

The Truth for youth*

John Nicholls

GETTING OUR young people to show an interest in and concern about the Truth is not easy. In the Western world, particularly, young people can earn good wages, and there are many opportunities for them in travel, entertainment and careers. Many young people find the Truth irrelevant for their lives, and the ecclesial meetings old fashioned and stuffy. In the Western world the greater need in preaching is not combating false doctrine (though this has to be a part of our witness) but convincing our friends and young people about the relevance of the Truth in this age. It is a pleasure, therefore, to review Sister Anna Tikvah's novel, *In Search of Life*, because it presents the Truth in a particularly good way for our young people and friends.

Jesus recognised the need to engage people's attention, and to capture their imaginations by telling stories. Some of these can stir our emotions, too, because we can identify with the characters and remember the dialogue. Who can forget the young man who, after wasting his inheritance in riotous living, came to himself and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee"? Or the father who "saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him . . . [and] said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry"? Or the hurt rejoinder of the elder son, who was angry and would not go in: "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf" (Lk. 15:18-30)? The simple story, full of human interest, can reach young and old, and teach powerful lessons about our God and His gracious purpose with erring man.

In Search of Life is about Verity Lovell, who realises at her alcoholic father's funeral that she knows little about what happens after death. She begins her search for the answers to her

questions by asking the minister who conducts the funeral, and starts to read the Bible for herself. Her family moves from the Canadian province of Saskatchewan to Ontario, a move her brother Tom resents because he loses his friends. At the high school both Tom and Verity make new friends, and Verity's maths teacher proves to be a help to her in her quest to understand the message of the Bible. Tom eventually gets into trouble, and Verity herself, after getting over the shock of her brother's waywardness and then supporting him, finds that trouble of a different kind comes her way. But Verity has the Truth, having succeeded in her search for life.

There is a lot more of human interest in the book than the brief resumé in the last paragraph indicates. The reviewer enjoyed reading it and looked forward to the next episode as the story unfolded. It has forty-three short chapters of more or less equal length, with titles like "The Funeral", "Goodbye", "A New Home", "It's a Gift", "The Party". It is well written, with plenty of dialogue, and Scripture quotations are given at the bottom of the page, although some are quoted in full by the characters in the story. This is an easy-to-read book, and young people who are used to television soap operas will appreciate the style! It is very sound without being overbearing, and the author has skilfully introduced all the major teachings of the Truth in the context of a continuing human saga.

The reviewer (and his wife) think this is one of the best books written for young people and interested friends they have seen recently. It is the kind of book you could read on a train or bus going to work. It has plenty of action, dialogue and emotion. We would recommend that all ecclesias have a copy on their bookstalls, and that

* *In Search of Life*, Anna Tikvah, Christadelphian Scripture Study Service, price in the UK £7.90 plus postage and packaging. Available from Brother Peter Talbot, 6 Ridge Lane, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Nottingham, NG12 1BD; tel. 0115 933 3683; email talbotpj@aol.com; or other CSSS agents.

copies should be available at youth groups and gatherings, and also family Bible schools. The only, and minor, criticisms would be that the title is not very attractive, and that the names of two of the principal female characters may seem to some rather improbable. By UK standards, with a competitive book market, it is probably slightly overpriced.

But all in all it is a splendid attempt at engaging our young people in a contemporary way, and is warmly recommended to all the young and young in heart in the Brotherhood. The reviewer is purchasing copies for his family and friends, and is looking forward to having his copy of the sequel that Sister Tikvah is proposing to write, called *A Door to Knock On*.

The Law given through Moses*

29. Conclusion

Islip Collyer

IN ATTEMPTING to summarise the thoughts which arise from our consideration of the Law, one is conscious of how much more might be written on both the legal code and ritual prophecy. There comes a time, however, when we must reach a conclusion.

We may make mental notes of one or two remarkable features which could not well be classified as either legal or ritual, and which have not received much attention in previous articles. One is the essential idea of a tabernacle. This suggests the thought that the Law was not intended as something fixed and eternal. A tent or tabernacle can readily be taken down. It has not the permanence or solidity of a temple. This thought is presented in a particularly beautiful passage of prophetic poetry regarding the restoration of Israel and their capital city:

“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us” (Isa. 33:20-22).

If stakes and cords remain secure the tent will stand, but it still remains a tent to be taken down and removed when it has served its turn. So with Israel after the flesh. There will be a restoration and there will be no further overthrow, but the flesh is not to endure for ever. At its best

and when it is most secure, it is still like a tabernacle.

ANOTHER remarkable feature of the Law is that, although God is always represented as near and all-powerful, there is little hope offered to man of a life beyond the grave. There is no suggestion of a soul able to live apart from the body. The idea was popular in Egypt, even in very early times, but it finds no place in the writings of Moses. There were definite promises of national blessings for righteousness, and warnings of national disaster to follow disobedience. Men who obeyed the commands could live in them, and their days might be long in the land, but there was no definite promise of individual life beyond the grave.

There were some indirect hints, just as there had been in the earlier promises to the fathers. The preservation of the manna kept in the holy place was such a hint, and is taken up in the book of Revelation with this meaning. For those who overcome, to eat of “the hidden manna” (2:17) expresses the hope of a future life. This meaning is rendered more definite by other promises to other victors in the struggle. To be permitted to eat of “the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (v. 7) quite clearly implies the gift of eternal life. Man, through sin, was not permitted to eat of the tree of life in Eden lest he should have that eternal life for which in a sin-stricken condition he was quite unfit. The way to the tree of life was barred

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