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The Good News

THE WORK IN BRITAIN



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The Good News

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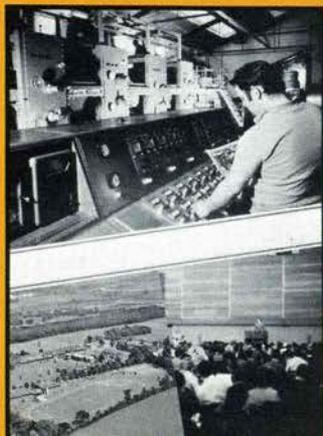
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ABOUT OUR COVER

Press facility at Radlett, England (top), where English newsstand edition of The Plain Truth is printed; aerial view of the Bricket Wood campus (bottom left); Worldwide Church of God congregation meeting at Bricket Wood (bottom right).

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WHY DOES THIS WORLD NEED JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH?

Few people ever think of Jesus Christ as the Advance Emissary of a world-ruling government. There are millions of people who believe on Christ, who believe Jesus is the Christ, who believe He died for the sins of the world — and yet don't believe Christ. That is, they don't believe what He plainly said in scripture after scripture about bringing a global-governing authority to this earth.

by Garner Ted Armstrong

Millions of professing Christians are willing to forgive Christ! They are willing to forgive what He said and what He did — and just believe on His person.

They seem to think that Jesus got all carried away with Himself when He talked about a soon-coming global government, about His future rulership and about apportioning positions of responsibility to future kings, presidents, premiers, governors and mayors. All of those scriptures are conveniently categorized as just so much spiritual salt and pepper to flavor "the Golden Rule."

Their enormously practical value to this modern world is all but totally forgotten.

What the World Needs Now. The leaders of the world are groping about for some kind of *assurance of human survival!* Agreements are arduously negotiated over long, hard, tiresome weeks, months, and even years in some cases. Negotiators tirelessly sweat it out over coffee

and cigarettes. Diplomats hop the globe in search of some small vestige of peace. Politicians keep their fingers crossed: they hope that half-insane terrorists will somehow be prevented from pulling the nuclear trigger; they worry about the constant escalation in the number of members in the "Nuclear Club."

People work for peace, they hope for peace and they even pray for peace. And yet there is precious little real peace on this earth. Human survival is threatened fifty times over by the ever-present stark specter of thermonuclear warfare. Brush-fire skirmishes break out here and there all over the globe. The Middle East continually boils over with "rumors of war." After Lebanon, you wonder which country will be next.

The tortuous twists and turns of international politics are something else again. Africa is a case in point. One military dictator on the continent had the unmitigated gall to tell the United States government that it

had to choose between freedom and oppression in deciding whether or not to support "the illegal Rhodesian regime." He forgot to mention that he had recently confiscated virtually all private property in his country and was engaging in a program of "re-education" (a polite word for political incarceration and brutal oppression) of hundreds of its citizens.

Such blatant hypocrisy can only be rivaled by the OPEC minister who dared to tell Washington that it should not use its natural resources as a political weapon (meaning embargoing our food shipments in the event of another oil embargo).

As a matter of fact, the United States government did declare its "unrelenting opposition" to minority rule in both Rhodesia and South Africa (even to the point of the State Department urging the U.S. to join in a total embargo against Rhodesia). At worst we may be looking at a bloodbath; at best the "forced" resettlement of thousands of Euro-

WORLD GOVERNMENT: NEEDED FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL

Jesus Christ of Nazareth: "And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved" (Matt. 24:22).

Albert Einstein: "In the light of new knowledge, a world authority and an eventual world state are not just desirable in the name of brotherhood, they are necessary for survival."

Norman Cousins: "The management of the planet, therefore, whether we are talking about the need to prevent war or the need to prevent ultimate damage to the conditions of life, requires a world government. Humanity needs a world order."

Winston Churchill: "Unless some effective world super-government can be brought quickly into action, the proposals for peace and human progress are dark and doubtful."

Clement Attlee: "The world needs the consummation of our conception of world organization through world law if civilization is to survive."

Joseph Rotblat, Polish-born physicist who helped develop the first atomic bomb: "Some sort of world authority must be found. I can't see any other way of the world surviving."

Edward Teller: "Some form of supranational government is absolutely necessary if the world wants to end the danger of nuclear war . . ."

Hans J. Morgenthau: "There is no shirking the conclusion that international peace cannot be permanent without a world state, and that a world state cannot be established under the present moral, social, and political conditions of the world. There is also no shirking the further conclusion that in no period of modern history was civilization more in need of permanent peace and, hence, of a world state. . . ."

Charles E. Osgood of the University of Illinois: "What we need, and that most urgently, is an enlivened search for new alternatives of war as a means of resolving human conflicts. A world government may be the only permanent solution."

peans currently residing in those two nations. Ever deeper racial polarities in the United States may be another unwanted side effect. Quite a price to pay to help prevent any future Cuban intervention on the African continent. Such are the strange twists and turns afflicting those who are unfortunate enough to be caught up in the confused world of international diplomacy.

Consider the plight of the inter-

national diplomat. New despots emerge here and there; guerrilla warfare, political kidnappings, bombings and assassinations pockmark the globe all the way from Central and South America to Europe and beyond. One conflict, as in Angola, seems to spark another like as not on the same continent. Amid the near total dismantlement of the traditional colonial empires, paradoxically you find another giant

"colonial" empire emerging, carefully camouflaged by a clever facade of anticolonialism.

The Soviet Union continues to carve out a gigantic, global colonial empire. It has the largest navy the world has ever seen. It has the largest standing army on the face of this earth. Its nuclear capability rivals that of the United States.

The prospects of obtaining a SALT II agreement with the Soviet Union are bogging down. U.S. options for solving Middle Eastern problems appear to be painfully limited. Africa is in ferment in the aftermath of Angola.

The piecemeal efforts of even very dedicated and partially successful ambassadors, envoys and diplomats are somewhat discouraging at best.

The Only Answer. Every thinking person seems to know that the only ultimate solution to our deep-seated global problems is the creation of a super government, a supranational authority that would constitute a world-ruling government.

Many famous politicians, statesmen, presidents, prime ministers, scientists and leaders of world bodies have echoed this solution over and over again until it begins to sound like a broken record. I have quoted their words verbatim on many a radio and television program, on evangelistic campaigns and in the pages of *The Plain Truth* magazine. (See the accompanying box for a small smattering of these authentic quotations from famous men who seem to speak as with one voice.)

Virtually all statesmen recognize the stern fact that one worldwide government is the only permanent solution to man's ills. They know that only a super-global government, embodying all nations, with world courts, world laws and a world police force, could ever succeed.

And yet, they also know that such a government *in the hands of men is impossible!* Should it ever happen, it would be a nightmare of hideous proportions. For confirmation of this fact, we need to look back no further than Hitler. If he had succeeded in ushering in his 1,000-year Reich, the world

would have been bathed in blood for decades. It would have been dragged through a new Dark Age of horrible repression, religious martyrdom and "big brotherism" — the likes of which can only be envisioned by reading George Orwell's *1984* and Fox's *Book of Martyrs*.

So national leaders acknowledge on the one hand that world government is an absolute necessity for human survival, and yet on the other they admit *it is an impossibility* in the hands of men.

If they would only be willing to take one step further and conclude that world government *taken out* of the hands of humankind is the only solution. A national news magazine came the closest to this conclusion about a decade ago. It talked about the world needing "*a Strong Hand from Someplace*."

The Dream Has Never Come True. From time immemorial, humankind has dreamed of putting together some sort of a global authority. And each and every time, some one or some thing has come along to thwart every single human attempt. God Himself frustrated mankind's first organized try at the Tower of Babel by confusing oral communications.

Then, each in its turn, beginning with ancient Babylon, followed by Persia, Greece and the Roman Empire (with its many revivals), first tried and then eventually failed to glue a global community of nations together.

The first serious modern attempt at some form of world government was the League of Nations. However, the seeds of collapse were sown in the League at its very creation. The short-sightedness of Western allies resulted in the terrible inadequacies of the Treaty of Versailles. Intolerable political and economic concessions were abruptly demanded of Germany following her defeat in World War I. Included in the demand for reparations was the stripping away of her entire colonial empire — all her East African colonies, all her eastern European possessions, and all her South Sea holdings. The League's effectiveness was also torpedoed by the lack of U.S. support, influence and active participation fol-

lowing the death of Woodrow Wilson. Subsequent failure to meet the Nazi threat sent the League into permanent political oblivion.

Enter the Atlantic Charter amid the battles of World War II. The provisions of this Roosevelt-Churchill pact proved to be the forerunner of the United Nations charter in 1945. Leaders of nations (great and small) assembled at the world conclave in San Francisco. Great statesmen there called the United Nations the world's "last chance" for peace. And truly this world body does represent man's greatest single effort in all history to bring all nations together in mutual understanding and cooperation.

What has happened in the thirty years since is true testimony to its real effectiveness. The veto provision in the Security Council and the "one nation-one vote" concept in the General Assembly built in the bitter fruits we see today. All the good the United Nations has done in relieving suffering around the globe (i.e., UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO) has been more than overbalanced by its failure to alleviate discord and enmity between nations.

So far no national government or international body in the history of this world has ever brought its people lasting peace, prosperity and happiness. True, certain governments have succeeded in achieving dizzying military conquests and glamorous economic heights. But each, in its own turn, tottered and toppled, leaving only the splintered shards, ruined buildings and dust-covered monuments to mark its passing.

Further, this war-weary world seems, *at this moment*, further from the dream of world peace, harmony and understanding between nations than it has ever been. The dream has never come true!

But the imperative for world government is *now* greater than anytime in history. The stage is set. Enter a message from outer space from that "Strong Hand from Someplace."

The Destiny of the Christ Child. Today the Christian religion is based upon the worship of a personality. The message that person-

ality brought has long since been lost track of. The emphasis begins in the Christmas season with the birth of "a little Lord Jesus away in a manger" and ends in the Easter season picturing His death hanging on a cross. There is precious little in between.

It all begins with little school children annually reenacting the story of the Christ child's birth in pageants and plays complete with all the accoutrements of the nativity scene. Somewhere in the story appears a little boy dressed up in "angel's wings." He pipes up and says: "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). Though the rest of the archangel Gabriel's message may then be read, the comprehension generally comes to a halt right there — robbing the annunciation or announcement of Jesus' birth of its real, intended impact. All the ceremony and folderol has obscured the real message almost beyond belief.

But read on: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and *he shall reign* over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom *there shall be no end*" (verse 32). To most people this scripture means anything but what it plainly says. The popular interpretation revolves around a nebulous, ethereal, wishy-washy, "never-never," "spiritual" kingdom in the hearts of men. That it could mean a never-ending literal kingdom with real subjects, actual territory and tangible laws has simply never occurred to the majority of Western churchianity.

But the biblical meaning of this scripture is very literal and very precise! Contrary to the suspicions of some secular historians, King David was a real person who occupied a real throne on this earth in an ancient nation called Israel. The Davidic Covenant consists of a decree or statement that God made to David that his throne would never perish from the earth — so somewhere, somehow that throne still exists on this earth today (see

Psalm 89). Jesus Christ of Nazareth is of the lineage of the House of David (see Luke 3 and Matthew 1). So far, so good. It all comes together in a literal sense!

Now, according to the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation, the twelve tribes of Israel will still be extant at the second coming of Christ in numbers no less than 12,000 strong in each tribe. There is the biblical proof that a resurrected, literal, living Christ could rule over the House of Israel forever.

Supporting Scriptures. The cast of supporting scriptures is a huge one. Seven hundred years prior to the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah predicted: "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, Counsellor, 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" (Isa. 9:6-7).

In Matthew 2:2, Jesus is called the "King of the Jews." In Micah's prophecy (quoted in Matthew 2:6), He is called a governor or a ruler of the people of Israel. Micah wrote: And you, Bethlehem Ephrathah [the place of Jesus' birth], you who are little among the thousands of Judah, out of you shall come forth to me to be ruler of Israel, he whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). The apostle John tells us of a woman (biblical symbol for a church) who "gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron flail [rod] . . ." (Rev. 12:5, Moffatt translation). The prophet Zechariah says He will "be king over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9). These scriptures expand Christ's Kingdom far beyond the borders of ancient Israel to every nation on earth.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the promised descendant (called in the Bible "seed," "root," and "Branch") of David whose ultimate destiny is to fulfill Jeremiah's

prophecy: "Behold, the days come . . . that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely . . ." (Jer. 23:5, 6).

Encounter with Pilate. Millions have misunderstood the timing of the arrival of the Kingdom of God. Motion pictures, passion plays and television screenings of the crucifixion sometimes reenact scenes showing Jesus being spit upon, clothed with a purple robe and coronated with a crown of thorns. The obvious intent is to ridicule the idea that Jesus had come as a conquering king to set up a kingdom then — by those who tend to disbelieve in His divinity and Messiahship now.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

His last hours with Pontius Pilate — the Roman ruler — do in fact reveal that He came two thousand years ago *only as the Advance Emissary* of the coming Kingdom of God.

Pilate was in a political quandary — between a rock and a hard place — over the illegal trial of Jesus Christ. His wife had had some strange dreams. He sensed that Jesus was not guilty and that political motives and professional jealousy were the real reasons behind His indictment. Yet Pilate feared that the chief priests would stir up a riot and the Roman government would "have his head" if he intervened too strongly on Jesus' behalf.

The famous conversation begins in John 18:33: "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art

thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus was aware of Pilate's previous meetings with His accusers, so "Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" (Verses 34-35.)

Then Jesus Christ answered Pilate's original question directly: "My kingdom is not of this world [this age, this system, this society — Greek, *cosmos*]: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (verse 36).

By now Pilate is really puzzled. He knew that they were discussing a real, literal kingdom — *not* some kind of ethereal "in-your-heart nothingness." And yet Jesus told him that He possessed no kingdom then — He was not exercising kingly prerogatives and authority over real, live subjects *at that time*.

Pontius Pilate simply couldn't grasp a king without a kingdom, so he repeats the original question: "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then?"

"Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world . . ." (verse 37). Jesus Christ of Nazareth plainly understood the *long-run purpose* of His birth as a human being — not just the fact that He was to die for the sins of the world. The prophecies of His *eternal kingship* by Isaiah and the angel Gabriel were *not in vain*.

But that Kingdom would *never* put in an appearance *until* the end of this present age of man — or "present evil world" as the apostle Paul later described it.

Whether Pilate ever did "tumble" to what Jesus meant is a moot question. But judging by what transpired afterwards, Pilate apparently at least halfway believed Him. After they had hung Jesus upon the stake, "Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the

city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he [Jesus] said, I am King of the Jews" (John 19:19-21).

The chief priests and the Jewish nationals had previously shouted: "We have no king but Caesar" (verse 15). They simply didn't want Jesus recognized as their king. However, Pontius Pilate was adamant and said: "What I have written I have written" (verse 22).

"Thy Kingdom Come." The people of Jesus' generation, because they misunderstood the timing of many of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies, never did seem to get the true time factor of the Kingdom of God straight.

The parable of the pounds is a case in point: "And as they heard these things, he [Jesus] added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they [erroneously] thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke 19:11).

Later, just before Jesus' ascension to heaven, the disciples were still very anxious about *exactly when* the Kingdom of God would actually come to this earth: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he [Jesus] said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:6-7).

Notice that *at no time* did these discussions revolve around the Protestant concept of an ethereal "kingdom in your heart." Always they would talk about a literal kingdom with a literal king!

What was one of the cardinal points that Jesus told His disciples to pray about regularly as a major portion of their daily prayers? Simply: "*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*" (Matt.—6:10). Do you think Jesus Christ would ask His followers to pray for a kingdom to come that was already here? Is the Father's will being done on earth *now* as it is in heaven?

Anyone who has been reading *The Good News* very long knows

that this is *not* God's world, but Satan's (see Rev. 12:9; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; etc.). God's will is *not* literally being done on this earth today except in the overall sense of His great long-term purpose.

Plainly, the Kingdom of God has not yet come to this earth!

A Global Issue. The good news of the coming government of God is a huge, broad global issue. It is not a "religious issue" in the traditional sense. What is "religious" about human survival? What is "religious" about all the worldwide reforms that must take place if the human species is to survive? Never forget that these biblical scriptures I quoted in this article have everything to do with this problem-prone world in which we now live.

The Kingdom of God is running on a campaign of global reforms. Its

**"He shall be great,
and shall be called the
Son of the Highest:
and the Lord God shall
give unto him the throne of
his father David . . .
of his kingdom there shall
be no end."**

coming promises to solve the age-old problems of feeding, clothing, housing and educating humankind. It involves the total abolition of military conscription. It involves fundamental agrarian reform, a parcel of land for every family, the complete abolition of the present prison system, full employment, linguistic reform, and perhaps most important of all, *religious reform*. In fact, it absolutely guarantees man's first utopian state since the "micro-cosmic" Garden of Eden.

The United States of America is currently going through the long, tiresome exercise of choosing its Presidential candidates for the November election. Richard A. Falk, professor of International Law and Practice at Princeton University and a Senior Fellow at the Institute of World Order, had something very interesting to say about the quali-

ties we need in a President: "That person should be the next President who can begin *the process of coping with the world order crisis in a positive manner*. As yet, no political leader of national stature has done more than merely acknowledge the dangers generated by the interplay of such trends as population growth, mass poverty, ecological decay, political repression, and spreading technologies of mass destruction. . . . *We desperately need leadership that can awaken the American people to the magnitude of the challenge* without generating a sense of anxiety and helplessness.

"We need, in other words, a President who can begin the process of adjustment that involves a series of difficult moral and political choices about the direction of national development. . . . The effort to reorient national development should proceed within a *far wider framework of global reform*. . . . Hence I envisage the process of adjustment . . . *on the global level by increasing supranational authority and coordination of specific tasks* (managing the oceans, distributing food and capital, overseeing the disarmament process, protecting the environment)" (*Worldview*, April 1976, pp. 9-10, emphasis mine throughout quote).

Is any one of our present crop of candidates able to effectively initiate such a "process of coping" with our incredible, unbelievable domestic and international problems by successfully reordering our national priorities? The answer is all too obvious. Such a gigantic task is simply "beyond the ken" of one man in this super-complex space age.

Professor Falk also said in the same article: ". . . This positive national mood can evolve only if the Presidential leadership can project an image of a *new political order* organized around a set of positive values — peace, economic well-being for all, widespread realization of human rights, ecological balance — anchored finally in a cohering new pattern of identity and loyalty that is expansive as to both time and space. This pattern of identity (Continued on page 16)

Q **UESTION:** "We have been reading 'Is All Animal Flesh Good Food?' with much interest. We live in the country and have our own garden and meat for the table but need to know if liver, heart, tongue and kidneys are edible meats. We are certain it is in the Bible but are unable to find it."

**Mr. and Mrs. A.H.,
Marion, Texas**

A **NSWER:** The reason you cannot find any instruction in the Bible regarding the eating of organ meats is because it isn't there. The Old Testament does mention that some organs were to be burned along with the fat when an animal was sacrificed, but this had nothing to do with the normal killing and eating of these animals (Ex. 29:13).

There is *no* Old Testament prohibition against eating organ meats of "clean" animals. However, the Israelites were told not to eat fat and blood (Lev. 3:17; 7:26-27). This admonition against eating blood was repeated in the instructions of the elders of the early Church to the Gentiles (Acts 15:20-29; 21:25).

Q: "You wrote that the Bible says, 'No one has ever seen God' (John 1:18; 5:37). What do you have to say about the following scriptures? In Genesis 18:1-8, God appeared to Abraham, and God did eat! According to Genesis 32:24-30, Jacob wrestled with God and wouldn't let go until God blessed him. In II Samuel 22:9-11, God appears with smoke pouring out of His nostrils and riding on the back of a cherub! Everyone knows that God does not have a physical body. Why do the Old Testament writers say that He does? This implies that He has mortal needs such as food and water. Did or did not God appear to the people the Bible says He did?"

**Debra N.,
Emporia, Kansas**

A: The article specifically referred to no one having seen *God the Father*. The verses cited (John 1:18; 5:37) make the same distinction. So who did Abraham dine with? The answer is that the member of the God family who became Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament, the God who appeared to Abraham, Moses and others. This is explained in the free reprint article "Who — What — Was Jesus Before His Human Birth?"

The Old Testament writers did not say that God has a *physical* body. They merely recorded the fact that God *appeared* in physical form. As the Creator of all physical things, God certainly has the power to manifest Himself to men in physical form, though He is a spirit. And again, the Old Testament record doesn't say God *needs* food, water, and so on, but He is certainly able to partake of physical amenities and enjoy them. The free article "What Will You Be Like in the Resurrection?" explains further.

Commentators agree that the description of God in II Samuel 22:9-11 is clearly a case of poetic license and not a literal description.

Q: "Could you please tell me if it is wrong to read the Apocrypha?"

**Robert R.,
Coleman, Wisconsin**

A: The Greek term *apocrypha* originally meant "hidden" or "mysterious." Later it came to mean "spurious" or "heretical" and hence was applied to writings that were regarded as questionable in terms of inspiration or canonicity. The term is now generally used to refer to those books not included in the Jewish and Protestant Old Testament which are, however, included in the Roman Catholic canon of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament Apocrypha consists of 14 or 15 books (seven of which have been included in the Roman Catholic Old Testament), mostly composed in the period from about 200 B.C. to A.D. 100. For unknown reasons, some of these

books came to be included in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament known as the Septuagint, the work of Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria, Egypt. (This translation was evidently spread over the last two or three centuries B.C.)

The New Testament teaching clearly seems to be that the Jews were given the custody of the Old Testament Scripture. Romans 3:2 states: "The Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God" (see also Acts 7:37-38; Matt. 23:1-3; I Peter 1:12). Regardless of when the final decisions were made, the books later known as the Apocrypha were never included in the official Jewish canon of the Old Testament. This situation is reflected in the statement of the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, who wrote: "For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, as the Greeks have, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine" (*Against Apion*, book I, section 8). From Josephus' enumeration it is hard to see how the seven apocryphal works could have been regarded by the Jews as divinely inspired in the first century.

Later, in the second to the fourth centuries A.D., it appears that some of the early fathers of the Catholic Church regarded certain Apocryphal books as canonical. Others, however, did not. For example, Jerome, who translated the Scriptures into Latin circa A.D. 400 (the Latin Vulgate), did not regard the Apocrypha as inspired: "Jerome explicitly stated that the Old Testament Apocrypha might be read for edification, but not for confirming the authority of church dogmas" (*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Apocrypha").

However, later Catholic leaders such as Augustine accepted certain Apocryphal books as Scripture. During the Reformation, Protestant Old Testament scholars rejected

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

these books as uncanonical and accepted only the Jewish Old Testament canon. In response to this, the (Catholic) Council of Trent in 1546 declared them canonical and inspired. The situation has remained basically the same until the present day.

According to the New Testament, Christians should accept as *canonical* Old Testament Scripture only those books which have been officially accepted by the Jews. Those Apocryphal books generally included in the Catholic Old Testament would not, therefore, qualify as canonical Scripture. However, this does not mean that a Christian should not read them! These books do contain valuable historical data of the intertestamental period as well as interesting and informative writings by Jewish religious thinkers of that day. It would not be wrong at all to read them for educational, informative purposes; in fact, it would be good for Christians to be aware of their contents since they illustrate aspects of Jewish history and religious thought just preceding and during the time of Jesus.

In addition to these, there are a number of early Christian writings sometimes referred to as "New Testament Apocrypha." These consist of a great number of books of all kinds — gospels, acts, letters, apocalyptic literature, etc. Nearly all of these works are *spurious embellishments* of the contents of New Testament books. "That any of them preserve authentic traditions of words or doings of their heroes — notably Jesus, the apostles, the Virgin, and other characters in the canonical New Testament books — is most unlikely" (*ibid.*). None of these books can be seriously regarded as having a claim to New Testament canonicity. The New Testament canon has been practically undisputed for the last thousand years.

For more information on this subject, write for our free reprint article "Do We Have the Complete Bible?"

Q: "Should a Christian read

science-fiction literature? Or any type of fictional literature, for that matter?"

**Gary H.,
Orrville, Ohio**

A: What one chooses to read is largely a matter of personal taste. Unless such literature causes a person to break God's law (like pornographic or hate-oriented material might), there is nothing wrong with reading many different types of literary works — both fiction and non-fiction. If one approaches such books solidly grounded in God's Word and His law, there is much that can be learned and gained from reading various fiction works. For example, the apostle Paul was well versed in the secular poetry and literature of his day, and quoted this material in his discussion with unbelievers and in his epistles (see Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12).

Of course, there are some really poor-quality books (both fiction and nonfiction) that would be a waste of time to read. Also, some books can produce emotionally objectionable effects such as depression. But whether one reads a book or not is basically a matter of personal judgment and preference.

Well-written science-fiction material can be informative, educational, entertaining, and very intellectually stimulating to read.

Q: "A friend and I had a discussion on the subject of making jokes about sex. He says 'jesting about sex is out. I don't see any harm in this. Obviously, filthy jokes are no good, but aren't there harmless jokes about sex?'"

**J.A.,
Beckley, West Virginia**

A: The verse on which your friend based his opinion is found in Ephesians 5. Here the apostle Paul is instructing the Ephesian church to be "imitators of God" and "walk in love." Verse 4 reads: "Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor lewdity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving." In the

original Greek the word translated "filthiness" is *aischrotes*, meaning "ugliness or wickedness." "Silly talk" was translated from the word *morologia* meaning "silly or foolish talk or conversation"; "lewdity" from *eutrapelia* which came to have the connotation of "coarse jesting" or "buffoonery" (Arndt-Gingrich *Lexicon of New Testament Greek*).

Obviously, wickedness is something in which we should not participate. Also foolish talk, coarse jesting and buffoonery are something Christians would want to avoid.

But there is a place for a sense of humor and a joyful appreciation of wit in the Christian personality. The apostle Paul himself made a pun which he recorded in his letter to Philemon. Verses 10 and 11 contain a play on the word "useful" and the name of the slave Onesimus, which in the Greek meant "useful." In most of our present English translations the relationship of these Greek words is not evident.

Sex of and by itself is *not* obscene. It is a normal body function and is perfectly wholesome and good within the God-defined limits of marriage (Gen. 1:28, 31; Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 7). There are some jokes about the subject of sex that are *not* "evil" or "obscene!" Each individual Christian should be able to discern which jokes are funny and inoffensive, and which are coarse and vulgar to him *and others*, and to act accordingly.

But don't offend your friend by telling him even harmless jokes on the subject *if* he has made it clear to you that "jesting about sex is out" with him. Each one of us has a special obligation *not* to offend our neighbors in joking about some of these more sensitive subjects. Ethnic jokes are in a similar category. The apostle Paul wisely advised us not to "put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in [our] brother's way" (Rom. 14:13, KJV).

For a more complete biblical perspective on the subject of sex, write for our free booklet *Is Sex Sin?* □

ROMANS 8:30

Romans 8:30 — a definitive scripture of profound implications! In a single passage, the apostle Paul sums up the entire Christian experience from predestination to glorification. Each key word in this important passage is worthy of amplification. And that is exactly what this series of articles is designed to do. Four authors have collaborated to provide you with four important descriptions of these basic steps in a Christian's spiritual development: predestination, calling, justification, and, finally, glorification. We hope you will find these specially prepared articles valuable and enlightening.

"...WHOM HE DID PREDESTINATE"

In the long centuries of church history, perhaps few other subjects have been debated over such an extended period of time as predestination.

The word "predestinate" is found in only two passages in the Authorized Version: Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:5, 11. Each time the underlying Greek word is *proorizo*. The word does not appear to be used before the time of Paul. Thus, he may even have coined it himself. Another way of translating it might be "ordain" or "decide upon beforehand."

Each context in which the word occurs — Romans 8 and Ephesians 1 — contains a powerful and moving discourse on the Christian goal. *It is God's purpose that Christians become very children of God.*

With such an awesome backdrop, no wonder predestination has been so fiercely debated!

But is it true, as some Christians have believed, that God has already determined the good and the evil, the saved and the lost, the sheep and the goats? Is Christian life only a stage on which a prearranged farce is played out according to parts chosen at random? Or a pup-

pet show with auto-controlled mannequins oblivious to true freedom of choice?

The God Who Acts. God's physical creation is only a part of the great historical drama. According to this magnificent script, Christ "was chosen before the founding of the world even though not revealed until the end of time" (1 Peter 1:20, translations are the author's throughout). Even the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was in this plan since he was "the lamb slain from the time of the earth's foundation" (Rev. 13:8).

The whole of the Bible is the gradual unfolding of this great prearranged plan. God worked with different individuals through the long millennia of time: Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and others. But much of God's working was tied up with physical promises to physical descendants. The nation of Israel became the focus of God's concern, to obey and live or disobey and die. It was never the former for more than a short period of time.

There are many statements throughout the Old Testament — especially in the prophetic and wis-

dom writings — which take the most profound spiritual insight to appreciate. We are not surprised to find that few did appreciate them. On the whole, the prophets were scorned, ridiculed, ignored and rejected. The end result was corruption, conquest, captivity.

Yet this was not the end of the plan. It was only another scene in one of the many acts. The curtain went down; it rose again to the Judaea of the post-exilic period. God had not forsaken the earth, but the great prophets no longer spoke to the chosen people. It was into this world that the leading actor came, though not as yet Jesus Christ Superstar.

Jesus' sojourn on earth was as the humble carpenter from Nazareth who ended his physical life on a Roman instrument of execution. Yet it soon became apparent that this was not the end. First His disciples and later their followers saw that Jesus' death and resurrection only foreshadowed the final resolution of the divine plot.

The Christian Goal. At first the New Testament Church thought that Jesus would soon return as the conquering Christ and bring down

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the final curtain. As time went on, they began to see that much more was yet to come. But the writings of the early Church tell us of episodes yet to follow, even in *our* future.

The final denouement is described in a number of passages. But few summarize better than one in Acts and one in Paul's writings: "So even the expectation of the creation longingly awaits the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19). The very inanimate universe is, as it were, earnestly desiring the time when puny mortal man — and, yes, even the most humble, the very lowest, the Christian — becomes God's own divine son. Then will come the "time of restoring everything to perfection" as God had already promised long before (Acts 3:21).

This is God's great plan. It has not changed. The script has not been altered. The scenes yet to come cannot be rewritten. The basic outcome was decided long ago.

Yet some things have been assumed about God's plan which have no basis in the stage directions of the original author. It is at this very point that the analogy needs to be changed lest it give the wrong impression. Christians are not robots who unerringly act according to a present pattern and speak only the words already recorded for them. Neither are they dumb figures on a chessboard to be manipulated unprotesting by the divine power.

Free Choice. Although God's basic plan is fixed, the part of the individual — your part and my part — has not been determined. To ancient Israel God said: "I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have put life and death, blessing and cursing, before you. May you choose life so that you and your descendants will live!" (Deut. 30:19.)

The choice which God gave to physical Israel now becomes the

eternal choice of the spiritual Israelite. Granted, God has to make the first initiative just as he did with Israel: "No one is able to come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44). The New Testament makes it clear that God is not "drawing" everyone at this time.

Those whom God calls have a tremendous reward in store for them, as described in such passages as Romans 8 and Ephesians 1. It is by the power of God's Spirit that they are able to live a Christian life pleasing to Him (I John 3:22-24). Our salvation is ultimately due to His grace, not our own good deeds (Eph. 2:8-9).

Yet a Christian life is not a passive one. It should show good works as the fruit of God's Spirit (Eph. 2:10; Matt. 16:27; I Tim. 4:14). It must not be assumed that these good works are automatic for the Christian. On the contrary, he must exert himself and put forth his own effort to use the power God gives. Even Timothy had to be exhorted to use the special spiritual gift given to him (I Tim. 4:13-16). Further, it is possible for a Christian, even after receiving the Holy Spirit and experiencing God's calling, to fall away and reject God's offer (Heb. 6:1-8).

Consistent with the choice which each Christian has is the fact that God does not know what each of us will eventually choose. God chose Abraham. Yet He tested him because only then did He *really* "know" of Abraham's unswerving character (Gen. 22:12). Some of those God chose to use repaid the offer, such as Jacob. Others went along for a time but eventually made the decision to reject God's grace. Saul is a sad example of how a good start does not guarantee a strong finish.

In each case God *did not know* what they would do. They had free choice, and free choice rules out

specific foreknowledge. Free choice means that one can choose wrongly. But there is no responsibility without risk, and there is no eternal life without the risk of eternal death.

Freedom Within God's Plan. As a means of understanding freedom of choice yet within certain limits, one can think of an officer on a ship. The officer was given his post as a free gift; he did not earn it. Yet along with the post came the ability to fulfill it. Once the ship gets under way, there is no way he can change its destination. Its goal is fixed and it steams inexorably toward it.

Yet the officer has a great deal of freedom. He can work hard and carry out his duties well. If he does, he knows a great reward awaits him at the end of the voyage. Yet the duties are not easy: long watches, frequent storms, grueling physical labor. He can slack off and make it easier on himself, though he knows his commendation at the end will be less. He could stop work altogether. He could even actively oppose the rest of the crew.

These are all choices he has. He has incentive to do well, and a counter incentive to take it easy. There is no way he can keep the ship from reaching its ultimate destination. But within the limits of the ship and the time of the voyage, his opportunity of choice is very great. And only he can make the choices — no one will make them for him.

The Christian finds himself in a very similar role. He did not ask God to call him. But God did call him according to His plan — because He already intended to call a certain number even before the world began. Those that He does call, He "foreknew" in a sense even though it is not implied that specific knowledge of specific persons was involved. (The word, *proginosko* in Greek, can refer to general expectations, even of human beings, as in Acts 26:5. It does not by any

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means say that God caused specific spermatozoa to impregnate specific ova to produce specific individuals all down through history.)

Once God calls a person, He gives that person His Holy Spirit upon the individual's repentance and baptism. This already requires certain decisions. At every turn in his Christian life, he must make decisions. He has the help of the Holy Spirit, but he also has the power to reject that help. He even has the power to give up God's calling and

salvation completely. All the time he also has the pulls of his physical nature, as Paul so vividly describes in Romans 7 and the first part of Romans 8.

Thus, there is indeed a type of predestination. God's basic plan includes the calling of certain individuals throughout the ages from the time of Jesus. But that by no means removes free choice or the power of the individual to act within the limits of God's plan. No one is predestined to be lost, even though some will not be called until later. (Write for our free article "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?") Yet

when one does have his chance for salvation, it is not automatic. He has all the help he needs; he does not have to use it, though. Yet God is always willing to work with him so long as he is willing to work with God.

Therefore, never forget: "Beloved, we are God's children now even though it has not been revealed what we will be like [in the resurrection]. For we know that whenever Christ is revealed, we will be just like him and see him just as he is" (1 John 3:2). What greater calling can possibly be imagined!

— Lester L. Grabbe

"...THEM HE ALSO CALLED"

The days and months following the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, were exciting and momentous times for the fledgling Church of God. Each day God was adding more and more believers to the body of Christ (Acts 2:47). Thousands were coming into the Church.

The Holy Spirit was at work in the lives of many — often in ways little suspected by those involved!

Ethiopian Eunuch. The case of the Ethiopian eunuch is such an example: "But an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is a desert road. And he rose and went. And behold, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister [servant] of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot'" (Acts 8:26-29).

Philip had been one of the original deacons (Acts 6:1-6). He had been ordained to minister to the physical needs of the Church of that day. But God had even greater service in mind for this Hellenistic Jew. Philip was led to do the work

of an evangelist and later became known as such (Acts 21:8).

God, through the Holy Spirit, and sometimes through angels, led Philip to preach the gospel in Samaria and in many other parts of Israel. This is how he came into contact with the Ethiopian eunuch.

The eunuch was a trusted servant of the queen-mother of the Ethiopian king ("Candace" was a dynastic title given to the queen mother). He may have been a Jew, or he could have been a God-fearing Gentile. The former is unlikely, however, since there was a prohibition against allowing eunuchs into the spiritual community of Israel based upon Deuteronomy 23:1.

In any case, he was a devout man who feared God and studied his Bible. As the chariot lurched down the dusty desert road, the eunuch, in his zeal, strained to read a copy of the book of Isaiah. His eyes lighted upon the passage found in chapter 53, verse 7. As he read the words in the Greek version (the wording here follows this version — the Septuagint — rather than the Hebrew), he pondered their meaning.

At that point, God inspired Philip to join the chariot. Overhearing the eunuch reading the words of Isaiah

aloud, Philip inquired if the man understood their meaning.

The queen's treasurer replied: "How can I, unless some one guides me?"

The eunuch recognized the need for scriptural explanation.

Philip then explained that the passage concerned Christ who was the Messiah. Proceeding from that point, he began to expound the gospel to the eunuch. As Philip continued to talk, the Holy Spirit worked to bring about conviction and conversion in the Ethiopian.

Philip's explanation must have included the matter of baptism, for when they arrived at a stream the eunuch exclaimed: "See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?" (Acts 8:36.)

Philip knew that God was calling the eunuch to His Kingdom. That is why the Holy Spirit had worked in such a dramatic way to bring about the circumstances whereby the two men met. Immediately they halted the chariot and went down into the water. Philip immersed the eunuch under the swirling waters of the stream and the two of them joyfully returned to the shore.

The Ethiopian eunuch had answered the call of God!

How God Works Today. God does

not always work so dramatically today to call those he seeks to attain to salvation. Often God's calling is quite subtle. A man in a barber shop picks up a stray copy of *The Plain Truth* or *The Good News*. A friend casually mentions some point of spiritual truth. Curiosity arouses the mind of one who is studying some passage of Scripture. His inquiries lead him inexorably to the truth of God. (If you have had an interesting experience in "stumbling" across the truth, we'd be happy to hear from you! Drop us a line.)

Some have been called by a random twirling of the radio dial. They just "happened" to chance upon *The World Tomorrow* broadcast. Somehow the words and the tone of the speaker rang true. The listener was transfixed. "There is something *different* about this man," he exclaims. One thing leads to another and the person writes for literature. He simply can't get enough. He wants more and more booklets, reprint articles and periodicals. The Bible begins to open up to him as the glorious plan of salvation unfolds before his eyes. "This is it!" he determines. "This is *the Church of God!*"

Like the Ethiopian eunuch, the man asks: "What is to prevent my being baptized?"

"Join" the Church? Those who are led through these various paths to truth and to conversion are being *called* of God. They are being called to have a part in the preaching of the gospel in this life and to an incredible, mind-boggling eternity in the Kingdom of God.

And this calling is not of men.

It is not something you can choose for yourself.

Jesus said: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44).

It is God who adds to the Church daily "such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47, KJV). God takes the initiative. He acts first. John said: "We love [God], because he *first* loved us" (I John 4:19).

God *draws* those He is calling like a magnet draws iron filings. He draws them through circumstances. He exposes them to truth little by

little. He reveals understanding. As truth is unveiled, conviction deepens. At some point in the process, the potential Christian becomes convinced of the need to *act* upon what he is learning. "I simply can't continue to sit on the fence," he determines. "I've got to do something about what I've been learning. God will hold me accountable for what I now know."

Religious Hobbyists. Some, of course, treat their calling lightly. They do not take it seriously. They merely dabble in religion and may be labeled "religious hobbyists." To such, religion is much like stamp collecting. They compare, they evaluate, they trade, but, somehow, they never determine which one

God draws those He is calling (John 6:44) like a magnet draws iron filings. He draws them through circumstances. He exposes them to truth little by little. He reveals understanding.

they are going to keep *forever!*

There is only one true religion. There is only one faith (Eph. 4:4-6). Once you have found it you had better hang on to it. You had better "make your calling and election *sure!*" (II Peter 1:10, KJV.)

You have a God-given "right" to become a full-fledged member of the family of God. Yet God will not force you to enter His divine family. You are a free moral agent — not an automaton. You have choices to make. You must arrive at your own decisions.

But no decision is more crucial than that of *whether* you will answer the call of God!

We believe that this Work, being done by the Worldwide Church of God, represents the work of Jesus Christ on this earth today. We make

no apologies for that. We are convinced.

Not that we are perfect. We are not. We make no claims to perfection. We, too, are learning and growing as we are led by the Spirit of God. But we believe that God and His truth can be found in this Work.

Many of you are seeing things you have never seen before — right in the pages of your own Bibles. Many of those things "ring true." They make sense.

As you learn, study, pray and grow in grace and in knowledge, the fact of God's calling becomes more apparent. Conviction will set in. Your conscience, your reason and heart will demand that you act upon your heavenly calling.

As you come to understand the truth of God, it will set you free from the doubts, errors and conflicts of the past. You will *know* your ultimate destiny. You will have hope!

"See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children *now*; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears *we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:1-2).

What a magnificent hope! To be *just like* Christ! To live forever in the eternal Kingdom of the living God! This is the hope of your calling and of mine.

Can we be anything but grateful to God, from the very depths of our beings, that He would grant us such a reward? "But we are *bound* to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, *through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth*. To this *he called you through our gospel*, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:13-14).

We are called to obtain the glory of Christ! We are set apart (sanctified) by the Holy Spirit for this very purpose. We are convicted of the truth of the gospel. In short, we have been *called* by God!

Respond to Your Calling. Those

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who have been called have a responsibility to that high calling. You and I must *respond* to the God who made us and seeks to bring us into his glorious, everlasting Kingdom. It is our duty "to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12).

Those who have been called to the Kingdom cannot continue to live as they have lived. Now they must experience a *change of direction*. Their lives must become oriented to God and to the fulfillment of His purposes instead of to self-indulgence and self-will.

Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

To repent means to change! It

means to do an "about-face" and go the opposite way. Paul expressed it this way to the Romans: "Do not be conformed to this world but *be transformed* by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove [put to the test] what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2).

When you are called of God, it is time to put away the fleshly, carnal mind and seek to acquire the mind of Christ. Paul said: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5, KJV).

The mind of Christ is given by the indwelling and working of the Holy Spirit, which follows repentance and baptism. Those who have received the Spirit of God begin to bear its fruits: "... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." (Gal. 5:22).

Those who bear such fruit walk worthy of their high calling in Christ!

Ministers Available. Those of us in the Worldwide Church of God sincerely want *you* to join us in answering God's call. We want you to share with us in this great Work.

The Church maintains local congregations headed by ordained, qualified ministers all over the world. These ministers are willing to visit you as time permits and counsel with you about the Word of God and your own personal goals in life. They will put no "pressure" on you to join anything. Only God can put you into His Church. They are merely there to serve you and to answer your questions.

If you wish to have one of our (your!) ministers contact you, please give us a call on the nearest toll-free number listed in the box on page 29. Or you can write to the address of our office nearest you. We'll be more than happy to put you in contact with a representative!

— Brian Knowles

"...THEM HE ALSO JUSTIFIED"

And whom he called, them he also justified..." (Rom. 8:30). Justification is an important and major New Testament doctrine. It is especially propounded (and used in almost a unique way) by the apostle Paul; more is said about justification in his epistles than in any other part of the New Testament.

But "justification" is a difficult concept for many to understand. Part of the problem is that the English word "justify" conjures up a meaning in people's minds different from that intended in the original Greek of the New Testament. Also, over the centuries, the English word has taken on a different meaning in English than it originally had in the 1600's when the King James translation was made. In the *World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary*, the word "justify" has as its first meaning, "to show to be just or right; give a good reason for."

Probably most people today associate the word "justify" with this primary definition: i.e., giving a reason for an action. However, listed also as definitions are "to clear of blame or guilt; vindicate," as well as to "show a satisfactory reason or excuse for something done."

Just and Right. What makes the term "justification" so difficult to understand, as it is used in the Bible, is that we read it all by itself and do not connect it with another very important biblical term, which in English seems to be a quite different concept. That word is "righteous" or "righteousness."

In actuality, in the Greek of the New Testament, the word "just" is *dikaion*; its verb is "justify" or *dikaioo*. Related to these is the word "righteousness," *dikaosune*. A "just" man is a man who is "right" or "upright."

To "glorify" something is to

"make it glorious." To "rectify" something is to "make it right." To "dignify" something is "to give it dignity" or "make it have dignity." In the same way, to "justify" is to make "just" or "righteous."

This is the usage of the New Testament term. After a brief introduction, Paul begins the book of Romans by talking about the revelation of the "righteousness of God." In verses 16 and 17 of the first chapter, he states that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for in it is revealed the "righteousness [*dikaosune*] of God... from faith to faith: as it is written, The just [*dikaioi*] shall live by faith."

All Are Unjust. After this, Paul launches into a long explanation of the "unrighteousness" that is on the earth. This will bring God's wrath from heaven against men who hold to unrighteousness and suppress the truth (verse 18). As

we read in verses 21-32, these men are primarily Gentiles.

In chapter 2 of Romans, Paul tells his readers (primarily Jews) that they are also without excuse. Though they would like to judge the Gentiles, are they any better? In verse 11, he says "There is no respect of persons with God!" — whether Jew or Gentile, whether with law or without it, every man is going to be judged according to what he has done, on the basis of whether his deeds have been right or wrong. He then proceeds to condemn those who have the law and pay lip service to it, but have not kept it (verses 17-23). Finally, Paul ends in chapter 3 by showing that *everyone* has sinned, regardless of whether Jew or Gentile. "What then? are we [Jews] better than they [Gentiles]? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one" (verses 9-10).

Further, Paul goes on to emphasize that what the law says it says to everyone who is under it, because God considers all the world to be guilty (verse 19). The law brings the knowledge of sin (verse 20), but since no one has kept the law perfectly, no one can be justified (made just or righteous in God's sight) by the law.

God's Righteousness. But now God is revealing the righteousness (*dikaiousune*) of God apart from the law or "without the law," although "the law and the prophets" (a phrase signifying the first two major sections of the Old Testament) bear witness to it (verse 21). Paul says it is "the righteousness [*dikaiousune*] of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (verses 22-23).

Paul asserts that everyone has sinned, that the world — both Jews and Gentiles — is in utter hopelessness either with or without the law. Those without the law have sinned without it, and those with it have sinned with it: thus everyone is guilty before God. There is only one way to be made right in God's sight:

that is through faith in the Son whom He has revealed.

Notice verse 24: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "Being justified" means to be made righteous — the passive form of the verb *dikaioo*, which is *dikaiousthai*. This is defined in the Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich *Lexicon of the New Testament* as "to be acquitted, to be pronounced and treated as righteous, and thereby become *dikaios*, receive the divine gift of *dikaiousune* [righteousness]" (p. 196). Here Paul tells us that we are made righteous by the grace of God which is freely given. We stand in the *dikaiousune* of God, that is, the righteousness of God. And we do it by

"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8, 9).

the grace of God through the redemption that we have in Christ Jesus.

In verses 25 and 26, Paul goes on to explain that this redemption comes to us because God sent Christ forth as "a propitiation through faith in his blood . . . to declare, I say, at this time his [God's] righteousness [*dikaiousune*]: that he [God] might be just [*dikaion*], and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." God declares His own righteousness by passing over our sins.

Remember that the words "righteousness," "just," and "justifier" are all from the same basic family of words in the Greek language. God is declaring His own righteousness apart from the law in order that God may be just (righteous Himself) and

that He might be the One who makes righteous (justifies) the person who believes in Jesus.

This excludes boasting because this righteousness comes from faith (verse 27). "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified [made righteous] by faith without [apart from] the deeds of the law" (verse 28).

Case in Point: Abraham. This truly is an amazing doctrine! How can God make sinners righteous? How can He, while we are enemies, love us so much that Christ would die for us that we might be reconciled to God and therefore be "justified" by His blood? (Rom. 5:6-10.) Paul answers from the law itself: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31).

Here the "law" means the first five books of the Old Testament. Paul uses the law — the book of Genesis in this case — to explain how God counted for righteousness the faith that Abraham had.

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3; see Gen. 15:6). The word "counted" is the same Greek word translated "imputed" in verses 6, 11, 22-24 and "reckoned" in verse 10.

This "imputing" of righteousness was reckoned as a result of Abraham's faith and belief in God's word. "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him [Abraham]; but for us also, *to whom it shall be imputed* [the righteousness of God will be imputed to us like it was to Abraham], *if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification* [*diakaiosis*]" (verses 22-25).

What is God doing when He justifies us through faith? When we allow God's faith and His word to enter us, when we have a change of heart which comes from repentance, and we express that change of heart through living faith and belief in God, that faith is attributed to us as righteousness. God counts it as righteousness. We may not *actually* be righteous in the sense we have done all the things that a righteous person should do as de-

ROMANS 8:30

manded by the law. But because of this intrinsic change of heart there is in a Christian righteousness (an attitude of faith and wanting to fulfill the law) which is apart from the law, which God sees and counts as more important. This is the righteousness which comes through faith.

Blessings of Justification. Paul goes on to explain the wonderful benefits of being justified. These are outlined for us in Romans, chapter 5.

The apostle writes: "Therefore being justified [made righteous in His sight] by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 1). Notice that the first benefit is the fact that we are now at peace with God. When we have a change of mind (repentance) and come to believe in God and in His Son that He raised from the dead, we are at peace. Prior to that, we were enemies and were fighting Him. And God's wrath was against us because we were sinners. But now we have put all that away. We have buried the hatchet, so to speak, and through this justification we now have peace — peace that comes through Jesus Christ. And it is through Him that we have

"access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (verse 2).

Through Jesus Christ we have access to God. We are not worthy to stand before God on our own; it is God's grace that allows us to stand.

Also, we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (verse 2). So we have three immediate benefits: 1) peace with God, 2) access by faith to God's grace, and 3) the hope of God's glory.

But there are other benefits that come from this justification as well as this grace, for Paul says that a Christian who has been justified can even meet tribulation head on with exaltation. For the Christian knows *why* he suffers. He knows the purpose for patience and hope and experience, and he knows above all that God loves Him throughout this tribulation (verses 3, 4).

You Can Be Sure. But how do we know that God loves us when we have trials and problems?

Because we have this hope, this meaning and purpose to life, we are told that this hope will never let us down or disappoint us. We will never have to be ashamed, for God's love is shed abroad in our hearts by the gift of the Holy Spirit. We know God loves us by the Holy Spirit which we have in us (verse 5).

But how can we be sure? Paul explains that although a man might scarcely, or rarely, die for a really good, kind and righteous man, Christ died for us while we were enemies, while we were yet sinners, that we might be justified by His blood (verses 7-9).

Now if God loved us enough while we were His enemies to permit Jesus to die for us, how much more does He love us now that we have accepted His Son and we are His friends? "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more [now that we're His friends and children], being reconciled, we *shall be saved by his life*" (verse 10).

To be justified is to stand in God's sight clean of your guilty past because you have believed in the only begotten Son of God and have had a change of mind which changes your life. The first step in living this new life is to recognize that God imputes to you righteousness for the faith which has come out of this change of heart. This faith is in His Son.

"And whom he called [by His Word which brought you to His Son Jesus Christ], them he also justified" — made righteous — made to stand clean and just in His sight.

— David L. Antion

"...THEM HE ALSO GLORIFIED"

After being justified, the apostle Paul says Christians are to be "glorified" (Rom. 8:30).

How? What does it mean, *really*? Is this just some spiritual-sounding "fluff-fluff" about a nebulous existence in a never-never land with nothing to do?

The true answer is perhaps the most exciting realization in the annals of human history! When you understand you will see that this is not an exaggeration or a hyperbole. Because this basic truth is tremendous, thrilling and genuinely heart-

warming. It involves the very *purpose* for which you and I were created and given the breath of life.

Why We Were Created. King David, the shepherd of Israel, had spent thousands of hours out under the stars at night — keeping his lonely vigil, quietly contemplating the vastness of the heavens above and his own smallness as a mere speck in the infinite universe. Later, the great God, the Creator of that universe, inspired David to write: "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that

thou dost care for him? Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor. Thou hast *given him dominion* over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet . . ." (Ps. 8:4-6).

Man was made to have dominion, or *rule*, over ALL things — ultimately. For man was created "in the image" of God. And God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and *let them have dominion* over the fish of the sea . . ." (Gen. 1:26).

You and I were created to exercise rule or *government* over all things which God has created. But, as the apostle explains in the book of Hebrews: "Now in putting *everything* in subjection to him, he left NOTHING outside his control" (Heb. 2:8). Eventually, then, man has to indirectly control the entire universe!

Can we begin to grasp our ultimate purpose?

Continuing in Hebrews: "As it is, we do not *yet* see everything in subjection to him. But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor . . ." (verses 8, 9). Here we see that God's own Son was *also* made "lower than the angels" — yet is now *glorified!* For it was fitting that God, "in bringing *many sons* to GLORY, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering" (verse 10).

Ah, there it is!

Christ, after suffering through many trials and tests, was *glorified*. Now, He is bringing many other sons to "glory" also. This is, in fact, the "mystery" of God's eternal purpose which is being revealed through the true gospel (Eph. 1:9). For God also is reproducing *after His own kind* (Gen. 1:24). He has made mankind in His image ultimately to be *born* of Him as members of the God family, the Kingdom of God. It is God's master plan for the entire human race, "a *plan* for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:10).

Need for Divine Character. Yes, we are to be added as members of the very family of God, to become *like Christ*: ". . . That he might be the first-born among *many brethren*" (Rom. 8:29).

After true Christians have repented and have *totally surrendered* their wills to God, He gives them of His Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). His Spirit is His very nature, a bit of the *divine character* implanted within His begotten children by a miracle (II Peter 1:4). This is why Jesus could say to His followers: "You, therefore, must be *perfect*, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

The true Christian is to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). He or she is to become ever more like God — through the *power* of the Holy Spirit which imparts God's character.

Through constant Bible study and prayer — daily, personal, heartfelt prayer — the Christian focuses his mind and his very being on becoming like Christ. As King David did, he will meditate on God's law through the day — seeking how to apply the Ten Commandments in all their spiritual richness more and more perfectly in his life.

This true Christian will seek to glorify God in his mind, body, personality and character — his *entire*

We will share the same magnificent, dazzling glory that Christ shares with the Father, for "we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2).

being. He will yearn for the resurrection when there is to be no more sickness or pain, no more suffering or death — and no more temptation and mental anguish. Daily, he will beseech God: "Thy kingdom come."

This man, being still human, will make mistakes. But he will never do so willingly, and will constantly repent and learn from his mistakes. He will imitate Jesus, who "offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death Although he was a Son, he *learned obedience* through what he suffered; and *being made perfect* he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him . . ." (Heb. 5:7-9).

What a picture!

God is fashioning and molding future sons — *testing* them through trials and chastenings. *Preparing* them to become members of the very God family after they have proved that they will yield to His way and literally, *willingly*, build His very character into their lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Glory We Will Share. Notice the apostle Peter's inspired description of the process of glorification: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his *eternal GLORY* by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:10, KJV). Yes, *after* we have suffered through many tests of our total willingness to surrender to our Maker, He gives us a glorified spirit body.

Is it worth it?

Listen! "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory* which shall be revealed *in us*" (Rom. 8:18, KJV). The very glory of God is not merely to be revealed to us, but is to be manifested *in us*. For we will become like the resurrected Jesus Christ, "who will change our lowly body to be *like his GLORIOUS* body . . ." (Phil. 3:21).

How does Jesus Christ look now?

As we have just seen, Jesus' appearance now is the prototype of what our appearance will be in the resurrection. Notice this description of Christ's appearance now: "His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters; in his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword, and *his face was like the sun shining in full strength*" (Rev. 1:14-16).

Can you imagine sharing *that* kind of glory with your Creator?

In a world of sickness, suffering, mental anguish, death and even the threat of cosmocide, this hope should be tremendously inspiring to everyone who comes to understanding. The absolute promise of eternal life as part of the very family.

ROMANS 8:30

of God in a total atmosphere of love, joy, peace and prosperity is almost too much for some to grasp. But God *is* reproducing Himself! He and the Son *do* desire — in outgoing concern — to share their plans and opportunities on the God-level of existence with millions of others.

For true love *is* outgoing concern. And God *is* love.

God is reproducing after *His* kind, not after the chicken-kind, or the cow-kind, or some other kind. As my sons look *like me*, so all true overcomers will look like God in the resurrection. Can we grasp that? True Christians who overcome and qualify in this life will become God as *God is God*. There is no greater glory than to look and to be like God Himself!

Jesus Prayed for This. In His final prayer just before He was taken to be tried and executed, Jesus asked: "Father, *glorify thou me* in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made" (John 17:5). What greater glory is there than to have the *same* glory He had shared with God from eternity? Yet Christ and the Father do not have an exclusivist urge to "hang on" to their glory as something apart from others. They want to *share it* with every human being made in their image!

So, in His prayer, Jesus prayed directly for *us* who now believe because of the words recorded by the apostles in the Bible. Including *our generation*, He asked "that they may all be *one*; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The *glory* which thou hast given me *I have given to them*, that they may be one *even as we are one*" (John 17:21-22).

God *will* hear that prayer from His firstborn Son!

Those of every generation who truly walk with God are to be literally BORN of Him, *as was Jesus*, at the resurrection (Col. 1:18). We will share the same magnificent, dazzling glory that He shares with the

Father, for "we know that when he appears *we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is. And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself *as he is pure*" (1 John 3:2-3).

As it says, if we have this kind of hope, there is a real *reason* to be pure, to overcome, to *build character*. It is not a matter of forsaking our fun because God is a crotchety old figure in the sky who looks askance at pleasure. The reality is that God wants us to fully appreciate life in all its variety, but *only* in the way that does not involve damaging or hurting ourselves or others. Then, all of us can appreciate the total joys of loving, laughing, giving, sharing for *all eternity* — with no hangovers and no delayed penalties.

Filled with God's Fullness. Our Creator has good wisdom and good reason for wanting us to *build character* — to become pure as He is pure.

He allows us to be tried and tested now. He fashions and molds us like a master potter. Slowly but surely, through constant prayer and personal Bible study, through personal effort and overcoming all the temptations that surround us — *with His divine help* — we grow unto "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Then, and only then, will we be truly ready for the "last trump" to sound — heralding the second coming of Jesus Christ, and heralding also our time to be *born* into the very family of God and share the glory of that family, the God Kingdom, throughout all eternity.

Then, truly, we "may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, *that you may be filled with all the fulness of God*" (Eph. 3:18-19).

These words have profound *meaning*.

This is our hope and our calling. This is the very purpose for which we were created. This is the glory for which true and understanding Christians are willing to serve and to suffer now.

— Roderick C. Meredith

WORLD NEED JESUS?

(Continued from page 5)

and loyalty *depends on seeing the planet from afar as a whole* and upon a sense of destiny that extends concern forward to future generations. It is, in other words, *a call for spiritual or religious underpinning to guide and sustain the new focus of political energy.*"

Utopia can never be brought about by leaders without an overview or a view from afar. In fact, man has never been able to marshal forth the proper mental attitude and broad capacity to bring about a human millennium here on earth.

And more importantly, utopia can never happen without leaders possessing a *strong spiritual capacity*. This is perhaps the greatest lack in our modern world.

If a Presidential candidate ever comes along with the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the mercy of Christ, then I guarantee you that I will vote for him. I would campaign for such a candidate with every fiber of my being. I would use all of the media tools at my disposal to get such a man elected.

Trouble is, Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the only Being who has ever been flesh and blood who possesses *all of these qualities!* No other man ever has!

Jesus Christ has the overview! He literally sees this planet from afar. He is the Visitor from Outer Space who knows just what this earth needs! This is why this world desperately needs Jesus Christ of Nazareth! Only He can bring it *the Kingdom of God!* Did you know He offers you a chance for citizenship *in advance?* □

RECOMMENDED READING

How does one become a citizen of the Kingdom of God? What is the Kingdom of God? Is it the Church? Where will it be? How will it be set up? What will Christians do in the Kingdom of God? These basic questions are answered in the booklet *Just What Do You Mean . . . Kingdom of God?* To obtain your free copy simply request it by title (see inside front cover for the address of our office nearest you).

THE BIBLE IN A CHANGING WORLD

THE STARS AND SCRIPTURE

Recent opinion polls show that some 35 million Americans believe that astrology has some value in helping one lead a successful life. But what does the Bible say about astrology?

As with other superstitions of man, there may be some element of truth amidst the mass of astrological mythology. Recent scientific evidence suggests that certain astronomical relationships can affect living organisms on earth — e.g., some biological rhythms of plants and animals are regulated by phases of the moon, sunspot cycles, etc. Hitherto unknown influences — electromagnetic, gravitational, etc., from beyond the earth may even do the same. But astrology is, to say the least, scientifically unprovable.

Certainly a God who could create both the astral bodies (Gen. 1:1) and all the forms of life found on earth is able to have ordained many not-so-obvious interrelationships hitherto undiscovered by man. "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:4-5).

Furthermore, God did definitely intend that the stars should be studied by man and used for human purposes. Says the book of Genesis: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Gen. 1:14).

But the same God absolutely forbade astrology for the following reason: If a person looks to the stars for guidance — makes himself any form of astrological religion — he worships the created more than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

Dependence upon astrology for spiritual answers to life's problems,

therefore, breaks one of the basic Ten Commandments — that against idolatry: "I am the Lord thy God . . . Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:2-3). For this reason Moses also wrote: "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves . . . lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them . . ." (Deut. 4:15-19).

Violation of this law carried the death penalty in the theocracy of Israel (Deut. 17:2-5). This was — and is — the Word of God. No true believer in the Bible can regulate his or her spiritual life by astrology and remain loyal to the Creator. On the other hand, dependence upon and obedience to God prevents the evil effects of idolatry and produces a more abundant life here and now and eternal life in the future.

As an example for us today (I Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4), biblical history records the apostasy of the ancient House of Israel. Those peoples failed to follow the laws God designed to bring them peace, prosperity and happiness. Instead, ". . . They left all the commandments of the Lord their God . . . and worshipped all the host of heaven" (II Kings 17:16). The House of Judah later fell into this same idolatry. Manasseh, king of Judah, "worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them" (II Kings 21:3).

The prophet Isaiah forecasted the ultimate penalty for stubborn continuance in the practice of astrology — at least in the biblical sense of the term: "Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold . . . they shall not deliver themselves . . ." (Isa. 47:13-14).

We ourselves may not always be able to exactly determine whether or not many who practice some

forms of what is called astrology today actually come under the biblical condemnation. However, it is far safer to simply avoid the practice of such things altogether. For further information on this subject, write for our free booklet about *The Occult Explosion*.

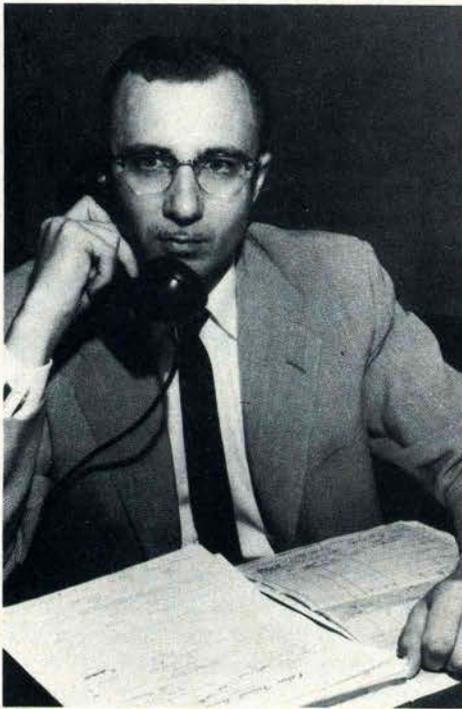
MARRY IN HASTE, REPENT AT LEISURE

Time magazine recently reported that a California state law allowing for confidential marriages was making it possible for more than 20,000 couples yearly to enter into quickie unions without going through a lot of red tape. This law, designed to make it easier for common-law couples to legalize their relationship, not only provides a loophole for people intent on bigamy, but increases the danger of the spread of venereal disease because no blood test or waiting period is required.

The Bible contains some pertinent advice on entering into hasty contracts such as this without due counsel and consideration. Proverbs 11:14 says: "Where there is no guidance, a people falls; but in an *abundance of counselors* there is safety." Proverbs 24:6 repeats this principle: "By wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory." Proverbs 15:22 adds that "Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed."

Marriage especially should not be entered into hastily. Again we read in Proverbs that "It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a contentious woman." Finding out if you are able to spend a lifetime together compatibly takes a good deal of time, and quickie marriages don't make for such careful consideration.

(Further information on this subject may be obtained by writing for the free booklet entitled *Modern Dating*.) □



The Work in Britain

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

by Brian Knowles
with D. Paul Graunke

First impressions have a way of sticking with you. Arriving this spring on the campus of Ambassador College set in the beautiful "green belt" north of London was a meaningful and enlightening experience. Soft, cumulus clouds looked heavy with rain. The greens, browns and soft blues of the rolling English countryside were muted by a moist haze. The campus was all but deserted.

An End and a New Beginning. No

more could one see the bustling activity of hundreds of students from many nations around the globe on the magnificently manicured grounds of Ambassador College, Bricket Wood. The college buildings and grounds are now up for sale.

In many ways it seems a shame to sell such a beautiful and functionally efficient facility. But, in another way, it will prove to be beneficial for the Work in Britain. The Bricket Wood campus has borne much fruit over the years. Hundreds of graduates are now living all around the world helping to support the goals and message of the Worldwide Church of God. In addition, they are making valuable contributions to their local communities.

But now that era is past. It's a new ball game, as they say. It's time for other things — better things. Once the campus is sold, money will be freed up to plow back into the main effort of preaching the gospel to the British people.

Planting a Mustard Seed. From the beginning, the British Work has continually faced hard times and

roadblocks, only to surmount each obstacle and spring forward stronger and more determined. The door opened to preaching the gospel to Britain at 4:15 p.m. on January 1, 1953, when *The World Tomorrow* broadcast was beamed across the channel by Radio Luxembourg. To handle the mail response, Richard D. Armstrong, late elder son of Herbert W. Armstrong, came to London in February. He stayed until September, but returned the following June with Roderick C. Meredith to handle the mounting backlog of mail from the Radio Luxembourg broadcasts.

About 75-100 pieces of mail were coming in a month, a small beginning. "Remember, we never had local radio stations carrying the program like in the United States or Canada," said Mr. Meredith when asked about those early years. "The program came across the channel through fog and static. It was very hard to get it in the environs of London. Dick [Armstrong] and I used to drive out on Westminster Bridge by Parliament to hear the broadcast at 11:30 p.m. We couldn't get it in our flat, but could



GN Photos

on the bridge. Big Ben would toll midnight just as the program ended."

In September 1954, Herbert W. Armstrong conducted a series of evangelistic campaigns in Belfast, Glasgow, Manchester and London. On September 17, the first person in Britain was baptized into the Church.

Many of us, if we had been on the scene in those formative years, might have become discouraged. Oh, there was fruit being borne all right as a result of the broadcast and campaigns. But it was a long way from being a bumper harvest! It was not until six months after Herbert W. Armstrong's campaigns that a permanent office in London was established by Richard Armstrong and George Meeker. And it was not until June 1956 that the first regular church services were held in Britain when 16 people met in London. It later slumped to just three!

These were humble beginnings. But Mr. Armstrong was not one to be easily discouraged. As he wrote several years later in a review of the growth in Britain: "The things of God, when built through human in-

struments, always start the *smallest*, but like the proverbial grain of mustard seed, they continue growing until they become the largest. God does not stop growth."

Roderick C. Meredith returned to Britain in the fall of 1956 to replace Richard Armstrong, who was transferred to Pasadena. Mr. Meredith promptly set out to stimulate new growth in the minute "mustard seedling."

In January 1957, he began a lecture series, speaking five nights a week at the Royal Empire Society Committee Rooms in London. Four weeks of intensive preaching and counseling were rewarded with a small but dedicated church numbering 30 people.

In April, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was observed in London by about 40 persons. With the London Church now well established, Mr. Meredith returned to his administrative and teaching duties in the United States. He was replaced by Gerald Waterhouse, who remained until June 1958.

In March 1958, Radio Luxembourg offered Mr. Armstrong two nights a week. The hour was late

LEFT TO RIGHT: Richard D. Armstrong, late elder son of Herbert W. Armstrong; Raymond F. McNair, Deputy Chancellor of Bricket Wood campus in a 1968 picture; pressman working in the Watford complex; one of the "pirate" ships that broadcast program in 1965-67.

(11:30 p.m.) but the program still bore fruit. (*The World Tomorrow* broadcast remained on Radio Luxembourg until June 1966.) Church membership continued to grow. By the end of 1958 the circulation of *The Plain Truth* in Great Britain had climbed to around 12,000 and the fledgling church had increased to 75 members.

Campus and Press. The following year proved to be a watershed. Mr. Armstrong wanted to locate another campus of Ambassador College in Britain. Raymond McNair, who had succeeded Mr. Waterhouse, began an intensive search that eventually led to the purchase of the 33-room mansion and 8 acres of Hanstead Estate at Bricket Wood, Hertfordshire. Workmen began to convert the estate into the second campus



of Ambassador College. In November of that year, the first *Reader's Digest* advertisement appeared in Britain, yielding 5,136 responses. In the first five months of 1960, over 21,000 responses to *Reader's Digest* ads poured in.

Mr. Meredith returned in the summer of 1960 for month-long lectures (five nights a week again) in Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester. As a result of his efforts, three churches of about 40 persons each were raised up. Meanwhile, Raymond McNair and Robin Jones made a tour of other parts of Britain and Ireland, baptizing 45 people. And to cap off a year of hard work and good growth, Ambassador College, Bricket Wood, opened its doors on October 14.

That year also saw the beginning of the British printing plant — again in a very inauspicious manner. It was born of an idea by the late Dr. Benjamin Rea, then dean of faculty at Bricket Wood. To serve the Spanish Work, Dr. Rea asked if Spanish reprint articles and correspondence courses could be printed on the campus. The answer was yes, and so the press was born

with one man, Leon Walker, and one primitive machine. In succeeding months the press expanded, acquiring new equipment and personnel. By 1963 campus press facilities were bursting at the seams, so the operation was moved to new industrial premises in nearby Watford. Once men and equipment were settled in, the first British edition of *The Plain Truth* rolled off our own presses.

In those days, the floor space at Watford seemed vast. But in less than a decade, continual growth reduced the wide expanses of the Watford complex to cramped quarters. In 1972, the operation moved once again to a new press complex at Radlett. Within a year, the press was gobbling up 1,000 miles of paper to produce English, Dutch, French, and German editions of *The Plain Truth*. Over 750,000 copies were printed a month at an average speed of 25,000 signatures per hour.

Doors Open and Close. Through the first half of the 60's the Work grew steadily. By early 1965, *Plain Truth* circulation in England had grown to 48,000. One church con-

gregation had become nine, and the Church had increased to about 900 members. On January 5, 1965, a new door opened — Radio London, a "pirate" ship station broadcasting offshore Britain, began airing *The World Tomorrow* once a week. By March, it was carrying the program seven nights a week. By the end of the year, the program was being aired over four pirate stations.

In a little over 2½ years of broadcasting on these stations, *The World Tomorrow* program netted some 63,000 first-time responses. This door to preaching the gospel remained open until August 1967, when the British government took effective action to ban the "pirate ship" stations.

But another door was soon to open. The gospel had to be proclaimed! In July 1968, a new means of reaching the British people began through advertisements in several large circulation publications, including *Drive*, the *Sunday Express*, the *Sunday Times* and, for the second time, *Reader's Digest*. In four weeks, over 25,000 responses came in.



Phil Stevens — GN

The growth stimulated by the advertisements brought the total number of church congregations to a dozen and attendance to over 1700 by the middle of 1971. But by that time the effort to get the gospel to Great Britain had reached an impasse. As successful as the ads were, they began to suffer from the law of diminishing returns. So, Ronald Dart, then director of the International Division, came up with an idea. Why not place *The Plain Truth* on newsstands? Why not present the gospel directly for people to pick up and take home?

After weeks of negotiations with newsstand dealers, a "mustard seed" of 399 magazines was planted on select newsstands for a trial distribution in July. The results were encouraging — some 7.5 percent of those who picked up the magazine wrote in for a one-year subscription. The next month an 8.8 percent response came in from 1100 magazines. Reassured by these percentages — higher than from any other media we had used in Great Britain, Mr. Armstrong gave the green light to expand the program.

Newsstand distribution eventually spread to Eire, France, and Scandinavia. By the end of 1973, over 100,000 magazines were being distributed on British newsstands each month. Another 16,700 were being sent to librarians. Total newsstand distribution, including European outlets, was 227,000.

New Challenges and Programs.

In 1974 the Work began a period of transition and change. With inflation outstripping increases in income, it became impractical to operate the college in Britain. On June 7, Ambassador College, Bricket Wood, graduated its last class of 61 students. Other austerities were necessary to make the British Work less dependent on the generous subsidy from the United States that had been supplied for two decades. But the front line effort — the proclaiming of the gospel — did not cease! In wake of saturation newsstand coverage, a series of lectures began all over Britain. These continued into 1975, creating greater interest and involvement in the Work by British readers.

Today, the British Work is headed by Frank Brown, a native

LEFT TO RIGHT: Newsstand outlet for *Plain Truth* in England; English editorial staff of Philip Stevens, John Dunn and Peter Butler; Y.O.U. soccer match at Bricket Wood; Francis Bergin, business manager; Frank Brown, director of British Work.

Englishman with some nine years of broad administrative experience at Headquarters in Pasadena.

After nearly a quarter of a century of help from their cousins across the Atlantic, the British Work is approaching self-sufficiency. The British brethren will eventually finance entirely the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God to their own people.

Hundreds of thousands of pounds will be poured into aggressive newsstand programs, direct mail efforts, *Good News* circulation drives and an expanded booklet program. The Correspondence Course will be sent out to additional thousands of interested students. And the result will be as it has always been — new growth and development. □

BLESSED ARE THE BEGGARS

by D. Paul Graunke

Christ presented many important truths to His followers in the form of paradoxes. "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 10:39); "If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35) are two examples. In both, Christ juxtaposes opposite terms in a relationship that at first glance may seem absurd. But further thought reveals an important principle that becomes more intelligible and valid when it is *practiced* as well as pondered.

Such is the case with the first beatitude given in the so-called sermon on the mount. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3).

Christ cannot mean that we should be impoverished of the Holy Spirit. A Christian is by definition someone who has the Holy Spirit: "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom. 8:9). We are exhorted to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18) — not destitute of it.

Similar to Meek? Several translations render "poor in spirit" as "humble" or "humble-minded." This creates the impression that "poor in spirit" in verse 3 and "meek" in verse 5 are closely related, if not synonymous. The two terms do share a common connotation of humility. But if Christ was trying to convey only one concept, then verse 5 is somewhat redundant. As it is, the New Testament Greek uses two different words in verses 3 and 5, for Christ was emphasizing two distinct but very complementary attitudes of mind.

The Greek word for "meek" in verse 5 is *praus*. It means "gentle," "pleasant," "unassuming." It connotes a person who calmly accepts the vicissitudes and injustices of life, who perhaps is oppressed and bowed down (see the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VI, pp. 645-649).

The Greek word for "poor" in verse 3 is *ptochos*. In earlier Greek usage the word meant "beggar." In New Testament times the word had expanded to mean any poor person. Yet it is often used in reference to literal beggars, such as Lazarus in Luke 16. If we take the word in Matthew 5:3 in this sense, it suggests a number of significant concepts. The following exposition follows from this interpretation even though it is not the only possible connotation in the context.

In our Western culture, where we continually wage wars on poverty and promote various kinds of welfare, the word "beggar" sometimes conjures up the image of the social misfit or work-shy. But this is not what Christ intended to convey to His hearers. No, He was speaking in a culture where the disparity between rich and poor was very great, where beggars were numerous and in genuine need. He used the word *ptochos* metaphorically to mean "happy are those who in spiritual matters are obviously and consciously in need, who realize their utter dependence on God's grace and beneficence." Thus, *The New English Bible* renders verse 3: "How blest are those who know their need of God. . . ."

Nothing Apart From Christ. To be a beggar in spirit is to be keenly aware of your dependency upon

God, to realize that your relationship with God is not a convenience or a luxury but a life-or-death *necessity*. It is to realize that you don't have within your own resources the power to do God's will, but must be dependent upon God supplying His Spirit. "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me," said Christ. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, *for apart from me you can do nothing*" (John 15:4-5).

The opposite of a beggar is, of course, a rich man. Some expositors see in the first beatitude an implicit warning to those who enjoy an adequate or abundant supply of worldly success and possessions. The Bible has much to say in other places about the pitfalls of coveting or possessing great physical wealth. Not that riches, per se, are evil. But they can create a false sense of security and self-sufficiency. They can lead to pride and pretensions of superiority. Riches can distract people from realizing how utterly dependent they are on God. It can destroy the beggar-in-spirit attitude that Christ proclaimed to be beneficial.

"In God We Trust" is the motto found on American money. But too often people trust more in what money can do than in what God can do. They desire financial gain over godliness. That is why the apostle Paul wrote: "There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing [i.e., the basic essen-

tials to sustain life], with these we shall be content. But those who *desire* to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For *the love of money* is the [a] root of all evils; it is through this *craving* that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs" (1 Tim. 6:6-10).

Proud in Spirit. But there is another warning implicit in the first beatitude. It is directed to those who desire godliness, but have missed the mark in terms of the approach to religion that God approves. Such people *think* they are endowed with "spiritual riches," but are not. They find security and pride in their own religious knowledge and religious deeds, and have lost sight of their need and dependence upon God. In a purely spiritual sense, the opposite of the "beggar in spirit" is the "proud in spirit" — the self-righteous.

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14 contrasts the "beggar-in-spirit" and "proud-in-spirit" attitudes.

"He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get." But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a

sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.'"

What the Pharisee said about himself was strictly true. But God looks at the inner heart — not just the external deed. And what he saw in the Pharisee was anything but humility and a desperate feeling of dependence upon God. The man obviously had great faith in his *own* righteousness, as if he could "earn" salvation by merit.

He believed he had fulfilled the law by going through the motions of observing specific parts of it. But in actuality he missed completely the whole point of God's law, falling woefully short of what God really wants: "... And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness [margin: steadfast love], and to walk *humbly* with your God?" (Micah 6:8.)

The publican, on the other hand, knew exactly where he stood with God; he realized his desperate plight and threw himself upon God's mercy. His prayer got results. He went home justified — that is, forgiven of his sins and reckoned righteous. He was found acceptable by God — but the Pharisee, for all his great religious deeds, *was not!*

Christ Our Only Gain. The moral of the parable is not that we must always be wretched sinners in desperate need of forgiveness. "Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!" exclaimed the apostle Paul (Rom. 6:1-2). He then proceeded to describe the new life in the Holy Spirit we are to live. A key factor in that life is a

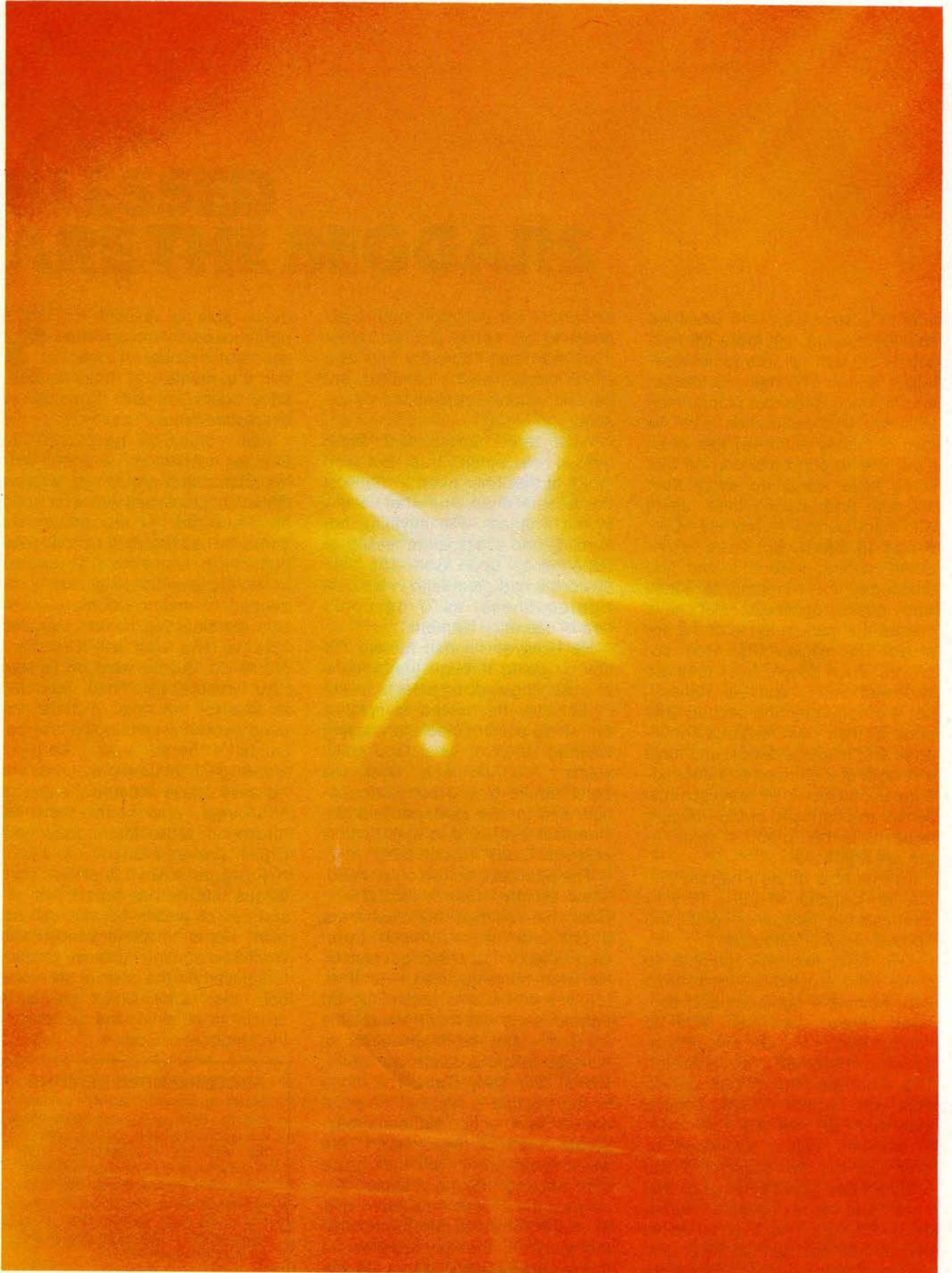
deep, abiding respect for God's righteousness and an absence of self-righteousness. It operates under the premise of total dependence upon God with no delusions of spiritual self-sufficiency.

Paul continually gave credit to God for everything. He prized only his relationship with Christ wherein Christ accomplished whatever good he, Paul, did. "If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more," he stated in Philippians 3:4. He then proceeded to enumerate his credentials for boasting, which included "as to the law a Pharisee" (verse 5). But he went on to say: "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ" (verses 7-8).

A beggar in spirit is always conscious that he has no spiritual resources or wealth he can call his own. He is totally dependent on God. This continuing sense of spiritual poverty is the basis of his salvation, the factor Christ claims is crucial to obtaining the blessing of the Kingdom of God. □

RECOMMENDED READING

Prefacing Jesus' "sermon on the mount" (Matt. 5-7), the beatitudes are among the heart, root and core of the teachings of Christianity. The Worldwide Church of God publishes a full-color booklet expounding and explaining each one. Write for our free publication entitled *What Is a Real Christian?* Mailing addresses are on the inside front cover.



Four by Five, Inc.

"Ye are gods," said your Savior. An anthropomorphic idea? Spiritual salt and pepper? A theological euphemism? Or did He really mean it — literally? "Thou art God!" What a mind-boggling possibility! Is God literally our Father? Are we literally His sons? What is the mystery of God?

Blasphe-my!" shouted the righteously indignant and generally enraged religious bigots of Jesus' day when He said, "I am the Son of God" (John 10:36). "For a good work we stone thee not; but because thou, being a man, makest thyself God," they explained smugly in their theological strait-jacket as they stooped to pick up rocks (verse 33).

But for some reason they paused to give Jesus time to pose a puzzling question from the heart of their own Scriptures: "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (Verses 34-36.)

Having posed a question they couldn't answer made them even more angry, and they tried again to follow through with their stoning, but Jesus escaped again, *that* time.

The Son of God. Lying at the very heart of Christian belief is the absolute necessity of recognizing what those of Jesus' day labeled "blasphemy!" Every good Christian believes as the most cardinal point of doctrine that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was and is the Son of God — but how many good Christians do you know who *also* believe *equally* in the words of that *same* Jesus of Nazareth when He said, praying to His Father in heaven just before His crucifixion: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that *they may be one, as we are . . .* 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 . . .*" (John 17:11, 20-21). How many do you know who believe *that*?

Pick Your Purpose. When you get right down to it, are you really satisfied with *any* religion's explanation of the meaning of life, the key purpose of our creation, the ultimate goal to be attained by any religious exercise? Let's briefly examine the major options offered.

Billions have believed that the ultimate goal of mankind is to achieve Nirvana: "the state of perfect blessedness achieved by the absorption of the soul into the supreme spirit." That is: an unconscious continued

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

by David Jon Hill

existence as it were like a cell in the body of the great One. It may have served billions, and driven them to extremes in their worship to achieve that Nirvana — but I must admit that it does *not* satisfy me personally — what good is it to live forever and yet not even realize that you are?

A nearly equal number have believed that the afterlife of the faithful, forever, will consist of living at ease in an oasis called the Garden of Allah, where, lounging in a hammock strung between two date palms, the men (because it is a rather male-dominant religion) will be fed delicacies by a bevy of voluptuous women (an eternal harem?) and have a little hashish as needed to keep them in a proper stupor (because alcohol is not allowed) so the boredom will not

bother them. In the name of the god of peace, true believers have converted others by the sword to believe and seek this reward.

This goal may be pleasing to many — it does have some few specific rewards offered — but I must admit that it does not satisfy me personally.

Two Camps. Christianity is separated into two basic camps. The more universal belief is that the purpose of life is to achieve the beatific vision. After wading through six pages of fine print in the encyclopedia of that religion attempting to define just *what* the beatific vision really is, you come to their disappointing conclusion that *no one really knows!*

The best you can get is that it is a state of blessedness in which you, living forever, will be able to gaze upon God, seeing Him better than you see Him now, but not as He really is, because He is too perfect to be seen even by the spiritually successful in their lower state of perfection, beyond which there is no hope of attainment. Vague as it may seem, it is avidly pursued by hundreds of millions as the goal of their existence. Perhaps the threat of the only other alternative — suffering unimaginable torments in hellfire forever — spurs them on.

Again I must admit this theory does not satisfy me. To think that the Creator who has fashioned this fabulously complex, intricate, specific and real universe would propose such a vague purpose for His highest creation — man — does not compute with me.

At the Pearly Gates? The other Christian belief — developed in protest and shattered into hundreds of splinters, each having a slightly different variant of doctrine regarding the afterlife — is basically this: when you die you go to heaven as a spirit being of some sort and live eternally in bliss (somewhat similar to the beatific vision — but more details are added). You check in at the Pearly Gates with Peter, get your wings, your harp, your cloud and your golden slippers with which to walk the golden streets — and then you *do virtually nothing*, but you do it forever. And you never hunger or thirst or cry or suffer. Again, the

only prod to achieve this eternal goal seems to be the awful alternative: suffering forever in hell.

It's a little more specific, but again I must admit that for me it is not personally satisfying, not something I would like to do forever.

There are many more beliefs with goals equally vague — these cover the majority of mankind, with the exception of that segment of people who believe we are born and die like dogs with no purpose whatsoever: this doesn't satisfy me either and I refuse to even address it.

Empty Phrases. Why do we use all the words and slogans so common to Christianity in vain? Do we believe that neither Jesus nor the Father in heaven really *mean* what they say? Do we believe that the gospel message so plainly stated by Jesus is all allegory, all symbolism, all parable, all fable, all myth? Do we say by our beliefs and actions that the communists are right after all when they say that belief in a supernatural being, religion, is *indeed* "the opiate of the people"?

Do we believe that plain, clear words in the Bible describing the purpose of life, the plan of God, the gospel defined are empty phrases holding no practical meaning? That they are to be taken with a grain of salt as mere religious vocabulary having no *real* meaning or substance? That words used in the revelation of God to mankind have a meaning apart from reality? That the Bible says one thing, but *means* another?

Why the Mystery? There is a very definite reason for all this confusion. The vagueness of the ultimate reward of the true believer of any religion, and particularly the Christian religion, is specifically predicted and explained in your Bible. It is nobody's fault; no one is to blame. All who cling to these faiths can easily be given the benefit of the doubt and truly be said to be deeply sincere — the blood of believers, saints and martyrs of all these religions bespeaks eloquently the indelible fact of sincerity.

But there is a reason why *no* faith gives the clear purpose of life, the reason for creation, the plan of God, the ultimate goal God set for

mankind. The reason is that God locked up that truth and gives the key to unlock it only to those of His choosing at the time of His choosing.

Many a sermon has been preached on how impossible it is for us to understand just what it is that God has in store for us. The text most often used is this scripture: "But as it is written, 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" (1. Cor. 2:9). This conveniently explains away the vagueness. This allows all manner of speculation, of scenario developing for possibilities, of doctrinal discrepancies among believers. This brings comfort to the confused, helps in swallowing the impractical visions advanced regarding God's purpose.

It also fulfills the scripture itself. Nobody has *seen* the perfect will of God. Since nobody has *seen* it, obviously nobody has *heard* of it. No man has *thought up* or *conceived* the plan God has in mind, try though they may have. Intelligence, wisdom, dedication — all in absolute sincerity — have been applied in vain. Still no one has come up with the plan.

Next Text. The text for the day seems an inadequate tool — let's cheat just a little and read the *next text* also! Maybe we'll see, hear and begin to conceive what others have not: "*But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*" (verse 10). This plainly says that despite the fact that man alone (in his own imagination and with all the effort he has expended at it) has not been able to come up with the plan God has in mind for those who love Him, that He, by His Spirit, reveals it!

In short, God's purpose for mankind *can* be known, but only by His Spirit. "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the *revelation* of the mystery, which *was kept secret* since the world began, *but now is made manifest*, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the ever-

lasting God, *made known* to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever" (Rom. 16:25-27).

Thankfully, if God grants His spiritual key, we can turn to the Scriptures and unlock the unknown truth — without prejudice, without prior concepts clouding the plain truth, just having God's Spirit help us understand the clean, clear truth, believing the words mean just what they say and have no meaning in antithesis.

Let's try.

Some say you can interpret the Bible to mean anything you want it to say. And the multitude of beliefs would seem to confirm this statement. But let's cheat again and not interpret anything. Let's pretend the words God uses have straightforward, clear meanings and are not clouded with double, hidden or allegorical meanings. When God says "son" he means *son*, not just someone of younger years or less experience or intelligence. When God says "Father" He means one who has produced sons, not father image, or father idea. When He says "brethren" He means sons of the same father and mother, not just people who hold the same general belief. Keep it clean.

Let's try.

The Bible Says . . . you are made in the image of God!

Why?

None of the other millions of creatures God created are made in His image. God doesn't look like a snake, a bull, a bird or a fish — He looks just like a human being, or, better, human beings look just like God. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:26-27). God is not a male chauvinist: He plainly declares that both male and female are in *His image*.

We look like Him, but we are not *exactly* like Him. An image shows design and shape, but is not made of the same substance as the original. We are physical flesh, temporary, mortal — God is Spirit, Eternal, Immortal.

David knew that God had created us in His likeness, yet he said: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15). To be like God as God is God — to be *totally* in the likeness of God — requires a change in our composition from physical to spiritual. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood *cannot* inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but *we shall all be changed*, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump [the *when* David referred to that he would finally be satisfied]: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and *we shall be changed*" (I Cor. 15:50-52).

Job was familiar with this necessary change: "If a man die, shall he live again? [The basic question every religiously interested person asks about a possible afterlife.] All the days of my appointed time will I wait, *till my change come*. Thou shalt call [the last trump], and I will answer thee: thou *will* have a desire to the work of thine hands . . . For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though *after* my skin worms destroy this body [corruption], yet *apart from* [more proper rendering of the Hebrew] my flesh shall I see God" (Job 14:14-15; 19:25-26).

What is changed is flesh, attitude, character — *not personality*, the integral, personal, conscious *you*. Job makes this clear: "Whom [God] I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another . . ." (19:27).

There are other clues. But the mystery of the gospel is not clearly explained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Jesus came for that purpose (among others) as He said: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). And again: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . ." (John 6:44).

The direct Father/Son relationship is not plainly revealed in the Old Testament. The *term* "father" is used, but plainly in a metaphor (see Numbers 11:12 and Isaiah 9:6).

Power To Become Sons. Jesus is the Son of God — no good Christian denies that. Jesus is unique: He is the only son of a human being who had God the Father in heaven as His literal father who caused His impregnation in the womb of a woman (Mary), i.e., the *only* Son of God.

But He is also called the "first-born." Now, granted, one can be *firstborn* even though there are never any others born after — *but* there is a clear implication that others *will* come, being born *after* the *first* born. And there are specific scriptures which demand this understanding.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).

Jesus became the *firstborn* Son of God by the resurrection from the dead: "And declared to be the Son of God . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). Even Jesus was physical, flesh and blood. That had to change. And that overwhelming change came about at His resurrection. But the beautiful thing about the resurrection of our Savior, the Captain of our Salvation, our Redeemer who lives, is that it becomes possible through the power of that resurrection for *you and me* to also be changed, to also become a Son of God, to be God as God is God; to be God as Jesus is now God!

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among *many* brethren" (Rom. 8:29). Sure sounds like there are to be "many"

more sons born into God's family! "For it became him, for whom are all things [the Father], and by whom are all things, in bringing *many* sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation [Jesus Christ] perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). This also makes it plain there are *others* yet to become glorified sons! "For *both* he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are all of one*: for which cause he [Jesus] is not ashamed to call them *brethren*" (verse 11). "And he [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church: who is the *beginning*, the *firstborn* from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence . . . Christ in *you*, the hope of [your] glory"! (Col. 1:18, 27.)

In fact, the Bible plainly states that the purpose of Christ's coming was to make it possible for us to become God's sons. "But as many as received him, to them gave he *power to become the sons of God*, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

Not Yet Born. This is all very difficult, because the Bible calls physical human beings "sons of God." Yet the Bible also plainly says flesh and blood can't inherit, be sons. Humans must be born again. Not just an experience of the mind, but an actual birth, a complete change to a new being as different from our present state as a mature plant is from the seed which is planted in the ground (to use an analogy Paul used in I Corinthians 15).

The difficulty is resolved when you realize that the New Testament was written in Greek. The Greek language uses one word, *gennao*, to refer to conception, the begotten stage of fetus growth and the actual birth. So, from the beginning of the new life, conception, the individual is considered to *be* a son even though he is not yet born. When you as a natural parent are first aware that there is new life in the womb, don't you think of it as your child, even though it is not yet born? And do not *most* of those conceived finally achieve birth?

It's the same with God.

Jesus said "Thou *art* God" because that is *your* awesome potential whether you know it yet or not. Besides, God's way of referring to something He plans to do is to refer to it as if it were already done, or, "callesth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). So I take this license in faith.

God begins the birth of His sons very small, just as we *begin* the birth of our own children. "For he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the *earnest* of the Spirit" (II Cor. 5:5).

Now an "earnest" is a very small down payment carrying with it a promise of more to come, until the full commitment is reached.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). There are no capital letters in Greek by the way, it is only the translators of the King James Version who decided to capitalize "Son" when it referred to Jesus and *not* to capitalize "son" when it referred to us. A most humble and sincere reverence, but perhaps it leads us to misunderstanding.

Not Metaphors or Niceties. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (verse 15). Again the word "adoption" can just as well be translated "sonship" or even "Sonship," but, according to the very scriptures they were translating, it never did enter into their minds that we could be the actual Sons of God — they only took the words to be metaphors or niceties, condescension from God as it were. But this scripture clearly declares that *we* are to call God, Abba, which is Hebrew for Father, and then amplifies it by adding Father. An actual Father, not a pretend Father.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we *are the children of God*" (verse 16). Not born yet, of course. Just beginning. Not changed yet from physical to spiritual totally, but the process begun.

Fact is nobody has been changed yet except Jesus of Nazareth. All the holy men of old are dead and in their graves, waiting as

Job stated he would wait. Some dust (as Peter said of David after the resurrection of Christ — Acts 2), some ashes, some possibly partly physically preserved (Joseph, for example, whose body was mummified after the Egyptian style) — all waiting for a "better resurrection . . . God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:35, 40). The general assembly of the church of the first-born, the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12:23) . . . waiting.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God . . . Beloved, now *are* we the sons of God, and [would you believe, "but"] it doth not yet appear what we shall be [we're not born yet, just begotten]; but we *know* that, *when* he shall appear, *we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*" (I John 3:1-2).

What is Jesus going to be like when He comes back to this earth? A metaphoric, allegorical, mythical "Son of God" — or a *real, spiritual, all-powerful, actual Son of God*? You guessed it; the second answer is right. Now if He is like that, and we are going to be *like He is* — what do you suppose *we* will be like???

God As God Is God! God is not playing games. God is not perpetrating some cosmic joke. God is not sponsoring an eternal rest home in the sky for retired Christians.

God is reproducing Himself!

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises [beyond the scope of human imagination]: that by these *ye might be partakers of the divine nature . . .*" (II Peter 1:4). "I [Jesus says] will make them [people, human beings] to come and *worship before thy feet . . .*"! (Rev. 3:9.) Now, you know, and I know, that *only God is worthy of worship!*

There is only one inescapable conclusion.

If we are to be changed from physical to spiritual — and not just ordinary spiritual, but by and into *the Spirit of God*; if we are taught by Jesus to pray "Our Father in

heaven . . ."; if He really is our (not just His) Father; if we are (to be) His sons; if we share the Father's and the Son's *glory*; if we inherit *eternal* life; if we partake of the *divine* nature; if we are to be *just like Jesus now is*; if we have the complete mind of Christ; if we are *worthy of worship* — WE MUST BE GOD!

Blasphemy?

No!

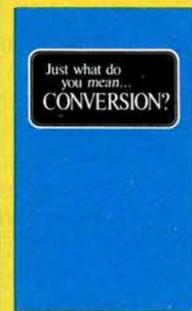
That is the unbelievable truth of your Bible.

One short article is totally insufficient to explain God's total plan, but this is the core of it. If you are interested in pursuing the subject, I'm sure there are ministers of the Worldwide Church of God near you who would be more than happy to help you understand more. (See box on the next page.)

But, believe it or not, you are a potential omnipotent power. You were born to become God! This is the mystery of God! □

Just what do you mean — CONVERSION?

According to the dictionary, religious conversion is "the experience of a definite and decisive adoption of religion." That's fine as far as it goes, but the Bible clearly shows that real Christian conversion is also an ongoing process. In the booklet *Just What Do You Mean — Conversion?* Herbert Armstrong gives the reader valuable insights into the subject and points out the danger of a false conversion. For your



free copy of this helpful, instructive booklet, write to *The Good News* office nearest you. (See inside front cover for the addresses.)

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE

Many hundreds have written asking if we have representatives in their areas to counsel with them personally and to answer their questions.

The answer is yes, we do.

The Worldwide Church of God stations personal representatives (most are ordained ministers) in the United States and British Commonwealth and many other areas of the world. These men will visit you, if invited, directly in your own home.

So if you have spiritual matters to discuss or questions to ask about biblical topics such as repentance, baptism, etc., please feel free to write us and request a private appointment. Worldwide mailing addresses are as follows:

- United States: P.O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91123 (Or simply dial this toll-free number in the continental U.S.: 1-800-423-4444. Readers in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5225 collect.)
- United Kingdom, Europe, India, and Africa: P.O. Box 111, St. Albans, Herts., England
- Australia: G.P.O. Box 202, Burleigh Heads, Queensland 4220 (Or dial this number: 075-35-4233 — reverse the charges.)
- Canada: P.O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver, B.C.
- South Africa: P.O. Box 1060, Johannesburg 2000 (Or dial this number: 011-216406.)

Other areas of the world should check the inside front cover (staff box) for the address of our office nearest you.

A Man from Space

Much better than any sci-fi story I ever read as a teenager! The article gave me a greater appreciation for the One who made everything inside and outside of me.

Harlan S.,
Oregon City, Oregon

"When a Man from Space Visited Earth" was an excellent article except where you wrote that Christ died from a spear thrust. The Bible, in both the Gospels that relate to this, says that the Romans broke the legs of the two thieves, but finding Christ already dead pierced Him with the spear. Please tell me if I'm wrong.

Al L.,
Ione, California

This apparent discrepancy is due to part of the original Greek text being left out of the King James Version of the Bible (Matt. 27:49). The omitted verse reads: "And another took a spear and pierced his side, and there came out water and blood." For a more detailed explanation, write for the free reprint article "Did Christ Die of a Broken Heart?"

The Apocalypse Generation

My thanks to Jeff Calkins for his "Open Letter to the Apocalypse Generation." I am also twenty-three years old, and the very things he spoke of had been troubling my mind for quite some time. Mr. Calkins helped me to realize that it is for the good of all mankind that the days of my generation will be cut short, and to resent that is not only selfish but contrary to the will of God.

Paul H.,
Mandan, North Dakota

Coping With Loneliness

Thank you for the April GN article "Coping with Loneliness." As was so competently mentioned in the article, how very often I have found loneliness to be looked on as a symptom rather than a cause, something to make one feel embar-

assed before others, a sign of weak character. To your wise words I'll add a few of mine: a problem needs an answer or solution, not an explanation. Loneliness, especially the "interpersonal" kind, does affect many, and this article strengthens hope (Rev. 21:3-4) that in tomorrow's world it simply won't be there.

Naresh K.,
Calcutta, India

Conscientious Approach

I want to thank you for sending me your magazine and tell you how very much I enjoy every article in it. I would particularly like to compliment you on your very conscientious approach to the subject matter in your articles; for example, being careful to not link the rise in female crime to Women's Lib, taking a reasoning rather than a condemnatory attitude toward drug use, and a balanced, sensible position on the role of corporal punishment in child rearing.

Geoffrey G.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan

GN Has Answers

It seems that every time I need an answer to a problem, here comes *The Good News* magazine and there is my answer. I would like to have the name and telephone number of the nearest minister in our area.

Irene B.,
Lebanon, Indiana

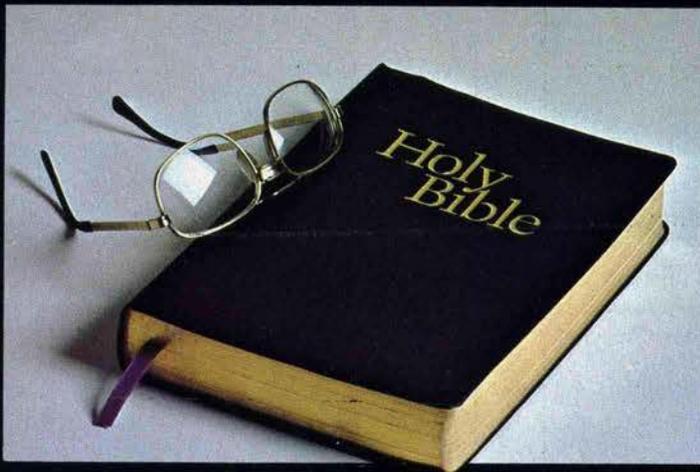
• See the box on this page for the information you need.

Tithing

Thank you for the beautiful booklet on tithing. I don't doubt God's way of tithing since our experiences have proved it is better when you do. There have been times, like this paycheck, when I wondered how I would pay these bills; taxes for real estate have gone out of sight. But my confidence is in God and His way.

Mr. and Mrs. Eric A.,
Evergreen Park, Illinois

Isn't it time you read



the all-time best seller?

Why should you take the time to read a centuries-old book? Glad you asked. To begin with, the Bible gives you the answers to the great issues of life — answers to questions such as What is man? Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? The Bible is a practical book, too. In fact, it's the greatest "success book" ever written, literally filled with principles that can make your life more rewarding in every way.

It's also a book about the future — giving you tomorrow's news today. The Bible is replete with startling prophecies, many of which refer to our present age!

Finally, the Bible is *the* source of knowledge about the true Christian faith. So why not *read* the book and find out what it's all about?

And while you're thinking about it, request your free copy of the booklet entitled "Read the Book." It gives you a helpful outline of key biblical topics and some basic principles to remember when reading the Book of books. To receive your free copy, send your request to The Good News. (See inside front cover for address nearest you.)

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