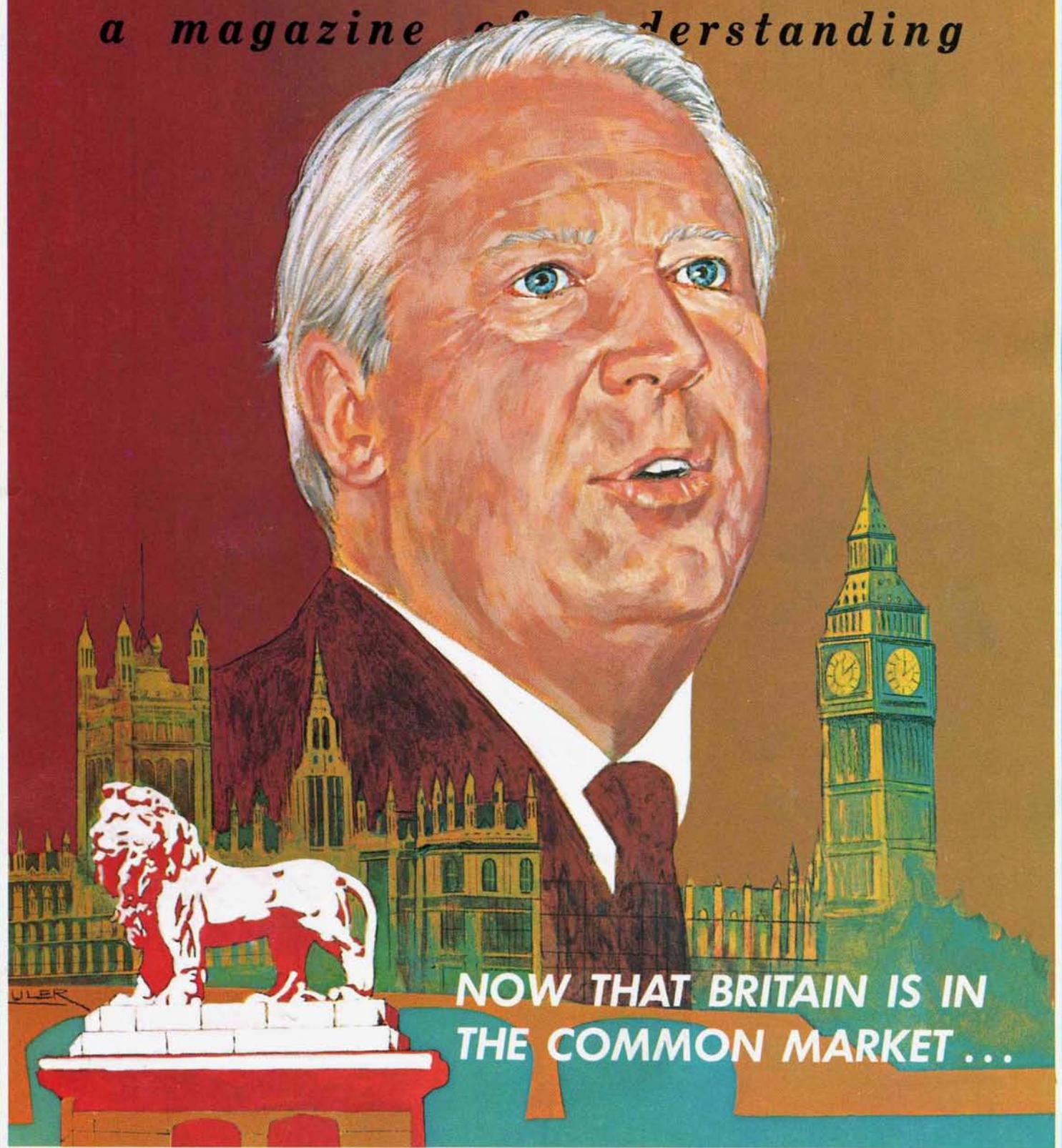


*the*  
**PLAIN TRUTH**  
*a magazine of understanding*



**NOW THAT BRITAIN IS IN  
THE COMMON MARKET ...**



## About Our Cover

The European Economic Community has expanded from six to nine member nations, including Great Britain, Denmark, and Ireland. English Prime Minister Edward Heath has led his nation into a new relationship with Europe which will have important unforeseen consequences.

Bill Schuler — Plain Truth Art

## IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Personal from the Editor</i> .....	1
<i>Prosperity or Calamity? Now That Britain Is in the Common Market</i> .....	2
<i>Vietnam Cease-Fire</i> .....	7
<i>Easter — How Did an Ancient Pagan Custom Become "Christian"?</i> .....	8
<i>Modern "Christianity" versus Christ</i> .....	14
<i>Why the Critical Breakdown in Factory Farming?</i> .....	18
<i>The Awesome Power of Prayer</i> .....	25
<i>Is God on Vacation?</i> .....	29
<i>The Book Almost Nobody Knows</i> .....	34
<i>What You Can Do</i> .....	39
<i>Home Gardening — Here Are the Hidden Payoffs</i> .....	40
<i>What Our Readers Say</i> .....	48

Address all communications to *The PLAIN TRUTH* office nearest you.

- *United States*: P. O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91109.
- *Canada*: P. O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver I, B.C.
- *México*: Institución Ambassador. Apartado Postal 5-595, México 5, D. F.
- *United Kingdom, Europe, India, Africa and the West Indies*: P. O. Box 111, St. Albans, Herts., England.
- *South Africa, Mauritius and Malawi*: P. O. Box 1060, Johannesburg.
- *Rhodesia*: P. O. Box A94, Avondale, Salisbury.
- *Australia and Southeast Asia*: G.P.O. Box 345, Sydney NSW 2001, Australia.
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March 1973

VOL. XXXVIII

NO. 3

Circulation: 2,821,146

Published monthly (except combined September-October issue) by Ambassador College, 300 West Green Street, Pasadena, California 91105, as a public service in the public interest. Your already-paid subscription is made possible by the contributions of those who, voluntarily, have become co-workers in support of this worldwide work. Ambassador College, as a separate corporation, is associated with the Worldwide Church of God, and a portion of the financial needs of the work is supplied by that Church. The publishers have nothing to sell, and although contributions are gratefully welcomed, no solicitation is ever made to the public for financial support.

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Published monthly (except combined September-October issue) at 300 West Green St., Pasadena, California 91105; St. Albans, England; and North Sydney, Australia, by Ambassador College. French, Dutch and German editions published at St. Albans, England; Spanish edition at Pasadena, California. ©1973 Ambassador College. All rights reserved.

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE paid at Pasadena, California, and at additional mailing offices. Entered as SECOND CLASS matter at Manila Post Office on March 16, 1967. Registered in Australia for transmission by post as a book.

# Personal from

*Robert K. Remarking*

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## The HIDDEN Knowledge

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I WAS driven by automobile, a few months ago, within ten miles of the Red Chinese border. I visited, at that point, a world-famous carpet and rug factory. I inspected samples and arranged for production of the special carpeting for the new auditorium now under construction on the Ambassador College campus in Pasadena.

The managing director of the rug company drove me out to the factory and back. Along the way, he pointed out a district of hillside residences. He said the people of this comparatively small district represented many different religions — Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Hinduism, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism. "They're very tolerant toward religions other than their own," he said. "Even different members of one family living in the same house may belong to as many as three different religions."

I couldn't help asking myself, "Why so many different religions in the world?" No two agree. Yet I suppose most feel that theirs is the one and only RIGHT religion.

And then there are the millions, religious and nonreligious, who, through modern education, accept the theory of evolution. Evolution is a theory UNPROVED, and by its very nature UNPROVABLE. Therefore it is

**RELIGIOUS PROCESSION** winds its way through the streets of Hong Kong.

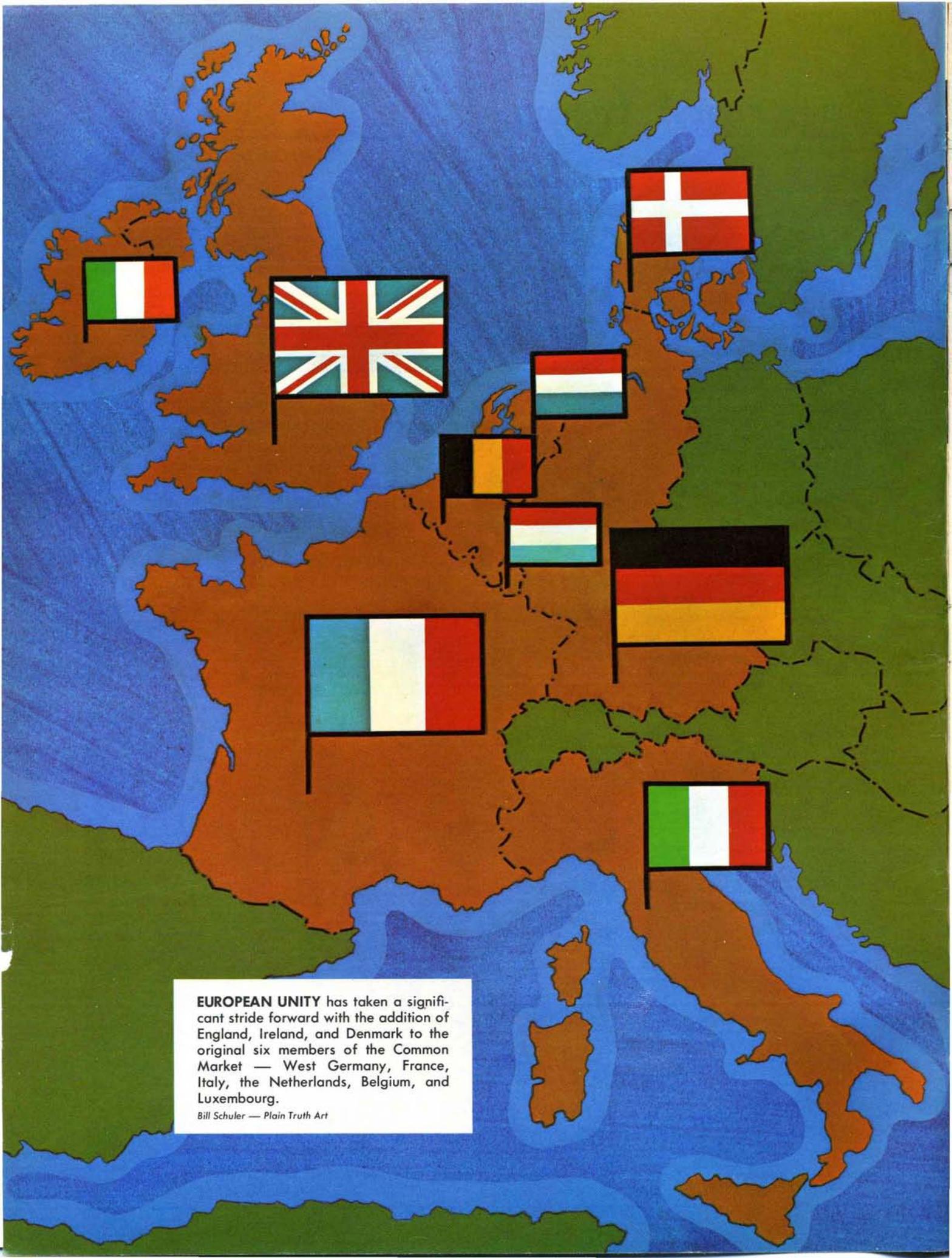
another FAITH OR BELIEF, even though most of its adherents may not think of it as a RELIGION.

Why do people believe whatever they do? How did they come to believe it? Do you know that most people never stop to ask themselves those questions? Of course most who accept a religion were simply brought up to believe the particular

religion of their parents, or of their part of the world. They never made an examination of it, or of other religions, to PROVE whether it is true. And that is true of most who accept the evolutionary theory of origins. That is, they were taught it in school — in college or the university — and they simply went along with the

*(Continued on page 46)*





**EUROPEAN UNITY** has taken a significant stride forward with the addition of England, Ireland, and Denmark to the original six members of the Common Market — West Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

*Bill Schuler — Plain Truth Art*

# PROSPERITY OR CALAMITY?

## Now That Britain Is in the Common Market

*Before there is a final prosperity in utopian peace  
and well-being, grave things are prophesied for  
Britain and Europe.*

by Herbert W. Armstrong

**B**RITAIN is going to look back on Monday, January 1, 1973, in all probability, as a most tragically historic date — a date fraught with ominous potentialities! For that date marked the United Kingdom's entry into the European Community.

But one could logically ask, how could that event portend anything unhappy for the United Kingdom? Probably a majority in Britain initially looked forward to Common Market entry with approval.

Humans seldom foresee unexpected happenings. But prophecy pinpoints the major events in the world's imminent future that will affect us all!

For 39 years now, I've been telling our radio audience and PLAIN TRUTH readers that a political union of ten nations in Europe would rise, resurrecting the Holy Roman Em-

pire of the Middle Ages. I was predicting this even before World War II. Of course, almost no one believed me, then.

Four years before Adolf Hitler plunged the world into World War II, an article appeared in the July 1935 PLAIN TRUTH. That article might have been summarized by this sentence in it: "Out of the present Italy is to emerge a reincarnation of the once great and powerful Roman Empire, by an alliance of ten nations within its territory."

### To Start as an Economic Movement

Biblical prophecy revealed that this empire would start as an economic movement — that it would bring an era of unusual prosperity to Europe. It did start in March, 1957, when six European countries

— West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg signed the Treaty of Rome, creating the European Economic Community (EEC). It has been known, of course, as the Common Market. And it came into active being on January 1, 1958. Immediately, "the Six" began to enjoy a new wave of prosperity.

For years, European nations have wanted to *unite politically*, in a sort of "United States of Europe." But so far, political union has posed more problems than they have been able to solve. While President Charles de Gaulle of France lived, Germany would never have yielded to accept him as ruler over Germany. The French would not accept a German. Until some man emerged, one whom *all* could accept as a supreme authority, it seemed that they were totally stymied. Meanwhile,

long-range economic plans are already more than a year under way in a ten-year program for establishing a common currency for European nations. But if the greater problem of achieving political union could be hurdled, the common currency might be produced very quickly.

#### Ten — But Not Same Ten

This January 1, 1973 date marked also the entry of the Irish Republic and Denmark into the European Community. For a while, it was scheduled to include ten nations. Norway had applied. But in a referendum, Norway voted to stay out. However, the anticipated ten would not, in all probability, have been the prophesied ten.

How did I know, as far back as 1927, that this coming United States of Europe would spring up — *in our time?* I knew because I saw it clearly revealed in Biblical prophecy. Of course it's true that almost no one understands Biblical prophecy. But no wonder! For almost no one understands what the gospel of Jesus Christ is, or *where* and *how* in prophecy the United States and British Commonwealth are identified.

There has, of course, been much preaching of a Gospel about Jesus Christ. In that sense, Christ has been much preached to the world. But not His Gospel! Not the Gospel He personally taught.

Very few have realized that Jesus came with *a news announcement!* The very word "Gospel" means "Good News." And it's made very plain in the New Testament. Jesus taught the good news of the Kingdom of God. Yet few have understood what the Kingdom of God really is. You should write for our free booklet, *Just What Do You Mean . . . Kingdom of God?* It contains vital knowledge, little understood.

Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God is the government of God, which is going to rule all the nations of the earth to bring world peace

and salvation with eternal life as God's gift. He taught that the Kingdom of God is not only the coming world-ruling government, but also the ruling divine family into which we may be born. You should also request the free booklet, *Just What Do You Mean . . . Born Again?* Nothing has been more misunderstood! Nothing is so important! Yet it's very plain and clear in the Bible! Write for these booklets and get the surprise of your life when you see these clear truths *in your own Bible!*

Jesus gave descriptions of the Kingdom of God. He described it in many parables — yet for eighteen and a half centuries, this truth — this Gospel — was not preached to the whole world. It's been right there in the Bible all these years! It's plain and clear. But *don't ask me why it wasn't proclaimed to the world!*

There is a direct and most vital connection between this true Gospel, which Christ taught, and the uniting of ten nations in Europe. The Gospel Jesus brought from God — the good news He announced — was news of the future! For that Kingdom of world rule was not set up in His day, nor has it even yet been set up! So Christ's Gospel — this news announcement — was, in itself, *prophecy*. Did you ever wonder why approximately one third of the Bible is devoted to prophecy? Prophecy is directly connected with the true Gospel.

The prophecies of the book of Daniel are connected with the Kingdom of God — and therefore with the Gospel.

In the second chapter of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon ruled over the very first world-empire — the Chaldean Empire. This was 600 years before Christ. Nebuchadnezzar had a most unusual dream. God used the prophet Daniel to interpret the meaning of that dream. In it, this Chaldean king saw a frightfully large metallic image.

Describing and interpreting it, Daniel said: "This image's head was

of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest *till . . .*" — notice a time element is introduced — till certain events occur — ". . . till that a stone was cut out without hands [supernaturally] which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces" (Daniel 2:32-34).

Of course, these parts of the image were symbols. But Daniel interpreted the symbols:

"This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O King, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. . . . Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron. . . . and as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. . . . And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom . . . shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:36-44).

So here in this prophecy, we see a time sequence of *governments*, commencing with the first world empire, 600 years before Christ, continuing down through time to, and past, our time — even to the setting up of the Kingdom of God. So Christ's Gospel was concerned with a succession of governments, climaxing in the government of God.

The panorama of prophecy of these same kingdoms continues in the seventh chapter of Daniel.

In that chapter, Daniel had a prophetic dream. He saw four wild animals. The first was like a lion. The second was like a bear, and the third was like a leopard which had four heads. A fourth beast was unlike any of the others — stronger, more

terrible than the previous three, and with great iron teeth. Out of the head of this fourth beast grew ten horns.

Daniel was given the interpretation of the dream. The lion was Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldean Empire (Babylon). The bear was the Persian Empire, and the leopard represented the Greco-Macedonian Empire with four divisions. The fourth beast was the Roman Empire. The horns were other governments which came out of the Roman Empire after its fall (A.D. 476). The first three horns were uprooted between A.D. 493 and A.D. 554 by a smaller horn, representing a religious kingdom. It persecuted "the saints" — people of God — until the establishment of the Kingdom of God, when "the saints" will possess the Kingdom and rule.

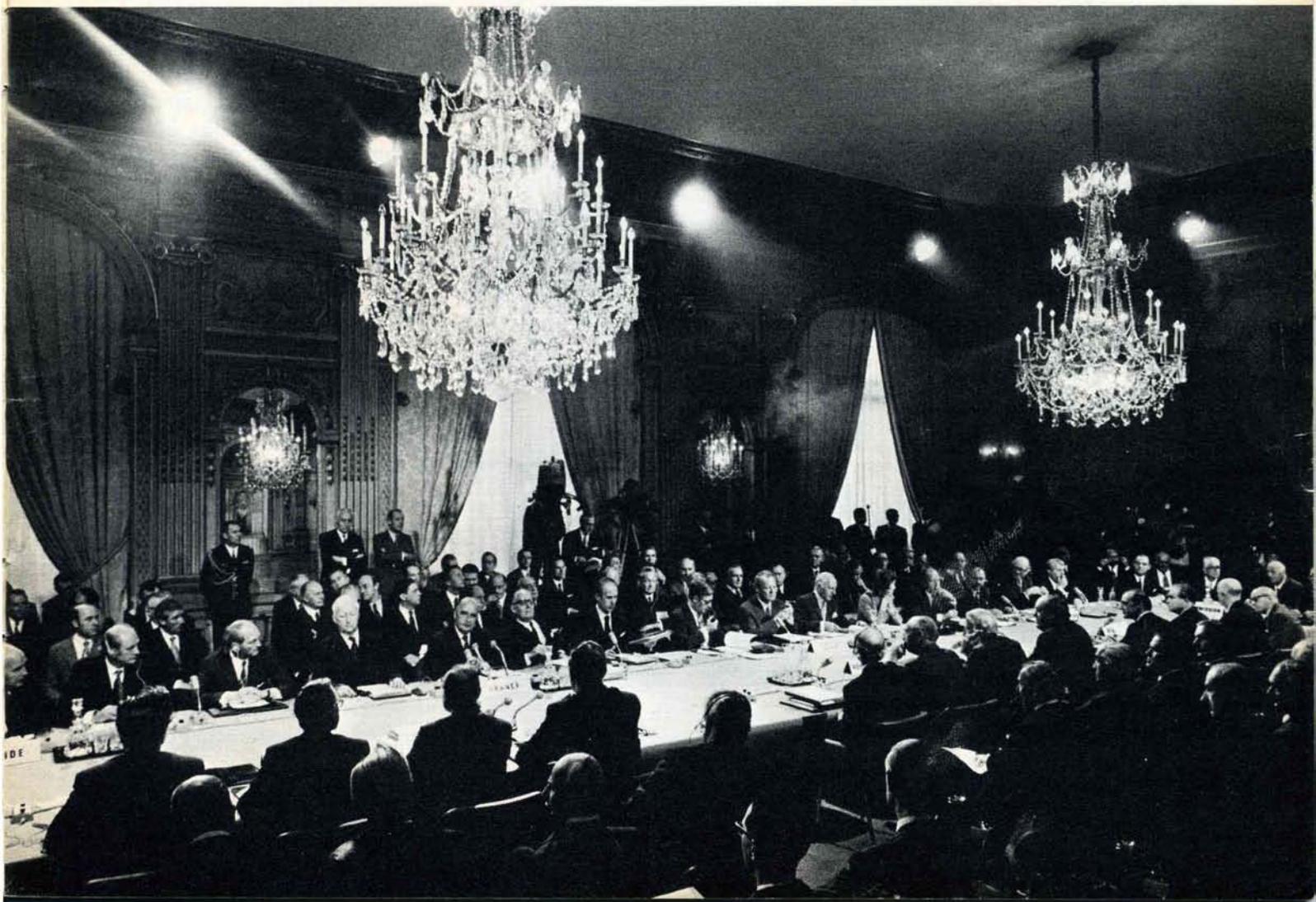
Next came a succession of five kingdoms — or governments — carried on in the 13th chapter of Revelation. John, the apostle who wrote the book of Revelation, saw in vision one wild animal — like a leopard, with the feet of a bear, the mouth of a lion, with seven heads and ten horns and crowns on the horns (not heads). A dragon, interpreted in the 12th chapter of Revelation to be the Devil, gave this beast his power, and his seat and great authority — a government. This one beast, the Roman Empire, is the one that had all the strengths of Daniel's four beasts which had a total of seven heads. But the crowns on its horns depict a time of rule after the fall of the ancient Roman Empire — when the deadly wound was healed. Five of the horns continued for 1260 years.

Now remember, there were, in the book of Daniel, seven heads, but only four wild animals. But Daniel's leopard had four heads. This leopard was a symbol for the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great. After Alexander conquered the Persian Empire, he died from illness ten days after a prolonged banquet and drinking bout. About ten years later, his vast empire was split up into four major divisions by his four top generals. The Roman Empire absorbed all four. So the animal John saw in the 13th chapter of Revelation was the Roman Empire, which dated from 31 B.C. to A.D. 476.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, three smaller governments ruled the West — the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths. But they were totally uprooted. Not a vestige

**AN HISTORIC FIRST** — Chiefs of State of the nine member nations of the newly expanded Common Market make history in their first Summit Conference, held in Paris in October 1972.

*Bundesbildstelle Photo*



of them remained. That left seven more governments to come, symbolized by the last seven of the ten horns out of this seventh head — that is, continuing after the fall of the Roman Empire through the Middle Ages and again in our time. The reestablishment of the empire occurred in A.D. 554. Remember, the prophecy in the 13th chapter of Revelation said it would continue 1260 years.

The last seven eras of government symbolized by the last seven of the ten horns of the Roman Empire formed, as it were, an eighth kingdom, which was like a continuing part of Daniel's preceding seven government heads. This is pictured as the beast or animal, described in the 17th chapter of Revelation. Through the High Middle Ages, it was called the Holy Roman Empire. It began in A.D. 554, under Justinian. The second head of government, represented by this 17th chapter beast — or animal — was Charlemagne, A.D. 800 — the

Frankish head of state. He was followed by the third head of state, Otto the Great, of the German dynasty. The fourth head of state was the Hapsburg dynasty, culminating in the reign of Charles the Great. The fifth head of state was Napoleon. Napoleon's dynasty ended in 1814. These five heads of states were symbolized by the first five heads of the 17th chapter beast (of Revelation). Throughout these periods of rise and fall, religion was the most significant institution to provide continuity to the Holy Roman Empire. It provided continuity when the political power failed.

Now the prophetic time in which the apostle John appears to have seen the next sequence of events in his vision was approximately 1934-1937. John wrote, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the founda-

tion of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (Revelation 17:8).

Now continuing, "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:9-14).

So you see the time described — as if looking forward from about 1935 to the second coming of Christ. The ten horns on the seventh head are yet to come, but are now beginning to rise through the European Community. These picture the final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. It was, through the Middle Ages, and of necessity will be, a *united church and state empire*. There is no other kind of union that can provide the unity Europe has been seeking.

I said at the beginning, Britain's entry into the European Community portends a tragic situation. Britain will be faced with a dilemma. Will she abandon Protestantism? She will be forced to do this if she is to have a permanent role with the other nine that will form this United Europe! Today's violence in Northern Ireland is the tragic beginning of a generally unforeseen religious struggle that will be intensified throughout the Western world when the European Community becomes a united political union. □

**ON JANUARY 1**, after signing the treaty at Brussels, Britain formally entered the Common Market. This epochal event will have tremendous impact on the future of European union.

Alfred Hennig — Plain Truth Photo



# Vietnam Cease-Fire:

## How Long Will it Last?

AS WE go to press, the long-awaited cease-fire in Vietnam has been announced by the Presidents of the United States and of North and South Vietnam.

But are we going to have *real* peace?

Listen to the cautious words of President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam: "True and lasting peace will depend upon the intentions and goodwill of the Communists." In other words, peace will come only if the Communists *want* it to come.

### What Communists Plan

Does a revolutionary government, such as North Vietnam, fight for a quarter of a century, sacrificing the lives of a million men, and then give up because of a piece of paper?

Assuredly not.

According to General Vo Nguyen Giap, North Vietnam's defense minister, the Communist revolution must continue throughout Vietnam although a cease-fire has been signed. Giap, the victor over the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, said the continuing revolution is one of the major duties facing "the Communist compatriots of the entire country" now that "victory had been won" *against the United States*. The key for what the Communists now call the "new stage of the revolution" was to come to terms with South Vietnam's protector, the United States, so that the U.S. could depart "with honor."

It has always been the Communist way to talk peace and coexistence, to hold out the prospects of a negotiated peace. But at the confer-

ence table, a Communist never really negotiates to seek peaceful solutions. He talks only to *gain time*. The Communists are not interested in real peace, but in overthrowing capitalism and subjecting the whole world to the dictates of the Communist Party. The United States has seemingly never caught on to what the Communist plan is.

The worldwide Communist movement has used Vietnam as a means of weakening the United States internally and diminishing its prestige abroad. The Vietnam struggle divided America as it had not been since the Civil War. Perhaps no other war in U.S. history has done more to sap the nation's pride and power.

North Vietnam's late Ho Chi Minh once gave this warning to the French nearly a quarter of a century ago: "You will kill ten of our men and we will kill one of yours, and in the end it will be you who tire of it." Later, when the first American combat troops set foot on the shores of Vietnam, long after the last French soldier had departed, Ho's strategy remained the same. As recently as 1968, North Vietnam's Giap stated: "The myth of the invincibility of the United States — this colossus that leans, powerless, on the H-bomb — is crumbling forever."

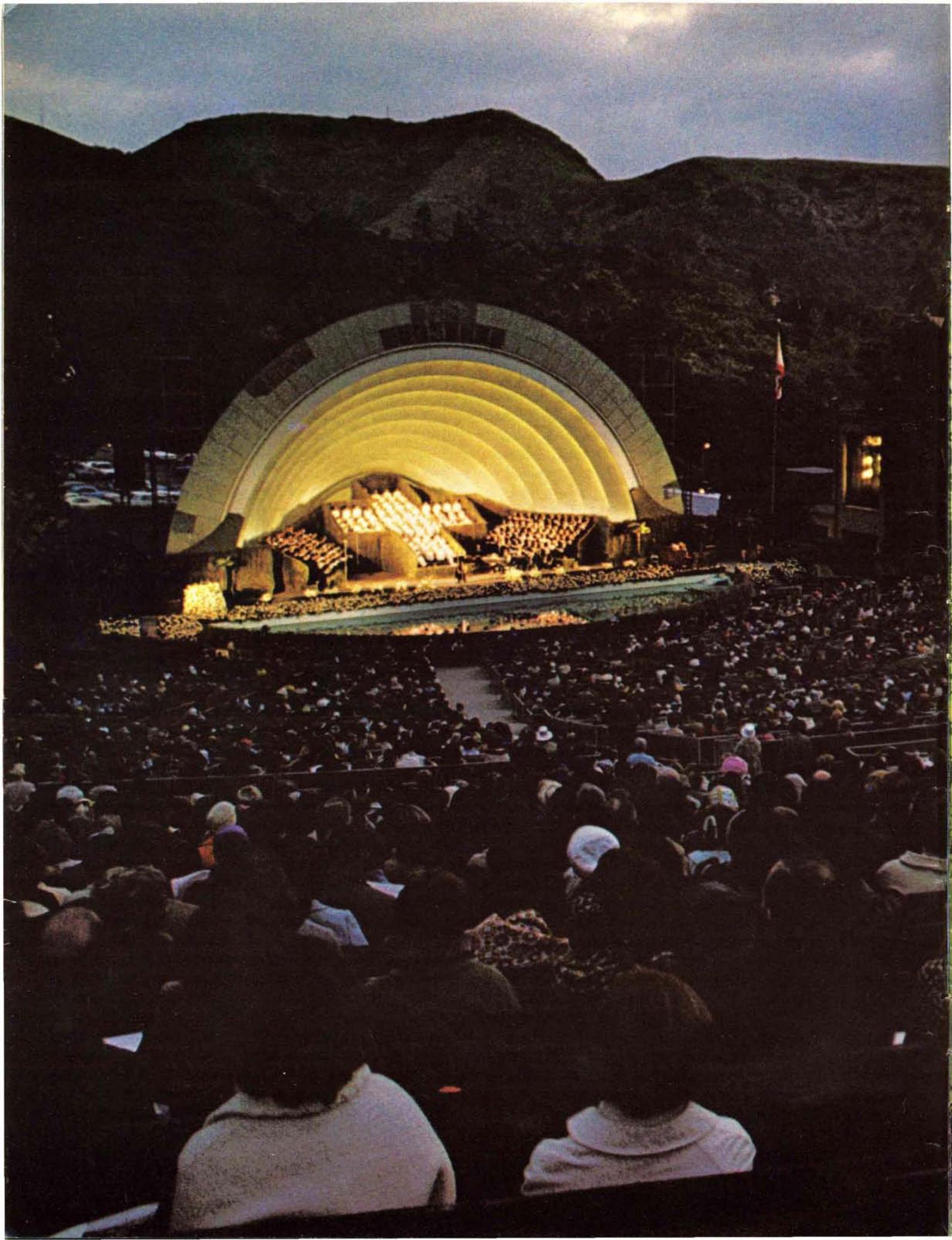
From its very beginnings, the worldwide Communist movement, though suffering at times from its own internal dissensions, has been pursuing the ultimate goal of world revolution and conquest. There is nothing to indicate that these plans have changed.

Since 1917, Communism has been responsible for the deaths of between 95 and 147 million people. In the process, one third of the world has become Communist. Communist leaders will not quit now with only one third of their goal achieved.

### The New U. S. Role.

Americans have come away from the Vietnam experience in a changed mood. "The time has passed," said President Nixon in his inaugural address, "when America will make every other nation's conflict our own..." The American government and American people have been sickened and drained by the Vietnam experience. The United States has "tired of it," in the words of Ho. In the future, where U.S. military intervention might be justified, there is now a much greater possibility the nation may not wish to become involved. The French magazine *L'Express* recently said it more strongly: "*Isolationism* in the U.S. is becoming a dominant political force. And Europe, in the event of outside menace, can no longer count on the United States as its veritable ally."

The January cease-fire agreement leaves Indochina vulnerable to Communist takeover. With the United States out of the way, the North Vietnamese forces will undoubtedly sooner or later attempt a bold new move. Their goal of national unification of North and South Vietnam by military force, if necessary, has never — and will never — change. □



# EASTER-

## How Did an Ancient Pagan Custom Become "Christian"?

Where did Easter originate? Are Easter customs really Christian? You may be astonished at the origin of Easter and what the Bible says about it.

by William F. Dankenbring

**W**HAT DO colored eggs and bunny rabbits have to do with Christ and His teachings? Have you ever wondered? Where did the Easter parade and hot-cross buns come from? What about Easter sunrise services?

Millions of people assume that these time-hallowed customs are Christian and must therefore date back to the early Christian Church. Yet few know the real origin of Easter, or why the Christian-professing world, today, observes this particular holiday.

The true story of the origin of Easter is intriguing. In this article, we will explore the earliest beginnings of the celebration of the spring festival called Easter, discover the origins of many of today's

**EASTER SUNRISE SERVICES** are held annually at the famous Hollywood Bowl in California. Multiple thousands rise early in order to participate in this modern version of an ancient rite of spring.

John Kilburn — Plain Truth Photo

Easter customs, and see the amazing manner in which this ancient custom wove its way into the fabric of modern Christianity. No story is more astonishing.

### Day of a Pagan Goddess

First, you should know that the English word Easter and the German *Ostern* come from a common origin (*Eostur, Eastur, Ostara, Ostara*), which to the Norsemen meant the season of the rising or growing sun — the season of new birth. The word was used by ancient Europeans to designate the "Feast of New Life" in the spring.

The word long antedates Christianity. Originally, it referred to the celebration of the spring sun, which had its birth in the East and brought new life upon the earth. The ancient Teutonic goddess of spring was addressed as *Eostre*. Easter, then, antedates Christianity by centuries.

But what about the myriad customs that surround this day — the

chocolate bunnies, the Easter eggs, the parades?

Again, you may be surprised to learn that red, blue, yellow or green eggs, as symbols of the renewal of life, were part of a custom that goes back centuries before the birth of Christ. Eggs, a symbol of fertility in many lands, are easily traceable to ancient pagan lore. So is the famous Easter bunny. (Only the chocolate rabbit is modern.) This rapidly breeding and multiplying animal was an ancient symbol of fecundity. And so modern children, eagerly hunting for Easter eggs supposedly deposited by a rabbit, are unknowingly following an ancient fertility rite.

What about the Easter parade? Does that, too, date back to the days of antiquity when pagans paraded in the springtime, donning new hats and clothes to honor their goddess of spring?

The answer is yes. Scholars can trace the Easter parade to similar

rites in ancient Germany, Greece, and even India.

Hot-cross buns, interestingly enough, were eaten by pagan Saxons in honor of Easter, their goddess of light. The Mexicans and Peruvians had a similar custom. In fact, the custom of eating hot-cross buns was practically universal in the ancient pagan world!

Easter fires, although not a widespread phenomenon today, are still lit in some northern European countries, notably Germany. This practice is clearly traceable to pagan antiquity.

And what about Easter sunrise services? They too go back to the pagan custom of prostrating before the rising springtide sun. The goddess of light, Eastre or Ostera, was identified with the rising sun.

Throughout the Middle Ages, this pagan custom was continued. "A universal celebration was held in the Middle Ages at the hour of sunrise. According to an old legend, the sun dances on Easter morning or makes three cheerful jumps at the moment of rising, in honor of Christ's Resurrection. . . . All over Europe people would gather in open plains or on the crests of hills to watch the spectacle of sunrise on Easter Day. The moment of daybreak was marked by the shooting of cannon and the ringing of bells. . . . In most places the crowds would pray as the sun appeared. . . . From this medieval custom dates our modern SUNRISE SERVICE held by many congregations in this country on Easter Sunday" (Weiser, *The Easter Book*, pp. 158-159).

Plainly, then, today's Easter has its roots deep in ancient paganism — centuries before the birth of Christ — and its rites have scarcely changed.

#### The Earliest Easter Story

From the literature of the ancient Sumerians in Mesopotamia comes the earliest legend of the death and

resurrection of a pagan deity — the first Easter story.

Tammuz, whose name meant "true son of the deep waters," was married to the goddess Inanna or Ishtar (pronounced Eestar), the "mother goddess" who represented Mother Earth. According to the legend, when Tammuz died, Inanna was grief-stricken and followed him to the underworld to the realm of Eresh-Kigal, queen of the dead. In her absence, the earth lost its fertility, crops ceased to grow, and animals ceased mating — all life was threatened. Then Ea, god of water and wisdom, sent a messenger from heaven to the underworld to bring back Inanna or Ishtar. The messenger sprinkled Inanna and Tammuz with the water of life, giving them power to return to the light of the sun for six months of the year. Each year, therefore, Tammuz would again return to the realm of the dead for six months, Inanna would pursue him, and her grief would move Ea to rescue them.

This ancient legend, very widespread in the Middle East, traveled to Phoenicia and Syria, where Tammuz was called Adon and Inanna was called Astarte. In Greece, they became known as Adonis and Aphrodite. The original legend underwent many changes in its passage to



other countries, but the essential theme of autumnal death and vernal resurrection remained. In Asia Minor, Adonis was called Attis and his wife-mother was Cybele, Rhea or Dindymene. The Egyptian myth of Osiris, who married (in this version his sister) Isis, the Great Mother goddess of the Egyptian pantheon, springs from the same source.

The Egyptian Osiris, put to death by Set, was, it is said, brought back to life and emerged from a sarcophagus or from a broken egg. On rising from the dead, he became lord of the Tuat or underworld and the judge of the living and the dead. He was called "Eternity and Everlastingness," the one who would come again to reign upon the earth.

Says Alan W. Watts in *Easter, Its Story and Meaning*: "It would be tedious to describe in detail all that has been handed down to us about the various rites of Tammuz, Adonis, Kore, Dionysus, and many others. . . . Some of them were celebrated at the vernal equinox, or thereabouts, and some at midsummer. But their universal theme — the drama of death and resurrection — makes them the forerunners of the Christian Easter, and thus the first 'easter services'" (p. 58).

Writes James George Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, "When we reflect how often the Church has skillfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith on the *old stock of paganism*, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration of the *dead and risen Adonis*, which . . . was celebrated in Syria at the same season" (p. 345).

Frazer notes the striking similarities between the rites of Adonis and the Easter rites observed in Greece, Sicily, and southern Italy. He points out that ecclesiastical authorities were motivated to assimilate the rites of the risen Adonis to celebrate the risen Christ.

In analyzing the strange customs



Laenderpress Photos

**OUTDOOR EASTER FIRES** (above) are a tradition in much of Europe dating back to early pre-Christian times. Colorfully dyed Easter eggs (below, opposite page) have been traced by scholars to early Egypt.

of the pagans and their astonishing similarity to certain "Christian" customs today, Watts was moved to write, "At first sight it is surprising to find so many of these stories and symbols of death-and-resurrection in so many different places. The points of resemblance between the Christ story, on the one hand, and the myth and ritual of ancient and 'pagan' cults, on the other, is at times startling enough to look like a conspiracy" (*op. cit.* p. 22).

A "conspiracy"?

The answer may be clearly seen in the historical record of how this festival crept into the professing Christian Church, and in comparing this festival with the evidence from the Bible.

#### The Biblical Tradition

Search through the Bible and you will find no evidence that either Christ, the apostles, or the New Testament Church ever observed Easter Sunday.

Admittedly, there is one verse in the King James Version of the Bible which mentions "Easter." In that verse "Easter" is a flagrant mistranslation! The original Greek word used in Acts 12:4 is *pascha*

meaning "Passover." Modern translations clear up this difficulty by translating the word properly.

Further, a careful study of the New Testament proves the time of Jesus' resurrection was not Sunday morning, anyway. (Have you ever wondered how three days and three nights — see Matthew 12:40 — can be squeezed between Friday evening at sunset and Sunday morning at sunrise? Obviously, there is something wrong with the popular tradition. Our free booklet *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday* clearly explains the true timing and sequence of events.)

But if the early Christians did not celebrate Easter, then what did they celebrate? Why did early translators mistakenly translate a word meaning Passover as "Easter"?

Here is the answer. The Passover was a solemn holy day in ancient Israel (see Exodus 12). Israel's God "passed over" the enslaved Israelites and slew the firstborn children of their enemies — of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The Passover was commemorated every year in the spring on the 14th of the Hebrew month Nisan, in the evening, by eating roast lamb and herbs (see Exodus

12). This was a statute instituted for observance forever (Exodus 12:14, 24).

In the days of Christ, the Jews still observed the Passover. Christ and His disciples observed it. This solemn holy day is mentioned by name 48 times in the Old Testament, and 28 times in the New Testament.

In Luke 22, we discover that, while Jesus and His disciples kept His final Passover, Jesus changed the manner of its observance. When the hour for eating the Passover supper came, Jesus instituted the ordinance often referred to as the "Lord's Supper" or "Communion." He told His disciples to drink of the cup, symbolizing His blood which was about to be shed for our sins, and to eat of the unleavened bread, symbolizing His body which was about to be broken for our physical sins, as a remembrance — a memorial — of His supreme sacrifice (Luke 22:14-20).

Thus Jesus changed the emblems of the ancient Passover, which had been instituted forever. He did not do away with this solemn holy day. Rather, He simply *changed* the way it was to be observed. The Passover lamb, symbolizing the Messiah, was no longer to be killed; rather, the taking of the wine and the unleavened bread now symbolize the Messiah's — Christ's — suffering and death for our sins.

But what, you may wonder, does this solemn biblical holy day have to do with Easter?

There is no record in the New Testament of the early Christians ever observing Easter. But there is evidence that, as Christ commanded, they continued observing the Passover each spring, on the 14th of Nisan, commemorating Christ's sacrifice for our sins! How, then, did Easter creep into the professing Christian Church?

#### "The Age of Shadows"

The correct translation of Acts 12:4 shows that Luke, the writer of

the book of Acts, acknowledged that the *pascha* or Passover was still in existence and being observed when he wrote the book of Acts. Similarly, the apostle Paul indicated that Christians were observing the Passover when he wrote the epistle of I Corinthians (see I Corinthians 5:7-8; 11:20-34).

But after the New Testament was completely written and after all the original apostles had died, a change occurred. Church historian Jesse Lyman Hurlbut describes the age that followed as "the Age of Shadows."

Says Hurlbut: "For fifty years after . . . Paul's life *a curtain hangs over the church*, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises, about 120 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church-fathers, we find a church *in many aspects very different* from that in the days of . . . Peter and . . . Paul" (*The Story of the Christian Church*, p. 41).

Hurlbut continues on page 60, "For fifty or sixty years after the death of . . . Peter and . . . Paul, the *history of the church is a blank*."

What had happened? The answer is in the Bible — a conspiracy to introduce pagan customs under the name "Christian" had been formed in the days of the apostle Paul (see Gal. 1:6-9; II Cor. 11:13-15; II Tim. 4:3-4). By the last days of the apostle John, this conspiracy had grown so great that in some areas, *true* Christians were being cast out of the established local churches! (III John 9, 10.)

### The Long Struggle

About A.D. 154, Polycarp, who had observed the Passover with the apostle John and other apostles, traveled to Rome to discuss the issue of Passover and Easter with Anicetus, the bishop at Rome. At the time, neither could persuade the other to give up his custom. Wrote the fourth-century church historian Eusebius:

"For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it [the

Passover], because he had always observed it with John, the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it [Passover], who said that he was bound to maintain the practice [Easter Sunday] of the presbyters before him" (*Ecclesiastical History*, Bk. V, Chap. XXIV).

Before Easter was universally adopted, there was a bitter and protracted controversy. In the days of Emperor Commodus (A.D. 180-192), when Victor became bishop at Rome (A.D. 190), the dispute became severe. Declared the historian Eusebius:

"There was a considerable discussion raised about this time, in consequence of a difference of opinion respecting the observance of the paschal season. The churches of all Asia, guided by a remoter tradition, supposed that they ought to keep the *fourteenth day of the moon* for the festival of the *Saviour's passover*, in which day the Jews were commanded to kill the paschal lamb. . . . But . . . *it was not the custom to celebrate it in this manner in the churches throughout the rest of the world . . .*" (*Eccl. Hist.*, Bk. V, chap. XXIII).

Even at this late date, the Churches of God in Asia dissented from the majority viewpoint. Polycrates, their leader, wrote to Victor, bishop at Rome, saying:

"We, therefore, observe the *genuine day; neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom*" (chap. XXIV). He cited New Testament Christians, including Philip and the apostle John, and asserted: "All these observed the fourteenth day of the passover according to the gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith" (*ibid.*).

Upon receiving this letter, Victor, bishop at Rome, became furious. Reports Eusebius: "Upon this, Victor, the bishop of the church of Rome, forthwith endeavoured to cut off the churches of all Asia, together

with the neighbouring churches, as heterodox, from the common unity. And he publishes abroad by letters, and proclaims, that all the brethren there are wholly excommunicated" (*ibid.*).

Although at that time Victor was restrained from carrying out this threat, the controversy continued until as late as the fourth century.

### Introduction of Easter

By the early fourth century A.D. nominal Christianity became established as a state religion of the Roman Empire. Almost everybody sought membership in the new Church, and almost nobody was rejected. Says Hurlbut of this period:

"The services of worship increased in splendor, but were less spiritual and hearty than those of former times. The forms and ceremonies of paganism gradually crept into the worship. Some of the old heathen feasts *became church festivals with change of name and of worship*" (*ibid.*, p. 79).

One of those heathen feasts which were adopted by large numbers of professing Christians and endorsed by the leaders of the popular church was Easter!

Roman Emperor Constantine, who had been a devoted worshipper of the sun most of his life, and who did not embrace the "Christian" religion until his death bed, proposed the adoption of pagan customs by the Christians.

The church leaders of that day felt that for "Christianity" to conquer the world, it would be wise to compromise with pagans throughout the Empire. Since the common people were habituated to their pagan customs and revelled in their pagan holidays, church leaders devised a method to reconcile paganism and nominal Christianity. They simply "baptized" pagan customs, thereby making them "Christian" in appearance and name. The result? Pagans began to flock into the Church in droves. They kept the same days

and performed the same rituals, but now they did it to "Christ" instead of to Astarte or Tammuz! They had not, however, understood what it meant to repent and become converted.

How, then, did Easter creep into the professing Christian Church?

Constantine presided over the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) at which the "Easter question" was taken up for settlement. In an attempt to conciliate the conflicting customs of "Christians" throughout the Roman Empire, he wanted his religious leaders to determine a universal date for the celebration of Easter so that all the peoples of his Empire would observe this festival on the same date. It was at the Council of Nicaea that the date of Easter was declared to be the first Sunday after the full moon following the spring equinox.

#### Why Easter Is Wrong

"Well, what difference does it make?" many might ask. "Sure, Easter Sunday is derived from heathen customs, but don't we observe it as a Christian holiday, in honor of Christ and His resurrection. I don't see anything inherently wrong or evil about that!"

In the first place, Easter does not commemorate the resurrection. The resurrection was not on Sunday. Nor was the crucifixion on any so-called "Good Friday." And second, we humans are not free to select our own method of worshipping God!

King Solomon was inspired to write: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). Jesus Christ said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).

The vitally important question is: What does God say about taking pagan practices and "making them Christian"?

Jeremiah 10:2, "Thus saith the

Lord, *Learn not the way of the heathen*, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them."

Those are plain words.

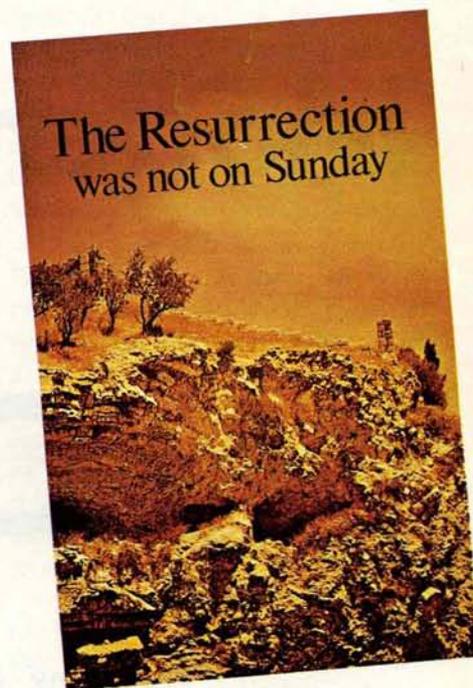
God says in the Bible that Satan the devil "deceiveth the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). Do you want to go along with the world in its deception? Speaking of the religious system and customs of this modern world, God says to His people: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

Should you simply go along with the crowd and attend Easter services? God says: "... what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

God sent ancient Israel into captivity because that nation forsook His commandments and began following pagan ways and incorporating pagan traditions, customs, and superstitions into the worship of God (see II Kings 17; Jeremiah 44; Ezekiel 8). Should we imitate their mistakes?

The question is whether or not we are willing to trustfully obey God, even when we do not fully understand why He tells us to do something. To learn this kind of obedience based on faith is of decisive importance not only for our life here and now, but also for all eternity.

Whether or not we observe pagan customs labeled "Christian" makes a great deal of difference to God. Therefore, let's get back to the pure, unaltered and unadulterated faith which was once delivered to the saints. □



## When Was Christ Resurrected?

Easter Sunday, shocking as it may seem, does NOT commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ was not resurrected on a Sunday morning nor did He die on "Good Friday." Read the irrefutable Biblical proof in this carefully documented booklet.

See inside front cover for address of PLAIN TRUTH office nearest you.

# Modern "Christianity"

## versus

# CHRIST

*Very few grasp the spectacular difference between today's Christianity and the original teachings of Christ.*

by Roderick C. Meredith

"SINCE COMING here," an African student told a white friend, "I've discovered the white man has two gods — one that he taught us about, and another to whom he prays. A mission school taught me that the tribal doctrines of my ancestors, who worshipped images and believed in witchcraft, were wrong and almost ludicrous. But here you worship larger images — cars and electrical appliances. I honestly can't see the difference."

This disillusioned young man had discerned that modern "Christianity" had strayed a long way from the original teachings of Christ. The realization hit him like a thunderbolt.

But why have modern Christians forsaken the simple teachings of Jesus Christ?

### Where Does Christ Come In?

Let's take a case in point. Jesus Christ declared: "You have heard the saying, 'You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you . . ." (Matthew 5:43-44, Moffatt translation.)

Do professing Christians in our Western culture follow Christ by loving their enemies and turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:39) as He commanded? Of course not. That would not be practical, we are told.

The truth is that most of the greatest and bloodiest wars in all history have been waged primarily in Europe — the very heart of Western, Christian civilization.

Were the men, women and even children involved in these wars true followers of the humble carpenter of Nazareth who said: "Love your enemies"? Remember that these people called themselves by the name of Christ — "Christian."

It seems that nearly all Western religions, philosophies and sects persist in applying the name of Christ to their ideas, teachings and practices, however far removed from the teachings of Christ they may be. In ancient times, the pagans at least honestly and openly acknowledged the idols they worshipped.

### Using Christ's Name Proves Nothing

Since the life, death and resurrection of the Son of God, Christ's name has been placed on every type

of pagan, perverted philosophy of man that has come along! The fact that many doctrines, ideas and practices of men are called "Christian" proves absolutely nothing!

Did Christ start these ideas and institutions? Do they follow His teaching and His example? How can you know?

What was the teaching of Jesus Christ?

The only authoritative answer is found in the inspired record of what Jesus did teach and in the perfect example He set for us to follow. Your own Bible contains this inspired record.

With the above questions in mind, let's look into the Bible honestly, openly and without prejudice.

What did Jesus — the author of true Christianity — actually teach and do? And remember that a true "Christian" is one who *follows Christ* and His teaching!

#### **What Did Jesus Teach?**

At the beginning of His ministry, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15).

The word "kingdom" implies "government." Jesus was talking about the coming government of God over this earth. He commanded: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel!"

To "repent" means to be so sorry that you are not only willing to quit living in what theologians call "sin" — but that you are also willing to turn around and go the other way. But what is sin? God answers, "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4).

So we must repent of disobeying God's government — of breaking His law!

Again, notice Jesus' own inspired words on this subject: "Think not [although many do want to think

this] that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Greek scholars acknowledge that the word translated "fulfill" means not only "to do or perform," but also to "fill to the full." In other words, Jesus, in His own life, filled to the full and perfectly performed the spiritual intent and purpose of God's law — to love God with all your might and to love your neighbor as yourself.

Why did He do this? To do away with God's law by this means? That's what men will try to tell you! The ultimate criterion for right and wrong, many church leaders say, is not divine command, but the individual's subjective perception of what is good for himself. "We are delivered from the law," they expostulate. But let God answer. In a prophecy about the coming Messiah, Isaiah wrote: "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable" (Isaiah 42:21).

#### **Jesus Magnified God's Law**

To magnify does not mean to destroy, but to show forth and enlarge to the fullest possible extent. Jesus perfectly fulfilled and magnified God's law to show us its fullest spiritual application and also to set us an example that we should follow in His steps (I Peter 2:21).

Jesus continued in this same discourse: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19). So according to Jesus' teaching, you have to both do and teach even the least of God's commandments if you are to become great in His Kingdom. This is just the opposite of the common teaching of "Christianity" today. Probably, you were taught to be-

lieve Jesus did away with the law of God.

Jesus showed that even to hate a brother — involving as it does the spirit of murder — is bringing us into judgment before the spiritual law of God (Matthew 5:21-26). He vividly illustrated how one can commit adultery not just by performing the act, but by even lusting after a woman in his heart (verses 27-28).

Read these examples in your own Bible. Think about them. In every case, they obviously do not do away with God's law, but rather, they make it all the more binding!

Matthew's fifth chapter ends with Jesus' instruction: "Be ye ["become ye" is the literal, original Greek] therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (verse 48).

Obedience to God and His law is the keynote of the entire Sermon on the Mount. Jesus declared: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Later during His ministry, a young man came and interviewed Him saying, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, *keep the commandments*" (Matthew 19:16-17). Then Jesus proceeded to name some of the Ten Commandments (verses 18-19). In this brief interview, Jesus again emphasized the principle of obedience.

#### **Does God's Government Have Laws?**

Speaking about the good news which He preached, Jesus stated: "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (Luke

16:16-17). Here, Jesus showed that God's Kingdom or government is connected with God's law. He showed that law would never fail! Then He went on to show what law He was talking about (verse 18) by commenting on the commandment concerning adultery — one of the Ten Commandments!

So the good news of God's Kingdom — which is not understood or preached by the mainstream of today's Christianity — is related to the law of God as contained in the Ten Commandments. Jesus always magnified and kept this law during His lifetime. He said, "I have kept my Father's commandments" (John 15:10).

After Christ's resurrection, when He was commissioning His disciples to preach His message to all nations, He commanded: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: *teaching them to observe ALL THINGS whatsoever I have commanded you:* and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Here, Jesus is clearly and plainly telling His apostles to go out to all nations, preaching exactly the same message of obedience to God's law and His government as He Himself had taught them. And yet, many theologians and religious leaders today rebel at the teaching of obedience to God's commandments. They claim, "The Ten Commandments are out of date!"

Plainly, as the African student mentioned in the beginning of this article noticed, modern Christianity has strayed far from the simple teachings of Jesus!

#### **Did Jesus Set a Perfect Example?**

Remember, a Christian is one who literally follows the example of Jesus Christ! Jesus was the "light" that God sent into the world to show man how he ought to live.

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

Peter was inspired to record that Jesus Christ lived and walked, leaving us an example, that we should *follow His steps* (I Peter 2:21). Jesus obeyed God. He did not sin — and sin is the "transgression of the law." Rather, He obeyed God and suffered willingly in service to others, and in all this, set an example for us to follow.

The apostle John was inspired to write: "He that saith he abideth in him [Christ] ought himself also so to walk [to live], even as he walked" (I John 2:6).

*The New English Bible* translation renders this in more modern English: "Here is the test by which we can make sure that we are in him: whoever claims to be dwelling in him, binds himself to live as Christ himself lived."

Jesus lived a life of giving and serving. He conducted himself as an ambassador of a foreign kingdom or government — God's government in heaven which will soon come to earth to replace all human governments. How many "Christians" really believe this?

Paul was inspired to write that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Christ has not changed. He will guide you to live the same kind of life today that He lived in His own human body 1900 years ago. And remember, Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

How will Jesus guide you to do this? The apostle Paul put it this way, describing his own experience: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me:* and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Here we see that Christ comes to live His life in the true Christian. He

does this through His Spirit (Romans 8:9). The Holy Spirit imparts to the individual the very faith of Jesus Christ — the same faith that guided and motivated Jesus when he dwelled in mortal flesh.

Through the Holy Spirit, then, you can receive the very nature and power of Christ to obey the commandments and laws of Almighty God. The Holy Spirit imparts the power to keep God's spiritual law. It is His righteousness operating in your body, a body that you have willingly yielded to Him as His instrument. What percentage of "Christians" do that today?

#### **How the Holy Spirit Functions**

But how does one receive God's Holy Spirit? Peter addressed a large audience of people in his day, saying, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). This same principle applies to our day.

Since your old self must be figuratively buried — baptized for the remission of sin — you must first repent of sin. That means to repent of breaking God's law! Then after truly repenting and accepting, through faith, Christ's shed blood as payment for your past sins, you must be baptized in order to receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit.

Baptism — immersion in a watery grave — is an outward acknowledgment of the death penalty you have brought upon yourself by disobeying the law of your Creator and is an acknowledgment of your willingness to let your old self figuratively die.

#### **The Love of God**

Then, through His Spirit, Christ places His nature within you — His love, His faith, His strength to overcome your own nature and the temptations of Satan and of this world (see Galatians 5:22-23).

The love you receive through God's Spirit is not mere human love, but the very love of God, which "... is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

Now how does this love operate? Christ's Word gives the true answer: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

It is through God's love placed in us by His Spirit that we are able to keep His Commandments! Through constant Bible study, earnest prayer, and consistent spiritual overcoming and growth, you can yield to let God fashion you in His spiritual image, so that you can be born of Him in the resurrection as His own son — having His very nature.

This is, in fact, the very purpose of your existence.

#### Identity of True Christians

Down through history, God has always set apart those who truly serve Him by keeping His com-

mandments and His laws. The apostle John was inspired to write: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4).

A person who isn't keeping God's commandments does not grasp the kind of character and personality that the true God is. He is not truly "acquainted" with God! He is simply manufacturing his own private "god" out of his own imagination.

Can we believe that God means what He says in His inspired Word?

The true God doesn't even hear our prayers unless we keep His commandments! "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (I John 3:22). How many professing Christians believe this?

Today, as the African student perceived, millions of deceived people worship a sentimental, manufactured "god" who requires no obedience. They have been deceived into believing that the importance of worshipping the true God

of Creation — the God who requires obedience to His will as a prerequisite for receiving the gift of eternal life — can be lightly set aside.

But God states: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ [the very teachings of Jesus Himself], hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 9-11).

Those are strong words! The matter of obedience to the true God and His law is of paramount importance!

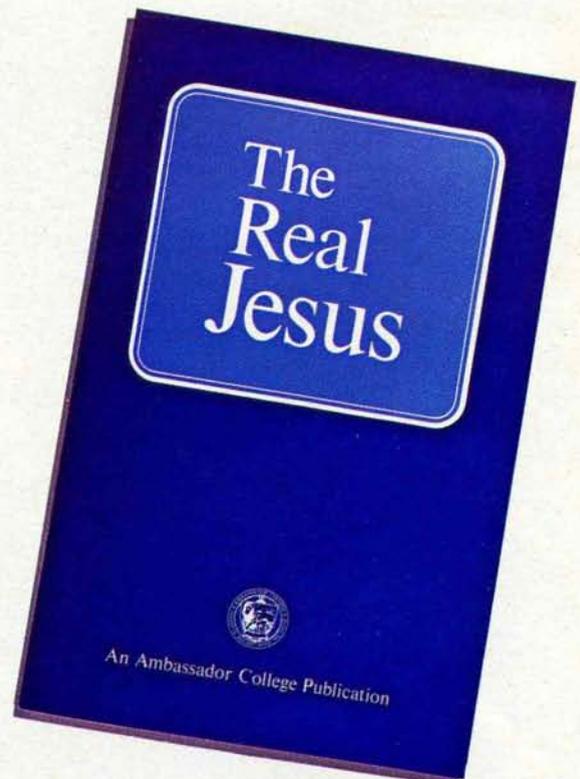
*Obedience will make you happy and fill your life with real inner joy. This obedience is what sets real Christians apart from the millions who assume that they are Christians but who have strayed far from the simple truths taught by Jesus Christ.* □

## Who Is Jesus Christ?

*Many, today, don't really know who Jesus was, where He came from, what He believed and taught, or what He even looked like. They think they are worshipping Jesus Christ, when in fact, they are following "another Jesus."*

*Read in this fascinating booklet about the TRUE Jesus — the Jesus Christ of your Bible.*

See inside front cover for address of PLAIN TRUTH office nearest you.



*Why the Critical Breakdown in*  
**FACTORY**



# FARMING ?

*Mass-production farming once promised hope for the world's hungry. Today mass problems threaten agriculture. Here are the ominous facts — and what they portend.*

by Dennis Neill

**Y**OU PROBABLY don't live on a farm. Yet you are no less dependent on farm production to put food on your table than is the farmer. Did you ever wonder *how* your food is produced?

## **An Enemy Strikes**

Farming was once man's most unpredictable occupation. A bewildering array of catastrophes could strike — either singly or all at once.

Within the past thirty years, however, it has begun to look as though modern agricultural techniques are finally eliminating the threats of insect infestations, diseases, adverse weather conditions and related natural disasters. Large farms have become as routinized and mechanized as manufacturing plants. These large commercial operations are known as "factory farms."

If you ever visit a factory farm, you will see an entirely different concept of farming. Traditional methods are passé. Factory farms

concentrate on producing one or two products. Their intent is to produce as large a quantity of saleable foodstuffs at as low a cost as possible. This concept has given rise to 10,000-acre (4,000 hectare) grain farms, feedlots with thousands of cattle, pigs or sheep confined to pens, and egg- or meat-producing chicken ranches that may house millions of birds in wire cages.

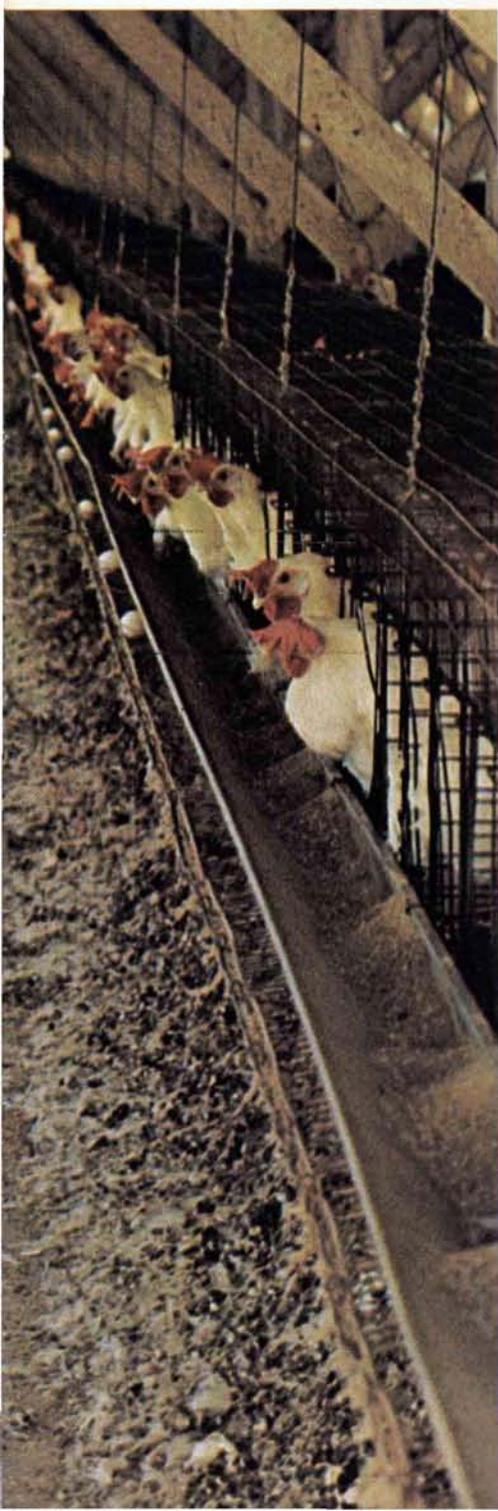
Farms of this sort supply 75 percent of the foods sold in the United States. Continental Europe has not yet reached that point, but European agricultural planners are pulling out all stops in an attempt to reach a similar position. The British Isles have already reached and exceeded it in at least one aspect: 87 percent of all English laying hens are found on giant commercial ranches.

Turning farms into factories has vastly increased food production. It has also created the potential for unexpected disastrous breakdowns in food production. The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) gave one example of a critical situation which developed recently when a chicken sickness

*(Text continued on page 22)*

**ASSEMBLY LINE** egg production. Row upon row of living machines produce most of the eggs used in the Western world today. This ranch in Cucamonga, California, houses 50,000 chickens.

Don Lorton — Plain Truth Photo







**DEATH BY STRESS** — Chicken on the ground (left) died of stress from crowded conditions and not of any disease.

Vaccine is being administered ocularly to chick too small to receive injection (above).

USDA workers struggle to capture birds in backyard flock for vaccination (right).

When the outbreak of Exotic Newcastle's disease first started in southern California in November 1971, government officials thought it would soon be brought under control. Four million chickens were slaughtered ("depopulated") in the first half of 1972 in an attempt to prevent the spread of the highly contagious disease, which is fatal to poultry but harmless to humans.

But in September of the same year, the USDA had to order another "depopulation," this time of a huge commercial flock at Egg City, near Moorpark, California. This time, 3.4 million chickens were destroyed.

The only hope of eradicating the disease was by an all-out, three-pronged attack. It consisted of extermination of all infected flocks, vaccination of all unexposed flocks (30 million birds), and a rigid, 45,000-square-mile quarantine of the infected area.

But even the desperation methods employed in the U. S. were not as effective as originally hoped. The huge flock destroyed at Egg City had been vaccinated. Yet special susceptible "sentinel" birds planted in the flock came down with the disease, so the USDA had to order the destruction of the entire flock.

*Don Lorton — Plain Truth Photos*



# "Hardy, high-yield variations of major crops are the success story of modern . . . genetics, but they may carry the seeds of their own destruction."

(Text continued from page 19)  
called Newcastle's disease struck poultry ranches. "The Newcastle disease situation," warns FAO, "has worsened in recent years, as a result of the rapid expansion of intensive poultry production."

If you think you're not involved, then consider this: The disease now threatens the poultry industries of 118 nations, among them France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, West Germany, East Germany, the U.S.S.R., Greece, India, Israel, South Africa, Mexico, Argentina and Ecuador. Only 22 countries in the world are free of this poultry disease.

In the United States, one of the areas hardest hit is southern California. The poultry industry there was

almost destroyed. (The accompanying photos tell that story.)

## Perverting the Environment

If you have never seen a factory farm for chickens, you may not understand why such sudden devastation to our food supply can occur. On a commercial chicken ranch, birds are kept closely confined — perhaps two hens to a wire cage 12" x 12" x 14". Automated troughs cause high-energy feed to flow by on one side, and antibiotic-treated water on the other. The eggs drop through the bottom onto a wire grid for easy pickup. In some cases, up to 100,000 birds are housed in one long, low shed.

This environment creates several problems. For one, high-energy feed forces growth and production. It exchanges long-range continual production for short-range, high-level production. Hens in modern laying plants have an average life-span shortened to 18 to 24 months. It's like running a tractor designed for 2,000 rpm operation at 4,000 rpm — all the time. The tractor is going to wear out sooner and be more susceptible to breakdowns.

Newcastle's is a respiratory disease similar to pneumonia. The disease is caused by a virus which likes the environment of the factory farm. Its effects are immensely increased by the methods used on commercial ranches. As the FAO's *World Animal Review* put it, "The growth of the intensive system of poultry production has completely changed the

structure . . . of poultry [production] . . . and has created a new set of ecological factors. Unfortunately, most of these factors are working in favour of the virus."

But what about medical protection afforded birds in a commercial flock? Dr. Charles C. Edwards, U.S. Food and Drug Administration commissioner, reported that an FDA task force recently discovered that the use of certain antibiotics may cause bacteria to become resistant to those antibiotics. If the "protected" bird or animal doesn't build any natural immunity to the disease and the disease organism becomes tolerant of the drug used to control it, trouble is inevitable.

Of course, vaccines are designed to provide that "natural" immunity. But there are problems here, too. Once a vaccine for a particular disease is used, you are committed to living with that disease. When a vaccine is used, the disease is there to stay because usually the vaccine is a weakened version of the strain and is in every bird, animal or human vaccinated. For this reason, the United States Department of Agriculture has refused to use a vaccine prepared from Exotic Newcastle's. It has, instead, used one made from domestic Newcastle's disease — a common poultry disease that is much less virulent than the foreign "Exotic" strain.

On the other hand, England, also suffering from the problem, has developed a new vaccine from Exotic Newcastle's and has thus entered a path of "coexistence" with the disease.

## Multiplying Weaknesses

Another problem in commercial flocks is uniformity of weaknesses. The chickens are all of the same

**VETERINARIAN** carries another load of diseased California chickens to be destroyed (left). The aftermath is in photo on opposite page.

Mike Hendrickson — Plain Truth Photo



**AFTERMATH** of disease. Millions of chickens were killed, hauled to rendering plants and processed into chicken feed.

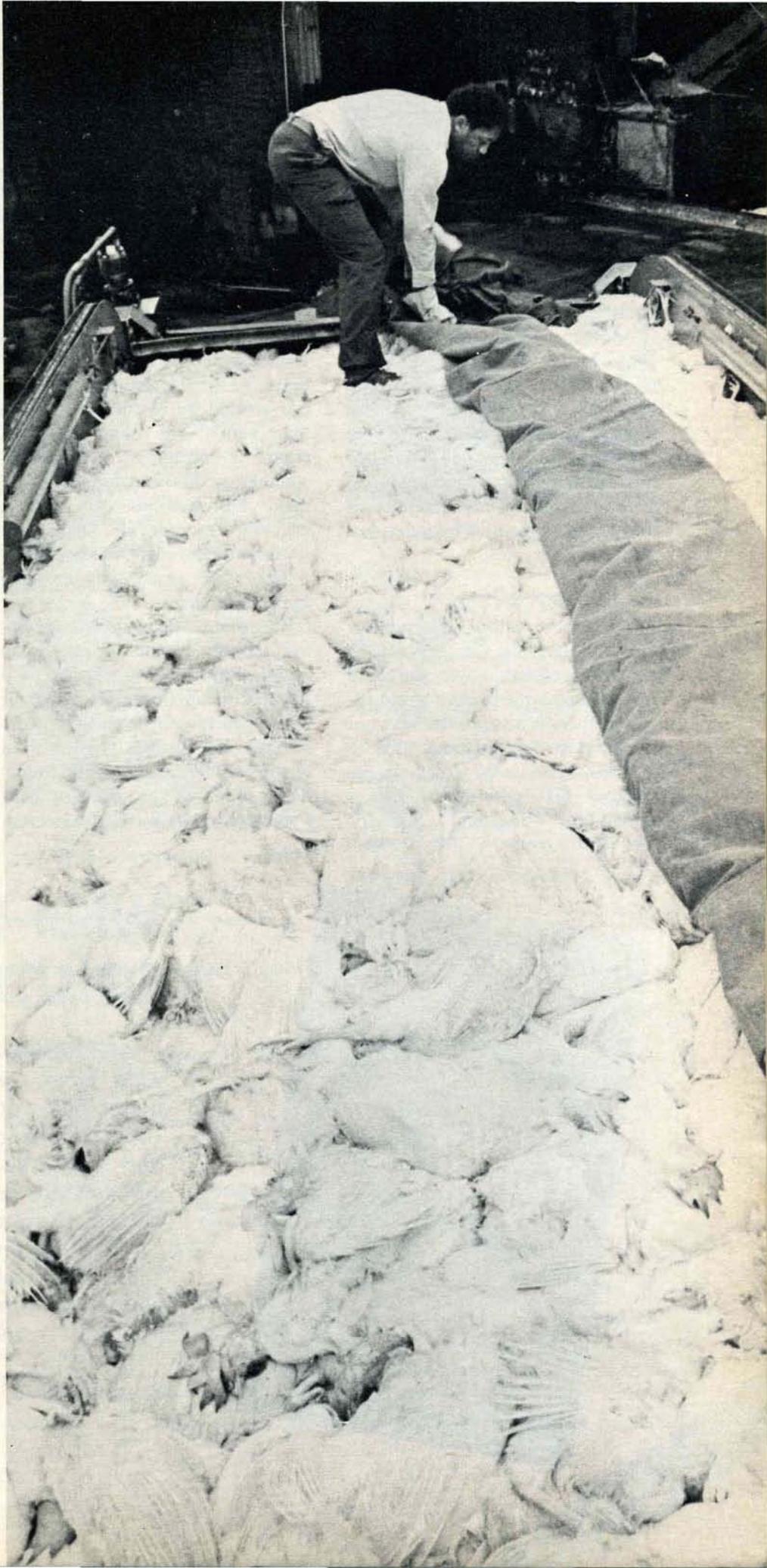
Mike Hendrickson — Plain Truth Photo

breed because they are selected for the same strengths — desired production capabilities. But by the same token, they will all have the same weaknesses and hence, they will be broadly susceptible to the same diseases. If one succumbs, chances are that they all will. This is exactly what happens with Newcastle's disease. Once it gets into the flocks, it rages uncontrollably.

Overcrowding sets up unfavorable stress conditions. According to the manager of a 50,000-bird egg ranch near Cucamonga, California, five to ten of his hens succumb daily to confinement stress. (That's between two and four thousand per year.) "These birds," he says, "don't die of any disease. They just can't take the stress of crowded living." In addition, he has to clip the beaks of his crowded birds because "cannibalism increases as the concentration of birds goes up." Clipping beaks further weakens the birds and makes them even more susceptible to diseases.

An added difficulty is the worldwide scope of the problem. The USDA has banned the importation of live birds of any sort from the 23 nations which have experienced the most serious outbreaks of the disease and/or face Exotic Newcastle's as a problem. The FAO reported that not only are more countries being stricken with the disease, but also that larger numbers of birds are being affected. (*World Animal Review*, 1972, pp. 33-34.)

Modern mass-production agriculture is by far the most productive system used in recent history. And it must be, for world farm production must be multiplied to feed endlessly growing numbers of hungry mouths. And yet, first one segment of agriculture and then another is being



stricken with virulent, devastating forms of common disease. Newcastle's disease has been around for a long time, but the exotic "hot" type only became a problem a few years ago. Now it has destroyed 25 percent of southern California's poultry industry and threatens the poultry industries of many nations.

Another example of such disease explosions is corn blight. Twenty percent of the American corn crop was ruined by mutant Southern Corn Leaf Blight in 1970.

In the Philippines, new types of rice are failing to stand up under weather and disease conditions formerly shrugged off by older, less productive varieties.

#### Trapping Ourselves

Techniques that multiply production over the short run seem also to multiply problems over the long run. And with the present world situation, there is no apparent way out of this trap. The methods used to feed the world today are the same methods that promise continuing agricultural disasters. *Scientific*

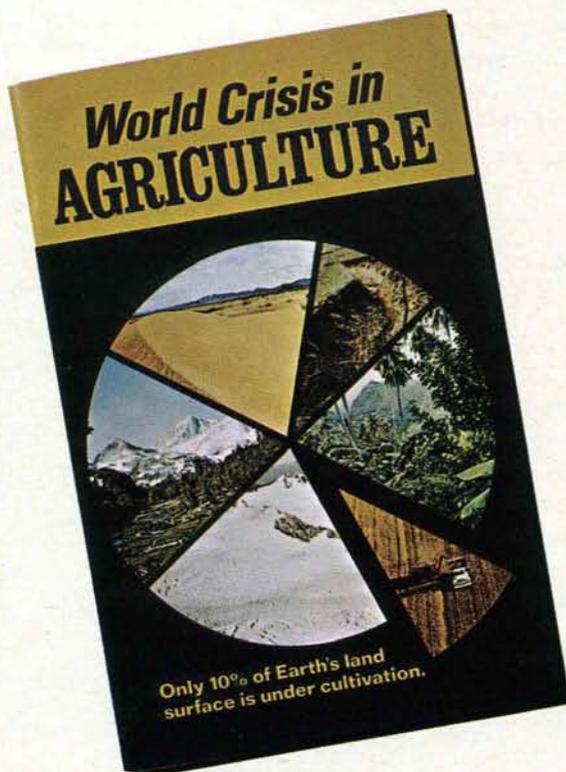
*American* reiterated this chilling premise in their June 1971 issue: "Hardy, high-yield varieties of major crops are the success story of modern...genetics, but they may carry the seeds of their own destruction."

The solution does not lie in agricultural methods. It lies in agricultural attitudes. Man on occasion has been capable of using natural systems well. He has more often proven that he is capable of using them poorly. The solution then becomes a matter of attitudes — whether or not man is willing to make the sacrifices necessary to properly care for his life-support system. Apparently, he's not willing.

The world is facing a crushing hunger problem. Yet it is not surprising that food production systems in a selfishly oriented world are not designed primarily to feed the hungry and maintain productivity for future generations. In the highly developed nations that provide most of the world's food supplies, immediate profit is the primary end! Factory farming systems were devel-

oped to produce as large a quantity of saleable foodstuffs — of whatever quality or lack of it — as possible, in the cheapest way possible. Modern consumers demand that the farms do so.

But it is a fact of life that you can't get something for nothing. Any time a system tries to get too much output from too little input, it is treading on dangerous ground. Factory farms are pushing natural productivity past its built-in limits. This is the basic underlying cause of the many problems affecting worldwide industrialized farming today. We demand more food for less money and reap the natural returns of that selfish attitude. We want to spend our money, instead, on temporary pleasures that satiate our senses. So we force the competitive food producers to break the laws governing natural production in order for them to survive economically. Until we change this attitude of greed, on the part of consumers as well as producers, we will continue to face mounting problems in maintaining our food supply. □



## What Is The SOLUTION?

AGRICULTURAL LEADERS worldwide have come face-to-face with a dangerous, yet little understood, crisis. Today farmlands are tired, overworked, and depleted. Modern agricultural methods are producing a host of unexpected critical problems.

WHY do we face this new crisis? What is its solution? This booklet explores the problems and shows how they can — and will — be solved.

See inside front cover for address of PLAIN TRUTH office nearest you.

# The Awesome Power of Prayer

*Is there really a God who answers prayer?  
Why are so many prayers unanswered?*

by William F. Dankenbring

**H**ENRY WAS crushed by a huge bulldozer one day last autumn. Seven ribs were broken. His lungs were seriously damaged. His pelvic bone and hip were smashed. Doctors who examined him gave up hope the boy would live. "It would take a miracle," the medical professionals declared.

But Henry's mother was a woman who really believed in prayer. She prayed and asked others to do so as well. Today, Henry has left that hospital bed, gone home, is able to walk, and is well on the road to recovery.

Was Henry's recovery due to answered prayer? Or was it coincidence? Henry's mother is convinced she knows the answer. But a skeptic might ask, "What about all the thousands of prayers that are not answered?"

There are two sides to the prayer question. There are millions of people who pray regularly to a Supreme Being, but who admit their prayers are not answered directly. They pray for the inner comfort it seems to give them.

I recently interviewed a noted psychiatrist who has counseled hun-

dreds of patients, including theologians and high-ranking church officials. They had come to him because of serious problems in their lives. Prayer had not helped, so they had turned to psychiatry for insight and help.

This psychiatrist, unlike a number of his colleagues, believes in prayer. He believes in an Almighty God who can change circumstances and intervene in people's problems. But for most people, prayer is little short of a personal matter of emotional relief. "Prayer," he suggested, "for most people, simply helps them get problems off their chest which they have bottled up inside of them."

This psychiatrist himself claimed that sometimes prayers are answered in a direct, supernatural way — in a manner that seems to belie rational human explanation.

What, then, is the real truth about prayer? Is there a seldom realized, awesome power in prayer? If so, what kind of prayer really achieves dynamic results?

## **A Living Example**

A young lad, Richard Brian, was playing in his house not long ago.

As he was running from one room to another, he slipped in a puddle of water, which hadn't yet been cleaned up, on the kitchen floor. He struck his head and was knocked unconscious. His mother, hearing him fall, ran to him and tried to revive him, but her attempts went for naught. Extremely excited, she rushed out into the alley near their home and summoned help from a policeman who happened to be in the area. She told him her story of what had happened. He then ran to the house, leaping over a small fence standing in the way.

Once inside the house, the policeman tried mouth to mouth resuscitation, without success. He immediately said that the boy should be taken to the hospital.

At the hospital, the nurses and doctors in the emergency room feverishly tried to revive Richard. After an hour of artificial respiration and heart massage, there was no change in Richard's condition. His mother was told that he had died, and the nurses covered him with a sheet, asking which mortuary they should call.

The boy's mother had been fer-

vently praying all along because she believed that prayer could change things. So she hesitated, tried to call others to pray for the lad, and while she was doing so, an intern came to her. He apologized and told her that they had somehow made a mistake. They had returned to the room and found Richard sitting up, playing with the sheet they had draped over him!

A neurological specialist was called in to examine him. He saw a bump on the back of his head, but told the other doctors and nurses that the boy could not have been dead. Yet they insisted that he had been!

"Well, he's all right now," the specialist wistfully concluded.

And the boy certainly was! Was this recent experience a real answer to fervent, believing prayer?

A skeptic might insist that the nurses and doctors had simply made a mistake; but Richard's parents know better.

#### Lost at Sea

Many people have heard the saga of World War I ace pilot Eddie Rickenbacker, who was lost at sea during World War II for several weeks, drifting aimlessly on a rubber life raft without food and water. After his plane had crashed, he prayed that God would intervene and have mercy. Miraculously, he and his companions were finally rescued after many harrowing brushes with death.

A more personal story, however, has to do with some teen-age boys who were swimming in the breakers off the southern coast of Taiwan about twenty years ago. The water was rough that day, and a treacherous undertow quickly caught two of them and swiftly carried them out to sea.

There was no help available. The two boys looked like pin pricks bobbing up and down about two hundred yards offshore. The situation seemed utterly hopeless.

With anguish and earnestness, the older brother of one of the boys silently, intently prayed for a miracle. There was no way he could rescue them.

Just as he finished praying, he looked down the shoreline and spied a group of Chinese Nationalist soldiers about to begin maneuvers. They happened to have with them a large, rubber life raft with oars.

The young man raced breathlessly down the beach, shouting at the top of his lungs to the soldiers, pointing excitedly to the ocean where his brother and friend were drifting. Neither could understand the language of the other, but when the Chinese troopers scanned the ocean where he pointed, they saw two little specks out in the water, sized up the situation, and rushed their life raft into the waves.

The two swimmers were saved. And you will never convince that young man on the beach that his prayers were not answered in an immediate, spectacular way. I know — I was that young man.

Many other examples of answered prayer could be cited. But some people would still claim that an answer is "a lucky accident" — a mere "coincidence." They might argue, "What about all the prayers that go unanswered? What about all the times when God does *not* intervene?"

Is there a reason — or reasons — for *unanswered* prayers?

#### Key to the Problem

Let's face it. Most prayers are not answered. But that does not prove that no prayers are answered! There may be specific, credible reasons why many prayers don't achieve miraculous results.

The Bible claims to be a book about God and contains much information about prayer. It may be well worth our time to examine its contents on this subject.

Let's grant, for the moment, that the Bible is a book which can be be-

lieved — that it is truth. What, then, does it say about answered versus unanswered prayer?

One key is found in the words of the apostle James, in the New Testament, who challenged the people of his day with these ringing words: "What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it because there is a whole army of evil desires within you? You want what you don't have, so you kill to get it. You long for what others have, and can't afford it, so you start a fight to take it away from them. And yet the reason you don't have what you want is that you don't ask God for it" (James 4:1-2, *The Living Bible*). (Hereafter, unless otherwise stated, all scriptures quoted are from *The Living Bible*.)

That is part of the reason prayers go unanswered, or hopeless situations remain hopeless — because many people don't pray.

But, James continues, "And even when you do ask you don't get it because your whole aim is wrong — you want only what will give *you* pleasure" (James 4:3).

Thus, if a person prays merely to "get" something selfishly for himself, his prayer will not be heard!

Another key to unanswered prayer is found in a parable told by Jesus. "Two men went to the Temple to pray," He related. "One was a proud, self-righteous Pharisee, and the other a cheating tax collector. The proud Pharisee 'prayed' this prayer: 'Thank God, I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't commit adultery, I go without food twice a week, and I give to God a tenth of everything I earn.'

"But the corrupt tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed, but beat upon his chest in sorrow, exclaiming, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home forgiven! For the proud shall

be humbled, but the humble shall be honored" (Luke 18:10-14).

Consider this example. Here is a prime reason so many lofty, wordy, eloquent, elegant prayers are not answered: *The heart is not right!*

#### How to Pray

In another place, Jesus told His disciples how to pray. He gave them these instructions: "And now about prayer. When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who pretend piety by praying publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. Truly, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, all alone, and shut the door behind you and pray to your Father secretly, and your Father, who knows your secrets, will reward you" (Matthew 6:5-6).

To be heard, then, prayer must be an intense, personal experience — something between you and God.

Jesus gave further instruction in the following words: "Don't recite the same prayer over and over as the heathen do, who think prayers are answered only by repeating them again and again" (Matthew 6:7-8). Such praying implies that God is hard of hearing, or has a faulty memory — that He needs to be reminded continually, or even "nagged," before He will answer.

If you have prayed, but God didn't answer, perhaps you should consider whether you prayed in the wrong manner.

#### A Vital Prerequisite

One vastly overlooked element of answered prayer is simple faith that God will do what He has promised, that He loves us, and that He will look after us. Unfortunately, that kind of faith is very rare today.

The apostle Paul put it this way: "What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead" (Hebrews 11:1).

Do you have that kind of faith? Paul added, "You can never please God without faith, without depending on him. Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely look for him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Faith is a spiritual quality. It is not something you can put into your mind by struggling, wrestling, and agonizing with yourself. It must come from outside yourself.

Real, serene faith, the Bible says, is a gift from God — a gift of His Holy Spirit — something God will give you if you ask Him for it!

Notice, for a moment, a Biblical example of faith. Abraham, a patriarch of the Old Testament and progenitor of the Israelites, went through life many years without a son, an heir. Sarah, his wife, was barren.

Did this fact frustrate Abraham or unnerve him? Not at all. "So, when God told Abraham that he would give him a son who would have many descendants and become a great nation, Abraham believed God even though such a promise just couldn't come to pass! And because his faith was strong, he didn't worry about the fact that he was too old to be a father, at the age of one hundred, and that Sarah his wife, at ninety, was also much too old to have a baby" (Romans 4:18-19).

It was enough in Abraham's mind that God had promised. So what happened?

"But Abraham never doubted. He believed God, for his faith and trust grew ever stronger, and he praised God for this blessing even before it happened. He was completely sure that God was well able to do anything he promised" (Romans 4:20-21).

And God did. Isaac was born!

But the lesson of Abraham teaches not only faith, but also another vital key to answered prayer — the key of patience.

#### "Never Give Up"

Many people, when they pray, soon become discouraged and give up if the answer doesn't come right away, when they expect it, or the way they expect it. Their faith is like water running through a sieve.

This is such a common, paramount human problem that Jesus was moved to warn us that we "must keep praying until the answer comes" (Luke 18:1). He told a story about a judge who denied justice to a poor widow. But since she continually brought her case before him, he finally relented and ruled in her favor.

When you pray, do you *continue* in prayer? Do you persevere, persist and endure tenaciously, clinging tightly to God's promises, refusing to let go?

#### How Jesus Prayed

If anybody knew how to pray, it was certainly Jesus Christ. He walked with God, talked with Him, and was so close to Him that His life was one continual series of miraculous interventions after another. He, Himself, admitted that the sick people He cured and the miracles He performed were not of His own doing, or His own power. "The Son can do nothing by himself," He once stated (John 5:19). Jesus admitted that His power came from the Father, who worked through Him as an instrument.

How did Jesus maintain this vital contact with the Father? He often arose early in the morning, before light, to pray (Mark 1:35). Once he prayed all night long (Luke 6:12).

Jesus' prayers meant a lot to Him. He prayed with tears and real, sincere emotion (Hebrews 5:7). He was not bored; prayer was not merely a "routine" or "duty." He meant every word he uttered!

In every Biblical example of answered prayer, those who received answers really put their hearts into their prayers. In every personal case

that I know of, prayers that were answered were always fervent, intense, and wholehearted.

But most people's prayers are sleepy-time, listless, drowsy mutterings, carrying little conviction or earnestness. This has been a common problem throughout man's history.

During the times of the Old Testament prophets, people had the same attitude toward prayer that is so prevalent today. God said through the prophet Hosea, "They never put their heart into their prayers" (Hosea 7:14, Moffatt).

Imagine walking into the oval office of the President of the United States for an important discussion or interview. As you begin to speak, while he is giving you his undivided attention, you start to grow sleepy, drowsy, start mumbling your words, rambling from one topic to another, monotonously, repetitiously, droning on and on. What reaction would you receive from the President? Very likely, he would boot you out of his office and never give you another audience.

How much more disrespectful is it to God when people "fall asleep" while they are supposedly praying to God, or mumble their words, ramble endlessly, their minds on something else!

Such prayers are about as powerful as powderpuffs; they are about as forceful as a mouthful of cotton candy!

The New Testament word for "zeal" is *zelos* and means "heat, zeal, ardor."

One man who prayed with fervent zeal was Elijah, one of the most famous prophets of the Old Testament. Many people who have heard of this man assume he was some sort of spiritual giant. They think he was a superman. But such was definitely not the case. "Elijah was as completely human as we are," wrote the apostle James in the New Testament, "and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none

fell for the next three and one half years! Then he prayed again, this time that it *would* rain, and down it poured and the grass turned green and the gardens began to grow again" (James 5:17-18).

With the prayers of Elijah in mind, James declared, "The earnest prayer of a righteous man has great power and wonderful results" (verse 16).

But notice that little word "righteous." Here is an element of answered prayer which has been avoided until now. But without it, all prayer is of no avail!

### The Final Key

Perhaps the greatest single stumblingblock to answered prayer is that most people are not living the way God wants them to live.

The ancient prophet Isaiah put the case plainly: "Listen now! The Lord isn't too weak to save you. And he isn't getting deaf! He can hear you when you call! But the trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God. Because of sin he has turned his face away from you and will not listen anymore" (Isaiah 59:1-2).

But what is this thing called "sin"? Simply put, it is the lack of righteousness or right living. It means living in a way not pleasing to God; it means violating the Ten Commandments of God (I John 3:4).

A man whom Jesus healed of blindness, as the ninth chapter of John records, gives further insight into this problem most men and women face. He said, "Well, God doesn't listen to evil men, but he has open ears to those who worship him and do his will" (John 9:31).

Before you can have real faith and confidence that God will hear your prayer, you must put away sin, evil, and everything that separates you from God. When you begin to straighten up your life, begin to obey God's Word, and keep His commandments, God promises that

He will begin to hear you and *answer your prayers!*

The apostle John wrote of those who ceased living in sin, when he said, "But, dearly loved friends, if our consciences are clear, we can come to the Lord with perfect assurance and trust, and get whatever we ask for because we are obeying him and doing the things that please him" (I John 3:21-22).

### A Special Promise

Obviously, the skeptic has never had a prayer answered in his life — or he wouldn't be a skeptic. The skeptic needs to first *prove* to himself whether or not there is a God.

But for those who do believe in God and who pray, notice an incredible promise Jesus made to those who believe and obey Him.

"In solemn truth I tell you," He declared, "anyone believing in me shall do the same miracles I have done, and even greater ones, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask him for *anything*, using my name, and I will do it, for this will bring praise to the Father because of what I, the Son, will do for you. Yes, ask *anything*, using my name, and I will do it!" (John 14:12-14.)

What did Jesus mean? Notice that He was talking to those who follow and obey Him, living within the will of God. He meant, therefore, that if such a one will ask for something within the expressed will of God and according to His overall Plan, that He will receive it — whatever he asks for — as long as he obeys Christ!

That is an awesome promise — a flat out "blank check" which you can cash in. Jesus did not make idle promises.

Therefore, if you surrender your life to God, keep His commandments, believe what He says in His Word, and pray fervently, wholeheartedly, with perseverance and patience, then God will hear you! You can count on it! □

# Is GOD on Vacation?

*Why does God hide himself? Why hasn't the all-powerful God of the universe come down and put an end to our unsolvable problems and endless human sufferings?*

by Charles F. Vinson

**F**ORGET, for a moment, about what you think is or is not impossible, and imagine yourself to be an enterprising, skillful reporter. You are willing to go to incredible lengths to land a top-notch story — and this time you've really got one.

You, of all people, have somehow been granted an interview with God.

Assuming you can find the nerve to speak, what will you ask Him? Surely not picky doctrinal questions which have narrow audience appeal and won't sell copy. No, you would want to give your readers solid answers to basic questions — the questions which have puzzled men for centuries.

Perhaps you would begin with this:

"Would you please explain why you have the reputation for being a recluse, a sort of Howard Hughes of heaven? Why haven't you come out and revealed yourself and put an end to centuries of religious contro-

versy? You know, some people have facetiously proclaimed you to be on vacation — or even dead! Could you please explain why?"

## **How Would God Answer?**

To begin with, He might chide you a little for going to all the trouble of setting up a personal interview when you could have gotten your answers by carefully reading His book.

"A good reporter always does his homework. But since you're here anyway, I'll answer your question," God replies. "I have not been, nor am I now, as you put it, 'on vacation, a recluse or even dead.' In fact, in the beginning . . ."

You begin scribbling furiously to catch the words clarifying the history of God's relationship with man. In the beginning of His relationship with man, your notes read, God — like any parent — was absorbed in His newly created family, teaching them, molding their environment, showing them how to live the good

life. And, contrary to some popular religious opinions, He was actually very pleased with His creation. In fact, viewing it as a total package, God described it as "very good" (Genesis 1:31).

He tells you about the moment He placed the newly created man and woman in a beautiful park-like garden where they were free to live within the bounds of God's instructions. One thing was explicitly forbidden to them. They weren't to eat the fruit from a tree symbolically called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17).

Things went well in the garden for a short period of time, and probably would have indefinitely, if not for the presence of a rebellious spirit being who was named Satan. Satan had previously attempted to overthrow the government of God, but had emerged from the battle second best (Ezekiel 28:12-17). Now, Satan was again mistakenly convinced that he could thwart His plan, God tells you. Satan knew very well that

Adam and Eve were created to be free moral agents — that they were able to make their own decisions independent of the will of God, as can all men today. Adam and Eve could choose to disobey God, although neither had done so previously.

Satan decided to persuade Eve to disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit. And through Eve, he would get at the man.

### **They Blew It**

You continue to take rapid notes, ignoring the writer's cramp already beginning to set in. You ask further questions only when you feel it is absolutely necessary.

Once they had sinned, God explains to you, Adam and Eve tried to escape from Him by hiding behind some trees in the garden (Genesis 3:8), a pathetic gesture at best, but typical of what mankind has been doing ever since.

You learn that when God later talked to Adam, Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent — Satan — for their sin. But it didn't matter so much, by then, who was to blame because the mistake had already been made.

"Notice," interjects God at this point of the interview, "that it wasn't I who hid from Adam and Eve — as some would tell the story — but they tried to hide from me, because they felt guilty about disobeying!"

(Most of the words in the quotation marks of this interview are *not* direct quotes from the Bible, but they are a modern conversational form of the scriptures, most of which are cited.)

God then tells you how He sent Adam and Eve out of Eden to till the ground. Time passed and children were born, among them one named Cain, who has the dubious distinction of being the first recorded murderer. Cain killed his brother Abel out of jealousy because Abel had obtained favor with

God (Genesis 4:1-8). Unfortunately, Cain was somewhat of a trend setter. As generations passed and cities were founded, the earth experienced an initial population explosion — and most of those people followed the lawless way of Cain.

"Because those people ignored what I told their first parents," explains God, "conditions became worse and worse, rather than improving. Frankly, I didn't really expect humanity to turn out quite that bad. As I said in my book, 'the wickedness of man was great in the earth . . . every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually' [Genesis 6:5].

"I might have scratched Project Earth altogether at that point if it had not been for a man named Noah. He wasn't disobedient to my laws, and consequently, he had not cut himself off from me [Genesis 6:8-9]. I decided to spare him, his family [II Pet. 2:5], and anyone else who would listen to the warning I gave through him. But, as you may have read, no one else at that time paid any attention. I gave them many years to make a decision one way or the other, but no one individual bothered to acknowledge me. Consequently, everyone on earth except for Noah and his immediate family died in a devastating flood."

By this time, your hand is growing desperately tired from taking such copious notes, but you're not about to miss this chance. You ignore the problem and continue.

### **They Build a Tower**

"It didn't take long for the descendants of Noah to forget about me, even though they themselves were living testimony to my power and mercy. For example, there was the incident of the tower of Babel. It is absolutely clear in my memory," God remarks.

"Those people at Babel were going the very same way that people had before the Flood. If I hadn't



confused their language and given them different languages, it wouldn't have been long before men would have progressed to the point where they would have destroyed themselves . . . and that wasn't in my plan.

"In spite of the fact that the Flood was recent history to them, men once again chose to ignore me — not vice versa!" (Genesis 11:1-9.)

God tells you that humanity, scattered, took longer to progress. Eventually, nations formed from tribes, grew great, and conquered or enslaved others. One case in point, God brings to your attention, was the presence of the children of Israel in Egypt.

"Why was Israel so important?" you wonder inwardly, but before you can verbalize the question, God answers — which unnerves you more than a little, so that you almost miss His explanation. You quickly note: God chose the descendants of the patriarch Israel with a



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## **"Get lost, God!" seems to be man's attitude toward his Creator.**

special purpose in mind — to use them as an example for all other nations of the earth. In fact, at that time, God had not chosen to reveal Himself in the same way to any other nation, although He would do so in the future. But at that time, Israel was enslaved by a prosperous and powerful Pharaoh, so God sent a specially chosen man named Moses to liberate them. Judging from their reactions, however, they didn't really want to leave Egypt all that much.

"Why not?" you wonder, this time aloud.

"They," replies God, "preferred to stay in Egypt rather than face the rigors of the desert and rely on me for protection. I demonstrated my power to the Israelites time after time when I delivered them from bondage. But no sooner had I miraculously parted the waters of the Red Sea and saved them from the Egyptian army, than they wanted to go back!" (Exodus 16:3.)

### **Murmuring in the Desert**

You venture a comment. "I've always been under the impression, Sir, that you were, well, a little hard on those people out in the desert — I mean, they were only human!"

Sighing gently, and with a slight smile, God answers, "Please, when you get home, won't you take the time to read my book, carefully?"

Your face burning, you assume note taking as He continues to answer your original question — which is taking longer than you expected. In the desert, you learn, the Israelites complained to Moses, and also, about Moses. It was just one thing after another, first complaints about no food and then no water.

"When they asked for food, I supplied something special for them called manna," explains God, "but some didn't gather it when they were told to, and consequently, broke the sabbath, which was designed to give them a much-needed weekly rest

[Exodus 16:27-28]. Once again I was merciful. Even so, when they needed water, they somehow forgot the previous miracles and got so upset that they tried to blame Moses for their troubles and almost stoned him. I supplied the water anyway." (Exodus 17:1-6.)

Comments God, "After all the miracles I had performed for their benefit, you would assume, wouldn't you, that those people would have realized that I was indeed leading them by day and night? And they really should have been convinced that I was going to supply every need they had and that I was merciful, patient and more than willing to put up with their inadequacies and weaknesses. But no, even after all that, they still asked, 'Is the Lord among us, or not?' Incredible!"

### **Then There Was Mt. Sinai**

God continues with His absorbing narrative and comes to a turning point in history. "At Mt. Sinai,"

God relates, "all Israel had a chance to see my power firsthand and the glory of my presence with them in the wilderness. Yet, would you believe it — after I delivered the Law to them with thunderings, lightning, the noise of a great trumpet, and the smoking mountain — a suitably impressive event — the people said they couldn't take it!

"They called for Moses to speak with them," adds God, "being afraid that if I spoke with them any more, they would die [Exodus 20:19]. Yet even with the memory of my presence so fresh in their minds, they somehow conveniently forgot about me — again. Moses was not in the camp, so those Israelites, the people to whom I had most clearly revealed myself, made an idol to worship and held an orgy [Exodus 32:1-6]. I set them straight on the matter, but they still wanted to go back to Egypt and follow that whole wretched pagan way of life I had helped them escape [Numbers 14:4].

"Years later, Israel demanded a human king, so I gave them Saul. I comforted my prophet at that time, Samuel, by explaining to him that the people had not rejected him as their ruler, but that in demanding a human king, they were rejecting me and my rulership over them. It was the same old story." (I Samuel 8:7.)

You pause in your note taking and remember the story of Saul well enough from childhood to realize that he was a loser. He, too, ultimately rejected God, and David was anointed king in his place. David was truly unusual, a man after God's own heart — but his son and successor, Solomon, eventually veered away from God's way, even though he knew better (I Kings 11:1-11). After Solomon's death, the nation never again wholeheartedly followed God's laws.

You recall that ancient Israel rejected the prophets God sent, killing them rather than heeding their messages. Tradition even says that Isaiah was sawn in half on king Ma-

nasseh's orders. Jeremiah would have probably been killed on several occasions if God had not directly intervened. Yet God did not stop revealing Himself, His plan and His purpose through the prophets, even though no one wanted to listen. In fact, many of their messages were recorded in the Bible for later generations and are especially applicable today.

#### **A Case of Mistaken Identity**

"I stopped revealing myself through the prophets," said God, "and came to earth in person to live as a human being almost two thousand years ago."

This simple statement hits you like a two-ton truck. You almost drop your pen as you stutter a few clumsy comments: "Wait a minute . . . if I properly understand what you are saying, then you must be — I mean, I thought you were . . ."

"Yes, you're right," He smiles, a little amused at your consternation. "I am the one you know as Jesus Christ, but I am also the one you think of as the 'angry God' of the Old Testament. Since the beginning, I have been with the One you know as 'the Father.' I am the Word or Spokesman for Him, the one who did the actual work of creating the world, working together with my Father according to His plans. I became His son about 2,000 years ago by being born of Him and a human mother. I told you all about that in John 1:1-3 and Ephesians 3:9.

"I was the one who walked with Adam and Eve in the garden. I was the one who was with the Israelites in the Sinai wilderness, working miracles on their behalf. I was their Rock, as you can see in I Corinthians 10:4. I am the one to whom Abraham paid one tenth of his income. That's mentioned in Hebrews 7:1-3.

"I now occupy the position of 'High Priest,' having qualified for that job through my perfect life on earth as a human being. I am now,

of course, spirit, but having once been human, I am personally acquainted with human feelings and drives and can intercede with my Father on behalf of men, whenever they pray to Him. That information is found in Hebrews 4:14-16.

"If you want to talk with my Father, you can do so at any time through prayer — and you should do so often — but if you want an interview with Him, you'll have to wait for a little more than a thousand years. Then He, also, will be available for direct comment when He moves His headquarters — the new Jerusalem described in Revelation 21:1-3 — to the new earth."

#### **God in Person**

This information has crumbled some of your lifetime concepts about God — but there will be plenty of time later to think these things over. Right now, God — Jesus Christ, as you have discovered — is continuing to explain how it was when He fully revealed himself to man around two thousand years ago.

"I frankly don't know how much more open I could have been with everyone — how much more I could have revealed myself to a doubting humanity. I pulled no punches in telling the religious leaders of the day where they were wrong. I worked miracles through my Father's power, healing the sick, even raising the dead. I revealed to those who would listen the plan we have had in mind for humanity all along — that all mankind can eventually become part of God's family — can literally become 'sons of God' [John 1:12]. My life, death and resurrection are revealed in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Yet, even if you haven't read those books, you have undoubtedly heard what happened."

Yes, you are quite familiar with that story about how mankind was responsible for crucifying Him. He explained that his death and con-

# God has given man a chance to do things his way— but if you'll notice how things have been going, man's way has just not been working well at all.

sequent resurrection were, of course, an integral part of an overall plan to bring mankind to salvation — and that they also illustrated the fact that even when a member of the family of God appeared in person, mankind, as a whole, rejected everything He stood for, didn't want to listen, and eventually, brutally murdered Him. Instead of rejoicing because of the truth that was revealed, man's attitude was — and always has been — “get lost God,” an attitude encouraged and reinforced by the spiritual influence of Satan and his demons.

## The Church

As Christ nears the end of His long answer to your question, you forget entirely about your writer's cramp and listen closely to what He is saying.

“After my resurrection, the Church of God — of which I am the Head — imbued with the Holy Spirit, started out to spread the good news of our plan for humanity throughout the world. Yet, even before the original apostles died, men began — with a great deal of help from Satan — to systematically counterfeit my truths, to go right back to the same types of paganism found in ancient Babylon and Egypt. Much of this paganism was dressed up to look ‘Christian’ and eventually constituted much of the beliefs of the leading church bodies of the world — but it simply was not the truth.

“Read my book for yourself if you don't believe this. How many so-called ‘Christian’ churches do you find literally taking their beliefs from it, explaining about my coming government, helping people to come out of sin, which is the viola-

tion of my law (which was established for their own good), and teaching people to observe my Sabbath and my Holy Days? How many preach the simple fact stressed over and over again throughout the New Testament that I am going to return again to the earth? No, even after I completely revealed myself, ‘came out of hiding’ if you please, humanity once again reenacted that old familiar story. My church was persecuted and had to flee; the truth became hidden from the majority of people and was known only to a persecuted few whom I preserved to do my work.

“I do want to make clear one thing I have mentioned before. Yes, all this time that man has been rejecting me and saying, ‘Where is God?’, I could have been *forcing* humanity to obey me. But I haven't because I created man with a mind capable of making decisions. Men are not just automated extensions of what you would probably call my ego. I have given man a chance to do things his way — and if you'll notice how things have been going, man's way has just not been working well at all.

“Because of this, when I return to the earth — and my return is the focal point of a great many Old and New Testament scriptures — then there is really going to be no question as to which way of living makes for genuine happiness and which way leads to chaos and destruction. Man's history has made that clear.”

But now comes information which you *know* the readers will want: God offers a much stronger, real and personal proof that He is alive — that He is personally con-

cerned with humanity today, concerned enough to save man from self-destruction. He tells about His Holy Spirit.

## The Holy Spirit

“The sick, emotionally based ‘spirit’ manifestations that are so highly touted by certain religious groups are not at all the fruits of the Holy Spirit,” explains Christ. “The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of power and love, and especially a sound mind. Check II Timothy 1:7.”

“How can we get it?” is the next question which springs instantly to your lips.

“The requirements are very basic. First, you must completely quit rejecting me and my way of life. The person who does not wholeheartedly attempt to live by every word in my book has been rejecting me, whether consciously or not — even so-called religious people. Second, you must be baptized, which symbolically pictures death, burial and a resurrection to a new kind of life. Rising out of the water from baptism is the prelude to a person's becoming a new man. Look up Acts 2:38 and Romans 6:4 for that. The requirements are that simple.

“Once you have received the Holy Spirit and continue to live by my laws, then you will have a living, personal, day-to-day proof that I am still alive and that my Father is answering your prayers. You will clearly see that it has been man who has rejected me all along, rather than me rejecting man. You will have proof that I am not dead, that I am not hiding nor ever have been, that I am not ‘on vacation.’

“Have my comments sufficiently answered your original question?”

“Yes, Sir!” □

# The **BOOK** Almost Nobody Knows

*The world's number one best seller is, paradoxically, the world's least understood book. Why? Should it be understood? If so, how can one come to understand it?*

by William F. Dankenbring

**A**S A YOUTH, I rarely went to church. Occasionally, a school chum would ask me to visit his church, and when I did so, the teacher would tell us stories about David and a giant named Goliath, Jonah and a whale, Daniel and his being thrown into a pit of lions, and Noah, who lived through a tremendous flood.

At the time, of course, I regarded these stories as interesting, as most young children would, but they had no relevance to me, personally. I couldn't identify with any of the Biblical characters. Their age, time, and surroundings were too remote, too estranged from conditions of life in the space age of the 20th century. Our modern industrial civilization seemed so much more real.

So, as I grew older, I lost whatever interest I had in the Bible. The question of reading the Bible never crossed my mind. It simply didn't concern me. I felt I was too busy with other things — work, sports,

classes, entertainment, or reading the latest novel. But the Bible didn't appeal to me.

## Why Read the Bible

"Why should I read the Bible?" I wondered. A few times I picked one up at an uncle's home, leafed through it, and put it down unread. It seemed too big, too heavy, too ancient.

Today, I know that I was overlooking a fantastic treasury of knowledge, wisdom, and human experience. Now I realize that my neglect of the Bible was a detriment to my own growth and understanding. I have learned that the Bible is not merely a collection of misty fables, legends, or quaint romances. I have learned that it is a book about *people* — people like you and me — people who lived, made mistakes, and died.

When I finally took the Bible off the shelf and began to study it as an adult, I discovered that it was, in reality, an action-packed saga of the

human race. It didn't blue-pencil people's lives, mistakes, or problems, but told the unvarnished truth.

I was intrigued. Here was a book that was really challenging! True-to-life episodes, violence, sadism, rape, adultery — plenty of raw human nature was revealed in its pages. The dark side of human experience was there, but also love, joy, happiness, and peace. I found that the Bible contained examples of men and women like myself in many respects, who faced life's difficulties and either mastered them or were mastered by them!

As I continued to study, I found that it contained wisdom enough to solve the world's problems, *if* that wisdom were utilized. Unfortunately, I discovered to my chagrin that the nations of the world had failed to look into that book for answers. World leaders, I found, had usually neglected that source of knowledge!

To my dismay and consternation, I found, as I continued reading the Bible, even more surprises. I found, in fact, that even religious leaders did not understand what was in the pages of the Bible!

You do not have to take my word for these facts. You don't have to believe what I say, just because I say it. My personal opinion means nothing.

The important thing for you to do is to find out for yourself. Check up, look into your Bible, and see if it is everything it claims to be.

### Where Should You Begin?

The Bible is a challenging book. When I first began reading it, I didn't know what surprises were in store for me. I couldn't foresee what a tremendous effect it would later come to have on my life!

You may be in the precise position I found myself in, twenty years or so ago. You may, at this very moment, have never read the Bible.

But let me tell you about some of the shocks that occurred as I studied and thought about the Bible. Right away, I became confused and frustrated when I listened to what other men and religious leaders had to say about the Bible. I thought, at first, that their opinions might be helpful.

But what I found was that religious leaders and other men were themselves mixed up and confused about the Bible! As incredible as it seemed to me at the time, I found that trained and educated men themselves could not even agree on what the Bible said or taught! One said one thing, and another said the exact opposite! It was baffling, confusing, mind-boggling. In the midst of this confusion, I made a decision that was to have a profound influence on my life.

I decided that in view of the controversy surrounding the Bible I wasn't going to take any man's word for what the Bible taught. Rather, I decided to compare what each man taught with what others taught, and

then — this is important — I decided that I would put them all to the test and read *the Bible itself* to find out the truth!

I was flabbergasted at the result. When I went to the Bible and read it for myself, I soon found that some of the most cherished, time-honored teachings that I had heard as a boy, and had assumed to be true, were nowhere to be found in the Bible!

Incredulous, with my mind churning, I learned that many popular "Christian" teachings, which I had always accepted and assumed to be Biblical, were really the diametric opposite to what I read in the pages of the Bible itself!

Can you imagine my state of mind?

For example, I found that Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). I found that those who do Christ's will shall "reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10), and compared this with the teachings of men.

Upon further examination, I found that the Bible says that the patriarch David died and was buried (Acts 2:29), and Peter, who lived 1,000 years later, said of David, after all that time, "For David did NOT ascend into the heavens..." (Acts 2:34, RSV).

And finally, I read the very words of Jesus who declared: "NO ONE HAS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man" (John 3:13, RSV).

I was astonished. But there it was, right before my very eyes, right in the Bible. And I couldn't argue with it! Of course I had heard the popular "Christian" teaching that the saints go to heaven when they die. But here was the Bible — and it said what I had never heard before.

Obviously, all the different denominations neither rightly understand nor properly interpret the Bible! However, Jesus Himself said, "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35, RSV). To make it even

plainer, He added later: "Thy word [the Bible] is *truth*" (John 17:17). He said men ought to live by every word of God, referring to the Bible (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).

How, then, can you rightly understand the Bible — a unique book that contains a message which has endured through the ages?

### Read the Book

To come to grasp the real meaning of the Bible and its contents, you must first of all *read it*. Reading books *about* the Bible is not enough. The place to begin is with the Bible itself — read it, study it, as you would any worthwhile book.

Generally, the place to start is in the beginning — that is, with the book of Genesis, the first book in the Old Testament. However, many people begin with the first book of the New Testament. It really doesn't matter, as long as you begin. Of course, if you begin with the book of Genesis, and then read right through, you will begin to see a story flow through the entire Bible. You will learn the history and background of many of the events mentioned later in the New Testament.

To come to understand any book, whether a textbook of biology, civics, or history, you must read the book itself. The apostle Paul praised the Bereans, "for they received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11, RSV).

What translation should you read? That is up to you. There are many good English translations, including the popular King James Version and the more modern Revised Standard Version. Other helpful translations are the Moffatt version, the Goodspeed version, and *The New English Bible*. A popular modern paraphrase of the Bible is *The Living Bible*, but it is not as accurate as the more literal translations.

Begin reading the Bible with an open-minded, inquisitive approach

— don't take for granted what you have been taught.

You have probably heard the old refrain, "Nobody can understand the Bible, because it contradicts itself." That, however, is not true. I found that when studying any subject, if I maintained an open mind and compared the scripture passages carefully, apparent and alleged contradictions could be solved with a minimum of effort!

Those who waste their time reading the Bible to discover "loose bricks" will stumble over many easily explainable passages, merely because of their critical attitude.

But if one studies the Bible in a

humble, teachable frame of mind, his study will be richly rewarded.

#### **Purpose for Study**

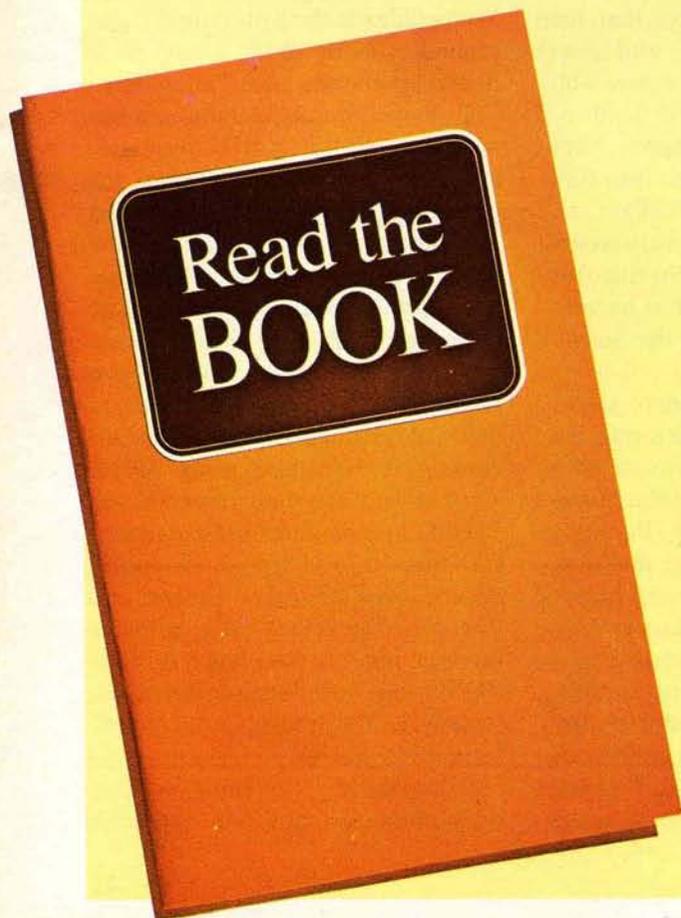
If you just study from casual interest, your Bible study will soon be over. A cursory, superficial interest in the Bible will soon be filled, your curiosity will be satiated, and there will be no more value in Bible study for you.

In order to make your study really worthwhile and meaningful, you must study with the attitude of seeking understanding and wisdom to apply to situations that arise in daily living. If you do this, you will find that the Bible contains exam-

ples of people who went through problems similar to your own, and you will see how they coped with them. You will be able to draw on lessons from the experience of others, so that hopefully you won't make the same mistakes.

Set your mind to obtain understanding. If you do this, you will be ready to receive instruction from the Bible. As Solomon wrote in the book of Proverbs: "Have two goals: wisdom — that is, knowing and doing right — and common sense. Don't let them slip away" (Proverbs 3:21, *The Living Bible*). He added: "Determination to be wise is the first step toward becoming wise!

# How to Understand the Bible



THE BIBLE, THE WORLD'S STAND-OUT BEST SELLER, IS ALSO THE WORLD'S LEAST UNDERSTOOD BOOK. WHY?

Why do many people shake their heads and exclaim, "I just can't understand this book"?

When people first read the Bible, they often give up. They assume that it is archaic, irrelevant to our modern 20th century. They never really *study* it carefully, as they should.

Believe it or not, the Bible **CAN BE UNDERSTOOD**. The *Ambassador College Correspondence Course* makes the Bible **COME ALIVE** with meaning, interest, and relevancy to **YOUR LIFE!** It makes the Scriptures **PLAIN** and easy to understand. It is free. If you have wanted to understand the Bible, write to the **PLAIN TRUTH** office nearest you, shown on the inside front cover. And also ask for the free booklet *Read the Book*. You have never read a booklet like it.

And with your wisdom, develop common sense and good judgment" (Proverbs 4:7).

If this is the attitude you have or the reason you study the Bible, then your life will be profited immeasurably, as many men of business have found.

### Another Key to Understanding

Even with the right approach and goal, there is another vital key to Bible understanding. It is revealed in the Bible itself.

One hot day, an Ethiopian was riding in a caravan across the Judean desert. He was passing the time by reading from the scroll of

the prophet Isaiah. He was perplexed. He could not make out what the prophet was really writing about!

At this juncture, Philip ran up to his chariot and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The befuddled Ethiopian official replied, "How can I, unless some one guides me?" He then read a passage of Isaiah aloud to Philip and asked, "About whom, pray, does the prophet say this, about himself or about some one else?" (See Acts 8:30-34.)

Philip, in response, explained the whole passage to him.

Why is this incident recorded in

the book of Acts? The answer is simple. Sometimes you will not entirely understand a certain passage of Scripture, so in order to fully grasp the meaning, you will need someone who already understands the passage to explain it logically and sensibly to you.

But since there are so many different interpretations of the Bible and its contents, you must be very careful to check up on whatever you read, or are told, and to compare it with what the Bible really says. Take nothing for granted, until you clearly see what's in the Bible. Don't rush to false conclusions.

This brings up the next key to un-



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An International Course of Biblical Understanding



The Space Age — What Does It Mean?

LESSON 1

Lesson 1

WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?



Today's modern weapons of warfare were predicted centuries ago!

## LESSON 1

### What Is the "End of the World"?

1. Was Jesus ever questioned about the "end of the world," and the signs that would point to His return? Matthew 24:3. What were Christ's disciples really talking about when they asked Him about the "end of the world"?

COMMENT: The New Testament, as originally inspired by God, was written in the Greek language. The Greek word translated "world" here in Matthew 24:3 is *aión*, meaning AGE — not the physical planet on which we live. Jesus, then, was questioned about the end of an "age" and about His scheduled return, rather than the destruction of the terrestrial globe we call earth. The end of man's civilization would mean the end of an age, but the earth itself would continue to exist!

### A Time of Great Trouble

1. Did Jesus prophesy that a time of GREAT trouble would occur on the earth just before His return? Matt. 24:21.

2. What did Jesus declare would happen if these days of tribulation were allowed to continue? Matt. 24:22.

COMMENT: The Moffatt translation renders this verse clearer as "not a soul would be saved alive." This verse, then, is not referring to spiritual salvation at all, but to being saved from physical destruction — from premature DEATH!

3. Did Jesus prophesy that only the inhabi-

tants of Jerusalem would be threatened by total destruction? Or did He plainly say that NO ONE would be safe from the threat of annihilation? Same verse.

COMMENT: The Revised Standard Version says "no human being would be saved."

4. Who will intervene in world affairs to cut short this time of trouble, and thus prevent the annihilation of all humanity? Mark 13:20.

COMMENT: These verses do not mean that God will alter the time of Christ's scheduled return, but that just as He planned originally, He will intervene at the very moment humanity would otherwise destroy itself. By His scheduled intervention He will cut short the days of man's rule over man, which would otherwise lead to the destruction of all human life.

### No Time Like It!

1. Has there ever been a time of trouble such as will occur just before Christ's return? Matt. 24:21; Mark 13:19.

2. Did any of the Old Testament prophets foresee this same time of worldwide peril? Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1.

COMMENT: Since each of the preceding four verses explains that there has never been before, period of crisis, they can only be referring to ONE GREAT CLIMACTIC period of worldwide trouble!

3. How did the prophet Joel symbolically describe the horrible events to take place at the close of this age? Joel 2:1-3. Will there ever again be a time like this? Verse 2.

COMMENT: Joel's God-inspired prophecy pic-

derstanding the Bible. And that is, never attempt to read into a passage what it doesn't clearly say. If you run across a perplexing scripture, don't immediately begin to search your own mind for a possible explanation.

The key to understanding difficult passages, whether on prophecy, or various Biblical symbols, is first of all to read the passage *in context*. Never try to lift it out of its Biblical setting and study it in isolation. Various symbols and prophecies may be explained more fully in other portions of the Bible.

The apostle Peter was faced with people who misinterpreted the Bible in his day, so he wrote: "First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (II Peter 1:20-21, RSV).

The whole point is this: The Bible interprets the Bible. It reveals the meaning and explanation of its own symbols, figures of speech, allegories, and prophecies.

#### **Avoid Tunnel Vision**

Another mistake many Bible students make is that they form an opinion on a topic without studying *all* the scattered scriptures which are relevant to the subject. From just a few verses in one part of the Bible, they may gain a wrong impression because of the slant they have put on those verses.

A scientist, before he formulates a hypothesis, researches all the available literature on the subject. He studies all the relevant items, marshals and assembles his data, and then proceeds to interpret that data. If he has only *partial* data, however, his conclusions will, most likely, be in error.

So it is with Bible study. When you examine or study a particular subject in the Bible, gather all the relevant scriptures on the subject —

all the Biblical facts, data, and information available — and then, putting it all together, draw your conclusions. If you fail to do this, you have only yourself to blame for any errors you fall into.

#### **The Big Test**

Finally, and most important — if you desire to understand the Bible, you must be willing to obey the words of your Creator. You must be willing to live by His instructions to mankind.

Isaiah the prophet wrote, "Yet I will look with pity on the man who has a humble and a contrite heart, who trembles at my word" (Isaiah 66:2, *The Living Bible*).

Some of the prophecies of Daniel, for instance, seem very obscure and complex. Daniel himself was not allowed to understand the meaning of certain things revealed to him. He was told, "Go now, Daniel, for what I have said is not to be understood *until* the time of the end. Many shall be purified by great trials and persecutions. But the wicked shall continue in their wickedness, and none of them shall understand. *Only those who are willing to learn* will know what it means" (Daniel 12:9-10, *The Living Bible*).

David put it this way: "How can men be wise? The only way to begin is by reverence for God. For growth in wisdom comes from obeying his laws. Praise his name forever" (Psalm 111:10, *The Living Bible*).

To understand the Bible is to obey it and to live by it. But if you ever reject what you see in the Bible, if you ever cease to live by it, then what knowledge you have gained will slip away. You will lose the understanding and knowledge that was once yours.

Why is this? Simply because the Bible is a spiritual book. And carnal, rebellious minds without God's Spirit cannot comprehend spiritual truths. To the carnal mind, spiritual truths seem foolish. It cannot take

them in, digest them, and grasp them (see I Corinthians 2:10-14).

Once you begin to put these steps into practice, you will find the Bible coming alive to you. You will find it filled with interesting and meaningful knowledge of vital significance to your life and the age in which we live.

The Bible, very likely, will completely change your life, as it did mine, about fifteen years ago!

#### **Your Next Step**

To help you in your study of this challenging book, Ambassador College has created a unique in-the-home instruction program for those interested in studying and understanding what the Bible says. You can write to the editor of this magazine, at one of the addresses listed on the inside front cover, and ask to be enrolled in the *Ambassador College Correspondence Course*. There is no cost.

This fascinating course makes the Bible vibrant with interest, meaning, significance, and relevance. It poses and delves into the big questions of life — showing what the Bible says in answer. It discusses such topics as: Why human life? Where are we headed? What does the Bible reveal about the future? What is the purpose for your drawing breath?

Also, questions regarding heaven, hell, the soul, salvation, death, and prophecy are explored — and answered straight from the Bible.

If you are interested in studying the Bible, you cannot afford to be without this unique correspondence course.

And if you follow the keys of Bible study outlined in this article, then your own life will be enriched and blessed far above expectations. Your whole life will be challenged, changed, and you will experience the exhilaration of learning truths hidden from millions throughout the ages of human history.

It is entirely up to you. □

# what you can do...

**TIMELY Tips and Helpful Suggestions for YOU and YOUR FAMILY**

## ● Smoking and Pregnancy

Mounting evidence indicates that smoking during pregnancy is not only harmful to the mother, but also harmful to the growth and development of the yet unborn baby.

According to a British report, "Mothers who smoke during pregnancy tend to have smaller babies than nonsmokers and may be more likely to lose their babies from abortion, stillbirths and deaths in the first days of life" (*Smoking and Health Now, A Report of the Royal College of Physicians, 1971*). Similar conclusions were reached in a 1971 report to the Surgeon General of the United States, called *The Health Consequences of Smoking*.

Another British report, this one a long-term study, included 98 percent of the total births registered during one week in March 1958 throughout England, Scotland, and Wales. Investigators found that the children of mothers who were heavy smokers during pregnancy showed significantly decreased height, retardation of reading ability, and lower ratings on "social adjustment" than the children of nonsmoking mothers (*Second Report of the British Perinatal Mortality Survey, 1969*).

In an American study at Texas A & M University, 103 boys and girls ages 6 through 13 years old were subjected to a smoking environment to find out what effects smoking has on nonsmokers. It was discovered that in 30 minutes a nonsmoker's heart rate increases, his blood pressure goes up, and the amount of carbon monoxide in his blood mounts up measurably.

Overall it was disclosed that the smoking environment's effect upon the nonsmoker is similar to cigarette smoke's effect upon the smoker himself, but on a reduced scale. The obvious implication is that even if the expectant mother doesn't smoke, but dad does, the yet unborn baby may still be somewhat harmed.

What should be done in the light of these facts is obvious. If you smoke, you should quit, not only for your sake and those immediately around you, but also for the sake of any unborn children. For the help you need on how to break the cigarette habit and for an in-depth study on other effects of smoking, write for our free booklet *You Can Quit Smoking*.

## ● Warning: Escalators Can Be Dangerous!

Escalators are normally safe, convenient ways of getting from one floor to another. But for some 1,000 people this year (mostly children six and under), usually safe escalators will become maiming, mangling, amputating, metal monsters.

Not too long ago, a tragic accident involving a little two-year-old boy occurred on an escalator at a railroad station. The toddler, who was with his mother, fell off the escalator as it neared the end of its circuit. His tiny right hand caught in the escalator and passed under the comb plate along with the last escalator step. His fourth finger was ripped off.

Children, as well as adults, have lost fingers or toes, or have had hands or feet badly crushed in escalators. One small child, whose parent allowed him to ride an escalator all the way to the end, sitting down, had his bottom badly torn.

These are tragic incidents. But even more tragic is the fact that these accidents could have been prevented. Don't let a similar occurrence mar your child. Follow these simple escalator riding rules, and teach them to your child:

Always observe the "Please Hold Handrail" sign. Stand still in the middle of the step. Do not walk up or down. (This rule does not apply in some areas. In London's underground train system, for instance, it is customary to stand to the side of the escalator steps so that others in a hurry can freely pass you on the stairs.) Do not lean over the handrail, or lean against it.

When riding an escalator with a small child, hold his hand and have him hold the handrail with his other hand. Hold little toddlers in your arms. Never allow your child to sit on escalator steps. Never allow your child to play on or around escalators. An escalator is not a plaything or a babysitter.

— Patrick A. Parnell





## Home Gardening...

# Here Are the Hidden Payoffs

*There are many lesser-known benefits in home gardening which add up to make "growing your own" a fruitful, productive hobby.*

Text and Photography by Jerry Gentry

**S**INK YOUR teeth into a steaming-hot ear of sweet corn, plucked from its stalk only minutes earlier. . . .

Savor hot buttered squash picked from its vine less than one hour before. . . .

Taste the full-bodied flavor of a vine-ripened tomato. . . .

Impossible in our Supermarket Age, you say?

Not at all. In fact, these rewards are commonplace for a small, yet ardently successful group of people known as home gardeners.

Now before you throw up your hands and say "not for me," read a little further. It does not require a college degree in horticulture or an

**TOMATOES GROW** in a space-saving "vertical garden" along a backyard fence. A variety of natural stimuli for children is just one of the many hidden benefits of growing a family garden.

impossible number of back-breaking hours to enjoy the benefits of a home vegetable garden. The amount of work required is reimbursed by a fruitful harvest — plus additional *hidden payoffs* you may have never realized before.

### Ever Taste a Really Delicious Tomato?

Today, it is nearly impossible to buy, for example, a vine-ripened tomato at the local grocery or supermarket. The reason is simply a matter of time, transportation requirements and the economics of modern agricultural production. Tomato fields are usually far removed from the neighborhood grocery store or the supermarket shelves. It requires at least a few days or even weeks to harvest, pack, transport, distribute and display tomatoes which were harvested wholly green or greenish-yellow. During this time-lag, the tomatoes turn red.

Though commercial tomatoes are obviously better than no tomatoes at all, the modern marketing procedures necessary for the mass production and distribution of tomatoes rob them of freshness and sometimes create a fruit so bland that you would just as soon not eat it. Why? Because the red tomato you buy at the store has not acquired the nutritional and flavorful benefits of vine ripening.

Now consider the taste, freshness and high quality of home-grown vegetables and fruits. (Tomatoes are, botanically, a fruit. But they are grown and used much like vegetable crops.)

A home-grown tomato does not suffer from the limitations imposed upon commercially grown crops. Los Angeles County Farm Advisor L. E. Francis stated recently: "There's no marketing program in existence today that can give the quality and freshness of a hand-grown and picked vegetable from a backyard garden."

Today, Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, comes close by offering vegetables for sale the same day they are picked from nearby fields. This example, unfortunately, is not typical of many other cities around the world where much prime agricultural land has been covered with housing subdivisions.

#### **Savings to Family Food Budget**

Quality and freshness are both desirable vegetable characteristics. But just how much of a contribution can a home garden make toward saving money which would normally be spent for food? Aren't home-grown vegetables commonly more expensive?

The answer is yes, pound for pound, when all costs are considered. But the cost per pound of the harvested crop is not the whole picture.

A budget-conscious home gardener can just about pay for his hobby out of grocery savings. That



is, the savings accrued to the weekly food budget just about offset the cost of a few hand tools, seeds, fertilizer and water. People normally donate their time to a hobby without expecting an hourly wage. Gardening is no different. And this hobby gives the same relaxation, recreation and diversion as do other hobbies. In addition, gardeners reap a fruitful harvest of good food.

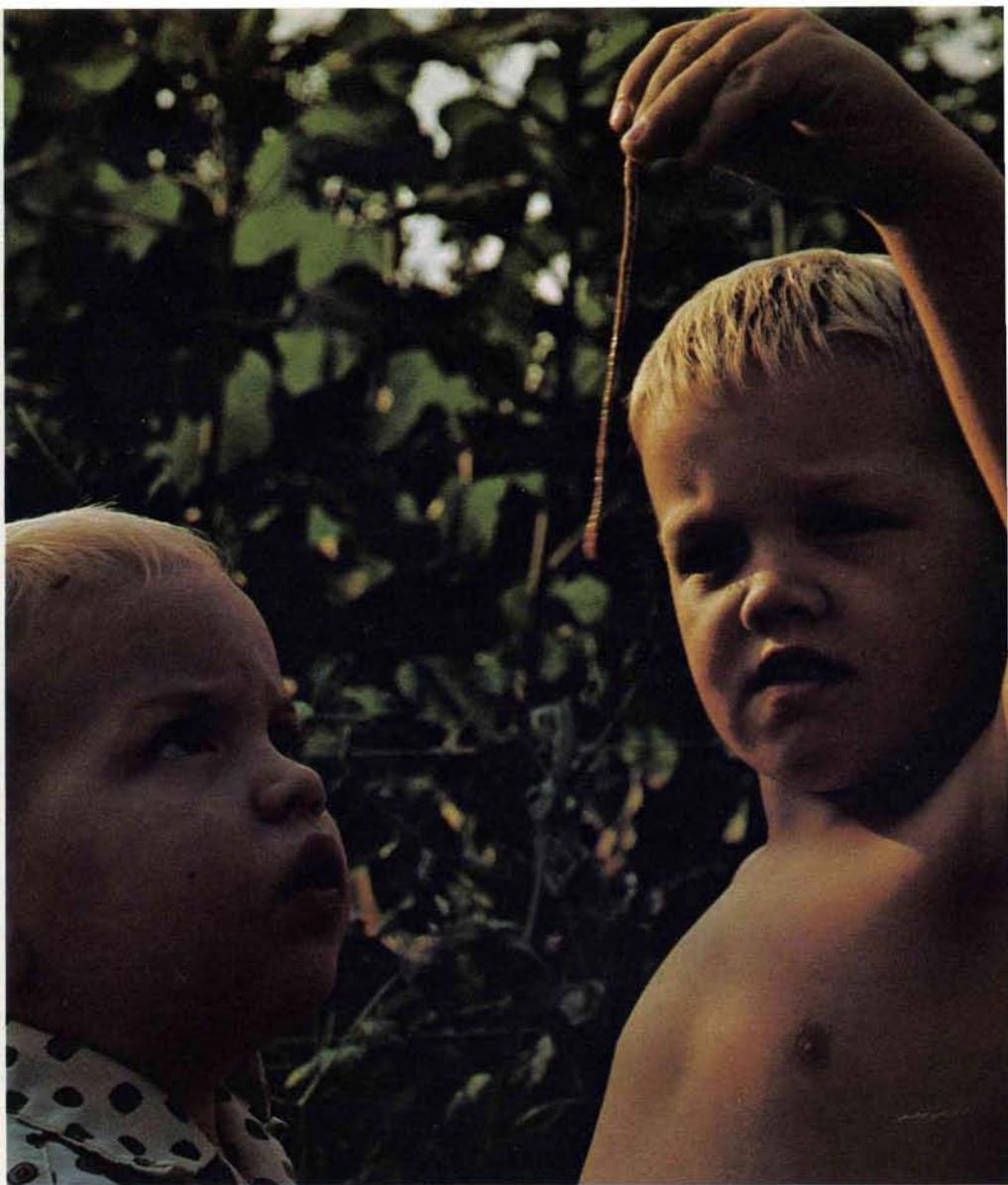
Of course, home-grown fruits and vegetables require a little more effort. Even so, the hidden payoffs more than make up the difference.

For example, as late as the 1930's, large numbers of French factory workers, white-collar workers and small shop keepers joined together in an organization known as the Workingman-Gardeners' Association, which grew to several million members. These working people lived on small acreages in the country, but worked in the cities. Later, when economic depression and unemployment struck Europe, these working people simply "dug in" and subsisted on their small acreages of ground. These proud Frenchmen simply did not have to depend on dole lines and welfare. Instead, a vegetable garden, a few chickens, and a couple of milk goats, along with some good physical labor, provided them a comfortable means of weathering the economic storm.

#### Psychological Benefits

Even during relatively normal economic times, gardening is a relaxing, productive diversion from the frantic pace of life in the city where people are battered, dislodged and uprooted by many shocking experiences. Planting a seed and watching it grow exactly as expected and realizing that your own physical body is also dependent on soil, air, water and living things — just like plants growing in a home garden — can be psychologically stabilizing.

To pause and meditate on the



**HEALTHY SOIL** (left) is created by adding compost, which is made from leaves, straw, animal manures and other organic material allowed to decompose. Children, intrigued by an earthworm (above), make many exciting discoveries in a family garden. Below, a tiny predator spider waits to capture an insect attracted to a cucumber flower — a little known example of the finely tuned ecological relationships which can be observed in a home garden.



natural world which continues according to basic laws can be more than a small comfort to people caught up in the urban rat race for survival. The germination of a seed, the growth of a plant and finally, the harvest of a nutritious fruit or vegetable provides not only food for the stomach but also an understanding of life. This points the mind to a source of life and energy beyond the full control of human beings. The germinating forces inside a seed, the natural tendency for plants to grow toward sunlight, the interdependencies between pollinating insects and the nectar-bearing flowers these insects feed upon — all these are mysteries which man does not fully understand. Yet, what better method of *experiencing* nature does the average person have than by personal observations readily available in a home garden?

To these psychological benefits, add the effects of the regular physical exercise necessary to prepare the soil, plant seeds and tend the crop, and you heap up one more reward — a convenient means of keeping in better physical condition.

#### Stimuli for Children

Children also benefit from a home garden. Prior to the coming of the Urban Era, children grew up in rural surroundings. Trees, grass, animals and birds were a common part of the everyday environment.

Today, much of the Western world, and increasingly the developing world, is urbanized. Multitudes of people moving to big cities have resulted in depriving children of contact with nature. What was once a flower, a blade of grass, a babbling brook or a robin's song has today been transformed. Now, glaring neon signs, telephone poles, concrete-walled river beds and screaming sirens take the place of the former sights and sounds of nature. This artificial, dehumanized environment produces strange, in-

human qualities in people. Children respond to their environment and develop according to the variety of stimuli with which they are provided.

Dr. René Dubos, who spent much of his early childhood in rural France, north of Paris, wrote: "The quality of human life is inextricably interwoven with the kinds and variety of stimuli man receives from the Earth and the life it harbors" (*Audubon*, July, 1972, p. 33).

Home gardening offers an opportunity to bring a little of the rural peace and natural harmony, plus a great variety of beneficial stimuli into a child's early life. The value of such stimuli was recently demonstrated by a group of nurses working with mentally retarded children in a hospital. The nurses got the idea of bringing chickens and rabbits inside the hospital's sterile walls. Not surprisingly, the formerly somber, passive children began responding to the living things they were shown. For the first time, they actually began to enjoy life. Later, the nurses took the children outdoors for more sensory exercises. They discovered that feeling a blade of grass, touching the bark of a tree, or seeing a beautiful flower was a stimulating challenge for these retarded children.

Such sensory exercises stimulated the children's minds. Of course, such exercises did not perform a miracle. The children still remained mentally retarded. But life did become less boring, more exciting and stimulating, even for these not-so-blessed youngsters.

How much more valuable are the same stimuli to the millions of children endowed with normal intelligence and physiques. If a child can poke his own chubby little finger into the soil and drop in a seed, he can begin to learn about the mystery of life. He can learn that he must *care* for plants, or they will wither. He can learn responsibility and even some basic lessons of ecology.

If a child is given the responsibility of managing his own plot, the results are even greater. He can reap the benefit of his own labor plus learn basic lessons from the mistakes he will undoubtedly make.

Then he will begin to apply these same lessons to relationships with other human beings. He will learn that *caring* for human beings is an attribute which must be exercised, or it too withers, just as a plant does. Much of the urban environment spawns "care-less" attitudes, which actually cause children to become dehumanized.

Patience and diligence, which are greatly needed for success in any walk of life, are two more attributes gardening teaches.

#### Space for a Garden

"But where and how can I grow a garden?" you ask.

The answer is surprisingly simple. Wherever there is sunlight and soil, plants will grow. You may not feel like tackling a full-blown vegetable garden the first year. If you live in a big city apartment, you have little or no space for a large garden. Nevertheless, a window box planted with herbs or a section of a flower bed planted with leafy lettuce, radishes, squash or even tomatoes offers many of the same benefits. With only a few square feet of soil space, a Chinese cook living in a Los Angeles high-rise apartment grew a successful window-box garden of ornamental flowers. You can grow vegetables in the same manner.

Yard space in cities is at a premium, but anyone who can find six square feet of soil space that receives direct sunlight can grow enough lettuce, for example, to provide a family of four with salad throughout the growing season.

Many experienced home gardeners carefully select a house with a larger space for a garden. My own family's vegetable garden occupies a 25- by 50-foot space behind our garage. In addition, a fence row makes



**HARVEST TIME** — Children look at this year's pea seeds that will become next year's plants.

a convenient "vertical garden" for growing tomatoes, beans, peas and other vining plants. Our own garden, plus one fifty-foot section of fence row for tomatoes, provides enough vegetables to feed our family of five with no outside vegetable purchases during the five-month growing period. Of course, we do purchase other groceries.

Since growing seasons and types of vegetables vary throughout the world, a gardener should follow localized planting instructions found on most seed packages, or read an inexpensive "how to" gardening book designed for his local area.

#### **A Few Simple Rules**

You can grow your own garden by following a few simple rules.

First, you must enrich the topsoil, since it is the lifeblood of your gar-

den. Yet in most backyards, especially in the city, the ground surface is usually a combination of subsoil, builders' rubble and maybe a little organic matter called humus. You need humus for healthy crops. This comes from leaves, sludge, straw, animal wastes and other sources. Any means of increasing the humus content of your garden soil will help grow better, healthier plants and more abundant crops. Fallen leaves, bedding material from a dairy or stable and most animal litter make far superior fertilizer and soil conditioners than do chemical fertilizers without humus.

Once your plot has organic material (an inch on the surface is minimal, 3 to 6 inches is better) and you have scratched the surface of the ground with a hoe or rake, plant seeds in rows or hills, according to

the instructions on your seed packages.

Generally, plant after danger from frost has passed. (Note the time spring wildflowers begin to show. They generally bloom after danger from frosts has passed.) Give your plot the equivalent of an inch of rainfall each week during the growing season — if rains are not forthcoming.

With these abbreviated rules on how to start your garden, you are ready to begin. Inexpensive books on the many details of successful home gardening are available in local libraries or book shops. If you need to, consult these as your garden progresses. You'll find a world of new ideas, inspiration and increasing health open to you as you experience the hidden payoffs in home gardening. □

## Personal from



(Continued from page 1)

others who were being taught it, and simply ASSUMED it to be truth.

But something must be lacking in them all! For none has really made this a better world. None has shown us the WAY to a lasting world PEACE. None has the answer to all the poverty, the destitution, the illiteracy, the filth and squalor of the hundreds of millions in Asia, Africa, South America — or to the moral degeneracy, the tragedy of broken marriages and split-up families, the crime, the violence, the discontent throughout our supposedly educated and affluent Western world.

Not one of these religions — nor the evolutionists — nor modern science — has been able to explain *why man is as he is* — with the almost AWESOME human mind that can send men to the moon and back, but can't solve his problems here on earth.

Do you know that there *is* a source that *does* explain all this? There is a source that can be PROVED to be true — and the *only* source that can give us the answers. It is the source the Christian religion is supposed to follow, but *doesn't!* It is a source not followed by the Eastern religions — a source rejected by modern science. This very REJECTION is the REASON that modern science offers NO SOLUTION for humanity's greater problems — the way to lasting world PEACE — the way to universal happiness, prosperity, and abundant well-being.

You can PROVE the existence of God, the Creator of all, the Ruler of all, and the Great Educator, whose revelation of BASIC KNOWLEDGE is the FOUNDATION of ALL knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

You can prove the authenticity

and the AUTHORITY of the revelation of that Supreme God — which revelation we call the Bible. Why not write for the free booklet titled *Does God Exist?*, and another booklet as well, also gratis, *Seven Proofs God Exists*.

Why is there so much MISSING knowledge? Or, why is the most VITAL and important knowledge MISSING? And on the other hand, WHY is there so much MIS-knowledge — so many fallacies, fables, untruths being taught in the guise of fact or of truth?

Let me tell you, when you really let the true answer to those questions come into your mind, you'll be on the way to understanding this whole riddle of life — and the REASON for the really terrible and sickening conditions that exist on this earth today.

Let me tell you some of the vital factors of knowledge that have been HIDDEN from this world — yes, hidden from the world's leading educators, hidden from modern science, hidden from all religions, hidden from statesmen, heads of state, and the world's rulers, hidden from the public — yes, and hidden from YOU!

One vital factor of knowledge hidden from the world is knowledge of the CAUSE of a lasting world PEACE — and, conversely, knowledge of the CAUSE of the lack of it!

Another vital factor of knowledge hidden from the world is the true MEANING of life — the PURPOSE for which humanity was put here on the earth. Another is the REASON why man can invent such marvelous machines, can fly to the moon, yet *can't* solve his own problems here on earth.

The Bible is our Maker's Instruction Manual — His basic revelation of necessary knowledge. And this book claims that ALL mankind, as a whole, is *deceived!* All nations are deceived. Listen! Let me show it to you. "The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which *deceiveth the whole world*" (Revelation 12:9).

Notice Jesus' warning: "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

"All these are the beginning of sorrows . . . .

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many . . . .

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:5-8, 11, 24).

And notice the apostle Paul's warning to the Gentile Corinthians: "... the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them . . . for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Corinthians 4:4; 11:14-15).

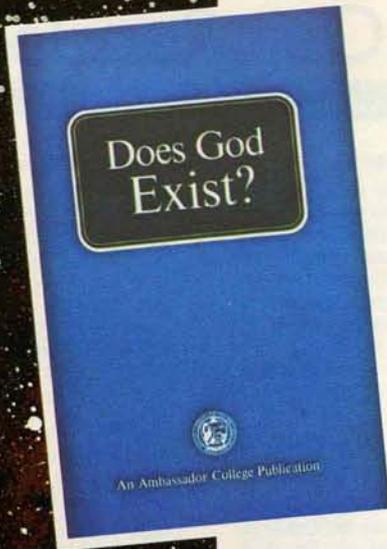
These passages represent Satan the devil as the arch-deceiver of mankind. Probably most people today are deceived into thinking there is no devil. The very arch-deceiver has deceived the world into thinking he doesn't exist and untold millions into thinking that God doesn't even exist.

Another important fact the knowledge of which has been hidden from the world is that there was once peace on this earth — peace worldwide — happiness, joy! Originally this world was populated with angels — not humans. And that's another bit of knowledge hidden from most people today. So let us

# YOU NEED TO KNOW!

THE QUESTION of God's existence has been debated by theologians, scholars, and scientists for centuries. But never was this question more relevant than today. Atheists deny God's existence. Most religious people ASSUME that He exists. It's time you read the evidence for yourself in this intriguing booklet — *Does God Exist?*

See inside front cover for address of PLAIN TRUTH office nearest you.



Saritka Soloman — Art

now notice the very first verse in all the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

The Hebrew words in which Moses originally wrote that sentence imply a perfect creation — not one in chaos and confusion, as described in the second verse. Many scriptures in other parts of the Bible reveal great world-shaking events that occurred between the time of the first and second verses of Genesis one.

In the book of Job the original creation is described as so perfect and so beautiful that the angels shouted for joy. God the Creator is described as asking Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:4, 7).

There was worldwide peace on earth for some time after the earth was first created, because the government of God was being administered here then. For how long a duration is not revealed. It could have been millions of years. In any event it lasted until about 6,000 years ago.

When this earth was first created, God the Creator-Ruler of the uni-

verse set one of two highest-ranking archangels — a cherub — who was thoroughly experienced in the administration of God's government as King to administer the government of God over the earth.

And all that, too, is knowledge hidden from the world today. And that involves also another important bit of hidden knowledge — the very ORIGIN of this Satan, the devil. Where did he come from? Did God deliberately create a devil?

Notice Ezekiel's description of the origin of Satan: "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering . . . the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast *created*. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast *created*, till iniquity was found in thee . . . thou hast sinned. Therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain

of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee" (Ezekiel 28:12-17).

The real ruler of the ancient city of Tyre, the economic giant of those days, was Satan.

Notice what Isaiah reveals about this Lucifer or Satan. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isaiah 14:12-15).

This super archangel who became Satan led one third of all the angels — the whole earth's population — in his war of aggression. And he is deceiving the whole earth today!

As a result of this colossal earth-wide mutiny and rebellion against the government of God, a physical

destruction put this whole earth into chaos and darkness, and that's what we find described in Genesis 1:2: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Then in six days God RENEWED the face of the earth: "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth" (Psalm 104:30).

So now, notice the first thing God did in *renewing* the face of the earth: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3).

It was on the sixth day of renewing the face of the earth that God created the first HUMANS — when MAN was first put here on this earth — and for a tremendous purpose which also has been WITHHELD from public knowledge. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26).

Satan DECEIVED the first woman and got to Adam through his wife. Adam rejected God's revealed knowledge — just as humanity has been doing ever since — disobeyed the government of God, allowed the SAME ATTITUDE that Satan had to enter his heart — the self-centered attitude of vanity, lust and greed, of selfishness, of resentment against authority — especially the authority of God — of total unconcern for the good or welfare of others, of jealousy, envy, and hatred.

And all humanity, under the sway of this active Satan, is traveling that way of life still. And that is the very CAUSE of all humanity's ills and evils in this sick, sick world today.

Happily, the time is coming, SOON, when this whole world is going to be jolted into waking up to this vital knowledge, so long HIDDEN from a sleeping and sick world! □

# What Our Readers Say

## Personal from the Editor

I received my first copy of *The PLAIN TRUTH* and especially enjoyed the article about General Suharto, President of Indonesia. Also the article concerning "What is a real Christian." It was very revealing and helpful. I am sincerely grateful to everyone that made this study of God's Word, the Bible, possible.

Earl S.,  
Coal City, West Virginia

## Blood Money — The High Costs of War

I just received my second issue of *The PLAIN TRUTH*. And I must say the article by Gary Alexander, "Blood Money, the High Costs of War" was not only the plain truth, but the plain shock!

Jeanne E.,  
Weatherby, Pennsylvania

## Human Machines

That was a very fine article in the November issue of *The PLAIN TRUTH* magazine, "Turning Workers into Human Machines." This article has touched on a subject that is going to be brought into much sharper focus in the very near future.

I have worked in one of the local G.M. plants as a tool and die maker for the past fourteen years and have been watching this problem of job dissatisfaction or job boredom growing worse year by year. Over the past years, as this problem has been growing, I feel that it was hoped higher wages and increased benefits might offset it, but the problem cannot be cured that way. A job that has become so boring and meaningless that an individual can't stand to go to work will never be cured by this means.

Raymond S.,  
Saginaw, Michigan

## Disenchantment With Science?

No wonder everyone is becoming so disenchanting with science today. Science has promised us a glamor world, but our world of today is in such a chaotic mess — suffering from an overdose of science. D. S. Winnail described it very well in his article, "Why the Growing Disenchantment With Science?" I applaud D. S. Winnail and his article in daring to "tell it like it is."

Virgil H.,  
Chattanooga, Tennessee

I agree with your article "Why the Growing Disenchantment With Science." This change was easily foreseen. When we (with our advanced technology) can spend \$200,000 to kill one human being in Vietnam and can't even walk the streets at night for fear of being mugged, you know that something is wrong.

Kevin M.,  
Stacyville, Iowa

## What Is a Real Christian?

I just finished reading "What Is a Real Christian?" for the second time. I have never really known what a real Christian was until I read this article. I do wish I could be a real Christian. Some people tell me I don't have to work at being a Christian. I say you do. Others tell me just have faith. That isn't easy either. I am so confused. Seems the older a person gets, the less we understand.

Myrtle S.,  
Eugene, Oregon

A copy of your magazine, *The PLAIN TRUTH*, has been given me by a friend. I have read it from front to back and love it, especially "What Is a Real Christian?" I find I have been believing the wrong way. I would like very much to enroll in your *Ambassador College Correspondence Course*. I will welcome any literature pertaining to the word of God. Being a Sunday school teacher, I must teach the truth.

Ernest A.,  
Norris City, Illinois

## Is Heaven Our Reward?

I have one question regarding Garner Ted Armstrong's article "What is a Real Christian?" He stated: "Nowhere in all the Bible is heaven promised as the reward of the saved." Here is a quote from *The Living Bible*, paraphrased, John 14:2-3: "There are many homes up there where my Father lives, and I am going to prepare them for your coming. When everything is ready, then I will come and get you, so that you can always be with me where I am."

Doesn't this imply that sometime in the future God's chosen will be up there (heaven) in the home prepared by Christ? I would appreciate clarification of this point in my mind.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill B.,  
Dallas, Texas

● The quotation from *The Living Bible*, as you yourself noted, is "paraphrased." The paraphrase is simply incorrect. Other modern translations, such as the *Moffatt*, *Goodspeed* or *Revised Standard Version*, have this verse correctly translated into modern English. Jesus was not talking about "homes," but rather, rooms or offices — positions of responsibility in the Kingdom of God. Christ is now preparing the offices, jobs and responsibilities which He will bestow upon true Christians when He returns. Our reward is now, presently, being "kept in heaven" for us (I Peter 1:4). Jesus is going to bring our rewards with Him when He returns to earth. *Moffatt* puts it this way: "Lo, I am coming very soon, with my reward, to requite everyone for what he has done" (Revelation 22:12). Write for our free article, "What Is the Place That Jesus Is Preparing?" for a more detailed explanation of this much misunderstood subject.

## Capital Punishment

In the November issue of *The PLAIN TRUTH*, you had an article on "An Alternative to Capital Punishment." I can readily say I agree to most of what you said about men and women who commit murder. But you must also remember that a murder can be committed and yet not intended.

I'm down here in prison for murder myself and am doing life after receiving the death penalty for 2 years. I'm thankful today however that I got a stay of execution. I fully believe that orphanages, state training schools, prisons and society itself, as they are today, are the main causes for a young man or woman to commit murder. Most of the institutions, (which I have been in all of the above named) today use brutal force in which to rehabilitate a man. By doing so the young man may turn worse than he ever was and therefore may repeat his actions over again. I speak from experience on this matter.

Paul C.,  
Huntsville, Texas

## Smoking

I am a man of totally different views from those propagated by *The PLAIN TRUTH*. I am a staunch materialist and a

committed Communist in ideology. Moreover, I am an active worker in my party, the C.P.I. Before reading your magazine, I had tried several times to get rid of the habit of smoking. I failed. Your advice has inspired me to try again. To tell the truth, I have stopped smoking from the very moment that I finished reading the article. I can't say how far that it will go, but at present, the renunciation is absolutely complete.

Comrade Harjit S. M.,  
Punjab, India

## General Comments

For some time now I have been in contact with your magazine, *The PLAIN TRUTH*, through borrowed copies. It is quite enlightening and instructive. I would be grateful if you could arrange to mail a copy to me. Our teachers and students find it very useful. Though most of the references in the paper may have a Western tone, its influence HAS and IS infiltrating into Indian life and the reading of *The PLAIN TRUTH* may work as a preventive, which is better than a cure.

J. C.,  
Society of Jesus,  
Mangalore, India

My family used to receive *The PLAIN TRUTH* in Africa, but a fortnight ago they were evacuated from Uganda. Leaving the country in which we toiled and helped to build and develop has meant abandoning everything we had worked for and gained; our literature, our property and personal possessions. The only cherished items not left behind were your magazines — full of hope, wisdom and promises of the better world-to-come . . . . May your subscription list grow till all the people of this world get your enlightening education, and better themselves.

Tinn N.,  
Wales

## An Agnostic Writes

Being an Agnostic, it's hard for me to believe that you have *any solutions* to the PROBLEM of our existence??? I consider it an accident. Being an Agnostic, I'm open to suggestions. Plato and Aristotle were Gnostics, as was Socrates; their world was simpler. I'm a profound reader of your magazine. I must commend you for your honesty and forwardness and SPUNK! Rare these political days.

John S.,  
Bronx, New York

—IN PERSON

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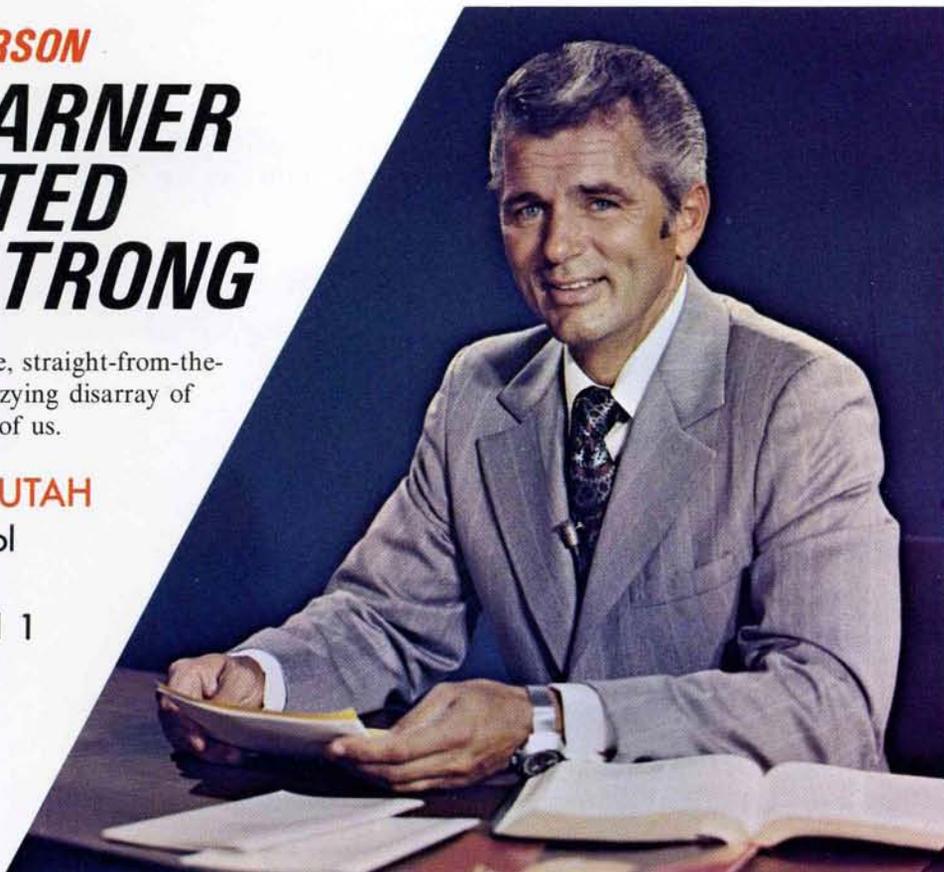
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# In This Issue

- ★ **PROSPERITY OR CALAMITY? NOW THAT BRITAIN IS IN THE COMMON MARKET**  
Before there is a final prosperity in utopian peace and well-being, grave things are prophesied for Britain and Europe. See page 2.
- ★ **EASTER — HOW DID AN ANCIENT PAGAN CUSTOM BECOME "CHRISTIAN"?**  
See Page 8.
- ★ **MODERN "CHRISTIANITY" VERSUS CHRIST**  
Very few grasp the spectacular difference between today's Christianity and the original teachings of Christ. See page 14.
- ★ **WHY THE CRITICAL BREAKDOWN IN FACTORY FARMING?**  
Mass-production farming once promised hope for the world's hungry. But today it is threatened with unforeseen problems. See page 18.
- ★ **THE AWESOME POWER OF PRAYER**  
Is there really a God who answers prayer? Why are so many prayers unanswered? See page 25.
- ★ **IS GOD ON VACATION?**  
Why does God hide himself? See page 29.
- ★ **THE BOOK ALMOST NOBODY KNOWS**  
The world's number one best seller is the world's least understood book. Why? See page 34.
- ★ **HOME GARDENING — HERE ARE THE HIDDEN PAYOFFS**  
See page 40.

Printed in U.S.A.

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