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GAY

The Good News

A 'GOOD NEWS'
PROGRESS REPORT

WHY IS THE
TRINITY
NOT MENTIONED
IN SCRIPTURE?

WHO WAS JESUS?

PESTILENCE IN
PROPHECY

GN

The Good News

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Scene in Pakistani refugee camp during bitter civil war. Disease epidemics, as a result of malnutrition and lack of hygiene, often follow in the wake of warfare. The article "Pestilence in Prophecy" (page 6) shows mankind has not seen the last of this dreaded scourge.

Ernst Herb — GN

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Why is the word "Trinity" nowhere in the Bible? Look it up for yourself — use any Bible dictionary or exhaustive concordance. The word "Trinity" just isn't there!

But then, neither is the doctrine of "Lent," nor the word "rapture," for that matter.

But why?

Why should it be that some of the major doctrines of a professing Christian world are shockingly absent from the Bible, the Word of God? Don't most religious organizations claim to find their doctrines in the Bible?

Probably you have either heard or sung many times the song called "Holy, Holy, Holy." Millions have. In it, the words "blessed Trinity" appear.

In the songbook.

But not in the Bible!

But then, millions of Americans spend more time opening and closing a songbook in church services than they do a Bible — so it's little wonder the impression gained from habit and tradition sometimes outweighs solid biblical truth.

In the pages of this magazine, we dare to bring out the real truths of the Bible, proving, carefully, by the Word of God, the doctrines presented. We have seen through these past few months the truth about many of the totally pagan doctrines masquerading as "Christian," which have been subtly brought into a professing "Christian" religion.

As shocking as it may seem to

many, the doctrine of the "Trinity" is another of the pagan "mysteries" which is not found in the Bible!

Does a "doctrine" have to be obscure, murky, dark, mysterious, *impossible* to understand in a practical, day-to-day, commonsense manner? Not according to Christ! He promised His followers the *truth*! He plainly said the Father would *reveal* truth to real Christians!

True Christianity consists of a col-

Does religion have to be a "mystery" in order to understand it? No one truly "understands" the so-called "mystery of the Trinity." Scholarly theologians nevertheless insist their followers must accept the doctrine, though admitting it is a mystery, incapable of understanding! But Jesus said: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He said: "Thy word [the Bible] is truth." Can you really understand about God; about the family of God; about who and how many members make up the Godhead? God's Word says you can — and you must. Believe it or not, the Bible nowhere teaches the doctrine of the "Trinity." Here's the proof.

by Garner Ted Armstrong

lection of sane, logical, two-plus-two-equals-four, practical, common-sense doctrines of life and living — laws, principles and precepts that really work when put to the test — concepts that are credible and believable to a person who would approach them just like any other practical, everyday-life circumstance.

The Truth Makes Sense

Most of the really true concepts and doctrines of God's Christianity are *not* "out of sync" with the real world of natural laws involving physics, chemistry and just the way things work in this whole orderly universe. To our finite, limited, unseeing human minds, of course, miracles might be an exception to this general truism.

But the whole panorama of pagan doctrines seems to have this one common denominator: they are *all* *patently illogical*. And the Trinity is no exception! The Trinity is cloaked in a murky maze of mystery. Theologians find it exceedingly difficult to pin this doctrine down and get a firm grip on it. The layman is simply told not to bother his head about it — it is a "mystery," anyway. "The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who would try to understand the mystery fully will lose his mind. But he who would deny the Trinity will lose his soul" (Lindsell & Woodbridge, *A Handbook of Christian Truth*, pp. 51-52).

So accept it *or else*, we are told in rather intimidating language, yet

Part Two

WHY IS THE "TRINITY" NOT MENTIONED IN SCRIPTURE?

there is no use in trying to understand it.

Says *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*: "It is difficult in the second half of the 20th century to offer a clear, objective, and straightforward account of the revelation, doctrinal evolution, and the theological elaboration of the mystery of the Trinity. Trinitarian discussion, Roman Catholic as well as other, presents a somewhat unsteady silhouette" (vol. XIV, p. 295).

A Christian, who is firmly admonished by the apostle Paul to "prove all things" and to "search the scriptures daily," cannot afford to base his biblical understanding (and perhaps even his very salvation) on an "unsteady silhouette." True Bible doctrine can be understood! It makes sane, logical sense when subjected to proofs and tests. Christ said: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

To Whom Did Jesus Pray?

Can we apply a little plain old biblical "horse sense" to this time-honored doctrine of a three-person Godhead? Consider this completely unshakable biblical fact: Jesus Christ of Nazareth — your Savior and my Savior — was conceived not by a human father as all other human beings (excepting Adam and Eve) — but by the Holy Spirit.

A great angelic being appeared to Joseph, Jesus' legal father, in a dream and said: "... Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:20; cf. verse 18). Perhaps the very same angel — in this case the archangel Gabriel (Luke 1:26) — was sent with a similar message to the virgin Mary.

Notice carefully the wording of their conversation. "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (verses 30-31).

Mary's reply was just exactly what you would expect of a woman in that situation. "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest [this is the real biblical definition of the Holy Spirit; it is a force or power] shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God . . . For with God nothing shall be impossible" (verses 34-35, 37).

So if we want to believe the Bible, we are forced to admit that Jesus Christ was conceived through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Yet Jesus calls God His Father — not the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ said to Mary Magdalene in the book of John: "... Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

Can you begin to see how utterly illogical the concept of the Trinity is? If the Holy Spirit were a person, "he" would be Jesus' father — not God the Father. Yet Christ dogmatically stated, as you have just read, that God is His Father.

Consider further. If the Holy Spirit were a person, Jesus Christ prayed to the wrong "father." Since Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit, if the Holy Spirit were a person, Jesus' father would be the Holy Spirit. But throughout the four Gospel accounts, we find Christ praying directly to His Father — God Almighty! Just one example: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee . . . And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God [still talking to the Father], and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:1, 3).

A Simple Lesson in Grammar

About now, somebody is going to ask: "What about the fact that John

uses the personal pronoun 'he' when referring to the Holy Spirit or Comforter in the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of his Gospel?"

In the Greek language, like the Romance languages (Spanish, Italian, French, etc.), every noun has what is called gender; that is, it is either masculine, feminine or neuter.

Even such an inanimate object as a glass — being utterly devoid of any real life — has masculine gender in Spanish. *El vaso* is the Spanish equivalent of the two words "the glass" in English. The "el" prefix and the "o" ending to the word *vaso* gives the word "glass" masculine gender in Spanish. Yet by no stretch of the imagination could a glass be considered a male person in the human sense. That would be utterly ridiculous!

La mesa is the Spanish equivalent of the two English words "the table." The "la" prefix and the "a" ending give the word "table" (*mesa*) feminine gender in Spanish. Yet it would be completely ludicrous to the extreme to consider a table as a human female personality.

Likewise in the Greek language, the gender of a word has nothing whatever to do with whether it is really masculine or feminine in the human sense at all. Gender in languages is really nothing more than a convenient grammatical tool. In the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John, the English pronoun "he" is definitely used in connection with the word "Comforter" — but not for theological or spiritual reasons.

Grammatically, all pronouns in Greek must agree in gender with the word they refer to — or in other words, with the term that the pronoun replaces or takes the place of (the antecedent if you want to get technical). The Greek word *parakletos* ("comforter" in English) has masculine gender; hence the translators' use of the personal pronoun "he." ("It" would have been a far better rendering into the English language.)

In some cases "he" is incorrectly

used in the King James where the original Greek uses the neuter "it." The reason? The translators already believed in the Trinity and allowed themselves to *interpret* rather than translate. For example, in John 14:17 the personal pronouns "he" and "him" should have been rendered "it" (as they are in the original Greek).

In this and other cases, *pneuma* is the Greek word — always grammatically neuter and always properly represented by the pronoun "it." But the King James translators — swayed by the doctrine of the Trinity — generally *mistranslated* pronouns referring to *pneuma* as masculine. Romans 8:16 is a notable exception: "The Spirit *itself* beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

So Trinitarians cannot honestly fall back on a personal pronoun to "prove" that their doctrine is biblical.

I John 5:7-8

But so deliberate has been the deceptive attempt to foist this false doctrine upon the world that a monk copyist in the fourth century A.D. inserted totally and completely spurious words into the Bible in order to "prove" this major doctrine of pagan antiquity.

Turn in your own Bible (King James Version) to I John 5:7-8: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth*, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

But did you know that not one of the italicized words is in any of the accepted New Testament Greek manuscripts? Did you know this spurious section was not found in the text of any Greek manuscripts until *after* the invention of printing? Comparison with many of the more modern translations and simple research will prove my point. Verses 7 and 8 should actually read as follows: "There are three witnesses, the

Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree." This is how the passage is rendered in the Revised Standard Version, perhaps the best overall of all modern Bible translations.

The editors of both liberal and conservative Bible commentaries (ancient and modern) agree as to the very dubious origin of I John 5:7-8 (as it now stands in the King James or Authorized Version). Notice a couple of quotes from two commentaries of a more recent vintage. Says the conservatively oriented *New Bible Commentary Revised*: "... The words are clearly a gloss and are rightly excluded by RSV [Revised Standard Version] even from its margin" (p. 1269). *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, universally recognized as a liberal work, is even more incisive with its comments: "The famous interpolation after 'three witnesses' is not printed even in RSV, and rightly.... No respectable Greek MS [manuscript] contains it. Appearing first in a late 4th century Latin text, it entered the Vulgate and finally the NT [New Testament] of Erasmus [and eventually the King James]" (p. 1038).

The majority of the more recent New Testament translations (including Moffatt, Phillips, Williams, *The Living Bible* [a paraphrase]) do not contain the King James text of I John 5:7-8. Clearly it is a spurious addition that is in no way, manner, shape or form a part of the New Testament Canon. I John 5:7-8 has no credibility, credence or authority and should be considered nonexistent as far as the Bible is concerned.

Matthew 28:19

Another grossly misunderstood text (often cited to "prove" there is indeed a Trinity) is Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Rotherham actually has a much better translation of this verse. "Go you therefore and

disciple all the nations, immersing them *into* [Greek, *eis*] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

To infer that this verse means to imply that all three (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) are persons is just not being honest with the Scriptures. Clearly the first two (God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ) are two separate individual spirit personalities in the Godhead; but that fact does *not* automatically make the Holy Spirit also a person.

Think about it a moment! People give names to many things that are simply not persons. Nearly everything — whether person, place or thing — *has a name!*

But why did Jesus command the apostles to baptize converts into these three names? And why must they be baptized (see Acts 2:38) into these names in order to receive the Holy Spirit? God the Father grants human beings *real repentance* (Rom. 2:4; Acts 11:18; II Tim. 2:25). We become His sons (literally!) — *the sons of God* (bearing His name) — when we receive the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9, 14, 16-17). Is that so hard to understand? Human beings often bear the names of their forebears, i.e., Johnson, Robertson, Jackson, meaning originally the sons of John, Robert and Jack.

"God" is *the family name* in English of the divine Kingdom of spirit beings. The apostle Paul wrote: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom *the whole family in heaven and [on] earth is named*" (Eph. 3:14-15). The Father's name is called "God" in English. Jesus Christ — who was crucified so our past sins may be forgiven — is also called *God* in John 1:1, Hebrews 1:8 and other New Testament texts. The Holy Spirit — which comes forth from the very person of God — is the begettal agent by which we receive the earnest of our salvation (II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:16).

Many religionists do not understand the part that the Father, the

Son and the Holy Spirit each play in the salvation process. The Trinity is the result, in part, of such fundamental misunderstandings.

But here is another one of those "famous" biblical opposites. Instead of teaching the pagan doctrine of the Trinity, Matthew 28:19 really tells us that God is a growing family or Kingdom into which we may enter upon repentance, baptism, the receipt of the Holy Spirit and patient endurance to the end of our natural lives and/or Christ's coming — which ever comes first.

A closed Trinity or triad, or triumvirate of three persons (whatever you want to call it), is as far from God's mind and His plan and purpose for human beings as the east is from the west. The false doctrine of the Trinity can only blind gullible human beings to the transcendent purpose of human life — to be born as literal spirit beings (sons of God) into the great God family!

The Godhead Is Now Dual

God is *dual*! There is God the Father and Christ the Son. In almost all of creation, God made *pairs* of humans, pairs of sexes, pairs in the animal kingdom. A man has two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two hands, two feet, two legs, two arms.

Notice the theme of duality running throughout the Bible. There was the first man Adam, and the second man Adam, who was Christ (I Cor. 15:45-47). There is the Old Covenant and the New Covenant; the Old Testament and the New; the former prophets and the latter prophets; the old Jerusalem and the new heavenly Jerusalem.

God is one, in two persons — *not* three. Jesus said: "I and my Father

[just the two of us] are one" (John 10:30).

Hundreds of years before Christ was born as a human being, the prophet Daniel wrote: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days..." (Dan. 7:13). Daniel then saw, in advance, this "Son of man" given rulership in a kingdom that shall never be destroyed (the Kingdom or family of

Why the Deliberate Deception?

The author of all the religious deception in which this world is steeped is Satan the devil (see Rev. 12:9). Believe it or not, it is he who originally was one part of a great "Trinity." There are only three great *archangels* mentioned in the Bible: Lucifer (who became Satan), Michael and Gabriel. But Lucifer fell (Luke 10:18) — leaving only two who are loyal to God.

But why has the devil palmed off the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity on this unsuspecting world? Because He desperately desires to prevent any further additions to the God family. He wants to deprive humanity of the knowledge that God's family is open-ended — *not* a closed Trinity of three persons.

Further, Satan fully realizes that one of the future responsibilities of real Christians is to *judge angels* (see I Cor. 6:2). The ultimate fate of Satan and his demons may yet be decided by future members of the God family.

Are you actively preparing yourself for such an awesome job? God Almighty has called us to much more than just some inactive eternity of laziness and ease! We are going to have the responsibility of ruling the universe with Christ.

God is *not* a limited Trinity! He is the divine Head of a *growing family* or Kingdom into which we may, through the grace of God, freely enter! The apostle Peter wrote that if you have the fruits of God's Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:5-9), "*an entrance* shall be ministered unto you *abundantly into* the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (verse 10). □

Is God a Trinity?

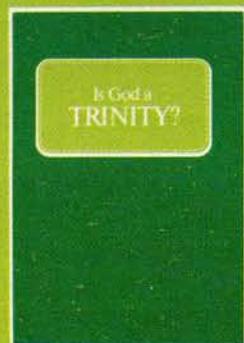
The doctrine of the "Trinity" is believed, or at least accepted, by most professing Christians. Yet the word Trinity is not found in the Bible! Nor is there substantive proof for such a doctrine.

What is the truth about the nature of God? What is the Holy Spirit? Was Jesus Christ God, or merely a man? Was Jesus the born Son of God, or only an adopted son? To receive the answers to these and other questions,

request your copy of this informative booklet, *Is God a Trinity?* Send your request to:

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God, verse 14). This description of the "Son of man" can only fit Jesus Christ of Nazareth approaching the Father on His throne; it is *not* referring to a mere physical human being.

King David, like the prophet Daniel, was also aware of the duality of the God family. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps. 110:1). Again two separate, distinct God persons are mentioned.

Q & A

QUESTION: "You have been doing a pretty good job lately, but you are still quoting out of the Old Testament, which we are not to do! Paul said so! If we do, we will be confused! According to all the apostles, we are only to teach of Jesus Christ and Him crucified and raised from the dead!"

M. R.,
Detroit, Michigan

ANSWER: The apostle Paul never said we should not use the Old Testament. He not only quoted the Old Testament himself quite often, but he stated in his letter to Timothy that "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching [doctrine, KJV], for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness . . ." (II Tim. 3:16).

In this passage he was referring to the *Old* Testament, because the New Testament hadn't been fully written or canonized at that time. In verse 14, Paul instructed Timothy: "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings [the Old Testament] which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 3:14, 15). In Timothy's childhood there was no New Testament written — so Paul must be speaking of the Old Testament.

Paul also commended the Jews of Berea, who "received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures [again the Old Testament] daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed . . ." (Acts 17:11-12).

Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4 both

quote Jesus Himself as saying: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Jesus Christ Himself is here quoting from the Old Testament — Deuteronomy 8:3. This is not the only time Christ quoted the Old Testament. He gave His stamp of approval to historical accounts which are sometimes questioned by some "higher critics" today: Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:3-4), Abel (Matt. 23:35), Noah's Flood (Luke 17:26-27), Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28-29), and Jonah (Matt. 12:40). Jesus also referred to Moses, the author of most of the Pentateuch. Christ said in John 5:46-47 (KJV): "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

The Old Testament and the Old Covenant (which was pre-Christian) are two entirely different things. The Old Covenant was the agreement between God and ancient Israel, while the Old Testament is composed of the inspired writings of people who lived during the time the Old Covenant was in effect. While Paul said that we no longer need to observe certain of the Old Covenant Levitical rituals such as physical circumcision, he did not mean that we should not quote the Old Testament.

The New Testament contains hundreds of direct and indirect quotations from the Old (about 630 quotations and references, see *The Bible Handbook* by Joseph Angus, p. 249). And the Old Testament contains prophecies of Christ, plus predictions that are yet to be fulfilled in our day. We cannot ignore the Old Testament if we are to follow the examples of Christ and Paul.

Q: "If God is the Father of Christ, then it is because sometime in the eons before the beginning of creation God created His Son out of His own living word. Otherwise how could God be the Father and Christ be the Son if God did not create Him?"

Houston E.,
Denton, Texas

A: The fact that Christ is spoken of as God's Son refers to His human begettal and birth. Before His advent He was the "Word," not the "Son." This was His name, the badge of His power and authority as Spokesman for God the Father. It did not refer to God having created Him from His "Word." John 1:1 does not show that God the Father created Christ. It only states that Christ was there in the beginning. It does not rule out the idea that He could have existed earlier. There is no other scripture in the entirety of the Bible which would support the idea of such a creation.

Christ is the Creator — not the created.

There is a scripture which might indicate that Christ existed *before* the "beginning," or creation. Isaiah 9 is generally accepted as a prophecy referring to Christ. In verse 6 He is referred to as "the everlasting Father," which also can be rendered "the Father of the everlasting age," or the "Father of eternity." The God family inhabits eternity (Isa. 57:15).

If God the Father has always existed, then there is no problem with Christ also having always existed. Christ, like God the Father, is immortal and eternal — concepts our minds have trouble grasping. Some of these things God has chosen not to fully reveal to man at this time (Deut. 29:29). □

War, famine and disease: mankind's three worst enemies. Much has been written about the first two. We are familiar with the chilling facts, statistics and pessimistic prognostications telling us about the possibilities of some future nuclear holocaust or worldwide food shortages. But what about disease? What does Bible prophecy have to say about the future? Will the human race ever be free from the curse of the grim reaper? Or will mankind once again be engulfed in a tidal wave of disease

epidemics that will rival the worst ones of history?

The world has yet to see the last of widespread disease epidemics. That, in effect, was what Jesus Christ told His disciples in the pivotal Olivet prophecy recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke 21.

Right along with wars and famine came pestilence: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" (Matt. 24:7). These were some of the prophetic signs that



PESTILENCE IN PROPHECY

by George Ritter





Christ listed in answering the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (Verse 3).

Granted, pestilence, famine and war have been ongoing problems that have plagued mankind ever since the dawn of history. But the main thrust of Christ's message is futuristic. The overall context of the Olivet prophecy readily attests to this fact. In verses 21 and 22 of Mat-

thew 24, Christ referred to a time when the total annihilation of human life would be a distinct possibility. Only with the recent development of multiple-megaton nuclear weaponry could such an event have become a reality.

The Pale Horseman Rides

The book of Revelation also underscores the fact that such tumultuous times are yet in store for

the future. John's apocalyptic scenario centers around the events surrounding the Day of the Lord (Rev. 1:10). In the sixth chapter we see war, famine and pestilence (the last three of the four horsemen of John's vision) riding together at this critical juncture in world history.

With both the black horse of famine and the red horse of war riding roughshod over the earth, it is only natural for the pale horse of pesti-



Ernst Herb — GN

lence to follow hard on their heels. Ezekiel also described the devastating effect this deadly triad can have: "A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them" (Ezek. 5:12).

Parallel prophecies found in the

Old Testament clearly indicate why man will continue to suffer from the ravages of disease. Notice this cause-and-effect relationship as outlined in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy: "But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God," warns man's Creator, "the Lord will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from off the land, which you go to possess. The Lord will smite you with con-

TENT FOR THE SICK in Pakistani refugee camp near Calcutta, India. During the rainy season the beds stand in water, creating fertile breeding grounds for cholera and typhoid.

sumption [wasting, degenerative disease], with fever and inflammation [possibly infectious contagions]. . . . and the tumors, the scurvy [deficiency disease] and the itch, of which you cannot be healed.



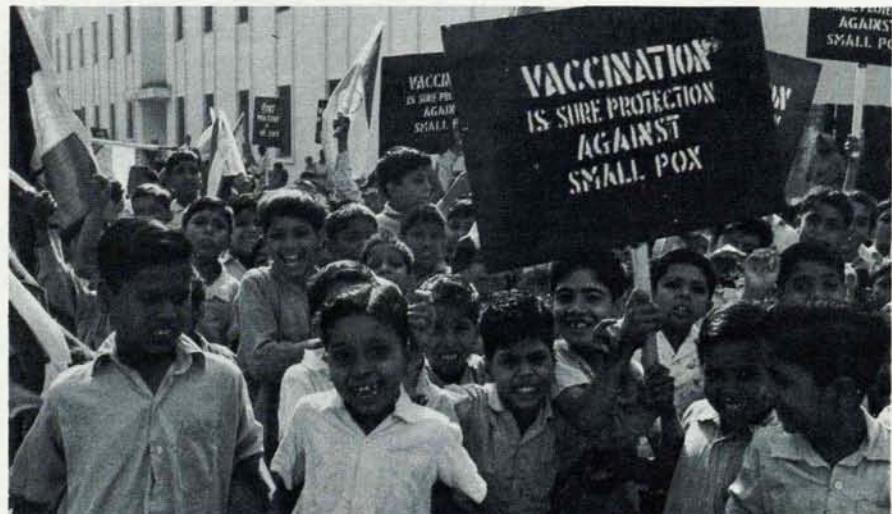
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The Lord will smite you with madness [mental disorders] and blindness and dismay of heart [emotional trauma]" (verses 15, 21-22, 27-28, *The Amplified Bible*).

It Has Only Just Begun

Misgovernment, greed and oppression over the course of nearly 6000 years of history have saddled the human race with the unwanted burden of disease. For instance, man's proclivity to crowd into disease-prone cities is indicative of this problem. And it is interesting to note that Bible prophecy seems to indicate that this crowd-at-all-costs policy will eventually backfire on the human race. Notice Leviticus 26:25: "... And when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you...." Also Ezekiel 7:15: "The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him."

This type of lethal disease epi-



OMS par Satyan

demic, working hand in glove with war and famine, will lay the groundwork for perhaps the greatest catastrophe ever to confront the human race. In Revelation 6:8, John writes: "And I saw, and behold, a pale horse, and its rider's name was Death, and Hades [the grave] followed him; and they were given power over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of

the earth" (RSV). By today's head count, that would amount to a mind-boggling one billion people. And according to the Olivet prophecy, that is only the "beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:8). Much more is to follow as the world moves into the darkest moments of its entire history. Jeremiah called it the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). Christ said there would be "great tribulation, such as was not since the



Ernst Herb — GN

beginning of the world... nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21).

In the eighth chapter of Revelation, John again writes: "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and

many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (verses 10-11).

Was John perhaps referring to yet another round of deadly waterborne disease epidemics? Could this be the result of man's continual pollution of his freshwater sources? Regardless of the reason, it is apparent that at this point in time humanity is in dire straits. Perhaps that is one reason a massive horde of 200 million



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OPPOSITE PAGE: Doctor checks malnourished Pakistani refugee. Schoolboys take part in Indian vaccination campaign. Left: Pills for lepers in Tanzania. Above: Cholera-infected beggars at railway station in Pakistan.

"horsemen" (a great army) decides to descend on the pivotal area of the Middle East (Rev. 9:16). Could the increased pressures of widespread famine and disease pandemics have something to do with this warlike mass movement? Again it is difficult to read between the lines of John's prophecy. However, it is interesting to note that some authors have speculated on just such a possibility.

Frederick F. Cartwright, author of *Disease and History*, had this to say: "Sheer pressure of numbers and of hunger may dictate a return to Mongolian and Viking-type invasions; since all the more desirable parts of the world are thickly inhabited, global war would inevitably result" (p. 237).

Robert Heilbrunner writes in *The Human Prospect*: "Massive human

Old Testament Health Laws— Still Ahead of Their Time

Several millennia ago, God gave a people the opportunity to live a basically disease-free existence. Shortly after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, He told them: "If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord, your healer" (Ex. 15:26, RSV).

Many of the laws and statutes that God gave them contributed directly to the elimination of disease at its source. For instance, the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is insurance against gonorrhea, syphilis and herpes.

God also told the Israelites to bury their sewage (Deut. 23:12, 13), rather than using it to contaminate their waterways. This simple preventive measure, if followed, virtually eliminates the threat of crippling waterborne diseases such as dysentery, cholera, typhoid, hepatitis and bilharzia.

Old Testament dietary laws made a lot of sense too. The Israelites were instructed not to eat known disease-carrying animals such as pigs, rabbits, oysters and snails. Obedience to these laws would greatly reduce the incidence of trichinosis, tularemia, hepatitis and other parasitic diseases.

Sanitation, cleanliness and quarantine were also emphasized. Lepers and diseased people were required to be isolated from the main body of the Israelites. Houses known to harbor disease were quarantined (Lev. 14:33-38) and then given a thorough scrubbing (verses 39-42). If that didn't do the trick, the officiating priest was instructed to demolish the offending domicile and get rid of the infected rubble (verses 43-45).

Procedures were also given for treatment of people with various types of running sores and infections (see Leviticus 15). Virtually anything the person touched was considered contaminated, including dishes, clothes and even saddles.

Adherence to these laws, even in the "advanced" twentieth century, would alleviate quite a bit of suffering and misery among millions of people around the world today.

deterioration in the backward areas can be avoided only by a redistribution of the world's output and energies on a scale immensely larger than anything that has hitherto been seriously contemplated.... Such an unprecedented international transfer seems impossible

to imagine except under some kind of threat" (p. 44).

Whatever future role disease plays in precipitating these events, it is obvious from the above prophecies that if God did not personally intervene and put a final stop to the continually escalating rounds of

war, famine and disease that will more than likely engulf this planet, all humanity would perish (Matt. 24:21-22).

Healing a Disease-Torn World

Fortunately, God will not allow the human race to pass the cosmic failsafe point. Jesus Christ will return to save mankind from the triple threat of war, famine and disease. One of the first things He will do is put a final end to man's age-old war-making activities (Micah 4:3). Not only will that take care of the red horse, it will go a long way toward reducing the proclivity for disease epidemics.

Christ will also be faced with a world whose rivers and streams are too polluted to support any kind of life (see Revelation 8:10-11 and 16:4). To correct this situation, living waters will begin to flow from Jerusalem to heal the world's water supply (Zech. 14:8; Ezek. 47:8).

The world's agricultural system will be revolutionized and men will no longer have to endure the rigors of malnutrition and deficiency diseases (Amos 9:13-14). Land reform will also be a primary item on the agenda. Crowded, disease-ridden cities will go by the boards. Every human being will be entitled to his own plot of ground: "They shall each one sit under his vine and under his fig tree; and no one shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:4). But even more important, mankind will begin to live by a new system of principles and laws. Instead of destroying and desecrating their surroundings, they will learn how to dress and keep the earth (Gen. 2:15). This will undoubtedly eliminate the favorite breeding grounds of many a rat, fly, cockroach and mosquito.

Before Christ's thousand-year reign is over, humanity will at long last understand what it means to be truly free from sickness and pestilence. Like the dodo, passenger pigeon and saber-toothed tiger, disease will be something men read about in their history books. □

CHRISTIANS IN DEED?

The world is full of nominal Christians — but how many are Christians in deed? The Christian Bible makes it clear that mere belief is not enough.

by Brian Knowles

United States Senator Mark Hatfield recently quoted a very moving, yet indicting poem, "Listen Christian!" (by Bob Rowland), which reads as follows:

*I was hungry
and you formed a humanities club
and discussed my hunger.
Thank you.*

*I was imprisoned
and you crept off quietly
to your chapel in the cellar
and prayed for my release.*

*I was naked
and in your mind
you debated the morality of
my appearance.*

*I was sick
and you knelt
and thanked God
for your health.*

*I was homeless
and you preached to me
about the spiritual shelter
of the love of God.*

*I was lonely
and you left me alone
to pray for me.*

*Christian,
you seem so holy;
so close to God.
But I'm still very hungry,
and lonely,
and cold...*

This poignant poem is an obvious modification of the words of Jesus

Himself as recorded in Matthew 25:35-36: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

What Jesus was describing was a way of life that involved more than mere lip service. It involved action — *deeds!* To the Jesus Christ of the Bible, mere nominal Christianity is woefully inadequate. Belief, of and by itself, is dead Christianity. James wrote: "You believe that God is one; you do well. *Even the demons believe* — and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you foolish fellow, that faith apart from works is barren?" (James 2:19-20.)

Perhaps, like Martin Luther, you believe that the book of James is "an epistle of straw." Will you then believe Paul? "For we [the Church collectively] are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Here we are told that the very purpose for which the Christian Church was created was for "good works." This was the consistent teaching of the apostle Paul. These were not works of law. They were works of charity, love, outgoing concern for the rest of humanity. Christ, James and Paul taught that Christians should be *humanitarians*. Those who were more wealthy in the congregations were expected to do more: "As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be

The True Christian— A Doer of Good Works

Titus 2:7 — "Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds."

Titus 3:14 — "And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds."

I John 3:17 — "But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"

Prov. 3:27-28 — "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go and come again, tomorrow I will give it' — when you have it with you."

Heb. 10:24 — "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works."

I Tim. 6:17, 18 — "As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous."

James 1:27 — "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction."

James 2:15-16 — "If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?"

Luke 10:36-37 — The parable of the Good Samaritan — "Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, 'The one who showed mercy on him.' And Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

Deut. 15:7-8 — "If there is among you a poor man [or woman], one of your brethren [your neighbor], in any of your towns within your land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him, and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be."

Prov. 21:13 — "He who closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself cry out and not be heard."

I Thes. 5:15 — "Always seek to do good to one another and to all."

I Thes. 5:14 — "Encourage the fainthearted, help the weak."

Heb. 13:16 — "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

Lev. 19:34 — "The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself."

haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in *good deeds*, liberal and generous, thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future..." (I Tim. 6:17-19).

The "good works" of a Christian are not a mere by-product of his Christianity. They are central to it. His eternal reward will be affected by the quality and quantity of those works. They are the reason he or she exists in this present evil society: "... Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for *good deeds*" (Titus 2:13-14).

This is the Christianity of Christ!

This is not a selfish, egocentric, sheltered, self-feeding brand of religion. Rather, it is an outgoing, serving, giving, helping, concerned pattern of life. The Church of the living God is not a "closed shop." The spiritual body of Christ echoes the words of Jesus Himself who said: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Jesus did not come with a burdensome religion of endless, Talmudic do's and don'ts. He delivered a way of life that was based on love and compassion for fellowman. Christ's Christianity is based on an active relationship with the world out of which one is called. He sent his disciples "*into the world*" (John 17:18) with a message of hope and comfort. He prayed only that they would be kept from the world's sins — from its evil. "I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

Jesus did not expect his followers to be spiritual isolationists. He expected them to mix and mingle with

contemporary society, all the while being a light and an example. He said Christians should shine like a beacon of light in a darkened world. They are to be like a city that is established upon a high hill which no one can miss (Matt. 5:14-16). They are to establish "a pattern of good works" (Titus 2:7, KJV). Those who observe the life and actions of true Christians are to be inspired to "glorify God" as a result of what they see.

This kind of *active* Christianity is something less than comfortable! It puts you on the spot. It forces one out of the comfortable shell of religious hobbyism. It requires you to "put up or shut up."

Christians of this type are but a tiny minority in the world of nominal Christianity! Most nominal Christians would rather "worship" in the quiet sanctuary of majestic stone cathedrals and church buildings, singing hymns and forming social clubs, than be out letting their personal Christianity shine in tangible good works! It is like the difference between destroying a city by the push of a computer button and stabbing a man in the chest while he is looking at you. Today's professing Christianity is *impersonal* and *irrelevant*. It is self-centered. It is meaningless in a world of general suffering, political oppression, economic crisis, starvation and malnutrition, social upheaval and violence.

God's people *must* be different! They must be more than mere denominational religious hobbyists with esoteric "doctrines," beliefs and practices. They must come out of this world's word-laden Christianity and become truly converted to Christ's!

Hypocrisy Is Out!

Christ did not come to start the First Church of Hypocrisy. He founded a Church (Greek: *ekklesia*) in which the chief claim to greatness was *service*. He taught: "... But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever

would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:26-28).

While practicing and teaching a life of service and self-sacrifice, Jesus launched a verbal tongue-lashing at those ecclesiastical hypocrites who sat in Moses' seat: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. You blind Pharisee! *first cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean*" (Matt. 23:25-26).

The apostle Paul taught strongly against hypocrisy among the membership of God's Church. In ad-

Most nominal Christians would rather "worship" in the quiet sanctuary of majestic stone cathedrals and church buildings, singing hymns and forming social clubs, than be out letting their personal Christianity shine in tangible good works! ... Today's professing Christianity is impersonal and irrelevant.

dressing a letter to the Christians in Rome, he wrote: "You then who teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?" (Rom. 2:21-23.)

He explained that it was not the hearers or preachers of the law who would be justified before God, but the *doers* (Rom. 2:13).

Christians are to be *doers*!

They are to abound in good works no matter how much critics ridicule "Christian do-gooders." The New Testament is filled with scriptures showing the need to perform such actions and deeds (see accompanying box). These are not

primarily works of law, but works of service, love, compassion and concern. True Christianity is a state of mind — not a set of legalistic dogmas and Talmudic legislation.

(God has given certain laws and practices which produce character and ensure an orderly society. But there is *no law* that a Christian may keep that will make him righteous or guarantee salvation! Salvation is not a matter of law but of grace, as Paul plainly taught. Yet law-keeping is still very much a part of the Christian way of life.)

God teaches that Christians should "get involved." They should participate in those activities which benefit their local community. Paul wrote to the Galatians: "So then, as we have opportunity, *let us do good to all men*, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

No one is excluded. *All* are to be blessed by the good works of a Christian. Paul does show that one should not neglect service to the Church in favor of those who live outside of "the faith," however. He wrote: "Bear one another's burdens, and so *fulfil the law of Christ*" (Gal. 6:2).

Which law of Christ did he have in mind? Undoubtedly that recorded in John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

This love and outgoing concern for others is the very *essence* of true Christianity. It is the answer to "legalism." It is the life force of the converted mind! Without love and service all law-keeping, ritual, tradition and denominationalism is meaningless. A Christian without such good works is no Christian at all.

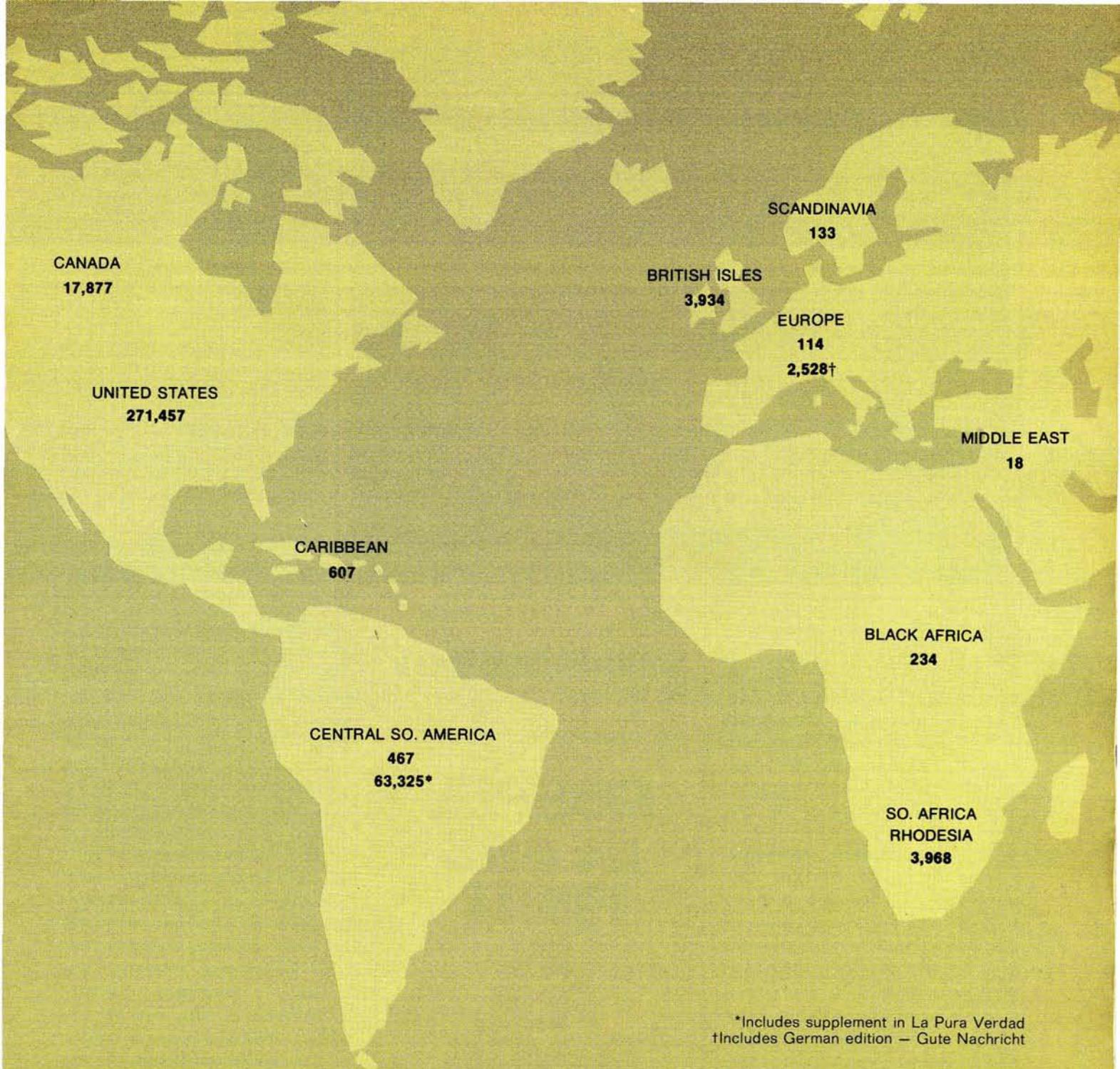
Will you accept the challenge to become *more* than a nominal Christian? Will you respond to the plain teaching of the Founder of true Christianity and become a Christian — *in deed?*

**UPDATE
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A 'GOOD NEWS' PROGRESS REPORT

Two-Year Anniversary



*Includes supplement in *La Pura Verdad*

†Includes German edition — *Gute Nachricht*

Since its new beginning in November 1973, *The Good News* magazine has been a continuing success story. The first issue under the new format had a combined circulation of over 113,000 in the United States and Canada. Today circulation stands at more than 300,000 in those two countries alone — an increase of 165% in two years. Additional tens of thousands of readers have been added around the globe, bringing total worldwide circulation to over

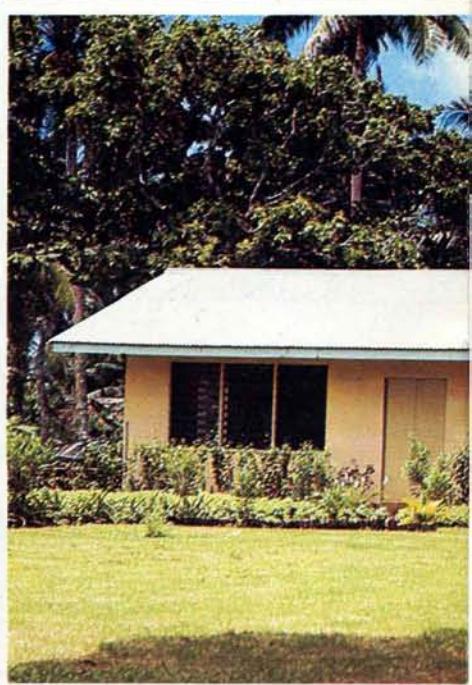
330,000 — not including foreign language supplements.

In addition to the English language, *The Good News* appears as a supplement in *La Pura Verdad*, the *Plain Truth* in Spanish. And, as of April 1975, there has been a German edition of *The Good News* — *Gute Nachricht* (circulation 1700).

Many have written expressing their appreciation for the many in-depth spiritual and doctrinal articles that have appeared as well as infor-

mation about the Worldwide Church of God and its far-flung work. We thank you for your encouragement and look forward to serving you with more articles about God's Word and His Church.

We thought readers would like to know the distribution of our circulation worldwide as we complete our second full year of publication of the new format GN. The map above shows the current global circulation figures for *The Good News*. □



Once a year we have been making a tour of Fiji, an archipelago of islands located about 1300 miles north of Auckland, New Zealand. This year, Bill Hutchinson, business manager for the Church in New Zealand, came with me to visit members and counsel *interested readers* of our literature.

We began our tour on June 25 by spending a day with the first Fijian member of the Church, Mrs. Dorothy Pery, an elderly and lively English lady. For seven years she was the only member of the Worldwide Church of God in Fiji. Mrs. Pery lives on an idyllic beach front on the western side of the island of Viti Levu. To get there we had to travel over rough gravel roads taking two hours to cover 40 miles, and nearly colliding with a horse at night standing in the middle of the road. We found Mrs. Pery recovering from a fractured hip, but otherwise in good spirits.

Then we flew to the other large island of the archipelago, Vanua Levu, and its main town, Lambasa. There we were greeted by a man I'd met several years ago, Mr. John Jit, an Indian. Fiji is approximately half Indian (Indians make up over 40% of Fiji's population, indigenous Fi-

South Pacific Diary

GOSPEL BEARS FRUIT IN FIJI, TONGA

jians slightly less, with Europeans and Chinese making up most of the rest). John had asked for the visit on behalf of his wife, who is Chinese, and her brother, Ah-kee Gock, and sister Elizabeth. We spent a profitable afternoon talking with them about the Bible, and then drove a few miles to a peaceful river where we baptized Ah-kee and Mrs. Jit.

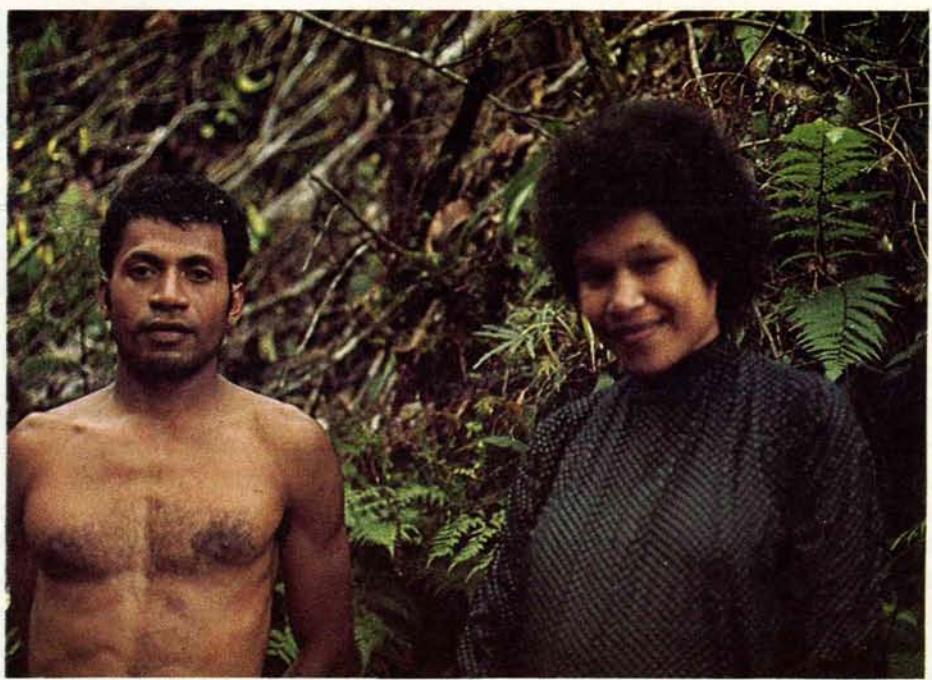
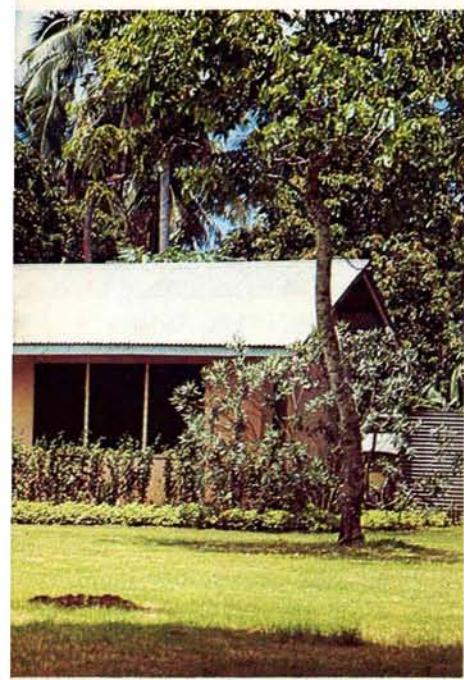
We then hopscotched back to Viti Levu and the capital city of Suva, where we had several contacts to make. While waiting with one of our Fijian members outside a car rental agency, one of the contacts recognized us on the street. We made arrangements for him to come to a Bible study the following day. At the Bible study on the Sabbath, we had nine adults present.

The next day several of us went to a small farm to meet Mr. George Tuisawau in his two-room house. His wife prepared a Fijian-style lunch for us, and afterwards we baptized Mr. Tuisawau and a lady by the name of Mrs. Duaibe.

There were more people yet to see. On another smaller island, the wife of a member, Pita Dakuni, had requested baptism. We flew there and after talking with her she was baptized in the warm Pacific Ocean.

Then back to Suva to see two more people in a hospital. We found out that the hospital was for those with Hansen's disease — leprosy! I must admit we were apprehensive until we were informed that it wasn't communicable.

At the hospital we were greeted by two men and an American nun, who was quite interested in the liter-



GN Photos

ature they had been reading. We sat down and spent the next two hours discussing repentance, baptism, salvation, the Ten Commandments, etc. The nun asked numerous questions and showed great interest in the Worldwide Church of God.

One of the men, Mr. Mesulame Fatiaki, expressed great interest in being baptized, so we arranged to come back and talk with him again. When we did come back and saw that he was ready for baptism, we discovered that his two friends — the other male patient and the nun — also wanted to be present. They had prepared a picnic lunch as well. So off we went to a peaceful river where we baptized Mesulame while the nun took photographs.

Afterwards we anointed Mesulame for his many health problems. He has a weak heart, liver, kidneys and eyes, in addition to his leprosy. He has now spent six years of his life in hospitals with no clear prospect of leading a normal life.

Our tour ended on July 8 with a visit to the island kingdom of Tonga, southeast of Fiji. Some 30 people, members of the Worldwide Church of God and their families, face an unusual problem: they have to observe *two* rest days a week!

All churches on Tonga keep Sunday. Historically, the Wesleyans converted the Tongans and so Sunday was decreed by law as the day of rest. And they mean rest. No washing of clothes. No fishing. Ships are not allowed to unload or load cargo. Even the "Seventh-day" churches are required to rest on Sunday. They respect the fact that the king is supreme and the Bible says to obey the authorities. There is also a line of reasoning over the international date line. So as not to have half Tonga on one day and the other half tomorrow (or yesterday, depends on what side of the island you live) the geographers bent the international line around the Tongan Islands to avoid confusion. But some reason that the date line should pass the Islands on the west rather than on the east as it does now. That would mean that Sunday is really Saturday. So one major Saturday-keeping church keeps Sunday as the seventh day in "good conscience." Members of the Worldwide Church of God on Tonga, however, keep the Sabbath on the internationally agreed upon seventh day — Saturday.

But it means hardships. Tongans cannot travel by bus on Sunday —

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mesulame Fatiaki, new member on Viti Levu, is shown with Graemme Marshall, director of New Zealand office. Tabernacle building built by members on Tonga. Fijian members after baptismal ceremony.

the buses don't run. They cannot play sports or games openly where police might see. They cannot work in gardens or on farms unless out of view. They can paddle in the sea but not swim. It literally is a day of rest — punishable by the police. The constitution even says that any agreement made or witnessed on this day shall not be recognized by the government.

Tourists can't make overseas phone calls — the exchange is closed. They cannot buy anything, including food. Tourists can tour by taxi and swim, and, of course, go to church. But they cannot take a flight anywhere — the airport is closed. All you can do is listen to the radio (church music and cultural programs).

Despite these hardships, members prosper, grow and develop in faith and zeal. They look for a Kingdom above — invisible — yet to come.

— Graemme J. Marshall
Director of New Zealand Office

WHO WAS JESUS?

Your Savior — was He man, God, or what? Where did He come from? How did He get here? Was He really divine? Could it be true that Christ and the God of the Old Testament are one and the same Person? Many have asked these most basic of all questions. Here, from the book of John, are the answers.

by John R. Schroeder

Most all human beings either have or have had a "best friend," or a "closest buddy" — someone with whom they share a side of themselves seldom seen by others.

Though Jesus loved all men, He was especially close to His disciple John. The apostle himself revealed this warm relationship in his own Gospel. He is a bit bashful about mentioning himself in the first person — although he wasn't at all hesitant about mentioning the other disciples by name.

He is the only one of Christ's biographers who was bold enough to point out Simon Peter as the man who severed the servant's ear during Jesus' arrest in the garden (John 18:10). Yet he never mentions *himself* by name in his entire book; when he writes of "John," he refers to John the Baptist.

"The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved"

At His last Passover, "Jesus was deeply troubled and testified, 'I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.' His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said,

"Ask him which one he means'" (John 13:21-24, *The New International Version*).

Who was this "disciple whom Jesus loved"?

Some days after Jesus' resurrection from the dead, Peter engaged in an extended discourse with the risen Christ. Concluding the conversation, "Peter turned and saw following them *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, who had lain close to his breast at the [last Passover] supper and had said, 'Lord who is it that is going to betray you?' When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about this man?'

"Jesus said to him, 'If it is my will that he remain [alive] until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!' (John 21:20-22).

Verse 24 then reveals the identity of this disciple and future apostle: "This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true." This could be none other than the author of "the Gospel According to John." John remained alive to write the book of Revelation long after Peter's martyrdom. Apparently John was the only apostle whose life did not end in martyrdom. It is thought that, although imprisoned, he was allowed to live out his last days in relative peace on the Isle of Patmos.

John was also favored to be among the small inner circle of disciples who witnessed a foretaste of the Kingdom of God in vision. "And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain *apart*" (Matt. 17:1). There they saw Jesus transfigured before them, with Moses and Elijah.

It was also John who was the first disciple to believe Christ had risen from the dead. Shortly after Christ's resurrection, Mary Magdalene came

and saw that the tomb was empty. "So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and *the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved...*" (John 20:2).

John outran Simon Peter to the tomb, but impetuous Peter went in first (verses 3-7). "Then *the other disciple*, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and *he saw and believed*" (verse 8).

John's Deeper Understanding

Perhaps in part because of his special closeness to Jesus, John was given of God a deeper and broader understanding of his Savior. Matthew, Mark and Luke each begin their "minibiographies" of Jesus with an account of John the Baptist or with the conception of the human Jesus.

But John's beginning pre-dates even the events in the Old Testament: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

Verse 14 explains who this "Word" was: "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we [the disciples] have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.*" Jesus Christ is the only heavenly Being who ever became a fleshly human being and lived in this world.

These very few verses tell us a great deal about the nature of Jesus Christ: 1) He was God; 2) He was with another Being called God from the very beginning; 3) He was the "Word" (Greek: *Logos*) or Spokesman for the Father ("No one has ever seen God," meaning the other Being called God, verse 18).

John's first letter and two of Paul's epistles provide us with an

excellent commentary on these beginning scriptures in the fourth Gospel. As if of habit, John begins his first epistle with "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life — the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life *which was with the Father* and was made manifest to us — that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with *the Father* and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:1-3).

This letter, as the first verses of John's Gospel, makes it plain that the Being with whom they had lived, worked, played, swam and fished was none other than a member of the Godhead — with, and like, God the Father.

The apostle Paul wrote: "He [the Father] has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son [Jesus Christ], in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him *all things were created*, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things..." (Col. 1:13-17; compare with Eph. 3:9). Paul here points out the broad and massive extent of the work and authority of the pre-human Christ.

John's Theme — the Godship of Christ

John emphasizes over and over again, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (see II Tim. 3:16;

II Peter 1:20-21; John 14:26), the pre-existence of Christ as God before His human birth. It is a prominent theme running throughout his entire Gospel. Notice it again in the very first chapter. "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not" (John 1:10). If He made the world, then He *preceded* His own creation. Yet when He came in the human flesh, the vast majority of those who had the opportunity to know Him rejected their own Creator.

John the Baptist picks up this same theme. "John bore witness to him, and cried, 'This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, for *he was before me*'" (John 1:15). Was the Baptist indulging in some kind of spiritual doubletalk here? No! John the Baptist was begotten and born into the human flesh *before* Jesus was (Luke 1:35-36, 57-60). But *Jesus was God* long before John was ever conceived. The Baptist repeats it in verse 30: "... After me comes a man who ranks before me, for *he was before me*."

Jesus' Supernatural Knowledge

John revealed that Christ possessed powers that no normal human being had, although He was certainly subject to the pulls and temptations of the flesh (Heb. 4:15).

When Christ called Nathanael to a discipleship (and future apostleship), "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' Nathanael said to him, 'How do you know me?' Jesus answered him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' Nathanael answered him, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God!'... Jesus answered him, 'Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree,

do you believe? You shall see greater things [miracles] than these'" (John 1:47-50).

Notice also the last three verses of John, chapter two. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw his signs which he did; but Jesus did not trust himself to them, because *he knew all men* and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man" (verses 23-25). Christ the Creator had made mankind and He knew all about people's human weaknesses.

Jesus — From Heaven

John knew Jesus' true origin. Quoting Christ Himself, John 3:13 declares: "No one has ascended into heaven but *he who descended* from heaven, the Son of man."

John continues this theme in the second half of the chapter: "He who comes *from above* is above all; he who is of the earth belongs to the earth, and of the earth he speaks; he who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one [the vast majority] receives his testimony; he [only a few] who receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. For *he whom God has sent* utters the words of God, for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit" (verses 30-34).

While Jesus Christ was yet in heaven (*before* His human birth), our Savior saw and heard the message that He later spoke on earth. Here, in a conversation with the religious leaders of His generation, He said: "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from [heaven] and where I am going [heaven]" (John 8:14, *The New International Version*). He continued in verses 23 and 28: "You are from below, I am

from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. . . . When you have lifted up [crucified] the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me."

Backtracking to verse 26, "... But he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."

Verse 38: "I speak of what I have seen with my Father"

Verse 42: "... I came not of my own accord, but he sent me."

Jesus — The God of the Old Testament

In this very long dialogue of Jesus, the Pharisees brought up the subject of Abraham (the greatest of Jewish national heroes). Jesus explained to them: "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see *my day*; he saw it and was glad" (verse 56). The One who became Christ actually walked and talked with the patriarch Abraham (Gen. 12:1-4; 13:14-18; 17:1-22; 18:1-33; 22:1-2). Of course, these religionists simply didn't grasp what Jesus was saying. "The Jews then said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am'" (verses 57-58).

Jesus Christ was the same God who walked and talked with Moses in the wilderness — the same "I AM" (see Ex. 3:14) who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. Paul makes this plain. "I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the [Red] sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. . . . For they drank from the same supernatural Rock which followed them, and the ['that,' KJV] Rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:1-4).

This same Personage in the God-head presided over the Flood in Noah's day. Peter gives us the facts: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he [Christ] went and preached unto the spirits [demons] in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (I Peter 3:18-20, KJV).

From Creator to Son

But we find the most emphatic statements about the pre-existence of Jesus Christ in the book of John. The book's major emphasis is on the

undeniable fact that *Jesus Christ was God* before His human birth. Even the Pharisee Nicodemus said to Jesus: "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God . . ." (John 3:2).

Jesus told the leaders of this smallish sect: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself *equal with God*" (John 5:17-18, KJV). If you have any sons or daughters, they are on the same plane and level of existence as yourself. They are *not* inferior beings like animals. Jesus was equal with God in the sense that He existed on the same God-plane that the Father did. True, the Father was and is greater in authority — "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28, KJV).

Continuing His discussion with the Pharisees, Christ drove home the point that He was indeed God's Son: "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing; and greater works than these will he show him, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and

Christ in the Book of John

John had an unusually close, friendly relationship with Jesus. He seemed to understand better than the other disciples where He came from, where He was going, and what He was all about. Below are references from John's Gospel on the nature of Christ.

Christ Created the World:
1:1-3; 1:10
He Was the God of the Old Testament:
1:15, 30; 5:46; 8:56-58

He Is One With God the Father and Equal to Him:

5:17-18; 10:30, 33, 38; 12:44-45; 15:23; 17:11, 20-26; 19:7

He Rules Over Everything:
3:34-35; 5:19-23, 26-27; 16:15

He Became a Man:
1:14

He Came Down From Heaven:
3:13, 31; 6:38, 41, 51, 58, 62;
8:14, 21-23

He Was Sent by God the Father:

3:16-17, 34; 4:34; 5:30;
6:29, 44, 57; 7:28-29, 33; 8:42;
9:4; 10:34-36; 11:42; 16:27-29;
17:7; 20:21

His Authority Was From God the Father:

7:16-18; 8:16, 26-29; 12:44,
49-50; 14:24; 15:15

He Went Back to Heaven:

6:62; 7:33-34; 8:21; 13:1-3, 33; 14:1-3, 12; 16:27-29;
20:17

He Will Come Again:

5:25-29; 14:3; 21:22-23

gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will" (John 5:19-21). Jesus possesses the same powers that the Father does, because He too is God.

Jesus Christ said: "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Not that they are the same Being, but they are one in purpose, one in plan, and most of all, one in the sense that they are members of the same God family.

If anyone in that generation saw Jesus, they saw how One in the God family would act if He were here on earth — and specifically the Father. "And Jesus cried out and said, 'He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And he who sees me sees him who sent me'" (John 12:44-45).

Jesus Resumed His Glorified Godship

We have firmly established the fact that Jesus was God before His human birth. Notice just one more verse to that effect: "And now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made" (John 17:5). Jesus was a glorified God-Being before there ever was an angel or man on earth. In fact, Jesus has eternally existed as God. (For more vital information on this subject, write for our free article entitled "Has God Eternally Existed?")

But He divested Himself of His former glory and came down to this earth as a human being to (among many other things) die for the sins of all mankind. Paul wrote to the Philippian brethren: "Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:5-8).

Paul then brings out the fact that

Jesus is now restored to His former glory: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow [God does not allow human beings to worship other human beings or even angels — only members of the God family], in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (verses 9-11).

John also wrote of Jesus' resuming His Godship. Notice Christ's words in the true Lord's prayer: "And now I am no more in the world . . . and I come to thee" (John 17:11, KJV).

Earlier Jesus had said to His disciples: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6:62, KJV.) Later they did see just that (Acts 1:9). Notice John 7:33 (KJV): "Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me."

Concerning the occasion of Christ's last Passover, John begins: "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was [very soon to] come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father . . ." (John 13:1, KJV).

John repeats this vital theme over and over again. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:28, KJV).

The Incredible Destiny of Man

Jesus was God before His human birth; He was God in the flesh while a human being here on earth; and He is now very God at the right hand of the Father in heaven. But must we stop there in our knowledge?

Jesus said to Mary Magdalene: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17, KJV).

In this verse, Jesus was equating

Himself (though He was their Lord and Master — John 13:13) with His disciples and future apostles. What is the real significance of this statement? Jesus Himself gives us the true answer in John 10. "The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?' The Jews answered him, 'We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God.' Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, you are gods" [see Psalm 82:6]? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming," because I said, "I am the Son of God"?" (Verses 31-36.) This very vital passage of scripture reveals, believe it or not, that man's ultimate destiny is to become a part of the God family.

Notice John's first letter once again: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2, KJV). Can you grasp what John is saying here? Even as God became man, so man may become God! The two planes are interchangeable under certain conditions.

Man is to become just as much God as Christ is God. That in a nutshell is the transcendent purpose of human life!

What can every man and woman do to ensure that this wonderful event does indeed happen to them? Verse 3: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure" (KJV). □

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Many have written asking about God's nature and the relationship between Christ and God the Father. Our "Letters" section this month presents some of these letters and the answers to the questions they posed.

THE PILGRIM “SABBATH”

CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY



Many Mormons, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Pentecostals, even some Baptists — in short, the descendants of the Puritans and their friends of 16th-century Britain — call Sunday the “Christian Sabbath.” The Puritans objected to many pagan features of so-called Christianity. They prohibited May Day and Christmas observances, etc., by law. They read the Bible, believed in real obedience to God, and taught strict adherence to godliness as a way of life. They were strict about their “Sabbath.” The Mayflower Pilgrims who landed on Plymouth Rock in 1620 were Puritans, as were others who landed later in different spots on the forbidding New England coast. They were a stern, God-fearing race who fled the Old World for the New World to practice the religion of their conscience in peace. Their “Sabbath” was observed with rigor. But was it the Sabbath of God?

by Lawson C. Briggs

It was 1646, April 3. The first New England Thanksgiving was that year to be a quarter century old. By this time, in old England, there were Sabbath-keepers — observers of the seventh-day memorial of creation and creation's God (Ex. 31:13). Another Massachusetts spring was not far away as John Cotton wrote out his argument to Thomas Shepard to prove that the first day of the week, and not the seventh, should be observed as the Christian Sabbath (*Felt, The Ecclesiastical History of New England*, p. 569).

Obviously, there was some diversity of opinion in Massachusetts

about the Sabbath. And Felt goes on to record that the subject was at that time much discussed by New England ministers against objectors. But that anyone actually observed the seventh day in mid-17th century New England is not completely established. For the fact is that Puritans were Sunday observers, in spite of their use of the term "Christian Sabbath" (or just "Sabbath") to describe it, and contrary to the mistaken notions some Sabbath-keepers publish today. It is not true as some direct descendants from the Pilgrims have claimed they "well knew," namely that all their "grandparents and great-grandparents knew that the Pilgrims of the Mayflower days were strict Sabbath-keepers of the seventh day of the week, instead of Sunday" (Kiesz in *The Sabbath Sentinel*, June 1975, p. 10; also Dugger and Dodd, *A True History of the True Religion*, pp. 265-266).

The term "Sabbath" (but meaning Sunday) even occurs in the ordinances of the Long Parliament (the Puritan-dominated body which ruled Britain during the 1640s when Oliver Cromwell was head of state in place of the rejected king). "Christian Sabbath," a term apparently newly coined about a hundred years before, occurs in an ordinance of 1644 (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., "Sunday").

How Sabbath Confusion Began

With all due respect to the Puritan forebears of Britain and America for all their sincerity and determination, they made some egregious errors. Mistaking the Sabbath was one.

No informed person assumes that the Sabbath God instituted is Sunday. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, but Sunday is another and different institution. No one confused the two for centuries after the apostles. And none regarded the Exodus command to rest and be rejuvenated on the seventh day as in any way applicable or transferred to Sunday.

In fact, some professing Christians observed both Sunday (as a time of meeting for worship) and Sabbath (as a day of abstinence from work) into the beginning of the Dark Ages. Some observed both days as days of assembly (as is recorded in Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, VI, 8, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*).

Gradually, the Catholic world departed from the Sabbath, alleging apostolic authority for having abolished or changed the commandment. Throughout the Middle Ages in Europe, Sunday was the only day honored weekly, but it was not pri-

his short-lived son Edward, then briefly by Mary, and finally by Elizabeth I whose long reign lasted 45 years. Church services included the reading of the Ten Commandments, commandment by commandment, and after each commandment the congregation responded: "Lord, incline our hearts to keep this law" (Thomas Broad, *Three Questions Answered*, 1621, title page). But here was a problem.

What would they do when they prayed for the inclination and help to obey the Fourth Commandment? Most Puritans had but one answer: they would try to invest *Sunday* with

Most Puritans had but one answer: they would try to invest Sunday with all the sanctity (including total abstinence from work, "profane" sports, or pleasure of any kind) that belonged to the true Sabbath. They claimed that the Sabbath had been changed.

marily nor generally a rest day. That came later, and in a different cultural milieu.

Sunday "Sabbath" Came With the Puritans

Everybody knows about Henry the Eighth, king of England. He wanted his freedom to marry another, and to get his divorce he declared the independence of the Church of England from Rome in A.D. 1534. With detachment from the Pope, a certain degree of reformation began, as it had in Germany and neighboring countries on the European continent. A Puritan element, so-called because they desired to purify the church, began to make itself heard in England.

But the same no-Sabbathism that characterized both Catholicism and Protestantism on the Continent continued in the Church of England. Work went on seven days a week.

Henry died and was replaced with

all the sanctity and respect (including total abstinence from work, "profane" sports, or pleasure of any kind) that belonged to the true Sabbath. They claimed that the Sabbath had been changed. Of course, that led them into doctrinal deep water, because, lacking any real or valid evidence in the New Testament for such a supposed change, the only possible authority that remained for it was the Pope against whom they were in rebellion!

The whole thing was an embarrassment to the Established Church and churchmen. It was 1595 when Nicholas Bownd, D.D., a Suffolk clergyman, "boldly and crudely claimed for Sunday the authority and the observances of the Jewish Sabbath and maintained that they should be enforced by the State" (Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, "Sunday"). Bownd injected the term "Christian Sabbath," that it is a perpetuation of the Sab-

bath of the Fourth Commandment, but that the day specified in that commandment has been changed by authority from the seventh to the first day of the week" (Belcher, *Religious Denominations in America*, p. 228).

His book was suppressed by order of the archbishop. The English church as a whole was not prepared for a Sabbath doctrine that extreme. Neither, in fact, were all Puritans.

Nevertheless, Bownd's theory, in the words of a learned contemporary, was a "most bewitching error, and the most popular infatuation that ever was embraced by the people of England" (*ibid.*).

It soon permeated the thinking of all Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. "The book had an immense vogue. It was translated and circulated on the Continent, where it exercised much influence. In England, accepted as an inspiration by some and as challenge by others, it gave rise to a literary controversy which lasted for a hundred years" (Hastings, *op. cit.*).

In the absence of requisite evidence for a Sabbath change ever having been made, many began to argue that actually the Fourth Commandment merely required the observance of "one day in seven," a contention plainly contradictory to the context of Genesis 2, Exodus 20:11, etc.

Some did indeed draw the obvious conclusion (though there is no evidence any acted correctly upon it for some years), for the old *Chambers' Encyclopedia* (article "Sabbath") declares: "Accordingly in the reign of Elizabeth [1558-1603] it occurred to many conscientious and independent thinkers...that the Fourth Commandment required of them the observance, not of the first, but of the specified *seventh* day of the week."

Emergence of Seventh-Day Keeping

Seventh-Day Baptists trace their origin back to 17th-century England. But actually the earliest

known English-speaking keepers of the seventh day were Puritans. John Traske, stentorian-voiced Puritan preacher from the west of England, is the first famous name. He and his wife, both schoolteachers, had the true Sabbath pointed out to them shortly after moving to London in 1617 by Hamlet Jackson, whom Traske later ordained one of four evangelists.

But all things did not go well for long. Both Traskes were imprisoned for "Judaizing" contrary to the practice of the established religion. Mrs. Traske remained in prison sixteen years till her death. Mr. Traske, at least partially, recanted (of keeping the annual feast days of the Old Testament) and was released after three years, but ever afterward — as

RECOMMENDED READING

The question of which day is the Christian Sabbath has been bitterly debated for centuries. Yet the answer is clearly revealed in God's Word and in the pages of history. We offer three booklets which contain irrefutable proof on this subject. Simply request them by title (mailing addresses are on the inside front cover):

- Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?
- Which Day Is the Sabbath of the New Testament?
- Has Time Been Lost?

various mentions in State papers show — continued under suspicion of Sabbath-keeping, until he also died. Perhaps the treatment he received should rightly be described as "persecution." He continued a Puritan, becoming a member of the very famous Independent (Puritan) congregation led by Henry Jacob. (Most of Jacob's people learned and determined to practice the true meaning and method of baptism, and from this congregation sprang five or six others which became the origin of the Particular, or Calvinistic, Baptists.)

After the Traskes and their small group, a few other leaders stood forth to teach, by the printed word and by example, the real Sabbath — Brabourne, Tandy, Ockford, the

Stennetts, etc. A Sabbatarian movement developed, which because of its association with baptism by immersion was "Baptist," though there was great diversity of belief and freedom of conscience in other doctrines. Some Sabbatarians were Calvinistic and some were not. But the diversity continued, even after their descendants eventually became known as Seventh-Day Baptists more than a century later.

Meanwhile, the Puritans as a whole remained a Sunday people and practiced infant baptism.

All the while there was persecution — both for Sabbath-keepers and Puritans. In those days it was only necessary to differ from the party in power to be persecuted. Any kind of difference in understanding was sufficient. It was for this reason that some Puritans found it preferable to flee to Holland and live in exile than to remain at home among people of their own language.

Some of them fled further, across the Atlantic, to found a new commonwealth and become our own founding Pilgrim fathers.

But one of the ironies of the age was that the Puritans, whether in Britain or America, once they themselves were in power, were unwilling to grant to others the same religious freedom they had sought for themselves.

Puritanism in Control

In 1639, religious civil war broke out in Scotland. When the ensuing strife all over Britain was temporarily over ten years later, the king had been beheaded, the army was in control under its leader Oliver Cromwell, and a rubber-stamp, Puritan-dominated Parliament made the laws.

Already by 1643, the Puritan Sunday "Sabbath" became the law of all the territory then under the authority of the Puritan-run Parliament. Continues the Hastings encyclopedia article quoted earlier: "The same Parliament proscribed every kind of Sunday recreation, even

'vainly and profanely' walking for pleasure."

And further: "No recreation remained but whisky-drinking, and a great part of the drunkenness which is still [in 1917] common in Scotland [and we may perhaps add, in the regions of Scottish settlement in the United States] may be traced to an unwise Sabbatarianism."

Among many regulatory acts, the Parliament in 1656 took care to ordain that "the Sabbath should be deemed to extend from twelve of the clock on Saturday night to twelve of the clock on Lord's-day night, and within that compass of time they prohibited all kinds of business and diversions, except works of necessity and mercy" (Neale, *History of the Puritans*, vol. 2, p. 118).

Stringent laws, with severe penalties, were enacted against all the prominent vices, such as profanity, different forms of licentiousness, impious opinions concerning God and the Bible, drunkenness, etc. Next to Sunday, one other day was most important to them, a *fast* on the last Wednesday of every month.

On the positive side, the moral character of people was much improved during Puritan supremacy. No doubt they enforced some things with too much rigor and preciseness, but laying the lusts of mankind under tangible restraint did foster the spirit of religion as well as its appearance.

Puritan political supremacy virtually ended in England in 1660. But the argument, "Which day for the Sabbath?" raged on, and the scene of further progress broadened to North America.

The Persecuted Persecute

The first Puritans landed in America at Plymouth in 1620. The civil government they set up had been based directly on the theocracy of the Hebrews under Moses. Gradually their Common Law became more and more rigid and all-confining. "In 1650, June 10th, the general court enacted the following:

'Further be it enacted, that whosoever shall profane the Lord's-day by doing any servile work, or any such like abuse, shall forfeit for every such default ten shillings, or be whipped.'

"In 1651, June 6th: 'It is enacted by the court that whatsoever person or persons shall neglect the frequenting of public worship of God that is according to God, in the places where they live, or do assemble themselves upon any pretense whatsoever, contrary to God and the allowance of the government... to pay ten shillings for every such default... or be whipped!' (A. H. Lewis, *A Critical History of the Sabbath and the Sunday*, pp. 342, 343.)

"In 1652 and again in 1656, laws were passed, prohibiting Indians from hunting, working or playing on Sunday, within the limits of the colony" (*ibid.*, p. 347).

Even earlier, the Massachusetts Bay Colony operated under the following 1629 instruction from their proprietors in England: "And to the end the Sabbath may be celebrated in a religious manner, we appoint that all that inhabit the plantation, both for the general and particular employments, may surcease their labor every Saturday throughout the year, at three of the clock in the afternoon, and that they spend the rest of that day in catechising, and preparations for the Sabbath, as the minister may direct" (*ibid.*).

In the very year of the before-mentioned discussion in Massachusetts about which day was the Sabbath, the general court decreed: "That wheresoever the ministry of the Word is established, according to the order of the gospel, throughout this jurisdiction, every person shall duly resort and attend thereunto, respectively upon the Lord's-days, and upon such public fast days and days of thanksgiving as are to be generally held by the appointment of authority" (*ibid.*, p. 348). Massachusetts colony, like Plymouth, provided penalties — fines and whipping — for Sunday absence. Similar laws were enacted

in New Haven and Connecticut colonies.

No wonder, then, that Roger Williams, fleeing from Massachusetts to found Rhode Island, was soon joined by many others, and that there religious liberty was brought forth on the American continent.

Rhode Island became a haven for the persecuted Baptists.

To Rhode Island came Stephen Mumford in 1664 from London bringing the Saturday Sabbath, and there he persuaded others who became the first true Sabbath-keeping church in America in 1671.

Americans on Thanksgiving Day 1975 have a lot to be thankful for, both that the Puritans strove mightily to serve God, and that their misguided zeal was finally tempered so that all Americans are free to serve God and follow his ways to the fullest degree. □

For Those Who Want to Help

Jesus said: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations," just before the end of the age. His true disciples were to announce His second coming around the globe.

He told them: "Freely you have received, freely give." But a price must be paid for giving this magazine *The Good News*, the Correspondence Course, booklets and other literature to as many as possible. Therefore, God expects every child of His to give generously as His means of paying the cost of carrying this gospel to others.

"It is more blessed to give," Jesus said, "than to receive."

We have received a number of questions from our readers concerning the nature of Jesus Christ and His relationship to God the Father. The first four letters are a sample of these, presented along with answers from our editors.

Is Christ God?

Jesus told the apostles when He was about to ascend into heaven, "I go unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God."

To me, He plainly said that His God and His Father are one and the same person; further, that His Father is also *our* God! If you have another explanation of the meaning of Christ's words as quoted here, compatible with your teaching that Jesus is God, please let me know.

Mrs. B. D.,
Orting, Washington

• Yes, God the Father was Christ's God, and is our God. In order to fulfill His mission on earth, Christ voluntarily emptied Himself of His divine power (Phil. 2:5-8). Hebrews 2:9 states that "Jesus . . . for a little while was made lower than the angels," in order to "taste death for every one" — to be our Savior. "He had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest . . . For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted" (verses 17, 18, RSV). While He was mortal, He prayed to God the Father as His God (see John 17).

But Christ is now no longer mortal. He was killed, and after three days was resurrected to immortal life (I Cor. 15:3-5). He returned to His former status as a member of the Godhead. He is now "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9) and sits "at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs" (Heb. 1:3-4, RSV).

When Christ said He and the Father were one, and that He was equal with God, the Jews accused Him of blasphemy. Here is what He replied: "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'" (John 10:34-36, RSV.)

Read the answers to the following letters for more information on the nature and relationship of Christ and God the Father.

How Many Gods?

I refer to your article "The Truth About Pagan Doctrines," and agree with you that the doctrine of the Trinity is not proved in the Bible. But equally erroneous is the doctrine that God is dual. You have no other proof but the saying of our Lord in John 10:30: "I and my Father are one." Please read carefully John 17:21: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . ." And: "... There is none other

God but one. . . . But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Cor. 8:4-6).

Mr. Sotis P.,
Fort Lee, New Jersey

• You are correct in saying that God is "one." This is true in the sense that there is one Godhead, or one God family, who are of one mind and purpose. But that family is now composed of two individuals, God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This is clearly stated in John 1:1 (RSV): "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The "Word," or "Spokesman," refers to the One who later became Jesus Christ (see verse 14).

Hebrews 1 also shows conclusively that Christ was and is now God: "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:1-3). God says of Christ: "Let all the angels of God worship him" (verse 6). Only a member of the God family is worthy of worship.

But the God family is not limited to God the Father and Jesus Christ: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God . . ." (John 1:12). And this does not mean an existence on some sort of angelic plane, either. Hebrews 2:7 (RSV) shows that mankind, like Christ, was made "for a little while lower than the angels," but that he is to be "crowned with glory and honor." "Everything" is to be put "in subjection under his feet." But, "As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him," because the resurrection to immortality hasn't occurred yet.

So the family of God will eventually be expanded to include all of mankind who choose to accept Christ as their Savior and follow God's way. Christians "now are . . . the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). I Corinthians 15:49, 53 (RSV) adds: "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven [Christ]. . . . For this mortal . . . must put on immortality." Here it says plainly that resurrected Christians are to be immortal like Christ. He is our elder brother (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11), the pioneer of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). When we are changed, our mortal bodies will become spirit bodies like His. He will make "our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself" (Phil. 3:20-21, RSV).

For more information on this subject, request our free booklet "Why Were You Born?"

"Christ Was a Good Man"

In the GN article "The Path to True Greatness," you said Christ was God. This

is far from the truth. Didn't you know that God Almighty was here a long, long time before Christ was ever born? Christ was a good man, but to make a God of Him is neither fair nor right. God comes first, before Christ.

Mrs. M. N.,
Great Neck, New York

• God and the One who became Jesus Christ have coexisted for eternity. As we said above, Christ was the "Word" referred to in John 1:1-4, the Person who did the actual creating of the universe under God the Father's authority. What many people don't realize is that not only was Christ very God (along with God the Father) long before emptying himself of His divinity to become our sacrifice for sin, but He was the One referred to as the "Lord" (Hebrew YHVH) in the Old Testament. He was the "Rock" spoken of in I Corinthians 10:4; the God who led the children of Israel through the Red Sea.

While on this earth, Christ prayed: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). Part of Christ's message was to reveal God the Father to mankind (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22) because up to that time they had only communicated with the God who became Jesus Christ.

Jesus Less Than the Father?

Can we look to Jesus too much, and make Him to be in our minds above God the Father? Or should we think of Jesus as being a little less than God the Father?

Mrs. Loren B.,
Mauk, Georgia

• If you worship Jesus, you almost automatically acknowledge the Father at the same time, and vice versa. When Jesus' disciples didn't have Christ's relationship to His Father quite clear in their minds, He answered them this way: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Christ and the Father are one (John 10:30). And Christ Himself commands us to give God the Father the preeminence by praying to Him (Matt. 6:9), even though we pray in Jesus' name (John 16:23).

So we should worship both God the Father and Jesus Christ as members of the God family — one as our Father and the other as our Savior and High Priest.

For more information on the subject of Christ's nature, be sure to read the article "Who Was Jesus?" beginning on page 20 of this issue.

Leadership in God's Church

Thank you so much for your article entitled "Leadership in God's Church." It is good for us to be reminded occasionally of the privilege and honor we have been given by God to take part in the work Jesus Christ put on you and your son. May God continue to give you the renewed strength and vitality to carry on. We are behind you both 100%, even though we have so little to give financially. We pray others who have

Letters

more will care to give more. We will do all we can.

Mr. & Mrs. Chuck G.,
Tucson, Arizona

Mr. Armstrong's "Leadership in God's Church" was an excellent article, well-written and to the point. All his articles are always good, but I believe this one was one of the best I've ever read.

Mrs. Frances C.,
Williams, Arizona

The Spirit of Giving

Your article on money was tops! It was also very encouraging. I remembered how David was confused as to how a rich man could have no problems and die quietly in bed — until their fate was revealed to him when he went into the temple to pray. I just now realized the same thing, thanks to your timely article in the *Good News*. It gave me a bigger view of these things and more understanding of the pressures on an unconverted mind when money is a problem.

Mr. C. B.,
Prairie Village, Kansas

The Wavesheaf

In the article "The Wavesheaf Ritual — Proof of Christ and the Bible," by Lawson Briggs (June *Good News*), it is mentioned that the priest asked, "Is the sun set?" They answered, "Yes!" "Shall I reap?" And they answered, "Reap!" Here it pictures the sheaf of grain being cut right after sunset, yet the article later says it was cut loose from the ground just at sunset, the exact time Christ rose from the dead. If Christ rose at the time the sheaf was cut, would He not have then risen after sunset, on the first day of the week?

Mr. Elmer J.,
Norwood, Ohio

• The Jewish priests cut the wavesheaf from the ground just as soon as it was legal to do so. The law said it should be done on the "morrow after the sabbath" (on or following the Passover day). That allowed them to do it any time during the day, just as long as the waving was accomplished before the following day (Monday, if counted sunset to sunset). But the priests and witnesses were there in the field Saturday evening, so that just as soon as the sun was down — at that very instant — they could cut. Hence the questions: "Is the sun set?" "Is this the time?" etc. They didn't waste a minute.

It seems obvious that Christ was buried and also rose just as a new day began. In a sense it was on the Sabbath. In another sense it was on Sunday. Or you might say it was on neither. Those who buried His body hastened to get it wrapped and in the tomb as the sun was sinking low. They must have completed rolling the stone over the entrance just as it sank out of sight.

Cartoons in GN

I am writing this letter in response to the fellow reader who felt that drawings and/or cartoons degrade *The Good News* [April 1975 issue]. I disagree. First of all, cartoons,

just as the articles written in this magazine, are created by men. They are merely one man's way of conveying information. There is nothing sacred about the "means"! What is more important is the subject matter. No one was making a mockery of those who wear the cloth. This cartoon is a graphic representation of Matthew 24:5, and if that isn't the gospel I don't know what is.

Mr. Mark K.,
Richmond Hill, New York

Please rest assured that your publication of cartoons such as "I hear they're a non-prophet organization" will not cause me to withdraw my support of this vital Work. The idea instilled into so many minds is that God only smiles when we rend our garments. When I was only eleven years old, I was threatened with eternal damnation for buying a ten-cent comic book. It seems commonplace to find this attitude in many self-righteous "Christians" who delight in tormenting others with their idea of God's wrath on those enjoying innocent fun.

Mr. Fred A.,
Americus, Georgia

This is in reference to your cartoon on hell shown on the *Garner Ted Armstrong* broadcast. I'm an artist but shook in my shoes to think anyone would use a cartoon to illustrate that there is anything funny or laughable about hell. Can't you see that to make comedy of anything concerning God and God's work is playing into the Communist plot to demoralize our youth? To a child a comic strip is laughable. We need to teach of God's love and strike fear in the heart of people of God's wrath.

Lavada L.,
College Park, Georgia

• The typical concept of an ever-burning hellfire is both unbiblical and ungodly. Request our free booklet "Is There a Real Hellfire?"

Comments from Canada

To be quite honest, I don't think that I ever really considered myself a religious person, let alone a Christian. Although I have always believed in a Creator God, I found it difficult, even embarrassing, to talk about God or the Bible. Anyhow, Mr. Armstrong's broadcasts and the many free publications I have received from Ambassador College have now changed all that. For the first time I feel able to honestly search for, and hopefully attain, a true understanding of the Bible.

Edgar P.,
Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada

Could you please cancel my subscription to both *Plain Truth* and *The Good News*. I no longer wish to receive your magazines or publications at the present time. The way I feel now is I'd like to go a year without listening to the radio and watching television and reading newspapers. I'm getting so tired of this stupid world. I would like to try living in a tent in the woods for a few weeks

and see what it is like to be a hermit. It would be nice to get away from society and the rat race for a few weeks. Before closing, I'd like to say thanks for serving me with your publications — I learned more from them than any church has taught me.

Mr. Charles S.,
Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, Canada

• Wish we could all join you — but there is a job to be done right here in the middle of "this stupid world" (John 17:18).

It is with considerable elation that I'm contacting you at this time. We have just finished our first full year of tithing and wow — God's promise to bless abundantly those who tithe faithfully has been dramatically shown in our case! It certainly is true that you cannot outgive God.

Mr. & Mrs. Cliff D.,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Was Jesus a Jew?

A few days ago a friend of mine let me read one of your booklets, which said that Jesus "looked like any other Jew...." Ridiculous! Jesus was not a Jew! You should really study the scriptures! The Bible says that He was "all things to all men." I have talked with Jewish people, even rabbis, and each of them stated that Jesus was not a Jew, and they should know.

Louise H.,
North Las Vegas, Nevada

• Technically, Paul strove to be "all things to all men" (I Cor. 9:22). Before we can prove whether or not Jesus was a Jew, we must define the term. "Jew" is merely a shortened form of the word "Judean" which referred to the descendants of the patriarch Judah. In the New Testament genealogies, both Joseph and Mary are listed as descending from Judah through the line of David (Matt. 1:2, 6, 16 and Luke 3:23, 31-33). Christ was not only a Jew — of Judah — but also of the Davidic, or kingly, line of Judah. Numerous scriptures refer to Him as the son of David (Matt. 15:22; 22:41-46; Mark 10:47-48; Luke 1:32; Rom. 1:3; etc.).

Christ was also of Jewish nationality, being born in Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. 2:1). Paul said: "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda..." (Heb. 7:14). Christ was of typical Jewish appearance — he escaped capture by blending in with crowds, and had to be betrayed by a kiss. In Revelation 5:5, Jesus is called the "Lion of the tribe of Juda." Both Genesis 49:10 and I Chronicles 5:2 prophesied that the Prince, or Messiah, would come from the tribe of Judah. Pilate knew Jesus was a Jew (John 18:35). He was well known by His countrymen to be the son of Joseph and Mary (Matt. 13:54-56; Luke 4:22), descendants of David. Jesus was a human being who inherited Jewish characteristics from His mother Mary. Christ took on the flesh and blood of his physical parent (Heb. 2:14). It is clear from the Bible that Jesus was born of human flesh by a divine begetting into the nation, area and family of Judah.

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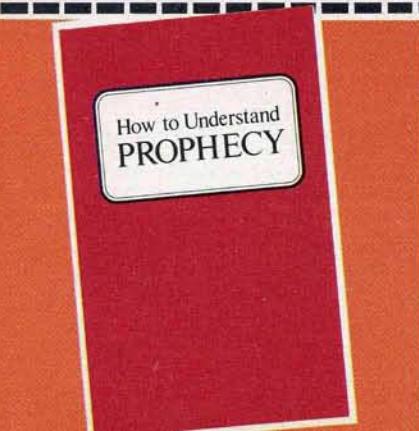
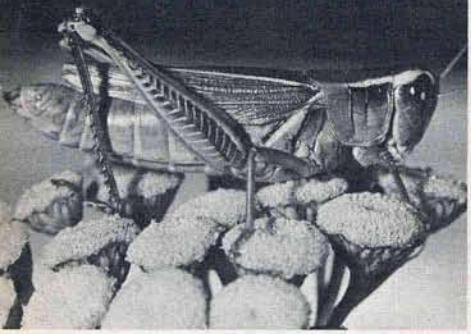
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And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth . . . like unto horses prepared unto battle. (Rev. 9:3,7)



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