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THE OLYMPICS: A WASTE OF POMP?

ATTENTION-GRABBING IS GETTING TOUGHER

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One of the few motifs running from cover to cover throughout the Bible is God's struggle to grab and keep the chosen people's attention. In ancient Egypt, even for the Hebrew slaves there were more attention-diverting blandishments (= "idols") than ever had been anywhere else in the history of the world.

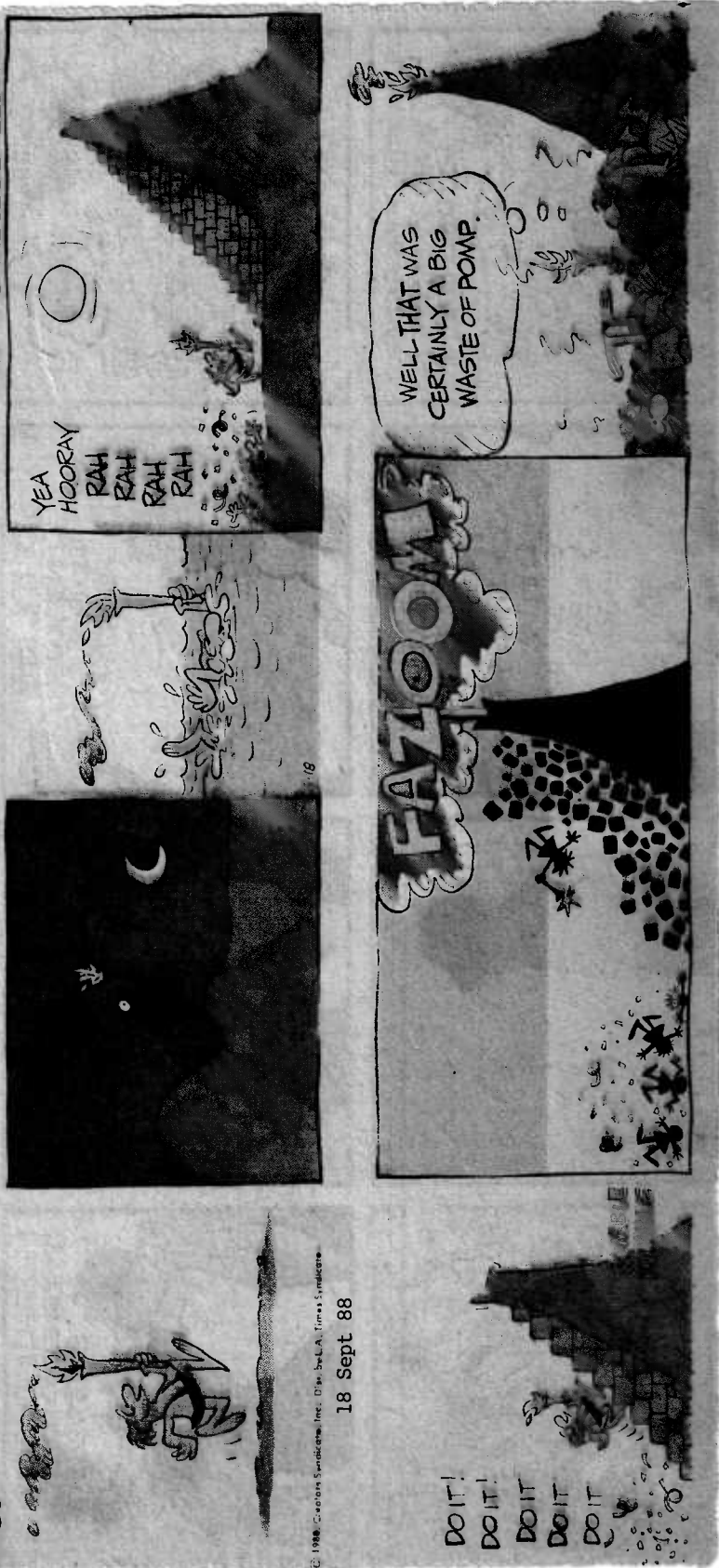
Maybe the temptation to forget God would be less out in the wilderness? No way: it was only a switch from Egypt experienced to Egypt remembered. So in the persistent hope of getting and holding their attention, which the miraculous deliverance from Pharaoh's army had failed to do, God made an old dead volcano go "FAZOOM!" or something like that. But that didn't work either: their numinous awe before Mount Sinai, an unmanageable holy, was soon transferred to an idol, a manageable sacred, the golden calf.

So God gave them the Bible, beginning right there at the foot of Mount Sinai, the inscribed tablets in the hands of Moses of the radiant countenance.

You tell me what Johnny Hart has in mind in today's cartoon. Certainly the Summer Olympics now grabbing as many of the world's eyeballs as the Government of Korea and the world's media can manage to wow with pomp. Probably also the Olympics' strongest competitor for attention as the games began, namely, Gilbert, the strongest sustained hurricane ever recorded (converted in this cartoon, I guess, into an active volcano).

Now, I don't think the Olympics are "a big waste of pomp." But I do think the category intriguing: in the light of God, in comparison with abiding and eternal values, what pomps the world offers are not wastes, or at least wasted on me? I like commencements even though they always try to impress me with Sir Edwin Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance"--but should I? And how do I witness to what's worthy of pomp, for the glory of God?

BY JOHNNY HART



B.C.

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