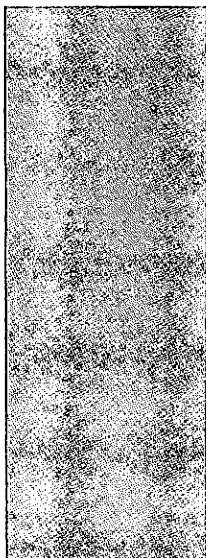


" . . . Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error"

The
DISCERNER



CONTENTS

VOLUME NO. 1 NO. 12

- 2** If Christ Be Not Risen
- 5** The Multi-Million Dollar I Am
- 7** Satan's Attacks Upon the Resurrection
- 11** When Faith Is Scarce on Earth
- 16** Puzzling Questions and Discerning Answers

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IF CHRIST BE NOT RISEN

I Corinthians 15

By TERRY C. HULBERT

If there is no resurrection, then Christ did not rise. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then no human being can hope for life after death. In man's perpetual flight from the facing of future judgment he has often retreated to the trite aphorism, "What heaven there is, I have right now; what hell there is, I experience now." Such reasoning is a simple, but very ineffective escape mechanism and makes necessary a tortuous twisting of Scripture.

The fallacy committed in this thinking is that of "arguing in a circle." If we do not wish to face a conscious eternity in a resurrected body, we simply deny human resurrection. If this be denied, then Christ's resurrection must be ruled out to maintain consistency. And if Christ did not rise physically, then there is no literal physical resurrection and the original premise is sustained, that our heaven and hell are but states of mind as we sojourn here for our threescore years and ten.

This fallacious sequence is violently interrupted by God's revelation in I Corinthians 15. More is at stake than the issue of eternal blessing and judgment if Christ did not literally rise from the dead. In verse 13 Paul admits for the moment the hypothesis that there is no physical resurrection and then carries the argument forward to its logical involvements. The most serious of

these is the denial of Christ's resurrection. To deny this is to precipitate more undesirable results than the superficial thinker would anticipate. Let us evaluate the tremendous consequences listed in this passage if Christ did not rise, though Peter, the five hundred brethren, and others still living at the time of the writing had so testified.

1. *Our preaching is in vain:* From the perspective of nineteen centuries, liberal theologians have found it expedient to emphasize almost exclusively the Sermon on the Mount and similar teachings of Christ which possess a tremendous ethical impact. The high moral ideals of these utterances are held up before a struggling and depraved humanity as the determining factor as to whether he, in this life, enjoys a state of mind called "heaven" or an emotional impasse of frustration referred to as "hell." Such theology, which omits Christ's substitutionary propitiation and physical resurrection Paul characterizes as "vain." His word is *kenē*, "empty." The force of this term is seen in the verb form used in Philippians 2:6, "Who . . . emptied himself." Just as Christ voluntarily emptied himself of the independent use of his attributes, so men in Paul's day and ours desire to empty the gospel of all its impelling dynamic and purpose. Quite opposed to this liberal idea of liv-

ing up to a code of "Christian principles" the message of the gospel is that of a co-crucifixion and co-resurrection with Christ. The physical resurrection of Christ is the basis of every New Testament appeal to and enablement for a new kind of life.

2. *Your faith is also vain:* The emptiness of the tomb assured the fullness of faith. Notwithstanding the current and flippant "Just have faith," the Bible at every turn points to the object toward which the faith is to be directed. Humanism emphasizes the subject doing the believing, as though some emotional or mental state (glibly labelled "faith") in a fallen creature could transform him into a child of God. On the contrary, God always emphasizes the object of faith, the One on whom a man is invited to believe. For example Paul did not instruct the jailer to "have faith," but to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." The objective basis of faith is a resurrected Savior, and without such a One, so-called "faith" is most "empty." It is empty in the sense that the effectiveness is dependent upon the subject doing the believing, an idea very popular with the unrepentant.

3. *We are false witnesses of God:* The present tense of this passive verb indicates a characteristic condition always evident, even to the casual observer. The gravity of this conclusion rests upon the association of the words "false witness" and "God." Hebrew 6:18 claims, as indeed does all Scripture, that it is impossible for God to lie. God does not descend to the use of perjury to promulgate his gospel. Nor is He responsible for false claims. Thus, if these apostles were sent from Him and by Him to be witnesses (Acts 1:8, 4:20), then either Christ rose

from the dead as they claimed, or God is not only fallible, but maliciously deceptive.

4. *Your faith is in vain and ye are yet in your sins:* Not only is faith futile as a means of applying salvation, but there is no such thing as salvation. "The wages of sin is death." Since "All have sinned" we all owe a debt. As the personal substitute for every sinner Christ went to the cross and then to the grave. He became the debtor and paid the tremendous obligation of a sin-saturated race of men. Further, He not only took our debt upon Himself, but He actually paid for it in full when He suffered. This suffering, though it included excruciating physical pain, involved separation from God to an infinite degree, being exactly equivalent to the second death of Revelation 20:6, 14. Since He fully and completely discharged the debt man owed to God, it follows that when the transaction was completed, neither He nor any who would believe on Him owed anything to God for sin. If the debt then was paid, the prisoner could no longer be held. As long as the debtor is in prison it is presumed that the debt has not been paid. Thus if Christ did not rise, and was therefore being held prisoner, it could only indicate that God was still not satisfied with the offering of the "Lamb of God"; that Christ was not accurate when He said, "It has been finished," and that as Paul here points out, "Ye are still in your sins." The physical resurrection of Christ from the dead is God's receipt of payment in full for sin committed.

A progression is to be noted in the words Paul uses in v. 14 and in v. 27. In the former reference "vain" is a translation of *kene*, "empty." In

the latter he uses *mataia*, which draws attention to the effect of the action, being best rendered "useless." Thus in v. 14 faith is "empty" because of the lack of a worthy object, and in v. 17 faith is "useless" because of the lack of a meaningful result.

5. *Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished:* The logical results of a denial of Christ's physical resurrection is seen in v. 18 with reference to the believer who had died, and in v. 19 with re the believer who is still living, an incidental parallel to the arrangement of John 11:25, 26. The term "sleep," when used as a euphemism for death is applied in Scripture only to believers. There is no question concerning the unbelievers perishing (Jo. 3:18) and so there would be no purpose in noting here that perishing would be a result unless believers were in view in the verse.

To deny Christ's resurrection is to encourage the believer to close his eyes in the joy of salvation, and the assurance of seeing the Lord, only to have him awake to the torments of perdition. Death then, even for the believer, would not be, as Paul claims, "far better," but rather "far worse" if Christ did not rise bodily from the tomb.

The tense of *appolumi*, "perish" even excludes the anesthesia of annihilation. It does not indicate an unconsciousness, not yet still the final end of the personality, but only that state of the lost after death. Everywhere this is mentioned in Scripture, it is described as being conscious, painful, and completely cut off from God.

6. *If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable:* Morality swings on the hinges of immorality and bodily resurrection. Self-denial in this life

fails if there is no physical resurrection to a future state. The pains and privations of the saints may have spiritual compensations here, but they are scarcely justified without being related to the values of eternity. Paul was not a Stoic, denying for the sake of denying; nor was he an Epicurean, indulging for the sake of indulging. Virtue does not have its own reward; and vice does not have its own excuse. Neither is absolute in itself, but is always relative to the eternal God and our ceaseless relationship to Him.

Paul uses the perfect compound *elpikotes esmen*, "we have hoped, and the effect of this action remains to the present." If only this life is considered, such a hope in a dead Christ (if He be not raised) produces not the transformed, reborn, scintillating sons of a heavenly Father, but pitiful, despondent, resentful and disillusioned misfits in a society of miserable men.

From the gloom of these six logical involvements of a yet-dead Christ, Paul lifts us to the glory of the overwhelming conviction that Christ has risen and that He is now alive, and that the one grand conclusion of this premise is that we, too, shall be physically raised from the dead.

Adam *died*, and all in his family have been born spiritually dead and physically dying. Christ *arose*, and all in His family have been born again spiritually, and will know no end to personal conscious fellowship with the Father. Christ became not just one more decaying corpse in an oriental crypt, but the first fruits of sleeping believers. Death for His own is not separation but sleep. It is not gloom but glory. It is not frustration but fellowship. "But now is Christ risen from the dead." I Cor. 15:20.

THE MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR I AM

An Exposé of the I AM Cult

By EMMA BELLE YOURDON

HE WANTED TO SEE! "The late blind senator from Minnesota, Thomas Schall, wanted sight so much he paid the I AM cult \$1,000 for a miracle" (*Minneapolis Star Journal*, Dec. 5, 1940). But he was disappointed, according to his widow's court testimony.

A little gray-haired servant woman in Chicago wanted money. She invested, and lost, \$200—her life savings. She was but one of many victims of Guy W. Ballard's confidence games, as the *Chicago Herald Examiner*, Oct. 14, 1938, reports: "Woman Sues 'Great I AM.' In a stormy scene in the lobby of the (Chicago) Civic Opera House, Guy W. Ballard, 'Accredited Messenger' of the 'Great I AM Presence,' was served with a summons . . ."

A third individual who is now woefully acquainted with the I AM cult, had a different desire. She testifies: "I wanted to find this wonderful way to God. I gave myself without reserve to the strange power that flooded my soul. Soon a change took place within me. I fell headlong into indescribable supernatural manifestations. Eventually, I knew that I was lost and going to hell!

"But a man of God showed me with Scripture that there is power in the blood and in the name of Jesus. As I asked in that mighty name to have my sins forgiven and my whole being washed in the blood, I felt the power of Satan relax. Jesus lifted me. I thank and praise Him for the salvation of my soul!" (Lulu Jordan Cheesman, in her tract, *The Enslaving Power Behind the Mighty I AM Cult*, obtainable from address given below.)

Here are three typical (and real) cases. One wanted to be healed; one wanted to be rich; one wanted to be right with God. Let us investigate this Mighty I AM, which promised these seekers so much, only to disappoint them.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy W. Ballard launched the movement in 1934. Under the imprint, *Saint Germain Press*, Chicago, they published several occult textbooks, and a periodical, *Voice of the I AM*. The following are some of Ballard's "experiences" as related in *Unveiled Mysteries* and *The Magic Presence*.

The first begins with a take-off on the story of the Samaritan woman to whom the Lord Jesus offered living water. So Ballard, roaming on Mt. Shasta, was met by a stranger who gave him a cup of creamy liquid which turned out to be "Omnipresent Life." The stranger now transfigured himself into "a magnificent god-like figure"—Saint Germain, who offered to conduct Ballard on a tour to scenes of his former incarnations.

So Ballard looked down upon Luxor, where (as he now beheld) he and his son Donald had been priests in a beautiful temple. He recognized the vestal virgin guarding the sacred fire as his "Twin Ray," the present Mrs. Ballard. He saw an evil prince with slaves enter to seize the vestal virgin, but High Priest Donald sent a flash of flame which caused the villain and one slave to drop dead.

This incident furnished opportunity for Saint Germain to expound: "There is only one way to avoid the cosmic wheel of cause and effect—the necessity for re-embodiment.

One must earnestly seek the God Within . . . that 'Inner Self.' (The villain and his slave must try life again.) Ballard was then returned to his body—for a few days. He once encountered a panther on Mt. Shasta. He conquered his fear, realizing that "the 'Presence' within was all Love," and that "this beautiful animal was a part of God's Life also . . . God's Love filled us both." A moment later, he was stroking the fur of his new friend, the panther. (This incident was evidently invented to teach the doctrine of pantheism—God indwelling all things.)

Saint Germain appeared then to congratulate Ballard, and to conduct him, by means of "projected consciousness," to the Sahara Desert, where 70,000 years ago a civilization had flourished. Saint Germain said he himself had lived there as king and as father of the three Ballards. After watching them all these centuries, he was now, in A.D. 1934, to give them deserved promotion to become his only Accredited Messengers, and the saviours of the United States of America. (Guy Ballard in his eighteenth century incarnation had been "the father of his country," George Washington.)

According to his weird tale, Ballard was often shown caves full of gold and jewels. He was ushered into a council hall where, with 70 Masters he viewed upon a "cosmic screen" the life of lost continents and ancient civilizations. He saw Egypt, and later Rome, rise and fall. When the degradation was greatest, he saw Jesus appear in Transfiguration and Ascension. (We note that the Cross is skipped.) The pictures portrayed not only the past, but also the future, and indicated that the

condition of this United States of America is to be that of "peace, prosperity, spiritual illumination, and dominion."

Such is the story which multitudes have accepted as literally true. During the years of 1934-39, the Ballards toured the country, holding classes, open at first, but later closed to all except the loyal. Ascended Masters, notably Saint Germain, and sometimes one of the lesser deities such as Jesus (!), assertedly sent their "decrees" through the lips of the Ballards, their announcers, and printed pages of *Voice of the I AM*. "Time and again the writer sat among the huge assemblage at the Shrine Civic Auditorium in Los Angeles and heard the smooth-tongued announcer say: 'Dear ones, these blessed Messengers (the Ballards) today are occupying the place that Jesus the Christ occupied 2,000 years ago!' (Gerald B. Bryan: *Psychic Dictatorship in America*, p. 194).

These self-styled "Messengers" had rapidly risen from obscurity to fame and fortune by bringing forth as a new Messiah to back up their every "decree," the eighteenth century French Comte de St. Germain. Would this "show" last forever? The I AM books teach as a cardinal doctrine the possibility of physical ascension without death. For instance, an "elderly brother" sat in a golden chair, the "atomic accelerator." After "his hair had returned to its original color . . . the lines faded from his face, and his flesh became the pink of perfect health," and he disappeared in a "dazzling radiance" (*Mystic Presence*, p. 84). (Thieves and robbers who would climb up any way other than God's should read John 10:1.)

(Continued on page 14)

SATAN'S ATTACKS UPON THE RESURRECTION

By HERBERT V. CANEDAY

We can better understand the false religious systems and their refusal to accept the Biblical teaching of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, when we first realize that all Satanic hatred is centered upon the person and work of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan has always been active to nullify the purpose for which Jesus came into this world.

I. Satan's Sinister Scheme

Centuries before Jesus' birth, Satan sought repeatedly to cut off the family line through which the Scriptures declared He was to be born. Failing of that, the Devil used King Herod as his tool to attempt to kill the infant Christ. When that had failed and Jesus came to the beginning of His ministry, Satan sought through the temptation in the wilderness to short-circuit Him from His divinely appointed purpose. Defeated again in his hellish scheme, Satan instigated several attempts upon the life of Christ through the medium of unbelieving men; but always these wicked men and their father, the Devil, were restrained from fulfillment of their evil purpose.

II. Satan's Short Supremacy

At long last Satan seemed successful as the hosts of darkness closed in upon the Son of God on the night of His betrayal, followed by His trial and crucifixion. How Satan must have rejoiced when the lifeless body of the Son of God was laid in the tomb! Then with masterly forethought, he incited the chief priests to request the setting of the Roman guard to watch the tomb. Can you not almost see the high carnival of hellish glee among

the wicked spirits of the nether world through those three days and three nights that the body of our Lord lay in that garden tomb? While hell rejoiced, the blackness of despair settled upon the hearts of the disciples. Their hopes had died with Jesus. Death, the dread result of sin, had reached all the way from earth to heaven to snatch the life of the eternal Son of God who had left those realms of glory. Sorrow and amazement must have dazed the angels as they watched those dreadful events from the galleries of heaven. The hosts of heaven were sad; but the armies of hell were glad for those three dismal days and nights while a band of Roman soldiers (God's creatures) guarded the tomb where lay the body of the incarnate Creator. This was the great day, the climax of Satan's wicked career.

III. Satan's Sudden Subversion

Hell's jubilation could still be unbounded today if only that tomb still held Jesus' dead body. The Devil would not mind all the finest tributes of praise men might heap upon the memory of that great Man of Galilee if He could only have been held in the shackles of death. That Old Serpent would gladly have stimulated a project to raise the world's most magnificent mausoleum over the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth if only that tomb could still contain His dead body to this present hour. But all such thoughts were dashed to nothingness on that glorious morning when the angel rolled back the stone from the mouth of the empty tomb and announced to the sorrowing women, "He is not here; for He is risen." Heaven and earth rejoiced while

the gloom and despair of eternal defeat settled upon the world of evil spirits and wicked men who had plotted together for Jesus' death.

Jesus' bodily resurrection meant the utter undoing of all the age-long purposes of Satan's rebellion against God. The Devil's crafty program had gone out of his control, as God had turned Satan's seeming victory into his crushing defeat. Jesus had predicted that, "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17, 18). In resurrection power He had fulfilled His word, "having spoiled principalities and powers (of Satan) He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15).

Now Satan knew that Jesus' resurrection would give life and power to the message of salvation through Jesus' death and life. Men would be snatched from Satan's kingdom of darkness if they heard and believed this good news. No wishful thinking could turn back the course of events. Jesus could not be slain again, for He was immortal, alive forevermore. If Satan was to salvage anything from his kingdom of evil and darkness, he must do something and be quick about it.

IV. Satan's Substitute Strategy

Almost within the hour after the announcement of Jesus' resurrection, Satan had men at work to carry out his plan to nullify the good news of hope and life eternal through a risen Savior. The soldiers of the Roman guard were the first to bring the word of the resurrection to the ears of the Jewish authorities who then bribed them with a rich reward if they would temporarily endanger their lives by declaring

falsely, "His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept." They knew that death was the penalty for sleeping on guard duty; but the Jewish elders said, "If this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him (tell him the truth) and secure you (save you from the death penalty)" (Matt. 28:11-15).

Thus was launched the first in a long succession of lies in denial of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Satan knew even then that if men would believe this lie, they would be as effectively cut off from all hope of salvation as they would have been if Jesus' body could have been kept forever in that tomb. As this lie is a negation of the fact, it puts those who believe this lie into the position of having a dead Christ Who cannot save from sin. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain . . . ye are yet in your sins . . . then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (I Cor. 15:14-18).

Satan has his modern systems of false cults and isms which still deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, and thereby he continues to cut men off from God's way of salvation through the risen Redeemer.

Nothing could be plainer than that one must believe in His resurrection to become a possessor of salvation. Romans 10:9.

Every religious system that denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ brands itself as having the spirit of antichrist. "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (I John 4:3). That is not that He *once* came in the flesh;

but that He *is* come in the flesh, that He *is now* in the flesh. There is a man in glory today, Jesus Christ in a glorified immortal body of flesh and bone—the same in which He suffered and died. Let us examine some of the cults and note their false and antichrist teaching on this important question.

The so-called Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the man Christ Jesus is forever dead, that He suffered extinction of being (annihilation if you please). They further declare that His body was supernaturally removed from the tomb or else dissolved into gases ("Studies in the Scriptures" vol. II, pp. 129-130; and "The Truth Shall Make You Free" p. 264). When they speak of His supposed resurrection, they say it was a spiritual resurrection, by which they plainly mean the raising of His spirit. Such is absurd, since the Bible nowhere speaks of the death of man's spirit, but we remember that Jesus said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing" (John 20:27). Thomas was not deceived; he saw, touched, and believed. Will you believe?

Christian Science seeks to circumvent the resurrection by denying that Jesus Christ ever died (Unity of Good p. 62). They adopt the swoon theory (Science and Health pp. 44, 45, 46) and teach that the coolness of the tomb revived Him, and there, in refuge from His foes He spent the three days and nights in meditation on the principles of Christian Science. When His disciples saw Him after His crucifixion, (not resurrection) they learned that He had not died. However, we have the testimony of eye witnesses who verify for us the fact that He did

die. Among them are Luke (the beloved physician), John, Peter, the Roman soldiers, the women at the cross, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathæa who prepared His body for burial. These were not deceived. We do well to believe their testimony.

Among others who refuse to accept the Bible record of the resurrection of Jesus' body are the false religious systems known as New Thought, Unity, Theosophy, Swedenborgianism, Mormonism, Rosicrucianism, Modernism, and many more that bear the mark of the antichrist denial that Jesus is in the flesh today. Surely there must be some logical reason why all of these unite in this Satanic conspiracy to reject the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. The answer is not hard to find.

The first reason for that unbelief is found in the fact that, like those Jewish authorities who bribed the guards, men today do not want to believe that Jesus of Nazareth is more than a mere man. If He was raised from the dead, He then stands unique and alone among men, above all men, and more than a man. His resurrection is the loudest kind of testimony to the fact of His Deity. His Deity is a bright and shining light that reveals the horrible hideousness of man's sin.

The very fact that God, the Creator of man, chose to live incognito among men and that He was unrecognized, rejected, shamed, and crucified by the human race is a greater disgrace upon mankind than most unregenerate hearts care to face. Truth is a soul-searching light, and Jesus said, "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20). Jesus' resurrection and His ascension into

the heavens is a stinging reproof to this world that men would seek to avoid (see John 16:7-11).

Another logical reason for this Satan inspired unbelief is the fact that men well know that if Jesus Christ did rise from that tomb in a glorified body of flesh and bones, then He is beyond the reach of their human hands as an object of their venomous hatred today. With a fiendish desire to pull Him from the skies, men can loudly deny His resurrection life, and make to themselves an impotent, dead Jesus inferior to themselves according to their deluded minds. Thus He can be reviled, defamed, and mocked anew by unholy lips without consciousness of guilt before God.

Yet again there stands the further fact that if Jesus' resurrection is not a myth, then He is indeed the Master of death and the grave. Thereby He would possess the power over sinful men both living and dead, that could spell out the eternal ruin of every rejector of His message of life. Here, too, man's fears are well founded, for the glorified Christ declared such to be the true case in Rev. 1:18 R.V. "I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore: Amen; and have the keys of hades and of death." Hades holds the souls of the wicked dead; while death holds the body. Jesus vanquished both and holds the keys of both. Thereby He controls the power that will raise all men from the dead. What a terrifying thought that is to unbelievers! Again the cultist's denial of Jesus' resurrection will ease his mind from that torturing thought.

Lastly, religious unbelievers follow Satan's strategy in a vain attempt to deny that God has either the right or the ability to bring the

ungodly into judgment. Any denial of Jesus' resurrection would also refute His authority and power to be judge of mankind. If the Judge is dead, there can be no day of judgment. However, the Judge is not dead—but He is "alive forevermore" (Rev. 1:180). Moreover His resurrection is the pledge and seal of God's declaration that there will be a judgment day for lost men. "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). His resurrection is proof and assurance that He is the Judge, and that every unsaved person will be raised to be judged by Him. A denial may ease the awareness of impending doom; but it will not change the fact of its sure occurrence.

That same resurrection of Jesus Christ that spells the eternal doom of the unbeliever is also the satisfying pledge and assurance of a glorious resurrection for every believing child of God. Jesus' power over the tomb will bring you joy or pain, gladness or despair, rapture or anguish according to whether you have received or rejected Him as your Lord and Savior. "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to be called the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name." John 1:12. Believe, receive Him and you will rejoice in the certainty of the fact that "Blessed and holy is he which hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

WHEN FAITH IS SCARCE ON EARTH

By PROF. JOHN E. DAHLIN

Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?

Luke 18:7 and 8

Throughout the Gospel narratives, we find that Jesus used the question and answer method to drive home spiritual truth. That such a method has merit we find verified in both Protestantism and Catholicism through their use of the catechism. Our Lord was the incomparable teacher, however, and a vast field of truth is opened by this *one question*.

First of all, our Lord makes it plain that prior to His return there will be a scarcity of faith on this earth. In other words, there will be a tapering off in this precious element as we approach the end of the age. "When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" In a strict dispensational recognition of the text, it may refer to His coming in glory, and not the rapture of the church. But it is only obvious that the same spiritual tendency will be characteristic on earth throughout the entire brief period, which brings the whole age to its close.

The text suggests at our Lord's return other characteristics will become unusually prominent: Our Lord will doubtless find, at His return, a great expansion in forms of godliness, but a denial of the power thereof (II Tim. 3:5). Indeed, there will be a superabundance of externalism as e.g., systems of religion, rituals, and ceremonies. Religious movements will become more numerous and prominent the closer we move towards the end of the dispensation. For several decades we have seen a stepped-up tempo of works which may be classified as humanitarianism. In

fact, the Federal Council of Churches which emerged in 1908 officially embraced the Social Gospel. The recent World Council with all its humanitarianism and religious activity manifests an even greater degree of this type of emphasis.

I think the text suggests the Lord will find a more highly polished priesthood and ministerial leadership and prominence than in any other age. When has the clergy put such emphasis on training as now? It is not our purpose to discredit education and training for the church, but the supreme danger is men are prone to put a chief reliance upon it. Yes, our Lord will find at His return polished preachers who are careful so as not to offend anyone; musical organizations capable of rendition of the most excellent productions and concerts; the emphasis being placed on quality and the richness of religious organizations; and cultural and artistic gifts being given even greater prominence in our age. All of this may be classified as the form of godliness, since the emphasis is given to the external, and not to the true spiritual element.

In the text our Lord is *not depicted* as being anxious concerning the external attainment in churchianity, but rather in regard to the quality of the *inner life* of the church and the individual believer. The Church of Laodicea, which typifies the last period of the church age, had a great abundance of external activities. In other words, it was a smoothly organized church. It considered itself in need of noth-

ing. But our Lord said, "Thou art wretched, and miserable and poor, and blind, and naked. . . . I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire . . . and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Our Lord had been crowded out, due to the many activities and programs of the church.

At the close of the age, and at the time of our Lord's return, there will be a scarcity of belief in God's power. We see already how the premium is given to great gifts, and to smoothly organized programs. Great personalities are brought in to spearhead these many projects. Human power, cleverness, and promotional wonders often displace a reliance on divine power. All this we find despite the unalterable fact of Scripture that faith is the basic element. It is still true "That without faith it is impossible to please God; for him that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." There is a desperate need for reliance upon God's power, yet there is an astonishing scarcity now of faith in that divine power. More and more self-reliance and human resourcefulness in religion are characteristic of the age as it draws to its close.

Again, there will be an increasing scarcity of faith in the divine methods as we reach the end of the age. God's program in this dispensation is laid down in Acts 15:14-16 "To visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. . . . After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down. . . ." The marching order of the church is to bring the message of the Gospel to all nations. Jesus said, "Ye shall be my witnesses." There are those

in our present generation who seem to feel it has hit upon a better method, which is to federate, or bring together scores of denominations in a world church, and the purpose of which is to promote humanitarianism, brotherhood, improvement in the social, economic and religious areas of life—in other words, to bring in a better world through the social gospel approach.

That the World Council of Churches has substituted for the New Testament program its *own* program, was clearly manifest when it voted down decisively last summer at the Evanston Conclave its belief both in the personal return of our Lord, and in God's special dispensational program for His own nation Israel. The hope of the World Council is not in Christ's return, but in humanitarianism, in religion, and in the Social program of the church. If our Lord came today, He would find that by and large throughout Christendom, the original method has been superseded by one that seems more expedient. Faith in the New Testament method is rapidly vanishing in the present-day church. Instead of emphasizing the new birth, the modern church is insisting on rearing people into Christianity. Of the early church, however, it is said, "God added to the church daily those that were saved." The divine methods are blessedly simple, but Christendom is insisting on its own program; faith in the divine method is tapering off now with alarming rapidity.

The climactic thought in the text is reached in the words, "Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him?" Our Lord was concerned that there be those who never cease to cry day

and night unto Him. Our Lord is primarily concerned that we will be awake and that our lamps be burning in the midnight hour. Paul also writes, "It is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. . . ." Jesus is anxious, and we might say even worried, lest we fall in line with the spirit of the age and be found among those who say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" The spiritual sleep about which both Christ and Paul speak is characteristic of modern churchianity. Truly millions are satisfied with the mere forms of godliness. Yes, every year religious leaders boast about a new high in national church membership. And almost every respectable person wants to masquerade in the cloak of religion and external piety. Christ is concerned with life. He wants to find those who cry day and night unto Him; those who never let go, but who plead and pray and look for His return from heaven. The personal experience is what counts in Christianity. It is often obscured by all this chatter about religious piety and externalism. We need to get back to the fundamentals and emphasize the personal element in Christianity.

A preacher of the old school was out on his visitation evangelism. One day he stopped his buggy in front of a cottage and, walking to the door, knocked. A woman plainly clad, opened to him. He said, "Does Jesus live here?" Her face flushed and she did not answer. Again, he asked the same question, and getting no response he turned away to call at the next door. But the woman went immediately into the back yard where her husband was chop-

ping wood and said to him, "A strange man came to our door a few moments ago and asked if Jesus lived here." Her husband's attention was aroused, and he said, "Of course you told him that we belong to the church down the road; that we attend regularly; that we are religious; and that we contribute generously to the church?" "Oh, no," she said, "He didn't ask me that; he simply asked, 'Does Jesus live here?'" The supreme question we need to face is, does Jesus live in our hearts? Religion, externalism—that is, forms and ceremonies—do not produce spiritual life. Neither can such be substitutes for the shining hope of the church, which is our Lord's return. All around us we witness an increasing scarcity of real Scriptural faith. This is significant, I think, in the light of the fact that every New Testament writer points to the oncoming apostacy. Paul refers to it as "a falling away" prior to our Lord's return. Pure, unadulterated faith is rare, and it will become increasingly scarce the nearer we reach the end of the age.

Fortunately God's true children will still possess true faith to the end, but they will be in the minority. The author of Hebrews, while depicting a turning away from Christ, says, "We are persuaded better things of you" (Heb. 6:9). Born again believers are "the children of light" no matter how wide the apostacy will become. Real spiritual discernment is exceptionally scarce in all religious circles. There is hardly any other commodity so scarce in the realm of churchianity. "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

(Continued from page 6)

But on Dec. 29, 1939, Guy Ballard, after weeks of agony, *died* and according to California death certificate No. 17697, District No. 1901, his body was cremated. Edna Ballard was entirely capable of carrying on, and all her resourcefulness was needed — first, to make the most of the event in a dramatic announcement of her co-founder's "Ascension"; second, to explain that it ushered in a new dispensation, during which ascension may *follow* death; third, to meet the crisis indicated by the following *Associated Press* dispatches of July 24, 1940: "A federal grand jury . . . indicted 24 leaders of the I AM Foundation, a nation-wide movement reported to have a million converts, on charges of fraudulent use of the mails . . . Assistant U. S. attorney who presented the case to the grand jury, said the I AM cultists had collected close to \$3,000,000 . . ." The case was carried to the U. S. Supreme Court twice, and although the government's charges of fraud were sustained, the case was invalidated. Banned from California and from the use of the mails, the woman who issues the "decrees" still has telegraph and express services. So the movement *moves* — underground.

Even this brief look at the Mighty I AM, should cause us to heed our Lord's warning, "Beware of the false teachers—men who come to you in sheep's fleeces, but beneath that disguise they are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15, Weymouth)—false teachers holding out false hopes for health, wealth, and spiritual weal!

Could deception be more cruel than these promises? "You can renew any nerve, any organ, and build any member of the body into

its perfection almost immediately" (*The I AM Discourses*, p. 42.). Aged and infirm folk, if "without God and without hope in the world," are attracted, as moths to the flame by this: "You . . . who are in the neighborhood of 60 years . . . in 6 weeks *can* be as strong, firm, and active as you were in your fullest youth" (*Voice of the I AM*, Sept. 1937, p. 16).

For every human desire, the evil tree called the Mighty I AM has an attractive plum. How many hands must have grasped for this! "To you who have had a struggle financially . . . if you will only make your earnest application, I assure you that all obstructions will be removed from your pathway" (*Voice of the I AM*, Dec. 1938, p. 7).

How different God's promises! See Psalm 91:15; II Corinthians 12:9; Matthew 8:20; I Timothy 6:8-10; I Corinthians 1:26; Philippians 4:19.

To take false teachers' guidance to health or wealth is bad enough, but to take their word regarding the way to God and heaven is the irreparable tragedy. The I AM's counterfeit "Jesus" is made to say, by means of Edna Ballard's typewriter, the Saint Germain Press, and the *Voice* of February 1937, p. 6: "It is My determination to break down within the concepts of mankind the feeling that Saint Germain should not be accepted as Myself." But read about the real Jesus in such scriptures as Philippians 2:5-11; Acts 4:14; Revelation 5:12, 13.

Ballardism, this false I AM ("I AM—of the devil"), blasphemously teaches that Jesus freed Himself from the bondage of sin and materialism by constantly asserting "I

(Continued on page 15)

THE MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR I AM

(Continued from page 14)

am . . ." and that we can do the same! "In the days of His flesh," Jesus' enemies recognized that when He said, "I am," He was claiming deity. He and He alone, had and has every right to this claim and this meaningful name. When Moses heard a voice from the burning bush say, "I AM THAT I AM," (Exodus 3:14), he knew that he was listening to God, the self-existent One. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ find His "I AM" name like a blank check to be filled out for every need. The Infinite One is the only significant figure, and we may add the ciphers. He says, "*I am Alpha and Omega*" . . . "*I am that Bread*

of life" . . . "*I am the Good Shepherd . . . "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me"* (Revelation 1:8; John 6:48; 8:12; 10:11; 14:16).

Why does anyone accept Satan's counterfeit? The solemn answer is in II Thessalonians 2:7-12. Satan will exhibit "power and signs and lying wonders." They who have not "the love of the truth" will "believe a lie." If embedded within your heart and soul there is *the love of the truth*, you will shun the satanic cult called The Mighty I AM, and will turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, who in truth said, "*I am . . . the Truth.*"

"**THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS**" edited by J. N. D. Anderson has for its aim to provide a short factual account of the history, philosophy, and practice of seven of the great religions of the world. The authors of the various sections are all men who have studied these religions in the countries where they are most widely practiced. A book of this kind faces the reader with the necessity of deciding what his attitude to these religions shall be. In a final chapter the editor discusses this problem in the light of the Christian faith.

Thirteen Members of the American Scientific Affiliation have written "**MODERN SCIENCE AND CHRISTIAN FAITH**" particularly for use by Christian students and workers when called upon to deal with spiritual problems and intellectual difficulties of a modern world steeped in science. Each chapter is written by one or more members, each a Christian and a specialist in his field. The book treats the points of contact between the inspired record of the Bible and the various scientific fields.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

We are a non-profit organization. Our work is carried on by voluntary workers who are interested in the work of pointing out the truth in God's Word exposing error proclaimed by the "cults" and others. Our office rent, telephone bills, office supplies, postage, etc., are paid for, to a large extent, by friends of the work. Our Board Members frequently have to dig into their pockets for more cash with which to meet the bills. They, and quite a few others, are sacrificing that this work may continue. No one receives any remuneration for his services. Our sole object is to prevent souls from going astray and to rescue those who have gone astray.

We solicit your prayers and any financial aid you may be able to give to this work. Much more could be accomplished if we had the funds necessary for expanding the work.

PUZZLING QUESTIONS AND DISCERNING ANSWERS

By PASTOR "MAC"

Question . . . Do you know any good book that will help me to understand the teachings of Jehovah Witnesses?

Answer . . . Yes, we finally have one good book that is very excellent in this particular field. Walter R. Martin and Norman H. Klann just published this book under the title of "Jehovah of the Watchtower." It is published by Biblical Truth Publishing Society, Inc. After you study this book, you will understand clearly why the Jehovah of the Bible is not the Jehovah of so called Jehovah's Witnesses!

Question . . . Do you think that Christians should permit members of a cult to come into their home and explain what they believe and teach?

Answer . . . NO! We have already been warned about this in the Word of God. Read carefully verses seven through eleven in the Second Epistle of John. If there is any question in your mind about them as a cult, ask them—before you invite them into your home—what they believe about the Deity of Jesus Christ. Make them be specific and to the point because the average member of a cult is an expert at arguing around the point. Another pointed question that I always like to ask people who are involved in some cult is this: "If I should accept what you teach, WHEN do I get eternal life?" Only the Word of God offers through the Gospel of Jesus Christ eternal life in the PRESENT tense. Try this out and you will see that it is a key question.

Question . . . Why it is so difficult to win to Christ someone who is already involved in a cult religion?

Answer . . . I have noticed that this is also true and especially when they have gone so far as to become a full member of it. There is hope if you can get to them when they first begin to become interested, or if they have been raised in some cult but have never taken up with it personally. Then you must take into consideration the Satanic deception present in the cults.

A recent book that will give you a good understanding of this is "Biblical Demonology" by Merrill F. Unger. He devotes the entire tenth chapter to Biblical Demonology and Heresy. We need to remember that it is a deadly thing to go into a cult and the Scripture warns us "to try the spirits." Only when a person is willing to listen to the Word of God can he be led out of darkness (II Cor. 4:1-6).

Our present pagan worldly-mindedness, our frantic thinking about building a better world after this or that war, our emphasis on social service and freedom from physical want blind us to the other-worldiness of many whom we call heathen. The sincere and devout Moslem, Hindu, and Buddhist are always thinking of what happens after their span of life is over. Death is not the end of the road, but a portal to eternal bliss or woe for each individual.

For men like that we need not a social gospel, but one of eternal life and joy and peace through the risen Saviour.