

The Good News

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God's Work in Britain *Leaps Ahead!*

New churches have been raised up. Scores have been baptized. The new college is off to a wonderful start!

by Roderick C. Meredith

WE WERE sailing across the Atlantic but a few short months ago on the SS United States. With us on board ship was the Treasurer of the United States, Ivy Baker Priest, and many other dignitaries.

With my recently-purchased tiny transistor radio—small enough to fit into your coat pocket—I made my way up to the sports deck. It was a cold, black night. Most of the passengers were either already in bed or having a last “fling” in the ship’s cocktail lounge and ballroom, as we would be landing in France early the next morning. Then the ship sailed on to England.

But soon—alone up there with the wind and the waves — I was in an entirely *different* atmosphere.

“And GREETINGS friends!” the voice boomed across the water, “this is Garner Ted Armstrong with the *Good News of The World Tomorrow*.” Here was the VOICE of God’s Church ringing across Europe over powerful Radio Luxembourg. It had *prepared the way* for the blessed and busy summer’s work that lay ahead of us. And it sure sounded GOOD to me that black night on the ocean!

Traveling with Mr. and Mrs. Herbert W. Armstrong and others in God’s work, we were soon to reach the shores

of England to begin the busiest and most fruitful summer so far for God’s Church in Britain. This past summer has *multiplied* the scope and influence of the Church of God in the British Isles!

Good Progress

Arriving at Southampton, we were met by Mr. and Mrs. Raymond McNair, Mr. George Meeker, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Woodie, and a host of others. We felt at home immediately, for we were among brethren. But we could already see *many new faces* among those brethren, for the London church had multiplied nearly *four times* since my wife and I had left it in April of 1957.

We found that Mr. Raymond McNair — Evangelist in charge of God’s churches in Britain—had built up the work here a great deal. Beside the fine increase in the London church, a small church had been raised up in Bristol composed of about eight to ten adult members. This solid nucleus of converted members was to prove the needed “backbone” of the larger Bristol church that resulted from the Evangelistic campaign there.

In addition, a Bible study had been formed of the seven baptized members in Birmingham. It was only meeting twice a month, but the local members

there had been strengthened greatly to act as “pillars” in the church that was to be raised up.

In addition, under Mr. McNair’s supervision, property developments and improvements were constantly changing the face of our future college campus. It was really becoming a *fabulous* place!

At this point, I cannot help but mention the outstanding example of *zeal, dedication and hard work* set by two of our “pioneer” London church members, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Silcox. They began attending the London church steadily after the campaign held in London in January and February of 1957. Soon after, they were baptized in the “ice-cold” water of the Thames river.

As most new members do, they had many trials and tests at first in keeping the Sabbath and making a complete break with the world. But they were *faithful*, and they kept on growing.

After the property for our college here in England was purchased, an unusual opportunity for service opened up to them. It was known that Mr. Silcox had done a great deal of gardening, and he was asked to move his family to Bricket Wood and help get our college grounds and gardens in shape.

As it turned out, he was an even more

experienced and competent man than we had realized. He was soon put in complete charge of our gardening crew, and began doing a magnificent job restoring the grounds and gardens here to their former beauty.

Mr. Silcox believes in WORK! And he *drives himself* to accomplish the work normally done by several men. He literally works from dawn to dusk most days, and often far into the night.

In addition, his wife and two sons have donated countless hours of their time to the job of keeping the trees and bushes pruned, and the flower beds in good condition. In fact, they often work harder than most outsiders would if they were being paid for it!

Well, I give this just as an example illustrating that many of our British brethren have their entire lives and hearts wrapped up in God's work. The Silcox's example reminded me of how our beloved brother Bill Homberger—in the early years of the college in America—gave up his outside job and all past associations in order to move to Pasadena and help get things in shape. He, too, worked long and hard hours—donating extra hours of love and service constantly.

Now *he*—like the Silcoxes—is blessed with the privilege of working and living right in the midst of "the happiest spot on earth," Ambassador College.

This example also parallels that of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Hammer, of Glade-water, Texas. They too gave of themselves unceasingly in the arduous job of maintaining the big Tabernacle there, being the backbone of the local church, and planning and doing the literally hundreds of things necessary in the physical arrangements for the church festivals each year.

Now they, too, are blessed with the privilege of not only working but living on the very grounds they have worked so hard to make beautiful. And, not surprisingly at all when we understand, they may also have the additional blessing of sharing the atmosphere of yet another Ambassador College campus—a Junior College possibly to be established there within a year or two!

Haven't you noticed that people who go "all out" for God and His work are really BLESSED for it?

A Busy Summer

Upon arrival, Mr. Armstrong immediately set himself to the task of completing all plans and arrangements for the new Ambassador College. There was remodeling to be done on the buildings, new property to be purchased, college equipment to be purchased and literally scores of other details to see to.

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong had a busy

summer directing these many activities, and then flew back to America for the start of the college year there. And, of course, Mr. Armstrong's major responsibilities of directing the entire work of God, preaching in the churches, and writing for the magazines and bulletins continue wherever he is.

Meanwhile, after a few days at our new headquarters on the college grounds at Bricket Wood, England, Mr. Ernest Martin and I left for Bristol, England. We needed to make final preparations for the Bristol Evangelistic Campaign which was to begin on Monday night, June 20th, in the Y.M.C.A. auditorium.

Evangelistic Campaign "Team"

Before describing the Bristol meetings, let me tell you about our campaign "team"—and how we were organized for conducting three evangelistic campaigns in a row. For last summer God's Church—*your* Church—held three important evangelistic campaigns in England.

Mr. Ernest Martin—one of our ministers now stationed in Britain and the Registrar of Ambassador College there—was the song leader and campaign manager. Mr. Martin and his dedicated wife, Helen, were there each night to greet the people, handle any arrangements and answer literally hundreds of questions after the meetings.

The brilliant piano accompaniment to the hymn singing—and special solo numbers—was provided by Miss Ruth Myrick. Miss Myrick, as many of you brethren know, is the piano virtuoso of Ambassador College. You may remember her as the young lady who accompanied the hymns for us during the Feast of Tabernacles last year, 1959.

This year, Miss Myrick has been sent to England as one of the pioneer students of the new Ambassador College here. Together with other advanced students, Miss Myrick is here to help "set the pace" and aid in establishing the Ambassador atmosphere in the new college.

In addition to her musical accompaniments, Miss Myrick also did an important job in counselling with scores of people.

My wife, Margie, had a real job on her hands taking care of our two small children and also getting moved into a new "flat" each place we went. But she did a remarkable job of this, and found time to counsel with and encourage many of the other ladies attending the meetings!

Mr. Robin Jones joined the campaign "team" at the start and finish of the meetings in Bristol and Birmingham, and took over the job of song leading for the Manchester campaign. This was arranged so that Mr. Martin could take

up his duties as Registrar of Ambassador College in Bricket Wood.

Your author was the campaign speaker, and it was a challenging assignment. For we were conducting meetings five nights a week for *twelve solid weeks*—and preaching once or twice on the Sabbath beside!

The Bristol Campaign

We knew that our Bristol meetings would be the smallest we would hold. But we had been urged to hold these by Mr. McNair on behalf of the local church brethren.

As it turned out, they were quite successful considering that our listeners in the Bristol area are comparatively few. Remember, brethren, that our campaigns are not primarily designed to attract huge crowds of people who know nothing of the truth, but are rather intended to reach primarily our own listeners and readers of *THE PLAIN TRUTH* who have at least a general knowledge of, and interest in, God's plan.

There was excitement in the air that first night in Bristol! The audience was expecting something different from the average evangelistic campaign, and *they certainly got it*. The prophesied future of England—and of Bristol—was laid bare. A warning was sounded and a witness was given. From then on, a regular chain of prophetic events was given through the meetings, and the spiritual revelation of *what to do about it!*

Many people had come over from Wales and other areas who could not attend regularly. However, according to pattern, the attendance held up well. There were 112 people attending the first night, and at the end of four weeks 56 people—exactly half—were there to hear the closing sermon.

The first Sabbath after the campaign, the little meeting room where the Bristol church meets was packed with 44 people! As Jesus prophesied, a few have since fallen by the wayside. But latest reports indicate that about 35 are still attending in Bristol, and it has now become a full-fledged church with a good foundation for future growth.

Mr. Ernest Martin is now the Pastor of the Bristol church and reports that they are a very zealous and enthusiastic group. Remember to PRAY for Mr. Martin, and our new brethren in Bristol!

Blessings and Problems in the Birmingham Meetings

Satan was waiting for us in Birmingham! Through misguided human instruments, he tried to upset the audience in the first two nights of our meetings there.

Without realizing it, we had rented

the very hall used regularly by a certain religious sect for holding very special meetings. When they discovered that we had rented this hall for a series of evangelistic meetings to proclaim God's TRUTH—which they fight and oppose—they were apparently quite upset.

They tried to bring *confusion* into our meetings! But God gave us His *wisdom* and *POWER*—and the meeting was handled so that they were shown in their true light as instruments of the Devil.

After that, the meetings proceeded peaceably, and God blessed us with a *good harvest*. Beginning with about 170 in attendance the first night, the attendance held up over or near a hundred for the first two weeks. Then, when the strong spiritual "meat" was presented, some dropped away.

But the campaign closed with 68 adults in attendance for the very *first* Sabbath services of God's Church in Birmingham. Most of these still remain, and the church shows prospects of becoming a really large church in the future.

Since the campaign, Dr. Benjamin Rea and I have handled the ministry there as co-pastors in Birmingham—one of us driving up each Sabbath from our college headquarters. The church there is becoming more warm and friendly each week, and is beginning to remind us of the church in San Diego, Calif.

Brethren, PRAY for God's church in Birmingham! And give Him *thanks* for these new brethren in Christ!

Final Campaign in Manchester

Humanly speaking, after eight solid weeks of every-night preaching, I would have enjoyed a rest before the Manchester campaign. So would the rest of the team, I am sure.

But, in another way, it was good to tackle a new challenge. And Manchester seemed a very friendly city, and we had a wonderful hall there in which to meet.

I had been forced by circumstances to send my wife and two children back down to London after the Birmingham campaign. She was expecting another child soon, and in addition to this burden we had found it intolerably difficult to find a decent place to live during our short campaign stopovers in each city. So she went to stay with her brother, Mr. Raymond McNair, and his wife and family. I tried to get down and see her when I could on weekends, since I was going halfway in order to preach in Birmingham each Sabbath anyway.

Thus, I was forced to carry on without my wife, and Mr. Robin Jones and I stayed in small private rooms in the Y.M.C.A. But somehow that made all of us, I think, work and pray all the harder during the Manchester campaign.

In any case, God was with us and really BLESSED this final campaign of the series. Starting with only about 130 in attendance the first night, we completed the campaign with more than 60 adults in attendance.

Next day—in a city where we previously had practically no real church members, and no church or Bible study group of any kind—the Manchester Church of God started with 51 adults in attendance. Most of these people's lives had already been CHANGED by God's Spirit and His Truth.

Since then, the attendance has held up extremely well, many have been baptized, and the church in Manchester may well prove to be one of our most zealous churches anywhere!

PRAY for this new church, brethren! Remember that most of these people are very new—still "babes" in the true knowledge of Jesus Christ. They need your *help*—your *earnest prayers* that they might remain faithful to the truth God has so recently granted them!

Feast of Tabernacles in Britain

A few weeks after the campaigns were completed, it was time for the Feast of Tabernacles!

Plans and all arrangements had been made to hold the Feast here in England on our own college grounds. A large marquee—or reinforced tent—had been set up for the services and special kitchen facilities and help was provided.

Last year, the maximum attendance at the Feast here had been reported at 117 people. This year, people kept coming in until last year's attendance was *more than doubled*!

Since Mr. Armstrong was at the big Tabernacle in Texas for the first half of the Feast, Mr. Raymond McNair and I took charge of the festival here in Britain until he arrived. We were powerfully assisted in the preaching by Dr. Benjamin Rea, Mr. Ernest Martin, Mr. George Meeker, and Mr. Robin Jones.

Mr. McNair gave a series of very informative sermons vividly portraying what the millennium will be like. He also gave a very moving sermon on the importance of prayer.

In my sermons, I thoroughly proved that God's Holy Days should be observed by Christians today. In addition, I spoke on the subject of "Worldliness" and the tremendous DESTINY that awaits us as God's sons.

Dr. Rea gave a fascinating and important sermon showing *how* and *why* Almighty God has placed the various nations and races of men in the locations in which they find themselves. And, of course, many other important sermons were given on doctrine, prophecy and Christian living.

There was certainly a feeling of *peace*, *unity* and *love* among the brethren here. Although perhaps a little more reserved than our American brethren, God's people were joyously WORSHIPPING Him in this Feast.

There was a particular *intensity* of interest in the spiritual truths that were revealed in the sermons. For these people do not get the daily broadcast as do you brethren in America. And most of them are relatively new to the wonderful truths God has revealed to His Church. And so they were deeply *interested*—literally "soaking up"—the sermons from God's ministers.

Mr. Armstrong Arrives

The sixth day of the Feast Mr. Armstrong arrived with a JOYOUS report on the festival in Texas! Next day, he spoke on man's tremendous potential to be *like God* and have dominion over the world under Christ.

On the final Great High Day, Mr. Armstrong brought *both* of the main sermons! In the morning, he spoke on the Great White Throne Judgment—the time of salvation for all not being called now. That afternoon, he spoke on the tremendous world upheavals to come—and the CHALLENGE that is placed before each of us in God's Church to do our part in carrying Christ's true MESSAGE of salvation to a sick and dying world.

It was a sobering but stirring message, and a fitting climax to the Feast of Tabernacles. As the last hymn came to a close, all of us from America realized that we had definitely NOT "missed" the Feast of Tabernacles! Some human reactions were different, but the attitude of *love* and *unity* in Christ was here. And the spirit of genuine SURRENDER to the will of Almighty God was felt and experienced here as much, I am sure, as anywhere else on earth.

And it should have been. For this was the *place* which GOD had chosen for the observance of His Feast in Britain. It was His presence and His Spirit which made God's Feast of Tabernacles, 1960, a *great success* in Britain!

Next month, we hope to bring you more news about the new Ambassador College here in England and report on the continued growth of God's work and churches here in the British Isles. Meanwhile, *remember your brethren* here in "Ephraim." PRAY that God will open more and better "doors" of radio and television to reach those whom He is calling here.

And let us give God *great THANKS* for these tremendous *leap ahead* taken by His Church and work here in just the last few months!

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*ministering to its members
scattered abroad*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thankful to Attend Feast of Tabernacles

"Dear Mr. Armstrong:

"We are so thankful that God made it possible for us to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, and received so much from being there. We were shown the way on different things that we didn't fully understand before, and are now learning to change our ways, and do the things that are right in God's sight. We don't fully understand yet, but as we overcome these things that we have been shown, I know God will open our understanding on these other things that we don't yet understand."

Couple, Garden Grove, Iowa.

Thanks to Ministers, Elders and Deacons

"Dear Mr. Armstrong:

"This letter is mainly to express my thanks and joy to all the ministers, elders, and deacons and everyone who made the Feast of Tabernacles such a wonderful Feast. Believe me I have been encouraged and strengthened and filled with joy, being blessed greatly by God in just getting to come to His wonderful Feast and hearing the wonderful sermons which are going to help me grow."

Woman, Delaware.

"Englishmen" Make Hit

"Dear Mr. Armstrong:

"The Feast of Tabernacles this year

seemed to have greater meaning than ever before. And the concert and fun show, how we enjoyed them; especially the 'Englishmen.' I don't believe there are any like them on earth."

Member in Arkansas.

Still Digesting "Feast"

"Dear Mr. Ted Armstrong:

"This was our first Feast of Tabernacles. I'll never forget it and can say that I'd rather be dead than to miss one. I thank God for opening our eyes to the truth that you, your father and the Church put out. The spiritual feast you put out will take me a long time to fully digest. I only hope I'll grow enough by next year to absorb that much more."

Man from Walnut, Illinois.

Looking Forward to Next Feast

"Dear Mr. Armstrong:

"We have recently returned from attending our first Feast of Tabernacles. We were there for the full eight days and attended all the sermons. The sermons were very inspiring and enjoyable. We also enjoyed meeting all of God's ministers. The time seemed so short and we didn't want it to end. We are now look-

ing forward to our next Feast of Tabernacles."

Couple, San Antonio, Texas.

Really Got Spiritual Food

"Dear Mr. Armstrong:

"I enjoyed myself so much at the Feast of Tabernacles. I needed the spiritual food so very much and indeed I really got some of it. I had such a hard struggle trying to get there. My husband constantly opposes me. He tried to hinder me from going to the Feast by withholding his support for two weeks during September from me and the children. However, I managed to feed us all during that time. I was anointed at the Feast for nervousness and sleeplessness. I was blessed to be better immediately."

Woman from Detroit, Michigan.

Editor's Comment: We have received many wonderful letters in response to the Festival of Tabernacles. We are sorry there was not more space in the last issue to devote to pictures of the Festival—but dozens of world-wide Festival pictures will be reproduced in the beautiful 1961 ENVOY.

Question Box

Your questions answered in these columns! Your opportunity to have discussed those problems pertaining directly to members of God's Church.

I thought it was all right to use "Jell-O." But I have been told it contains pork. Is this true?

The use of some brands of gelatin, including "Jell-O" and "Royal" has been questioned by several members in the Church. Some were sure that these brands contain pork and shouldn't be used. Others were in doubt. Some assumed all brands of prepared gelatin were permissible to use. Just what is the truth?

Here are the facts about the content of "Jell-O," directly from the manufacturer of this brand. When asked what was used in making their product, this was the reply: "The gelatin used in Jell-O is extracted from the skins of food animals, principally beef and calf *with some pork*. In addition to being used in many pure food products, gelatin is used in very substantial quantity in the manufacture of medicines, for coating pills, for making capsules, as well as other medical preparations."

A letter from the Research Service Department of the company which makes "Royal" gelatin revealed this: "Gelatin is a pure food product made

from collagen, a protein constituent of animal tissues, particularly from parts of *pork* skins and beef bones. Royal, as well as others in the industry, uses these sources as raw materials for their gelatin."

So both "Jell-O" and "Royal" contain pork products, as well as other *harmful* ingredients such as *artificial* flavoring, coloring and sweetening, which should *also* be avoided. Is there a gelatin which contains no pork or harmful additives? If you desire a gelatin product, you should search the grocery shelves in your area to locate a brand of gelatin clearly labelled "all beef" or "all calf" products. Some of the more common gelatins which are made from beef are "McCormick," "Ben-Hur" and "United States." The widely available Knox gelatin is unfortunately no longer all beef and should not be used.

A *vegetable* gelatin would also be suitable. Such a gelatin may be plain, unflavored, and without added sugar. You can flavor it with fruit juice and sweeten it with raw sugar or honey. Vegetable gelatin is generally available only in health food stores. If they do not have it they can order it for you.

Is JUDAISM the *Religion of Moses*?

by Ernest Martin

People assume that Judaism is the religion of Moses—that Jesus brought a message opposed to the Old Testament—that He came to nullify the teaching of Moses. It is taken for granted that the New Testament presents a Gentile religion and that the Old Testament teaches Judaism!

Yet all these assumptions *are absolutely false!*

Shocking though it may seem, history proves that Judaism is *not* the religion of the Old Testament Scriptures. Judaism is plainly and simply the religion of the Jews—a religion manufactured by their own ingenuity. The Jews of Roman times had appropriated the name of Moses as the author of their religion—but in actuality, they had rejected Moses. Jesus said: "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me . . . but ye believe not his writings" (John 5:46, 47). The Jews used the name of Moses, but they didn't practice what he commanded.

Just as today, there are hundreds of denominations and sects in what is commonly called Christianity, all appropriating the name of Christ—saying they are Christian—but contradicting each other and failing to practice what He taught! And history proves that the Jews had misappropriated the name of Moses.

In effect, Judaism was a man-made religion! Jesus said that they were "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7).

It is time we looked into the records of history. It is time we learned how the Jews departed from the religion of Moses. We will be dumbfounded to discover that Jesus, in reality, re-emphasized the message that Moses brought—in its true *spiritual* intention. And, instead of nullifying Moses' teaching, He magnified it, having in view the true spiritual purpose originally intended.

The time has come to get our eyes open to the facts! Judaism was not, and is not, the religion of Moses!

IT IS obvious to the most superficial reader of the New Testament that a fundamental difference existed between the teaching of Jesus and the Judaism of His day.

Why?

The answer is surprising!

History shows—and the Jews themselves admit—that their religion had drifted far away from the simple doctrines of Scripture—commonly called the "Old Testament." The Jews had modified God's law and even instituted laws and commandments of their own which were, in many instances, diametrically opposite to the precepts of Moses.

It is time we realize that Christ came to a people who had, through their human laws and traditions, rejected the religion of the Old Testament which God had given to their forefathers.

These are the plain facts of history. It is important that we understand this if we are to comprehend the significance of events in the New Testament period. Christ, in effect, came to retrieve the Jews from their apostasy—from their rejection of the laws of God. And, He came to reveal to them the Gospel—

the New Testament revelation—to *complete* the promises that God gave to Moses, not to do away with them!

The Divisions of Judaism

Many people have erroneously assumed that the Judaism in the time of Christ was a religion united in a common bond—every Jew believing about the same thing—all united into one major Jewish denomination.

This is the first illusion that history reveals.

Judaism was divided into *many sects* in Jesus' day. Each had its peculiar beliefs. One of the most authoritative Jewish writers on Judaism, Dr. Herford, tells us: "If it were possible to analyze the Judaism of the New Testament period into all its component elements, the results of the process would be to show *how complex a variety* is summed up under that name, and *how far from the truth* it is to speak of 'the Jews' collectively as if they were all alike, in respect to their Judaism" (*Judaism in the New Testament Period*, pp. 41, 42).

Judaism was not one unified organization. Actually, there were many religious sects comprising it. And, even

within some of these major sects there were many "splinter" groups which had their own ideas and beliefs. In many respects, the Judaism of Christ's time was not unlike our own world. We have many competitive sects representing "Christianity." So likewise, the Jews had their divisions, differing sects representing "Judaism."

Some of these sects will be familiar to readers of the New Testament. There were the Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees, Zealots and Herodians. However, there were many more divisions of which we have a good deal of history. Some of these were the Essenes, the Qumran sects (who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls of which so much has been written lately), and others who are called, by contemporary religious historians, Apocalyptic.

There were other divisions among the Jews who lived in the surrounding areas, such as Egypt, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Greece, etc. There certainly was not just one single Jewish sect—Judaism was split into many fragments.

But history reveals another shocking and little-understood fact. It will eradicate the fiction from many people's

minds that the Jews, as a whole, were deeply interested in religion at this time in history.

A Surprising Fact Comes to Light

The records show that *far less than 5% of the total Jewish population of Palestine belonged directly to any of the religious groups mentioned above!*

Unbelievable as it sounds it is true! Over 95% of the total Palestine population were neither Pharisee, Scribe, Zcador, Herodian, Essene, Qumran, or Apocalyptic. These people—the overwhelming majority in Palestine—had no direct membership in these religious denominations of Judaism and in most cases were not particularly religious at all.

The Pharisees referred to the mass of the people as the *Am ha-aretz*. This word is Hebrew and signifies "The People of the Land," or simply, "The Common People."

These people were the multitudes who lived in the cities, towns, and country. They were, in many respects, like many non-church members today—some went to the synagogues frequently, many only occasionally, and many never attended at all.

The scholar Herford has this to say about these people:

"It is clear that the *Am ha-aretz* (the Common People) were not all of one type, either in respect of their religion or socially and economically. Just as they included rich and poor, capitalist and labourer, the merchant, the farmer, the artisan, the tax-gatherer (publican) and the tradesman, so, on the religious side, they included those who were just not Pharisees, and those who paid little or no heed to religion at all, with every shade of piety and indifference in between" (*ibid.*, p. 72).

The Population Analyzed

We can demonstrate quite easily that far less than 5% of the population in Palestine belonged to the Jewish religious sects in New Testament times. By comparing the number of members within the Jewish religious sects with the sum of the total Palestine population, we will arrive at some surprising answers. The figures should be interesting.

The *Encyclopedia Biblica* records that the population of Palestine must have been somewhere between 2½ and 3 million inhabitants at this time (Column 3550). This is the figure that most scholars represent as the total population of Palestine.

There is a full discussion on the Palestine population question in Salo Baron's, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. i, pp. 370-372. This

Jewish historian has summed up the opinions of the experts in this matter. He quotes as his conclusion to the whole question, the findings of Dr. J. Klausner, a contemporary Jewish scholar:

"J. Klausner, finally, has studied in particular, the records pertaining to the wars between 63 and 37 B.C. and has reached the conclusion that 'at the end of the Maccabean reign there lived in all of Palestine approximately 3 million Jews, not including half of a million Samaritans, Syro-Phoenicians, Arabs and Greeks'" (*ibid.*, vol. i, p. 372).

This figure should not be far from right. There were nearly 3,000,000 Jews living in Palestine in the days of Christ.

How Many Jews Belonged to the Religious Sects?

The most prominent sect in Judaism at this time was the Pharisees. This was the group Christ had more to say against than any other. One of the reasons for this is because the Pharisees were the most influential group and had more members than any of the other sects. They also had direct control over the majority of synagogues and schools, and in this respect, were the most popular with the people. But yet, even though the Pharisees were the most influential and the most prominent religious group among the Jews in the time of Christ, it is astounding and dumbfounding to realize that out of 3,000,000 Jews in Palestine *only a mere 6,000 were Pharisees*. The Jewish historian, Josephus, who was a contemporary of the Apostle Paul, and a Pharisee himself, informs us of this fact in his history *Antiquities of the Jews*, xvii, 2, 4.

But just imagine what this means! Here were the Pharisees, *the major religious sect among the Jews*, representing nothing more than an insignificant .2% of all the Jews in Palestine. These facts will have to change the convictions of many people who have had the erroneous idea that most of the Jews in Christ's time were Pharisees.

Most readers of the New Testament have never thought it necessary to ascertain the religious condition of the Jews in Roman times. And because of this, most people have been making erroneous assumptions based on our own contemporary conditions.

The Other Jewish Sects

All other sects within Judaism *were of less significance* than the Pharisees. The Sadducees, for example, were a sect that Christ came into contact with frequently, but they were less prominent than the Pharisees. There is no question about the fact that they had fewer members (*Antiquities of the Jews*, xviii, 1, 4 and *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*,

vol. i, p. 322). If we number the Sadducees at less than 3,000 members we will not be far from the truth.

Another sect among the Jews at this time, but not mentioned in the Bible, were the Essenes. Josephus informs us that there were *only about 4,000 of them* (*Antiquities of the Jews*, xviii, 1, 5). A group known as the Qumran, associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls just recently found, were a part of this Essene sect and represented part of the 4,000 members.

The rest of the sects in Palestine were of minor importance and definitely had fewer members than the Pharisees, Sadducees or Essenes (e.g., Herford, *Judaism in the New Testament Period*, pp. 127, 128).

These figures represent the startling truth that the overwhelming majority of Jews DID NOT belong to the religious sects.

With the facts staring us directly in the face, it should not be difficult to understand why it can be stated with absolute assurance that FAR LESS than 5% of the 3,000,000 Jews of Palestine belonged to these religious sects.

Some Common People Were Religious

The majority of people, known as the *Am ha-aretz*, the Common People, who were not members of the religious sects, represented all classes and varying degrees of feeling in regard to religion.

It is definitely known that some of these Common People were not totally irreligious. Some of them did hold to a form of religion, even though they did not belong to the accepted religious sects.

Since there were synagogues scattered throughout Palestine, it is altogether obvious that those Jews who did attend had some form of religious conviction. Because the "ministers" in charge of most of the synagogues were Pharisees, it is likely that much of the Pharisaical teaching influenced them. However, these Common People *were not Pharisees!* Most of the people had no desire to practice the strict and disciplinary rules of the Pharisees. Nevertheless, some of the people did attend the Pharisaic synagogues to hear the Scriptures expounded on the Sabbath or on other occasions.

The Common People who did attend the synagogue services, however, were not required to hold to the teachings of the Pharisees. The Pharisees exercised little real authority over the religious life of the people. If a person desired to attend the synagogue, he could; if he obliged himself to stay away, that was his prerogative. There was no coercion to attend Sabbath services, for THERE WAS LITTLE EXERCISE OF ANY CENTRAL



A view of the Capernaum synagogue, looking over the broken outside wall. Now turn the page and see the inside of the synagogue.

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY WITHIN JUDAISM AT THIS TIME. "Pharisaism had no means of compelling those who were not in their fellowship to conform to their requirements" (*ibid.*, p. 137).

"It is perfectly clear that the people at large did not share in the punctilious religious life of the Pharisees, however much they might admire it. In Palestine, as in modern lands, the proportion of those actively engaged in religious service was undoubtedly small" (Mathews, *History of New Testament Times in Palestine*, p. 160).

It was only over the lives of the "pious" that the Pharisees saddled a harsh religion of "do's" and don't's."

Were Synagogues Frequented by the Jews?

Even though the synagogues ruled by the Pharisees were open to all the Jews and they could attend them on the Sabbaths, this does not mean that all

the Jews attended. In fact, from the available evidence, it appears quite strongly that only very few Jews, relatively speaking, attended the synagogues regularly. At least, if the size and number of synagogues, of which records exist, are any guide, and they obviously do represent a guide, then we can safely say that very few of the Common People attended the synagogues with regularity.

Take as an example the Capernaum Synagogue.

Capernaum Synagogue

It is a matter of history, recorded in the New Testament, that there was only ONE synagogue in the city of Capernaum in Galilee—and even that was built by a Gentile (Luke 7:1-5). That only one synagogue existed in such a large city surprises even Edersheim (one of the foremost Jewish writers on early Judaism), because Capernaum was very significant in New Testament times and

had a considerable Jewish population. See *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i, pp. 365, 432, 433.

The ruins of this synagogue shows that it would have probably seated around 500 people at the very most. This was certainly not large for the city of Capernaum.

Josephus tells us that there was no city or village (township) in all of Galilee that had less than 15,000 inhabitants (*Wars of the Jews*, iii, 3, 3). There is no reason to doubt Josephus' statement regarding this, for he should have known. He was governor of the province of Galilee under the Romans and was well aware of the number of his constituents, especially since he was responsible for collecting taxes from them. So, from Josephus, we can be certain that Capernaum had at least 15,000 inhabitants, but from other evidence which shows its political importance in Galilee, there must have



An inside view of the Capernaum synagogue. Though small, this was one of the largest synagogues in all Palestine.

been considerable more inhabitants.

Most of the people in Galilee were Jews (Mathews, *History of New Testament Times in Palestine*, p. 149). And of this Galilean population it is said that "no region was more punctual in observance of the Sabbaths and feasts" (*ibid.*, p. 150). And yet there was only one synagogue in Capernaum—one of the chief cities of Galilee.

The importance of Capernaum in New Testament times has been recognized by our contemporary historians (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. i, p. 566). It is known that the city was the residence of a high officer of the king (John 4:46) and significant enough to have a customs station (Matt. 9:9 and 17:24).

Nonetheless, even being one of the chief cities of Galilee and having a considerable Jewish population it had ONLY ONE synagogue. (In the New Testament, the definite Greek article is

used, which indicates only one synagogue). It would have been virtually impossible to get even 10% of the Jewish population into this synagogue for Sabbath services. This serves to indicate that only a small minority of the Jews attended.

The Nazareth Synagogue

It is known that the great bulk of the synagogues of Galilee were quite small in size even though there were a considerable number of Jews living in every city. (Mathews, *History of New Testament Times in Palestine*, p. 149). In Nazareth, where Jesus was brought up, there was *one* synagogue. This, in itself, is not surprising, for Nazareth was not of the same prominence as Capernaum. Yet, Nazareth, with its immediate environs, to again cite Josephus, had at least 15,000 inhabitants. It was certainly no mean city, even though it was smaller than Capernaum.

Edersheim informs us that Nazareth was a religious center for certain of the priests who ministered in the temple (*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i, p. 147). Also, Nazareth was one of the major cities located on the great caravan route from the Mediterranean Sea to Damascus (*ibid.*). This location gave it a particular importance.

But even with these advantages, the ruins of the synagogue at Nazareth show that it was so small that it could hardly seat more than 75 souls. This size shows how insignificant was the synagogue compared to the population of the township of Nazareth, which numbered over 15,000 inhabitants. This again serves to indicate that the synagogues were not attended regularly except by the most pious of the Common People. The rest of them were not particularly interested in religion. Un-

(Please continue on page 12)

Are We Cursing Our Land?

Today we have severe drought in some areas—unexpected floods in others. It has not always been this way. Why the change? Read who is responsible!

by J. W. Robinson

LARGE portions of the United States, Australia, South Africa, which were once productive, are now drought stricken or ravaged by floods. Streams and springs are drying up in many areas! Much of the topsoil is eroding. Hurricanes are sweeping inland farther, and with greater frequency, than ever before!

Why all this distress? Is it a *naturally caused* situation which can be explained away? OR IS IT PUNISHMENT FOR SIN?

If it is punishment, for whose sin are YOU being punished?

Here certainly is a question not only our brethren on the farm need to understand, but all of us everywhere!

Why Climatic Rampage?

Here is the answer—

When God gave Israel the law in Mount Sinai, He told them to cultivate the land and harvest its fruit for six years (Ex. 23:10-11). But He also included this little-known, though vitally important statute: "*the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie still . . . In like manner shall you deal with your vineyard and your oliveyard.*"

God made this law a part of His overall law of love. He knows that the land needs a rest every seventh year.

God did not say, "Do it if you *want* to." He made it a definite command for *our own good*!

But why the increase in floods, in drought, in blowing topsoil and in tornadoes? And why the coming war and captivity of this whole people? What have the people done to merit such devastation?

Let Leviticus 26:34-35 tell us. "Then [in the near future] shall the land enjoy her sabbaths AS LONG AS IT LIES DESOLATE, and you be in your enemies' land; then shall the land rest, AND ENJOY HER SABBATHS. As long as it lies desolate it shall rest; BECAUSE IT DID NOT REST IN YOUR SABBATHS, WHEN YOU DWELT UPON IT."

It is all very clear. The land becomes desolate *because it has not been allowed to rest and keep its sabbaths*!

Some who call themselves Christians show a great lack of concern for God's sabbatical year. Does *that* show an attitude of SUBMISSION? No, it typifies the indifference of this modern age!

Don't think for a minute that you are on a band wagon with an easy ticket

into the Kingdom of God. *You must OBEY God!* Otherwise you will suffer with the nation when it pays in full for its sins.

In the Scriptures God isn't speaking just to your neighbor. *HE is speaking to YOU!*

God's Conditional Promises

Are you occasionally plagued by disease among your livestock, by insect pest, or by drought? If so, you may have been neglecting to DESERVE God's promised blessings. God promises the obedient that He will ". . . satisfy your soul in drought . . . and you shall be like an irrigated garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. 58:11).

God commands us, in Exodus 23:25-26, "And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land."

Again, in II Chronicles 7:13-14 God promised us, "When I shut up the heavens that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, *if My people* [Christians today] who are called by My name HUMBLE THEMSELVES and PRAY and SEEK My face, and *turn from their wicked ways*, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and HEAL their land."

There it is! God's people must obey God—and that includes the keeping of the sabbath year. Now is the time we need to learn to PRAY for *one another*, "Casting all your cares upon Him; for He cares for you" (I Pet. 5:7).

Punishment for Disobedience

Notice what happened once before when the people refused to obey this law. We have a record of this in II Chronicles 36:20-21: "And them that had escaped from the sword carried he [Nebuchadnezzar] away to Babylon; where they were servants of him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: *to fulfill the Word of the Eternal by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths*: for as long as she [the land] lay desolate *she kept sabbath*, to fulfill threescore and ten years." Every sabbatical year unkept meant a year in captivity for Judah! God's cor-

rective measures are sure—Israel, too, *will* be desolate and the land will soon *enjoy* her sabbaths because the people refuse to turn to God and keep His sabbatical years.

God warned Israel in Leviticus 26:14-35 what would happen *if they disobeyed* this law. Israel was to receive severe punishments in four progressively worsening stages unless the nation repented.

Some have thought this prophecy applies only to Israel's first punishment, and isn't for us today. They quote verse 22: "I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you FEW in number; and your ways [roads] shall be desolate."

Those who are scoffers will say, "That is no concern of ours: there are not enough wild beasts in this nation to do any serious damage." Don't you believe it! We are already getting a foretaste of this condition. Rabies and other diseases that are spread by animals are becoming increasingly more destructive, especially to our children. A typical report which illustrates this point is the following news item from Toronto, Ontario, Canada: "Red foxes are bringing an *epidemic of rabies* into heavily populated southern Ontario . . . *School children* in Grey County recently began carrying clubs while waiting for school busses after one girl drove off an attacking fox . . . Anti-rabies vaccine has been given to 400 persons so far this year, compared to 200 for *all* 1957 . . . *Cattle* have been hit by the disease" (quoted from the *Dallas Times Herald*, Nov. 1, 1958).

Besides the rabies that is being spread far and wide by foxes, skunks, mice, bats, and dogs, there are many more diseases that are bringing great destruction to our children and cattle. Diseases, however, are not the only source of trouble from animals. Man has so abused his natural surroundings that wildlife populations and their food supplies are becoming unbalanced. When a species becomes too numerous, or its natural food supply runs low, it is likely to cause abnormal destruction due to sheer hunger madness. Consider the following report from TRUE MAGAZINE, March, 1960:

"There are twice as many rats in the world as people—about five billion (400

million rats in the U. S.). *Every 12th farm in the world produces food only to feed rats*; a total of about two million average sized modern farm! . . . "Wild animals are destined to become even more destructive *throughout* the world because men have severely abused the land.

How to Keep the Sabbath Year

We know that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in **RIGHTEOUSNESS**" (II Tim. 3:16). We know also that we are *commanded* to keep the sabbath year and that "*all {God's} commandments are **RIGHTEOUSNESS** (Ps. 119:172).*" Therefore let us look into the Scriptures for instruction in the keeping of the sabbath year.

God's instructions, in Leviticus 25: 3-7, for the sabbath year are very thorough and complete and are easily understood. [I quote from the Moffatt translation here because it is more easily understood than is the King James Version. The meaning, however, is identical in both].

"For six years you may sow your field, for six years you may prune your vineyard, and gather in the produce; but the seventh year shall be a sabbath of *entire* rest **FOR THE LAND**, a sabbath in honor of the Eternal, on which you must neither sow a field nor prune a vineyard, on which you must not even gather the aftergrowth of your harvest nor grapes from your undressed vines . . . it shall be a year of *entire* rest **FOR THE LAND**, a sabbath in honor of the Eternal, on which you must neither sow a field nor prune a vineyard, on which you must not even gather the aftergrowth of your harvest nor grapes from your undressed vines . . . it shall be a year of *entire* rest **FOR THE LAND**. The *natural* produce of the land shall serve as food for you, for yourself and your slaves, male and female, for your hired servant and any outsiders staying with you, furnishing food also for your cattle and livestock!

Read these verses again very carefully. They are important. Notice that the sabbatical year is a year of *entire* rest **FOR THE LAND**. Verse five tells you that you must not gather your crops or fruit for commercial use or to store up in that year. They must, in general, be allowed to return to the soil. Yet verse six tells you that the *natural* produce of the land—that which grows voluntarily—in the sabbatical year shall serve as food for you, your servants, and strangers or guests that are with you.

Some people are temporarily confused when reading these two verses, thinking they contradict. But actually they do not.

You must not harvest the produce of the land in order to sell it. Neither are you to store up the produce of the sabbath year for future use. You may use the voluntary produce for day-to-day needs. God wants you to enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables when they are in season, even in the sabbath year.

The natural produce of the land in that year will also furnish food for your cattle and other livestock which may graze on the land (verse 7). This clearly shows that it is permissible to allow cattle to graze the fields in addition to the pasture in the sabbath year. To take advantage of this liberty it is permissible to allow your cattle herd to increase while they are grazing the whole farm. One man, *who did not study these scriptures*, mistakenly assumed he should sell all of his cattle the sabbath year!

Definite proof that we should not plant a garden in our sabbatical year, nor harvest or can its produce, is found in Leviticus 25:20-21: "And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow nor gather in our increase . . ." Notice that God is making provision for those who will be concerned about what they are going to eat during the year in which their land is resting. If we could plant a vegetable garden in the sabbatical year, no one would wonder where his food is coming from, because a well-managed garden can be depended upon to provide an abundance of fresh food. Under such a condition, there would be no test of the faith of the individual.

God's Blessings Promised

Some are sure to say, "How can we make a living in the sabbath year? A little fresh fruit and vegetables will not support my family. I need a cash crop. *I think* God wants us to use our minds and learn to draw our own conclusions; and *I think* we should let one-seventh of the farm lie idle each year." This looks good to the natural reasoning of some people, but *what does God say about it?*

God *does* want you to use your minds. And if you use them properly, you will come to the conclusion that *everyone* must learn God's point of view and live by it. The only other recourse is to follow human reasoning, independent of the Scriptures, which leads only to heartaches, sorrows, and wretchedness. Therefore, let us turn to God's Word so that He will tell us *how* to keep the sabbath year.

God tells us in Leviticus 25:20-22, "And if you shall say, 'What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase.' Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year; and it shall bring

forth produce for three years. And you shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old produce until the ninth year; until her produce comes in you shall eat of the old produce."

There you see a definite command that one particular year should be set aside in which the *whole farm* should rest by being uncultivated. Also you see a *very distinct promise* that God will so abundantly bless you in the sixth year that your produce will last until the fall crops are harvested in the end of the eighth year to give you food for the ninth year.

You should be diligent in your work, but not overly concerned with such matters as your physical needs, because there is very little that *you* can do about it. *Making your crops grow is one of God's jobs.* Strive for greater spiritual growth and God will supply your needs. "For your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask Him" (Mat. 6:8).

"Take no thought, saying, 'What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed?'—for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (Mat. 6:25-34).

What about shrubbery and flowers? How should you care for them in the sabbath year? The answer is that you should keep the house and its surroundings neat with whatever lawn and hedge trimming may be necessary. God would not want you to let your home become run-down and dilapidated looking. The law of the sabbatical year involves *only that land from which crops are harvested, removed, sold or stored*. It does not include your pasture or the lawn, shrubbery, and flowers around your home.

How to Figure Your Sabbath Year

The sabbath year is counted according to the Old Testament from about one Feast of Tabernacles to the next, beginning and ending in the autumn of the year. In ancient Israel the sabbatical years included the Jubilee every 50th year. The Jubilee is reckoned *only when there is a God-given permanent inheritance*.

After the Jews returned from captivity under Ezra and Nehemiah they were not given any permanent inheritance. Therefore God did not require them to keep a jubilee—but only the sabbatical years every seventh year.

After the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity they reckoned sabbatical years, without Jubilees, from the time they *reoccupied* the land. *We are in a similar situation today.*

We have no permanent inheritance. It is apparent that God intends us to use a personal, and not a national, system. *Your sabbath year would be the seventh year from the time that this knowledge comes to you—or from your conversion, counted from one Feast of Tabernacles to the next.* Count the year of your conversion as your first year if it is more than half a year.

Is This Your Problem?

Someone is sure to ask, "Should renters, as well as landowners, keep the sabbath year?" The answer is an emphatic "yes."

There may be landowners who will not allow their renters to let the whole land rest for a year. Renters do not have the authority to force the issue in this case but must submit to the demands of the owner. In this case the renter should let a portion rest each year until it has all rested. Through this method the land will at least have its recuperative rest.

The exact year that the land rests is not of primary importance because *Christians are not now an organized community. They do not all have the same sabbath year anyway.*

Since renters do not own the land, they must not insist that the owners obey God. Instead, they may have to find work and a farm elsewhere.

Actually, all land renters who are obeying God should, *after wise counsel*, aim to become landowners so that they will have full authority to farm according to God's principles. (But don't buy a farm in a drought-stricken area!)

If you are obeying God, you, like Abraham, must be willing to leave the locality in which your ancestors lived. But BEFORE you move into a new area, *make sure you can make a living there.* God is not obligated to supply your needs if you move into a desolate, drought-stricken area, or if you grow up in such an area and stay there. You should start your farming venture in an area that is not yet suffering.

Then, *after you have fulfilled your normal obligations and are obeying and trusting God to the best of your ability, God will supply all your needs!* Of this, you have His *sure promise* in Deuteronomy 28:1-6, 11-12 and Matthew 6:25-34. Read these scriptures carefully.

Land Left Fallow Every 2nd or 3rd Year?

There may arise the question, "What should be done with land that is already being left idle every second, third, or fourth year? How should it be handled in order to conform to God's sabbath year?"

Three general types of land are being

managed in this manner. The first type to be considered is *good, productive land* that is periodically being left idle, usually being seeded to a winter legume or other soil builder. Such a practice builds the soil up to a richer, more productive capacity and should in no way be discouraged. However, this should be *in addition* to the sabbatical rest.

In some Plains States areas there is fertile soil that must be *summer fallowed* every other year because it receives so little rainfall that it will not produce yearly crops. In such an area, it would be permissible to summer fallow in a sabbatical year so that the land will not be sapped of all its surface water, which is needed for the following year's crop. Some in dry areas have not summer fallowed their land, letting weeds grow to maturity. They did not raise a crop in the eighth year. But in each succeeding year the production has steadily increased *well beyond any previous yearly average.*

If you were to summer fallow during your sabbatical year, you should allow some growth to spring up, but disk it into the soil while it is young and tender enough to decompose rapidly. In the Jewish translation of the Old Testament, the word "rest" is translated by "lie fallow."

Another grade of soil is occasionally left idle because it is too poor to produce crops any more often. Such soil is gradually wasting away and is so thin that it should not be cultivated in the first place. Rather, it ought to be seeded to a good pasture grass and *turned into permanent pasture.*

It is *vitaly important*, however, that you *do not overgraze your land!* One cause of the present distress in our Western states is that much of the land has been overgrazed in the interest of *temporary* higher profits.

If too many cattle are on the land they will nibble the grass *so short* that it will afford no *protective covering* for the soil. The land will then dry up—the grass will starve—the topsoil will be blown away.

Some land is overgrazed even under the best grazing arrangement. Such land has already been worn out and should be left to nature so that shrubs and trees may take over and enrich the soil and, at the same time, produce a tree crop for future generations. Do not think of *present profits only*. Think of future generations who will reclaim this land after the captivity—after the land shall have kept its sabbaths.

What Work Should One Do in the Sabbath Year?

Some will want to know, "What should I do on the sabbath year? I know

I shouldn't become idle. Should I get a job in town?"

Considering the purpose of the sabbath year, you should not get a job *until you have put your farm in good repair.* The sabbath year does for your land what the sabbath day does for your physical body. One rejuvenates the physical body; the other rejuvenates and improves the land. Surely you have buildings and fences that need repairing. Do you need new fences? Then build them. Digging post holes will not be a violation of the principle of letting the land rest. The sabbath year is *a sabbath for the land.* It's the year you work for the land instead of the land working for you.

Possibly your home needs remodeling and painting. Take time to renovate it thoroughly in your seventh year. That will be the best opportunity you will have to make of it the kind of home you want. Overhaul or repair all of your machinery—make sure that everything is in good condition *before the beginning of the eighth year.*

After all this is accomplished, why not take an *educational vacation?* Go to the cities' libraries and museums to study and broaden your understanding of the world around you. You might also visit some of the nation's beautiful parks or attend concerts that would be inaccessible in the other six years.

When you have done all of these things that you *can afford*—go ahead and get a job for the remainder of the year! *It is good to stay busy,* and the extra money can certainly be useful.

Trust God

Remember that the sabbath year is a time for rejoicing, created for the benefit of man. If you *obey* God and *trust* Him, in *faith*, He will fully supply all your needs. In Deuteronomy 11:13-15 God promises you that if you *obey* Him, He will send you rain at the right season so that your fields will produce abundant crops and your pastures plenty of grass "... that you may eat and be satisfied."

Do you think it would be difficult for God to punish the nation *without injuring you?* Turn to Psalm 91:7-10 and read God's answer to this question: "A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the Eternal, who is my refuge, and the Most High, your habitation; there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling."

Turn to Amos 4:7, also, and read: "I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city:

one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered." This definitely *proves* that God can give *you* rain while your neighbor suffers from drought. If you doubt that this refers to our day, read carefully verses 6-12. The statement, "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel" at the end of verse 12 shows that this Scripture is for our day—just before the return of Christ.

Could you want stronger promises? What could be stronger than these as-

surances taken directly from God's inspired word? Do you believe God? If you do not, you have a very wretched life ahead of you! Anyone can see that conditions are worsening the world over. Human scheming certainly cannot save you from the rapidly approaching chaos and ruin. Are you going to continue disobeying God like the world around you and suffer for it? Or will you OBEY Him so that He can heap HIS BLESSINGS upon you?

Is JUDAISM the Religion of Moses?

(Continued from page 8)

doubtedly many of them did attend the annual festivals which were held in the synagogues and at the Temple in Jerusalem. To the Jews the annual festivals were like national holidays. But the evidence is clearly against the masses attending the synagogues *regularly* every Sabbath.

It has been conjectured by some that the Nazareth synagogue may have been built later than the time of Christ because it was not situated in the highest part of the city, as they supposedly think it should have been. However, Edersheim shows that this is not a proper criterion and rejects the supposition. (*ibid.*, vol. i, p. 433). There is every reason to believe that this small synagogue was the one Jesus attended. In their visit to Nazareth in 1956, both Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong came to the same conclusion as did Edersheim—it is the very synagogue that existed in Jesus' day.

This religious condition in Palestine nearly 2,000 years ago should not surprise us much. Today it is common for many of the people who profess Christianity to attend church only on the two pagan holidays that almost all churches celebrate today—Easter and Christmas. The rest of the year finds the majority not attending church with any regularity. The Jews, in Christ's day, can be compared in like manner with the common tendency today.

How Many Synagogues in Palestine?

It is not known exactly how many synagogues there were throughout Palestine in Christ's time. However, there are some hints as to the number.

Herford tells us that almost every area which had a considerable Jewish population had at least one synagogue in each of its cities. (*Judaism in the New Testament Period*, pp. 27, 133). It must be remembered that Capernaum,

as large as it was, had *one* synagogue. There can be little question about the fact that there was at least one synagogue in almost every town of any size. This seems to be a foregone conclusion of all the writers on the subject.

We happen to know, again from Josephus, that there were 240 cities and villages in all of Galilee (*Life of Josephus*, p. 45). Galilee was much more prosperous than Judea in the south, and in fact, Galilee was far and above the province of Judea in material blessings. Edersheim says the cost of living in Judea, for example, was five times that of Galilee because of Judea's relative sparsity of good soil and crops (*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i, pp. 224, 225). However, if we allow Judea to also have had about 240 cities and villages as did Galilee (although there were probably less), then we arrive at about 500 cities and villages in all of Palestine that could have had a synagogue. This would represent about 500 synagogues. But, if we allow some of the cities to have had two or more synagogues, the number could be raised to about 1,000 synagogues. That is, if every city and village did have a synagogue.

If there were, being extremely liberal, about 1,000 synagogues scattered throughout Palestine out of a population of 3,000,000 people, this would mean one synagogue for every 3,000 people. The sizes of the synagogues were from the very small, held in the home (*ibid.*, vol. i, p. 433), to the size of the Capernaum synagogue with as many as 500. There were certainly none which could hold 3,000, nor even a third of that amount. And the majority were small synagogues not much bigger than the one in Nazareth.

That there could hardly be more than 1,000 synagogues throughout Palestine is obvious in another respect, too, when

we consider that there were only 6,000 Pharisees to minister in these synagogues. THE PHARISEES WERE THE SYNAGOGUE RULERS (Herford, *Judaism in the New Testament Period*, p. 134). However, not all Pharisees were religious leaders in the synagogues. For example, Josephus, the Jewish historian, was a Pharisee but was not a ruler or synagogue official. In fact, a good percentage of Pharisees were not a part of the synagogue government.

And besides this, there were several offices to be filled in each synagogue (ISBE, vol. v, pp. 2878, 2879). The limited number of Pharisees available could hardly have filled the necessary posts for more than 1,000 separate synagogues.

With about 3,000 Jews for each synagogue in Palestine, and the synagogues ranging in size from around 75 members (even 10 if held in a home, as was sometimes allowed) to around 500 people, it can easily be seen that a good number of the Common People *did not attend*.

Popular Judaism Like Popular Churchianity

The religious condition of the Jews during the days of Christ can be compared with our own society. Today, there are about 750 million people who claim to be Christians, but how many of these are fervent in their beliefs? How many are consistent church goers? How many are zealously interested in their church? How many put their church above anything else in their lives? How many really know God?

Even the major Protestant and Catholic leaders are appalled at the seeming lack of real interest expressed by so many of their members. It is a known fact that the majority of people today just aren't interested in real, heart-felt religion at all—even though most claim to be Christians.

Should we then be amazed that over 95% of the Jews of Christ's time were no more religious than our own people? Of course not! People were the same then as they are today.

The false notion that the Jews of Christ's day were intensely interested in religion—the religion of Moses—must be eradicated from our minds. Such deception must be replaced by the cold facts! The Jews were no more fervent about the religion of Moses than the majority of Christians are today about the religion of Christ!

Yet when they heard Christ's message it began to awaken them to their senses, just as millions are being awakened from their lethargy today by the WORLD TOMORROW broadcast.

(To be continued next issue)