

THIS IS IT

The article below was written in 1967 by my dad, Ernie Gommel, during the early days of The Hitchin Post Market, and Church of Our Lord and Savior. We were in Reche Canyon at the time, with Lucerne

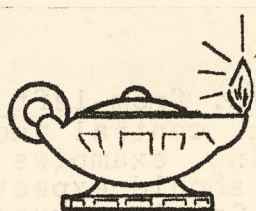
Valley Market 8 years into the future.

We still meet together on Sunday mornings, without our leader who passed in 2012, so each of us is encouraged to prepare something to share. Recently we have been sharing these New Light articles on Sundays, along with what oth-

ers have prepared. This one struck a chord in me, as "IT" is a favorite of mine. Please read on to find out what or who "IT" is.

Maybe next week I'll respond to this article, since times have changed, many years have passed, and perspectives change as we grow in the Spirit.

Linda Gommel



THE NEW LIGHT

News of the CHURCH of OUR LORD and SAVIOR

Volume II, Number 42. November 16, 1967

FROM
THE
PASTOR'S
STUDY

THIS IS IT

THE YOUNGER GENERATION IS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT in rebelling against so much that is phony. Thank God that so many young people are idealists and have a passion for genuineness and truth. Certainly, the many who hit the newspapers are often wrong in their arrogance and methods, in my opinion. But these who achieve such notoriety -- who seem so many -- are really just a few, compared with the average teenager or college-age person. The bulk of the young people are wonderful -- hopeful, energetic, idealistic ("I'm not going to mess up my life like my parents did!"), and unfortunately confused, mostly by the forked tongue of the adults.

LET ME SAY TO YOU YOUNG PEOPLE, hold to your ideals. Let them be developed and transformed by God. The Christian faith isn't what you so often see it as. It should and can check with what the Bible promises. It is not just the finest thinking or a good organization. It's something else, and very much worth giving your life to. It is the highest, most challenging and difficult -- and wonderful calling there is. Rightly followed, it makes the Peace Corps seem like a tea party. In fact, the Lord will make your life so full and challenging that you will need IT! IT is essential or you will collapse under the strain. Oh, sure, you can mess around with what you might call Christianity and get by without IT -- most "Christians" do. But this is what's been turning your stomach. When you understand IT, you'll know IT is essential, and you'll either fervently want IT or violently reject IT. You can have IT. And when you have IT, you'll find that the tremendous calling is no strain at all, but a thrilling way of life.

NOW, I WAS RAISED in a church that avoided IT. As I grew up and climbed the ladder in business, we attended no churches that really expected IT. I guess they had found that if they let IT take control, things might get out of their (men's) hands and IT might cause trouble -- or folks who wouldn't understand might laugh.

YES, I AM FROM CHURCHES WHICH AVOIDED IT. I am a scientist -- a college-educated and state-licensed Civil Engineer. I am also a seminary graduate and ordained minister. I am 46 years old. I've had about as much education, experience in the world and struggle with spiritual matters as anyone my age, and I say you cannot avoid IT!

NOW, IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE THE BIBLE simply and essentially for what it says, I pray you will some day. There is no real alternative. However, what I have to say right here is not so much for you. If you are one who does believe the Bible -- or want to -- but if you are confused because what the Bible leads you to believe and expect does not check with what the Christians you've known expect and are examples of, take heart. STICK WITH THE BIBLE! Seek out Christians and Christian groups which check with what the Bible leads you to expect. There are some, you know, often ridiculed by the "respectable Christians" who have their nice religion under their (man's) control. The difference is IT! IT makes all the difference.

WHAT IS IT? IT is really a Him. IT is the Holy Spirit -- a person -- properly called "Him." He is the living Christ in us. HE makes all the difference. Wouldn't you like to be like Peter as recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles? He had courage you wouldn't believe, except for the Holy Spirit. He had courage enough to stand before some of the most influential men in his church and country (like standing before the Pope) -- men who could have him killed, really -- perhaps illegally, but he'd still be dead. He had the courage to say to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19,20). Peter could heal sick people. He was just an uneducated fisherman, but the Holy Spirit gave him the power to preach before thousands, and in very dangerous situations.

NOW SOME WILL SAY, "But he was an Apostle. They were special. But a man (not an Apostle) named Ananias performed the miracle of healing Paul's blindness and giving him the Holy Spirit. (Acts 9:10-19). And the Bible says you and I are to expect gifts of the Spirit -- and one place that tells about what you and I are to expect is the twelfth chapter of I Corinthians. It says:

"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (12:7)

Another version says: "Each one is given some proof of the Spirit's presence for the good of all." (The New Testament in Today's English Version)

NOW, YOU SHOULD EXPECT TO BE GIVEN any one, or several, of these gifts: special wisdom, utterance of exceptional knowledge, special faith, the ability miraculously to heal, the power to work other miracles, prophecy, the ability to distinguish between spirits, the ability to speak in various kinds of tongues ("to speak with strange sounds," one version says), and the gift of being able to interpret these "strange sounds." (12:8-10). Of course, the greatest gift we should all expect is to have the real love of God in us, Paul tells us in I Cor. 13. But this does not deny the importance or the expectation of the other gifts.

NOW, AS A SCIENTIST, I know this much: I must accept the Bible simply for what it says or forget this Christianity business. As a man of faith, (and scientist and philosopher), to say that I accept the Bible and then to deny what it clearly says is blasphemy. To deny what it makes central and substantiates with living examples -- to deny what it says we should expect, is blasphemy against the Spirit, quenching the Spirit and hypocrisy. Unfortunately, my young friend, in too many cases the reason IT (Excuse me, I mean Him -- the Holy Spirit.) is avoided is because we are too concerned for the success of the church in worldly terms. The Holy Spirit will (most likely) foul up the plans and aspirations of institution-oriented men. An old challenge to those who want to avoid letting the Holy Spirit "get loose" is this:

"You believe I Cor. 13, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you believe I Cor. 12?"

CHURCH OF OUR LORD & SAVIOR EXPECTS the Holy Spirit and His manifestations fully and exactly as described in I Cor. 12, and as exemplified elsewhere. We will settle for no less. We thank Him for such as He has given. We expect, await and actively seek more.

MY YOUNG, (or old) FRIENDS, do not be deceived. Do not let your hope for a truly transformed, powerful, miraculous life be quenched by the "respectable skeptics," or those who pervert the gifts. The Christian faith can be exactly as the Bible testifies. Since we have started to write courageously about the Holy Spirit, a number of persons have thanked us and shared their story of the miracles He has brought to their lives. They are so glad to find a fellow-Christian who will listen with joy instead of skepticism or ridicule.

Ernie Gommel