

# COUNTDOWN TO THE GREAT TRIBULATION

**“The Russian Prime Minister, Primakov, declared today at the world economic summit in Davos, Switzerland, that although Russia is currently preoccupied by serious economic difficulties, Moscow remains a great power whose views must be considered in global politics discussions. He said that Moscow opposes a ‘unipolar’ world - an apparent reference to the preeminent position held by the USA.**

**In spite of its current economic difficulties, Russia is still a strong military power, with great resources and military potential, he said. Although its current economic problems will take at least a year to resolve, they are a temporary phenomenon which would not prevent Russia from playing an active role in international diplomacy.”** (*Radio Free Europe*, February 1, 1999).

It seems an awfully long time since the Russian Prime Minister, Yevgeni Primakov, made that statement, yet that was only earlier this year. Our times are moving so fast it is hard to keep up with world developments anymore. Russia is now having its third Prime Minister since then.

We have been expecting this kind of assertiveness from the Russian leaders for some time now, and when it came it did not surprise us. But it raised a few eyebrows among those who have written Russia off as a superpower years ago.

Ever since the Soviet Union was signed out of existence in 1991, we have continually warned the world that Russia would rise once again and be the main player in the end-time nuclear holocaust – known in the Bible as the great tribulation. So when we heard of Primakov’s statement, we were curious what the mainstream media had to say about it. This is what we found in *The Australian*:

“It would take Russia at least a year to pull out of its economic crises, but its economic woes would not prevent it playing an active role in international diplomacy, Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov said at the weekend. He told the World Economic Forum annual gathering that Russia’s economic problems were a “temporary phenomenon” and even if “it will take time and probably more than a year to get out of these dire straits . . . it will not do anything to prevent Russia playing an active role” in international diplomacy. In the Middle East, in Kosovo” and elsewhere “we are going to play a positive role in all these places”, Mr. Primakov said. “The difficult economic situation does not create the best conditions in which to pursue an active foreign policy. We want to use our influence in order to stabilize the situation.” (*The Australian*, February 1, 1999).

Can you detect the differences between the two accounts? No mention of Russia’s great military potential, or its opposition to a “unipolar” world in *The Australian*. In other words, no mention of its claim to superpower status alongside the USA. Nothing but a benign claim to playing an active role in international diplomacy in order to “stabilize the situation”.

Since the beginning of our work, it has been our policy to send our magazines to national and religious leaders, and to media representatives, as part of our efforts to witness the restored Gospel of the Kingdom of God to as many people as possible. Early in our work, we received a reply from the religious writer of *The Australian* who told us among other things that he “always answers letters”. We took that to mean that he wanted us to continue sending him our magazines, which we did. That was the first and last we heard from him, but that was not the end of our communication.

In our very first edition, we revealed that the time was ripe for the fulfillment of a major biblical prophecy: the visit to Israel of the head of the Catholic Church. This is what we wrote then.

“Because three major world religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – claim [Jerusalem] as a central place for their faiths, the only possible solution is to make that an international city. That way we would also have the conditions for a Pope to visit that city. Did you know that no Pope ever visited Jerusalem in two thousand years of Christianity? Only one Pope will God Almighty allow to step foot on that land, and most likely he will come to inaugurate the ‘new era of peace!’ When that happens, be ready for Armageddon.” (*The Christian Herald*, No 1, 1990, p. 16).

Only a few months later, the Vatican announced that the Pope would indeed like to visit Jerusalem as “a messenger of peace”. We were taken by surprise by that announcement because we did not expect it to come so soon. As it turned out, that event was still almost a decade away. But after a few false starts, we know for sure now that that event is scheduled to take place sometimes in the year 2000. In subsequent editions of *The Christian Herald*, we discussed the implications of that visit, and explained that it would take place after a new leader took over in Russia from Yeltsin. We understood from biblical prophecies that Yeltsin would not be the man responsible for the end-time nuclear holocaust (For a detailed analysis of those prophecies see *The Christian Herald*s Nos 3 & 4).

But then we were taken by surprise by an article in *The Australian*, signed by its religious editor, which said that the Pope’s visit would take place no later than 1995. Being an ordained preacher, we assumed that he had inside knowledge about this event. So for a while, that put us in a conundrum – we just could not see how that could happen so soon. But when that date passed and his prediction did not eventuate, it became obvious that he had expressed not an informed opinion, but his own personal desire. He was very anxious for that visit to take place as soon as possible. Why? Because that would have made us false prophets. Russia could not have had a new leader by then, and the Pope’s visit would not have fulfilled the most important prophecy of our time.

Afterwards, we noticed a peculiar change in the editorial policy of this newspaper. As we continued to point out the perilous condition of the world, and the increasing tribulations it was experiencing since the beginning of this decade, which coincided with the beginning of our work, this newspaper began to play the Devil’s advocate.

Natural disasters? Nothing unusual compared to previous times. Environmental degradation? Nothing that cannot be repaired. Danger of nuclear holocaust? The world has entered a peaceful and prosperous new age. Overpopulation? The earth could accommodate many times more people than it does now. Famine? Only a matter of distributing the resources evenly. Warming of the planet? The earth is experiencing one of its many cycles. And so they went, the more we pointed out that these are the preceding signs and stages to the great tribulation, the more they reassured their readers that there is nothing to worry about.

Nothing in the world seemed to disturb these people. But in their effort to present a rosy picture of the world, they emaciated and sanitized their paper so badly, one could no longer get an accurate picture of the world from its pages. So we had no choice but to give up wasting out time on their newspaper.

We relied instead on *The Sydney Morning Herald*, by far the most informed and insightful newspaper in Australia, and on a handful of other local and international publications. But when it came to Primakov's statement, even those at the *SMH* seemed to take fright by ignoring it altogether. This was the more surprising since only days earlier they acknowledged in an important article that western media made a mistake in the way it looked at Russia. This is what they said:

### **“Blind to an unholy alliance”**

“There are sinister echoes of the rise of National Socialism in moves for a Slavic union. Its hardly surprising that Western media keep missing important – and troubling – political trends in Moscow; it just reflects our total preoccupation with Russia's financial meltdown. Such preoccupation with economics might have been excused in the heady days of President Yeltsin's power. The trouble is that its not just Yeltsin but an entire era is fading from the picture, and a new and dangerous one looms while we refuse to see its omens. One can't help but recall the Western press of the early 1930s, still engrossed in the Weimar Republic's financial agony, on the verge of the Nazi takeover of Germany.

Some of the omens ignored by our media include the visit to Russia of Vojislav Seselj, the Vice-Premier of Serbia, as well as his sensational appeal for a Slavic Union of Russia, Yugoslavia and Belarus. Of course, Seselj is habitually called the “mad dog” of Serbian nationalism, an “irreconcilable” next to whom even Slobodan Milosevic looks like a moderate. What's really important, though, is that in the Russian city of Yaroslavl, Seselj's appeal got a standing ovation.

Missed as well was the Belarus President Alexander G. Lukashenko's depiction of Ukraine as a betrayer of the common Slavic cause. Seselj and Lukashenko are politicians, not amateur travellers. Unlike our media, they must have smelled change in Moscow's political air. Why else would they bother suddenly forging an alliance with Russia's own “irreconcilables”, the anti-Western nationalists who have worked hard for the last seven years trying to provoke a confrontation with the West?

For all their ravings about the Zionist conspiracy deliberately ruining Russia, these gentlemen were until now of limited value to their Serb and Belarus brethren. With Yeltsin in the Kremlin and lacking a credible and popular leader, they had no chance to change radically Russia's foreign policy. Not any more, though, not when they are rallying behind a formidable presidential contender in Yuri Luzhkov, the Mayor of Moscow. If so, their political program would seem to deserve some media scrutiny. Especially the points that are of such concern to Seselj and Lukashenko:

- The immediate Anschluss of Belarus, which for Russia would be the same as Austria's consolidation with Germany in 1938.
- The return to Russia of the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol (compare it with Hitler's demand for the return of Danzig on the eve of World War II).
- The creation of a Slavic Union of Russia –Belarus, Yugoslavia and Ukraine, which Lukashenko intends to lead. If the “treasonous” Ukrainian leadership refuses to join the ranks, Seselj and Lukashenko will threaten a civil war – 10 million Russians, after all, live in Ukraine.

So what happens if Luzhkov wins the presidential elections? Given that he is one of the most fervent champions of incorporating Belarus as well as of the return of Sevastopol, some kind of Russian-Ukrainian confrontation would be on the cards. If that occurs, its hard to imagine the US not intervening on behalf of Ukraine. And here we see clearly what Seselj and Lukashenko are up to – US intervention is all that the “irreconcilables” need to turn Russia into a Serbia-in-making.

Russia would be ruined economically, just as Serbia is. Yet, again like Serbia, Russia would be fuelled by an all-consuming “patriotic” fervour of imperial restoration. It's easy to envisage what the emergence of such a nuclear mega-Serbia would mean. Just imagine the mayhem that Iraq in the Middle East or Serbia in the Balkans might create if allowed to operate with impunity behind a Russian nuclear shield.

Yes, this is a worst case scenario. The Russian “irreconcilables” may not come to terms with Luzhkov – though it's hard to see why they wouldn't. And Luzhkov himself may be defeated in the elections (though it's hard to guess by whom). Still, it's hardly wise to give him a helping hand by sticking to the course designed by the International Monetary Fund, which generates only misery in Russia and nationalist outrage towards the West. It's not too late to realise that what the West has been doing to Russia in the last seven years is a carbon copy of what it did to Weimar Germany in the 1920s. Should we be surprised if identical policies produce identical results?

The whole thing looks more bizarre when we recall that a remarkable generation of Americans after World War II rejected those failed Weimar policies of financial manipulation in favour of a solid strategy of reconciliation of former enemies – a strategy crowned with success in both Japan and in Germany. We didn't give them money then that could be stolen just as it has in Russia. We modernised their industries instead. Why not follow George Marshall and Dean Acheson, fashioners of the Marshall Plan? Why refuse to face the fact that radical reform is needed, not just by Russia's economy but in our own policies as well?

First things first, however. Right now our main preoccupation in Moscow must be to assure that in the next five years there is no Russian Milosevic in the Kremlin – if only because there must still be a Russia after 2000 willing to accept a reformed Western policy.” (*Alexander Yanov, Sydney Morning Herald, December 30, 1998*).

So, “the Western media keep missing important – and troubling – political trends in Moscow”. Isn't this what we have been saying for nearly a decade now? But nobody took us seriously because we looked at the world in light of biblical prophecies, and you can't take seriously a man who says that the world is proceeding exactly as God had determined thousands of years ago, can you? But then, when were God's people taken seriously by this world?

# FALSE PROPHETS AND PROPHECIES

**“Today, we refuse to learn from the signs of history. And some of those signs are happening inside that very same nation – Germany! Our peoples are again refusing to see what is really happening. Germany is prophesied to rise one last time, again to be the enemy of America and Britain (Isa. 10:5-7; “Assyria” is the ancient name of Germany). God helped us in World War II. But God has prophesied that He will oppose us in World War III, unless we repent. “Any good watchman looks for disquieting signs and warns his people. God has given me a watchtower from which to warn our people today.” (*The Philadelphia Trumpet*, January 1999).**

This is what Gerard Flurry wrote in his magazine *The Philadelphia Trumpet* of January 1999. If you do not know who Gerard Flurry is, you will find out shortly. Sufficient to say here that judging by the speed with which he expands his religious empire, and the number of television stations that carry his message, he appears to be the most successful preacher in the world at the present.

As you can see, according to this man, it is not Russia and China that represent a great danger to the world, but Germany. So sure is he of this fact, that he gave us biblical references to check them for ourselves. So let us do just that, let us see what Isaiah 10:5-7 has to say.

"Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger  
And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.

I will send him against an ungodly nation,  
And against the people of My wrath I will give him charge,  
To seize the spoil, to take the prey,  
And to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

Yet he does not mean so,  
Nor does his heart think so;  
But it is in his heart to destroy,  
And cut off not a few nations."

Can you see Britain, the USA, and World War III in this prophecy? Or can you see a Germany capable of "treading down like the mire of the street" both Britain and the USA in a very short time? Yet this is what this man wants us to read in this passage. Or at least, this is what he reads in this passage.

It is true that Germany was the Assyria of old, and that this nation was the rod of God's anger through much of history, the First and Second World Wars being only the most recent examples, but Germany does not feature as a main protagonist in the end-time global tribulation. One of the prophecies dealing with that time, which Gerard Flurry conveniently ignores, is found in the book of Ezekiel. See if you can identify which nations it refers to, and whether Germany is among them.

Ezek 38:1 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say,

Ezek 38:3 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.

Ezek 38:4 "I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.

Ezek 38:5 "Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet;

Ezek 38:6 "Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops; many people are with you.

Ezek 38:7 "Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them.

Ezek 38:8 "After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. "You will ascend, coming like a storm,

Ezek 38:9 covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you. "'Thus says the Lord GOD:

Ezek 38:10 "On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan:

Ezek 38:11 "You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates';

Ezek 38:12 "to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land.

Ezek 38:13 "Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?'"

Ezek 38:14 "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know it?"

Ezek 38:15 "Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army.

Ezek 38:16 "You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes."

Add to this the following prophecy from the book of Revelation, dealing with the same event, and you have an even better picture of which countries it might refer to.

Rev 9:13 "Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet,  
Rev 9:14 "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."  
Rev 9:15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.  
Rev 9:16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them."

Now even if you find it hard to accept that Rosh, Mesheck, and Tubal are Russia, Moscow and Tobolsk, as some people do, there are other factors in these statements which identify Russia, and its allies as the most likely protagonists in this end-time scenario.

- First, its location in the "far north". Look at a globe and see which country is far north of Israel, Germany or Russia?

- Second, look at its allies: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya. Persia is today's Iran. The Iranian leaders never stop talking about eliminating Israel. They are being feverishly armed, not by Germany, but by Russia. The same is true of Libya. Ethiopia still has a leftist Government. Primakov, a former KGB chief, has maintained close links with Saddam Hussein. He is the darling of many left leaning people and leaders around the world who keep hunkering for the good old communist times.

If you think that the aim of world revolution has come to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union, think again. The battle has merely shifted ground from the battlefield to the home. The shot gun, the machete, and the rope have been joined by the film, TV, radio, computer, printed media, and the education of your kids. The center of revolution is no longer Moscow, or Beijing, or Havana, but Hollywood, and the Education Departments of your own Government. They no longer aim to grab your material possessions and turn them into collective property, but the destruction of values, beliefs and philosophy that have held families together since the advent of civilized society. Parents are appalled at what their children learn and bring home from school these days. Kindergarten and primary school children know more about sex than their parents knew when they got married. A permissive environment is the surest way to destroy our society and prepare the groundwork for their revolutionary aims.

Even the Russians who helped bring down the old repressive Soviet system are having second thoughts about what they got themselves into – a recycled old Russian feudal system.

At a recent meeting between the leaders of Russia and China, President Yeltsin put his hand over his chest and said that China is very close to his heart. The two countries discovered that perhaps the old system served them best, if only it could be refined and ironed out. These countries have been courting each other with renewed vigor lately?

"Leaders unite to protect borders. Facing a growing threat from armed Islamic fundamentalists, the leaders of Russia, China and three Central Asian nations have signed a pact aimed at promoting security along their vast mutual borders. "The issue in question is the creation of a peace zone that would be unique for Asia along the common border of our five countries," said Russian President Mr Boris Yeltsin." (*SMH*, August 7, 1999).

"China-bound. Russia's President Boris Yeltsin will visit China in the northern autumn for a second meeting with President Jiang Zemin, the official Xinhua news agency said at the weekend. Beijing and Moscow are opposed to a "unipolar" post-Cold War world dominated by Washington." (*SMH*, August 30, 1999).

"Russia to sell jets to China in \$3billion deal. Russia has concluded a huge deal to sell advanced fighter planes to China according to reports from Khabarovsk, the region where the Sukhoi-30 aircraft are being made. . . If confirmed, the deal fits into China's strategy of edging closer to Moscow." (*SMH*, August 9, 1999).

We have come a long way since 1992 when President Yeltsin, hand in hand with President Bush, declared that Russia and the USA were no longer enemies but allies.

Yevgeni Primakov is not Russia's Prime Minister anymore, but he has emerged as a strong contender for next year's Presidential elections. Interestingly enough, the current Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, is also a former chief of Russia's Security apparatus. Which tells you who pulls the strings in Russia these days.

- Third, the army of two hundred million people is coming from the north-east across the Euphrates, not from the west from Germany. Germany could not gather an army of two hundred million people even if it co-opted the whole of Europe west of Russia into its camp, let alone only ten central European nations, whereas an alliance between Russia, Iran and China would make that a fait accompli.

Now let us consider what would be at stake for Germany to become such a colossal power. First it would need to develop a large arsenal of nuclear weapons. Then it would need to build their means of delivery – an enormous array of ballistic missiles, aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, destroyers, troop carriers, etc. – and a defensive system so accurate and powerful as to destroy all incoming nuclear missiles and bombers from Britain and the USA. And that assuming that these two nations do nothing to upgrade their already awesome nuclear capabilities. At present, no country on earth could build such a defensive system, the USA being merely in the initial stages of developing its Strategic Defense System. If a nuclear confrontation were to erupt between these

two countries, Britain alone could do enough damage to Germany to cripple that country for ever. The surviving population would have an impossible task surviving the nuclear contamination, let alone taking care of the injured, the irradiated, even the dead, in a country with ruined cities and devastated infrastructure.

And yet, Gerard Flurry assures us that Germany is about to cripple Britain and the USA instead.

Britain's nuclear capabilities are not directed against the likes of Russia, China, or some other far away power, against whom it would have little hope of winning a nuclear war, but as a deterrent against closer neighbors, Germany being the most obvious one. But after their unfortunate experience with Hitler, it is hard to imagine that the people of Germany would allow their democratic system to be undermined again by a lunatic who would drag them into a suicidal war.

Nuclear war requires above all else large uncontaminated area to serve as refuge for the survivors. That is why only countries the size of Russia, China, the USA, and possibly India, could ever countenance such a war. Right now, Russia, unlike Germany, has all the ingredients in place. It has a vast territory; a system which is inimical to the West; a religion which calls for the restoration of the old empire; and it is piling up even more sophisticated nuclear weapons on top of an already bloated military arsenal. And, unfortunately for the West, it also has the motive to launch a preemptive strike, for more and more of its politicians and military leaders are blaming the West for the economic morass in which it finds itself. All it needs now is a leader who listens to these disgruntled voices, and you have the great tribulation. Soon, it will get that one too. Many Russian generals believe that enough of their people can survive a nuclear war to be able to rise to world prominence again. That is why the United States takes this threat very seriously.

"It is almost 10 years since the Berlin Wall came down and people believe that the Cold War is over. Not so. The US Department of Energy has never conceded that the possession and possible use of nuclear weapons is an outdated and obsolete concept, and it is presently funding a program to design, build and test new nuclear weapons at a cost of \$4.5 billion a year over the next 10 to 15 years, which exceeds the annual average spending at the height of the Cold War. So extraordinary is this new endeavor that the department's Assistant Secretary of Defense Programs, Mr Victor Reis, described it as "a scientific and technical challenge perhaps as formidable as the Manhattan Project". This concept originated in 1994 when President Clinton announced a Nuclear Posture Review, calling for nuclear forces to remain a cornerstone of US defense posture for the foreseeable future, directing the Energy Department to design, fabricate and certify new nuclear warheads.

Two years later, on September 24, 1996, Clinton signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Now the nuclear weapons labs - Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore and Sandia - are designing and building huge supercomputers that will simulate actual nuclear testing, while at the same time testing sub-critical quantities of plutonium at the Nevada nuclear test site, thereby directly violating the spirit and the letter of the CTBT. Extraordinarily complex and expensive scientific experimental facilities are on the drawing board and under construction at the labs for "virtual" nuclear testing. These include the Dial Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test Facility, Advanced Hydrotest Facility, National Ignition Facility, Advanced Radiation Source and the Atlas Power Facility. Several of these machines are designed to simulate the turbulence within the Plutonium trigger in the nanoseconds before explosion. This is called hydrotesting.

Other exotic scientific procedures include high energy evaluation, gap analysis, spallation/ejection, aging evaluation, new design evaluation, dynamic material properties, gas cavity studies, fission ignition and burn, and radiation transport.

The nuclear Scientists at the labs will also study nuclear performance in flight, electromagnetic pulse, pulsed power source, simulation of radiation environments, stockpile to target sequence and hydrodynamics of solid rocket fuel.

In all, America is planning to develop a new arsenal of "modernised" weapons, many of low or moderate yield, to be fitted to an array of faster stealthier, longer range delivery platforms with sophisticated electronics, fully integrated into a 21st century "battlefield" controlled by satellite surveillance, remotely deployed sensor arrays and precision targeting.

According to military documents, the US is scheduled to maintain an arsenal of 10,000 nuclear weapons under START II - yet to be ratified by the Duma in Moscow - enough to produce nuclear winter and the end of most life on earth by a factor of 10.

In short, America still maintains its strategic weapons on a high state of alert and will use them first if necessary.

- Since 1994, in fact, the Department of Energy has already designed and constructed a new "earth penetrating" nuclear weapon and has plans to build more new types of weapons. It is also moving towards the possible development of a pure fusion bomb, which will not require the use of fission materials. This is an extremely serious proposition because arms control verification is dependent upon the satellite detection of fissionable isotopes. So pure fusion development, if successful, will end the global process of arms control.

During the Cold War, nuclear weapons were only to be used against other nuclear nations - the Soviet Union or China. But US policy has changed. Now these new weapons are to be used against non-nuclear countries that possess "weapons of mass destruction" -classified as chemical, biological or nuclear. The firewall has been dismantled and any tiny country is now a target for the terrible might of thermonuclear weapons.

"Manhattan Two" programs have already been initiated by the four other declared nuclear nations - England, France, China and Russia. The last has already conducted two subcritical tests and France is preparing to do so. These nations, of course, almost always emulate the conduct of the US. The Department of Energy has also initiated a five-year grant of \$20 million a piece to five universities, to train a new generation of nuclear weapon specialists to work with the most advanced nuclear science and technology in the world, hoping that these young people will devote their lives to the development of ever more sophisticated atomic weapons.

The five universities are Stanford, University of Chicago, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Utah and the California Institute of Technology. These extremely dangerous developments have come about because of the awesome political power of the nuclear scientists, a Congress which is inattentive, and a President who has been otherwise involved, unable or unwilling to focus on the possibility of nuclear-free future for our children and grandchildren.

The most serious consequences will be the development of both "horizontal" and "vertical" proliferation. Because

the US is violating the CTBT and the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which calls for the nuclear nations to disarm, non-nuclear nations will be encouraged to build and test their own nuclear weapons. and the nuclear nations, as previously noted, will develop ever more sophisticated nuclear devices. If the US does not accept the overwhelming will of the American people - 87 per cent of whom favor nuclear disarmament - and recognize the rapidly growing worldwide movement for the abolition of nuclear weapons I predict that within a decade, 10 more nations, such as India and Pakistan, will have developed their own nuclear arsenals and, within 20 years, there will be a nuclear war. Such a cataclysmic event, according to General Lee Butler, former commander-in-chief of the US Strategic Air command, will be one "transcending time and space, poisoning the earth and deforming its inhabitants". We must not, cannot, let this happen." (Helen Caldicott – author of *Nuclear Madness, What Can You Do* - *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 28, 1999).

Now lest you think that the USA alone is villain in this case, this is what the Russians have been doing lately too:

"In a rare meeting of the Kremlin Security Council devoted to nuclear weapons policy, President Boris Yeltsin has approved a new blue print for beefing up thousands of short-range or tactical nuclear weapons that were taken out of service unilaterally earlier in the decade, officials said. The decision was announced by the Security Council secretary, Mr Vladimir Putin, who said it had nothing to do with the conflict over Kosovo. However, other sources said the decision clearly reflected Russia's growing anxiety about NATO strikes against Yugoslavia, and Moscow's continuing weakness in conventional, or non-nuclear, weapons." (*SMH*, May 1, 1999).

Can you see now why Jesus Christ said that His return, and the great tribulation, will take the world by surprise? Those who ought to know better, are deceiving the world into a false sense of security by focusing people's attention away from the real danger, and towards a country which is not even a nuclear power, and which has unilaterally renounced nuclear weapons. If we have to wait for Germany to become the insurmountable nuclear power capable of destroying Britain and the USA, we would have to wait a long time indeed. But if the end-time holocaust comes from the north and east, as Ezekiel and many other prophecies point out, then those dreadful times are upon us now. The great tribulation could begin at any time.

Flurry says that he sees "disquieting signs" coming from Germany, and that he is using the platform God has given him to warn his people of the danger coming from that country. He sees no disquieting signs coming from Russia, which his magazine described as "the dead man standing" (*TFT*, Feb. 1999, p.10), or from China, or from an alliance of the two and other countries. He is using the Bible to prove that "Germany is prophesied to rise one last time, again to become the enemy of America and Britain", yet there is nothing in his references to even remotely support his point. It is this kind of careless use of the Scriptures that has given religion a bad name and turned people away from God. Flurry thrives on this kind of preaching – lambasting Germany for just about every evil in the world today.

During the Balkan conflict earlier this year, not once did he speak against the atrocities committed by the Serbs against the Albanians of Kosovo, yet all the time he blamed Germany for what was happening in that country. In his twisted reasoning, Germany is guilty for those atrocities because it recognized Croatia in 1991, which led to the eventual disintegration of Yugoslavia.

At the height of that conflict, in his May 1999 edition of *The Philadelphia Trumpet*, Germany was mentioned directly or indirectly in no less than 23 pages of the 28 that his magazine contained. Germany featured as the main subject of his venomous writings in everyone of the five editions that came into our hands this year. In the end we got tired of his paranoia and refused to have anything to do with him or his publications anymore. But we know of people who have swallowed the contents of his poisoned chalice and are bitter towards the victims of that conflict and sympathetic towards the perpetrators.

He thinks of himself as a prophet of God, yet shows no sympathy for the hapless victims of gang rape (women and girls even below the age of puberty), of torture, starvation, wholesale slaughter, and mass deportations. He and his ministers would have you believe that Jesus Christ cannot return to this earth before a new temple is built in Jerusalem too. Once again, if we have to wait until that is done, it would be a long time before our Savior could return to save us from this wretched world. On the site of the old temple of God, there is now the Dome of the Rock, the second most important shrine in the Muslim world. All we would need now is for the Israelis to try to demolish that mosque, and we would have an all out war in the Middle East. Many Jewish zealots are thinking on doing just that, but that would mean that the great tribulation starts before the temple is rebuilt. That cannot happen because the "abomination of desolation" is supposed to profane the holy place which is to be located in a temple which is yet to be built. But if Jesus Christ is not going to return to any temple built by human hands, we being the temple of the living God (2 Cor. 6:16), and the holy place is not inside any new temple, because it is the ground on which He was crucified and which holds His blood, then He could return any time now. Still another deception propagated by Flurry and his ministers is in regard to the identification of the "abomination of desolation". Like all the preachers who have mushroomed out of Armstrong's school of thought, he maintains that this is a statue or a swine which is to be placed on the altar of that new temple.

The effect of this preaching is to hide the true identity of the "abomination of desolation", and cause people to look elsewhere for the fulfillment of this prophecy, and thus be unprepared for their Savior's return. We have amply documented from historical and biblical sources, that this is none other than the head of the forth "beast" of Daniel's prophecies – Pontifex Maximus.

# Mystery of the Philadelphia Church of God

Before this year, we knew nothing about Gerard Flurry and his church, except that he was just another offshoot of the Worldwide Church of God. But then, a friend of ours, knowing that our teachings were diametrically opposed, handed us some of his publications and asked us to comment on them. It was then we discovered that we were wrong to have dismissed this man so lightly in the past. He does not want to be considered just another offshoot of the WCG; he claims nothing less than the mantle of Herbert W. Armstrong, and the leadership of the Philadelphia Church of God.

Before the death of its founder, Worldwide Church of God members believed that their church was none other than the Philadelphia Church of God of the book of Revelation, but even Herbert W. Armstrong hesitated to make that official, fearing perhaps what other churches may think, or that they might scoff at the idea. Not so Gerard Flurry. He did away with all pretenses and came out into the open. After considering all the facts, we believe that he is right. He is indeed the rightful inheritor of Armstrong's mantle, and the head of the Philadelphia Church of God.

On the back of the title page of his *Philadelphia Trumpet* he makes the following statement:

"The *Philadelphia Trumpet* has no subscription price – it is free. This is made possible by the tithes and offerings of the membership of the Philadelphia Church of God and others. Contributions, however, are welcomed and are tax deductible in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support this worldwide Work of God are gladly welcomed as co-workers in the effort to "hold fast" to the traditions established in the true church by Herbert W. Armstrong and to proclaim a final warning to the world. Contributions or letters of interest may be sent to one of our offices nearest you."

He "holds fast" to the traditions established in the "true church" by Herbert W. Armstrong. He did well to put the words "hold fast" in inverted commas, but forgot to do the same with the words "true church". After the death of Herbert W. Armstrong, when his sins, excesses, and false doctrines were exposed to the world, not one of his top evangelists wanted to have anything to do with him anymore. They either took their flocks and created new "Churches of God", or set about to dismantle everything he stood for. Then, out of that chaos, arose a white knight, which hardly anyone knew, who determined to preserve the memory of his mentor and restore his religious empire. Hence, the Philadelphia Church of God. He succeeded beyond his wildest dreams, surging ahead at phenomenal rates of growth. His message is now being broadcast by more than 120 television stations around the world. In the January 1999 edition of *The Philadelphia Trumpet*, we found this:

"For over 50 years, the late Herbert W. Armstrong taught a strong prophecy message which included God's prophecies about a "beast" power comprised of ten nations or groups of nations (Dan. 2:28-43; Rev. 13). That multi-national religion-led superpower is now rising to the forefront of world economic news before our very eyes, and will soon dominate the world and all of its inhabitants (Rev. 13:16-17). A European economic and military powerhouse led by Germany and a "universal" church will soon take mankind down its final and most deadly pathway of destruction! (Read Rev. 13:11-15; Ezek. 5; Jer. 9:12-16; the entire book of Lamentations, and many other prophetic scriptures dealing with the "latter days.")

It was Herbert W. Armstrong who first began the polemic against Germany. He preached about the danger coming from that country as early as the 1930s. He was justified in doing so then, but failed to understand the new geopolitical realities that arose from the Second World War.

When he saw Germany making great strides in rebuilding itself after the war, he assumed that this country would once again rise to become a world power and a threat to his people. Germany, however, developed into a stable democratic country, thoroughly integrated into the European Community, and unilaterally renounced nuclear weapons. These developments however were totally out of character with Armstrong's preaching, nevertheless he held on to his beliefs until he died. In the new world only two countries counted as great military powers, the Soviet Union and the USA, yet he continued to speak of the threat coming from Germany and ignored the one coming from Russia.

After his death, if some of his followers had doubts about his preaching, they were quickly forgotten when they saw the catastrophic collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. They were convinced then that Germany's time had come. That is when both Gerard Flurry and us began our works in earnest. He has been telling the world that Germany represents a great danger to the world peace, while we have been telling it that the danger comes from Russia and its allies. Now if success is measured by the number of people converted to one's cause, we are an abysmal failure. Flurry on the other hand, could rightly claim to be the most successful preacher in the world at present. Since both Flurry and I were once baptized into the Worldwide Church of God, let us see where we stand in relation to the Philadelphia Church of God of the book of Revelation.

Rev 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens':"

Rev 3:8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

Rev 3:9 "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie; indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

Rev 3:10 "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall

come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Rev 3:11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Rev 3:12 "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.

Rev 3:13 And I will write on him My new name. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Notice carefully verses 9 and 10. They speak of two kinds of people in this church. On the one hand, you have a group of people who claim to be "Jews" (spiritual Jews or Christians), but who are in fact a "synagogue of Satan". And on the other, you have one man of little strength who persevered and kept Jesus' word and not denied His name, before whom the first are made to come and worship before his feet.

The word "synagogue" helps us identify who is who in this scenario. In ancient times, this word identified the Jews who preserved the Torah and observed the sacrificial and dietary laws of the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, after the abolition of the sacrificial laws through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2: 14, 16; Heb. 7:11-28), these dietary laws became doctrines of demons. This is what Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to Timothy:

1 Tim 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

1 Tim 4:2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

1 Tim 4:3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

1 Tim 4:4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with

1 Tim 4:5 thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

1 Tim 4:6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

So then a "good minister of Jesus Christ" would never preach "doctrines of demons" such as "forbidding to marry, and commanding [people] to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth". Anyone who preaches otherwise, obviously does not know the truth. For Flurry and his followers it is as if these Scriptures do not exist, as they did not exist for Herbert W Armstrong and many Churches of God. They make a great virtue out of keeping these dietary laws more strictly than the Jews. By denying the New Testament doctrines, they deny the name, and sacrifice, of Jesus Christ.

Can you see now why Jesus Christ spoke of two kinds of people in His Philadelphia Church? There are some who claim to be "Jews", but who are instead a synagogue of Satan. Bear in mind that Jesus Christ calls His followers Jews not Christians. That is in line with the point made earlier in His ministry that salvation belongs to the Jews.

John 4:22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."

Now a few words about "forbidding to marry". This interdiction must be seen in context of the changes that occurred between the Old and the New Testaments. In the Old Testament, the Jews were forbidden to marry people of other races, but in the New Testament this distinction no longer applies.

Gal 3:26 "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek,

Gal 3:28 there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The only restriction in the New Testament for the people of God is that they must marry from among those who are members of the Congregations of God.

1 Cor 7:39 A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

2 Cor 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

2 Cor 6:15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore,

2 Cor 6:17 "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

2 Cor 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

In the New Testament, we have a marriage covenant with God, just as the Jews of old had a marriage covenant with Him.

Jer 3:14 ""Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

Jer 3:15 "And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding."

Gerard Flurry holds on to the Old Testament marital restrictions by forbidding people of different races to

intermarry even if they are baptized and full members of his congregation. Once again, in so doing he annuls the New Testament and denies the name of his Savior. You may have noticed the word “unclean” in 2 Cor. 6:17. This is often used to justify maintaining the distinction between “clean” and “unclean” foods, and hence their dietary laws. But what is it that the people of God must not touch, unclean foods or idols? This passage is not about food, but about marriage; it does not refer to food, but to idols (see verse 16).

We can destroy our marriage with God Almighty by going after idols. That is what makes us spiritually unclean, not the eating of foods. Apostle John told us to test the spirits to find out which are true and which are false.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

And Apostle Paul warned us not to be deceived by those who come disguised as ministers of Christ, but who are ministers of Satan instead.

2 Cor 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of

2 Cor 11:14 Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

2 Cor 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

We hope you are in a better position now to distinguish between the true and the false ministers of Jesus Christ.

## Mystery of the Worldwide Church of God

During my brief period in the Worldwide Church of God, in the early 1970s, I found it hard to believe that its leaders would regard Germany as a great threat to America, yet treat Russia (then incorporated into the Soviet Union) as if it did not exist. To me that represented a major fault in their preaching, but I could do nothing about it because, 1) I did not know much about biblical prophecies, and 2) my English was at the beginning stage then. But as I grew in “grace and knowledge”, I became more and more convinced that they were wrong in their prophetic understanding, and tried to tell them about it. But the ministers in that church would have none of it. It was inconceivable for them that a newcomer could see things better than their great prophet.

So successful was Herbert W Armstrong in his brainwashing techniques that his followers still believe his prophecies even now when the whole world could see that they have failed.

My conviction about the danger coming from the Soviet Union at that time was based not on prophetic understanding, but on firsthand experience. I grew up in Romania at the time of the Russian occupation, and later under the strictest of the communist regimes, and knew what they were preaching and aiming at.

Having been indoctrinated in the communist ideology for no less than seventeen years in various educational and vocational institutions, it is nothing short of a miracle that I am now preaching Christ instead of Marx.

When I arrived in the West, many people were interested in my story. I remember how at one time, at a party in Vancouver, Canada, people sat around me for hours, asking dozens of questions: how I escaped from the Iron Curtain, how I survived in the West, how was life in the communist world, in the communist army, in the navy, what was I planning to do in the West, etc. At the end, many people advised me to write it down and publish it, but of course I could not do that. It was one thing to tell a story at a party in a broken language, and quite another to publish it.

After that evening, I toned down my story and seldom talked about it, preferring instead to look to the future than to dwell on my past trials and those of my family. It was the best thing I could have done for myself, opening up a new world of possibilities and freeing myself from the shackles of the past. I feel sorry for the people who relieve long past injustices and injuries every time they remember or talk about them.

What could I have achieved if I had remained bitter about the injustices of the past? I and my family were victims of the communist system, not of Nazism, and we all know that Russia cannot pay billions to its victims, as does Germany to the victims of Nazism. Besides, Germany lost the war and Russia won it, and that is why one has to pay and the other doesn't. That is why for me it was better to forget the past than hope in vain for justice which no one could deliver.

Those who had illusions that this world can deliver justice, must have come down to earth with a thud when they saw what happened to Pinochet of Chile. If the man is guilty of crimes against humanity, let him face the courts indeed, but who will arrest the people on the left of the political spectrum for their millions of victims? Dare anyone lay his hands on Fidel Castro for example? Or on Mengistu of Ethiopia who took refuge in the “paradise” of his close friend Mugabe of Zimbabwe? Or on Jiang Zemin of China, for that matter, for the blatant violations of human rights that continue to take place in that country, not to speak of the millions of people who lost their lives during their Cultural Revolution?

Who will bring to court Ion Iliescu for taking revenge on my mother for the articles I wrote in this magazine

when he became President of Romania by crooked methods, or for the victims of his collectivization when he was second in command under Ceausescu, which ruined the country and brought misery to millions?

And just the same, who will bring to justice the Judges of Australia who put me in the street on a disability pension and gave my house to my millionaires wife who divorced me because I had “squandered” the money on this work? Can one get justice for preaching Christ when he is judged by Jews, and divorced by a wife who also happens to be Jewish? In Australia there is supposed to be no religious persecution, but as they say, there is more than one way to skin a cat. But woe to that country whose Judges look for profit and deliver crooked justice.

The Judge in my case even had the temerity to acknowledge before the court that he was delivering a crooked justice when he said in the hearing of all: “I am sorry to do this to you, Mr. Sbarcea!”

To which I replied, also in the hearing of everyone: “You are doing it to yourself, Sir!”

Of course, he did not believe me then, but he will shortly. For had he applied God’s righteous principles, and used the Bible for guidance, he would have known that one must not “judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment” (John 7:24), because “with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you” (Mat 7:2), for one does “not judge for man but for the LORD” (2 Chr. 19:6).

No, not much has changed since the time of Jesus Christ. Christians are still getting the same raw justice their Lord got two thousand years ago. And this from the people who ought to know better, who themselves endured great injustice only half a century ago.

If “justice” is the name of the game, then let there be justice for all not only for those who fought the evils of communism and Satanism. We wish the Jewish victims of the Holocaust good luck with their compensation, but we advise them to spend it quickly, for their billions will be worthless in just a few, very few, short years.

And before anyone starts jumping up and down, accusing me of anti-Semitism, let me make one point clear: I happen to believe that I come from the same stock as the Jewish people, though I cannot prove it. Not that I care to.

What that Judge did not know was that the day I was summoned to appear in court, was the day of completion of our mission (Rev.11:3). *[Well, we got that one wrong. We had so many problems we were hoping that might be the end of them. When the Two Witnesses of Rev 11 complete their work it will be their end. Unfortunately, time has shown that we had a lot more work to do before we’d reach that point, but reach we will].*

The Judge had placed himself in the service of the Wicked One, who had begun his relentless war against us. We were hoping and praying that that would mean the end of our trials, but the Almighty showed us that we must continue until Daniel 12:11-12 is also being fulfilled. *[In hindsight, we now know that that day was the transition to another end time prophecy. See TCH 10 and 13 for articles on Daniel’s prophecies].*

It may well be that the reason the ministers in the Worldwide Church of God began to give me cold shoulders after I was baptized in their church, was that we were beginning to speak a different language. I could no longer accept their notion that in order to be a Christian one had to keep the Jewish dietary laws and obey the law of tithing practiced in ancient Israel. I chose instead to follow the example of the other Jews – the Apostles of Jesus Christ, who never even mentioned these laws let alone enforce them on their followers.

Another reason, of course, was that no story was allowed to overshadow that of their great leader. He was the one who had succeeded against all odds during the great depression; he had suffered great hardship during much of his life; he had risen from great poverty to lead the greatest institution on earth. Now he was entitled to all the accolades and adoration he was receiving from his grateful followers for whom he was preparing a “paradise” on earth.

No one was allowed to cast even a shadow of a doubt over the validity of his doctrines and teachings. My salvation came from the fact that I did not allow others to determine the path of my life for ever. Anyone who exercises his brains in the minimum can see that churches serve as the babysitters in the early stages of one’s spiritual growth. But then one must stand on his own feet or forever be slave to others. What else could the following Scriptures mean?

Mat 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

Mat 7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

Mat 7:14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Mat 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Mat 7:16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

Mat 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Mat 7:22 "Many will say to Me in that day, '**Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?**'

Mat 7:23 "**And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"**

Who are they who prophesy in Jesus’ name, cast out demons in His name, and do wonders in His name, yet still practice lawlessness, if not those who are leaders in His churches? Those who claim to be “Jews”, yet are a synagogue of Satan inside the very churches which carry the name of our heavenly Father – the Churches of

God!

Every single one of the seven Churches of God mentioned in the book of Revelation, had problems with these people. This is the great mystery of our world, that God Almighty has allowed the children of the Wicked One to rule in His churches over His children who needed to be chastened in order to develop the character suitable for His eternal Kingdom.

Heb 12:5 "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

Heb 12:6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

eHeb 12:7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

Heb 12:8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Heb 12:9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

Heb 12:10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. But woe is it to those by whom these trials come.

Luke 17:1 Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!

Luke 17:2 "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

2 Pet 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

2 Pet 2:2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be

2 Pet 2:19 blasphemed. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

2 Pet 2:20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

2 Pet 2:21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

2 Pet 2:22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

So take hold of a good Bible and "work out your own salvation", for if you rely on others all your life you will not make it into the Kingdom of God any more than they will.

## THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

Herbert W. Armstrong did not live to see the changes that took place in the world in late 80's and early 90's, but his hirelings saw them and were heartened by them, believing that their master's prophecies were finally beginning to come true. But as the years passed by, the unthinkable occurred. Instead of Germany rising to new heights of power, it was Russia which started to assert itself again. So they had to do something about it. They had to find an explanation and a new role for this country in their scheme of things. This is what Gerard Flurry came up with:

"Germany is soon to inflict great destruction on this world. God is going to use that nation—called Assyria anciently—as His tool to punish the nations of Israel today—mainly America and Britain. Then, about three years later, God is going to use the Russians and Chinese to destroy Germany. Finally, comes the battle called Armageddon, when Jesus Christ returns to rule this earth. We are getting dangerously close to the dreadful day of the Lord! But we also need to look beyond that time to the glorious rule of God!" (*Nahum. An end-time prophecy for Germany*, published by the Philadelphia Church of God).

So after demolishing Britain and America, Germany will be still be such an insurmountable power that Russia alone could not destroy it. It will need a helping hand from China, a country in the other side of the world, to destroy this average size country in central Europe, when only a fraction of Russia's missiles could virtually pulverize that country.

Now did you notice how many biblical references they gave us to prove these assertions? None! None, because there aren't any. And there aren't any because this is pure fallacy not biblical prophecy. That booklet was published in 1996, but by 1999 Flurry and his ministers had another change of heart. "This former superpower [Russia] is now a dead man standing and has all but totally collapsed from the same economic phenomenon which has swept the other global emerging markets". (*The Philadelphia Trumpet*, February 1999,

p. 10). But then, realizing that this new position did not square well with their earlier pronouncements, they performed yet another somersault.

“Over the past year the Western press has presented the world with a picture of an ailing Russia, its economy in tatters, its president on the brink of death, International Monetary Fund aid disappearing without trace, its foreign policy enfeebled—an impression that Russia is a basket case with no means of recovery evident in the foreseeable future. But gullible Western journalists have forgotten one thing: the expertise of the Russians in manufacturing and perpetrating disinformation. All of a sudden, the Russians are back.” (*Philadelphia Trumpet*, May 1999, p. 20).

Breathtaking hypocrisy! It is the Western media which presented a false image of an ailing Russia; the gullible Western journalists who forgot the Russian expertise in manufacturing and perpetrating disinformation, not they themselves. In the ensuing editions of their magazine, they went back to their thesis that Russia in conjunction with China would destroy Germany after this first destroys Britain and America.

People pay up to thirty per cent of their income, under the same ruinous tithing regime invented by Herbert W. Armstrong, to hear this kind of utter trash. Flurry gave us Isaiah 10:5-7 as proof that Germany would rise one more time to become a mortal threat to Britain and America. But when we checked that reference we found that it said nothing of a kind.

Then he gave us Revelation 13:16-17 as proof that a “multi-national religion-led superpower is now rising to the forefront of world economic news before our very eyes, and will soon dominate the world and all of its inhabitants”. Well, let’s check this reference too, maybe we are more lucky this time.

Rev 13:16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

Rev 13:17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Rev 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Do you see a “multinational-led superpower rising before our very eyes” in this passage? Both these references are outright misquotations. Our “watchman of God” does not appear to be very sure of his Bible. Could it be that his inability to prove his points is because he did not take them from the Scriptures but blindly accepted them from Herbert W. Armstrong?

We added verse 18 to that quote to make it even more clear, and because this verse is closely linked with the previous two verses. We do not know why they left this one out, except perhaps because it tells us to calculate the number 666 which identifies the “beast”.

By assigning numerical values to letters, the Pope’s title, “VICARIUS FILII DEI” (“Vicar of the Son of God”) in Latin, adds up to 666. The letters “Lateinos” (the Latins) in Greek also add up to 666. And, astonishingly, the letters “ROMIITH” (the Romans) in Hebrew also add up to 666. This is how Joseph F. Berg presented them in his book, *The Great Apostasy*.

V .....	5	F.....	0	D .....	500
I .....	1	I .....	1	E .....	0
C .....	100	L .....	50	I .....	1
A .....	0	I .....	1		501
R .....	1	I .....	1		112
I .....	5		53		53
U .....	0				666
	112				

GREEK – Lateinos

Λ .....	30
Α .....	1
Τ .....	300
Ε .....	5
Ι .....	10
Ν .....	50
Ο .....	70
Σ .....	200
	666

HEBREW – Romiith

η .....	200
י .....	6
ר .....	40
ט .....	10
ת .....	10
פ .....	400
	666

“Now we challenge the world to find another name in three languages : Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, which shall designate the same number”, wrote Joseph F. Berg.

If this superpower is rising up “before our very eyes”, how did the ancients know about it too? We find similar explanations in Christian writings as early as the third and fourth centuries AD. Does not this tell you that this prophecy has long since been fulfilled?

Whose purpose does it serve then to hide the true identity of this “beast” by telling people that it is yet to rise when in fact it has already risen? Who is interested in keeping Christians unprepared for the return of their Savior by making them believe that there are still many years before these prophecies are fulfilled?

Verses 16 and 17 of Revelation 13 do not speak about a “multi-national religion-led superpower”, but about a man who would cause all human beings to receive the mark of the “beast” on their right hand and on their foreheads.

Most people never check other people’s references because they think that they are true as a matter of fact. But true they aren’t, because we are not dealing with honest people but with deceivers, “whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame”.

Phil 3:18 “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross

Phil 3:19 of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who set their mind on earthly things.

Phil 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Phil 3:21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

Now let us look at Revelation 13:16-17 from another angle. Let us accept that this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. How long would it take Germany to become such a colossal power capable of destroying Britain and America?

It took these countries more than 50 years to reach their present awesome nuclear capabilities. Now even if Germany has the know-how and the resources to build such an arsenal, it would take it at least half that long to catch up with the USA, let alone overtake it. But what does the Bible say about the time element? Let us look at the preceding 15 verses.

Rev 13:1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

Rev 13:2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

Rev 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

Rev 13:4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

Rev 13:5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

Rev 13:6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

Rev 13:7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Rev 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Rev 13:9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

Rev 13:10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Rev 13:11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

Rev 13:12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Rev 13:13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

Rev 13:14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

Rev 13:15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Here we have two “beasts”, one arising from the other. The first “beast” lasted for forty-two months, during which time it blasphemed God and made war with the saints. Then the second “beast” arose from the first and made those who dwell on the earth to worship the first “beast”. Now which “beast” is supposed to rise “before our very eyes”, the first or the second?

If Germany is the second “beast”, which is the first one from which it is supposed to have risen?

But if it is the first “beast” which rises “before our very eyes”, then it must reach its potential in just forty-two months. That is, if we take the forty-two months to mean 1260 days, but if they mean 1260 years – a day for one year, as it often does in biblical prophecies – then that would make this prophecy an impossibility in our time.

If, on the other hand, this “beast” is the ancient Roman Empire, as we have proven after extensive historical and biblical research (See *TCH* 3&4), is it a mere coincidence that from the foundation of Rome in about 750 B.C. until the collapse of that empire in about 510 A.D. are 1260 years?

The second “beast”, of course, is the Holy Roman Empire, which arose from the first “beast”, the Roman Empire. The connecting link between these empires was Pontifex Maximus. He was the religious leader of both empires. He still is the head of the religious Roman Empire – the Catholic Church – today.

Remember, the prophet Daniel said that this empire would be different from the previous three – the Babylonian, Persian and Greek – and would last until the end of this age. Now we know what he meant. This empire is different in that it transformed itself from an expanding imperial power into an expanding religious empire. Its doctrines and beliefs, false and dangerous as they are, have penetrated every corner of the world.

It is this “beast” which has stamped its sign on people’s foreheads long ago by imprinting its pagan beliefs in their heads, and on their hand by forcing them to work and dishonor their God-given Holy Days after imposing on them its own pagan holy days. Flurry’s *Philadelphia Trumpet* gave us another reference which is supposed to prove that a superpower of ten nations would arise in Europe now.

“For over 50 years, the late Herbert W. Armstrong taught a strong prophecy message which included God’s prophecies about a “beast” power comprised of ten nations or groups of nations (Dan. 2:28-43; Rev. 13).

Let us do the usual and check Daniel 2:28-43.

Dan 2:28 "But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:

Dan 2:29 "As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.

Dan 2:30 "But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

Dan 2:31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

Dan 2:32 "This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of

Dan 2:33 bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

Dan 2:34 "You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

Dan 2:35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Dan 2:36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

Dan 2:37 "You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power,

Dan 2:38 strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all; you are this head of gold.

Dan 2:39 "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

Dan 2:40 "And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

Dan 2:41 "Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

Dan 2:42 "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

Dan 2:43 "As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

Dan 2:44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Convinced by it? Do you see in this passage a ‘beast’ power of ten nations rising in our time in central Europe? If so, what is Nebuchadnezzar doing there? Daniel told this Babylonian king that there would arise three new kingdoms after his, the last one being more powerful than all the others. This would remain in existence until the Kingdom of God will be established, and rulership will be given to the saints of the Most High. Is this not clear that this prophecy also refers to the Roman Empire? Once again, Flurry’s reference lets him down. Not only is it not proving his point, it proves the very points we have been making all along.

A “best” power will indeed arise shortly; in fact it is rising before our very eyes, but not in central Europe, and not around Germany, but much further east. Not involving the countries mentioned in Armstrong’s and Flurry’s writings, but the ones we have mentioned – Russia, China and their allies (For details of this prophecy, see *The Christian Herald* 2&4).

# HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN

In the February 1999 edition of *The Philadelphia Trumpet*, there is a revealing article about what happened in the Worldwide Church of God after the decease of its founder. The article began very 'subtly' with the following biblical quote:

*"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me.  
But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?  
In tithes and offerings." –Malachi 3:8*

Then it continued:

"April 7, 1974, the doors were flung open for the new Ambassador Auditorium's first concert: Carla Maria Giulini conducting the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. The Auditorium had been the talk of the Worldwide Church of God for years. It was 13 years before – January 1961– that WCG founder Herbert W. Armstrong was inspired with a plan to build "a house for God". The Auditorium project became a priority on its members regularly. They zealously contributed to a special building fund, over and above regular tithes and offerings that Mr. Armstrong felt should be used for preaching the gospel only. As time went on, drawings, pictures of models, and then of the ongoing stages of construction appeared in church publications. Finally it was finished, and its glittering inauguration brought a host of dignitaries from several countries.

The Auditorium brought world renown to Pasadena as it became a beacon of excellence in the performing arts. It also became a symbol of Mr Armstrong's 57-year ministry: a work that was built on the principle of GIVE. Virtually everything the WCG produced was offered freely to the world, and, like the Auditorium, supported by the tithes and freewill offerings of he WCG members. Before Mr Armstrong died, on January 16, 1986, there were more than 100,000 members. Millions regularly tuned in to hear him on television each week. Eight million people subscribed to *The Plain Truth*, the flagship magazine of the church. Thousands of young people graduated from one of three colleges Mr Armstrong raised up. His Ambassador Foundation conducted cultural, humanitarian charitable and educational activities for international projects. He spoke with hundreds of world leaders as an unofficial ambassador for world peace. But in the 13 years since his death, politics of destruction have reigned in the Worldwide Church of God. When the new administration took over in 1986, they immediately began making changes—administratively and doctrinally. Here are the fruits of this transformation: More than 60 percent of church membership have either left the church disgruntled or were excommunicated for resisting change. *The Plain Truth's* 8 million circulation plummeted to less than 100,000. The television program, once on 400 stations, has been cancelled. Ambassador College has been completely shut down; the Ambassador Foundation dissolved. To many WCG members and former members, these 13 years have been gut wrenching.

And all the while, a tight-knit band of administrators at the church's headquarters have weathered the storm: the fleeing membership, the plummeting income, the downsizing and phasing out. They can now survey the desolate landscape of a once-prosperous church they've destroyed. But they can do it with a smile. Last month, on the very day Mr. Armstrong died 13 years ago, the Los Angeles Times reported that WCG officials had sold the Ambassador campus and church headquarters in Pasadena for more then \$100 million. Today, the Auditorium, God's house, awaits development as an "urban village." And former church members gape, wondering what this small group of rebels will do with God's money." (*The Philadelphia Trumpet*, February 1999, p.6).

When I was a member of that church in the early 1970's, it took me about three years to discover the hypocrisy and deception that permeated the highest echelons of that church. You may think that three years is a long time, but you have to remember that, like Gerard Flurry today, Herbert W. Armstrong made a strong case that he was God's special instrument on earth. Some people spend a life time in that kind of servitude without ever growing out of it.

It is God's principle that this world's churches and religions are the kindergartens for His children until they grow to spiritual maturity and can stand on their own feet. Having escaped from the "Iron Curtain" only three years earlier, I was starved of emotional and spiritual comfort, and so I was easy pray to those who claimed that I could find the love of God in their church. What I found instead was anything but the love of God. What struck me the most about the Worldwide Church of God was the similarity between its regime and that of the communist world from which I had escaped. Neither allowed dissent, and neither forgave easily those who overstepped their mark.

The communists could throw you in jail, even execute you, but they could not take the spiritual salvation away from you. But being expelled from the WCG meant your spiritual death, and that,

according to its leaders, was the worst possible fate awaiting anyone. It was a recipe for total control over their members, which explains why so many people never make much progress in their spiritual growth. They prefer to remain in the security of their church no matter what the cost, content in the belief that their minister knows better, fearful that if they probe too deeply into aspects of their church which they do not like, they may get into trouble. And so they fulfil Jesus' parable of the unprofitable servants.

Luke 19:20 "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief.

Luke 19:21 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'

Luke 19:22 "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.

Luke 19:23 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

Luke 19:24 "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.'

Luke 19:25 ("But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.'). 'For I say to you,

Luke 19:26 that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

The tragedy of these people is that by failing to grow spiritually, they are losers on both fronts. Not only do they condemn themselves to a lifetime of servitude, but lose their salvation too. The burdens which the members of the Worldwide Church of God had to endure almost defied belief. I knew a girl who was quite beautiful, but who was so skinny I wondered whether she was anorexic. After befriending her, I discovered that it was her financial situation which was causing the problem, not her mind. After complying with all the church requirements, she simply did not have enough to live on.

Although I was having doubts about the applicability of this doctrine in the New Testament for sometime, I was not quite ready to confront the minister about it, but the discovery that people were actually starving as a result of it, forced me to act then. The result was a foregone conclusion.

At that time I was even entertaining the idea of proposing to that girl, but when the minister expelled me from the church, I become a pariah to everyone, including herself.

In that church one was not allowed to "cheat" on the "Government of God". Like most fundamentalist churches, they had all the records and knew everything about their members: what they earned, how they lived, what they spent their money on, and, of course, how much they gave to the church. It was not hard for them to determine whether one was a dedicated member or not, and woe befell those who were not. Those who tried to hide anything from their ministers were actually punished. They used an example from the Bible which is totally unsuited for that purpose.

Acts 4:32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

Acts 4:33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 4:34 And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, Acts 4:35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

Acts 4:36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement),

Acts 4:37 a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

Acts 5:2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?

Acts 5:4 "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Acts 5:5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things."

Now obviously when all members live communally, and one holds back from the common obligation, he is cheating. What Apostle Peter was telling Ananias and everyone else, is that no one forced him to join their congregation. He could have held back until he was ready for it, if ever, but once he made the commitment, and

began partaking of the common pie, then he could no longer hold back on what he possessed, because that was cheating on the others who had placed everything at everybody's disposal.

That this example is no longer applicable today should be obvious to all. The church people of today no longer live communally and share everything as they did in the very first church. Apostle Peter's experiment was a bold one, but the world was not ready for that kind of communism, and shortly afterwards it scattered them in all directions, making it impossible for them to continue that way.

Apostle Paul's Gentile churches on the other hand, which became the mainstay of the New Testament, were organised on a different principle. People retained control of their possessions and gave to the church only what their heart allowed, or what they could afford. That way, the onus remained with them, to prove themselves before God not before men. At no time did Apostle Paul invoke the tithing principle in his dealing with his churches. But in the Worldwide Church of God things were different. The vast majority of people were brought to the point in which they gave "voluntarily" all their surplus, being told that the more they gave the more God would bless them. The idea was that if you weren't blessed, and suffered deprivation, it was your fault for not giving generously to the Church. And so the circle went: the more you gave, the poorer you became, the less blessed you appeared to be, and the greater your psychological trauma.

People were brought to such a state of psychological dependency upon the church environment, they could no longer reason normally or maintain a logical discussion with outsiders. That is why it is so difficult to debrief those who have been exposed to their brainwashing techniques. It is paramount that people stand on their own feet as soon as their spiritual understanding overtakes that of their mentors. Otherwise they sink into a worse state of spiritual confusion than before they joined the church. This is what Jesus Christ meant when He said:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Mat. 23:15).

Although Jesus Christ knew what happened in those congregations, He still told people to go and obey those in command.

"And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." (Mat. 8:4).

He also knew that the time would come, for those who are true children of God, when they would just naturally be put out of their congregation.

"They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service" (John 16:2).

It is a badge of honour for anyone to be put out of a church for having committed no sin. They never told me why they put me out of their church, except that I disagreed with them over their tithing doctrines and because I told them that God Almighty has chosen me to be one of His witnesses.

People think that just because Jesus Christ used the word "Pharisee", His words applied only to the Jews of the Old Testament. If anything, His words are more valid now than they were then. The Pharisees of Jesus' time did not enforce the tithing principle on their people, but the "Pharisees" of our time demand even a second and a third tithe.

At one time, when I was a member of that church, in order to shut the mouths of those who were claiming that their ruinous regime condemned people to a perpetual state of poverty, the leaders announced that they were taking a survey among their members to determine how many had acquired new homes or apartments while in the church. The results of that survey were never made public. Can you think of a reason why?

When the old man died, and the walls of his religious empire began to crumble, the same people who had failed to grow spiritually, suddenly saw an opportunity to fulfil their dreams. Hundreds left and listed themselves as a new church, most having no more than their families in their congregation. A *Directory of Sabbath Observing Groups* published in America in 1996, listed no less than four hundred and forty-five "Churches of God". But by 1999, almost a third of them had ceased to exist. That's how many envelopes came back to us when we tried to contact them.

Now we are witnessing a reverse process. Whereas in the late 1980s and early 1990's these churches were growing like mushrooms after a shower, now they are disappearing just as quickly. They did not find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow as they thought they would. The reason so many failed is undoubtedly because most were a carbon copy of the Worldwide Church of God. They thought that they could subject their recruits to the same ruinous doctrines they themselves were subjected to.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with tithing. It is a good principle in the right circumstances. Tithing basically was the taxation law of ancient Israel. But in our world today governments are taxing us at far higher rates than the ten per cent that would normally be the case if God's laws were universally applied. That is why the Apostles of Jesus Christ never enforced this law. They understood that their followers were having enough problems as it were without them inflicting additional burdens on them. Apostle Paul took great care not to impose himself even on the churches which he himself had established.

Acts 20:33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.

Acts 20:34 "Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.

Acts 20:35 "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

2 Th 3:7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat

2 Th 3:8 anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden

Herbert W. Armstrong, however, had no such qualms. For him these Scriptures did not exist. He never considered what effect his three tiered tithing system might have on his followers. And if that was not enough, when he decided to build a "House for God", he imposed even greater burdens on his followers. As Flurry pointed out, that "House" had to be built from additional donations, not from the normal tithes.

In his meetings with foreign dignitaries, whom he often visited with expensive gifts, he used to boast that it was the philosophy of giving not getting that brought him so many blessings. Of course, he was adept at getting not giving. Whatever he gave was in the shape of "free" booklets, magazines and religious tracts, which had the effect of enslaving even more people and bringing him even more blessings.

Gerard Flurry made the point that it took 13 years to built Armstrong's "House for God". He said that, "To many Worldwide Church of God members and former members, these 13 years have been gut wrenching." I'll say! There is an interesting similarity between Armstrong's "House for God" and Solomon's "House of the Lord".

1 Ki 6:37 In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of Ziv.

1 Ki 6:38 And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details and according to all its plans. So he was seven years in building it.

1 Ki 7:1 But Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house; so he finished all his house.

It took Solomon seven years to build a "House for the Lord", and thirteen years to build a house for himself. It took Herbert W. Armstrong thirteen years to build his "House for God" too. Thirteen is unmistakably associated with the Devil in the Bible. We hope you can see now why all these "Houses" ended up on the scrap hip of history?

But Armstrong took thirteen years to build a "House for God" not for himself, one might say. The only god Herbert W. Armstrong ever knew was himself. Initially he wanted to build that "House" in Jerusalem. He must have bored the Jewish leaders to death with his visits and inquiries about that temple. But when it became obvious that they could not do it soon enough, he took the initiative and built a "House for God" in California. He might as well have built in Las Vegas — more in tune with his lifestyle. He spent the last few years of his life in total seclusion not far from that place anyway.

His followers used to wonder why not even members of his family could see him. Only his most trusted adjutants were allowed to come near him. But there was a very good reason for that. Herbert W. Armstrong had suffered a stroke and was exhibiting not the signs of an Apostle, of Elijah, or of one of God's witness from the book of Revelation, which he had so assiduously cultivated, but those of the famous false shepherd.

Zec 11:15 And the LORD said to me, "Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd.

Zec 11:16 "For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces.

Zec 11:17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd, Who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm And against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded."

That could not be revealed to the world, or to anyone outside their close circle, for if they did, they would all lose everything. About a decade later, after years of trying, and after abandoning all the doctrines and polemic which Armstrong had used to expose other churches as false, the Worldwide Church of God was finally admitted into the forum of the mainstream churches. Its leaders must have reckoned that one is better off being associated with these churches, lacklustre as they may be in terms of scriptural compliance, than with the religion of the man whom they discovered to be the foolish and cruel shepherd. In so doing they threw out the baby with the bathwater. It does not mater to them that the family of churches hatched by Armstrong's theology claim foul and describe them as a fallen away church, or that they have lost almost half their membership in the process. They know what they know, and they can not confess it to anyone.

The death of Herbert W. Armstrong created another unexpected problem. A new person had to be found to fulfil the propcey of Revelation 16:13.

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet."

We know who the dragon is. Satan! We also know who the "beast" is. Pontifex Maximus and his empire! But who could the false prophet be? Well, we now know who that one is too. He disclosed himself. He who claims the mantle of Herbert W. Armstrong!

# A WORLD IN TURMOIL FACES ITS DESTINY

It used to be that people remembered and talked about major world disasters for years, even decades, but hardly anyone anymore. They have a hard time coping with what is happening in their midst at the present, to be bothered by what happened last year or the year before.

The international rescue teams from Turkey barely unpacked their luggage after the earthquake that flattened that country, that another earthquake brought major devastation to Greece. And unbelievably, as if to emphasize the perils of the times, only days later another powerful earthquake devastated Taiwan.

Hundreds of earthquakes occur every year, but their pattern has been to take place mostly in unpopulated areas. But as we approach the day of reckoning, they are moving closer and closer to populated areas. Heaven is giving us a warning that the world is on a collision course with its Maker.

Earthquakes are not the only signs that characterize our times. North America reeled from the worst draught ever, and from a spate of hurricanes unprecedented in magnitude and frequency, while China braced itself for what has become an annual ritual of catastrophic floods. Yet these events draw only cursory mention in our media these days. It seems that even media people suffer from information overload, paying scant attention to such "minor" disasters as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, frost, fires, and the like, which cause havoc on our planet as never before.

Now if this year's disasters fade from memory so quickly, what can we say about those from yesteryear? Does anyone remember last year's headlines? Here is a sample:

"Fires - no fewer than 10,000 of them - in Mexico alone, have left a dense haze over Mexico City and parts of neighbouring Texas, where health authorities have advised people to stay indoors." (*SMH*, May 31, 1998).

Health authorities advise people to stay indoors? Why not advise them to stop breathing altogether, for if they can't go to work the effect would be the same only more prolonged. People used to open their windows to get fresh air from outside, now they close them to keep the bad air out and the good one in. Brave new world we live in.

The bog fires of Southeast Asia, which choked cities in several countries, lasted for more than six months. People walked around with face masks for months on end. Obviously they did not have the benefit of the kind of advice Mexico's and Texas' health authorities gave to their people. You can imagine how they would have felt if told to stay inside until the crisis was over. Fires devastated large parts of Florida too, while in Central America fires wiped out thousands of hectares of tropical forests. Fires were out of control in the Brazilian tropical forest, as were those in Russia's far east which threatened the last refuge of the Siberian tiger. Fires were out of control in virtually every part of the globe last year. 1998 will most likely be remembered as the year of fires.

Last year meteorologists told us that seven of this century's hottest years occurred this decade. And that was even before the decade was over. After the excessive heat and draught of this year, you can be sure that that number will change.

This year, scientists are telling us that surface temperature in the oceans has increased by as much as 3 and 4 degrees in some places. That portends nothing but calamity for the world.

The trends have been with us since the beginning of the decade, as we have consistently reported in our magazines, yet, as late as three years ago, scientists and the mainstream media were telling people that there is nothing to worry about.

**"Study scotches fears of a long term drought"** "Temperatures are rising steadily but there is no indication the drought of recent years indicates a long-term trend to drier weather, according to one of the most intensive studies of weather patterns in Australia. The results of the study by Dr Janice Luff, a senior research scientist with the Australian Institute of Marine Science, will be published soon in the *International Journal of Climatology*.

Dr Luff has analysed rainfall throughout Queensland since 1891, when records began, and temperatures since 1910. In line with a major prediction of the impact of the greenhouse effect, and with similar studies overseas, Dr Luff has detected a clear pattern of temperature increases. Her analysis shows a rise of between half and one degree in summer and winter averages over the past 85 years, and in minimum temperatures for both seasons. There has been no significant change in maximum temperatures. "Whatever warming is going on is mostly at night," Dr Luff said. She said there had been a great deal of variability with rainfall, with particularly wet summers in the 1950s and 1970s, while summers since 1982 have been unusually dry with the exception of 1983/84 and 1990/91. Dr Luff said that despite the drought, now in its sixth year over large swathes of outback NSW and Queensland, there has been no overall trend towards drier or wetter conditions. "The 1902 drought over much of Australia was as bad as anything we've had recently," Dr Luff said. Nonetheless, there have been wild local variations in recent rains. Cape Tribulation had 745 millimetres in one day in March - almost twice the previous 24-hour record for the North Queensland settlement and more than the total annual for other parts of the State. According to Dr Neville Nichols, a senior research scientist with the Bureau of Meteorology, winter rainfall in south-western Western Australia has been declining in recent decades, while summer falls over parts of south-eastern Australia, mainly in coastal NSW, have been increasing. Dr Nicholls said there was unequivocal

evidence of temperature rises, with a progressive decline in the incidence of frost in inland eastern Australia this century, and a steady increase in cloud cover in the eastern States over the past three decades.

"It is not possible to say yet whether the greenhouse effect or anything else is involved," Dr Nicholls said. Despite heavy rains, the drought continues its relentless march, with 41 of Queensland's 122 shires drought-declared. Mrs Kath Delahunty said her property, Bundella, 130 kilometres south of Hughenden in north Queensland, had no rain for 22 months until last January, when 130 millimetres fell in a few days, and none has fallen since. "We are devastated in every way imaginable. We pray for rain every day and I only hope we're still sane when it eventually comes," Mrs Delahunty said." (*Sydney Morning Herald*, May 6, 1996).

Never before has humanity been surrounded by so many perils and threatened from so many quarters, yet never before has there been more ignorance about the true reasons for these problems.

Since ancient times until the advent of modern science, people knew exactly what the main reason for their misfortunes was. They knew that alienation from God brought disaster upon them, so they always returned to their God, imperfect as that may have been, and survived. But now they are no longer turning to God because they have been conditioned to think that there is no God, or that if there is one He does not care anymore.

A seismic change has occurred in people's perceptions about the worth of religion. But this does not mean that people's hunger for spiritual fulfilment has waned away. What it means is that this hunger is no longer being fulfilled by preachers from the pulpit, but by commercial television stations which have discovered that there is profit in tackling subjects which were taboo only yesteryear. Within days of each other, the two most popular commercial television stations in Australia presented two-hour programs that drew huge interest from the public. One was titled *Signs From God*, and the other *Seven Signs of Christ's Return*. Channel 7 travelled the globe in search of paranormal phenomena such as weeping icons and statues, and that mysterious phenomenon called the "stigmata". That these "miracles" have nothing to do with the Scriptures, or with the miracles performed by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, is of little concern to those who present them as a sure sign of God's presence in those places. That God is present all over the world there is no doubt, but that He manifests Himself in those fake miracles there is. It is another god that is using these signs to deceive if possible even the elect of God.

2 Cor 4:3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

2 Cor 4:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."

These signs are exactly of the kind Jesus Christ said that would occur before His return. First He told us that there would be no faith in the world at this time, meaning that it would be impossible to perform true miracles.

Luke 18:8b "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Mat 13:57 So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

Mat 13:58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Then He said that Satan would use every possible trick in an attempt to deceive the elect.

Mat 24:23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

Mat 24:24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive,

Mat 24:25 if possible, even the elect. "See, I have told you beforehand. "Therefore if they say to you,

Mat 24:26 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.

Mat 24:27 "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

So the sign of His return cannot be found in obscure places at this time, but can be observed in heaven at the appropriate time. Now is it a mere coincidence that all these fake signs are connected with the Roman Catholic Church?

All roads lead to Rome, including those dealing with fake miracles. The signs of stigmata appear only among the Catholics too. As a religious commentator observed:

"Why are the religious claims under investigation in *Signs From God* of a distinctly Catholic variety? Does God only communicate in Catholic idioms?" (*SMH, The Guide*, August 16-22).

Regarding the program on Channel 9, incredibly, not one of the seven signs they gave us as proof of Christ's return is biblically and prophetically accurate. And they couldn't be because like Gerard Flurry they were also talking about the rise of a superpower in central Europe, of a new temple in Jerusalem, of a new worldwide religion, of a super human dictator as head of the "best" who would stamp his number on people's forehead and hand, and so on. Which proves that the great distinction that once existed between mainstream religions and fundamentalist churches is now blurred and insignificant.

Anyone who believes those signs will undoubtedly be caught unprepared by the return of Jesus Christ, for all of them require a long time to be fulfilled.

As we watched that program, it became obvious to us that its main purpose was to divert people's attention from the most important event of our time – the planned visit to the Holy Land of the Pontiff. The implications of that event are horrendous for the world, yet that was not even mentioned in their program. The Pope made an

appeal to the world earlier this year not to see his journey as anything other than a personal pilgrimage “on the steps of Abraham”.

On the steps of Abraham? Is he the “Vicar of Abraham” or the “Vicar of Christ”? Why would the “Vicar of Christ” want to follow in the steps of Abraham, instead of the steps of Jesus Christ? Or is he afraid of what he is about to do and is merely testing the waters nearby to see what happens before he plunges into fulfilling the most awesome prophecy of the Bible?

This Pope is a brave one. Having visited some eighty countries so far, he is now bracing for the mission of his life. And to show us how brave he is, he has just reintroduced the indulgences which shook the church in the Middle Ages and led to the Reformation of Martin Luther.

“Lest anyone think that indulgences are a medieval anachronism, the Vatican has issued an updated manual for how modern Catholics can use them and maybe get to heaven faster. Now, according to a revised guide presented in the Vatican on Friday, the new spiritually correct protocol includes being nice to immigrants, praying ostentatiously in the office or giving up cigarettes and alcohol. These more relevant steps in the modern world can help you get to heaven, says the *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* (Manual of Indulgences). The 115-page booklet outlines ways the Catholics can gain forgiveness for their sins and reduce the period of time they have to suffer for them in purgatory. Written in Latin, it updates an earlier document passed by Pope Paul VI in 1968.

A visit to one of Rome’s major basilica during 2000, combined with the recital of “special prayers for the intentions of the Pope” is another way sinners can cut their time in purgatory – the place where mortals expiate their sins through suffering after death. In the early church, people got indulgences by going on a pilgrimage to a holy shrine or by fighting in the Crusades. The document grants a partial indulgence to blind people who listen to prescribed religious texts on tape” (*SMH*, Sept. 20, 1999).

A recent major study in the USA, involving some 22,000 people, produced heartening results for the believers.

“CHURCHGOERS will have another reason to praise the Lord each Sunday, with a US study showing regular attendance in the pew can improve your health and increase your life expectancy. The study in *Demography* revealed the life expectancy of weekly attenders to be 82 years – seven years more than that of non-attenders. People who attend less than once a week are expected to live to 79. The results were based on data collected during a nine-year period on 22,000 people who took part in the US National Health Interview Survey. The study showed people who never attended church were four times more likely to die of respiratory diseases, diabetes and infectious diseases than people who were regular attenders. Researchers believed going to church contributed to psychological factors that are important to a person’s well-being and morality.” (*The Sun-Herald*, September 26, 1999).

God told His people long ago that this is exactly what would happen if they remained faithful to Him and obeyed His laws and statutes.

Deu 4:39 "Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.

Deu 4:40 "You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

Deu 5:16 'Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

But unbelievably, this study, which should have gladdened the hearts of all preachers, which confirms from a scientific point of view what God has told us long ago, has upset the Catholic Church.

“Father Brian Lucas, a Sydney spokesman for the Catholic Church, dismissed the study, saying: “I am not sure about its validity. I’m surprised such a study was done.” “Father Lucas said regularly attending services was about spiritual well-being, not increasing a person’s life expectancy” (*The Sun-Herald*, September 26, 1999).

Has this man ever read the fifth commandment which specifically says that if people honour their parents they prolong their life on earth? If this is not a spiritual matter what is it? We hope you understand now who is the “Mother of Harlots” – who would dominate the world – and who is the little flock of Jesus Christ that would perish at its hands.

Rev 17:5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Rev 17:6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

Luke 12:31 "But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.

Luke 12:32 "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luke 12:33 "Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.

Luke 12:34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

# PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AGAIN!

During the former Prime Minister's Netanyahu reign, the peace process in the Middle East was halting, but with the election of a Labour Prime Minister, peace was salvaged and revived, and things are shaping up well for the visit of their esteemed guest, Pontifex Maximus, next year. He is expected to bless them with his peace and give them legitimacy and worldwide recognition.

"Barak seeks peace agenda" said a headline in Australia's influential newspaper, *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

After giving us the details of how this peace is to be achieved over the next 15 months, they concluded their article with the following revealing note:

"Israel has confirmed that it plans to add at least 50 more F-16s to an already formidable jet fighter fleet, signalling a determination to maintain decisive regional superiority even as it pursues peace deals with its neighbours. In what would be the largest arms purchase in Israel's history, Mr Barak has told US officials that his country wants to buy 50 new F-16E fighter-bombers, a \$US2.5 billion order, with an option to order up to 60 more jets for a further \$US2 billion.

Israel already has more than 250 F-16s, the largest fleet outside the US." (*SMH*, July 20, 1999).

A country the size of Israel already has the largest fleet of F-16s outside the US and plans to buy even more of these formidable war machines! Obviously they are very confident of the dividends the current peace negotiations will bring them.

A few days later, Israel's Chief-of-Staff made it clear why Israel cannot trust its partners in this peace process.

**"Watch Syria, general warns.** The Chief-of-Staff of Israel's defence forces has identified Syria's ability to launch missile strikes as the greatest military threat facing the Jewish state.

The assessment of General Shaul Mofaz underscores the urgency for Israel to make peace with Damascus.

"The main threat today is surface-to-surface missiles and the biggest threat, as of today, is Syria, although this threat is also developing from Iran," General Mofaz said. At their present range, the Scud B and Scud C [missiles] which the Syrians have, are the biggest threats." Israel must remain on a war footing even as it reaches out to make peace with Syria and the Palestinians, General Mofaz said. Further crises must be expected in the Middle East peace process and the Israeli defence forces "must be ready to respond to them", he said. "We must adopt the phrase 'those who seek peace must prepare for war'." (*SMH*, August 4, 1999).

Maybe Israeli leaders know more than they can tell us. Either way, they are doing well to be prepare themselves for any eventuality. They would do even better to declare a national day of repentance and turn to their God and, dare we say, to the Son whom their forefathers had carelessly crucified. After paying for their sins to the brim ("His blood be on us and on our children." Mat 27:25), it is time their eyes were opened to what they have done, and repent, for He eagerly waits for them to acknowledge the calamity their forefathers have bequeathed on them. This way they can turn their misfortune to their advantage, for God is ready to grant them their rightful place at the top, but only if they apply His laws, judgments and statutes righteously and faithfully.

Zec 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."

Zec 8:23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'" "

Does the Jewish nation need to undergo another fiery trial before its leaders – spiritual and political – abandon their myopic refusal to see reason and continue to close their eyes and shut their ears to the call of the Almighty, who is prepared to place them above all nations if only they repent and accept the sacrifice and message of the wisest and greatest man who ever lived – their own Son Jesus Christ? Time will tell, but the current signs are not encouraging.

# THE “SACRED NAME” DOCTRINE – WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT

In the last few years, a pernicious new religious fad has been spreading through America like bush fire, and now threatens to spread throughout the whole world – the so-called “Sacred Names” doctrine.

Of all the letters we have received over the years, none have been as persistent as those that came from people who took us to task for not adhering to their “sacred name” doctrine. At first we treated them with the attention they deserved, ignoring them altogether, but the time has come to put these people in their place, lest they pester us to death.

The common thread among them is the idea that God’s only sacred name is the original Hebrew “YAH”. This fallacy is easily exposed by the fact that no one quite knows how to pronounce it, or even how to write it down: Yah, YHWA, Yahweh, Jehovah, etc. This is what the *Assemblies of Yahweh* have told us:

“The Assemblies of Yahweh present this volume, *The Sacred Scriptures*, to the reader in our humble endeavour to give you a special gift of greater biblical knowledge. We have restored the Sacred Name, Yahweh (the Tetragrammaton) and proper titles to the English text of the Old Testament as well as returning the Name of Yahshua, our Savior, to the text of the New Testament.

*The Sacred Scriptures*, Bethel Edition, is based upon the translation work of the American Standard Version, 1901, known as the most accurate English version ever put into print.”

But *The Remnant of YHWA* said this:

“In the Hebrew tongue, as in most languages including English, vowels are very important elements for determining the correct definition of words. . . A Prime example is the three-letter consonant :Q-D-SH. Pronounced qo-desh it means: to be set apart for righteousness, but pronounced qe-desh’ it means: prostitute – quite a contrast you could say. Likewise, if we give the wrong pronunciation of the Messiah’s name, it too will have a different meaning other than the definition inspired in Matt. 1:21. Since the death of the Apostles then, everyone on earth has been pronouncing the Messiah’s Hebrew Name incorrectly, including the “Sacred Name” groups in America which take pride in the fact that their ministries are built on this primary goal. It is time to restore to its rightful place the Royal Name of the soon coming King of kings! It’s been lost for nearly 2,000 years now. The Remnant must prove all things!”

“The Jewish Messiah, whose name is “Yahsha”, meaning “YHWH is Salvation” (Matt. 1:21), went everywhere announcing the great news of peace to come. This message of peace is the great news, and it is the only hope of mankind’s survival. It is the coming Kingdom of YHWA (Yah-weh) and the 1,000 year rule of its King – Yahsha Ha’Mashiyakh. If traditional mainstream religions really understood and taught the true message of the Jewish Messiah, then this world would understand that the Kingdom of YHWA must come soon to be established on this earth. Ironically, traditional religion fails to teach this”. . . “In the coming thousand-reign of Yahsha Ha’Mashiyakh,. . . not only will the Ten Commandments be observed, but the entire Covenant: the Sabbaths, the annual feasts, the clean and unclean food laws, and all other Laws, statutes and judgments contained in the Torah.”

And still others, who simply signed themselves as *The Faith of Yahweh*, wrote:

“These are the eternal names of the Heavenly Father and His Son. Like Them, they never change! See **Mal. 3:6.**”

Very soon will begin the tribulation over all the earth. There will be the beast system of the Anti-Messiah in Rome, its number is 666. You won’t be able to buy or sell without this mark. Don’t take it! Now they are already talking about imprinting numbers in the hands of people to be read by computers! The tribulation will end in a great battle in the valley of Armageddon near Jerusalem. YAHSHUA will return, and will descend down to Mount Zion and His millennial reign on the earth of 1,000 years begins. But watch out! Many won’t survive until it arrives! Read Zach. 14:1-4; Rev. 20:5-6; Isa. 65:16-25; Micah 4:1-5, etc. Accept YAHWEH and YAHSHUA, seek the Holy Spirit. Repent! Publicly confess YAHWEH and YAHSHUA, be baptized. Help build the Kingdom in hearts, and the rest of the good things will follow! Have the Ten Commandments engraved on your hearts. They are part of YAHWEH’S eternal character...”

Have these people convinced you of the need to return to the Hebrew roots of our Father’s and our Saviour’s names? Is our Father’s name Yahweh, or YHWA (Yah-weh)? And our Saviour’s, Yahshua, or Yahsha Ha’Mashiyakh?

First, the *Assemblies of Yahweh* told us that they were “humbly endeavouring to give us a special gift of greater biblical knowledge by restoring the Sacred Names”, then *The remnant of Yahweh* endeavoured to restore the names which the first ones got it wrong, and finally *The Faith of Yahweh* authoritatively told us that, “These are the eternal names of the Heavenly Father and His Son. Like Them, they never change! See Mal. 3:6.”

These are by no means the only people who graced us with their advise, but some are so atrocious, we would be committing blasphemy, as they do, if we reprinted them.

We would like to go over all their references, as we normally do, to show you how misplaced they are, but you can do that for yourselves. We will have a look only at Malachi 3:6 which they use to prove that the names of "Yahweh" and "Yahshua" never change.

"For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob."

That is how the *New King James Bible*, which we use in our writings, has it, but if you think that perhaps the Jews might have it differently, this is how *The Jewish Tanakh of the Holy Scriptures*, published in 1985, renders this verse.

"For I am the LORD—I have not changed; and you are the children of Jacob—you have not ceased to be."

Aside from the fact that this is an extremely poor translation, as anyone can see even without going to the original, which proves that modern Jewish scholars could be as good at it as their Christian counterparts when they set their minds to it, this example proves that the Jews themselves have ceased to use the original "sacred names", preferring instead, quite sensibly, to use their modern equivalents. The attempt to return to the Hebrew roots of the Bible falls into the same category as the dietary laws, which these people also preach.

"We affirm that adherence to the law of clean and unclean meats in Lev. 11 and Deut. 14 remains in effect and binding in our era, and that it is important to our physical health, 2 Cor. 6:16-18" (Assemblies of Yahweh).

We have no qualms with Lev. 11 and Deut. 14, they served their purpose at that time and were true as far the Old Testament lasted. But let us look at their references from the New Testament.

2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore  
2 Cor 6:17 "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."  
2 Cor 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

Do you see anything to do with "physical health" in this passage? See how easy it is to trap these people in their own webs of deception? The word "unclean" refers to idols, which are an abomination to the Lord. Anyone touched by them, or better said, anyone who prays or pays respect to them, becomes spiritually unclean, not physically unclean. Apostle Paul took this reference from the Old Testament, from Numbers 33: 51-56. So let us see what that Scripture says also.

Num 33:51 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of  
Num 33:52 Canaan, 'then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places;  
Num 33:53 'you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to  
Num 33:54 posses. 'And you shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families; to the larger you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance; there everyone's inheritance shall be whatever falls to him by lot. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.  
Num 33:55 'But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you  
Num 33:56 dwell. 'Moreover it shall be that I will do to you as I thought to do to them.'" Numbers 33:51-56

The Canaanites were to be driven out from their land not because they were eating "unclean" food, but because they were spiritually "unclean", having polluted themselves with their "engraved stones and moulded images".

Not only do these people fail to prove their point, and are misquoting the Scriptures, but avoid the very biblical references which prove that they observe "doctrines of demons".

1 Tim 4:1 "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to  
deceiving spirits  
1 Tim 4:2 and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,  
1 Tim 4:3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by  
1 Tim 4:4 those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received  
1 Tim 4:5 with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.  
1 Tim 4:6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed."

Now if someone "departs from the faith, gives heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons", and "commands people to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving", he is pure and simply a Satanist. Once again here are the words of the man who wrote most of the New Testament.

2 Cor 11:13 "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

2 Cor 11:14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

2 Cor 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."

Now these are not our words, but the words of your own Bible. If you don't believe the Bible, nothing in the world will fill the void in your soul. So don't believe us, believe what you read in your own Scriptures.

It is the height of lunacy to claim that people of Africa, Europe, Asia, Oceania, and America, cannot find God unless they call Him by His Hebrew "sacred names". Chances are that most of them could not even pronounce them, particularly since the Hebrew themselves seem to have had difficulties pronouncing them. Those at *The Remnant of Yahweh*, assure us that, "Since the death of the Apostles, everyone on earth has been pronouncing the Messiah's Hebrew Name incorrectly". Which means that since the time of the Apostles there have been no Christians on earth. This is a blasphemy, for it denies the very work of the Holy Spirit, not to speak of the fact that it denies the name of Jesus Christ.

This exercise is nothing but another disguised attack on the New Testament. An acceptance of their doctrine, leads people to believe that some names of God are sacred while others are not, leading them to break the third commandment.

Exo 20:7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

Every single name of God, in whatever language it is pronounced, or by whatever sound people know Him, **is sacred**. I happen to speak in two tongues. (That is, two real tongues, not the babbling of the Charismatic Christians who utter sounds totally unintelligible and call them "tongues"). Depending of the company I am with, if I speak Romanian, I address Him by the Romanian names; and if I speak English, I address Him by the English equivalents. I can assure you that my Father in Heaven, and My Lord Jesus Christ, hear me when I pray to Them, or when I worship Them, and know for a fact that They appreciate the names by which I address Them.

In the Old Testament, God used several names, all of which are sacred. Here are a few examples:

Gen 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "**I am Almighty God**; walk before Me and be blameless.

Exo 3:13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

Exo 3:14 And God said to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM**." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, '**I AM** has sent me to you.'"

Exo 6:2 And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "**I am the LORD**."

Exo 6:3 "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name **LORD** I was not known to them."

Psa 68:4 Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Extol Him who rides on the clouds, By His name YAH, And rejoice before Him.

Psa 83:16 Fill their faces with shame, That they may seek Your name, O LORD.

Psa 83:17 Let them be confounded and dismayed forever; Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,

Psa 83:18 That they may know that You, whose name alone is the LORD, Are the **Most High** over all the earth.

Isa 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be **called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**.

So "YAH" is only one of many names by which our heavenly Father may be known and addressed: Almighty God, I AM WHO I AM, I AM, Lord, Most High, Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, etc.

The same is true of Jesus Christ. He is known by several names in the Bible, all of which must be regarded as sacred.

Mat 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name **Immanuel**," which is translated, "God with us."

Mat 1:24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him

Mat 1:25 his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name **JESUS**.

Mark 1:24 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are; the **Holy One of God!**"

Luke 1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. "He will be great,

Luke 1:32 and will be called the **Son of the Highest**; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that **Holy One** who is to be born will be called the **Son of God**.

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the **Messiah**" (which is translated, the **Christ**).

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. Jesus said to him,

John 14:6 "**I am the way, the truth, and the life**. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning **the Word** of life;

Acts 3:13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified **His Servant Jesus**, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.

Acts 3:14 "But you denied the **Holy One** and **the Just**, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

Acts 3:15 "and killed the **Prince of life**, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

Acts 3:16 "And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Acts 10:36 "The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through **Jesus Christ**; He is **Lord** of all;

1 Pet 5:4 and when the **Chief Shepherd** appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the **Shepherd** and **Overseer** of your souls.

Heb 12:2 "looking unto Jesus, **the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Eph 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being **the chief corner stone**,

Eph 1:22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.

2 Tim 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which **the Lord, the righteous Judge**, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Rev 15:3 They sing the song of Moses, the servant of **God**, and the song of the **Lamb**, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, **Lord God Almighty!** Just and true are Your ways, **O King of the saints!**

Rev 21:6 And He said to me, "It is done! **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End**. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

Rev 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am **the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star**."

So just to recap, these are the names by which our Saviour may be known, or their equivalent in whatever language people happen to address Him: Immanuel, Prince of Life, Lion of the tribe of Judah, Root of David, Word of Life, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Lamb of God, Advocate, The Way, The Truth, The Life, Dayspring, Lord of All, Lord God Almighty, Messiah, Son of God, Saviour, Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, Author and Finisher of Our Faith, Chief Cornerstone, Righteous Judge, Light of the World, Morning Star, Head of the Church, Chief Shepherd, Resurrection and Life, Alpha and Omega. If you use any of these names to refer to Jesus Christ, you must regard them as sacred in that particular context, otherwise you cannot possibly expect the blood of Jesus Christ to atone for your sins. Now before we conclude, we will draw your attention to another dangerous doctrine from these people.

"We affirm that in order to preach this true doctrine of salvation around the world, every member of the body of the Messiah is obligated by scriptural law to tithe (10 percent of his increase) to the Assembly of Yahweh, Prov. 3:9. These tithes are to be paid to the headquarters treasury so that no duplication of the ministry shall occur, Mal. 3:8-12; Lev. 27:30-33; Matt. 23:23. The Assembly of Yahweh teaches also the second (feast day) tithe, Deut. 14:22-26, and the third (third year poor fund) tithe, Deut. 14: 27-29; Deut. 26:12-17." (*Assemblies of Yahweh, Statement of Doctrine*).

Like the Worldwide Church of God under Herbert W. Armstrong, and the Philadelphia Church of God under Gerard Flurry, these people also preach the ruinous tithing doctrines. We hope you noticed that it is not only ten percent that they require, hard as that may be, but thirty percent – the "second" tithe to be used at the Feast of Tabernacles, and the "third" tithe to be used every third year for the poor. For the other two years presumably the poor must live on air, or eat stale bread two years old.

# THE “ORIGINAL” BIBLE IN A MUDDLE OVER ITS TITLE

It used to be that undertaking a major work such as producing a new translation of the Bible was fraught with dangers. William Tyndale, who tried to produce the first English Bible, was accused of heresy and lost his life in 1536 before he could finish his work. But nowadays, it seems people undertake such a task for no other reason than they can do it. This could explain the explosion of new English versions in the last few decades. A few years ago we were informed that another translation was in the making, only that this was not going to be just another Bible, this was to be an “Original” Bible.

It took these people several years until it dawned on them that a translation could never be called “original”. Dr Tabor, the author of this work, was finally forced to appeal to his “associates” to help him find a new title for it. Faithful as he is, he also asked us to help him with this near impossible task. And since we are not the type of people to turn our backs to a person in need, we immediately went to work assiduously on his behalf. We have good news for him, but first this is what he told us in his *Original Bible Project Newsletter* of January 30, 1999.

“One thing we have not settled is how we will refer to this Bible, once it is published. In other words, do we want to give it some distinctive name? We have called our overall efforts *The Original Bible Project*, but in terms of a name, it is not clear whether we would want to call out final product “The Original Bible” or not. Every translation has a name, a distinctive tag or designation, from King James Version, to the Jerusalem Bible, to the New Revised Standard Version. One thing I am sure about, I do not want it called the “Tabor” Bible! It might be that calling it “the Original Bible” would sound a bit too pretentious. After all, we want this Bible to appeal to the general audience, but also to be respected by all the Biblical scholars. There are many excellent translations on the market, and although we believe none is quite like ours, we do not want to come across in a way that would sound foolhardy or vain. Many Bibles are simply called: The Holy Bible, or The Holy Scriptures, with the name of the translation given as a descriptive tag. I find that approach rather appealing—but that still leaves open the question of our descriptive name or tag. If any of you have ideas along this line, please pass them on to us.”

He acknowledges that “there are many excellent translations on the market”, but does not tell us why we need yet another one. Since he discarded the idea that he is going to give us an “Original Bible”, it stands to reason that his project has become redundant too. But after duping people for years into believing that he is producing a masterpiece, he can’t just abandon the project for they might demand their money back. So he is now seeking their help in getting him out of a sticky situation.

One can’t help but be moved by Dr Tabor’s sense of modesty. He does not want to call it the “Tabor Bible” or “the Original Bible” because it “would sound too pretentious”. Well, we don’t think so. We think it would be perfectly all right to call it the “Tabor Bible”. Nevertheless since he past off the opportunity to achieve immortality this way, we came to his help. After all, isn’t this what friends are there for? We think that the most appropriate title for his “Original” Bible is . . . the . . . “Johnny-come-lately-Bible”. Or rather, the . . . “James-comes-lately-Bible”. And to show our good faith, we are even forfeiting our royalties, which could amount to quite a bit given the commercial success of such a title. But then, we know that Dr James Tabor does not do this for financial reasons. He never tires of reminding his “associates” of this fact.

“We have never had to beg, plead, or badger any of you for funds. Our costs over the next year will be higher than in the past, but I am confident we will have what we need to move on to completion”.

See, he never “begs, pleads, or badgers” people over their heads for funds. Coming to think about it, do you know of anyone who does, or did, that? Some of you who were once under the spell of Herbert W. Armstrong might be tempted to say yes, but really, don’t they all say the same? Dr Tabor, once a victim of Armstrong’s theology himself, is not averse to using his methods for his own ends. Except that he is more refined. He knows that an innocuous reminder in the right place could have a greater psychological impact, and bring more rewards than badgering people with crude requests for funds. How honest is it then to claim that he never “begs, pleads, or badgers” people for funds when in the very next sentence he reminds them not so subtly that his expenses are going to be higher next year than they were in the past?

The idea of an “Original Bible” was first expressed by Dr Martin two years after we started publishing *The Christian Herald* and began calling for a return to the **original Gospel**. But after convincing Dr Tabor to take over his project, he dedicated most of his efforts to combating our work. We all know how successful he has been at that (See *TCH No 7*).

Now we would like to conclude this article with the words of Dr Tabor once again. In his January 1999 edition of the *Original Bible Project Newsletter*, we found the following P.S.

“Congratulations to Dr Tabor upon his promotion to the rank of Full Professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.”

Now who do you think takes credit for these congratulations? A fellow academic? No! His mentor, Dr Martin? No! Someone we don’t know perhaps? No! It is none other than . . . Dr Tabor, err, Professor Tabor, himself. Once again his discreet sense of modesty comes to the fore. But then, maybe that is how they do things at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

# WHICH BIBLE CAN WE TRUST?

During our field missions, in which we try to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible, we sometimes quietly participate in the religious service of the churches that happen to be our way. Once we visited a church which displayed religious literature on two large tables in the church foyer before their service began. Among them, there were two books which immediately caught my attention: *Which Bible can we trust?*, and *Westcott & Hort – the Occult Connection and the New Greek Text*. Both were compiled and edited by Less Garrett.

When I offered to buy them, I was told to wait until the end of the service when the author himself would hand them to me. So we waited quietly and patiently at the back of their congregation until the end of their service. As it turned out, the author himself was their guest of honor and the main speaker of the day. It soon became obvious that he was a well known and traveled person. He had just returned from a lengthy tour of the USA, and people seemed to be delighted to hear his experiences in that country. He told them how he had been invited to speak and appear on many radio and television programs all over that country. When he got to the main topic of his sermon, he began by saying, "We are not like other churches, which say one thing and do another. We follow the Bible accurately".

Now nothing pleases us more than to hear people say that they follow the Bible accurately so we listened the more attentively. But towards the end of their service we realized how accurately they do that when they began to "speak in tongues". And when the wife of the local preacher, listed as their second "pastor", led the closing ceremonies, we had another good example of how accurately they follow the Bible.

During his speech, Less Garrett made a statement which he will probably never forget. He said that he would give a thousand dollars to anyone who could prove to him that Jesus Christ spent at least one night in Jerusalem. But, not to embarrass his audience, he quickly added that he would not hold it against them if no one claimed his prize because no one ever did it. No one did it because, he said, it is not true. Now I don't know why he made that statement, since it did not seem to fit into his sermon, except perhaps to impress his audience with his knowledge of the Scriptures. But as soon as I heard him, I thought to myself, "Oops, here I am about to get richer by one thousand dollars - enough to pay the expenses of this trip". I should have stood up and showed him the following Scriptures in the hearing of everyone, and he would have had no choice but to pay. But I waited patiently to the end of service after he had finished talking with everyone, then I addressed him and said: "Sir, you owe me one thousand dollars, but after paying for these two books it comes down to only 960 dollars."

He looked at me and laughed, thinking perhaps that I was joking. But when I opened the Bible and read the following passage from the book of Luke, his face went pale.

Luke 2:40 "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

Luke 2:41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

Luke 2:42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

Luke 2:43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company,

Luke 2:44 they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

Luke 2:45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

Luke 2:46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

Luke 2:47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

Luke 2:48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

Luke 2:49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Clearly, the Boy Jesus slept in Jerusalem during the three days and three nights that his parents looked for Him. He also spent the last night of His life in Jerusalem, albeit in prison. When I finished reading that passage, Garrett and his wife gazed at me in stunned silence. After a few moments which seemed to last forever, I broke the impasse and said: "next time just be more careful what you say". His wife immediately jumped: "yes, yes, you must do that, you must do that next time". To which he replied barely audible: "Yes, I guess I better do that". So I gave him the \$40, and he gave me his books. I then handed him some of our magazines which he accepted gracefully.

Many years ago, during my brief encounter with the Worldwide Church of God, I had an almost identical experience in that church. Garner Ted Armstrong, in his radio broadcasts, used to say that he would give \$10,000 to anyone who could prove to him from the Bible that people go to heaven after death. So one day, I had nothing better to do than to quote to him Revelation 6: 9-11 and 14:1-5. Here they are.

Rev 6:9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

Rev 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then a white robe was given to each of them;

Rev 6:11 and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow

servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

Rev 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.

Rev 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.

Rev 14:3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

Rev 14:4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

Rev 14:5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

In the first example, the souls are held in a kind of animated suspense until the resurrection time, but in the second, it is human beings, resurrected to spiritual life, that are in heaven before the throne of God Almighty. Admittedly, they are elevated to heaven after a resurrection, but in heaven they are nevertheless.

The reason Garner Ted Armstrong was sure no one could claim his money is that his church preached that people don't go to heaven because the Kingdom of Heaven, or Kingdom of God, will be established here on this earth. They use the following Scripture as the basis for their belief:

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

Rev 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; **And we shall reign on the earth.**"

Had these people read to whole book of Revelation, they would have come across the following passage which clarifies that statement.

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

Rev 20:13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Rev 20:14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Rev 20:15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Rev 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

The Kingdom of God will be established on a new earth and a new heaven, not on this polluted and filthy earth. This is what Apostle Peter preached too:

2 Pet 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

2 Pet 3:11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and

2 Pet 3:12 godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

2 Pet 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Garner Ted Armstrong of course was not going to pay me that money when he could just as well put me out of his Church. Shortly after that, he and his ministers relished the occasion I gave them to do just that. Such are the perils of a naïve person like me who takes people at their word. But then, I take God at His Word too, and this is what He says:

Deu 23:23 "That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth."

Lev 5:4 'Or if a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it; when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in any of these matters."

Psa 15:1 **LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?** Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

Psa 15:2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;

Psa 15:3 He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

Psa 15:4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; **He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;**

Psa 15:5 He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved." (Emphasis added).

Mat 12:36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of

judgment.

Mat 12:37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Now coming back to Les Garrett, that was an unfortunate incident, because his two books are very useful indeed and we strongly recommend them to our readers. He went to great lengths to compile materials from many sources which show the strength and weaknesses of many of our contemporary Bibles. He concluded that:

1) In spite of its somewhat archaic language, the King James Version remains by far the most accurate and reliable of all the Bibles.

2) The Revised Version of 1881, produced by Westcott & Hort, which became the basis for many modern translations, contained thousands of errors and deliberate changes from the manuscripts from which it was translated.

Many of the religious differences in the Christian world today could be traced back directly to that work. As a general rule, the more a church relies on the Revised Version of 1881, or on the Bibles which emanated from it, the further away from the truth of God it is. Garrett compiled a list of the modern Bibles which contain the largest number of errors.

New American Standard Bible	909
Revised Version	788
New World Translation	767
New International Version	695
Good News for Modern Man	614
Amplified Bible	484
Douay-Rheims Witness Catholic Version	421
Old Jehovah Witnesses Authorised Bible	120

He says nothing about the New King James version, which we have adopted for our work, and we assume this is because this translation may not have been published when he finished his work.

The New King James Version is not perfect, but it has two important points going for it:

1) It rigorously lists on its margins every instance in which there are differences between the manuscripts from which it was translated, and those which form the basis of other translations.

2) It retains much of the framework and style of the King James Version.

If this Bible had been available years ago when I started my biblical journey, it would have saved me a lot of time and money. Nowadays life is infinitely easier for those who have access to this Bible and its computer version.

For serious students of the Bible, it is important to remain faithful to one printed version of the Bible, even if they use many others for comparison purposes. Over time you form a mental picture of its structure and language, and this is essential when you begin to use a concordance.

We are amazed at people whom we knew to be proficient in the King James Version, who now speak and write as if they are novices. The explanation could only be that after changing to the New International Version they became destabilized and disoriented. Either that, or they fulfill this prophecy:

1 Cor 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

1 Cor 1:19 "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

Where is the wise?

1 Cor 1:20 Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

The New International Version has gained wide acceptance since its publication, and we don't understand why. Aside from the hundreds of places in which it diverges from the original manuscripts, its authors have decided to use the term "Sovereign God" as if there are some other God's out there in heaven or in the universe. We find this practice terribly jarring and unnecessary. The distinction between the two spellings, "God" and "god", should be sufficient to delineate the true from the false as has been the case in the past.

Some people have adopted the Jewish practice of writing the Old Testament books in the order in which they appear in the Jewish Tanakh. They trumpet this as if it was as yet an undiscovered Christian virtue, when in fact it is nothing but another source of confusion for biblical students. The form in which the Christian Bible has been arranged and preserved for us by the Holy Spirit has served us well since the time of the Apostles. If anyone wants the Old Testament books in the order in which they appear in the Jewish Tanakh, they could buy a copy of that book. But we can tell you this much: there is nothing in that book that is not as well, or better, rendered in the King James and New King James versions.

The following excerpts from Les Garrett's book, *Which Bible can we Trust*, should give you a good idea of why we so strongly recommend it to our readers.

## THE CHRONLOGY OF THE KING JAMES VERSION

1. From The birth of Christ to 100 A.D. the original manuscripts were written in the Greek language.

2. The New Testament was compiled by 400 A.D.
  - (a) by 170 AD. - 20 New Testament books had been accepted by the early Christians.
  - (b) by 400 A.D. - all 27 books of the New Testament had been accepted by the early Christians as they were guided by the Holy Spirit.
  - (c) the Holy Spirit guided so that only the genuine books were included.
  - (d) the Holy Spirit also guided in the selection of the pure manuscripts.
  - (e) the Holy Spirit so guided that false gospels and manuscripts were set aside.
3. 452 - 1453 A.D. - The Textus Receptus was used by the Greek Church during this time under the direction of the Holy Spirit.
4. 1516 AD. - Erasmus edited the first printing of the Greek New Testament. This was in agreement with the Textus Receptus.
5. 1526 A.D. - Tyndale's New Testament in English was printed. He was burned at the stake in 1536 because he had the Bible printed in English.
6. 1550 A.D. - Stephens Greek New Testament (Textus Receptus).
7. 1611 A.D. - The King James or Authorised Version of the Bible was translated from the Greek Textus Receptus in the New Testament and Hebrew Masoretic Text in the Old Testament.
8. 1611 AD. - To the present. Infidels and assorted enemies of the Bible have attacked our Bible in every way known to man, but God's Word shall abide forever.

## **THE CORRUPT FOUNDATION OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS**

The 'other Bibles' which are so prevalent today are as dependable as quicksand. They will vary even from printing to printing as the constantly changing whims of man directs. However, each new Bible will continue down the same path of confusion and error. You cannot produce good fruit from a rotten tree.

## **THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE 'OTHER BIBLES'**

1. From the birth of Christ to 400 A.D. False prophets wrote polluted gospels and other books of the Bible at the same time that the true books of the New Testament were being written. Paul makes mention of this in 2 Cor. 2:17 "For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God...". Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit these tainted manuscripts were cast aside and were not included in the Textus Receptus.
2. 331 A.D. Constantine ordered that an 'ecumenical Bible' be written that would be acceptable to every stripe of Christian that was under his jurisdiction. A man by the name of Eusebius was assigned to direct this undertaking. Eusebius was a follower of Origen who rejected the deity of Christ and claimed that Christ was a created being. The Jehovah's Witnesses of today believe the same thing. This error is called the Arian heresy.
3. 1481 A.D. The Vatican manuscript was discovered in the Vatican library. This is a corrupted manuscript which repeatedly casts aside the deity of Christ. It reflects the Arianism of Origen and is thought by some to be one of the surviving manuscripts done by Eusebius at the command of Constantine. The date of its writing coincides with the 'ecumenical Bible' of Constantine.
4. 1844 A.D. The Sinaitic manuscript was discovered at Mt. Sinai in the monastery of Saint Catherine. It agrees closely with the Vatican manuscript and minimises the deity of Christ and is Arian in nature. It is safe to suggest that these two manuscripts were two of the fifty that were written for Constantine.
5. 1881A.D. The Westcott and Hort Greek Text was introduced. This text departed from the Textus Receptus and follows the Vatican and Sinaitic corruptions. Most scholars from every spectrum of Christianity have knowingly or otherwise promoted the Westcott and Hort Text from that time to the present.

The Jehovah's Witness Bible entitled the 'New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures' was translated from the text of Westcott and Hort. Their friendship with Westcott and Hort is not surprising. They reject the deity of Christ and gain strength from this corrupt text.

Most, if not all, of the modern translations of the Bible follow the path of the two worst manuscripts which are in existence. They almost seem to loath the Textus Receptus. This is evidenced by the fact that most Bible colleges, seminaries and schools use some Greek text other than the Textus Receptus. Nevertheless, the new versions are founded on faulty texts.

## **How We Got Our Bible**

### **"The LORD gave the Word"**

The Bible is the gift of God and the writers of the individual books testify that they received a revelation from God. "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue" (2 Samuel 23:2); "I have put My Words in thy mouth" (Jeremiah 1:9); "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16); "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). The Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 4 describes the Holy Scriptures as "every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God".

The Books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew on rolls prepared from the skins of animals, and scrupulous care was taken to ensure that copies were accurate. These books were compiled over a period of nearly one thousand years and were completed about 400 years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ at Bethlehem. Nearly 300 years before that event the Hebrew books appeared in a Greek translation which became known as the Version of the Seventy (Septuagint)

because the translation was believed to be the work of seventy learned Jews of Alexandria. This version was in common use in the days of the Apostles and is often quoted in the New Testament.

### **Inspiration and Authority**

The New Testament Books were written in Greek and were added at intervals during the hundred years following the Saviour's birth. Like the Old Testament Books they were recognised as "Holy Scripture" and acknowledged to be divinely inspired. Peter includes the epistles of Paul with "the other Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16), and Paul declares that his teaching was delivered "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Corinthians 2:13). From the last quarter of the first century to the end of the second there is a widening stream of testimony to the unique authority of the New Testament Scriptures. These testimonies may be gathered from the surviving writings of early Christian teachers in the Greek and Latin churches of Africa, Palestine, Syria, Rome and France. Here we may allow Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 180) to speak for them all "The Scriptures are perfect, inasmuch as they were uttered by the Word of God and His Spirit" - and he proceeds to use the Old and New Testaments as "Scripture" without distinction.

Councils of the Churches made official pronouncements on the subject from time to time during the following centuries, but it can be seen that there is no ground for the claim often made by the Roman Church that we received our Bible from her hands. All of the Books of the Bible were in use and acknowledged among Christian people generations before Rome ever claimed to be "mother and mistress of all the churches".

In the first five hundred years of the Christian era there were several important translations of the Holy Scriptures in Syriac, Latin, Egyptian (Coptic), Gothic and Armenian. These were all in existence centuries before there was a Bible in English. Late in the 4th century Jerome of Bethlehem completed a Latin translation which became known as the "Vulgate" because it was in the common or "vulgar" tongue of a large portion of the professing Church. Early attempts to put the Bible into the language of our own country were based not on the Hebrew and Greek, but on this Latin version.

### **The English language**

In order to trace the history of the English versions of the Holy Scriptures it is necessary to remember a little of the history of the English people and their language. When the Roman forces withdrew early in the fifth century the South Britons obtained the help of the Saxons against the attacks of the Picts and Scots. The Saxons returned from their victory in the North and began to take possession of the South. This struggle continued for about 150 years during which the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, a heathen people, gradually gained control and divided the country into seven kingdoms. Each of these in turn was absorbed by its stronger neighbour and finally in AD 827 Egbert combined them under his own rule, and his kingdom came to be known as Angle-land or England. In this period the light of the Gospel was practically extinguished over much of the country and then rekindled after the conversion of Ethelbert, King of Kent, at the end of the 6th century.

During the Saxon period the Danes repeatedly invaded and occupied large areas of the country. In AD 878 Alfred the Great overcame their army at Ethandune and their king embraced the Christian faith and submitted to Alfred. The next one hundred and fifty years witnessed many periods of strife between the English and the Danes, culminating in the Danish invasion of the northern counties at the instigation of William of Normandy. Harold defeated the Danes in the North, but was himself defeated at Hastings by the Normans under William, who divided up a large part of the country among his nobles. The English Church was reorganised under Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury.

### **Anglo Saxon versions**

There were several attempts to make the light of God's Word available to the people in the Anglo Saxon tongue. Early in the 8th century Aldhelan of Glastonbury translated the Psalms and Egbert of Holy Island translated the Gospels. A copy of this version may be seen in the British Museum. In AD 735 Bede laboured at Jarrow on his translation of the Gospel. A letter written by one of his pupils describes how the aged scholar pressed on with his work of translating the Scriptures up to the last moment of his life. Early in the morning of "Ascension Day" in AD 735 he summoned his helpers to continue with the task and dictated to them the translation of John's Gospel from the words, "What are they among so many?" As the sun was setting one of the scribes told him there was only one more chapter, but it seemed hard for Bede to speak. He replied, "Nay, it is easy, take up thy pen and write quickly". The young scribe wrote on until he could tell his master that only one sentence was wanting. When Bede dictated it the young man exclaimed, "It is finished, master!" Bede replied, "Aye it is finished! lift me up and place me by the window where I have so often prayed to God". Then with the Name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit upon his lips he passed into the presence of the Lord.

Alfred the Great desired that his people should be able to read the Word of God and he personally engaged in a translation of the Psalms until his death in AD 901. In the later 10th century Archbishop Aelfric and a number of others endeavoured to provide translations which could be read in the Churches so that many who could not read would at least hear the word of Truth.

## **Wycliffe's Bible**

The next four hundred years were an important period in the development of the English language. It is not possible to give precise dates but from AD 1066 to about 1150 Saxon and Norman French were in use side by side. From about 1150 the gradual fusion of the two peoples caused languages to mingle and merge with one another, producing what has been described as "semi-Saxon". The old Saxon and the Norman French and from about 1250 "English" emerges to pass through a century or more of development before being used as the vehicle of English Bible of AD 1382.

Wycliffe, knowing no Hebrew or Greek, translated from the Latin Vulgate which was far from perfect, but the English Version nevertheless showed only too clearly how far the doctrines of the Roman Church were removed from the plain teaching of God's Word. Wycliffe was accused of heresy and excommunicated, but continued with his task until his death in 1384. Every copy of his translation had to be written by hand, but so many were written that a Bill was enacted in Parliament to forbid its circulation. Archbishop Arundel complained to the Pope of "that pestilent wretch Wycliffe". The convocation of Oxford under Arundel in 1408 decreed "that no man hereafter by his own authority translate any text of the Scripture into English or any other tongue, by way of book, pamphlet or treatise; and that no man read any such book, pamphlet or treatise, now lately composed in the time of John Wycliffe or since . . . publicly or privately, upon pain of greater excommunication . . . He that shall do contrary to this shall likewise be punished as a favourer of heresy and error". During the next hundred years many Christian martyrs were burned to death with Wycliffe's Bible tied around their necks, but 170 copies remain to this day to testify to his faithfulness and the diligence of his helpers.

## **Invention of printing**

About twenty years after Wycliffe's death a boy named Gensfleisch ("Gooseflesh") was amusing himself cutting out the letters of his name from a piece of bark. He dropped one of these accidentally in a pot of hot dye, snatched it out and dropped it on a piece of white skin on a bench near the fire and was intrigued to see the pattern of the letter was impressed on the skin. It is possible that this experience lingered in his mind and suggested the idea of printing. Thirty years afterwards he set up his famous press at Mainz under the name of Gutenberg, his mother's family name. This was an epoch-making invention and was to contribute greatly towards the rapid reproduction of the Scriptures and the establishment of the Reformation in Europe.

## **William Tyndale**

For several hundred years the Greek language was almost unknown in Western Europe, but a great revival of Greek learning commenced about the middle of the 15th century and the new art of printing was the means of placing printed copies of the Greek Scriptures in the hands of Christian scholars. Erasmus of Rotterdam published his first edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516, and provided William Tyndale with the means of giving to English readers for the first time a New Testament translated directly from the Greek, the language in which it was first written. Like Wycliffe, Tyndale was accused of heresy, and was not allowed to pursue his studies in peace. He spent several years on the Continent and was eventually betrayed by a false friend, arrested, imprisoned, and burned at the stake at Vilvorde in Belgium in 1536. The place is marked by a memorial erected by the Trinitarian Bible Society and the Belgian Bible Society and the inscriptions include Tyndale's dying prayer - "Lord open the eyes of the King of England". His prayer was answered when in 1538 King Henry VIII gave instructions that a large Bible should be placed in every parish church.

Tyndale published an edition of the New Testament in a conveniently small size and arranged for thousands of copies to be smuggled into England in barrels, bales of cloth, and even in flour sacks. By these means the New Testament was rapidly and widely distributed. Many copies were seized and burned at St. Paul's, as "a burnt offering most pleasing to Almighty God" - as Cardinal Campeggio wrote to Wolsey. Tyndale said that he was not surprised and would not be surprised if later they should burn him also.

## **Opposition Providentially Over-ruled**

The Bishop of London, who was anxious to obstruct the progress of Reformation, consulted with Pakington, a merchant with connections in Antwerp, and asked his advice about buying up all the copies that could be obtained in Europe. He did not know that Pakington was a friend of Tyndale. "Hale Chronicle" contains a quaint description of the incident. "Gentle Master Pakington", said the Bishop, deeming that he had God by the toe, when in truth he had, as he after thought, the devil by the fist, to get them for me, and I will gladly give you whatever they cost, for the books are naughty and I intend to destroy them all, and to burn them at Paul's Cross". The bargain was made, and the story continues, "The Bishop had the Books, Pakington had the thanks, and Tyndale had the money".

Tyndale was quite pleased with the arrangement, as the money relieved him of his debts, the burning of some of the Testaments had the effect of encouraging many people to support the work he was doing, and he now had to spend on an improved edition. Some time afterwards a man named Constantine was being tried before Sir Thomas More for heresy. He was promised leniency if he would tell where Tyndale and his helpers obtained the money to pay for their editions. Constantine replied, "It is the Bishop of London that hath holpen us, for he bestowed among us a great deal of money upon New Testaments to burn them, and that hath been our chief succour and comfort".

## **Editions of the Greek Text**

The remainder of the 16th century saw the completion and fruitful use of several printed editions of the Greek New Testament and several translations of the entire Bible in the English language. Robert Stephens produced editions of the

Greek in 1546, 1549, 1550 and 1551. Theodore Beza produced nine editions of the Greek between 1565 and 1604, and the Elzevir press published at Leyden in 1633 an edition described in the preface as the "Received Text", the "Textus Receptus". Among English readers this title has often been given to Robert Stephens' edition of 1550.

## English Versions

The English translation of Tyndale was followed by those of Coverdale (1536), Rogers (1537), Taverner (1539), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1557-1560) and the Bishop's Bible (1568). These all owed much to Tyndale's pioneer labours and each contributed to the progress and establishment of the Reformation in this country. The Geneva Bible was translated and published by Protestant scholars who found refuge in Geneva during the persecutions of Mary's reign, 1553-1558. This version was very popular and remained in use for a considerable time after the first appearance of the Authorised Version. The Geneva Version was produced during a period when the Protestants were suffering violent persecution, and it is not surprising that the marginal notes very pungently exposed the errors of the Roman Church.

The most noticeable changes in the Geneva Bible were the adoption of Roman type in place of the old "black letter", and the division of the chapters into verses. These changes made the Geneva version much easier to use, and it achieved wonderful popularity. From 1560 to 1616 one or more editions appeared every year, and in 1599 ten separate editions were printed. About two hundred editions of this version are known to have been printed. It has been known as the "Breeches Bible" because of the use of this word in Genesis 3:7, where the A.V. has "aprons".

### The Bishops' Bible

Queen Elizabeth I commissioned Archbishop Parker to produce a Bible free from these controversial notes and his version appeared in 1568. It never achieved great popularity but it was later used as the basis of the revision of 1611 which was to become known as the "Authorised Version". Incidentally the Bishops' Bible had this caption - "Authorised and appointed to be read in Churches", but the version of 1611 did not have the word "authorised" on its title page.

The Bishops' Bible took the place of the Great Bible in the public services of the Church, but for private use it never displaced the Geneva Version. The Puritans who held livings in the Church of England disregarded the ruling of Convocation and continued to take their texts from the Geneva Version. The last edition of the Bishops' Bible was printed in 1619, eight years after the appearance of the "Authorised Version". This 1619 edition contained at the end of the New Testament a number of readings from the Old Testament to be used in the Communion service on certain days. Strangely enough, these readings were taken from Matthew's Bible (Rogers) of 1537.

### The Authorised Version

At the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 the Puritan leader Reynolds made the suggestion - which was first opposed and then adopted by the conference with the enthusiastic approval of James I - that there should be a new translation of the Holy Scriptures in English to replace the different versions in common use. Fifty-four men, including "High churchmen" and Puritans, the greatest Hebrew and Greek scholars of the age, formed six companies to undertake the task. Using their Greek sources and the best commentaries of European scholars and referring to existing versions in several other languages, they produced a version which accurately expresses the sense of the Hebrew and Greek in clear, vigorous idiomatic English. This Bible won its battles against the prejudice and criticism which greeted its first appearance, and became the Bible of the English-speaking world.

The Authorised Version has been well described as "the purest well of our native English, in its grand simplicity standing out in contrast to the ornate and affected diction of the language of that time". In the language of a competent judge, "If accuracy and strictest attention to the letter of the text be supposed to constitute an excellent version this is of all versions the most excellent". The spelling and punctuation were extensively revised in 1762 and 1769 by Dr. Paris and Dr. Blayney, and at various times there have been considerable additions to the marginal references, which in the first edition were not more than about nine thousand in number.

### The modern versions

Advocates of the modern versions often argue that the discovery of many ancient manuscripts unknown to the earlier translators has made necessary to "correct" the Authorised Version in many places. Many people have been very sadly misled in this matter and have accepted the allegation that the manuscript evidence is unfavourable to our old Bible. This is very far from being the case. It is true that Erasmus, Stephens and Beza had comparatively few Greek manuscripts at their disposal, but these few were representative of the Greek text preserved in the great majority of the documents which have since come to light. These now number several thousand, and they give a very full measure of support to the Greek text underlying the Authorised Version. Surviving copies of very ancient translations originating in the second, third and fourth centuries, also testify to the integrity of our English Bible. The quotations from the ancient Scriptures preserved in the writings of the earliest Christian writers after the Apostles, also make it quite clear that those "fathers" had in their hands copies of the Greek Scriptures similar to those underlying our English Bible.

During the last 150 years it has unfortunately become increasingly the fashion among Biblical scholars and translators to adopt as their guide to the original text a small group of ancient but unreliable manuscripts, including the Vatican and Sinai copies of the 4th century, and a few others which exhibit the same kind of abbreviated and altered text. One result of this tendency of modern scholarship is that modern critical editions of the Greek, and modern English versions based upon them present in a weaker form many of the plainest declarations of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### The trustworthiness of the Authorised Version

The English reader is on safe ground in regarding the Authorised Version as a faithful translation made from trustworthy sources. God has exercised His wisdom, power and grace in sending forth His Word the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and He has exercised His providence in the preservation of the written revelation and its propagation throughout the world.

There have been many attempts to replace the Authorised Version by a translation in more modern English, but as yet none of these excels the version which has held its place in the English speaking world for more than 350 years. It was very significant that while the American astronauts were encircling the moon they read and broadcast to the world the story of the creation - not from a modern version, not from an American version, not from the R.S.V. or N.E.B., but from the Bible of the English speaking world - the Authorised Version - an acknowledgment that this still has its pre-eminent place even in this age of modern science.

At the present time there are about one hundred modern English translations, most of which are based on less reliable manuscript sources, were translated by scholars with less respect for the authority of the inspired Word and the eternal deity of the Lord Jesus Christ - "The Chief Subject of the Sacred Book" - and display less command of the wealth and resources of our English tongue.

As we recall the long history of our English Bible we remember the words of the Lord Jesus Himself - "Other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours".

## **The Divine Original**

### **Preliminary Considerations**

The Holy Scriptures exhort us to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints". That faith was delivered to the saints in "the Holy Scriptures, which were given by inspiration of God, and are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus". The New Testament Scriptures were written in Greek, and our Bible is in English. Therefore when we read our English Bible we hear the Word of God through an interpreter, or rather through a whole series of Interpreters. The question arises - were the interpreters reliable, or did they produce an imperfect translation based upon defective manuscripts? When we contend for individual passages, are we contending for the changeless Truth of God, or are we contending for ancient human errors introduced into that text by accident or design?

These questions have been raised with increasing persistence during the past hundred years, and with growing clamour during the last decade. People of every shade of Christian opinion, including "modernists" on the one hand and "evangelicals" of unquestioned integrity on the other, evince a common eagerness to discredit the Authorised Version of the English Bible.

They insist that the translators had few and poor manuscripts, that their knowledge of Greek and Hebrew was imperfect and that their English style contributed to the production of a version which, although it "sounds nice" is "downright misleading", and should be dismissed from the pulpit to the library, to make way for the allegedly Superior modern versions - (Crusade Editorial, September, 1964). Many of these statements are themselves misleading and it is important that we should be acquainted with the facts before attempting to evaluate either the modern versions or the older ones.

### **The English Bible before the Reformation**

Before A.D. 1450 there was no printing in this part of the world, but there was an English Bible translated from the Latin Vulgate in 1382 by Wycliffe and his associates. This version was fruitfully used and the means of blessing to many but it was far from perfect. It was beautifully hand-written throughout, and a few copies remain to this day to testify to the devoted care and skill of an earlier age.

Early in the next century a youth in Germany "accidentally" discovered the art of printing, and in 1450 Gensfleisch set up the first press at Mainz. This was the beginning of the era of Bible printing.

### **The Revival of Greek Learning**

For many centuries before the Reformation Greek Scholarship was virtually non-existent in Western Europe. In 1453 Constantinople, the ancient capital of the eastern part of the Empire and the centre of the eastern Church, fell to the Moslem invaders. One far-reaching result of this calamity was that Christian scholars with a knowledge of Greek, and with Greek copies of the Holy Scriptures in their possession, fled to Western Europe where their influence gave a new impetus to the study of the Greek language. It has been said that "Greece rose from the grave with the New Testament in her hand".

### **Printed Editions of the Greek New Testament**

Among the next generation of Greek scholars was Erasmus of Rotterdam, who prepared an edition of the Greek N.T. from five manuscripts in repute at that time. This edition was printed in 1516 and was followed by four later editions. At Alcalá (Complutum) University in 1502 Cardinal Ximenes gathered manuscripts and men under the direction of *Stunica*, who published the "Complutensian Polyglot" in 1522, again from comparatively few manuscripts. Robert Stephens, relying largely upon Erasmus and *Stunica*, and with possibly sixteen manuscripts at his disposal, produced editions of the Greek text in 1546, 1549, 1550 and 1551. In 1552 he withdrew to Geneva and joined the Protestant cause. Theodore Beza produced five editions of the Greek between 1559 and 1598. These followed Stephens fairly closely, although Beza had some ancient manuscripts not available to Stephens. The Elzevir Brothers' editions printed at Leyden had much in common with those of Stephens and Beza. The Elzevir text announced itself as the "Textus Receptus" and since that time Stephens' 1550 edition has been known as the "Received Text" in England, while the Elzevir edition of 1633 has had this title on the Continent.

### **The Protestant Translations**

The Protestant versions in England and on the Continent in the 16th and 17th centuries were based on these editions of the Greek text. These early printed Greek editions were themselves based on comparatively few manuscripts, which have nevertheless proved to be representative of the Greek text embraced many centuries earlier throughout the Greek Church.

The English versions of Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthews (or Rogers), the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Bishops' Bible and the Authorised Version were all based upon this little company of Greek documents, in which was preserved the Greek Text generally received throughout the Greek Church since the Apostolic age.

## **The Authorised Version [King James Version]**

At the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 the Puritan leader Reynolds made the suggestion - which was first opposed and then adopted by the Conference with the enthusiastic approval of King James I - that there should be a new translation of the Holy Scriptures in English, to replace the different versions then in common use. Fifty-four men, including High Churchmen and Puritans, the greatest Hebrew and Greek scholars of the age, formed six companies to undertake the task. Using their Greek sources and the best commentaries of European scholars, and referring to Bibles in Spanish, Italian, French and German, they expressed the sense of the Greek in clear, vigorous and idiomatic English. This Bible won its battles against the prejudices and criticism which greeted its first appearance and became the Bible of the English-speaking world. In 1786 Dr. Geddes wrote,

*"If accuracy and strictest attention to the letter of the text be supposed to constitute an excellent version, this is of all versions the most excellent."*

Bishop Lightfoot affirmed that this version was the storehouse of the highest truth and the purest well of our native English. "Indeed", he wrote, "we may take courage from the fact that the language of our English Bible is not the language of the age in which the translators lived, but *in its grand simplicity* stands out in contrast to the ornate and often affected diction of the literature of the time."

## **Recent Discoveries and Textual Criticism**

During the next three hundred years vast numbers of documents were brought to light and Biblical scholars made many attempts to reconstruct the Greek New Testament. There are now about 4,500 Greek manuscripts, including 170 papyrus fragments (2nd - 7th century); 212 Uncial copies (4th - 10th); 2,429 minuscules (9th - 16th); and 1678 Lectionary copies. The overwhelming majority of these manuscripts agree so closely that they may be said to present the same Greek Text, called by some the "Byzantine Text" because it prevailed throughout the Church in the Byzantine period A.D. 312 - 1453 (and long after).

*The Versions.* In addition to these Greek sources scholars have recovered copies of ancient *translations* in Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, Gothic, etc. Some of these originated before our oldest existing Greek copies and thus testify to the contents of still earlier manuscripts. The great weight of this evidence is favourable to the "Received Text" underlying the Authorised Version.

## **Early Greek and Latin writers - The "Fathers"**

The writings of early champions of the truth (and heretics) contain copious references to the Scriptures and again testify concerning the Greek text as it was in the 2nd century onwards - in a period earlier than our oldest copies. The majority of these witnesses support the so-called "Byzantine" or "Received" or "Traditional" text underlying the Authorised Version, and they establish the antiquity of this text and its superior acceptance in the earliest period.

## **The Papyri**

It is alleged that the most ancient papyrus fragments are hostile to the Received Text, but it must be remembered that the fragments that remain are few in comparison with the many that must have perished through long and frequent use. It is probable that the surviving minority survived because they were not much used and that they fell into disuse because of their deficiencies. Twenty-nine papyri of the 6th to 8th centuries do not contain a distinctively "Byzantine" type of text, although it is beyond question that the "Byzantine" text was dominant in that period. These papyri are surviving representatives of a defective and discarded text.

## **Favourable evidence of the Papyri**

Some of the papyrus fragments of earliest date do contain readings which 19th century scholars had wrongly rejected as belonging to a late "Syrian" or "Byzantine" revision. This is true of the document known as Papyrus Bodmer II (A.D. 200?) which contains John Chapters 1 - 14 including 13 per cent. of the readings rejected by 19th century scholars as "late Byzantine".

## **The Vatican and Sinai Manuscripts**

In the 1860's the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus became available to Biblical scholars, and in 1881 Westcott and Hort advanced the theory that the New Testament text was preserved in an almost perfect state in these two fourth century manuscripts.

## **An Error of Judgment**

The discovery of these MSS betrayed many Biblical students into a lamentable infirmity of critical judgment. Tischendorf himself, the discoverer of the Sinai Codex, amended his eighth edition in at least 3,505 places in conformity with new readings which he found in this document. The Codex Vaticanus exercised a similar mesmeric influence on the minds of many 19th and 20th century scholars. The Revised Greek Text underlying the modern versions has the support only of that very small minority of the available MSS which are in some respects in agreement with the unreliable text of the Sinai and Vatican codices.

## **An Elaborate Theory**

Westcott and Hort devised an elaborate theory, based more on imagination and intuition than upon evidence, elevating this little group to the heights of almost infallible authority. Their treatise on the subject and their edition of the Greek N.T. exercised a powerful and far-reaching influence, not only on the next generation of students and scholars, but also indirectly

upon the minds of millions who have had neither the ability, nor the time, nor the inclination to submit the theory to a searching examination.

### **Fundamental Error**

Those who do so will find that the whole theory was based upon a fundamental error, namely the assumption that the reliability of these 4<sup>th</sup> century documents was in proportion to their age. There were no doubt copies in every age, some corrupted by accident, some by ignorance some by design. These two exhibit the most amazing number of incorrect readings.

### **Deficiencies of these MSS**

These two MSS and a few others containing a similar text present in a weakened form many of the passages of Holy Scripture which speak most plainly of the deity of the Son of God. The trend of Biblical scholarship and 20th centuries has been towards a "humanitarian" view of the person of Christ. It does not surprise us that many modern scholars welcome the support of these two ancient documents, but it saddens us to see so many earnest evangelical Christians ready to accept without question a theory so destructive of the faith once delivered to the saints.

### **Rejecting the Evidence**

In the words of a great 19th century scholar, "To cast away at least nineteen-twentieth of the evidence, and to draw conclusions from the petty remainder is not less than a crime and a sin, not only by reason of sacrilegious destructiveness exercised upon the Holy Scriptures, but because such a treatment is inconsistent with conscientious exhaustiveness and logical method.

### **The True Text**

The Sinai and Vatican manuscripts represent a small family of documents containing various readings which the Church as a whole rejected before the end of the 4th century. Under the singular care and providence of God more reliable MSS were multiplied and copied from generation to generation, and the great majority of existing MSS exhibit a faithful reproduction of the true text which was acknowledged by the entire Greek Church in the Byzantine period AD. 312-1453. This text represented by the small group of documents available to Erasmus, Stephens, the compilers of the Complutensian edition and other 16th century editors. This text is represented by the Authorised Version and other Protestant translations up to the latter part of the 19th century.

### **The Revised Version of 1881**

This version was intended to embody the testimony of the newly discovered manuscripts and the fruits of scholarly research in the Greek language, but the whole undertaking was so dominated by the mistaken textual theories of Westcott and Hort, that the years of labour produced an unreliable translation based upon an unreliable text.

### **Influence of Westcott and Hort**

When the Revision Committee met, each member was given an advance copy of the edition of the Greek N.T. prepared by Professor Westcott and Professor Hort. These scholars had both persuaded themselves that the true text of the N.T. was preserved in its purest form in the Codex Vaticanus and that the testimony of this manuscript or the Code Sinaiticus supported by one or more of a small company of document exhibiting the same kind of text must be regarded as almost infallible in all cases where the available manuscripts presented a variety of readings.

Among the Revisers there was only one other who could lay claim to have experience and ability in the realm of textual criticism, namely Prebendary Scrivener. As the revision proceeded textual matters were discourse upon in turn by these three men and in many cases the more conservative opinions of Scrivener were set aside under pressure from Westcott and Hort. The majority of the Revisers were disposed to be influenced by the judgment of the two professors and the wiser and more judicious minority were constantly over-ruled in this way.

### **The Revisers' Greek Text**

After the publication of the R.V., Scrivener was commissioned to prepare an edition of the Greek Text which had been followed by the Revisers. This text was not identical with that of Westcott and Hort but owed much to their dominant influence and followed their lead in most matters of major importance. In this edition Scrivener was bound to reproduce a Greek text in which there were many features which were repugnant to his own wiser judgment. In his own works, particularly the learned Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament (which went through numerous editions including what might be termed definitive edition by Miller), and Scrivener's Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament, Scrivener dissented from many of the conclusions of the Revisers.

The crux of the matter is Westcott and Hort's insistence upon the superiority of the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus and a few kindred documents. The worst corruptions of the Greek text appeared before the end of the second century and it is generally agreed among critical scholars that the few manuscripts available to Stunica, Erasmus and Stephens were infinitely better than many of the earliest period. Some of these ancient but imperfect manuscripts were progenitors documents like the Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but side by side with them were other MSS exhibiting the text more or less as represented the so-called Received Text and Authorised Version. The most ancient writers and the translators of the most ancient versions were apparently acquainted with both kinds of text.

### **The Antiquity of the Received Text**

This fact is admitted by Bishop Ellicott the chairman of the revisers his pamphlet, "The Revisers and the Greek Text of the N.T. by two members of the N.T. Company", pp. 11, 12. "The manuscripts which Erasmus used differ, for the most part only in small and insignificant details, from the great bulk of the cursive MSS. The general character of their text is the same.

By this observation the pedigree of the Received Text is carried up beyond the individual manuscripts used by Erasmus. That pedigree stretches back to remote antiquity. The first ancestor the Received Text was at least contemporary with the oldest of our extant MSS, if not older than any one of them."

It must be emphasised that the argument is not between an ancient text and a recent one, but between two ancient forms of the text, one which was rejected and the other adopted and preserved by the Church as a whole and remaining in common use for more than fifteen centuries. The assumptions of modern textual criticism are based upon the discordant testimony of a few specimens of the rejected text recently disinterred from the oblivion to which they had been deliberately and wisely consigned in the 4th century.

### **The "Syrian Recension" Theory**

Being convinced that the Vatican/Sinai type of text was the most ancient and most pure, Westcott and Hort assumed that there must have been a "Syrian Recension" of the Greek text some time between A.D. 250 and A.D.350 and that this recension was the progenitor of the "Received Text". In their Introduction to the Greek N.T. these two scholars spun a web of theories to advance the claims of their favourite manuscripts to highest antiquity. One great obstacle was the frequent agreement of the Peshitto Syriac with the Greek Textus Receptus. This obstacle was removed by the simple expedient of changing the relative dates of Peshitto and Curetonian Syriac, called the latter the "Vetus" and former the "Vulgate" Syriac.

In his book on the N.T Canon (1855), Westcott himself saw reason to desert the opinion which has obtained the sanction of the most competent scholars, that the formation of the Peshitto Syriac was to be fixed within the first half of the 2nd century. The very obscurity which hangs over its origin is *proof* of its venerable age, because it shows that it grew up spontaneously among Christian congregations . . . Had it been a work of later date, of the 3rd or 4th century, it is scarcely possible that its history should be so uncertain as it is." In the "Introduction to the N.T. Greek", 1882, Westcott contradicted himself on all these points and contended that the Curetonian Syriac was of greater antiquity, and that the Peshitto was an authoritative revision in the latter part of the or 4th centuries.

Although entirely lacking in historical evidence, the Syrian Recension was particularly attractive because it appeared to give some semblance of authority to those engaged in the process of recasting the Text in the mould of the Vatican/Sinai MSS. These documents belong to a small group exhibiting the kind of Greek text familiar to and generally approved by Origen, whose pronounced Arian tendencies sufficiently explain his preference for MSS of this character. In many passages related to the Person of Christ this type of text dilutes the testimony of the Holy Scriptures to our Lord's deity. (Some of these passages are commented on below.)

### **The Deity of our Lord**

In his Bampton lectures on the Divinity of our Lord, delivered in the 1866, Canon Liddon gave a timely and solemn warning of the perils which then beset the Church of Christ through the denial of our Saviour's essential eternal deity. The detractors of this vital truth of God's Word have found a powerful ally in the modern versions which have been based upon the pro-Arian type of Greek Text exhibited by MSS of the Vatican/Sinai group.

Perhaps the most powerful unitarian assailants of the true doctrine of Holy Scripture today are the so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses". It is significant that their own version follows this type of text and that they are generally disposed to welcome versions like the R.S.V. and N.E.B. which display similar deficiencies and rest upon the same unsound foundation.

Most people today, including theological students, teachers and ministers are prepared to adopt the attitude that the "scholars" must be right and that matters relating to the Greek Text must be left in the hands of the "experts". The evangelical professes to stand firm by the divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, the equal and eternal deity of Christ, the virgin birth, the atonement and other vital doctrines, but hopefully surrenders both text and translation to the biased judgment of unsound scholars and meekly allows the text of Holy Scripture to be arbitrated by a group of ancient but unreliable documents.

### **The American Standard Version**

After the English Revisers had completed their task the American Revision Committee continued its deliberations for some years and published the fruit of their labours early in the present century. This version was in many respects very similar to the English Revised Version, although diverging from it in hundreds of details of varying significance.

The R.S.V. is a revision of this "Standard Version".

### **THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION (R.S.V.)**

This version, which is the property of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., has achieved a measure of popularity in the English-speaking world, and some of the Bible Societies have amended their constitutions in order to permit its circulation. Its general adoption by English readers was commented on without disapproval by Professor Bruce in his article entitled, "One Bible Many Versions" in the *Christian* on October 9th, 1964. It is quoted by evangelical preachers and writers and widely circulated by evangelical organisations.

Notwithstanding its present popularity and the misleading and sometimes ill-informed testimonials to its excellence, there are very good reasons why discerning Christians with a reverent regard for the divine inspiration, authority and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures should exercise great caution in the use of this version and refrain from encouraging its general use by undiscerning readers.

### **The Translators**

Some of the translators have written articles which indicate that they do not acknowledge the Bible doctrines of the Deity of Christ, His Pre-existence, His Virgin Birth, His Atoning Sacrifice and present intercession in Heaven. A translator who has adopted an entirely "humanitarian" view of the Son of God, and is prepared to respect His ideal humanity and to disregard His claims to full deity, is likely to betray his erroneous dogma in his translation. That this deficiency is apparent in the R.S.V. is demonstrated by the examples given later in this article.

## **Socinianism**

The last 150 years have witnessed a great resurgence of ancient heresies relating to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and these errors have left their mark on modern translations of the Bible.

The translator, as well as the reader, is confronted with the vital question, "Whom do men say that I am?". The Ebionite of old, and later the Socinian, asserted that Jesus was merely man, whether supernaturally born, or as modern rationalists generally maintain, subject in all respects to ordinary natural laws. They contended that His moral eminence alone entitled the enthusiastic admirer to call Him "divine". Socinianism will confess Christ's "divinity" if this involves nothing more emphatic than an acknowledgment of certain moral features of the Divine Being displayed in the human life of Christ.

## **Modern Humanitarianism**

In modern days this phenomenon of "humanitarianism" is reproduced by writers who use language which seems to do justice to Christ's deity. They recognise Him as the "perfect revelation of God" and the "true head and Lord of human kind", but they deny the existence of a Trinity in the Godhead, and recognise in God no pre-existent Personal Form as the basis of His self-manifestation to man. They therefore avoid any plain assertion that Christ is God.

## **Arianism**

Arians maintain that our Lord Jesus Christ existed before His Incarnation and that by Him, as by an instrument, the Supreme God made the worlds, and that He is to be "worshipped" only as the highest creature. They insist that there was a time when He did not exist, that He had a beginning of existence and cannot be called God in the sense in which the Name is applied to the Supreme Being. This view of the Redeemer satisfies neither reason nor faith and has been well described as a resting point for minds which are sinking from a profession of Christian faith downwards to pure humanitarianism. Some of the translators have embraced and expressed unscriptural views akin to these, in contrast to the faith of the whole Church of Christ, which acknowledges the pre-existent and eternal deity of the only-begotten Son of God, His equality with the Father, His miraculous incarnation, His atoning death and physical resurrection.

## **Doctrinal Changes**

The advocates of the R.S.V. endeavour to assure their readers that the numerous changes in the text do not affect any fundamental doctrine. They allege that the alterations are exclusively dictated by newly discovered manuscripts and by the gains of scholarly research in the Biblical languages. These assurances are not in accordance with the facts. Fundamental doctrines relating to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ are weakened and obscured in the R.S.V. and the translators appear to have made some changes on dogmatic rather than linguistic or documentary grounds.

## **A Jewish Scholar among the R.S.V. Translators**

The translation committee included in its membership a Jewish scholar, Mr. H.M. Orlinsky of the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. This man would not accept the deity of Christ, but would favour a "unitarian" emphasis in any passage referring to the Messiah.

For example, the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was altered to read "*A young woman shall conceive and bear a son.*" The correct reading is, "*A virgin shall conceive.*" . . . The erroneous reading in the R.S.V. makes it possible to dissociate this prophecy from the record of our Lord's miraculous birth of the virgin Mary in the New Testament.

## **The Comment of a Jewish Rabbi**

The corrupted text met with the warm approval of Rabbi Balfour Brickner of Temple Sinai, Washington, who declared, "I am delighted to know that at last this great error of translation has been finally corrected, and that at least some elements of the Christian world no longer officially maintain that Isaiah 7:14 is a prediction that Jesus was to be born of the virgin Mary."

## **The Unitarian Bias of the R.S.V.**

Shortly after the R.S.V. New Testament was published its deficiencies were exposed in an article by Dr. R.C. Foster, Professor of Greek and N.T. in Cincinnati Bible Seminary, Ohio. His treatise was published in 1946 in the July issue of the "Church News Letter". After presenting a careful study of the numerous changes in the text, he wrote, "The Revised Standard Version is frankly unitarian and offers a very subtle attack upon the deity of Christ . . . It is as if the scholars were saying – This stubborn and unscientific generation of the 20th century insists on maintaining that Jesus was God in the flesh, but by the use of a literary device we will put words into their mouths as they read this version so that they will consciously or unconsciously admit that Jesus is not God but man."

The truth of this assertion is vindicated by the list of significant passages given below.

## **The Name of God withheld from Christ**

**Psalms 45:6** "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*" is altered to "*Your divine throne endures for ever and ever.*" In an explanatory article the translators stated that "Thou" and "Thee" were used only when the Deity was addressed. The use of "Your" indicates that the translators believed that this verse did not apply to a Divine Person. The Name of God is here reduced to the adjective "divine", but when this text is quoted in Hebrews chapter 1:8, it is made to apply to the Son, and the Name of God is restored in the text. The footnote leaves the way open to the sceptical reader to deny that the Son is addressed as God. "*Thy throne, O God*", in the text, becomes "*God is your throne*" in the note.

## **His Eternal Pre-existence denied**

**Micah 5:2** - "*Out of thee shall He come forth . . . whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*" In the R.S.V. this becomes . . . "*whose ORIGIN is from of old, from ancient days.*" Thus the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God

is denied and the new translation assigns to the ETERNAL SON an origin in time. This is a very ancient heresy which has been disinterred in the last hundred years or so and thrust upon undiscerning hearers and readers by many blind leaders of the blind.

**Proverbs 8:22** *"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way."*

The R.S.V. reads, *"The Lord CREATED me in the beginning of His work.* This is a Messianic passage and the new version alleges that the Person spoken of was a CREATURE. This kind of teaching has been widely canvassed in recent times by the so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses".

#### **His miraculous birth obscured**

**Matthew 1:25** - ". . . till she had brought forth her FIRST-BORN son."

Verse 23 quotes the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. *"A Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son"*, and verse 25 emphasises the fulfilment of the prophecy by stating that this was her FIRST-BORN son.

The R.S.V. text omits *"firstborn"* and thus obscures the literal fulfilment of the prophecy and weakens the emphasis on the Virgin Birth.

**Matthew 1:16** - Early editions of the R.S.V. have a footnote (similar to that in the N.E.B.). Other ancient authorities read, *"Joseph to whom was betrothed the Virgin Mary, was the father of Jesus who is called Christ."* This note was based on a single corrupt Syriac version opposed by all the major manuscripts. This footnote leaves it to the option of the reader either to believe that Jesus was miraculously born of the virgin Mary, or that Joseph was His father. Read in conjunction with the corrupted rendering in Isaiah 7 the note constitutes a denial of the deity of Christ.

#### **His essential Divine Goodness**

**Matthew 19:16.17** - *"Good Master, what good thing shall I do. . ."*

*"Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God . . ."*

Without any explanatory note the R.S.V. changes this to, *"Teacher, what good deed must I do . . .?"* *"Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. . ."* The A.V. says in effect, "You know there is only One Who is essentially and perfectly good - that is God Himself. You addressed me as 'Good', but do you really believe me to be 'Good' and therefore one with God?" The whole significance of the passage is destroyed by the altered rendering.

#### **His Divine Sonship obscured**

**Mark 1:1** - *"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God."*

The R.S.V. has a footnote - Other ancient authorities omit *"the Son of God"*. Biblical scholars have been erratically omitting and inserting these words in the Greek text and English translations for several generations. The testimony for their inclusion is overwhelming, and even the translators of the N.E.B. were constrained to admit that *"the Son of God"* is the best attested reading. There is a note to this effect in the Greek Text underlying the N.E.B. edited by Professor R.G.V. Tasker.

#### **Fulfilment of prophecy omitted**

**Mark 15:28** - R.S.V. text omits *"And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors."*

#### **His Post-Resurrection Appearances omitted**

**Mark 16:9-20** - The whole of this portion is relegated to the margin of the R.S.V. The evidence for the genuineness of this passage is outlined in a separate article.

**Luke 24:40** - R.S.V. omits this verse which states that the Risen Lord showed His disciples His hands and His feet to prove to them the reality of His death and resurrection.

#### **His Miraculous Ascension obscured**

**Luke 24:51** - R.S.V. omits the statement that *"He was carried up into Heaven"*

**Luke 24:52** - R.S.V. omits the declaration that His disciples WORSHIPPED Him.

**Mistranslation of Luke 2:14** - *"Good will toward men"* becomes in the R.S.V. text ". . . peace among men with whom He is pleased." This rendering has very slender manuscript support. The indisputable case for the Received Text and A.V. is summarised in a separate article.

#### **Trinitarian doctrine impugned**

John 1:3 - The R.S.V. note in this verse is redolent of ancient heresies, the significance of which is stated in a separate article. The note makes it possible to regard the Holy Spirit as a CREATURE and to deny the eternal pre-existence of Christ.

John 1:18 - The influence of early heretics may be seen in the marginal note first in the R.V., *"God only begotten"* (for *the only begotten Son*). The R.S.V. translators retained *"The Son"* but reduced *"only begotten"* to *"only"* so their text reads, *"the only Son"*. The margin allows the alternative *"God"*, so the full text would then exhibit the impossible reading, *"The only God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known."* One revision robs Him of the title *"only begotten"* and the other revision robs Him of the title *"Son"*.

#### **The rightful place of the Son of Man in heaven denied**

John 3:13 A.V. - *"And no man hath ascended up into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."* The R.S.V. omits the words, *"which is in heaven"*.

#### **Belief in Jesus as God removed from John 6:47**

The Lord Jesus Christ said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."* The implication of His words is that to believe on Him is to believe on God, whom to know is life eternal. The R.S.V. omits the words *"on me"*, reducing the statement to, *"He who believes has eternal life"*. The implication of this new reading is that whoever believes in God has eternal life. Belief in Jesus as God no longer has a place in the text. This weakened rendering would be quite able to annoy any who deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **Peter's Testimony to "Christ the Son of the Living God" rejected**

**John 6:69** - *"We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."* The R.S.V. reduces this to, *"We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God."* Thus another declaration of His unique Divine Sonship is lost. The new reading is more palatable to unitarians. Admittedly, the *"Holy One"* is a title of great dignity, but it does not attribute Sonship to the Person addressed.

#### **His use of the title "The Son of God" denied**

In **John 9:35** the Lord Jesus Christ asks the man whose sight He has miraculously restored, *"Dost thou believe on the Son of man?"* and thus eliminates this clear personal testimony of our Lord concerning His own Divine Sonship. Admittedly the title *"Son of man"* is used elsewhere, but here there is a clear reference to His unique relationship to the Father. The R.S.V. destroys the important doctrinal teaching of this verse.

#### **Prayer to the Father in the Name of the Son discountenanced**

**John 14:14** - *"If ye shall ask anything in my name"* is changed by a marginal note to, *"If ye shall ask me anything in my name, I will do it."* If we accept the alteration we dilute the testimony of the Holy Scriptures to the efficacy of prayer offered to the Father in the name of the Son. This is even more noticeable in **John 16:23** - *"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you,"* becomes in the R.S.V. text, *"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, he will give it you in my name."*

#### **Testimony to His Divine Sonship omitted**

When Philip preached the Gospel to the Ethiopian, as recorded in **Acts 8:36, 37** the Ethiopian asked for baptism and *"Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* The text of the R.S.V. omits this affirmation of the Ethiopian's faith in Christ as the Son of God.

#### **The Deity of Christ obscured in Acts 20, 28**

Paul admonished the elders at Ephesus, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased WITH HIS OWN BLOOD."* This is preserved in the R.S.V. text, but a marginal note offers the alternative reading, *"WITH THE BLOOD OF HIS OWN"*. This is entirely different. The correct reading asserts that the flock was purchased with the blood of One who was God - *"the church of God... purchased with His own blood."* The marginal reading dilutes this testimony and merely declares that God purchased the Church with the blood of one who was His own. This reading removes the testimony to the deity of the Redeemer.

#### **The Deity of Christ eliminated from Romans 9:5**

The Apostle Paul writes of his own *"kinsmen according to the flesh . . . Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."* This is the plainest possible declaration that Christ is God, but the R.S.V. introduces a radical change by adjusting the punctuation so that the statement reads, *"To them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen."* The R.S.V. relegates the true reading to a secondary place in a marginal note. The R.S.V. text merely acknowledges that the Messiah was of human descent from the patriarchs and then in a separate sentence pronounces a blessing upon God who is over all. This passage no longer declares that Christ is God.

#### **The Judgment Seat of Christ abolished in Romans 14:10**

The Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write, *"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."* This clearly implies that the Son is one with the Father in judgment and is consistent with the Saviour's own words, *"The Father. . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son."*

The R.S.V. changes the text to read *"the judgment seat of God"*, and thus another testimony to the deity of Christ and His equality with the Father disappears.

#### **The Pre-existence of the Son as Lord in Heaven discredited**

**1 Corinthians 15:47** - *"The first man is of the earth, earthy - the second man is the Lord from heaven"*. In the R.S.V. this becomes merely, *"the second man is from heaven"*. This is at variance with the whole teaching of God's Word on the mysterious incarnation of the Saviour. He did not come from heaven as man. "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary." In this appointed way, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." He was eternally with the Father as the Son of God, but He was not eternally with the Father as man. In the incarnation He fulfilled His eternal purposes and took our human nature and "was found in fashion as a man". In this way, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His own Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." It is not Scriptural to say that *"The second man is from heaven"*, but it is Scriptural, and the utterance of the Holy Ghost, that *"The second man is the LORD from heaven"*.

#### **The Miraculous Incarnation of the Son eliminated from 1 Tim.3.'16**

In the majority of the Greek manuscripts and in the A.V. we read, *"God was manifest in the flesh"*. In the R.S.V. and other modern versions this is reduced to *"He was manifested in the flesh"*. This is introduced as great mystery of our religion. There is nothing mysterious in any person being manifest in the flesh. This is true of every human being who has ever lived. The great mystery of our religion is that Christ is God manifest in the flesh. This is true only of Him.

R.S.V. footnote reads, "Greek *Who*; other ancient authorities read *God*; others, *Which*". One might well enquire why the R.S.V. translators put "*He*" in the text if the Greek is "*Who*". In fact the Greek is not "*Who*" or "*He*" or "*Which*", but "*GOD*".

### **Inspiration of the Scriptures doubtful**

The R.S.V. calls in question the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures by inserting a note in 2 Timothy 3:16 suggesting that this may be read alternatively "*Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable . . .*" This suggests that some Scriptures may not be inspired of God, and that only those that are inspired are profitable.

#### **"Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ" 2 Peter 1:1**

This plain declaration of the Saviour's Godhead is called in question by a note in the R.S.V. "*Our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ*", which avoids the unequivocal statement that the Lord Jesus Christ is God.

### **The Manuscripts**

We have seen that the corrupted readings quoted in the preceding are supported by a small group of ancient but untrustworthy manuscripts at variance with the vast majority of the documents now at the disposal of Biblical scholars. It has become the vogue to refer to "the best manuscripts" whereas in reality they contain some of the worst corruptions of the ancient text. Some of these documents, particularly the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, were produced at the time when the most dangerous heresies prevailed in the Church with regard to the Person of Christ and His relationship to the Father. This group of documents proved specially attractive to those modern scholars who were disposed to adopt very similar erroneous views themselves.

Westcott and Hort in the last century endeavoured to make this deficient minority of the manuscripts respectable by propounding a theory that the majority of the N.T. documents were derived from copies which had been deliberately "edited" and embellished, implying that their conformity with the Trinitarian doctrine embraced by the Church was artificial and not original. There is in fact no historical evidence for any such revision, but the groundless and dangerous theory has cast its long shadow over the whole field of Biblical scholarship right down to our own times.

The Bible testifies to the eternal deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal God. The modern versions, and the defective manuscripts upon which they rely, obscure this vital testimony, which the Authorised Version faithfully preserves.

### **GOD'S BOOK**

*Selected from two sermons preached before the University of Oxford in 1860 by J. W. Burgon, MA., as printed in the Quarterly Record of the Trinitarian Bible Society, April 1967.*

#### **A challenge to fashionable impiety**

Learn to put away from your souls that vile indifferentism which is becoming the curse of this shallow and unlearned age. Be as forgiving as you please of indignities offered to yourselves; but do not be ashamed to be very jealous for the honour of the LORD of Hosts, and to resent any dishonour offered to Him with a fiery indignation unlike anything you could possibly feel for a personal wrong. Every form of fashionable impiety is one and the same vile thing in the essence of it – still Anti-Christ, disguise it how you will . . . The same is true of the idolatry of human reason and of physical science, as well as of that misinformed "moral sense" which finds in the atonement of our Lord nothing but a stone of stumbling and a snare.

It is true of popish error also – for what else is this, but a setting up of the human above the Divine – tradition, the worship of the blessed Virgin, the casuistry of the confessional, and the like, - and so once more substituting the creature for the Creator?

#### **The Antidote**

The true antidote to all such forms of impiety, believe me, is not controversy of any sort, but the childlike study of the Bible, each one for himself, not without prayer . . . Its aims and purpose, and real function is that the fiery hour of temptation may find the Christian soldier armed with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God and that the dark season of adversity may find his soul anchored on the Rock of Ages, which alone can prove his soul's sufficient strength and stay . . .

Of a truth, as life goes on, men will find the blessedness of their hope. Under every form of trial, under every strange vicissitude; in sickness and in perplexity; in bereavement and in the hour of death; – "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou, *Thou* hast the Words of Eternal life".

#### **The Key of Faith**

Waste not thy precious time in cavil about the structure of the casket which contains thy treasure, but unlock it with the key of faith, and make thyself rich indeed. Already the Judge standeth at the door, and assuredly you and I, to whom God has entrusted so much, shall have to render a very strict account of the use we have made of the Bible when we shall stand face to face with its undoubted Author . . . In that tremendous hour the veil will be withdrawn from our eyes, and the office of faith will be ended, and we shall be confronted with One Who bath "a vesture dipped in blood, and whose Name is called THE WORD OF GOD" . . . "I have heard of Thee", we shall everyone of us exclaim, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee!"

(This is less than ten per cent of Garret's *Which Bible Can We Trust?* But both this and his other compilation, *Westcott & Hort – the Occult Connection and the New Greek Text*, are valuable additions to anyone's library. They are produced by the Christian Centre Press, P. O. Box 7277, Gold Coast Mailing Centre, Queensland, 4217, Australia).

# ENGLISH FOR THE NON-ENGLISH

Students of the Scriptures may have been puzzled by the inconsistency in spelling of certain biblical words found in many religious writings. To resolve this problem, we looked in a few English dictionaries. The results amazed us. This is how Funk & Wagnalls International Edition renders the following terms:

God	--	godly
Bible	--	Biblical
Scripture	--	Scriptural
Satan	--	satanic
Devil	--	devilish
demon	--	demonic

But the Webster's Dictionary has it this way:

god	--	godly
Bible	--	biblical
Scripture	--	scriptural
Satan	--	satanic
devil	--	devilish
demon	--	demonical

While the Oxford English Dictionary has it like this:

God	--	Godly
Bible	--	Biblical
Scripture	--	Scriptural
Satan	--	Satanic
Devil	--	Devilish
Demon	--	Demonical

Now if English scholars themselves cannot agree, or don't know how to write these terms, what are we, novices, to do about it?

Whenever a journalist or a politician wants to create an issue, they can always rely on the spelling of primary and secondary school students. It is a perennial problem in the English speaking world.

I know it because I worked in education for many years until recently.

No matter how good the results of a school may be in other areas, there are always plenty of students who do not make the mark in spelling. And, as one might expect, the loudest critics are usually themselves poor spellers.

This is why we strongly support the growing worldwide movement towards a simplified form of English spelling – preferably a phonetic one. In the Romanian language, for example, once the pupils learn how to read and write, they no longer have a problem with spelling. They just write down what they hear.

In the meantime we suggest the following rendering of these terms.

We see no reason why any of the adjectives should be capitalized. Certainly we cannot understand how one could justify capitalizing "Biblical" and "Scriptural", yet not "godly". Therefore we think that all these terms should be written in the following manner: godly, biblical, scriptural, satanic, devilish and demonic.

On the other hand, all their corresponding nouns should be capitalized except the last. Thus, it should always be: God, Bible, Scripture, Satan, Devil, but not "demon" because this is a general term referring to any of the rebellious angels.

Now a clarification also about the word "apostle". We believe that there is a similarity between this and the term "doctor". Thus, when used in the general sense, they should both be written in lower cases: "apostle" and "doctor". But when they are applied to specific persons, they become titles of honour, and as such they become, "Apostle", "Doctor" or "Dr."

If an ordinary human being who achieves excellence in an earthly discipline is honoured with the title "Doctor", how much more should a disciple of Jesus Christ, who had attained the highest spiritual position any human being could ever aspire to, be honoured with the title "Apostle" rather than just "apostle"?

The expression "Kingdom of God" is another term which seems to create some confusion. If it is correct to capitalize "Great Britain", or "Federal Republic of Germany", or the "United States of America" or "Spain", or whatever other earthly kingdom or republic, how much more should our Father's spiritual domain, into which we all aspire to enter, be capitalized as "Kingdom of God" instead of just "kingdom of God"? This title refers to a specific kingdom, located on another plane of existence – God's spiritual plane – therefore it deserves to have its own specific spelling.

We welcome corrections or additions which help clarify the uncertainties of the English language.

# A RIGHT ROYAL EDICT

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 1999, the British Government made an important announcement. The British public, it said, would not be used as guinea pigs in the battle for the genetically modified foods. The media picked up this news and relayed it around the world. Many people jumped with joy believing that this was a great breakthrough, but then came the second part of this announcement. There is nothing to fear from these foods, said the British Foreign Minister. People could eat them with confidence, without any concern for their health.

The two parts of this announcement did not seem go together very well. It did not make sense to say that the British people would not be used as guinea pigs, then tell people to eat those untested foods without any concern for their health.

Only a week earlier, American scientists had announced that certain species of insects were no longer able to reproduce after feasting on the pollen of GM plants.

Now while the British Government was trying to obtain public acceptance for the GM foods, the American Government was threatening a trade war with Europe over its ban on American beef containing traces of steroid chemicals (used as growth stimulants).

It is almost beyond belief that one Government would threaten war against another Government for refusing to accept poisoned food for its people.

Has America overstepped its mark and forgot that there are limits to what even a superpower can do?

If steroids are not harmful to people's health, then why are so many athletes being penalized for using them to enhance their performance? Why are women developing male characteristics, for example, after prolonged use of these chemicals?

The Governments that champion human rights and freedoms around the world, which went to war on behalf of other people (Kuwait, Kosovo, Somalia, etc.), are treating their own peoples with utmost contempt on a matter of life and death, or at least a matter of health and sickness.

This topic was then taken up and well argued in a widely publicized article by none other than the heir to the British throne, Prince Charles himself. Here are some excerpts from that article.

"Not a day goes by without some new piece of evidence claiming to demonstrate either the safety or the risks of GM technology. I believe the public reaction shows that instinctively we are nervous about tampering with nature when we can't be sure that we know enough about all the consequences.

Having followed this debate very closely for some while now, I believe there are still a number of unanswered questions.

- Do we need GM food? On the basis of what we have seen so far, we don't appear to need it at all. The benefits, such as there are, seem to be limited to the people who own the technology and the people who farm on an industrialized scale. We are constantly told that this technology may have huge benefits for the future. Well, perhaps. But we have all heard claims like that before and they don't always come true in the long run – look at the case of antibiotic growth promoters in animal feed.

...  
- How much do we really know about the environmental consequences of GM crops? Laboratory tests showing that pollen from GM maize in the United States caused damage to the caterpillars of Monarch butterflies provide the latest cause for concern. If GM plants can do this to butterflies, what damage might they cause to other species? But more alarmingly perhaps, this GM maize is not under test. Surely this effect should have been discovered by the company producing the seeds, or the regulatory authorities who approved them for sale, at a much earlier stage. Indeed, how much more are we going to learn the hard way about the impact of GM crops on the environment?

...  
If something goes wrong with a GM crop, who will be held responsible? It is important that we know precisely who is going to be legally liable to pay for any damage – whether it be to human health, the environment or both. Will it be the company who sells the seed or the farmer who grows it? Or will it, as was the case with BSE, be all of us?

- Are GM crops really the only way to feed the world's growing population? This argument sounds suspiciously like emotional blackmail to me . . . How much more could we achieve if all the research funds currently devoted to fashionable GM techniques – which run into billions of dollars a year – were applied to improving methods of agriculture which have stood the test of time?

- What effect will GM crops have on the people of the world's poorest countries? Christian Aid has just published a devastating report entitled *Selling Suicide*, explaining why GM crops are unlikely to provide solutions to the problems of famine and poverty." (*Sydney Daily Telegraph*, June 2, 1999).

As you can see, the Government and the Monarchy are at odds on this matter. Time was when those opposing the Monarchy would lose their heads, but with Constitutional Monarchies . . . anything goes. If the Monarch's views carry no weight with his own Government, why pay millions to have a monarchy at all?

Prince Charles clearly is better informed, and better attuned to the public mood, than his Government. He had done himself a great disservice by not coming out earlier and letting us know what he is capable of, for clearly he can do more than just open shopping malls and play polo. Perhaps if he had a stint as Governor in the

far outposts of the Commonwealth (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, etc.), there might not be such an yearning for a native head of state (Republic) in these lands. But then, this would have meant leaving London behind, and who would wish to inflict such a fate on the royal progeny.

What Prince Charles didn't do in his article (though as head of the Anglican Church he could have had a go at it), is tell people what God Himself had to say on this topic. But had he done that, he might have been branded as religious, and these days that could have meant the kiss of death as far as his chances of succeeding to the British throne were concerned. But we have no throne to lose, so we take up this case.

"Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good." (Gen. 1:11-12).

So when God created the world He determined that everything had to be "according to its kind", not mixing animal genes with plant genes and producing who knows what monstrosities in the process.

But what about mixing and "improving" things, someone might ask. This is what God says about that:

"You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed." (Lev. 19:19).

"You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled." (Deu. 22:9).

So breeding and mixing different kinds, be they livestock or seeds, does not improve but weaken and defiles the respective species. Those who have tampered with the genetic makeup of plants and animals have gone way beyond just mixing different kinds, they have modified the very fabric of God's creation.

It is not a mere coincidence that as these practices have proliferated, the world has stumbled from one disaster to another, with all kinds of new and deadly viruses and epidemics. It was God's way of telling the world that He does not like what human beings have been doing to His creation.

During the decades of chemical contamination (in the guise of fertilizers, insecticides and antibiotic growth promoters), it was still possible to reduce exposure to these foods by growing your own or by buying from those who have grown them organically. But now, this insidious new development makes it impossible to protect oneself. There are now products on the market which are not only genetically modified, and therefore harmful to health, but promoted as alternative health foods. Canola, maize, cotton seed, and soybean oils are only a few of such examples.

Most people may be under the impression that we are at the beginning of this problem, when in fact supermarket shelves are full of products which have been genetically altered.

"Consumers have been advised to avoid mixed vegetable oils, margarines, some take-away foods and even pork if they do not want genetically engineered foods. Gene technology watchdog the Gene-Ethics Network says consumers will have to be very careful if they want to steer completely clear of altered foods. Director Bob Phelps said the most widely used GE foods here were modified cotton seed oil and modified soybean. It's a matter of doing some research and getting on the 1 800 numbers and finding out for yourself," Mr Phelps said." (*The Sun-Herald*, June 20, 1999).

Isn't that extraordinary? It is not for the Governments to pass legislation forcing companies to tell us what they are feeding us, it is for the consumers to become research specialists if they want to know what they are eating.

Food affects people's health and mental processes. Being a Christian demands a resolute commitment to a way of life which encourages and stimulates clear and insightful thinking. Tampering with the genetic makeup of plants and animals poses a danger not only to our bodies, but to our mental and spiritual well-being too. We pray and hope that God Almighty will not allow this to happen. We also hope that the British, the American, the Australian Governments, as indeed all Governments, take note of this late development.

**"Vilified gene food scientist right after all.** A scientist who was vilified by the British Government earlier this year for raising the alarm over genetically modified food is about to be vindicated by the publication of his original research in the prestigious medical journal, *The Lancet* later this month. Dr Arpad Pusztai, a world expert in lectins, the natural insecticide produced by plants, found GM food stunted the rats' growth, damaged internal organs and weakened immune system." (*SMH*, October 5, 1999).