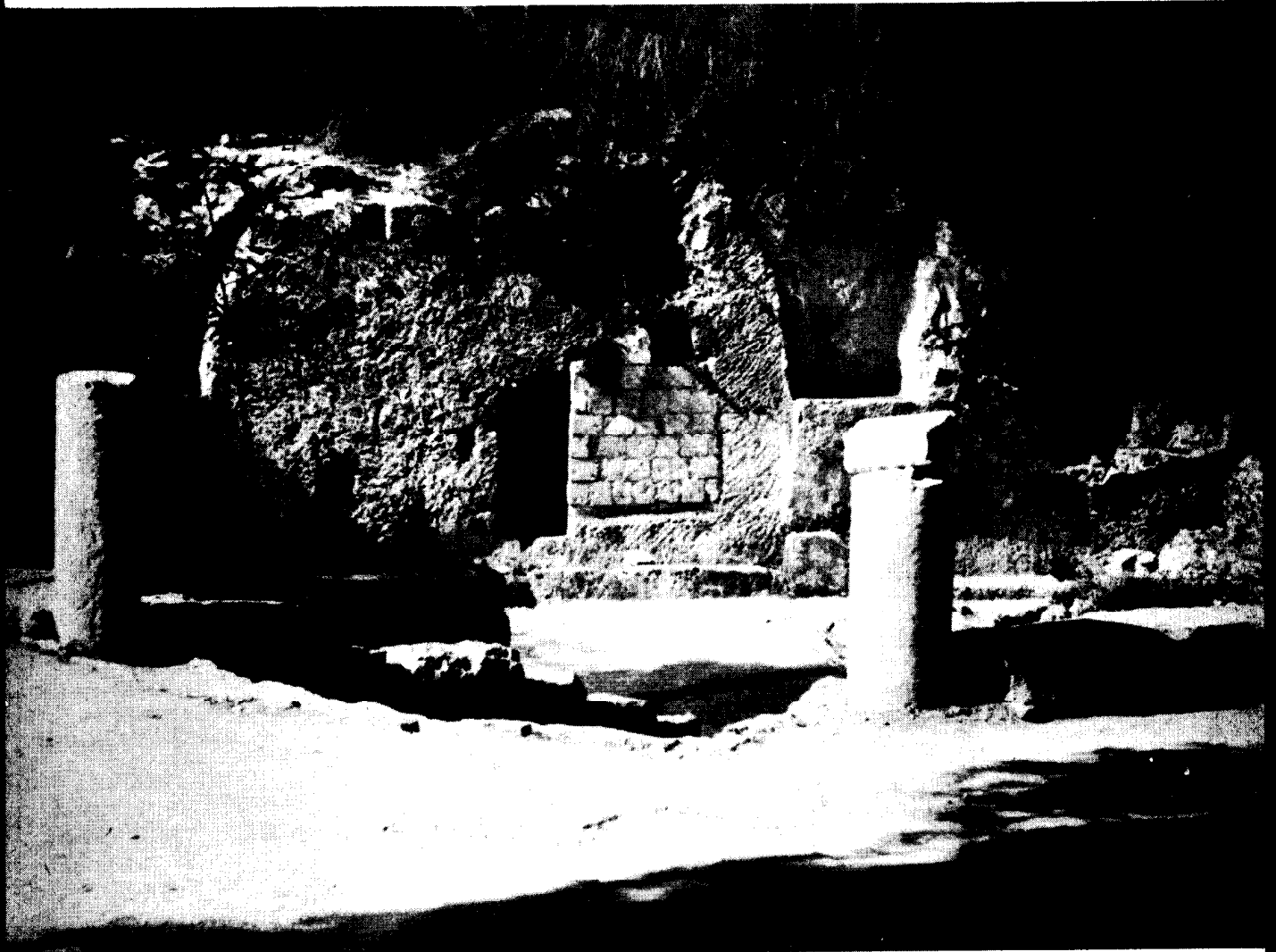


the
PLAIN TRUTH
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The TOMB of CHRIST

The Garden Tomb in which Jesus Christ was buried and from which He arose after being three days and three nights in this grave. No remains of the huge stone door which once sealed the tomb now exist. Nearby, to the right, is Golgotha—the Place of the Skull—where Jesus was crucified. Read in this issue the astounding truth that Christ's resurrection was not on Sunday—and that the crucifixion was not on Friday!

The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong

At last, in this 15th installment, we find Mr. Armstrong angered into the first real study of the Bible—and the account of his conversion!

IT WAS bewildering—utterly frustrating! It seemed as if some mysterious, invisible hand was disintegrating every business I started!

That was precisely what *was* happening! The hand of God was taking away every activity on which my heart had been set—the business success before whose shrine I had worshipped. This zeal to become important in the business world had become an idol. God was destroying the idol. He was knocking me down—again and again! He was puncturing the ego, deflating the vanity.

Midas in Reverse

At age 16 ambition had been aroused. I began to study constantly—to work at self-improvement—to prod and drive myself on and on. I had sought the jobs which would provide training and experience for the future. This had led to travel, to contacts with big and important men, multi-millionaire executives.

At twenty-eight a publishers' representative business had been built in Chicago which produced an income equivalent to some \$25,000 a year measured by today's dollar-value. The flash depression of 1920 had swept it away. At age thirty, discouraged, broken in spirit, I was removed from it entirely.

Then, in Oregon, had come the advertising service for laundries. It was growing and multiplying rapidly. After one year, in the fall of 1926, the fees were grossing close to \$1,000 per month. I saw visions of a personal net income mounting to from \$300,000 to a half million a year with expansion to national proportions. Then an action by the Laundryowners National Association swept the laundry advertising business out from under my feet. They had contracted for a \$5,000,000 co-operative national campaign in the big-circulation

women's magazines. The national Association had possessed power to assess every local laundry within ½ of 1% of the maximum it was safe for any laundry to spend for advertising. All of my clients' advertising money had been diverted to this national campaign. There was nothing I or my clients could do about it!

There was yet another million-dollar project—not a gold-mine, but a mysterious clay mine which promised to turn into gold. And it, too, was to be disintegrated by the depression of 1929. But that is getting ahead of my story.

It seemed that I was King Midas in reverse. Every material money-making enterprise I started *promised* gold, but turned to *nothing*! They vanished like mirages on a desert.

Yes, God Almighty the Creator was knocking me down—again and again. As often as I got back to my feet to fight, on starting another business or enterprise, another blow of utter and bitter defeat seemed to strike me from behind by an unseen hand. I was being "softened" for the final knock-out of material ambition.

Driven to Bible Study

The merchandising survey for the Vancouver *Columbian* had begun in August, 1924. That and the six months' engagement as a merchandising specialist with *The Columbian* had terminated about the first of April, 1925. At that time we had moved back to my parents' home in Salem, Oregon, to reduce expenses while starting the laundry advertising business. About eight or nine months later we had moved to a house we rented on Klickitat Street, in Portland. Our elder daughter, Beverly, had gone to school one year in Iowa before we moved to Oregon, and then another year in Vancouver, and in Salem. Our younger daughter, Dorothy, was started in school in Portland in the fall of 1926.

It was probably in the early fall of 1926, while visiting again in Salem, that my mother's neighbor, Mrs. O. J. Runcorn, had led my wife through a series of Biblical passages which convinced her that she ought to be keeping Saturday as the Sabbath, instead of Sunday. Mrs. Armstrong had accepted this conviction quickly, and with enthusiasm had come running back to my parents' home to break the "good" news to me.

"Are you CRAZY?" I had asked, shocked, incredulous!

My wife gone into religious *fanaticism*! I was horrified, outraged! What would my friends—my business associates say?

I demanded that she drop this ridiculous heresy at once! But she wouldn't. I argued. Week after week I argued. But all to no avail. I threatened divorce. I told her I would not have our children brought up in any such fanatical religion—and I was sure any sane court would grant me custody of our daughters.

I had been humiliated, my ego punctured, by unpreventable business reverses. But this was the greatest humiliation of all. This seemed more than my vanity and conceit could take. It was a mortifying blow.

"You can't tell me that all these Churches have been wrong all these years and centuries! They all teach that SUNDAY is the day to keep and hold church services, all but one strange, queer, fanatical sect."

My wife was broken up, too, when for the first time in our married life I threatened divorce. She was sobbing.

"But I can't help it," she sobbed. "I have seen with my own eyes *in the Bible* that God made holy the hours between Friday sunset and Saturday sunset. I would be disobeying GOD if I gave it up now—I would be LOST!"

I was boiling with indignation and anger.

"I know that the BIBLE says we are

to keep SUNDAY," I said sternly. "I don't know just *where*, but I do know that all these churches can't be wrong! I'm going to give you just one more chance, before your nonsensical fanaticism breaks up our home! I have an analytical mind. I've been trained in getting and analyzing *facts!* Now I'm going to research the Bible! I'm going to find *where* the Bible commands us to observe SUNDAY. I'LL PROVE IT TO YOU IN THE BIBLE! Will you *then* give up this fanaticism?"

She agreed—*IF* I could prove it, and show it to her *in the BIBLE*. That was good enough for me! I was supremely confident. I knew it was there. I knew I could find it!

And so it came about that in the fall of 1926, with my business gone—with but one laundry client left, whose advertising required only some thirty minutes of my time a week, that I was goaded into my first real study of the Bible.

"Ignorant" of Evolution

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1925, my brother-in-law, Walter Dillon, with his sister Bertha, his father, and a new bride, had returned to Oregon. Both Walter and his sister obtained jobs teaching school, and my father-in-law bought a small-town store.

Walter's wife had been indoctrinated with the theory of evolution in college. One day she and I became engaged in a discussion. I didn't believe in the evolutionary theory.

"You are *ignorant!*" Her words stabbed deeply into what was left of my ego—and there was still an enormous amount of it left. "You have never studied evolution. One is uneducated, and *simply ignorant*, if he has not studied evolution. All educated people know it's true!"

That challenge came hot on the heels of this "Sabbath" challenge from my wife.

"Hertha," I said, "I am just starting a study of the Bible. I will include in my research a thorough study of the Biblical account of creation, and also I will make a thorough study of evolution. I'm sure I'm going to find that it is *you* who are ignorant, and in error, and if and when I do, *I am going to make you EAT those words!*"

And so it came about that I now had a *double* challenge on my hands—a *dual*-subject study of the Bible, and also a research into texts on biology, geology, and evolution.

I began my study by obtaining everything I could in the way of books and pamphlets refuting what they called "the Jewish Sabbath." I read reams of arguments on the subject of "law and grace," or, as often expressed, "law *or* grace." I soon became very familiar with certain passages in the New Testament Books of Romans and Galatians. These began to seem rather convincing.

At the same time, I found, in the Portland Public Library, many scientific works either directly on evolution, or teaching it indirectly in connection with biology and geology. Also I found books by scientists and doctors of philosophy puncturing many holes in the evolutionary hypothesis. Strangely, even the critics of evolution, being themselves scientific men, paradoxically accepted the very theory they so ably refuted.

But, reading first the works of men like Haeckel, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Vogt, and more recent and modern "authorities," the evolutionary postulate began to become very convincing.

It became apparent early that the *real* and thorough-going evolutionists universally agreed that evolution excluded the possibility of the existence of GOD! While some of the lesser lights professed a sort of fence-straddling "theistic" evolution, I soon learned that the real dyed-in-the-wool evolutionists all were atheists. Evolution *could not* honestly be reconciled with the first chapter of Genesis!

Does God Exist?

And so it came about that, very early in this study of evolution and of the Bible, actual *doubts* came into my mind as to the existence of God!

In a very real sense, this was a good

thing. I believe God Himself was directing it. I had always *assumed* the existence of God because I had been taught it from childhood. I had grown up in Sunday school. I simply took it for granted.

Now, suddenly, I realized I had never PROVED whether there is a God. Since the existence of God is the very first BASIS for religious belief and authority—and since the inspiration of the Bible *by* such a God as His revelation to mankind is the secondary and companion basis for faith and practise, I realized that the place to start was to PROVE whether God exists and whether the Holy Bible is His WORD!

I had nothing but TIME on my hands. I rose early and STUDIED. Most mornings I was standing at the front entrance of the Public Library when its doors were opened. Most evenings I was chased out of the Library at 9 p.m., closing time. Most nights I continued study at home until my wife, at 1 a.m. or later, would waken from her sleep and urge me to break off and get to bed.

I delved somewhat into science. I learned facts about radioactive elements. I learned that radioactivity proves there has been no past eternity of matter. There was a time when matter did not exist. Then there came a time when matter came into existence. This was CREATION, one of several proofs of GOD.

By the laws of science, including the law of biogenesis, that only LIFE can beget life—that dead matter cannot produce life—that the living cannot come from the not-living, by these laws came PROOF that God exists.

In the Bible I found one quoted, saying in the first person, "I am GOD." This God was quoted directly in Scriptures, *proved* to have been written hundreds of years before Christ, pronouncing the future fates of *every* major city and nation in the ancient world. I delved into HISTORY. I learned that these prophecies, in every instance, had come to pass precisely as written!

Debunking Evolution

I studied the creation account in the Bible. It is not *all* in Genesis One. I studied it *all!* I studied evolution. At first it seemed very convincing—just

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as it does to freshman students in most colleges and universities.

I noted evidences of comparative anatomy. But these evidences were not, in themselves, PROOF. They merely tended to make the theory appear more reasonable IF proved. I noted tests and discoveries of embryology. These, too, were not PROOF, but only supporting evidence IF already proved.

I noticed that Lamarck's original theory of use and disuse, once accepted as science, had been laughed out of school. I learned that the once scientific "spiral nebular" theory of the earth's existence had become the present-day laughing stock, supplanted by Professor Chamberlain's "Planetesimal Hypothesis." I hunted out and read the story of Darwin's life—of his continual sickness—of his preconceived theory and inductive process of reasoning in searching *only* for such facts and arguments as would sustain his theory, refusing to consider any facts on the other side of the fence. I read all about his tour on the good ship *Beagle*. I read of how he finally came to *doubt* and lose confidence in his theories and what he had written, but how his colleagues hushed this up from the world, and propagandized his theory into "scientific" acceptance.

I came to see that there was only ONE possible PROOF of evolution as a FACT. That was the assumption that, in the study of paleontology, the most simple and unintelligent fossils were always in the *oldest* strata, laid down first; while, as we progress gradually into strata of later deposition, the fossils found in them become gradually more complex and tending toward intelligence.

That one claim, I finally determined, was the TRUNK of the tree of evolution. If the trunk stood, the theory appeared proved. If I could chop down the trunk, the entire tree would fall with it.

I began a search to learn HOW these "scientists" determined the age of strata. I was months finding it. None of the texts I searched seemed to explain anything about it. This TRUNK of the tree was carelessly *assumed*—without proof. Yet the entire "onion-coat" theory of geology was bound up in it.

Were the oldest strata always on the bottom—the next oldest next to the

bottom, the most recent on the top? Finally I found it in a recognized text on Geology. No, sometimes the most recent were actually *below* the most ancient strata. The age of strata was *not* determined by stages of depth. These things varied in different parts of the world.

How, then, was the age of strata determined? Why, I finally discovered in this very reputable "authority," their age was determined by the FOSSILS found in them. Since the geologists "*knew*" their evolutionary theory was true, and since they had estimated how many millions of years ago a certain fossil specimen had lived, that age determined the age of the strata!

In other words, they PROVED the age of the strata by the supposition that their theory of evolution was true. And they PROVED their theory was true by the supposition of the progressive ages of the strata in which fossil remains had been found! This was ridiculous arguing in a circle!

The TRUNK of the evolutionary tree was chopped down. There WAS NO PROOF!

I wrote a short paper on this discovery. I showed it to the head librarian of the technical and science department of the Library.

"Mr. Armstrong," she said, "you have an uncanny knack of getting right to the crux of a problem. Yes, I have to admit you have chopped down the trunk of the tree. You have robbed me of PROOF! But, Mr. Armstrong, I still have to go on *believing* in evolution, even if it is totally disproved. I have done graduate work at Columbia, at the University of Chicago, and other top level institutions. I have spent my life in the atmosphere of science and in the company of scientific people. I am SO STEEPED in it that I could not root it from my mind!"

What a pitiful confession, from one so steeped in "the wisdom of this world."

The Creation MEMORIAL

I had *disproved* the theory of evolution. I had found PROOF of CREATION—PROOF of the existence of GOD—PROOF of the divine inspiration of the BIBLE.

Now I had a BASIS for belief. Now

SIX LIVRETS FRANÇAIS

Les SIX livrets français sont offerts GRATUITEMENT à tous ceux qui nous en font la demande:

"La Foi nécessaire au Salut"

"La Résurrection ne tombe pas le dimanche"

"Quel est le Sabbat du Nouveau Testament?"

"Dieu guérit-Il toujours?"

"Qu'est-ce que la Foi?"

"Pourquoi êtes-vous né?"

Prière de s'adresser à

LE MONDE À VENIR

Box 111

Pasadena, California

I had a solid FOUNDATION on which to build. The BIBLE had proved itself to contain AUTHORITY. I had now studied far enough to know that I must LIVE by it, and that I shall finally be JUDGED by it—not by men, nor by man's church denominations, theories, theologies, tenets, doctrines, or pronouncements. I would be judged by Almighty GOD finally, and according to the BIBLE!

So now I began to study further into this Sabbath question.

I learned that CREATION is the very PROOF of GOD! A heathen comes along, pointing to an idol made by man's hands out of wood, stone, or marble or gold.

"This idol is the real god," he says. "How can you prove your God is superior to this idol that I worship?"

"Why," I answer, "My God is the CREATOR. He *created* the wood, stone, marble or gold that your god is made of. He created MAN, and man, a *created* being, MADE that idol. Therefore my God is greater than your idol because it is only a little particle of what my God MADE!"

Another comes along and says, "I worship the SUN. We get our light from the sun. It warms the earth and makes vegetation grow. I think the SUN is God."

"But," I reply, "the true God CREATED the sun. He created light. He created force, energy, and LIFE. He makes the sun shine on the earth. He CONTROLS the sun, because He *controls* all the forces of His creation. He is

supreme RULER over His universe."

Then I began to see that on the very seventh day of creation week, God set that day aside from other days. On that day He RESTED from all He had created by WORK. On that day He *created* the Sabbath, not by work, but by REST, putting His divine presence in it! He made it HOLY TIME. No man has authority to make future time holy. No group of men—no church! Only GOD is HOLY! Only GOD can make things HOLY. The Sabbath is a constantly recurring space of time, marked off by the setting of the sun. God made every recurring Sabbath HOLY, and commanded man (Exodus 20) to *keep* it holy.

WHY did He do it? WHY does it make any difference?

I found it in the SPECIAL SABBATH COVENANT in Exodus 31:12-18. He made it the SIGN between Him and His people. A SIGN is a mark of identity. First, it is a sign that GOD is the CREATOR, because it is a MEMORIAL OF CREATION—and CREATION is the PROOF of God—it identifies Him. No other space of time could be a memorial of CREATION. Thus God chose that very space of time for man to assemble for worship which KEEPS MAN IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE IDENTITY OF GOD AS THE CREATOR. Every nation which has NOT kept the Sabbath has worshipped the *created* rather than the Creator. It is a sign that identifies God's own people, because it is they who OBEY God in this commandment, while this is the very commandment which every one else regards as the LEAST of the commandments — which they REBEL against obeying!

GOD is the one you OBEY. The word LORD means MASTER—the one you OBEY! This is the one point on which the largest number of people refuse to OBEY the true GOD, thus proving they are *not* His people!

Law and Grace

I studied carefully everything I could obtain which attempted to *refute* the Sabbath. I wanted, more than anything on earth, to refute it—to prove that SUNDAY was the true Christian Sabbath, or "Lord's Day."

I read the arguments about "law or grace."

I was pointed to, and read, Romans 3:20: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight."

But I looked into the BIBLE, and found the pamphlet had left out the rest of the verse which says: "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." That is true, because I read in I John 3:4 that the Bible definition of SIN is NOT man's conscience, or his church "DON'TS," but "*Sin is the transgression of the law.*" Naturally, then, the KNOWLEDGE of sin comes by the LAW.

And I discovered the pamphlet forgot to quote the 31st verse:

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, *we establish the law.*"

I read in a pamphlet, ". . . the law worketh WRATH" (Rom. 4:15).

I turned to my Bible and read the rest of the same verse: "for where no law is, there is no transgression." Of course! Because the law DEFINES sin. Sin is disobedience of the law!

I read in one of the pamphlets that the law was an evil thing, contrary to our best interests. But then I read in Romans 7: "Is the law sin? *God forbid!* Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said 'Thou shalt not covet.'" And "Wherefore the law is HOLY, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." And again, "For we know that the *law is spiritual*" (Verses 7, 12, 14).

I learned that GRACE is PARDON, thru the blood of Christ, for having *transgressed* the law. But if a human judge pardons a man for breaking a civil or criminal law, that pardon does not appeal the law. The man is pardoned so that he may now OBEY the law. And GOD pardons only after we REPENT of sin!

The Bitter Pill

But do not suppose I quickly or easily came to accept the seventh-day Sabbath as the truth of the Bible.

I spent a solid SIX MONTHS of virtual night-and-day, seven-day-a-week STUDY and research, in a determined effort to find just the opposite.

I searched IN VAIN for any authority in the Bible to establish SUNDAY as the

day for Christian worship. I even studied Greek sufficiently to run down every possible questionable text in the original Greek.

I studied the Commentaries. I studied the Lexicons and *Robert's Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. Then I studied HISTORY. I delved into encyclopedias—the Britannica, the Americana, and several religious encyclopedias. I searched the Jewish Encyclopedia, and the Catholic Encyclopedia. I read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, especially his chapter 15 dealing with the religious history of the first four hundred years after Christ.

I left no stone unturned.

I found clever arguments. I will confess that, so eager was I to overthrow this Sabbath belief of my wife, at one point in this intensive study I believe I might possibly have used some trick arguments to confuse and upset my wife on the Sabbath question. But I *knew* these arguments *were not honest!* There was a brief inward battle between desire and honesty. But I *could not* deliberately try to deceive my wife with dishonest arguments. The temptation was soon pushed aside.

Finally, after six months, the TRUTH had become crystal clear. At last I KNEW what was the truth. Once again, GOD had taken me to a licking!

Now came the greatest inner battle of my life.

To accept this truth meant to *cut me off from all former friends, acquaintances and business associates*. I had come to meet some of the independent "Sabbath-keepers" down around Salem and the Willamette Valley. Some of them were what I then, in my pride and conceit, regarded as back-woods "hill-billies." None were of the financial and social position I had associated with.

My associations and pride had led me to "look down upon" this class of people. I had been ambitious to hob-nob with the wealthy and the cultural.

I saw plainly what a decision was before me. To accept this truth meant to throw in my lot for life with a class of people I had always looked on as inferior. I learned later that God *looks on the heart*, and these humble people were the real salt of the earth. But I was then

(Please continue on page 18)

all the known facts of history.

As Jesus was about thirty years old in the early autumn of 27 A.D., then he must have been born in the early autumn of B.C. 4, about half a year before the death of Herod. *Jesus could not have been born before this time*, or he would have been more than thirty years old at the beginning of his ministry. Neither could he have been born later in B.C. 2 as some assume, for he would have been only twenty-eight years old. But Luke plainly said that he was *about* THIRTY years of age.

When Did the Wise Men Arrive?

But what are we going to do with the statement recorded in Matthew 2:16 that just before his death Herod had all the children in Bethlehem killed "from two years old and under"? This would appear to indicate that Jesus may have been born one year earlier than He really was born.

Most people carelessly read this account by *assuming that Herod knew the date of Jesus' birth*. They think he had all the children killed because Jesus must have been between one and two years old.

Think for a moment how illogical this would be. Would a murderer like Herod wait for at least one whole year *after the Magi left before attempting to kill the child Jesus?* Of course not.

The truth is that *Herod did not know the time of Jesus' birth*. Notice what the Scriptures states: *As soon as Herod saw that the Magi didn't return to him he became very angry, ordering all those little children butchered "from two years old and under, ACCORDING TO THE TIME WHICH HE HAD exactly LEARNED of the magi"* (Mat. 2:16).

Now what was the *exact time* that he learned from the magi? Was it the date of Jesus' birth? No!

Notice verse seven of this same chapter: "Then Herod privily called the magi, and learned of them exactly the time of . . . what? The birth of Jesus? No. But "of the appearing star."

Of course!

The wise men or magi had come a great distance from the East and the star had appeared *some time before the birth of Jesus* in order for them to prepare to make their journey to Beth-

lehem while Jesus was still very young. Since the star appeared more than one year previously, Herod took no chances but had every infant killed up to two years of age.

Jesus was slightly less than six months
(Please continue on page 30)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from page 2)

is an unbeliever) about Adam and Eve being chased out of the Garden of Eden."

"It's all you said it would be and more. I've never seen anything like it before."

"It's wonderful. No words to express how I really feel."

"Though I'm quite a way from being a youngster anymore I found myself all wrapped up in the new 'Bible Story' beginning there. That is going to be a blessing to both young and old alike."

"I'm not 5 but 76 and have never read a Bible story so interesting."

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

(Continued from page 10)

still looking on the outward appearance. It meant being cut off completely and forever from all to which I had aspired. It meant a total crushing of vanity. It meant a total *change of life!*

I counted the cost!

But then, I had been beaten down. I had been humiliated. I had been broken in spirit, frustrated. I had come to look on this formerly esteemed self as a failure. I now took another good look at myself.

And I acknowledged: "I'm nothing but a burned-out old hunk of junk."

I had maintained that the business failures were not my fault. Now I began to doubt that. I began to suspect that I was not even remotely the man of great talents and abilities I had always imagined. I realized I had been a swell-headed egotistical jackass.

Finally, in desperation, I threw myself on God's mercy. I said to God that I knew, now, that I was nothing but a

failure, a burned-out hunk of junk. My life was worth nothing more to ME. I said to God that I knew now I had nothing to offer HIM—but if He would forgive me—if He could have any use whatsoever for such a worthless dreg of humanity who had fallen all the way down in failure and disillusionment, that He could have my life; I knew it was worthless, but if He could do anything with it, He could have it—I was willing to give this worthless self to HIM—I wanted to accept Jesus Christ as personal Saviour!

I meant it! It was the toughest battle I ever fought. It was a battle for LIFE. I lost that battle, as I had been recently losing all battles. I realized Jesus Christ had bought and paid for my life. I gave in. I surrendered, unconditionally. I told Christ He could have what was left of me! I didn't think I was worth saving!

Jesus said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." I then and there gave up my life—not knowing that this was the *ONLY* way to really *find* it!

It was humiliating to have to admit my wife had been right, and I had been wrong. It was disillusioning to learn, on studying the BIBLE for the first time that what I had been taught in Sunday School was, in so many basic instances, the very opposite of what the Bible plainly states. It was shocking to learn that "all these churches *were* wrong" after all!

But I did, later, have one satisfaction. I wrote up a long manuscript about the Sabbath, finally tying it up with evolution, and PROVING evolution false. I gave it to my sister-in-law, Mrs. Dillon. She read it unsuspectingly. Before she realized what she was reading, she had accepted the evidence and *PROOF* that evolution was false.

"You tricked me!" she exclaimed.

But she *did* have to "eat those words!"

How I continued on and on with the STUDY OF THE BIBLE, starting out with this one doctrine, going on to other doctrines, finding real love and satisfying fellowship among humble people whose *hearts were right*, and being finally drawn into the ministry, will continue with the next installment.