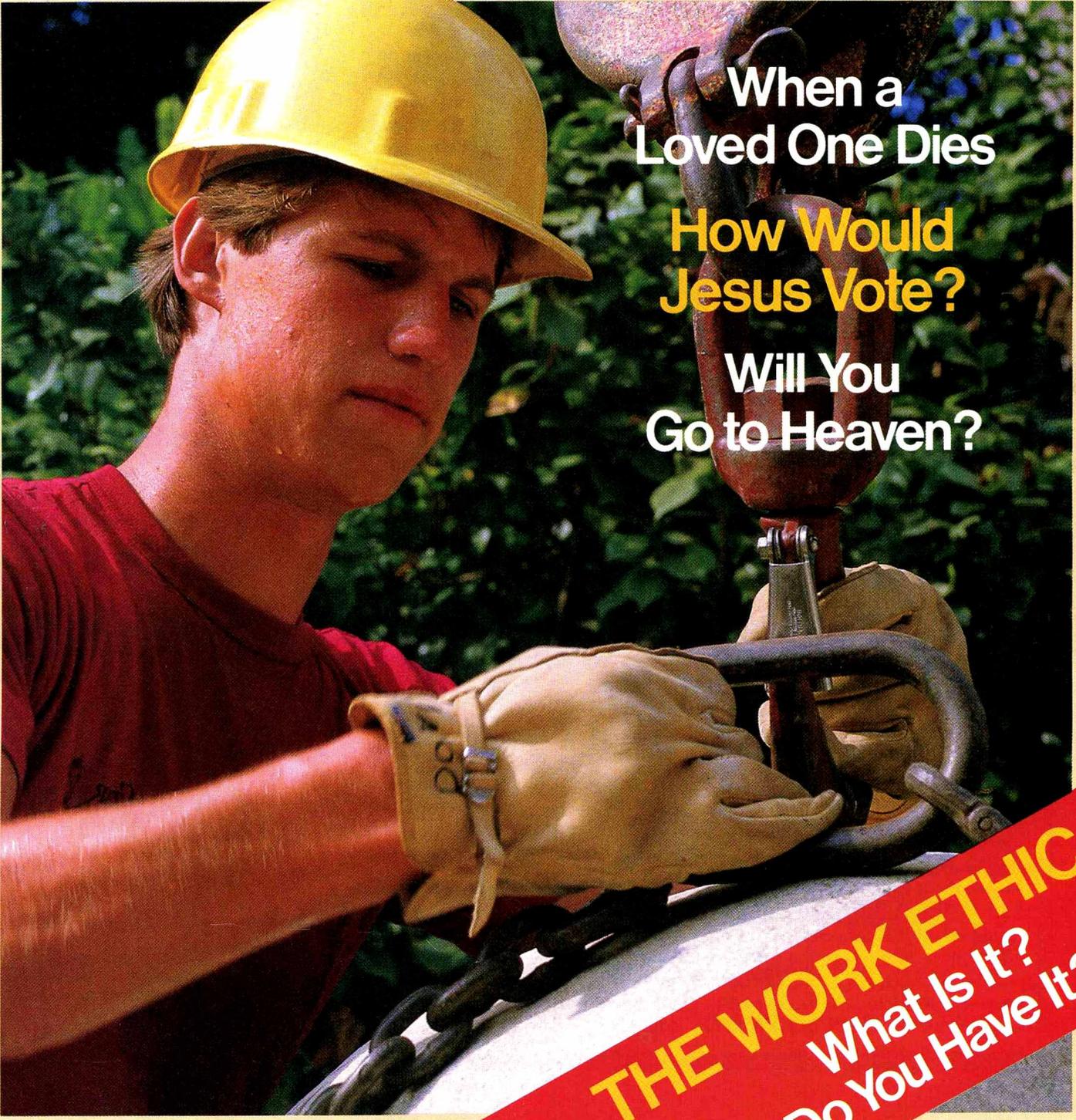


OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1984

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

A young man wearing a yellow hard hat and a red t-shirt is focused on his work. He is wearing tan work gloves and is using a large, rusted metal tool, possibly a wrench or a similar fastener, on a piece of machinery. The background is a blurred green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

When a
Loved One Dies

How Would
Jesus Vote?

Will You
Go to Heaven?

THE WORK ETHIC
What Is It?
Do You Have It?

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

OCT.-NOV. 1984

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9



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A Special Kind of Friendship
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COVER: Workman moving a boulder. The work ethic is vital both for physical and spiritual prosperity; see article beginning on page 11. Photo by Hal Finch.

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PERSONAL FROM

Herbert Armstrong

Here's Good News!

You live in a world of frustration and despair, whose greatest problem is the very question of SURVIVAL! In this troubled world, *The Good News of the World Tomorrow* comes

The search for peace seems to be the No. 1 occupation of governments today. Yet none knows where to find it. None knows THE WAY to peace!

It is like the story you may have heard about the elderly lady who searched every nook and

all the time — she had simply not known where to look.

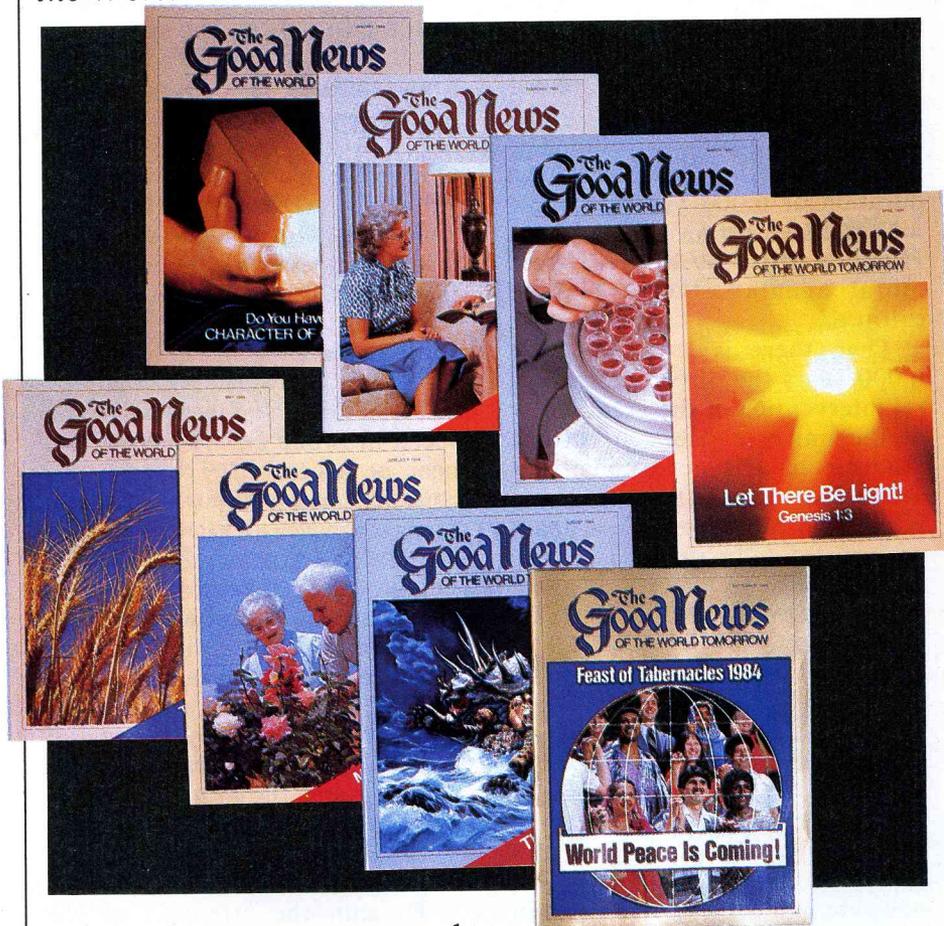
But if we were to tell the world about the **ONLY PLACE** where the way to peace can be found, the world would not listen, for that is a source the world has completely rejected. The world *refuses* to look there for THE WAY, or to listen if it is read. The source simply *does not speak their language*.

Consequently, we get this **GOOD NEWS** to the world in the world's language. The *Plain Truth* magazine makes that amazing and positive truth **PLAIN** — in a language this world understands and will accept.

But *The Good News of the World Tomorrow* is for those who accept the one source where this truth may be found — for those who wish to *go deeper* into this precious gold mine of truth, **IN ITS OWN LANGUAGE!**

We have been given, one might say, a dual commission: 1) Our first and principal commission is to proclaim to the whole world, **AS A WITNESS**, the good news of coming world peace. In Bible language, it is called "Jesus Christ's Gospel" (the word *gospel* means "good news") — and that Gospel is the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is the coming **WORLD GOVERNMENT** that will bring peace. World leaders — both statesmen and scientists — are saying the world's only hope is **WORLD GOVERNMENT**. So we proclaim it *in their language* — not Bible language. We are commissioned to proclaim it *ONLY as a witness*. Following Jesus Christ's example — and Peter's and Paul's — we make no



to bring hope, assurance and **TRUTH**.

Our commission is to proclaim to the world the **GOOD NEWS** of the coming **WORLD OF PEACE**. World leaders, however, will not produce it.

cranny of her home to find where she had mislaid her glasses. They were nowhere to be found — until she went to wash her face. Then she discovered they had simply been pushed up above her forehead. They were right there

effort to cram Christ's religion down their throats.

Jesus said none *can* come to Him (spiritually — religiously) except the Spirit of God *draws him*. We are humans. We cannot draw them. That is not our job — it is God's. Jesus never pleaded, "WON'T you accept me?" He never urged or begged any to "be saved." Nor did Peter or Paul. That is

seeks those results by going the opposite way. And *that* is THE WAY that produces every unwanted trouble!

There is one root CAUSE for all the troubles this world is suffering — transgression of our Maker's right WAY OF LIFE — that way expressed in principle by the Ten Commandments.

This world, in general, has lost contact with, and therefore knowledge of, its Maker — the

power and force! He is coming, strange as it may sound, to *force* peace, happiness and abundant well-being on a human race that will not accept, voluntarily, the WAY that will cause it!

Our commission is to get the GOOD NEWS to the world. But we cannot gain the attention of the world by using religious or Bible-sounding language.

We have to be realistic. The world in general, by nature, is hostile to God's message — when spoken in religious-sounding language. God explained that through the apostle Paul, who wrote, "The carnal mind is enmity [hostile] against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

If we go to the world with BIBLE LANGUAGE, the world will not listen! On the other hand, *we know* that the very foundation of ALL knowledge — the very basis of all right EDUCATION — is God's revealed Word — the Holy Bible! But the world does not know that. Nor will the world, *IF* it knows the knowledge is coming from the Bible, accept it.

Actually — think of it — the Bible is the BASIS of right EDUCATION. But the world will not look into the Bible for it. Nor, if you speak in BIBLE LANGUAGE, will it hear or accept it! To reach the consciousness of the world, therefore, we have to SAY IT IN THE WORLD'S LANGUAGE!

Now what *IS* salvation? It is THE PURPOSE for which we were put here on this earth. So, to the world, we don't use the word *salvation*. We talk about the fact that one of the very BASICS of knowledge is an awareness of the meaning and the PURPOSE of life — to make life MEANINGFUL. The world will listen to that kind of language.

To gain the attention of the world — to get God's truth — Jesus Christ's Gospel — into the consciousness of the millions in the world — WE HAVE TO SPEAK THE WORLD'S LANGUAGE! Not the spiritual-sounding language of the Bible.

So in *The Plain Truth* and
(Continued on page 22)

The Good News is for those who accept the one source of truth and who wish to go deeper into this gold mine!

a modern Protestant RELIGIOUS invention and practice.

Our commission TO THE WORLD is to preach the GOOD NEWS *as a witness*. This we do IN THEIR LANGUAGE. This we do as an interesting, dynamic, EDUCATIONAL broadcast — *NOT* as a religious program.

For this, *The Plain Truth* is our vehicle-in-print, besides free booklets.

But our second commission is to "FEED JESUS CHRIST'S SHEEP," to put it in biblical language. Those whom God, through His Spirit, *has* drawn to Jesus Christ — HAS converted — need *deeper spiritual food*. And *The Good News* is our magazine to help in fulfilling *that* vital phase of our commission.

World leaders *search* for the way to PEACE. Yet they see nothing ahead but ever worsening troubles with no solutions. The reason they see no solutions is that they often willingly hide their eyes from the CAUSES.

For every wrong result there has to be a CAUSE. To CAUSE the desired results of peace, happiness, prosperity and abundant well-being, our Creator set in motion invisible and inexorable laws. There is *no other way* to obtain these desired ends.

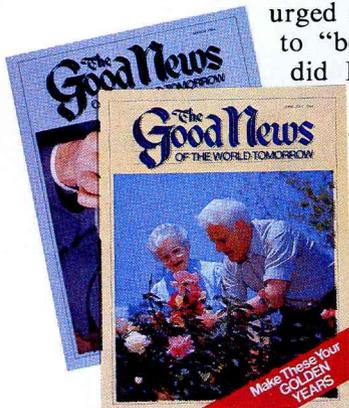
Yet a rebellious mankind refuses to obey THAT WAY. It

SOURCE of everything good that man desires.

The living God our Creator RULES over His entire vast, limitless creation. But to fulfill His purpose, He has marked out a duration of 6,000 years to allow man to make his own free choice. Humans have been made free moral agents — creatures of CHOICE.

Then there is to *follow* that 6,000 years the direct supernatural intervention of the great Ruler of the universe. He will enforce the rule of His government for 1,000 years. Even the nature that has drawn humanity like a magnet toward false values and into the wrong ways will be changed! *THE WORLD TOMORROW* will, therefore, be a world of PEACE, PROSPERITY, HAPPINESS, ABUNDANT WELL-BEING!

Our commission is to proclaim to the world this GOOD NEWS of the Kingdom of God and of His gift of eternal life, and to prepare the way for the coming of the glorified Messiah. *Very soon*, now, He will come to this earth in supernatural POWER and GLORY! He is coming to RULE all nations — to set up WORLD GOVERNMENT! World statesmen and scientists say WORLD GOVERNMENT is the only hope of world peace. But men could never achieve it. Jesus Christ is coming to rule with TOTAL supernatural



How Would Jesus Vote for President?

Jesus Christ's message was concerned with the government of nations. Christians are those who follow Christ. Here's what He would do.

By Herbert W. Armstrong

The presidential campaign is on full blast in the United States. The issue of survival of the nation will fall squarely on the shoulders of the next president.

Other important elections have recently occurred, or will occur shortly, in other nations around the world.

World war threatens to explode in the Middle East and other "hot spots." Frightful nuclear war! War that means the annihilation of civilization. The world this minute is in grave danger. The issue is a matter of government!

Few realize it because they do not hear it today, but the GOSPEL

OF JESUS CHRIST — the Gospel Jesus brought from God and preached — was a message about *government!*

Christ was interested in GOVERNMENT

Yes, Jesus was interested in government. His message was about a government to RULE THE

WORLD and bring us WORLD PEACE!

In this momentous presidential year, what would Jesus Christ do, for instance, about the upcoming U.S. election if He were a native-born American?

Would He vote for Walter Mondale? Would He use His influence to keep the Reagan administration at the helm in this crisis?

Many of you have

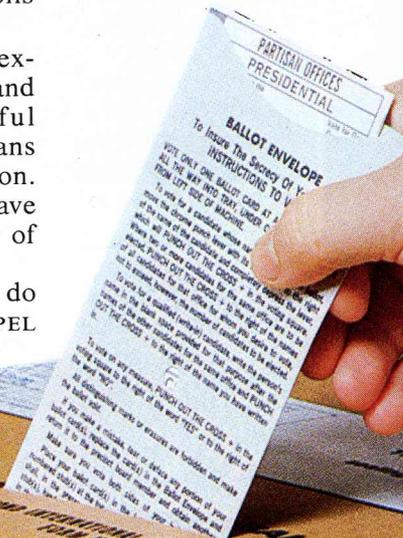


Photo by G. A. Belluche, Jr.; props courtesy Sequoia Pacific Systems Corporation

**OFFICIAL
BALLOT**

before

undoubtedly read the book *In His Steps* by Dr. Charles M. Sheldon. It has been one of the all-time best-sellers. It is the story of an entire congregation that set out to do, in all circumstances daily, just as Jesus would do — to “follow His steps,” as we are admonished by Peter.

My only criticism of the book is that its characters, like most people who think they follow Jesus, acted as they *supposed* Jesus would act instead of studying the Bible to find out how He did act.

The apostle Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*” (Galatians 2:20, Authorized Version). He admonished, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

A person is not really a Christian unless he follows Christ — acts as Christ would act — unless Christ is living His life in him.

What would Jesus do in this crucial election?

To understand what Jesus would do we must take a quick overview of the governments of this world from its foundation until now. This is necessary for a true perspective. We are prone to view politics, government and world events from the standpoint of this present world.

How it all started

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). In rulership over this earth God sent a cherub who sealed up the sum total of perfection, wisdom and beauty. His throne was in Eden. He was ruler over a peaceful world populated by beings superior to humans — spirit beings called angels (Ezekiel 28:12-15).

But as this brilliant shining

“star of the dawn” — Lucifer — contemplated his glory, pride lifted him up, ambition seized him and suddenly he became dissatisfied with a rulership limited to one single planet.

He became jealous of God, set his heart to rival the eternal Creator himself and left this planet in a war of conquest, in which a third of the angels followed him,

doomed it to physical destruction once again by fire — so the sins of the angels caused the face of the earth to suffer great violence, and it *became* chaotic, in confusion, waste and empty (Genesis 1:2).

First chance at world rule

Then in six days God Almighty brought order out of chaos,



From flag-waving partisans to angry protesters, the U.S. election campaign is in full swing. Worldwide, leaders face the all-important issue of human survival!

created the present vegetable and animal life and created upon earth a new race, the race of human mortals.

Adam was given rule over the lower species — animals. Lucifer, a cherub, had been given rule over angels. But, while humans were made a little lower in status than angels, they were made in the image of God with possibilities, through conversion, of being born of God and *changed* into immortal spirit beings, higher in order than angels.

In the Garden of Eden was the tree of life, symbolic of the Holy Spirit of God Himself, by which Adam could have been raised to this higher immortal and divine level.

First, Adam was given opportunity to qualify as **WORLD RULER**. He could have become successor to the former Lucifer, now renamed *Satan* (meaning “adversary, rival, aggressor”). Adam was put to the test to

attempting to conquer and rule the universe (Isaiah 14:12-15, Revelation 12:4).

But he was cast back down to earth in defeat, disqualified even as earth ruler, *though not to be dethroned until a successor was both qualified and inaugurated into office.*

Just as the sins of the antediluvian world brought physical destruction to the earth by the Flood — just as the fornication of Sodom and Gomorrah brought physical destruction and chaos to those cities by fire — just as the sins of the present evil world have

determine whether he would obey God and prove able to RULE with God's laws.

In the fateful test with Satan, Adam disobeyed God, accepted the rule of Satan over him — yielded to human pride, lust and greed.

Thus he placed himself and his children under the rule of Satan. He failed to overthrow Satan. He failed to prove he could obey God and carry out God's government over those God should have placed under him.

Had Adam obeyed God and proved able to defeat Satan in this test, he could have partaken of the tree of LIFE — he would have been begotten of GOD, later BORN

influence, temptation and deception, over the world.

How our present system started

Just how Satan manipulated human mortals in the ways of government on earth during the first 1,600 or 1,700 years, there is no historic record. We know merely that with very few exceptions, humans under Satan's invisible sway followed the course of human passions, the wickedness of man was great on the earth and God destroyed all but eight souls by the Flood.

Noah and his descendants should have learned their lesson, but they didn't.

people into a system of human government by which man ruled over man contrary to the principles established by God.

Such government never could be good or bring blessings to humanity, but the Eternal purposed to permit man to learn that lesson by hard experiences. We are learning it still, and haven't learned it yet.

Now notice how the present world's society became organized. Nimrod organized the present world's first government — the city of BABYLON. Later he organized Nineveh and other cities. He instituted the system of regimentation, whereby one or a few at the top, by directing their efforts, profit from the sweat and labor of others.

Thus the BABYLONISH system of government was started. Soon there were many cities, each ruled by a king.

Then an ambitious king, swayed by Satan's philosophy, seeking more worlds to conquer, organized a portion of his manpower into a fighting force and by aggression ruled over adjoining cities. Thus nations were born, and then empires.

This BABYLONISH principle of government, intertwined with economic manipulation, has ruled the world ever since. It has ruled under various forms — whether called oligarchy, monarchy, dictatorship, autocracy, democracy, communism or Naziism — but it's the same old BABYLONISH PRINCIPLE under slightly different modes of administration.

And this is the origin of what we call CIVILIZATION. Its forms of administration have undergone change, but its basic principle has remained the same — competition and strife based upon greed and vanity.

Regardless of the form in



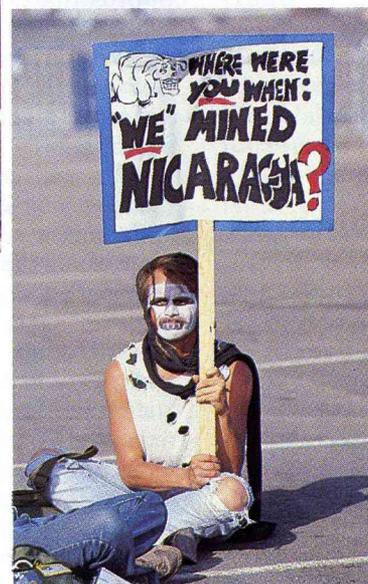
of God, *changed* from mortal human to immortal and divine God, of the very Family — the KINGDOM — OF GOD! All earth's mortals, as his children, would have been under his rule. He would have become world ruler forever! But Adam placed himself and his children UNDER THE RULE OF SATAN.

Adam was driven from the Garden of Eden lest he take of the tree of life and gain immortality (Genesis 3:22). Thus he never received immortality, which is the gift of God by and through His Holy Spirit.

Satan thus retained his rulership, through invisible sway of

This troubled world definitely is not of God's making! Should Christians try to improve conditions through political processes? What would Jesus do?

Satan found in one of the great-grandsons of Noah, Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, a very able and powerful man who could be used politically. Through Satan's influence, instilling great ambition through greed and pride, this Nimrod organized the



which it appears, it is a system based upon exploitation of the people, aggression, regimentation, delusion and deception. And the entire system is founded on the idea of huddling people together in crowded *cities*.

Since it is the system of strife and competition, each of the four phases of this civilization — political, economic, religious and social — has striven contantly to dominate and rule.

In ancient Rome the politicians ruled over the church, business and society. Then after A.D. 554, *the church ruled over* the state, business and society. In America, where we are supposed to rule ourselves, it has been a constant struggle for dominance between big business and the politicians.

In Russia today a small group of atheistic Marxists have set up a dictatorship of the proletariat inducing the laboring class to support this dictatorship for the benefit of this one class.

But regardless of the particular form of administration, this CIVILIZATION that holds the entire world in its organized grip today is the same old BABYLONISH SYSTEM started at the original BABYLON by Nimrod!

Babylon means "CONFUSION." Competition and strife have produced confusion in the world. *And God is not the author of confusion* (I Corinthians 14:33).

Should Christians strive to make this a BETTER WORLD?

Now we come to the reason for needing a true perspective.

Most churchmen today, viewing everything from the perspective of THIS WORLD TODAY, blindly assume this is God's world. They see certain forces of evil in it, and these they feel they must oppose. They see the Christian duty to be that of working to make this a better world.

That concept is a wrong viewpoint altogether.

This is *not* a world of God's making. *This is SATAN'S world!* Satan is the invisible god of this world. He is the author of its organization, its basic philoso-

phies, its systems of government, business, society — *yes*, and RELIGIONS!

This thing we boast of as CIVILIZATION is, in actual fact, Satan's handiwork, not God's! Strange as it may seem, that is true! *All nations* — not just the heathen powers, but all nations, *including ours* — are DECEIVED, swayed, led, by Satan (Revelation 12:9, 18:3, 20:2-3). The Bible speaks of this world as "this present EVIL WORLD" (Galatians 1:4, AV).

Why Jesus Christ came!

Into such a world, in His own due time, God sent forth His own Son, born of the human virgin Mary.

WHY did Jesus come? To get into politics, to strive against the forces of evil in this world, to make this a better world for humanity to live in?

WHAT was His message? Certainly NOT a Gospel merely about Himself — a Gospel of merely accepting Him and then, as part of this world, helping to make it better!

When Jesus reached the approximate age of 30 He was baptized and anointed with the Holy Spirit as the Christ. But before He preached a word — before He could even enter upon His ministry — He, like the first Adam, had to meet Satan in the greatest contest in all eternity!

It was a contest for the rulership of all the earth. Jesus Christ met and conquered Satan by the Word of God. Satan, like his ministers today, quoted Scripture, but he twisted and perverted its meaning. Jesus quoted Scripture, accepted it to mean what it says, overcame Satan by *obeying* it!

Jesus withstood Satan's temptations, rejected his deceptions, refused to obey him, conquered him by *obeying* GOD! Then He *commanded* Satan, "Away with you!" — and the devil obeyed and slunk away!

Then and there Jesus Christ *qualified* to succeed Satan as RULER OVER ALL THE EARTH! But the time had not yet come for Him to be inaugurated into

office. First, He had to return to the throne of God and receive God's official authorization.

God had allotted ONE MILLENNIAL WEEK — that is, a period of seven thousand-year "days" — for the accomplishment of His divine PURPOSE in humanity on this earth. That divine purpose is the creation of righteous, spiritual sons of God.

God allotted the first *six* of these thousand-year periods for Satan's labor of deceiving the human race — 6,000 years in which man is permitted, if he chooses, to suffer from the "labor" of sin. When the first Adam failed to depose Satan, God extended the duration of Satan's dominion over the earth for 6,000 years. This was necessary for the accomplishment of God's great purpose.

Then, as "in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:17), even so in the seventh millennium, humanity is to "rest" from sin and those converted are to enter into God's spiritual rest. In this coming Millennium, Satan shall not do *any work* — that is, his work of deceiving the world!

Then Jesus will return to earth, this time in all His power and glory as KING of kings and LORD of lords.

But, in God's great plan, He has purposed that Jesus shall rule by and through many saints then made immortal. They shall form the world-ruling kingdom — the KINGDOM OF GOD — that shall rule over all the mortal nations on earth. Time had to be allowed for their conversion.

Jesus preached GOVERNMENT

So, after meeting and conquering Satan, Jesus devoted three and a half years to teaching His Gospel to His disciples.

His Gospel — the only true Gospel of Jesus Christ — is not what most people think today. Few have heard it, today!

It was, and is, a Gospel of good government! The word *gospel* (Continued on page 23)

What the World Needs Now Is HOPE!

Often underemphasized in the lives of many, hope is a tremendous spiritual gift at work in all who will be in God's coming Kingdom.

By James P. Lichtenstein

The Bible speaks of three great fruits of God's Holy Spirit: faith, hope and love (I Corinthians 13:13). Most Christians readily and easily understand that love, called the greatest of these gifts, and faith are essential for salvation.

But what about hope? What is hope, even?

Given equal rank with love and faith, hope stands as one of the most important spiritual gifts, to be sought after and exercised by every one of God's people.

What is hope?

Let's understand first what hope is *not*. It is not watered-down faith.

In everyday conversation, people often say *hope* when they mean *wish*. "Let's hope it all works out for the best" sometimes means the person is afraid it won't! Hoping is not wishing. Hope is confident, powerful, bold. Hope is not afraid. Hope casts out fear and doubt.

To hope means to look forward

to with confidence of fulfillment, to expect with desire.

There is nothing weak in true Christian hope. It is positive, assured, looking ahead to the future. Hope lifts a person's thoughts beyond the immediate trials and problems of the present. Hope sees God's plan at work — God producing His character in us, by what we experience, to qualify us for eternal life.

A Christian filled with hope has zeal and purpose. He is alive with spiritual energy to keep overcoming and growing no matter what negative factors and influences are at work to discourage and frustrate his progress toward God's Kingdom. Paul goes so far as to say, "For we are saved by hope" (Romans 8:24, Authorized Version)!

Hope makes the difference

Every Christian fights a daily and lifelong spiritual battle against sin. Even the apostle Paul, a deeply converted Christian, was frustrated by his own personal failure to measure up to the goal of spiritual perfection that is in Jesus Christ.

Paul cried out, "For I know

that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find" (verse 18).

Certainly you, too, have been overwhelmed at times by physical pulls, thoughts and attitudes you knew were contrary to God's perfect law of love. Yet you were unable to resist their power. You may even have feared losing salvation because of your inability to root sin completely from your life. The thought of sin is abhorrent, but its pull on our flesh is strong.

All Christians might well echo Paul's insightful words: "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin" (verse 14).

As long as we live, the battle against sin rages. It is our mortal enemy. Toward the end of his long life and ministry, the apostle John instructed, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8).

Since no Christian, apart from Jesus Christ, God's own Son in the flesh, ever fully conquered sin, what separates those who

qualify for eternal life from those who do not?

God led Paul to describe the problems common to all Christians. He also inspired Paul to reveal the way out of them. We are to undergo a transformation of character by the power of God's Holy Spirit working within our minds.

A Christian must completely repent of past sins, surrender to God, be baptized in water and by the laying on of hands by God's true ministers receive the Holy Spirit.

Once begotten by God's Spirit, the Christian begins a life dedicated to growth and overcoming, developing God's character. Here lies our hope for the future. Paul tells us, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13). This is God's promise to us!

God the Father places His Holy Spirit in the mind of each newly converted believer to grant him power over sin, in order that He may develop His own character in us. Jesus Christ, our Savior, paid the penalty of death because of sin for us so we might be born into the God Family and receive everlasting life at His Second Coming (Romans 6:23).

This is the very purpose for our being alive, and the foundation of our hope for the future! "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14). No Christian is yet born into God's Family, but is an heir, an inheritor of the promise. True Christians are part of the firstfruits of God's Family, to be born when Jesus Christ returns.

What will it take for you to be a part of this glorious future hope? More, perhaps, than anything else the realization that God earnestly intends and desires that *you* be in His Kingdom. God wants it for you (I Peter 1:3-5)!

Hopelessness and fear

Many of God's people, though they realize God's Kingdom will be set up on earth and even desire to be a part of it, nevertheless

despair of receiving eternal life. They are overcome by fear and self-doubt.

These hopeless attitudes come from Satan and his demons, who know the Kingdom is coming and have no hope. For them Jesus Christ's return will be a time of judgment for their sins of rebellion. James writes: "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble!" (James 2:19).

The nature of Satan and the demons is set. They will not change and submit to God's direction in their lives. They are archenemies and rebels. On the other hand, human beings, caught by sin because of weakness or ignorance, have hope.

Some of those listening to Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost had called out just short weeks before for the death of Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. When convicted of their sin, they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). They were afraid and hopeless. Then Peter preached hope through the repentance of sins and the mercy of God (verses 38-40):

God created all people to qualify for His Family (I Timothy 2:4). When a person who is given this opportunity by God's calling fails to act on this hope, he becomes like the individual described in the parable of the talents, who refused to produce with the one talent given to him. In an attempt to justify his failure, he replied, "And I was afraid" (Matthew 25:25). He possessed no vision for the future. He lost out.

No matter what the obstacles, the apostle Paul was not afraid. He well understood it was God's will that he be in the Kingdom, and he always had his mind on that goal: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32).

For nearly 6,000 years God the

Father and Jesus Christ have endured the sins and rebellion of mankind against God's government and way of life. Soon God's deliverance to this earth will come. As Romans 8:21 predicts, "Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Paul concludes the powerfully written Romans 8, which might well be called the "hope chapter" of the Bible (just as I Corinthians 13 is often referred to as the "love chapter" and Hebrews 11 as the "faith chapter"), with this: "For 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 created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

How does hope grow?

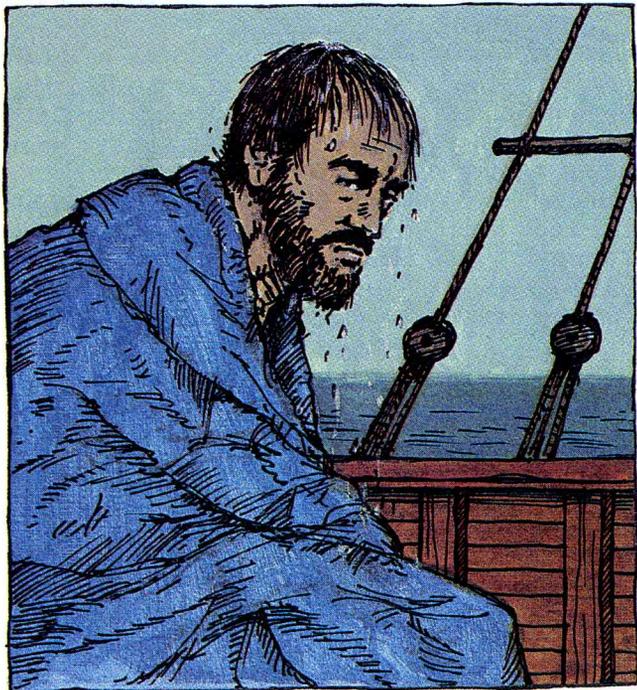
Like all the other fruits of the Holy Spirit, hope is a gift from God that increases directly as a Christian dedicates his life to God. By a life of prayer, diligent study of God's Word and living always with eyes set on the goal of God's Kingdom first and foremost, hope will grow.

The apostle John describes what knowing our future should do to inspire us to overcome: "Beloved, now we are the children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (I John 3:2-3).

The time is drawing near for the return of Jesus Christ, when the parable of the talents will have an actual fulfillment. May we all set our sights clearly on the Kingdom and be among those to whom our Lord says: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:21). □

His Best Wasn't Good Enough

He'd done it again. As he sat cold and shivering in the boat, he could sense his companions exchanging smug looks and mocking smiles. Why, he thought miserably, does it always have to be me?



He had meant well — he always meant well. He loved and admired Jesus, and he wanted to be like Him in every way.

Every way. So on that stormy night when he had seen Jesus walking on the sea, Peter had wanted to do it, too.

At first he and his companions had been terrified at the sight of the lone figure striding across the waves, miles from shore. They

thought it was a ghost. Then a familiar voice rang out, "Don't be afraid, it's me."

That's Jesus' voice, thought Peter. But how could it be Him? They had left Him on the shore hours before. He'd asked them earlier to take the boat across to Capernaum and had said that He would meet them later.

They had seen Him perform many wonderful things. But surely even Jesus couldn't walk across a storm-tossed sea, could He? Well, there was one way to find out.

"Lord, if it is really You, tell me to come to You across the water," Peter called out.

The reply from Jesus? "Come on, then."

It was Jesus.

Without one moment of hesitation, Peter climbed over the side of the boat. The other disciples looked on incredulously. They were accustomed to Peter's impulsiveness, but this beat everything.

Peter, however, was full of confidence. With his eyes fixed on Jesus, he took a step away from the side of the boat.

The water was cold and the heaving waves bounced him about — but he didn't sink. He took another step, and then another, and then began to stride out con-

fidently. He forgot the wind and the waves. He was filled with exhilaration.

He, Peter the fisherman, the son of Jonah, the friend and disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, was actually walking on water!

Failed again

Peter glanced over his shoulder. The boat was several yards away now, almost out of sight in the gloom. Jesus was still walking toward him, but He, too, was a long way off. The wind seemed to have increased, and the waves were getting higher.

Suddenly it hit Peter: What am I doing? I can't do this. His brash confidence ebbed away, and to his horror he began to sink into the cold, green sea.

Peter thrashed around trying to stay afloat, but he felt himself sinking deeper into the water. Desperately he called out: "Help! Help, Lord, save me!" He began to panic as he felt himself going under.

And then he felt a hand grip his, and strong arms drew him out of the water. Jesus held Peter for a moment, allowing him to catch his breath, and then half dragged and half carried the sputtering disciple back to the boat.

"O you of little faith," Jesus said, kindly but reproachfully, "why did you doubt?"

As soon as the two men had climbed into the boat, the wind died down and the sea became calm.

Jesus told the disciples to continue to row toward the shore, and Peter was left alone with his thoughts (Matthew 14:22-32).

What had gone wrong? He

wanted so very much to be like Jesus. Had Jesus set him up, only to see him nearly drown? He must have felt crushed, let down and discouraged.

Don't you sometimes feel that way?

You may be like Peter, utterly sincere in your desire to be like Jesus Christ. You want to follow His example in all things, and maybe you're also one of those naturally enthusiastic people who throw themselves wholeheartedly into everything. You always do your best — only to have things go wrong.

Even your best, it seems, isn't good enough.

If you're beginning to see that, you're learning an important lesson about being a real Christian — *your* best really is *not* good enough.

Human faith not enough

Some people do seem to be endowed with more natural faith than others. Peter was like that. He had the type of personality that would jump into a situation where other, more cautious people would hold back. Sometimes (more often than not, it would seem, from the stories in the gospels) it got him into trouble. But you could not accuse Peter of lacking zeal and a positive, can-do attitude about life.

Jesus appreciated that. He did not want to squash Peter's personality. Eventually He would choose him to be the leader among the original 12 apostles. But first He had to teach this enthusiastic, rather self-confident young man some important spiritual lessons.

God is certainly not against the right kind of confidence. He rewards those who do the best they can. You will see this if you read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30.

But you must always remember that even your best efforts are not going to be enough to save you. Otherwise you could be "saved by works," something the Bible clearly shows is impossible. You need something more. This

is what Peter had to learn. Maybe you do, too.

A different kind of faith

Peter had faith to step over the side of the boat. But when he began to fully appreciate the consequences of what he had done by "stepping out in faith," his own human faith broke down. Jesus showed Peter that he really only had "little faith" because he had doubted.

What Peter — even enthusiastic, faith-full Peter — needed, in addition to his own faith, was a different kind of faith, a faith that would not break down in the face of adversity.

But where could he get that kind of faith? It was not something he could somehow work up himself.

Jesus had that kind of faith. He knew that, humanly speaking, what He had to do in His life was impossible. He had to live without sinning even once, something even the most resourceful, enthusiastic, energetic, zealous human cannot do. As the prophet Jeremiah said, "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

So Jesus prayed earnestly to His Father for the faith He needed to live a life that would qualify Him to be the Savior (Hebrews 5:7-8). Jesus knew that without the faith that could come only from God, He could no more live a life free of sin than He could — well, than He could walk on water, for instance. He was flesh and blood, and his weight and the force of gravity made that impossible, too.

But Jesus did walk on the water.

Jesus had the kind of faith that could surmount impossible odds, the kind of faith that could move mountains if need be. Jesus told His disciples: "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you"

(Matthew 17:20). So when He walked across the Sea of Galilee, it was not just a stunt to impress His friends. And by letting Peter fail He wasn't just playing games with him. He wanted to teach His friend, who had so much else going for him, a valuable lesson.

Growing in faith

Peter must often have remembered what Jesus had said to him as He led him back to safety: "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Peter doubted because he lacked the kind of faith he needed to keep going. His human reasoning told him that he was in an impossible position, and that human faith, abundant though it was, couldn't sustain him.

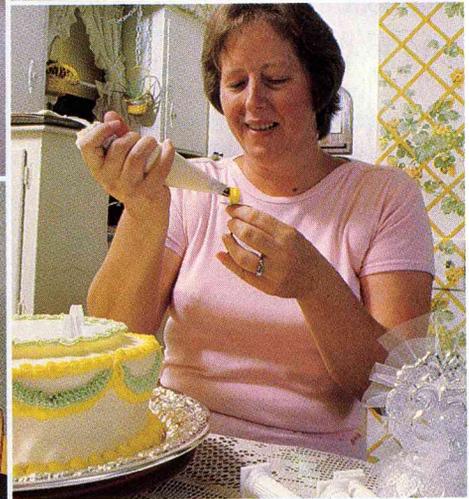
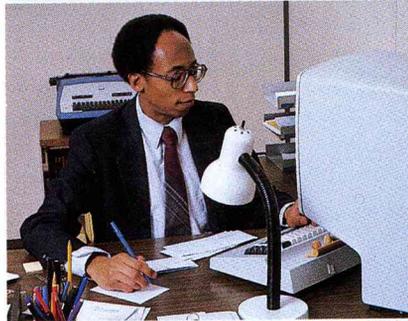
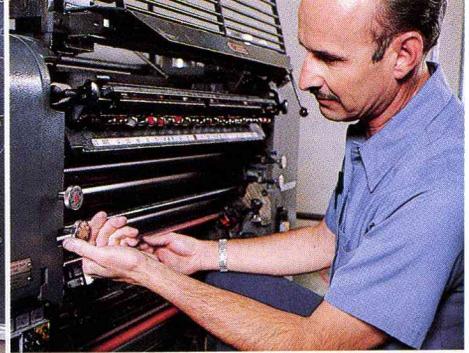
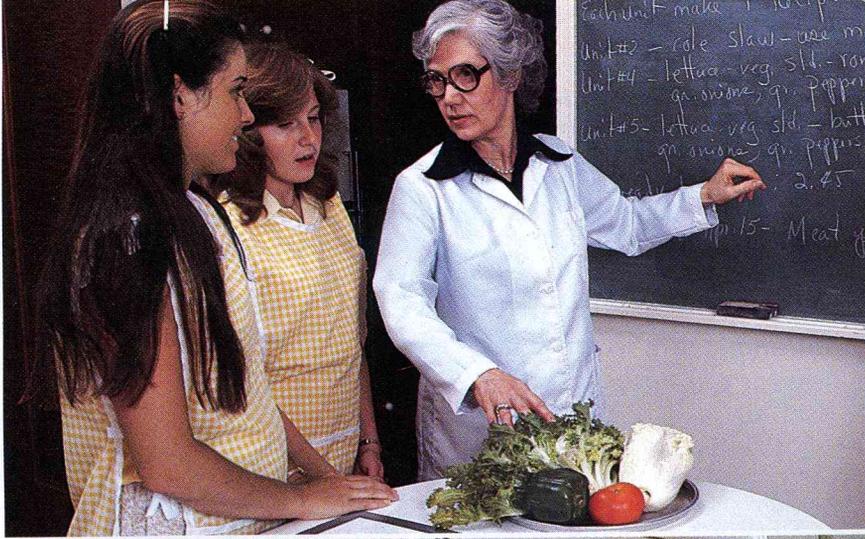
Over the years and after many more well-intentioned mistakes, Peter grew to understand this even more.

As leading apostle, he often found himself in impossible positions where his human faith and patience would have been stretched beyond the breaking point. He was often in trouble with the authorities. He was thrown in jail. He had to spend years countering the influence of false teachers, and eventually he suffered martyrdom.

But he had learned where to go to get the strength he needed. We can see from his two epistles that he had become the epitome of faith and patience.

Those early years of the Church must have taxed even Peter's energy and enthusiasm to the utmost. God used Peter's strong personality and leadership to encourage the Church through some stormy times — times that threatened to drown the faith of others.

The man who nearly drowned in the Sea of Galilee had learned, though, that *his* best was not good enough. He had learned to go to God, to seek that kind of faith that only God can give: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). And that made all the difference. □



THE WORK ETHIC

What Is It?

Do You Have It?

As competition for available work grows, your job will increasingly depend on your work habits. Read why the work ethic is such an important quality.

By Victor Kubik

Layoffs and long-term unemployment are no longer fears for many of our readers. They are facts of life!

Even if you hold a steady job — even in these relatively good times, when employment seems to be on an upswing — you might do well to stop and

ask yourself, Is my job *secure*?

In these uncertain times, can you make yourself more attractive to an employer or improve your chances of holding on to your job?

The answer is absolutely yes!

With increasing competition for work, your job may depend more and more on your attitude toward work.

The Bible has a lot to say about the work ethic. The apostle Paul admonishes Christians, "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10).

He continued with strong words for those who wouldn't work: "For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command

Photos: Warren Watson, Nathan Faulkner, G.A. Belluche Jr., Hal Finch

and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread" (verses 11-12).

And if they didn't listen? "And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed" (verse 14).

"Go to the ant"

The book of Proverbs beautifully illustrates the work ethic:

"Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6).

What does the ant teach us? The ant, "having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest"

(verses 7-8). The ant works when no one is watching. The ant is a self-starter. It has instinctive diligence, drive, desire to work and does a job when the job needs to be done.

Humans must learn these important habits.

What employers like

Surveys show that only 10 percent of all workers who are fired lose their jobs because they can't do the tasks required. The rest lose their jobs simply because of poor work habits and personality problems.

I interviewed several employers and asked them about the work habits they liked and disliked in employees.

At the top of the list were

dependability, responsibility, enthusiasm and interest in the job. The bosses liked those who gave them a full day's work and were loyal to the company.

Employers appreciated most an employee who knew that he was hired to help his employer get a job done and beamed a positive "we can do it" attitude. He cared about his boss.

Employers liked a worker who dedicated himself to doing his best and constantly learned more about his job. Sometimes he wasn't the most experienced employee, but if he grew with his job he was valuable.

Exclaimed one manager about his workers, "I have some employees who have 10 years' experience and then I have others

Your Job and Your Ultimate Reward

By Henry Sturcke

Most of us are shocked when we begin to understand what the Bible says about our human potential.

We learn, contrary to what we may have been taught about a heavenly eternity of idleness, that God's purpose for us involves His entrusting us with rulership! We are to have responsibility on a far higher level than most of us have ever come into contact with, let alone exercised.

We learn from the parables of the pounds and the talents (Luke 19:11-27, Matthew 25:14-30) that we will receive different degrees of reward in God's Kingdom based on what we do with what we are given in this life.

And there are few activities in this life that take as much of our time as our jobs.

But it is sometimes puzzling to understand how God could be training us now for such exalted leadership. Have you ever looked at the job you do and asked yourself, "Why would God call a house painter (salesman, baker, housewife) to have a part in His Kingdom?"

Some have wondered whether they

should change from their present occupation to another that would seem more suitable for training them for the Kingdom. Since God tells us we will rule over nations (Revelation 2:26), should we try to switch from a craft or vocation, for example, to management? Since Jesus Christ speaks of giving us authority over cities (Luke 19:17, 19), should we seek experience in city government?

Just what is the relationship between our work now and our work in God's Kingdom?

Skills vs. habits

To begin to understand, let's take the example of a draftsman. Consider all the technical skills he must acquire for his job — skills such as understanding proportion and scale, the ability to visualize a three-dimensional shape and represent it in two-dimensional drawings, understanding principles of design and proper drawing techniques and lettering styles.

How could these skills be preparing him for a high position of governing and ruling people, judging them

and helping to solve their problems in the Millennium?

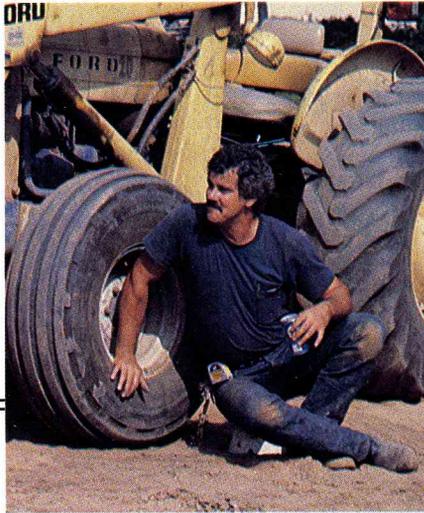
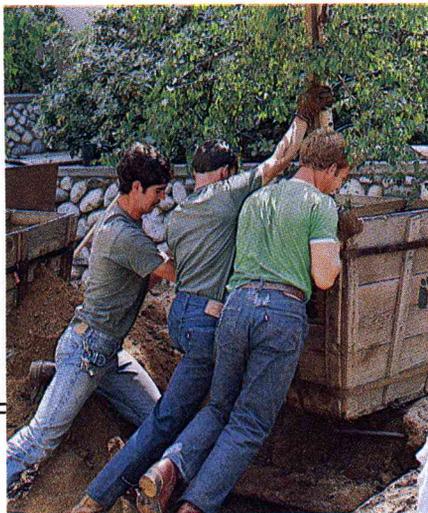
He will probably use these specific technical skills little. A draftsman might conclude that his job doesn't have much to do with what he will be doing for all eternity.

But now let's look at some of the less technical aspects of a draftsman's job. How does he manage his time? Does he meet his deadlines? Does he strive to meet the needs of his clients? Can he work with the carpenters, who must construct buildings based on his drawings? Is he loyal to his employer? Is he motivated, diligent and alert?

When we analyze his job in that way — studying not his technical job skills, but his work habits and skills in human relations — we can see that much of what a draftsman is learning today will be excellent training for his life as a future God and ruler.

Your work skills may someday be obsolete. But not so with your work habits and human relations skills! They're a part of your character. They show not only how you do your

The reason for developing good work habits is because work is such an important part of God's nature. As Christians we have a duty to work, not only in this life, but also in the world tomorrow.



Photos: Joe Martire, Hal Finch

present job, but how you are likely to do any future job, including your responsibilities in God's Kingdom.

Let's understand: The ability to write a computer program is a technical work skill, but the ability to carry out explicit, detailed instructions is a work habit.

The ability to operate a chain saw is a technical work skill, but the ability to work for long periods without supervision is a work habit.

Because they are part of character, our work habits are highly important to God. But they are also important to employers now.

Employment counselors stress that while work content skills may determine whether you'll be hired for a certain job, it's primarily your work habits that will determine whether you keep it.

There's another important difference between technical work skills and work habits: Work skills can be learned by practice or study. However, work habits, as part of our character, are part of who and what we are. They change only through diligent effort to overcome, sometimes over long periods.

The foundation of good work habits

Could your work habits use a refresher course? The proper place to start improving them is with the

Bible. This book, the foundation of all knowledge, has much to say about good work habits.

In Colossians 3:22, we're told to obey our masters in all things. One trait on which God will judge us is whether we can carry out instructions on the job.

This verse continues, "Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God." We've all seen those who can produce quality work quickly — but only when the foreman or boss is watching, or when a promotion or salary increase is at stake. Are we the same?

Verse 23 adds: "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." We shouldn't let our boss's shortcomings distract us from the understanding of this verse — that our real boss is, and always will be, Jesus Christ. God knows we won't work any differently as members of His Family than we do now. An alert, energetic approach is a work habit we can use in any occupation.

Are good work habits important solely for those with jobs outside the home? What about homemakers?

Proverbs 31 describes the virtuous woman. It tells us much about her work habits. This woman is trustworthy, industrious, generous, compassionate and wise. We aren't told how she did her laundry — that's a tech-

who have repeated their first year's experience 10 times!"

Employers agreed that, in this age of rapidly developing technology, workers who best adjust to changes in their jobs — learning new procedures quickly and willingly and adapting to new machines such as computers — will be most secure in their jobs.

Learning and growing in knowledge is a principle taught in Scripture (II Peter 3:18).

Another habit employers desired in employees was willingness to work until the job got done and making every effort to get it done on time.

This is how Jesus Christ worked. "My food," He said, "is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work"

nical skill that has changed over the centuries. Her work habits, though, are still valuable for us to emulate.

Homemakers might analyze their tasks in the light of the work habits they need to excel. No household I know of just magically falls into order each week. Its management takes forethought, organization, perseverance and flexibility.

Looking for work

What if you are now unemployed? Does that make it impossible for you to qualify for a reward? Not at all. You may not realize it, but if you are unemployed, you have a full-time job: looking for work!

Finding a job in today's tight job market requires imagination, resourcefulness and, above all, constant effort — in other words, the same traits necessary to perform well once you have a job.

God looks quite closely at our performance on the job as a leading indicator of how we will perform for all eternity.

Few have the opportunity King David of Israel had — to qualify for his position in God's Kingdom by doing that same job in this life. Yet, remember the great reward given to the one who had proven faithful in little (Luke 19:17)?

Every day on the job, we reveal to God how we would handle any responsibilities in His Kingdom. Whatever our job, career or occupation, let's work at it to qualify for an abundant reward! □

(John 4:34). Of God the Father, the apostle Paul says, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it" (Philippians 1:6).

Consider: If you expressed this attitude of diligence and loyal perseverance on the job, you could make yourself almost indispensable.

Every employer I talked to said that if he had to lay off one of two workers doing the same job, he would keep the one who had the better work attitude over the one with greater experience.

Employers also considered it important that an employee cooperate with and be liked by other employees. They appreciated one who brought up solid suggestions for improvement at the right place and time and who followed company rules.

Finally, employers said good grooming, posture and appropriate, clean dress were telltale indicators of how seriously their employees took their jobs.

... And what they don't like

Employers were irritated by an employee who "dragged his feet," putting forth only the minimum effort required when the boss knew the person could do a lot better. "As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him" (Proverbs 10:26).

Bosses said they were also irked by an employee who always wanted to do the job his own way. One employer said he finally fired an arrogant worker who always uttered some rebuttal whenever told to do something. The man constantly let the boss know that he thought he knew more than the boss.

Employers also said they disliked someone who brought his personal problems to work. This person's mind wasn't on his job. If he talked to others too much during working hours, he would hinder their production, too.

When hiring for a particularly responsible position, one employer said the first question he asked was, "Are you a good fami-

ly man?" He knew from years of experience that one who had a stable family life did better work.

Workers who constantly get up for coffee tell the boss that their minds aren't on their work. Many cups of coffee lead to rest room trips that further disrupt production. Employers also expressed dissatisfaction with employees who acted differently when the boss noticed them, always used up every minute of their sick time, concerned themselves with matters that were none of their business, didn't use common sense, talked to other employees excessively on the job and had alcohol or other drug problems.

The work ethic

Many people consider work as the undesirable time period between pleasure and leisure. Recreation and relaxation excite them. Work does not.

Because many people simply haven't been taught how to work, when they enter the labor market, they have trouble holding a job. They make excuses about why one job isn't working out or why another doesn't fit them.

One such person managed to drift through 50 jobs in a 10-year span! He always seemed to have something "come up," "happen" or "not work out" on his jobs.

Lazy people often explain their hard luck with the greatest of skill. "The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly," affirms Proverbs 26:16.

Solomon records some preposterous excuses for not working. For instance, "The slothful man says, 'There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!'" (Proverbs 22:13).

Employers often lament that, although many want jobs, few actually want to work. But did you know that the most important reason for work is not to earn money?

The most important reason for working and for developing good work habits is because work is so much a part of God's nature.

Jesus Christ said, "My Father

is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working" (John 5:17, New International Version). He restates His dedication to work in John 9:4: "I must work the works of Him who sent Me."

We are created in God's image — not only in His appearance but, as we submit to Him, in His nature and character. The work ethic — the desire, the love for, the satisfaction gained from producing and creating — needs to be part of our nature, just as it is part of God's nature.

Work will never end

As Christians we have a duty to work, not only in this life, but in the future as well. When Jesus Christ returns, this earth will have to be restored. Someone will have to make the deserts blossom as the rose (Isaiah 35:1). Cities will have to be rebuilt and managed. Prophecy shows that government, religion and education will be properly established. We won't just be watching Jesus do all that. We'll be helping Him.

Then we will continue to expand God's Kingdom forever (Luke 1:33, Daniel 7:27). Indeed, we will look forward to imaginative, stimulating, challenging work for all eternity.

We will be God — producing, creating, ruling and sharing the same exhilaration God expressed at the creation of the heavens and the earth. God has definitely not promised us an eternity in retirement, lounging in idleness and ease, of laziness and slacking off, of boredom and uselessness.

For more information on this tremendous future — on *your* future — request our free booklets *Your Awesome Potential — How Religion Has Deceived You* and *The Wonderful World Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like*.

Let's learn how to work and how to love work. We can build character and make our lives richer, fuller and happier by applying Solomon's admonition: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). □

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Should Christians be baptized on behalf of dead friends and relatives who died unbaptized? Did Paul teach baptism for the dead?

The practice of being baptized for unconverted friends is founded on a misinterpretation of I Corinthians 15:29: "Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?"

The inspired New Testament Church did not practice this custom, nor did the apostle Paul teach it. Baptism for the dead was introduced into the professing Christian world about A.D. 150 by the heretic Marcion.

Before a person may be baptized, he must first repent (Acts 2:38) and believe (Mark 16:16, Acts 16:31, 33). The dead are not able to repent or believe — they know nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5). The dead have no hope until the resurrection!

Baptism is for the living. It is a symbol whereby the living acknowledge their sins, figuratively die with Jesus Christ in a watery grave and rise in hope of a new life through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:4).

Baptism is also a symbol of the resurrection. To rise up out of the watery grave is to acknowledge belief in the resurrection of the dead (Romans 6). To surrender one's life to God, to crucify the self, to be baptized — all this is foolish unless there is a resurrection. Paul said, "If the dead do not rise, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (I Corinthians 15:32).

Now we are ready to understand I Corinthians 15:29.

The subject of the entire 15th chapter of I Corinthians is the resurrection. As one proof of the resurrection, Paul cites the example of those who are baptized to symbolize their hope in the resurrection. Why were they baptized if the dead don't rise? But the

verse is not correctly translated from the original inspired Greek. Paul is not talking about being baptized *in place of* the dead or *on behalf of* the dead or *for* the dead.

The Greek word translated "for" is *huper*. It has several meanings: "above, over, instead of, for the realization of, for the hope of." The context determines the meaning of the word.

Turn to Philippians 2:13, Authorized Version, for example. Paul here declares, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do *of* his good pleasure." The Greek word translated "of" in this verse is *huper*, the same word used in I Corinthians 15:29.

In Philippians 2:13, *huper* cannot mean "instead of." It would be senseless to say, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do *instead of* his good pleasure." The proper translation of Philippians 2:13 is "God . . . worketh in you both to will and to do *for the realization of* his good pleasure."

And what is God's "good pleasure"? "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," said Jesus (Luke 12:32). God works in us *in the hope of* giving us His Kingdom.

Now turn to I Corinthians 15:29. Here the Greek word *huper*, according to context, should be translated "for the hope of": "Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized *for the hope of* the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized *for the hope of* the dead?"

What is the hope of the dead? The resurrection! Paul is writing about baptism, which illustrates the hope of the resurrection. Baptism — arising out of a watery grave — is a symbol of the hope of the dead, the hope of the resurrection. This verse has nothing to do with the false doctrine of baptism on behalf of the unbaptized dead.

Why did Jesus Christ have to suffer to become perfect, since He never sinned?

Most people have no idea what perfection is.

Jesus Christ, before He became a man, was God. He was perfect character. When He became flesh, His mind became subject to the pulls and temptations of His flesh. But He never yielded to temptation.

Jesus learned what it meant to become perfect in the flesh by calling upon the power of God for help. By the power of the Holy Spirit He resisted every trial and temptation.

Perfection of character is a day-by-day struggle. It was this experience of maintaining perfection of character that Jesus Christ went through in the human flesh.

Jesus qualified to become our great High Priest through His experiences as a human. In order to effectively minister to our needs in this office, Jesus experienced fiery tests of faith (I Peter 1:7), but He endured and overcame. And Jesus can empathize with us in helping us to overcome. He knows what we are going through (Hebrews 4:14-16)!

Jesus Christ never suffered for His own sins. But He *did* suffer for sins — ours!

The full penalty of our sins was put upon Him "who committed no sin" (I Peter 2:21-24). Jesus Christ knows what it is like to suffer for sin. He knows what it is like to be forsaken by almighty God — He was "cut off" in our stead (Matthew 27:46). He paid for our sins so that we can turn to God for forgiveness when we repent of our sins.

Jesus Christ never sinned, never forsook God's commandments, never allowed wrong attitudes to enter His mind. He learned perfection — resisted temptation — no matter what trial or test came His way, even to enduring the brutal death of crucifixion. □

Why So Many Say “I Don’t Understand the Bible!”

The Bible, the world’s all-time best-seller, has been translated into more than 1,400 languages. Yet the Bible has been called “the book nobody knows.” There is a very basic reason why!

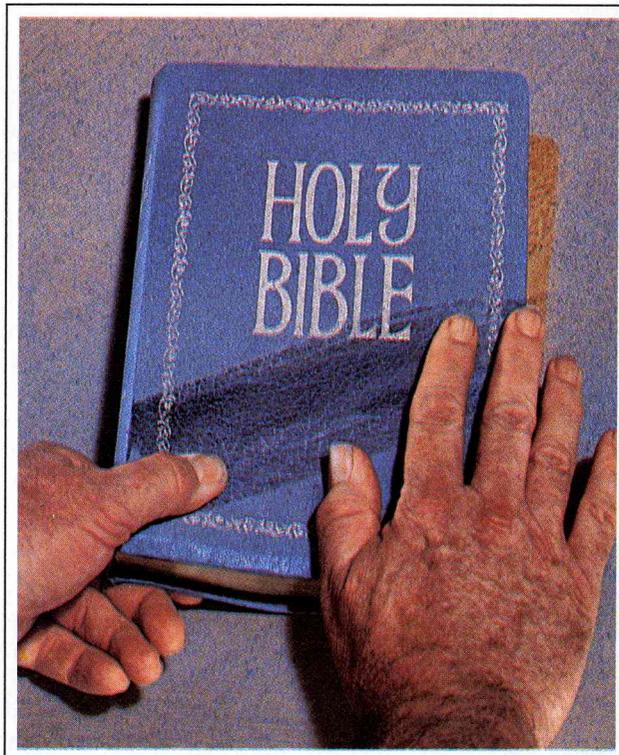
By Richard H. Sedliacik

Here is an eye-opening example of the appalling ignorance of the Bible among most professing Christians today, as related by a startled newspaper reporter:

“Some months ago, a Protestant pastor administered a Bible quiz to his congregation. The questions were very simple. Anyone with a general knowledge of the Bible should have been able to answer all of them easily.

“The results staggered the pastor. Only five percent of his flock made a commendable grade on the test. Fifteen percent failed to give a single correct answer. Sixty percent were unable to name the four gospels. Seventy-five percent could not identify Calvary (Golgotha) as the place where Jesus was crucified.

“Some congregations might do better than that,” continued the reporter, “but not many. The vast



majority of Americans today are Bible illiterates. They simply have never read the book which they profess to regard as the ‘Word of God.’”

The newspaper reporter went on to explain why most professing Christians do not read or study the Bible.

“A great many people have turned away from the Bible because, when they do try to read

it, they find they cannot understand it. . . . To the modern reader, it has a remote and antiquarian flavor. It is likely to leave him with the impression the Bible is an ancient history book that has no real relevance to his life here and now.”

Have you had this impression? Have you tried to read the Bible, only to throw up your hands and say, “I can’t understand it”?

Hallmark of our times

Paradoxically, this biblical ignorance is considered respectable today.

“It is one of the curious phenomena of modern times,” comments J.B.

Phillips in *The Young Church in Action*, “that it is considered perfectly respectable to be abysmally ignorant of the Christian faith. Men and women who would be deeply ashamed of having their ignorance exposed in matters of poetry, music or painting, for example, are not in the least perturbed to be found ignorant of the New Testament.”

And so the Bible has become

Photo by Hal Finch

little more than an obsolete book which millions claim to believe, but few actually read, study or understand.

What are the underlying reasons for such widespread lack of understanding? Why aren't people ashamed of not knowing what's contained in their Bibles?

How some theologians view the Bible

You might expect atheists and agnostics to deny the divine origin and purpose of the Bible. But would you expect that some of today's leading ministers and theologians are foremost among the critics of the Bible?

One such minister of a large church denomination said: "No mainstream Christian church accepts the Bible as the literal interpretation of the Word of God. Some of it is folklore, some legend, some tribal history."

How does he know? Answer: He doesn't! He has merely assumed as true the erroneous theories and hypotheses taught today in the seminaries and graduate schools of theology.

Listen to these words from another well-known minister: "We know now that every idea in the Bible started from primitive and childlike origins." He said it is an "impossible attempt to harmonize the Bible with itself, to make it speak with unanimous voice, to resolve its conflicts and contradictions."

What a paradox! This man was looked up to as a minister of God. Yet he attempted to discredit the very Book he was supposed to uphold and teach.

In the introduction to a well-known modern version of the Bible, the translator claims that many books of the Bible are "notes by disciples, worked up into literary papers which have been repeatedly edited, sometimes by pious collectors."

This learned scholar thought that the earlier portions of the Bible stemmed from "the natural desire to gather up the primitive traditions of the people."

Still another theologian summed up the modern trend this

way: "We must take the Bible seriously, but not literally."

Certainly statements such as these by well-known ministers, theologians and Bible scholars have directly discouraged many from trying to read and understand the Bible. What else could you expect the average person to think about the Bible when men looked up to as biblical specialists and experts declare it to be a pious fraud?

Most people, including church laymen and many in the clergy, have not taken the time to really look into the Bible and study it for themselves. And so most people continue to carelessly assume the Bible teaches hundreds of conflicting ideas — that it is irrational and irrelevant in our advanced age — and that the Bible is responsible for the hundreds of differing sects and denominations we find in the world today.

Nothing could be further from the truth!

What is the Bible?

The Bible is God's revelation of knowledge that humans are unable to discover for themselves.

For example: God did not directly reveal the laws of physics in the Bible. He equipped man with the powers and abilities to discover these laws for himself.

But man has not been able to discover what he is, on the other hand, and why he was put here on earth — whether there is a real purpose for human life and what that purpose is. Man has not been able to discover the true way to peace, happiness, abundant well-being and real success. The Bible reveals this knowledge!

The Bible is God's instruction manual to show His supreme physical creation how to live. The Bible is the foundation of knowledge! It gives the true approach to the acquisition of knowledge in the fields of history, education, psychology, sociology and health. It reveals basic principles concerning business, science, the arts, law, government, philosophy and religion. The Bible also

explains the meaning of the chaotic times in which we live. And it shows us how peace, prosperity, success and happiness are coming to all the world — in our lifetime!

People could begin to understand the Bible if they were really willing to let it teach them, and if they would accept it for what it says. The Bible is plain and simple. It means exactly what it says. If we take it as it is, letting it interpret itself, it makes real sense.

You can understand it

For three full decades now, the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course has been helping hundreds of thousands to become biblical literates. This unique course has led more than one-and-one-half million students in almost every nation on earth to a greater knowledge and understanding of the most-misunderstood book in the world.

This course is a totally different method of Bible study. It makes the Bible easy to understand. It is dynamic, down to earth. It pulls no punches. It tells the truth straight from the Bible.

The Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course is designed to guide you through a systematic study of your own Bible, which is the only textbook you will need. It is not a study of men's ideas about the Bible, but a study of the Bible itself.

Many of the informative articles you read in the *Good News* magazine can only deal briefly with certain aspects of various subjects because of limited space. But each 16-page, beautifully illustrated, monthly lesson of this course provides ample space to present an in-depth study of each topic.

Many subjects of vital interest to you today are thoroughly explored and made clear with these lessons. They direct you step by step to the plain, simple answers in your own Bible! (The "Ministudy" on pages 19 and 20 is a sample of the method of study employed by the course.)

This course helps you find the

answers to the really big questions of life you have always wondered about.

Students from all walks of life are enrolled in the course, including ministers of religion, and are enthusiastically discovering new truth in their Bibles with the guidance of each lesson. They are learning that there is hope for the future — that there are solutions to the seemingly unsolvable problems of today. They are learning to understand Bible prophecy and the principles that lead to success, financial security and a happy, abundant life.

But perhaps you might think that a college correspondence course would be too difficult for you — that you wouldn't understand it, or that you're too old to study. If you think so, you couldn't be more wrong. This course is designed for people of all ages — for you! And it makes studying the Bible enjoyable and rewarding — the experience of a lifetime.

What our students say

Thousands of our students have written expressing their sincere appreciation for the lessons. We'd like to share with you some of those letters that show how our students are actually understanding the Bible for the first time. They are finding that the Bible is relevant to their own lives here and now. Notice the following letter:

I wish to express my thanks to you for the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. It is truly amazing how alive and exciting the Holy Bible is. I have never known how up-to-date the Bible is, nor how relevant the prophetic events are to our 20th-century world. Thank you so much for enlightening me about God's inspired Word; I needed this understanding so very much.

Virginia

Read what these two students discovered with the aid of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course:

Your Bible correspondence

course is the most rewarding and remarkable course that has ever been put together. I am learning more about my Bible and how to understand it, since I started, than I have ever learned from reading the Bible myself, or from any minister I have ever heard or talked to.

Illinois

I am up to Lesson 3 of your correspondence course, and am amazed at what I have discovered in the Bible. Your method of study makes it easy to learn. I, like most people, thought the Bible would be hard to understand, but it really isn't. I would highly recommend this course to anyone.

Tennessee

Even with a doctor's degree in divinity, this student learned more from the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course:

I graduated from three Bible schools and have a doctor's degree in divinity, but I have learned more from your correspondence course than anywhere else. You make it so plain to understand with the scripture verses to back up what you have written. It is just beautiful and I'm so thankful for it.

North Carolina

A well-pleased Canadian wrote the following letter:

Before hearing the *World Tomorrow* broadcast I had many unanswered questions that were so big that a psychiatrist was unwilling to answer them. The only answer I received from him was that I should take a trip to Europe, go hunting, roam the countryside to get close to nature, take up sailboating, get married, etc. This didn't answer any of my questions. Through the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course I have received direct and workable answers to all my questions.

I am now learning the real purpose in life and receiving

blessings beyond my wildest dreams.

Canada

A well educated person wrote this letter:

Since I had the advantage of a good deal of this world's education, I feel qualified to make this next statement. Although the correspondence course is written so that anyone who can read can easily do the work in quality and thoroughness of instruction, it is easily the equivalent of courses given for college credit by the better colleges and universities. It is really superior.

Wisconsin

Many are surprised to find that limited schooling is no barrier to studying the Bible with these lessons, as this student discovered:

Please tell people they don't have to have a high education to take the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. I didn't finish high school and that kept me from writing for it for a long time. Now there isn't enough money to buy the lessons from me that I have received.

Florida

You, too, can begin to understand the knowledge that really counts. The only qualification necessary for taking this course is the ability to read. As the last student said, no college or other advanced education is necessary.

These monthly lessons are plainly and interestingly written. And there are no assignments to send in — just a test after every fourth lesson so that you can check your own progress.

Remember, there is no tuition cost. The course is absolutely free.

Will you let the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course make the Bible 100 percent relevant to your life today? Just write to us at our address nearest you and ask to be enrolled. A list of our addresses is on the inside front cover.

Do it right now lest you forget. You'll be glad you took advantage of what so many have called "the opportunity of a lifetime"! □

God's Formula for Job Success

Instructions: The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and read in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the Revised Authorized Version of the Bible, unless indicated.)

God wants Christians to prosper both spiritually and materially — He wants us to enjoy life! Jesus Christ Himself said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

"I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health," God inspired the apostle John to write (III John 2). But in order to experience the abundant life, we must be *practicing* the way of life that produces it. This includes keeping God's commandments and following the principles of Christian living and working that God reveals in His Word.

Let's look into the Bible to learn what kind of attitude and approach God wants His people to have toward work. Let's study God's formula for job success!

1. When God put Adam in the Garden of Eden, did He put him to work? Genesis 2:15. What was to be the continuing task of the human race? Genesis 1:26-28.

In the first two chapters of Genesis, God reveals Himself as a creator — a worker. Within six days His creative work unfolded. And when He created the first human beings in His own image, He made them workers, too.

God told the parents of mankind to subdue the earth — to develop, care for and produce from their environment. When God planted the garden in Eden, He put the man into the garden to cultivate and beautify it.

2. Does the commandment to rest on the Sabbath have another side? Exodus 20:8-9.

Rest from what? From work, of course. Though many have not realized it, the Fourth Commandment also instructs us to labor during the other six days of the week. That part of the command is just as important as the part requir-

ing us to rest on the seventh day of the week — the day God made holy.

The Sabbath commandment actually dates back to creation week. It was given to keep man in a close spiritual relationship with his Creator, who is engaged in productive work — who created and now sustains His creation. And God intends for us to become like Him.

3. Was Jesus Christ sent to earth to work? John 9:4. Did He reveal that the Father is still busily at work? John 5:17.

4. Does God intend for us to enjoy and profit from the work we do? Ecclesiastes 2:24, 3:22. How zealously should we do all of our work? Ecclesiastes 9:10.

God works with zeal. We are to become more like God by working diligently, whether we are working for an employer, doing the housework or working for ourselves.

Philosopher and writer Elbert Hubbard realized the importance of working diligently. He said: "If I worked for a man, I would work for him. I would not work for him part of the time, and against him the rest of the time. I would either work for him all the time, or I would not work for him at all."

5. How did the apostle Paul deal with lazy, shiftless idlers? II Thessalonians 3:10. Did he command them to work? Verses 11-12.

6. Will diligent effort always prove its worth? Proverbs 10:4-5, 13:4. Will the hard worker have the necessities of life? Proverbs 20:13, 28:19.

7. Does the slothful person look for all kinds of dangers to justify his lack of effort? Proverbs 22:13, 26:13-15. Is his love of sleep and lack of effort the cause of his poverty? Proverbs 6:10-11.

8. Does laziness tend to become habit-forming? Proverbs 19:15.

Some use the slightest excuse to flop down on the bed or couch — they cannot distinguish between true tiredness and plain laziness! Others watch television when they ought to be working or doing something constructive.

9. Is there profit in all labor? And nothing but poverty in a lot of talk? Proverbs 14:23.

If you happen to be unemployed, you can

start profiting from this principle right now. How? By making a job out of finding a job. Work at it 40 hours a week. Persist and be resourceful. Read books to learn how to search more effectively. Seek advice on other types of employment if your skills are not in demand, or perhaps your skills can be adapted to some other job. And, of course, ask God to help you find a job. Once you have a job, you are ready to put into action further practical instruction from the New Testament.

10. What did Paul teach regarding service to one's employer — one's boss, foreman or supervisor? Colossians 3:22-24, Titus 2:9-10.

Though Paul's instruction was specifically to Christians who were bond slaves, the principles also apply to our performance on the job. Whatever your occupation may be, work as if your immediate boss were Jesus Christ: "Do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." Be cooperative and zealous on the job. Be alert to please your boss by doing the job his way. Show your willingness to go beyond what is required.

Remember, too, that good personal relations on the job is one of the best forms of employment insurance. Don't be a flatterer or a hypocrite, but show sincere, loving concern and cooperation toward your employer, your foreman and your fellow employees in every possible way. Your good attitude and cheerfulness will help everyone else do a better job, too.

11. Can one expect to be paid a good salary if he is not worth it? See the principle in Mark 4:24.

Moffatt translates this verse "the measure you deal out to others will be dealt out to yourselves." If you give your employer a fair day's work, he will pay a fair day's wage. If he won't, another employer will be glad to.

The way to receive a higher salary is to be worth more! Be a valuable employee. Don't just plod along in your job with a ho-hum, hum-drum, every-day-the-same-routine attitude. Be energetic — produce. Study to improve your skills. Take some night classes or check out books on your line of work from the public library.

Really apply yourself and prove to your employer that you have the ability and the desire to work and do an excellent job. Do your part and God will bless you.

12. What is a sluggard like to those who hire him? Proverbs 10:26.

He simply doesn't get the job done. Therefore he isn't paid much, if he can hold a job at all.

13. To whom is the sluggard instructed to go to study and learn about the initiative he lacks? Proverbs 6:6-9.

Many have not understood the main point of this passage. Certainly it advocates the quality

of diligence. But notice verse 7. The ant not only works, but does so with "no leader, no foreman or chief" (Moffatt).

Humans, with the God-given ability to think and reason, should be able to do much better than these lower forms of life whose actions are only instinctive. An employee should think ahead to see what needs to be done, always working diligently whether or not the boss is looking.

14. What kind of employee will end up directing the rest of the workers? Proverbs 12:24. And what will be the lot of the slothful? Same verse.

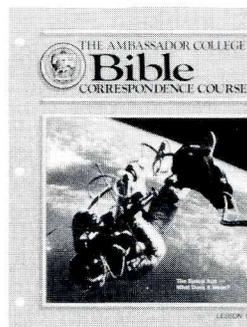
Do your job without being told. Or do it immediately when told how. Get it right the first time. Be the kind of person who increases his superior's production and the production of his fellow workers. When the time comes for raises and promotions, this is the person who will be remembered.

15. Will the person who really applies himself on the job eventually find himself in the company of distinguished people? Proverbs 22:29.

16. Was Joseph an industrious young man who was given great responsibilities? Genesis 39:2-6, 22-23, 41:39-44.

Are you willing to put forth the effort to be like Joseph? He was a diligent worker who served and obeyed God. And though he was severely tested for a time, he did the best he could even in limited circumstances. He obeyed God, and therefore God blessed him greatly. He eventually became prime minister of Egypt, and will be given a high position in the soon-coming Kingdom of God (see Hebrews 11).

If you really believe God and set yourself to follow the biblical principles we've just studied, and strive to please God in other facets of your life as revealed in His Word, He promises to bless you! The apostle Paul sums it up in Hebrews 11:6: "He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder [both spiritually and physically] of those who diligently seek Him." □



ENROLL IN FREE BIBLE COURSE

The short study you've just completed is a sample of the study method used in each monthly lesson of the eye-opening Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. You can enroll in this free course by writing to the *Good News* office nearest you. See inside front cover for addresses.

A Special Kind of Friendship

True friendship is one of the most positive and rewarding aspects of human personality.

Yet, sad to say, what we too often experience is only superficial, put-on friendliness that lasts about as long as a vapor on a windy day. How often



“friendship” dissipates when the need for such support is most urgent!

God wants us to be friendly. “A man who has friends must himself be friendly,” says Proverbs 18:24. But how does God define being “friendly”? The fact is that we need to develop friendships that are true and lasting, that are able to weather all the storms and tests of life, that go beyond a friendly smile and a passing handshake.

Model friendships

True friendship has depth and maturity. It has been cultivated and nurtured through intimate sharing of hopes, dreams, experiences and even tragedies. Real friendships are precious. God’s

Word gives numerous examples of model friendships. The patriarch Abraham, for instance, was called “the friend of God” (James 2:23, Isaiah 41:8). This friendship was not of the fair-weather variety. It stood the test. Abraham valued his friendship with God beyond his personal status, the community where he lived or even the life of his son.

Ruth and Naomi had a special kind of friendship. All the comforts of home beckoned Ruth to remain among her own people in familiar Moab. But Ruth perceived that other values in life were more important, pledging, “Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God” (Ruth 1:16). That’s commitment — that’s friendship.

The friendship of David and Jonathan is also instructive; here, loyalty, mutual respect and godly love transcended selfish desires, politics and prestige. Jonathan, the heir apparent to Israel’s throne, had the spiritual courage and faith to serve his friend, knowing David was anointed of God, rather than to selfishly cling to his position.

True friendship is not just based on mutual interests, likes or dislikes, monetary gain or sublimated self-interest. A true friend will always help, even if it hurts: “Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. Faithful are

the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Proverbs 27:5-6).

Of course, friends don’t always see eye to eye or agree on every issue. Sometimes, friends may even be wrong. Yet friends stick together and pull together: “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17).

Friendship with God

As Christians, our friendship with God must be primary. How can we qualify for this highest relationship? God shows that wholehearted obedience to Him and reverence for His laws is the key to friendship with Him. Jesus taught, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15:14).

Jesus sets us a perfect example of love, friendship and loyalty. He doesn’t forsake us as He sees us struggling to overcome the hurdles of life. We, too, must not abandon friends during times of trial. “A friend is always a friend, he is a born brother for adversity” (Proverbs 17:17, Moffatt).

But our friendship with God is not to be exclusive. In John 15:12 Jesus commands that we expand our horizons and “love one another as I have loved you.” And our commission as Christians is to eventually help all humanity come to know God and share with Him the type of friendship we now have!

Everyone could use at least one more true friend. Are we open to the challenge of having this kind of friend — or, better yet, *being* a true friend ourselves to someone else? □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 2)

other literature we do this, even as the apostle Paul did. He set us an example. We speak to unconverted, nonreligious people in nonreligious language.

Paul said, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." He explained: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews." *He spoke their language!* "To those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law . . . to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. . . Now this I do for the gospel's sake" (I Corinthians 9:20-23).

Did you ever stop to think WHY we named the parent magazine *The Plain Truth*? Jesus said, "THY WORD is truth." God's Word — the BIBLE — is TRUTH. The *Plain Truth* magazine makes Bible truth PLAIN!

But HOW can you do that to a world prejudiced against the Bible — a world whose carnal minds are HOSTILE against GOD — whose minds are prejudiced against reading what they recognize as coming from the Bible?

Do you realize that modern education as a whole — especially high school and university-level education — has literally rejected the Bible?

They have adopted the theory of EVOLUTION. That theory becomes their CONCEPT — their APPROACH to all knowledge.

For example, take the textbooks on history. You find NOTHING in them about the historic creation of Adam and Eve, or the presence of Satan in the garden of Eden. You find NOTHING about any man named Noah and a universal, earth-filling deluge. You find NOTHING in accepted history textbooks about Israelites in Egypt, or Pharaoh's armies being drowned in the Red Sea.

The approach too often is that if an event is recorded in the Bible it never happened, for mod-

ern scholarship *discredits* the Bible as a source of historic TRUTH.

God knew they would. Through Paul, God says: "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations [reasonings], and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise [intellectual, scholarly, highly educated], THEY BECAME

Jesus Christ is coming to rule the world with absolute power! Our job is to get that GOOD NEWS to the world.

fools . . . and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient [proper]" (Romans 1:21-22, 28, Authorized Version).

Notice, they did not retain GOD in their knowledge! In the knowledge they disseminate, GOD IS NOT IN IT, nor God's revelation of truth — the BIBLE.

They are hostile against it.

So, how do we get Jesus Christ's Gospel message *past* that barrier of prejudice, and INTO THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS?

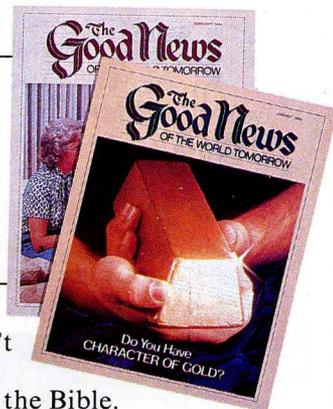
If we ran an article in *The Plain Truth* headlined "REPENT, and TURN FROM YOUR SINS, FOR JESUS CHRIST IS COMING SOON," how many of this world's educated do you suppose would read it? Do you see what I mean? We DO say it in *The Plain Truth* — but not in those words! We speak to the world in the world's own language!

When our headline says "WHY MARRIAGES BREAK UP," with such dropheads as "This article brings you the true perspective of the modern Western marriage crisis — the incredible statistics about divorce and marital unhappiness — and gives you the practical LAWS that make marriage work," then hundreds of thousands — even millions — do read it. We catch their attention — we

prick their interest — we create suspense in their minds to want to know the answer.

In the article, like any article in *Time* or *Newsweek* or the *Economist* magazines, we give them the facts — the statistics — state the problem. But WHERE do you suppose we get the ANSWERS? WHERE do we find the LAWS that work?

Why, in God's Bible,



of course.

But we don't necessarily

need to quote the Bible.

That's not their language! So we make the truth PLAIN in THEIR language, because it would not be plain to them in a religious language they do not understand!

We put it in the language of EDUCATION, not the language of RELIGION. And MORE THAN SEVEN MILLION ARE NOW READING *The Plain Truth!*

Now, naturally, speaking to this whole WORLD, in a manner that can make the truth PLAIN to them, in their language, we cannot say, "Now take up your Bibles and turn to thus and such chapters and verses, and we will expound them and make them PLAIN." 1) That would *not* make it PLAIN to them, because they don't speak that language, and 2) due to prejudice, they would refuse to read it, anyway. We would fail to get the truth through to their consciousness.

YOU MUST REALIZE THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF MINDS: 1) the carnal, or natural, physical mind with which all humans have been born, and 2) the spiritual mind that has been opened by God's Holy Spirit, and now has SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION.

The natural carnal mind may have GREAT comprehension of material knowledge. The brain of

a cow or a chicken is something pretty stupid by comparison. But, spiritually speaking, on the other hand, the GREAT MINDS of GREAT men or women, still carnal, are just as *spiritually* stupid and unable to understand as the cow or chicken brain is MATERIALLY unable to comprehend.

Our No. 1 COMMISSION is to REACH THE WORLD — as a witness! *The Plain Truth* is our magazine for them.

Our second commission is to feed spiritually Jesus Christ's "sheep." *The Good News* is for those who are God's people — who want, and are ABLE, to go into the deeper spiritual truths — those to whom we *can* say, "Open your Bibles, and we will expound and MAKE THE TRUTH PLAIN!"

Our No. 1 commission is to proclaim Jesus Christ's GOOD NEWS as a witness — not to try to force conversion on any. Only God can convert.

None can come to Jesus Christ as Savior, anyway, until and unless God the Father draws them. God GRANTS repentance (John 6:44, Acts 5:31, 11:18).

Once we gain the INTEREST of readers and give them the KNOWLEDGE, it may lead to their salvation, if God GRANTS repentance and DRAWS them by His Holy Spirit. But first we must reach past their prejudices and plant the right KNOWLEDGE in their consciousness. That requires an EDUCATIONAL, not a religious, program. And, let me repeat, our major commission is to get the good news to them AS A WITNESS. Of course there is the second phase of our commission — to FEED JESUS CHRIST'S SHEEP.

The Plain Truth is our instrument for the former — *The Good News* for the latter.

THIS, then, is the magazine to FEED CHRIST'S SHEEP — to FEED those spiritually hungry for the deeper SPIRITUAL FOOD.

We hope you UNDERSTAND!

We make *The Good News* available — subscription *already paid* — to any and all who hunger and thirst for GOD'S TRUTH, and who can receive and digest the stronger spiritual food. □

Jesus Vote?

(Continued from page 6)

means "good news." And what Jesus preached — the message He brought to mankind from God — was the good news of the coming GOVERNMENT OF GOD — the coming world-ruling government *that shall overthrow, blast out of existence and rule in place of every present government on earth!*

Yes, Jesus Christ said to Pilate that He was born to be a King! He, Himself, is coming again as WORLD KING!

And His Gospel was merely, as one might say, His *political platform* for His Kingdom. He revealed the way to enter it as one of its immortal citizens — the way of salvation. He revealed its laws.

What Jesus taught was that this present world, with its governments, its religions, its economies, its society, is *an evil world* — it is Satan's world — it is a world *in competition against*, and AT WAR AGAINST, HIS COMING KINGDOM — THE WORLD TOMORROW!

Did Jesus come to make this a BETTER WORLD?

No, *Jesus did not enter into THIS WORLD'S politics!* He called His disciples *out* of this present evil world — out of all its customs and philosophies and ways — to a life of SEPARATION from the world.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Follow Me!" And one cannot follow Him and also follow this present world! He did not mean for Christians to go out of the world, physically. He knew they must live in it, but He taught that they should not be *of* it.

In his final prayer for His disciples, Jesus said to His Father: "I do not

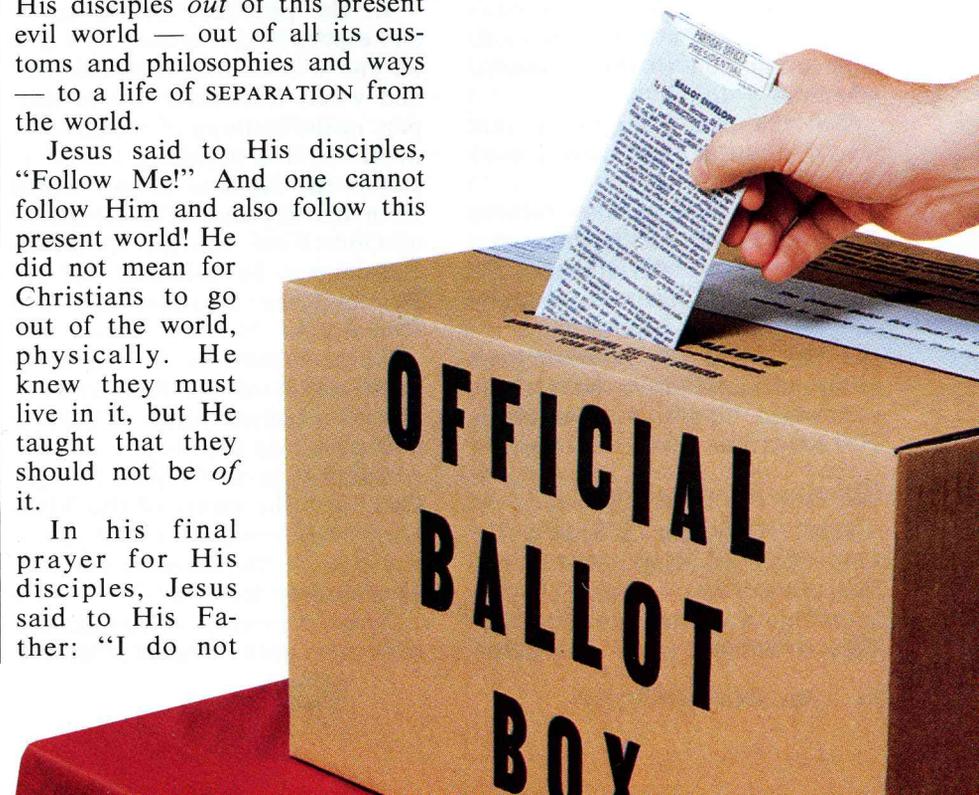
pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. They are not *of* the world, just as I am not of the world" (John 17:15-16).

Thus Jesus' disciples live *in* this present evil world as though they were foreigners, here merely as the guests of the nation where they reside, as AMBASSADORS for Christ and His coming Kingdom, here as representatives of His coming Kingdom, *not* of any of this world's governments.

As the Word of God reveals in II Corinthians 5:17-20: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: old things have passed away . . . therefore we are *ambassadors for Christ.*"

The United States sends an ambassador to the Kremlin. He resides for the time in Moscow. The Christian in the world today is in the same relative position as the American ambassador in the Soviet Union.

He is not a communist. He does not regard the Soviet as his government, and he knows well it is a government mortally opposed to his government. He does not serve the Soviet government, nor enter into its politics, nor devote his time in Moscow to trying to eradicate the evils he sees in their system, or to making their state a



better state, or voting, or entering their army or fighting for their cause.

Yet, he subjects himself to all their rules and regulations that in any way concern him or his life while there. If they drive automobiles on the left side of the street, he conforms to their regulations. He does not oppose them; he is SUBJECT to them while there, endeavoring to cause them to like him so as to better represent the interests of *his* government, the United States.

Jesus taught His disciples to render unto Caesar the things that *are* Caesar's. Specifically He was referring to payment of taxes. If the government levies taxes, pay them.

The Bible teaching for the Christian is to be SUBJECT to the powers that be in this world, but, on the other hand, Christians shall *obey God* rather than man.

The true Christian will so conduct himself as to be highly regarded by the powers of government where he lives. He will be regarded by them as a good citizen.

He will appreciate the privileges, advantages and opportunities extended. He will regard himself as the *paying guest* of the country where he resides, and he will act with due courtesy, submission to its rules and regulations, insofar as they do not conflict with the commands of God, and submission to their *penalty* where they do.

But the true Christian is one who *follows Christ*, and Christ did not vote!

Jesus did not try to reform Caesar. He did not try to make this a better world. Rather, He preached the doctrine of a radically different world to come — and He called His followers out of all participation in this present evil world, and to allegiance to HIS KINGDOM that is to come.

Citizenship in heaven

But *His* world is the world *tomorrow!* His Kingdom, He told Pilate, is *not of this world* — that is, of this AGE, this present time. This is Satan's world and Jesus

Christ did not come to reform Satan or improve Satan's handiwork, but to save His followers *from* Satan and his system.

Since God's Kingdom is not literally set up as yet, the true Christian's citizenship is now reserved in heaven (I Peter 1:4, Ephesians 2:19).

Christians are called to be separate from the world and all its affiliations, whether social, political, economic or religious (II Corinthians 6:17). They are not to live by the philosophies, customs and ways of this world, but by EVERY WORD OF GOD (Luke 4:4). Jesus taught us *not* to live by traditions of the present civilization, but by God's laws, and He taught here that those who disobey this teaching WORSHIP HIM IN VAIN.

Yes, thousands call themselves Christians, think they are converted, believe in Christ, worship Him, but *worship Him in vain*, following the course of this world and its customs and ways, instead of the commandments of God (Mark 7:7-9)!

Jesus said for the Christian to seek *first the KINGDOM OF GOD* (Matthew 6:33), and He also said we cannot give allegiance to and serve *two* kingdoms (verse 24).

How and when Christians are to help run government

In the prophecy of Daniel 7, and especially in verses 17-18, 21-22 and 27, we find revealed how and when Christians are to take part in the running of the government. In this prophecy Daniel is shown the empires of this world from his day until the Kingdom of God. First was the Chaldean Empire, to be followed by the Persian, the Grecian and the Roman.

There is now to be one more resurrection of the Roman Empire — a United States of Europe now presently forming.

But finally, at Christ's *Second Coming*, "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."

These present governments are to run their course "UNTIL

the . . . *time came* for the saints to possess the kingdom." That time has not yet come. Until then Christians are to obey God and be subject to the powers that be.

When Jesus comes again, it is proclaimed, "The kingdoms of this world *have become* the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and HE shall reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15). Then it is, as Jesus has said, "He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, *to him I will give power over the nations* — he shall rule them" (Revelation 2:26-27). The smashing of the present governments of the world is pictured in Daniel 2:34-35, 44.

Then Satan shall be shorn of power to rule the world (Revelation 20:1-4). His qualified successor, Jesus Christ, shall then be inaugurated into office. *Then* begins the Sabbath Millennium of Jesus Christ's reign — when He shall set His hand again to *save* Israel and the world.

Jesus would not take part

What, then, would Jesus do in this time of presidential election? He would WARN true Christians, "COME OUT of her [this world's governments, this Babylonish system], my people, lest you share in her sins, and *lest you receive of her plagues*" (Revelation 18:4)!

The plagues of God are soon to fall upon this world and all who choose to remain part of it. JESUS CALLS YOU OUT!

What would Jesus do? HE WOULD BE TOO BUSY PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF HIS OWN COMING WORLD-RULING KINGDOM, and the way of salvation, to take any part whatsoever in the politics of this present evil world, or in any man-made form of government that is DOOMED very soon to be destroyed and replaced by the theocratic government of THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

Our mission is, as ambassadors of Christ — as advance emissaries of HIS KINGDOM — to WARN the world of its plight and present danger, to proclaim to all nations the good news of THE KINGDOM OF GOD! □

When a Loved One Dies

By Arthur O. Suckling

My wife was in bed. She'd been there for about three weeks with what we had been told was a back problem. One day the doctor called and took a blood sample. He soon communicated the results to me.

The doctor called me into a private office and told me he was sorry, but my wife had malignant melanoma. She probably had but a short time to live.

I was shocked, dumbfounded and broke down crying, hardly believing what I was hearing. Between my sobbing, I asked him how long she had. Six months, perhaps a year, was his reply.

Everybody dies. Diseases, accidents or old age claim everyone eventually. Such events leave behind grieving widows, widowers, parents and children.

This article is written as a result of some self-observations I noted as I passed through the various stages of grief. I hope some find it helpful.

The tragic message

The doctor quietly left me alone in the room. I stared out the window, struggling to grasp the

significance of what I had been told, trying somehow to make some sort of reality out of it and get control of my emotions. Tears flowed, and I struggled to fight them back. I had to walk through the waiting room to get to my car.

My wife was waiting at home for me to return from the doctor's with the test results. Somehow I had to tell her, but what could I say? I drove the few minutes home and went right past the house without stopping. I parked and continued crying. Again, I drove by the house. This time my son saw the car from the window, so I drove in.

I entered our bedroom and knelt by the bed. I put my head in her arms and sobbed. She said: "It's all right, dear, I know. I've got cancer, haven't I?" I said yes. Miraculously, at that moment, my mother and my brother and his wife arrived and walked into the room unexpectedly. They shared our sad news with us. How wonderful it is to have family around at such times of sadness.

Blood tests followed to confirm the first diagnosis. Bone scans were done at the hospital to determine the extent of the disease. Then we as a family settled down to wait.

Three months later, my wife

died. During this period, my mother had moved in to help us. My brother and his family visited frequently and often stayed with us on weekends. The people from church rallied around and called on the phone, sent cards and visited until that became impractical. So it was a family time devoted to taking care of the one who was dying.

The attitude of the dying

Most people feel they would rather suffer themselves than see a mate or child suffer. The reason, often, is because they find the situation easier to accept and cope with somehow. Often the person dying is, in one sense, the most realistic and "comfortable" of all. Many times he or she quickly accepts what is happening, while those around — the family and friends — find themselves having a difficult time.

To illustrate the point: At one stage toward the end when my wife was close to dying, she asked a question that tore me up emotionally: "When I die, you will get married again, won't you?" My reaction was to cry and tell her that I just couldn't think about that now, but she had already thought through the course of events to their natural conclusion. (As I write four and a

half years later, I am again very happily married.)

Another thing she did was to sort out in her mind to whom she wanted to give her possessions. Again, it was difficult for me to comply to her request — to sit down with pen and paper and make a list detailing her desires. Naturally I did, and followed through on those requests. She obviously was preparing everything in her mind for her death.

At one stage when I was particularly emotional, she said, “Don’t worry, dear, it won’t be long now before I die.” I can only conclude that her practical approach came out of a deep belief in God and His promises. I also have those beliefs, but being the one doing the nursing, I found such forthright and realistic statements hard to handle.

Telling the children

My wife died peacefully in her sleep at 1:50 a.m. I was surprised at my calmness as I sat by the bed waiting for it to happen. I woke my mother, who was nearby, and together we made preparations and tidied up the room whose walls had observed so much. In the morning I went and woke my two sons.

I supposed that being around a terminally ill person prepares you for the inevitable to a certain extent. I held them both, as they sat on my knees, and told them that Mummy had died in the night, and she was not suffering any more.

Their reactions differed. The elder cried a little, while the younger sat on my knee rocking back and forth and nodding his head, indicating, “Yes, I understand.” I felt it best to send them out with Grandma to go and buy a newspaper. The undertaker had been contacted and arrangements made for him to come while they were gone. I felt it best that the boys be away at this time.

It is important that events have a natural and complete conclusion. While funerals are emotional, they are necessary events for the whole family to see. They signify the completion of the cycle

of birth to death. The funeral is an act of finality. So our family laid to rest the loved one who died.

The stages of bereavement

Thinking back on it, I don’t remember anyone telling me of or advising me to read about the stages or emotions I would feel or pass through during bereavement, so I discovered the various stages one at a time. I am surprised how predictable the emotions are:

1) Shock and numbness. 2) Emotional turmoil. 3) Emptiness — loneliness, despair and depression. 4) Acceptance.

Let us explore each of these stages briefly, understanding that they are not necessarily clearly defined stages. Loss of sleep, lack of appetite and extremes of emotions are common throughout bereavement.

Shock and numbness

The death of the loved one may come from an accident or from natural causes such as age or disease. Of course, there is little one can do to prepare for accidents, except to try to prevent them. They happen, and we adapt to meet the crisis. Old age and disease are common visitors, and we do sometimes have warning that the person is nearing death.

Despite the preparation we may have to accept that a person is dying, it still comes as a shock, either immediately or a little later. It’s a time I describe as a lack of feeling.

By that I mean you are so deeply involved with your thoughts and feelings that events around you lose immediate significance. Deep preoccupation perhaps best describes the state you’re in. You may need reminding to eat or turn off the boiling kettle on the stove.

It’s nature’s morphia or sedative that allows you to do necessary things — attend the funeral, pay the bills and carry on immediately after the death.

Emotional turmoil

Following the shock and numbness is a period of emotional tur-

moil. Such feelings and emotions as anger, resentment, guilt, bitterness or fear may be felt to varying degrees of intensity and duration.

Many people conclude that because you have coped so well in the initial stages, you no longer need emotional support, and they are unavailable when you most need it. I was grateful that my family and friends were there during the times I thought I was going crazy. Sometimes my thoughts were wild and extreme. Their sympathetic ears and few words were of inestimable help.

Even up to two years later, I was still availing myself of friends to use as a sounding board for my feelings. Frequently, these chats were accompanied by tears and a glass of beer! How profitable and beneficial these situations were, for they helped me to come to terms with my own emotions.

I recall having many regrets at this time. Frequently the “If only I had . . .” feeling invaded me. Self-recrimination changes nothing. The opportunity to do it differently may present itself in the future.

Emptiness

Loneliness, despair and depression are typical emotions, and stay around for quite a while.

I remember my mother saying to me one day, “Son, I have experienced loneliness like you’ll never know.” I think I now understand how she felt after the death of her husband, and the void that followed.

Coming to terms with loneliness is important. I strongly felt that I had to survive and make it on my own doing the daily physical things. I felt equally strongly about coming to terms with loneliness. You must learn to live with it and be careful not to avoid it by leaning too heavily on someone or something else.

Sometimes people lean on others or use alcohol to blunt loneliness. While both may tend to help in moderation, extreme caution needs to be taken, especially with alcohol. You don’t want to wear out your welcome

with friends, nor do you want to become dependent on a bottle.

Remember, the bereavement process takes time. Don't be impatient with it.

Acceptance

I call the final stage acceptance. This is when you've done all your crying, grieving and fretting. You're basically on an even keel again and your emotions have settled to an acceptable equilibrium.

You will still feel lonely and miss the person. That's to be expected, for you will never be the same again as a result of bereavement. You will, though, come to accept the status quo in time.

Perhaps the surest sign that you are recovering is when you begin to really take an interest in life again. You have a renewed spark to do things you haven't done for a long time. For me, it was playing squash. I lost all interest in playing for months. Eventually, the interest returned as I began to feel more normal again.

In the past, it was expected that people follow a social custom of mourning. In many respects this social timetable fit closely the more natural progression of grief. Today, in our fast-paced and busy lives, modern society leaves little room for the slow and natural process of grief. I think it would be wise to take a page out of the past and consider it.

A time not to make decisions

Too often today people try to rush this natural process and fill the void that has been created in their lives. People have sold their homes and moved or made rash decisions that they have regretted. I know of cases where widows and widowers married too soon after the death of a mate. They were not over the deaths yet and ended up making tragic mistakes by acting in haste.

I do not subscribe to a return to Victorian rigidity, but I do advocate caution. There ought to be respect for the dead and their memory for a suitable time. I per-

sonally feel it takes about one year.

Others may feel less is acceptable. The Bible does not give any specific length of time for mourning. In many instances, though, great or grievous mourning took place (Genesis 50:11).

The important thing is to be sure you are truly emotionally over, say, your first marriage before entering a new phase in your life, such as dating or another marriage. Be sure you really

Coming to terms is important. I strongly felt that I had to survive and make it on my own. You must learn to live with your loss.

feel like doing something before you do it.

Speaking from experience, I found it convenient not to date until two years had passed after my wife died. When I did, it came naturally. I had been encouraged by well-meaning colleagues and friends to get dating again. I was advised I didn't owe my past wife anything and that I should feel free to date.

The latter statement may have been true, but the fact that I just did not feel ready was sufficient reason enough not to do it. So I did not! I found it extremely embarrassing simply contemplating the thought of asking someone out for a date.

Slowly, a bit at a time, I came to the place where I wanted female company. I began dating a few women that I had gotten to know through a friend in a similar situation. One of those women became my wife.

What do you say?

People feel awkward or embarrassed around a grieving person. They don't know what to say. They don't want to upset you, but they want to say something.

I clearly remember a couple who wanted to give me their condolences but did not want to upset me. They were talking to

my brother, and he advised them to go ahead, as I was standing nearby. So they came over and saw me. During our brief conversation, I was overwhelmed with my feelings and began crying. I know it was embarrassing for them, but it was good for me.

People ought not to feel they need say much at all. "I'm sorry" or "You have our sympathy" is fine. If the person cries, we ought to recognize that this is normal and not feel responsible because

we have spoken. The person will probably cry many times initially, and I know that a simple word of sympathy or encouragement is all that's needed.

Why must we experience the deaths of loved ones and the bereavement that follows? It's a question probably no human can answer right now.

Time and chance happen to all (Ecclesiastes 9:11). Death is a part of life that either is or will be common to all (Hebrews 9:27). Rejoicing in your trial (I Peter 1:6-7) is not easy for the Christian. We do not often see the growth that can come from some experiences until they are over. Rising to the occasion and overcoming produces character.

Conversely, you can allow your situation to destroy you. We should expect trials, for they will come (I Peter 4:12).

God also tells us that He will not test us beyond our ability to stand a trial (I Corinthians 10:13). He also says there is a resurrection and that our loved ones will stand upright again (Ezekiel 37, I Corinthians 15:50-58, I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

It makes it much easier, while we lick our wounds and recover from our hurts, to know the divine purpose God has for all humanity! □

Will You Go to Heaven?

Heaven! This one short word summarizes the blessed goal of all Christians. It gives the very meaning of the purpose of life, and the essence of the hope of life after death.

Or does it?

Millions of professing Christians think so. But are they correct? Is heaven what they think it is — namely, the prayed-for and worked-toward reward of the saved?

You need to know the truth! And even if you already know the truth, you need to be able to prove it. No doctrinal question strikes closer to the heart of traditional Christian belief than the truth of the biblical teaching on the doctrine of heaven.

The basic doctrine

Quite surprisingly, the biblical teachings about heaven can be easily summarized in a brief sentence or two: In short, heaven is the celestial place of God's throne, His headquarters of government of all things seen and unseen. It is decidedly *not* the promised reward of saved Christians, however.

The usual teachings of this world

No doubt that last sentence — the one saying that heaven is *not* the promised reward of the saved — would shock most professing Christians. Most have been taught, and have blindly accepted without proof, that heaven is indeed the goal and hope of life itself. Most persons, even though not having seen heaven, carry with themselves a mental image

of it. Usually this image is of a sort of spiritual paradise, replete with adorning clouds populated by angels (with wings, halos and long, flowing golden hair). Also to be found are the "souls" of the faithful, clustered together in holy groups, playing on harps or beholding the face of the Lord in trancelike fixation millennia after millennia.

Yes, this is probably most people's belief about heaven — what it is for, and what it is like. But it is not the picture the Bible gives!

The Bible teaching

Since every doctrine of the Bible is unique, each doctrine must be dealt with from its own point of view. In the case of the doctrine of heaven, it is best to first show what heaven *is*, and then what it is *not*.

Many are surprised to find that the Bible speaks of not just one but three heavens.

The first heaven is our earthly atmosphere — the blanket of life-sustaining gases that encircles our globe, the heaven where the birds fly (Genesis 1:20) and from where the dew falls (Deuteronomy 33:28).

The second heaven represents

the expanse of this great universe — the outer space where we find the sun, moon, stars, comets and planets. It is of this heaven that God spoke when He said that the sun, moon and stars were to be for lights (Genesis 1:15-17).

The final heaven — the "third" (II Corinthians 12:2) — is indeed the location of God's holy throne and the seat of the ruling authority of all physical and spiritual reality. And it certainly does have *some* of the qualities traditional Christianity assigns to it.

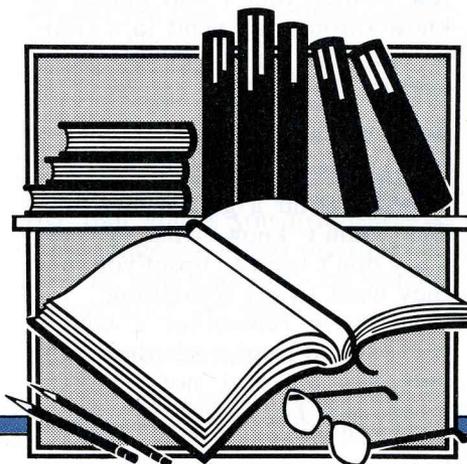
For example, this third heaven is a type of spiritual paradise. The apostle Paul said as much in II Corinthians 12:4 when he briefly described the place and called it "Paradise."

Further, it is plainly the seat of God's throne and of His power, for we are taught by Jesus Christ not to swear by heaven, because "it is God's throne" (Matthew 5:34).

God further draws back the curtain and reveals more about His throne in Revelation 4, where, in a few sweeping verses the apostle John tantalizes us with panoramic glimpses of the celestial pageantry and power of the heavenly throne room.

Of the specific layout and furnishing of the place we know but little. However, in addition to the items listed in Revelation 4, we are told that the lampstand, table, showbread and other artifacts of the earthly tabernacle were merely physical counterparts of heavenly things (Hebrews 9:1-5, 23), although an exact explanation of what this means is not given.

But we need not guess about whether heaven is the reward of the saved. We are directly told, in



no uncertain or ambiguous terms. And the answer will shock many!

Jesus plainly taught, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man" (Jesus Himself — John 3:13). Astoundingly, that scripture means just what it says: No man — not Abraham, Isaac or Jacob — no one — has gone to heaven! There are no souls of the saved in heaven. It cannot therefore be the reward of the saved.

People do not like to believe this plain statement of Jesus. Yet even King David, said to be a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22) and one who found favor with God (Acts 7:46), was not in heaven even after Jesus' death. As the apostle Peter said, "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day" (Acts 2:29). Peter then added, "For David did not ascend into the heavens" (verse 34).

We have now seen that heaven *is* God's throne, and we have read that it most assuredly *is not* the abode of the deceased souls of the righteous. But, then, what *is* the future hope and goal of the true Christian?

Put briefly, the hope and goal of a Christian is not to enter heaven and play a harp for eternity, but to be born into the Family of God (as a member of the God Family and hence become a literal God) and rule in God's government and Kingdom with eternal life *from on the earth*. See Revelation 5:10, Daniel 2:44, 7:27 and Matthew 5:5.

Even the plain scriptures cited above, showing that heaven is not the abode of the righteous dead nor the promised reward of the saved, are scarcely ever sufficient to answer the objections of those who believe that Jesus promised heaven to the good who die. Rather, they point to numerous

scriptures that, to their minds at least, seem to say we do go to heaven at death.

For example, some will point to John 14:1-4, which quotes Jesus telling the disciples that in His "Father's house are many mansions" that He was going to prepare for them, and say this passage proves we go to heaven.

But these verses say no such thing. For the Father's "house" is not heaven, but the Temple of God (John 2:16), which had many chambers or "mansions," each for the use of a specific job or function. The disciples correctly understood Jesus to be saying that in His Kingdom were many responsible positions, and that He was going to prepare a job for them, and that He would bring it with Him when He comes again (John 14:3, Revelation 22:12) to set up His Kingdom on earth.

Others turn to Philippians 1:23-24 and quote Paul's statement that he desired to "depart and be with Christ" as a proof text for going to heaven at death. But Paul does not in this verse say where he will meet Jesus Christ, nor when. Paul does in other verses clearly show that he and the rest of the righteous will meet Jesus at the time of the resurrection, and on earth in its "clouds," at His Second Coming (I Thessalonians 4:16-17), not in heaven.

And consider this: If the saved souls of millions are now in heaven, why must there be a resurrection of the dead in the first place (I Corinthians 15)? Obviously because the dead are just that — dead and in their graves, not in heaven.

Likewise, the oft-quoted scripture saying "great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12) is misunderstood by many. Too often verse 5 of that chapter is not read, where Jesus says the righteous will "inherit the earth." Nor is this section compared with I Peter 1:3-4, which says a Chris-

tian's reward is "reserved in heaven," and Revelation 22:12, which shows that — although the reward is reserved in heaven — Jesus will bring it with Him and give it to us when He returns to earth.

Space fails us to address in detail other misunderstood passages of Scripture such as those concerning the true fate of Enoch and Elijah, whom many falsely suppose went to heaven based upon misunderstood verses, or the story of the thief on the cross, Lazarus and the rich man and Paul's vision of heaven in II Corinthians 12:1-6. These and related verses are explained fully in our booklets *Where Are Enoch and Elijah?*, *What Is the Reward of the Saved?* and *Lazarus and the Rich Man*. Write to our office nearest you for your free copies.

Key verses

Aside from a knowledge of the oft-misunderstood verses just mentioned, the whole subject of heaven can be grasped by remembering relatively few scriptures. The main ones are Matthew 5:34, which says heaven is God's throne; Revelation 4, which describes that throne; John 3:13, which states no man has ascended to heaven; and Acts 2:29-35, which states that — even after Jesus Christ's ascension — David the righteous had not gone to heaven.

Also, it is helpful to remember a few verses showing that God's Kingdom will be on earth (Matthew 5:5, Daniel 2:44, 7:27, Revelation 5:10).

Yes, the biblical truth about heaven is easily summarized: Heaven is God's throne and current seat of government, but it is not the promised reward of the saved. How wonderful is our God to reveal through His true Church the blessed truth about this important subject in this end age! □

COMING IN THE GOOD NEWS

◆ Seven Keys to Understanding the Bible

If the Bible seems an archaic mystery to you, there's good news — you *can* begin to understand it! Here are the keys that unlock what God has revealed in His Word!

◆ The Power of Appreciation

“Smart move, honey!” “Nice job, sis!” “I’m proud of you, son!” Discover what the habit of showing appreciation will do in the lives of the people you love.

◆ In Pursuit of Spiritual Excellence

What drives humans to climb mountains, break records, overcome debilitating handicaps? It's the same force that can help a Christian endure to the end.

◆ Grace — Do You Understand It?

The word *grace* is an important part of the Christian vocabulary, yet for many the subject is confusing. Let's let God's Word give us a clear understanding.

◆ Woman, Wife, Widow

Widowhood — it's a life stage that many women will have to face at some time. It helps to know what to expect.

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