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Are God's Festivals to be Observed FOREVER?

Granted that the Holy Days were commanded to be kept forever. But were not physical sacrifices also commanded forever?—and they are not being done today? Read here the surprising answer!

by Herman L. Hoeh

WE HAVE heard all our lives that Israel was commanded to observe physical sacrifices and various ablutions *forever*.

But is this true? Were *both* the annual festivals and physical sacrifices and ablutions commanded to be kept by the people forever?

The Surprising Answer

It is time we opened our Bibles once again to see what the Scriptures actually say. Most of us, of course, are familiar with the many texts which declare God's festivals are to be "observed by a statute FOREVER."

Read them! "And this day"—the passover—"shall be unto you for a MEMORIAL; and ye shall keep it a feast [the word "festival" is a better translation] to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by a statute ["ordinance" is not the correct translation] FOR EVER" (Ex. 12:14).

"And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore [as a MEMORIAL] shall ye observe this day in your generations by a statute ["ordinance" is not correct] FOR EVER" (Ex. 12:17).

In this same chapter, verse 24, the passover is again referred to: "And ye shall observe this for a statute to thee and to thy sons FOR EVER!"

In Exodus 13:10 the feast of unleavened bread is commanded to be observed "in his season from year to year." As long as a new year occurs this festival is to be observed!

Notice what the Bible states about the day of atonement: "And this shall be a statute FOR EVER unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work" (Lev. 16:29). And verse 31: "It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute FOR EVER."

Concerning the feast of pentecost: "And ye shall proclaim of the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you, ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute FOR EVER in all your dwellings throughout your generations" (Lev. 23:21). Israel's generations are still continuing. Most of *you* are of Israel!

Again, "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a MEMORIAL of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation [verse 24]. Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement [verse 27]. Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute FOR EVER throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (Lev. 23:31).

The feast of tabernacles is mentioned

in verse 41 of this same chapter: "And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute FOR EVER in your generations."

Notice! Here are God's annual festivals COMMANDED FOREVER—throughout the generations of Israel. Israel's generations are still continuing. *The manner of observing the days is different now than under the Levitical priesthood, but the days are still to be observed—still to be kept holy—no servile work to be done in them!*

But do these verses mean what they say?

Are the annual festivals really to be kept forever?

But many will bring up the argument, "Were not the physical sacrifices, given in the days of Moses until the Seed—Christ—should come, also commanded by a statute forever? Did not God also command Israel to do those rituals forever? And if *forever* does not mean *forever* in one text, then how can we claim it means *forever* in another verse?"

The answer is that NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE WERE PHYSICAL SACRIFICES COMMANDED TO BE PERFORMED BY THE PEOPLE FOREVER! We have merely taken for granted that the Bible says so! But it is not true!

Meaning of "Forever"

But does "forever" mean *forever*?

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Turn to Psalms 102:12: "But thou, O Lord, shalt endure forever." Does "forever" mean *forever* in this verse? Certainly!

And Exodus 15:18: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." Does the expression "for ever and ever" mean what it says? Of course! If it does not, then you have no sure guarantee of eternal life! No real proof that *you* will live *forever*!

But what about the sixth verse of Exodus 21 and Deuteronomy 15:17?—"Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; . . . and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him FOREVER." Certainly if the master dies and the servant continues to live, the one is not being served by the other *forever*!

The answer is that the words "forever," "perpetual," "everlasting," and similar expressions, mean "*continuously, without end so long as the factors involved exist.*" (See definition in *Crudden's Concordance*.)

God is spirit. He cannot die. He *does* live and rule forever. The factor here is GOD, who is without end. But in the case of the master and the servant, the factors are two mortal human beings. Both will eventually *die*. So long as both are alive the one is to be served by the other. In Exodus 21:6 the word "forever" clearly means *continuously so long as both live*.

Now consider the annual festivals. These festivals are certain *days* of the year. Do we still have *days* occurring each year—year after year? Assuredly! Then the factors involved still exist!

As long as we have day and night, year after year, God's festivals are to be continuously observed—FOREVER! Notice what the Almighty declares in Jeremiah 31:35-36:

"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by *day*, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for light by *night* . . . if those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever."

If you can stop day and night from recurring year after year, then you can quit observing God's festivals! But so long as the Holy Days recur—as long as the factors involved exist—YOU MUST KEEP THEM!

The Duties of Priesthood "Forever"?

But, it is often rejoined, the priesthood was given to Aaron and his sons by a statute "for ever"; and in the New Testament the priesthood is "changed." If "a statute for ever" has been changed in the case of Aaron and his sons, how can we be sure that it has not been changed with regard to the annual festivals?

Let's examine now the places in the Bible where "a statute for ever" is used for things other than the annual holy days. What does the expression "statute for ever" signify in these cases?

First, Exodus 27:21: "In the tabernacle of the congregation . . . Aaron and his sons shall order it [the oil in the lamp] from evening to morning before the Lord: it shall be a statute for ever unto your generations." So long as the tabernacle, or the temple, existed, this was to be performed continuously. But there is now *no tabernacle* or temple in Jerusalem. The factors involved do not now exist. If a tabernacle or temple were there *Aaron and his sons would be performing this rite!* No one else would be allowed to do it—only a son of Aaron!

God's laws are *forever* so long as the factors exist! Certainly no abolition of the holy days of God here!

Now Exodus 28:42-43: "And thou shalt make them linen breeches . . . and they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place . . . it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him."

Is the tabernacle now standing? No! The factor of the tabernacle does not exist! If a tabernacle or temple in Jerusalem did exist, *Aaron's sons would have to wear these breeches!* (Ezekiel 44:18.) "Forever" means *forever* so long as the factors exist. But there is now no tabernacle. Again, no abolition of the holy days here!

Similar laws are given in Exodus 29:9,28, in 30:21. In each instance the sons of Aaron would have to practice these requirements "by a statute for ever" if there were a temple or if sacrifices were offered at Jerusalem. But neither a temple nor sacrifices exist there today! (See Ezekiel 44:17-21.)

Now turn to a most important Scripture. Leviticus 3:17: "It shall be a *perpetual statute* for your generations throughout all your dwellings, *that ye eat neither fat nor blood.*" Do fat and blood exist today? Indeed! Then we are forbidden by a *perpetual statute*—an everlasting statute—to eat blood and fat. Acts 15 confirms this law even on the Gentiles. So long as this physical creation exists, so long as animals are butchered for food this law applies. It is a "perpetual statute."

Here again is proof that "a statute for ever" means forever—for as long as the factors involved exist!

Continuing: Aaron's children shall have the right to eat of the meal offering by "a statute for ever" (Lev. 6:18). Of course! As long as sacrifices are presented, a portion of them belongs to Aaron's family. It means exactly what it says. No meal offerings are being presented today—that's why Aaron's family is not eating of them. If they were being offered, a part of them would be Aaron's!

Verse 22 declares that it is *only the high priest* who shall present an offering from the family of Aaron by "a statute for ever." The scripture does not say Aaron's sons must offer the offering forever; it merely states that it is the high priest alone of the children of Aaron who has the continual right to present the offering whenever it is given. *No command to observe sacrifices forever here.*

Similar principles are laid down in Leviticus 7:34-36, 10:15 and 24:3,9.

The sons of Aaron are forbidden to drink wine or strong drink "when [they] go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations." This means what it says! If there were a tabernacle in Jerusalem today, no son of Aaron would be allowed to enter it after drinking! It is a statute forever!

No Physical Sacrifices Commanded Forever

Another important verse appears in Leviticus 17:7: "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils [demons is a better translation], after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute FOR EVER unto them throughout their generations."

*No command here to offer sacrifices
(Please continue on page 5)*

A NEW Challenge to God's Church

From Mr. Ted Armstrong's administrative assistant, here is exciting news from the foreign work of this church. These letters and comments ought to be a challenge to YOU!

by Albert J. Portune

"MY SHEEP hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me," said Christ (John 10:27). Christ's sheep *are* hearing His voice.

The ever-more powerful voice of the *World Tomorrow* program, shouting His message around the world, is changing new lives. The voice and message of Jesus Christ is reaching out, searching out His own in the four corners of the earth, and they *are* following Him.

God has determined to reach those He is calling—regardless of where they are on the face of the earth. God has people in Africa, South America, the West Indies—in the remote areas of the world where the English language is only rarely spoken, and little understood. The people of these areas, that God is calling, need to hear His message. How can we get through to them? How is it going to reach them?

God has provided a way! God has made it possible to reach them. But, in so doing He has laid a heavy responsibility on His Church. God is beginning to call their leaders, their ministers, and spiritual elders.

Converted Ministers

Among the hundreds of letters which arrive daily at God's headquarters—Pasadena, California, are coming letters from ministers from all over the earth who are beginning to heed the words of Jesus Christ. Many of these ministers are using the information they hear on the *World Tomorrow* program and the articles in the *Plain Truth* magazine for sermons in their churches. Others are turning from their former affiliations—cutting themselves off from their churches—forsaking their salaries and means of support—in order to preach the truth. Many of these ministers are realizing that they are hearing Christ's voice—Christ's *message*—for the first time. They are beginning to see that the things they have been teaching are in *error*. They can't go back to the old teachings—they are dissatisfied.

In the past few months God has begun to open the minds of a number of ministers in remote areas of the world.

He has called *them* that *through* them we can send this gospel of Christ's coming kingdom to their people. Although in most cases they cannot understand the program nor read English, their ministers usually are well educated and capable men. By calling these men who understand and *can* speak the native dialects, God is able to reach His people—*through* them.

Several months ago you read about the minister in the Philippine Islands, who because of the *World Tomorrow* program, turned from his former denomination to become a part of the true Church of God. This minister has continued to grow and overcome, devouring the material being sent him from headquarters. The *three* churches of God under his leadership have continued to grow in the Philippines. A number have been baptized and more are ready. God is reaching His people in the Philippine Islands through the efforts of this man, who in turn depends on *us* at headquarters Church to guide and nourish him.

We have heard from several other ministers in the Philippine Islands who were part of what the Bible describes as a "dead" Sardis branch of God's Church (Rev. 3:1-3). They have written of their dissatisfaction with their *own Church*. They have been convicted by the truth they heard on the *World Tomorrow* program. They want to preach the *truth*—they want *our* help and guidance.

We should certainly all be rejoicing in the progress God's work is making in the Philippines. Let's all pray more for the churches of God there.

Thrilling News from Central Africa

On December 1st, a native African minister from Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia, wrote that after hearing the *World Tomorrow* program for several months he realized he had been preaching error to his people. This man was a Lutheran minister—the first native African minister of the Lutheran Church to be sent to Central Africa. This well-educated minister was paid a substantial salary in English pounds by the Lutheran

Church, had a good home, and was well respected in his community and by his denomination. But, when he heard the voice of Mr. Armstrong preaching the truth of God over the *World Tomorrow* broadcast, he *knew* it was the truth. He asked for no financial help. He requested no aid. But, in simple believing faith he *forsook everything*. He gave up his salary, his friends, his position in the Church—to live in poverty, without food or clothing—just to preach the *truth*.

Finally, after enduring for many months, he wrote the following:

"My dear friend,

"You will pardon me for keeping silent for so long time without reply. This is because I receive booklets from you I have find thing I have been preaching to people was not quite true. On reading them over and over I found first three points: 1. I have been baptizing people in wrong way on forehead, 2. I preach to them and tell them to keep Sunday instead seventh day Sabbath and, 3. I am not tell people about the tithe. So, when I read all this I went to my missionary in charge and tell him that from now on I am going to preach the truth to my people—not your Sunday. *I left them*. I was paid fifty pounds a month, being ordained pastor, but I am now not doing anything to help myself at present. I am only preaching what I *learn from you*.

"I am always out preaching the gospel by train, by bus, by footing. I live in bare house without chairs, table, beds—starving, naked, without clothes because I left Lutheran Church. I am married man having four children. I would be grateful to you if you would write me as soon as possible. Yours in Christ our Lord, J. E. Mwambula, Lusaka, South Africa."

This should make our hearts leap with joy!

God's truth really *does* change lives. "My sheep hear my voice—and they follow me." We can all thank God and rejoice that we are a part of the very body of Christ that is carrying His voice to the world. This should make us rededicate ourselves even more to getting



This photograph was taken last December by J. E. Mwambula, who is acting as pastor of this congregation in Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia in the heart of Africa. His interesting letter about his conversion is included in the accompanying article.

behind this great work we have been given to do.

After corresponding with this minister in Central Africa, Mr. Armstrong authorized financial assistance to help him in his work, which he is now receiving. He is studying the *Correspondence Course*, many back issues of the *Plain Truth* magazine, and all of the booklets—besides receiving the personal guidance and help of Mr. Ted Armstrong by personal letter. He is now preaching the *truth* of God to his congregation who are accepting the truth as well. God *can* reach His people wherever they are on this earth!

Another Minister from Nigeria

Another African minister from Nigeria—who has a radio broadcast over twenty radio stations—writes the following letter:

"Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong,

"Sir, I have got the booklets you send. In my going through this booklet I found really that the Sabbath day is the special day blessed by God to be kept Holy. I mean I have *resign* from Sunday keeper with my twenty stations and become the body of *Radio Church of God* in Nigeria. My wife, Mrs. Margaret S. Ugoji, has greeted

yours. We are earnestly praying for you. I close with Christian greetings. Your servant in Christ, Pastor Sam O. Ugoji."

Brethren, it is letters like these that show the power of God and how He is working through *this Church*. Men like Mr. Ugoji—as he is helped and guided by God's Church—can become powerful instruments in reaching God's people in Africa. Our efforts and our prayers should be even more behind this work we have been given to do!

More Exciting News

God has begun to work in the British West Indies as never before! We have received letters from, and are corresponding with, three ministers in this area. These ministers are hearing God's truth—and are changing! They are carrying God's truth to their people. One minister from the island of Saint Lucia writes: "May I express many thanks to you for your kind letter. Truly it brought to me the happiest moment on the day I received it. I greatly admire the faith of you for such an interest you have in us in all parts of the world. It is now four years since I am ordained. I am not engaged full-time in the ministry as it is always my intention, be-

cause I have got to labor to maintain a wife and two children. But I go around in my spare time. I have a group of thirty-two or more members, they are in another district forty-eight miles from my home. Yesterday, I received an envelope which contained three *Plain Truth* magazines. I can say 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' I feel I should have been connected with this group long before. With best Christian greetings to all. Leo Joseph, Castries, Saint Lucia."

Another minister from Jamaica writes: "Dear Sir: Through the precious name of Jesus I am able to listen to your broadcast, of which spiritual food was established to myself and family. Feelings descend into my daily life, sir, that from last week I am refreshed of your radio broadcast. Therefore, sir, I pen to you asking through your generosity to forward some leaflets for distribution in this district.

"In Port Antonio I own a mission capable of holding over two hundred people. We are a humble lot numbering fifty-six members. Our attendance numbers up to one hundred to two hundred each service to share God's blessings. It may be possible, sir, that one day you may take a trip to Jamaica and the word

of God could preach by you. Your books show us the full nature of what was hidden from us. Sincerely yours, Brother Thomas Parkinson, Port Antonia, Jamaica."

A Challenge to Us All

What a great blessing that God is opening *new doors* for His gospel to reach these scattered people! This is really news to rejoice over. But, we should also be sobered by the realization that we may *not* be doing *our part*.

A world-wide tour had been planned for early January of this year to counsel and help Mr. Ortiguero and the Church in the Philippines, to cross Africa and make plans for the work there, to study the progress of the work in Australia and perhaps to open an office there, and to baptize many who are waiting in scattered areas of the world. **THIS TOUR HAD TO BE POSTPONED!**

God's Church is *undermanned*! With all the responsibilities of the headquarters Church, the local churches across the nation, the Church in England, and the *world-wide* program, God's ministers are spread *too thin*. Ministers just can't be spared at this time to send to these people who need our help desperately.

God has placed a heavy burden on His ministers today—especially those at headquarters Church. Besides their full-time ministerial church responsibilities, they have the other duties of teaching, writing, editing, publishing, broadcasting, and maintaining offices for counseling and personal assistance. These men can't be spared.

At the last moment, Mr. Armstrong wisely made the decision to postpone the world tour—even though it was desperately needed. These pressing demands overseas will have to wait another year, or perhaps two—until enough qualified men can be trained and prepared to take the important jobs these overseas responsibilities will create. God's work needs—as never before—qualified men who can handle responsibility.

Mr. Ted Armstrong wrote an article in March 1958 *Good News* entitled "God's Work Is Waiting on You." These words were never any truer than they are today—God's work *is* waiting on *you*.

The more men who can qualify for local elders and deacons, the more the load on the other ministers can be reduced. Then they can be spared for *other important work*. Are you really *on fire* to qualify for a position in God's Church? Are you really studying and overcoming? Are you really behind God's work with your effective, *fervent* prayers?

Are we going to let these people

down—these sheep who have responded to the voice of Christ and who have turned to follow Him?

There isn't much time left! This gospel must go to the world as a witness. God has opened this way to reach His scattered people. But, He has laid the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of His Church—*our Church*. Are we too weak, too lethargic to carry the load? Let's all get behind this work with greater zeal than ever before!

God's Festivals Observed FOREVER?

(Continued from page 2)

forever, but there is a command never to do it to demons who lurk behind idols. This verse means what it says! No sacrifices are ever to be offered to demons—whether they be animal sacrifices or money! "A statute for ever" means a statute forever! And if this is perpetual **SO ARE THE HOLY DAYS TO BE PERPETUALLY OBSERVED!**

In Numbers 10:8 a statute forever permits *only Aaron and his sons* to blow the special trumpets on special occasions. By this law no others are ever allowed to do so. This law means what it says. It is a statute forever!

Now continue with Numbers 15:14-15: "And if a stranger sojourn with you . . . and will offer an offering . . . unto the Lord; as ye do, so shall he do. One statute shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, *a statute for ever in your generations*: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord."

It is an everlasting law that Israelite and Gentile must approach the Lord in the same manner—whether, after circumcision, in Old Testament times or through faith in prayer to the Father in New Testament times. This law is forever—but there is no requirement to offer sacrifice forever! No abolition of the holy days by this verse!

Levites Have No Inheritance Forever

As long as the Aaronic priesthood remained faithful they were blessed for carrying out these responsibilities. As the physical ministers of God, it is "a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they [the Levites] have no inheritance" (Numbers 18:24). Their inheritance came from teaching and from the service at the altar (verses 8, 11, 19). I Corinthians 9:13-14 adds: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are par-

takers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

The family of Levi were not permitted the inheritance of vast property for income. They were allowed only their homes in their towns and sufficient lands around to accommodate the stock used in their physical service or to store the tithe till it was taken to Jerusalem. It was the duty of the Levite to teach the people God's knowledge and His law and to trust God for a living from the tithes and offerings of Israel. They were *forever forbidden* to spend their time making money. Notice Malachi 2:7 on this point. If the Levites had been faithful, they would be God's teachers today serving in a spiritual ministry, having no inheritance but trusting God for income. This law in Numbers 18 is as much binding on Levi's descendants today as it was under Moses. It is a statute forever! Any Levite who violates this law has a mighty stiff penalty to pay in the judgment!

Here again notice that no proof exists that the everlasting statutes which enforce God's holy days are not binding.

Also in Numbers 19:10 and 21 notice that everlasting statutes *regulate the manner* in which rituals were carried out. There is *no* command to carry out the rituals forever. The only command refers to *the manner* of their performance. In each instance the rituals given in Moses' day were imposed only "till the seed should come" (Galatians 3:19), "imposed until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:10). But the *manner* in which these rituals would be carried out will always remain constant.

These temporary rituals given under Moses were *never originally* a part of the everlasting statutes which regulate the annual festivals of God (Jeremiah 7:22-23).

Aaronic Priesthood "Forever"?

If God's festivals are to be observed by a statute forever, why has the priesthood of Aaron been changed when it, too, is established by a statute forever?

Let's understand what the Bible does say about the priesthood of Aaron. It does not say what most people believe!

Open your Bibles to Exodus 40:15: "And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office: **FOR THEIR ANOINTING SHALL SURELY BE AN EVERLASTING PRIESTHOOD THROUGHOUT THEIR GENERATION.**" And again Numbers 25:13: "And he [Phinehas, Aaron's grandson] shall have

it [the priesthood], and his seed after him, even the covenant of *an everlasting priesthood* . . ."

And notice God's promise in Jeremiah 33:17-22: "For thus saith the Lord; David shall never [lack] a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites [lack] a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meal offerings, and to do sacrifice continually . . . Thus saith the Lord; If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night; and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also My covenant be broken with David My servant . . . and with the Levites the priests, My ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of . . . the Levites that minister unto Me."

Notice it! The Levites shall never lack a man—"want a man" in the archaic wording of the King James Version—to present offerings continually. There will *always* be Levites available to do the job—or God's promise is not true. The Levites have been punished—there is now no temple or tabernacle whereupon to present their offerings, but they have never lacked a man who could perform the rituals whenever they might be required.

In Ezekiel we find that after Christ's return the Levites will still be available to perform the physical duties of the priesthood as a reminder of Israel's failure as a nation to do God's will (Ezekiel 40:46; 43:19; and 44:9-23). *The very statutes which were perpetually established upon the priesthood in Moses' day are still binding during the millennium upon the Levites* (Eze. 44:17-23). When God declares a statute everlasting, HE MEANS IT! Read these verses for yourself.

But what about Paul's statement in Hebrews that *the priesthood has been changed*—that it is not perpetual? How can Ezekiel and Paul both be correct? Is not this a Bible contradiction? Is this not a proof that the festivals of God have also been changed?

What Paul Really Said!

Turn to Hebrews 7:11-12: "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law [of Moses],) what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law [regarding who receives the tithes]."

And then verses 18-19: "For there is verily a disannulling of the com-

mandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law [of Moses] made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh to God."

The assumption of most commentators is that God was not faithful to what He said in the Old Testament—that God did not mean forever. Notice what Paul is actually writing! In what manner is the priesthood being changed? Is another priesthood taking the place of Aaron's priesthood *at the physical altar* so that others instead of Aaron's descendants are to present physical sacrifices? Is another physical priesthood substituted for that of Aaron in order to perform the rituals of the law of Moses?

No! Aaron's priesthood was established for physical ceremonies ON EARTH. But Christ's priesthood is not a physical priesthood to administer ceremonies on earth. Christ, the high priest after the order of Melchizedec, is IN HEAVEN. His is a *spiritual* priesthood. Turn to Hebrews 8:4-5: "For if He [Christ] were on earth, HE SHOULD NOT BE A PRIEST, SEEING THAT THERE ARE PRIESTS THAT OFFER GIFTS ACCORDING TO THE LAW: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."

Do you grasp the significance of this? Christ has not replaced Aaron's family on earth. Aaron's priesthood is the only one which can ever perform the physical priesthood on earth. Aaron's is an everlasting priesthood on earth. But Christ has a greater, an eternal office of high priest IN HEAVEN administering spiritual gifts on behalf of the whole world!

Look at Hebrews 8:4 again! The earthly priesthood still belonged to the family of Aaron. In the New Testament Church Jesus Christ has not replaced Aaron in the administration of a physical altar in some temple or tabernacle in Jerusalem. One priesthood was not substituted for another to do physical sacrifices on earth!

What the Change Was

BUT THERE WAS A CHANGE MADE—not the kind of change most people believe! *The priesthood through which man approached God for forgiveness of sin and for the attainment of perfection has been changed.* No longer does man have access to God through the Aaronic high priest. We have access to God through the high priest of the order of Melchizedec! We have access to God through a different priesthood today. But the physical service at an earthly altar still is Aaron's. No Bible contradiction here!

There was a commandment which required all Israelites from the time of Moses to the time of Christ's crucifixion to be physically reconciled to the Lord through the Levitical priesthood. Jesus mentioned this commandment in Matthew 8:4 after he had cleansed a leper: "Go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." It is repeated in Mark 1:14 and Luke 5:14.

Those Levitical priests stood "daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, *which can never take away sins*" (Heb. 10:11). We today do not go to the Levitical priesthood in order to approach God. *That has been changed.* The priesthood today is different—"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way . . . and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water . . . And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: *NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER*, as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10:19-25).

Holy Days Commanded Forever Nine Times

How plain! The priesthood through which man approaches God has been changed. We have a new and living way through a *spiritual* priesthood today. And that is all the more reason we should not fail to assemble ourselves together on the weekly sabbath and on the annual festivals *which God has commanded by statutes to be observed FOREVER!*

In every one of these scriptures *God means exactly what He inspired the writers of the Bible to record for us!* When He declares a law to be everlasting HE MEANS IT! In *nine specific verses* in the Bible mentioned near the beginning of this article the annual festivals of God are COMMANDED TO BE OBSERVED YEAR BY YEAR—IN THEIR SEASON—AS LONG AS DAY AND NIGHT CONTINUE—BY STATUTES *FOR EVER!*

Read them again: Exodus 12:14, 17 and 24; 13:10; and Leviticus 16:29, 31; and 23:21, 24, 27, 31 and 41.

No stronger proof than these nine verses can be given that the Church of God must keep holy these days God made holy! Yet in not one of these places is any mention made of physical sacrifices being commanded forever.

Correction: January Good News, p. 4, col. 1, line 16 should read: ". . . seen God [the Father] at any time."

What Church Members should know about MASONRY

Many of our brethren have become astounded at their own credulity in embracing the Lodge with pride, now that they became truly familiar with the Scriptures. They are now overawed with the fact that Masonry is pagan—not Christian—in origin. Here, in this installment of the series to our church members, is the heart and core of Masonic secret doctrine.

by Jack R. Elliott

THE FAMOUS Masonic lecturer Wilmshurst discovered in his search for the secrets of life that THREE GREAT QUESTIONS press inexorably upon the attention of mankind. These three questions as explained in the preceding article of this series are: "What am I?" "Whence came I?" "Whither go I?"

The Pagan Answers

In his human reasoning he came to the same answer as did the ancient pagans: (1) Man is an immortal soul that is evolving spiritually toward perfection; (2) He existed in a higher state before he was born into this world, but he lost something which left him in this lower state; (3) He will again attain that higher state of existence after death, provided he continues to perfect himself.

This is, of course, not the true answer to life's questions as revealed by the Bible. Adam was created by God and given the same choice which you and I face today: Obedience, and life—or disobedience, and death. Adam, just as you and I, had no immortal soul; and, as you and I, he grew old and died. God would have raised him to immortality; however, he chose the way of disobedience and God left him to its reward—*death*. Thereby Adam set the example of disobedience which mankind has followed ever since (see Rom. 5:14-15). Brethren you and I should turn from that example and follow Christ's example of obedience to God that our reward might be *life* through the resurrection.

What about the thing which Wilmshurst came to see was missing in man? Truly there is a very important thing missing in every one of us until we are converted. You and I know it is the Spirit of God which we must have if we are to overcome and grow in the ways of God.

Wilmshurst, of course, did not come

to this answer. Following the philosophies and symbols of the ancient pagans he looked for a mysterious, magical something which only the secretly informed could know. This mysterious something, he came to believe, was the *genuine secrets of the Master Mason*.

These secrets are all connected with an ancient legend which Masons call "The Legend of Hiram Abiff."

I will not embarrass ex-Masons of our Church brethren by exposing the absurdity of the "secret rites" connected with this legend. Let it suffice to say that they are merely a ritualistic acting-out of the legend in which certain passwords, distress signs, grips etc. are introduced and demonstrated. The Masons then learn these secret tokens and use them to identify themselves and convey certain information to one another in everyday life.

The candidate, without any attempt at rehearsal, is required to act out the role of the ancient Grand Master of Masonry, Hiram Abiff. This is not difficult because the role consists mainly of supposedly being killed and playing dead while he is moved here and there by Lodge members.

Hiram Abiff, the hero of the legend, was supposedly murdered by the Fellow Crafts, fifteen of whom entered into a conspiracy to extort the secrets of a Master Mason from him, or take his life. But reflecting with horror on the atrocity of the intended crime, twelve of them recanted; the other three, however, persisted in their murderous design.

The fantastic legend, as the "Worshipful Master" recites it to the candidates, is as follows:

Chief Masonic Legend

"Our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff, was slain at *high twelve* while the craft were called from labor to refreshment. It being his custom at that hour to enter into the unfinished '*sanctum sanctorum*'

or '*Holy of Holies*' of the temple, there to offer up his devotion to the Deity and draw his designs on the trestle-board. The three Fellow Crafts who persisted in their murderous design knowing this to be his usual practice placed themselves at the South, West and East gates of the inner court of the temple and there awaited his return. Our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff, having finished his usual exercises was about to retire by the South gate, where he was accosted by the *first ruffian*, who thrice demanded of him the secrets of a Master Mason or Master's word and on his refusal he gave him a blow with the *twenty-four-inch* gauge across his throat after which he fled and attempted to pass out of the West gate where he was in like manner accosted by the second, who thrice demanded of him the secrets of a Master Mason or the Master's word, and in a like refusal he gave him a blow with a square across his breast. Whereupon he fled and attempted to escape by the East gate where he was likewise accosted by the *third*, who thrice demanded of him the secrets of a Master Mason or the Master's word, and on a similar refusal he gave him a violent blow with a *setting maul* on his forehead which felled him dead on the spot.

"They then buried the body in the rubbish of the temple until *low twelve* or twelve at night, when they met by appointments and conveyed it a westerly course from the temple to the brow of a hill west of Mount Moriah, where they had been and dug a grave due East and West, six feet perpendicular, and there buried it. In the head of the grave they planted an acacia to conceal it and that the place might be known, should occasion ever require, and made their escape.

"Our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff, was found to be missing on the day following, from there being no designs on the trestle-board. King Solomon being informed thereof, at first supposed

him to be indisposed, and ordered strict search and due inquiry to be made for him in and about the several apartments of the temple. Strict search and due inquiry were accordingly made, but he could not be found. King Solomon then fearing that some fatal accident had befallen him ordered the several rolls of the workmen to be called.

"At roll-call three Fellow Crafts were found to be missing, namely, *Jubela*, *Jubelo*, and *Jubelum*, who from the similarity of their names were supposed to be brethren and men of Tyre.

"At this time the twelve Fellow Crafts who had recanted from their murderous designs appeared before King Solomon, clad in white gloves and aprons, in token of their innocence, acknowledged their premeditated guilt and most humbly implored his pardon. King Solomon then ordered the twelve Fellow Crafts to divide themselves in parties and travel three East, three West, three North and three South (with others whom he should appoint), *in search of the ruffians* and return not without tidings. They traveled and at the point while pursuing a westerly course coming down near the port of Joppa, they fell in with a *wayfaring man* of whom they *enquired* if he had seen any strangers pass that way. He informed them that he had, three, who from their appearance were workmen from the temple and men of Tyre seeking a passage into Ethiopia, but not having King Solomon's pass could not obtain a passage and turned back into the country. They returned and reported this intelligence to King Solomon, who ordered them to disguise themselves and travel as before with positive injunctions to find the ruffians and with positive assurance that if they did not the twelve Fellow Crafts should be deemed the murderers and severally suffer for the crime committed. They traveled and as the party which pursued a westerly course a second time were returning after several days fruitless search, one brother being more weary than the rest sat down at the brow of a hill west of Mount Moriah to rest and refresh himself.

"On attempting to arise he *accidentally caught hold of an acacia* which easily giving way excited his curiosity, whereupon he hailed his companions, and on their return and examination, they found the appearance of a newly made grave. While meditating on this singular circumstance they heard the following horrid exclamations from the clefts of an adjacent rock. The first was the voice of *Jubela*, who exclaimed, 'Oh, that my throat had been cut across, my tongue torn out by its roots and buried in the rough sands of the sea at low water mark, where the

tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, ere I had been accessory to the death of *so great* a man as our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff!' The second was the voice of *Jubelo*, who exclaimed, 'Oh, that my left breast had been torn open, my heart plucked out and given as a prey to the beasts of the fields and the fowls of the air, ere I had *consented* to the death of *so good* a man as our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff!' The third was the voice of *Jubelum*, who exclaimed in tones of greater horror than the others, 'Oh, that my body had been severed in twain, my bowels taken from thence and burned to ashes and the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven, so that no trace or remembrance might be had of so vile and perjured a wretch as I, ere I had *caused* the death of *so great* and *so good* a man as our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff! Ah, *Jubela and Jubelo*, it is I who am more guilty than you both; it was I who gave the fatal blow, it was I who killed him! whereupon they rushed in, seized and bound them and took them before King Solomon, who, after a due confession of their guilt ordered them to be taken without the gates of the city and there executed according to their several imprecations, in the clefts of the rock. They were taken out and executed accordingly."

The Legend Continues

"King Solomon then ordered that the twelve Fellow Crafts *go in search* of the body of our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff, and if found to observe whether the Master's word, or a key to it or anything appertaining to the Master's degree were on or about it. The body of our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff, was found in a westerly course from the temple in a grave dug due East and West six feet perpendicular, in the brow of a hill where our weary brother sat down to rest and refresh himself. Nothing was found but the jewel of his office by which the body was designated. King Solomon then ordered the twelve Fellow Crafts to go and assist in raising the body, and as the Master's word was then lost, it was agreed between himself and Hiram, King of Tyre, that the first sign given on arriving at the grave and the first word spoken after the body should be raised, should be adopted as the sign and word for the regulation of all Master's Lodges until future generations should find out the right word.

"On repairing to the grave King Solomon ordered one of the Fellow Crafts to take the body by the Entered Apprentice's grip (one of the secret Masonic handshakes) and see if it could be raised, but owing to the high state of putrefaction the body having been

dead already fifteen days, the skin slipped and it could not be so raised. King Solomon then requested Hiram, King of Tyre, to take the body by the Fellow Craft grip and see if it could be raised, but owing to the reasons already assigned the flesh cleaved from the bone and it could not be so raised. King Solomon at length took the body by the strong grip of a Master Mason, or the 'Lion's Paw' and raised it on the five points of Fellowship, which have already been explained to you (the candidate). They then conveyed it back to the temple from which it was buried in due form."

All of this the "Worshipful Master" recites with great solemnity and the gullible candidate listens in awe. Then the "Worshipful Master" continues:

"The body of our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff, was buried three times: first, in the rubbish of the temple, second, on the brow of a hill west of Mount Moriah, and third, and last time without the gates of the city, as near the unfinished 'sanctum sanctorum' or 'Holy of Holies' as the Jewish law would permit; and Masonic tradition informs us that they erected to his memory a marble monument, consisting of a beautiful virgin weeping over a broken column [see Fig. 10], before her a book open, in her right hand a sprig of acacia, in her left an Urn and Time behind her, standing unfolding her ringlets and counting her hair.

"The beautiful virgin *weeping over the broken column*, denotes the unfinished temple and the untimely death of our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff.

"The Book *open before her*, that his virtues there lay on perpetual record.

"The *sprig of acacia in her right hand* denotes the timely discovery of the body.

"The Urn *in her left*, that his ashes were there safely deposited to perpetuate the remembrance of the amiable, distinguished and exemplary character.

"And Time *behind her*, standing unfolding her ringlets and counting her hair, that time, patience and perseverance will accomplish all things."

The Master points to each of the above emblems on the chart as he proceeds with his explanation. All the foregoing, it will be observed is a rehearsal of the Temple Legend, and is of course esoteric or *secret work* and must be learned orally from the Grand Lecturer or other lawfully constituted teacher.

Counterfeit of Christ's Sacrifice

Wilmshurst pictured Hiram Abiff as the symbol of Christ, and his death as the portrayal of Christ's death and resurrection. The Mason, when he dies, says Wilmshurst, will be raised to heaven by Christ with the *strong grip of the Master Mason*.

Wilmshurst's philosophies are widely accepted in the modern "Christian" Lodges of America. Anyone familiar with the teachings of the popular denominations can readily see where such a philosophy is congruous with *traditional Christian doctrine* on the subject. Consequently, after hearing this explanation, few consciences are disturbed as Masons act out this legend again and again, each time a new member undergoes the initiation of the third degree.

But, is that *really* what is pictured by the Legend? Christ was not secretly murdered by three ruffians. His body did not decompose (Acts 2:27), and He was not raised back to life by the "strong grip of a Master Mason."

There is a more revealing answer! Let us compare the main points of the legend of Hiram Abiff, with the chief legend of the Ancient Mysteries.

Hiram Abiff is Nimrod!

This legend stems from the exploits of Nimrod, a son of Cush, described in Genesis 10:8-10 as a mighty hunter and ruler.

In organizing the people under his rule, Nimrod usurped one of the prerogatives of God, because God is the *creator and sustainer* of all the universe, and thereby its rightful ruler.

Alexander Hislop in *The Two Babylons* gives some of the reasons for Nimrod's fame. On page 52, he writes that all tradition, from the earliest time, bears testimony to the *apostasy* of Nimrod, and to his success in leading men away from the patriarchal faith. He delivered their minds from the awe of God and the fear of the judgments of heaven. Hislop showed also (p. 50) that Nimrod was the object of high popularity, and through setting himself up as king, invaded the patriarchal system and curtailed the liberties of mankind. Yet, Nimrod was considered a hero and liberator to all his followers. No doubt it was because he "freed" them from following the way of God by giving them a counterfeit way—one which allowed them to follow their own lustful imaginations.

Scripture does not reveal how Nimrod died, but all ancient traditions show that he came to a *violent and early end!*

"Now," says Hislop on page 57, "when this mighty hero, in the midst of his career of glory, was suddenly cut off by a violent death, great seems to have been the shock that the catastrophe occasioned. When the news spread abroad the devotees of pleasure felt as if the best benefactor of mankind were gone . . . Then began the weeping for Tammuz (identified as Nimrod) in the guilt of which the daughters of Israel allowed themselves to be implicated (Ezek. 8:14) . . ."



Figure 10

Traditional marble monument in honor of Hiram Abiff.

Doctrine of Trinity Conceived

Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, apparently wasted no time in influencing the people to begin worshipping him as a god. It was claimed that the parts of the mutilated body were found and put together again and that Nimrod was resurrected; that he ascended up into the heavens and dwelt with the gods.

The sun was adopted as his symbol picturing his being overcome at night, and rising again the next day.

As time and imagination continued he became accredited as being the light bringer, sustainer of life, and judge of the living and the dead.

Semiramis, in her exalted position as wife of this mighty king who became god, played an important role in the

new religion. She became the mother of a child which she claimed was the son of this god. And as time passed, all three were deified. In later years the son became confused with his father and the worship of one was attributed to the other, giving occasion for this goddess' having been worshiped as both wife and mother. This was the origin of what came to be called the "Blessed Trinity": the father, the mother (holy ghost) and the son.

This is a diabolical counterfeit of God's plan of salvation for mankind as revealed in the Holy Bible, which plan God undoubtedly made known to the patriarchs with whom "He walked" (Gen. 6:9). With the knowledge of this plan, mankind, under Satan's inspiration, took matters into its own hands instead of waiting on the salvation of the Lord. Thus, the "Ancient Mysteries" began to evolve.

While similarities exist between this counterfeit system and God's plan for the salvation of mankind, it should not be overlooked that important differences do occur. One of these is that the son, nor the father, was resurrected back to life.

After the dividing of languages at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9), and the scattering of the nations, the names of these deified persons were changed and the legends about them grew in detail in each nation. New and different feats, characteristic of the nation in which they developed, were attributed to them and more symbols were adopted to picture these feats.

Furthermore, the adoption of new gods did not end with these three. Other gods and goddesses continued to be created in human imaginations. Today, any study of pagan beliefs and customs is made extremely difficult by this great confusion. An accurate description of the worship and doctrine about any one of these gods would have to be limited not only to the nation, but to the locality and sect within that nation and the year of its occurrence, because everything was constantly changing. Yet, through it all, the central theme which deifies the person of Nimrod, Semiramis and her illegitimate son was retained in practically all ages and nations. It is the chief tenet of all the "Ancient Mysteries."

Masonic Symbols Adopted from Pagan Egypt

Freemasonry borrowed most of its symbols from the ancient Egyptian system. To be consistent with this fact, and also to reduce confusion, we shall compare the legend of *Hiram Abiff* with the central legend of the Ancient Mysteries as they were observed in Egypt.

Here the gods were called Osiris, Isis, and Horus.

From Webster's Dictionary caption "Osiris," we read that Osiris is said to have been a wise and beneficent king of Egypt (i.e., Nimrod was king before the languages were confounded and the nations were formed. Each nation claims him to be its founder or king and its god, but each under a different name). Osiris, with the aid of Isis, taught his subjects agriculture and all the arts and crafts, conquering the rest of the world to civilize it. His brother Seth (whom Greeks called Typhon) treacherously murdered him, and cast the coffin containing his body into the River Nile. Drifting away to Byblos, it was discovered by Isis and taken back to Egypt. Seth again found the corpse, and cutting it in pieces, he cast them into the Nile—but Isis found them (more thorough accounts of the legend show that all but one part was found, the genital organ, for which she substituted the "Phallus"). Then came Horus to avenge his father Osiris, and the gods justifying Osiris, restored his body to life and immortality.

This death and resurrection was symbolized daily by the setting and rising of the sun, and also yearly by the seasons during which the sun recedes until the winter solstice, then begins to be slowly "resurrected back to life." Seth (or Typhon) was the symbol of winter which destroys the fecundating and fertilizing powers of the sun, depriving him of life. When Seth was killed by Horus, the sun began to climb higher in the sky, as if being resurrected by the gods. It was a time for rejoicing. This custom of rejoicing at the time of the winter solstice has continued to our present day when people who call themselves Christians celebrate this pagan custom thinking they celebrate Christ's birth.

When we examine the legend of Hiram Abiff we find that he possessed the valuable *Master's Word*, a badge of highest authority, just as Osiris (or Nimrod) possessed a kingdom and was an *enlightened* one.

There was also conspiracy against Hiram just as there was against Osiris. Hiram, like Osiris, was attacked and killed, and this at the hand of a brother. The body was buried twice, not in the waters of the Nile, since this is identified only with Egypt, but in a more appropriate place under the rubble of the temple and later under an acacia tree. It was also discovered twice by the Fellow Crafts, this time not just as Isis discovered Osiris's body, but in a more "convenient" method for Freemasonry.

As the legend says that Seth was killed for his crime by Horus, so were the

ruffian murderers of Abiff killed by the Fellow Craft. A new twist is given the Masonic legend, however, for each ruffian is killed in a different manner befitting the degree of his crimes. The methods of death represent the penalties a Mason promises and *swears* to pay if he reveals the secrets of the first three degrees (i.e., in the initiation of the First degree the candidate swears to pay the same penalty as the first ruffian paid if he reveals Entered Apprentice secrets).

In the initiation of the Second degree the candidate swears to keep the secrets under penalty of the same death that the second ruffian suffered, etc.

When Isis found Osiris's body one part was lost—the genital organ. When the Fellow Craft finds Hiram's body one part also is lost—the Master's Word. Isis substituted the Phallus; Masons substitute Mah-hah-bone. From Masonic writings *Masonry Defined*, pp. 643, 608, *Mah-hah* means literally, "What is this the"—and *bone*, coming from the Hebrew word *boneh*, means "builder." Mah-hah-bone then means, "What is this the builder?"

In all appearances the "Master's Word" in Masonry symbolizes the *same creative force* that the phallus does; both are pagan symbols for the creator of life.

Meaning of Term "Hiram Abiff"

Even the name "Hiram Abiff" is significant. Hiram it literally "most noble" and is therefore a title. Abiff, according to Masons, means "his father"; so the complete translation of the title is, "most noble, his father." Who could this refer to other than Osiris, father of Horus?

Is this pagan explanation of the "mystery of life" contained in the symbolic legend of Hiram Abiff the *ultimate* of all the "genuine secrets" of Masonry?

For some it is. Others prefer the Romanized version of the same fairy tale. But for those Masons, bright enough to have their faith in this world's "christendom" shaken by observing its parallelism with the ancient pagan mysteries, the Lodge has one more super-secret.

All through thirty-two degrees the Mason was promised a reward to be received at the top of the toilsome "winding stairs." Not money, nor corn, nor wine, nor oil. All these are but symbols. His wages were to be *Masonic truth*. This *truth* is one of the most concealed doctrines of the "science of Masonic symbolism." This most coveted and *costly* Masonic reward, *desired by the many, attained by the few*, the object of
(Please continue on page 12)

Should Christians Celebrate BIRTHDAYS?

Why does the Bible omit mention of the birthdates of such men as Abraham, Moses and even Jesus Christ? Where did the custom of celebrating birthdays begin?

by Kenneth C. Herrmann

(Owing to the many requests of new members, this article from the May, 1957 issue is here reprinted.)

SEARCH your Bible! How many birthday celebrations do you find?

That of a Pharaoh who celebrated his birthday by hanging his chief baker (Genesis 40). And a second, Herod's birthday celebration at which John the Baptist was beheaded (Matt. 14:6).

Only two definite birthday celebrations in the entire Bible!

Not a single mention is ever made of the exact date in terms of the month and day upon which any individual was born! Isn't all this strange in the light of the popular modern practice? Birthdays seem to have little importance in God's eyes!

The sons of Job may also have been observing their birthdays, though there is uncertainty as to whether these "days" (Job 1:4) they met on were really birthdays. Job actually cursed his birthday! (Job 3:1).

It was to show His death that Christ commanded His disciples to continue in the observance of the Passover. NO MENTION OF THE DATE OF JESUS' BIRTH AS A HUMAN BEING IS FOUND. *Certainly your birth date is not as important as His!*

Why did God the Father intend that Jesus' birthdate should be forgotten but that man should remember the date of His death? Is it hard to believe, "the day of death . . . is better . . . than the day of one's birth"?

Attached to This World

We live in a world today that is geared to the Roman calendar. We remember the date of our birth, pay our taxes and have our tombstones engraved with the day we die—all in accord with this *pagan Roman system of calculating time*.

Have we forgotten we are commanded to come out of this world?

In following these customs we are obliged to make use of this Roman system of time with its *pagan* designations: Sunday, Moonday, Tinsday, Wodenday, Thursday, January, February, etc. In many business matters we must regard January 1 as the beginning of a new year. Think back. Doesn't January 1

completely overshadow in your mind the date when *the true new year really begins?*

Probably ONLY A HANDFUL OF YOU WILL TAKE NOTE AT SUNSET ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 8 THIS YEAR that A NEW YEAR, AS GOD REVEALED IT, IS BEGINNING. April 9 is the anniversary of the date about which the Eternal spoke to the children of Israel, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."

Thirteen days after the first day of God's new year we are to remember the date of *death* of Jesus Christ. *Is it strange that His DEATHdate and not His BIRTHdate should be remembered?*

How hard Satan has worked to substitute his Roman calendar, his first day of the week, his midnight beginning for a day, his emphasis on men's birthdates so man might forget the day of death of Christ, our Passover!

How completely has Satan succeeded in convincing men that Easter is the resurrection date, that Sunday is the Sabbath!

Consider the tactics of your enemy. Satan's work of deception extends into every field of endeavor, every practice, every custom, everything we deal with in life. His efforts are continually directed to provide a counterfeit for every practice that God has ordained, a perversion of every true way; a wrong way suited to every whim of carnal human nature.

What Is the Correct Attitude?

We are prone, like the world, to overemphasize the date one is born into this carnal life. When one repents, turns to God's true way, receives God's Spirit and then death overtakes him before Christ comes—ISN'T THIS MAN'S DAY OF DEATH MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH? This man, though dead, has completed his time of trial and testing. Eternal life, a position as ruler, awaits him at the resurrection!

Paul writes, upon nearing death, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown

of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (II Tim. 4:7, 8).

The day Paul began his carnal life as a baby could hardly be compared in importance with the day he, at death, made certain his reward by enduring the problems and trials of a Christian life to the end.

A child's life does not begin with birth. Rather, at birth he is about nine months old and about ready to begin his training in the mastery of his emotions, his lusts and desires under the guiding hands of his parents.

Japanese count a man's age from the time of conception rather than birth.

A single Greek word is translated both BORN and BEGOTTEN in our English translations of the Bible and the difference may be understood only from the context. No distinction is made of the moment of birth. The single word *fathered* could have been used to carry the intended meaning in English. Preserving one's genealogy was important, but the date on which one was born was considered of little account.

A New Birth Date

Our present mortal existence is but one of dust kept alive by the breath of life, the oxygen we breathe in and which our bloodstream carries to all parts of the body. The moment of conception and of the birth of *this mortal life* are of little importance compared to our *new birth* into God's kingdom.

In sharp contrast to the complete absence of any mortal man's birthdate in the Bible, *we do find the command to commemorate the day* which pictures the first "harvest of souls"—the time when *immortal Sons of God will be born!* This day pictures not only our spiritual birthday but the day of conception as well!

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." "You must be *born* again." For Christians the moment of *conception* of this new life is the time *they receive God's Spirit as a begetting* to eternal Spirit life. Now turn to Acts

2. For many in 31 A.D., the time of spiritual conception was the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2.

For some it was then three years *after their repentance and baptism*; for others only months or days. It is not our baptism day then that is to be remembered year by year, but *the Day of Pentecost* which is set aside as *the memorial of conception of all God's children*, the moment of the beginning of their Spiritual life.

But conception only begins our life. *We must yet be born!* Paul writes, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth *until* Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19). We must grow from conception, from the moment God implants His Spirit in us. We must be born immortal. That moment, then, will be the day of our new birth. This is the *day of birth* Satan would like to cover up by emphasis on the day of your birth into this *physical* life.

It is *the Feast of Pentecost*—which commemorates the first harvest, the spring harvest—that *commemorates* in advance *the time when Christians will be reaped into the Kingdom of God and freed from this mortal earthly body* in which they have been developing and growing to be like God. For those Christians in their graves it will be a moment of awakening. *They will come up out of their graves*, children of the earth and children of God!

The new birth is again emphasized by the Feast of Trumpets which pictures the Day of the Lord—and the return of Christ at the "seventh trumpet" to raise the "first fruits" of God's creation.

Why Birthdays?

The basic purpose of observing birthdays is to keep track of one's age. How important are mere years? Is there not something MORE IMPORTANT than having achieved only another birthday?

Consider the case of Job. He was a middle-aged man, proud of his years, righteous in the eyes of all; even Satan could find no fault.

God brought him down to repentance by showing His great might compared to Job's, by showing the contrast in wisdom, in understanding. But first Job had to receive wisdom from a comparative youth.

Study Job, chapters 32 through 38. Before Job could have the personal interview with God that he demanded, he had to have his sins laid bare by a youth. This young man, Elihu, had good manners. He "had waited till Job [and the others] had spoken, because they were older than he. When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men . . . [he] said, I am young, and ye are very old: wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you

mine opinion. I said, *'Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.'*"

Put yourself in Job's position. God was bringing him down. A youth, strangely enough, gives words of wisdom. A man of years listens.

The speech of the Eternal out of the whirlwind which follows contains no rebuke for this young man. Job repented. His three friends offered sacrifices for their own folly.

Isn't there a lesson here for those of us who count our wisdom by our age? "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." (Prov. 16:31). Here is a different attitude toward age. The multitude of years *should teach wisdom*, the aged should understand judgment. We should be better qualified to teach wisdom each year. But are we?

Ought we not to look back year by year with a feeling of regret rather than pride? We have not learned the wisdom or acquired the knowledge and understanding that we might.

If we had only applied ourselves more diligently. If we had only begun earlier in life to fear God, to keep His commandments, to recognize human nature for what it is. Then our years could be a thing to look back over with joy and with a right kind of pride.

What is this mortal life anyway? Of what lasting significance is a birthdate? None!

God's Calendar for Birthdays?

A few moments spent considering God's Sacred Calendar should make it clear why the practice of birthday observance among God's people *would be impossible*. Have you pitied the "unfortunate" individual who was born on February 29 and could receive gifts and congratulations only once every four years? Then consider that *the length of three months* of the God's Sacred Calendar *varies from year to year*, having 29 and 30 days after a rather complicated pattern. *Three times* as many individuals would be affected.

A still greater deterrent to annual birthday observance is *the insertion of a 13th month* in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years of the present 19-year cycle. The *single* irregularity of February 29 of the Roman calendar affects but *one individual* in 1461. *The irregularities of God's Calendar would affect the birthday observance of one person in every eight.*

It is true that some Jewish people continue to observe birthdays and other anniversaries with God's Calendar. A rather intricate set of carnal human rules governs whether to move the celebration ahead or back one day, or back one month in the absence of the 13th

month. Differing regulations are applied and the practice is not uniformly followed by all. But Christians follow God, not Jews who have adopted pagan customs!

The use of the God-given calendar actually deprives one person in eight of the pride and pleasure of having a regular day once a year on which to practice idleness and overindulgence!

Keeping God's Holydays

But, you might ask, doesn't this pattern in God's Calendar make His annual Holydays difficult to keep also? NOT AT ALL. *Every one of these Holydays comes during the first seven months of the year. These first seven months never change in length.* The 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th months always have 30 days; the even numbered months coming between, but 29 days. Even the last month of the year, whether it be a twelfth or thirteenth month, has always a regular 29 day length.

Thus *an eight month section of God's Sacred Calendar is free of irregularities* eliminating any chance for confusion as to when the Holydays are to be kept!

But no scripture anywhere commands us to observe any dates other than God's Sabbath and His Holydays. To celebrate birthdays is to add to the law—and whoever does that will be added to the Lake of Fire!

MASONRY

(Continued from page 10)

many years diligent preparation, is at last fully realized. It is the humiliating admission that *Masons must always search for truth but never find it!*

In their official words, Machey, *Masonry Defined*, p. 561, "This divine truth, the object of all his labors, is symbolized by the *Word*, and this is intended to teach the humiliating but necessary lesson that the knowledge of the nature of God and of man's relation to Him, which knowledge constitutes divine truth, can never be acquired in this life."

Thus, in one fell swoop, Masonry abolishes all pretext of encouraging its members to believe in the Holy Scriptures upon which it claims to base its allegories and upon which its oaths are administered. By this final secret they confirm what was always implied in the Lodge—that the way of life revealed in the Bible and God's plan of salvation outlined in it *are lies*—that man cannot know God nor understand his relationship to Him. WHAT IGNORANCE!

(To be continued)