TIMELY GREETINGS

— The Only Peace of Mind —

Vol. 1 Nos 17,18

BRIGHT CLOUDS BRING GENTLE RAIN

THE END OF HUMAN IDOLS AND THEIR WORSHIPERS

THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION AND PRAYER

I shall read from "The Mount Of Blessing," beginning with the first paragraph on page 170. This page is based on the scripture. "Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil one." – R.V.

M.B., pg. 170 – "Temptation is enticement to sin, and this does not proceed from God, but from Satan, and from the evil of our own hearts. 'God can not be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man.'

"Satan seeks to bring us into temptation, that the evil of our character may be revealed before men and angels, that he may claim us as his own.... The enemy leads us into sin, and then he accuses us before the heavenly universe as unworthy of the love of God...."

Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience in character building. The soul that resists temptation through Divine power reveals to the world and to the universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ.

Here is seen that Satan is the great tempter of our souls, that he constantly seeks to make us fall. But he cannot do anything against us if our hearts be right with God, and if we stay within the hedge He has built around us. He can succeed only if we ourselves make it possible. If we willingly yield to sin, we thus voluntarily surrender to Satan. Let us not forget that no one can keep on going his own way and at the same time pray the Lord's prayer without making a liar of himself. But those who wholeheartedly take the Lord at His word and allow Him to direct their steps, they never go wrong. We should pray to be among this latter class.

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V.T. HOUTEFF

BRIGHT CLOUDS BRING GENTLE RAIN

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, NOVEMBER 30, 1946
MT. CARMEL CHAPEL
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This afternoon we are to study the tenth chapter of Zechariah. To find the time of the fulfilment of its prophecy and of the promises it contains, we need look no further than the first verse of the chapter.

Zech. 10:1 – "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field."

These figures of speech, you know, are not used by Inspiration promiscuously, the term "latter rain" must have its special and accurate significance. Inspiration chose to use the term "rain", because rain makes things grow and brings abundant harvest. The term "latter" denotes the last rain before the harvest, the rain that completes maturity and that ripens the grain.

The latter rain of Truth, therefore, is the very last, the one that is to develop the people of God for the harvest, for the time in which God separates the wheat from the tares (Matt. 13:30), the wise virgins from the foolish ones (Matt. 25:1-12), the good fish from the bad (Matt. 13:47, 48), and the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:32, 33). In short, the harvest is the day of cleansing, the day of Judgment, the antitypical

Day of Atonement, the day in which the sinners are cut off. This spiritual latter rain is, therefore, to do to the church just what the natural latter rain does to the field. Without this latter rain the saints could not develop for the heavenly garner, neither could the tares for the fire. By the "latter rain," therefore, is illustrated the last shower of Truth. And, too, this last portion of Truth must come as freely to every member of the church who lives just prior to the harvest time as does the rain come to every grass in the field. Just as soon as this final touch of development is accomplished, the sickle is to be put to the precious golden grain. But let us remember that it is not left in the field to rot, it is put into the "barn," (Kingdom) while the tares are burned, so says the Lord (Matt. 13:30). What is symbolized by the "latter rain? Is it miracle-working Truth, or is it miracle-working power? – The prophet Joel explains that the miracle-working power comes after both the "former and the latter rain." Says he:

"And it shall come to pass afterward [after the former and the latter rain – Joel 2:23], that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit." Joel 2:28, 29.

Plainly, then, the "latter rain" is miracle-working Truth that causes the saints to mature for the harvest of which the 144,000 are the first fruits (Rev. 14:4). Then, in order to quickly gather the second fruits, God pours His Spirit upon every first fruit saint, (upon "every one grass") old or young, boy or girl – not upon one here and upon another there.

Obviously "bright clouds" represent agencies conveying Truth which they scatter everywhere in the

Lord's vineyard – over every church member – "every one grass," wheat or tare.

Literally speaking, dark clouds suggest a very heavy and damaging rain that frightens the beholders. Conversely, bright clouds suggest a gentle rain, the kind that descends in such a way so that the ground can absorb all of it. It does not waste itself.

Spiritually speaking, dark clouds would, therefore, represent a source of dangerous reading matter and too voluminous for one to welcome or to comprehend. But bright clouds stand for a source of small, easily comprehended Truth-laden publications packed with "meat in due season," Truth that comes in portions easy to take in, easy to assimilate all of It, and thus to develop the recipient of It for the "master's" use and for His service.

Then, too, spiritual "latter rain" must fall as freely and without cost to the recipients as does literal rain. Thus it is that never before has the world witnessed so much absolutely free literature scattered away as this literature is. Millions! So it is that these small comprehensive publications, the bright clouds, laden with present Truth, are now being scattered as leaves of autumn throughout Laodicea to every church member, "to every one grass" in the vineyard of the Lord. The final results? "More than one thousand," attests Inspiration, "will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications." – "Review and Herald," Nov. 10, 1885. Accordingly, along with the world's dark clouds that now hover over those who are pessimistic about the promises of God, there are these bright clouds that hover over the faithful believing and trusting children of God.

THE LATTER RAIN
I have need of nothing
LAODICEA

And so, Brother, Sister, you need not listen to the voices that urge you to shut yourself in from this gentle rain, or to tuck in under someone's umbrella. Come out and avail yourself of this much needed shower. It is sent to give you the development which you need, and to enable you to survive the great and dreadful day of the Lord, the Judgment for the Living. Delay no longer, get out in the open and let the precious rain fall upon you, let it soak in through and through lest the angels find you unfit for the "barn" and they cast you into the fire along with the tares. Inspiration makes it as clear as can be made that not a soul (not one blade of grass), can be fit for the Kingdom ("barn") if it fails to absorb this rain of Truth.

How important then that you should avail yourselves of it. No, you cannot afford to stand dry under the umbrellas of Truth-haters. Get out from under their devilish umbrellas lest you lose out eternally, lest you hopelessly cry out, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jer. 8:20.

Verse 2 – "For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd."

Here is conveyed the thought that this character-building and wisdom and light-importing "rain" that fits one for the society of Heaven, finds the waiting ones listening to idols speaking "vanity" and to diviners telling false dreams, in vain trying to comfort. Will you not heed Inspiration's Voice and turn away from listening to idols?

Who could they be if not vain self-important Truth-hating

ministers that are idolized by the laity, false preachers trying to comfort by preaching falsehood.

Revival and reformation therefore must do their work among both ministers and laity. Indeed the sheep are troubled because there is no real shepherd anywhere, they all have gone their own way!

Verse 3 – "Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the Lord of hosts hath visited His flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as His goodly horse in the battle."

This verse discloses that the Lord has visited His people with revealed Truth preparatory to separating the goats from the sheep whereupon He is to reward the sheep and punish the goats – the work of the Judgment for the Living. His visit makes His servants as goodly horses in His vineyard.

Verse 4 – "Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together."

The Lord Himself chooses from Judah the "corner" stone (founder), the "nail" (organizer), the "bow" (the Truth, or instrument by which to gain the victory over the Enemy), and every "oppressor" (ruler). With these He builds the house of Judah.

Verse 5 – "And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the Lord is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded."

The victory shall be so complete that even the

demons who lead our enemies in the conflict, will themselves be confounded.

Verse 6 – "And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the Lord their God, and will hear them."

The statements, "I will strengthen," instead of save, "the house of Judah," and "I will save" instead of strengthen "the house of Joseph," imply that the house of Judah is saved before the house of Joseph is, and to save the house of Joseph He strengthens the house of Judah. The second fruits need to be saved, whereas the first fruits need to be fitted for service. Both are gathered into one place, (the "barn," the Kingdom). The Lord extends this favor to both of them because He has mercy upon them and will treat them as though they had never caused Him to cast them out.

Verse 7 – "And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the Lord."

The fathers shall rejoice and the children shall see it. He shall thus "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers...." Mal. 4:6.

Verse 8 – "I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased."

"They shall increase," that is, the second fruits

are to be added to the "firstfruits." (Rev. 7:4, 9).

Verse 9 – "And I will sow [multiply] them among the people: and they shall remember Me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again [to their homeland]."

Verse 10 – "I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them."

The elect shall be gathered from everywhere, and shall spread as far as the land of Gilead and Lebanon. But even then, the place shall be too small for them.

Verses 11, 12 – "And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away. And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in His name, saith the Lord."

That is to say, the gathering of the people is to be unobstructed. Every hindrance is to be removed. The reign of sin is to be brought to an end. The nations who have enslaved God's people are to be humbled, and their scepters (thrones) are to be no more.

Be strong in the Lord, walk up and down happy and without fear, saith the Lord.

The work that God has begun in the human heart by Divine light and knowledge, must continually go forward. "...Every individual must realize his own

necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement, and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain.

"Only those who are living up to the light they have, will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it. – "Testimonies to Ministers," p. 507.

Since this Truth is so vitally important do not let any enemy against revealed Truth confuse you. If he tries to convince you against this Truth, you take him to task – make him give a more Biblical interpretation of these scriptures. If he cannot give you something better or as good, then tell him to mind his own business and you will mind yours.

A Gem for Reflection and Prayer

I shall read from Mount of Blessing, page 171, beginning with the second paragraph. This reading is a continuation of our last Sabbath's reading, based on the Lord's prayer.

M.B., pg. 171 – "It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan's suggestions. Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but it is blinding and deceiving in its nature, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan's ground, we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us.

"The prayer, 'Bring us not into temptation,' is itself a promise. If we commit ourselves to God, we have the assurance, 'He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'"

We shall now kneel and pray that we may realize that sin is blinding and deceiving in its nature; that it leads to dishonor and disaster; and that to be on the safe side, we must not even so much as contemplate yielding to Satan's suggestions, for once we venture onto his ground we cannot expect God's protection. Let us also thank the Lord for the comforting assurance that if we fully commit ourselves to him, He will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able.

THE END OF HUMAN IDOLS AND THEIR WORSHIPERS

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, NOVEMBER 23, 1946
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This afternoon we shall study Zechariah, chapter 13. Let us begin with the first verse.

Zech. 13:1 – "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

The phrase "in that day" points back to preceding events, back to the twelfth chapter. There we find that the event is the great mourning in Jerusalem (chapter 12, verses 12- 14). So "in that day," in the day of that great mourning, this fountain is to be opened.

To find the time in which the mourning takes place, it is necessary that we go further back into the twelfth chapter. Better still, we should review the chapter from the first verse on, because there are brought to view seven groups of separate and distinct events, one following the other.

The outstanding events of each group are these: (1) Jerusalem is to be made "a cup of trembling" and the nations of the earth are to be "in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem." (2) "In that day" the nations are to gather together against them.

(3) "In that day" the Lord is to "smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness," and He is also to open His "eyes upon the house of Judah." The governors of Judah are then to say in their hearts, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God." (4) "In that day" Jerusalem is to be inhabited again. (5) "In that day he that is feeble among them" is to be as David; and the house of David is to be as God. (6) "In that day" the Lord is to seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. He will then pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications. (7) "In that day" there is to be a great mourning in Jerusalem.

Thus one event is contingent upon another, the last of which is the great mourning in Jerusalem. In the day of these events, therefore, the fountain for sin and for uncleanness is opened. Let us now connect Zechariah 13:1 with verse 2.

Zech. 13:1, 2 – "In that day [in the day the great mourning takes place] there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land."

Two things stand out clearly in these verses: (1) that the house of David must come into existence before the cleansing fountain is opened; (2) that the cleansing begins with cutting off the names of the idols, and throwing out of the land the false prophets

and the unclean spirits.

In our previous study of the tenth chapter of Zechariah, we learned that these idols are the kind that speak; that they are men. There is no doubt, therefore, that these are ministering brethren who the laity are idolizing. As a result, the laity are blindly following them, and whatever decisions their "idols" make concerning what is truth and what is error, what is sin and what is righteousness, those are the decisions which the laity does carry out. These "idols," therefore are creating a situation similar to that which the priests, scribes, and Pharisees created in the days of Christ's first advent. Consequently, the idol-worshipers are not troubling themselves to personally investigate fresh messages, and they are thereby ignorantly following men rather than Christ and His advancing Truth. These, along with the prophets and the unclean spirits, shall pass out of the land.

Verses 3-5 – "And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord; and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth."

The names of the idols (the flattering titles of men) shall forever be forgotten: Men shall never again be known by such titles. Thereafter neither a false prophet nor an unclean spirit shall be tolerated in the land. In fact, not even a father or a

mother will then tolerate their own son to pose as such, but they shall deliver him to the executioners. It shall come to pass that the men who even now are exalting themselves, and, worst of all, are preaching without having been "sent," shall be ashamed as they see their foolish teachings, predictions, and private interpretations of the Scriptures. No longer will they wear deceitful garments. Rather, they will say, "I am no prophet, not even a pastor, I am only a herdsman, a common farmer."

The prophet Ezekiel also was given glimpses of this situation: "Thus saith the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The Lord saith it; albeit I have not spoken? Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord God. And Mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of My people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God.

"Because, even because they have seduced My people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered morter: Say unto them which daub it

with untempered morter, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it? Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I will even rend it with a stormy wind in My fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in Mine anger, and great hailstones in My fury to consume it. So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered morter, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Thus will I accomplish My wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered morter, and will say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it." Ezek. 13:3-15.

What a fearful responsibility rests upon those who carelessly handle the Word of God, who pose as soul guardians over the people! Both they and their abominations will fall in the ditch. Indeed, if any reform is needed in Christendom, this one is.

Having now learned better, let us no longer make idols of men; let us no longer give place within us to unclean spirits. Let us rather give the Spirit of God a chance to lead us into His ever-advancing Truth with personal understanding.

Let us be followers of Christ, never again of Paul, of Apollos, or of Cephas.

Verses 6, 7 – "And one shall say unto him, What are

these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends. Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones."

I have no special comments to make on verses 6 and 7, other than what is commonly understood among Christians. It is plain to see, though, that after the Lord's shepherd is smitten, then it is that the Lord will separate His people.

Verse 8 – "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein."

In this separation, according to verse 8, the people are divided in three parts: Evidently they are the saints, the hypocrites, and the heathen. The two latter parts are to be cut off (separated from the saints), and they are to die. Concerning the future of the former third, let us read–

Verse 9 – "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

In this connection, the gospel prophet was instructed to write: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world

for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

"Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger. And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land. Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword." Isa. 13:9-15.

To this warning the prophet Zephaniah adds: "And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof. The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

"That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their

gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Zeph. 1:12-18.

These scriptures are self-explanatory, and they make our subject as clear as crystal: As soon as the house of David is set up, as soon as the first fruits reach Mt. Zion and there stand with the Lamb, the cleansing fountain will be opened. Then it is that the great harvest will begin during which every grain of "wheat" shall be put into the "barn," but every noxious seed burned (Matt. 13:30). Then it is that every good "fish" shall be put into vessels, whereas every bad one shall be cast out (Matt. 13:48). Then it is that everyone having on the "wedding garment" shall be served the wedding supper, but everyone having not the garment on shall be cast into outer darkness (Matt. 22:11- 13).

In the terms of the parables all this can be summed as follows: Those who successfully aim to be spared as "wheat," as good "fish," and to put on the wedding garment, are those who have found the field of great treasure and the pearl of great price and have done all to purchase them.

"So shall it be at the end of the world, the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 13:49, 50.

Solemn times we have come to, Brother and Sister. Now is the time to put on the white garment. Now is the time to buy the field with the great treasure, and

the pearl of great price. “Shall you? Shall I?” is the great question that we must quickly settle without other people’s influence or interference.

We should now be able to see how the gospel work is to be finished, and that the idea which we have had about it is merely a human fabrication. It is now clearly seen how sinners are made saints, how God’s great fountain is capable of cleansing all of us, of making us as white as snow if we let Him. So it matters not what we were yesterday, the important thing is what we are to do today, and what are we to be from this hour on.

In 1931, after “The Shepherd’s Rod,” Vol. 1, came off the press, we published a two-page article in which we said that what God has led us into is either all Truth or no Truth. Since that time we have published another book and over twenty tracts besides the series of “Timely Greetings,” all containing doctrinal matter. These publications have been scattered far and wide throughout the Denomination, but this day the Denomination has not one officially attempted to refute any subject in its entirety. They never try to take away what we have on these scriptures, but never

yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Hab. 3:17, 18. Thus, just as the apostles defeated the enemy of the church in their day, likewise shall we defeat him in our day.

give us something better. All we have heard or seen is garbling, or some such procedure as followed by first-day keepers while debating with Sabbath keepers.

Do not let the enemies of revealed Truth get by with their garbling, but take them to task with the Bible. I know that it is not a Bulgarian from the Rhodope Mountains who has made scholarly Americans scratch their heads. It is not possible that such a one could have shaken the Denomination fron center to circumference. If you do not know Who it actually is, then you had better find out without delay.

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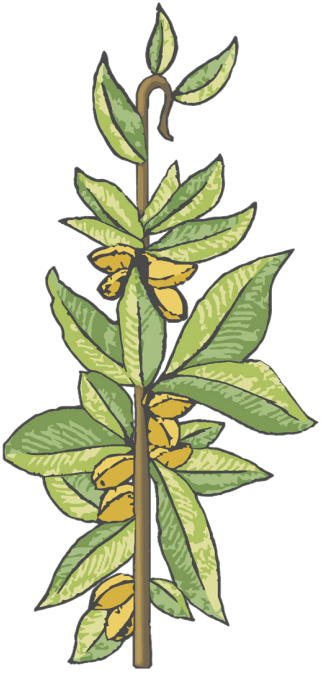

VOL. 1 N^{OS}. 17,18
Printed in the United States of America