focus.

The Lutheran scholar, Paul Althaus, is one of many theologians who recognise that what is taught in churches about the future of man is far removed from the Christianity of Jesus and the apostles. Speaking of the New Testament view of resurrection he says, "The hope of the early church centred on the resurrection of the Last Day. This resurrection happens to the *whole man and not only to the body.*" His point is that the Bible knows nothing of an intermediate consciousness for the soul, whereas churches speak of this as an unquestionable Christian tenet. Althaus shows that the Bible has been rejected in favour of Greek thought. "Thus the original biblical concepts have been replaced by ideas from Hellenistic gnostic dualism. The New Testament idea of the resurrection which affects the whole man has had to give way to the immortality of the soul."⁷

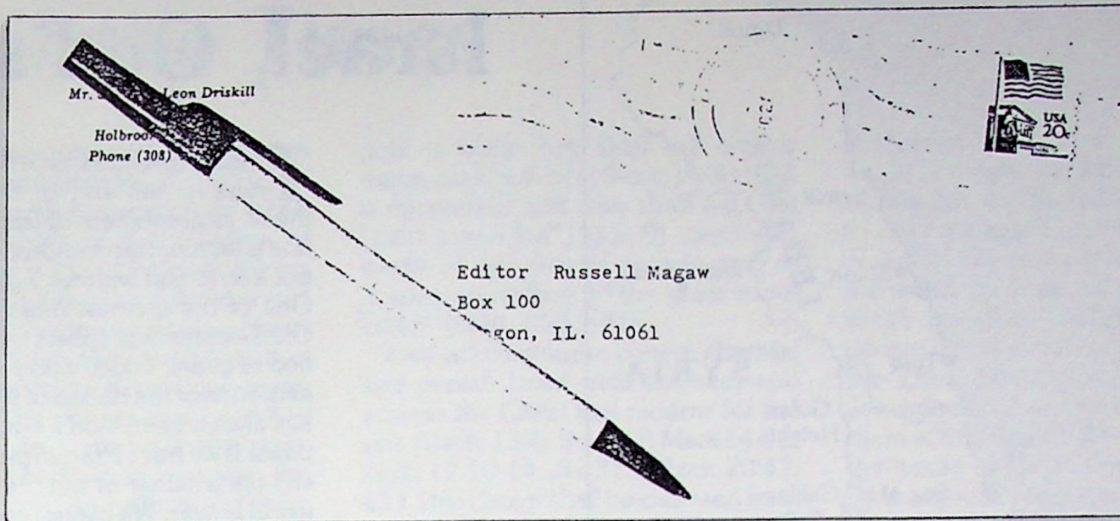
The Clear Shape of the Future

The shape of the future, as the Bible lays it out, is simple. Jesus will return to the earth. The faithful dead will be raised to immortality and join the Messiah in the kingdom destined to reorder the earth (1 Cor. 15:22, 23). These facts can be easily perceived once the words of Jesus are taken as plain vehicles of communication. What, for example, could have been more straightforward than his promise to the disciples that "in the New Age, when the son of man comes to sit on the throne of His glory, you too will take your places on twelve thrones to govern the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29, 30).⁸ Paul would be no less puzzled at present-day ignorance of the Bible than he was at Corinth: "Don't you realise that the Christians are going to manage the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2).⁹

Let these texts be expounded in churches across the land and the result will be a renewal of interest in the extraordinary promises and predictions of Scripture. Hope for the fulfillment of God's promise of his kingdom on earth is the only sure antidote to the despair of our chaotic age. It is also the Christian gospel.

Footnotes

- ¹H.H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, 1953.
- ²*International Critical Commentary*, p. xxvi, 1929.
- ³*Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.
- ⁴H. Goudge, *The Calling of the Jews*.
- ⁵*Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*, 1918 (emphasis mine).
- ⁶J. A. T. Robinson, *In the End God*, p. 42 (emphasis mine).
- ⁷*The Theology of Martin Luther*, pp. 413, 414, 1966 (emphasis mine).
- ⁸Translation based on James Moffatt.
- ⁹*Ibid.*



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Comments on October, 1983, HERALD

The article by Michael Mattison on school prayer and the one on the Gospel of the Kingdom by Anthony Buzzard spoke on topics we all need to know about. I heard a sermon on the radio recently titled "The Gospel of the Kingdom." We seem to hear a lot about the tribulation period but not much on the kingdom. We need the inspiration that knowledge of the gospel of the kingdom can give us.

—Minneapolis, MN.

Your editorial in the October issue ("Lebanese Conflict Fires Religious Friction") gives cause for concern. At a time when we ought to be looking forward to the kingdom of God as the solution to this world's problems, I see the Church of God leaning and turning to this world's politics.

The matter of Lebanon is not unique among nations. Religion has been the reason for a goodly share of man's conflicts. Most countries have involved religion with state. A purely political conflict without religious overtones is practically unheard of in the annals of history.

God is regulating the affairs of Lebanon as he has in all countries of the past (Dan. 4:25, 32). The struggle to rule the kingdoms of men will continue till Jesus returns with the right to rule from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth (Psa. 72:8). To favor one nation above another today, unless it be the kingdom of God, is to be unfaithful to the King of Kings who has chosen his followers to represent him and his kingdom until he returns.

The believer cannot logically choose earthly sides in the conflicts of men without incurring the wrath of God and his Son (see Psa. 2). Choices like those may just put us on the opposite side of our Lord and Savior.

—Cashmere, WA.

Current Events and Revelation Six

We enjoy keeping in touch with our brethren through THE HERALD and the inspiration it brings.

World affairs seem rather ominous at present. Unless Christ comes soon we may all be entering into the time of the Four Horsemen of Revelation. The sixth chapter seems to indicate the time when men everywhere cry out for peace and safety. I feel we are there now.

The red horse indicates bloodshed and war. As it was in the days of Noah, the earth is being filled with violence more every day. War always brings loss of life and the good things of life. And famine could well be the black horse. Recently a TV commentator reported that millions are facing starvation in Africa in 1984.

Death and the grave may well be prepared for millions now on

earth. I am reading "The Gulag Archipeligo" by Solzhenitsyn. It is an eye-opener for a godless world to contemplate.

—Troy, OH.

Reaction to "Nuclear Freeze," September, 1983

There can be no nuclear arms race without the consent and support of the people. There are many points of view concerning the arms race, but we can all agree that our only security is to be found in peace. We are temporary caretakers of the earth; we hold it in trust for the generations to come. Can we speak in unison, for the children, with the children, on this most crucial issue?

—Enosburg Falls, VT.

Appreciative Notes

My husband was encouraged by the "Letters to the Editor" in the November, 1983, issue of THE HERALD. I also appreciated the comments.

—Tipp City, OH.

While speaking with a friend recently, she expressed her feelings about THE RESTITUTION HERALD being a great publication. Of course, I agreed with her. I just wish I could get more people interested in subscribing to it.

—North Olmstead, OH.

"The Day After" Fears

That television movie "The Day After" has scared people half to death. The Sunday after it aired I took packages of tracts to two malls and a shopping center to distribute.

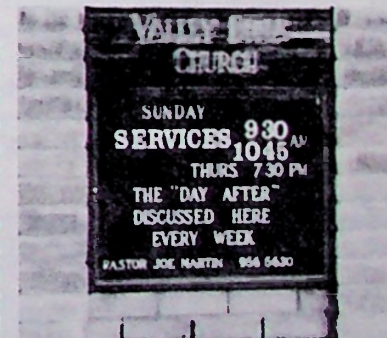
The attractive tract "No Fear in Your Future If It Is Based on Faith" was on the outside of the package I put together. It was accepted with interest.

People are looking for answers. We of the Church of God, Faith of Abraham have those answers!

I suggest we get those answers out to our neighbors and friends. Take them to the universities for students, to laborers at their work, to shopping centers. In these places we can reach more people in an hour than our pastors can in a year.

People have problems, are worried, and are fearful. Let's cover the country with our message of HOPE. Isn't that what we're here for?

—Westerville, OH.



Israel, God's Sign

THE GREATEST SIGN of the nearness of the end of the world is the re-establishment of Israel in Palestine after nineteen hundred years without a land and without a government. One of the greatest messages of the Old Testament prophets is the restoration of Israel. Today who can deny the existence of the nation of Israel? Israel has always been God's signpost of the times. If we trace Israel in prophecy, we can tell whether or not the end of the world is near. We cannot know the day or the hour, but we can know the generation.

The rebirth of the nation of Israel was prophesied in Isaiah 66:8, "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?" It is unheard of for a nation to spring into existence overnight; yet that is exactly what happened May 14, 1948. Overnight Israel became a nation, fulfilling Isaiah 66:8.

The manner of Israel's rebirth was also prophesied. Joel 3:2 prophesied that before Armageddon all nations would band together and divide or "part" the land of Palestine. This has taken place. The United Nations Organization, composed of representatives of all the great nations of earth, did divide the land of Palestine, this decision going into effect May 14, 1948. The land of Israel was partitioned into two parts—one part for the Arabs, and one part for the Jews. The Arabs received the old city of Jerusalem where God's temple used to stand as was prophesied in Ezekiel 36:2 and Obadiah 16. Israel received more or less the western and southern portion of Palestine.

"Behold the fig tree, and all the trees," said Jesus. "When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled" (Luke 21:29-32). The fig tree refers to Israel (Joel 1:7), and "all the trees" refer to the other nations.

by Pastor

THE RESTITUTION HERALD

MEDITERRANEAN SEA



post of the Times

When Israel "shoots forth" and begins to bud and grow leaves, you know that summer, or the end of the world and the coming of the kingdom of God, is near. It is said in this prophecy that other nations will "shoot forth" and grow during this same time. Never before has there been such a rash of nations becoming independent, separating from the powers that have had dominion over them for many years. Jesus said that when we see this "shooting forth" of nations, the kingdom of God is "nigh at hand." "Israel shall blossom and bud," said Isaiah. (27:6.) Truly Israel and other nations are shooting forth buds and leaves today.

Ezekiel also records how Israel will be dwelling safely in "the land of Israel" when the great northern army invades the land of Palestine just before God's wrath is poured out. (Ezek. 33:8, 16, 18.) Today Israel is such a nation in Palestine, established, growing. Therefore, the kingdom of God cannot be far off.

Many are the prophecies that speak of Israel's regathering. Some of them are: Isaiah 11:10-13; 27:12, 13; Jeremiah 16:14, 15, 23:3-8; 29:14, 32:37-44; 33:24-26; Ezekiel 4:11-31; Amos 9:15. Israel shall be partly regathered in this age, and completely regathered after Jesus returns.

In a number of the preceding verses, Israel is spoken of as being a "remnant" people. In other words, many of Israel shall perish. This end-time condition of Israel is prophesied in several places. Jeremiah speaks of "the time of Jacob's trouble," an awful destruction that shall overtake Israel at the hand of other nations and from the hand of God at the end of the age. (30:7, 11.) Daniel told Israel that at the end of the world "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was" (12:1). This shall take place just before the resurrection.

Zechariah prophesied, "It shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as

gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God" (13:8, 9). Jesus also spoke of this time of abomination of desolation, calling it "the great tribulation" (Matt. 14:15-21).

God will continue to correct, chastise, and punish Israel until she sees and accepts the Christ and mourns for her sins. (Zech. 13:6; Rev. 1:7; Mark 14:62; Zech. 12:10-14; Jer. 31:9; Ezek. 20:42, 43.) Then Israel shall be cleansed from her sins, a new covenant shall be made, and she shall inherit the land of Canaan forever, as promised in the Abrahamic covenant (Ezek. 36:24-28; Zech. 13:1; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 37:25; 47:13 - 48:29.)

Some feel that Israel fulfilled a prophecy made by Isaiah in 11:14. "They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them." Study reveals that Edom, Moab, and Ammon are now the modern-day, hatchet-shaped nation called Jordan. The time is coming when Israel's army shall lash out at Jordan and the Gaza strip at the same time, and conquer them. This could have been fulfilled when the Israeli air force defeated the Palestinian and Jordanian air force in the manner described by the prophet in the 1967 war. Whether this prophecy in Isaiah is the same as the one in Zechariah 12:1-8, we cannot say, but both passages do show Israel strong in might, and both speak of the end of the world. Zechariah records, "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. . . . In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about. . . . In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God."

At any rate, we see awful things and great things ahead for Israel. First was to be her reestablishment, which has taken place; next her prosperity and peace and growth; then her destruction; and finally the salvation of her remnant through Christ and her everlasting inheritance in Canaan in the kingdom of God.

Israel is God's example nation. Israel will show all nations, by the way God deals with her and her reactions to God's dealings, how all nations may come to God in the reign of Christ. (Ezek. 36:23; 38:23; 39:21-23.) Israel shall be a blessing to the world. (Rom. 11:12, 15.) She shall help lead earth's heathen to God. (Zech. 8:23.) She will be the leading nation in the Millennium, "the head and not the tail" (Deut. 28:13).

In speaking of the budding of the fig tree, Jesus said, "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, *This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.*" We have seen the budding of Israel. We can expect, then, that this generation in which we live shall not pass away till all is fulfilled. Are you prepared for the coming of God's kingdom?



JAMES MATTISON has written numerous articles relating current events to Bible prophecy. Currently he pastors a congregation at Burr Oak, IN.

James Mattison



RUSSIA TO DIE ON THE HILLS OF ISRAEL!

(Continued from page 13)

scholar, wrote, "Rosh, taken as a proper name, signifies the inhabitants of Scythia, from which the modern Russians derive their name" (John Cummings, *The Destiny of Nations*). Wilhelm Gesenius, another Hebrew student, said, "Mesech is the source for the name of the city of Moscow." So Ezekiel's message is understood to be against Gog, the symbolic leader of Magog—the people of Russia!

The case can be strengthened by other considerations. Ezekiel 37 (about Israel's regathering and restoration to the land of Palestine) was not fulfilled prior to 1948. Thus the invasion predicted in Ezekiel 38 and 39 has never occurred. Also, Israel has never been invaded from the "far" north (38:6, 15; 39:2). It is no mere coincidence that Moscow is on the same longitude as Jerusalem!

Why Will Russia Invade Israel?

(1) For its *strategic* value. The land of Palestine is a natural land-bridge between Africa and Europe/Asia.

(2) It would give the USSR a *warm water port* on the Mediterranean Sea.

(3) Russia would have *possession of the Dead Sea*—a water body estimated to contain over 1 trillion dollars worth of chemicals and minerals.

(4) Perhaps the strongest motive is *hatred*. Russia despises the seed of Abraham. Recently she was embarrassed when Soviet-made Syrian jets were repeatedly brought down in dogfights over Lebanon by Israeli fighters.

But the loathing goes deeper. Being atheistic, the Soviets hate the nation of Israel through which the true and living God revealed himself, his Son Jesus Christ, and the plan of eternal salvation. She unites in passion with the Arabic nations that are consumed with a desire to drive Israel into the sea—and from the face of the earth.

When Red Will be Dead

Few experts would have given Gideon and his army of 300 any chance against the 120,000-plus soldiers of the Midianite army (see Judg. 7). Yet Gideon prevailed.

So it will be when the Soviet invasion of Israel comes. The Jews will be outnumbered and outmatched. But victory will be theirs! Note how God will intervene to bring about Russian defeat:

"And I shall call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. And with pestilence and with blood I shall enter into judgment with him; and I shall rain on him, and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Ezek 38:21, 22).

Supernatural destruction will also occur in the Russian motherland:

"And I shall send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will know that I am the LORD" (Ezek 39:6).

THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST ARMY WILL DIE ON THE HILLS OF ISRAEL!

Why Will God Destroy the Soviet Union?

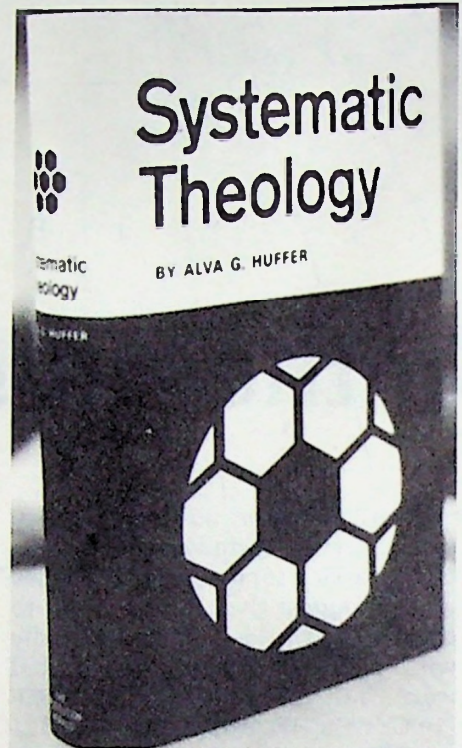
There is no mystery as to this series of events, nor to the outcome. A divine judgment is coming upon the USSR for her brutality to others. But even more important are these reasons:

"And My holy name I shall make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I shall not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel" (Ezek 39:7).

"And I shall magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD" (Ezek 38:23).

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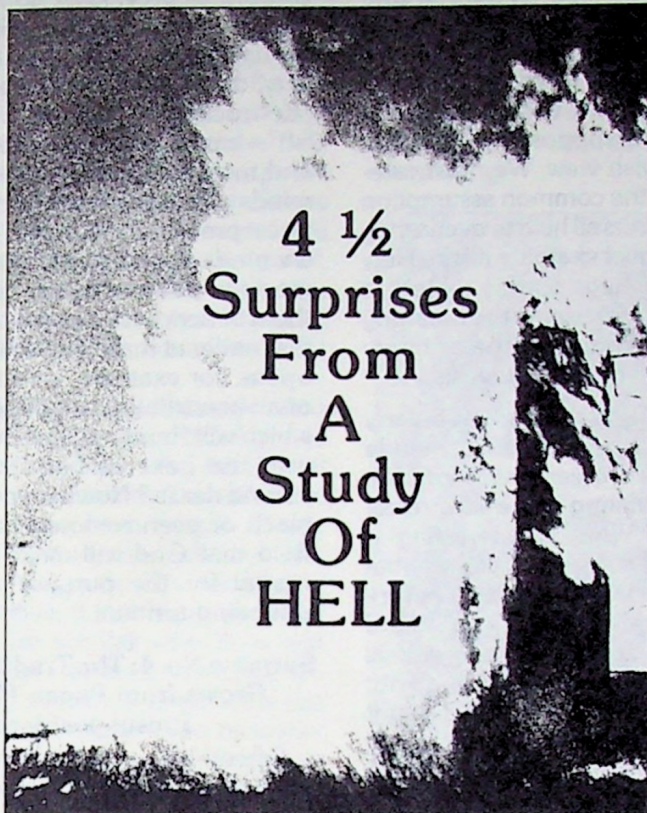
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THE RESTITUTION HERALD



4 1/2 Surprises From A Study Of HELL

IT IS SAID that when Pythagoras formulated his theorem using the square of the hypotenuse, he celebrated by offering 1,000 oxen to Zeus. Since that day, whenever anyone has had a new thought, oxen everywhere have trembled.

By nature, I am not a brave soul. To be perfectly honest (as ministers ought to be), closest friends might find more comparisons than one between myself and the aforementioned beast. When I accepted a publisher's invitation to critically investigate the biblical and historical roots of the common doctrine of final punishment, therefore, it was with every expectation of a calm academic exercise and not with any quixotic zeal. In consequence, I was little prepared for the surprises which that research soon brought to light. Indeed, at one point I seriously entertained the notion (to the point of mentioning it to my wife) of packing the boxes of raw notes off to the sponsor and making a quiet and anonymous retreat to other pursuits less threatening.

Instead, other motivations rose to the surface, impulses for which I probably must accept some blame since both I and certain petitioned friends had been praying daily for divine guidance in the study, and for a pure

by Edward Fudge

heart to pursue the truth however it might happen to fall. In the end, and after experiencing in successive stages shades of shock and alarm, incredulity and simple wonder, my timidity went by the way, and, moving across a tide of lifelong supposition, I capitulated to the conclusion which now seemed inevitable.

Even timidity, once it discovers that it has left the comfortable ranks of a majority position, has little left to fear. So I took the final step and wrote a book.

The traditional view of hell (with which I came to the study myself) rests on pillars that are well known. According to the majority tradition, the Old Testament says very little on the subject of final punishment. What it does say, however, is thought to have developed during the intertestamental period into the common understanding of everlasting conscious torment. That doctrine (the tradition has it) kept growing in acceptance to become, by the time of Jesus, the uniform Jewish view.

Since Jesus did not explicitly deny the view, it is argued, we rightly read his words as if he accepted it. The same is said of other New Testament spokes-

man on final punishment. All biblical warnings that the wicked will die, perish, or be destroyed are interpreted as metaphorical. The unschooled would think such words actually end up meaning quite the opposite of what he might expect, since the wicked (like the redeemed) are traditionally said to be immortal and therefore inherently unable ever to really die, perish, or be destroyed. A few heretics have disputed this teaching through the centuries, it is said, but "everyone knows" that this is the view which "the church" has "always" held.

I came to my study with roughly this notion in mind. Here I would like to share just 4½ surprises from the many this research uncovered—surprises which cumulatively emboldened at least one cautious ox to shake the trembles and to dig in for whatever consequence a new thought might bring.

Surprise No. 1: The Old Testament Is Not Silent on the End of the Wicked

When we ask whether the Old Testament shines any light on this dark subject, we might intend to ask (1) whether a person holding the traditional view of eternal conscious torment can go to the Old Testament and find evidence for that view; (2) whether a person seeking insight into the fate of those who persistently reject God will learn anything from the Old Testament. The majority literature has actually asked the first question, but has transposed its answer to the second. Like some gloomy spies returning from a valley of promise, many traditional authors seem to have gone in search of a particular fruit. Not finding that, they have returned empty-handed to report that the land is barren.

The second question meets with different results altogether. Whoever spies out the text with it in mind may well return with a cluster of Old Testament expressions greater than one man can carry. I discovered, for example (not as if for the first time in Christian experience, though it was still virgin territory to me), that the Old Testament uses no fewer than seventy different words or phrases to describe the final end of the wicked. It is not startling that the data fails to clearly support the traditional view; even traditional authors acknowledge as much. What is startling is that all the evidence seems to say exactly the opposite—that the wicked will finally pass away

entirely and forever, so that neither they nor their memory, will ever again come to view or to mind.

A sample list of Old Testament expressions must suffice here. The wicked, we read, will be as straw that is burned, thorns in a fire, wax that melts, a dream that vanishes, a vessel broken to pieces, ashes trodden under foot, smoke that disappears, and (as every small boy with a salt shaker will appreciate) a slug that melts. My own study also revealed two great paradigms of divine judgment in the Old Testament the flood and the destruction of Sodom. Both incidents illustrate the total devastation and extinction of their victims, without any hope of reprieve or recovery. As we will observe later, the New Testament frequently draws on the same language, to make the same point.

Surprise No. 2: The Intertestamental Witness Is Not Uniform

The Apocrypha is almost uniform in its testimony about final punishment, but it testifies for total extinction instead of eternal torment. Its single clear exception is found in Judith 16:17, which is also the first explicit word I could find favoring the traditional view in any biblical literature. Judith uses words taken from Isaiah 66:24, but, like all traditional literature since, she assigns them a meaning almost totally opposite their apparent sense in the original context.

The Pseudepigrapha also yields a mixed witness. One consistently finds total extinction in a few of these books (The Sibylline Oracles, A Zadokite Fragment, The Psalms of Solomon, and Fourth Ezra). Other books are ambiguous (The Assumption of Moses, The Testaments of The Twelve Patriarchs, and The Life of Adam and Eve). The Book of Jubilees appears to give a mixed word all by itself, as do First Enoch and Second Baruch. And traditionalists can probably claim as their witnesses the books of Second Enoch and Fourth Maccabees—at least we will concede the point for the present.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls total extinction of the wicked is the consistent testimony.

Surprise No 3: The New Testament Does Not Presuppose or Clearly Support the Majority View of Conscious Unending Torment

Because of the unquestionable range of documented opinion in the inter-

testamental literature, we cannot presume a single attitude among Jews of the time of Jesus on this subject. We cannot read Jesus' words, or those of the New Testament writers, with any presuppositions supposedly based on a uniform Jewish view. We must categorically deny the common assumption that Jesus' hearers all held to everlasting torment. We must examine all the New Testament language on this subject at face value, and determine the meaning of its terms according to the ordinary rules of proper biblical exegesis.

Even the most liberal scholarly methods of Gospel criticism conclude that Jesus said a great deal about the terrible fate awaiting those who reject God's mercy. What is interesting is what Jesus did *not* say, as well as what he said. For while others both before and contemporary with Jesus found no difficulty in explicitly teaching eternal conscious torment, the Gospels do not preserve even one such statement from the mouth of the Lord. What Jesus *did* say comes, in almost every case, from the Old Testament. When we look carefully at what he actually says, using regular tools and rules of historical-grammatical exegesis, we see that Jesus also warns of complete and eternal destruction.

Authors of the majority view generally pass over the fact that Jesus even uses language from the Old Testament. When they do acknowledge that fact, they commonly stop there, without looking at the Old Testament usage for help in defining the term in its New Testament quotation. As a result, expressions like "unquenchable fire," "the worm that dies not" and "weeping and gnashing of teeth" get defined, not by preceding biblical usage, but by later theologizing often based on horrendously unbiblical presuppositions.

Time and time again, the majority advocates muster their artillery, only to find that it fires boomerang shells that land on their own heads. One by one, the very expressions commonly thought to require unending conscious torment turn out, under even minor scrutiny, to have an Old Testament usage signifying total destruction.

Without the mistaken presupposition of a uniform Jewish view, and with the Old Testament background for the New Testament vocabulary on the subject, the rational mind escapes another

contortion previously considered necessary. Now the New Testament's most widely-used terminology—words like "die" and "death," "destroy" and "destruction," "corruption" and "perish"—can have their almost universal and most natural connotations in the minds of readers worldwide. This also frees preachers to issue the biblical warnings which accompany God's gracious offer in Christ, and to state them in Scripture's own words, leaving the matter at that. The New Testament opens, for example, with the warning of an irresistible ("unquenchable") fire which will "burn up" the chaff. It closes with the Lake of Fire "which is the second death." Nowhere does it clearly teach or even remotely require us to hold that God will make sinners immortal for the purpose of suffering unending torment.

Surprise No. 4: The Traditional View Grows from Pagan Platonic Presuppositions

Fifteen years ago when I was in graduate school, we conservative theological neophytes were reveling in the elaborations of Oscar Cullmann and others on the difference between the pagan Greek hope, based on a supposed innate immortality of the soul, and the biblical or Hebraic hope, based on the faithfulness of God who could rescue even his sinful dust creature by marvellous resurrection from the dead.

This more recent study has clarified those insights, and has made them even more significant. For it has led me directly back to the same points on the nature of man that Cullman championed, and which now are stated almost as a matter of course from one end of the theological spectrum to the other. As the biblical surprises themselves began to sink in, I had to ask the next question. If the traditional view of unending torment does not come from Scripture, where did it originate? The answer came in the writings of the Christian apologists from the late second to the fifth centuries.

When they talked about man, these writers rather consistently affirmed conditional immortality. Man is God's creature, they said, and while he has an "immortal soul," it is only by God's continuing grace. If God should will, they warned, even man's "immortal soul" cannot withstand extinction. When these same writers talked of hell,

however, they seem to have forgotten their earlier concession.

We find Tertullian explaining Jesus' warning, therefore, in words to this effect. When Jesus speaks of God destroying both body and soul in hell, Tertullian says, we ought not to suppose that the soul will actually perish, for we all know that the soul is immortal and cannot die. What Jesus really meant, he says, is that the soul will suffer unending conscious torment in hell. In this kind of reasoning, Tertullian is not alone.

Without the pagan presupposition of man's innate indestructibility (via his "immortal soul"), the traditional dogma of eternal torment would probably never have been taught. Today mainline and evangelical scholars alike stress something quite different. Liberal or conservative, it is difficult to find a contemporary scholar who does not point out man's essential dependence on God for existence itself, with the corresponding biblical hope of resurrection as its fitting and fulfilling companion theme. The ancient Platonic notion of man's inherent immortality,

.....
Without the pagan presupposition of man's innate indestructibility, the traditional dogma of eternal torment would probably never have been taught.
.....

so appealing to nineteenth century liberals, seems itself to be meeting a slow but certain demise in Christian doctrine.

The only step remaining, in terms of my investigation, was to observe that connection and, freed from unbiblical requirements requiring the contortion of scriptural language, to lay out the enormous quantity of exegetical data from both Old and New Testaments. I was not the first to do this by any means, though my study has had the benefit of much material not previously brought together in quite the same fashion. We can confidently build a definition for the terms usually thought to require eternal torment (they actually suggest total extinction), and consequently give words like "die," "perish," and "destroy" their ordinary and expected meanings.

Surprise No. 4½: Why Protestantism Has Not Investigated this Subject Until Now From Scratch

Here medieval politics, Reformation

intrigue, and sectarian jousts all play a part, but we are out of space. Suffice it to say that the instrumental use made of the traditional doctrine of eternal torment render the lack of investigation of the conventional view only half surprising.



Edward William Fudge, *Providential Press, P.O. Box 218026, Houston, Texas 77218, 1982, 500 pages, \$19.95. Order your copy from THE RESTITUTION HERALD, Box 100, Oregon, IL 61061.*

4½ Surprises from a Study of Hell was the title of a book review that started me on an exciting look at one of the best books written in a long time about the final judgment of God. The first excitement was that it concluded with the idea that man is a unit and not a mixture of things mortal and immortal, an idea that is basic to the Church of God. The next excitement was that it was printed in a journal that is supportive of doctrines that are more "tradiitonal."

As I read the book, my excitement continued to grow. Here was a man who was raised in the "traditionalist" viewpoint. (That is, he believed that the final punishment of man was to suffer eternal torment in flames of fire. That torment was necessitated because man had an immortal soul.) But as he began to study the Bible and supporting history, he grew into another view of man's final judgment. He decided that the Bible taught "conditional immortality." This book is the presentation of his study of the subject.

To say that his study was extensive might be an understatement. He covers nearly every verse that deals with the final judgment of God and what we can learn from those verses. He also refers extensively to the material that was written between the testaments and what was written and taught up through the present day.

Fudge compares the traditionalists and the conditionalists looking for descriptions of death and judgment in the Old Testament to the spies searching out the land of Canaan. "Conditionalists have discovered more fertile fields in the Old Testament. Like the spies returning from the valley of Eshcol, these writers sometimes come home with a cluster of texts greater than one man can carry. One begins to wonder if traditionalist authors might have gone in search of a particular fruit and, not finding that, returned

The Fire that Consumes, by Edward Fudge (500 pp., \$19.95), is available from Providential Press, P.O. Box 218026, Houston, Texas 77218. This review has been reprinted with permission from the author and from *Minister's Personal Library Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2, where it originally appeared.

empty-handed to report that the land was barren." But he warns us, "At the same time, closer investigation of conditionalist's Texts sometimes suggests an overenthusiastic picking on their part" (page 78).

That Fudge is objective in his approach can be seen in his disappointment in the lack of good study procedures by both traditionalists and conditionalists. "In dealing with the subject of final punishment, traditionalists have often ignored the Old Testament, oversimplified the intertestamental material, and read the New Testament in the light of that misunderstanding. They have been strong in the defense of biblical authority but weak in using the Bible. Conditionalists have walked through the Old Testament, picking up nuggets, but they have shown little interest in mining deeper. Usually they look long enough to gather favorable evidence without going into more detail" (page 209).

As Fudge progresses through the history of the church and the doctrine of final judgment, he selects those whom he sees as most responsible for the traditionalist views. He points to Plato as the one responsible for bringing up the idea of man's inherent immortality. He adds that in the church age Tertullian (born A.D. 160) was one of the first to promote the concept. Later Augustine (354-430) and much later Calvin (1509-1564) promoted the traditionalist point of view. In fact Fudge devotes one appendix to the influence of Augustine and another to the influence of Calvin.

Another piece of excitement was added by the fact that the Church of God General Conference was mentioned as one of the few modern churches to hold to the conditionalist viewpoint. I think it is very good "press" for us.

The only shadow of disappointment in the whole work was the fact that Fudge never once mentioned the lie of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. It told Eve, "You surely shall not die!" I feel that the traditionalist view is a continuation of that lie. Because it isn't mentioned, it is possible that he has never considered that it is the successor to Satan's lie?

This book is a must for any serious student of the Word of God. For the Church of God, it is uplifting to find independent support for the doctrines which we have held. For others it is a challenge to honestly face the questions that Fudge proposes and make biblical reply.

—Pastor Ron Macy.

What Happe



Because we grow to love and respect people during their lifetimes, it becomes a concern to us when they die. What happens to them? Where are they? What hope, if any, do they have? Based upon superstition, legend, myth, and hope, there have been many ideas fabricated and accepted about the state of the dead. The Bible also gives information about the place of the dead. Consider the teachings of the One who created man.

What is Man?

It is not too difficult to find the biblical revelation of man's destiny if a few Bible words and phrases are defined. First in this definition process is the necessity of knowing what man is. A basic text is Genesis 2:7 where we are given the formula used in the creation of man. It says, "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." The simplicity by which complex man was created is awesome. The dust was formed into a shape; the breath or spirit of life was given; and a living soul came into being.

This, however, was not the first soul God created. In Genesis 1:20 where God created sea life, the "creatures" that were created were also souls. The writer used the same word in Genesis 1:20 as he did in 2:7. Man, then, does not possess a soul. He is a soul.

As we continue in the Book of Genesis we have the process of death explained in detail. God told Adam that the result of disobedience would be death. "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (2:17b). Adam, ignoring the warning, ate of the forbidden tree and the curse was pronounced upon him in detail, thus telling us what would happen at

death. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (3:19).

The man Adam was to return to dust as he was. There is no hint here that Adam would go someplace else; the Bible writer understood that Adam was the physical body, and that at death Adam would cease to be and return to dust. Adam, the man, would return to the dust—not only his body, but his totally existent self.

Death and Life Opposites

Hezekiah many years later understood his fate when the prophet Isaiah told him, "Thou shalt die, and not live" (Isa. 38:1b). Scriptural death is the opposite of life. The two are not compatible. In the instance of Hezekiah there was no hint of any other existence—just death, the absence of life. If Hezekiah had been the only one to have death explained this way to him, we could possibly harbor some doubts as to the accuracy of this formula; but other men of God also wrote of death in detail and they all came to the same conclusions.

Man's Frailty, Death's Process

David, in an effort to encourage people to praise God and look to him for help, gives a step-by-step description of the frailty of man and the process of death. He said, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psa. 146:3, 4).

Note how the process that David explains coincides with the creation of man in the very beginning. David's

process is the exact reverse of the creation process. The breath (spirit of life) leaves a man; the body returns to the dust according to the curse of Genesis 3:19, and his thoughts perish. Man enters into a state of dormancy at death and he knows no more in death than he did before his birth. His thoughts are a thing of the past.

David well taught his son Solomon in the nature of man and his future. Solomon wrote extensively of the frailty of man and his condition in death in the Book of Ecclesiastes. Notice the description of death that Solomon gives. "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten" (Eccl. 9:5).

The key thought in this verse is that the knowledge of the dead ones is nonexistent. Because of this, Solomon encourages people to consider God in their lives while there is still an opportunity to do something about it. Look at his plea in 9:10: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

Once again, it is important to notice that Solomon makes no separation between the person, his soul, and his body. To the Bible writers a person is a soul, as a unified being, and when the writer says "you may go to the grave," there is no thought of any division of the person. The being meets his fate.

Death and Hell

It is advisable at this point to look at and consider one more biblical word. Solomon says that the "grave" is the place of the dead. The word from which grave is translated is the Hebrew *sheol* and it is rendered "grave," "pit," and "hell" by the translators. When the Old Testament was quoted in the New Testament, the Greek word *hades* was used to carry the same thought as the Hebrew word *sheol*. Therefore, it is not too difficult to see that hell and the grave are synonymous according to the writers of the Scriptures, and that it is a place of inactivity and dormancy—a place where there is no work, device, knowledge, or wisdom. Solomon further

ns At Death?

by Pastor Richard Worley

simplifies the understanding of the death process in Ecclesiastes 12:7 when he says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

Remember the creation process? God breathed in the breath (same word as spirit) of life and man lived. At death the process is reversed: 1) the spirit, that breath of life which man has not been able to duplicate, that power that causes man to live, think, and move about, returns to God, and 2) the dust returns to the earth. The spirit is not a part of man but simply a life-giving force.

Old Testament Study

Thus far we have dealt with the Old Testament teachings about man's condition in death. It is postulated by some that the New Testament teaching goes beyond the "misconceptions" of the Old Testament personalities and their views of man's nature and opens up new revelations about man's nature, hope, and destiny. Peter disagrees with this thinking by saying that "...no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:20, 21). It is incredible to believe that God would inspire men to write about the nature of man in error. Therefore, it is imperative that the Old and New Testaments agree on this subject as well as any other that is studied.

New Testament Teaching

The New Testament does not have the mass of information about the condition of men in death that the Old Testament does, but it does treat the subject directly in some verses and indirectly in many others. When Peter spoke to the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost he called their attention to a prophecy King David had made concerning the Lordship of Jesus. In explaining that David was not speaking of himself Peter made two statements that reinforce the teaching we have been discussing.

Two Statements

1. Acts 2:29, "Men and brethren, let

me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." Peter said David had no life, that he was dead and buried and, as mute proof, his grave was still in evidence. Some may say that is only his body in the grave and the "real" David has ascended to his reward as the "man after God's own heart." The other statement of Peter denies this as a possibility.

2. Acts 2:34: "David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, the LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand." The process that David himself described in Psalm 146:3, 4 had happened to David. He lived, died, and was buried.

Lazarus

In John 11 we have the account of Jesus' friend Lazarus' death. As Jesus came to Bethany to comfort the sisters of Lazarus he entered into a discussion with Martha about the end time and the resurrection of the dead. Martha was convinced that Lazarus would "rise again" in the resurrection of the last day. The very wording of her hope tells of a bringing up from the grave rather than down from a reward already received. Jesus extended Martha's hope to anyone who believes in him. He said, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall be live" (John 11:25b). The hope Jesus gives is not a transfer of existence but life itself. The cortege then went to the tomb and Jesus spoke the familiar words, "Lazarus, come forth," and the scriptural testimony is that "he that was dead came forth."

The Hope

The incident of Lazarus tells not only of the condition of a person in death,

but it also deals with the hope of the gospel that has been extended to mankind: the resurrection. Old Testament and New Testament alike proclaim the resurrection to be the hope that God has given to us, a reversal of the death process when God will give his people life eternal. Consider the statements about the importance of the resurrection:

Paul to the Corinthians: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. 15: 17). Without hope of resurrection we are destitute because in death there is no feeling or thought.

Job: "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change comes. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands" (Job 14:14, 15).

David: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psa. 17:15b).

Paul: I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ... that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection... if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:8-11).

It is only by understanding the nature of man and his condition in death that the hope of the resurrection can be fully appreciated. Since the resurrection is so wondrously taught in the Scriptures, will we be held guiltless if we persist in claiming a different hope of the gospel than what the Scriptures teach? The resurrection hope is an integral part of the gospel because of the nature of man, and Paul decried any changing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:6-9.) May we spend our time studying the truths of God's Word, living according to the dictates of that Word, and rejoicing in the hope that has been promised to us—resurrection at the coming of Christ and living in his presence on this earth throughout eternity.



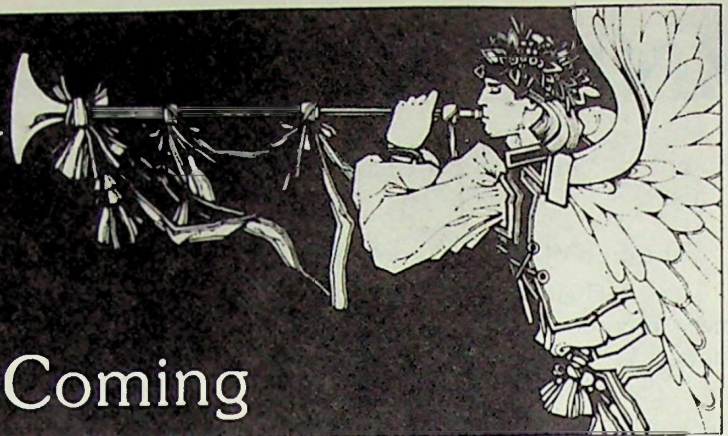
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by Pastor
Ed Bender

announcing the Fact of Christ's Coming



The Middle East continues to be the focal point of the national news, and yet I am sure that there are many who do not know that this news, and these front-page headlines were predicted many years ago by the writers of the Holy Scriptures.

If any of you have listened to the news carefully and know the Scriptures, you will have noticed that many of the nations that have been brought to our attention lately are the nations that the Bible talks about. Let's look at the Scriptures:

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog [northern conglomerate of nations], the land of Magog [Russia], the chief prince [prince of Rosh or Russia] of Meshech [Moscow] and Tubal [Tobolsk?], and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I [God] will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of

them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia [old Persian Empire including Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq?, Pakistan, and maybe Lebanon], Ethiopia [same as today], and Libya [same as today] with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer [Germany, maybe also West Germany], and all of his bands; the house of Togarmah [no doubt Turkey] of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee" (Ezek. 38:1-6).

It is noteworthy that we have seen in the last two years many of these same nations that are in the news a part of GOD'S NEWS to HIS PEOPLE for THOUSANDS OF YEARS!!

It is my personal feeling that in the near future we will be hearing more from the nations listed that have been fairly quiet. Some we expect to hear from are Turkey and perhaps West Germany.

Just before the battle of Armageddon (the battle described in Ezekiel 38), there will be some kind of peace agreement in the middle-east which is supposed to give security to Israel. Let's read about that.

"After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel . . . brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them" (Ezek. 38:8; also see verses 11 and 14).

Paul talked about this same period of time. "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thes. 5:3). Paul is telling us that when this time comes we should be ready, because war will follow it as surely as pain with childbirth and that nothing will change those circumstances.

The Bible tells us that we should be well aware that this destruction will come and that it will not come UNEXPECTEDLY to those of us who are WATCHING. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thes. 5:4, 5).

Paul is not saying that we know the "day or hour" of the coming of Christ, because we do not (Matt. 24:36), but he is saying that we will KNOW the SIGNS of HIS COMING. One sign is "distress of nations." ARE YOU READY TO MEET JESUS?



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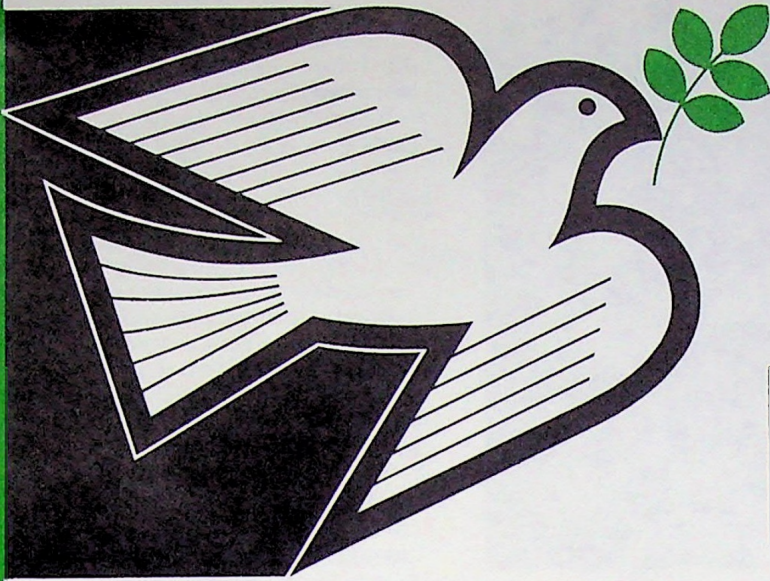


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President and Mrs. Reagan wave to crowd of well-wishers at birthday celebration in Dixon, Illinois.

Editor's Viewpoint

Reagan's Birthday

It's not every year the President of the United States goes to Dixon, Illinois, to celebrate his birthday. Of course, the only reason why Ronald Reagan did just that on February 6, 1984, is because city fathers insisted long enough that he couldn't disappoint them.

In fact, Reagan tremendously increased the population of his boyhood hometown of 16,000 by sending countless Secret Service agents to comb the Rock River valley around Dixon three weeks in advance of his visit. Naturally, many more thousands braved temperatures in the single digits to get a glimpse of the famous native.

And, naturally, every precaution was taken to guarantee the president's health and safety after he arrived. He brought his new bullet-proof limo, a helicopter whisked him from the Rockford airport for the 40-mile ride to Dixon, and he wasn't allowed to eat anything from the local dinner held in his honor—even his own birthday cake was forbidden.

We mention Reagan's visit not only because he came near the city of Oregon where THE RESTITUTION HERALD offices are located, but because his visit stands in stark contrast to Planet Earth's greatest future visitor. Someday the very Son of God will leave his Father's right hand to return. Preparations for his visit have taken almost 2,000 years. During that time the church has proclaimed the gospel, lives have been changed by the power of God, and many have made personal preparation for the heavenly visitor.

Countless man hours are spent each day by numberless believers evangelizing the world, urging friends and relatives to make preparation for Christ's coming. How about you? What are you doing to ready your life for the coming of Earth's truly Chief Executive?

Reagan Recognizes the Vatican

When President Reagan officially recognized the Vatican, and specifically the Pope, as a nation and an head of state by establishing diplomatic relations earlier this year, the flap caused by the move was not as severe as expected. After all, the Pope has made political pronouncements for some time. He might as well be treated as he acts.

While Protestants rightfully registered protests of the move, their voice went unheard in the White house. Since Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell basically supported the president—and he carries clout with the volatile fundamentalist wing of Christianity—there was no need to be concerned about Protestant reaction. Most evangelicals expressed mild response at best, and the liberals had no issue with the political ties.

Of course, the founding principle of separation of church and state has been violated—if it is interpreted literally. But since precious few principles are held today, why get uptight? At least many in Christendom have resigned themselves to that expressed fate.

Probably all that's left to discuss in relation to this move is the implications it makes in fulfilling Bible prophecy. It might be a foreward to the completing of the prediction of the uniting of an

ecclesiastical beast with its political counterpart which is revealed in Revelation 13. Additionally, Catholicism will surely march one step ahead of Protestantism when things political surface in the future affecting the lives of the corresponding followers.

Reagan merely opened the pages of Bible prophecy a little more, helping the student to see clearly that the final days of this age are near.

Ministers Urged to Overcome Differences

When 950 ministers attended the Ohio Pastors' Convocation in Columbus on January 29, 1984, they were told to forget theological differences and get down to the business of "effectively healing the world."

The speaker of those words, Paul Crow, Jr., a specialist in church unity, continued to decry differences that divide churches and clergy. He declared that today's biggest heresy is "playing parlor games about our theological differences."

Crow confirmed the Lima Document, a statement written by key theologians last year which addresses baptism, eucharist, and ministry in an ecumenical setting. He implied that dwelling on differences of interpretation regarding these topics was fostered because "most ministers are captive to middle-management concepts, to visions of ministry as fund-raising and church growth."

Crow concluded by declaring that in taking these three topics seriously, we will give up faulty concepts and get on with healing the world.

Admittedly, Crow has a point.

Theologians need to rid themselves of the cultural, denominational, and prejudicial trappings of religion concerning baptism, communion, and ministry. If every Christian could come to the Bible with the strictly scriptural understanding of these terms and practices, there would more likely be a common ground on which to build the unity of brethren for which Jesus prayed (John 17).

But Crow doesn't go far enough.

The best formula for unity must include the Spirit of the Lord. When Christians come under the power of God, then they are free to behold Jesus, and be changed into his glory (2 Cor. 3:17, 18). It is by his Spirit that we are taught the truth so we can in unity glorify the Lord (John 16:12-15).

Then we can march ahead with true power to "convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" (16:8, RSV). For only then will God's Spirit empower us to make a difference in the world; one that overcomes the world.

LETTERS

The Gospel of the Kingdom

It was a great pleasure for me to read Anthony Buzzard's article entitled, "The Gospel—What Is It?" in the October 1983 issue of THE HERALD. There have always been in every generation since the primitive church men who took their stand upon the true gospel message. I am conscious of many historically famous individual reformers, scientists, and doctors who transcended practical difficulties to proclaim that Christ would reign upon his throne on the earth. Bro. Buzzard is exactly correct when he writes, "In order to worship God successfully, you must lay aside traditional beliefs which conflict with the teachings of Jesus." Let us therefore continue to run the course set before us, preaching and teaching our cause "'Til the Whole World Knows." —Chicago, IL

What About the World Council of Churches?

Pastor Rex Cain introduced me to THE RESTITUTION HERALD early in 1983. I look forward to each article, knowing that I will gain some knowledge for daily living.

Perhaps you could print an article concerning the World Council of Churches. I would like to know more about this subject. What are they about? Who is responsible? Is this a group of churches or religious leaders? Are they for good or evil? There seems to be controversy which is confusing to people. Can you help clarify this confusion?

—Macomb, IL

The ecumenical concept of a World Council of Churches (WCC) was first discussed by influential clergy (which included William Temple from Great Britain) soon after WWI for the purpose of bringing churches together to render common witness to problems in modern society and to explore possible approaches to reunion. Because of WWII, the WCC didn't get organized until its first assembly in Amsterdam, Holland, from August 22 to September 3, 1948. Part of its basis can be seen in the doctrinal statement: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." This statement already excludes Arian and Socinian believers.

Early ideals insisted on the rights of churches to make contributions to the cause of unity without promoting one concept of unity above another. But the very weight of bureaucracy forbade such an ideal. Activities of the WCC include the study of doctrinal differences, a department to study the church's witness to the world, a commission to administer inter-church aid and service to refugees, a commission to formulate the Christian mind on world affairs, and less influential departments on youth, women, and evangelism. The WCC denominations have declined in membership and influence over the past 30 years. The WCC's stress toward maintenance of the organization at the expense of the church's commission of making new disciples has contributed toward its decline. —Editor.

Words of Encouragement

THE RESTITUTION HERALD gives me peace and enjoyment. I very much like the Bible doctrine articles because they make me think deeply.

—Weiser, ID.

We need articles with "teeth"; giving Scripture—book, chapter, and verse—articles that will help us understand various subjects. Maybe you folks in Oregon don't need those kinds of articles, but we isolated members do. So I have subscribed again, hoping that THE HERALD is much improved.

—Wellington, KS.

Don't Depend on Swindoll

My comment regarding your editorial thoughts ["Happy New Year, Charles Swindoll," Dec/1983/Jan/1984]: Though we might learn from the writings of others who do not share our faith, be careful not to become too reliant upon them in our study of the Scriptures. My prayer for Mr. Swindoll and other popular writers on religion is the same as Paul's for Israel (Rom. 10:1, 2).

—Cashmere, WA.

The Swindoll editorial was done as a piece of satire. My aim was to dissuade pastors from depending on the words of others to accomplish their work.

—Editor.

Like the February, 1984, Issue

A friend who takes THE HERALD was talking with me after he read the February 1984, issue. He said that you are "really making something of that paper!" and I agree. But you may have created a problem—what to do for an encore.

—Ashland, OH.

Must Premillennialism Always Be Dispensational?

I have enjoyed reading through your entire issue [February, 1984] and appreciate the good work you do as editor. Your church's stance is much like mine in several respects—particularly in the emphasis on Acts 2:38 (though I am trying to help our folks steer away from a rather legalistic attitude to one more Christ-centered) and baptism "for the remission of sins." On the other hand, our group is not officially committed to conditional immortality (though I see a real openness and much study and some changing of minds already), and we are traditionally amillennial in interpretation of Scripture. You do not seem to be of the Hal Lindsey/Dallas Theological Seminary perspective, either, though you hold to certain particular points in common with those folks. When I was at Covenant Seminary (Reformed Presbyterian) I thought it interesting that some of them were premillennial even though they were definitely not dispensational. And we have some premill opinions in the Churches of Christ, although that was a big issue with us 40 years ago and the mean debater who won out in the fuss were decidedly anti-premill.

[We] hope to have further fellowship with you and your people. It would be a pleasure to meet you in person one day.

—Edward Fudge,
Houston, TX

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates: the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6); the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8); Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4); the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through him (Col. 3:3); the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28); the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54); the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8); the final restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32), the church to be joint heirs with him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3); the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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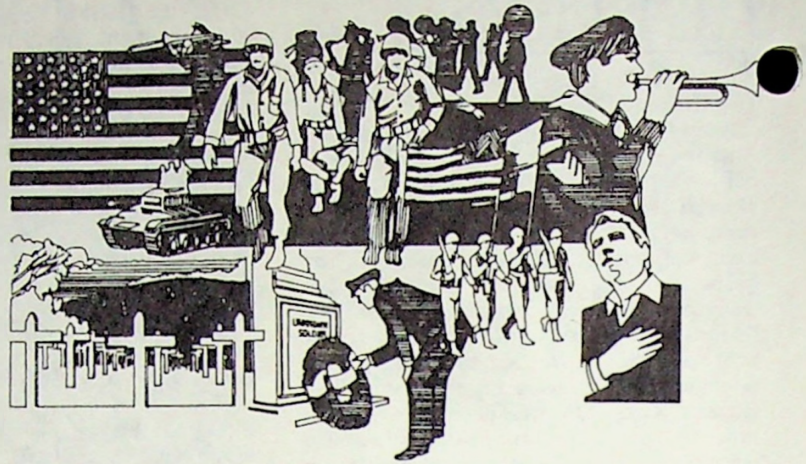
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Blessed Are Those Who MOURN...



LIKE the grieving parents of the Marines in Beirut and Grenada? Like the thousands of survivors who buried their loved ones after the huge earthquake in Eastern Turkey? Like the friends and relatives of the jumbo jet shot down over the frigid waters of the Sea of Japan?

Surely, Jesus doesn't mean what he says! Add up the figures: 230 marines in Beirut, 18 in Grenada, 1,800 in Turkey, and 269 in the Sea of Japan. This is 2,317 dead. There must be at least three grieving each death; that calculates out to 6,951. All "blessed"?! I can well understand that, when Jesus concluded his mountainside lecture, "the crowds were astonished" (Matt 7:28, RSV). I would have been.

Jesus often talked peculiarly. He

her (at least momentarily) by returning. "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it" (Luke 11:28, NASB). Jesus often spoke puzzling words, perplexing concepts.

"Blessed are those who mourn" is not an exception, but typical. The only satisfactory solution to this bewilderment is to climb to the higher plateau where Jesus lived. He was usually "beyond" the thinking of the average work-a-day world. Even at 12 years of age, he caused his parents no little apprehension—only because he was in another dimension. "Your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." Jesus calmly replies, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" The parents, at a loss for words, "did not under-

Christ. At the resurrection they shall discover comfort and joy.

Like the woman who so wanted to compliment Jesus and his mother, we must stop and reflect—Jesus has little concern with this temporal, brief, transient world. His mind was always and forever thinking kingdom, resurrection, future, immortality, and spiritual. Let's climb to his spiritual plateau and revel in his level of understanding. Remember Paul's admonition? "The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14, RSV). No wonder the common laborers sitting about the mountainside were astonished.

Interesting how the Bible is so pain-

... For They Shall Be

was out of sync with his society... and ours. We are locked in with today's hurts. He saw beyond. We are so physical. He was on a higher plateau.

Recall the day a woman was overwhelmed with Jesus' charm and authority? She was fantasizing—"If only he were my child, I'd be so proud!" But he wasn't her's, so she blurted out her next impulse, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts at which You nursed" (Luke 11:27, NASB). You'd think Jesus could accept that compliment, but instead, he jarred her composure by dismissing it! He probably stunned

stand... And his mother kept all these things in her heart" (Luke 2:48-51, RSV).

"Blessed are those who mourn" must contain something beyond our immediate comprehension since history has proven Jesus indeed "taught them as one who had authority" (Matt 7:29, RSV). The key to this remark that survivors of dead loved ones are "blessed (which means "happy") must lie in the qualifying statement that follows:

"For they shall be comforted."

Not now. Not today. Not immediately. But tomorrow. At the return of

fully honest about death and judgment at one moment ("It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment" Heb. 9:27, RSV), and reverberating with hope the next ("Christ... will appear a second time... to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" Heb. 9:28, RSV). Thus, one phrase in the Beatitudes is "earthly" (death), and the next "spiritual" (shall be comforted). Jesus only states the one to provide his spiritual caveat of the next!

On another occasion when some sanctimonious Sadducees attempted to bring Christ down to their human

—by Pastor Rex F. Cain—

level of logic, they submitted this argument (I'm sure with a smirk across their lips): If a woman had seven husbands, whose wife will she be in the kingdom? (Matt 22:23-28.) Jesus turned the tables on them and highlighted (to their chagrin) that they only exposed their humanness while Jesus walked in a spiritual world. He replied, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage. . . . And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:29-32). And, once again (naturally so), "When the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching" (v. 33). Of course! We're so slow to rise to spiritual realms.

We come now to the crux of the whole matter. Jesus wasn't being sarcastic by declaring that those who mourn are happy. Neither was he insulting our intelligence. He was merely endeavoring to lift us from the mire of human reasoning to the consciousness of God; to sensitize us to another dimension; to enhance our latent spirituality; to rivet upon us the truth—"hope that is seen is not hope" (Rom. 8:24, RSV). That is, what our human eyes can observe is not true reality! Reality arrives with the Second Advent!

Comforted

In the parallel passage of Matthew 22 already quoted, we find a few more explanatory words in Luke 20: "Those who are accounted worthy to attain to that age [reality to come] and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry . . . for they cannot die anymore . . . they are equal to angels . . . sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (vv. 34-36).

This was the truth on our Lord's mind when he made that "astonishing" statement—"Blessed are those who mourn, for **THEY SHALL** [in that "coming age" of true reality] **BE COMFORTED.**"

THE BOOK OF BOOKS



By Pastor Stephen Bolhous

THE BIBLE is truly an amazing book. It was written by more than 30 different men over 15 centuries of history. Even though this time span makes a large margin for discrepancies, yet the work is a cohesive unit without contradictions because its author is God.

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Critics have sought to destroy the Bible by denying its accuracy and divine inspiration. The his-

torical facts it relates are erroneous, they say. Of the hundreds of thousands of artifacts found by archeologists, not one has ever been discovered that contradicts or denies one word of the Bible; instead, the biblical record has always been confirmed and verified.

The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the people of the world have the Bible, or part of it, available to them in their own language. The Bible is continuously a best seller, and Bible societies around the globe distribute millions of copies annually.

The Bible is God's inspired written revelation of himself that has survived the ages and come down to you and me. The songwriter has written:

God's Word is like a hammer
That breaketh the rock in twain;
A lamp to guide our footsteps,
An anchor on the stormy main;
A sword that has two edges
And a mirror ourselves to see;
O, yes, it is the Book of books,
The book for you and me!

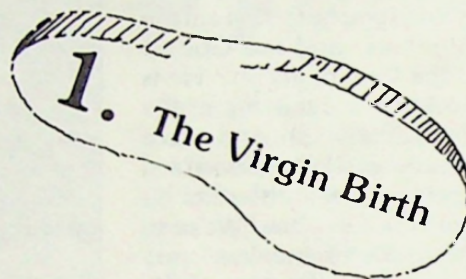


God's Plan in Five Steps

by Pastor Hollis Partlowe

CHRISTIANITY is an historic faith. It rests upon specific arts in history. Religion as such may simply be rationalization of men or going through mystic rites. Someone other than the founder could have established them and continued them, but this is not true of Christianity. True, it has its doctrines and precepts, but as its center is Jesus Christ. It can't exist without him. He is its center and foundation.

What he is and what he has done are the foundation of Christianity. When we speak of his birth, death, resurrection, ascension, and return, we are speaking of actual events. These events form the backbone of God's plan of redemption.



1. The Virgin Birth

Let's begin with that and proceed logically: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23). Matthew, quoting Isaiah (7:14), assures us that Jesus' birth of the virgin fulfilled the ancient prophecy.

Immanuel! One doesn't have to be a Hebrew or Greek scholar to know the meaning of that. To have Jesus Christ as one's Savior is to have heaven's blessing.

In the annunciation, the angel Gabriel said to the startled virgin: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Jesus was virgin born and is the only begotten of the Father. He is not the son of Joseph.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, NASB). The first 13 verses of John's Gospel form a prologue, showing that Jesus was always in God's plan, his blueprint. The "Word" (*logos*) is not a person. The *logos* became or now was flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. It did not become part flesh and part God, not merely clothed with flesh, but became or now was flesh. John 1 doesn't say, "In the beginning was Jesus," but, "In the beginning was the Word," the *logos*. Jesus doesn't come into existence until verse 14.

The virgin birth is not just a theory to be defended, but one of the essential doctrines of the Bible. Jesus Christ is Lord. Since he is our Lord, we are his servants; we must never say no to him, or doubt his ability to bring victory in us. We are not our own but bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

2. The Atonement

God's answer to the sin question is the substitute Savior. His death protects the holiness of God and meets the sinfulness of man. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3, 4). Observe that Jesus not only died, he died for our sins. There was a specific purpose in Christ's death. Jesus, the just one, died for us, the unjust ones. Why? "That he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). His sinless life provides the necessary basis for acceptance of his sacrifice in the court of high heaven. From his birth Jesus was a marked man. He lived his whole life in the shadow of the cross.

Scripture says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). As the sinless man, he could and did die for all. Just what do you think of the Lord who died for you? It's important to realize that God himself didn't die, nor did an angel. Just any man wouldn't do, but a certain man: the unique man, the Son of God. Jesus' mission into this world was to redeem man. He alone was qualified to be man's Savior.

Furthermore, notice the ethical connotation of Christ's death. God won't tolerate sin. Sin put our Lord upon the cross. Dare we love that which crucified our Lord? To enter the historic fact of Christ's death and to love sin is a contradiction of thought. "Hate evil, you who love the LORD" (Psa. 97:10, NASB). How can we excuse sin? How can we hold it close to our hearts as if it were our friend? "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1, 2). Paul the apostle startles at the very idea. Believers are reckoned or considered dead to sin. That is our standing before God. If a murderer is shot down in the street by police the corpse is not taken to court. The case is closed. Likewise, Christians shall not come into judgment but have passed from death to life (John 5:24). Our sins have been atoned for at Calvary, and we will receive immortality in the twinkling of an eye when Jesus comes. (1 Cor. 15:52).

3. The Resurrection

The historic fact of Christ's resurrection is set forth in Matthew 28:6. As the women approached the tomb on

the morning of the resurrection the angel announced, "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Other passages of Scripture amplify this summation. For example, Romans 4:25 says that Christ was not only "delivered for our offences" but "was raised again for our justification." Our Lord came forth from the grave to demonstrate the validity of his sacrifice. When God raised his Son from the dead to immortality, he set his stamp of approval upon his sacrifice for the sins of the world. That was God's way of saying, "I accept the death of my only begotten Son for the sins of all mankind." The message is loud and clear for all who wish to read it. I have no patience with people who try to explain away the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus himself made an issue out of the fact that he had a flesh-and-bone body after overcoming death and the grave. In his appearance to the eleven, when they thought they had seen a ghost, said he: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Luke 24:39-43). Having overcome death, Jesus said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [*hades*] and of death" (Rev. 1:18).

As all Bible students know, Jesus spent 40 days on earth in his post-resurrection ministry (Acts 1:3). During that time he was seen by many of the brethren (by 500 at one time, 1 Cor. 15:6), but never without a body or in a different body. There is no such thing as life without a body. To believe otherwise is to drift into paganism and superstition.

4. The Ascension

The historic fact of our Lord's ascension is recorded in Luke 24:50, 51, among other places. He led the disciples out as far as Bethany, a little village on the Mount of Olives. "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Yes, in his resurrection body Jesus ascended into the heavens

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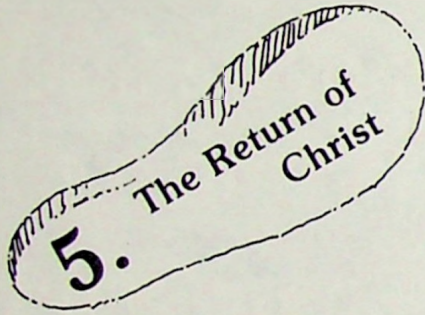
GOD'S PLAN IN FIVE STEPS
(Continued from page 7)

and sat down on the right hand of God, the place of honor. (See Heb. 8:1; 1:3; 10:12; Col. 3:1; Eph. 1:20.)

Now notice the ethical connotation of it all. "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). We are not literally in heaven. Man is earthbound, but in a sense we are seated with Christ at God's right hand.

Beyond doubt the Christian hope for the future is focused on the second coming of Christ. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4). Our work today is fashioned with eternal values in mind. You profess to be a Christian. For what are you living? For whom?

Beyond doubt, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven nearly 2000 years ago. From that day to this, faithful believers have looked for his return.



This is the great consummation toward which this world is moving. This fact is voiced again and again in prophecy and is just as sure as if it had already occurred. As Jesus ascended from the disciples and from the Mount of Olives, a cloud received him out of their sight. The angel assured them: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Jesus assured the disciples: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7). "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. 14:4).

If someone tells you Jesus is not coming literally, visibly, and physically to this earth, don't believe him. Our Lord, the most faithful witness of all, has promised: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). Make no mistake! Jesus is coming to reward his followers. Has he rewarded you? Here is clear evidence that he has not come yet.

These five great doctrines are the basic milestones in God's redemptive program. These great truths we stand for, and we are set in defense of these things. They speak of how we should live now.

The Gift By Grace



by
Pastor
Francis
Burnett

BOTH JOB AND DAVID asked the same question which had to do with their own lives. The question, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?" (See Job 7:17a and Psalm 8:4a.) We can continue to ask the same question as the magnificence of God, our heavenly Father, is considered. Mankind is frail and weak. There may be thoughts to change the times and seasons, but it cannot be done. Man was created from the dust. And were it not for the grace of the living God, he would remain in the dust after death forever. (See Gen. 3:19.)

As Solomon was evaluating his own life, and life in general, he came to some definite conclusions. For instance, "I said to myself, 'God will judge the just man and the wicked equally; every activity and every purpose has its proper time.' I said to myself, 'In dealing with men it is God's purpose to test them and to see what they truly are'" (Eccl. 3:17, 18, NEB). Earlier, Solomon had written, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die" (Eccl. 3:1, 2a).

THE PENALTY OF DEATH began with the disobedience of Adam and Eve. In regard to "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" God said, "for on the day that you eat from it, you will certainly die" (Gen. 2:17, NEB). Death is unavoidable. Paul wrote, "Sin came into the world through one man. And, death came into the world through sin. In this way, death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12, Simple English Bible). Hebrews 9:27 reads, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." As Solomon viewed the whole matter, he wrote "The fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies so dies the other, indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity. All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust" (Eccl. 3:19, 20, NASB). What a revolting thought! However, it is true—that is, if God's Word is true. But you say, "Man has no advantage over a beast! That cannot be." This is very true—except for *the grace of God*.

WE REFERRED PREVIOUSLY to the weakness of the human race. Solomon wrote about that in the closing part of the book of Ecclesiastes. He compared being young with growing older. In chapter 12, he gave a picture of the penalties of aging (vv. 1-7). The conclusion was (and is), "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Many persons have problems in dealing with the word "spirit." The Hebrew meaning is *wind*. The same word is used as "breath" in Genesis 6:17, "Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life." Also *breath* is used in Ecclesiastes 3:19; Psalm 146:4; Ezekiel 37:5-10 and more. The Hebrew in the previous verses is the same word as that for "spirit" in Ecclesiastes 12:7. What, then, is the biblical teaching? Obviously, when a person dies, the breath which God gave him in the beginning returns to him.

JOB SENT FORTH dramatic statements concerning death. "My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me" (Job 17:1). He continued, "If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father. . . . Where is now my hope? . . . They shall go down to the bars of the pit [grave], when our rest together is in the dust" (Job 17:13-16). Job had before

shown where his *hope* was. "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave. . . . All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee" (Job 14:13-15). Job's assurance is found in these words, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth . . . yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27). Job knew that he would completely waste away (corrupt), but he knew also that he would see God with his own eyes and stand on his own feet.

This is where the *gift by grace* enters into all lives. Because of sin, all of mankind was condemned to death. Paul wrote, "So death passed upon all men" (Rom. 5:12b). But he continued to write and showed there was another way. "God's gracious love and the free gift that comes through one man, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:15, Simple English Bible). Most Bible students are familiar with the grand promise, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

IN ALL OF THIS, we see the plan and reason for the *resurrection*. David very definitely expresses the only hope of all people. "Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken [make alive] me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth" (Psa. 71:20). God's promise continues as recorded in Paul's words, "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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:52, 53).

PAUL'S CONCLUSION to the brethren in Rome on the subject of sin versus grace was, "The law came in to increase sin. But where sin increased, God's gracious love overflowed much more. Sin used death to rule. In the same way, God's gracious love rules through righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life" (Rom. 5:20, 21, Simple English Bible). Without the *grace of God*, all of mankind would lie in the grave without any hope. **BUT** God gave his Son, Jesus Christ, for sin—that is, to conquer sin, even to overcome death. Let our hope of the future be like that of Job, David, and Paul—that God through Jesus Christ will raise the dead from the graves where they are. Thank you, Jehovah!

RETURNING TO THE WAY

by Pastor Tom New



ANYONE who has ever driven a car through an unfamiliar large city has probably made a wrong turn at one time or another. When I was a child I remember traveling through Chicago with my parents. My father made such a wrong turn. We had not known that Chicago had such scenery, and I remember Mother saying, "Kids, roll up the windows!" We felt fortunate to get out of there in one piece, and with our hubcaps!

Ten years later I was the one taking a wrong turn in "scenic" Chicago. This time, instead of dear old dad getting uptight, flustered, and panicky, it was me. And my five-hour trip to college turned into an eight-hour trip right through downtown Chicago—all at no extra charge to my unhappy riders. Yes, we've all made wrong turns at one time or another.

SOMETIMES people come to crossroads in their lives when they have to make a major decision. This decision may be concerning college, career, or selecting a marriage partner. It is possible to make a wrong decision that will send us on a road in a direction opposite the one God wants us to take.

Unfortunately, this is what has happened in modern theology. There have been some major "wrong turns" that have led us to what is called "orthodox theology."

In finding the right path in any situation, one must first return to the place where there was a fork in the road. It is my belief that if modern theologians would study the historical background of "orthodox theology," perhaps they would not only change their theology, but their theology would no longer be "orthodox."

THE MOST important debate that has flourished since the early centuries of the church is the one concerning the simple unity of the nature of God. While theologians battled over this issue,

they became lost in a jumble of pagan ideas, causing them to make a major "wrong turn." They went from the Hebrew monotheistic God to a paganistic triune God. No doubt this battle will continue until man returns to the God that the Jews have worshiped for so many centuries. In trying to find the truth, it is important to get not only biblical support, but historical support as well. And in this case it is to the ancient Hebrews and the Old Testament that we need to go. It is ironic that the fundamental doctrine of the early Hebrews was the unity of God. "Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut. 6:4). This simple verse was written in their hearts, and was their most important truth and basic tenet. It was belief in a monotheistic God that separated Israel from all other religions. Thomas Nelson writes in his book, *An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*:

"It was in fact through them [the Hebrews], that the ancient world first learned of a spiritualised and moralised monotheism—a single God, worshipped without images, and divine because perfectly righteous, not simply because perfectly powerful.

Having been dispersed from the Tower of Babel, nations almost universally were submerged in paganism and idolatry. Through Abraham God formed His own special nation, placed it in Palestine at the crossroads of the continents, and ordained that it should be a missionary witness to Him, the One True God. God purposed that Israel would be a 'kingdom of priests' (Ex. 19:6). Israelites were to worship Him as the one God and become the medium for converting other nations from polytheism to monotheism."

IT IS A REVEALING fact that the greatest hindrance to the Jews' acceptance of Christianity is the false doctrine of a triune god that is advocated by a large portion of Christianity. The Jews, grounded in pure monotheism, know that one cannot believe consistently in both the doctrine of the trinity and the Bible's teaching of the one true God.

MARCH, 1984

Even Mohammedanism, which is an offshoot of Judaism, and borrowed some of its elements from Judaism and Christianity, is strictly monotheistic, with no sign of a triune God.

In the New Testament we find no mention of the Trinity. Jesus Christ did not once claim to be God, only to be the Son of God. In the New Testament we see Jesus subordinate to his Father. Jesus prayed to his Father as we do—for strength and guidance. It was from God that Jesus received all power and authority.

The early church preached of a Savior raised from the grave by God's power. They told of a Father, the Creator of the universe, and how he loved this world so much he was willing to give up his Son for the salvation of many. Abraham's offering of Isaac was an example of how God would offer up his Son as a sacrifice. Every Jewish sacrifice was a typology of this supreme sacrifice God made on the cross with his only begotten Son. When Jesus was born, he was unique. He was not God, nor was he an ordinary man. He was the Son of God, born of a woman, but conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Messiah promised by the Holy prophets.

JESUS and his Father are one in purpose, power, and will. Jesus devoted his life to doing the will of his Father. Even when nearing death he said, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

When Jesus ascended into heaven, he ascended to the second highest position in the universe (Eph. 1:20, 21). Hebrews 2:7-9 reads:

"You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet. In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (NIV).

Hebrews 1:3, 4 reads:

"After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs" (NIV).

The oldest and most dependable church creed can be found only in the Bible. The early Christians believed that

"yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (NIV, 1 Cor. 8:6).

BUT in the early church, even as this new-found faith grew, paganism began to get a foothold as new Christians were brought in from other nations. The following New Testament profession of faith was probably directed against such heresy.

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time" (1 Tim. 2:5, 6 NIV).

When Christianity was trying to get back on track during the Reformation period, there were many Anti-trinitarians who gave their lives for this great truth. One of the most prominent was a doctor named Michael Servetus. Servetus was also a great reformer and a writer. In 1531 he wrote a book entitled, *On the Error of the Trinity*. In this book he writes:

"How much this tradition of the Trinity has, alas! been a laughing stock to the Mohammedans, only God knows. The Jews also shrink from giving adherence to this fancy of ours, and laugh at our foolishness about the Trinity; and on account which they adduce with regard to this matter. If they distinguished the brightness that then was from their own darkness so utterly confused, they might realize that Paul well said that the Church of God is the ground and pillar of the truth; which is no

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RETURNING TO THE WAY

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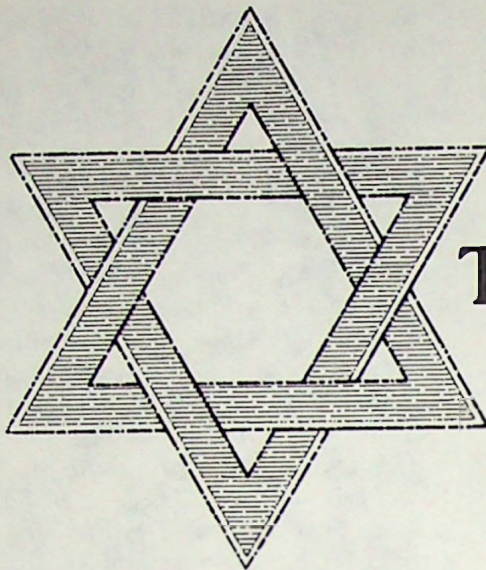
more than to say that the word of the Gospel is true; and *the word of the Gospel is this, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*"

Servetus' book became a best seller, and ignited Antitrinitarian sentiment in Germany, Switzerland, and especially in Italy. But the Reformers, whom Servetus had hoped to convert, recoiled in shock and dismay. They feared a renewal of Catholic suppression if the Protestant doctrine went too far.

AFTER THE BOOK was banned in leading Protestant cities, the Spanish Inquisition sought to bring him to trial, but Servetus escaped to Italy with friends. However, as he passed through Geneva, Switzerland, he was recognized and immediately arrested, imprisoned, tried, and found guilty. Sentence was pronounced on October 26, 1553. Servetus died in flames, tied to a stake, the following noon.

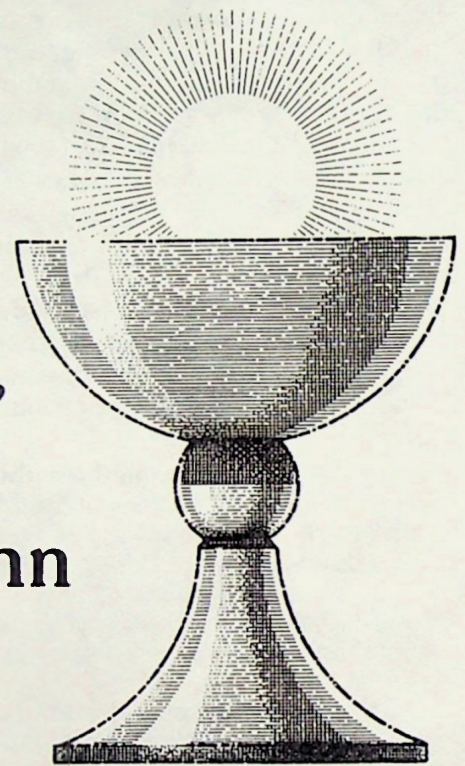
SERVETUS is only one of many who were put to death for the cause of the truth. From the times of the Hebrews down to today, God has always had a people who believed in the truth. Although their books were burned and they suffered terrible persecution—even death—the truth of the simple unity of God has been preserved. The path of the truth can be traced more accurately by the blood of the men who believed it, rather than by their works. We can all be very thankful for these men who did not take a wrong turn theologically, and we should treasure the truth that remains for all of us to enjoy.

"Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (1 Cor. 8:6, NIV).



The Messiah,

Son of God, and the Gospel of John



"Unfortunately this means that there is no sufficient evidence in the New Testament to show whether or not Jesus in fact believed Himself to be the Messiah."

SUCH is the despairing conclusion reached by the writer of the article on Christ in a standard biblical dictionary (*A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. Alan Richardson, SCM Press, London, p. 45). Armed with this text it is difficult to see how the young graduate of a theological college will be able to inspire confidence in the New Testament documents which are supposed to provide his inspiration.

"It is often said that Jesus knew Himself to be the Messiah," the article

continues, "but not the Messiah whom the Jews expected; but why should He have used the term at all, if He had to give it a new and different meaning? To do this without explanation would have only misled his hearers" (*Ibid.*, p. 45). The point is certainly valid.

FOR THOSE who are convinced that Jesus did not mislead his audience, and that the constant affirmation of the New Testament is that Jesus both

by Anthony Buzzard

claimed to be and is the Messiah, there is only one possible conclusion: Jesus used the title "Messiah" in the only sense in which from the whole of the Old Testament record and the contemporary setting it can be understood: of the Anointed King who was to arise from the descendants of David (Psa. 89:20-37, Psa. 2; quoted of Jesus in Heb. 1:5; 2 Sam. 7:14; Psa. 72; Acts 2:30-32) to be ruler in Israel (Matt. 2:6), and Savior of the world (John 4:42). It is in that capacity and no other that Jesus is recognised:

"Nathaniel answered Him, 'You are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel'" (John 1:49).

"We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:42).

It was as King of Israel that Jesus rode into Jerusalem:

"Fear not, daughter of Sion, Behold, your King comes, sitting on the foal of an ass" (John 12:15).

Before Pilate Jesus says:

"You say I am a King; for this purpose I was born, for this purpose I came into the world, that I might witness to that Truth" (John 18:37).

The Gospel of John thrills at the discovery of the promised Messiah. Andrew finds his brother Simon and announces triumphantly:

"We have found the Messiah (which in Greek is the Christ)" (John 1:41).

Even the Gentile Samaritan woman rejoices in the hope of Israel:

"I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called Christ. When He comes, He will announce everything to us. Jesus said to her, 'I who am speaking to you am He'" (John 4:25, 26).

THE READER will judge for himself the truth of the opening statement that there is no sufficient evidence to show whether or not Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah. It will be quite apparent to the student of Scripture that the New Testament is a colossal fraud if Jesus is not the Messiah. The church will have been founded on a lie. "Scholarship" seems sometimes to want to have it so.

MARCH, 1984

When the well-known Jewish scholar, Hugh Schonfield, set out to investigate the origins of Christianity, he discovered, in comparing contemporary Christianity with the Bible, that there were "two Christianities, one inside the other. The inside one was Jewish relating to the Messiahship of Jesus, while the other was largely Gentile reflecting the major doctrines of the Church. . . . I knew some Christians of Jewish origin who mostly spoke the language of the Church. . . . It was in fact another, and to their way of thinking a much more exalted and necessary Jesus, who was the object of their devotion and worship. For them the matter of His Messiahship was a relevant incidental, while for me it was paramount. I sensed that there was something radically amiss with Christian teaching which has taken Christianity out of the proper orbit of Messianism, and made it alien" (*The Politics of God*, p. xiv, emphasis mine).

HUGH SCHONFIELD'S remarks are strikingly reminiscent of Paul's warning to the Corinthians about accepting "another Jesus":

"I fear lest somehow as the Serpent deceived Eve by his cleverness, your minds may be seduced from the simplicity of belief in the Messiah. For if indeed someone comes and proclaims another Jesus, whom we did not proclaim, or a different [alien] Spirit, which you did not receive, or a different Good News which you did not accept, you may well tolerate it" (2 Cor. 11:3, 4).

Our writer in the *Theological Word Book* reports as a matter of history that, exactly as Paul feared, the Messiah of the Bible was replaced by another Jesus. The exchange was effected not by denying that Jesus is the Christ, but by attaching an entirely new meaning to the title "Christ":

"Since [Peter] was speaking to the Jews he would naturally be understood to use it [the term 'Christ'] in its Jewish sense (Acts 2:36). It is, however, clear that in Christian usage the word first acquired a new and different meaning and then lost all real meaning, and became simply a

proper name like 'Jesus' itself. The latter development was all but inevitable among Greek-speaking Gentile Christians, who were not interested in a 'Christ' who would restore the Kingdom to Israel, and who did not understand the meaning of the word" (*Ibid.*, p. 46, emphasis mine).

The implications of these astonishing admissions should be carefully pondered. It should be clear to all that the shifting of the meaning of words—in this case the key word in Christianity—is the most effective way of altering information. The subtlety of the process lies in the fact that biblical terminology can continue to be used, while biblical meanings are eliminated. The result is that the original biblical information about Christ and the kingdom of God suffers a radical distortion; a system of theology can be built which is able to masquerade as biblical while the central biblical facts are suppressed. Thus while Peter nourished the Christian Church upon belief in the Messiah in the Jewish/biblical sense, and while Paul insisted that Gentile believers fully grasp the implications of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, all was well. However, by mid-second century the influence of Gentile "converts" in the Church was so strong that there was no longer an interest in "the Messiah who would restore the Kingdom to Israel" (quoted previously). An investigation in contemporary churches will reveal that it is the Gentile non-Messianic system of belief which has survived, while the Messianic faith of the apostles is regarded as a curious aberration.

COMMENTATORS on Scripture have lamented the fact that "Christ" has lost its biblical significance for churchgoers and rightly insist that within the pages of the New Testament, "Christ" means only the Messiah of Israel. Thus Alexander Reese in *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, says:

"I follow the example of Bishop Lightfoot in substituting 'Messiah' for 'Christ' in these texts. The universal use of the latter as a proper name for our Lord has obscured the
(Continued on page 14)

THE MESSIAH (Continued)

fact that almost always in the New Testament, 'Messiah' or *the Christ* would give the sense and atmosphere better. What a lot of fresh meaning, for instance, Lightfoot imparts to a familiar text when he renders it 'we preach a Messiah crucified' (p. 167).

The same point is made by Sir Robert Anderson:

"I would take sides with those who refuse to believe that 'Christ' is ever used merely as a proper name. With the Jew it was a sacred title of great solemnity, and it is hard to believe that a Hebrew Christian could have come to regard it in any better light" (*The Lord from Heaven*, p. 105).

MORE RECENTLY the celebrated Pauline scholar, Herman Ridderbos, reminds us:

"For Paul the Christ in whose death and resurrection the new Aeon dawns is the Messiah of Israel (Rom. 1:2-4; 9:5), in whom God gathers and saves his people and whom He has exalted and appointed Saviour and Kyrios (Lord) of all things (Phil. 2:9, 10). However much the name Christ in the Pauline usage seems to have acquired the sense of a proper name, this does not mean that this designation has lost its historic Israelite significance. Paul proclaims Christ as the fulfilment of the promises of God to Abraham . . . the eschatological bringer of salvation whose all-embracing significance must be understood in the light of prophecy" (Rom. 15:9-12).

Coming to the text of John's account of the ministry of Jesus, we find Jesus proclaimed both as "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29) and as "Son of God" and "King of Israel" (John 1:49). As C. K. Barratt points out with reference to the designation "Son of God, King of Israel," "Both titles have the same Messianic meaning. It is incorrect to suppose that the latter (King of Israel) is a lower title than the former; there is no anti-climax" (*Commentary on John*, p. 155). His remarks are aimed at counteracting the almost universal belief that "Son of God" describes a more exalted status than "Messiah."

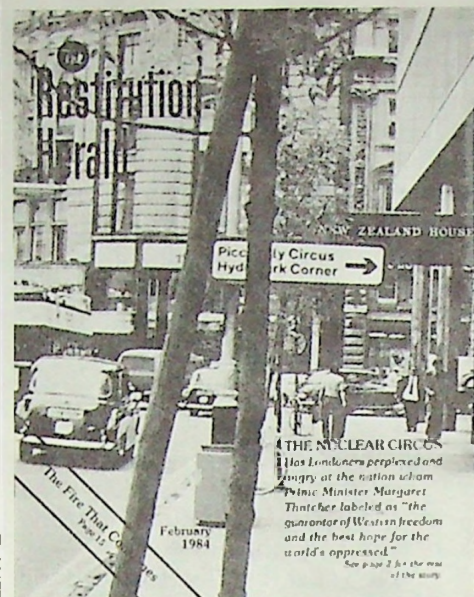
The truth is that for the biblical writers, no title can surpass that of "Messiah, Son of God."

But why should anyone wish to make "Son of God" a higher title than "King of Israel"? Peter's central confession, hailed by Jesus as a glorious revelation from the Father, was that:

"You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16). His insight was precisely that of Nathaniel, that Jesus was the Son of God, King of Israel" (John 1:49).

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE betrays its Gentile origin by a curious tendency to want to exalt the title "Son of God" above that of "Messiah" and "King of Israel." Attempts have been made to separate the designation "Messiah" from "Son of God" on the basis that "Messiah" is Jewish and "Son of God" Christian. The New Testament gives no support at all for such a distinction. Cullman (*Christology of the New Testament*, p. 280) makes the astonishing claim that Jesus approved Peter's confession of Him only as "Son of God" and not as Messiah! Any sensible reading of the passage shows that "Son of God" and "Messiah" are equally designations of the one office, "Son of God" expressing the relation of the King to His Father (Psa. 2:7), and "Messiah" implying His anointing with Holy Spirit for the exercise of His office as a divine representative (Psa. 2:2, Anointed=Messiah).

Efforts to unite Christians will continue to fail until we first reestablish from Scripture the central confession that Jesus is the *Messiah*, the Son of God (Matt. 16:16). A world of meaning is to be found in the term "Messiah," much of which does not make any impact on those who seek to put their trust in Jesus. At the center of all evangelism we must proclaim Jesus as Messiah just any Jesus will not do. The threatening possibility of proclaiming or believing in "another Jesus" (2 Cor. 11:4) remains as much a danger to the church as it always was. The evil one's tactics have not changed.



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Insights From A Letter Home

by Alan Cain

Editor's Note: The author, a student at Oregon Bible College, Oregon, Illinois, discovered valuable insights in theology during a classroom discussion. We are reproducing a portion of his letter to his parents to share his discovery with our readers. The letter first appeared in the Macomb Church of God bulletin.

We had an interesting discussion today in Systematic Theology. We were discussing the birth of Jesus. There are two Greek words concerning birth: *ginomy* which means "come to be" and there is *genao* which means "begat." Surprisingly, Paul uses "ginomai" (come to be) in Galatians 4:4 instead of "begat." Apparently Paul recognized that "begat" has a reference to an earthly father. This also negates the preexistence concept because this is when Jesus "came to be." The same word is used in John 1:16 when it says John was "sent from God," but was John preexistent? *Apostello* is the word used for "sent from" in John 1:6 and Galatians 4:4. Also, *apostello* is where we get the word "apostle," meaning "sent forth." I thought it was significant that both John and Jesus were "sent" in the same fashion.

However, there is still something more interesting. In Matthew 1:18, there are two more Greek words: *genises*/origin and *genesis*/birth. Almost all translations use the second Greek word which is "birth," but this is found to be tampering with the original text and the first word is correct, which is "origin." So Matthew did not just want to say "birth," but rather this was Jesus' "origin."

Also, a confutation of preexistence is seen in Luke 1:35. The word "therefore" is used. "Therefore" connects *the overshadowing of the Most High* and *Son of God*. In other words, for the reason that the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary, the Child will be called the Son of God: not because he was pre-existent with God and then incarnated, but because Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit.



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That Rock Was Christ

by John Cunningham

BELIEVERS in the personal pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ often appeal to the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:4 where he says of the Israelites in the wilderness, that they all drank "the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

It is argued from this that Christ himself personally accompanied the people of Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness to the promised land. The verse is often tied in with several Old Testament texts which describe Yahweh as a Rock (Deut 32:4; Psa. 18:2, 31). Since Yahweh is the rock, and Christ is also the Rock who accompanied Israel, Christ must therefore be Yahweh, it is believed.

Defective Interpretation

This interpretation, common though it is, suffers from a number of serious defects. The first of these concerns the meaning of the term "Christ." Too often we use it simply as a proper name for Jesus as if it were his surname. "Christos" is the Greek form of the Hebrew word "Messiah," meaning "the anointed one." It was a title given to the kings of Israel. David was a "messiah" and was a type, or forerunner, of the one who would deliver the people of Israel and establish the kingdom of God.

The coming of the Messiah is a common theme of Old Testament prophecy. He was to be the "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15), the "seed of Abraham" (Gen. 22:18, Gal. 3:8, 16), the "seed of Judah" (Gen. 49:10; 1

Chron. 5:2), and the "seed of David" (2 Sam. 7:12-14; Isa. 11:1, 10; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8).

"Seed" in all these scriptures means "descendant." This points to the fact that the Messiah was prophesied to arise from the human race. Nothing in the Old Testament suggests that the promised seed was already in existence in another form. For Paul to have taught that the Messiah was actually and personally present with Israel in the wilderness would have been a staggering contradiction of the words of the prophets.

Another Objection

The second major objection to this theory is the fact that God used angels to minister to Israel. The New Testament declares in three places that the law was given by angels (Acts 7:38, 53; Gal. 3:19, Heb. 2:2). In each of these passages the angelic giving of the Law forms an important part of the argument. Study each in its context with care and you will see that the common theme is the superiority of the gospel to the Law. The Law was given only by angels but the gospel was brought by the Son of God and is therefore vastly superior to it. Christ could not have had any part, therefore, either in giving the Law to Israel, or in ministering to the Israelites in the wilderness.

Since the Messiah could not have been present personally in the wilderness, Paul's statement must mean that the Rock represented or typified Christ in some way. It is not uncommon for Scripture to use the verb "to be" in a representational sense. Jesus said, "I

am the door" (John 10:7), "I am the true vine" (John 15:1). In the institution of the Lord's supper he said that the bread "is my body" and that the cup "is my blood" (1 Cor. 11:24, 25) clearly meaning that they symbolised his broken body and shed blood.

Typological Parallels

This interpretation is strengthened by a close study of the whole passage from verse 1 to verse 11 of 1 Corinthians 10. Twice Paul states that the experiences of Israel were examples for us (vv. 6, 11). The Greek word used here actually means "types."

The passing of the Israelites through the cloud and through the Red Sea was a type of Christian baptism. They were baptized "into Moses" (v. 2, NASB) as we are baptized "into Christ" (Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27). Verses 3 and 4 continue the typological parallel by referring to the incidents of the giving of the manna in Exodus 16, and the incidents at Rephidim and Kadesh when God miraculously supplied water out of a rock (Ex. 17:1-7; Num. 20:1-13).

The "spiritual" food mentioned in verse 3 is clearly the manna miraculously given daily to Israel over a period of 40 years. The giving of the manna is recorded in Exodus 16 and forms the background to John 6.

Two Rock Incidents

There are two incidents involving a rock recorded during the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites and it is important to notice the difference between them.

The first incident occurred just after the miraculous giving of the manna. Israel arrived at Rephidim (Ex. 17:1) and immediately began to complain about lack of water, whereupon God commanded Moses to strike the rock. Water gushed out and the people's thirst was satisfied. The striking of the rock typifies the fact that Christ our Rock was smitten for us. The miraculous giving of the water typifies the giving of the Holy Spirit, the water of Life (John 7:37-39).

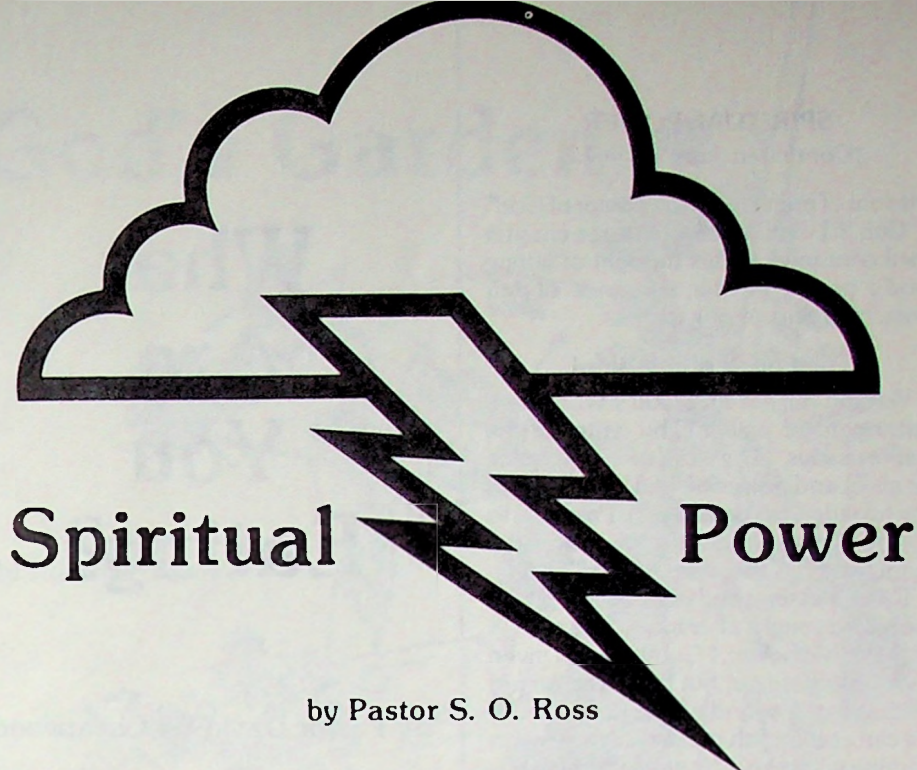
The second incident occurred toward the end of the wandering in the wilderness. Again, Israel complained for lack of water and again God provided for their needs. This time, however, he clearly instructed Moses to *speak* to the Rock, but in his anger Moses disobeyed and struck the rock twice (Num. 20:1-12).

In smiting the rock instead of speaking to it Moses was guilty of destroying the type. The rock in Exodus 17 typified Christ in the flesh, smitten to give to us the water of life while the rock in Numbers 20 typified Christ our High Priest, not to be smitten twice (cp. Heb. 6:6), but only to be spoken to to supply the water of life.

The first incident occurred at the beginning of the wanderings, the second at the end; both incidents thus form a parable of Christ's continuous presence with his people during their "wilderness wanderings."

The two incidents we have looked at took place in entirely different locations and there is a different Hebrew word for "rock" used in each place. In Exodus 17 the word is *tsur* and in Numbers 20 it is *sela*. So what does Paul mean when he states that "they drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them"? Obviously, a literal rock did not accompany Israel through the wilderness and many feel that this is proof that Christ himself went with them. The answer is that Paul is using the language of Christian experience and reading it back into the Old Testament type. This is shown clearly by his reference to baptism in verse 1 and 2. The Israelites were not literally "baptized." In fact, we are told that the water did not come near them; they walked dryshod through the Red Sea. But their experience is a close enough parallel for Paul to say they were baptized "into Moses." Likewise the rock did not literally follow them. It was simply a type of Christ accompanying us through life.

MARCH, 1984



by Pastor S. O. Ross

MAN'S SKILL has given him proficiency in many imaginative procedures. The dynamo to create or manufacture electrical power, the atomic power of today, and the sending of man to the moon are a few examples of man's accomplishments. What we need to realize is that this is all God's power which has been harnessed by man. The power comes from God. All the great feats performed by man we usually find are really the power of God.

In this article I will review for you the great power of God. I call it Spiritual Power. It is that power with which God created the universe and all that is in it by it he caused Mary to conceive and bear the child Jesus; he also resurrected Jesus from the grave. In nature his power is active. It causes little seeds to send forth plants and grow crops. Trees and beautiful flowers spring forth at his command. Job said it well in describing this great power: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7). The angel said to Mary, "With God nothing shall be impossible."

The Witness of the Word

Throughout the Scriptures we see evidence of this great Spiritual Power in use. I believe this same power is still available today, at least in some measure, or as needed.

God does give special power to his servants. Micah said, "Truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD" (3:8). Jesus said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:18).

This spiritual power is mightier than any physical force. Zechariah wrote, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (4:6). We find the account in Mark 4 where Jesus with the power of God was able to still the mighty wind and cause a great calm on the sea. Acts 16 records Paul and Silas in prison praying and singing praises to God. As a result, a great earthquake shook off their shackles and opened the prison gates. This great spiritual power was mightier than prison gates and chains.

The same power provided dynamic preaching for the apostles. Acts 4:33 tells us, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all."

This power also gave strength for an effective witness. Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This witness is said to have turned the world upside down.

God's power can fill lives for special service. Paul said, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the

(Continued on page 18)

SPIRITUAL POWER

(Continued from page 17)

wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5). Later in this same chapter Paul continues in this thought of letting God's power be the influence of our preaching and of our witness.

The Power of the Word

We find further that God's Word is an instrument of power. The writer to the Hebrews says, "The word of God is quick [or alive] and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword" (4:12). Paul says to the Ephesians, take "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (6:16).

These blessings and use of God's power should be sought after today. We should pray for that power. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). We can accomplish much with that power working within us. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20). We need to seek that power and let it work in our lives. This spiritual power, God's power, is in the world today. It can be in your life and mine if we truly seek it.

The Power in God's People

It was this same great Spiritual Power of God that motivated that new little band of believers after Christ's resurrection. In the early verses of Acts 2 we find how the Holy Ghost, or the power of God, emblazened this assembly with strength and desire to evangelize and be missionaries for him. Those to whom they spoke came from various tongues and different countries, yet all heard them speaking in their own language. What a miracle. What power. Spiritual Power!

This little band was able to move thousands to believe, accept, and serve the Lord. Peter's great sermon on Pentecost brought some 3,000 forward to accept Christ and be baptized into him. What a revival! God's power knows no bounds. May we seek that power in our lives.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). So Jesus is the connecting link to that great power. We need to plug in to him. As we can have no electric power or light unless we are plugged into the power, so must we plug into that great Spiritual Power through Christ. May we truly "plug in" to that great Spiritual Power that is available for us today—that great Power of God.

What Are You Eating?

By Pastor David W. Cheatwood

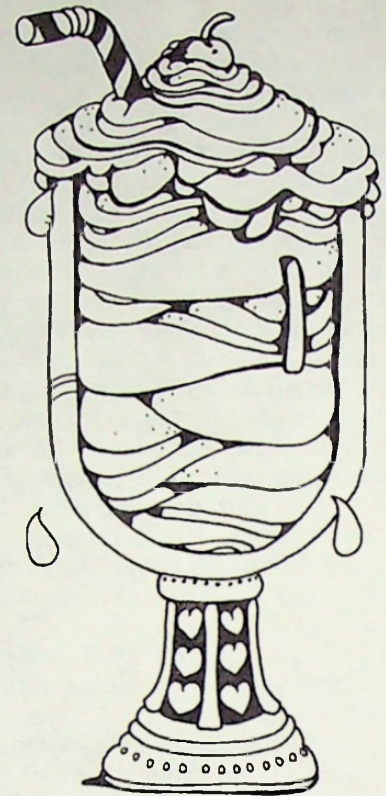
YOU DON'T have to watch much television to know that food is being placed in front of us with the lure to eat more and more. For those of us with an eating problem this can add a great deal to our stress. How many times this week have you heard "Are you hungry?"

Most of us Americans don't need to be encouraged to eat. In fact we eat far more than we need. Of course I am speaking about physical food. We do need to improve our eating habits concerning spiritual food.

Jesus says: "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:4). How is your spiritual diet?

Are you spending time with God and his Word each day? Do you take time in your daily activities to hear from him as well as talk to him? Meal times are usually scheduled into our daily activities and we don't care to miss them. Isn't the Word of God just as important to our spiritual man as food is to our physical man?

For the next month, why not try setting aside time to read the Word of God and let it lift you up and direct you to walk closer to him? Each day read five Psalms and one Proverb. Try it this way: Suppose today is the tenth, so you can read the 10th



Proverb, the 10th Psalm, the 40th Psalm, the 70th Psalm, the 100th Psalm, the 130th Psalm. By reading the Proverb of the day's date and the Psalm of the day's date plus each 30th Psalm thereafter you will read through the Proverbs and the Psalms each month. You will not become bored with these texts because they draw you closer to God and teach you how to live your life for today. The Psalms will lift you up and the Proverbs will direct your path so that you might honor God.

Will you join me in taking time to improve our spiritual diets? It is just as important as the physical man. In fact it is more important. Without the proper spiritual diet we will continue to abuse the physical man until we have destroyed ourselves. We need more care in what we eat.

Jesus says that we need more than bread. How do you react to him? Do you believe him? Will you get the spiritual food you need for your life? He is waiting to see what you do about your spiritual diet. What is your decision?

Mark sat in the window seat, his chin in his hands, looking out at the rain.

"When is it ever going to stop, Mom? It's been raining almost all week and our spring vacation is about over. I wanted to play ball with Danny and Joe and Ernie. And we planned on hiking Saturday."

Mother looked up from her mending. "Yes, Mark. I suppose you are tired of being cooped up in the house and not able to do what you planned. . . . I see the mailman has just gone. Why don't you go see what he left for us?"

Mark dashed out to the mailbox, making sure to jump in every puddle, getting two very wet feet. He found a whole bundle of letters and papers which he tucked under his jacket.

"We got a lot of mail today, Mom. Hey, here's a big seed catalog. Can I look at it?"

"Oh, I'm glad it came. Daddy and I were talking last night about the garden we'll be planting soon. Daddy is going to plow the ground between the orchard and the barn for our garden. We plan to make an extra big one. Since we got the new freezer, I'll be able to freeze most of our food for this winter."

Mark, his parents, and sister Mary had moved to the small farm on the outskirts of town. They never had a garden before since there was no space for one in the small yard behind their house.

"Do you think I could have a garden of my own and plant some corn and beans and tomatoes and some flowers, too? I promise to weed it and hoe it."

"Of course you can. Remember that it will need water, and those weeds grow awfully fast. There might even be times when you will have to give up a ball game because your plants need attention."

Mark sat thinking about this. Then he asked, "Mom, when did people learn how to plant gardens and care for them?"

"Well, Mark, way back at the very beginning, God planted a garden and called it Eden. He put all kinds of trees in it—trees to bear fruits and nuts, trees with flowers, some with sap to make into sweet syrup, and others just for shade and beauty. There were bushes with berries, flowers, and leaves for making a delicious drink. Many kinds of grasses grew for the animals to eat. Here in this garden God also created the first man and woman and told them to care for the garden.

"One day an evil serpent tempted Eve to disobey God and eat fruit from a tree that God had told them not to eat. Adam

God's Garden

By Maxine Herr



ate some, too. Because they disobeyed God, Adam and Eve had to leave the beautiful garden and could never return. They had to grow their food. As part of their punishment for disobedience, weeds, thistles, and insects got in their way. So they had to work very hard to grow the food."

"So that is why we still have weeds and bugs, huh, Mom?"

"Yes, but I'd like to tell you about another garden. This garden existed a long time after the other one. In fact, it is still there over in Israel, just outside Jerusalem. It is called the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus often went to this lovely and peaceful place to pray to God. He prayed there the night before the soldiers took him to be crucified.

"After Jesus died on the cross, a man who had loved him very much took his body and laid it in a tomb in another lovely garden. But we know that Jesus did not stay in that tomb. He arose and is still alive. Some of his friends saw him in the garden and thought he was the gardener. Then he spoke to them and they recognized him as the Christ they loved.

"This happened in the springtime, that time when the seeds that have lain asleep in the ground during the cold winter feel the warm gentle rains and the bright sun. They push their sprouts up through the earth, and the buds come and then burst into bloom. The sap in the roots of the trees starts rising to flow into the limbs and branches and the leaves and blossoms appear. People plow up the ground and plant the seeds that will become the different kinds of foods and flowers that brighten our days and bring joy through their beauty.

"Springtime is the time of renewal of life and hope. And do you know, Mark, as beautiful as our land is, some day Jesus is going to come back here from where he has been in heaven with God. He will clean away all the bad things, like the weeds and insects and diseases. Then the earth will once more be like that first garden God made."

Mark looked out the window as a ray of sunlight fell on the page of roses in the catalog. "Oh, Mom, just look! There's a rainbow. God sure knows how to make beautiful things. And I'm going to help by planting lots and lots of seeds."

C h i l d r e n ' s P a g e

Rachel Carr,
Editor

"All Television Is Educational Television"

—Nicholas Johnson

If what former F.C.C. member Nicholas Johnson stated is correct, then every time we turn on the TV set, we are watching educational television. The question is, What kind of education? What kind of values?

Based upon a review of more than 25,000 individual TV research studies published between 1972 & 1982, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services recently concluded:

1. The amount of violence on TV has not decreased in the last

10 years. The consensus among most of the research community is that violence on TV does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teen-agers who watch the programs.

2. TV molds children's attitudes which later may be translated into behavior. Children who watch a lot of violence on TV may come to accept violence as normal behavior.

3. A causal link between televised violence and aggressive behavior now seems obvious.



4. Most young children do not know the difference between reality and fantasy on TV.

5. Lately there has been more sexual reference, more innuendo, and more seductive actions and dress. Both parents and behavioral scientists consider TV an important sex educator, not only in depictions specifically related to sex, but in the relationships between men and women throughout all programs.

6. TV influences how people think about the world around them or what is sometimes called their concept of social reality. For example, heavy viewers of TV are more apt to think the world is violent than are light viewers. They also trust other people less and believe that the world is a "mean and scary" place.

I do not believe that the answer is: Get Rid of the Thing! The answer is to recognize that TV is educational—all of it! It is valuable—or at least can be—if we learn and exercise self-discipline in TV viewing and actively control the TV viewing of our children!

Dennis Lowry suggests the following paraphrase of Philippians 4:8; "Finally, brethren, whatever programs are noble, whatever programs are just, whatever programs are lovely, whatever programs are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy on TV—watch these programs." Think it over this month.

—Pastor James Graham.

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APRIL
1984

The
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- **The Kingdom of God
Is Good News**
Page 12

Editor's Viewpoint

Easter Brings out the Best in Christians

Thank God for Easter.

Without Christ's resurrection our faith would be useless (1 Cor. 15:12-19) and life lived just in the strength of what we experience by our five senses would be a hopeless existence.

Imagine what life would be like without the vindicating fact of Christ's resurrection.

Paul says that Christian preaching and faith would be in vain (1 Cor. 15:14). Unbelievers could accuse believers of being downright liars for speaking about a raised Savior who they knew wasn't raised (v. 15). The whole business of remaining Christian would be futile because no sins could be seen as forgiven. Christ would have died for his own sins of being an imposter—claiming to have represented God's truth (see v. 17). Additionally, every Christian who died would rest without hope of ever living again (v. 18).

But Paul strikes out all the assumptions of the foregoing paragraph.

Because of the witness of hundreds of people (v. 5-8), Christ's resurrection is an historical fact. All that has been said about him and his ministry clarifies Christian faith. Our living Savior guarantees that our hope will also become fact—in time.

"But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20, RSV).

Because Christ lives, we know we too shall live again—forever.

Because Christ lives we know our lives today are worthwhile, useful, helpful, wholesome, meaningful, and necessary to the well-being of the world around us (1 Cor. 15:58).

Because Christ lives, we know that one day even our mortal bodies will experience change to never again undergo the curse of sin, disease, and death. The perishable will become imperishable; weakness will be raised in power; the man of dust shall bear the image of the man of heaven (see 1 Cor. 15:42-49, RSV).

Because Christ lives, we know that death is doomed forever. We shall

triumph over our greatest enemy (1 Cor. 15:26, 54-56).

Yes, thank God for Easter. It brings out the best in Christians.

Noah's Ark a Submarine Built by Spacemen

If you believe that one, you've read it in *The National Enquirer*.

That popular newsprint tabloid quotes "experts" to prove the suggestion of the headline. A director of the International UFO Bureau is quoted as leaving no doubt that Noah's vessel was a submarine. He could not have built such a sophisticated ship without the direction of space aliens. Another UFO investigator agrees with the claim.

But what seemingly clinches the argument is the expert opinion of a self-proclaimed biblical scholar, Zecharia Sitchin. He declares that the biblical term for "ark" in ancient Hebrew finds its root in a word we would translate "sunken." Thus, only a submarine-type vessel could fulfill the demands of the Bible passage.

Before commenting on the validity of these assertions, we note that the whole story appears at the bottom of page 2 of *The Enquirer's* February 14, 1984, edition. Its placement in the issue identifies the piece as nothing more than sensational "filler." Not too much stock should be placed in speculative statements found in the story.

According to the best exegetic helps available, there is no shred of evidence to suggest that the original Hebrew word translated "ark" has "sunken" as its root. In no scientific or biblical studies can it be ascertained that spacemen assisted in the ark's construction. Only the figment of the imagination of self-styled UFO investigators can create a submarine in Noah's day.

The best evidence declares that God instructed Noah to construct the ark, and "Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him" (Gen. 6:22, RSV).

Vatican Helped Nazi War Criminals Escape

Sounds suspiciously like a rumor kept alive since 1945 by Catholic haters.

Not true.

The New York Times Service reports that recent statements by a French

Nazi hunter and a declassified State Department report implicate the Vatican's role in assisting German war criminals to relocate in South American countries.

Where and how did this report originate?

Apparently a Foreign Service officer in Rome in 1947 included the incriminating evidence in a report. In part, Vincent La Vista wrote that "in countries where the church is a controlling or dominating factor, the Vatican has brought pressure to bear which has resulted in the foreign countries taking an attitude almost favoring the entry into their country of former Nazis and former Fascists or other political groups, so long as they are anti-communist."

Why did the Vatican protect Nazi criminals?

The report has the answer: "The justification of the Vatican for its participation in this illegal traffic is simply the propagation of the faith."

So far the Vatican has refused comment to the allegations.

Nicotine Arouses Killer Germicide

What happens when the human body attempts to defend itself from nicotine, the addictive component in cigarette smoke?

This question has intrigued researchers like Dr. Robert Senior, a professor at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. He and his peers have uncovered evidence that should frighten all smokers right out of the habit.

When the nicotine in the smoke hits the lungs, immediately the body sends white blood cells called neutrophils to the rescue. The result is that potent enzymes are released which act like a germicide. While these cells gravitate toward the nicotine to clear up this foreign bacteria, they also attack attached lung cells, gradually dissolving the lining of the lungs.

When the enzymes digest vital components of nearby lung cells, over a period of years the smoker's ability to breathe wears away. Eventual death is the result.

Next time you're in a crowd of heavy smokers, head for the nearest exit. The life you save may be your own.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kudos for the February Issue

I thought your February, 1984, issue of THE RESTITUTION HERALD was one of the best I've ever read. I feel so fortunate to have had a home where we were taught the Bible truths and we used our Bibles to support our faith.

—San Luis Obispo, CA

The February HERALD was indeed fine, and the cover spectacular. The articles dealt with our special Church of God teachings. —San Dimas, CA.

We recently reviewed the February issue of THE RESTITUTION HERALD which was prepared for distribution not only here, but in England. We would like to commend you on an overall excellent publication. The articles were all timely and challenging. This publication is an excellent way to spearhead our outreach efforts in England. Thank you for your efforts in putting this together. —Hammond, LA.

We want to send gift subscriptions of THE RESTITUTION HERALD to some of our friends, but we want to be sure that their subscriptions will begin with the February issue. That was a good one. We were told that the issues from now on will carry more doctrine. We hope that after they see a change they will be willing to subscribe for it themselves.

—Pelzer, SC.

Your February edition of THE RESTITUTION HERALD really was a tremendous issue. Keep up the good work!

—Mt. Sterling, IL

Appreciate Objective Approach

I have very much enjoyed reading THE HERALD the last few years. I believe you have done a very good job of improving its overall content and quality. Particularly, I feel Bro. Needham's and Bro. Buzzard's series have been uplifting. The tone of the magazine is such that I can send it to nonbelievers with the confidence that they will be exposed to the truth without being offended. Rather, the objective approach encourages thought on the part of the reader, prompting him to question his own views in light of what the writer might be saying. —Englewood, OH.

Agree with "Freeze or Deterrence?" Article

I did enjoy your article on "Freeze or Deterrence—Defusing the Nuclear Debate" (February, 1984, issue). It is exactly the direction I have been thinking. We don't have to grasp at straws when we can live in the beautiful calm of faith. That is what it said to me. Thank you for your effort.

—St. Louis, MO.

I really enjoyed your article on the nuclear freeze—deterrence issue. I want to share it with a friend. She is upset by the stockpiling of bombs by the world's nations. —Oberlin, KS.

More on the Swindoll Editorial

I couldn't help but read the "Cashmere" letter ["Don't Depend on Swindoll," March HERALD] with amused interest. It must be a heavy responsibility—being the watchdog of the Church of God. To be burdened with the calling of (or is it a gift) being the Corporate Conscience. I would encourage those of our family who feel the need to watch out, monitor, check up on, pass judgment on the rest of us to learn to:

1. Trust and respect others within the church as mature Christians.
2. Stop looking for bad in or weakness in every statement.
3. Attack the real problem—there are those dying without Christ.

If this sounds sarcastic and cynical, then I have made my point. Keep your chin up. Some of us are capable of understanding SATIRE—we can even laugh at ourselves.

—Paradise Valley, AZ.

Fig Tree for Members Only

The cover on the Dec/Jan HERALD is beautiful. But it makes me thankful that we are spending the winter in Florida.

I was surprised when I read, "Is the Church of God the Fig Tree of Matthew 21:19?" It was an excellent article—for members only. If I were a nonmember picking up this issue and reading the article, I would not run, or even walk, to attend the church described. Keep THE RESTITUTION HERALDS so we will enjoy reading them and happy to pass them on to others. God bless your efforts.

—Orlando, FL

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates: the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6); the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8); Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4); the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through him (Col. 3:3); the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28); the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54); the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8); the final restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32), the church to be joint heirs with him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3); the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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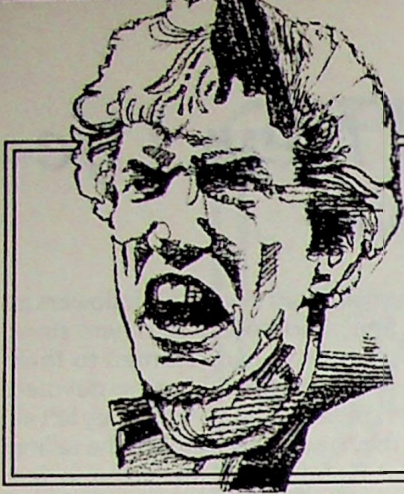
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The Incredible Courage of Michael Sattler

by Pastor Sidney Hatch

*"The time cometh, that whosoever killeth
you will think that he doeth God service."*—
John 16:2.

ON MAY 21, 1527, in the town of Rottenburg, Germany, 23 miles from Stuttgart, Michael Sattler died for the cause of Christ. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that this man's martyrdom is unique in Christian history.

Michael Sattler was one of the leaders of the Anabaptist movement which swept across Europe in the sixteenth century. To appreciate his place in history, we must first look at the spiritual episode in which he played such a heroic part.

The Anabaptist revival was, essentially, a recovery of Bible-believing Christianity. It began in Switzerland in the form of Bible study groups, and from there spread throughout Europe.

These humble Christian folk were called "ana-baptists" or "re-baptizers," because they rejected the infant baptism of the state churches. Baptism, they said, should only be administered to adults upon confession of personal faith in Christ. This view, along with other convictions, both religious and political, set them on a collision course with the empire-church of that day.

Other Anabaptist "peculiarities," almost too numerous to mention here, included a literal interpretation of Scripture, separation of church and state, freedom of conscience, development of Christian character, the formation of Christian communities, and a strong belief in the second coming of Christ and his millennial reign. Many of these people believed in the sleep of the dead, followed by the resurrection. Among their leaders were men who dared to question such traditional dogma as eternal torment and trinitarianism.

As the Anabaptist movement grew, Europe became alarmed. A religious conclave or "diet" was held at Speyer, Germany, in 1529, and out of it came a decree that all Anabaptists should be put to death! This decree was binding upon all the states of the so-called Holy Roman Empire, and, from that date on, Anabaptists and their like were hunted like animals.

For the next half century, Anabaptists perished in all the countries of Europe. It has been written that their blood flowed like water, and they cried to the Lord for help. Hundreds went to their death joyful

and singing Psalms. By 1546, in Holland and neighboring Friesland alone, at least 30,000 had been slain.

As late as 1612, a year after the King James Version of the Bible was published, the despotic English king, James I, burned at the stake two Anabaptist leaders, Edward Wightman and Bartholomew Legatt. Among other "heresies," these men were charged with denying the doctrine of the Trinity and believing firmly in the various tenets of conditional immortality. The martyrdom of Wightman created such a sensation, that, from that day forth, no more executions for heresy took place in England.

It was in the tumultuous context of this movement, in its very beginning, that Michael Sattler appeared. He was born at Stauffen, Germany, probably in the year 1490. At an early age he entered a monastery, preparatory to becoming a Catholic monk. While there, he studied the letters of Paul, and also learned Hebrew and Greek. In time, he left the monastery, and it was not long until he had embraced Anabaptist doctrines.

Michael Sattler soon became a leader of the South German and Swiss Anabaptists. He threw himself into his new life and ministry, preaching the gospel in Germany, and at secret meetings in the forests of Switzerland. Later his center of activities shifted to Horb and Rottenburg, cities in southwest Germany, east of the Rhine. It was only a matter of time until the authorities discovered the little flocks with which he was associated, and Michael Sattler and his wife, and others of the believers, were placed under arrest.

The spirit of the times is illustrated in the suggestion of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria that the prisoners immediately receive "third baptism" or drowning. This apparently was a convenient method of disposing of Anabaptists. But, in this instance at least, the authorities preferred a semblance of justice.

Michael Sattler's trial was conducted at Rottenburg. It was a turbulent affair, lasting about two days, during which time vilification and abuse were heaped upon him. But, as a prisoner of the gospel, he defended his views with Scripture and never lost his composure, all of which sorely

vexed the judges.

During the course of the trial, he was asked about veneration of the Virgin Mary and the saints. Here again Sattler spoke forth scripturally and without compromise. Mary and the saints, he explained, could not intercede for us. Like all the rest of the faithful, they were asleep in death and awaiting the judgment. Thus it became clear that, like so many of the Anabaptists, he believed in person-sleep, the biblical doctrine of the sleep of the dead.

A verdict in the trial was not long in coming, and Michael Sattler was sentenced to die. First he was to be tortured, and then, as an arch-heretic, burned at the stake. Still, as the sentence was announced, he maintained his calmness.

The terrible proceedings began at the city market place. First his tongue was cut off, and then he was forged or framed to a wagon. Twice, then, red-hot pliers or tweezers were used to tear pieces of flesh from his body. On the way to the execution, the pliers ripped away at his flesh five more times.

When the executioner and his party arrived at the appointed spot, Michael Sattler's torn body was bound to a ladder, which was then set upright in a stack of wood arranged for the burning. But, as he stood in the midst of the fire, he gave one more demonstration of his unconquerable faith in his Savior. When the flames had burned away the ropes which bound his hands, he lifted up his forefingers. It was a prearranged sign for his family, and a farewell signal for all to see. He wanted everyone to know that, even in the flames, he had been faithful to the end. Then, the moving account says, he patiently fell asleep in the Lord.

Eight days later, Michael Sattler's wife was drowned in the Neckar River. Faithful like her husband, she received "third baptism."

The impact at the time of Michael Sattler's death has been described by modern historians "far-reaching" and "profound." But, tragically, there was no let-up in the persecution of the Anabaptists. The terrible Edict of Speyer was to come just two years later, April 23, 1529.

A German account before us describes Michael Sattler as *der Blutzeuge Gottes*, "the blood-witness of God." When we consider his martyrdom, and the truths for which he and his fellow-believers died, we take courage and remind ourselves that we "have not yet resisted unto blood" (Heb. 12:4).

The persecution of Michael Sattler and the others like him, was, in a very real way, a fulfillment of our Lord's prophecy in the upper room: "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:2, 3).



by Pastor Edward Bender

THE RESURRECTION, OUR HOPE

AT THIS TIME of the year when we see nature springing forth from winter's sleep, we are reminded of man's rest in the sleep of death until the springing forth of the RESURRECTION. The Bible clearly resounds to us that THE RESURRECTION is the HOPE OF THE BELIEVER! "Looking for that BLESSED HOPE, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). Our HOPE and REWARD come at the same time as the FIRST RESURRECTION which occurs at the return of Jesus Christ.

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep (in death), that ye sorrow not, even as others which have NO HOPE. For if we believe that Jesus died and ROSE AGAIN, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For 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: 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" (1 Thes. 4:13-17, emphasis mine). Paul clearly stated that our HOPE is the COMING OF JESUS CHRIST when he will awaken us from the SLEEP OF DEATH. At this time we will receive our REWARD. "The Son of man SHALL COME in the glory of his Father with his angels; and THEN he shall REWARD every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

The truth of CHRIST'S RESURRECTION in the Scriptures points toward the HOPE that we will have when Jesus returns to this earth as "the RESURRECTION, and the LIFE" (John 11:25).

Our HOPE of the future is based upon OUR HOPE of the RETURN OF JESUS to this EARTH and the RESURRECTION POWER which he will demonstrate at that time. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [in death], but we shall all be changed [resurrected]. . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:51-54). Those who have fallen asleep in death IN CHRIST will be resurrected

when Jesus returns.

Paul clearly defines the spiritual meaning of hope. He states: "For we are saved by HOPE: but HOPE that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we HOPE for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24, 25). Paul is reminding the believers at Rome that the Christ-like walk is a DAY-BY-DAY EXPERIENCE. Our HOPE will not become reality until that day that Jesus returns to this earth and grants immortality to his followers.

Jesus will bring the fulfillment of this HOPE with him when he returns to this earth. "And, behold, I come quickly; and MY REWARD IS WITH ME, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

As we approach this special time of the year when we remember the RESURRECTION OF THE SON OF GOD, it is essential that we remember that THE RESURRECTION is our HOPE. "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. And every man that HATH THIS HOPE IN HIM purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).



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Who Is Jesus?

IF OUR WORSHIP is to be, as the Bible demands, “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24), it is clear that we shall want to understand what the Bible discloses about Jesus and his relationship to his Father. Scripture tells us that Jesus of Nazareth is the one revealed in the Bible as God’s Son, the Messiah promised by the prophets of the Old Testament.

It is a striking fact that Jesus never referred to himself as “God.” Equally remarkable is the New Testament’s use of the word “God”—in Greek *ho theos*—to refer to the *Father*

alone, some 1350 times. In sharp contrast, Jesus is called “god” in a handful of texts only—perhaps no more than two.¹

Old Testament Monotheism Confirmed by Jesus and Paul

Readers of Scripture in the 20th century may not easily appreciate the strength of the monotheism—belief in one God—which was the first principle of all Old Testament teaching about God. The Jews were prepared to die for their conviction that the true God was a single person. Any idea of plurality in the Godhead was rejected as dangerous idolatry. The Law and the Prophets had repeatedly insisted that only one was truly God, and no one could have envisaged “distinctions” within the Godhead once he had committed to memory texts like the following (quoted from the New American Standard Bible):

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” (Deut 6:4.)

“Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us?” (Mal. 2:10.)

“Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me” (Isa. 43:10).

“I am God, and there is no other” (Isa. 45:22).

“I am God, and there is no one like Me” (Isa. 46:9).

Examples of strictly monotheistic statements can be multiplied from the Old Testament. The important fact to observe is that Jesus, as founder of Christianity, confirmed and reinforced the Old Testament insistence that God is one. According to the records of his teaching compiled by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus said nothing at all to disturb belief in the absolute oneness of God. When a scribe (a theologian) quoted the famous words, “God is one, and there is none else besides him,” Jesus commended him because he had “spoken intelligently” and was “not far from the Kingdom of God” (Mark 12:29-34).

In John’s account of Jesus’ ministry, Jesus equally confirmed the unrestricted monotheism of his Jewish heritage in words which cannot be misunderstood. He spoke of God, his Father, as “the one who alone is God” (John 5:44), and “the only true God” (John 17:3). Throughout his recorded discourses he referred the word “God” to the Father only. Not once did He ever say that he was God, a notion which would have sounded both absurd and blasphemous. Jesus’ monotheistic phrases in John 5:44 and 17:3 are echoes of the Old Testament view of God as one unique person. We can easily discern the Jewish and Old Testament orthodoxy of Paul who spoke of his Christian belief in “one God, the Father” (1 Cor. 8:6) and the “one God” as distinct from the “one mediator between God and man, Jesus, himself *man*” (1 Tim. 2:5). For both Jesus and Paul, God was a single uncreated being, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1:3). Even after Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of the Father, the Father is still, in Jesus’ own words, his God (Rev. 3:12).

If we examine the recorded teachings of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, remembering that these documents repre-

sent the mature understanding of the apostolic church in the 60's-80's A.D., we shall find that Jesus believed himself to be a created being who had a beginning. Matthew and Luke trace the origin of Jesus to a special act of creation by God when the Messiah's conception took place in the womb of Mary. It was this miraculous event which marked the beginning—the *genesis*, or origin, of Jesus of Nazareth (Matt. 1:18). Nothing at all is said of an "eternal sonship," implying that Jesus had been alive as a Son *before* his conception. That idea was introduced into Christian circles after the New Testament documents had been completed.

Whoever Said the Messiah Was God?

Most readers of Scripture approach the divine records with a well established set of assumptions. They are unaware of the fact that much of what they understand about Jesus is derived from theological systems devised by writers outside the Bible. In this way they readily accept a large dose of tradition, while claiming and believing that the Bible is their sole authority.²

The crucial question we must answer is this: On what basis did Jesus and the early church claim that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah? The answer is plain. It was by contending that he perfectly fulfilled the role which the Old Testament had predicted of him. It had to be demonstrated that he fit the "specifications" laid out for the Messiah in Hebrew prophecy. Matthew particularly delights in quoting the Old Testament as it was fulfilled in the facts of Jesus' life and experience (Matt. 1:23; 2:6, 15, etc.). But Mark, Luke, and John and Peter (in the early chapters of Acts) equally insist that Jesus exactly fits the Old Testament description of the Messiah. Paul spent much of his ministry demonstrating from the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus was the promised Christ (Acts 28:23). Unless Jesus' identity could be matched with the Old Testament description of him, there would be no good reason to believe that his claim to Messiahship was true!

What portrait of the Messiah is drawn by the Hebrew scriptures? When the New Testament Christians seek to substantiate Jesus' claim to Messiahship they are fond of quoting Deuteronomy 18:18:

"I will raise up a Prophet from among their countrymen like you [Moses], and I will put my words into his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I command him." Both Peter (Acts 3:22) and Stephen (Acts 7:37) used this primary text to show that Jesus was "that promised prophet" (John 6:14), whose origin would be in an Israelite family and whose function would be similar to that of Moses. In Jesus, God had raised up the Messiah, the long-promised divine spokesman, the Savior of Israel and the world. In Peter's words, "God raised up his servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:26).

Other classic Messianic texts promised that "a son will be born to Israel" (Isa. 9:6), the "seed of a woman" (Gen. 3:15), a descendant of Abraham (Gal. 3:16), and a descendant of David's royal house (2 Sam. 7:14-16, Isa. 11:1). He would be a ruler born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:6; Micah 5:2). Of his several titles one would be "mighty god" and another,

"everlasting Father" (Isa. 9:6). It is this single text in Isaiah 9:6 which might appear to put the Messiah into a category of uncreated beings, though this would of course provoke a crisis for monotheism. However, the sensitive reader of Scripture will be aware that a single text should not be allowed to overthrow the Old Testament's insistence that only one person is truly God. It should not be forgotten that the sacred oracles were committed to the Jews, none of whom thought that a divine title given to the Messianic King meant that he was a member of an eternal Godhead, now composed suddenly and mysteriously of *two* persons, in contradiction of all that the heritage of Israel had stood for. The "mighty God" of Isaiah 9:6 is defined by the leading Hebrew Lexicon as "divine hero, reflecting the divine majesty." The same authority records that the word "God" used by Isaiah is applied elsewhere in Scripture to "men of might and rank," as well as to angels. As for "eternal Father," this title was understood by the Jews as "Father of the coming [Messianic] age."³ It was widely recognized that a human figure could be "father to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem" (Isa. 22:21).

In Psalm 45 the "ideal" Messianic King is addressed as "God," but there is no need whatever to assume that Jewish monotheism has therefore been compromised. The word (in this case *elohim*) was applied not only to the one God but "to divine representatives at sacred places or as reflecting divine majesty and power" (Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament by Brown, Driver, and Briggs, pp. 42, 43). The Psalmist, and the writer to the Hebrews who quoted him (Heb. 1:8), were conscious of their specialized use of the word "God" to describe the Messianic King and quickly added that the Messiah's God had granted him his royal privileges (Psa. 45:7).

Even the frequently quoted text in Micah 5:2 about the origins of Messiah do not necessitate any kind of literal, eternal preexistence. In the same book a similar expression dates the promises made to Jacob from "days of old" (Micah 7:20). Certainly the promises of Messiah had been given at an early moment in the history of man (Gen. 3:15; cp. Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17-19).

Approaching the question of Jesus' Messiahship as he and the apostles do, we find nothing at all in the Old Testament predictions about the Christ which suggests that an eternal immortal being was to become human as the promised King of Israel. That King was to be born in Israel, a descendant of David, and conceived by a virgin (2 Sam. 7:13-16; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23). And so, during the reign of Emperor Augustus, the Messiah arrived on the scene.

¹Bultmann, for example, in *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, p. 276, claims that John 20:28 is the only sure instance in the New Testament of the title "God" being applied to Jesus. Most would agree that Hebrews 1:8 is a second clear instance.

²I am indebted to F. F. Bruce for the following keen observation: "People who adhere to sola scriptura (as they believe) often adhere in fact to a traditional school of interpretation of sola scriptura. Evangelical Protestants can be as much servants of tradition as Roman Catholics or Greek Orthodox Christians; only they don't realize that it is 'tradition'" (from correspondence).

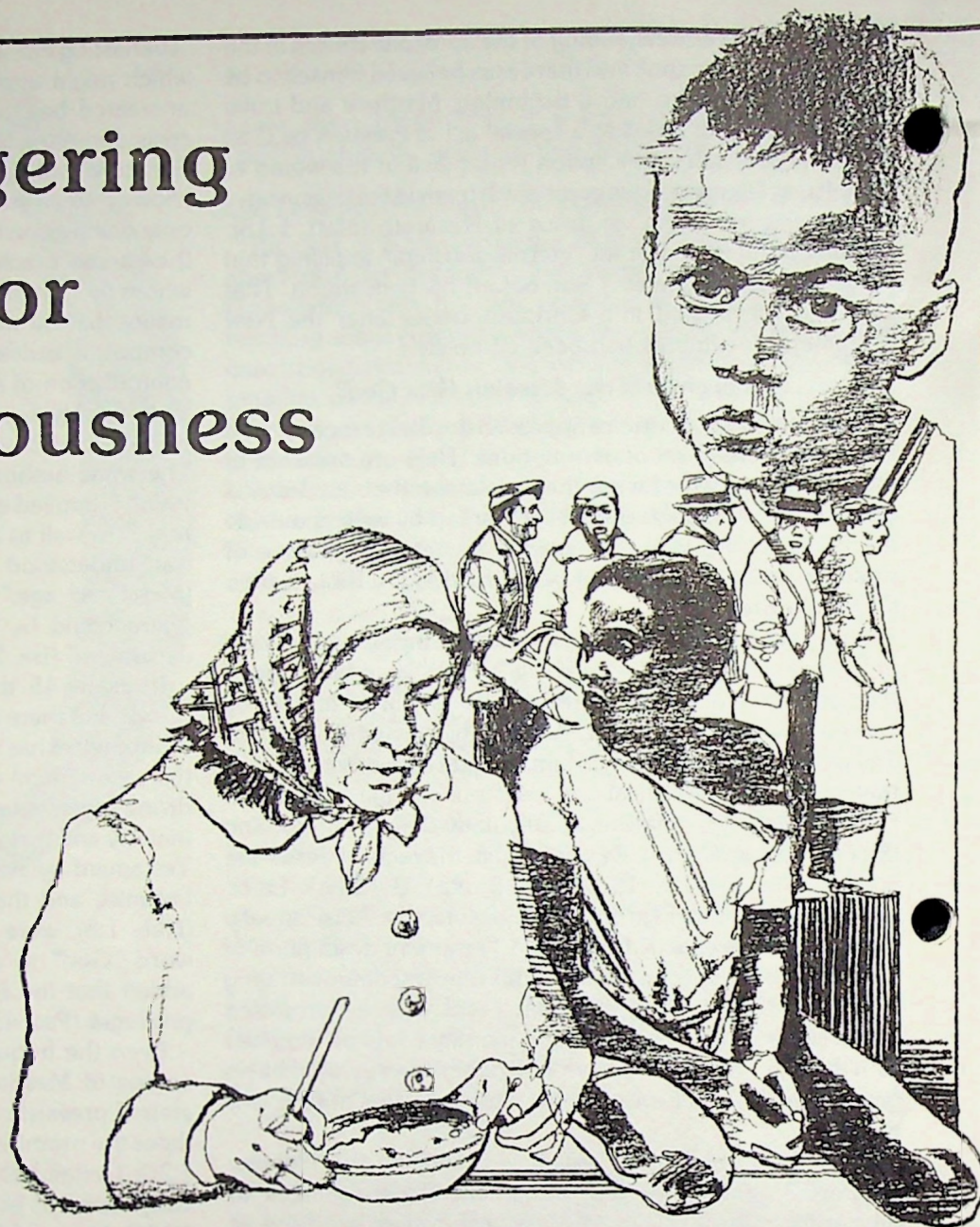
³So the Jews rendered the Hebrew expression when they translated their Scriptures into Greek.

Hungering For Righteousness

LYING in stone-like stillness, already glazed brown eyes fixed upon eternity, an adolescent girl pants her final shallow breaths. Her emaciated body is shaded by her brother, himself manifesting signs of being beyond help. His sister is his most immediate concern. Their mother, being almost gruesomely realistic, her emotions having been numbed by her own physical suffering and the agony of having lost other children in death, says, "Tomorrow she will die."

This family in such distressing throes is but one of millions who deal daily with the plight of hunger and starvation on our seemingly abundant planet. Few who will read these words know the depths of their distress or despair. Few in our country or culture are familiar with the level of suffering to which they have become accustomed. Indeed, few have ever experienced life-threatening hunger or thirst that multitudes live with daily.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matt. 5:6, NASB). The Savior is addressing citizens of the everlasting kingdom in this passage,



acquainting them with desirable, qualifying characteristics. In each "beatitude" he reveals that true and lasting happiness, or blessedness, is only attained by deferring self-satisfying goals and placing one's highest priority on assuming a Christlike posture.

The Master teaches those who will listen that this hungering and thirsting for righteousness is a matter of life and death, not simply the mid-afternoon gnarling of a regularly filled stomach or the

parching of a palate usually satisfied with Perrier. Rather, it is the deep hunger and stinging thirst of one who is in deadly peril. In effect, he states that only those who are "dying" for a right relationship with God in Christ will ultimately be satisfied.

Prior to developing this degree of "hunger" or "thirst" for a right relationship with the Almighty, one must first have an adequate assessment of his circumstance. Paul writes, "At that time you were

By Pastor David Wilsterman

separated from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12, NIV). Mankind was starving, dying without God, never having hope of survival . . . and then there was Jesus, the possibility of relief of God's providing.

It is said of almost all kinds of contestants that their desire to secure victory is their strongest attribute. Some have gone so far as to say, "I can almost taste victory." In an age of tremendous affluence, we are often plagued by complacent "full" sensations instead of hunger pangs. Today many are content with a little nibble of righteousness, or but a sip of this precious relational quality. In our culture, most often individuals just want to taste—for the experience—the things of God rather

than to completely devour them. Some in churches today are neither hungry nor thirsty, rather they "play" as indulged children with the spiritual food spread before them in banquet array. Unchecked, this practice may lead to the development of spiritually and morally unhealthy individuals, always ready to sit down and snack out of habit, but never hungry enough to devour a balanced meal. These persons are never bored with snacking at "goodness," but neither are they ravenous enough to crave genuine righteousness.

The Savior has little taste for refined delicacies when it comes to satisfying a spiritual appetite, preferring instead simple, life-sustaining staples. In this one powerful verse our Lord states bluntly that if you are famished for a right relationship with the Creator, you are that one who will be satisfied; and, if that is not the thing for which you hunger, you will only be disappointed.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." These words spoken by the Son of the Holy One of Israel are a blessing pronounced on a most unlikely category of people: those who are "dying" for a wholesomely pure relationship with God Almighty. These, and these alone, will be satisfied; not the "snackers" or those connoisseurs of many delicacies, or those who slake their thirst with socially or culturally acceptable religious beverages. The Christ leaves it for you to decide your own degree of hunger and thirst for righteousness and takes pleasure in your being ravenous.

WHO IS JESUS?

Anthony Buzzard's article entitled "Who is Jesus?" which appears on pages 8 and 9 of this issue is an excerpt of a larger article by the same title. The full text by Bro. Buzzard is available in booklet form from THE RESTITUTION HERALD.

This newly printed 24-page booklet will regularly be available at \$1.25 each. But as a prepublication offer we will give our readers opportunity to secure copies for \$1.00 each. Please clip and send the following order coupon with your remittance.

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Please send me _____ copies of Anthony Buzzard's "Who is Jesus?" booklet on the nature of Jesus at \$1.00 per copy plus postage and handling. This introductory offer expires May 31, 1984, after which the regular price of \$1.25 will be in effect.

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The Kingdom of God Is Good News



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IN THE New Testament preaching and teaching ministry of Jesus, the kingdom of God was a central theme. One recorded account of this, Luke 8:1, provides a biblical statement which embraces an intricate message of redemption unto salvation, God's plan of the ages, and the commission to the church to take the good news of the kingdom to the people of the world. It is my intention to examine the important emphasis placed upon this subject in Scripture and explore its relevancy to the redemptive message, including God's promise of a better world and man's hope and anticipation of what is yet to come. Further, it will be my purpose to explain my understanding of how the kingdom of God fits into God's plan of the ages with a comparison of man's present life situation with God's

revealed description of conditions in the kingdom of God.

By comparing what the world is like now with the biblical promise of what God has in store for man in the kingdom, we can certainly say, "That is good news!" Further, through the realization that redemption through Jesus Christ results in living eternally in the kingdom of God, that too is good news.

The importance of the kingdom message and its relevancy to God's redemptive program, and the eschatological promises of the kingdom of God, are brought together in the Great Commission. This important theme of the Bible is the basis upon which Old Testament and New Testament teaching comes into focus relative to God's purpose.

God intends that all authority and power be his and that this universal

sovereignty be realized when Christ delivers the kingdom to his Father. Further, God's purpose for man is that a redeemed people dwell with him in a perfected environment as immortals (Rev. 21:3-5). These fundamental doctrines are basic in understanding God's purpose, the mission of the church, and its proclamation of the salvation message. For the church to truthfully and faithfully obey the Great Commission, it is essential to minister to humanity in congruence with God's purposes.

The Kingdom of God— An Important Emphasis in Scripture

The message of the kingdom of God holds an important place in New Testament Scripture in the preaching and teaching ministry of Jesus. As Jesus began his ministry, he went about proclaiming, "The kingdom of

—by Warren Sorenson—

God is close at hand." It is noteworthy that Jesus started with this message. Apparently to him it was an urgent subject. Perhaps the urgency of that time was related to the fact that the message was directed to the Israelites in a call to repentance and that they might accept the King as well as the kingdom. The fact that Israel rejected Christ as Savior and King does not change the fact that the message of the kingdom was an urgent one. Christ died for the sins of the world and God's purpose continues to move toward the return of Christ and his rulership as King of Kings. The call to repentance has been extended worldwide and the message of the King and the kingdom remains both an urgent and glorious one.

The Gospel of Luke (4:18) introduces the preaching ministry of Christ with some definitive insights which, while not using the term "kingdom of God," does refer to the acceptable year of the Lord. Also, the message of healing the brokenhearted, deliverance of the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, and setting at liberty the bruised, describes conditions that will be permanently experienced in the kingdom of God. We recognize that an application of this message can also be made to the temporal experiences of people during Christ's earthly ministry prior to his death and that Matthew reports a healing ministry associated with Jesus' preaching (Matt. 4:23). Luke's record reveals details of Christ's message while Matthew and Mark identify the subject preached.

The importance of the kingdom message in the ministry of Jesus is further exemplified in Matthew 5:19, 20, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." In this text, a faithful response is contrasted with hypocritical righteousness. The kingdom of God is here spoken of as the

reward of the faithful response, while exclusion from the kingdom is the result of hypocritical righteousness. Thus, Jesus speaks of life in the kingdom in association with faithful obedience and exclusion from the kingdom as the result of disobedience or rejection.

Jesus confirms clearly and forcibly the importance of the message of the kingdom in Matthew 6:33. Here Jesus relates to man's value system as being measured by his attitude toward the kingdom of God. Jesus makes it very clear that fulfillment and satisfaction in life come by pressing toward the kingdom of God. It seems that Jesus is conveying a basic value system for life. If life is viewed in the perspective of the coming kingdom of God, then everything else will fall into place. Jesus spoke of that pearl of great price in Matthew 13:45, which confirms what Jesus has said concerning the prioritizing of life's values. Certainly, the emphasis of the kingdom of God as a pearl of great price illustrates the important value Jesus placed upon the preaching and teaching of the kingdom message. It further emphasizes the extreme importance of the reality of the coming kingdom of God as a pearl of great price.

The Kingdom Message In the Ministry of the Apostles

Following his death and resurrection, Jesus appeared to the apostles and delivered to them important instructions. Included in these instructions was teaching concerning the kingdom of God: "He showed himself to these men after his death, and gave ample proof that he was alive: over a period of forty days he appeared to them and taught them about the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:4, NEB). The scenario in which this instruction takes place magnifies the importance of the subject taught. When we view this in terms of launching the New Testament Church and the birth of Christianity about to be experienced, we see the obvious importance that Jesus placed on this great doctrine.

This was a time to speak clearly regarding essentials in the foundation of an infant church. This was a time to make certain that the apostles understood very clearly their teaching

assignment. The apostles did not question the fact of the kingdom, however, they did have one question, and that was, "When will it come?" Acts 1:6: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" His answer did not give the time of the coming kingdom, but rather a responsibility to be witnesses to the uttermost part of the earth. Since Jesus had spent 40 days speaking to them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God, we are to assume that he intended this message to be included in that witness.

In subsequent writings in the Book of Acts, and as the church grew, the teaching ministry was continued through faithful men and the message of the kingdom of God remained important. Shortly after the murder of Stephen by an angry crowd, Philip was actively preaching the kingdom message in the city of Samaria. "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

The Emphasis of the Kingdom of God In the Ministry of Paul

Paul, who had witnessed the execution of Stephen, is soon converted by a personal encounter with the Lord on the Damascus Road. Before mentioning Paul's preaching ministry, it is significant to note his personal testimony of learning what was included in the gospel. "So now whom am I trying to please—man, or God? Would you say it is men's approval I am looking for? If I still wanted that, I should not be what I am—a servant of Christ. The fact is, brothers, and I want you to realize this, **the Good News I preached is not a human message that I was given by men, it is something I learned only through a revelation of Jesus Christ.** You must have heard of my career as a practicing Jew, how merciless I was in persecuting the Church of God, how much damage I did to it, how I stood out among other Jews of my generation, and how enthusiastic I was for the traditions of my ancestors. Then God, who had specially chosen me
(Continued on page 14)

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS GOOD NEWS

(Continued from page 13)

while I was still in my mother's womb, called me through his grace and chose to reveal his Son in me, so that I might preach the Good News about him to the pagans. I did not stop to discuss this with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were already apostles before me, but I went off to Arabia at once and later went straight back from there to Damascus" (Gal. 1:10-17, Jerusalem Bible).

In the city of Ephesus, Paul attended the synagogue and, for three months, "using argument and persuasion, spoke boldly and freely about the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8, NEB). Paul, in speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, speaks concerning the proclamation of the kingdom of God among the people.

Paul spent two years in Rome during which time he opened his home to all who would come. To those who came he spoke boldly about "the kingdom of God and teaching... the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:23, 30, 31).

Summary

In summation of the important emphasis in Scripture concerning the kingdom of God, Jesus in his ministry placed great emphasis upon this subject. During an extremely emotional

and critical time in his personal relationship with the apostles, those chosen to carry on the responsibility of proclaiming the good news, Jesus spoke of the kingdom. Those who were about to be separated by the crucifixion of Jesus were promised a reunion (Luke 22:28-30). "You are the men who have stood by me faithfully in my trials; and now I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father conferred one on me: you will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30, JB).

To further summarize the importance of this great subject in the days of training prior to his ascension, Jesus reaffirmed the importance of the kingdom message as he spoke to the apostles in his final instruction to them before his ascension. The records of the Book of Acts reveal obedience to his instruction in the teaching ministry of the apostles which included the kingdom-of-God theme. Paul, called to be an apostle after the ascension of Jesus, through divine revelation continues the faithful proclamation of this central message. With scriptural documentation supporting the importance of the kingdom of God, the church of today will do well to follow in obedient response by boldly proclaiming the kingdom of God as a central doctrine of Scripture.

"There Has To Be Something Better Sometime!"

THESE WORDS, spoken by a dear old friend and neighbor as she lay dying in a nursing home, are but an echo of a lonely cry—the deepest desire of all humanity for life and a more abundant life. We can never appreciate so well our dependence on bread and water for the sustenance of mortal life as the day we suddenly become deprived of these basic needs. We can never realize so well our dependence on a Savior for life and health as on the day we suddenly realize that we are fast losing both.

It has been said that the knowledge revealed by archaeological finds might have been purposefully kept dormant for the last days when faith would be at a low ebb and our patience sorely tried. The unfolding of prophecy can also strengthen our faith and encourage us in this present time of disillusionment and skepticism. It can help us to remember that God's Word is sure and that our hope lies in the future. It is good to delve into the intricacies of the Scriptures and the mysteries of Revelation, but this unfolding and revealing is of value only when it motivates us to be about the business of today.

Longer days, warm sunshine, and the return of the birds are sure signs that God has remembered his promise of springtime and we are motivated to busy ourselves in the garden. In



MAY 3, 1984 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Take 5 at 12

"Prayer unites people. This common expression of reverence heals and brings us together as a Nation, and we pray it may one day bring renewed respect for God to all the peoples of the world."

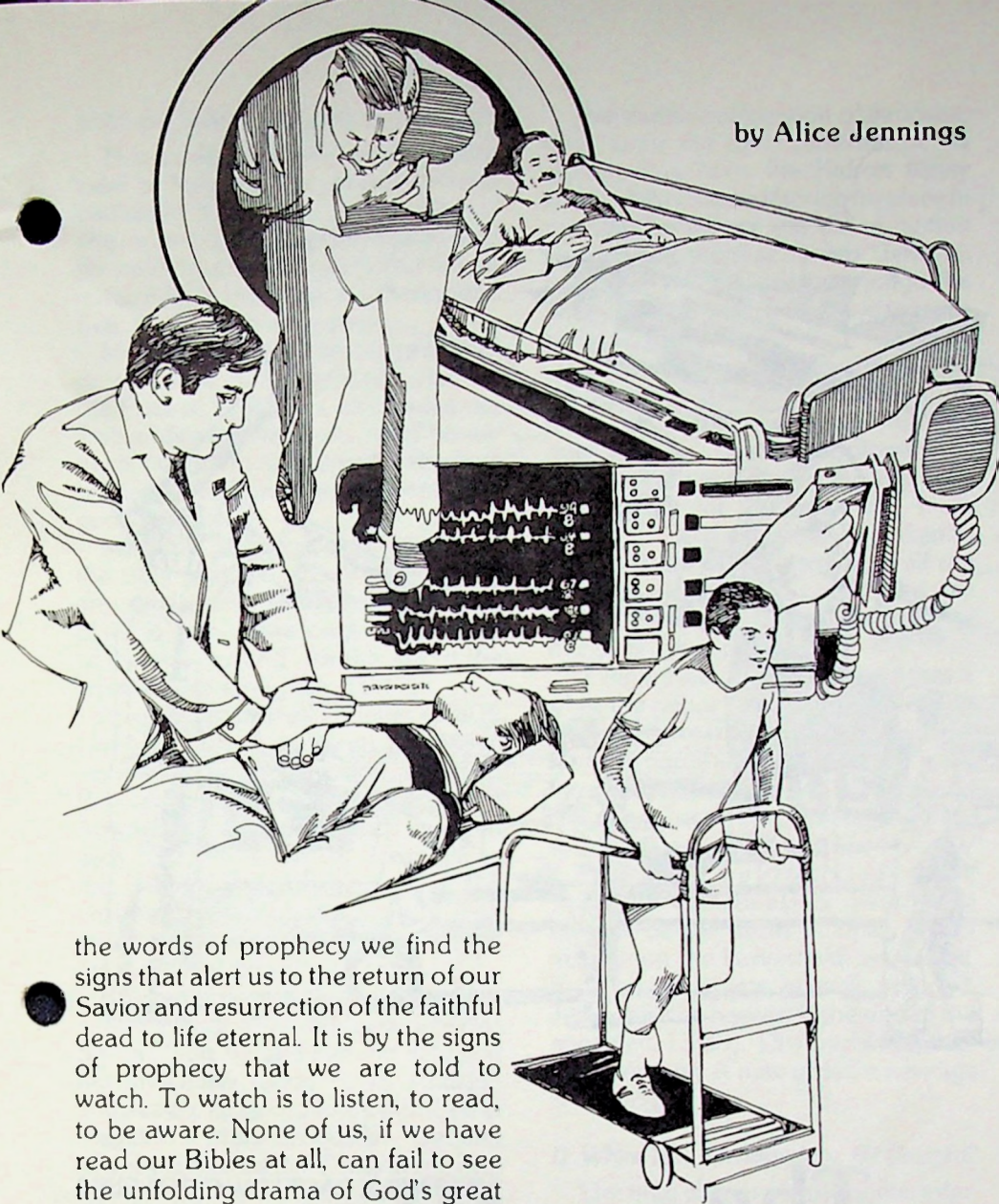
President Ronald Reagan in his proclamation of May 3 as the 1984 National Day of Prayer.

On May 3, you will have the opportunity to join in prayer with other Americans across the nation.

From 12 noon until 12:05 p.m. that day, bells will ring and people throughout the United States will bow their heads to acknowledge dependence upon God, give thanks to Him for His blessings through the years, and intercede for our nation and its leaders.

Join your fellow American citizens and "Take 5 at 12." Pray for our country and the men and women who lead it.

by Alice Jennings



the words of prophecy we find the signs that alert us to the return of our Savior and resurrection of the faithful dead to life eternal. It is by the signs of prophecy that we are told to watch. To watch is to listen, to read, to be aware. None of us, if we have read our Bibles at all, can fail to see the unfolding drama of God's great plan for mankind on this earth. The Jews have become again a nation, after 2000 years of dispersal. The nations are preparing for war—no doubt the Armageddon prophesied—and this includes our own nation. Great portions of the world have no faith in God and hold Jesus up to ridicule. Confusion and fear grips all people who look ahead to the future. Even those of us without great academic skills can be aware that Christ's return is approaching. We do not have to understand and decipher every step in the process before we decide to walk a little closer to the one who knows the way.

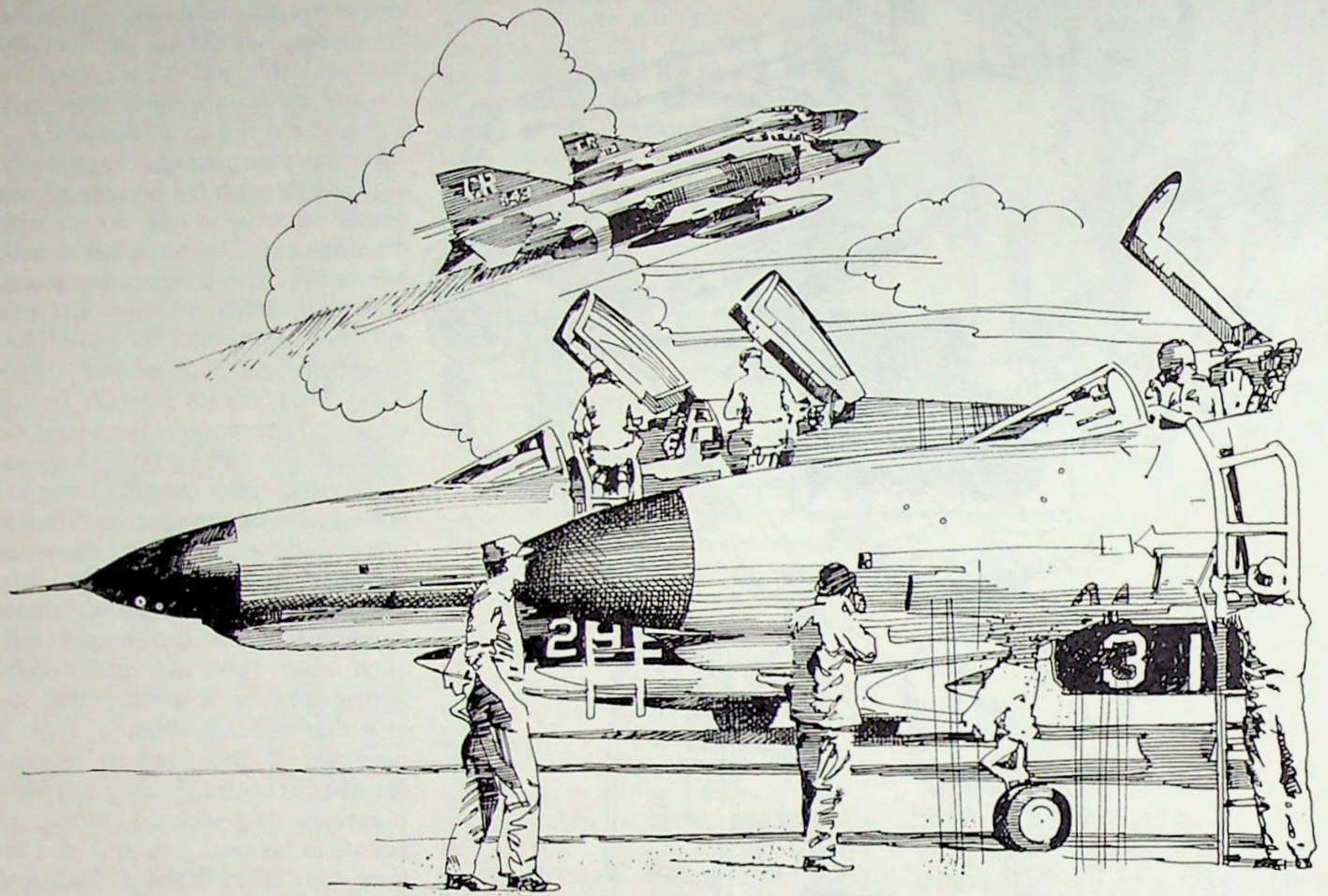
When Paul counselled Timothy to "study to shew thyself approved . . . rightly dividing the word of truth," he was speaking not only of our comprehension of the words we read, but an

awareness of the delicate balance upon which the whole Word of God is based. It is so easy to concentrate only upon the things which God will do for us to the exclusion of the things which we must do for him. It is so easy to read what we like to hear and become fixed in our interpretation of what we want it to mean. It is very hard to concede that we did not have all the facts or that our comprehension was at fault when a short time later the picture expands and reveals a wider view. A wise man once said to me, "The only way to be absolutely sure of prophecy is to look back at the fulfillment." The command given is to watch—, not for a while, but to watch constantly because fulfillment is an unfolding, revealing process. The Jews became fixed in their interpretation of the

coming of the Messiah. With all their love of the law and knowledge of the Scriptures, they did not see the baby born in Bethlehem as their king. We are not more intelligent than they and perhaps not more humble.

We have the privilege of approaching God through his Son for all our needs as long as we do so with thanksgiving. We can stand in faith before him in exactly the same way that the father of the epileptic approached the Savior, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Faith comes through knowledge and acceptance, but surely we add to it by positive action. There are few controversies over the basic beliefs which we confess at baptism. It is only when we treat the mysteries and dark sayings as though they were similar to our new electronic games in which we can compete with each other, show our super intelligence, and be a winner, that we lose that delicate balance. Then it becomes all too easy to become fixed in our understanding and blind ourselves to God's unfolding of events in his own way and his own time. Our Bible is not a "Dick and Jane" book to be sure, but a book that should keep us burning the midnight oil in study until the last day of our lives. That in itself should give us a little more humility and a lot more compassion for our fellow sinners. As our lukewarm brother in Revelation who felt so prosperous and secure, not knowing that he was poor and blind and naked, we would do well to buy the gold tried by fire, the treasure hid in the field, white raiment to cover our sins and inadequacies, and anoint our eyes with the eyesalve of compassionate comprehension of the basic needs of our neighbor. This is, after all, our reasonable service.

My good friend needed the same reassurance we all need when the problems of life become more than we can handle. She needed to hear that God's Word is sure; that the good news is our life preserver, that, whether awake or asleep, Jesus' resurrection to life insures our resurrection to life—a more abundant life.



The War Of Armageddon

THE PAST FEW CENTURIES have witnessed an unusual number of international conflicts, but the Bible teaches that the worst war of all still lies in the future. Unlike the others, Jesus will intervene in this one. It is called Armageddon and is said to be "the war to end wars." God is to gather the nations to "a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16:16). This is the only occurrence of the word in Holy Scripture. Although Armageddon is described in chapter 19, only in this verse is the location given. When the armies of earth are gathered for this conflict, it will dwarf any war the mind of man can imagine.

The derivative of the term is highly descriptive and appropriate. The word originally had an "H" in front of it. The prefix "Har" signifies mountain; "Gadad" signifies slaughter. Armageddon is the place where God will slaughter the nations in battle.

I. Where Will This Battle Be Fought?

This conflict will be waged near the town of Megiddo, an ancient decisive battlefield. It is located in Central Palestine on the edge of the Plain of Esdraelon, ten miles south of Nazareth and fifteen miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea. It's location is strategic.

Megiddo was a military stronghold on the route from Egypt to Syria, on the Plain of Esdraelon, also called the Plain of Jezreel. Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, overlooks Megiddo. It's the final battleground between the forces of good and evil.

Megiddo (Armageddon) has been the sight of more bloody battles than any similar area of earth. It's a fitting place to gather "the kings of earth and of the whole world" for the war of the great day of God (Rev. 16:14).

Megiddo is an area 12 miles wide in central Palestine between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Revelation 14:14-20 gives a vision of Armageddon which extends over an area of 200 miles (v. 20). Historically, the Plain of Esdraelon has been the crossroad of commerce, culture, and conquest. Through the centuries, armies have clashed there.

It was there that Saul died at the hands of the Philistines; Barak defeated Sisera (Judg. 4); and Gideon defeated the Midianites (Judg. 6; 7). Ahaziah and Josiah, kings of Judah, perished at Megiddo. More recently, General Allenby defeated the Turks there, and earned for himself the title "Lord Allenby of Megiddo." Certainly it is an appropriate place for the vast conflict pictured in Revelation 16 and other prophetic passages.

Joel 3 presents the same prophetic picture. "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land" (v. 2). God is going to judge the nations for dispersing his covenant people (Israel) and dividing his land, the Holy Land. Most prophetic students believe that the division of the land took place in May, 1948, when the United Nations divided part of the land of Canaan between the Jews and the Arabs.

The traditional location of Jehoshaphat, since the early centuries of the church, has been the Kidron valley east of Jerusalem, although no place in the Old Testament was called by that name. "Jehoshaphat" means "Jehovah is Judge." God is going to judge the nations in his wrath for the two reasons given in this verse.

God continues to address the nations: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles [nations]; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men . . . beat your plowshares into spears; and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong . . . Let the heathen be awakened . . . for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. . . . For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:9-14).

"Prepare war," God says, and that is what the nations are doing. "Wake up the mighty men." A good example is Red China. She was a sleeping giant for a long time, but is awake today and will play a significant roll in end-time events, in my opinion.

The nations are to feel God's wrath, "for their wickedness is great." The harvest of the earth is ripe. At Armageddon the harvest will be reaped. Evil has a harvest as well as good. Jesus said the harvest is the end of the age (Matt. 13:39). This world's civilization is ending. A new order, a new age is coming.

II. When Will Armageddon Be Fought?

The time element in prophetic interpretation is important. The normal premillennial viewpoint places Armageddon at the end of the Great Tribulation mentioned in Matthew 24:21, 22 and described in Jeremiah 30:3-7; Daniel 12:1; and Revelation 4 through 18. The climax of the strife and turmoil of the nations during the Great Tribulation is the final war of the age.

An equally explicit passage of this gigantic struggle is recorded in Revelation 19:11-15: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . . His name is called the Word of God. . . . Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron."

While antichrist is still in power, Jesus comes to "judge and make war." John, the Revelator saw the armies of earth gathered against Christ.

It is reported that 40,000 warheads are stored in the United States and the Soviet Union, making a fulfillment of these prophecies through nuclear exchange an ever-present possibility.

A difficult prophecy to fit into the sequence of events is the invasion of the Middle East and especially Israel by Russia in the last days as recorded in Ezekiel 38 and 39. This huge aggression from far north of Israel takes place when Israel is at peace, dwelling in an unprotected state (Ezek. 38:11). Obviously, this description doesn't fit in with the campaign of Armageddon. When, then, does this Russian invasion take place? Conservative scholars are divided at this point. Some feel that it occurs earlier: some in the middle of the seven-year period called the Great Tribulation, some at the beginning of it, and some before it begins.

Although many details of the prophetic puzzle are not clear, Bible prophecy offers much by way of broad outline. Careful students do not go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). With this in mind, a commitment to the biblical view will give direction for the future. The Lord of the nations is the Lord of history. God stands at the center of the universe, not us.

The prophecies of Armageddon portray a specific eschatological event to occur at the end of the age at the advent of Messiah. Jesus is coming for deliverance of Israel and to establish his Messianic kingdom. Armageddon is a worldwide eschatological event when literal armies of earth are gathered at Jerusalem.

Small Wars

Today at least 15 "small wars" rage around the globe along with a score or more of lesser conflicts, according to the Associated Press. Almost 300 such wars have been fought since World War II.

In Lebanon the U. S. is faced with two choices—both bad: increase or decrease military involvement. Lebanon has never had a strong central government because there are too many fac-

(Continued on page 18)

by Pastor Hollis Partlowe

THE WAR OF ARMAGEDDON

(Continued from page 17)

tions with too much hatred to allow any sort of majority agreement. Those Lebanese factions have been killing each other for centuries, and there are no easy answers. To believe otherwise is unrealistic. We can't change history in the Middle East with a few Marines.

President Reagan has said: "This generation may see Armageddon, the final conflict between good and evil predicted in the Bible." Armageddon is a household word today, even in the White House.

Syria is Russia's chief ally in the Middle East. Russian military equipment is pouring into the country at an alarming rate. Consequently, the Syrian army is considerably stronger now than a year ago and twice as strong as in 1973.

Israel's most formidable neighbor, Syria is spending half its budget on defense. Russia has supplied her with Sam 5 anti-aircraft missiles. Syria is using Russian radar which has a range of 150 miles. It can spot Israeli aircraft taking off within Israel. The radar is manned by Soviet crewman.

Furthermore, Syria has 230,000 men under arms on the ground. The tangled Arab-Israeli conflict is an increasingly unsolvable problem. No compromises are in sight.

III. Who Will be Engaged in Armageddon?

Zechariah, the major prophet of the minor prophets, prewrote the news story which does not paint a pretty picture. "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken. . . . Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (14:2-4). The setting here is clearly before the millennium when Christ comes to intervene in the affairs of "all nations" when they are gathered at Jerusalem to do battle. His mission is to make war and rule with a rod of iron. With his sharp sword he will smite the nations. Armageddon is associated in Scripture with the advent of Christ, the smiting stone of Daniel 2.

Then too, the armies of the east are destined to share in this "war of all wars." The great river Euphrates is to be dried up so the kings of the east can

cross over and engage in the conflict of Armageddon. In fact, John says "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" gather to the war of the great day of God Almighty (Rev. 16:12-14). Yes, as the day of military climax speeds on, Asia is erupting in preparation for her share in this global conflict. Notice: it is a war—not just a battle. Armageddon is a series of conflicts.

IV. Results of This Campaign

Armageddon is a series of battles, a campaign in which the Son of God will win a total and final victory. Fowls of the air are invited to a gruesome feast. "I saw an angel . . . and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. . . . And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Rev. 19:17, 18, 21). Here then is a brief description of the final war of this age, and Jesus Christ is the victor.

Armageddon won't be limited to a single geographical site. Its center is Israel, but it will sweep to the ends of the earth. Israel in her pilgrimage to national redemption will find her terminus at Armageddon toward which the nations now rush with ever-increasing speed.

Israel is loved of God. He has a plan for his covenant people which does not include annihilation at the hands of the nations, although two thirds of the Jews will be cut off and perish during the Great Tribulation which reaches its apex in the campaign of Armageddon. One third of the Jews will survive this unprecedented time of trouble, be redeemed, and enter the millennial kingdom (Zech. 13:8, 9). Not all the Jews will make it, but the emphasis is on the *remnant* all through the prophecies. Survival of Israel is important to God because of his undying love for his elect nation.

Beyond the turbulent days ahead of us is the millennial kingdom of Christ which is the calm after the storm of Armageddon and the Great Tribulation. We'll focus on that in my next article.

He's Alive!

By Rachel Carr

First Corinthians 15:6 says that after his resurrection Jesus appeared to over 500 brethren at once. The Bible gives no other details. This story is how it might have happened.

"How could they do it, Father? I just don't understand. He was such a good man—always helping people. Why did they kill him?"

"Oh, Philip, I wish I had some answers for you. All I know is that the religious leaders hated Jesus and didn't want him around. But I surely never thought they would cause his death."

"There was something different about the way Jesus taught. He didn't just teach lessons like my teachers in the synagogue. He seemed to really love the people and want them to know all about God and his kingdom."

"You're right, son. He was different. Some of us were so sure that he was the one God had promised to send to deliver us. But how could he be when he's dead?"

* * *

For many years the Jewish people had looked for the Promised One of God. The first promise had been made back in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned. Later God told Abraham that he would be the ancestor of this special one to come. The prophets God sent to his people repeated the promise that God would send the Messiah to save them.

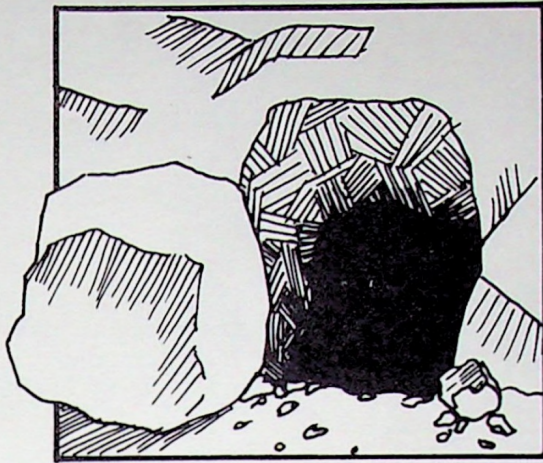
When Jesus appeared and began teaching, many thought he was the Promised One. They followed him and listened closely as he told about God and the coming kingdom. They brought their sick ones to him to be healed. And then . . . he died on a cross. All their hopes were dashed in pieces.

* * *

It was several days later and Philip was helping his mother carry water from the well. As they were filling the water jars in their home . . .

C h i l u

THE RESTITUTION HERALD



"Miriam, Philip, you won't believe the news." Philip's father burst through the door. "I heard it in the market as I was unloading the vegetables. They're saying that Jesus is alive!"

"Oh, Hiram, could it be true? Has anyone seen him?"

"Well, apparently two men were walking to Emmaus and they say that Jesus walked and talked with them. Only they didn't recognize him till they stopped to eat and he prayed."

"Oh, Father, you don't think it's just a rumor, do you?"

"I don't know. It's hard to believe, but if it is true. . . oh how wonderful it will be to have him with us again."

During the next couple of days Philip's father forgot his work and talked with many in the city. He had to know if Jesus really was alive. One of the believers reported that Jesus had suddenly appeared to his disciples as they were gathered behind closed doors. A cousin of Mary Magdalene told Hiram how Mary had seen Jesus in the garden. The good news just had to be true.

It was early one morning a couple weeks later that Hiram awakened his family. "Miriam, Philip, get up. Get dressed quickly and come with me."

"Why, Father, where are we going?" asked Philip sleepily.

"We're going to a special gathering of Jesus' followers. Yesterday some of us were talking about Jesus being raised to life on the first day of the week. We decided that beginning today we would meet together every first day of the week to remember Jesus' resurrection. That's why I was so late getting home last night. We all went to different

believers' homes to let them know."

"Where are we meeting, Hiram?" asked Philip's mother.

"Do you remember the hillside outside the city where we gathered one day to hear Jesus teach?"

* * *

As the many followers of Jesus stood together on the hill, one of the disciples began to speak. He recalled some of the things Jesus had done, such as multiplying the loaves and fishes to feed 5000. Others spoke of the parables he had taught them on this very spot.

Suddenly an excited murmur rippled through the crowd. "Look—it's him!" "It can't be." "But it is!"

The man stood in front of the people and raised his arms. It was Jesus! "Peace be unto you, my friends. Don't be afraid; it is I. My Father has raised me from the dead to new life." Jesus continued with them for awhile. It was so good to have him with them again. Then he said, "Now go and tell all that you have seen and learned from me."

And with that, he was gone. After a few seconds of silence, everyone started talking at once.

"Oh, Father, Jesus really is alive! We've seen him with our own eyes."

"Yes, son, he's alive. . . And now we must do as he has commanded—go and tell others what we have both seen and heard."

"There's my friend Matthew. He never seemed interested in hearing about Jesus before. But when he hears. . ."

"I must see Micah and Jacob right away. . . and then there's Benjamin. . ."

THE AGE TO COME

(Continued from page 20)

Christ (or commencement of the age to come) and the termination, or "the end" named by Paul. As we notice those events, it will be seen that their character and magnitude will be such as to render it impossible for the advent of Christ and the "end" to occur at or very near the same time. It must require some length of time for those events to have their full accomplishment. We will name them.

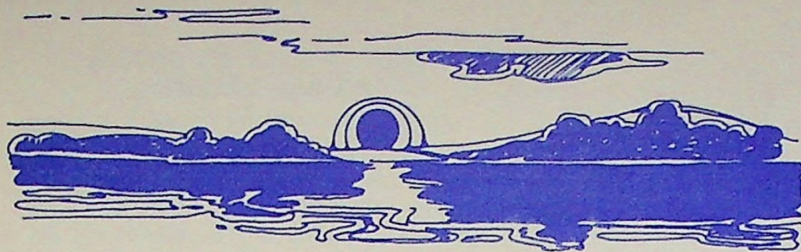
1. Setting up the kingdom of God. Since Christ is to deliver up the kingdom at "the end" or close of the millennium or age to come, and since the kingdom is not set up before the commencement of that age, it follows, as a matter of course, that it will be set up some time *during* that age. Notice the preparation or cleansing of the territory or locality of the kingdom, the gathering from the four winds of the immortal subjects, the organization of the government, and the setting up of the throne of David our king in the glorious capital—the beloved city. It will be seen that this stupendous work will require some time for its accomplishment; consequently, the advent of Christ and "the end" cannot be at the same time.

2. The reign of Christ "For he must reign" between the time of his advent and "the end" of the age to come. Hence that end and his coming cannot be at the same time. The dignity, the greatness, and glory of the *reign* of Christ on the earth cannot be crowded into the narrow space of a few days, weeks, months, or even years. Despotic kings have reigned longer than that. A thousand years is none too long for such a reign of our glorious and all-conquering Lord and King before the close of the age to come.

3. The destruction of all the enemies of Christ "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." The destruction of death takes place at "the end" of the millennium, or age to come (Rev. 20); consequently that *end* and the advent of Christ are a thousand years apart. Other enemies of Christ are to be destroyed after the commencement of his reign, or during the age to come. It will be seen in the detail that it will require time to subdue or destroy them all in the manner in which the word of prophecy clearly predicts the great and fearful work will be done.

Keep an eye upon these great events: the setting up of the kingdom, the reign of Christ, and the destruction of his enemies. Bear in mind that they all transpire *after* the advent of Christ, and *before* and at "the end" of the age to come. Admit the correctness of this view and you will no longer, as many do, blend the millennial age (or age to come) with either the gospel age or the eternal age. There is as marked a distinction between them as there is between the gospel and Jewish ages.

We are near the commencement of the world to come. That glorious day may dawn with its glory upon us at any moment. The world is ripe for the coming of the Lord, and he will soon come in all his glory. Let us take heed to ourselves lest he come upon us as a thief, and we be unprepared to meet him.



The Age to Come

THE Mosaic Dispensation, or Age, closed at the death of Christ, and the Gospel Age commenced with his resurrection. The Gospel Age will close at the second coming of Christ, when the Future Age, a more glorious dispensation, will commence, and continue until the ushering in of the Eternal Age of glory.

The order and events of the Jewish and Christian ages are now matters of history, with the exception of the closing scenes of the latter—and the history of that will soon be complete. Then the great and glorious events of the Age to come will be passing before us.

There is much darkness in the church relative to the character of the age to come. And many advent believers, who make the prophecies their study, are greatly confused on this important subject. It is true that they have seen the absurdity of the popular faith of the church relative to the character of the millennium, or age to come, but at the same time have been unable to give a consistent view of its character in harmony with the many prophecies which relate to that glorious period.

We have heard a number of labored discourses on the millennium of

Editor's Note: The following article by early Church of God minister, editor, and writer Joseph Marsh appeared in a religious paper he edited, *The Harbinger and Advocate*, on Saturday, January 5, 1850.

by
Joseph Marsh

Revelation 20, in which a harmony of events predicted in that and the following chapter was attempted in accordance with the views generally entertained among us. But every such effort, to us, has been a failure; consequently we have never adopted those views, but at the same time we have confessed our ignorance of the true harmony of the events named in those chapters. We have frequently remarked that there was great darkness among us about the real character of the millennium, or age to come, and that the order of events of that period was not understood by us. But we now say with strong assurance that we have the true light on this important matter, which we will endeavor to impart to others.

In this investigation the plain Word of the Lord will be our guide. We shall let it name the events of the age to come and give their order in its own inspired language. We will allow it to justify its own propositions, by its own clear and infallible testimony plainly recorded upon many of its sacred pages. Indeed, the burden of the prophecy of this inspired volume has been given to shed light and glory upon the age to come.

The object of this article is to state the general outlines of the subject under consideration. And as a foundation of our present and future remarks, we give the following words of the great apostle to the Gentiles. In speaking of the resurrection of the saints, he says:

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 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. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be in all" (1 Cor. 15:23-28).

This plain declaration of the inspired penman has never been, nor can it be, explained in harmony with the view of the age to come as held by either the popular church or "Adventists" generally. But all is clear with the view we entertain on this subject. All we have to do in understanding it is to believe that the inspired writer means just what he says. He lays down the order of events thus:

1. The coming of Christ (and the resurrection of the saints at his coming) is to take place at the close of the gospel age (dispensation) and commencement of the age to come.

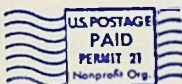
2. "Then cometh the end" of the age to come, or seventh millennium, or seventh anti-typical day of this world. The end of "every ruler, and every governor, and every potentate" (marg. Whit. Text.) of earth; for Christ must reign after his advent till all enemies are destroyed, which includes death, and him that has the power of death, the devil. Their final destruction by fire from God out of heaven will mark the end of the age to come, the descent of the great white throne, and the commencement of the eternal age. (See Rev. 20; 21.)

The design of the apostle appears to have been to state the great outlines of the order under consideration thus. At the termination of the Jewish, and commencement of the Gospel Age, "Christ, the first fruits," died, and rose again from the dead. Then, at the close of the gospel age and commencement of the age to come, Christ will appear, raise his children from the grave, change the living saints, and with them enter upon his glorious reign upon the earth. Finally, at the close of the age to come (seventh millennium) the "end" named will take place and the kingdom will be delivered up to God the Father, that God may be all in all. This is the commencement of the eternal state of blessedness.

These are the great outlines of the order of events as laid down by Paul in the scripture under consideration. That we take a correct view of the order will appear evident when we shall have stated the stupendous events that are to transpire between the coming of
(Please turn back to page 19)

THE RESTITUTION HERALD

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Scholarship**
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The Restitution Herald

May
1984



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1000 Years of Peace, page 8

Hope, Faith, Love,
and Forgiveness
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Lebanon—A Nice Burial Job

Nobody in the free world liked what was happening with Lebanon. While that beleaguered land fights for its political life, Americans are no longer interested. Like Pilate, we want to wash our hands of the whole mess—let's get out before it becomes another Viet Nam.

Without saying it, now that the Gemayel government is all but counted out, most folks hope the whole mess can be washed away quickly and forgotten. Americans are happy to allow the Israelis to fend for themselves against the Soviet-backed Syrians in the struggle over a divided Lebanon. We want to bury that political sorespot.

But Bible students anticipate further action behind today's headlines in Lebanon.

Uncovering the pages of history, orders are found from God to the original Israeli army: "Take your journey . . . unto Lebanon. . . Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and their seed after them" (Deut. 1:7, 8). Those first Israelis failed in that conquest. Even present-day Israel has backed off from the pursuit of the PLO and sacking Lebanon—especially after United States intervention on the behalf of the pursued.

Yet still further in Bible prophecy, the indication is clear that Israel will make Lebanon part of its territory. Through the prophet Zechariah God declares to Israel: "I will bring them [Israel] into the land of Gilead and Lebanon" (Zech. 10:10). Zionism in Israel has long felt that Lebanon was part of the Homeland. It's an area which belongs to Jewry.

However, the modern dilemma of several Muslim factions vying with Christian political leaders in Lebanon—which at the same time was used as a base of operations for Syrian and PLO interests against Israel—complicated the Zionist's picture. Yet the Old Testament facts still stand. Some day they will have fulfillment.

Then there is the Biblical scene of Ezekiel 38 and 39, which forecast an invasion by a mighty northern army. Libya, Iran (ancient Persia), and Ethiopia

are cohorts with Gog and Gomer in that force (see 38:5). The text indicates that "friends of Israel" will only question the invading power, in effect pulling their support away from the Israelis (see 38:13). Only by the intervention of God will Israel be saved and the world of nations come to "know that I am the LORD" (38:23).

Lebanon is most likely not to suffer a quiet fate and a silent burial. Scripture and world politics dictate a giant explosion in the coming future.

The School Prayer Issue

Democratic presidential candidate and Colorado senator Gary Hart interrupted his campaign long enough on Tuesday, March 20, 1984, to fly back to Washington to cast a *NO* vote on the school prayer constitutional amendment. His vote helped halt passage by the needed two-thirds majority, sending the Reagan-backed proposal to defeat.

Of course the school prayer issue isn't permanently defeated. Undoubtedly Moral Majority advocate Jerry Falwell and cohorts will try again. When prayer activist Tim LaHaye was interviewed on national television news after the vote, he vowed additionally to mount campaigns against senators who voted *NO*.

However, several outspoken Catholic and mainline Protestant church leaders applauded the *NO* vote. Citing separation of church and state reasoning, these church officials joined many secular activists in opposing the amendment.

While the issue seems to be narrowly defined as prayer in public schools, there is a larger problem at stake. By glancing at the activities of proponents on both sides of the prayer issue, perhaps we can glimpse the real problem.

Persons in the school prayer camp are there because they want to halt the moral slide downward taking place in America. Ever since the Supreme Court ruled against a state-written school prayer, these persons have perceived a lack of traditional morals in our large cities. The New York-San Francisco "new morality" has gradually been imposed on the rest of the country through movies, television, magazines, advertising, music, and lack of interest

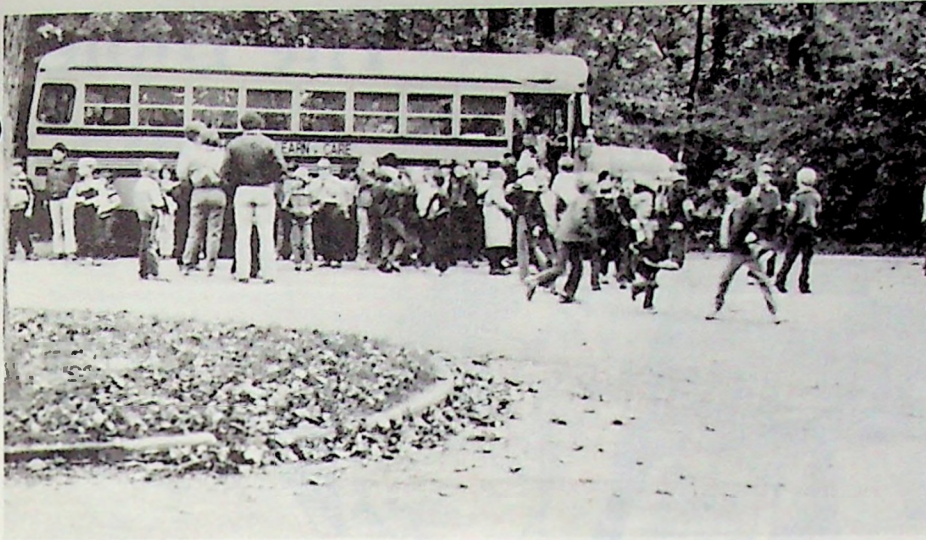


The FBI in Oregon, Illinois

This small northern Illinois community was buzzing with the news of the alleged Mafia-connected drug-ring involvement and FBI arrest of pizza restaurant owner "Pete" Alfano in Madrid, Spain, on Sunday, April 8, 1984. Radio and television stations sent reporters to interview local dignitaries regarding the incident. News services from around the country phoned in requests for information, photos, etc.

While Oregon comes before the nation through this infamous means, perhaps it's a good time to remember that fame is fleeting and, hopefully, fame for the wrong reasons will soon fade away. Things about which we think and talk should be characterized by "whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious . . . anything worthy of praise" (Phil. 4:8, RSV).

Yet our hearts go out to all who have been hurt by what has happened in Oregon. Many Oregon Bible College students and Church of God ministers and their families have had associations through the years with the Alfano restaurant. We include a photo of the establishment because from now on things will not be the same.



Why are the lives of school children made the battleground over prayer?

in the fight by mainline denominations. The upshot of this moral swing is that it has disrupted communication and behavior patterns among adults and between parents and their children. American families and communities across the land needed helpful support from the solid religious institutions, but that guidance never came.

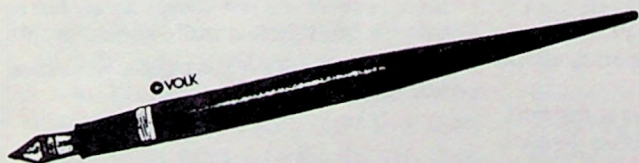
Why has the moral support been slow in coming from "Christendom"? Because the mainline church bodies were too busy turning to public politics to care about the boring tasks of undergirding their middle class constituents with moral scruples. More headlines are generated when religionists jump on human-rights violations, entitle-

ments programs, arms control, energy policy, etc.

By looking at the larger picture, perhaps we can understand the concern of so many in the Moral Majority camp. We can also see why members of mainline congregations are not being fed moral and spiritual nourishment.

What is needed is a genuine return to the truths of Scripture regarding faith and practice. If God's truth is lived, and Christ becomes Lord of the life of church members, then moral and spiritual principles will spill over into practice. Additionally, the highly media-attractive activities will gain grassroots support.

Letters to the Editor



Likes our Literature

I find great satisfaction in your literature for the most part. Thank you. Put me on your list for more.

—Louisville, KY.

March HERALD Measures Up

The encore didn't quite come up to the original [February's HERALD], but that would have been impossible. All in all, the March HERALD was not bad. Keep up the good work.

—Ashland, OH.

Notes of Encouragement

I found the February 1984 issue of THE RESTITUTION HERALD most interesting and I am enclosing my check for five copies of the issue.

Also I might add that I find no fault with the March issue either. I'd like to compliment you on the attractive front cover. It's simple and clean cut and effectively conveys the idea that it's bringing me a message— or messages.

—Wellington, KS.

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates: the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6); the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8); Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4); the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through him (Col. 3:3); the literal resurrection of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54), the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8); the final restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32), the church to be joint heirs with him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3); the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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The Bible and the

Shape of America's Future

SEVERAL years ago a number of Christians sported pins affirming "Christ is the answer." More than one wag responded, "But what is the question?" There are questions aplenty facing America today: abortion, capital punishment, homosexuality, state welfare programs, nuclear armaments, and many more. Does the Bible have the answers? And, if so, will America heed the Bible's answers?

About 150 years ago a great revival of religion swept across America, especially in New England and the Upper Midwest. It featured the preaching of the likes of the innovative Charles G. Finney. Whole communities were touched and transformed.

OUT OF THAT return to Biblical religion grew a great moral outrage against the institution of slavery. Concurrent with that revival was born the American Anti-slavery Society. The two streams met and converged and the revival of religion gave powerful impetus to the abolition movement.

The anti-slavery tide ran for three decades, leading to a bloody war to free the slaves while preserving the union. But anti-slavery was not the only movement that drew

strength from the 19th century religious revival. As people turned to the Bible they discovered direction for other social and moral causes—women's rights, prison reform, and help for the needy were included.

TODAY it is generally acclaimed in this country that slavery is wrong, that prisoners should not be treated like animals, that women are not simply the property of the menfolk in their lives, and that society needs to be open-handed toward the legitimately poor in its midst. If we in our society have not yet reached perfection in any of these areas, at least we have made great progress. The Bible helped to shape that progress.

Not all Bible readers agreed at the time. There were debates, sometimes heated. The Bible does not yield up its answers to life's hard problems easily. But the answers are there. And as sincere people read and study the Bible and strive to apply its teachings to the tough moral and social issues of the times, God guides through his Word.

THERE ARE THOSE who oppose the teachings of the Bible without even reading

by **Ralph Woodworth**

it or understanding them. There always are. But when the truth of God prevails, even those may eventually come to realize that the Bible's way is the better way.

The Bible helped to shape America in the 19th century. It was not the only shaping influence, of course; there were many others. But our society today would be much poorer for the lack of that molding influence of the Bible.

The Bible will help to shape America in the future if people read it and seek earnestly to apply it to the day's problems. Bible readers will not always agree, but as they pit truth against truth, society profits.

—Reprinted from *The Church Letter*, Wenatchee, WA, *Church of God*.

(The author is a graduate student in journalism at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. This is the winning entry in the 5th annual National Bible Week Editorial Contest for Journalism Students.)

Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted in honor of a man of God, Pastor Z. B. Duncan, who gave himself unselfishly for the proclamation of the gospel. Brother Duncan fell asleep in Jesus on Saturday, March 10, 1984. The article was first printed in the March, 1971, issue of THE RESTITUTION HERALD. It is a sample of the intensity of preaching Brother Duncan delivered in more than 32 years of pastoral ministry. A full obituary appears in the April/May/1984 issue of *The Progress Journal*.



Doers of

ONE OF the tragedies of our modern religions is the constant claim of Christ as Savior for a license to sin, to live loosely, and to disregard the commandments of God. The common opinion seems to indicate that many believe if a person accepts Christ he can sin just like a sinner and live like a sinner, but he is justified because he has accepted Jesus Christ. When one so uses our blessed Lord he brings himself into the greater damnation. According to Revelation 12:17, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." At once we can see, in the war between the dragon and the seed of the woman, that the seed are those who do two things: they keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Let us consider a few things about accepting Christ and continuing to live in sin. "What then?

the Word

shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey; his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:15, 16). Two things are certain: if you serve sin you are a servant of sin, and if you serve righteousness you are a servant of righteousness.

Dead to Sin

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1, 2.) This is a question each one ought to ask of himself: Am I dead to sin or alive to sin? God forbids that we take his grace and then continue in sin. God forbids that we take his grace and remain alive to sin and let sin reign

By Z. B. Duncan

over us. The grace of God forgives our past sins, is able to help us and keep us from present sins, but nowhere does the grace of God give us a license to continue in sin, and to live in willful sin. Such ideas as "once saved always saved," or "once in grace always in grace," no matter what you do, are responsible for much deception in the world today. We must rightly divide the Word of Truth, or find ourselves standing with the hypocrites on that final day.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). The word "destroyed" here means "crucified," or "made of none effect." When is the old

(Continued on the next page)

DOERS OF THE WORD

(Continued from page 5)

man crucified? and when is the body of flesh brought into subjection to the spirit—instead of to the lusts of the flesh? It is when one comes to the place Paul came to when he said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). What did he mean? He meant the old man of sin, of passion, and of the flesh was crucified when he gave his life to Jesus Christ and became a partaker of his grace. He crucified the nature of the first Adam that he might receive and live by the nature of the second Adam. The nature of the first leads to death; the nature of the second leads to life eternal. Note that it says, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." By the crucifixion of the old nature, and letting Christ come in and take control, one finds he is led of the Spirit to do those things which are pleasing to God.

No License to Sin

How sad that men in modern times have come to think that to accept Christ means we are no longer responsible for our sins, no matter what we do. They say, in effect, "If I accept Christ I can kill, commit adultery, bear false witness, and worship other gods, but I cannot be held accountable for my sins because I accepted Christ and he bore them all for me." Hear ye, my beloved! Such thinking is very dangerous and deceptive. Hear the Word of the Lord: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the

whole world" (1 John 2:1, 2). If this means because he died for our sins, we can live like we want, then this is "universal salvation," for he died for the sins of the whole world. This term "whole world" means that wherever there is sin in the world Christ's death can take away sin, IF the conditions specified in the Word of God are met by the ones seeking remission of sins. When we receive him we have forgiveness of sins, but we do not receive forgiveness for sins we shall commit in the future, willfully and wholeheartedly.

Keep His Commandments

"Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3, 4). Thus the Word of God declares that if you say you know Christ and keep not his commandments you are a liar. "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (3:22, 23). Beloved, can any man make it plainer?

Doers of the Word

We conclude therefore that when one loves the Lord with all his heart, when one becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus, when one comes to the place where old things are passed away and all things have become new, he has no grief at keeping the commandments of God! Revelation 22:14 says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in

through the gates into the city." You can note that these are they who do his commandments. We may know that the commandments are right and truth. Only, however, when we do them can we receive the blessing and obtain the reward. James put it very nicely: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (1:22).

Just because you hear the word, believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and claim to be a Christian follower of the Lord, does not mean you are anything but deceived. You see, my friend, accepting Jesus Christ and believing on him makes one a doer as well as a hearer of the Word. The Apostle Paul learned this lesson at his conversion. He said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). He did not say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to hear? or believe?" But, "What wilt thou have me to do?" When you do right it is proof you have heard right and believed right.

Work to be Done

Brethren and beloved, God has much work that needs to be done. Those who hear about it, and believe it needs to be done, but never do any of it are not Christians. Jesus did not say, "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so hearing or believing," but "so doing." James tells us "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (2:17). Is your faith a living faith? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? If you do, then get out and let him work in you. Let him use you to testify to your loved ones, your neighbors, and your friends. Let him make you a doer of the commandments of the Lord. You shall be blessed in your deeds. May God bless you all.

The Kingdom Of God

By Warren Sorenson

The Kingdom of God in God's Plan of the Ages

Why did the apostles ask the question, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 2:6). Why were the Jews expecting the Messiah to come in the form of a ruling king? Why did the wise men from the east at the time of the birth of Jesus come looking for the one to be born king of the Jews? These questions speak to the fact that the expectation of the coming King and kingdom was a well-known subject in Old Testament teaching. The fact of the King and kingdom was accepted. This leads us to the conclusion that during the time of the unfolding of God's relationship with Israel, the message of the coming kingdom and a coming ruler was taught

God's Covenant With Abraham

God's plan of the ages has one focal point: the kingdom of God. God's covenant with Abraham is an important part of the unfolding of God's plan of the ages. In retracing the steps of Old Testament personalities and in listening in on their Biblical conversations, the unveiling of the kingdom of God message will result. God selected Abraham and his descendants to form a great nation through which he would bless the world. The covenant which God made with Abraham is a foundation stone in the development of the promises of the coming kingdom. To Abraham God declared the promise of the land as an everlasting inheritance:

"It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to set out for a country that was the inheritance given to him and his descendants, and that he set out without knowing where he was going. By faith he arrived, as a foreigner, in the Promised Land, and lived there as if in a strange country, with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. They lived there in tents while he looked forward to a city founded, designed and built by God. It was equally

by faith that Sarah, in spite of being past the age, was made able to conceive, because she believed that he who had made the promise would be faithful to it. Because of this, there came from one man, and one who was already as good as dead himself, more descendants than could be counted, as many as the stars of heaven or the grains of sand on the seashore. All these died in faith, before receiving any of the things that had been promised, but they saw them in the far distance and welcomed them, recognizing that they were only strangers and nomads on earth" (Heb. 11:8-13).

The covenant relationship which began with Abraham was confirmed through succeeding generations and ultimately confirmed in Jesus Christ as the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). This is significant in that Christ is also God's appointed king who will be enthroned according to God's time plan. Through Jesus Christ the inheritance has been extended to all nations. "Compare this, brothers, with what happens in ordinary life. If a will has been drawn up in due form, no one is allowed to disregard it or add to it. Now the promises were addressed to Abraham and his descendants—notice, in passing, that scripture does not use a plural word as if there were several descendants, it uses the singular. To his posterity, which is Christ. But my point is this: once God had expressed his will in due form, no law that came four hundred and thirty years later could cancel that and make the promise meaningless. If you inherit something as a legal right, it does not come to you as the result of a promise, and it was in the form of a promise that God made his gift to Abraham. . . . And you are, all of you, sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. All baptized in

Christ, you have all clothed yourself in Christ, and there is no more distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus. Merely by belonging to Christ, you are the posterity of Abraham, the heirs he was promised" (Gal. 3:15-18, 26-29, JB).

God's promise to Abraham of the land for an everlasting inheritance centers in Jesus Christ. This covenant relationship with Abraham reveals one important aspect of the unfolding of God's kingdom plans, that is, the land as an inheritance. This aspect of the kingdom promise identifies that which will provide a dwelling place for the redeemed. In God's plan of the ages, he not only promises life without an end, but also the land for an eternal inheritance in which to enjoy that life. In verses 23-29 of the quoted text, three primary truths are revealed: 1) that a relationship in Jesus Christ replaces the law; all persons share equally in a saving relationship through Jesus Christ whether male or female and regardless of social status or of race; 2) through this saving relationship in Jesus Christ, persons become heirs of the inheritance promised to Abraham. This is confirmed in Romans 8:16, 17, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and jointheirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him." 3) Since Jesus is the heir to the inheritance promised to Abraham and we are joint heirs with Christ, Christian believers share the inheritance of the Abrahamic covenant.

“Biblical” Scholarship



And The Second Coming

by Tim Jones

ONE OF THE foundational beliefs of the Church of God throughout our history has been our insistence on the Bible as the sole source of truth. We as a group believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and therefore was error-free as it was originally written. Upon this

basis we believe in such vital doctrines as the Second Coming of Jesus and the future physical kingdom of God on the earth. These key truths are the focus of our hope in God and the basis of our faith. However, this view is increasingly challenged by so-called “Biblical” scholarship.

According to an article in a recent edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, a group of scholars met for an unusual conference. In the words of the *Times*, they “assembled at USC recently for a seminar to debunk contemporary apocalyptic claims that advancing around the corner are a war to end all wars and Jesus’ second coming.” This seminar was organized by the magazine *Free Inquiry*, a humanist-oriented organization, as part of its Religion and Biblical Criticism Research Project. This group attempts to convince scholars to devote time they would spend on original research to counter fundamentalist Bible interpretation. These scholars assembled because of concern that the United States is “a nation being wrung to pieces by irrationality,” as one scholar stated.

Many of the scholars were or are employed by religious schools in the United States. One of the strongest statements was issued by a retired USC religion department professor, Gerald A. Larue. He said that the early Christian beliefs—that they would witness the resurrected Jesus returning in power and glory, as foretold by both Old and New Testament writers—were wrong. He stated, “Jesus was wrong. Paul was wrong,” referring in Paul’s case to 1 Thessalonians 4:15. Other scholars in attendance claimed that perhaps Christ was not wrong, because he never made the statements attributed to him in such passages as Matthew 24. Instead, they claim these statements were inserted by the writer of the Gospel, and attributed to Jesus after his death, to justify the beliefs of the writer and give credence to his words.

According to the scholars at this seminar, Biblical books, or sections of them, were often written because of historical situations, and then the name of an apostle or one of the prophets was attached to the book to give it authority. This was a common literary practice during the era of Biblical writing. This idea is carried to

the limit by one of the speakers at the conference, Randel Helms, who said that rather than being actual historical reports or faithful accounts of visions, the Books of Daniel and Revelation are "religious fictions."

What should our reaction be to these statements? The first thing we must realize is that this sort of attack on our fundamental beliefs will continue, and indeed grow more frequent and sophisticated as time goes on. These statements give an indication of a shift in the type of skepticism which we can expect from the academic community. Rather than expounding an atheistic philosophy, these so-called "Bible" scholars are involved in many cases in religious studies, or are perhaps professors at such divinity schools as Harvard, Yale, or the School of Theology at Claremont. As such, their views carry weight, especially with people who have not been exposed to the truths of the Bible.

However, by denying the inspiration of the Bible, their attacks on our beliefs are potentially more devastating than those of someone who may deny God's existence completely. Even if they fail to place seeds of doubt in our own minds concerning the message of the church, they can increase the skepticism which we must overcome in witnessing to others.

Let us consider for a moment the position in which we will find ourselves if we accept the views of these scholars, that the Bible is "a historically conditioned document." On the surface, we might even agree with this premise. The Bible was written by men of their own era, using the language and ideas which prevailed during their lifetimes. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that these men wrote under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Regardless of the terminology or visions used to relay information to his servants, their visions of the future were directly from God, and can therefore be relied upon to come to pass.

On the other side of this issue, contemporary Bible researchers are unable to accept the inspiration of Scripture. More importantly, they are unwilling to accept the inerrancy of the Bible. As previously noted, they look upon the Bible as an "historically conditioned document." However, to these scholars, this means that the Bible was written by men in response to the conditions surrounding them at that particular time. For example, Randel Helms of Arizona State University stated, "Revelation's presentation of itself as a series of actual visions is a literary pretense, for those visions are, in fact, carefully constructed fictions modeled after visionary portions of the Old Testament, especially the books of Ezekiel and Daniel."

Another, but similar view of the prophetic books of the Bible, can be seen in an article written by Ross W. Marris. In an article in the February issue of *The Clergy Journal*, he states that Revelation was written to alleviate the persecutions of the early church. He says:

Read Revelation again. For too many, smoke, fire, brimstone seep out of its pages, strange animals stalk the earth, there are signs in heaven, and calendars being fulfilled. But look again. Revelation written to a church in trouble, in danger of being ripped to shreds by a madman demanding worship of himself. Revelation is no calendar for the 20th Century. It is a word of comfort and hope written to a suffering people in the First Century.

In this minister's view, Revelation was not written under inspiration of God to foretell the plan God had for this world at the end of time. Instead, it is a fictionalized account, designed to encourage those of the early church who were undergoing persecutions as followers of Christ. The claims to be written under God's inspiration are attempts by the author of the book to give his words additional support among his listeners.

If we are to accept this type of theology, what type of position do we place ourselves in? First of all, if we throw away our belief in the inerrancy of the Bible, *as it was originally written*, we can no longer be sure of any of the Scriptures' authenticity. Statements like Second Peter 1:20, 21 become not only misleading, but outright deceptions and lies in the Scripture itself. God did not inspire his prophets to write out the plan which he had for this earth: instead, men created fictional accounts from their own imaginations to give each other comfort.

A second result of this type of thinking—one less obvious, but potentially more destructive of true faith—is that we destroy the unique importance Jesus has as God's Son. To reject the teachings of Christ, it is necessary to take a less exalted view of his origins. One of the speakers at the USC seminar, James M. Robinson of the Claremont Graduate School, said Jesus was converted by an apocalyptic leader, John the Baptist. In other words, the perfect Son of God was, in fact, converted and influenced by the teachings of John the Baptist into an erroneous belief in the end of this world. Ross W. Marris describes Jesus as a "child of his own age" and states that "he did not think in terms of an end of things." The message we are to draw from these statements is that the teachings of Christ are no more reliable than those of any other man, as he was certainly deluded into thinking along apocalyptic lines, simply because other people of his day thought the same way. There is no reason to assume that Christ will ever return to this earth, and those passages which speak of a return are either the invention of superb storytellers; the beliefs of deluded and misled individuals of which Christ himself was one; or the result of misinterpretation on the part of the readers of the passage. In effect, we have done
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BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

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away with the promise of the kingdom of God, the reward for which believers throughout the centuries since Christ's death have longed for.

However, to those of us willing to accept that God in fact did speak to his people through his chosen agents, the prophets of the Old and the New Testament, these ideas should not come as any surprise, or cause us to despair. In fact, there is reason to rejoice because we see this occurring today. Consider the following quotation from Second Peter 3:3, 4:

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our father died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation" (NIV).

And now, look at a quote from the article by Ross Marrs. Notice the great similarity between the statements he makes and the prophecy of Peter hundreds and hundreds of years earlier.

The signs are unmistakable this time... this time we are certain. Pack! Get ready! and still the end has not come, and there is no sign of its coming.

And the plain fact is that such ideas, such predictions, such expectations and so-called prophecies of what God is doing or is to do next are as discredited today as they were in the 2nd Century.

The similarity of these two passages is astounding. Peter warned us not to be misled by this type of thinking and those who would try to discredit our belief. Surely this in itself is reason to believe we are correct in our reliance upon the prophecies we find in the Scriptures. They are as relevant today as they were when first written, and just as sure to take place.

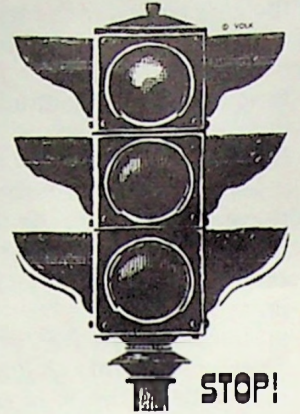
There are some actions we must take, however, to avoid the spread of

this skeptical view of prophecy. First, we must beware of getting too involved in date-setting for the return of Christ. One reason these opponents of literal interpretation of the Bible find such receptive listeners is the very visible failures some denominations and groups have had in trying to predict exactly when Christ will return. If we lock ourselves too firmly into a single interpretation of prophetic passages, and then our view is not borne out by actual events, we have hurt not only our credibility as individuals, but we also damage our opportunity as a church body to spread the true gospel.

Second, we must be informed of the Bible and its prophecies concerning the return of Christ. We are warned that in the last days even the elect will almost be deceived by those proclaiming a false message. If we are to remain faithful, we must be well informed on the true message of Christ's return and what that means to each of us as members of his church. And this glorious message is not for us alone, but it is our solemn responsibility to share it with others, letting them know also that we are truly living in the last days.

At the end of his article, Ross W. Marrs gives the following quotation: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven..." To Mr. Marrs, this is evidence that our attention should be on the world around us, and not looking for that time when Christ shall return as he has promised. However, for us who accept the Word of God as true, we do not have to stop where Mr. Marrs does. We continue with the promise "... will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." It is a glorious thing to hold the Word of God to be true, and therefore to be able to join the writer of Revelation in saying:

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.



HAVE you ever said something you wish you could take back? So have I. Life is full of situations that we don't always handle as we should. Is there a way to overcome such problems? I believe there is, but it does require patience and effort.

Proverbs 17:14 says: "The beginning of strife is as when water first trickles (from a crack in a dam); therefore stop contention before it becomes worse and quarreling breaks out" (The Amplified Bible).

Can you picture that little Dutch lad holding his finger in the dike? He saved many lives because he cared. While others went for help he took care of that hole so it wouldn't get bigger and out of control.

So it is with our tensions. If we are going to have control we must deal with the problem before it gets blown out of proportion. Too many people let many problems go unresolved until they explode and all the resentment from all those accumulated problems vent themselves. A little patch work and dealing with those difficulties would go a long way in keeping the dike from bursting.

We need to face contention when

Stop It While You can

By Pastor David W. Cheatwood

it shows itself. Not after it has led to disaster. Healing happens only as we resolve differences. We dare not let them pile up, because we can't handle that big a pile of garbage.

Our relationship with Jehovah is often the same. We don't talk to him about our problems as we confront them, and finally the load gets so big that we begin to blame God for our problems. What we need is better communications with him so that we resolve each problem and maintain a worthwhile relationship.

When you get upset with others, take time to think about the results of voicing what you are thinking. Plug your mouth before you tear up a relationship that is important to you. Stop while the problem is small enough to deal with. Then quarreling will not be necessary.

Seek God's help and mercy. He will not fail you. Deal with the present and tomorrow there will not be so much to wade through. Save yourself from accumulated stress by resolving today's stress.



Merciful Me In a Merciless World

by Pastor Michele Millard

Matthew 5:7

IT'S A DOG-EAT-DOG world—and everyone knows it. With unemployment still high, I have to be the first in line for that job opening. With the cost of living, I have to be the first at the sales. When it's hard enough to put food on your own table, how can I worry about my neighbors' bare cupboards? When it's raining and I'm looking for a parking spot in a crowded lot, it's be pushy or be out of a spot. How does mercy fit into a world where aggressiveness is rewarded and the nice guy usually finishes last? How do I begin being merciful in order that I may be the recipient of mercy?

This little beatitude, stuck in the midst of all the rest, hardly seems revolutionary in its idea. If we, however,

look at the cultural context in which it was written, we'll discover that it was a very drastic and novel idea, overturning the accepted practices and philosophies of the day. The Romans, whose strength and might made them rulers of an empire, despised pity. They equated mercy with weakness and found no room for it in the administration of their empire. The Stoics, who were a main philosophical force of their time, held very rigid views of what was morally good and acceptable. Their philosophy taught them to keep their feelings under control and had little room for compassion to others. The Pharisees, who were the religious leaders of the day, were so caught up in

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MERCIFUL ME . . .

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exacting legalism and so obsessed with observing law that mercy was unacceptable. The commonly held explanation for those who were suffering or needed mercy was that they were being punished for their sins. But Jesus' short statement and the actions of his ministry overthrew that line of thinking. Mercy was in the center of his ministry and occurred wherever there was suffering, even when one deserved punishment.

The word "mercy" is taken from the Greek word *eleemon*, which is further traced back to the Hebrew *chesedh*. This word is virtually untranslatable in our language. It means, not simply feeling sorry for another person, but attaining the ability to get right inside of the other person's skin until we can see with his eyes, think with his mind, and feel with his feelings. Anyone with any sensitivity at all has had momentary emotional waves overtake him at the sight of homeless families, of starving children, or of grieving parents. But the mercy that Jesus is talking about here is much more than a momentary emotional feeling of pity that overcomes us and then fades away. It is a disciplined feeling that demands a deliberate effort of the mind and will. It takes work on our part to identify with another person. The word "sympathy" literally means to experience or suffer together with another—to emotionally go through what he is going through. This is an uncommon phenomenon. It doesn't happen easily, nor does it happen often.

To totally empathize with a person puts our relationship with him on an entirely different plane. No longer is it possible to sit in judgment of people, or wonder why they are the way they are, or have trouble communicating with them. Instead of just seeing a person as expressed in his ideas and actions, we see a person with his background, his problems, his environment, and his physical condition. It automatically makes living with others a whole lot easier in that we begin to understand them as individuals. We begin to understand the reasons behind their thinking and actions. It makes tolerance and forgiveness much easier. There is

an old French proverb that says, "To know all is to forgive all."

This, in essence, is what God did through Jesus Christ. It was through the man Jesus, and the suffering he experienced, that God and man were finally reconciled. God's mercy, or his ability to get right inside of our skin, was perfectly manifested in his Son. In turn, those who are the recipients of this perfect mercy find in turn they are able to give it. The paradox is that they who begin to show this mercy to others find themselves to be more openly receptive to it. Those who show mercy are reflecting a Godlike character. In other words, they are acting like God. He who gets right inside of other people will discover that others will be motivated to do the same for him, and will realize that that is what God in Christ Jesus has done.

The word itself carries with it the connotation of practice. It is not merely a feeling or a sentiment felt within oneself. It doesn't exist until it is translated into action. A momentary emotional wave of sympathy for a destitute family is not valid until I translate that feeling into providing some relief for the family. A momentary feeling of sadness for someone who has offended me is worth nothing unless I restore my relationship with that person. If I do not act, I may as well not feel, for one without the other is useless.

Showing and obtaining mercy is a small but vital key in victorious living. It is something that takes conscious effort to develop in our lives. How do we maintain that difficult balance between treating people fairly and showing mercy? We want to encourage others to be responsible for their actions, yet foster that godly aspect of mercy in our relationships. That balance can be elusive unless we begin to be aware of the roles that fairness and mercy plan in our lives.

Shakespeare, in the Merchant of Venice, spoke beautifully of the quality of mercy: "The quality of of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath, it is twice blest. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes. 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes the throned monarch better than his crown."

Seven Days



May 1984

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Of Christian Growth

IN OUR LOCAL CHURCH recently we had what we called "Involvement Week." It was to be a week of personal Christian growth. When we analyze a normal week, if we are honest we will admit that a very small part of the week is used in Christian experience.

We had a Sunday School contest recently and our superintendent at the beginning of the contest showed us graphically how little time we spend in worship or Christian service. He had a rope that was 168 inches in length. With a bit of calculation you will find that one week (seven days) has 168 hours. The rope, you see, represented a week. He then showed how much of the rope of 168 inches was used when we attended two, three, or four services, which is common in most churches. We were all appalled when we saw the comparison of 3 or 4 inches to the 168 total.

I challenged our church to get involved and spend more time during a given week (in our case it was the following week) to seek a closer walk with God—to draw closer to him and his Son Jesus in even a greater way. I want to challenge you, a reader of this article, to decide to make this effort **NEXT WEEK**.

How can this be done? Well, I am sure there are many ways it could be done, but I want to ask you to do an exercise project next week. I will give you a little outline to follow. Start next Monday. Maybe it will become a habit each week thereafter. Many in our congregation gave wonderful testimony of the growth they had experienced during that week.

MONDAY: "Judge Not" (Matthew 7:1a).

Those two words will be the key for the day. Oh! how often we are judging people hourly. Each time we meet someone we make a quick judgment: "I like him or her," or, "I sure don't like that guy," etc.

If we are trying to grow in Christ this day, Monday, let us make a special effort to go through the whole day, from wake up to bedtime, without criticizing another human being. Can you do it? Try it. I am sure we will need to begin with prayer for strength. I am sure too that we will each need to bite the tongue several times that Monday. But make a real effort. Don't say a critical thing about anyone.

A good saying is, "If you can't say something good about a person, don't say anything." "Judge not." The verse goes on, "That ye be not judged." Try it Monday. Make it a part of your day.

TUESDAY: "Seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22).

Matthew 18:21, 22 says, "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." This of course does not mean 70 x 7 or 490 times. It really means infinitum.

We need to be forgiving. Oh, how many lessons there are in the Scriptures on forgiveness. The Lord's model prayer says, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Let us be ready to forgive and erase all malice and evil thinking from our day. If you have someone you feel "apart" from, go on Tuesday and make things right. Forgive. See how good you will feel.

WEDNESDAY: "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

The verse says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." Well, we could talk of tithes and other giving. We could speak of giving time and talents to the Lord. All of these are important. On this Wednesday, however, take some item you have, something of considerable value, and give it away. Give it to someone who has a need or just as a goodwill gesture. Just give it to him. Maybe someone has need of money, so give that if you want. The point is, give something of value to somebody. We all have items we can give. "God loveth a cheerful giver."

THURSDAY: "Be thankful" (Psa. 100:4).

Thankful for what? Thankful to God for all his great creation, his Word, his plan of salvation, his Son Jesus, and on and on. But let us be more specific today, Thursday.

Make a list of people who have meant a lot to you in some special way or at some special time. Sit down on Thursday and write two or three letters. Write to some of these people a real letter of thanks. Maybe you just never got around to it before. You could also phone a couple of people or go see them and express that real "thank you" that you may have neglected or not gotten around to do sooner.

Just do it and see how good it makes you feel. I know those persons you thank will really appreciate it very much. I recall many such letters I have received over the years, undeserved in my eyes, but something that an individual seemed to appreciate and took time to write or call me about. It made me feel good, to be sure. I am sure by now that in the week's activities you have shown growth, but the week is not over.

FRIDAY: "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17).

You may want to jot down a special verse of Scripture—a verse that is most meaningful—and sit down several times during the day and read and reread it and truly meditate upon it. Pray with it; think and study and concentrate on the words of the verse.

Pray for one or more persons also that day, not once but several times throughout the day, Friday. "Pray without ceasing." Make this a special day of prayer.

SATURDAY: "A still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12).

Make this a day of quietude. Get away from the hustle and bustle of life for awhile.

First Kings 19:11, 12, "He said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD, And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

Find a favorite chair in a quiet place. Go to a lakeside if weather permits and find a quiet, serene place. Find such a place and sit and think and let your mind go into complete rest for a while. You may want to read a little. Read some poetry, or some favorite Bible verses. The Psalms are especially good. Most of all, let God speak to you through quiet meditation.

A quiet place, of course, is not easy to find in this crazy noisy world of turmoil that we live in, but really try on Saturday to find such a place. Hear that still small voice. Let him speak to you.

SUNDAY: "The seventh day" (Psa. 122:1; 146:1).

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psa. 122:1). "Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul" (Psa. 146:1). On this Sunday be sure to come together in the house of God and worship him and his Son Jesus Christ. Lift up voice in song and praise.

Do as little as possible on this Sunday. Even Jesus needed rest. God rested on the seventh day. During the service this Sunday or even earlier in the day, look back over the week. How successful were my efforts in this exercise? How successful was I in

Withholding judgment?

Giving up grudges?

Parting with possession of material things?

Expressing thanks and gratitude?

Deepening my spiritual awareness, and in a closer prayer life?

Achieving an inner quietness?

Ask yourself, did I really accomplish these growth steps? Then sit back and enjoy the worship on Sunday. Let God's peace and power come into your life, in an even greater way than ever before.

I hope you will follow these steps during the next week after you read this. Remember at the end of the week, if you didn't quite accomplish all of these steps to your satisfaction, there is another week, another seven days, another 168 hours just ahead. Keep looking up; keep growing in Christ. May God bless in your efforts. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:16, 17).

by Pastor S. O. Ross

Hope, Faith, Love, and Forgiveness



Discussing the Christian virtues among friends in a class situation.

In the midst of the battle for the presidency of the United States in this election year, the four above words must not lose their significance.

By now we've heard enough back-biting, mud-slinging, and word battles to scar us for life, politically. No longer can we say the prayer of the wishful thinker. "I hope the best man wins." From what I've read and heard from all the candidates, the best man lost his appeal long ago.

What Americans yearn for most from their politicians is constant dosages of the four big words—hope, faith, love, and forgiveness. But perhaps that's just too much wishful thinking. By now we are sure it's just another dirty business. We can no longer be comforted by the German philosopher's words, "The romance of politics is best

used to numb and quell the fears of the uninformed" (Goethe).

There may be a thin thread of hope which gives redeeming social value to our political system—that is, to see it in the long range of the lasting values. In this election year, avoid taking the political talk seriously. This too shall pass.

Remember the words attributed to theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (as quoted by *New York Times* columnist James Reston):

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime. Therefore, we must be saved by hope.

Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history. Therefore we are saved by faith.

Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone. Therefore we must be saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our own standpoint. Therefore, we must be saved by the final form of love, which is forgiveness.

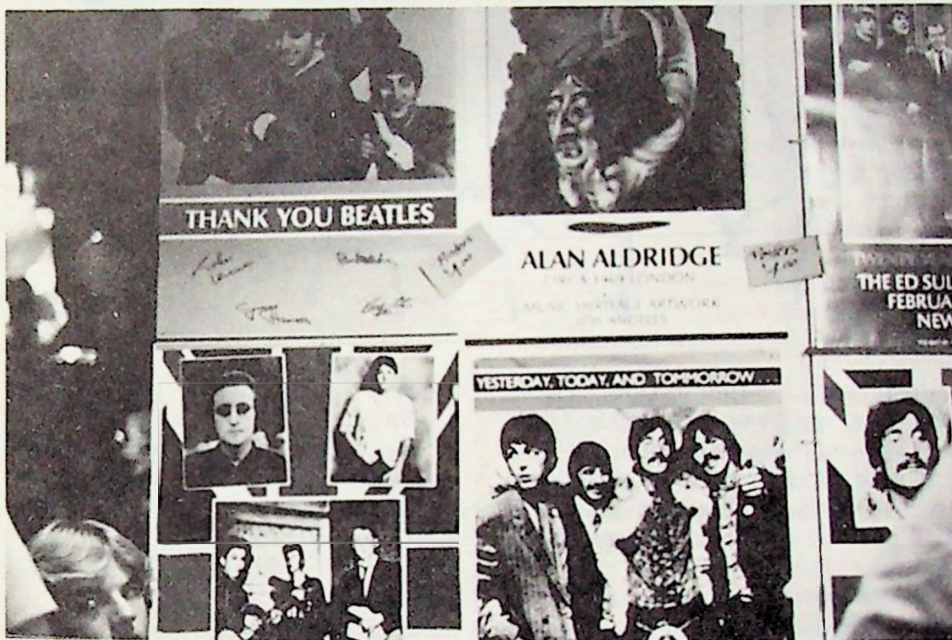
"We give thanks to God always for you all... remembering before our God and Father your work of *faith* and labor of *love* and steadfastness of *hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes. 1:2, 3, RSV).

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, *forgiving* one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:31, 32, RSV).

Let's Sell

CHASTITY

to Teens



Chastity. Offering an alternative to youth bombarded by the Beatlemania which affected their parents.

A family planning group from Cincinnati is doing just that.

The Cincinnati Couple-to-Couple league produces a 26-minute color slide show aimed at a mixed audience of 7th- to 12th-graders which states reasons why abstinence is preferable to intercourse.

How successful have the sales been? In just the two months of 1984, 285 sets of the \$95 program have been sold. The group expects to sell 1,000 programs by the end of the year.

Why has the idea been successful? According to Kevin Banet, information director for the group, it is because

“the idea of presenting chastity and chastity only is novel.”

Certainly chastity is novel in a day when its opposite is proclaimed as the fun in-thing for all. Perhaps folks are finally waking up to the fact that chastity provides the only solution for long-lasting results in sexuality.

It took the Couple-to-Couple League two years and \$30,000 to develop the show. “It’s the Springtime of Your Life” might truly be worthwhile for church youth groups, pastoral counseling, and discussion starters for retreats. At least here’s one approach which begins with biblical truth.

There’s a Right Religion



for TV News

It’s not fair, that’s all.

If you are Roman Catholic, Jewish, Episcopalian, or Amish, you get more television news coverage than if you are Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Lutheran.

There are far more Baptists in America than Episcopalians, so why are the latter more newsworthy?

That’s a good question. The only religious group which is covered in proportion to its membership is the Mormons. The TV networks apparently cover religion using standards other than membership percentages.

The foregoing discoveries were made in a survey spanning 1972 to 1982 which was conducted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The survey considered only the coverage of the three major networks.

Some obvious assumptions can be made from these consequences. First, the television networks will only cover events in religion which make good news copy.

But what makes good news copy? One criterion for newsworthiness is newness itself, or *timeliness*. The reporter must ask if the event or story is fresh and up-to-date.

A second component of the criteria for news selection is *proximity*. The

THERE'S A RIGHT RELIGION FOR TV News

(Continued from page 17)

nearer a story occurs to the people who read about it, the more newsworthy it is.

Prominence is also crucial in the selection process. The more widely known the participants in an occurrence, the more newsworthy the happening. Thus, whatever the president of the United States or the pope of Rome does, it makes the news. Of course, prominence has a snowballing effect; the more a person is referred to in the news, the more news he "makes." Conversely, those who are not noted in the news eventually sink out of sight.

Two of the most important criteria for news selection are *consequences* and *human interest*. Almost anybody can be involved in a happening which has widespread ramifications—an earthquake or an accident, for instance.

Finally, those matters which catch and hold our attention because of physical and emotional responses that are built into human beings are newsworthy. Again, anyone can be involved in human interest which catches the eye of the TV camera.

Then how can the Church of God become more newsworthy than larger denominations? By meeting the needs of people in a way which develops a timely, prominent, and human interest quality to grab attention from the networks. Then we'll get more coverage than others who are larger.

Naturally, we know that the gospel itself should be all the news we need. The word itself means "good news."

But the good news has been around a long time. Countless persons and organizations have used their filter to pass it on to the audience.

What's needed to make the TV news is a happening/event/pronouncement which meets the foregoing criteria.



Jason and his friend Tom were in Jason's room. It was Saturday and they had been working on a model airplane. But it seemed that the model pieces just wouldn't go together right and they had lost or broken several of the parts.

"What can we do for the rest of the day?" asked Jason.

Tom thought a minute. "Let's go over to the park and see if there are any girls playing. It's fun to run through their games or take their jacks or jump rope. They sure do yell when you won't let them on the slide or swings, too." Tom laughed.

"Well, I don't know. My mother sure wouldn't like it if she knew I did that," said Jason.

"Oh, how will she know about it? Come on."

As they sent through the living room Jason grabbed one of his sister Lisa's braids and gave it a yank.

"Hey, you quit that!"

"Oh, I didn't hurt you any. Why did you have to yell?"

"What did you do to Lisa, Jason?" asked Mother.

"He pulled my hair and it hurt," answered Lisa.

Mother stopped the boys just as they were going out the door. "Jason, please tell Lisa that you are sorry you pulled her hair."

"But I was only teasing her a little, and she always yells. That's why it's fun to tease her."

"Fun for whom?" questioned Mother. "Teasing is fun only when both people are enjoying it. When one isn't having fun anymore, then it is time to stop."

Jason said, "Oh, all right, I'm sorry I pulled your hair, Lisa."

The boys left and wandered down the street, kicking a can along and hopping up and down the curb.

"Hey, here comes Timmy on his new bike," said Tom. "Let's give him a push."

As Timmy rode slowly by, Tom turned and shoved the back of the bike. The sudden push startled Timmy and he ran into the curb and fell over.

C h i l d r e n ' s

Do Unto Others

By Maxine Herr

"Oh, my wrist. It hurts."

"Let's get out of here," said Tom.

When the boys got to the park, there were some older fellows sitting on some benches, talking and laughing. As Tom and Jason started walking past them, one put out his foot and tripped Tom. He fell flat on his face.

"Hey, what did you do that for?" Tom said angrily. "I wasn't doing anything to you. And besides, you're a lot bigger than I am."

"So, I'm bigger, that's why I could do it," taunted the older boy. "You're just a cry baby."

Tom picked himself up and as he and Jason hurried away, Tom looked at his friend. "That was sure a mean kid. I could have been really hurt."

Jason was silent for a moment. "Well, Tom, you are bigger than Timmy, and he *did* get hurt. And I'm bigger than Lisa, and I hurt her . . . I guess we're just as bad as that guy that tripped you."

They walked along without saying anything for awhile. Then Jason said, "Tom, do you remember what our memory verse was in Sunday School last week? 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' We sure haven't been acting like we know what that means. Now I know what Mom meant when she said that teasing is okay only as long as everyone is having fun."

"I guess that's right."

"Now I'm going to tell Lisa that I really *am* sorry. The next time I'm looking for something to do, it won't be teasing someone or doing something I wouldn't want them to do to me."

ONE THOUSAND YEARS OF PEACE

(Continued from page 9)

Description of the Millennium

Many passages focus on this time period when "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15b).

Great healing will be in evidence during the earthly reign of Christ. "Then the eyes of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isa. 35:5, 6). "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (33:24). Passages like these fit only in the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth.

Then, too, the longevity of the patriarchs will be restored. The mortal people who enter the kingdom will live to be several hundred years old as was the case before the flood. (This does not affect the church which will be made immortal in a moment when Jesus comes.)

"No longer will babies die when only a few days old; no longer will men be considered old at 100! Only sinners will die that young. . . For my people will live as long as trees and will long enjoy their hard-won gains" (Isa. 65:20-22, LB). Sin and death are not completely destroyed in the millennium, but righteousness will dominate that time period as sin does now.

Even animals will know peace when Jesus is in control. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fating together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9).

This is strictly an earthly scene when Edenic beauty is restored to old mother earth. God put the fear of man in animals after the flood (Gen. 9:2). Here peace is restored between man and man; and between animal and animal. The whole earth is restored to its original state of purity, and that's what the whole message of the Bible is about.

One must remember that the millennium is a transitional period when

the order of things now in existence is passing away and the new order is being ushered into view. If that be accepted, it will help a great deal to better understand prophetic events because so many passages of God's Word won't fit anywhere else.

Isaiah 2:2-4 is one of the better-known millennial passages. It reveals that all nations of earth will go to Jerusalem to worship and be at peace with each other. They come to be taught God's ways and learn how to live under a righteous government. There is no more war, but peace (v. 4). Micah 4:1-4 expresses the same thing. Compare them. The real disarmament revealed here will be welcome after Armageddon.

Adam's sin in Eden brought the curse. Paradise was destroyed. Milton called it "Paradise Lost." Our human environment is no longer ideal. Disease of the body, crime on the street, weeds in the garden, blight on the crops, and natural disasters have afflicted our race since the fall.

It is still God's purpose to rule on earth and provide a beautiful and healthful place for people to flourish. It's just been postponed a few thousand years. In Peter's second sermon he echoes the voice of the Old Testament prophets.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21). Everything God promised long ago through the prophets is to be restored.

The whole creation groans and suffers under the curse (Rom. 8:21-23). It will experience regeneration (Matt. 19:28) when Jesus comes. Yes, old mother earth will be born again. Christ will become the Monarch of all the earth, and prosperity will be worldwide. Special blessings will come to the nation of Israel which will be living in the Holy Land. The Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled. "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever . . . that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21).

According to Isaiah 60 and 61 the Gentiles will also enjoy the great blessing of God. Knowledge of the Lord will be worldwide. People will not say, "Know the LORD," for all will know him. Paradise is restored. Hallelujah!



Don't Forget to Pray

When all you can see are flowers ahead,
 Don't forget to pray,
 For a weed can easily slip in.

When all your worry has seemingly come
 to and end,
 Don't forget to pray,
 Else reality will set in.

When all your days seem glorious and
 bright,
 Don't forget to pray,
 For dark shall be the night.

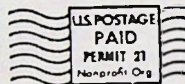
When the road seems fairly smooth and
 your cares are not a one,
 Don't forget to pray,
 For the pebbles that you meet will become
 bumps to be won.

When all your strength and ability shine
 forth with dignity and pride,
 Don't forget to pray,
 For God can humble your state of stride.

When prayers go unanswered and you
 want to search the sky,
 Don't forget to pray,
 For God hears your fretful cry.

—Darlene Day.

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MOTHERS



by Joyce Housman

GOD GIVES EVERYONE a mother. Some we cannot keep for long. Mothers belong to us for 40 or 50 years. More fortunate people may keep their mothers for 70 years. Whatever length of time we have them, it is never long enough.

Mothers come in various sizes, shapes, and colors. They have some things in common.

They seem fond of periodic dentist appointments, Sunday School attendance, regular bedtime hours, and eating everything on your plate. They dislike fistfights, sassing back, and dirty fingernails.

But more than this, they believe in their children. They believe that you are capable of anything you choose to do. They believe that you can take your first step alone, that you will survive your first day of school (even though *she* might not), that you can get better than a "D" in math, and that you will be accepted at a college. She believes that some wise far-seeing employer will hire you, that you will find a spouse worthy of you, and that you will live happily ever after. And if God pleases, you will bring her grandchildren to visit her very often.

Her children may fail in her expectations, but she will never fail to love them. She will bear your crosses as well as share in your successes. She will never stop being your mother while there is breath in her body. Even at 95 my grandmother worries about her 70-year old son and daughter. Love never stops.

Mothers raise teachers, builders, salesmen, executives, ditch diggers, senators, presidents, and other mothers to take her place. God has never created anything to compare with a mother, or to replace her.

So if you are still fortunate enough to have a mother, love her. If you have lost your mother, cherish your memories of her, for God has given a special place in your heart that no one else will ever fill.



The Restitution Herald



June
1984

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Editor's

Prospect Finding This Summer

As these lines are being written, Outreach and Church Development Director Warren Sorenson busily plans to take a team of Oregon Bible College students to several church sites this summer for prospect finding.

What's prospect finding?

It's assisting churches in finding persons interested in the gospel. It's helping churches to discover and minister



Where do churches find prospective members?
On college campuses?

to people in need. It's aiding churches to reach out beyond their four walls to participate in their communities.

For five Bible college students, their sponsors, and the churches which will share in this ministry, the summer of 1984 promises to be three months of sharpening the gift of evangelism. We hope to give you some results of this exciting time in our pages in later issues.



In homes behind closed doors which need opening?

Potpourri for June

Weddings, Father's day, and Children's day mark the calendar this month. We've supplied you with a variety of articles in keeping with these special events.

Pastor David Cheatwood stresses a positive note for all would-be marriages in his "Healthy Sexuality" article on page 15. You will appreciate Anita Howell's story of her own father, the late Pastor John Humphreys, titled "I Had a Father who Prayed." Her piece begins on page 12. You don't have to wait until Children's day to read to your youngsters Rachel Carr's "Twelve Men Went to Canaan Land" (page 16). Her two-part article will be concluded in the July/August issue.

May God bless you in your participation of the special days of June.

The Sermon on the Mount

You may have noticed in the last several issues articles on parts of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The series continues with Pastor John Hearp's comments on the "heart Beatitude." Many of our pastors are involved in this series which we hope will bring you new insights to strengthen your faith. The article begins on page 4.

Divine Healing

I hope the thoughts contained in Pastor Brian J. Atra's article on page 9 challenge your thinking regarding divine healing. While I find it difficult to believe in *divine healers*, I believe God is in the business of *divine healing*. Of course, ultimately there is a grand day of healing. That will come for the faithful of all the ages at the return of Christ. Clearly, physical healing that does not take place today will find its completion at the second coming.

Subscription Opportunities Every Six Months

Beginning with the July/August Issue of THE RESTITUTION HERALD we will offer opportunity to new subscribers to start a full-year subscription.

As you know, since THE HERALD returned to the subscription basis a few years ago, all subs began with the February issue. This was done to save lots of headaches regarding the beginning of subscriptions. But it also limited the sale of subs to just once a year. Thus it became impractical for you to send gift subscriptions except once a year. But with the opportunity of full-year subs twice a year, you can now—today, in fact—send in gift subscriptions which begin in July/August.

Also, formerly any mid-year subscribers received back issues to the February issue. This was not an effective

policy. Few people are interested in outdated material. This practice will be modified with subs beginning in July/August as well as February.

How can you take advantage of this new subscription opportunity? By making use of the form on page 20. It has been redesigned to accommodate subscriptions beginning in July/August.

Eventually we hope to begin subscriptions at any point in the year. For now we will need to be satisfied with the twice a year schedule. When we again update the programming on our mailing list computer, then we will be able to carry out subscription starts on demand.

Issues of Theology and Ministry

The above title served as the theme for this spring's Church of God Ministerial Conference held at Oregon Bible College and at the Oregon Church of God in Oregon, IL. Issues dealing with eschatology, women in pastoral leadership, and the use of alcohol by Christians were discussed.

As can be expected with an issue-related theme, often discussions became heated and emotional when both sides of the problem were debated. In spite of that difficulty, some light and some appreciation for opposing views did penetrate into our minds when we faced the issues honestly. Generally pastors went home knowing that the Lord had been in the midst of the conference. Participants often expressed appreciation for the program and for the time of fellowship and the exchange of viewpoints.

May God bless the continued ministries of Church of God ministers and the future good work of their congregations. I look forward not only to the conference in 1985, but to any opportunity our ministers have to fellowship and share viewpoints. I'm confident that such exchanges will be enriching.

Pastoral Changes

This year at last count at least 14 pastors and churches will experience changes. All kinds of adjustments will be necessary on the part of both pastors and churches. Our prayers and concerns are extended on behalf of all. May God work a huge miracle in the life and work of the Church of God while these transitions take place.

Perhaps the following poem by Darlene Day will help smooth over the

Viewpoint

pastor-church relationship during these changes. She expresses heart-felt care for the pastor from the viewpoint of one in the congregation.

Pastor

Once we were strangers like the seas,
With miles and miles of distance stretched in
between.

Sunday sermons, hand shakes, hellos and
good-byes
Brought us closer together like birds in the
skies

The words of wisdom in which you shared
Gave to me an instinct that, through you, God
really cared.

Your actions I sought, who's behavior I would
find,
A reflection of Christ, who is ever so loving
and kind.

Now that you are going on, traveling a new
way,
You leave to me your memories that will
always be here to stay.

May you find peace and happiness in your life
ahead, forgetting not the past friendships
you made,
For there shall come a day when we will meet
again.

—Darlene Day

Russia Pulls Out of the Olympics

America got a taste of her own medicine when Moscow refused its athletes the privilege of participation in the Los Angeles Olympics this summer. In 1980 president Carter pulled the same political maneuver in protest of Russia's invasion of Afghanistan.

Of course, the United States is conciliatory to the Soviets, urging a mind change because Russia's fears about terrorism against her participants is blown out of proportion. Many Amer-

icans probably hesitate to travel in Russia for the same reason. Certainly we declare that we have good reason for our mistrust. As far as we are concerned, there's no way a like mistrust of the United States could be justified. Except for alleged CIA interference in Central America, where else can one find an example of U. S. skulduggery?

While the Olympics were meant to exhibit friendship among enemies, they've always managed to create their own built-in tensions because such is the situation between participating nations. But the pull-outs of the last two Olympics only underscore the blatant truth: mankind's actions in the political-military arena remain unregenerate.

What is the Christian response to political upstaging in the Olympics? The same which Paul made to the Games of his day. Use the true value of the events to urge believers on to victory in the Christian life. Review again his application of the Games:

Every athlete in training submits to strict discipline, in order to be crowned with a wreath that will not last; but we do it for one that will last forever. That is why I run straight for the finish line; that is why I am like a boxer who does not waste his punches. I harden my body with blows and bring it under complete control, to keep myself from being disqualified after having called others to the contest (1 Cor. 9:25-27, GNB).

If Paul saw the state of the Olympics today, he'd probably boycott them along with the Russians.



Letters to the Editor

April Cover Was the Pits

I have really been enjoying the articles in THE RESTITUTION HERALD, and you are an expert in editing it. I also know that you have done everything possible to cut costs, but the cover on the April issue was really the pits as far as I was concerned. I understand cost cutting, but we sure lose some of the effectiveness with covers like that.

—Phoenix, AZ

I agree; the April cover bombed. My choice of colors for the two-color photo conversion was awful. Please accept my apologies.
Editor.

Reprint Defusing the Nuclear Debate?

Have you thought of printing the article "Freeze or Deterrence? Defusing the Nuclear Debate," published in the February, 1984, HERALD so it could be widely distributed? I'd like to have copies. It's a good article.
—Westerville, OH.

Rather than reprinting the article, we will make it and the total February issue of THE HERALD available for distribution by all our readers without charge. All we ask is that some consideration be given to making a donation for the copies you can use. Our printing costs somehow need to be covered.
—Editor.

The Restitution Herald

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates: the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6); the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8); Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4); the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through him (Col. 3:3); the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28); the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54); the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8); the final restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32), the church to be joint heirs with him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3); the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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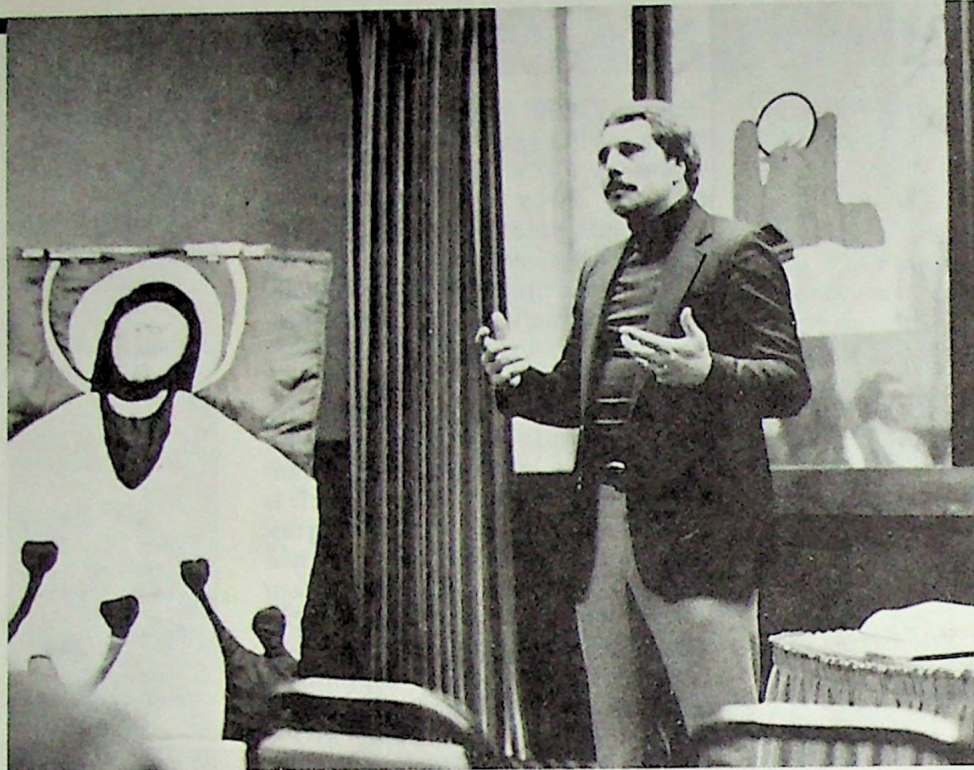
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AN AFFAIR OF

by Pastor

IF SOMEONE SAID, "Will the real you please stand up?" just who would stand? The person other people think you are? The person you'd like to be? Or, the person you really are?

The words of the sixth Beatitude will be familiar to most of you. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8). At first reading they might not seem to relate to the opening questions. But let's consider the "pure in heart" as those who are pure inwardly. This would distinguish them from those who are pure outwardly.

Inward vs. Outward Purity

During much of his ministry, Jesus was engaged in a running controversy with the Pharisees. They had a seeming obsession with ceremonial or outward purity, but were willing to ignore the proper attitudes or inward purity. (See

Matthew 23:23-28.) Jesus said, "You can't have the one without the other."

What Does "Pure in Heart" Mean?

Purity of heart is not innocence, or correct behavior, or reformation of the natural man. It is only obtained through the mercy of God and the acceptance of Jesus Christ.¹ God is the purifying agent (Isa. 55:7). Cleansing comes to us through the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7).

The pure in heart have been defined as "the single-minded, who are free from the tyranny of a divided self, and who do not try to serve God and the world at the same time."² A possible translation of the verse is, "Blessed is the man whose motives are always entirely unmix'd, for that man shall see God."³

Pure

The pure heart is the heart that is no longer divided. It has a single purpose. The Psalmist asks God to make his heart single, sincere, and free from any hypocrisy (Psa. 86:11).⁴

Originally "pure" meant simply clean, such as clothes that had been washed. It was also used for corn that had all of the chaff removed. Used with another word it meant metal that had no alloy.⁵

We could capsulize these definitions and say that "pure means "cleansed and having a single purpose without hypocrisy."

Heart

When Jesus speaks with the Pharisees, he puts the emphasis on the heart, and not on conduct or external observances. When used in the Scriptures, the heart refers to the very center

of the personality. As such it includes the intellect, the emotions, and the will. It is the total person.

Listen to the words of Jesus when he responded to a lawyer who inquired what he must do to inherit eternal life. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). True religion is involved with the whole person, and not just the mind. "It is all too possible for us to make intellectual assent to the truths of the Bible . . . and yet have a heart untouched by saving grace."⁶ The truth of the gospel must be believed, and then it must be lived.

A Golden Chain

Our Lord is outlining the characteristics of his followers in the Beatitudes. Each builds on the other. The graces

takes over. This may—indeed, does—take time. The many members of the body and motivations from within are not subdued in a day. Faith and unbelief existed side by side in the one who cried, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). It can be much the same with deeds and intentions.

Becoming a believer does not make one a "superman" in a moment. Nor does it enable us to have instantaneous self-mastery and become spiritual giants—although it can and does happen more rapidly with some than with others. "There is no such thing as a victorious Christian; there is only a victorious Christ."⁸

We Will See God

This is a promise that is given. There is no reason to doubt it. Let me suggest two possible fulfillments for this

Second, we will see God face to face. This is a promise for the future. Our source of confidence is in his Word which is as sure as the everlasting hills. As sons of God we can look forward to seeing him as he is (1 John 3:2). The Psalmist also sought the face of God (Psa. 27:8).

We can look forward to conditions of perfection which will exist in God's eternal kingdom on the earth (Isa. 11:9). We will dwell with God in a time of uninterrupted fellowship (Rev. 21:3; 22:3, 4).

Are you looking for adventure? The kind you can have where you are, rather than traveling around the world? Then look to the Beatitudes of Jesus and embark on a daily adventure of vital Christian living. They are not "platitudes to be piously babbled . . . but vital principles to undergird arduous living."

Notes

¹William Fitch, *The Beatitudes of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1961), p. 84.

²R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1968), p. 62.

³William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. 1* (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 101.

⁴D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., n.d.), p. 111.

⁵William Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁶William Fitch, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁷William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1981), p. 277.

⁸Sherwood Eliot Wirt, *Magnificent Promise* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1965), p. 86.

THE HEART

John Hearp

that are listed here should be found in every believer. All should be found in some measure.

God's work is a purified people. In order to have purity of heart, we must be delivered from earthly ambitions, false confidences, vain hopes, and empty pride. This is the regeneration that comes from God through his Holy Spirit. Along with David we can pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psa. 51:10).

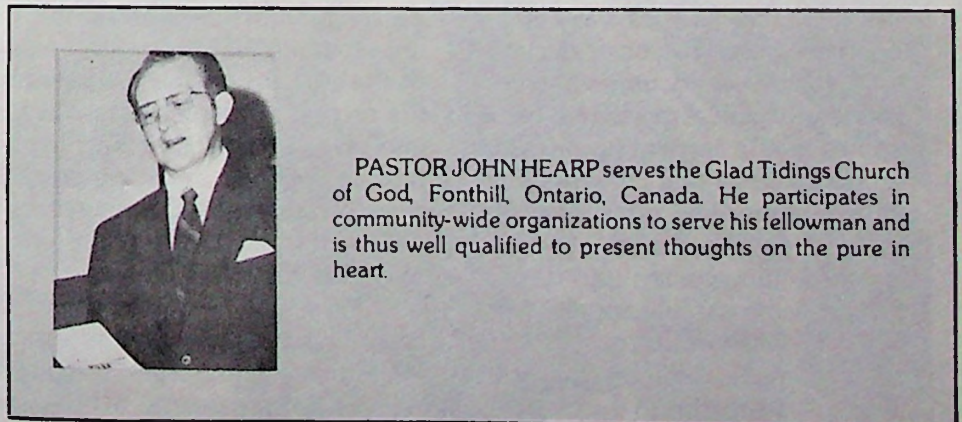
Our heart is to be in tune with the heart of God. When it is we will dwell on and practice the virtues mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22, 23; Ephesians 4:32; 5:1; Philippians 2:1-4; 4-8, 9; and Colossians 3:1-17.

How Soon?

Life is purified as God increasingly

promise.

First, we see God today, although through a glass darkly. We see him in his Word. We see him in the world about us. We see him at work in the lives of fellow believers.



PASTOR JOHN HEARP serves the Glad Tidings Church of God, Fonthill, Ontario, Canada. He participates in community-wide organizations to serve his fellowman and is thus well qualified to present thoughts on the pure in heart.

THE WRITERS of the Old Testament were in no doubt that God had spoken. Not only had he created the heavens and the earth by the power of his divine Word, but he continued to speak through certain carefully chosen agents, the prophets. In this way mankind was not left in the dark about the plan and purpose which God, who had made everything, was executing for the benefit of his creation. The character of the God of creation was summed up in his divine name which revealed him as "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abundantly kind and faithful."

The role of the prophet, as God's representative, was to make clear the direction in which men were to go in order to comply with the divine program. Their compliance would be in their best interest, for to resist God was in the long run to court disaster. Men might appear to "get away with it" for a time, but ultimate retribution would be swift and sure—and terrible. "It is a fearful thing," says the New Testament writer to the Hebrews, "to fall into the hands of the living God." The compassion of the one God of Israel was in no way inconsistent with the reality of his displeasure at wrongdoing. The judgment which the evildoer brings upon himself is a constant feature of the Biblical message.

The diagnosis of the human sickness which in all ages was evident on every hand had been declared in the earliest documents of the Hebrew religion. A mysterious being, known as the serpent (the definite article suggests that he was a well-known figure) had questioned the truth of the Creator's Word and lured the first woman into disobedience, using a subtle appeal to her desire for wisdom. Thus tricked into disobedience—though they had been fully instructed in the Creator's

What Is The Divine Message?

will—the first pair were made to understand the gravity of their error by suffering the curse of banishment from the garden of Eden. The supreme tragedy was that their potential for immortality was lost. For God will not grant endless life to any who have not proved by their conscientious obedience that they will serve him alone. And this Adam and Eve had clearly failed to do.

Their situation was hopeless but for one redeeming feature. There was the promise given by the Creator that in later generations a descendant of the woman would arise to undo the catastrophic work of the serpent and make possible the recovery of man's potential for endless life. Until that Savior appeared, however, man must consider himself subject to inevitable death—the just punishment for his disobedience to his Maker.

Against this background there arises in the Hebrew Scriptures the fundamentally important notion of the word or message, a body of

information about the divine program for rescuing mankind from the consequences of his rebellion. In Adam and Eve the human race had become guilty of the ultimate crime, that of complying with the instructions of the serpent whose clever lie had been more attractive than the Creator's truth. Their error showed a careless disregard for the divine will. Their failure to discern between truth and lie was a poor recommendation indeed for candidates for immortality. A universe peopled by immortals unable to distinguish right from wrong would be unthinkable.

The way out of the impasse in which fallen man now found himself, and the way back to the tree of life, is the subject of the divine message revealed progressively throughout the sacred writings. It is really the single concern of the whole Bible. The message revealed the solution to the terrible predicament now facing the human race. Like a beacon in a dark world, it

by Anthony Buzzard

held forth the hope of rescue from death—the attainment of immortality, the restoration of paradise on earth, and harmony throughout the universe.

Millennia had passed when the divine message was communicated to Abraham. His very name nominates him a founding Father, even the opening letters of his name suggest primacy and foundation, like the beginning of the alphabet. “ab” is the Hebrew for “father” and Abraham means “Father of a multitude.” Abraham began to express his faith in God by responding to the divine call to leave his native country and journey to an unknown land which God would show him. Later, by a divine covenant, the land of Canaan was promised to him and to his descendants—and, in a special sense, to his descendant, in the singular. The suggestive term “seed” to designate Abraham’s offspring recalls the “seed” promised

to Eve. In him the disaster caused by the serpent would be reversed. The New Testament comment by Paul informs us that the great descendant was none other than the Messiah himself, the deliverer of Israel and the whole world.

The message which came to Abraham already contains all the essential elements of the divine plan, at least in embryonic form. A descendant of Eve and Abraham will one day gain possession of the land of Palestine “for ever.” Abraham will share this inheritance, though during his lifetime he was to inherit nothing. The permanence of the arrangement at once raises the question of immortality. For what is the point of an endless inheritance for Abraham unless his life can be prolonged indefinitely to enjoy it?

Abraham died and slept with his fathers. A permanent inheritance can make sense, therefore, only if Abraham can be brought to life

again. We confront here the absolute necessity for resurrection in the divine scheme.

Generations pass and the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob grow into the nation of Israel. Emerging from their terrible slavery in Egypt, the people wander in the wilderness, guided by Moses, and enter the promised land under Joshua. Can this be the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham? Clearly not in its ultimate form, for Abraham has long since been buried and the promised seed, the great deliverer, has not yet appeared! The message persists. Far from becoming obscure as time goes on, it gains a remarkable clarity in the life of the beloved King of Israel, David, son of Jesse.

The unimportant eighth son of a sheep farmer, a mere shepherd boy with beautiful eyes, David becomes (next to Abraham) the most significant
(Continued, page 8)



WHAT IS THE DIVINE MESSAGE?

(Continued from page 7)

nificant figure in the history of Israel and the development of the Divine Plan. He is distinguished by his whole-hearted devotion to God and he is equipped for his high office by the gift of divine Spirit which marks him out as God's

is bound up with the promise of the greater son of David, the Messiah, whose kingdom will provide the ultimate solution to the world's ills.

Words are inadequate to describe the feelings of the two women selected to bear the children in whom these mighty promises would come to fruition. Luke's account of

powers of darkness which had enslaved mankind's first parents and their descendants ever since. The serpent's devastating work was apparent everywhere in suffering humanity. But the Spirit of God in Jesus was stronger by far. The New Testament accounts of his ministry describe a dramatic conquest of evil by means of the extraordinary divine Spirit with which he was gifted.

Yet despite the majesty of his career in Palestine, only a handful of people responded to his message. The exponents of traditional religion, claiming allegiance to the same sacred writings as he, joined the Roman authorities in consigning him to a criminal's death on the cross.

And there, but for the supreme miracle of the resurrection, the story would have ended. Yet, in reality, it had just begun; for the resurrection of Jesus was only one of the stages in the grand scheme for the rescue of mankind.

It is the function of the church to be custodian of the divine information which alone gives meaning to the universe in which man finds himself. She holds the message by which the destinies of the human race are to be directed. The voice of God is heard in her proclamation. These are no empty theological platitudes. They represent the heart of the Biblical heritage on which the church must be founded, if indeed she is to be the church.

"The resurrection of Jesus was only one of the stages in the grand scheme for the rescue of mankind."

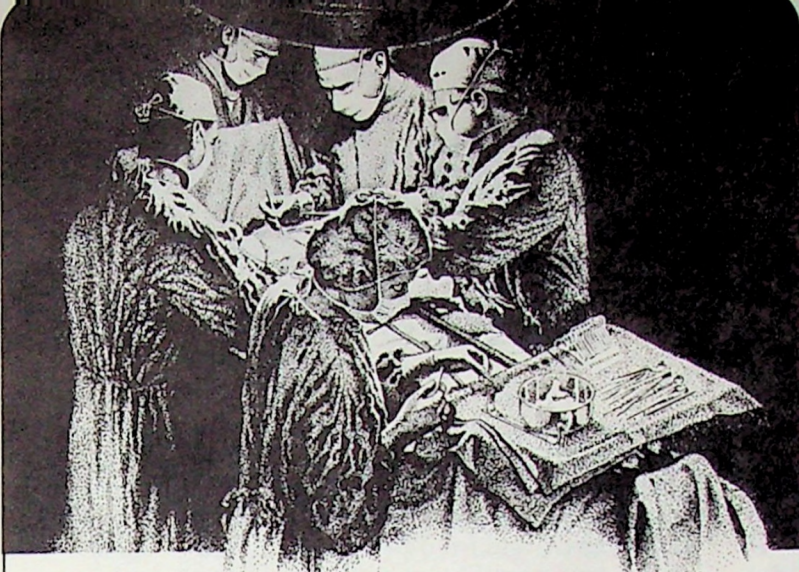
anointed king. Through Nathan the prophet the message comes to David. Once again there is the promise of the seed who will one day establish for ever the kingdom granted to David. In this message of the kingdom, David sees "a set of instructions, an oracle by which the destiny of mankind will be directed." The message has become universal in its scope. The future of humanity

the birth of John the Baptist and of his far greater and unique successor Jesus is alive with the thrill of Messianic expectation. Since the dawn of history the faithful in Israel had awaited the coming of the one who was to be empowered to reverse the tragedy which had befallen Adam and Eve. This was the King, imbued with the divine Spirit, who would triumph over the spiritual



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The theological implications of this article do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Church of God General Conference. Pastor Atra's stance on divine healing is published to provide you helpful consideration regarding practical ramifications of the subject.



Divine Healing

By Pastor Brian J. Atra

DIVINE HEALING has attracted much interest in recent years. Even among Christians, the subject arouses controversy, misunderstandings, and confusion. Some have gone to extremes: ranging from a belief that any illness is a result of personal sin, to issuing a blanket statement that divine healing does not exist today. Scripture makes it clear that divine healing is significant in God's plan for humankind.

God as Healer

David declared, "Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases" (Psa. 103: 2, 3, NIV). God's nature is to heal. This is affirmed throughout the Old Testament.

God is not the author of sin, sickness, or death. These were the results of Adam's disobedience. The curse of sin has befallen all creation, including humankind. Part of that curse is sickness and, eventually, death.

Vivid instances of divine healing are recorded in the Old Testament. Hezekiah was at the point of death but was restored and given fifteen additional years to live. Naaman was healed as a result of humble obedience. Job was healed and his fortune restored.

Salvation and Atonement

We often lack a thorough understanding of what the Biblical writers meant. One such example is salvation. While evangelicalism has construed salvation as an instantaneous, mystical, personal experience, the Bible has a

broader concept in mind in speaking of salvation. Salvation includes blessing, prosperity, peace, divine fellowship, wholeness, and health. Such will only be realized in the kingdom of God.

Yet many Messianic blessings are now available through Christ. Among these is healing. Few would doubt that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah finds fulfillment in Jesus. Speaking of the suffering servant, the fourth verse reads, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . ." The Hebrew term for "grief" or "sorrow" might also be rendered "infirmity" or "sickness" (cf. the marginal note in the RSV).

Apparently, in Jesus' day the passage was understood in this light. In Matthew 8:14-17 we read the account of the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law. After she received healing, Matthew notes, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (v. 17). Jesus not only bore our sin, but the entire curse, including sickness and death!

Jesus' Ministry

Jesus healed victims of many infirmities, including blindness (Mark 10:46ff); dropsy (Luke 14:2-4); fever (Matt 8:14, 15); lameness (Matt 21:14); spinal abnormality (Luke 13:11-13), etc. The Gospels record healing of multitudes (Matt. 12:15; 19:2; Luke 4:40; 6:17-19; 9:11). What were the purposes of these healings? They were done to glorify God (Matt 15:30, 31), but also to confirm Jesus' Messiahship.

John the Baptist questioned the disciples to determine if Jesus were the Messiah. "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou *he that should come*, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt 11:2-5, italics mine). Jesus affirmed his Messianic identity by healing. Divine healing was central to his role as Messiah.

Divine Healing in the Early Church

When Jesus commissioned the 12 to preach the kingdom, he also commissioned them to heal the sick. "When Jesus had called the Twelve together . . . he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick (Luke 9:1, 2, NIV). Healing is an integral component of the gospel of the kingdom. It is strikingly evident that the message of the kingdom was accompanied by healing (cf. Matt. 10:7, 8; Luke 10:8, 9).

Such healing continued in the early church. The Apostle Peter was greatly used of God in healing the sick, as was the Apostle Paul. However, many
(Continued, page 19)



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The Message of

By Warren

THE MESSAGE of the kingdom of God unifies God's plan of the ages and God's salvation promise for redeemed believers. Three covenant relationships clarify the three major aspects of the kingdom message. God's covenant with and through Abraham promised the land for an everlasting inheritance. The Davidic covenant provides for the throne and subsequent conditions and quality of government as a result of the fulfillment of the king from David's line sitting in rulership. The new covenant, through Jesus Christ, provides immortal life for believers. Thus in these three covenants—Abrahamic, Davidic, and New—an outline of the kingdom message is presented: the land as an inheritance, which depicts the dwelling place of the redeemed; the throne; the governmental conditions of the kingdom; and the gift of immortal life. Thus believers have the promise of continued life in an environment described through the conditions and results of a restored earth with God's rulership administered through Jesus Christ.

God's Covenant with David

God promised to Abraham an eternal seed (Gen. 17:6, 7; Gal. 3:16) and the land for an everlasting possession (Gen. 17:8; Rom. 4:13, 16). Through David came the promise of the throne and the promised king who would rule. The Biblical hope which the prophets proclaim has as a focal point the victorious rulership of God's appointed world ruler. In Isaiah 11:1-12 the restoration of David's kingdom is foretold. In this passage in Isaiah is revealed the rulership of Jesus Christ and the conditions of that rulership. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fating together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the

people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

The prophet Ezekiel also speaks of this coming rulership and the one who would sit upon that throne. Ezekiel 21:25-27, "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."

Jesus is the one whose right it is to sit upon David's throne and to rule. The question could be asked, "Why did wise men come from the east seeking him who was born king of the Jews?" This is undoubtedly answered in the fact that studies had been made of writings which described the kingship of the coming one. A study of Old Testament scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit would bring one to the conclusion that Jesus is the king promised in the Davidic covenant. Old Testament prophecy foretells the birth of Jesus and his right to the throne of David. Isaiah 9:6, 7 states, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." This prophecy identifies Jesus as the King of the kingdom. The characteristics of peace and justice without end as a result of his rule and government lead to the understanding that this prophecy refers to the eschatological kingdom of God.

Similarities of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants

In God's covenant with Abraham the focal point is Jesus Christ, and through him the fulfillment will be experienced. It is also revealed that God intends for the blessings to be extended to recipients from all nations. Through Jesus Christ, people of every kindred, tongue, and nation have the opportunity to become joint heirs with Christ. So also with God's covenant through David: the focal point is the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Son of David who will sit upon the throne in rulership. Another parallel is to be found

Kingdom of God

n Sorenson

between the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. As with Abraham, the blessings extended to all nations; so also with David. Through the rulership of Jesus sitting on the throne in the kingdom of God, the redeemed of the Lord will share in the benefits of Christ's rulership on the throne. (Cp. Rev. 1:5, 6 and 5:9, 10.)

The Return of Christ Ushers in that Promise of Rulership

The return of Jesus Christ to the earth will result in the smiting of the nations and the establishment of the kingdom of God with Jesus as the ruler. The smiting of the nations is not to be interpreted as a gradual conversion of humanity through today's church. Rather, it refers to the future judgment of Christ as he returns as king of kings. The rulers of the nations will yield to the authority and person of Jesus Christ as God's appointed king. And God's kingdom will replace the earthly kingdoms of today.

A Comparison of Life Today and Kingdom Conditions

In order to more clearly understand the comparison between the life we are living today and what God has promised in his coming kingdom as to the conditions to be fulfilled for believers, we offer the following comparisons:

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN (As it is now)

Sickness and death

Ecclesiastes 8:8—"There is no discharge in that war" (death).

Ecclesiastes 9:5—"The living know that they shall die."

Job 14:1—"Few days, and full of trouble."

Violence—conflict—war

Matthew 24:6, 7—Nations fighting.

2 Peter 2:13—Riots.

Romans 13:13—"Strife."

THE NEW WORLD COMING (As it will be in end times)

Free from sickness and death

Isaiah 35:5, 6—Restoring sight and hearing.

Revelation 21:1-4—No more pain, death.

Revelation 22:3—"No more curse."

Peace

Isaiah 2:2-4—Not learn war any more.

Micah 4:1-4—"None shall make them afraid."

Isaiah 32:17, 18—Peaceable dwelling places.

Economic failure—over-population
Revelation 18:10-19—Collapse of all world trade.

Corruption—moral decay
2 Peter 2:14, 18—political manipulation

Destruction in nature
Luke 21:25—In space.
Isaiah 24:17-23—On the earth.

Israel's time of trouble
Zechariah 12:2—"cup of trembling"

Spiritual apostasy
2 Timothy 3:13—It just keeps getting worse.

Abundance and prosperity
Isaiah 65:21, 22—Reap the fruit of all labor.

Righteousness
Isaiah 11:1-9—Rulership in truth.

Restoration of the earth
Isaiah 35:1, 2—Desert blossoms.
Habakkuk 2:14—Earth filled with the glory of the Lord.

Israel's regeneration
Zechariah 13:1; Zechariah 12:10

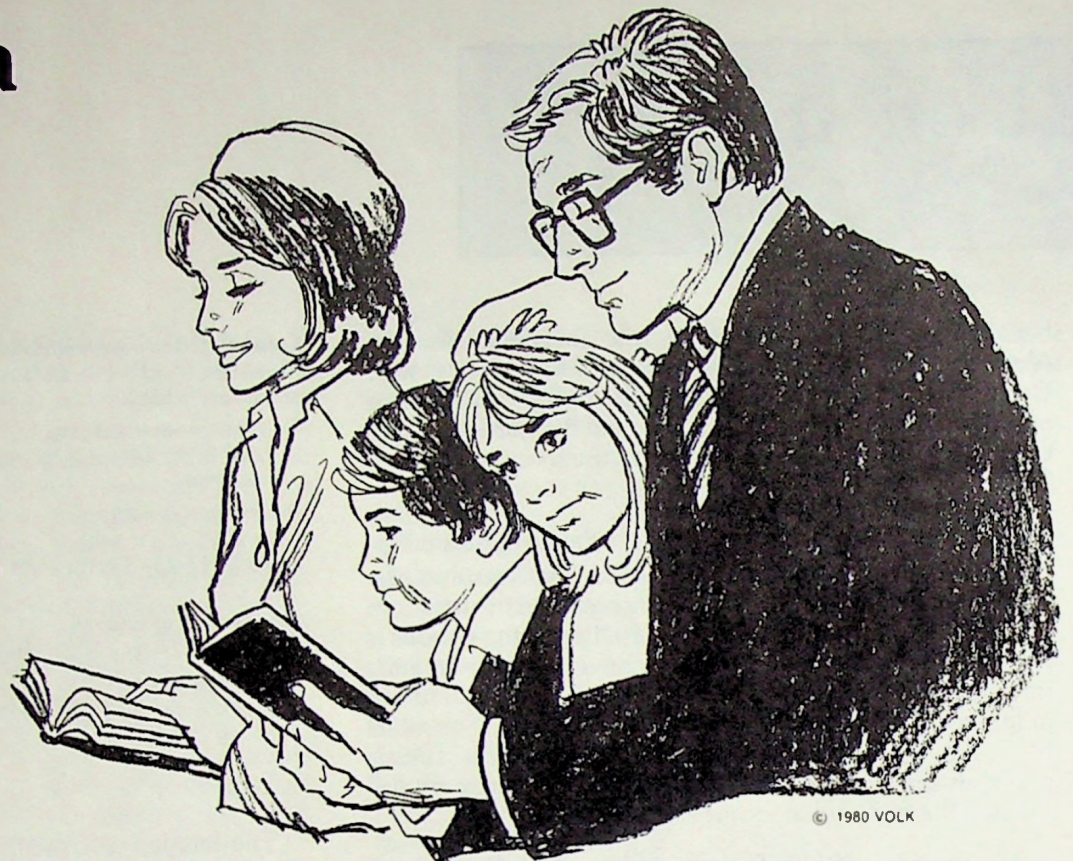
Spiritual purity
Revelation 21:3—God is with men and they shall be his people.

The foregoing comparison of conditions of the world in which we live today and in the world to come along with supporting Biblical evidence, allows us to see what God has in store for the believers in the coming kingdom. What the Apostle Paul said to us in 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10 is illustrated through this comparison, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Certainly as human beings we are not able to fully understand all that the kingdom offers to us by way of promise. However, God has revealed to us through his Word much of what we may anticipate at the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the kingdom of God. It is through this Spiritual understanding as a result of a study of God's Word that believers come to grips with the substance of the hope that is set before them. Not only does Bible study provide for us an understanding of truth, but also through that understanding of the truth is a strengthening for Christian experience and Christian responsibility.



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I Had a Father Who Prayed



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DAD'S VOICE rang strong when he talked to the Lord. It seemed he was on intimate terms with that mysterious someone up in heaven that I had learned to call God. I never doubted that God was listening as our family gathered around the dining table or knelt by our chairs before retiring each night.

There were eight children under that blessing in our old farmhouse in Royal, Arkansas, during the great depression. Although we had little, it seemed nothing else was needed to make my life complete.

Mother was a soft-spoken woman who loved her big family and gave all her time to seeing to their needs and especially to her husband. She taught us that Dad came first when it meant that extra comfort, piece of meat, etc. He was the provider and had to have his strength to work or all would suffer.

At night we would gather around the fireplace when our schoolwork was finished and Dad would get the Bible. Sometimes mother would read or one

of my older sisters or my brother. But Dad always prayed. His prayers were not very long. Usually a blessing was asked for our family, thanks were given for the many blessings we had received, guidance was requested for the rulers and government, and help was implored for ones who were sick. Then Dad would say, "You children get to bed." We "got," for Dad was strict and we knew we were to obey. Dad gave spankings, but was careful not to overdo the spank. He said he remembered what it was like to be a child, and no one had a more secure, loving home than we.

Dad was forced to go away from home looking for work several times, and during his absence Mother would have our family altar. Her prayers were just as sweet and reassuring as Dad's, and we never missed that most important hour of our lives.

There were six girls and only two boys so the work was heavy on Dad and my older brother. Dad, I'm sure, must have questioned why he was not

blessed with more boys. His prayers at mealtime always started with, "Lord, we thank thee for these many blessings." All heads were bowed one day for a noon meal and Dad began, "Lord we thank thee for these many girls." He stopped, hastily amended, "blessings," and amid smothered tittering finished his prayer. We girls never let him forget his mistake.

Throughout his life he prayed, and many blessings the Lord gave. As children we were seldom sick and none ever had a severe illness.

One blessing that seemed like a miracle happened one winter. We were down to no meat left in the salt barrels and very little canned goods. Dad had no money and only three bullets left for his singleshot .22 rifle. As he left to go hunting, Mother came to the door and said, "John, be careful because we need meat so badly." He was gone about four hours and came back with four quail, two rabbits, and one squirrel. Mother was astonished. How had he gotten all that game?

by Anita Howell

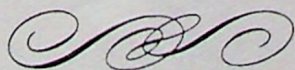
HOLD ME FAST

Snow was on the ground and he had followed a rabbit track. He spotted the rabbit in some bushes and shot him, but when he went to pick him up there was another rabbit, kicking. The bullet had gone through one and crippled the other. He shot into a covey of quail, getting down low so he might get two, and killed four. The squirrel was the only single kill he made. I have no doubt God was guiding him.

In all his prayers the one most precious to me was just a few weeks before his death. He had been very ill and sometimes not in his right mind and it seemed this morning as I helped him out of bed and into the living room, he was not as well as he had been. I picked up the Bible and read a chapter out loud while he sat quietly. When I finished he bowed his head and said "Let us pray." I rejoiced as he prayed one of his beautiful prayers.



He got sicker soon after that and we stayed night and day in shifts while he was in the hospital in Little Rock. It was my shift December 3, 1982, when a terrible storm arose and tornado sirens went off all over the city. I stepped across the hall and watched from the third story window as the same tornado that killed Br. McDougall of the New Hope Church swept toward the hospital. The hospital was on a hill and we could see for miles. I watched until the cloud was right on us, then ran into Dad's room and told him a tornado was going to hit the hospital. He reached up his hands and clasped mine and together we prayed. The building shook and rumbled as if in the clasp of a giant, and then I felt a release. The tornado lifted and the hospital was left with only two rooms damaged and they had been vacated earlier. I have no doubt God lifted the storm. My dad had prayed.



KEEP ME SAFE

There is a song written by Mosie Lister entitled *'Til the Storm Passes By*. The thoughts in the song picture life in comparison to storms with darkness, thunder, lightning, winds, and more. It shows that life has its doubts, sorrows, hopelessness, trials, and no place to hide. Yet, the admonition of the song is the petitioning of the Lord to *Hold Me Fast, Keep Me Safe*: "Let me stand in the hollow of thy hand . . . 'til the storm passes by."

As one measures the words of this song he realizes that many persons' thoughts are described in it. So the question is asked, "Is this wrong? Should a Christian who makes a profession before friends and neighbors—even to the world—show any sign of doubt, fear, or sorrow?" Some have indicated that to do so shows weakness and lack of faith. NOT SO! All have such feelings. Some

have more strength than others and do not show those feelings as much. But it is normal to have them.

Let us take a good look at some of the outstanding Bible personalities. First, examine the life of David, the king. He was chosen of God with the anointing of oil by the hands of Samuel. He was popular in that the Israelites said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:7). He was dearly loved by the people and the Lord God. Yet he had times when he was sorrowful, fearful, and more. "O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. . . . I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all

(Continued, page 14)

By Pastor Francis E. Burnett

HOLD ME FAST KEEP ME SAFE

(Continued from page 13)

the day long" (Psa. 38:1-6). "Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise. . . . My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me" (Psa. 55:1-5). This psalm was probably relating David's thought when he was fleeing from King Saul. He was in fear, pain, and sorrow.

Asaph, the musician, put into words these thoughts. "In the day of my trouble I sought the LORD: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. . . . Will the LORD cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?" (Psa. 77:2-8).

And our Savior, Jesus, had times of grief and sorrow. "Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. . . . If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:23-27). We see another of Jesus' troubles when he thought he was losing his friends. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" (John 6:66, 67.) Many more evidences of times of doubts, fears, and more could be set forth from the lives of the faithful.

As we review the words of the song, we are reminded of these items—doubt, fear, hopelessness, and sorrow. Is there room for doubt in our lives? Peter had it on one occasion. "Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent . . . stood before the gate" (Acts 10:17). Peter's doubt had to do with the meaning of the vision, but it involved the saving of others besides his own people. How many times has such doubt been in the minds of Christians when considering other nations? On the day of Pentecost, after having heard Peter and the other apostles speak in their tongues, those assembled "were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" (Acts 2:11, 12). Paul wrote the church in Galatia, "I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you" (Gal. 4:20).

"For in much wisdom is much grief! and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Eccl. 1:18). How many have experienced just that—knowing too much about something and having sorrow over it. Jesus informed his followers, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. . . . And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:20-22). Sorrow is not wrong for a Christian to have; it is one of life's experiences.

Have any of you ever felt that your future had *no hope*? Job had such feelings. "Where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?" (Job 17:15.) Again he said, "He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree" (Job 19:10). Yet in this same chapter we have one of the monumental statements of the resurrection. (See verses 23 through 27.) The nation of Israel set aside its hope by refusing to serve the living God. "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel" (Jer. 3:23). Paul wrote that he was in despair of his life. "We would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (2 Cor. 1:8). One might ask, Where was Paul's faith? It was in the same *one* as ours—the living God. But weaknesses in our lives do show up on occasion; and through Jesus Christ, our God understands.

Let Me Stand. These are words in the song. Stand in what? We read, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1, 2). Peter stated, "I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Pet. 5:12). We stand against the *storm* of life. "In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in

God" (Psa. 62:7). Isaiah wrote of God, "Thou has been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall" (Isa. 25:4). Paul also wrote of God, "We . . . have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:18, 19).

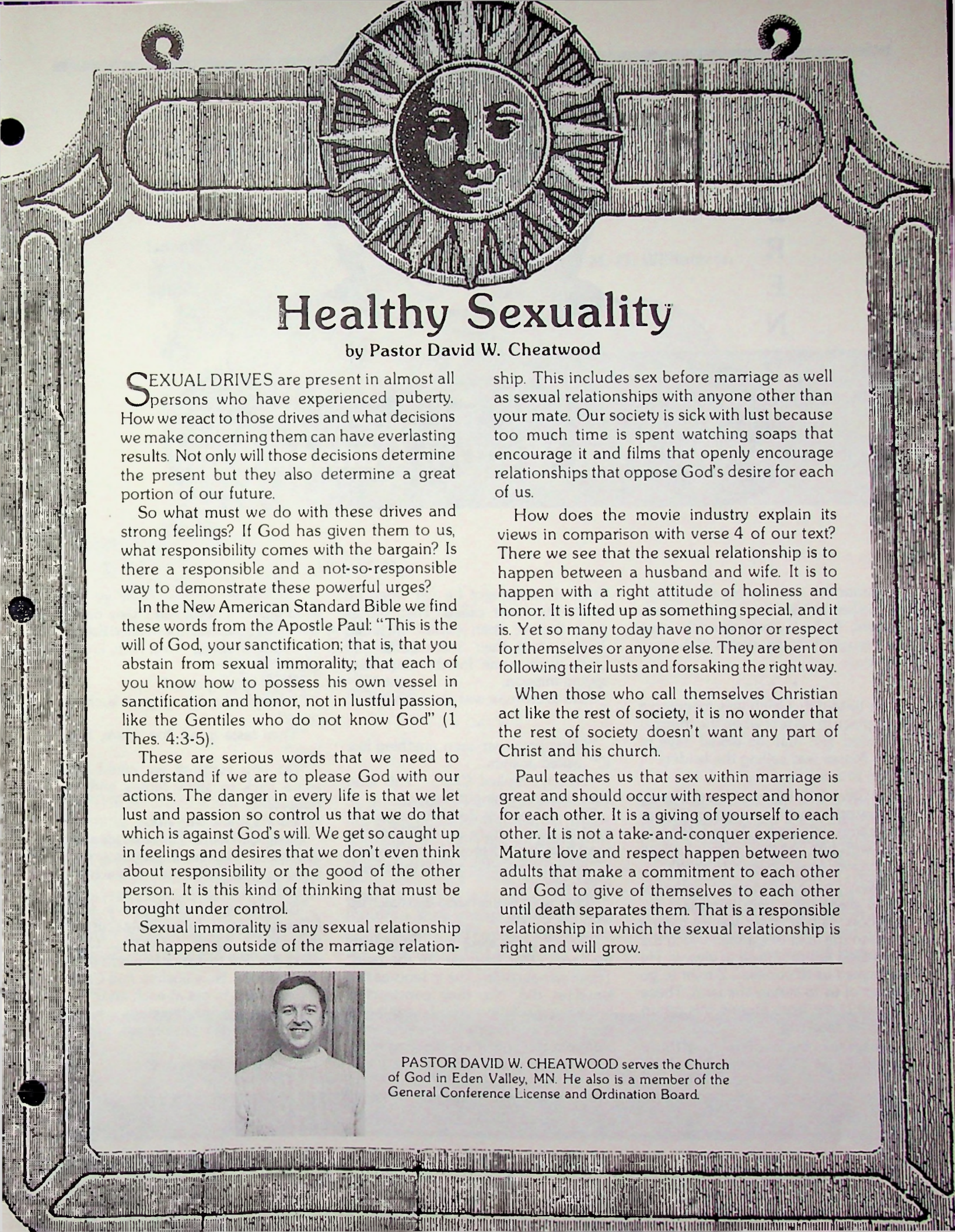
Believers in the living God and in the Lord Jesus Christ have a firm hope. God will *hold them fast*. He will *keep them safe* through their obedience to him through Jesus. Paul wrote, "Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). And again, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13). Yes, there is hope—a most wonderful hope. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). Titus also received encouragement of the "blessed hope" (2:13).

Why can one be so confident despite the weaknesses that prevail in life? Because God has promised that he will watch over us, provide for our needs, support us, and more! This comes in several ways. One, of course, is from God himself. Another is from the love of Jesus who speaks to God on our behalf. Yet another is through the other members of the church—the "body of Christ." Perhaps Peter has expressed as well as anyone could the reason we know that God will *hold us fast* and *keep us safe*. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. . . . Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Pet. 1:3, 21).

We can *stand in the hollow of his hand*. We have the privilege of "rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6b).



PASTOR FRANCIS E. BURNETT pastors the Oaklawn Church of God near Belle Plaine, IA. He also serves on the General Conference Board of License and Ordination.



Healthy Sexuality

by Pastor David W. Cheatwood

SEXUAL DRIVES are present in almost all persons who have experienced puberty. How we react to those drives and what decisions we make concerning them can have everlasting results. Not only will those decisions determine the present but they also determine a great portion of our future.

So what must we do with these drives and strong feelings? If God has given them to us, what responsibility comes with the bargain? Is there a responsible and a not-so-responsible way to demonstrate these powerful urges?

In the New American Standard Bible we find these words from the Apostle Paul: "This is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God" (1 Thes. 4:3-5).

These are serious words that we need to understand if we are to please God with our actions. The danger in every life is that we let lust and passion so control us that we do that which is against God's will. We get so caught up in feelings and desires that we don't even think about responsibility or the good of the other person. It is this kind of thinking that must be brought under control.

Sexual immorality is any sexual relationship that happens outside of the marriage relation-

ship. This includes sex before marriage as well as sexual relationships with anyone other than your mate. Our society is sick with lust because too much time is spent watching soaps that encourage it and films that openly encourage relationships that oppose God's desire for each of us.

How does the movie industry explain its views in comparison with verse 4 of our text? There we see that the sexual relationship is to happen between a husband and wife. It is to happen with a right attitude of holiness and honor. It is lifted up as something special, and it is. Yet so many today have no honor or respect for themselves or anyone else. They are bent on following their lusts and forsaking the right way.

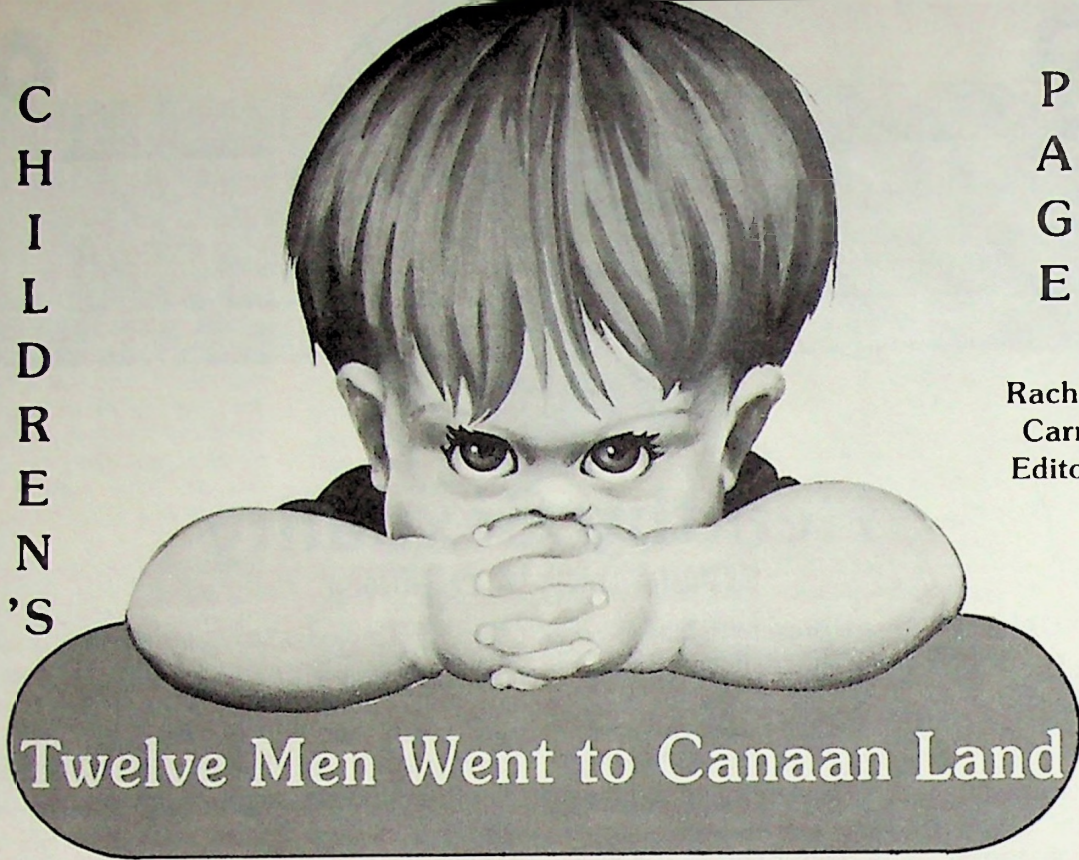
When those who call themselves Christian act like the rest of society, it is no wonder that the rest of society doesn't want any part of Christ and his church.

Paul teaches us that sex within marriage is great and should occur with respect and honor for each other. It is a giving of yourself to each other. It is not a take-and-conquer experience. Mature love and respect happen between two adults that make a commitment to each other and God to give of themselves to each other until death separates them. That is a responsible relationship in which the sexual relationship is right and will grow.



PASTOR DAVID W. CHEATWOOD serves the Church of God in Eden Valley, MN. He also is a member of the General Conference License and Ordination Board.

Rachel
Carr
Editor



Twelve Men Went to Canaan Land

Tomorrow was the big day! Caleb would have a hard time getting to sleep tonight. As he lay out under the stars he thought over the events of the past few days.

* * *

Ta-ta-ta-dah! Caleb was mending a torn place in his tent when the trumpet sounded. But that job would have to wait. Moses was calling the leaders of Israel to a meeting.

As Caleb hurried to join the gathering, he saw other men coming from all over the camp. His friend Joshua fell into step with him. As they came closer to the crowd, Moses began to speak.

"Men, I have called you together to make plans for a very important expedition. As you know, we are getting close to the land of Canaan which the Lord God has promised to give us. He has asked us to choose 12 men to go ahead of us to survey the land. These 12 will come from among this group here this morning."

Moses read the list of names of those chosen to go. Caleb remembered the

thrill of excitement he felt when he heard his name called. Then Moses gave the 12 men (which included Joshua, too) their instructions, and plans were made for this important spying mission.

And tomorrow was the big day!

* * *

"Have you ever seen anything like it?" asked Joshua.

"Never," replied Caleb. "This land sure beats anything in Egypt."

"See those cattle down there grazing in that lush pasture land? I'll bet the roast beef they will produce is delicious."

"I'd settle for a big cup of their fresh milk right now."

"Hey, we'd better hurry and catch up with the others."

The 12 spies were impressed with the large cities they saw in the land. These people didn't live in tents as the Israelites did. No, they constructed buildings of solid stone and surrounded their cities with high walls. But the walls were not the only thing that was high. Even the people themselves were tall.

The biggest surprise of all was the food growing in the land. One day as the men came to a brook called Eshcol, someone shouted, "Hey, men, look at these!"

"What huge grapes!"

"I wonder how they grow such big ones."

"They taste good, too. Here, have one."

"Do you suppose we could take some back to show Moses and the people?"

"I don't know why not."

Caleb spoke up. "I have an idea. We can put a cluster of grapes on my walking stick with a man on each end to carry it."

"Sounds good. Let's have three fellows hold this cluster while I cut it off the vine... Easy does it... Okay, there it is. Put that stick between those two sections. Now Joshua and Caleb, do you want to get at each end?"

"That works fine. Imagine—a bunch of grapes so big it takes two men to carry it!"

"Wait till Moses sees this!"

by Rachel Carr

To be concluded next month

The Awakening Time

By M. O. Williamson



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Note: The following prophetic article appeared in the March 30, 1943, RESTITUTION HERALD, a full two years before the end of World War II. It is reprinted for you to appreciate the insight Pastor Williamson had regarding the purpose of the study of eschatology. The author was a former pastor of the Guthrie Grove Church of God, Pelzer, SC.

IN THESE days when rationing, farming, and various vocations of labor are controlled by the government, people are crying, "The mark of the beast!" It is right amusing. When Hitler started his rampage, the cry was, "Man of sin!" Now it is Stalin! I believe neither Stalin nor Hitler will live the time that is allotted

to the beast in Revelation 13:5. In this chapter, forty-two months (three and one half years) are allotted to the beast. If this is a literal time period, both men have lived longer than that. Others say it represents twelve hundred sixty years, in which case either one would have a long time to live if he fulfills this scripture.

Let us remember when reading Revelation that we are reading that which is written largely in sign language. "He sent and *signified* it" (Rev. 1:1). We are then to remember the time of this beast or power as being represented by symbolical time: forty-two months (twelve hundred sixty days),
(Continued, page 18)

Considering a scripture that either cannot be fulfilled or that has already been fulfilled.

possibly representing twelve hundred sixty years. Find some power that ruled for that period of time. It began about the year 610 A.D., and lost its temporal power in the year 1870. Now subtract 610 years from 1870, and you have 1260 years. What power was it? Papal Rome. The same power is identified in 2 Thessalonians 2:9—with all power, signs, and lying wonders. Some say that Papal Rome today is consuming and will continue until the end. God has never left his people without a sign or a witness, so they may know where they are today and not expect the Man of Sin, which scripture has been fulfilled.

All students in the church are agreed that we are in the *awakening time* prophesied in Joel 3:9, saying: "Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near." There is no guess about this. The Gentiles were made to prepare war by Germany in 1914. Armistice came in 1918. Many say the first World War was to make the world safe for democracy. After that War, the nations discarded their armaments and went to sleep. Joel said, "Wake up the mighty men." Hitler is the man who started this work. Uncle Sam was asleep and, being a man who loves to sleep and live at peace (for which he fought war), wanted his nap to last, but on December 7, 1941, a ruthless power at Pearl Harbor caused him to *wake up*. Being awake, he speaks forth now and declares that he will fight to establish *lasting peace*. So does Great Britain declare.

I presume that when this present conflict is finished, the nations will gather as they did at the end of World War I to make a settlement for lasting peace, after which they will go to sleep again. Later, they will be awakened and come up to the valley

of Jehoshaphat as recorded in Joel 3:12. There, God is to judge the heathen, or Gentile powers, for their treatment of his people, the Jews. In World War I treaties, promise was made to give the Jews their land, the Holy Land. The promise has not been fulfilled. Today, Hitler is trying to destroy them. The other nations do not want them. What will be done with the Jews? They must first be put in a place for the judgment of the nations.

God will judge the nations. "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble" (the Jews' trouble, Jer. 30:7). Who is it that will cause Jacob's trouble? Gog and her allies, as recorded in Ezekiel 38:1-7. How are the Jews to be dwelling at ease—safely or confidently? Is it not that their land will have been given to them for a home, and they will believe that all is well with them? Well, what about the Gentiles when the Jews have their land? They will cry, "Peace and safety." What are to be the results when they cry, "Peace and safety"? "Sudden destruction cometh" (1 Thes. 5:3).

Joel 1:15 reads: "The day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come." "The day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty" (Isa. 13:6). "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (Dan. 12:1, 2).

This time will have brought the church to her resurrection. It will be

at the time of the second coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the righteous dead, and the translation of the righteous living. Putting two and two together, we find the Day of the Lord to be the time between the two stages of Jesus' second coming. Coming from heaven for his bride, the bride will be caught up to meet him. Then will be the Day of the Lord, the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1), the "time of trouble such as never was." Jesus will return with his bride to put an end to this trouble. (Zech. 14:3, 4.) Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives.

Germany, with the Kaiser as her leader in 1914, caused the nations to prepare war. Germany, in 1939, with Hitler as her leader, *woke up* the nations, as was proclaimed, "Wake up the mighty men." Will Germany have any part in bringing about the time of trouble—Jacob's trouble—and also the resurrection of the dead? Yes, and at that time Gog will be her leader.

Luke 21:24 says, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." We are hoping the present conflict will do this. We are hoping that the Jews' land will be turned over to them at the end of this war.

I have read some of Brother A. L. Corbaley's work. He states that in 1922 Great Britain was given a mandate over the Holy Land for twenty-five years. During this period of time, she was to give the Holy Land to the Jews. Now, it is believed by many that when this is done, the Jews will have only seven more years until their Messiah comes to sit on his father David's throne. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." This is the *awakening time*; let not the Lord's people be found sleeping!



A P T

Stewards

The need for stewardship in nature implies the need of spiritual stewardship.

I WANT TO INTRODUCE you to a new idea: "Stewardship Aptness." Let me explain. Stewardship is functioning as one who has charge of another's possessions or wealth. The aptness applies to the ability to be a steward, to carry out the office of one with that responsibility.

Actually, the term "stewardship aptness" is my own concoction. I use it to help us remember we should all be "apt" stewards with Abilities, Possessions, and Time.

The way we use or abuse what has been given to us is a reflection of our own thankfulness. The truth of this can clearly be seen in our own lives and our reaction to the treatment of a present we give. If it is tossed to the side or prized, it shows us how grateful the recipient is.

From this insight we can easily gather how God views our use of what he has given us, from our very lives to our material comfort. How much do we take for granted? Do we use what we have to the fullest, or do we waste it with full expectations that tomorrow will bring us more?

All we can be sure of in this world is what we have now, not what we will get tomorrow. That's why I wanted to spend some time dealing with stewardship "aptness." We all can do a little better.

—Pastor Charles Jones.

DIVINE HEALING

(Continued from page 9)

Bible students have misconstrued divine healing as a gift limited to the apostles or the twelve. The New Testament records healing by men who were not apostles, such as Philip (Acts 8) and Ananias (Acts 9). The prerequisite for healing was not apostleship, but belief. Jesus promised that healing would follow believers (Mark 16:17). In John 14:12 Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, *anyone* who has faith in me will do what I have been doing . . ." (NIV, italics mine).

Scripture lists healing as a gift of the Spirit. While Paul recognized that such gifts would cease, he sets the time of cessation as "when that which is perfect is come" (1 Cor. 13:10). Knowledge has not yet passed away, nor has the "perfect" arrived. Why, then, should we believe that the gift of healing has ceased?

Church historians occasionally point out that miraculous healing disappeared, for the most part, in the second century A.D. However, even Origen and Irenaeus recognize the existence of supernatural healing in their day.

Moreover, the absence of a doctrine, or its fall from ecclesiastical popularity, does not deny its validity. Justification by faith was out of vogue for nearly a millennium, yet remains Biblical truth. Likewise, other great truths have been greatly neglected, such as baptism by immersion, the nature of Christ, the mortality of man, and even the Second Coming. The unchanging Word of God remains the true source of doctrine, regardless of those who may choose to ignore or minimize portions of it. Shall we not, like Paul, proclaim the whole counsel of God?

Resurrection

Resurrection is the ultimate healing. Thus, to believe in the resurrection to immortality is to acknowledge divine healing. Every believer will have a perfect, complete healing in the first resurrection. Healing is an essential ingredient of the gospel and our inheritance. As we preach the message of the kingdom and its blessings, we long for the crowning day when "... there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain . . ." (Rev. 21:4).

Pioneers of the Faith

by Jan Stilson



Editor's Note: Several months ago David Graham wrote an article on the Age-to-Come doctrine which has peaked interest in the pioneers of our faith. Since then Jan Stilson has shown a slide sound set which tells vignettes of early Church of God ministers. Periodically in future issues of THE RESTITUTION HERALD we will feature material from this slide-sound set. On this page appears the first segment of the series.

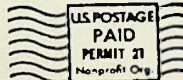
You may rent the slide-sound set for showing in your church or Bible study group. For more rental information, please contact Jan Stilson, Box 100, Oregon, IL 61061.

J. M. Stephenson was a convert from Sabbatarianism who lived in Wisconsin, but who fellowshipped with the brethren from the Chicago area. He was an evangelist, author, and for awhile was the corresponding editor for the *Millennial Harbinger* and *Bible Expositor* in 1863. He is spoken of most highly by Benjamin Wilson in the *Gospel Banner*. He may have returned to observing the Sabbath in his old age. He authored *God's Plan of Salvation* which is part of the General Conference archival collection.



J. M. Stephenson

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J. B. Cook



J. B. Cook was an associate of Joseph Marsh, one of the early advocates of the Age-to-Come doctrine. Both Cook and Marsh had been active in the Millerite movement which stressed the second coming of Christ, but did not stress the return of Israel to its homeland or the kingdom of God on earth. J. B. Cook had been a Baptist preacher from Connecticut, who had worked with Miller briefly because of his belief in the second advent. When Christ did not return on October 22, 1843, the date Miller had set, many Christians were disillusioned and floundered in their faith. J. B. Cook for a while during this period preached that the Sabbath should be kept on the seventh day; however he quickly broke from that and aligned himself with Joseph Marsh who was publishing the *Advent Harbinger* in Rochester, New York. Cook was an elder in the Church of God in Rochester and became an evangelist in New York, Ohio, Illinois, and Iowa, preaching the Age to Come, and the kingdom of God on earth.

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the Church
Page 4

Editor's Viewpoint

Searching Questions

That's the theme of this issue. If you follow each article in order, from page 4 through page 20, you'll find many of life's bothersome questions discussed.

In the first two articles David Krogh and Richard Seyster probe to the heart of what it takes to grow churches. Krogh deals with important questions regarding church growth while Seyster reveals five steps toward reviving a dying church. After exploring these articles you will know what to do to help your church turn the corner in reaching out into its community. In the September issue we will continue Krogh's thesis.

The next two articles confront our sins and how to find relief. Your editor asks serious questions regarding guilt in the first article. He explores two avenues which we commonly take to assuage guilt's weight. In Pastor Ed Goit's piece which begins on page 10, crucial questions regarding baptism are handled. A truly repentant searcher will want to find Christ and seal his faith with immersion.

The two articles on pages 13 and 14 deal with the hows and whys of enriching our lives. Pastor Ken Howe uses Christ's illustrations of salt and light in the Sermon on the Mount to show how you can bring zest to life's banquet. Then Pastor Chuck Jones answers the why in "Why We Fear New Relationships."

Another pair of questions comes next. How is Jesus the head of the new creation? Anthony Buzzard grapples with that query which originates in Colossians 1:17. Then Pastor Edward Bender examines Bible passages which help answer, "Who is to be the king of the kingdom?"

Our final question concerns God's justice. When we see the wicked prosper and God's children persecuted, of course we cry for justice. Scott Deane, a student at Oregon Bible College, tackles that problem. He uses Psalm 73 as his primary source. His article appears on page 20.

If human interest stories grab you, then you'll enjoy Beth Reaker's piece on Debbie Schmidlapp which begins

on page 17. After reading it you'll have to agree that Debbie is truly involved in an unusual and effective mission. Beth is city editor for a newspaper in Plymouth, Indiana, and a member of North Salem Church of God. Debbie has her membership at the Burr Oak, Indiana, Church of God.

Finally, Rachel Carr concludes her story for children on the 12 Hebrew spies. It appears on page 19.

My prayer is that this issue will both challenge and inspire you. I hope the questions challenge your thinking, causing response. May all the articles inspire you to greater Christian service, bringing others to Jesus before he returns. Just a glance at the Middle East assures us that he could come soon.

Why the United States Will Avoid War in the Persian Gulf

When these lines were written (June 1, 1984), President Reagan had already gone before the world in a press conference to assure all concerned that the United States would not become directly involved in war in the Persian Gulf. Never mind that Europe and Japan receive a large majority of

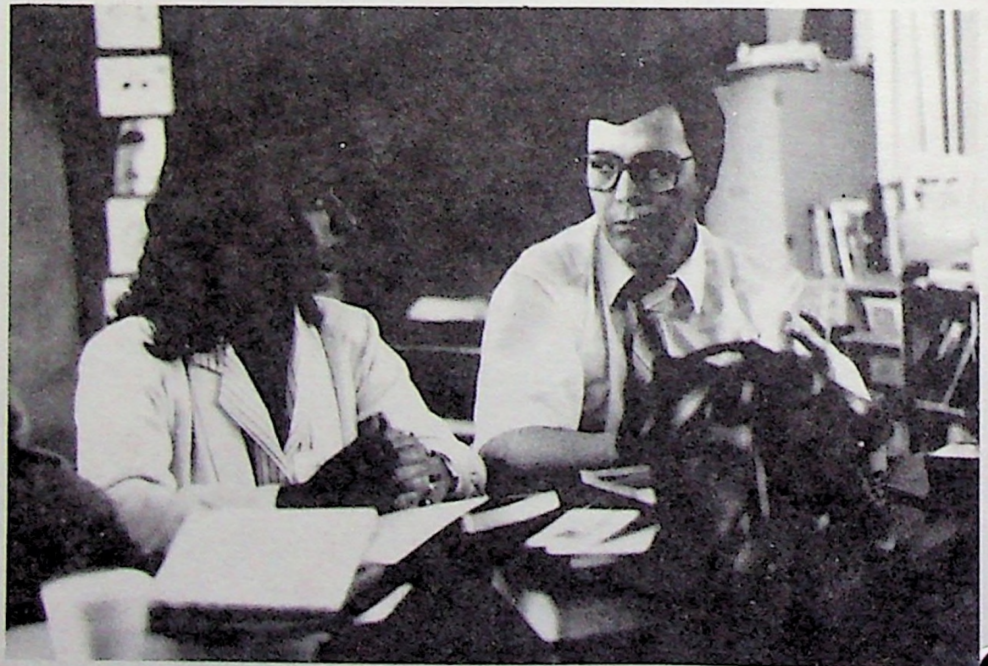
their oil from the Middle East through the Strait of Hormuz. Forget the fact that Saudi Arabia—America's only friend in the area—needs our support. Reagan made it clear we would not intervene militarily.

What goes on here? Is Reagan turning his back on a friendly nation in need? What will our other "friends" in the world of nations think of our promises to help in times of crisis?

But the politico-military complexities in the Gulf region dictate Reagan's response of nonintervention. He can't afford to get involved even to help a friend. Because of those complexities, the Saudis cannot benefit from American muscle.

To understand the hands-off policy, look squarely at where the Gulf nations stand politically and militarily.

Ever since the Shah was deposed and the Ayatollah Khomeini stepped into the void with his politico-religious message, Iran has exalted fanatic Islamic ideals to the demise of her Western-trained elites. Khomeini has taken it upon himself to proclaim a holy war against all who stand in his way, inspiring confidence and semi-alliance with



The questions featured in this issue are similar to those discussed in Bible classes conducted in Church of God congregations.

troublesome Syria and Libya.

Then Iraqi President Saddam Hussein got big ideas about leading his land into the forefront of Arab ideologies. So in 1980 he attacked Iran, attempting to overthrow the Ayatollah's regime. But ever since, Khomeini has held Iraq at bay—throwing teen-agers into the war of attrition with the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. Given the imbalance of population—40 million Iranians against 14 million Iraqis—victory for the Ayatollah is only a matter of time.

Of course Hussein realizes these conditions. He has appealed to Western nations, the countries of the Arab world, and Russia for help. He's been getting what he needs.

Recently his forces have used poison gas and finally he resorted to bombing tankers carrying Iranian oil through the Gulf to Europe and Japan. Of course, Iran retaliated by bombing the tankers of other Arab nations in the Gulf.

Saudia Arabia and the five sheikdoms who ally themselves with the Saudis on the Gulf Cooperation Council were put on a spot. Should they call the United States for help? Is it necessary to convince America to enter the fray, perhaps forcing Iran and Iraq to back down?

No, such intervention would be too dangerous, the Saudis realized. They themselves are too fragile politically to exist in an arena fraught with constant military conflict. They fear the Ayatollah's power with all fundamentalists in Islam. Thus to call in U. S. muscle would threaten even a delicately poised friendly regime as the Saudis.

So the United States was told to back off with the faint hopes that things in the region would simmer down. My guess is that there will be many more battles and bombings before either Iran or Iraq will be ready for a stalemate.

There's a prophetic passage in the Old Testament which speaks to this scenario. Israel's prophet Ezekiel hears

LETTERS

February Issue the Most Interesting in Several Years

I would like a one-year subscription sent to my friends in a neighboring town. I'm glad to know it will be retro-active to include the February issue. That's the most interesting one in several years.

—Empire, MI.

JULY/AUGUST, 1984

God speaking about a terrible invasion by a northern army into the Holy Land. Troops from Iran and Libya are among the invaders (Ezek. 38:5). Many other nations (38:9) are represented in this horde which covers Israel like a cloud and attacks like a storm.

Standing in the wings observing the invasion are "neutral" peoples who question the intent of this army from Gog (38:13). "Why are you spoiling Israel?" is their innocently meek query.

Many Bible students identify the Western world of nations with those who question the intent of Gog. They also see Russia, eastern Europe, and many Arabic powers as the invaders of Israel.

What we see happening in the Persian Gulf today is a forerunner of this final battle Ezekiel envisions "in future years" (38:8, NIV). The outcome of the battle is that God will intervene—since the meek powers cannot—to save Israel and vindicate his name before the world of nations (38:23; 39:7, 13, 21-23).

How far away is that day of vindication for God and Israel? When it comes, whose side will YOU be on?

The Ten Lost Tribes

Many Church of God members subscribe to the free magazine, *The Plain Truth*, published by the Worldwide Church of God, founded by Herbert W. Armstrong. This Armstrong church has no connection with the Church of God General Conference. While we share some beliefs, generally Armstrongism relies heavily on sabbath-keeping and an interpretation of prophecy termed "British-Israelism" which finds no foundation in Scripture.

Admittedly, Armstrong has some very interesting comments and he publishes a beautiful magazine. But his theory on the 10 lost tribes of Israel being "found" in America and Great Britain is incorrect. It is based on nothing more than conjecture. He invented these ideas to make his prophetic lineup more enticing for American and English people.

Quality Still Keeping Up

I wrote you about the excellent February HERALD, wondering out loud what you'd do for an encore. Then I wrote that the March encore was acceptable.

I didn't think you could keep up the quality of the HERALD, but you are doing it so well. Keep it up.

—Ashland, OH.

The Restitution Herald

Vol. 73 July/August, 1984 No. 9

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates: the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6); the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8); Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4); the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through him (Col. 3:3); the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28); the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54); the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8); the final restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32), the church to be joint heirs with him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3); the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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Why I Believe in Growing the Church

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Part I
•

by David Krogh

MY BELIEFS regarding Church Growth are based on several assumptions or presuppositions.

All Truth Is God's Truth

I believe that God has chosen to reveal himself to us in two ways through his Word and through his creation. "All

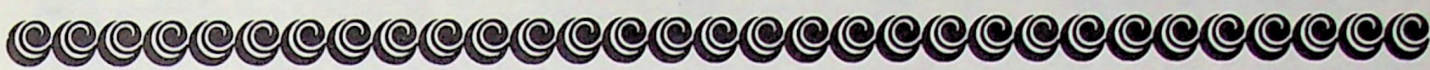
scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly

seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Psa 19:1).

Man has the ability to inquire and



"I am comfortable with my commitment to use scientific methods of observation, research, and analysis, along with my theological understanding to help churches grow."



discover God through two methods: science (the systematic and objective inquiry into the nature of the universe and its unfolding in social perspective) and theology.

Since God has revealed himself in two ways, it is proper that we come to understand him and his will through both science and the Bible. The sacred does not need to be separated from the secular. In fact, as Christians there can be no dichotomy between our Christian lives and our secular lives. God is our Father Monday through Saturday as well as on Sunday. Jesus must be Lord of all or he is not Lord at all. All truth is God's truth. Yes, there are those scientists who have refused to see God in creation, but in his book, *God Is*, Alan Hayward, a British scientist, says that in Britain there are just as many scientists who are believers as there are in any other profession. Scientists are not automatically atheists.

Therefore, I am comfortable with my commitment to use scientific methods of observation, research, and analysis, along with my theological understandings to help churches grow. God approves of doing things decently and in order and he has given us minds to use in his service. We are not to be like "the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding" (Psa. 32:9). Human beings were made in the image of God, with minds that are rational. That is why Jesus told his followers that they were to love the Lord with all their minds as well as with their other faculties (Matt. 22:37).

Some people feel that the more a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, the less he has to use his mind. And thus they are saying that the more a person uses his mind, the less spiritual he is. Those who believe this have a hard time accepting church growth principles. These persons think that all problems in the church are ultimately

spiritual. And if people would only deepen their prayer life, or if they would only study the Word harder, God would bless them and make the church grow.

Please don't misunderstand; many of the problems we have in the church today are spiritual problems, and there is a vital need for all of us to deepen our spiritual commitment. But the scientific aspect of church growth is interested in understanding and describing *all* the factors which enter into the success or failure of churches. One of the factors is spiritual, but there are other factors as well. For example, if you choose to have your Sunday morning worship services at 3:00 a.m. every Sunday, you could hardly call the small attendance a spiritual problem. Yes, we may get our own faithful members to come at that hour, but it is unlikely that the unconverted will be receptive to coming at that time. Good common sense tells us that 3:00 a.m. is an unreasonable hour to hold Sunday services. God expects us to use our minds to figure out the best way to do his work.

The Church of God Does Not Have a Monopoly on All Truth

Let me hasten to say that I believe that the Church of God is standing nearly alone today in teaching the fundamental truths of the Bible. I am delighted to see that many theologians and denominations are beginning to teach the truth regarding the nature of man and the second coming of Jesus and other truths that are dear to us. It is exciting to see the changes that are taking place in the theological world today.

However, I believe that there are people in other churches today who have things to share with us which can help us to be more effective in our ministry. We can benefit from books written by non-Church-of-God people.

We can benefit from seminars conducted by non-Church-of-God people. We must not go to these people to learn doctrine, because they do *not* believe the truth, but we can learn how to be better Sunday School teachers. We can learn how to build up our church families. We can learn ways to help our churches grow. These other people have skills and knowledge which can be valuable to us. The fact that they believe false doctrine does not diminish the value of the insight which they have. They have some information which can help us. It is similar to having your car repaired. If something goes wrong with your car, you take it to a mechanic who knows how to fix it. You probably do not check out his doctrinal beliefs before you let him fix your car. You are not going to the mechanic to get doctrinal help; you

(continued, page 6)



WHY I BELIEVE IN GROWING THE CHURCH

(continued from page 5)

are going to get your car fixed. His doctrinal beliefs do not determine his ability to fix your car. He has a skill which you need. He is an expert, so you use his services.

Change Is Necessary

We live in a changing world. Society is changing. People are changing. Our church must change to effectively perform its ministry in the 20th century. Methods of proclaiming the gospel are different today from the ones used in the early church. Jesus and Paul used the synagogue as a means of reaching people who were receptive to the gospel. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom in Jewish synagogues today is not an effective means of propagating the gospel.

I must clearly emphasize that the changes which must take place in the church are not in the area of the fundamental doctrines. The God we worship does not change: "I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal 3:6). God's Word does not change. What he has written in his Word was true yesterday, it is true today, and it will be true tomorrow. The promises of God are unchangeable.

As we do the Lord's work today, we cannot live in the past. We cannot look back to "the good old days" and try to repeat practices which brought success in 1890. We are living today and our conduct must speak to the needs of today.

My commitment to the need for change in no way implies criticism of what has been done in the past. There are those who become very sensitive when change is proposed. They feel that fault is being found with the way they have done things in the past. Such sensitivity is needless. Each generation must respond to the challenges that face it, making decisions and acting on the basis of the information it has and acting on the basis of the circumstances, resources, and opportunities which are placed before it.

As an example, carpenters in 1950 installed little or no insulation in new homes. Today, carpenters are installing a minimum of R 19 in the ceiling and R 14 in the walls. Were carpenters in 1950 incompetent? Was their work inferior? No. They operated in the wisdom they had at that time. They performed their work based upon circumstances as they were at that time. Energy

was plentiful and cheap. It was not cost efficient to install lots of insulation. Today, circumstances are different. A carpenter today would be foolish to insist upon behaving as carpenters did in 1950. It would be foolish to close one's eyes to the realities of the situation in 1984.

Church Growth Defined

The term "church growth" has become widely used as a result of the efforts of Donald McGavran. McGavran served as a missionary to India for over 30 years. During that time he developed the conviction that the propagation of the gospel should be more effective than it was. He saw millions of dollars being spent overseas, with few lasting results being achieved. So he asked himself, "Why are we, the church of Jesus Christ, not getting growth commensurate with the mandate, resources, and power God promised?"

Church growth calls for the proclamation of the gospel, and the persuasion of men, which causes them to become disciples and responsible church members.

The answer he heard from many was, "We are doing the best we can. We are working as hard as we can under extremely difficult circumstances." Others said, "If we were only better Christians, if we only loved the Lord more, prayed more, and forgave each other more, we would grow." McGavran did not totally buy that. And he came to the conclusion that part of the reason for a lack of growth in mission churches was a series of excuses, rationalizations, and defensive thinking—commonly and falsely based on Scripture. So he concluded it was necessary to get the facts as to why mission churches were not growing.

As he began to get the facts and share them with mission leaders, he attempted to phrase the insights he had developed using words such as "evangelism" or "missions," but he found that these terms had been defined and redefined so much that they had lost their cutting edge. These words had come to mean

everything good that Christians did individually and collectively. And thus they really had come to mean nothing specific.

So in order to try to articulate his concerns, he jointed two common words—growth and church—together to produce a technical phrase which means:

"All that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with him and into responsible church membership."

A more complete definition is:

"An application of Biblical, theological, anthropological, and sociological principles to congregations and denominations and to their communities in an effort to disciple the greatest number of people for Jesus Christ. Believing that it is God's will that his church grow and his lost children be found, church growth endeavors to devise strategies, develop objectives, and apply proven principles of growth to individual congregations, to denominations, and to the worldwide Body of Christ."

Church growth is based upon Biblical foundations, and it considers truths regarding God and man, and man's behavior and his functioning in society. It applies these truths to congregations and denominations and communities for the sole purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ, who shall commit the message of salvation to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (2 Tim. 2:2.)

Church growth calls for the proclamation of the gospel and the persuasion of men, which causes them to become disciples and responsible members of the church.

Church growth is involved in numerical growth and spiritual growth. It emphasizes both as being equally important. Spiritual growth is necessary for numerical growth to take place, and numerical growth produces spiritual growth.

I must make it clear that church growth is not another term used to describe gimmicks that are used to try to attract people to Sunday School or church. Church growth is not a statistical numbers game. It is not a psychological approach to arouse church members to do that which they are not motivated to do. It is not man doing God's work. It is not an effort to bypass God's Spirit as it works in people's lives. It is not a short cut to help us do things that we really don't want to do.



What Gives a Dying Church New Life?

by Richard E. Seyster

AS A NEW CHRISTIAN I have often heard this question asked around the country. In this article I'll give you a formula which revives dying churches. First I'll list the ingredients, then I'll tell you how they transformed our church which was dying three years ago.

1. You've got to have a fired-up, highly motivated pastor with a heavy burden for lost people.

2. Next, the congregation must have a burden for lost people and a love for mankind.

3. A good discipleship program to teach these people how to go out and bring lost people in and keep them in after you get them.

4. Establish men's and women's cell groups. In the groups teach Christian love and how to study the Bible.

5. **PRAYER!** A congregation must really believe in prayer. God will answer all our prayers if we just believe in him.

These are the five main ingredients in my formula to give a dying church new life. Now let's see how each ingredient works.

1. *A highly motivated pastor with a burden for lost people.* This is what our pastor Richard Eldred has. Lost people is one of his first concerns. He teaches us to go out and win lost people, and sets an example for us to follow by practicing this himself. A pastor has to set an example, and practice what he teaches, if he wants his congregation to follow him.

2. *A congregation must have a burden for lost people and a true love for mankind.* If the congregation doesn't have this, it isn't going to want to go out and tell people about God. So the pastor has to get them fired up about God and show them what God can do in their lives through prayer and worship. And that is what our pastor does.

3. *A good discipleship program.* You've got to teach people how to go out and tell others about God. They don't just learn this by themselves; they must be taught. This is what our pastor had to do for us. He set up three discipling classes which he teaches. The class members then go out teaching and witnessing to others, bringing in lost people, and keeping them in the church afterwards. We realize that we

can't bring one family in the front door and have three others go out the back door and still grow.

4. *Then you've got to have men's and women's cell groups.* These groups teach how to love one another and how to get to know one another. They have a closeness with each other, and share in one another's lives. They also learn how to study God's Word together.

5. Now we come to the most important ingredient of all—**PRAYER!** A congregation that prays together stays together and can do anything. My church, East Oregon Chapel in Oregon, IL, has grown from about 20 active Christians three years ago to over a 100 today. We have built a big new addition onto our once little church. All this was done because we have a God who sent us a fired-up, highly motivated pastor with a burden for lost people that taught us how to pray for what we needed. Like the Bible says, through God all things are possible.

So you see, we have learned how to put all these five ingredients together. They brought our dying church back to life.

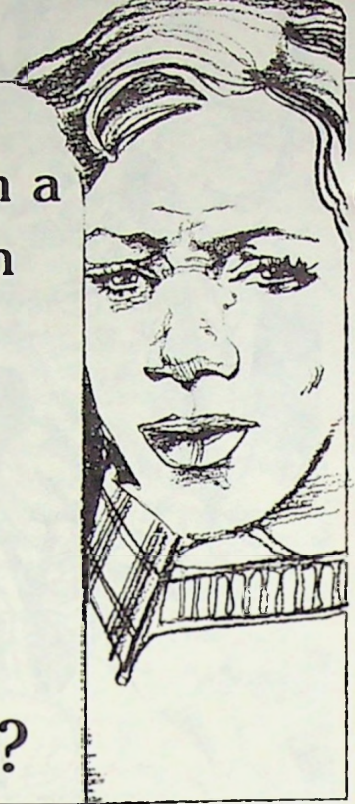
Why . . .

BLOOD GUSHED from the mortal wound, soaking the carpet. Frightened by what he'd done, Demos hurriedly wiped the stained knife blade, then rushed out the back door. But he fled headlong into the gauntlet of half-a-dozen policemen who had been summoned by a silent burglar alarm.

A jury spent just an hour deliberating. Demos was sentenced for first-degree murder. Yet he found religious

Do I Have Such a Hard Time With

**G
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GUILT . . .

Devastates children, contributes toward loss of self-esteem.

faith behind bars. Because of his splendid track record in incarceration, he was released 20 years later a free man.

Unfortunately, Demos has never shaken the memory of that bloody scene in the apartment which has marked him for life. Flashbacks leave him drenched emotionally, physically, spiritually. Now 40 years old, Demos moves from job to job, never able to grasp what it means to live again.

Israel's Guilt Condemned Her for Generations

What the foregoing modern-day murderer has experienced concerning guilt and repentance correlates with the agonies Israel has suffered in the aftermath of its sin against God. For centuries God's people have continued to receive the brunt of ridicule from the nations. Why? Because she committed the unpardonable sin—that of forsaking God for idols. Even since the preaching of Christ—for almost 2,000 years—the sense of shame and contempt continues.

Can Israel shake her condemnation? Will God forgive her if she repents? Her own prophets pleaded for that forgiveness—time and again. One prophet, Hosea, was made an object lesson via his unfaithful wife to show Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness. Could the nation come back to God? Can she find forgiveness?

The prophet deals with those questions. Particularly, in chapter 6, he approaches the difficulty from God's viewpoint. The Father of the nation is seen as waiting to hear of his people's repentance (see 5:15, where the sixth chapter really starts).

But what kind of repentance does God see coming from Israel? Hosea puts words of repentance in the mouths of the people (see 6:1-3) that sound superficial. The people presume that God will forgive and forget. An idolatry which has gone on for hundreds of years God will forgive easily. With words of "easy come, easy go" mirth, Israel is saying, "After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up" (6:2, RSV).

No Easy Escape

But sin, repentance, and forgiveness do not come that easily. There's no doubting the truth of repentance and forgiveness. God does forgive the penitent. But he will not forgive a nation whose expression of repentance is not genuine. In this case Israel's penitent heart is questioned by both Hosea and God. Israel's feigned love for God is seen as the quickly evaporating dew and the fast-fleeting morning cloud (6:4, RSV). Instead, God calls for "steadfast love" (6:6, RSV) from the people. Only when Israel turns in constant devotion to God will he execute speedy and lasting forgiveness.

But for now, reflect on Israel's suffering for almost 2,000 years since the preaching of Christ. Hasn't she spent her time of consequence for her sin? Using the "day as a thousand years" formula, couldn't we use the "after two days" phrase as referring to the last 2,000 years? Then would not the expression, "on the third day he will raise us up," refer to the millennium when Israel will be restored as the head of the nations, a forgiven and glorified people?

By allegorizing the passage to fit history and future prophecy we might assume the foregoing interpretation. But such an understanding fails to appreciate the original context of the passage and dismisses the spiritual lesson God wants us to catch. What is that lesson? Sin, repentance, and forgiveness do not come to us as simply as our "easy come, easy go" philosophy toward money. His response toward our repentance will not come in two or three days if we are not genuine. He examines our hearts to see if we mean it.

Why Guilt Is Difficult

Perhaps this "quick-fix repentance" attempt by Israel helps us to understand why we have such a dif-

ficult time with guilt today. Because our sins are so clear in our memory, the burden of guilt overwhelms us easily. We'd like to think that such ugliness could be swept away as swiftly as a wave of the sea washes a sandy beach.

However, when remorse washes through our emotions, too often our sins stand out more starkly than ever. In those moments of bare honesty we know there can be no instant forgiveness—at least if our remorse seems to last only as long as it takes to sin again.

So what can be done about our guilt? Is there remorse which leads to repentance? Where is the water which washes away our sins? Can we achieve the place where sin and its consequences can be forgotten?

These are hard questions. There can be no easy answers.

So is there a repentance which brings relief? Can we ever find freedom from regret in this lifetime?

Yes, there is a way. The Apostle Paul revealed it to us in his dealings with the church at Corinth.

Not only does Paul define the effect of repentance which brings relief, he also deals with the "quick-fix" which brings only more remorse. He identifies the first as godly grief and the false as worldly sorrow.

Godly Grief

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul calls for a "godly sorrow" and a "godly grief" (2 Cor. 7:10, KJV, RSV). It's the kind of repentance which produces real physical or emotional pain. In fact, Moffatt translates the phrase as "the pain God is allowed to guide."

Such pain is deep-felt hurt because our sin hurts. We realize that we have not only wronged ourselves or others, but we have wronged God. Such hurt brings us under his judgment. Condemned by the Almighty, we find that the only way to get out from under that weight is to

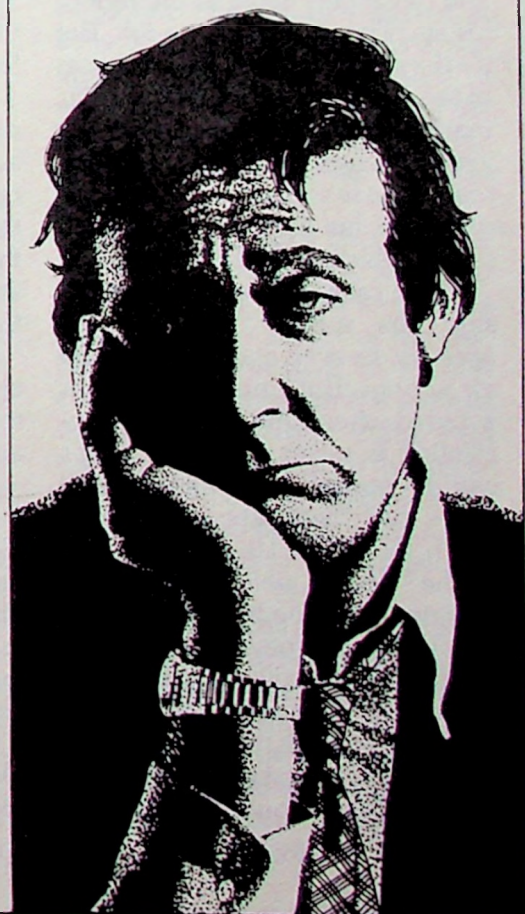
by Russ Magaw

totally abhor our sin. We want to dissociate ourselves from it, which in turn sets us free from being tempted by it again. No longer will we even think on it or allow our minds to toy with it.

That's the kind of godly grief which brings repentance. It "produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret" (2 Cor. 7:10, RSV). In other words,
(Continued, page 10)

GUILT . . .

Robs your initiative,
destroys your drive.



WHY DO I HAVE SUCH A HARD TIME WITH GUILT?

(Continued from page 9)

there are no feelings of resentment or hurt pride left over after godly repentance. The pain has led us back into fellowship with God and with those we have wronged.

Thus all the godly grief which brings pain should never be resented. It should be accepted and brought to God, much like a sufferer calls the doctor seeking diagnosis and cure.

Only then is good brought out of evil. Only then can we know the meaning of the psalmist's plea: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: . . . see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139:23, 24).

Worldly Sorrow

Worldly sorrow is altogether different. Such grief comes when the sufferer looks only at the symptoms and never gets down to the root of his sin. True, there is pain felt. But it's the pain from the consequences of the sin, such as physical disability, material losses, wounded pride, or loss of friendships. True, the sinner may choose to deal with only the symptom, but he will not face up to the sin which caused the symptom.

In the case of a broken relationship, the sufferer may seek an apology, or even apologize himself for wrongs. But true repentance is avoided when fundamental reconciliation is never achieved. That's worldly sorrow only, and as Paul writes, such "worldly grief produces death" (2 Cor. 7:10, RSV).

The "death" which the sufferer experiences is the broken relationship which can never be mended. In addition, a little bit of the sufferer's inner man experiences a type of demise from which there is no rescue. The memory of that sin is still present in his subconscious. It often sur-

faces at inopportune times, bringing him terrible feelings of remorse and regret. Like Demos at the beginning of our story, he seems unable to grasp what it means to live again.

The Marks of Real Repentance

In contrast, the truly repentant enjoy a freedom which worldly sorrow can never bring. That freedom Paul describes as follows:

For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter (2 Cor. 7:11, RSV).

Notice the six descriptive verbs which show true repentance. The Corinthians were dead *earnest* in doing something about their sin, which was revolting against Paul's ministry and teaching. Their godly sorrow made them *eager* to clear themselves with both God and Paul. They exhibited righteous *indignation* towards their sin—mad at themselves for creating such a rift.

Next, they became *alarmed* at what would happen to them if they stayed in an unrepentant state. That caused them to long to reconcile themselves with Paul and God. Then they turned to both with *zeal*, exercising great *punishment* against themselves for their evil.

Clearly their attitude had been changed. Now they were free from their sin, anxious to serve both God and Paul.

How about us? Can we look at ourselves in the same objectivity, identifying our sins and humbling ourselves before God and those we offend? Will we know what it means to live again? Or will we experience the flashbacks of self-guilt and self-condemnation like Demos?

Godly grief or worldly sorrow? The choice is ours—as are the consequences.

What Must I Do?

The question is not whether we submit to baptism or not, but rather, "What must I do to be saved?" God's Word answers this question in Acts 16:25-34. The story of the Philippian jailer contains God's requirements for salvation. The jailer sought salvation (v. 30), the Word of the Lord was preached (v. 32), he heard and believed (v. 31), he repented and was baptized (v. 33), and rose to live a new life (v. 34).

Even though the Apostle Paul was a chosen vessel of God, even though he was brought to his knees on the road to Damascus, even though his sight was restored, he had to do what Ananias told him he must do (Acts 9:6; 22:10). He had to be baptized. Paul had decided to follow Jesus, but he had to seal his faith by meeting God's demands. Ananias commanded him, "Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Paul was still in his sins until they were washed away in the blood of the Lamb in the symbolic form of water baptism. Indeed, as the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea (Ex. 4:13-31), so the sins of believers are drowned in the waters of baptism (1 Cor. 10:1, 2, 11).

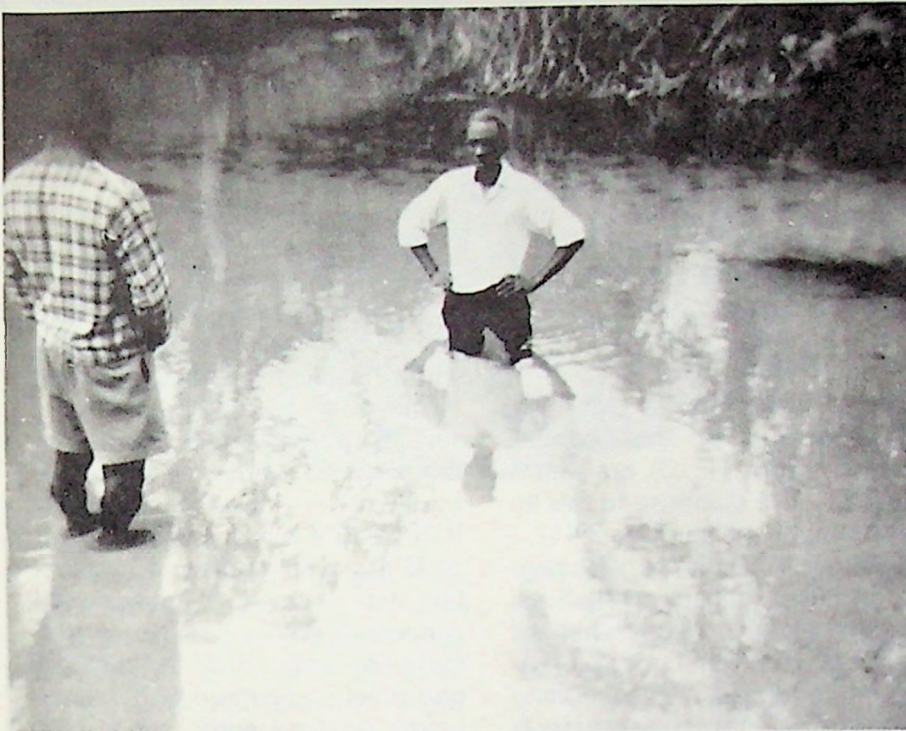
What Paul and the jailer had to do is what all must do to receive God's gift of salvation. *Jesus saves!* His sacrificial death provides merit for salvation. It places man in position so Jesus can perform his saving work.

Moral Goodness Is Not Enough

Moral goodness and good intentions are not enough. They cannot take the place of obedience to God's requirements. Acts 10 records the

Important Is Baptism?

by Pastor Edward Goit, Jr.



African Church of God member entering the body of Christ via immersion.

story of a good moral man, Cornelius. His moral qualities were excellent and they would gain him membership in the most popular churches today with no questions asked.

Cornelius' goodness did not cover him with the blood of Jesus. God instructed him to send for Peter, who would tell him the words whereby he and all his house would be saved (Acts 11:14). Peter came and "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). Cornelius knew the gospel. When Peter preached, Cornelius recognized himself as a sinner who had to meet God's requirements no matter how good he was. He believed Jesus Christ died for his personal sins, and he acted on this belief by being baptized.

Lydia's conversion to Christ, as recorded in Acts 16:14, 15, is another illustration where moral goodness was not enough for salvation. Lydia was a religious woman, a good woman, and a worshiper of God. She was sincere, devout, and God fearing—as many are today. Nevertheless, she saw her need to comply with God's requirements and she also was baptized.

Why was it necessary for Paul to come her way and disturb her good way of life? Why was it necessary for Lydia, a good moral woman, to be baptized? The saving relationship to Christ is expressed in the New Testament by the phrase "in Christ." Lydia had a definite need to be "in Christ." Baptism is the only way by which a believer can enter

into this saving relationship (Gal. 3:27).

One who understands God's plan of salvation will not disregard or seek to avoid baptism. The hearer and believer of the gospel will not need to have the necessity of baptism impressed on his mind, but will cry out as did the eunuch, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

(See Acts 2:42; 8:12, 38; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5.)

Who Is a Jew? A Christian?

Those who would negate BAPTISM frequently use Romans 2 to grind their axe of nonconformity. This scripture reasons, "Who is a Jew?" It is observed that the Jews, according to the flesh, had the law of Moses. Their boast was that as sons of Abraham there was a certain immunity from judgment. It can be further observed that if the law was the major distinction of the Jew, circumcision was a close second.

Paul, in writing of circumcision, reasons that circumcision had value to the physical Jew as long as he was not a transgressor of the law, but if he transgressed, his circumcision was worthless or the same as no circumcision (Rom. 2:25). Paul then wrote, "Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?" (Rom. 2:26.)

Those who deny the necessity for baptism claim the believing penitent is covered by the principle of Romans 2:26; that is, if the uncircumcised man kept the law his uncircumcision was counted to him as circumcision. It is believed that if the un-

(Continued, page 12)

HOW IMPORTANT IS BAPTISM?

(continued from page 11)

baptized person lives a Christian life it will count to him as baptism.

This might be true if it were possible for one to keep the law. In reality it is impossible for anyone to keep the law. Only Christ has been able to do this, and I'm sure not even a rejecter of the need for baptism would place himself in his shoes.

In addition to this, Paul constantly affirmed that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. 2:15, 16, 21). He further taught, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. 3:21, 22).

Peter, also a son of the law (a Jew according to the flesh), recognized that one needed to work righteousness to be accepted with God. He said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35). Peter realized that one didn't have to be born a son of Abraham, a Jew according to the flesh, to be accepted with God. An individual must fear God and work righteousness to be accepted of God.

Work Righteousness

On the occasion of the feeding of 5,000, the people inquired, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" (John 6:28). Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). To do the works of God, or "work righteousness," one must believe on Jesus. To believe on Jesus and to begin living a Christian life, it is first

necessary that one be baptized (Rom. 6:3, 4). Peter, on the occasion of declaring this great truth of "working righteousness," preached Jesus, and commanded those which heard the word (Acts 10:44) to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:48).

We cannot accept the Calvinistic and Arminian teaching of passiveness where baptism is concerned. We believe it is necessary for one to believe, repent, confess, and obey God in order to be saved. We do this, believing that baptism is for the remission of sins.

Romans 10:13

The phrase, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13), appears in Acts 2:21. The response to this invitation was baptism (Acts 2:41).

A permissible rendering of Romans 10:13 reads, "Whosoever shall call the name of the Lord upon himself shall be saved." (See James 2:7 [RV margin] and Acts 22:16; where the same form of the Greek verb is used.) How does one call the name of the Lord upon himself except by baptism (Gal. 3:27)?

There is no substitute for baptism. Good moral living is no passport to God's kingdom and it does not count as baptism.

Those who refute the necessity for baptism continue to paraphrase Paul's principle of Romans 2:28, 29, "For a man who is only a Christian outwardly is not a real Christian; nor is outward bodily baptism real baptism. The real Christian is the man who is a Christian in soul; and the real baptism is the baptism of the heart, a spiritual and not a literal thing." I believe this paraphrasing does violence to the spirit of this text.

Paul taught that a real Jew was one who has the circumcision of the heart accomplished by the Spirit. A transformed Jew would live up to the name he bears, for "Jew" is

derived from "Judah," which means "praise." A Jew is not necessarily one born into a race, but is one who has a certain conduct of praise.

A man is not necessarily a Christian because he has been outwardly baptized in water. *He is a Christian whose heart has been baptized inwardly, as well as his body outwardly.* Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

Conclusion

Bible baptism is a command of Jesus and much more. It follows a belief in the promises of God that center in Christ. It signifies dying with Christ to sin, and rising in him to newness of life. Although many seek to dispense with baptism as an unnecessary exercise, it remains a requirement of God. It is an ORDINANCE of Christ and a vital part of God's plan upon which salvation is predicated. A fundamental concept of Bible baptism is that there are certain basic truths which one must understand and believe before one can enter into a valid baptism.

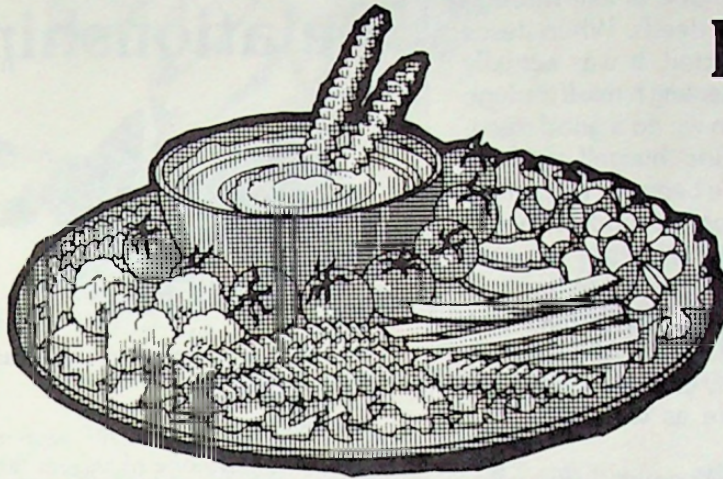
Bible baptism is important! The Church of God of the Faith of Abraham practices baptism by immersion. It is the only mode that portrays a symbol of death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism is the *only way* to put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).

The Indigan ministers (Church of God ministers from Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan) have written, "The Christian experience of immersion is available to any or all persons who have not made themselves subject to Jesus. To become subject to Jesus is to become a candidate for salvation. Salvation results from man doing his part and God doing his part. Man's part is to (1) repent (turn away from sin), (2) believe (turn toward Jesus), (3) be immersed (enter into Jesus the Christ)." *

*Indigan Ministers, Baptism and Salvation, THE RESTITUTION HERALD, Sept., 1968, p. 4.

How YOU Can Bring Zest to Life's

BANQUET



MATTHEW 5:13-16

by Pastor Ken Howe

LIFE IS A BANQUET and YOU are catering. You, and only you, are responsible for providing a nourishing and tasty meal for all who inhabit your personal world. So, what's on your menu?

Of course you would want to include a fair portion of problems to supply wise insight. And an equal amount of laughter and light living surely should be dished up to balance the meal properly. Right measures of the right foods are bound to provide the needed vitamins and minerals of love, joy, peace, and patience.

Offering a well-balanced "meal" to the people in your life is easy, right? Maybe it is to some extent. After all, just consider all of the innocent bystanders to whom you've been a pain in the neck—though I understand that you were simply increasing their wisdom. And I'm certain that you've made your fair share of folks laugh with your biting wit and jovial way. Also, there's always the hidden joy that you bring to people and never know about it. I mean the fun that some have laughing behind your back. Yes, you can

feed the people all kinds of food. And you can prepare it in any number of ways. Yet still it may be tasteless.

If you have ever been forced to follow a salt-free diet, then you know what the word "bland" means. Used in the sense of our lives and our influence on the lives of others, bland is what we too often are. Our pleasant personalities and outward appearances may gain many friends and sway many causes, yet still be bland when it comes to making any enduring impact upon the lives of friends and family and enemies. The food we offer to them has not been seasoned. In other words, we are tasteless. I am tasteless. You are the same. But there is a way to profoundly and wonderfully season our worlds. Ages old, it has never become tasteless.

A quick reading of Matthew 5:13 tells us that we are the salt that seasons. You and I have the potential to bring good taste to the earth. I repeat, we have the POTENTIAL. It's definitely not automatic. Just "me being me" is not enough. Something more must happen. We must

become the workers of miracles. Let's see how.

If we continue our reading in Matthew five, through verse 16, we find that another title has been given to us: light. We are the light of the world. We are the *potential* light of the world. Again, something more must happen before our brightness is realized. We must show to the world the miracle of good works. Our deeds must keep in step with our wordy philosophies and teachings. Potential must become action.

Let's return to the thought that we are the salt of the earth. Jesus posed the question about the fate of salt which has become tasteless. What good is it? It has no good, he taught. It is thrown out and mankind tramples it. And so it goes with philosophies and teachings, Christian or otherwise. If our actions don't match our exhortations, then they are illusions. And men love to destroy the dreams of others. Human nature forces unbelievers to scrutinize believers and rightfully condemn our lack of action. It is our fault

(Continued, page 14)

HOW YOU CAN BRING ZEST TO LIFE'S BANQUET

(Continued from page 13)

when we are trampled underfoot.

Our salt cannot be made salty again. In other words, any opportunity to do good which is passed by is tasteless salt. We have thrown it out the window and so are judged by our lack of action and (to our world) apparent lack of concern. Consider how many situations we don't season, situations in which we could have furthered the cause of the kingdom with a simple good deed. We must keep the salt salty.

To keep our light shining is the parallel thought. It does little good to proclaim the necessity of compassion, empathy, and right action, if we don't follow up the thought with those same feelings and works. When we pass up opportunities to love indeed, then we have put our flashlight back in the drawer. So what if the light's on? No one can see it.

If we stir our common lines of thinking together, then to place our light high on a lampstand for all to see is to season our world. The teachings are one and the same. Let the world in on God's love through our own love toward those around us. That's the point, isn't it? Jesus was born into this insane world to bring sanity. He brought

zesty taste to bland lives. He brightened the darkened lives of thousands. And still he does the same. He does the same through you and me.

The Christ walked the earth to glorify his heavenly Father; that, is to show what God is like through his words and deeds. When Jesus acted and reacted, it was actually the Father presenting himself through the Son. When we do a good deed, it's actually God himself working through us. We become, in a sense, Messiah to those around us. When our love is given to those in need, God's love is given also. In fact, it is God's love anyway. We love because he first loved us. That's what it means to glorify God. We must love in full measure as we have been fully loved.

And to a discriminating world, love is not love until it's shown in real and practical ways. Our good works glorify our Father in heaven. Why bypass opportunities to show our world what our good God is like? There is no reason.

Life IS a banquet! Let's enjoy the fare before us and invite all around to join us at a table set for a king.



Why We FEAR New Relationships



Humans can sometimes pretend cattishness in developing relationships.

GETTING TO KNOW each other could have one of two results. We would either be glad or sad. Sounds rather simple, doesn't it? But the truth is that the outcome we expect determines if we will get to know someone.

Outside the church, people may want to "get close" to someone for personal gain or advantage, so they would feel glad about getting together. We can imagine how hard they would work at a relationship from which they expect material gain.

Then we have the other extreme—the person who doesn't want anyone to know him or get close because a new friend might find out something bad about him. Getting to know someone, for this person, would be a sad experience. He would avoid it like a criminal would avoid being introduced to a policeman!

These two illustrations are common to the world. We see them all the time. They are seen in the church also—perhaps not as pronounced as we have described, but they are present.

As Christians, we should have only the purest motives for meeting and greeting people: for their benefit!

"Wait a minute," you say, "That sounds a little too proud for me." I must admit it does, at first sight. However, when we (as representatives of Christ) meet someone, we should allow the love, power, concern, and embrace of Jesus to be seen. Then it would make the other person "glad."

The hand we extend, to believers and nonbelievers alike, should be an extension of the Lord of our lives. When we get close, it should be to that end. As Christ has touched you, touch someone else!

by Pastor Charles Jones

THE RESTITUTION HERALD



How Is Jesus the Head of the New Creation?

by Anthony Buzzard

Editor's Note: this article is an excerpt from Bro. Buzzard's booklet "Who is Jesus?"

THE PARALLEL between Adam and Jesus forms the basis of Paul's thinking about the Messiah. Christ bears the same relationship to the new creation, the church, as Adam did to the creation begun in Genesis. Beginning with Jesus, humanity makes a new start. In Jesus as representative man, the new Adam, society begins all over again. This correspondence is seriously disturbed if Jesus after all did not originate as a man. As Adam is created a "Son of God" (Luke 3:38), so Jesus' conception constitutes him "Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Certainly Adam is of the earth (1 Cor. 15:47) while Jesus is the "man from heaven—" not, according to Paul, coming from heaven *at his birth*, but *at his second coming* to raise the faithful dead (1 Cor. 15:45ff). At this point we see the flaw in the traditional ideas about pre-existence. The movement of Christ from heaven to earth centers in Paul's mind upon the *Parousia* (second coming). In later thinking the center of interest was transferred to his birth. Thus, curiously, the traditional scheme looks backwards into history, while the Bible orients us primarily towards the Messiah's future coming in glory.

It is as head of the new creation and the center of God's cosmic purpose that Paul describes Jesus in Colossians 1. His intention is to show the supreme position which Jesus has won through resurrection and his preeminence in the new order, as against the claims of rival systems of religion by which the Colossians were being threatened. All authorities were created "in Christ" (Col. 1:16). So Jesus had claimed also: "All power in heaven and earth is mine" (Matt. 28:18). "All things" here means for Paul the intelligent, animate creation consisting of "thrones, dominion, rulers or authorities," which were created "in Christ," "through Christ" (not "by") and "for Christ." It is his *Kingdom* which Paul has in mind (Col. 1:13). Jesus is the firstborn of every creature as well as the firstborn from the dead (vv. 15, 18). * The term "firstborn" designates him the leading member of the new created order as well as its source, a position which he

attained by being the first to receive immortality through resurrection. John, in Revelation 3:14, similarly calls Jesus "the beginning of the creation of God," which most naturally means that he himself was part of the creation. That "firstborn" designates in the Bible the one who holds the supreme office can be shown from Psalm 89:27 where the "firstborn," the Messiah, is the "highest of the kings of the earth," one chosen like David *from the people* and exalted (Psa. 89:19). Once again Paul has developed the Messianic concepts already well established by the Hebrew Scriptures.

In none of Paul's statements are we compelled to find a "second, eternal divine being." He presents us rather with the glorified second Adam, now raised to the divine office for which man was originally created (Gen. 1:26; Psa. 8). Jesus now represents the human race as the Head of the new order of humanity. He intercedes for us as supreme High Priest in the heavenly temple (Heb. 8:1). In ascribing such elevated titles to the risen Lord, there is no reason to think that Paul has infringed his own clear monotheism expressed in 1 Corinthians 8:6: "To us Christians, there is *one God, the Father*, and one Lord Jesus Christ." Nothing in Colossians 1 forces us to believe that Paul, without warning, has parted company with Matthew, Mark, Luke, Peter, and John, and deviated from the absolute monotheism which he states so carefully and clearly elsewhere (1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 4:6), and which was deeply embedded in his whole theological background.

* At Colossians 1:17, many translators are less cautious than the NASB which wisely relegates to the margin the implication that Jesus "existed prior to" all things. It is sufficient to say, with Paul, that he is "before" all things meaning that he is supreme in the created world, not that he is literally the first in time to be created, or existed eternally. In John 1:15, 30 a similar enthusiasm for preexistence is shown by those translations which do not allow us to see that the verse may very well be rendered: "He who comes after me has taken up a position in front of me, because he had absolute priority over me." (See commentaries by Raymond Brown in the Anchor Bible series, and by Westcott.)

Who Is to Be the King of KINGDOM?



The King shall descend to the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem.

"Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezek. 21:26, 27).

by Pastor Edward Bender

The promise of a kingdom is wonderful, but a kingdom needs a king. Now Israel had three kings that ruled over the United Kingdom of Israel: Saul, David, and Solomon. God removed Saul and anointed David to follow Saul's rule. God gave Nathan a vision which revealed the Davidic Covenant of Promise. This vision was to be passed on to David. See 2 Samuel 7:12-16 and 1 Chronicles 17:10-14.

When it came time to tell Israel that a king was to be selected, the prophet Ezekiel received the task. Following the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon over the United Kingdom of Israel, it was divided. In about 975 B.C. the United Kingdom of Israel divided; this story is told in 1 Kings 12 - 14.

Following years of unrest, poor spiritual leadership, and idolatry, the northern kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians. This story is found in 2 Kings 18:1-12. Hosea was the last king and the northern 10 tribes of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C.

Then Judah, the southern portion of Israel (actually Judah and the Levitical tribe, which the Lord spared by an angel—2 Kings 19:35), became very evil. The men were killing each other off to become king. God chose to destroy Judah. He accomplished this by allowing the Babylonian army to come in and destroy Judah and Jerusalem. See 2 Kings 25 for the full details. The captivity itself began in 606 B.C. when Daniel and his friends were taken captive. When Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C., the captivity was complete. Zedekiah was the last king to rule Judah before its fall to Babylon.

God's

Debbie

This is what God meant by stating, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it," referring to the throne of David. Because Judah was the most faithful of the tribes, and because it was the ROYAL tribe, this prophecy applied to the throne of Judah. This throne will lay unoccupied "until he come whose right it is: and I will give it him."

The following are verses which talk about the future reign of the heir of David's throne. "Speak unto him saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH: and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: even he shall build the temple of the LORD; . . . and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:12, 13).

The Bible continues to say: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa. 11:1). The Bible states quite exquisitely who this rod is: "And when he had removed him [Saul, verse 21], he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus" (Acts 13:22, 23). Also read the following scriptures: Isaiah 11:10; Matthew 1:5, 6; Luke 3:32; and Romans 15:12. God has inspired the writers of the Scriptures to reveal the offspring of David who would sit on the throne of David—that being Jesus Christ.

Note: This excerpt is taken from a larger treatment of "The Kingdom of God," a booklet written by Pastor Bender.



Has a Message to Share

by Beth Reaker

WITH a special message to share, Debbie Schmidlapp stopped by her hometown

with members of the Youth With a Mission team.

Debbie, the only Hoosier with
(Continued, page 18)

DEBBIE
HAS A MESSAGE TO SHARE (Continued from page 17)

the group from Cambridge, Canada, was part of the troupe which performed the "Toymaker and Son" for several elementary classes at her former school.

The group traveled to the country of Belize in Central America, where they performed their program throughout the country for 3½ weeks. They made stops in Indiana, Nashville, TN, and New Orleans before catching a flight to Belize.

Debbie became a part of the group in January, when she traveled to Cambridge and began a three-month discipleship training class with Youth With a Mission. They will have a two-month field trip in all.

Her decision to join the group came last fall after attending Ball State University for 2½ years. She was undecided about her career goals, and felt the Lord was calling her to missions.

"Evangelism will not become obsolete. It is a field that will never lack for jobs," she said. "God is calling me to missions, and for a long time," she added.

"Toymaker and Son" is an allegory in which the Toymaker represents God, Toymaker's Son is Jesus and the Apprentice is Satan. The drama opens with a "Star Wars" battle, as the Apprentice is expelled deep into the universe after failing to overthrow Toymaker.

When Toyland is ready, Toymaker takes the first new toys and shows them all that he has made for them to enjoy. The

Apprentice reappears, and persuades the toys to be disobedient. As a result, Toyland becomes Sorrowland, and a place where greed, envy, pride, selfishness, and many other of the results of disobedience form a barrier which separates the toys from Toymaker and Son. And the story goes on.

"Toymaker and Son is presented through dramatic dance. It is the art of storytelling through a fusion of expressive dance, mime, costumes, lighting, and various styles of music. No words are spoken by the performers. Only a brief narration links the scenes and helps give a complete understanding of the theme.

Debbie has two parts in the production. First, she is like a robot, moving precisely with no mind of her own, until she receives the breath of life. Then later, she is the Mary doll in Toyland.

"We learned this in a week, through trial and error. It is quite a course in character development. None of us has had any acting experience or studied drama. Through this we can reach all ages. It is a creative way to present the gospel," she said.

The players travel in a renovated school bus, and they stayed in people's homes near where they were performing. The group is funded through gifts, as no one is paid, according to Debbie.

Prior to stopping in Indiana, the group performed at jails, malls, and coffeehouses in

Canada. Once in Belize, Debbie said that the group will be performing at parks, basketball courts, and just about anywhere else they can. "God only shows us a little bit at a time," she added.

Debbie has experienced no real problems traveling with the group thus far. She did tell of one incident, when one of her contacts popped out because it was so dry where they were performing. But fortunately, she looked down and found it right away. "It fit into the routine," she said, "and no one even noticed."

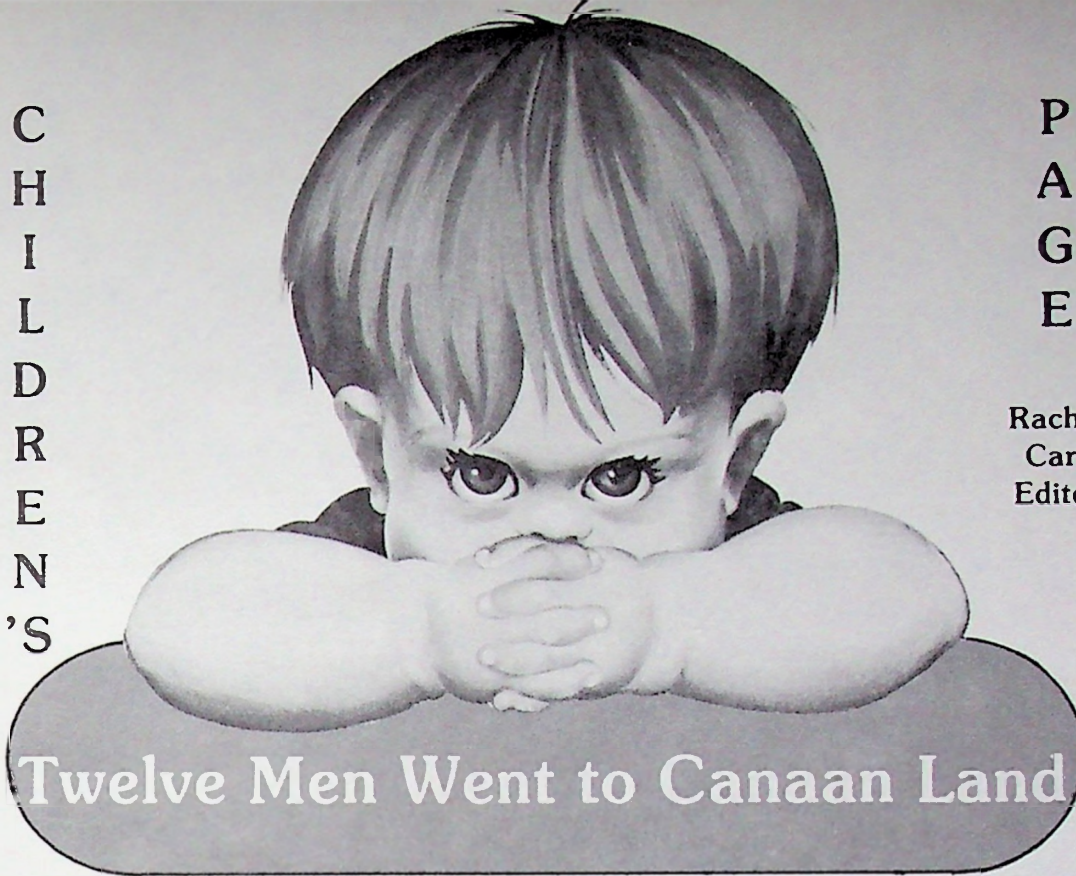
The performance in Argos, IN, was her mom's doing. "My mom wanted to see us. I also want my church to see what I am doing," Debbie said. The group also performed at the First United Methodist Church in Plymouth. Debbie is a member of the Burr Oak Church of God. She is the daughter of William and Carol Schmidlapp of Argos.

Later this summer, the Youth With a Mission will be in Los Angeles for three weeks during the Summer Olympics, performing "Toymaker and Son."

The entire tour will end on August 20, and Debbie is not sure what she'll be doing after that. "I can't make a decision on my own. I believe in being led by God. I'm sure he'll have a plan for me. He already does; I just don't know what it is," she said.

"It's exciting. I love the Lord and want to show his love to other people," she added.

Rachel
Carr
Editor



Twelve Men Went to Canaan Land

Ten Were Bad and Two Were Good

In last month's story Moses sent twelve men of Israel to search out the land of Canaan in preparation for the people to enter. We continue—

"Well, men, I think it's time we headed home. We have seen a lot in the past five weeks. The people will be waiting to hear all about this land of Canaan."

"We have all this fruit to show the people. Have to get it home before it spoils on us."

"I'll be glad to get back. It will be good to see the family again."

Forty days after they had left, the twelve men returned to the camp of Israel. The people were anxious to hear the report of their mission.

"God was right when he said this was a land flowing with milk and honey," began one of the men. "It's a rich land all right. We brought back some samples of the good food they grow. . . . Hey, fellows, bring that fruit up here."

"Have you ever seen such large grapes? And look at these luscious figs and beautiful pomegranates."

"The food is good, I'll agree," said another. "But don't forget to tell about the people. They are very strong. Their cities are huge with high walls around them."

Then Caleb spoke. "Let's go up right away and take this land. I know we can overcome these people."

By Rachel Carr

"Just a minute there. Let's not be so hasty," one of the men spoke up. "Surely you haven't forgotten just how big and strong those people are. I don't think we stand a chance against them."

"That's right," added another. "Remember those men of Anak? Why, they are giants. We felt just like grasshoppers next to them."

"Grasshoppers fighting giants? No thanks!"

"No, we can't do it. Might as well not even try."

The people of Israel were upset by what they heard. They were so discouraged they began to weep. Then they complained against Moses and Aaron, their leaders.

"Why did God bring us here? Just so we could be killed by these strange people?"

"It would have been better to die in Egypt or even in the wilderness."

"We'd be better off in Egypt."

"Let's go back to Egypt."

"I'm for that."

"Let's choose a captain to lead us back to Egypt."

"Back to Egypt. Back to Egypt."

"Wait. Listen everyone." Caleb shouted to make himself heard. "Calm down. The

land we explored is a very good land. God wants us to have it. I say let's go. God will help us conquer the people."

Joshua joined in. "Don't rebel against God. Forget this talk about going back to Egypt. We don't need to be afraid of these people. God is with us!"

This story does not have a happy ending. The people of Israel did not listen to Caleb and Joshua. In fact, they even wanted to throw stones at them.

Joshua and Caleb were sad that the people would not listen to them. But someone else was sad, too. God was sorry that his people did not trust him enough to go in and take the land. God told Moses that the people would be punished. For 40 years (one year for each day the spies were in the land), Israel would wander in the wilderness. Of all the people, only two (over the age of 20) would eventually enter the land of Canaan. The rest would die in the wilderness.

Can you guess which two got to go in? Yes, Joshua and Caleb, the ones who believed God and trusted him to help them.

It would have been easy for Caleb and Joshua to go along with the crowd. But the crowd is not always right, and they knew that. They chose to follow God's way and in the end they were rewarded.

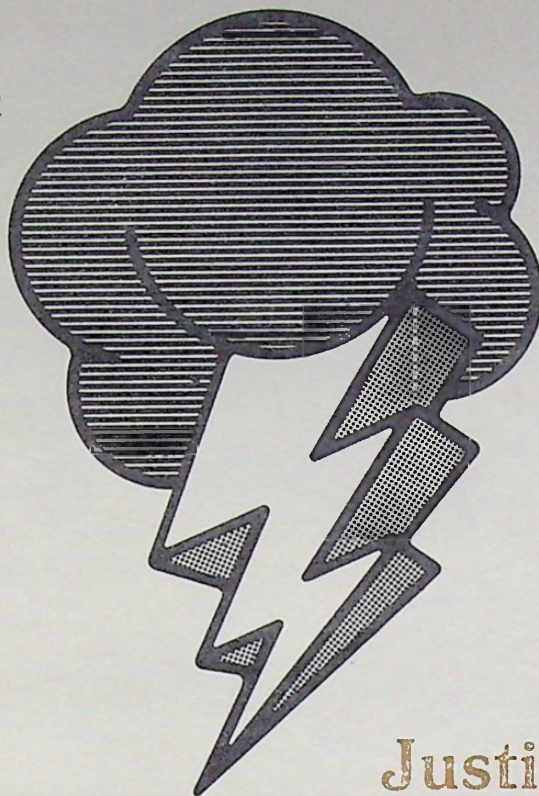
Remember: What counts is not the size of your giants—but the size of your God.

When Will We

Psalm 73

AT TIMES in our lives we have seen fellow Christians stricken with a sickness or even die. Perhaps you can think of a case. We all must admit that sickness and death are a part of life, but we are bothered when we see an apparently evil person enjoy perfect health while a friend is confined to a hospital bed. It seems so unjust. Why does God let this happen? If you are looking for an answer, don't look too far because God's Word offers a solution in Psalm 73.

Before we look at this psalm, I would like to look at some introductory matters. The authorship of this psalm is accredited



See God's

had a personal encounter with the Lord. As a result, he began to see the destiny of the unrighteous. The wicked walk in slippery places where they could fall into destruction at any moment (v. 18). Their slippery path could probably be attributed to their lifestyles. Also the life and substance of the wicked are transitory and could end within a moment (v. 19). Moreover, verse 20 indicates that they will be subjected to divine judgment.

As a result of this revelation, the author repents from his envious attitude. He realizes that his bitterness caused him to be as senseless as an animal (vv. 21, 22).

The psalmist comes near to God (v. 23) and looks to the Lord for guidance and counseling (vv. 23, 24). In other words, he follows the will of God. Consequently, he will be received to glory (v. 24). The glory most likely refers to a future resurrection and an inheritance in the kingdom.

In verse 25, the author pronounces his dependence on God and his commitment to him. The reason for this is found in the following verse. Even though he may die, the psalmist knows that God will save him (v. 26).

Verses 27 and 28 are a descriptive summary of this psalm. Those who are wicked and far from God will perish (v. 27), but those who are pure of heart and near to God will be given refuge (v. 28). If we assume that these verses refer to the final judgment, the message of the psalm is quite comforting. In other words, even though the wicked prosper today, there will come a day when all will receive their just reward or punishment. The initial question has been answered, but this is not to say that this is the only solution to the suffering of the righteous. Psalm 73 is only one aspect of it.

Justice?

to Asaph. He was one of David's chief musicians (1 Chron. 15:16-20), and his psalms were sung by King Hezekiah's choirs (2 Chron. 29:30). These facts would place the date of the psalm's composition before the Babylonian exile. This psalm is considered to be one of the wisdom psalms because its obvious intent is to teach.

The theme of this psalm can be found in verses 1-3. In the first verse, we see that the psalmist realizes God's goodness to those who are pure in heart. However, the author observes that the wicked prosper (v. 3). They were living in opposition to God, yet lived in comfort. This observation made him envious of the wicked and almost lose faith in God.

Verses 4-12 describe how the psalmist perceived the wicked. They were prosperous, well fed, and free from affliction, but they were arrogant, violent, and mockers of God.

Therefore, the writer of the psalm begins to feel that his righteousness is in vain (v. 13). After all, he has been pure in heart, yet he still suffers (v. 14). He has tried to understand it, but it only became troublesome to him (v. 16).

In verse 17, he finds a solution to his problem. He entered the sanctuary of God where he

by Scott A. Deane

THE RESTITUTION HERALD

Church of God General Conference
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The

Restitution Herald

Keeping You on

The ROAD of
FAITH

September
1984

FAITH
and
WORKS
ISSUE

The

Restitution Herald

Keeping You on

The ROAD of
FAITH

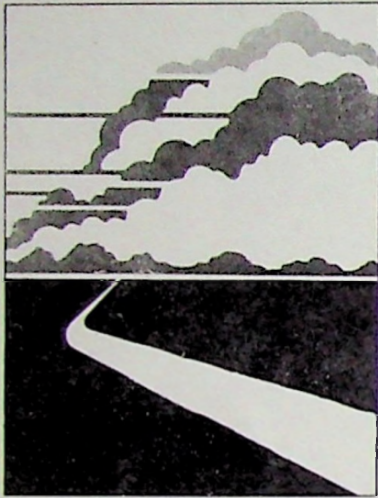
September
1984

FAITH
and
WORKS
ISSUE

Faith and Works Issue

When the book of Romans got hold of Martin Luther, God wouldn't let go until that fiery monk shook the theological world with his "Justification-by-Faith" doctrine.

Luther continued his treatise during a thorough study of Galatians, another thematic "faith-only" letter of Paul. For 500 years Protestantism has benefited from the Lutheran emphasis.



But that fastidious German was taken back when he reached the practical writing of James. Some of the astounding statements of the Lord's brother read like this:

What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? . . . But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. . . . You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. (Jas. 2:14, 18, 24, RSV).

Among the many invectives Luther unleashed against the Book of James, most had to do with the preceding paragraph. He denounced the author's emphasis on works and called the whole thing "a right strawey Epistle."

But Luther was needlessly upset with practical James. The writer was merely correlating faith with works; without one you can't have the other.

"So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. . . . For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead" (Jas. 2:17, 26, RSV). Both make what the other is.

"Faith and Works" is the theme of this issue of THE RESTITUTION HERALD. For instance, in the lead article, "Just

EDITOR'S

That Close . . ." by Pastor David Wilsterman, you'll easily see just how close the Israelites came to reaching the promised land by faith. They could actually see it with the naked eye. But works were not mixed with faith. The result? Read the article, beginning on page 4.

Next, Pastor Jim Shaull uses a vignette from Luther's life to illustrate that "The Just Shall Live by Faith."

Then Pastor Edward Bender examines how that Biblical faith is put into practice, or activated.

In light of this important faith/works theme, Anthony Buzzard puts the question "What is a Christian?" into perspective. There are certain basics about a believer's faith.

Don't laugh at men of faith. That's the warning of Pastor Dale Ward in "The Great Avenger," an article which should shock unbelievers and comfort the faithful.

Practical Implications of Faith

The rest of this month's issue deals with practical themes in light of the fact that we confess faith in Christ.

Our centerspread article by Pastor Scott Millard investigates the meaning of John 1 in light of the fact that Jesus is the embodiment of his Father's character. Millard deals with the dilemma that if Christ reveals the Father, then he must in some way be considered as more than a vital link in the chain of divine/human activity. Millard concludes his theological treatise with practical implications.

Important Bible passages such as Psalm 20 and Matthew 5:21-26 occupy the thinking and writing of Darlene Day and Vivian Kirkpatrick II. Their articles, "Victory to the King of the World," and "When Was the Last Time You Murdered?" will challenge your faith and put it into perspective to your daily life.

David Krogh continues his series on growing the local church. He leaves the reader with the sense that there is much he can do to help get the local congregation on the grow. Don't miss it; it appears on pages 16 and 17.

Finally, on our back cover Pastor

David Cheatwood wraps up our "Faith and Works" issue. In closing our thoughts here, we must quote one of his statements.

"The problem that most of us struggle with is this: We know what to do but cannot seem to do it."

Israel Again Calling the Shots in Lebanon

With the Americans out of the way in Beirut, Amin Gemayel making his peace with the Moslem majority, and Syria in a power vacuum because of President Assad's uncertain health, Israel has quietly set up a liaison office in Lebanon's capital city.

Surprisingly, everybody knows about the office, which might as well be an embassy, but nobody's complaining.

Granted, a Lebanese army officer mans the important first floor of the building, coordinating on the spot with the Israeli Army. This makes the whole procedure look acceptable.

But the Israeli presence is encouraged. Every politico-religious power in that troubled land appreciates the help.

After all, the Israelis continue to supply the Phalangists, so Gemayel needs the calming effect of their influence. The Druse confer openly with Israel regarding the keeping out of any PLO stragglers, so they need the information point in Beirut. Shiite leader Nabi Berri understands that if he is to have impact on his long-neglected 300,000 Shiites in the south, he must work with the Israelis. And Christians, with the Beirut harbor and airport closed to them, must depend on the Israelis for keeping ports open north of the city. After all, they have a regular state going which stretches from East Beirut 25 miles north to Byblos.

So it looks like Israel, the land condemned for starting the changes in Lebanon by its invasion in 1982, is silently leading the way for a revitalized Lebanon of the future.

A Note About February HERALDS

Several of you have been faithful in giving out the February issue of THE HERALD to friends and acquaintances; we appreciate your effort. We still have

VIEWPOINT

several copies for your use. We've decided to not charge the 50 cents per copy; send what you can for the number you can use to help defray our costs.

Recently we heard from Sr. Betty Ackels, telling of the extensive list of persons she has either sent or handed a copy of the February issue. Recipients include television news personalities, authors, religious leaders, service club members, doctors, relatives, and social activists. Thanks, Betty, for your interest in broadcasting the message.

Your HERALD Subscription

Usually we make a huge effort to create renewals in time for the February issue, and that will continue. But the good news is that you can renew your HERALD subscription at any time during the year. We thank Bro. Tim Jones for setting up the program on the computer to make this change possible.

This means that you may subscribe for a friend at any time. His annual subscription will begin as soon as our competent office staff can process your order. It also means that study groups and church groups can subscribe for their membership at any time during

the year with no receiving of back issues to February, and no lost time for subs to begin.

So take time today to send in new subscriptions to THE RESTITUTION HERALD. Subs are for one (\$10), two (\$18), and three (\$25) years. Use the form on page 20 to place your order. Thank you!

Visions of the Madonna Real; Heal Hundreds

That's what the Catholic hierarchy is saying about the visions six children have had daily since June 24, 1981, in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia. People pack the church every day and hundreds walk away healed.

When asked to describe Mary, the mother of Jesus, one of the children, now 19-year-old Mirjana Dragicovic replied; "She looks like a beautiful 20-year-old girl with rosy cheeks and blue eyes. She wears a gray robe under a blue cloak and a crown of shining stars. She appears to us in a bright cloud, barefooted, about a foot over the (communion) table."

Scrape together a few dreams, visions from the Book of Revelation, and the desire of hundreds, and almost anyone can manufacture a "real, live one."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Our Tract Distributer Is Still at It

I spent yesterday afternoon at Northland Mall distributing 72 packets of tracts. Each packet contained five tracts and a prophecy leaflet.

I placed packets in cars, hung them on car doors, and handed them to people. I never see one tract thrown out. I think the subjects covered interest people and I believe someone reads them. I gave out 432 sermons in all yesterday.

Shoppers at the mall were from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Alabama, Montana, West Virginia, etc. I enjoy this work. Please fill my order so I can repeat the performance.

—Westerville, OH.

Appreciates HERALD

Thank you for THE RESTITUTION HERALD. It is a very much well-read magazine among the members of our study group. —Vancouver, WA.

Kudos for June Issue

I want copies of Anthony Buzzard's article, "What Is the Divine Message?" printed in the June, 1984, issue of THE RESTITUTION HERALD. It was great. —Ohio.

Brother Buzzard mimeographs most of his articles which appear in THE HERALD for distribution. Interested persons may address him at Box 100, Oregon, IL 61061 for copies.

—Editor.

The Restitution Herald

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD advocates: the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6); the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8); Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16), and is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4); the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11), and life only through him (Col. 3:3); the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28); the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54); the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8); the final restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32), the church to be joint heirs with him (Rom. 8:17), and Israel to be made head over Gentile nations (Isa. 60:1-3); the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.

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JUST THAT



Getting close to a preying leap takes courage. How close must be your spiritual goals for you to take that crucial leap of faith?

CLOSE . . .

IT HAPPENED not long ago, as I was involved in my own personal study of God's Word. I was engaged in a survey of each of the books of the Bible. My research concerned the events of the early Israelites as they traveled in the Sinai wilderness. It was during a time of recreative prayer and meditation in my reading that God revealed a magnificent truth to me.

Oh, the truth was not a new one; it had always existed as truth, and as long as I had knowledge of it, it had been truth in my life. But that day its application to my own life-circum-

stance was new, and terrific in effect.

Two years and two months after the exodus from Egyptian bondage, our Lord called his people Israel to assemble for the *final* stage of travel into the land of promise (Num. 1:1). Nineteen days later the people broke camp to follow their God to the real estate he had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The nation waited in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh, while 12 spies were sent into the land of Canaan to survey and evaluate the situation yet before them (Num. 13:26). Well, you know the rest of this "spy story." Ten came back reporting that

the odds were too great for them to expect the property to be taken easily from the present inhabitants, while only two were confident in God's ability to do anything through his people.

The news spread quickly, and so did the suggestion that they select new leaders which would lead them back to the safety of their former Egyptian homeland (Num. 14:14). Using reason and logic, they saw that they could not do what God intended them to do. Employing much wisdom, they decided that their chances of survival, not to mention the possibility

How close are you to a courageous leap of faith?

of a fulfilling and abundant life, was greater in the land of captors than in the land of their God-deliverer.

Now consider, if they were at Kadesh-Barnea (which is in the wilderness of Paran) when all of this took place, they were within 30 to 50 miles of the land God had promised them. They were within two days' march of receiving everything their benevolent God had said he would give them. Why, one can see a distance of 50 miles on a clear day. It's a colloquialism, but it is fair to say that they were "just that close" to having all they had ever longed for.

What was it that prevented them from possessing that which was within their reach? What caused God to turn them around and make them to "wander" another 38 years in the forsaken Sinai desert?

Simply stated, it was their unbelief at such a miraculous prospect. The land was spectacular, to be sure, and the armies of the populating nations were awesome. It was "unreasonable" for them to expect their rag-tag troops to compete with the military machines of the Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, or Amorites. It was just not "logical" for one to speculate in favor of a nation of former slaves faced with the task of displacing civilized, settled, and mighty peoples. That's what stopped 'em! It wasn't that they took time to think through their situation; after all, God expects us to make the most of what he has given us, including our minds. No, their problem was that they doubted the superiority of the Creator's logic and had little trust in his ability to reason.

But that was then. We never have problems with doubt today, do we? After all, we know the "foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25).

Periodically, I suppose we each stumble over a statement like this in

our Bibles and are reminded of our God's tremendous power and intelligence. I look back through the shadows of time, and think, "Boy, those ancients were incredibly ignorant! Couldn't they understand anything God was trying to teach them? Couldn't they see how really close they were?"

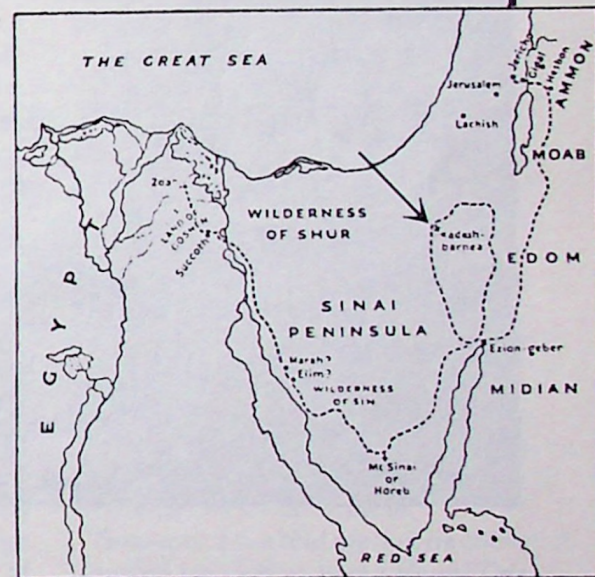
And then it hit me, or rather, God hit me. I've talked over and over about being involved in a life-long pilgrimage, headed for an inheritance of God's providing. I have also read the words of Jesus concerning his immediate provision and gratification upon my pilgrim way. "I am come that they might have life, and . . . have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). I honestly look for things like that in my day-to-day experiences: life—abundant and full; and joy—real Christ-like joy.

But there are times when I convince myself, and times when others aid in convincing me, that these kinds of promises are just not logical, nor very reasonable. I tell myself that the obstructions in this world are really formidable, and that a goodly number of those obstacles, no matter what degree of faith I possess, are actually insurmountable. I reason that this is a tangible, concrete world, not a sphere of spiritual mists and shadows, and we've all had head-on collisions with hard realities in this old world.

"It can't be done!" "It's just too tough!" "Nobody could ever accomplish that!" These are just some of the soul-soothing phrases I keep in stock for the difficult times when I must confront the world unwaveringly, and I'll bet you could supply others. In some cases it might just be easier if we could go back to square one and begin all over again.

Isn't that just what those "ignorant ancients" thought in the wilderness of Paran? And all the while they were "just that close" to everything the Lord had promised them: land, wealth, abundance in all things, peace, ease, etc. Yes, all the while, despite what our eyes see, or the world tells us, you and I, as God's people in Christ, are "just that close" to everything he has promised us: a full, rich life; and a fulfilling joy that only Jesus himself can share with us.

Look at the accompanying map of Bible lands, and locate ancient Kadesh-Barnea in the wilderness of Paran on the Sinai peninsula. Put yourself there



Israel failed her leap of faith when so near the Promised Land.

now, facing the land of promise flowing with "milk and honey," the land where peace is the primary industry. Consider, you are "just that close" to inheriting a full life and real joy if you'll just trust the God who has brought you this far, the God of your deliverance and salvation. If we will but trust in his ability to do what he has said he will do, all he has promised is "just that close"!

by Pastor David Wilsterman

Soaring faith moves believers into the Sonlight of God's love.



The Just Shall Live by Faith

by Pastor Jim Shaull

IN ROME near the church of St. John de Latern, which is the Pope's church, is a set of stairs known as the "Sacred Stairs." These stairs supposedly were brought from Jerusalem and supposedly are some of the same stairs which Jesus walked from Pilate's hall to the hill of Calvary. There are twenty-five steps and they are solid marble. The steps are now covered with wood to keep them from being worn out.

During Easter week people come from all over the world, and on their knees they climb the stairs. While the people creep slowly up the stairs they count their rosary beads, they cross their faces, and they repeat the Lord's prayer in Latin. At the top of the stairs

is a full-sized image of Jesus. The image is crowned with thorns and shows scars and wounds in his hands, feet, and side. When they reach the top of the stairs, they weep and wail and kiss the wounds of Jesus. They do all of this because they think that for each step they climb they will receive pardon for a year's worth of sins. Therefore, they think that when they have reached the top, 25 years worth of sin has been blotted out. They think that two or three trips to the "Sacred Stairs" will cover the sins of their lifetime.

About 500 years ago a man with shaven head and dressed as a monk was creeping up those stairs hoping to

calm his troubled conscience and work his way into the kingdom. All at once a voice within him said, "The just shall live by faith." These words, "The just shall live by faith," made him realize the error of trying to earn his salvation. His name was Martin Luther. He left Rome in disgust, went home, and nailed his "Theses" to the church door at Wittenberg, which started the Reformation.

Note: Jim Shaull is pastor of the Shamrock, Texas, Advent Christian Church. This article is reprinted from the church's newsletter, *The Visitor*.

Martin Luther found the true way to the kingdom of God, not by climbing the "Sacred Stairs" on his knees, but by faith in Jesus. He found faith in Christ who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me."

Notice what Isaiah had to say about our righteousness, "All our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6, NIV). That doesn't sound very good. No wonder Paul wrote, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10).

Two thousand years ago the Pharisees were considered by most people to be the most righteous people around. But Jesus told the disciples the truth about the Pharisees in the Book of Matthew (5:20). Jesus said the Pharisees' righteousness wasn't enough to get them into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said that unless our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Is it possible for us to have that kind of righteousness? Yes, God has provided a way for us to have righteousness by faith. John wrote that Jesus is righteousness (1 John 2). We know that he died for us and rose again from the grave. Now we can, through faith in Christ, have the righteousness that is necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Paul told the Corinthians, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:21). In other words, Christ bore our sins that we might share in his righteousness. Paul added to the Philippians that he "suffered" the loss of all things that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3:8, 9).

Paul's ambition was to sacrifice all and do all for Christ. But he knew that even if he sacrificed all he had and did all he could do, that his own righteousness wasn't good enough. Paul knew that the only way to obtain righteousness was through faith in Christ. That is why he quoted the prophet Habakkuk, "The just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17). Martin Luther realized that these words are true. We must also realize that if we are to have eternal life, we must have faith.



WHAT IS FAITH? The Bible states that "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1, RSV). Essentially, faith is having confidence that what we expect and look forward to will one day become a reality. It is having confidence and dependence upon the promises of God which will one day manifest themselves.

One of the most faithful individuals in the Bible is Abraham. The Bible states: "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" (Heb. 11:8).

Now, if Abraham had not gone when the Lord commanded him to go, he would not have had faith.

In Hebrews eleven, (Faith's Hall of Fame), all those accounted worthy took ACTION upon what they believed.

The Apostle James stated, "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (2:17). The initial means of salvation is given to us by GRACE. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). This text is telling us that man cannot "buy" or "earn" salvation by works. Salvation is a FREE GIFT OF GOD (Rom. 5:15-21). Wealth and efforts to obtain salvation without accepting this UNDESERVED FAVOR FROM GOD, called grace, are all worthless.

Faith needs action. For man to respond to this undeserved favor, we must actionize our faith. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).

James puts forth in his book ex-

BIBLICAL FAITH

By Pastor Edward Bender

amples of that extended meaning of faith. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" (Jas. 2:21-25).

The message that James is trying to get across is that FAITH WITHOUT ACTION ISN'T FAITH AT ALL. But faith that is "ACTIONIZED" is the Biblical faith that God wants to see in our lives.

"But without [Biblical] faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). If we want to please God and seek his reward, we must have Biblical faith. And this Biblical faith MUST INCLUDE ACTION UPON OUR BELIEF!

Someone once told me that he could worship his God at home alone. This may be true, and one should. You can also play golf on a railroad track; however, it is easier to do it on a golf course. "Let us consider one another to provoke [stir up] unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24, 25).

We can worship God at home, but it is MUCH easier to do it with the fellowship of assembling together. I wonder. If we do not have enough faith to assemble together, will God account us worthy of his kingdom?



"Shall God not
avenge his own
elect, which cry
day and night unto
him, though he
bear long with
them? I tell you
that he will avenge
them speedily"
(Luke 18:7, 8a).

The Great Avenger

by Pastor Dale Ward

THE OLD TESTAMENT reveals God as a God of wrath and vengeance. As God led the Israelites out of the wilderness and into the land of Palestine there were a number of instances in which he commanded them to utterly destroy the native tribes that opposed them. They were to slay men, women, and children (Deut. 7:2-4).

God was also strict with his people. He pronounced the death sentence upon them for a number of serious crimes (Deut. 13:6-9).

In the New Testament Jesus revealed a God of love and mercy. Jesus came to save men's lives, not to destroy them.

There seemed to be a great contrast between the God revealed in the Old Testament, and the God revealed in the New Testament. I believe there are good reasons for this contrast.

In the Old Testament times God was protecting a small, helpless nation from destruction. He had a purpose for Israel. He was also revealing his justice and severity toward sinners. The people of the nations that were destroyed were exceedingly wicked.

In the New Testament God was emphasizing his attributes of love and mercy.

Christians were commanded to submit to their enemies when they were mistreated. As a consequence many of them were mistreated and killed.

This does not mean that God taught it was right for good people to be tortured and killed. God commanded his people to submit to this injustice *only for a period of time*. You will notice that the New Testament teaches that there is to be a vengeance of God upon the wicked at some time in the

future! Christians are to wait for God to deal with this matter in his own time and way.

Sinners need to be warned that they are not getting by with a thing. God is aware of their sins. He is aware of the mistreatment of his people by the cruel and fierce people of the earth.

Notice a few of the many passages in the New Testament that teach a coming judgment and destruction of the wicked.

Please read Romans 2:1-11. Verse 5 gives the theme of this Scripture. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revela-

tion of the righteous judgment of God." Another passage is Romans 12:17-21, from which I will quote verse 19. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

This work of judgment and vengeance will begin when Jesus comes back to earth. As king of the earth he will condemn and destroy the sinners of the earth. Second Thessalonians 1:5-10 is a prophecy of these coming events. Verses 7 and 8 give the heart of this message. "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus will bring an end to the suffering and persecution of his people by the destruction of their enemies.

Revelation 19:11-21 is another example of the teaching that there will be a time of destruction against those who rebel against God. Jesus will come as the King of kings, and as the Commander-in-chief of the armies of God. In righteousness he will judge and make war. Make war? Yes! This will indeed be a holy war, it will be a war to end war.

Jesus came as the Lamb of God. He was meek and lowly. The world unjustly condemned him to death. The world also persecuted his followers. It has been a long and painful trial for many of the people of God. It will end when Jesus returns as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5). At that time the persecutors will be persecuted.

God has his just reasons for this program of judgment and vengeance. Sin is a serious business with God. Sinners cannot continue to exist in rebellion against God. God's program is repent of sin, accept Jesus as Savior, or perish.

We are thankful to God that his mercy is still available to those who will repent. There is a way to escape the terrible judgment of condemnation that is coming upon the world. This should be carefully investigated by all those who are outside of a faith in Christ.

CHRIST: The Revelation of God

HOW IS CHRIST the Revelation of God? How is God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself?

In this article we want to take a look at John 1 and attempt to understand the above questions and others we might have from this text.

The temptation exists for us to use the scripture as a proof text against some teaching, rather than simply expounding what it says in a positive way. We should attempt to explain what it *does* say, rather than try to defend or argue what it *does not* say.

This problem we sometimes face when we enter a discussion with a trinitarian on the nature of Christ. In our attempts to undermine the trinitarian argument, we are forced into primarily saying who Jesus Christ is *not* (he is not God) rather than creating a Biblical basis for who Jesus Christ *IS* (the Son of God).

In our efforts to *not sound* trinitarian when stating our doctrine of Christ, we must be cautious that we do not dilute the true significance and place of Jesus Christ. A problem which *can arise* out of our rejection of the trinity is a de-emphasis of the relationship and unity that Jesus does in fact share with God his Father. We must guard ourselves against nullifying the meaning of Christ's existence when we accent the differences of how Jesus is *not* God.

So our efforts must be directed towards elucidating the Biblical position concerning this oneness. How can this oneness be understood?

It is important for us to acknowledge the fact that the Bible does not deal in negative terms in reference to the person of Christ. That is, it does not try to show who Christ isn't. The New Testament, and especially the Gospel of John, is concerned with stating in a positive way that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

The Gospel tradition represents him as the ONE in whom the union of God and man was perfectly experienced. Through all his words and deeds God was revealed. It was a union so close and intimate that it could only be adequately described in terms of identity: "I and my Father are one." BUT, as Alva Huffer states in *Systematic Theology*, it is not a oneness in essence or being that they share (as trinitarians assert) or a oneness in person (as Sabellians teach).

The problem of the trinity did not mani-



by Pastor Scott Millard

fest itself as a serious challenge to the New Testament understanding of Christ until the second or third century. As we get farther away from the New Testament period, we find a gradual shift in the church's emphasis concerning the meaning of Christ. The early church was seeking for adequate concepts to express its basic conviction that God was *in* Christ reconciling the world unto himself. As their message went out into a Hellenized world, it conformed itself to the new world by taking on its conceptual apparatus.

We find that the basic intentions of the church fathers were, in principle, very legitimate ones. They were attempting to answer the question of "how Jesus and God were one." The *problem* came as a result of their attempt to explain and understand this unity between the Father and the Son in terms of Hellenistic symbols. Greek minds thought in metaphysical terms, so that they could only understand this unity of God and Jesus as being one of physical substance. However, if one reads the New Testament without being influenced by this Greek thinking, it is impossible to derive from it the idea of God and Jesus being one in physical substance or nature.

The New Testament (which brings a

Hebrew understanding to theology) could *only* comprehend this unity to be one of revelation and purpose. The understanding of how God was to be *in* the Messiah was centered in God's redeeming activity, and his work in bringing man to himself. The Messiah would reveal God's intended purposes for his people and bring his will about.

In a positive way, then, it can be stated that the man Jesus is the real revelation of the one true God. God has revealed himself through the law and the prophets, but Jesus Christ represents the highest form of God's self-communication.

All through the Gospels, we see that Christ's mission was to reveal God to mankind. Jesus said, "I come in my Father's name," or, as John says concerning Jesus, "He came to declare God—to make him known. He is one who is in the bosom of the Father, who is about his Father's business. He is one in whom the Word of God was manifest in the flesh." This is the role and essence of unity that the Father and Son share.

Christology is the study of the saving work of Christ. In the New Testament, the *subject* of Christology is *ultimately* the study of God. Remember, that Christ saw his mission as one of declaring God, of

making his will known! Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19).

When Christ forgives, when Christ seeks and accepts back the lost sinners, when Christ gives eternal life to believers, when Christ demonstrates a sacrificial love, he is simply showing what he knows his Father to be like. He does what he has seen his Father doing. It is God who saves, God who acts, God who is working in history to bring about his redemptive work; but it is accomplished through the man Jesus—the Christ.

He was God's representative, but even more so, Christ was God's thoughts, will, desires in the flesh of a human being. We all believe that Jesus, the man, was not God; but we do believe that Jesus was the image of God. Christ's life was the very expression of God's thoughts. What God was doing in the giving of his Son was opening a window in time, so that we might see what was going on inside of him. Or, as noted in Scripture, when the fullness of time had come, the cumulation of God's thoughts were given birth in the life of his Son. Jesus serves as a transparency—declaring God to the world.

As I have just said, Jesus continually tells us that he could do nothing of himself, but what he had seen and heard of his Father. He tells us that he did not seek his own will, but rather the will of his Father who had sent him. In Christ's life, therefore, we find the total expression of God's will, and righteousness, and love for mankind. In Christ, I believe the Word of God experienced life. The birth and expression of the Word—or God's thoughts—became a living object lesson for all to see.

One of the most neglected and mishandled portions of Scripture is John 1:1-14. It is difficult to understand what John is saying, so it is passed over.

Some people have said this scripture supports the trinity, when we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Because we believe that "THE WORD" refers to Jesus, we spend the majority of our time defensively trying to "explain away" this seemingly difficult passage, rather than aggressively declaring the real beauty and meaning that it contains.

Whenever we study some passage of Scripture, we need to remember the overall context in which it is placed. In the Book of John, we discover its overriding theme in John 20:30, 31. John states the purpose for his writing. He

records, "Now Jesus did many things which are not written in this book, but these things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name." As we get into John 1, let us remember that John's purpose in writing this Book was to show that Jesus is the Son of God—and that life can be received through him.

Thus we read: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

The WORD became flesh. This means that it took on the form of a living being. It will help us to better understand the meaning of this statement if we know the meaning of "the WORD." Just what was this WORD that became flesh? If we study the Greek of this statement, we find that "WORD" is rendered *Logos*. So we could read, "the *Logos* was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

Now *Logos*, as a Greek word, means a thought, or concept, and the expression or utterance of that thought. From this we see that this WORD or *Logos* became flesh, or the thought or concept was expressed in the flesh. This WORD, John says, beheld or revealed the glory of the Father. Therefore we know that these thoughts were God's thoughts, and that he revealed these thoughts in the form and the flesh of his Son Jesus. What we are saying, then, is that God's thoughts were no longer intangible and abstract, but they became a reality. Through Jesus, the infinite God could be seen in righteous action upon the plane of human existence. No longer were God's desires for man mere thoughts or words on paper, but they were experimentally and practically lived—in the life of Jesus. *Logos* in this context refers to the truth and Word of God revealed in his Son Jesus.

What better way could God express himself, so that we could understand what he desired for us to become, than to have these characteristics manifested in human form? One can say that if God were a man, he would be the man Christ Jesus. The theologian Paul Tillich keeps this thought in its proper perspective by saying, "God can do anything but cease to be God, but this is exactly what trinitarians are saying when they assert that God has become a man."

Jesus was not God, but Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, was the divine manifestation of God. God didn't become man, but he did reveal himself in the man Jesus of Nazareth.

Now, then, as we read earlier in John 1:1, 2, we heard that "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God, and the same was in the beginning with God."

From our glance at the Greek word *Logos*, we discovered that it was not representing the actual person of Jesus, but it represented the thoughts and concepts God had, which would be revealed in Jesus.

Therefore, "In the beginning was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with God, and the *logos* was God." Putting this into understandable English, it is saying that in the beginning the concept of Jesus was with God. In the beginning the concept of the one in whom all the fullness of the glory of God could be found, was with God.

This phrase, "In the beginning," has caused some confusion. Some feel that this was the beginning of the world, while others contend that this refers to the beginning of the church age. I'm not going to get into which beginning it was, but we do know that *before* Christ's actual physical existence he did exist—BUT ONLY in the mind of God. He was the one who would reveal what God is like in all his glory, and in what he wanted man to become. Again, as Alva Huffer states in *Systematic Theology*, Jesus did not exist as a person until he was born in Bethlehem. Nevertheless, he did exist in the mind of God from eternity.

The next part of the verse says that the WORD or *Logos* was God. Now I think this gives some of us a little bit of uneasiness. But after studying this out, I found it to be a very beautiful statement.

The prophets of the Old Testament tell us that when a man dies his thoughts perish. Solomon said, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." What I am trying to get at is this: The thoughts of a person are the very person himself—they are tied into the very fabric of his being. In the same sense God's thoughts are God himself. This WORD was not a person separate from God; but it consisted of the very thoughts of God.

Just as a man's words are the means whereby he reveals what he is thinking, so also is the WORD or *Logos* of God manifested in the flesh, the means whereby God reveals what he is thinking—uttered in such a way that man could understand him! He was simply showing us what he was in his desires, in his personality, and in his attributes. God was from the beginning and always will be, but he became known in Jesus Christ! He was actively revealing the will that he has had for mankind since the beginning! Therefore, when

(Continued on page 12)

Christ: The Revelation of God (Continued from page 11)

John says that the WORD or Logos WAS God, I think he was identifying God's thoughts, which would be made manifest in the Messiah, with God himself.

William Barclay, the widely used Biblical scholar, wrote the following comments on this verse:

Finally John says that the WORD was God. This is a difficult saying for us to understand, and it is difficult because Greek, in which John wrote, had a different way of saying things from the way in which English speaks. When Greek uses a noun it almost always uses the definite article with it. The Greek word for God is *theos* and the definite article is *ho*. When Greek speaks about God it does not simply say *theos*; it says *ho theos*. Now when Greek does not use the definite article with a noun, that noun becomes much more like an adjective. John did not say that the WORD was *ho theos*; that would have been to say that the WORD was identical with God. He said that the WORD was *theos*—without the definite article—which means that the WORD was, we might say, of the very same character and quality and being as God. When John said the WORD WAS GOD, he was not saying that Jesus was identical with God; he was saying that Jesus was so perfectly the same as God in heart, in mind and in being, that in him we perfectly see what God is like.

So right at the beginning of the gospel John lays it down that in Jesus, and in him alone, there is perfectly revealed to men all that God always was and always will be, and all that he feels towards and desires for men.

William Barclay believes that when John tells us that the Logos or WORD was God, he is not saying that Jesus was God. He is simply telling us that, when these thoughts that God has about the Messiah become reality and are manifested in the flesh of this Messiah, he would in all respects be like God. When he says, "The WORD was God," he was using an adjective to say that the WORD or Jesus was to be like God. And this is what we of the Church of God have always maintained!

Now that we understand the relationship of the *logos* to God, and that the thoughts of God and the way of salvation are centered in this *logos* (or Christ), we can see that verses 3 through 5 are showing that in creation all things were made with Christ in mind. Jesus Christ is the focal point of all divine works. Everything God has done in relation to man and the earth has been performed with Christ in mind. As Colossians 1:16 states, all things were created "for him."

Continually we find proof that God is revealed in his Son Jesus; and that Jesus

was in the Father.

Matthew 1:23 records the birth of Jesus, and when the writer states that they shall call his name EMMANUEL, which being interpreted is "God with us," I think that he was showing us how Christ was the manifestation of God's thoughts in the flesh. God was with us—through his representative, Jesus.

Later in his gospel John records Jesus' words about his relationship with his Father. "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:7-10).

I think it is quite evident that, if we see Jesus, we see the Father. Here Philip wanted proof to know that they had seen the Father. Jesus was not showing his apostles that he was God, but that he was in the image of God. He was the manifestation of God's attributes and thoughts in the flesh. There was no need to see the Father, because Jesus was the reflection of God himself. The word "image" means "likeness" or "impressed character." Jesus was the moral likeness of God. His character reflected God's moral attributes. An image is a replica of the original, but they are not the same. Have you ever seen a picture of the Mona Lisa? Few have probably ever seen the original, but for all practical purposes you have seen it in reproductions. The same is true with Christ—if we see Jesus—who is in the image of God, for all practical purposes, we see and know God. Jesus was God-like in character and conduct; his life revealed the character of God. It revealed his holiness, righteousness, justice, love, mercy, truth, and faithfulness. Yes, Jesus was in the Father, and the Father was in the Son.

In this relationship there was, beyond doubt, a oneness. Remember, John in writing this Book, was trying to prove that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. He was in no way showing that Jesus was God, but that he was the Son of God. Don't you think that, if Jesus were in fact God, the New Testament would have come right out and stated such a fact over and over again? Its failure to do such a thing brings immediate question to such a concept.

Their oneness consisted in their will and purpose. On the eve of his crucifixion, Christ prayed: "If thou be willing, remove this cup from me, never the less, not my will, but thine be done." He did not want to experience the terror of the cross, but even more, he did not want to go against the will of his Father and his God. Had Jesus yielded to his own will, their oneness would have been broken. It is apparent from this text that Christ had a separate will from his Father. If Jesus were God, how could this be possible? Therefore, we find that, because Jesus ultimately chose his Father's will over his own, it was a oneness in aim and purpose in carrying out the eternal plan of God that they shared.

Are you beginning to see what this Christ expresses to us? God's ideals and thoughts concerning humankind are revealed in this Messiah.

In this article I have been trying to show how God is revealed in his Son Jesus. I've been sharing with you that spiritual light that Christ gives us, which enlightens our awareness of God, God is not to be thought of as aloof and indifferent to his creation, but he has chosen to reveal himself.

God has revealed himself in his physical creation by his prophets, by his presence in the lives of his people, by his Scriptures, and has primarily revealed himself in his living WORD which became flesh—and who dwelt among us.

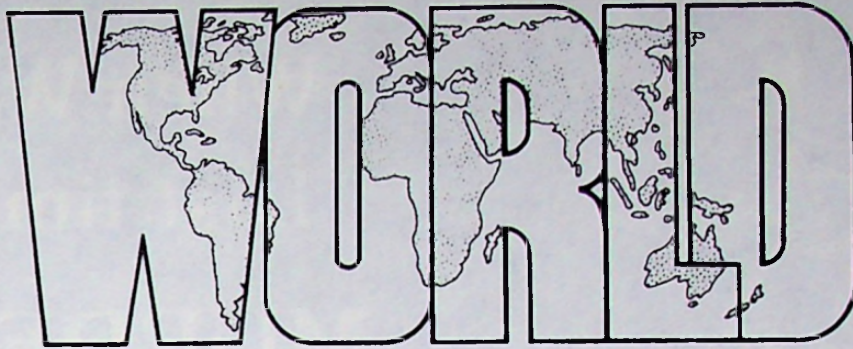
Through Christ we see what God is like and what we can become. As people of faith, we are called to experience this same oneness that Christ and God share. John gives the prayer of Jesus concerning his disciples and his desire for them to become one with him and his Father.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I give to them, that they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:20-22).

Even though we have not seen God, we can experience a oneness with him and know him because of our relationship to Christ. When we experience this relationship and oneness with God, then we as his ministers can also reveal God to the people whom he has entrusted to our care.

John the apostle calls us to allow the Word of God to become flesh in our lives. And when we become one with God in our will and purpose, we can become his representative to our world and reveal him to others.

VICTORY
TO THE
KING
OF THE



Psalm 20

A title which has been given to this psalm is "Supplication for Victory" or "Give Victory to the King, O Lord." This royal psalm in both structure and content is very closely linked with Psalm 21. The latter acts as a sequel of thanksgiving for answered prayer. The king is the central figure, while his victory occupies the attention of his subjects. It may well have been arranged for antiphonal singing, with the congregation or the Levitical choir acting as a chorus in verses 1-5, 9. A priest or Levite may have voiced the words of assurance in verses 6-8. Complete confidence in God is expressed throughout.

Verses 1-5 state a prayer of intercession by the community on behalf of the king. Although the prayer is addressed to the king, it is described as a vital step in the preparation for battle as the king presented his sacrifices to the Lord and received the assurance of God's blessing.

The psalm title in the Syriac version ascribes it to the time of David's war with the Ammonites. Some scholars suggest that the psalm belongs to the late pre-Exilic period because it reflects a more advanced theology. God does not go into battle in person, but he sends help from Mount Zion.

Verses 6-8 are an oracle of assurance. "Now I know." After an interval, possibly the time during which the sacrifices were offered, the speaker's response of confidence issues in the form of a prophetic oracle. The use of the prophetic perfect tense gives the necessary divine assurance to the king and worshippers. The army is now prepared to go forth in the name of the Lord.

Verse 9 is the closing chorus. "Save, Lord." This is more literally stated in the Septuagint as "O Lord, save the King and answer us when we call." It may have been sung by the whole congregation or by the Levitical choir. The concluding verse resumes the opening theme of the poem.

The poem is clearly Messianic, anticipating the victory of Christ, the coming ruler of David's throne, over his enemies.

by Darlene Day



When Was the Last time You MURDERED?

by Pastor Vivian Kirkpatrick, II

When was the last time you murdered? "What a horrible question!" you exclaim. "I would never commit such a heinous act."

Yet Jesus has categorized common actions of our minds to help us realize that our guilt is just as real. His teachings are not to be passed over lightly by saying, "That's impossible to keep," and "I'm not really as bad as a murderer." But what he taught must be applied in such a way as to purify our souls. In Matthew 5:21-26, Jesus not only reiterates and expands on the teachings of the fifth commandment, but he also provides us with practical applications.

Jesus' basic theme in the Sermon on the Mount is the true righteousness that marks God's people. This is compared to the self-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. In the first developmental stage of this theme, the true application of the fifth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is expounded. And in doing so, the deficiency of limiting that commandment to just the outward act becomes apparent. Jesus instructs his hearers that the inward

motivation that ultimately leads to murder is just as sinful. So then both the murderer and "whosoever is angry with his brother" are equally guilty and "in danger of the judgment."

Jewish teachers made a fundamental error in teaching and applying the law. They taught that keeping the law consisted of simple outward conformity or conduct. Jesus' teaching was much different—even more strict if considered from a basic "try-to-conform" mentality. The application Jesus makes was the purpose of the law from the beginning, and it also forms the basis for righteous Christian living today. The law was not given as a simple "do/do not" instruction book, but one whose instruction would conform the heart into a spiritual unity with God. God was not as concerned with murder as he was that an individual's inner spiritual morality would not contemplate such a thought. If a person's inner spirituality was conformed to God's will, the law would be totally unnecessary.

This same fundamental error is practiced over and over in Christian circles today. Christians often choose one of three attitudes. First, the strict following of the "do/do not's" of the Scriptures. There is nothing wrong with adhering to God's standards, but the adherence shouldn't be from a heart that is devoid of the Spirit's direction.

Second, there is the attitude of which Paul in Romans 6:15 says, "God forbid." This is the lax standard of living that tries to win freedom from even God's instructions under the banner of grace.

The third choice is the one Christ was encouraging when he said that the fifth commandment included not being angry. This involves a transformation of the mind which causes the believer to adhere strictly to God's standards because he can no longer contemplate any other way. Paul describes it this way: "Let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God, and to know what is good, acceptable, and perfect" (Rom. 12:2, NEB).

The law "Thou shalt not kill" is applied by Christ to the inner man so that it includes heart murder. Jesus' application and the guilt it brings agrees completely with Solomon, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7a). The heart or mind is the control factor of man and so what is contained therein is of utmost importance. The inner morality is more important than the outward conduct. "The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7b). Because God looks on the heart, what is there must conform with the outer conduct.

We must not be angry with our brother. This is Christ's application for us. Consider the original question again: "When was the last time you murdered?" Translators over the years have tried to temper Christ's meaning to make it more palatable by adding "without a cause." However, this phrase is not in original manuscripts so this is a total prohibition of *orge* (anger). There are two Greek words translated "anger." One describes that which arises but soon subsides. *Orge*, on the other hand, is that which arises and is fanned and fed until it becomes a living entity in our lives. It is *orge* that can find violence and crime at the end of its path. Christ is warning against those who allow angry thoughts about their brothers to brood and smolder in their lives. Feelings like this affect our disposition to the point where we can become very caustic Christians.

Jesus gives two illustrations to help us fully understand that anger cannot be allowed to control our lives. The first illustration applied to


their sacrifices. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23, 24). Although this went directly against the scribes and Pharisees who decreed no sacrifice should be stopped in the act—stressing thus the sacrifice and not the heart—Christ's instructions are of practical necessity. Israel's sacrifices atoned for their sins and thus established a proper relationship between them and God. Jesus simply observed that if unresolved sin still existed, their sacrifice was worthless. From this observation come two applications for us today. First, as we come to the communion service we need to examine ourselves ("Let a man examine himself"—1 Cor. 11:28a) and make sure we have no unreconciled differences. Since Jesus died to atone for our sins, taking such wrongful anger to the table with us would be to make a sham of Christ's sacrifice.

The second illustration of this principle for us is in the worship service. To worship God while our minds are not at peace with his is not pleasing to him (see Isa. 1:11-14). If you've ever been to a church where there is unresolved anger among the brethren, you go home drained, knowing that no true worship took place.

In Jesus' second illustration, he draws a parable picture warning that two individuals should always settle their differences before arriving at court. If they don't, they will have to go before the judge and may be put in prison. The moral is

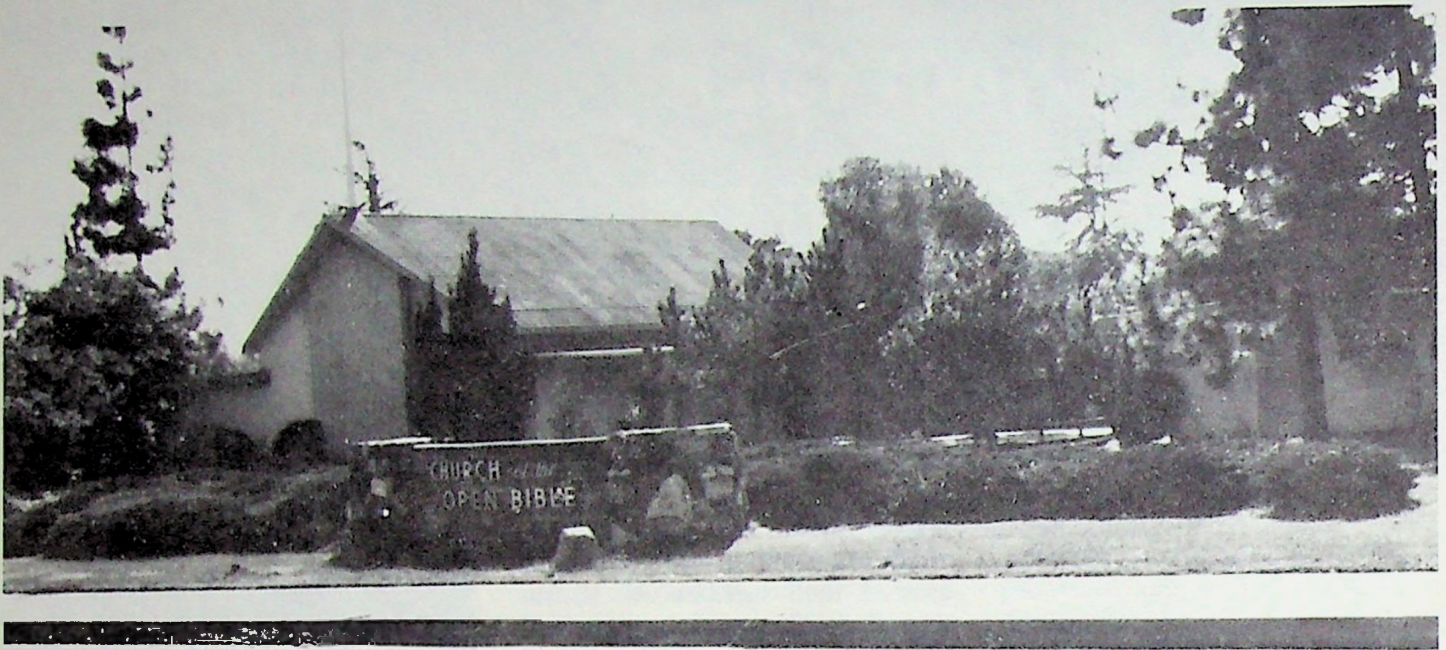
that if we don't resolve our anger, it worsens. If it remains within our hearts, eventually it will take us before the court of God.

Jesus' instructions then take us from the righteousness of keeping the law as was emphasized by the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees—to the true righteousness that is developed in the heart. The outer conduct might seem the same, but the latter is the only one pleasing to God. Is Jesus' instruction not to be angry with our brother impossible to keep? Our ability to keep it is only limited by how much our will is in unity with God.



*Smoldering, vengeful anger
boils over into violent, murderous
hatred.*

Why I Believe in



Growing the Church



I MUST MAKE IT CLEAR that the motive for church growth is not to increase the membership of our local church. The motive for church growth is not to try to raise more money for the church. The motive for church growth is not to keep the Church of God General Conference alive.

The motive for church growth is nothing less than to tell the world of God's love. The motive for church

growth is nothing less than to introduce men and women to Jesus, the Savior of men. The motive is to persuade them to accept Jesus and to be baptized and to live a transformed life, and to help make other disciples who in turn will make other disciples.

The motive for all church growth is summed up in Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2:4, where he says that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto

the knowledge of the truth." The motive for all church growth is clearly emphasized in Peter's words when he says that the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Biblical Foundations

The concept of the growth of the church is well established in Scripture. Jesus said, "I will build my church; and

by David

the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). The word "church" in the New Testament is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia*. The *ekklesia* is the assembly or congregation of persons who have been called out of the world through the proclamation of the gospel.

The Book of Acts records for us the birth of the church, and informs us of the establishment of new congregations as Christianity spread throughout the known world. People were added to the church and then the record says that the number of disciples was multiplied, and later there was multiplication of churches as new congregations were planted.

The Bible is results oriented. C. Peter Wagner writes:

"Our Lord, for example, is clearly not pleased with:

- fishing without catching (Luke 5:4-11).
- an empty banquet table (Luke 14:15-23).
- sowing without reaping (Matt. 13:3-9).
- a fig tree that bears no figs (Luke 13:6-9).
- lost sheep that are not brought into the fold (Matt. 18:11-14).
- a lost coin that is sought but not found (Luke 15:8-10).
- ripe harvests that are not reaped (Matt. 9:36-38).
- proclamation without response (Matt. 10:14).

"Church growth believes that unfruitfulness is a terrible disease. The remedies are diagnostic research, prescriptive treatment, and strategic care."

Waldo Werning says, "In his account of the seven churches in Revelation, chapters 1-3, God shows that he measures churches. The quality of these churches was not what it ought to be. Ephesus was deficient in love and had lost the zeal of first works. Sardis was measured and found to be a dead church. Laodicea was a lukewarm and self-satisfied church, which God rebuked. At the same time, divine measurement resulted in commendations to the churches of Smyrna and of Philadelphia, which were loyal. God's

Word was to be the foundation on which these churches were to be built."

As Paul wrote, "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). I believe that faithful stewardship involves using all possible resources in accomplishing God's will. According to Matthew 25:21, faithfulness is rewarded by God.

The principle of counting members and attenders at our services is also a Bible concept. At Mt. Sinai, God specifically directed that the people be numbered. (Num. 1:17-19.) The purpose apparently was to organize the people into families and groups so that everyone would be accounted for and none would be lost in the wilderness (Num. 2:32-34). Later they were numbered again in Moab and the purpose of this numbering was to show that all who had been numbered before at Mt. Sinai (with the exception of Caleb and Joshua) had perished in the wilderness just as God had said that they would. (Num. 26:63-65.)

David was punished later because he chose to number Israel. (1 Chron. 21.) After a series of military victories, David numbered his fighting men as an act of self-glorification. Both Joab and David knew it was wrong to do this (v. 3) because it failed to acknowledge God as the source of strength for the victories. Satan tempted David to use numbering to develop a false sense of security in human strength. David's motive obviously was wrong, and thus he had to be punished.

Jesus used the statistical principle in some of his parables. We find in Luke 15 that the shepherd knew one of his sheep was missing because he counted them. The woman knew that she had lost a coin because she counted them. The awareness of the loss led to the searching, finding, and consequent rejoicing. This all was possible only because of accurate counting. The motive was pastoral care.

What is happening to the people of our churches needs to be discovered and corrected if necessary. Church statistics ask questions and demand answers. The Good Shepherd knows his sheep by name. (John 10:3.)

Alan Tippett, in his book *Church Growth as a Biblical Concept* says re-

garding numbering, "I noted on one of my field trips that, in the statistics of a certain mission, a figure of 2,500 reappeared year after year. It was obviously a rough estimate in the first place, and the missionary responsible had simply carried it forward each year. The shepherd did not know how many sheep he had. He did not know how many were in the fold and how many lost in the wilderness.

"The motive for the careful numbering required in mission statistics is not pride in our accomplishments but the recognition of the seriousness of the commission given to us lesser shepherds to 'care for the flock of God' until 'the Chief Shepherd comes' (1 Pet. 5:2-4). Good numbering is part of good shepherding."

"In church growth research the statistics are never presented as an end in themselves. This would disqualify them by definition. If the motivation for numbering is self-glorification or denominational glorification, it stands Biblically condemned, as the precedent of David illustrates. In church growth research, however, statistics are examined as evidence of the state of the Lord's work—where it is prospering or where something is obstructing its growth—that it may be applied to a self-examination of the techniques of our stewardship or shepherding in all humility. We seek to discover where these techniques may be improved, that God's name alone may be praised. . . . It is sound Scriptural method to assume that leadership should be tested now, because ultimately it will stand before the judgment of God. Thus, numerical data are of value to us, and we are responsible for keeping mission statistics with care.

"Our statistical records may be used for comparison, as at Sinai and Moab; or for indicating where sheep have strayed from the flock that they may be sought and found again."

A Friend for Jason

By Rachel Carr

Rachel
Carr
Editor

Jason sat on the front steps, elbows propped on knees, chin resting in his hands. The sun was bright and a nice breeze was blowing. But Jason didn't notice.

"Why did we have to move here anyway? There aren't any kids on this block. School starts tomorrow, and I don't know anybody. . . . And besides, this house is so little I have to share a room with my two-year-old brother."

But Jason knew the reason they had moved here. The factory in Hillsdale had closed and his father was out of work. In fact, he had been out of work for three months before he found his new job. So here they were in this little house in Milton.

"Jason, come in and wash up for lunch," called Mother.

It was one of Jason's favorites—a toasted cheese sandwich—all golden brown with the yellow cheese oozing out the sides. But he wasn't much interested in eating.

"What's the matter, Jason? Aren't you feeling well?" asked Mother.

"Oh, I'm okay," he responded.

But Mother knew better, as mothers usually do. During lunch she cheerfully talked of their nice big yard. "There's plenty of room for a swing set. And Tommy can have one corner for a big sand box. I have a spot all picked out for a garden, too. Won't it be fun to grow our own vegetables next spring?"

"I guess so." Jason just couldn't seem to get interested in anything in this new place. He missed his friends back in Hillsdale. He missed his school. He missed the church they attended.

Jason didn't want to be here at all.

That night Mother came into Jason's room to quietly pray with him. (Tommy was already asleep.)

"I know it was difficult for you to leave all your friends in Hillsdale. It was hard for Daddy and me, too. We wish Daddy could have found a job there. But it didn't work out that way."

"I know, Mom. It's just that we've been here a week already and I haven't seen any kids. I won't know anybody at school tomorrow."

"That makes you feel sad and lonely, doesn't it?"

"Yeah, I guess so."

"You do remember, don't you, that you have a friend who goes with you everywhere?"

"Yes, I know Jesus is my friend. But sometimes I feel like I need someone like me—someone I can see."

"I know what you mean, dear."

"I wonder . . ." Jason stopped.

"You wonder . . ."

"Yeah, I was just thinkin'. Do you suppose—oh, it's probably not important to him."

"Go ahead. What were you thinking?" prodded Mother.

"Do you think if I asked God, he would give me a friend at school?"

"Why don't you talk to him about that tonight?"

So as Jason and his mother knelt beside his bed, that's exactly what he did.

Somehow the sun seemed brighter to Jason when he got up the next morning. He even seemed hungrier than usual at breakfast.

By 8:00 Mother had fastened Tommy in his car seat and they all headed for Jason's new school. It was only four blocks away, so Jason would be riding his bike. But, of course, Mother was taking him on his first day.

A pleasant lady in the principal's office told them how to find Jason's room. "It's just down the corridor to your right. Room 106, third door on the left. Mrs. Schwartz will be your teacher."

As they entered the room, the teacher left her desk and came toward them. "Good morning," she said, smiling.

"I'm Mrs. Matthews and these are my sons, Jason and Tommy. We have just moved to Milton."

"Hello, Mrs. Matthews. Hello, Jason and Tommy. I'm Mrs. Schwartz. Welcome to the second-grade class, Jason. The other children will be coming in soon. They are all still out on the playground. Come and I'll show you your seat."

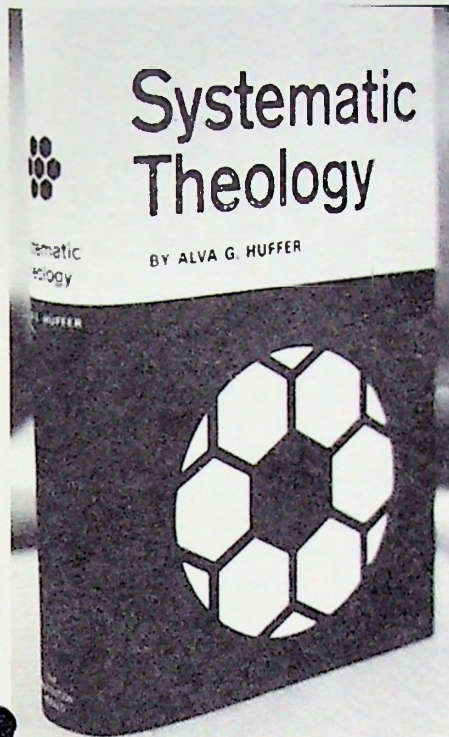
Mother and Tommy told Jason goodbye. "I'll be back at 3 to pick you up."

Jason decided he was going to like Mrs. Schwartz. The room looked okay, too. There were colored paper leaves pinned to the bulletin board. Across the top colored letters spelled out the words "WELCOME TO SECOND GRADE." He liked his desk right by the big windows. He could see the green lawn and the big flag flying from the pole.

In a few minutes the bell rang and Jason began to hear the voices of the other kids as they came down the hall to their classrooms. He watched as the second-graders filed into the room. Which one would be the friend he had asked God for?

(To be concluded next month)

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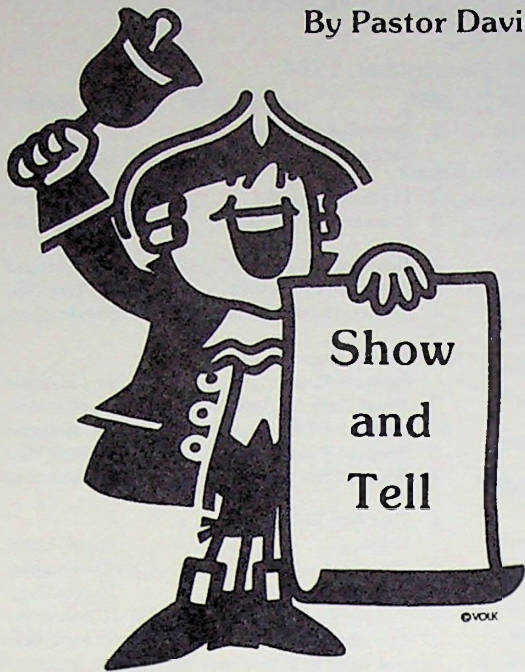
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By Pastor David Cheatwood



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SOCIETY HAS ALWAYS had those within it who were good at telling everyone, what to do and how to do it. The problem that often shows up is that this person doesn't live the words he speaks. That can be a problem. That doesn't mean his words are wrong. What it does mean is that he needs to take a better look at his own actions.

Jesus once spoke of this problem to the multitudes and his disciples: "Therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them" (Matt 23:3).

Have you ever done that? So have I. It is very frustrating when talking with our children to learn of our own failings. We are constantly talking to them about their relationship with each other. How often do we stop to think about our own relationship with them? It can be rather sobering. It could be that they treat each other like they do because this is the way we treat them. We must also show them some respect. Think about it the next time you want your child to do something. Listen to your tone of voice. Listen to the words you use. How would you feel if they talked to you like that?

The problem that most of us struggle with is this: We know what to do but cannot seem to do it. Jesus talked about the religious leaders of his day. They knew what to say, but not how to act. It was as if they lived by two sets of rules: the verbal and the real world. Jesus is trying to help us see that the real world needs to be under the influence of the verbal world. We need to bring our spiritual training into practice in our everyday lives. This does not happen over night. For many of us, it will take years to bring the thoughts into active reality. The Apostle Paul also struggled with this problem. He said: "For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate" (Rom. 7:15). As a person in Christ we still have to battle with our old self and old ways. It is not easy, but well worth the battle.

The secret is to learn what is right. Then do it. The scribes and Pharisees knew what to do, but not how to do it. I hope that we will not look like that to our fellowmen. Let's be sure we are practicing what we are preaching. Others will not be reached for God until our lives match up to our beliefs. Take time to reflect upon your life before God. Does he see what you know to be right happening in every area of your life? If not, start cleaning up your program and getting the circuits into shape, that God will be honored. Why? Because you can and should be one of his children that do what they say.

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