

The Princess and The Pauper

by Joy A. Veinot



I was up late, viewing a videotape of an interview with Harvard professor and renowned evolution-apologist Stephen Jay Gould. When the tape ended, the television came on, and I was shocked to hear that Princess Diana had been killed in an automobile accident in Paris. I stayed up for awhile and watched part of the somber coverage that would continue unabated for more than a week. So much was said about Diana's life and death;

her marital heartbreak, her rejection by the Royals, her great popularity with the common folk, her work for good causes, her quest for privacy, her vulnerable confessions, and on and on.

It was one of those strange weeks when the whole world seemed to be focused on the same story. But the week got even more strange when we learned that yet another widely loved and acclaimed woman of our times, Mother Theresa, had died of a heart attack at age 87. What a contrast between these two women! One was rich and glamorous, the other eschewed all earthly possessions; one a penultimate woman of the world, the other rejecting worldly values. Yet, both have already been "sainted" by popular vote.

Diana, it is said, was "born a lady, became a princess, and died a saint." And those who revere Mother Theresa are running ahead of their church in proclaiming her a saint, so sure are they of her "qualifications." The Roman Catholic Church has taught for centuries that "saints" are a special class of "holier-than-thou" folks, whose great holiness is manifested posthumously by miraculous signs and wonders. The church has reserved for itself the right to render judgment on the issue, and this canonization process can take many years. If Mother Theresa is not a "shoo-in," with all the good works she performed while on earth, what hope is there for everyday people whose idea of sacrifice might be missing Monday night football to visit a sick mother in the hospital?

The folks who are "sainting" Diana are not waiting for postmortem miracles or the sanction of any stuffy, ecclesiastical body to affirm her standing. However, it is obvious that they still hold to the traditional view that a "saint" is a person who is a cut above just plain folks. Not "holy," perhaps, but "good" certainly.

It seemed no coincidence to me that Diana and Theresa died

within one week of each other. What a contrast they presented to us! Mother Theresa was the embodiment of the stalwart saint of generations past, while Diana was the patron saint of the more touchy-feely, Oprah* era. It is safe to say that Mother Theresa presently would not be even a *candidate* for sainthood if she had been carrying on a public affair with a wealthy playboy. The morality of the old paradigm used to include sexual purity as one of its chief components. But, Princess Di was not shackled by such outmoded, puritanical restraints on her behavior. For a new age saint, morality has nothing to do with chastity. Rectitude is out; vulnerability is in. The economy is good, and the old-fangled, judgmental God of times past thankfully has been "reimagined" to reflect superior, humanistic ideals.

Which view is the correct one? Neither one, according to the Scriptures. Neither pious rectitude nor vulnerable beauty will buy entrance into heaven. What are the biblical "qualifications" for sainthood? Saints in our church age are just ordinary folks who have called upon the name of Jesus for salvation (1 Corinthians 1:2).

Believers do not achieve "saint status" some years or even centuries after their death. Ephesians 3:8 makes that clear. Paul called himself and the other believers saints *while they were yet alive*. It's not that they had circumvented any "canonization process." No, they had *already been "processed" by God* in heaven at the moment of belief! Princesses, paupers, apostles, and just plain folks enter sainthood the very same way — through simple faith in Christ.

Don't All Good People Go To Heaven?

Why should faith in Christ be the way in to heaven? After all, aren't there many "good" people who do not believe in Christ? God surely will not keep "good" people out of heaven, will He? No, God most assuredly will *not* keep good people out of heaven! All good people will be admitted into heaven on the basis of their good deeds. It says so in the Bible! Paul wrote in the book of Romans that in the day of judgment, God "will render to every man according to his deeds." Those who persevere in doing good will gain eternal life.

That's what I call GOOD NEWS.

(Continued on next page)



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"Pauper" (Continued from page 1)

All that anyone has to do to gain eternal life is to persevere in doing good (Romans 2:6-7)! Well then, what does it mean to *persevere*? According to Webster, it means "to persist against obstacles, to continue steadfastly." Steadfastly means constantly, constantly means continuously, and continuously means ALWAYS. Aye, there's the rub — Do you know *anyone* who ALWAYS has done good? We tend, in our humanness, to think that perseverance means "keep trying," when in reality it means "not ever failing." The standard is perfection. You must bat 1000 your whole life through. One measly strikeout, *during your whole career*, will keep you from attaining that — no matter how many home runs you subsequently hit. You can talk about being a "good person" all day long, but are you willing to reveal your stats?

Once perseverance has been factored into the mix, the GOOD NEWS doesn't sound so good anymore. But, when you consider what Paul wrote next, the situation becomes downright alarming! Here's the BAD NEWS — "... to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation" (v.8). Trust me, you don't want wrath and indignation to happen to you! Paul went on, "There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil ..." (v.9).

But wait a minute Joy! Paul wrote about evil people here! Someone would have to do something pretty *bad* to be called evil, wouldn't he? I could say, "yes," but I don't like to lie. No, "evil people" are described in the very first chapter of Romans, verses 29-32. What sins are these "evil people" committing? Pretty much the garden-variety sins of all humanity, I would say. Please note that gossip and disobedience to parents are listed right up there with malice and murder, without mentioning which sins are venial and which are mortal. The truth is that ALL sins are mortal sins, and every single person down through history but One is, (thereby, condemned).

But Paul didn't stop with the BAD NEWS of Romans 2. He wanted us to get the picture, to see what a hopeless fix we're in. So he spelled it out for dense humanity by delivering to us the BAD, BAD NEWS of Romans 3:10-18. "THERE IS NO ONE RIGHTEOUS," he declared, "NOT EVEN ONE." Uh oh. "THERE IS NO ONE WHO DOES GOOD, NOT EVEN ONE."

This is a MAJOR problem for self-

made saints. There has been only *one good man* in all of human history, and that man is Jesus Christ. God's standard of goodness is Himself, and Jesus is God made flesh. Remember the man who came to Jesus and called Him "good teacher" (Mark 10:17-18)? He wanted to approach Jesus as a peer, merely a "good man" among reasonably "good men." Very significantly, Jesus did not deny that He was good. He would have been *lying* if He had! But, by asking the man "WHY DO YOU CALL ME GOOD?" He made the man rethink the issue. Only God is good, Jesus told him. The inference: If I am truly GOOD, then I am GOD in human form and not merely a "good teacher" in a relative, human sense. Jesus' words should prompt us to ask, WHY do we call Princess Diana, Mother Theresa, or anyone else "good"?

It seems that whenever we call someone good, we, like the man who approached Jesus, do not have God's perfect standard in mind but are, in effect, grading on a curve. We mean that one is good *when compared to someone "less good" around them*.

I bowl with a group of fierce competitors on a Thursday night scratch league. The best in our group is Lisa, with a 200+ average. She's really a phenomenon. She is a bowling machine — programmed to "strike" again and again in relentless succession. She's the Mother Theresa of Wheaton Bowl. She makes it look easy. The last time I bowled against her, she beat me by better than a hundred pins over four games. And I really bowled very well, averaging 187 for the four games. The funny thing is, that by some freak accident (not likely to be repeated in this lifetime), I managed to win one of the games. Lisa was kind of miffed with herself by this, because Lisa's standard goal for herself does not allow for *losing ... EVER!* Losing is for losers.

Yet, even Lisa does not expect *absolute perfection* of herself, and neither do the rest of us expect it of her before we will be awestruck. After all, NOBODY'S PERFECT. Nevertheless, even though we do not live up to it, nor expect others to, there is a never-changing standard in bowling by which to judge one's performance. That standard is a 300 game, and smart bowlers know what it takes to achieve perfection in bowling. It's simple really. **STRIKE EVERY SINGLE TIME. PERSEVERE in doing good.** Never miss your mark. Do not swerve to the right or the left. Timing is everything, so don't get to the

line too early or too late; and whatever you do, don't cross the foul line, not even with your little piggy. Keep your head down, and your shoulder up. Reach for the pins. Follow through. Don't get distracted by the bowler in the next lane. We all *know* the rules, yet no one keeps them perfectly — because we can't. So, when we bowl our 200's, 225's and our 257's, we are fairly pleased with ourselves.

So it is in life as well. We don't compare our performance to God's standard of perfection, but rather to someone's we can match or even beat. Conveniently, there are some very unsavory characters we can look at to feel better about ourselves (murderers, rapists, thieves, politicians), and we rely on our consciences to tell us where we fit in the pack.

Don't Let Your Conscience Be Your Guide

However, human conscience is not a reliable guide. Recently, there was a case in the news of a young couple who murdered a girl who had come between them. Zamora, the young murderess, hit her victim over the head with a dumbbell weight, and then her gentleman friend shot the girl in the head. Should they be censured by society and, perhaps, punished for these "mistakes?" Well, Zamora is praying for another chance at life. She explained, "We are not bad people. We were young, in love, and not thinking straight." Incredible! We have come to a place in our culture where even murderers cannot see themselves as evil at all, but only misunderstood, or victimized by youthful emotions.

Even mass murderers who have sanctioned rape and torture do not necessarily consider themselves to be bad people! Pol Pot was interviewed by the *Associated Press* last October. Pol Pot, if you recall, was the Cambodian dictator who recently died. He was responsible for the death of between one-and two-million of his own people in the 1970's and the torture of countless others. Was he sorry? Not Pot. He defended his ordering the executions of his political opponents, although he did admit that his regime had "made mistakes." "But my conscience is clear" he said. "You can look at me ... Am I a savage person?"

Is the Pope Catholic? Yes, Pol, you are a savage if there ever was one, even if you do look just like somebody's brother. I am one "kettle" who doesn't mind calling Pot black, I guess. Yet, Pot impressed me with his insight that his best chance for escaping the judgment of the world and any consequent punishment for his crimes was to get us to *look at him*. Why is that? Human beings make most of their judgments *by what their eyes tell them*. Nevertheless, the problem is that one's character, whether good or evil, is not stamped upon one's features, and we are notoriously fooled by the way folks appear to us!

A few months ago, the feds located a Nazi concentration camp guard named Michael Kolnhofer, who was living in Kansas City. He had slipped by, unidentified, for years. If people are as good at assessing character as we seem to think we are, why didn't someone see the evil lurking here? According to the newspaper accounts, Kolnhofer was a "friendly man" who shared the vegetables from his backyard garden and enjoyed the company of the neighbor-

hood children. Can anyone who is kind to children be a "bad" person? Did Kolnhofer enjoy the company of the children in Buchenwald? More to the point, did they enjoy *his* company? Likely not. One of Kolnhofer's neighbors said she felt bad when she heard the news, because he seemed like such a "nice person." I guess she didn't know that lots of "nice people" participated in the Holocaust. Another of Kolnhofer's neighbors flatly stated he did not believe the accusations because, in his words, "He was too quiet, too neat, and too clean." The man does not know his history. "Neat and clean" were practically job requirements for Nazi killer/torturers. The "quiet" may have been added on in later years, as contemplation of eternity set in.

Back to Romans

Well, back to the BAD, BAD NEWS of the book of Romans. Paul wrote in Romans 3:19-20 that, because we do not meet the righteous requirements of the law, all of us are accountable to God. We all are silenced — there is nothing we can say on our behalf. We cannot point to the greater misdeeds of others as any excuse, because it doesn't make a dime's worth of difference who is further from the mark. If God were to leave it at that — that the good will be blessed with heaven while the bad will be tormented in

hell — none of us would have any more hope than Kolnhofer since *none* of us are good, and *all* of us are bad. We can neither earn heaven nor avoid hell by anything we have done or can do.

Jesus is not only fully God, but He is fully man as well. Jesus alone, out of all humanity, is truly good, sinlessly perfect. Think of the life He lived on earth in the context of the passage we've been looking at in Romans chapter 3. Jesus was righteous. He had understanding. He *persevered* in doing good — steadfastly, constantly, continuously, and always. He deserves heaven, and He is, in fact,

the only person who does. Yet, He *left* heaven in order to rescue the helpless likes of you and me.

That is why I call Romans 3:21-26 the GOOD, GOOD NEWS. Paul wrote that there is a "righteousness from God" which we can receive by faith alone, without regard to our deeds. God has offered to *give us, as a free gift*, the very righteousness of His Son. In return, we give Him the only thing we have to offer Him — nothing. That's a good trade, friends, so please do not neglect to receive God's gift of righteousness.

A gift offered can be a gift refused. What do we do with this righteousness once we do receive it? We put it on, just like a beautiful garment, and "wear" it. When God looks at us from that day forward, He sees us "clothed" in the righteousness of His Son, and He credits that righteousness to our account as though we had earned it ourselves. God's Son already has been voluntarily punished for our sins, so we are released from captivity when we take God up on His offer. Furthermore, not only are we released from bondage, but we who were enemies of God are now at peace with Him.

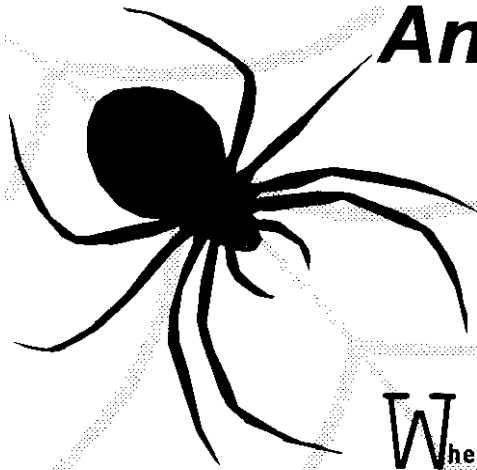
Romans 5:1: "Therefore, since we have been justified through
(Continued on page 11)

THE GOOD NEWS: Romans 2:6-7 The good people will be rewarded with eternal life.

THE BAD NEWS: Romans 2:8-9 The bad people will be experience God's wrath.

THE BAD, BAD NEWS: Romans 3:10 There are no good people!!

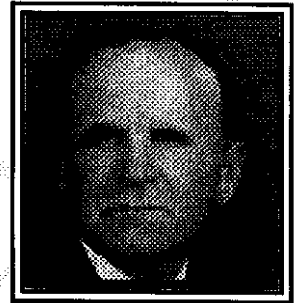
THE GOOD, GOOD NEWS: Romans 3:21-24 God will freely give bad people the goodness of His Son, if they only will believe that He can and will do it. Once they have "put on" the goodness of His Son, they will be given the eternal life that only the Son deserves.



And Along Came a Spider . . .

William Branham's Family Tree

By Eric Pement



When he is remembered at all, he is remembered with reverence befitting a legend. Yet, what did this obscure evangelist actually teach?

The name of William Branham probably will be unfamiliar to most of our readers, but to the Christian world a generation ago, he was as well known as Pat Robertson or Jerry Falwell is today. He was also as different from these two gentlemen as you can imagine.

William Branham was an American evangelist who achieved world renown for a powerful healing ministry which began in 1946 and lasted nearly 20 years. He traveled freely among pentecostal and "full gospel" audiences, yet he taught several questionable doctrines and denied both the Trinity and the eternity of hell. At the time of his death in 1965, he claimed he was the only prophet on earth sent from God to bring the Christian church into final truth.

Since Branham's death, hundreds of churches have been formed around his messages, while his sermons, now meticulously transcribed, have become virtually new Scripture for these churches. The story of William Branham is important, not simply because of the growth of these churches, but because some of his teaching has become seed for aberrational doctrine among Christian groups today.

Branham's Early History

William Marrion Branham was born on April 6, 1909, near Burkesville, Kentucky, to Charles and Ella Branham. He would be the first of nine children. Within a few years, the family moved to Jeffersonville, Indiana (unofficial headquarters of the Branham movement today).

Miraculous visitations and supernatural events supposedly followed Branham from his earliest days. He claimed a visible light hovered over his crib the day he was born (similar to the Star of Bethlehem, marking the birthplace of Jesus).¹ Branham apparently converted to Christianity at the age of 19, and within five years he was pastoring a Baptist church in Jeffersonville. His visions and revelations continued.

Branham attended a "Jesus only" pentecostal revival in Mishawaka in 1936, and felt that God wanted him to leave Indiana to evangelize other cities with these people. Yet, disapproval from his in-laws caused him to decide against it. Branham's first wife and one-year-old daughter died the following year, and he saw it as God's judgment for not going with the oneness pentecostals.

His Public Ministry

Branham reported that in May 1946, God led him to a secret cave in Indiana, "which no man can find," where he met an angel who told him God had commissioned him to carry the message of

divine healing to the world. The angel said that if Branham would be sincere and could convince the people to believe in him, nothing would be able to stand before his prayers, "not even cancer." Branham would be given two supernatural signs: first, the power to diagnose diseases through physical changes in his left hand; and second, the ability to tell the secret thoughts and deeds of people. If the first sign didn't convince people God was at work, the second sign would. Branham's public ministry began that same month and spread like wildfire across the United States.²

The angel from the cave accompanied Branham onstage during the healing services. This angel also directed Branham in other ways, sometimes telling him to cancel scheduled meetings.³ It is widely reported that many remarkable physical healings occurred at his services. David Harrell, premier chronicler of the healing and charismatic revivals of the forties and beyond, agrees that "the power of a Branham service . . . remains a legend unparalleled in the history of the charismatic movement."⁴

Lifelong pentecostals stood in awe at the specific detail packed into Branham's gift of "discernment" (as he called it), as Branham would reveal names, addresses, ailments, and personal details of people whom he had never seen before. Gordon Lindsay, founder of Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas, wrote that Branham's gift "was practically infallible. In the many hundreds of times I saw him speak under the anointing, he would unerringly speak forth the secrets of men's hearts — things which he had no possible way of knowing."⁵

An incredibly grueling schedule was laid upon Branham. Often, he literally was carried from the speaker's platform in total exhaustion, although a contributing factor may have been the presence of the angel. On one occasion he admitted that, "after hundreds and hundreds of times of visitations, it paralyzes me when he comes near. It sometimes even makes me . . . I almost completely pass out, just so weak when I leave the platform many times. If I stay too long, I'll go completely out."⁶ Branham nearly left the field in mid-1948, partly from overwork and partly from finding groups of followers who literally were baptizing converts in his name and who carried photos inscribed "Brother Branham, our Lord."⁷

Branham returned to the evangelistic circuit later that year, and went on to go overseas: Finland in 1950, South Africa in 1951, India in 1954, and Europe in 1955. In 1955, interest in Branham's ministry began to wane, and for the first time in nine years, the William Branham Evangelistic Association was unable to pay its bills. The Internal Revenue Service investigated Branham the following year, claiming he owed exorbitant amounts of money for back taxes.

When his ministry was still young, Branham restricted his

sermons to his personal testimony and God's power to save sinners and heal diseases. Many of his crusades were organized by trinitarians, and he was content to let others teach while he focused on healing. However, at Branham Tabernacle (his home church in Jeffersonville), he had free rein to promote his real beliefs. Consequently, when his popularity died down in the late '50s, Branham turned his attention to the churches which now believed in his message, and his doctrinal peculiarities became more and more pronounced.

William Branham and the Trinity

From his earliest days, Branham rejected the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. He thundered, "Trinitarianism is of the Devil! I say that THUS SAITH THE LORD!"⁸ Branham insisted that the Trinity doctrine originated with Satan, and that it taught there were "three gods." Therefore, he directed that any believer who was baptized according to the triune formula given in Matthew 28:19 should be rebaptized "in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Branham generally described the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as being three "titles," "offices," "attributes," or "merits" of God.⁹ The problem with this explanation is that titles, offices, attributes, or merits cannot relate to one another on a personal level.

The Bible shows that a personal relationship exists between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "The Father loves the Son" (John 3:35); the Son glorifies the Father (John 17:4); the Son sends the Holy Spirit (John 16:7); the Father "knows the mind of the Spirit" (Romans 8:27); the Holy Spirit listens to Jesus and testifies to others of Him (John 15:26, 16:13). If the love, communication, and relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is to be *meaningful*, there must be a distinctly personal self-consciousness between the members of the Godhead.

If the reader will forgive this intrusion, perhaps the problem can be clarified with this illustration. This writer is both a son and a father. I also have the office and title of "deacon" and "assistant editor." Yet there is no way that I meaningfully can say that my "sonship" loves my "fatherhood." My office as a church deacon cannot communicate with my office as assistant editor. *Persons* can engage in meaningful communication, but *attributes* cannot. Offices, attributes, titles, or merits – none of them can say "I." Only persons can say "I."

The New Testament teaches that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit coexist and communicate on a personal level. Nonetheless, though there are three divine persons, there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4, James 2:19).

Serpent's Seed and Predestination

Branham also claimed God revealed to him a complex doctrine known as "serpent's seed."¹⁰ In a nutshell, Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden was not eating a fruit but having a sexual relationship with the serpent. Before the fall, the serpent "was somewhat in between a chimpanzee and a man, but closer to a man."¹¹ Satan entered the serpent and seduced Eve. Thus, Cain was begotten by Satan not Adam.

Ever since, there always has been a race of people whose ultimate ancestor is Satan. When Jesus told the Jews in John 8:44, "You are of your father the Devil," He was speaking literally. These descendants of Satan never can be saved because they are the "seed of the serpent."

At the same time, there is also a "seed of God," a lineage of people irrevocably predestined for salvation. This group is the true Bride of Christ. They are predestined to hear and receive the "message" of Brother Branham.

Furthermore, there is a middle category of humans who are neither the seed of God nor the serpent's seed. They are not predestined at all but are saved or damned by their own choices. Branham taught that the vast majority of the traditional Church is in this category. Those Christians who reject Branham's message will suffer through the Great Tribulation when it arrives, whereas the Bride will be raptured off the earth before the Tribulation begins.¹²

Miscellaneous Teachings

Branham taught other doctrines of questionable validity. He denied that hell was eternal, and maintained that Satan and all the wicked eventually would be annihilated. He claimed that the passageways in the Great Pyramid and the twelve signs of the Zodiac, though inferior to the Bible, were also revelations from God.

He decreed that for a woman to cut her hair was grounds for divorce, according to the Bible (see Matthew 5:32 on this one!), and that unborn children are not alive until they take their first breath. "You say, 'Oh, it's alive!' No, it isn't! That's little nerves jerking, muscles. ... The baby hasn't received life till it's born."¹³

Branham's concept of Jesus was unscriptural in at least one important respect: he asserted that during the days Jesus lived on earth, He was the Son of man, not the Son of God. "He never said He was the Son of God," Branham declared; "He said He was the Son of man."¹⁴ Branham

taught that Jesus became the Son of God (i.e., the Holy Spirit) after His ascension into heaven.

One need only read the New Testament to refute this claim. In John 10:36 our Lord directly says, "I am the Son of God." (See also John 3:18, 5:25, 9:35-37, and 11:4 for further testimony from Jesus' own lips that He was indeed "the Son of God.") When Peter gave his famous confession in Matthew 16:16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus certainly didn't correct him, saying, "No, Peter, not yet."

Perhaps Branham's most drastic claim was that he was the "angel" referred to in Revelation 3:14 and 10:7, the Prophet to the Laodicean age, the final era of time. Branham's message would set the Christian Church in order, and then, Jesus would return. Indeed, Branham insisted that the true evidence of possessing the Holy Spirit was to follow "what God's Prophet gave for his age."¹⁵ In short, following Branham was the test of who was "in the truth."



(Continued on page 9)

It was a Friday evening this past October when the "Holy Ghost Bartender" came to town for a revival crusade. The "Bartender" was none other than Rodney Howard-Browne, the transplanted South African Pentecostal evangelist. Browne's meetings are known for outbreaks of so-called "holy laughter," unusual "manifestations" of the Holy Spirit, such as people being "slain in the spirit," making animal and other unusual sounds, being invisibly "pinned to the floor," etc. These outbreaks are alleged to be the "anointing of God." We wanted a firsthand look at these meetings to evaluate them ourselves. This meeting was held at *Midwest Christian Center*, a large Pentecostal church in Tinley Park, Illinois near Interstate 80 (not to be confused with *Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc.* or *MCO*).² The pastor of the church, Rob Thompson, is known locally for his weekly television program aired on WCFC, TV-38 in Chicago and also on TBN. The service began at 7:00 P.M. and was led entirely by Browne's crusade team, beginning with announcements about the various products available at the book table in the foyer.

After being seated in the auditorium, which held about 800-1,000 people, we noticed that church security men kept people out of the first two rows, which were reserved only for certain people.³ As we took out our notebooks, several ladies sitting nearby gave us some unusual stares. Browne appeared at about 7:10 as the choir and congregation sang "Let The Holy Ghost Rain On Me." Browne was a round, barrel-chested man of medium height and spoke with an English/South African accent. When the music subsided, Browne began, saying: "People think we're crazy, but we're having so much fun." Browne then told the audience to read the book of Acts in order to find confirmation of what would be happening that night. Apparently, the possibility existed that people may not experience what they came for that night, because Browne then made this statement: "If you don't get what you want, come to South Bend" (Indiana, just down the Interstate from where we were, the location of Browne's next crusade the following week).

Browne began giving away cassettes, videos, and books by throwing them into the crowd. While referring to the contents of one video he was throwing around, a crusade held at Oral Roberts University, Browne remarked, "We trashed the place."⁴

Next, Browne wanted to know how many people were there that night for the first time (the meetings had been going on all week). A show of hands indicated about 50 people were first-timers, while everyone else had been to at least one previous meeting. Browne asked how many pastors were present in the audience. There were only two who were visible to us, with one them having several from his congregation in the back who were cheering for him. This was noticed by Browne and he joked about the rare breed of pastors visiting from the Chicago area during the crusade. He told the pastors they could revive their congregations "if you know how to tap into the anointing."

Browne began preaching on the anointing, he said, "I've never had God tell me no." In reference to John 15:7, "If you abide in me, ask what you will. God isn't going to say: 'No, no, I'm not going to give you strength today. No, I won't heal you.' God answers by fire." By this time, people in the audience were sporadically laughing at times.

In reference to 1 Kings 17, where God tells Elijah that He commanded the ravens and the widow to provide for him, Browne likened God's command of the ravens to feed the prophet to God commanding us to feed (i.e. give to) one another in need. "God will tell you what [sic] birds feed you," Browne told the audience, "Then God commanded the widow to care for him. Give me what little you

THE HOLY GHOST BARTENDER



COMES TO

Chicago

by Dave Moore with Tammy Spears

have and I'll multiply it. We have the 'match' to start our blessing. We often wait for a miracle we already have. The widow would have died if she had disobeyed."

The point of Browne's message seemed clear: if we give from what little we have, God will provide for us in the midst of our poverty. According to Browne, if people understand that God commands them to give, then He will provide for them if they do so. This teaching is a typical word-faith belief that God will provide as a matter of spiritual law, only if we give first. If we don't give, we will suffer or possibly even die (as Browne's reference to the widow made clear). This teaching can be simply illustrated this way:

GIVE = RECEIVE
NOT GIVING = NOT RECEIVING
EXPECT NOTHING = GET NOTHING
DISOBEY GOD = DIE

At this point (about 8:00), Browne began telling jokes for more than 10 minutes (especially "roach" jokes about a particularly large roach in his kitchen in Florida), occasionally mocking those in the audience who were not laughing. We noticed that he would pause after telling each joke, as if he was waiting for a response. It appeared to us that he was "feeling out" his audience to see how long the laughter would last.

Browne related a story about how he tried to get a car after he came to America with his family. He said that God told him the sixth person would help him. Browne gave a strange woman \$100 and found out later she had needed a miracle. God then supposedly asked Browne: "If I commanded you, would you listen?" Later, a man at an auto dealer (the sixth person) helped Browne get the credit to buy a van. Browne commented that we should not forget the people who help us, and related how he later gave the man a gift.

At this point (8:25), Pastor Rob Thompson came into the service and sat down in the first row in front of the podium, next to his wife. Browne continued to address the audience: "The breakthrough [the anointing] starts with you."

Browne mentioned that, at one meeting, he gave away his entire book table as an illustration of the giving formula he was preaching and then recounted how he was blessed as a result. Making another joke about the "roach," Browne had to explain who the roach was to Pastor Thompson, whose facial expression

indicated that he wondered what Browne was talking about. (It should be noted that Browne made several references to "roaches" all night, which the audience, including us, found rather funny). At one point, Browne associated roaches with the Pharisees, then with the people who picket some of his meetings, then he connected all of this to "intellectuals" and "apologists" (people like yours truly, who take notes during his meetings). Several times, as he made points about Pharisees and intellectuals, the people sitting around us would continue to give us funny stares. They seemed more accepting of us, however, when we worshipped with them during the worship time.

Browne continued: "All you need to hear the voice of God is a bird brain" (in reference to the ravens, the audience found this remark particularly funny). Referring to the offering, Browne asked the audience if they would do what God commanded them, directly associating the audience with the widow in 1 Kings 17. Browne prayed for the offering, as increasing sporadic laughter continued in the background. The offering was taken (8:33), the entire amount apparently going to Browne's ministry. Browne pointed out to the audience an option on the offering envelope to designate an amount directly to the "pastor" (Browne himself?).

Browne continued to speak during the offering: "Did you get something out of that teaching tonight? I command you to be a partner, in Jesus name!" (Apparently, this was Browne's "positive confession" to make the audience respond.) Browne mentioned that his goal was to return to Chicago and fill a stadium like the United Center in Chicago, where the Bulls play basketball.⁵

Browne began singing a little ditty: "Praise the Lord, Hallelujah, HA HA!" (He repeated it, with laughter continuing in the background.) "Help to light a fire."

At 8:40, the choir began singing, as the audience again was led in worship. We noticed one woman in the choir having bouts of screaming, while another kept bending over, bobbing up and down repeatedly. After a few minutes, she removed herself for awhile. Also during the worship time, certain people were seated in the front two rows which had been kept unoccupied. The worship time continued until about 9:19 P.M.

When worship ended, Browne read from Luke 4:14-30, never once expounding on or explaining the passages. Browne interrupted his reading and began to "speak in tongues." He walked over and laid hands on one person in the front row, then apparently interpreted his own tongues by speaking English to the person. He spoke as though God was speaking in the first person. At that point, the laughing in the audience increased noticeably.

"Some pastors don't want to go to the next level," Browne retorted. The laughter continued, apparently without purpose, as Browne stood there watching the audience. Looking toward Pastor Thompson, Browne said, "He's gonna start shouting like you."⁶ Then, going back to his reading, Browne said, "Let's look in Luke."

For no apparent reason, Browne, himself, started laughing while attempting to read Scripture, and again did not expound on what he read because it would occur whenever he would mispronounce words (which he seemed to do purposely on some occasions). It seemed to us that he was helping to create the laughter. We have to admit, when Browne fluttered and rolled his eyes, stuck his tongue in and out, we laughed too! That kind of stuff always makes us laugh. We would call that "wholly," not "holy," laughter.⁸

Browne then described how, as an 18-year-old, he joined an evangelical ministry team. Browne made a point of negatively indicating that the team leaders, which he described as Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians (or non-Pentecostals) had forbidden him to speak in tongues during their services. (At this point, sev-

eral people around us began shaking visibly.) Browne said he did it anyway because it was God doing it and not him, saying, "When you talk about Jesus, you get the Spirit." He also described one incident where he was casting out "devils." Browne admitted that these manifestations of the "gifts" wrecked the team, saying that he's been fighting against "religion" (apparently non-Pentecostals) since he was 18. What interested us about Browne's account of this experience was that he clearly and enthusiastically indicated a total disregard, disobedience, and seeming contempt for the authorities who were over him and what they instructed him to do as a part of the team. Instead, Browne justified his actions by claiming it was "God" who did it, not him.

Browne joked some more, this time about the "fragrance" coming in from outside through an open door, a farm odor. Browne commented how "intellectuals" are not spiritually open to the supernatural. Browne said, apparently to the "intellectuals" (us): "I have a word from God for you to take care of that rash." People around us looked toward us again. We did not, however, break out in a rash, then or since. (A man behind us was shaking severely now and began bleating like a sheep for several minutes.⁹) Browne stated, "There are two kinds of anointings: one ministers to you, and one ministers through you."

While this was going on, we noticed that some of the children in the audience seemed apprehensive about all that was going on around them. One father was rubbing his daughter's shoulder, apparently an attempt to comfort her as the laughter and noises increased around them. Browne continued, "If I want the anointing, I have to place a demand upon it ... You can't make this up. How did you know it was from God? It sure wasn't me."

Browne again related a story from when he was on the evangelistic team, when he prayed for a woman who fell on the floor and was healed. He said the power was "flowing" out of his hand (specifically, his index finger which, he said, proves he doesn't "push" people over), and he described people laying all over. (More laughter broke out.) When the team questioned him about what he was doing, he indicated he was giving the people a blessing. Their idea of a blessing and his idea obviously were very different.

Browne then walked around the front of the audience. Touching their foreheads and shouting "OK!" Three women fell back after being touched. Walking around the crowd some more, Browne pointed his finger and "pulled" a man out of the pew by the "power" (without touching him, of course). It sort of reminded us of the old TV show *Bewitched*, when Samantha moved things around the room with her finger.

Referring back to previous meetings, Browne described people who had been stuck to the floor. When critics asked him, "Why would God do that?" Browne responded, "Why wouldn't He?" [not a very convincing apologetic]. "This is what was prophesied by Joel,"¹⁰ explained Browne, as he touched another lady who dropped to sitting on the floor. "How many places shake when people pray?"

Browne looked at the pastor previously mentioned who had some of his congregation in the back. He was a white-haired man sitting near the front whom we observed to be shaking through most of the service. Browne said to him, "Come here."

"No," the man replied.

"Don't say NO!" shouted Browne, touching the man on the forehead as he came forward. The man was "slain" backwards onto the floor, his legs going into the air as if he was in a *Three Stooges* comedy.

(Continued on next page)

"Bartender" (Continued from page 7)

Walking over to another lady, Browne shouted "FILL!" flailing his arms as she fell over. The noise in the audience now increased as many people made noises, mostly groanings. "Have a dose of the joy and you'll find it a little easier," said Browne to one person. He then criticized his own fellow Pentecostals who didn't accept his teaching, saying, "You see, the Pentecostals who are not following the 'new move' of God are like people not wanting to move from the ax to the power saw." Unquestionably, Browne was clearly indicating that his level of anointing was more spiritual than others.¹¹

Suddenly, the teens next to us started speaking in "tongues," shaking, grunting, and groaning, etc. A lady in front of us began to laugh uncontrollably. The entire congregation got louder and louder (it was now about 10:15). Browne stood at the podium watching as, for about 10 minutes, many in the audience made strange noises, laughed, and/or shook uncontrollably, etc.

As a lull occurred, Browne spoke again, "His power will change you. That's what this is all about. This is not man's power or manipulation. Try it yourself and nothing will happen. I've tested this out. People act the same. It's the power of the Holy Ghost" [Browne's apologetic].¹²

Browne then addressed, in an interesting way, accusations that he uses the "power of suggestion." Billy Graham, reasoned Browne, uses "the power of suggestion" on his (Billy's) crusade audiences telling them that they need to be saved. Browne equated that type of suggestion with his own, attempting to legitimize what he does. Browne joked that he has been accused of being a hypnotist or that the healings during his meetings are just psychosomatic events. Browne said that intellectuals take away belief in any supernatural experiences. (Another swipe, as those ladies were staring at us again!) "You can get so stuck up in your cranium..." as Browne proceeded to set up a straw-man (an easily knocked-down argument) by talking about those who try to use intellect or reason to evaluate what was happening.¹³

It was now 10:30 P.M.

"What if we ask God to move and the Devil shows up? You mean you wouldn't recognize evil if you saw it?"

"This joy is evil," Browne said sarcastically. "The great deception leading to the falling away of the church."

"The same Holy Ghost that was with Wigglesworth (Smith Wigglesworth, a Pentecostal evangelist at the turn of the century) is here today. Just like back in the 20's. They (the Pharisees) accused Jesus of being Satanic. If I'm laughing by the Devil, who are you laughing by?"

Browne asked people to bow their heads. He gave a prayer and an invitation, asking those interested in salvation, rededication, and those seeking God, to raise their hands. Then, he asked those who raised their hands to come forward to the platform. Browne gave the gospel of salvation to the audience (however, there was no mention of grace). As they came to the platform, Browne commented that over 200 had come forward in the past three days, while most churches don't get that many in years. The ushers also came forward and stood behind the people at the platform. Browne said, "I believe one day God's gonna shake this city."

After the people left the platform (having been up there for many minutes), some were "slain in the spirit" and remained on the floor. A lady went around and placed a covering over women on the floor, for modesty purposes.¹⁴ Then Browne spoke in "tongues" and pointed to a couple in the audience. As they came forward, Browne touched them on the forehead, and they fell down.

Referring to others already on the floor, Browne said, "When you see them turn over, God's just doing them on the other side" (audience laughing loudly at this remark).

Browne then walked over to another woman and said, "What's happening to you?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

Browne: "It's the Holy Ghost."

Woman: "I think I'm drunk."

Browne: "She says Jesus is with her and His presence is real, for those of you who don't believe it." By that statement, we could clearly see that Browne reported what she supposedly said when she didn't even appear to speak.

Browne closed the service by giving a "prophecy" to Pastor Thompson, saying that something would happen in the next year that would impact the ministry of his church.

As we walked out at the end of the service, we noticed people continuing to laugh uncontrollably, making strange noises, crawling around on the floor, etc. In the middle of the main foyer, two women walked out of the service in a nonchalant manner heading toward the exit. Without warning, they both fell to the floor and began speaking "in tongues." One was shaking while rolling around on her back, while the other woman lay on her back with her arms pushing down at her side, lifting her pelvis up and down rapidly in a rather lewd display. At no time did we see anyone question this or any of the other "manifestations" we witnessed that evening. This particular display in the foyer occurred while parents were nearby picking up their children from the nursery, and no one seemed to give it a second glance.

We talked to one individual named Eric who had gone up to the platform during the invitation. Eric stated that he wanted to receive Christ but was confused about the manifestations he had witnessed. He seemed unsure about what had happened that evening. As we talked with him and recalled what we had seen, we couldn't help but remember, with sorrow, the Scriptures that say: "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36, NKJV) and "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14, NKJV) and "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; And they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables." (2 Timothy 4:3-4, NKJV) Ω

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Editor's Note: The endnotes for this article are very thorough, however, they also are considerably lengthy. We regret not having the space in this issue to include them. You can request a complete set of notes via e-mail, fax, phone or US Postal Service. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

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"Branham" (Continued from page 5)

Influences on Modern Teachers

One of Branham's doctrines, which seems to have affected some of the modern "word/faith" teaching, involves the power of the "spoken word." Kenneth Hagin, an extremely popular teacher of the "word/faith" message, seems to pay a good deal of respect to Branham's teaching — in one of his publications he calls William Branham "a prophet."¹⁶

Branham believed that one of the marks which would identify him as the prophet for this age was the power to call things into existence out of nothing. Branham's term for this gift was "the third pull," and he believed this "new ministry" could never be duplicated by anyone else. In essence, though, it involved the power of the spoken word to create things — anything — *ex nihilo*. "Just speak the word, and there they would be standing there."¹⁷

Modern faith teachers seem to have appropriated this doctrine. The idea that faith is a force — which, when activated by the spoken word, inevitably brings things into existence — may well owe its genesis to Brother Branham.

Another carry-over from Branham into contemporary circles involves the doctrine that the Bride of Christ is different from the assembly of born-again Christians generally. Branham taught that only the elect Bride would be raptured, while the great majority of Christians — those who had not accepted his message — would face the Great Tribulation.

This two-story version of Christianity is replicated in many "higher light, deeper truth" groups, who basically have developed their own variations on the above theme. With the purest of motives, members of these groups often come to see their spotless and unblemished condition (Ephesians 5:27) as a consequence of following the prophet (whomever he might be). Subtly, the believer's acceptability with God is no longer based solely on the blood of Jesus, but on adherence to dress codes, baptismal formulae, and following a proposed "divine order." At the end of this road lies the cultic doctrine of the "one true church," pushing ordinary Christians who are merely born-again off to one side.

Evaluating Branham's Claims

It is imperative that we evaluate Branham's claims by the only valid test there is: conformity to the Word of God. Some followers of Branham would claim that his many miracles and the accuracy of his words of knowledge (or "discernment") must make his doctrines true, validating his subsequent revelations.

However, we feel that Branham, himself, has given an adequate answer to those who would make him an infallible teacher. "Now, can't you see that you can't put your trust in healing campaigns? You can't put your trust in any kind of a sign like that. The only thing you can put your trust in is THUS SAITH THE LORD from the Bible."¹⁸

In subjecting Branham to his own standard, we sincerely feel his claim to be the only prophet for today should be rejected on several levels. To begin with, the concept that each period of Church history has its own prophet is pure conjecture. There is no biblical evidence that the seven churches of Revelation are meant to be interpreted as seven successive periods of time, nor is there any command in the New Testament to follow a "prophet" other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, if Branham really was sent from God to correct the Church, he would have been theologically sound on basic doctrinal issues such as the Trinity. Branham's modalistic view of God, basically a variation of the "Jesus only" churches, cannot answer

the Bible's evidence for personality within the Godhead. He also should have been sound on such a basic issue as whether Jesus was the Son of God while He was on earth.

Third, we should expect that a true prophet would describe his opponents accurately. A prophet who denounces heresy must be able to "lay his finger" on the real problem. Branham regularly claimed that Trinitarians say there are "three gods," when in actual fact, Trinitarians always have said there is only one God. If Branham was a true prophet, he wouldn't have misrepresented the teaching of his Christian brethren.

Finally, those who accept Branham's message ultimately teach that a Christian's depth of spirituality is not gauged on whether he merely follows the Bible, but on whether that person also accepts Branham's revelations. In essence, Branham taught that if you accept his special teachings ("the word for your age"), you are in the Bride of Christ. If you reject them, it is evidence that you are not "in the truth."

The New Testament gives a different description of how we can know we are in the truth. Note that it has nothing to do with following a human messenger, but is based solely on following Jesus Christ:

"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments ... Therefore, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and the Father."

"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him ... Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by His Spirit whom He has given us" (1 John 2:3, 24; 3:18-19, 24).

Postscript

Although William Branham was sincere and felt he loved the Lord, he did not adhere to biblical truths. As we have seen, he was not informed about the teachings of the Bible, and he was deceived in several respects. There were many more doctrinal irregularities than we have had space to explore in this brief article. To those who believe that Branham's healings vindicated his authority, we reply that divine healing is meant to draw people to God, the Healer, not to any human vessel. Ω

The *Journal* would like to thank Eric Pement for untangling this issue's "Spider's Web." Eric is a Senior Editor of *Cornerstone* magazine. This article was reprinted with Eric's permission. It originally was published under the title, "William Branham: An American Legend" in *Cornerstone*, vol. 15, issue 81, pp. 14-17, 1986.

Endnotes can be found on page 11

Upcoming Events

CORNERSTONE FESTIVAL

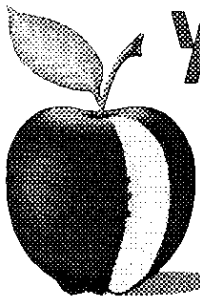
Bushnell, IL, July 1-5, 1998,
info. 773/561-2450

EMNR CONFERENCE,

Chicago, IL October 2-4, 1998,
info. 205/871-2858

FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITH CONFERENCE

Cortez, CO Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 1998
info. 630/627-9028



You Shall Know Them by Their Fruits

by Joy A. Veinot

The most used and abused verse of scripture among cults and pseudo-Christian groups, in my opinion, is Matthew 7:16 where Jesus said to His disciples, "You will know them by their fruits." Every cultic group, by ignoring the context, misuses this verse to prove to outsiders that *they* are the true Christians. The common attitude of the cults is, "LOOK AT OUR GOOD WORKS AND JUDGE FOR YOURSELVES WHETHER OR NOT WE ARE THE TRUE CHRISTIANS." The Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) boast, "We don't participate in war, and we are the only ones going door to door." The Mormons brag, "We are the only group that has a living prophet and apostles, and we also have the strongest and closest-knit families." "Oh, you think *that's* Christian?" Marshall Applewhite (of Heaven's Gate fame) might have retorted. "We have *left* our families to follow Christ, and we are the only ones who have truly followed Jesus' advice about cutting off any offending body parts," the Heaven's Gate crowd might have crowed. "Isn't it obvious from our fruits that WE are 'the truth'?"

Sorry fellas. Jesus Christ said that He, not any organization or religion or church, is "the truth" (John 14:6). And you're really going to have to give Matthew 7:15-20 another look, because it does not say what you try to make it say. Jesus was not talking about identifying *Christians* at all! He was warning them to beware of *false prophets* (verse 15), and telling them to judge whatever prophets come to them *by their* fruits! And what, my dears, are the "fruits" of false prophets? **False prophecies!** Apple trees bring forth apples, pear trees bring forth pears, and false prophet trees bring forth *false prophecies!* You can bank on it. These false prophecies can be in the form of false predictions of future events, or they can be in the form of false teachings that contradict scripture. Cults usually have both. Did the end come in 1914, 1925, or 1975 as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (JWs) predicted. Is Jesus actually Michael the archangel whom has already returned "invisibly" as they also claim? Can human beings become gods as the Mormons teach? Was there, after all, a space ship behind the Hale-Bopp Comet as Applewhite asserted?

Why did Jesus warn the people to look for false prophecies and false teachings to help them identify the false prophets? Shouldn't they have been able to judge them by their "works"? No. In fact, Jesus cautioned them that the false prophets who came to them would be wearing sheep's clothing. If one is wearing sheep's clothing, what is one going to look like? A sheep! People cannot identify false prophets by the way they appear, because *they look like true prophets* (or true Christians)!

False prophets, false Christians, and false religions *will* be able to show you good works, but do not be fooled — **GOOD WORKS DO NOT A CHRISTIAN MAKE.**

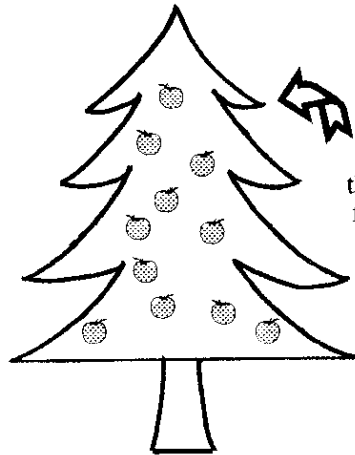
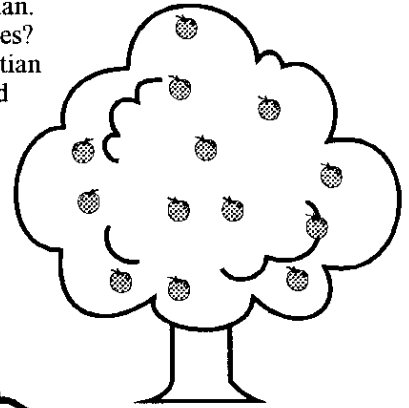
You say, "But wait a minute, Joy! The New Testament is full of exhortations to Christians to do good works, imitating the love and goodness of their Father in heaven."

That is very true. In fact, Paul told us that we were "created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). But *faith in Christ* is what makes one a Christian. Salvation is a free gift with *no strings attached*. Along with salvation comes a new nature; the good works that Christians do come out of hearts that have been changed.

Let me give you my apple-tree illustration:

This apple tree represents a true Christian. See the apples?

They are his Christian works produced from *his very nature* as an apple tree. The new nature is one of love and love always produces good works.



But what about this tree? Does the fact that this tree has apples fixed onto it make this tree an apple tree? No! This is obviously an evergreen tree in apple-tree clothing! Beware! On the outside he may be decked out like an apple tree, but inside he is a ravenous evergreen! So instead of checking out the apples, we should be looking for the "pinecones" of false predictions and teachings.

Can we always tell a tree by its apples? What if we were to find a genuine apple tree with no apples on it? Would we then label that tree an evergreen? That would be silly, because an apple tree, with or without fruit, is not an evergreen tree. We know that in nature, there are sometimes good reasons why a tree might not be bearing fruit. It may be out of season or, perhaps, it is merely immature. Maybe it suffered an injury from a particularly bad winter, a late frost, or a crippling storm. By the same token, we all know someone who claims to be a Christian, and yet, our inspection does not turn up any evidential apples. Does this mean that the fruitless one is not a Christian? Perhaps. But sometimes we need to be patient. Then the miracle happens. The tree matures, blossoms, and then—**APPLES!**

How is an evergreen tree transformed into an apple tree, and gain eternal life and acceptance into God's family? Paul tells us in Romans 4:5, "To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned [credited or counted] as righteousness."

You do not have to "try to be a Christian." Only believe. Leave the rest to God. Ω

Love to all,

Joy

"Pauper" (Continued from page 3)

faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand."

Candles In The Wind?

After Diana's burial, our newspaper headline proclaimed that Diana was "AT PEACE, AT LAST." A chill went up my spine as I read that and wondered if it was true. Is Diana *at peace*, I wondered? Well, that depends upon *where* she is. Is she in heaven — as many just assume? Or has Diana, perhaps, just ceased to exist? Rock star Elton John broke all sales records with his new version of "Candle In The Wind" which he sang at Diana's funeral. The song espouses the view that human beings are like candles — they briefly burn and then are snuffed out by the wind. The "person" is gone while only their legend lives on. This is a very common view today among secular people. On the other hand, as we already read in Romans 2:9, after the judgment there will be tribulation and distress for those who have done evil but have not received Christ's righteousness by faith. "Tribulation and distress" doesn't sound like some peaceful annihilation to me.

The more you study human history, the more you will agree with King Solomon that there really *is* nothing new under the sun. This "candle in the wind" view is not a new one; King Solomon detailed this view in the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon, in giving the view of worldly wisdom, stated that "all share a common destiny — the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifice and those who do not ... Anyone who is among the living has hope — even a live dog is better off than a dead lion! For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten" (Ecclesiastes 9:2-5). Their candle goes out.

Is Solomon expressing the godly viewpoint in this book? No, not at all. The same man who strongly advocates wisdom throughout the book of Proverbs proclaims in *this* essay that wisdom really is no better than folly, since the same fate — death — awaits both the wise man and the fool (Ecclesiastes 2:14-16). He wrote in

Ecclesiastes 10:19 that "money is the answer to everything;" yet, in Proverbs 11:4 he wrote that "Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death." What's with the contradiction? There is none. Solomon is contrasting the hopeless secular outlook with the eternal perspective. We all must deal with what our eyes see "under the sun," and then we must decide whether to believe our own eyes or believe in God. All of us have to contend with the injustices we see here in this life. We see the good die young and the evil man prosper, or at least cheat the hangman as did Adolph Hitler. Think about it. If this life is all there is, Hitler cheats the hangman for all eternity. Justice will never be served if our lives are merely candles in the wind.

The view Solomon detailed in the book of Ecclesiastes is the prevailing viewpoint of our time. Life is hard, painful, and full of injustice, and then you die — and the good die young, so you better "grab all the gusto you can get, cause you only go around once." This is what reality looks like "under the sun." But that is *not* the view that has been revealed to us from "above the sun." It is written in Hebrews 9:27 that, it is appointed unto men to die, and then face judgment. Paul wrote that men or women who die knowing Christ do go immediately into the presence of God (2 Corinthians 5:6-8).

My friend Bill recently died after a battle with cancer. Bill is a real saint — not a self-made, so-called saint — but the genuine article. I'm not waiting for a miracle to attest to it. He did not count on his rectitude or his goodness to recommend himself to God. He wrapped himself in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and by faith he stood. I'd known Bill for 30 years, and I remember how happy I was that night 23 years ago when he believed and received Christ. But let me tell you, the happiness I felt that night cannot compare with the sheer comfort and joy I have now, knowing that Bill is with the Father, where we will join him someday. I hope and pray that you will be there too. Ω

Love to all,

Joy

*Oprah: Pertaining to, deriving from, or being of Oprah

"Branham" (Continued from page 9)

Endnotes

(1.) Branham's biography has been derived from the following books: Peary Green, *The Acts of the Prophet* (Tucson: Tucson Tabernacle Books, n.d.); David E. Harrell, Jr., *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1975); Gordon Lindsay, *William Branham: A Man Sent From God* (Jeffersonville, Ind: William Branham, 1950); Julius Stadskev, *William Branham, A Prophet, Visits South Africa* (Minneapolis: The author, 1952); Lee Vayle, *Twentieth Century Prophet* (Jeffersonville: Branham Campaigns, [1963?]); and *Footprints On The Sands of Time* (Jeffersonville: Spoken Word Publications, 1975), a compendium of Branham's teaching, containing his autobiography, visions, experiences, and prophetic utterances. The incident involving the light over Branham's crib appears in Green, p.39; Stadskev, p. 1; Vayle, p. 35; and *Footprints*, pp. 21, 93. (2.) The angelic commission is reported in *Footprints*, pp. 73-75, 79-80; and in the books by Green, Harrell, Lindsay, Sproul, Stadskev and Vayle. The secret cave is reported in Green, pp. 67-68. It seems that the cave Branham described on several occasions did exist, and recently (ca. 1991) photographs of the cave interior were published in a movement magazine, *Only Believe*; the precise location remains undisclosed to safeguard its interior from overzealous followers. (3.) See Kathie Adler, *William Branham: His Life and Teachings* (Holbrook, N.Y.: Narrow Way Ministries, 1986), pp. 3-4; Peary Green, p. 115; Kurt Koch, *Occult Bondage and Deliverance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1970), pp. 49-50; and Dick Leagatt, "New Wine Interviews Ern Baxter," *New Wine*, Dec. 1978, p. 5. (4.) Harrell, p. 162. (5.) Gordon Lindsay, "William Branham As I Knew Him," *The Voice of Healing*, Feb. 1966, p. 11. (6.) *Footprints*, p. 74. (7.) Sermon: "Revelation Chapter Four (Who is William Branham?)," June 11, 1961; Green, p. 199. (8.) *Footprints*, p. 606. (9.) William Branham, *Adoption* (Jeffersonville: Spoken Word Publications, n.d.), pp. 21, 31, 62, 69. (10.) On serpent's seed, see "Serpent's Seed," *The Spoken Word*, Vol.2, No. 4; "An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages" (Jeffersonville: Spoken Word Publications, [1965]), pp. 97-107; and *Conduct, Order, Doctrine of the Church* (Tucson: Tucson Tabernacle Books, n.d.), Vol. 2, pp. 821-23, 1131-

36. 11.) *Seven Church Ages*, p. 98-99. (12.) On this middle category, see *Seven Church Ages*, pp. 275-286. On the rapture being limited to the Bride, see *The Revelation of the Seven Seals* (Tucson: Spoken Word Publications, 1967), pp. 57-58; *Conduct, Order, Doctrine*, Vol. 2, p. 1040. (13.) *Conduct, Order, Doctrine*, Vol. 2, p. 1121. (14.) "This Day This Scripture Is Fulfilled," *The Spoken Word*, Vol.19, No. 5, p. 7. The same teaching is given on another occasion, in a sermon of the same title; see *The Spoken Word*, Vol. 3, No. 8, p. 26. (15.) *Seven Church Ages*, p. 165; see also pp. 155, 169. (16.) Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Ministry of a Prophet* (Tulsa: Faith Library Publications, 1979), p. 8. (17.) William Branham, *The Easter Message* (Jeffersonville: Spoken Word Publications, n.d.), p. 100, para. 171. For further information on the "third pull," see *The Easter Message*, pp. 98-105; *Seven Seals*, pp.558-64; *Footprints*, pp. 480-94; and Green, pp. 75-86. (18.) *Footprints*, p. 656.

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Editor's Note

The series on Bill Gothard and IBLP initially was to be presented in four parts. Due to the overwhelming demand for more information, and the time necessary for research, the series will end up being seven or eight parts. In the interest of fairness, we currently are reviewing the video-tape version of the basic seminar, and we have also requested a list of pastors in the tri-state area (Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana) who support the ministry of IBLP. We would like to choose several pastors from the list to interview in order to maintain fairness in our research and writing. This request was made over a month ago, and so far, we have not received a response. As a result, this issue of the **Journal** does not contain the next installment of the Gothard series, but it will resume in the next issue. Thank you for your patience.

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