

GN

The Good News



**GARNER TED ARMSTRONG
IN EUROPE**

NOVEMBER 1974



ABOUT OUR COVER

Garner Ted Armstrong on camera in front of NATO headquarters. This month's Update features Mr. Armstrong's fact-finding trip to Europe, where he gathered material for programs to be aired this coming season.

Lyle Christopherson — GN

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MY FAVORITE argument, used against my mother in the days of my naval service, was: "Mom, surely all these other churches can't be wrong!"

Since that time I have heard many people use the same argument on me.

It never occurred to me until many years later, following baptism and induction into Christ's ministry, that an opposite statement would work equally as well to answer that cherished argument of so many: "Surely all these churches can't be *right!*"

That's right. I was wrong! If any one church professing to teach and preach a method of salvation to its parishioners is "right," then all others are automatically "wrong" since they are all so different!

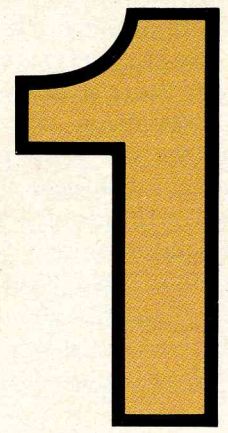
In this confusing world of "churchianity," with dozens of differing beliefs, practices, tenets of doctrine and approaches to the Bible and Christian living, you need to face squarely the practical fact that the old argument that "surely all these churches can't be wrong" is totally inadequate and illogical as an excuse to reject the truth of God when it comes to you!

Great Deception to Arise

Jesus warned of a great deception to arise soon after His death and resurrection, which was actually only a continuation of the great Babylonian Mystery conspiracy which had had its root beginnings in the lives of ancient apostates such as Semiramis and Nimrod. But Jesus said, "I will build *my church*" (Matt. 16:18), and promised He would be with that Church *always* — it would *never die out!* (Matt. 28:20.)

Jesus *did* begin that literal Church. Think. If I had never been born, and if my father had never lived — if there were no *World*

PROOF



GOD IS THE RULER

by Garner Ted Armstrong

Jesus said, "I will build my church"! And He did build it! No one in the Christian world denies there is a true Church of which Jesus Christ is the Head somewhere on this earth right now! Many imagine that Church is to be found in the hearts and minds of multiple millions who may represent dozens of different "faiths." Others claim it is one great organized and political body. Others may feel it is a tiny sect. Many churches claim to be "number one," meaning they claim to be the true Church! But can you prove which church is the true Church? There is proof available! Beginning with this article, we are presenting seven major proofs which represent incontrovertible evidence of where God's true Church, of which Jesus Christ is the literal living Head, is working on this earth today!

Tomorrow broadcast, no *Plain Truth* magazine and no Ambassador College — can you *know*, and absolutely realize that somewhere, somehow, on this earth, at this precise moment, the Church we are now discussing — the Church which Jesus built — would be active, *alive*, performing the Work of God?

You need to come to *know* where that true Church is working.

It doesn't seem to enter the minds of most of the people of this world today, as they gullibly pursue the religion of their youth, that there really *could* be only one *true religion* — and that all others are false.

Think again! If you had a whole room full of crisp, new, counterfeit, one-

hundred-dollar bills — such perfect counterfeits that perhaps only a very special investigator in the Treasury Department in Washington, D.C. would be able to tell the difference — and you had, in your pocket, a dirty, crumpled one-dollar bill — which would you choose?

Would you take the counterfeit — regardless as to "how close" it might appear alongside the original — or would you take the real article?

Jesus warned: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For *many* shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ [saying that Jesus is the Christ — not that 'they' are Christ]; and shall *deceive many*" (Matt. 24:4-5).

The Church Exists!

Remember, before we begin these major proofs about the true Church of God — that God's Church *does exist!*

Almost never do you hear any of the large, "respectable" Protestant bodies claiming to be the *one*, the *only* true Church, to the exclusion of all others. This, they know, would offend their "sister organizations" in the rest of American

and British Protestantism. So, rather than make such a claim outwardly, or in any evangelistic sense — they may *privately* “believe” this to be true — but keep it quiet among themselves. In this way, they can all reason in their own minds that perhaps every “Christian,” *regardless* of his beliefs and practices, can somehow be a member of the “true Church.”

But this reasoning is totally false!

God's true Church *exists!* Jesus said He would build it. He *did* build it — and regardless as to whether *The World Tomorrow* program had ever begun, that true Church would still exist today.

So now, sweeping your mind free from all preconceived opinions, prejudices, or “ideas” you may have had in the past — let's realize some concrete facts.

My father did not write the Bible. I did not write the Bible. Yet, in your Bible are the plain, impossible-to-misunderstand statements identifying the true Church of which *Jesus Christ is the Head* (Eph. 5:23; 4:15; 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 2:19).

Let's read these many scriptures, and come to thoroughly and totally understand them — and let's *prove* whether this is the true Church of God.

Proof No. 1 — God Is the Ruler

Almost no religious organization on this earth really believes that God is the absolute *Ruler*. Many sects and denominations of organized “churchianity” try to straddle the fence between belief in a Creator and belief in evolution. Others, while claiming to believe in God as the Creator, believe in Him more as a “First Cause,” or a vague, unreal ethereal “force” which may have had something or other to do with the creation of matter — but which did not actually bring life, as we know it today, into existence.

But God's true Church knows

Him to be the *Creator*. “I am the *Almighty God*; walk before me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1), God said to Abraham.

God revealed Himself as the Creator, and the *Ruler* of His creation, to Adam. God revealed Himself as the Ruler of all the universe, the great, divine One who *interferes* in the course of petty, human nations of ancient kings. The ancient nations of Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Syria and Phoenicia knew of the “God of the Hebrews” as a great Ruler who directly interfered in the affairs of human kingdoms, on behalf of His people.

When God expelled Adam from the Garden of Eden — God was *in charge* — He was the Ruler. God had to *intervene* in the course of the whole world at the time of the Flood — interrupting the course of humankind and the earth itself with the most truly gargantuan, awesome, monstrous, unimaginable and fantastic miracle — the great, *worldwide* Flood of the time of Noah.

God came down to this earth, shortly after the Flood, to *interfere* in the course of human affairs — scattering the people and confusing the tongues at the Tower of Babel. In spite of petty, human plans, of noble and lofty aspirations, of the grandiose plotting or the ferretlike chicanery of carnal man — God, who is the RULER, *interfered!*

God *intervened* in the personal life of Abraham — *saved* Joseph from death, and *met* Moses “face to face” in the wilderness.

He divided the Red Sea, led His people into the Promised Land — and revealed Himself to them as their Lord, their Master, their Boss — their *Ruler!*

Nebuchadnezzar Learned God Rules

Notice. “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever,” wrote Daniel, on the occasion of the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's

dream being revealed to him, “for wisdom and *might* are his: And he *changeth the times and the seasons*: he removeth kings, and *setteth up kings*: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him” (Dan. 2:20-22).

Later, Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar: “But there is a God in heaven that *revealeth secrets*, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar *what shall be in the latter days*” (verse 28).

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the greatest nation of that time, had to learn that “the God of heaven hath given thee [Nebuchadnezzar] a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory” (verse 37).

Later, when Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up in his pompous, human vanity, refused to acknowledge God, Daniel revealed to him that he would be driven from among men, to live like a beast, “to the intent that the living may know that the *most High ruleth* in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Dan. 4:17).

Still later, Daniel repeated this tremendous revelation to Nebuchadnezzar, saying: “. . . And they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, *till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will*” (verse 25).

The God of the Old Testament, who is the Jesus Christ of the New (Heb. 1; John 1; I Cor. 10:4; Col. 1:16-17), revealed Himself as the RULER to humankind.

Amazing, isn't it? Ancient “ignorant” Nebuchadnezzar — the man who was the king over the supposed “ancient” Babylonian Empire — knew far more about the true nature of God than most “learned” theologians of today. He knew God was the RULER!

If there is one reader of this magazine who has not yet read and thoroughly studied the booklet *Does God Exist?*, then you need to write for it immediately — and not let one more week go by before you thoroughly study, research and come to understand the great and awesome fact that our God — the God who looks into, supervises, leads, guides and directs this Church, is the *Creator* of heaven and earth, the *Ruler* of the entirety of the universe!

Most "Christians" Don't Know God as Ruler

Many of the false churches of this world, even though professing to believe in a God who is in at least *some* way "authoritative," believe God has gone way off somewhere — either unable to intervene in their personal lives, or else totally disinterested and unconcerned with this present world, and people in it. The average churchgoing professor of modern "churchianity" sees God as a type of "divinized father-figure" into whose arms he may creep in times of duress and peril. He visualizes the "grandfather-like figure" painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo, or a figment of his own imagination.

What if an individual came to you and said that your name was *not* your name? Would you be shocked? What if a researcher, in nattily attired businesslike respectability, complete with portfolio — arrived at your door, came into your living room, and proceeded to unfold from his portfolio the remarkable, fantastic story that you are not really who you think you are — but someone else. Wouldn't it be incredible?

Think of it. What if your name *had* been confused at the hospital when you were born? What if you had been "mixed up" with someone else's baby? What if — all these years — you had gone through life thinking yourself to be the offspring of one family — but actually the offspring of another?

This would certainly be one of the most overwhelming and remarkable

shocks to ever come to a person in human experience — wouldn't it?

Think again. Multiple millions of professing Christians have heard, pronounced, sung, talked of, or even used in profanity the name "God." And yet these same millions have never even *known* that God!

They have not known who He is, what He is, what He is doing — have not known His qualities, His attributes, His character, or His great plan. *You* had not really known the *Ruler* of this universe until you came to know Him through His *only* Church!

Professing Christians have not known His intent and purpose in their lives — His great plan and purpose in this earth and the universe — have not known of His unlimited *power*, and His ability to intervene in the course of human affairs.

They have not known how He appears — how He speaks — have not known His expressed will!

They have *not*, in short, *known God!*

God Is Known to the Elect

It is only the members of the true Church of God who truly **KNOW** God. Almighty God inspired Isaiah to describe those individuals who make in "their own images" a "god" according to the figment of their own imaginations.

Speaking of the devices of the carpenter, or the goldsmith, God says, "he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they *cannot see*; and their hearts, that they *cannot understand*" (Isa. 44:17-18).

God says man is a *worm* (Isa. 41:14), and says: "All nations before him are as *nothing*; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Isa. 40:17-18.)

Can we come to understand?

Unless a person has truly been called (I Cor. 1:26) of God, has re-

pentened, and been begotten of Him — he has not known Him.

We, of the true Church of God, *know* God to be the Creator, the Designer, Author, Architect, Beginner, of the *whole universe*. We know Him to be the **RULER over all!**

God Rules His Church

Knowing, as Job said, "My redeemer *liveth*" (Job 19:25), I know, and you know God has set *His* own government in His true Church. "And *he* gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the *perfecting* of the saints, for the *work* of the ministry, for the *edifying* of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-12).

Remember, Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18), and it is He who ordains His true ministers, appointing them to the offices and responsibilities of *His* choosing.

God's true Church will *never* follow the practice of the false churches of this world who "will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts [selfish preferences, favoritisms, and personal choices] shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:3-4).

God says, through the pen of the Apostle Paul: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, *governments*, diversities of tongues" (I Cor. 12:28).

Never forget that "God set the members every one of them in the body, *as it hath pleased him*" (verse 18).

The Purpose of Authority

The only use and purpose in authority is simply because there must be government, rule, order — even when it is not always "acceptable" to the majority.

The reason God gives His true ministers authority — the reason God *rules* through His true minis-

ters — is that He knew that rule, that *authority* would *not* always be agreed with!

The Apostle Paul said: "For though I should boast somewhat more of our *authority*, which the Lord hath given us for *edification*, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed . . . For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that *commend themselves* [think themselves to be of greater capacity and responsibility than they actually are]: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the *rule* which *God* hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you" (II Cor. 10:8, 12, 13).

Notice it. The Apostle Paul said he had authority given him directly of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ, for the express purpose of the upbuilding, the *edification* of the true Church of God! He called it a definite *rule* — position of *government*.

Was it then Paul's *personal* rule? Was it Paul, acting on his own, without real authority directly from Jesus Christ?

Decidedly not! He said: "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" (Gal. 2:20). Christ lived *in* the Apostle Paul!

It was *Christ* ruling *through* the Apostle Paul — not Paul doing something "on his own."

There is no clearer proof, no more concrete demonstration of the fact of the rulership of God in and through His human servants in His Church than the letters of the Apostle Paul to the young Evangelist Timothy, and to Titus.

These epistles are called the "Pastoral Epistles." Had the Holy Spirit not inspired them to be writ-

ten, the direct *qualifications* (I Tim. 3) for deacons and elders would not have been contained directly in the Bible. These letters, by the very fact of their existence, *prove* God *rules* in His true Church!

What if You Can't "Find It in the Bible"?

Many decisions Christ's ministers must make cannot be found directly quoted in the Bible.

Did the Apostle Paul ever order his congregations, or those serving directly under him, to do certain things, follow certain orders or admonitions, for which he had no direct scripture in the Old Testament?

Certainly! Read I Corinthians 7, where Paul plainly said he had no direct commandment from Christ, but that he, inspired by the Holy Spirit, gave his judgment in the matter. Remember, the "letters" of the Apostle Paul were regarded by lay members of that time as just exactly that. They were "letters" — personal, friendly, warm, oftentimes filled with rebukes and admonitions — but letters, nevertheless.

We now know that they were inspired of the Holy Spirit. However, many of the lay members of that time did *not* look upon these letters as being directly *inspired* of God's Holy Spirit!

If they had, they would have obeyed more implicitly. The Apostle Paul had written *many* additional letters which are not a part of the Bible. His first letter to the church at Thessalonica was totally misunderstood by many. Had they stood in fear, trembling in awe of this letter as if it were directly from the Holy Spirit of God — they would have *feared* to misinterpret, or misunderstand!

God Rules Through Human Instruments

But notice how Paul encouraged the members in his care to *obey* the *rule* of Almighty God — *through* His human instruments: "Where-

fore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are *over* you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to *esteem them very highly* in love for their work's sake" (I Thess. 5:12-13).

The Apostle Paul referred *back* to *verbal commands* he had given to the church at Thessalonica, and the Holy Spirit inspired him to write: "For even when we were with you, this we *commanded* you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thess. 3:10).

He continued: "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we *command* and *exhort* by our *Lord Jesus Christ*, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread . . . And if any man *obey not our word* [notice this was a direct command from Paul, in the form of a personal letter, directed to one specific church] *by this epistle*, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (verses 11-14).

There are *many* other scriptures proving beyond a shadow of a doubt the rule, authority and the *government* which Almighty God *Himself*, and *Jesus Christ*, who is the direct Head of this Church, exercise *through* their chosen and called human instruments.

Yes, God does literally *rule* in His true Church!

And how thankful — how joyously thankful, grateful, and happy we should be that He does!

It is the *only* way for preserving unity, for keeping God's true Church together, for keeping it protected from the wolves without, or from the roots of bitterness which creep up from within.

Our God is the Ruler of the whole universe. He is Ruler on

earth, interfering and intervening in the course of human governments and affairs whenever necessary. He rules — governs, guides and leads in His true Church.

Members of God's true Church not only recognize these prime factors, not only have they proved these major points, directly from the inspired Word of God, but they know God as their direct, *personal Ruler*.

They have come to know it is God who has set definite offices, authority and *government* in the *home*.

Each member of God's true Church recognizes that God's rule comes directly from God the Father, through Jesus Christ, to His apostle, and right on down through all the evangelists and other ministers in God's true Church to each lay member.

But, further, and even beyond recognizing the rule and the authority of God in the Church — each member thoroughly realizes and understands that God rules in his own private heart, his own private moments, his very thoughts, impulses, and his whole being.

"For ye are *bought with a price*: therefore glorify God in your

body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:20). God says: "Ye are bought with a price" (I Cor. 7:23) — that you are *owned*, body, soul and spirit. That is, you are owned in your fleshly body, your very life (soul), and your spirit (attitude, will, volition).

If you have truly repented and given yourself to God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2), then you are literally OWNED — just like a *slave* of God. You will be saying, just as Jesus Christ did, "Nevertheless not

my will be done, but thine." You will be saying, "Correct me" just as Jeremiah did. You will be saying, "Search me and try me, O God," as David did.

You will realize — and realize it thoroughly — that your God is your personal, private, direct Ruler — your Boss, your Lord, your Master, who tells you what to do for your good and well-being.

The true Christian knows he has been literally conquered of God. He

The true Christian knows Christ purchased HIM. He doesn't "take Christ" to be his very own — as a private, selfish, *inward* something which is *not* true Christianity — but he gives *himself* — UTTERLY, to Christ.

Have you done this?

Are you so totally bought, so purchased, so completely conquered, so absolutely given to Christ that you are His literal slave? Do you look on your Savior as your personal Ruler? Does He rule you? Does He order you around? Does He direct your energies, actions, thoughts? Does He demand certain things of you?

Do you always *like* His demands? Do you always agree with Christ?

You would be a *perfect* Christian if you did — but most are *not* perfect! That is why Christ *rules* in His Church, and in our individual lives.

Notice again the scripture we read in Ephesians the fourth chapter: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists... For the *perfecting* of the saints [because we are not yet perfect], for the *work* of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: TILL we all come in the unity of the

faith..." (verses 11-13).

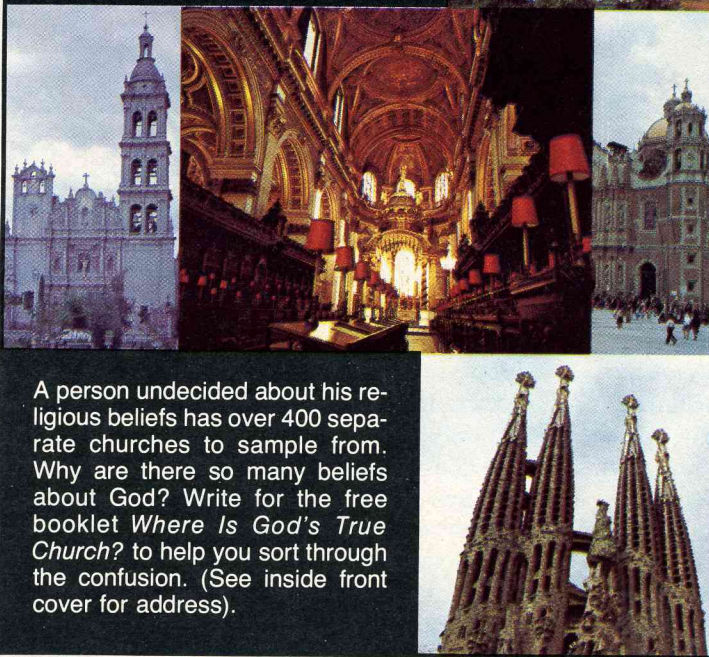
Yes, *until* we are all willing to obey implicitly, immediately, *perfectly*.

God rules in the universe. He rules in nations. He rules His Church. He governs in the home and family, and He rules in our own personal lives.

That's what makes us so different from any false and counterfeit church in this world. That's what makes us the very Church of God.

God is our Ruler! □

How do you recognize the true church?



A person undecided about his religious beliefs has over 400 separate churches to sample from. Why are there so many beliefs about God? Write for the free booklet *Where Is God's True Church?* to help you sort through the confusion. (See inside front cover for address).

has surrendered to a *conqueror* — to a Ruler!

Does Christ Rule You?

Instead of the insipid, effeminate, tremulous, spineless and utterly crass "way of the world" of "*receiving*" Christ, *appropriating* Christ, *taking* Christ to be "yours" — the true Christian has accepted the fact that Christ died for his sins — and along with it, the fact that Christ's death paid for the repentant sinner in full.

ACTS 2:38 ACTS 2:38

Ours is the age that produced the H-bomb, germ warfare and the ever-increasing threat of human annihilation. Ours is the age of airport bombings, X-rated movies and incredible political skullduggery.

We have so scarred and seared our collective conscience that we would undoubtedly — as a people —

kill Jesus Christ should He appear in the human flesh and indict us for our sins.

Listen! Over 1900 years ago a generation very similar to ours had literally done this very thing. But through logical, powerful and heart-felt preaching — and through direct miracles — thousands began to realize the wretchedness of their lives.

They began to see that their “establishment” — religious and political — their society, their grown-up “playhouse” was a sick and wretched thing, and that it had infected them personally and individually.

For their generation had killed the promised Messiah!

“Therefore let all the house of

“REPENT”

The nations of the Western world are *religious* — at least according to statistics. Many people profess a deep interest in Christianity. Religion has even become fashionable for many people in America and Britain. And with the advent of the “Jesus movement” about three years ago, many young people are showing an interest in religion — perhaps for the first time.

Yet our “Christian” societies are bearing *dubious* fruit! Do you know why?

Why with all this interest in religion isn’t our society becoming more law-abiding? Why aren’t good fruits being borne of our religious beliefs?

Part of the answer was revealed a few years ago in a surprising report in the Los Angeles *Times*: “But increasingly people are becoming disillusioned with churches — so many conflicting, confusing denominations. *Religion seems so unrelated to real life.* Today many people are dis-

illusioned because they can’t see the difference between the churchgoer and nonchurchgoer; between the believer and the nonbeliever” (emphasis mine throughout article).

Man wants religion, but he wants it *his way*. He doesn’t want to give up the way he lives. At the same time he doesn’t want to pay the penalty for living that way. As a result, people by the millions pour into their churches each week, donating time to help in worthy causes in the vain hope that God will accept their “good deeds” in place of their obedience to Him. Yet for the most part their way of living doesn’t change.

For some, church attendance is actually a means of “making up” for their shortcomings and sins. It is something they do without changing. It is an act of penance rather than repentance.

Simple religious interest hasn’t seemed to have made any difference in our way of life. What possible good does it do to belong to *any* denomination if no one can tell the difference between the actions or

fruits of a churchgoer and an agnostic?

Jesus Christ said: “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16). The Bible speaks of a true Christian as being a light to the world. Apparently modern-day “Christianity,” like so many of our cities, is suffering a power shortage. The result is the same — a “brown-out”! The light has grown so dim as to be barely able to be seen.

Church membership in the United States continues to reach new plateaus with over 60% of the population, over 132,000,000 people, claiming church membership. It has been reported that 40% of United States’ adults can be found in church every weekend. Yet, in spite of church membership figures, crime since 1960 has jumped nearly 175%, while the population has increased by only 11%. The annual cost of crime in the United States is now conservatively estimated to be over 30 billion dollars.

ACTS 2:38 ACTS 2:38

Israel know assuredly," Peter said, "that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

Several thousand people of that generation were intellectually and spiritually honest. They were willing to face the fact that they, personally, had become callous and sinful and guilty before their God. They

needed help and *forgiveness* even as we now do in this generation.

Those people were "pricked in their heart, and said . . . Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Verse 37.)

"Then Peter said unto them, 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 Ghost [Spirit]" (Acts 2:38).

This scripture sums up in one verse just exactly what steps a sinner has to take to become reconciled to His Creator.

An in-depth explanation into the profound meaning of Acts 2:38 — phrase by phrase — is contained in the following articles.

When considered in relation to our population growth, crime is increasing 15.8 times faster than our population! And this is not the result of more accurate reporting methods.

This is the *fruit* of our "Christian society." Unbelievable? Incredible? Astounding? The facts are down in black and white — easily accessible to anyone.

Today's religious interest doesn't go very deep. It doesn't affect the way most people live.

Why?

What is the answer? What does religion have to do with the way you live? For many it means very little.

Listen to this: "During the years of our greatest growth we produced a generation of anemic Christians, brought up on a few gospel truths captured in platitudes, slogans and shallow Bible study, in an atmosphere where we left the impression that dedication could be measured

by the extent of activity in a marathon of somewhat meaningless meetings" (Los Angeles Times, April 20, 1969).

Christianity is distant and out of touch with the perplexing and knotty problems of our modern society. The distance between professed faith and daily performance is astronomical.

Today's religious interest is reflected largely on paper. It only shines out from the church roll books. It doesn't show its light as it should in human lives.

The problem lies with the people themselves. Jesus Christ said — in speaking of the religious leaders and people of His day: ". . . This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit *in vain* do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6-7).

People attend evangelistic campaigns and talk of all uniting in the brotherhood of Christianity. But very few seem to want to *live* the way Jesus Christ commanded. Most

are willing to honor Him with their lips, but they don't want to do the things He taught.

The worldwide interest in religion is too often a cheap, shabby facade which serves to disguise a lack of personal integrity and morality. The basic problem is that as nations, and all too frequently even as individuals, there is a lack of genuine deep repentance!

If an increase in the interest in religion around the world doesn't show repentance, what does? If the great evangelistic campaigns aren't producing it, where does it come from? What does it mean?

The dictionary definition of repentance is: "To feel self-reproach, compunction or contrition for past conduct, to feel such sorrow for sin or fault as to be disposed to change one's life for the better" (*The American College Dictionary*).

The Bible definition means all of that *and much more!*

Godly repentance means to stop

sinning, to turn and go the other way — to change your way of life. It's not always easy to say, "I'm sorry." But it's even harder to mean it. Godly repentance has to come from the heart.

In speaking of Ephraim (identified as modern Britain), God says: "And they have not cried unto me *with their heart*, when they howled upon their beds . . . they rebel against me. Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me. They return, *but not to the most High* . . ." (Hosea 7:14-16).

Your Bible says people have made an *outward* show of returning to Him or repenting, but they haven't done it with their hearts. Ephraim's repentance, and for that matter that of the rest of the world, is the outward, superficial, worldly repentance with no real sincerity or deep feeling.

What is it you should repent *of* or feel sorrow *for*? To some it is one thing and to others — from another society or religion — it is something altogether different. But what does GOD say we should repent of?

It is *sin* we are commanded to repent of (Luke 24:47).

And what is sin?

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the *law*: *for sin is the transgression of the law*" (I John 3:4).

Sin is breaking God's law — not human customs!

Any time you break or disobey any one of the holy, righteous commandments of God, you have sinned. You must repent. No one is excluded. No man, woman or child has ever lived who hasn't disobeyed and broken God's law (Rom. 3:10, 23). Therefore every one of you needs to repent deeply and bitterly with all your heart. You need to turn to God for forgiveness. You need to begin to obey Him and keep His commandments — all His commandments — with zeal. For "He that saith, I know him [who says, 'I

am a Christian'], and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4).

We can't just drum up the deep feeling of abhorrence for our sins and our own utter wretchedness. It has to come *from God*. God grants repentance!

"Or despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the *goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance*?" (Rom. 2:4.)

II Timothy 2:25 tells us, "*... if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.*"

It is God who helps us to see our own wretchedness and shortcomings. He opens our minds and starts us on the way toward repentance.

There are definite steps to take if you sincerely desire to repent and serve God. They are simple steps. Anyone who will follow them can be guaranteed he will find the true God and the deep repentance that God requires.

Your Bible names dozens of men who are going to be in the Kingdom of God. Such men as David, Daniel and other prophets of God are guaranteed salvation and a place in His Kingdom. They found how to reach the Creator of the universe. Their example will help us to see how we might attain the same goal.

They all had one very essential thing in common. As soon as they realized God was displeased with them or their nation's ways, they set out to correct it. But how can you know when the Father in heaven is displeased? How do you know when any father, who really loves his children and has their welfare at heart, is displeased?

"Chastise your son, while there is still hope of him, and do not let him run to ruin" (Prov. 19:18, Moffatt translation).

Our heavenly Father many times begins to deal with us and bring us to repentance through chastening. Often He allows financial problems,

family problems, sickness, or other serious situations to develop in our lives which will force us to realize our need of Him. These very things have occurred in your life, but chances are you didn't appreciate them.

These trials are proof of the Father's love for each one of us. Notice Hebrews 12:6-8: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

Instead of fighting these problems in our own strength, we need to learn the lesson God is teaching us. We need to begin to *seek* Him. He doesn't need us. We do need Him!

Daniel was inspired to record his own reactions in such a case as this for our instruction. "And I set my face unto the Eternal God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (Dan. 9:3).

Nehemiah's example is also recorded for us. When he found that his nation which had returned to the Holy Land was in affliction and reproach, here's what he did: "And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven" (Neh. 1:4). He immediately set out to draw close to God. He didn't do it in a halfhearted, lackadaisical, matter-of-fact way. He set himself to find God and His will by prayer and fasting. These men earnestly desired to find God's will. They were desirous of doing whatever was required to draw close to Him and receive His forgiveness. They were even willing to do without food and water to demonstrate their sincere desire to know God's way.

Hard as it is to say, "I'm sorry," it is even more difficult to mean it with all your heart. The earnest supplication of God through prayer and

fasting shows Him you mean business. He doesn't want a temporary, fleeting repentance which is brought about by an emotional appeal or due to the pressures of those around you. Salvation is a personal matter between you and your God. *But it has to be on His terms.*

In the days of ancient Israel, God told King Solomon exactly what steps to follow if he found God's displeasure on his nation. These same steps apply to us today and forever (Heb. 13:8). He doesn't change. So if we will apply these steps in our everyday lives, He will answer just as He told Solomon He would.

Read these steps, this formula for repentance, for yourself in II Chronicles 7:12-14. "And the Eternal appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; if my people, which are called by my name, shall *humble themselves*, and *pray*, and *seek my face*, and *turn from their wicked ways*; then will I hear from heaven, and will *forgive their sin*, and will heal their land."

The steps are so simple, so clear and plain.

What does it mean to humble yourself? How do you go about it? Exactly the same way Daniel and Nehemiah did. David explains in Psalm 35:13 how to humble yourself. "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I

humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom."

Occasional fasting shows our earnestness and sincerity in seeking God and adds impetus to the prayers we raise to Him.

P rayer and fasting aren't the only requirements in seeking God. If you will read back over the examples of Daniel and Nehemiah as well as many of the other prophets of God, you will notice that in every case they freely acknowledged their own sins and shortcomings. It takes a deeply sincere man to say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24).

If we are earnestly seeking God and His way, this is the attitude we will be reflecting. We will freely admit our own sins and shortcomings and be earnestly importuning God to show us the right way. Jeremiah said: "O Lord, I know that *the way of man is not in himself*: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jer. 10:23-24).

We as individuals do not know how to live. Once we begin to learn that lesson, and look to God to show us how to live and how to change our lives, we are on our way to real repentance.

The steps are simple. Yet it is not easy to completely give of yourself,

to admit your own faults and sincerely ask for God's forgiveness.

T he people of this world outwardly follow many of these steps and yet fall short in the final, most important of all the steps — *turning from their wicked ways.*

So many people of this day and age profess to be repentant — profess Christianity — and yet still live in all the wretchedness of their sinful ways. So, finally, one of the most important of all the steps in coming to true repentance is to *stop sinning!*

All too often our repentance is the worldly repentance spoken of in II Corinthians 7:10. What we really need to come to see and understand is the kind of repentance God desires. . . . turn ye even to me *with all your heart*, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and *rend your heart*, and not your garments, and turn to the Eternal your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil" (Joel 2:12-13).

No, God doesn't want the worldly kind of repentance which is manifested by a trip down the sawdust trail. No, He doesn't just want your name on the membership rolls of some church. What God wants and what you should come to deeply desire is to sincerely acknowledge your sins and ask for forgiveness. God wants you to say, "I'm sorry" — and mean it! He wants you to repent of breaking, and to begin obeying, His law.

— Leslie L. McCullough

"BE BAPTIZED"

S treaking through the upper atmosphere at 600 miles per hour, our Boeing 747 was bound for London. Incredibly powerful jet engines enabled this huge plane to carry some 340 pas-

sengers plus luggage — a payload of about 710,000 pounds. A remarkable accomplishment of modern avionics.

Lunch was about to be served. Sipping on their preluncheon mar-

tinis, some of the passengers were visibly amused at two elderly ladies making their way down the aisle. For these women wore a kind of austere religious garb that seemed, somehow, utterly and totally in-

congruous with this modern jet-set atmosphere.

It was true. They just didn't fit. They looked and felt out of place.

But how can you *know* whether any costume or custom is just a "carry-over" of old-fashioned human ideas or whether it is, in fact, what the Creator of heaven and earth truly wants His followers to practice?

Most of you *Good News* readers have proved for yourselves that there is a great God working out a purpose here below. The Apostle Paul mused: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

God *should* be the "be all" and "end all" of our lives — the reason and ultimate *authority* for every major action or decision we take.

Jesus Christ stated: "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but *by every word of God*" (Luke 4:4).

Again, speaking of the Bible, Jesus said: "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

The ultimate criterion, then, for determining the importance and validity of *anything* pertaining to God or salvation is the Holy Bible.

Water baptism may seem old-fashioned or an anachronism to some. Part of this feeling may come because baptism is sometimes associated with very sentimental or emotional people — and often those lacking in this world's culture and education. Frankly, though, most of this feeling is probably due primarily to simple *ignorance* of what the Bible actually teaches.

Ignorance?

That's right. Because most people *assume* they know what the Bible teaches, yet very few bother to really study God's Word to see what it *does* say on any given subject!

Let's all make sure we have the intellectual and spiritual courage to *study* what God's Word says — and then *do it*: "But be ye *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deceiv-

ing your own selves" (James 1:22).

Are you willing to obey this inspired scripture?

Notice in your Bible the most direct and vital of all passages concerning baptism. Study carefully Acts 2:36-42. In his inspired sermon on this momentous Day of Pentecost, Peter indicted his listeners for their part in *murdering the Messiah!*

Many were cut to the heart with guilt and shame, and they asked: "Men and brethren, *what shall we DO?*"

A good question.

What do you do when you, individually, come to recognize that you have been in rebellion against the laws and purposes of your Creator? What does He tell you to do as a sign that you are willing to surrender your life to Him and seek His help and forgiveness?

What is the inspired answer to this question? Notice the clear biblical command: "Then Peter said unto them, 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."

The preceding article covered the subject of repentance. But the next step is to "be baptized."

That's what God specifically says to DO.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (verse 41). These thousands were "glad," it says, for the opportunity to be *forgiven* and to be *reconciled* to their God.

Later, we find the Evangelist Philip preaching about the Kingdom of God and baptizing quite a number of men and women (Acts 8:12). Still later, the Apostle Paul visited certain believers at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7) who had been instructed in "the way of the Lord" (Acts 18:25), but were baptized of John.

However, the correct understanding and meaning of baptism — and obviously baptism itself — was so

important that the Apostle Paul *again* baptized these people — this time in the name of Jesus.

Jesus Christ Himself set us an *example* that we should follow in His steps (I Pet. 2:21). Following Jesus — *imitating* Jesus — indeed, having Him live *His life* in us through the Holy Spirit (Gal. 2:20) — this is the very essence of true Christianity!

Was Jesus, then, baptized?

He certainly was. Notice the account in Matthew 3:13-17. Although Jesus was totally sinless and did not need to repent, yet even He — the Son of God — was baptized in water "to fulfill all righteousness" (verse 15). He did this to set us an example to follow! There was no other purpose for His baptism.

As He sent forth His disciples to all nations after His resurrection, Jesus 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" (Matt. 28:19).

In Mark 16:15-16, Jesus commanded: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

The above are explicit *commands* for Christian baptism.

Normally, baptism is the outward sign by which we acknowledge our surrender to God *prior* to receiving the Holy Spirit. But there is at least one exception mentioned in the New Testament. Notice the account in Acts 10. Cornelius, a most dedicated man, was chosen by God to be the first completely Gentile convert to Christianity. While the Apostle Peter spoke the gospel to Cornelius's household, the Holy Spirit was immediately poured out on them. Yet, even here, Peter "*COMMANDED them to be baptized* in the name of the Lord" (verse 48).

Without question baptism is a vital ordinance in the eyes of the God and the Christ revealed in your Bible. For it is repeated as a com-

mand by Jesus and His leading apostle!

What is the true form of baptism? Although various denominations and sects practice differing forms of baptism, there is only *one* form which is biblical. When you understand the *meaning* of baptism, the true form should become obvious.

The very word "baptize" comes from the original Greek *baptizo*, which means to "immerse," to "plunge into" or to "put into." There are different and distinct words for "pour" (*cheo*) and for "sprinkle" (*rantidzo*) in the Greek language.

So the word "baptize" has *nothing* directly to do with sprinkling or pouring. As we have said, baptism pictures the *burial* of the old self. You do not "sprinkle" or "pour" earth on a dead corpse — you completely *cover* it with earth (or with *water* if burial is at sea)!

Notice John 3:23. Here John was baptizing "because there was *much water* there." He certainly wouldn't have needed "much water" if sprinkling or pouring were considered baptism.

Again, in Matthew 3:16: "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway *out of the water . . .*" He must have been down *in* the water to be baptized!

When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, "they went *down both into the water*" (Acts 8:38).

The Apostle Paul was inspired to write that there is "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5) — not many different approaches to God and *differing* modes of baptism.

Many attempt to "reason around" every plain command and clear statement or example given in the Bible. But if anyone is looking for *truth*, the correct form and meaning of baptism is made unmistakably clear in the teaching of Scripture and in the *inspired example* of Jesus Christ — the Author of true Christianity.

What is the meaning of baptism? As we have stated, baptism pictures the *burial* of our old self. Notice Romans 6:3-6.

It states we are baptized into Christ's *death*. "We are *buried* with him *by baptism* into *death*: that like as Christ was *raised up* from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been *planted together in the likeness of his death*, we shall be also in the *likeness of his resurrection*" (verses 4-5).

Hence baptism pictures the old self dying, being buried in a watery grave, and being resurrected to live a new and God-centered life.

Baptism also pictures, in sym-

bolism, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Baptism requires a total *surrender*. After heartfelt repentance and recognition that we are worthy of death because of our sins, the ordinance of baptism is an outward manifestation to God and to His human servants that we sincerely intend to *bury* the old self. It shows we intend to come up out of that watery grave "to walk in newness of life" — to obey God's law and yield ourselves willingly to God's guidance and His rule in our lives. Baptism also expresses our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and our acceptance of His death, burial and resurrection on our behalf.

Again: "*Buried with him in baptism*, wherein also ye are *risen* with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). So baptism signifies that our deceitful, vain, lustful and rebellious nature must *die*. It is an outward acknowledgement of our total and unconditional surrender to God.

Our willingness to humble ourselves and *do* what Jesus did in the ordinance of baptism is vital. "He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

May God grant you the understanding, the faith, the humility to do what He commands for your good.

— Roderick C. Meredith

"IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST"

Is salvation possible through any "savior" other than Christ Jesus? What does the Word of God say? "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is *none other name* under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

But how does one receive salva-

tion through the name of Jesus Christ?

First, it is necessary to understand the importance which God attaches

to a name — and to the *meaning* of a name.

God originated the practice of naming things. When God created the first man, He named him "Adam" (Hebrew, "man"). God let Adam name his wife: "And Adam called his wife's name Eve [Hebrew, 'life' or 'living']; because she was [to be-

come] the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20).

God also named the angels, and assigned a name to every star (Ps. 147:4).

But what is the most important name ever borne by any human or angel? The one name which stands out supremely eminent above every other is *Jesus Christ* of Nazareth!

"... God also hath highly exalted him [Christ], and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Does Christ have a better name than the mighty, glorious angels of God? "God... in these last days [has] spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds... Being made *so much better than the angels*, as he hath by inheritance obtained a *more excellent name* than they" (Heb. 1:1-4).

How does the Father look upon the name of His Son Jesus Christ? The Father not only raised Jesus from the dead, but He also "set him at his own right hand [symbolizing Christ's preeminent position — right next to the Father in authority over the entire universe] in the heavenly places, *far above* all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and *every name that is named*, not only in this world [Greek, 'age'], but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:20, 21).

Down through the ages many men have been named "Jesus," but there has only been one "Jesus Christ." The book of Acts mentions "a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus [meaning 'son of Jesus']" (Acts 13:6). And in Colossians 4:11 Paul stated that one of his fellow workers was named "Jesus, which is called Justus."

But what does the name "Jesus" mean?

This is explained in Matthew 1:20-21 by an angel of God which suddenly appeared to Joseph (before Jesus' birth) and said: "... Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:20, 21).

This miraculously conceived child was to be called "Jesus" because that name signifies "savior." He was to become the Savior of all mankind.

This child was to be the Son of God and also the Son of man — both human and divine — having a human mother, but God as His father.

Next, let's consider what the word "Christ" means. The Greek word *Christos* (Christ) means the same as the Hebrew word *Messiah*. Both mean "anointed" and refer to "the Anointed One."

But why was Jesus also to be called "Christ" or "the Anointed One"?

Though Jesus was "conceived of the Holy Spirit" from the moment of His conception, His real *anointing* of the Spirit of God did not occur until after His baptism (see Matt. 3:16, 17).

Shortly after His baptism with water, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him, He went to Nazareth and preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath *anointed me* to preach the gospel..." (Luke 4:18).

The apostles recognized that the "rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ [Greek, 'anointed']. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed... the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together" (Acts 4:26, 27).

Later, in Acts 10:38, the Apostle

Peter told Cornelius and all those gathered at his house that "*God anointed Jesus* [Christ — verse 36] of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost [Spirit] and with power."

What is God's command for all human beings? "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 Ghost [Spirit]" (Acts 2:38).

But just before Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, He commanded His apostles: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them *in* [Greek, *eis*] *the name of the Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost* [Spirit]" (Matt. 28:19).

Then is there a contradiction between Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38 (which *only* mentions being baptized "in [Greek, *en*] the name of Jesus Christ")?

Scholars have long debated the differences in wording between these two scriptures. Some have pointed out that the two prepositions (*eis* and *en*) are often used interchangeably in Hellenistic Greek, even though kept separate in classical Greek.

However, the key does not lie in the use of two different prepositions — since prepositions are notorious for their wide range of meanings and uses. The key lies rather in the two different phrases. The expression *eis to onoma* (the phrase in Matthew 28:19) in the contemporary language was used in reference to *paying into an account*: "The phrase *eis (to) onoma tinos* is frequent in the papyri with reference to payments made 'to the account of any one'.... The usage is of interest in connection with Matthew 28:19, where the meaning would seem to be 'baptized into the possession of the Father, etc.'" (Moulton-Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, p. 451).

The authoritative *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* by Arndt, Gingrich and Bauer further

states: "Through baptism *eis (to) on[oma] t[inos]* the one who is baptized becomes the possession of and comes under the protection of the one whose name he bears" (see article, "Onoma").

By contrast, to do something *en to onomati* means to do it *by the authority* of the one named. It would be similar to a public official in England doing something "in the name of the Queen." One could even compare the old cliché, "Stop in the name of the law." To do something in the name of the Queen or in the name of the law is to do it with the authority of that individual or institution.

When God's ministers baptize in the name of Jesus Christ, the baptismal candidate is not baptized into any humanly devised denomination, but into the very *God family*, into the *name* of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

How does one become a member of the God family? Few professing Christians comprehend that one must first be *begotten*, then *born* into the family of God.

In fact, we are *now* God's children — though only begotten, still subject to the possibility of a spiritual miscarriage. "Beloved, *now* are we the *sons of God* . . . we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2).

In the case of a physical birth, there is first a begetting, then a development period of about nine months, and finally birth. So it is with the *spiritual* birth. There is first a spiritual begetting; then, nurtured by the Spirit of God, a period of spiritual *growth* and development in the "womb" of the Church; and, finally, the wondrous result of immortal, glorified, spirit-composed sons and daughters of God at Christ's second coming.

When we repent of our sins, accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and are baptized, our sins are totally forgiven. Then we receive the

Holy Spirit by the "laying on of hands." Once we receive God's Spirit we are *God's children* — members of His divine family!

The Apostle Paul spoke of this great divine family: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom *the whole family* in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14, 15).

Just before His crucifixion, Jesus Christ prayed: "... Holy Father, *keep through thine own name* those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11).

And the apostles of Christ did just that. They kept the believers together in God's name — the "*Church of God*"! This is why we read of the "church [singular] of God" in *eight* places in the New Testament (see Acts 20:28; I Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; I Tim. 3:5).

And the "churches [plural] of God" are mentioned in three places (I Cor. 11:16; I Thess. 2:14; II Thess. 1:4). The New Testament congregations are referred to as the "churches of Christ" once (Rom. 16:16).

What does the Bible mean when it commands us to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ"? It simply means the minister is to perform the baptism in the name or *by the authority* of Jesus Christ.

We are commanded: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain . . ." (Ex. 20:7). Our attitude toward God's name should be that of *reverence* — "*Hallowed* be thy name" (Matt. 6:9).

But there are those who take, use, or appropriate the name of Jesus Christ — yet are not *authorized* to do so. "For many shall come *in my name*, saying [or admitting that], I am Christ; and shall deceive many," said Jesus (Matt. 24:5).

It is true that Jesus Christ intended His true disciples and His ministers to be able to use His name freely. Christ promised certain *signs*

to those who rightly used His name: "And these *signs* shall follow them that believe; *In my name* shall they cast out devils [demons]; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17, 18).

When Jesus sent out the seventy disciples, He told them to heal the sick, raise the dead and cast out devils (demons). "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us *through thy name*" (Luke 10:17).

Once, during his ministry, Paul was followed and harrassed by a demon-possessed woman: "... But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee *in the name of Jesus Christ* to come out of her. And he came out the same hour" (Acts 16:18).

On another occasion seven Jewish brothers had to learn the hard way that one does not use the name "Jesus Christ" lightly, carelessly, or as though repeating certain "magical words."

They had seen Paul cast out demons in Christ's name. But these seven brothers failed to realize that Christ had not authorized them to use His name.

"Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits *the name of the Lord Jesus*, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth . . . And the evil spirit [which possessed that particular man] answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the *name of the Lord Jesus* was magnified" (Acts 19:13-17).

The demons knew they had to obey Paul when he gave them a command *in Jesus Christ's name*. And they also knew that they did *not* have to obey the seven exorcists — since Christ hadn't authorized them to use His name in expelling demons.

On one occasion that I know of, a minister of Jesus Christ commanded a demon to come out of a possessed young man. The demon defiantly said: "I will not come out!" The minister sternly charged it: "You *will* come out. In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out!" The demon, using the young man's voice, then meekly responded: "All right, *we* will come out. *We* will come out."

The demons did obey, and the young man has been perfectly sound-minded ever since.

There is tremendous *power* in the name of Jesus Christ — when that name is rightly used by one properly authorized.

Even during the ministry of Jesus, one man was using Christ's name to cast out demons. The disciples supposed he was *unauthorized* to do so, but the context implies otherwise.

"And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils [demons] *in thy name*, and he

followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle *in my name*, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us in on our part" (Mark 9:38-40).

But the greatest miracle which occurs in the name of Christ is the miracle of having one's sins forgiven by and through faith in that *name*. Jesus Christ's propitiatory death was for all humankind.

But how could one's sins be forgiven through the death of a *man*? Christ was not just a mere man. He was both *man* and *God*! Since the Father "created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:9), His life was — and is — of more value than all human lives put together. Therefore, His substitutionary, or vicarious, *death* on the cross is sufficient to pay the penalty for all the sins of all human beings throughout all ages!

The Gentile Samaritans recognized the necessity of being "baptized *in the name* of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16). And Cornelius and all those in his house heard Peter preaching about this remarkable person called *Christ*: "To him give

all the prophets witness, that *through his name* whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

"And he [Peter] commanded them to be baptized *in the name of the Lord...*" (verse 48).

The apostles realized the power that believers have when using the precious "name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" (Acts 3:6, 16; 4:7, 10, 12, 18, 30; 5:28, 40; 19:13). They went out everywhere teaching, preaching and baptizing in that name. And they got results.

Thousands were converted (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 16:5); their lives were changed; and they started on the way of life that leads to an eternal crown in the Kingdom of God. They were baptized "into" the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit — thereby becoming sons and daughters in the very family of God — the true destiny of all human beings.

God wants you also to repent of your sins, be baptized *in the name of Jesus Christ* and receive His Holy Spirit. Then you, too, will be progressing toward a permanent place in God's perfect, happy, wise, powerful, universe-ruling family — for all eternity!

— Raymond F. McNair

"FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS"

It was July 1942. Thousands of Jews were beginning to arrive at the German concentration camp at Auschwitz. Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler had arrived to inspect the operation.

Himmler was not happy with what he saw in Auschwitz. "To a former teacher of mathematics," wrote Rudolph Vrba, who was one of the prisoners, "the whole business was just too haphazard for words."

In the wake of his visit, Himmler "gave orders for the greatest, most efficient extermination factory the

world has ever known. For the modern concrete gas chambers and the vast crematoria that could absorb as many as 12,000 bodies in twenty-four hours, and, in fact, did so. For the machinery that sucked in 2,500,000 men, women and children in three years and puffed them out in harmless black smoke" (*I Cannot*

Forgive, pp. 9-10).

Just six months later, Himmler again visited Auschwitz. A special consignment of 3,000 Polish Jews had been brought in for the occasion. It was the inauguration of new mass-extermination gas chambers and ovens, Auschwitz's contribution to the "Final Solution."

Vrba described Himmler's reaction to what he saw: "Having waited for a while so that the poison would have circulated properly, Hoess courteously invited his guest to have another peep through the observa-

tion window. For some minutes, Himmler peered into the death chamber, obviously impressed, and then turned with new interest to his Commandant. . . . What he had seen seemed to have satisfied him and put him in good humour."

Himmler was just one of thousands who were responsible for the most organized atrocities that history has ever witnessed. He was one of many who lost no sleep over the monstrous murdering of millions of helpless victims!

The Bible commands: "Thou shalt not murder" (Jewish Publication Society translation). These men did not break that commandment in one momentary fit of anger. They were not provoked. They coolly, calmly, calculatedly authorized the greatest slaughter machine ever assembled.

History records no greater concentrated, systematic genocide.

A lifetime will never erase the understandable bitterness toward these men — human forgiveness is impossible.

And yet so great is the mercy of God that even *these* men, whom many *cannot forgive*, could have received absolute pardon from their Creator!

Does that seem unbelievable? Is it beyond our ability to comprehend? What about the words of Isaiah who reports God as saying, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"? (Isa. 1:18.) Does this include the sins of these men?

Sin is the transgression of God's righteous law (I John 3:4). The Bible reveals that the entire human race has sinned, and that every human being who has ever lived has come under the penalty of sin — *death* (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

Perhaps we may not consider that we have done very much wrong during our lifetime. Certainly we

couldn't be classed with war criminals like Himmler! Why, haven't we always lived a basically "good" life?

But "good" as we might think we are, if only one of us ever lived — if there had been no other members of the human race — Jesus Christ would *still* have had to die for our salvation to be possible!

Human beings classify and categorize sin. What Himmler did was unbelievably evil. We can all recognize that. But somehow what many of us have done doesn't seem as serious.

But the same penalty must be exacted for *our* sins as must be exacted for the sins of those who were responsible for the deaths of millions under Nazi Germany. Any sin required the death of our Maker if there is to be forgiveness. Sin is *just that serious!*

God says that if we have broken one of His laws, as far as the forfeiting of eternal life goes, we may as well have broken them all. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is *guilty of all*," the Apostle James tells us (James 2:10).

Can we begin to understand why *no sin* is beyond the realm of God's power to forgive? We look upon *some* sins as "unforgivable" because we don't grasp the enormity of *any* degree of sin.

One evening centuries ago, a king took a walk on the roof of his palace. He saw a very beautiful woman, and subsequently succumbed to heavy temptation.

To cover up his sin of adultery, King David of Israel stooped to cold-blooded, plotted murder! He purposely arranged for the death of the woman's husband in battle.

What David did angered God — especially Uriah's murder, for David had "*despised* the commandment of the Lord." It wasn't done in temporary weakness under great temptation. It was *deliberate* sin.

When the Prophet Nathan came to David to deliver God's judgment,

David's heart smote him. "And David said unto Nathan, *I have sinned* against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath *put away* thy sin; thou shalt not die" (II Sam. 12:13).

David's repentance is recorded in Psalm 51. He saw what he had done as a crime against the great God and came to bitterly *loathe* himself for his sin. And when he repented, God *forgave*.

But in God's forgiveness of David's sin we learn a tremendous lesson. God didn't "forgive" in the way that we humans so often do. He didn't begrudgingly *allow* David's life to be spared. David didn't get off by the "skin of his teeth," barely remaining alive. No, God forgave to the extent that David not only continued in office as a physical king, but he actually qualified to be king over all Israel in the coming Kingdom of God (Ezek. 37:24).

Little wonder that David later wrote in the 103rd Psalm that God "hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For *as the heaven is high above the earth*, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. *As far as the east is from the west*, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (verses 10-12).

When God forgives sin, it is *total* forgiveness. He puts sin so far from us that it in no way limits our future potential. We may carry scars and reap temporary penalties to remind us of the awesomeness of sin, but God never again brings that sin up. So complete is His forgiveness that David is even called a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).

Just how high are the heavens above the earth? How far is east from west?

Too many, not understanding the extent of God's forgiveness, continue to feel guilty for sins committed even *years* earlier, instead of allowing God to remove them and put them away forever.

Consider. If God can forgive even the most heinous sins, can he not

forgive *you*? If mercy is available to war criminals with countless human murders on their hands, isn't it also available to you?

The very gospel Christ came to proclaim to the world has to do with the "remission of sins." It was at the heart and core of the preaching of John the Baptist and Christ Himself (Mark 1:4; Luke 1:77). It is to be preached "among all nations" (Luke 24:47).

The Greek word translated "remission" in these passages means literally "to dismiss, to release." Christ came proclaiming a *release* from sin. Even as the prophecy of Isaiah had predicted centuries earlier, He came "to preach *deliverance to the captives*, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at *liberty* them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18; see also Isa. 61:1).

The Bible pictures us as captives to sin, the servants of lawlessness. We are chained in bondage to the way of life to which Satan has held this entire world. But Christ said that the message He brought will make a person *free* (John 8:32).

Remission of sins does not mean simply the forgiveness of past sins and deliverance from the death penalty we have incurred, though this is a vital part of it. But it involves our release from bondage — the termination of our slavery as servants of a wrong way of life! As the Apostle Paul explained: "Being then made *FREE* from sin" — having our sins *remitted* — "ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:16, 18).

When God grants us remission of sins, we are freed to begin walking *His* way, keeping His law.

The Apostle Paul explained the full ramification of the remission of sin in Hebrews 10:12-22. Speaking of Christ, he said: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God . . . For by one offering he hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the

Lord, I will put my *laws* into their *hearts*, and in their *minds* will I write them; and *their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*. Now where *remission* of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

Remission of sin includes forgiveness *and* turning to righteousness — obedience to God's law! Christ died to free us from bondage to the way of sin, and He remits our sins so that we can now walk in His law.

Notice that where there is remission of sin, "there is *no more* offering for sin." This doesn't take place immediately — it's a lifelong *process*. Once we have finally been liberated from sin, so that we no longer sin, there will no longer be a need for forgiveness. Christ's sacrifice not only blots out past sins, but *continues* to clean us up as we stumble along the way, until finally we are perfect (I John 1:7-9). Not until then is the "remission of sin" complete.

God promises that He will remember our sins no more. "Having therefore [because God no longer remembers our sins], brethren, *boldness* to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," Paul continues, ". . . Let us draw near with a true heart in *full assurance of faith*, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19, 22).

Faith is absolute *confidence* in God's promises. When we have this faith — this assurance — we no longer bear feelings of guilt. We don't allow mistakes, even terrible sins, of the past to encumber us. We put all of that behind us.

There's no room for doubt in faith. "Now faith is the *assurance* of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen," Paul explains in Hebrews 11:1 (RSV). You don't go around with a guilty conscience about past sin. You *know* you have been forgiven. You are *confident* Christ's sacrifice was big enough to forgive *every* sin.

In this same 10th chapter of Hebrews, Paul explains further this confidence we can have once we

have been forgiven. "Cast not away therefore your confidence," he urges. "Now the just [those who are obeying God] shall live by FAITH: But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (verses 35-39).

Those who are fearful, who carry their past sins with them, will not have the faith to live God's way wholly. But those who have really grasped how total God's forgiveness is, and who are *confident* in that remission, will press forward boldly in God's way of life. Paul said he was of those who *believe* to the inheriting of eternal life. God help us to have *confidence* in His ability to grant the remission of our sins!

The account of the forgiveness of the most evil king who ever lived highlights God's ability to blot out even the most heinous sins.

Manasseh, king of Judah, led the nation into utter idolatry. He caused the people of Judah to commit greater evil than the heathen God had earlier removed from the land so that Israel could possess it. We read that he "shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (II Kings 21:16). He even sacrificed his own son to a pagan god (verse 6). Because he did more evil than anyone before him, God actually caused him to be taken captive to Babylon.

But "when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and *humbled himself greatly* before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was *entreated* of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom" (II Chron. 33:12-13).

Even after Manasseh had actually been taken captive, God reversed the penalty of his sin and set him back in his kingdom. All of his murders, his idolatry, and even his black magic were put behind him. He was

given a *fresh start*. God heard Manasseh's prayer of repentance and forgave all his sin! No amount of evil is too great for God to forgive.

If God could forgive Manasseh, he will certainly forgive us. When we recognize our need for God's mercy as did Manasseh, our entire

past can be wiped away. God stands ready to offer every one of us the *total remission* of our sins!

— Charles F. Hunting

"RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT"

It's both basic and awesome at the same time: Acts 2:38 explains how God makes it possible for man to achieve his purpose in life. This is because Acts 2:38 explains how individual human beings can receive the Spirit of God — and it is only through the Spirit of God that we can understand the reason why God created us, and then fulfill this purpose by growing to think, act and become more like our Creator Father.

Why go through the mental strain of repentance? Why make the effort to be baptized? Why even bother with understanding the name of Jesus Christ? Why seek the remission of sins?

There is in fact one simple answer to all of these questions — one basic reason for all of these "why's" — that we may qualify to receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit.

Nothing could be more spectacular. Nothing more all-encompassing. Nothing more awesome.

We start with a basic definition of God's Holy Spirit: It is His *power* — the power of the Almighty Creator.

Acts 1:8 gives the actual historical promise which Christ gave to His disciples: "But ye shall receive *power*, after that the Holy Ghost [Spirit] is come upon you." Here is the great promise of God's Holy Spirit. *Power*.

Power can be simply defined as "the ability to act" — or, more technically, as "the capacity to do work." This most certainly applies to the power of God's Holy Spirit.

By His Spirit God *created* the entire universe in Genesis 1:1. And it is also by the power of His Spirit that God has continued to *sustain* the universe from that time until this time.

In another sense, the Holy Spirit is the essence of the mind of God — the power by which God begets His sons and enables them to keep His law. A basic definition of this aspect of God's Holy Spirit would be "the love of God fulfilling the law of God."

And this brings us directly to the point of this article, which is the climax of Acts 2:38.

If we had to list biblical verses in the order of their relative importance, Genesis 1:26 would surely be placed near the top. Here God states the reason why He created man: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

Man was designed with a physical human body resembling God's body and a human mind resembling God's mind — much as our shadows resemble our bodies. But this was just a start. Man, every man individually, would have to spiritually grow in order to attain "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

And the way to spiritually grow? There's only one: living the law of God.

In Exodus 19:5-6 God made a covenant with His people. He told them that they could become a treasure unto Him, "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." All they would

have to do would be to "obey my voice" and "keep my covenant" — in other words, follow the law of God. And Israel sincerely *wanted* to obey. "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Ex. 24:7).

But as everybody knows, neither ancient Israel nor Judah *ever* kept God's law consistently. And as a *direct* result both were exiled (II Kings 17:6-23 for the House of Israel, II Kings 25:1-17 for the House of Judah).

Why? Why were God's physical people unable to keep God's law and fulfill their part of the covenant?

The answer is given in Hebrews 8. After raising the question as to why the first covenant had to be superseded by the second covenant (verse 7), Paul answers: "For finding fault with *them*. . . ." In other words, there was nothing at all wrong with the law. It was the *people* who were at fault; it was *Israel*, not God, who was responsible for the failure of the first covenant.

But this is not the end of the story — it is not even the end of the eighth verse of Hebrews 8. Read this section in its entirety: "For finding fault with *them*, he [God] saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when *I will make a new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." For further details, go on to verse 10: "For this is the

covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts:* and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

How can God put His laws into our minds and write them in our hearts? In precisely the same way that God can be our Father and we can be His sons! Through God's Holy Spirit!

This is the essential ingredient of the New Covenant. This is why the New Covenant can offer "better promises" (Heb. 8:6).

Without God's Spirit, the human mind is carnally minded — which means that it is "enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

With God's Spirit, the human mind is spiritually minded — it is a converted mind — which means that it is no longer enmity against God. Rather, the individual whose mind is filled with God's Holy Spirit minds "the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5), he has "life and peace" (Rom. 8:6), and in him "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled" (Rom. 8:4).

In one short sentence, God's Spirit gives a man the *power* to obey God's laws. Many are the false teachers who proclaim that human beings *cannot* keep God's commandments. Now, humanly speaking, that's true — *we can't*. Yet *we must*. Because God will not allow anybody in His Kingdom if He cannot rule that person. So we have a problem. But God solves it: He supplies the *power* to obey Him — which is God's Spirit.

Recall the definition of power — "the capacity to do work." Now it must certainly be considered "work" to reorient and lead a human mind in the direction of obedience to God — because this is exactly the *opposite* direction from the human mind. Hence the necessity of a *power* to do this "work," a power which God's Spirit supplies.

Putting the whole story together, we find that the individual filled with God's Spirit is well on his or her way to fulfill and accomplish the ultimate purpose in life — the very reason why he or she was born! This is why the crucial presence or absence of God's Holy Spirit is the only valid determination of whether or not the individual is, in reality, a real Christian (Rom. 8:9).

In the physical realm, obedience to God makes possible a more abundant physical life. In fact, one of the reasons Christ came in the flesh was to make this more abundant life possible (John 10:10).

Even more important, God's Holy Spirit increases the capacity of your mind to know and to comprehend spiritual things. The addition of God's Spirit elevates a human mind onto a new plane. I Corinthians 2:9-14 tells this remarkable story. Now verse 9 is often used alone by those who wish to show that God hides His truth from man: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" — and there the quote usually ends. But why isn't the next verse quoted? "But God hath *revealed them* unto us *by his Spirit*: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

God reveals His most profound truths through His Holy Spirit. Of course! God's Spirit is a part of His actual mind. And it can be implanted in our own human minds! So it makes perfect sense that God's Holy Spirit will lead the converted individual "into *all truth*" and will enable him to understand "things to come" (John 16:13).

God's Spirit also generates the *hope* of God — the quiet confidence of the certainty of the resurrection which makes a human life happy and successful (Romans 15:13).

In fact, the Holy Spirit brings a whole list of the attributes of God into our lives. Read them in Galatians 5:22. The fruits of the Spirit

are these: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

And there you have it. So simple. Yet so profound.

Jesus Christ stated, "It is the spirit that quickeneth [makes alive]" (John 6:63) — or, as a modern translation puts it: "It is the Spirit that gives life" (*The Twentieth Century New Testament*).

How does this occur? How does God's Spirit "give life"?

When an individual receives the Holy Spirit, he then, for the first time, has a begetting of inherent life — self-existent life — life within himself. Christ said of the man who would have God's Spirit in him, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of *living water*. (But this spake he of *the Spirit*, which they that believe on him should receive)" (John 7:38, 39).

What is the end result of this? We read about it in I Corinthians 15:50-54. At the resurrection, at the last trump, both the dead and the living in Christ — those who died with God's Spirit and those who will be living with God's Spirit — shall have their mortal, corruptible, physical existence exchanged instantly for an immortal, incorruptible, spiritual existence. This will be true whether that physical existence be a living body or dead dust hundreds or thousands of years old.

How do we qualify for God's Spirit? First of all, the Holy Spirit is a *gift* from our Father and Creator. Acts 2:38 makes this quite clear. But God will not give us something we don't want. Certainly not His Holy Spirit — the most precious commodity in the universe.

We must fervently want it. And we must demonstrate this by asking for it.

Speaking to His disciples, Jesus said: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your

heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask* him?" (Luke 11:13.)

It's a breathtaking promise. Do you want God's Holy Spirit? Then ask your heavenly Father. (Of course, we should realize that even our desire to ask for God's Spirit must originate from God Himself: "For it is God which worketh in you both *to will* [to desire] and to do of his good pleasure" [Phil. 2:13].)

Now it is rather simple to realize that God's Spirit is a gift and that we must ask for it. And so if these were the only conditions, the unlimited power of God's Spirit would be proliferated to anybody and everybody — and thereby disastrously misused.

Therefore, in order to build harmony, order and control into His overall system, God added another condition — obedience. God will give His Holy Spirit — with all the powers, abilities and capacities involved — only to those who have demonstrated by both attitude and actions that they want to obey God and His laws. God first demands this wholehearted, wholly sincere desire to obey His laws; then, and only then, will He give us the power to actually obey these laws.

Peter told his persecutors: "We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that *obey* him" (Acts 5:32). Now some might misinterpret this statement and claim that Peter taught "salvation by works" — that he was a "legalist." This would be a most hasty conclusion. Throughout the Bible, God plainly shows that we can never "earn" "the right" to have the Holy Spirit. It is unquestionably a free gift from God, a gift which we do not and cannot ever deserve. But this has nothing to do with whether or not we must first want to obey God's laws. It is a mystery how anybody could even suggest that God would not require us to have an attitude of perfect obedience to His law before He would give us His

Holy Spirit. How could God allow even the possibility for some "misguided souls" to abuse such massive power?

How do you receive God's Holy Spirit? Just follow the simple, straightforward directions of Acts 2:38: one, "repent" — and that naturally includes "obey" — and two, "be baptized."

When you have repented and have been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, then you *shall* receive the gift of the Holy Spirit when God's ministers lay their hands on you after the actual baptism (Acts 8:17). And there are no "perhaps's" or "probably's." You *shall* receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is an absolute promise of God. It is sure.

There is a concrete act that you must do. You cannot baptize yourself. You *must be* baptized. And who better than by a true minister of Jesus Christ?

How can you arrange this? As many of our readers already know, God has His ministers within easy reach of all areas of the United States, British Commonwealth and Western Europe.

So if you want to meet and counsel with one of these men, write in the United States to:

The Good News

Pasadena, California 91123

See the inside front cover for addresses in other areas of the world. If you live in the *continental* United States and you would like faster service, please dial this toll-free number: 800-423-4444. (Readers in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5225 collect.)

This is all *you* have to do. Then it becomes our responsibility to arrange the most convenient time and place.

In this regard, there is a question that many readers have considered well worth asking. Many of you have been baptized in the past, or have had a "religious experience,"

or have made a previous decision or commitment to what you then believed to be the truth of God. Now, through articles in *The Good News*, you have come to learn a great deal more about many things — such as, for example, the Holy Spirit. So the puzzling question arises: "What should I do? Should I be *rebaptized*?"

The answer is found in the book of Acts. The story is short: from 18:24 to 19:6. It concerns Apollos, who was teaching what he knew from the ministry of John the Baptist.

Now when Apollos baptized people, they did *not* receive the Holy Spirit. Upon meeting some of these, the Apostle Paul immediately asked them: "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" These people told Paul not only that they hadn't received it, but that they didn't even know what the Holy Spirit was!

But then, hearing the additional truth regarding Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, etc., Apollos' followers were immediately rebaptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them." So it was only after rebaptism that these people did receive the Holy Spirit which they, though sincere, had never actually qualified to receive before.

If this be your situation, then you should consider this outstanding example and likewise be baptized into "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Indeed, you *must* be so baptized. No matter what your previous religious history has been, don't worry about it. Start afresh. Become a "new man."

This is what Acts 2:38 is all about. Begin to put the power of God's Holy Spirit to work in your life. And begin to look forward to the day when this same Holy Spirit will transform you into a Spirit Being — an eternal member of the God family!

— Robert Kuhn

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PART I

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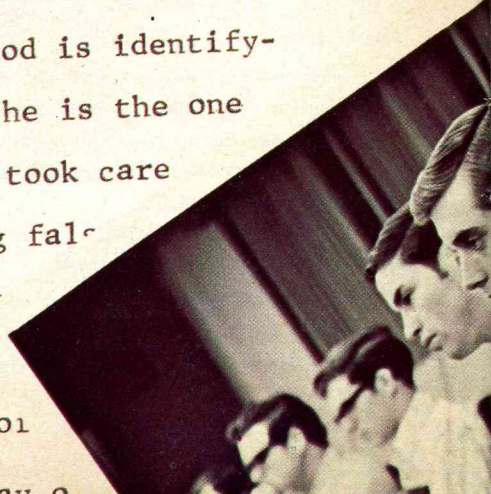
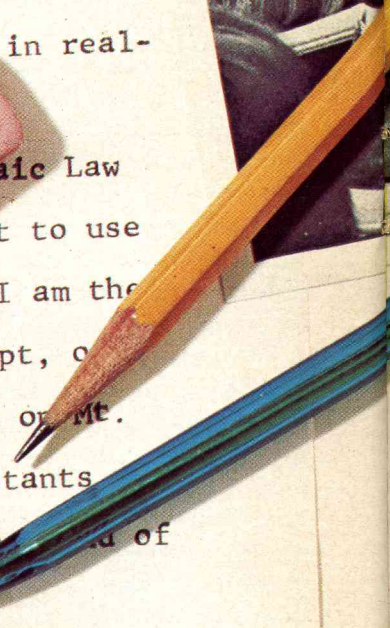
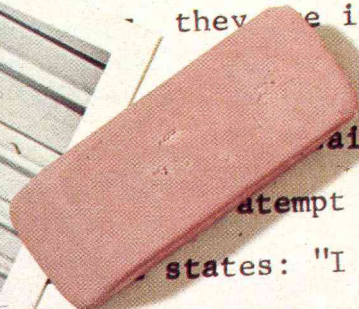
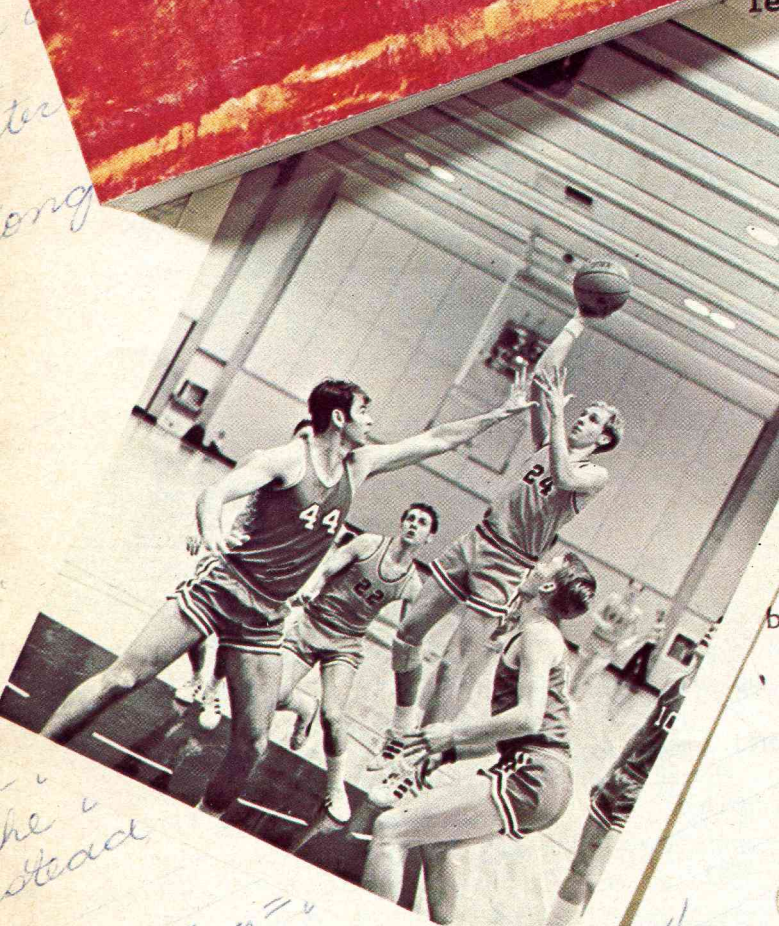
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**UPDATE
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NEW PROGRAMS AND COURSES AT AMBASSADOR COLLEGE

The college year is off to a flying start with the influx of over 300 new students at the Pasadena campus. More than a hundred of these are transfers from Bricket Wood, adding an international flavor to the student body.

Students are responding with enthusiasm to the new courses and programs being offered at Ambassador College this year. The three main thrusts to these new programs are in the biblical, scholastic and athletic areas.

First of all, the theology department, which has always been the strongest contributor to the Ambassador College curriculum, has been made even stronger with the addition of several faculty members.

The second thrust, in the scholastic area, involves newly developed degree programs. During the past year, faculty task forces and committees have been preparing the college for accreditation and building up the curriculum. Ambassador College students are receiving in-

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE CONTINUED

AWAITING THE start of the 100-yard dash on Track and Field Day (below). On the mall leading to the sunken gardens (bottom).



struction in the missing dimension in education — “how to live” — as well as course work leading to careers — “how to earn a living.”

The third main thrust is in inter-collegiate athletics. Athletic Director Jim Petty has arranged a full schedule for the junior varsity and varsity teams with such well-known schools as California State University at Long Beach and the University of Nevada. Ambassador College teams will also participate in cross country, track and field, swimming, and water polo.

Under the new curriculum, all students have, in effect, two majors. The theology core requirement constitutes an “automatic” major in theology. At the end of the sophomore year, students declare a major in another field of study.

At the moment, majors are available in English, history, chemistry, physical education and general studies. The basic course work for a major in business administration is being offered this year and a full program leading to a major in business administration will be operational in the fall of 1975.

A wide variety of minors has already been developed. Additional major and minor programs are in the planning stage and will be implemented in succeeding years to meet the needs of the student body.

Another new program beginning with this academic year is spring semester admission. Last year the Big Sandy campus admitted a group of students in January on an experimental basis with encouraging results. This year, in order to accommodate Bricket Wood transfers and applicants who were unable to obtain visas or make travel arrangements in time for the fall semester, as well as to give additional students the opportunity to attend Ambassador College, both Pasadena and Big Sandy will be accepting new students in January.

Application deadlines are November 1 for spring semester admission and July 1 for fall semester admission.



If you are a high school senior or a recent high school graduate and would like to become a part of this unique and exciting Ambassador College educational opportunity, be sure to write for a college catalog and an application for undergraduate admission.

You may write to the Office of Admissions, Ambassador College, 300 West Green Street, Pasadena, California 91123 or Office of Admissions, Ambassador College, Big Sandy, Texas 75755.

Extended Day Classes

Another innovation beginning this year is evening classes for adults! This new extended day program will make it possible for interested individuals in the Southern California area to take regular Ambassador College courses for credit on a part-time basis in the evening.

If you live within commuting distance of Pasadena and would like to attend evening classes at Ambassador College, you may write to Extended Day Program, Registrar's Office, Ambassador College, 300 West Green Street, Pasadena, California 91123.

Cultural Events

Several other programs open to the general public have been established, including the Ambassador College Celebrity Series, the Adventure Series and the Entertainment Series, all held in the new auditorium.

The Celebrity Series will feature famous personalities such as Winston Churchill (grandson of Sir Winston Churchill), Cathy Rigby and Tommy Mason, Eddie Albert and Francis Gary Powers.

Concerts, recitals and other special performances are also scheduled on a regular basis.

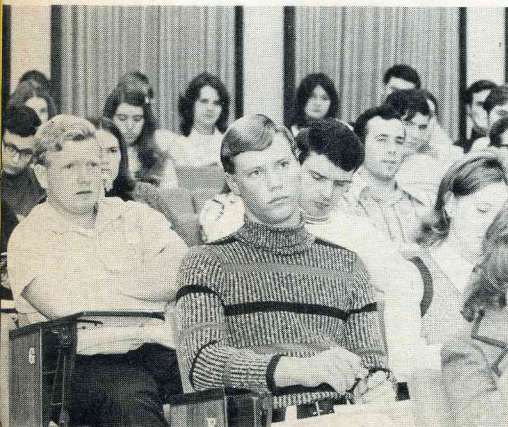
Both campuses have their largest enrollments ever. Big Sandy expects to receive governmental approval for enrolling non-U.S. residents momentarily. Accreditation of the college at Pasadena is just ahead.

— William Stenger
Director of Admissions



AMBASSADOR COLLEGE presents a balanced, complete education, with emphasis on character development and a right culture. Pictured above is Gene Hogberg, professor of International Relations.

GN Photos



GTA

IN EUROPE

EUROPE is in crisis! Dreams of political union are fragmented as a result of the Yom Kippur War. Inflation exacerbates social and political tensions. The economy of several countries teeters on the brink of bankruptcy. Is there any prophetic significance to these events? Garner Ted Armstrong took a special fact-finding tour of Europe in August. The information and interviews gathered can be seen in a series of television programs to be aired this season. While obtaining firsthand knowledge of current European conditions, Mr. Armstrong was particularly impressed with the fact that inflation is a *worldwide* problem. Reporting his trip to Church members, he observed: "I am absolutely shocked at some of the prices of things here in Europe! Gone are the days when American tourists could come to Europe and talk about their 'funny money' — the leaden-sounding coins of European countries. Gone are the days when Americans could buy luggage, all sorts of leather goods, cameras, watches, transistor radios and luxury items at prices almost ridiculously below prices in the United States! Would you believe a gallon of gasoline in Belgium now costs \$1.40?"

"Ray Kosanke, our *Plain Truth* regional editor here in Brussels, and his wife are getting rid of their gasoline-burning automobile in favor of a small diesel, since diesel fuel costs only half (still somewhat over 70 cents per gallon!) what gasoline costs!"

"Meat is terribly high in Europe, as are dairy prod-





PREPARING on-the-spot telecast at headquarters of the EEC (above). Taping at NATO headquarters (center). With journalists of European publications (above right). Interviewing Cesare Marchetti, specialist in energy problems (bottom).



ucts and canned goods. I honestly do not see how many Europeans manage to survive in such runaway inflation.

“In talking to the gentleman representing the large steel company here in Belgium, I found that the price of the coal bought from West Germany to fuel Belgium’s coal-burning blast furnaces had almost doubled in less than one year.

“While he hedged and was cagey regarding any price increases for consumers next year, he did finally admit that price increases would ultimately have to come.

“As a matter of fact, at least four major basic staples absolutely essential for the economy here are jumping tomorrow from 25 to 40 percent.

“Yesterday farmers were blocking roadways in France with farm vehicles in protest of low farm prices. Yet, in the European Common Market, the price of fertilizer, right in the face of these farmers’ protests in the big farming nation of France, is soaring upward to nearly 50 percent more than it was only a few days before!”

Christ warned His followers to watch world events (Matt. 24:42). Be sure to tune in *The World Tomorrow* broadcast and the *Garner Ted Armstrong* television program for this special series on Europe. Find out what Europe’s problems mean in the light of Bible prophecy. Consult the log in the *Plain Truth* magazine for time and stations. □

Photos by Lyle Christopherson

African Diary

BAPTIZING TOUR THROUGH FRENCH AFRICA

RECENTLY Mr. Harold Jackson, head of the Black African Department, and I completed our first baptizing tour through French Africa.

During eight days of travel and visiting, we were able to counsel a total of forty-six potential sons of God in Zaire and Cameroon.

The tour was a joint effort of the French Department and the Black African Department. All requests for personal counseling were directed to the Geneva office, and a schedule of appointments was prepared by Mr. Bernard Andrist and his staff.

Before its independence in 1960, Zaire was called the Belgian Congo. Its capital city, Kinshasa, formerly known as Leopoldville, was the first leg of our tour.

The people of Zaire are primarily Bantu, though many other tribes, including pygmies, live within its vast borders. In addition to French (the official language), five other languages are spoken.

Late afternoon, as the sun hung low over lush tropical hills, we landed at Kinshasa, cleared customs, took a car into the heart of the city and checked into the Intercontinental Hotel. This modern, developed area of the sprawling city is in dramatic contrast to the bulk of Kinshasa. Most of the 1½ million people in the city live in shanties.

During the next two days, we counseled 22 Africans in our hotel suite. After introducing everyone, we took photographs, and presented recent news about God's Work. We scheduled one hour of personal counseling for each person. Often we counseled continuously for twelve to thirteen hours. It was a pleasure to see their thirst for more knowledge of God's way. It was obvious God had opened their eyes to see the truth.

Having waited years to speak to a representative of the World-

wide Church of God, most had volumes of questions to ask. We tried to answer as many as possible and referred them to our French office for the answers to questions covered by literature.

It's not easy for most of those we counseled to obey God. There are always the influences of tribal religions and ancestor worship. There is also the overwhelming obstacle posed by the six-day workweek. This requires workers to work five-and-a-half days per week. The extra half day is on the Sabbath. Even school is held on the Sabbath. In Zaire we were told the government would provide work on Saturdays for anyone who thought he had nothing to do. There are windows to wash in governmental buildings, streets to clean, and other types of mandatory labor.

If any chooses to observe the Sabbath and refuses to work, he risks losing his job and not being able to find another.

This is a frightening situation for them because it could mean starvation and death. There are not always welfare services to fill their needs.

One man who dared to faithfully obey God lost his job as a clerk. He earnestly expected God to deliver him from the consequences and save his job. And God did just that! Three times this clerk lost his job for observing God's Sabbath. Each time it was immediately given back to him. God does not forget His promises!

In Douala, Cameroon we counseled 24 readers of the French *Plain Truth* (*La Pure Vérité*). As in Zaire, there is no

French broadcast. People learn of the magazine by word of mouth and request their own free subscription.

We ran into a language barrier when we counseled two women of the Bassa tribe of Cameroon. They did not speak English or French, only their tribal dialect — Bassa.

In order to communicate with them, Mr. Jackson addressed them in English. Then I translated his conversation into French, and another member of the Bassa, who spoke French as well as his tribal tongue, translated my French into Bassa. The elderly ladies responded through the same channel in reverse. In spite of the language barriers, it was evident that they were indeed ready for baptism.

Besides the two Bassa women, we baptized two men — for a total of four in Douala.

It is not unusual for women in Zaire and Cameroon, as well as much of Africa, to change their religion automatically if their husband changes his. Even a fiancée automatically changes to the religion of her future husband. This is a tribal tradition we encountered. We counseled one young man. His future bride had begun to study God's Word and keep His laws because her fiancé had begun to follow the way of Christ.

God is blessing His Work in French Africa. By word of mouth hundreds of Black Africans have learned of the way of God and written for *La Pure Vérité*, the French version of the Correspondence Course and other literature.

Africa is a potential gold mine. Its millions of people are a vast natural resource that God has begun to tap for His divine purpose. God is calling out a few now so they, in turn, can teach billions when Christ's rule is a reality in the world tomorrow (Rev. 20:4; 2:26).

— Henry E. Syphrett

WHEN I was a teenager back in the late thirties and early forties, I wondered what it would be like to be *invisible*. I remember so well the movie *The Invisible Man* starring Claude Rains. It was the story of a chemist who had discovered a formula that made him invisible.

Although invisible, he could still be felt and sometimes heard when he did not wish to be. His footprints could be seen; an opening door would betray him; or he would fall over an unseen object. Unable to discover the antidote that would make him visible again, he soon became very unhappy; the novelty of being invisible became a tragedy.

The Invisible World

Science fiction and Hollywood aside, there is a very real, but *invisible* world — another dimension, as some choose to call it — existing along with our own — but absolutely undiscernible to our five senses. It is the *spirit* world of God and angels.

God tells us that *He is a spirit* (John 4:24); that spirit is invisible (John 3:8, Col. 1:15); and that He is the Father of all spirit beings (Heb. 12:9).

God speaks of His son Jesus Christ, saying: "Who is the image of *the invisible God*, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, *visible and invisible*, whether they be [or have] thrones, or dominions, or [whether they be] principalities [holders of high offices in heaven or on earth], or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. And he is *before* all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:15-17).

Angels are called God's sons (Job 1:6; 38:7) because God created them. But they aren't *begotten* sons as is Christ. They exist in a hierarchy below the God-plane level of God the Father and Christ (Heb. 1:5-14).

Paul speaks plainly of the angels of God in the first two chapters of Hebrews. He tells us that we are

created a little lower than the angels; but we have the awesome potential of becoming far greater. We are called the sons of God — not sons by creation as they are, but *begotten* sons with a far greater future than they. We can be born into *God's very own family* as fellow-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:26-29).

God's Angels Created Before Adam

God created angels and arch-angels *before* He created and placed Adam on this earth. They were here even before the foundation of the earth was laid. They shouted for joy when they first saw the earth in all its perfection (Job 38:1-7).

That was prior to creation week, which took place sometime after the destruction on the earth caused by Lucifer's rebellion (Isa. 14:12-17). The earth was *not created* waste and in confusion, as we find it in Genesis 1:2. God created the earth to be inhabited; He did not create it in the ruined state in which it later became (Isa. 45:18).

Angels are invisible, immortal,

ANGELS

spirit beings with superior power and knowledge (II Pet. 2:11). They have seen all the activities of man on earth, and therefore know far more about the human mind, psychology, sociology, science and all the arts than any man living. And God has put them here with us as ministering spirits, to serve us! "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.)

They are put here to help us along the road to eternal life, to save us from premature death, accident,

SERVANTS OF GOD

by Hugh Mauck

etc., and to help us fight our battles and protect us from the devil and his demons. No wonder Elisha had no fear of his physical enemies when He saw one of God's spirit armies standing upon the mountain (II Kings 6:15-17).

God has had angels specifically assigned to supervise and protect His Church throughout all of its history (Rev. 1:4, 16, 20; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). He has angels who continually walk through the earth to

are probably assisting the Archangel Michael now.

Angels were messengers to the patriarchs of old. They appeared to Abraham, Lot, Hagar, Moses, Noah, Gideon, Elijah and many of the prophets and apostles.

When these angels manifest themselves to human beings, they generally do so in the form of men. They are not described in the Bible as having wings or halos. Paul points out in Hebrews 13:2 that they

Jude identifies as an *archangel* (Jude 9). Michael is the archangel specifically assigned to protect and minister to the twelve tribes of Israel. We read of this in Daniel 12:1; 10:13, 21.

Lucifer, of course, is a fallen angel — he rebelled against the government of God. How Lucifer came to be the devil, where he got his power, and his ultimate fate is all explained in our booklet titled *Did God Create a Devil?* If you have not

CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM

The word "angel" literally means "messenger," and this is often the role they fulfill in the Bible. The word conjures up in the minds of many people an image of an androgynous person clad in white robes, held aloft on wings and forever clutching a harp or a trumpet. However, the Bible presents quite a different description.

There appears to be at least two kinds of angels, each with distinctive features and responsibilities. They are known as cherubim and seraphim.

Some ancient authorities believe cherubim were just below seraphim in rank; but whether that is true or not is an unresolved academic question.

The best description of cherubim in the Bible comes from Ezekiel. They certainly don't look like babies with bird wings as the artists in the Middle Ages painted them. They are large, powerful, ox- and dragon-like creatures. In chapters one, nine and ten, we read of these living creatures as they are used to transport one of God's thrones.

Our first introduction to them is recorded in the book of Genesis, when God placed cherubim in the Garden of Eden to keep

Adam from entering and taking of the tree of life after he and Eve had sinned (Gen. 3:24).

The cherubim are associated with God's throne, either transporting it about (II Sam. 22:11; Ps. 18:10; 80:1; Ezek. 9:3; 10:4; 11:22), or carrying out important responsibilities, such as guarding the tree of life. Lucifer was given rule over the earth and thousands — perhaps millions — of angels before Adam. And he still is "the god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4).

The seraphim described by Isaiah (Isa. 6:2-6) are similar living creatures. These creatures have six wings, whereas cherubim have only four. These creatures are said to be before and above the throne, whereas the cherubim are beneath it, supporting and transporting it (see also Revelation 4).

observe and report back to Him the overall conditions on earth (Rev. 5:6; Zech. 4:10; II Chron. 16:9).

And God has angels specifically assigned to look after His begotten human children (Acts 12:15; Matt. 18:10). God promises: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:11).

Twelve of God's angels will be the gatekeepers in the new city of Jerusalem (Rev. 21:12), one for each tribe of Israel. These same twelve

can travel incognito, not immediately revealing who they are.

Angelic Responsibility

The Bible mentions three angels of high rank: Lucifer (Isa. 14:12), now Satan the devil; Gabriel, who appeared to Daniel on two occasions (Dan. 8:16; 9:21), to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:19), and later to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26); and Michael, called one of the *chief princes* (Dan. 10:13), and whom

read it, please write for a free copy.

When Lucifer rebelled against God, he led one third of God's angels into mutiny with him (Rev. 12:4). Lucifer's name was changed to *Satan* ("the adversary"). God renamed the fallen angels "devils" (Matt. 12:26, 27; Rev. 12:9) or "demons" (RSV). They are also called "evil spirits," "familiar spirits," "dumb spirits."

Their whole self-willed purpose in life now is to destroy all mankind and to thwart the plan of God.

Satan — who is the prince of demons (Matt. 12:24-26) — has not given up his futile struggle to overthrow God.

Satan's Form and Image

The devil is called "the dragon" — a winged serpent (Rev. 20:2). Satan is not made in the form and image of God, but is a "great red dragon" (or flying serpent). (Rev. 12:3.)

He is the serpent who induced Adam and Eve to sin with disastrous results for them and all mankind since (Gen. 3:1, 5, 13-19; I Cor. 15:22).

God sternly warns us not to seek after demons, and not to associate with those who do. "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a *consulter with familiar spirits*, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord..." (Deut. 18:10-12).

In spite of this warning, these and other occult practices are quite popular these days. (Write for our free booklet *The Occult Explosion — What Does It Mean?* It contains much more information about this subject.)

Fighting Our "Real" Enemies

Evil spirits, far more powerful than we, are actively seeking to destroy us. They are not playing games, though those people who begin to get involved with them see no danger until it is too late!

God says to avoid any demonic influence and to *resist* the devil (James 4:7).

Spirit beings are very "real" — in fact, *more* real than we are. As spirit beings they are immortal, while we in the physical human flesh live a transitory existence.

And evil spirit beings can completely destroy us spiritually unless we resist them and all they represent with all our might and the help of God and His angels. That protection comes to those who love God and keep His commandments.

We must "Put on the whole ar-

him get an advantage of us (II Cor. 2:11). Then we can confidently look forward to the New Heaven and New Earth, where only righteousness will survive — to a time when Satan and his angels will be cast away from us into outer darkness forever (Rev. 21:27; Jude 13).

There Are More With Us Than Against Us

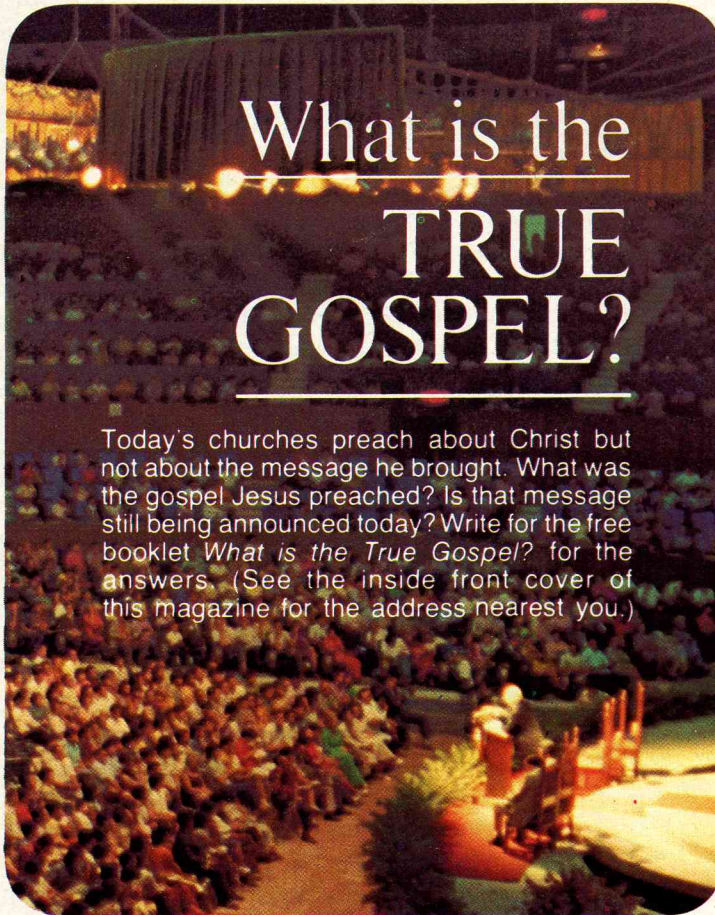
When Christ said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18), He was speaking of complete control over all evil powers, all spirit beings, good and bad. They all must do His bidding.

He is "the head of all principality and power . . . having spoiled principalities and powers [when He conquered Satan], he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:10, 15).

If we continue to serve Him, we need have no undue fear of any of these spirit beings — no matter how powerful they are or how much they want to separate us from life. Even though Satan brings our sins before God day and night (Rev. 12:10; Job 1:6), we have Jesus Christ as our advocate and atonement for all (I John 2:1; Heb. 7:25-26; 8:24-26).

Therefore, we can say with the Apostle Paul: "... I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

Truly, those who trust God need not fear, "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (II Kings 6:16). □



mour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities [high-ranking spirit beings who influence humans to fight and destroy one another], against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits] in high places" (Eph. 6:11-12).

We should heed Paul's admonition not to be ignorant of Satan's existence, or of his devices, nor let

the gospel according to ISAIAH

The Apostle Paul wished a curse — twice — on any who would dare to preach the wrong gospel message (Gal. 1:8-9). Yet who really understands what that message really is? Surprisingly, the ancient Prophet Isaiah, some 700 years before Christ, described the New Testament gospel in vivid detail!

by Brian Knowles

SURELY, no term is more misused in the world of professing Christianity than “gospel.” We hear of gospel music, gospel tracts, gospel preachin’, etc., etc. But Christ’s true gospel *message* is seldom heard!

The real gospel is a *message*. And it is a message with certain specific components. The term “gospel” itself tells us a great deal about the nature of that message from God.

What “Gospel” Means

The English term “gospel” is translated from the Greek *eu-angelion* which means “good news.” It can also be rendered “glad tidings.” Thus, we see that the gospel message is *positive* in nature. It is a message of hope and of optimism — not primarily of gloom and doom. Yet it does definitely contain an element of *warning*, as we shall see.

Of course, most Christians think of the gospel exclusively as a New Testament expression. We have the four “Gospels” — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We know that Christ and the apostles preached the gospel.

In a very real sense, Jesus’ gospel was a sensational, never-before proclaimed news announcement. Jesus was the newscaster who absolutely assured that the Kingdom of God

would come to this earth. He qualified for the kingship of that Kingdom by conquering Satan the devil in a spiritual battle of the highest stakes (Matt. 4; Luke 4). *After* conquering Satan, Jesus did say: “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand*” (Mark 1:15).

But few have realized that this very same gospel was *preannounced* in writing by a gifted group of God-called men designated as prophets — one of which was named Isaiah. It may surprise you to learn that the term “gospel” also appears in the Old Testament.

Which Bible Did the Apostles Use?

The New Testament apostles and writers used the Old Testament. They referred to it some 850 times — 280 of which are direct quotations. But which *translation* of the Old Testament did they most commonly use?

Following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., his empire was divided between four of his generals. One of these generals, Ptolemy, commenced a dynasty of rulers in Egypt which continued for some time.

Ptolemy I established a library in the city of Alexandria called the Great Museum — the first really extensive library of antiquity. It became the leading repository for literary wealth of the ancient world and the prototype of the modern university.

Ptolemy also captured the city of Jerusalem (on a Sabbath day when the Jewish people were resting). Though he deported a substantial number of the Jews to Egypt, he treated his captives well. They soon rose to positions of prominence in government and business; the Jewish contingent became firmly woven into the fabric of that Greek-speaking society.

According to tradition, it was under the rule of Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) — about 280 B.C. — that the first translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek became necessary.

The Pentateuch was the first part of the Old Testament rendered into Greek. The rest of the Old Testament books were translated afterward over a period of time. Scholarship is generally agreed that this translation — called the *Septuagint* — was done by Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt.

“By the first century A.D., the Septuagint had become the Bible of the Jews of the Dispersion and was widely circulated through the Roman world. *It became also the Bible of the early Christians who preached from it and quoted it in their writings.* A large proportion of the allusions to the Old Testament contained in the Gospels and in the Epistles are taken from the Septuagint” (*New Testament Times*, Merrill C. Tenney, page 30, emphasis mine).

We understand that many of the New Testament writers’ quotations of the Old Testament were from the Septuagint (LXX) translation rather than from the Hebrew. Over half of the direct quotations agree exactly or substantially with the major manuscripts of the LXX.

Why This Fact Is Significant

You might wonder what the point of this background really is — what does it have to do with the gospel?

Simply this. If you were to study certain verses in the book of Isaiah — in the Septuagint version — you would find the *same terminology* used as in the New Testament in relation to the gospel!

The Hebrew expression for “good news” or “glad tidings” is *basar*. But when translated into Greek, it is *euaggelion* or “gospel”!

Now notice a case in point: “O Zion, that bringest *good tidings* [*basar* or *euaggelion*], get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest *good tidings*, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” (Isa. 40:9.)

Here is a prophecy about the message of the gospel. Here we are introduced to the basic components of the New Testament message by

the *Old Testament*. Also read the next verse to complete the thought: “Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his *work* before him.”

The gospel message has to do with the fact that the dynamic, living Christ is to return *to rule* this earth with strength. In our present strife-torn world, what could be better news than that?

Notice also that it has to do with *revealing the true God* — “. . . Behold your God!”

That message also tells of *the reward* Christ will bring with Him for those who have faithfully done His work which is “before him.” (See also Revelation 22:12.)

Now notice another scripture in Isaiah which further reveals the makeup of the New Testament gospel message: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth *good tidings*, that publisheth *peace*; that bringeth *good tidings* of good, that publisheth *salvation*; that saith unto Zion, *Thy God reigneth!*” (Isa. 52:7.)

The Apostle Paul quoted this very scripture in application to the *New Testament* preachers of the gospel. Notice the way “good tidings” is translated: “. . . As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach *the gospel* of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15.)

Therefore, we can *know* these verses in Isaiah apply to the New Testament gospel message!

Our picture of the gospel message is further expanding. We now see that that message has to do with the way to peace and world harmony. And it has to do with salvation and the *rulership of God now* in His Church and *directly* over the whole earth in the world tomorrow.

We will see that all these prerequisites were fulfilled by Christ and the New Testament apostles. But first notice one more passage in the book of Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to

preach *good tidings* unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified” (Isa. 61:1-3).

Here is the capstone of Isaiah’s description of the New Testament gospel. Jesus Himself quoted this passage — partially — in showing that He was fulfilling those very words as He preached the gospel some 1900 years ago: “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias [Isaiah]. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me *to preach the gospel* to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:16-19).

Then Jesus closed the book without completing the quotation!

Why?

Because His commission was divided into two distinct parts. His first coming was to fulfill that part of the passage which he quoted from Isaiah. The second part of that commission — to bring about the day of God’s vengeance — is *yet* to be fulfilled! That will be the time when God’s ruling Kingdom will be set up on this earth and the law will go forth from Zion — from Jerusalem.

In the meantime, it is the function of the Church of God to announce

that great event *in advance!* The arrival of Jesus Christ with all of the saints and an army of righteous angels to set up the Kingdom of God on this earth is at the *heart and core* of the New Testament gospel message!

How the Gospel Developed

We have seen that Isaiah, in three passages of Scripture, described in detail the components of the gospel as it would be preached in the New Testament.

But what we have not yet examined is just how that gospel message was preached, and how it developed to the point of the present Work.

Let's notice another Old Testament scripture before we get to the New: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even *the messenger of the covenant*, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:1).

Christ came as a *messenger* of the covenant. That is the *new* covenant or agreement. Jesus, as part of His gospel, introduced a whole new arrangement. It was not the same as the old agreement or covenant — but distinctly a new one.

The Old Testament Prophet Jeremiah described that new covenant which Jesus later introduced: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people . . . they shall all know me . . . for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:31-34).

All Christians are spiritual "Israelites" (Gal. 3:28-29). We prefigure, in the Church, the conditions of that covenant which will be made with the *physical* nation of Israel (all twelve tribes). The Church *now* lives under the conditions of that covenant which will be in universal

force when the world-ruling Kingdom of God is set up on the earth!

Christ preached the *same law* — the great Ten Commandment law — but He preached it in its *spiritual* application. He showed that lust — inordinate or illegal desire — violated the commandment about adultery (Matt. 5:27-28). Jesus preached forgiveness of sins and offered the Holy Spirit as an aid, a Comforter and a power to overcome sin, the devil and this world.

Jesus Christ also announced the coming *rule* of God's Kingdom and repentance (Mark 1:14-15). He healed the sick, cast out demons and taught the way of righteousness. He said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." He showed the way to world peace through divine law. He spoke of salvation and entry into His Father's Kingdom (John 14:1-3).

That Kingdom was likened to a pearl of great price, or to a great treasure (Matt. 13:45, 46). Jesus showed that people ought to be willing to forsake anything and *everything* in order to have a part in that Kingdom.

Christ, in His gospel, also spoke of the idyllic conditions of the world tomorrow. He showed, in advance, men like Elijah, Job, Daniel, Moses and others in that future Kingdom. He spoke of judgment, mercy and especially *love*.

Some 50 or 60 years after the resurrection of Christ, the aged Apostle John summed up the real meaning of the gospel message: "For *this is the message* that ye heard from the beginning, *that we should love one another*" (I John 3:11).

Of course, that's not *all* there was to the message — but that is the underlying motivation and philosophy of it. Christ said all of the commandments could be summarized in two simple principles: love toward God and love toward neighbor. And those laws — based on love — are at the very heart of the gospel!

Personification of the Gospel

And who *personified* love toward God and love toward fellowman?

Who is the greatest "lover" in all history? Is it not Jesus Christ Himself, who said: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Jesus practiced what He preached!

Christ *is* at the heart and core of the gospel. He is the *King* of the coming Kingdom. He is the *way* into that Kingdom. He is the personification and fulfillment of all of its laws. It is He who will set up that Kingdom on this earth. And Jesus Himself will administer its laws. He was the main *messenger* who came to announce the good news of that Kingdom — and to begin His Church (His Body!) which would *continue* the Work He Himself had begun!

Jesus Himself fulfilled all the prophecies of the elements of the gospel as prophesied by Isaiah. And so does this Work of Christ!

Worldwide Fulfillment Today

Today, the Worldwide Church of God is also fulfilling all of the descriptions Isaiah gave of the future preaching and publishing of the gospel of the Kingdom. We have been announcing the way of peace directly to world leaders in many nations around the world. We have been preaching Christ — and the meaning of His crucifixion and sacrifice. We proclaim Christ's lordship and rule — both now and in the world tomorrow. We have shown the healing power of the living God. We have anointed the sick and preached liberty and freedom to those held captive by sin. This worldwide Work has given its audience a glimpse into the glittering future in which God Himself will rule on this earth from Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ, His original apostles and Christ's own Work today have *fulfilled* those prophecies made by the ancient Prophet Isaiah so many centuries before Christ! We have preached — and will continue to preach — the gospel according to Isaiah. □

WHAT OUR READERS SAY

"Where Your Treasure Is . . ."

I've just read your article in *The Good News* on "Where Your Treasure Is . . ." It was very good and well written, with lots of punch. I have had a slight promotion in just the last couple of weeks, and I know it's because I have been applying God's laws at work. We have only been married three years and have a very successful marriage because we live by God's laws every day of our lives. Those laws are living, dynamic laws — useful, workable laws that affect every facet of our lives. How very fortunate we are that the living God called us now, whether it be we were seeking God (the right way) or just stumbled on this way. We know and have proved beyond any doubt that you are serving the living God. We thank God He has allowed us the privilege to help support this most important Work.

Mr. and Mrs. Al G.,
Tacoma, Washington

My husband and I had a discussion on tithes after I read an article on tithing in *The Good News*. We jointly decided (even though my husband is not a professing Christian and I feel I have a terribly long way to go before measuring up to what Christ expects me to be) that tithing is the obedient thing to do and that's what we wish to start doing immediately. We have so much for which to be thankful. My husband just got a much better paying job; we have four lovely children; and, most of all, a loving God who cares for us. It's about time we showed Him we are grateful and thankful. There was no doubt about which Church we would send our tithes to. We both feel the Worldwide Church of God is the only true Church.

Mrs. Betty G.,
Wytheville, Virginia

New International Version

Dear Mr. Johnson: I'm puzzled at the approach of your article on *The New International Version* of the Bible, and particularly by your appraisal of the "archaic . . . seventeenth-century English of the King James Version." Obviously there are many other people, also born in the twentieth century, to whom the unique beauty of King James prose — aside from what some consider a superior original text — commends itself quite above other translations. For example, in their introduction to *The Holy Scriptures*, the Jewish Publication Society mentions the "Authorized Version with its admirable diction, which can never be surpassed. . . ." King James English is not merely archaic communication, but lovely, poignant communication created by a nation who pride themselves in their language — at the very time when that language was at a quality peak.

Secondly, is it not out of context with other Ambassador College publications that you so easily recommend "the text generally accepted by the other modern translators"? As you mention, that text is not the text from which the King James Version is translated, and varies significantly from it. Yet Ambassador College has consistently — until this article — supported the KJV as their preferred basic English Bible, and

largely for reasons inherent in its underlying Greek text. I don't question the value of the translation you recommend. Your article has made me want a copy of my own. But I do suggest that the force of your recommendation is stronger and pointed differently than even you intended.

J.D.S.,

Altadena, California

• *Although we have generally recommended the King James Version as a good basic study text, other translations can prove very helpful as well. But no translation is anywhere near perfect, and selection is largely a matter of personal choice.*

From Johannesburg Office

Thought I would pass on some encouraging news regarding the GN. My visiting covers a large area of Southern Africa, and it has been extremely stimulating to hear the very many good comments regarding the GN. The vast majority of people mention how much the articles have helped them to come to a greater and more comprehensive understanding of the truth. Many of our outlying prospective members are not visited on a regular basis. Yet it has often amazed us how some have grown a foot virtually overnight — basically due to the prod they received from the GN. (I realize naturally that God is the One who promotes growth. Yet I feel the GN has been used as an instrument in His hands.)

Some prospectives mentioned they came to a clearer understanding of God's plan of salvation, their calling, part in the Work, the commission God has given to His Church, prophecy, repentance and so on. Many mentioned they felt a greater personal warmth for the Work and a desire to "get more involved."

Andre van Belkum,
Johannesburg, South Africa

Games Christians Play

The "Games Christians Play" in *The Good News* really hit the nail on the head (how true). Your magazines are exceptional and I must say you look so very happy at what you are accomplishing. My prayers and thoughts go out every day for you and your family of staff and co-workers.

Ella M.,
Sacramento, California

Although I do not agree with your religious views entirely, I have enjoyed reading the up-to-the-minute news of the world. Why I am asking to have my name removed is the revolting articles by D. Paul Graunke, and the doubly revolting cartoons. I just will not have them in my home. Whether you are peddling aspirin or religion, brag yours up as high as the sky so long as you do not knock or poke fun at the other fellow's product. This is especially cheap when it is someone's belief you are downing. Granted even that every statement he makes is true of somebody, there are still those awful drawings, ruining an otherwise decent magazine — for me at least.

Marie S.,
Reedley, California

• *Cartoonists are allowed a certain amount of "editorial license" in most magazines. The artist's intent was to poke fun at attitudes common to most all human beings — not the specific beliefs of any particular denomination or group.*

Personal Counsel Desired

Please give me further information on what I must do to arrange a visit from your minister. I am eagerly awaiting an answer.

Mrs. Tanya N.,
Canovanas, Puerto Rico

• *We have forwarded your request to our ministers in Puerto Rico. They will contact you as soon as they possibly can.*

Any in the United States desiring a private appointment with a Worldwide Church of God minister can write to The Good News, P.O. Box 111, Pasadena, Calif. 91123. Those in the British Commonwealth and other parts of the world can write to the address of our office nearest them. See the communications box on the inside front cover.

Letters From Overseas

Thank you for keeping me informed and up to date with the activities of the Worldwide Church of God. It is indeed refreshing and stimulating to read of the progress of the efforts made. I myself have nothing much to offer other than my dedicated belief in Christ, my prayers, and my minute financial support to the cause. But nevertheless I am as happy as you are for the way things are going. I am always looking forward, in anxious anticipation, to receive your letters to co-workers. Your tenacity to succeed gives me renewed hope in the human race.

J. M.,
London, England

As an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland for over 30 years, having graduated from Edinburgh University and the deservedly famous New College, I have to acknowledge the new light and convictions your publications have conveyed to me concerning the gospel of God in Jesus Christ. After deep thought and much applied study, I can truthfully say that I have learned more of the "plain truth" of the Scriptures than I acquired throughout my entire academic courses. This I know has affected my whole spiritual outlook, and, I hope, is affecting my proclamation of the Word.

H. J.,
Angus, Scotland

I have just completed my first and second lessons of the Correspondence Course. I realized I had not known any other interesting and enlightening course of biblical understanding. Your lessons provided the guidance I alone could not accomplish without its direction. It has helped me understand the clear and revealing knowledge of the Bible. It opened my mind to think, form and hold opinions with what the Bible reveals.

Estanislao S.,
Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

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Why water baptism?

It's true that you are saved by grace,
but salvation requires more than just

"believing on Christ." According
to the Bible there are conditions
and water baptism is one
of the most important
steps of all. The free
booklet *All About Water*

Baptism answers your basic
questions about this essential
act of conviction and helps you
evaluate your attitude towards it.
(See inside front cover for address
nearest you.)

