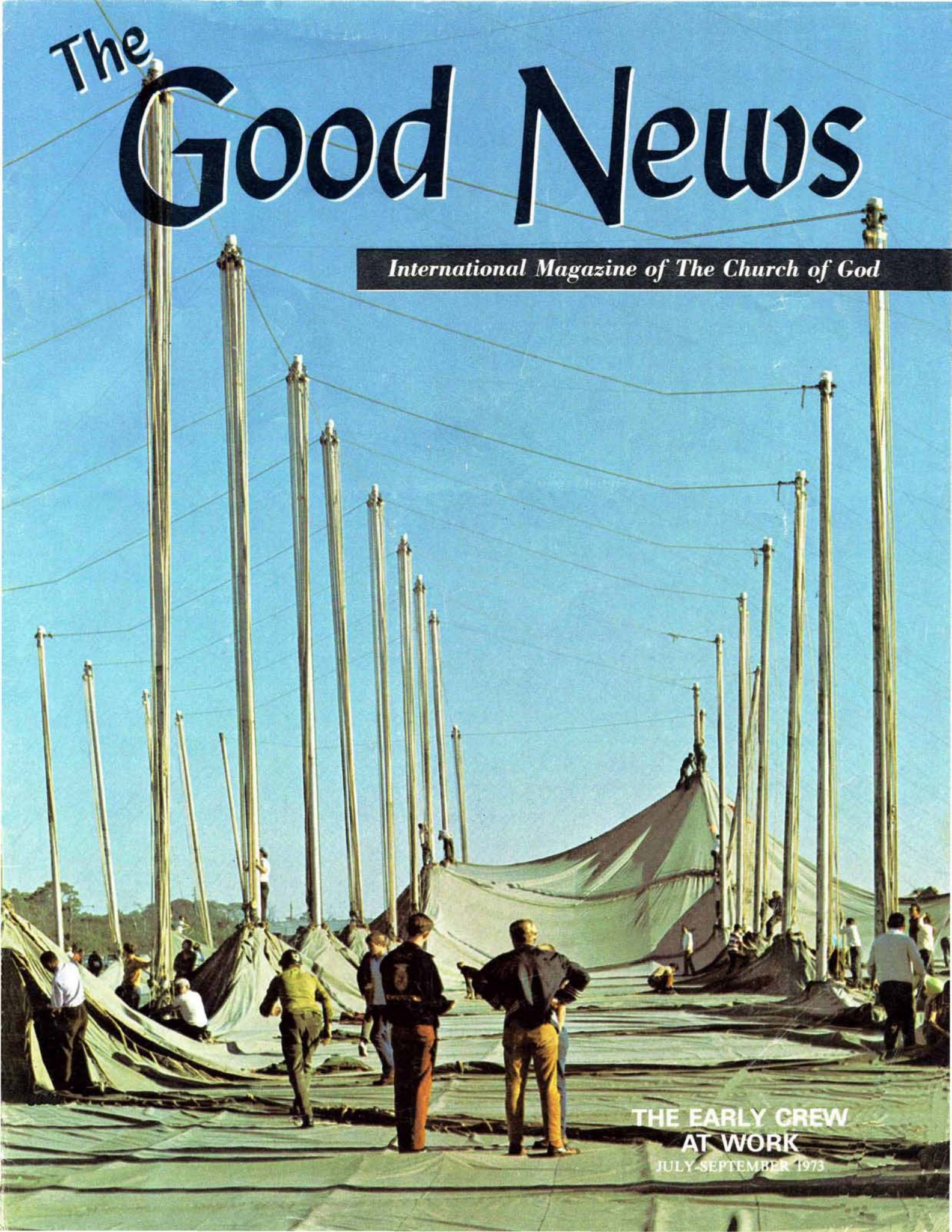


The

# Good News

*International Magazine of The Church of God*



**THE EARLY CREW  
AT WORK**

JULY-SEPTEMBER 1973





## More About Our Cover...

*The huge tent used for the Feast of Tabernacles at Jekyll Island, Georgia is set up every year by the "Early Crew." We hear very little about these groups of dedicated men and their efforts at the various Feast sites around the world each year. Beginning on page 10 is an article describing some of their work. You'll appreciate the Feast more this year after reading about some of the facets of Feast preparation we often take for granted.*

Cover photo by Cary Salter — Ambassador College

## What our READERS SAY...

A hundred hurrahs for the Worldwide Church of God. Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong's article on page one of the April-June GOOD NEWS is positively the most exciting, totally encouraging bit of information I have received in some time. These feelings are from the very depths of my being. The new openness and interest in people worldwide makes the immense satisfaction of being a part of this Work even more satisfying.

G.R., Argonia,  
Kansas

Again God has poured out His blessings on us in the April-June issue of the GOOD NEWS! God is richly feeding us these days if we will only digest and use the food He is giving us daily. Mr. Garner Ted's article really hit me, because I have a tendency to "hide" my religion — really I'm trying to protect "self" from persecution instead of thinking of my fellowman. With God's help, I pray to overcome this in the right manner — not blatantly or in a pushy manner. As usual, Mr. Dankenbring's article is most encouraging to be about God's business. I mentioned these, but all are great — much needed prodding and correction. So, thanks again for your work, love and concern.

C.K., Corrigan,  
Texas

If someone were to have seen me from a distance while I was reading "Are We Ashamed of God's Truth?" in the GN issue of April-June, he certainly would have thought I went out of my mind.

What an exceedingly wonderful message! As I was reading it, I laughed and cried, I strolled around my room and sat down again to continue reading. Garner Ted is down-to-earth practical. The way he brings out God's way in the very delicately needed "undocctrinal" areas is absolutely unique. Thank you, sir, for your understanding of the needs of the Church and the way you bring it to us.

God's way is by all means exciting. Al-

though most of us strive to radiate the works of God's Holy Spirit in our conduct, we all hid and choked the source we got it from. You just could not have broken down with more clarity that sincere sense of shame by our general attitude. I remember to my shame and disgust how I felt uncomfortable when a friend of mine asked me if it was true that I sent 10 percent of my income to the Work.

There is, of course, the other extreme you explained. But God's truth you brought to us does definitely add to the freedom He gave us. Thank you again for the article, and the entire magazine which is the best ever.

P.Z., London,  
England

Just read the article in the GOOD NEWS magazine and I am so excited — in fact, my entire family is excited. We have never been ashamed of God's Church, but sometimes it seemed as if we and others were trying to hide the truth from other people. This is the greatest thing that has happened since my association with the Church. I just had to write and let you know that my entire family and I, and everyone I talk to in the Church, are happy and excited about your recent article.

I am proud to be a member of God's Church, and I am proud to have my name mentioned along with yours, your father's or any other of God's ministers. I and everyone I know are behind you and just waiting to see the tremendous results that this new way will produce!

Mr. Armstrong, as you said, let's get the job done and be happy and excited about it at the same time. We are behind you 100 percent, and we love you and your father and the entire Church.

W.L., Lowpoint,  
Illinois

We received the April-June issue of the GOOD NEWS a few days ago, and my

(Continued on inside back cover)

International magazine of  
**THE CHURCH OF GOD**  
ministering to its members  
scattered abroad

July-September 1973

Volume XXII

Number 3

Published at Pasadena, California  
©1973 Worldwide Church of God

### EDITOR

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

### EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Garner Ted Armstrong

### SENIOR EDITORS

David L. Antion

David Jon Hill

Albert J. Portune

### MANAGING EDITOR

Richard H. Sedliacik

### Associate Editors

Lawson C. Briggs

Ronald Kelly

### Contributing Editors

Dibar K. Apartian

Ernest L. Martin

Alfred E. Carozzo

Leslie McCullough

Raymond C. Cole

Raymond McNair

William Dankenbring

L. Leroy Neff

Ronald L. Dart

John Robinson

Charles V. Dorothy

Paul S. Royer

Charles F. Hunting

Norman A. Smith

Robert L. Kuhn

Dean R. Wilson

Brian Knowles

Basil Wolverton

Clint C. Zimmerman

Ronald Beideck, Copy Editor

Thomas Haworth, Art Editor

### DIRECTOR OF PUBLISHING

C. Wayne Cole

### BUSINESS MANAGER

Albert J. Portune

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS to the Editor, P. O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91109.

Canadian members should address P. O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver 1, B. C., Canada.

Our members in United Kingdom, Europe, and Africa should address the Editor, P. O. Box 111, St. Albans, Herts., England.

South Africa: P. O. Box 1060, Johannesburg, Transvaal, R. S. A.

Members in Australia and Southeast Asia should address the Editor, G. P. O. Box 345, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia. In New Zealand, P. O. Box 2709, Auckland, New Zealand.

In the Philippines, P. O. Box 1111, Makati, Rizal D-708.

BE SURE TO NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY of any change in your address. Please include both old and new address. IMPORTANT!



# Were You Called to the “GOOD LIFE”?

**The primary target in life for some has become the things of this life — its fulfillment and its security, its rewards and satisfactions. Without realizing it, we often let this happen. But this is extremely dangerous! Just what are God's primary purposes for His people? How much should we expect to get out of this life?**

by Albert J. Portune

**W**HEN TRIALS, tests and problems arise in people's lives, the immediate human tendency is to think things have somehow gone wrong — that things aren't the way they ought to be.

Irrationally, when we don't have the peace of mind, security, happiness, recognition or stability we may expect and desire, we automatically tend to feel that things are *off kilter*, that something has gone awry and that nothing is right!

Perhaps doubt begins to enter our minds — we begin to doubt God's promises, His Word, or His love and concern. And always when trials really get “hot,” some begin to question, “Is God really concerned about me? Does He care? Or is He far off and uninvolved with my problems?”

## Time for a Straight Look

Brethren, if God means for Christians to “coast” through life satiated with blessings, then He has miserably failed His people down through the centuries of history!

From the pages of the Bible, and as particularly summarized in the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, we find that God's people have always suffered trials and tests.

“Some, through their faith, escaped death by the sword. Some were made strong again after they had been weak or sick. Others were given great power in battle; they made whole armies turn

and run away. And some women, through faith, received their loved ones back again from death. *But others trusted God and were beaten to death, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free — trusting that they would rise to a better life afterwards.*

“Some were laughed at and their backs cut open with whips, and others were chained in dungeons. Some died by stoning and some by being sawed in two; others were promised freedom if they would renounce their faith, then were killed with the sword. Some went about in skins of sheep and goats, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in dens and caves. They were hungry and sick and ill treated — too good for this world” (Heb. 11:34-38, *The Living Bible*).

The Apostle Paul was stoned, shipwrecked and imprisoned. Can you imagine his feelings — his possible moments of depression, loneliness, discouragement? A man that is in bonds and imprisoned has no outward security, happiness and peace of mind. God allowed Paul to have personal trials, inconveniences and difficulties just as He does you and me. Paul was not always “blessed” by having a warm home, luxurious surroundings and a loving family to share them with. He didn't measure God's love for him by the *degree* of physical comforts and benefits he enjoyed (Phil. 4:11).

Yet Paul was an apostle of God.

And God was *with* him — even in prison!

## Our Real Objective

Throughout history, God's people have looked forward to blessings and rewards *in the Kingdom of God*, instead of this fleeting physical life.

But why should this be? The answer is simple: in all the history of His dealings with mankind, God's objective with His own people has never been primarily the rewards, security, wealth, peace of mind, longevity, happiness of this physical life. He wants much *more* for us than these temporary blessings!

Now I am *not* saying that God does not bless His people. God does want to give us blessings in this physical life. When the circumstances are right, and when security and peace and tranquility and blessings will tend toward the greater good God is working to accomplish in and through us, God will bless and bless tremendously! There have been times in history when Christians have enjoyed peace and quiet, and many of the things human flesh desires. *For awhile!*

Most of us in God's Church today, relatively speaking, have been tremendously blessed.

But let's remember that God is far more concerned with what is being produced in our lives for the World Tomorrow than He is with our personal satisfactions on a day-by-day



basis. We need to learn that lesson now, and we need to learn it deeply and profoundly.

### WHY Should We Endure?

In I Corinthians 15:13 the Apostle Paul declared: "But if there be no resurrection" — that is, if there be no World Tomorrow, if there is no thousand-year millennial reign of Christ in the future — and then after that an ETERNITY of living, of building; of having security, happiness, tranquility, peace and purpose — "your faith is vain." If that is not coming, then you and I are simply *fools* for believing so. And if there is no World Tomorrow, you might as well get all you can out of this life WITHOUT enduring afflictions and trials!

If you don't have a future worth sacrificing for in this life, then you are a fool not to eat, drink and be merry.

But there IS such a future for God's people!

There *is* a future for the dead, and for those who *give up all* in this life. Christ did rise from the dead!

Tragically, some have begun to put their confidence in the things of this world but without really realizing it. They reason: "I have my little niche here to take care of me when trouble comes and I am buffeted, this nest egg of mine will protect me," and they begin to trust in their possessions to give security. But God says the day is coming when men will flee to caves, flinging their gold and silver to the moles and bats! (See Isa. 2:19-20; Ezek. 7:19; Zeph. 1:18; Rev. 6:15.)

So, whatever your situation may be, however insecure or unhappy you may feel you are at the moment — and I think there can be a lot of insecurity from time to time in your life, a lot of unhappiness (those people in Hebrews 11 weren't always happy being beaten, hanged, burned, sawn asunder, either) — regardless of your state, your condition, your trials, *hang in there!* Don't give up the ship. Don't become sour or discouraged. You were called to "endure hardness" (II Tim. 2:3). So shoulder your cross — whatever individual cross each of us has been given to carry — and follow Christ who set us the example.

### Faith — the Key

Even though there are a lot of unknowns, a lot of disturbing and upsetting circumstances that make life difficult — even though there are many things you may wonder about — remember, the Christian life is a work of FAITH. We deal in faith. And faith should be very real to us. It is not a nebulous, wishy-washy thing. Faith is a vital power in our lives — a power that can *change* attitudes, alter circumstances, *move* mountains!

Do you feel like you've "given up a lot for God's Work"? Do you sometimes dream of all the wealth, prestige, recreation or power you might have acquired if you had not been called into God's Church? Perhaps you had a business that has since grown into a multimillion-dollar corporation.

I did!

Perhaps you might have been a great success in this world's eyes.

But wait a minute. What attitude should we have toward such things? The Apostle Paul expressed it well: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

Is that *our* attitude, brethren? Or are you overly worried about your physical life, your job, your future, your family security?

What did Jesus say about those who are anxiety-ridden about such things? "... O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:30-34).

And when Peter told Him, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee," what did Jesus reply? "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or par-

ents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18:28-30).

### Who Is a Fool?

Was Ezekiel a fool when he lay on his side and cooked his tiny rations over a dung fire, for week after week and month after month? Was he a fool when he scratched around on the ground on a Babylonian brick, portraying a siege against Jerusalem as a testimony for the people? Was he a fool when he dug in the wall in the middle of the day portraying the future?

Was Hosea a fool when God told him to go out and marry a prostitute and raise children by her? Was he a fool to "wreck" his life?

Was Isaiah a fool and a jibbering idiot as he walked up and down the streets of Israel naked, with his buttocks blazing whitely in the sun, to portray a lesson to Israel?

Was Moses a fool to give it all up when he had it "made" as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, an heir to the kingship of Egypt, eligible to inherit all the riches and possessions of Egypt? Was he "insane" to serve God in the wilderness, despised and reproached even by the Israelites?

How about Jeremiah? Was he a fool when he spent much of his life as a persecuted criminal, being branded a traitor by the authorities of Judah and imprisoned in a cistern of mud armpit deep?

Were all the rest of the prophets fools? Were Elijah and Elisha fools? Was Jesus Christ a fool?

No, they weren't fools at all, although they would certainly have been called "fools" by the world today.

The Apostle Paul was no fool. Yet he wrote to the Corinthians, whose eyes were too much on physical rewards and pleasures: "All of you, no doubt, have everything you could desire. You have come into your fortune already. You have come into your kingdom — and left us out. How I wish you had indeed won your kingdom; then you might share it with us! For it seems to me God has made us



apostles the most abject of mankind. We are like men condemned to death in the arena, a spectacle to the whole universe — angels as well as men. *We are fools* for Christ's sake, while you are such sensible Christians. We are weak; you are so powerful. We are in disgrace; you are honored. To this day we go hungry and thirsty and in rags; we are roughly handled; we wander from place to place; we wear ourselves out working with our own hands. They curse us, and we bless; they persecute us and we submit to it; they slander us, and we humbly make our appeal. We are treated as the SCUM OF THE EARTH, *the dregs of humanity*, to this very day" (I Cor. 4:8-13, *The New English Bible*).

What about you and me? Are we willing to be "fools" for Christ's sake? Or is our chief desire to be looked up to by men, admired, applauded, respected, esteemed? Jesus did not seek praise, honor or adulation from *men*.

Brethren, we should be thankful that for the moment God has blessed, prospered and protected His Work, and that He has blessed His ministers with the tools to do their work — that it appears we may perhaps have a period of peace and prosperity ahead of us *for awhile*, and that, *right now*, we don't have to go hungry, thirsty, clothed in rags and tatters, to do God's Work.

But no one — whether minister or laymember — should *set his heart* on physical rewards in this present temporary life — on status, prestige, new homes, new automobiles, money and all the trappings of wealth.

Our lives should be LIVING SACRIFICES for God's Work — humbly striving to serve God with our whole heart, no matter what the circumstances, or what men think.

### Is It Really Worth It?

Is eternal life and the Kingdom of God worth sacrificing for now? Is it really worth all the effort, strain, struggle, suppressing the self, denying the flesh?

The Apostle Paul felt it was. He asserted: "And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together"

(Rom. 8:17). Then he added, undoubtedly with real emotion: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (verses 18-19).

What will this glory — this splendor — really be like? How great will it be to make our sufferings of the present pale into pallid insignificance?

Paul was contemplating our future glorified condition when he declared, "No wonder we do not lose heart! Though our outward humanity is in decay, yet day by day we are inwardly renewed. Our troubles are slight and short-lived; and their outcome an eternal glory which outweighs them far" (II Cor. 4:16-17, *NEB*).

In the book of Revelation we are given a glimpse of this tremendous glory. The Apostle John was shown in vision what the saints would be doing in the World Tomorrow. He said: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6).

Blessed and holy is he that qualifies to be in that first resurrection of the dead. For this person there isn't going to be any more death penalty. There won't be any more "old age" to provide for. There just won't be any more of the needs of *human* life. Because that person will have POWER, and will have LIFE INHERENT within himself!

So if in this life God calls on us even to be beheaded for the witness of Christ, the *reward will be worth it!*

In Revelation chapter two, we learn more about our future reward: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give

power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star" (Rev. 2:26-28).

It is as if God looked down and said: "Look, I am going to rule the world soon, and I need kings and priests and governors and rulers. Because I want to make a beautiful world — a world of peace, order and security — a world of happiness and true liberty in law — I am going to give to the kings, priests and governors that I select, power and strength and office and honor and authority. I am going to give them all of those things so that a world of peace and harmony and tranquility can be produced.

"I will give them REAL POWER, including a rod of iron to smash rebellious nations if necessary."

God further says to you: "Will you be one of them? Will you be one of my rulers and kings, priests and governors, if I train and prepare you? If I put you on the training program, and qualify you, so that eventually I can give you POWER, honor and glory, will you be willing to go all the way — to sacrifice, suffer and deny yourself *now*, for awhile, so you can have real power and honor and glory then?"

When you were baptized, you said, in effect: "Yes, Lord, I will." And then the rigorous training program began. God began to put you through trials, tests, circumstances, challenges, experiences.

Why?

So that later on when you are over other human beings, when you are a king and a priest, then you will be able to understand what is in people's minds in *their* trials. For you will have experienced it all yourself!

That is why God puts us through all of this training, brethren. Believe me, there are no other human beings on this earth that go through trials exactly like TRUE Christian people go through!

### We Need the OVERVIEW

David knew this to be a fact — and it was hard for him to understand it at first. He complained to God: "My feet had almost slipped, my foothold had



all but given way, because the boasts of sinners roused my envy when I saw how they prosper. No pain, no suffering, is theirs; they are sleek and sound in limb; they are not plunged in trouble as other men are. . . ."

It was with keen feelings of astonished wonder that David beheld the prosperity of the wicked. Then he compared his own life to theirs, and for a moment he thought: "So it was all in vain that I kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence. For all day long I suffer torment and am punished every morning. Yet had I let myself talk on in this fashion, I should have betrayed the family of God. So I set myself to think this out but I found it too hard for me, *until I went into God's sacred courts; there I saw clearly what their end would be*" (Ps. 73:13-17, NEB).

We ARE in an intensive training program. Our endurance, patience and attitudes are tried and stretched to the limit sometimes. We have been challenged and tested, and our minds have run the gamut of thought and apprehension and concern.

But you know what?

That's *good!*

It may not *feel* good, it may not *seem* good, it may be upsetting and disturbing — but it's *good*. God is doing all this to see how we will react. To see what we are made of — to determine our mettle. He is uniquely preparing us to deal with any and all *real, human* problems in the World Tomorrow.

What a mistake we will make if we relate the unique circumstances of our lives to this life *ONLY*. What a mistake we make if we say to ourselves, "I'm not happy. I want to conform to the life-style of my neighbors or business associates. I'm not getting the peace and satisfaction and tranquility I would like to have." I tell you, you will rarely get these things *anyway*, whether inside or outside of God's Church.

You may get them a little less often in God's Church. But what fantastic awareness, knowledge and understanding we develop if we say to ourselves, "Thank God that my mind, my patience, and my thought processes and my whole being have been tried to the limit. Thank God for my trials, my

tests, my experiences — even the bad ones. Thank God my character is being purged, purified, refined as gold and silver. Thank God I can see the *PURPOSE* for my sometimes mind-reeling, brain-numbing, harrowing trials and tests. Because these things are preparing me for a glorious, transcendent reward in the Kingdom of God for ever and ever and ever!"

### "Ninety-Day Wonders"

In World War II, when I was in the service, we had a desperate need for officers, commanders and leaders of companies and battalions. Schools were established to prepare officers in *ninety days!* Some of you who have been in the service remember we used to call them "the ninety-day wonders." They would come out still wet behind the ears, figuratively speaking. They were "green," inexperienced and soft. You couldn't depend on their decisions under fire because they had no practical experience.

Some were hard and intolerant and others were weak, loose, dirty and undisciplined. What a travesty on rulership! They were in most cases, pathetic, unqualified officers. If they ever became good officers they learned to be so by the practical experience they got after their schooling, right out on the front lines!

One lesson I can understand from that experience is that God isn't going to have any "green," untrained, "ninety-day wonders" as kings and priests in the World Tomorrow. He is going to have leaders in the World Tomorrow who have learned by being human. Why? Because they are going to deal with human beings for a thousand years.

God's rulers, kings and priests are going to be people who have been *through the training* and the experience of being human. Who have gone through trials that are unique. Trials that have been hard to wrestle with. Situations that involve sadness, sacrifice, unknowns, discouragements, insecurity. People who know people. People who can understand people. People who when given the power and the authority that God promises, will be perfectly *qualified* for the jobs they

will be given in the World Tomorrow. They will be able to understand human emotions and human situations in a way that human beings who have not been called and have not had the Spirit of God could never do.

### Are You Still Following Christ?

Jesus told His disciples to count the cost (Luke 14:28). And He told them, "Follow me." When you were baptized, you were told to count the cost. You determined to follow Christ, and so you were baptized.

But is your heart *still* 100 percent dedicated to God's Work, to following Christ, despite all the trials and tests you have had to endure?

We read in Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." What kind of mind, thoughts, attitude did Christ have?

Notice, from the *New English Bible*: "For the divine nature was his from the first; yet he did not think to snatch at equality with God, but made himself *NOTHING*, assuming the nature of a *slave*. Bearing the human likeness, revealed in human shape, *he humbled himself*, and in obedience accepted *EVEN DEATH* — death on a cross" (Phil. 2:5-8).

Consider that pristine example, brethren. It is obvious Jesus did not seek the fulfillment of His *physical* life as an end. Nor did He seek to become buffered against the future. He knew He was on this earth for a much *greater purpose*.

Don't misunderstand. It is not wrong to experience the blessings of this life, as God provides! It is not wrong to have happiness and peace of mind and tranquility and other blessings. And it is not wrong to have security if you use it rightly! Jesus had a measure of good things. He had good clothes, He ate good food and drank good wine. But the focus of His mind and life was not on this earth nor on the accoutrements of this physical life.

Jesus knew, as we do, what it is like to be human. He knew what it was like to be weak. (He was unable, remember, to carry that physical cross of wood all the way to Golgotha.) Jesus also knew  
(Continued on inside back cover)



# The New Testament

## FEAST OF TABERNACLES

**P**ERHAPS YOU never thought of it before — but the Church of God observes the *New Testament* Feast of Tabernacles.

Of course we all know that the sacrifices and preparatory washings of the law of Moses have ceased. But there are other, often overlooked, ways in which the New Testament Feast of Tabernacles differs from the manner in which the Old Testament Feast was observed.

### A Spiritual, Not Physical, Worship

The *fact* that there is a New Testament manner in which to keep the Feast was first enunciated by Jesus to the woman at the well in Samaria:

“Jesus said unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain [Mt. Gerizim in Samaria], nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. . . .” (John 4:21, 23).

The Old Testament Feast of Tabernacles, from Solomon’s time on, was observed with all its rites at Jerusalem only. But here Jesus plainly says that the place and manner of observing all the feasts would be changed. And today, we are to worship God “in spirit and truth,” not by mere ritual. The rituals of the law came by Moses, but grace and truth — and that includes how to keep the New Testament festivals of God — came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Before we look at Jesus’ example and what the New Testament reveals about keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, we need to acquaint ourselves with some of the customs that surrounded the observance of the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles under the Old Covenant. Remember, John, in his account of the

**Jesus commanded His disciples to observe the New Testament Passover, not by slaying a lamb in Jerusalem, but by washing one another’s feet and partaking of unleavened bread and wine. But how many of us have realized that the New Testament Feast of Tabernacles is just as different from its Old Testament celebration?**

by Herman L. Hoeh

Gospel, commonly uses the expression “Jews’ feast of tabernacles” (John 7:2) or “the passover, a feast of the Jews” (John 6:4). Why? Because various human customs were added over the years to the original Mosaic regulations for the festivals.

### How the Jews Observed the Feast of Tabernacles

How was the Feast of Tabernacles observed in Jesus’ day? What customs were the Jewish congregations following (customs that were not necessarily ordained by God and hence not to be continued in the New Testament observance)? Lawson C. Briggs, Associate Editor of *The GOOD NEWS*, has prepared for this article a summary of the ancient celebration. I want to share some of it with you. You may find it surprising:

“Although Israel forsook God’s festivals, the Feast of Tabernacles was the most popular of all the festivals in Judah. Josephus refers to it as being the ‘most holy and most eminent feast.’

The Jews found it delightful in the fall of the year, when the crops were in and the summer’s labor over, to rejoice. Funeral eulogies and fasting were alike forbidden for the week of the festival.

“The celebrations began as the fifteenth of Tishri approached, shortly after the regular afternoon sacrifice, and continued throughout the night. Flutes were played, along with lyres, harps and cymbals. Whoever could play an instrument did so. Whoever could sing sang. Others stamped their feet, clapped their hands, danced or whatever they could do, each to the best of his ability, while songs of joy and hymns of praise ascended to God.

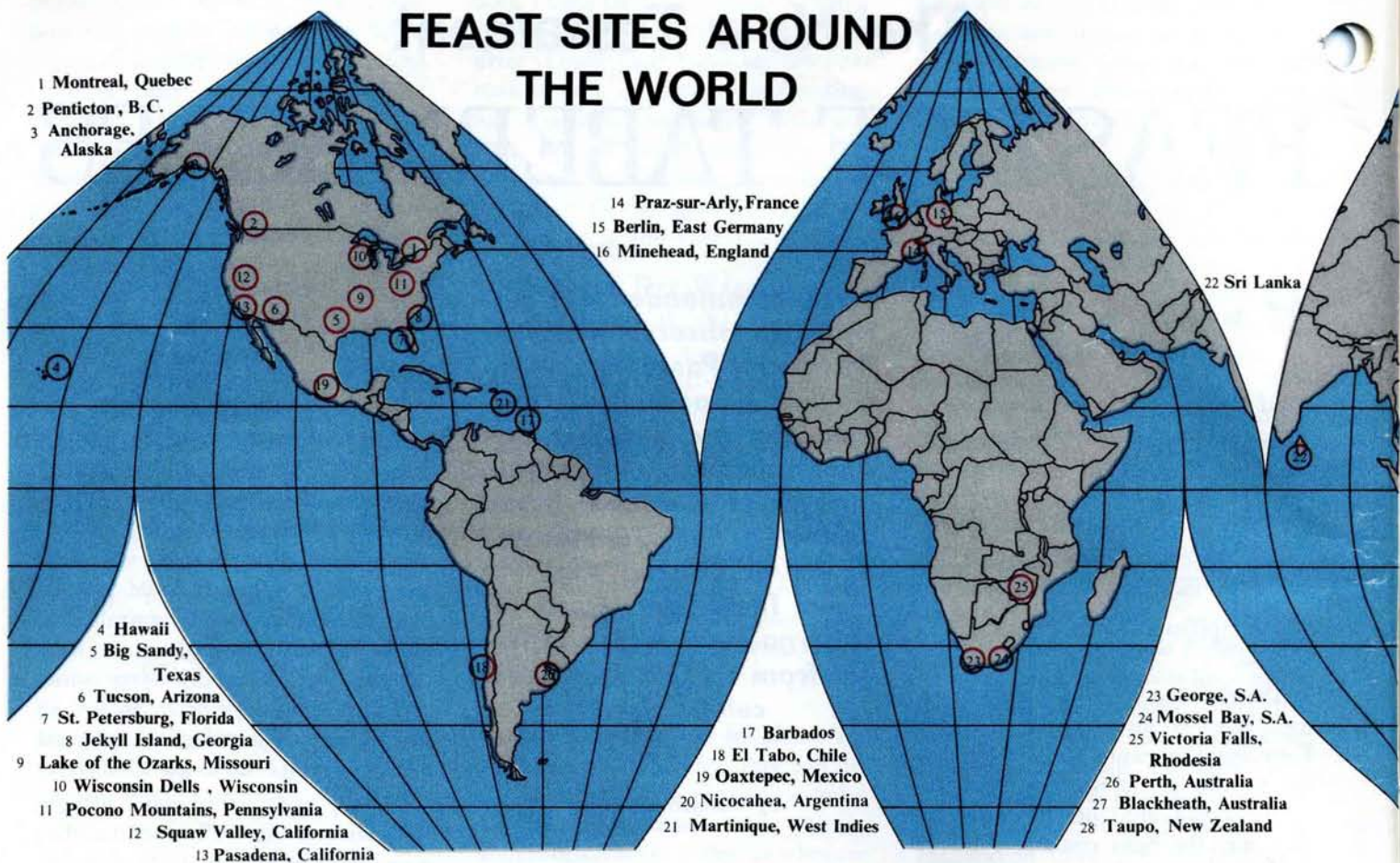
“In the midst of all this rejoicing, the Jews were very well aware that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, for they were living for seven days in the temporary booths or tabernacles which gave this feast its name (Lev. 23:42-43; see also 25:23). They were very careful, even overly careful, to build their booths just so — three walls and a roof of green leafy boughs, with nothing withered or dead, or taken from the precincts of pagan shrines, or stolen, etc., were specified by the typically strict Pharisaic regulations. Even the altar of burnt offering was fenced around and over with leafy branches for the festival’s duration.

“During the feast each celebrant carried two things *as signs*, in his left hand a citrus and in his right hand a palm branch tied with willow. The fruit exemplified the fruits of the good land which God had given them. The palm branch in the right hand symbolized to the Jews praise of God’s kingly power and His rule over the worshippers who carried it.

“A prominent part of the festivities in Jesus’ day — and very popular with the crowds — was the ceremony of the



# FEAST SITES AROUND THE WORLD



drawing of water. Early on the morning of the first day of the feast, one priest headed a joyful and enthusiastic procession from the Temple down to the pool of Siloam. Here he ritually dipped up a golden vessel full of the water and led the procession back to the Temple.

“As priest and procession reentered the city through the water gate, which was so-called from this ceremony, they were greeted by a threefold blast of a trumpet.

“The priest then walked up the rise to where the altar stood and poured the water from Siloam and the wine of the drink offering (Num. 29:16) into two silver bowls, from whence a pipe conveyed it away from the altar.

“Meanwhile the people shouted aloud to the priest, ‘Raise your hand.’ Thus they made sure the water really was poured where it was supposed to go, for once before, about 95 B.C., the priest-king Alexander Jannaeus (a Sad-

ducee) to show his contempt for the Pharisees to whom the water symbolized the fact of resurrection, had poured it on the ground. The watching people promptly pelted him with the fruits they held in their hands, precipitating a bloody massacre of several thousand by his foreign bodyguard.

“As the water and wine were poured into the bowls, the Temple music began. Psalms 113 through 118 were sung. With the opening and closing words of Psalm 118 and verse 25, ‘Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord’ (King James Version), the waiting worshippers shook the palm branches in their hands to all four points of the compass, thus signifying that God will rule over all nations.”

These various customs were very familiar to Jesus. He saw them enacted every year as part of the Jews’ celebration of the Old Testament Feast of Tabernacles.

The question is, how would Jesus

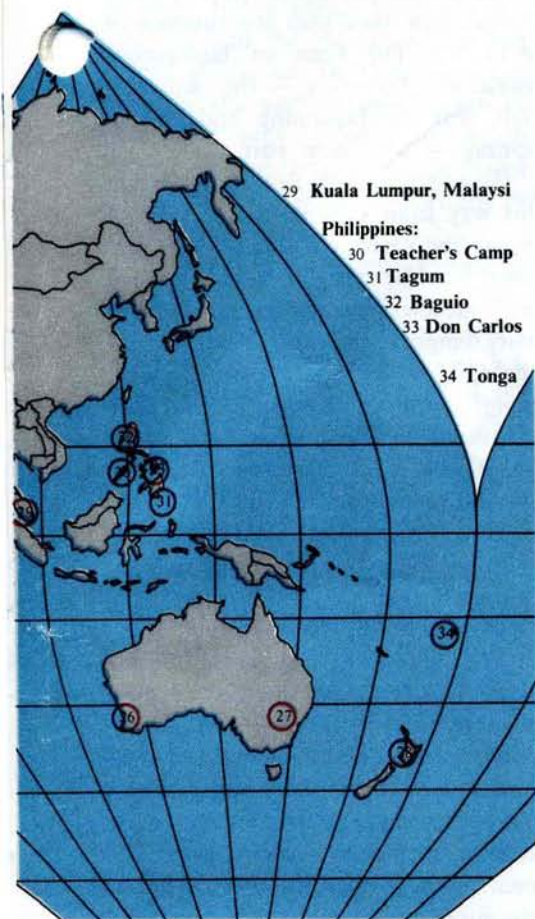
have us — the New Testament Church of God — celebrate the *New Testament* Feast of Tabernacles? How would it differ from the customs which developed under the Old Testament?

## Jesus Set His Church an Example

Who among us is not familiar with the fact that at the last Passover in His ministry Jesus instituted new symbols and a new ceremony for the New Testament Passover? But how many of us have looked at Jesus’ example during the last Feast of Tabernacles in His ministry? Nearly as many chapters are devoted to it as are devoted to the last Passover!

You will find Jesus’ activities during the Feast of Tabernacles described in the Gospel of John, chapters 7 through 9. “Now the Jews’ feast of Tabernacles was at hand,” reports John in 7:2. Notice Jesus’ example! “Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into





Ambassador College Art

the temple, and taught" (verse 14).

And a few days later: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly [innermost being] shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive...)" (verses 37-39).

What did John mean, "the last day, that great day of the feast"?

The Festival of Tabernacles is an autumn festival, seven days in length. It begins on the 15th day of the seventh month (Tishri) in the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to September/October in the Gregorian calendar. Immediately following the seven days is an "eighth day" (Lev. 23:34-36, 39), the 22nd day of Tishri. It is a one-day festival, called the Last Great Day. The entire eight-day period came to be known as the Feast of Tabernacles, just

as the two adjoining spring festivals of Passover and Unleavened Bread came to be known as Passover (Luke 22:1).

Jesus' evening message, as that Last Great Day began, centered on *water* as symbolic of the Holy Spirit of God. It was customary, as we have noted, to have a special ceremony of water-drawing from the pool of Siloam during the Feast of Tabernacles (*The Babylonian Talmud*, Seder Mo'ed, Sukkah, iv, Soncino Press, 1938). The ceremony symbolized the outpouring of the Spirit of God on the nations during the reign of the Messiah. The basis for the Jewish ceremony was Isaiah 12:3: "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

This water-drawing occurred on each of the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles and on the eighth or Last Great Day. (Whenever, as in A.D. 30, the Last Great Day occurred on a weekly Sabbath, the drawing of water occurred the previous evening.) The people would gather at the place of the water-drawing, at the pool in Jerusalem called Siloam, amidst rejoicing and music. A golden flagon was filled with water which, after the regular daily morning offering, would be poured out at the altar in the sight of the people. If the occasion were the eve of a Sabbath, a golden barrel was filled and placed that evening in a chamber of the Temple (Sukkah, iv, 48b).

It was to this event of water-drawing that Jesus made reference as He taught in the Temple on that evening of the Last Great Day. Jesus' message is recorded in less than two verses (John 7:37-39).

Now we read: "And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives. And early in the morning [in the daylight part of the Last Great Day] he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them" (John 7:53; 8:1-2).

Here was Jesus' example of keeping the daylight part of the Last Great Day.

Shortly thereafter the Pharisees interrupted Jesus. They brought into his presence a woman who had been caught in the very act of adultery.

Some translations delete the section about this woman and her adultery

from John's Gospel. But they are in error. This section belongs in the Gospel, exactly where it is found. It is in the official text of the Greek New Testament used throughout the Greek-speaking world and is found in the authoritative manuscripts of John's Gospel preserved by the Greek people.

Following this interruption, Jesus, setting an example to the New Testament ministry, spoke again to the people (8:12). In the crowds that listened were Pharisees who again interrupted (verse 13). A heated discussion ensued in which Jesus was accused of being a demon-possessed Samaritan (verse 48). Within minutes a fight broke out: "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (verse 59).

But the episode does not end here. The ninth chapter, verse one, continues:

"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth." Jesus made clay, anointed his eyes, and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. He returned "seeing" (verse 7). Later that last day of the feast, the one-time blind man, now healed, was brought before the Pharisees (verse 13). Verse 14 continues: "And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes" (see also verse 16). Here, too, we have Jesus' example: healing on the Sabbath.

In summary, we see that on Friday evening, at the beginning of the Last Great Day, Jesus spoke those few words recorded in John 7:37-38 about coming to Him for living water. The golden barrel had, shortly before, been filled with water from the pool of Siloam. It was Jesus' opportunity to explain the meaning of the ceremony and to focus attention on WHO it is from WHOM living spiritual waters flow. Later in the evening — Friday night — Jesus went to the Mount of Olives to rest. Next morning, on the daylight part of the Last Great Day, everyone returned to the Temple. It was a double Sabbath — a weekly Sabbath — Saturday — and an annual Sabbath, A.D. 30.



## The New Testament Teaching

Nowhere in the account do we find Jesus directly participating in any of the various Jewish customs that grew up around the Feast of Tabernacles. Not that He condemned them. Rather, Jesus set an example for the New Testament ministry to follow — that of preaching and teaching the *meaning* of the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles and of the Last Great Day, and of healing the sick.

That is why today the ministry during the Festival teaches, preaches and prays for the sick rather than directing the performance of symbolic rituals — that is why, in so many different climates, we “worship God in spirit and in truth” without the need to build ritually defined physical booths — that is why the Festival today does not have to be held in the one place, Jerusalem, for the entire Church of God.

Many of those ceremonies and customs of Jesus’ day did have meaning. Indeed! But they were physical and temporary. We are to present a spiritual worship at the Feast — “in spirit and truth.”

We today have access by prayer to the holy place in heaven itself — “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. 10:19). And, “Let us therefore with boldness approach the throne of grace” (Heb. 4:16, Panin translation). We are a “royal priesthood” (I Peter 2:5, 9) today. Today we have, not a Mosaic copy of the throne of God, but the *reality* in heaven itself!

Moses set the true Old Testament example. He was the one called of God to establish the practice of the Old Testament Church. He gave the “law of Moses” to the Old Testament Church. The Jews had Moses’ example.

Jesus did not come in Moses’ name, merely repeating the example of Moses. Jesus brought a new covenant message. The gospel came by Jesus Christ. Christ brought the New Testament promise of the Holy Spirit. He set the example for the New Testament Church of teaching about conversion and the Holy Spirit *during the Feast of Tabernacles*. Christ left us “an example that ye should follow his steps” (I Peter 2:21).

The Apostle John was inspired to write: “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments . . . whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: *hereby* know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him *ought himself also so to walk, even as he [Christ] walked*” (I John 2:3-6).

Notice: We are to walk as *Christ* walked, and His ministers are to speak as He spoke. It doesn’t say “as *Moses* walked.” Christ not only died to pay for our sins — He also *lived* so that we would know how to live. He kept His Father’s laws, and that included keeping the Feast of Tabernacles and setting us an example of how to keep it in New Testament times!

### Paul Kept the Feast of Tabernacles

Paul followed Jesus’ example and not only kept the Feast of Tabernacles, but kept it after the New Testament manner *long after* what was “nailed to the cross” was nailed there. And notice Paul’s command that we follow *his* example as *he* followed Christ’s: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1).

That is very plain. We follow Paul in keeping the New Testament Feast of Tabernacles as he followed Christ. Notice now the sequence of events in the book of Acts which clearly indicate that Paul kept the Feast of Tabernacles.

God used Paul to reach the Gentiles with the gospel. In A.D. 50, Paul crossed over from Asia into Europe and began to preach the gospel at Philippi (Acts 16:11-13).

After a few weeks at Philippi, Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), Berea (verse 10) and Athens (verse 16), Paul came to Corinth in the late summer of A.D. 50 (Acts 18:1). After spending several Sabbaths teaching in the synagogue (verse 4), Paul continued to hold meetings in the house of Justus (verse 7) for “a year and six months” (verse 11). This brings us to the spring of A.D. 52.

After a riot stirred up against the apostle was quelled, we read the following about Paul: “And Paul after this tarried there yet *a good while*, and then took his leave of the brethren, and

sailed thence into Syria” (Acts 18:18). It was now well into the summer of A.D. 52. The Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost — the two festivals near the beginning and end of spring — were now past.

To continue with Paul’s journey, on his way from Corinth to the port of Syria, “he came to Ephesus” and “entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying, *I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem*: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus” (Acts 18:19-21).

Was Paul planning to keep the feast with the Headquarters Church at Jerusalem? Indeed!

Which feast?

The spring festivals were already past. The two late summer or early autumn holy days, the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, were held at any of the local congregations. Yet here was a major festival being held at Jerusalem *in the autumn*. The one big major festival that occurs in the autumn is the Feast of Tabernacles! Paul told the Ephesians that he “*must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem*” — with the Headquarters Church. (This was long before A.D. 70, at which time Jerusalem fell to the Roman General Titus and the Temple was destroyed.)

Paul had just completed his first journey into Europe with the gospel and undoubtedly felt he had to report the progress of the work to the Headquarters Church and the brethren (verse 22). What better time to do so than while keeping the Feast of Tabernacles!

Here is the example of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. After years in the New Testament ministry he is still keeping the Feast of Tabernacles!

### Why Verse Left Out in Corrupted Manuscripts

Acts 18:21 appears correctly in the King James Version of the Bible. But numerous modern translations leave out that portion of the verse which tells of Paul’s intention to keep the Feast.



This verse, in its entirety, *belongs in the Bible*. It has always been 100 percent a part of the inspired Greek text handed down to the Greek-speaking world by the original true Church of God. The only manuscripts which leave it out are those copied in Egypt and in the Latin-speaking portions of the Roman Empire.

There would have been *no reason to add* this verse to the Bible if it were not there originally. But there is every reason why *men would like to remove it* from the inspired text! The Catholic version of the Bible leaves it out as do almost all modern Protestant translations of the Bible. These churches do not want to keep this feast.

### But Not at Jerusalem Only

Paul on this one occasion did travel to Jerusalem to keep the Feast. Yet, on many other occasions, he observed it elsewhere — just as Jesus said His Church would do. Remember, to the Samaritan woman Jesus said: "... the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." But this was not the first time Jesus spoke on this subject.

Notice what He said as the Spokesman in the Old Testament: "... in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Ex. 20:24, last part). Jesus, born of Mary, was not speaking anything different from what He told the Israelites at Sinai as the YHWH or Spokesman of the Old Testament. "In all places" — not merely for all time at Jerusalem.

As the New Testament Church of God grew in apostolic days, there soon developed a need for the scattered brethren to meet not only in Jerusalem but in numerous other sites to observe God's annual festivals. And in no case would the rituals of the Jews — such as the water-drawing — have been observed by the New Testament Church, for these rituals were performed by the Levitical priesthood only at Jerusalem in the precincts of the Temple.

Though Paul kept the festivals every year (I Cor. 5:8; 16:8; Acts 18:21; 20:16), yet for nearly 14 years Paul "was unknown by face" unto the churches of

Judaea which were in Christ: but they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (Gal. 1:22-23). Paul was not keeping the festivals at Jerusalem these fourteen years or he certainly would have been known by face.

Where was Paul observing the festivals during those years?

"I came," he said, "into the regions of Syria and Cilicia" (Gal. 1:21). Paul and Barnabas spent many years preaching there before being sent on their journeys. The center of the region of Cilicia and Syria was Antioch. At Antioch "it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people." Paul must have observed the Feast of Tabernacles that year with Christians in or near Antioch (read Acts 11:25-26).

On the second apostolic journey the Apostle Paul went into Europe. He came to Philippi in Macedonia 19 years after the Holy Spirit had come on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31. He then journeyed in the late summer of A.D. 50 to Corinth, in Southern Greece, in the province of Achaia. "He continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Acts 18:11). That period of time included two more Feasts of Tabernacles, which presumably were spent in or near Corinth.

Travel was so slow in those days that it would have taken two weeks to a month just to go to Corinth from Antioch, or vice versa. So, at the same time, converts in the geographic area of Syria and Cilicia were still observing the Feast of Tabernacles in Antioch in Syria. And converted Jews in Judaea were still observing it in Jerusalem, as always.

Paul's third journey took him into the province of Asia, which was subdivided into Mysia, Lydia and Caria. (This is the region of Western Turkey today.) The central location of this region was Ephesus, where Paul preached for at least *two years and three months* (Acts 19:8-10) without returning to Jerusalem.

Now consider how these facts from the New Testament affect God's Church today.

### A COLLECTIVE Blessing

It is a *collective* duty of the New Testament Church of God to observe the Feast of Tabernacles in the New Testament manner. And as Jesus prophesied to the woman at the well, Jerusalem would soon cease to be the primary site (John 4:21). In fact, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in A.D. 70 and Jerusalem temporarily ceased to be a festival site for the Church of God. But it will become so again, certainly in the Millennium if not before (Zech. 14:16).

But how can the members of God's Church know where to keep the Feasts today? It is the responsibility of the ministry and leadership of the Church to make it known, as Christ the Head of the Church (Col. 1:18) leads and directs them through His Spirit. For Christ "hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers. . . ." (I Cor. 12:28) — or, as in Ephesians 4:11-14, some are "apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith . . . that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. . . ."

But perhaps the most important *New Testament* aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles is what Jesus continued to prophesy to the Samaritan woman in John 4:23: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

The New Testament worship must be a true, spiritual, meaningful comprehension of the *meaning* of the Feast and of the purpose, plan and character of the Creator God whom we there and then worship. Only in this way can we truly "rejoice" as God and Jesus Christ (the YHWH) intended from the beginning.

With this understanding, let's make this year's Feast of Tabernacles an even more joyous occasion as the end of this age approaches. □



# THE EARLY CREW

**Have you ever wondered how the many facets of preparation for the Feast of Tabernacles are accomplished? An advance crew prepares the way to help guarantee the success of God's Holy Convocation every year. We call that preparation group the "Early Crew." Read about their work and learn how YOU are part of another "Early Crew."**

by Robert C. Smith

**J**UST BEFORE the Feast of Tabernacles — with little fanfare — a group of people arrives at each Feast site a little earlier than the rest. Their job is to help "get things ready." To help prepare for multiple thousands of people for an eight-day period.

They are the "Early Crew" — and they play a very important part in our lives at the Feast.

## **What It Would Be Like WITHOUT the "Early Crew"**

Picture in your mind for a moment this coming Feast *without* the Early Crew. Imagine, for example, Squaw Valley with 8,000 people from all walks of life converging on its facilities.

The first day of the Feast arrives — time made holy by God Almighty. The swirling dust of the rear parking lots settles into the arena, coating everything with which it comes in contact. There is nothing to stop the onslaught, for the giant canvas which should be over the open end of Blythe Arena has not been installed. The reason? The Early Crew was not there to do its job.

Those inside, searching for seats, encounter the frustration of first cleaning away a year's accumulation of dust (plus the newly settled dust) before they can be seated. Nobody was there to sweep them clean ahead of time. Those on the main floor find no chairs set up at all. Just simple jobs — but they weren't done.

Complaints begin emanating from the many musty restrooms. Those in line agonize at the sudden realization that no provisions have been made for those hapless souls who preceded them. Simple items taken completely for granted are now the perpetrators of unexpected anguish.

The "mother's rooms" — filled to capacity with mothers trying to find a clean spot on which to change their babies — add to the picture of mass

confusion. The cleanliness which should characterize godliness is totally absent — because the Early Crew wasn't there to provide these services.

Meanwhile, back in the arena, several ministers are standing on a large wooden box — because nobody has erected a stage.

The thousands of God's people who have arrived are cramped together in the bleachers, while the vast expanse of the arena floor is empty — except for the ministerial "box" — because nobody thought to bring the chairs. But, of course, there would not have been anyone to set them up anyway, without the Early Crew.

The special lighting has not been installed. The speaker cannot be heard because no sound system has been set up in advance for this important Festival of God. And so it goes.

## **The Work of the "Early Crew"**

It would be a sad story — if it were true. But this story will not be told, thanks to the advance preparations of the Early Crew.

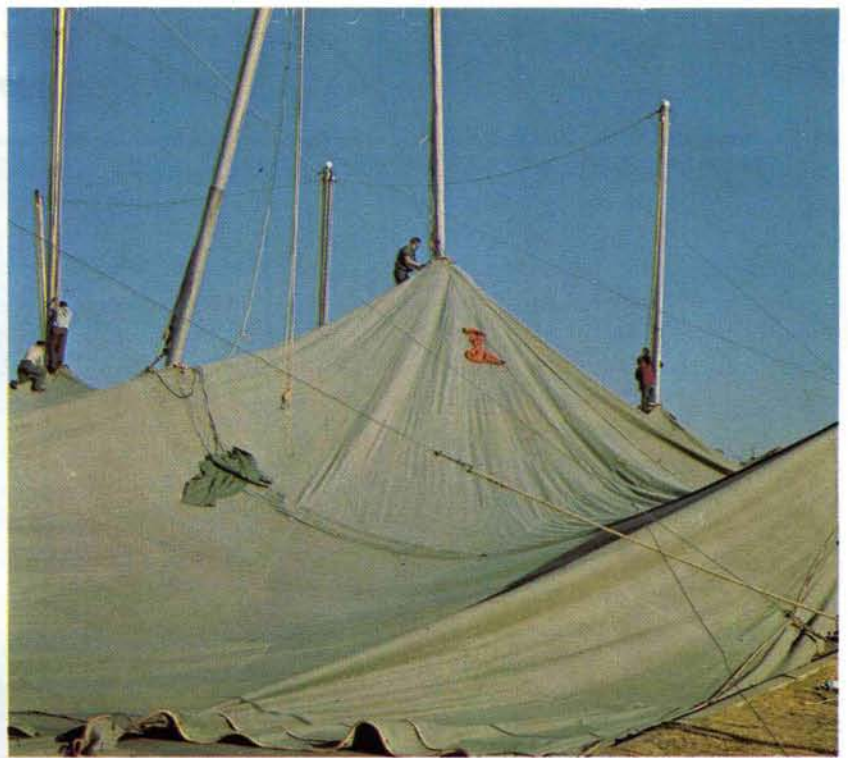
At every Feast site around the world, God's people enjoy peace, harmony and order. They enjoy comfort and a sense of belonging because of the Early Crew's work. All the dusting of the bleachers, the preparation for parking, getting the restrooms in order, setting up for registration, an information booth, dining rooms, and a virtual network of foresight and service are taken care of by the Early Crew.

## **YOU Are Part of an "Early Crew"**

Just as the Feast of Tabernacles is itself a symbolic forerunner of the soon-coming Millennium and government of God Almighty on this earth, so we in God's Church are all an "Early Crew" in the plan of salvation.

We are the "firstfruits" of the sons of God. We





Ambassador College photos by Joseph Clayton (above), Cary Soller (top right), Oren Simmons (bottom)



are Christ's *little* flock. Christ reminds us: "... thou hast a *little* strength" (Rev. 3:8). We are not great and impressive to the world any more than is the Early Crew to the Church. But, brethren, we all are preparing to play a very important part in the lives of those who do not even know we exist.

Imagine the masses that will turn to God in true repentance after having experienced the great tribulation and the plagues of God. Millions will have become *teachable*. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths..." (Isa. 2:2, 3).

Who will care for this confused, beaten people? Who will sit down with them individually, and patiently teach them who God is, how to apply His laws in their lives and how to be truly happy? Who will have prepared and qualified themselves ahead of time for this opportunity? You guessed it — *we* will — the *Early Crew!*

Soon all nations and all peoples will be keeping that greater "Feast of Tabernacles" — the Millennium. They will "... rejoice thou, and thy household," because *we* were there *first!* Because the Early Crew did its job!

Just as most of us today are not aware of the many-faceted preparations for the Feast (which involve not only the Early Crew, but also the year-round activities of the Festival Office staff) — neither will most of those joy-filled humans have really been aware of our present "behind-the-scenes" activity — the work of this little handful of people whom God calls His Church. But we will be waiting for them.

They will approach Christ and His born-again saints with the same joy-

filled anticipation with which we approach the Feast. They are going to expect to be taught, just as we do at the Feast. Their minds and their eyes are going to be wide open. They will be hungry for truth — and *our* efforts as the Early Crew of Almighty God will make possible the reality of their hopes.

Rather than meeting confusion, they will be guided and directed in an orderly and loving way. Instead of groping aimlessly about, they will experience a sense of belonging.

### A Job Well Done

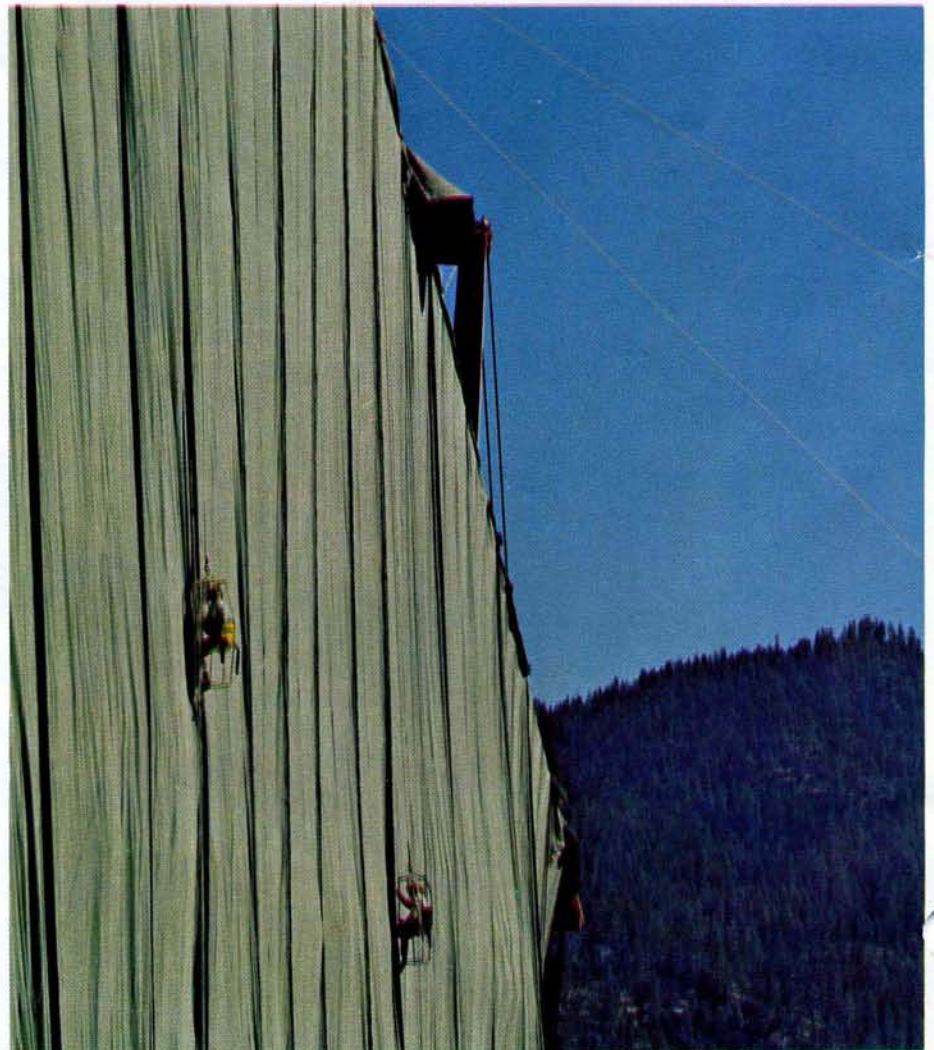
As we assist Christ in the great rehabilitation program at the beginning of this thousand-year Feast of Tabernacles, we will see the fruits of our efforts made manifest in those whom we will have instructed. Their way of life will become one of joy, abundance and productivity.

"And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

"But ye" — *WE* — "shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God..." (Isa. 61:4-6).

What a glorious calling is ours. Just as the Feast of Tabernacles could NOT be the same success and serve its purpose without the advance efforts of all concerned with Feast preparations, and just as their "behind-the-scenes" activity sets the stage, so *OUR* activity *now*, in our homes, on our jobs, on our *knees*, is necessary and is helping to set the stage for the World Tomorrow.

What zeal and enthusiasm and dedication this realization should give us! □



Howard Clark — Ambassador College  
Early Crew workmen tie huge sections of the canvas used to cover the open end of Blythe Arena at Squaw Valley, California.



# What Did Jesus Mean — “I Will Have Mercy, And Not Sacrifice”?

**W**HAT IS our goal — really? Is it a hazy, not too vivid, all-encompassing kind of thing, like “to get into the Kingdom,” “to show love,” or “to do the Work of God”?

Each of us must have a much more clearly defined, moment-by-moment goal than that. A goal so vivid and so real that we can confidently know we are fulfilling God’s desires — His purpose for our lives.

## The Starting Point

Everyone wants to live forever. But since we are merely physical human beings, we all face physical death.

Death is a sobering reality. As David said, our life is but a “handbreadth” (Ps. 39:5). We are here today and gone tomorrow.

Death is our final appointment in this life — then we simply no longer exist. Nothing physical survives. We are gone.

But spirit does survive. So our goal has to be one of *spiritual* survival.

## What Spiritual Survival Means

Look at it this way. Let’s suppose you want to hear music, so you compose a song. Then you hire an orchestra and a director. Finally you record their rendition by means of a tape recorder.

Afterward the orchestra disbands.

**Do we really know what He meant? Christ said, “Go ye and LEARN what that meaneth” (Matt. 9:13). Knowing can mean your eternal life!**

by Charles F. Hunting

The sheet music is destroyed. Everything physical that went into making the beautiful sounds is gone. But a perfect record of the whole effort remains recorded on tape. It can be replayed in a tape player at any time.

In the same way, the *spirit in man* is the spiritual record of each one of us. This is what survives.

God put this spirit in man for a great purpose. Combined with our physical brain it enables us to think, to plan, to design. It gives us some of the imagination and even some of the desires of God Himself. And it provides God with a record of our attitudes, personality, acquired knowledge, our very *character* — all that which makes us US — after we die. That which is physical decays and dies, but the spirit in man remains indestructible, eternal.

But why does God want a record? The answer is that God plans to “replay,” reconstitute, rebuild — resur-

rect — us exactly according to the pattern of what we will have become in this life — same basic personality, same attitudes, *same character*. And so the basic element of our whole being which will survive our physical life is our CHARACTER. Only we will then be composed totally of spirit.

So what is being recorded in your case? Think before you answer. Whatever it is, it has to be recognized by God as something He wants to survive eternally — or He will not “replay” for the purpose of eternal preservation the record that has been made.

And here is where the problem lies. Some of us will fulfill the sickening prophecy of nonrecognition found in Matthew 7:21-23, where Christ said: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. . . . Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord . . . and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.”

## Physical Works Not the Criterion

Did you notice something very frightening about those words? Christ was speaking of those who have identified Him and call Him Lord and Master like we do. They know He is the Messiah. But Christ does not know them. He does not recognize them. He is looking for something that He can-



not find. Therefore He will not replay their "record" for eternal life.

We keep the Sabbath, we tithe, we keep the Holy Days, we may pass out songbooks or give the opening or closing prayer, or even be ordained as a deacon or deaconess. We may feel that these activities prove we are on our way into the Kingdom.

We may even be ordained into the ministry of Jesus Christ, give sermons, anoint the sick and see them healed, and even cast out demons! Wouldn't you say that doing these things would be the obvious sign of a man of God, well on his way into God's Kingdom?

But read what Christ said: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out demons? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (verse 22.)

Do you grasp that? They have done all of those things that most of us would regard as the final stamp of approval from God. They have done great works — preached inspired sermons, anointed the sick and seen people healed, and cast out demons.

But didn't the apostles heal the sick and cast out demons — before they were ever begotten of God's Spirit? Didn't Judas also do all these things? Yes they did! And so did some of the other religious Jews of Christ's time (Matt. 12:27).

So what chance do you have? You're a laymember of the Church. Perhaps you took the leadership training course but you are still not "used." Have you failed? Maybe — but not because you were not ordained or put on the visiting program. If that were true, what about the women in the Church who don't even pass out songbooks or lead in opening and closing prayers, and whose main duties are housekeeping?

Let's understand something! *Your physical activities are not what ensures your receiving eternal life in God's Kingdom!*

Recall Matthew 5:3-7. Jesus said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Blessed are the meek. . . . Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. . . . Blessed are the merciful. . ." etc.

Notice that all these are qualities (attitudes) of mind — of character. And it is these qualities that are required in an eternal son of God.

### A Commandment-Keeping Failure!

One young man came to Christ and asked, just as we all do, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17.) Notice that he went to the right person, just as we do. Christ gave him the same answer that we are aware of: "Thou knowest the commandments. . ." (verse 19).

The young man told Him that he had observed and kept those laws from his youth. Then Christ loved this young man. He wanted to help him. But there was a problem, and Christ knew that something was wrong. The problem was not physical; it was only expressed physically, but it was a *spiritual* problem. This man had a mind that *coveted*. So he was a commandment-keeping failure, just as were the Israelites who tried to keep God's commandments in Moses' time.

God said of the ancient Israelites: "O that there were *such an heart in them*, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always. . ." (Deut. 5:29). In other words, there was a spiritual inability — a spiritual lack — that prevented them from completely comprehending the spiritual meaning of the great laws of God. But brethren, *we* should not have that lack; we should have the Spirit of God in our minds. God's laws are spiritual, and with His Spirit we can truly keep those laws in their *spiritual* intent.

### The Kind of Mind to Cultivate

Notice the important question asked in Micah 6:6-7: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? . . . Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" Is God going to be pleased with burnt offerings (physical works)? Shall we find approval from God with great tithes and offerings?

Now notice the startling answer in verse 8. "He hath showed you, O man, what is good; and what doth God

require of you, but to do justly, *and to love mercy*, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Here is what God wants: He wants you to "love mercy." Is there anything physical about that? Of course not. So be pursuing a merciful mind.

Are you happy when somebody who really deserves harsh punishment is forgiven and does not have to pay the penalty of his sins? Are you sure?

What happens when somebody has wronged *you*? Do you secretly hope they will be punished — that they will have to pay the just recompense for slandering or harming you? We must come to have a merciful mind that just loves to see people forgiven and allowed to escape the deserved penalty for their sins. For this is the mind of *Christ!* This is the spiritual and mental yardstick by which we can measure and examine our own mind in every action of our lives.

### The Greatness of God

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? . . ." (Isa. 66:1.)

In effect, God is saying, "The vast expanse of the universe is all mine. The earth, which is so huge to you and to which you are limited, to me is about like something you would put your feet up on in your own home. This is just a part of my greatness. So what can you possibly do for me?"

"For all those things hath my hand made. . ." (verse 2) — look how puny your efforts are physically in comparison to the tremendous vastness of my creation in space and its awesome unmeasurable power!"

Can we do anything to compare with this? Of course not. Anything physical we would do in comparison with what God has already done is total futility.

But God will still come to know us, recognize us and ultimately use our spirit-in-man "record," *because of one thing*. He will *look at* (or "look to") us if each one of us is of a "poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my [God's] word" (verse 2). Christ said that God seeks those who worship Him in *spirit* and in truth (John 4:24).

Do you see anything here about



physical accomplishments? Neither mental capacity nor a lack of it, nor race, nor sex, nor personal poverty can exclude any one of us from attaining to those things which God is looking for. A poverty-stricken paraplegic can still possess a poor and contrite spirit, for God is looking for something spiritual.

So acquiring and developing this spiritual character attribute must be our daily, hour-by-hour goal in life.

### Moses Understood

Moses will be in God's Kingdom not because of what he did physically, but because he "was *very meek*, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3).

The meek are going to rule the earth (Matt. 5:5). Are you pursuing a goal of meekness? Don't be deceived. It is not difficult to tell if you are one of the meek.

Meekness is totally different from feelings of inferiority. One who is meek is *very* teachable. He does not resent correction, regardless of the source from which it comes. You will not find a harsh, unbending or critical attitude in the spiritually minded keeper of the law. One who is meek is easily approached by family, friends and the ministers.

Moses took instruction and correction from a man beneath him in rank. Even with his vast experience in government in Pharaoh's court and with the tremendous power that God had displayed through him, when his father-in-law came to him and told him he was wrong, Moses *listened and learned* (Ex. 18:13-27).

He did not take the attitude some of us display when one younger than ourselves gives a sermon or sermonette, or has a suggestion. Moses was not self-opinionated, or puffed up with his great office, or with *his age* or with what he had accomplished.

Was Moses merciful? When Miriam was struck with leprosy for criticizing Moses, he cried out to God to heal her instantly (Num. 12). Would this have been our attitude?

### Why David Will Rule

Meekness, a broken and contrite spirit, and all of the other attributes of

Matthew 5 form the yardstick by which we can measure ourselves in God's eyes. It is not sufficient to put this on merely as a Sabbath facade, but it must be a continuous, ever-present goal in every activity — whether it is in our relationship with our employers, our wives or husbands, our children or any other human being.

Only this type of mind will be capable of safely handling the great power God is going to put in our hands.

Would you want a jealous, envious, revengeful type of person to rule over you? Obviously not. Neither does God.

Do you mentally hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6)? With deep emotion David said, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Ps. 119:18). Why? Because David realized his safety was in not wandering from the commandments of God. He knew that if his ways were directed by God's law, he would not make mistakes and be ashamed (verses 6, 10).

But what did David do when he was cursed and had stones thrown at him? Did he take vengeance? Notice a spiritual mind in action when Abishai, David's bodyguard, asked if he might destroy a man who deserved death. David replied: "If he is cursing because the Lord has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?' . . . let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord has bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will repay me with good for this cursing of me today" (II Sam. 16:10-12, RSV).

Would you react that way in similar circumstances?

David will be in God's family not because of his military or other physical accomplishments, but because of his great spiritual strength and a mind that God and Christ will recognize. He loved God's law and meditated on it — until, by means of the Holy Spirit, he came to *understand* the spirit of the law.

### The Rest of the Story

What is the spirit of the law? The Pharisees were very strict keepers of the

law. But Christ called them hypocrites because they missed the most important part of the law. Christ said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith . . ." (Matt. 23:23).

Did you notice that the most important aspects of the law, the "weightier matters," are good judgment (what we might call *balance* today), mercy and faith? These are spiritual things. And this is why "the law is spiritual" (Rom. 7:14).

"The law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives" (Rom. 7:1), but as true Christians "we should serve in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (verse 6).

You may not steal, but are you envious, jealous, stubborn or revengeful?

One of the biggest problems we have in the Church of God today is the breaking of the *law of faith*. But God says without faith it is *impossible* to please Him (Heb. 11:6).

Can we begin to understand why David said, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Ps. 119:165)? Or why Isaiah said, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Isa. 32:17)?

Both David and Isaiah understood the spiritual purpose of the law. They had the mind of Christ! Do we?

The greatest expression of the mind of God is mercy. It caused Christ to be willing to die for and at the hands of those who deserved to die. In His most horrible moment, forsaken, beaten beyond recognition, He said: "Father, forgive them . . ." (Luke 23:34).

The same Jesus Christ was quoting from Hosea 6:6 — an *Old Testament* prophet — when He said: "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, *I will have mercy*, and not sacrifice" — why? — "for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13).

Have *you* learned what it means to have mercy? □



# How Is God's Love For Us Expressed?

***If God truly loves His spirit-begotten children, why does He sometimes permit suffering and pain? Perhaps we have failed to understand just HOW God expresses His divine love.***

by Brian Knowles

**I**F GOD is wiser than we, His judgment must differ from our own on many things. What seems right to us may be wrong to God and vice versa. We are told by Isaiah: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55:8). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the manner in which God expresses His love is not always what we might expect.

## **A Grandfather — Or a Father?**

Humanly speaking, we tend to wish for a God who is a kindly *grandfather* rather than a father. We would like to believe that God is more of a "senile benevolence," as C. S. Lewis expressed it, who is concerned only that we all have a "good time" here below. We would like God to express His love for us by merely extending *kindness* (by which we really mean *indulgence*) as opposed to outgoing concern and involvement. Carnal man would like God to keep him out of painful situations and to bless him with "goodies" and spiritual bon-bons. Human inclination tends to resist too much direct involvement on the part of God.

A plaque in a gift shop reads, "God is not dead — He just doesn't want to get involved." This is a shallow slogan reflecting a tragic misunderstanding of God's nature — typical of most of humanity. Yet when we look around at the world, how much of God's direct involvement do we actually recognize?

We *do* see endless suffering and pain. We see injustice of every type. But where is God in all of this?

## **Who Has Rejected Whom?**

The problem, of course, is not that God does not want to "get involved." Rather, it is that man does *not want* God to be involved unless it is on man's terms.

Historically, when God thundered to the children of Israel from Mount Sinai, the people shrank back in fear. This was no kindly, senile grandfather! Rather, the powerful rock-shattering voice of the living God penetrated to the depth of their consciousness! Here was *power!* Too much power for puny men to cope with. "Let the *man* Moses speak on behalf of God," the people pleaded. They wanted to deal with someone who was vulnerable — flesh and blood like themselves. God's *direct* involvement was too much for them to handle.

Later, when the children of Israel asked the Prophet Samuel to arrange for them to have a human king like all the surrounding Gentile nations, God clearly framed the real problem. He said: "... they have not rejected thee [Samuel], *but they have rejected me*, that I should not reign over them" (I Sam. 8:7).

And humanity has been rejecting God ever since. It is man who does not want to get involved with his Creator! Isaiah was inspired to write: "And *there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee...*" (Isa. 64:7).

## **God's Love**

To extend His love toward His creation, it was necessary for God to make

the first move. We are told by the Apostle John that Christ said: "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...*" (John 6:44).

It just isn't in us to automatically love our Creator. God must first express His love toward us before we are able to reciprocate. We are told in Scripture that "God is love" (I John 4:8). He personifies it. He is the ultimate source of all love.

John further states, "Herein is love, *not that we loved God, but that he loved us...*" (I John 4:10). Man does not by nature love God. In fact, we are instructed that the natural human mind is *animosity* and enmity toward God! (Rom. 8:7.) How then does a human being ever come to love God? John answers: "We love him, *because he first loved us*" (I John 4:19).

But how is the love of God expressed? And how may it be reconciled with the suffering and pain we sometimes are allowed to endure?

God, in His revealed Word, makes several analogies which help throw light on this problem.

## **The Artist and His Creation**

Perhaps the least profound example which may be used to illustrate God's love for his human creation is the love of the artist for the artifact.

Jeremiah used an illustration from the arts in chapter 18, verse 6 — "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel."



Have you ever seen a landscape or portrait artist lovingly labor over a painting? He plans it, draws it in with loving care, and applies the pigment with careful diligence. Each stroke is significant. All the elements are painstakingly weighed against each other. Color, value, hue, light and shade, intensity and chroma are all evaluated and considered. The artist exults in the rendering and rejoices if the result is what he set out to achieve.

A sculptor may set out to sculpt a magnificent marble piece. He goes to great lengths to select the material with which to work. He may oversee the quarrying of a fine marble monolith. He examines it closely for quality and purity. He makes sure it is carefully protected as it is shipped to his studio. There he begins work by careful planning and measuring. Each stroke of the hammer is cautiously yet authoritatively executed as the chisel does its creative work. Soon the piece begins to emerge. The more it looks like what the sculptor envisioned, the more he delights in his work.

God is a great Artist who is lovingly

involved in a great work of art. He is the Master Architect and Builder who is producing a great spiritual house. Peter used this analogy in I Peter 2:5. "Ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house . . . acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Paul also used this analogy: "But Christ as a son over his own house; *whose house are we [Christians] . . .*" (Heb. 3:6).

God is also a Master Potter who will not be satisfied with the clay until it has achieved a certain character. (See "Lessons from . . . The Master Potter," Sept.-Oct. 1970 GOOD NEWS.)

Of course, any artist or artisan has to manipulate the materials with which he works. He does so with *loving* care and devotion. He pays attention to detail. He plans, he tests, he probes. He works with the *end product* in mind. So it is with the great Artist of the universe. He lovingly works with man and his environment to produce a glorious product that will give both Himself and the product immense satisfaction upon its completion. *Great art glorifies the artist who produced it!*

God intends that His children be

brought to *glory* — a condition of spiritual perfection and maturity. This in turn will glorify the Creator Himself. And all of this expresses God's great love for His human creation.

### The Shepherd and the Sheep

A second analogy of God and His people is that of the *shepherd and the sheep*. Asaph spoke of humanity as ". . . thy people and sheep of thy pasture . . ." (Ps. 79:13). This type is used throughout the Bible. Jesus is spoken of as the "good Shepherd."

This analogy is somewhat more sophisticated than the previous one. The relationship of a shepherd to his sheep — a man to his beast — illustrates some rather important points. Man is responsive and intelligent, yet decidedly *inferior* to God, as is the sheep to the shepherd. Yet even a human shepherd, far above the intellectual plane of his sheep, is deeply concerned with their welfare. He will fight off bears, wolves and other carnivores who attempt to rob him of his sheep. He will comfort them when they are frightened. He sees that they have adequate pasture and water. The good shepherd goes to great lengths to see that his sheep are well taken care of.

Think of a man and his dog. Why does a man train his dog? Primarily that he may love it, not that it may love him! But in addition, his training also makes the animal better able to serve him, not that *he* may serve *it*.

Man does not extend himself to the same degree to train a roach or a rat. The man takes pains with a dog — or a horse — because they are high on the intelligence scale of irrational creatures. A rat or a roach would hardly be worthy of such time and concern. A dog is more naturally lovable. And the man works at making it *fully lovable* — at least as much as is fitting between a human being and a brute beast.

No ridiculous anthropomorphic analogy should be made of this, of course. This is a limited analogy. But nevertheless God *does* make it. And we may learn from it.

God takes such pains to express His love to man because man alone is *worthy* of such concern. He is the apex of God's creation. God is naturally able to

A potter lovingly manipulates the clay with which he works.

Don Lorton — Ambassador College





love man quite readily — and yet He strives to make man *fully* lovable!

Now ask yourself this question. Could a dog who was being house trained or corrected for some social indiscretion possibly conclude that its master was “good”? (I speak facetiously of course, since a dog is incapable of such rationality.) Even so we sometimes fail to see the goodness of our Master, His purpose and methods.

### Husband/Wife

We may now proceed up the metaphorical ladder. God further explains His love to man by the analogy of *the marriage relationship*. This very expressive analogy is frequently used in the Bible to depict yet another aspect of God’s divine love for humanity.

Physical Israel was depicted as an abandoned baby girl left to the mercy of the elements. God found her, cleaned her up, reared her and espoused her (Ezek. 16). But when she reached the full flower of her beauty she betrayed her divine husband.

This was spiritual adultery.

The same kind of spiritual marriage relationship is also used to illustrate Christ’s relationship to *spiritual* Israel — the Church. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify” — set apart or separate — “and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27).

Now think about this. When a man enters into a love relationship with a woman, does he cease to care about her beauty, her appearance and cleanliness? Of course he doesn’t! He becomes *more acutely* concerned with such things. Love is more sensitive than hatred to every blemish, every line or wrinkle in one’s beloved. Hatred is disinterested, but love is extremely interested and highly involved. Love pays attention, but hatred ignores.

God, too, is highly concerned with every spiritual wrinkle or blemish a member of His Church may have. His concern and love may be expressed in a way that we do not recognize as love, however.

When God purges us of spiritual blemishes by whatever means He may choose to use, we all too often interpret His correction as undeserved suffering. Did Job take it kindly when God showed His love to him by allowing him to suffer so intensely? Not at all. Job writhed in self-pity. He claimed undeserved suffering. He argued with God and even accused Him! But finally he saw what God was doing and his reciprocal love to God grew even greater and deeper. His latter end was greater than the beginning.

Christ is a loving, concerned husband. He wants a wife who is spiritually healthy, morally clean and deeply affectionate toward Him. *He will have such a wife* by CLEANSING her in advance of His marriage (Rev. 19). While this cleansing may be painful — much like “grandma’s lye soap” — now, it will be much appreciated later when Jesus comes in His Kingdom!

### The Father/Son Analogy

Perhaps the greatest and most profound analogy used by God to illustrate His great love for mankind is the father/son analogy. This reflects the very relationship between God and Christ.

When this analogy was originally made and recorded as scripture, paternal authority stood on a much higher plane than it does today. Today the image of paternal authority is somewhat tarnished. But in biblical times it meant much more.

In this analogy — love between father and son — paternal love is essentially *authoritative* and the son’s love is that of *obedience*.

A son is a reflection of the father. Naturally the father wishes that reflection to be favorable. He wishes the son to be honorable — to *glorify* rather than besmirch the family name. The father uses his authority (if done correctly) to make the son into what the father in his superior wisdom realizes he should be.

God chastens and corrects His children in like manner, to strengthen their quality of character. This chastening is an expression of divine love. If God neglected to do this we could not consider ourselves His children.

“For whom the Lord *loveth* he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Heb. 12:6-8).

Of course we do not rejoice in correction at the time we are receiving it! It is not until *later* that we realize the good fruit of it. Then we are able to appreciate the love which was extended our way when the punishment was meted out (Heb. 12:11).

### Why We Were Created

Was man created so that he could love God? Quite the contrary!

Man was primarily created so that God could take pleasure in and express love toward him. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and *for thy pleasure they are and were created*” (Rev. 4:11).

God does not exist for the sake of man. Nor does man exist exclusively for his own sake. He exists as an object of God’s outgoing love!

As a great Master Artisan or Craftsman, God takes pains to ensure that His product is of the finest possible quality and beauty. God expresses His love to His sheep by protecting, feeding and caring for them as a concerned shepherd. As a loving husband strives to enhance his wife’s beauty and comeliness, so God purges the Church of blemishes and moral uncleanness. And as a kind, concerned, yet firmly authoritative Father, God chastens and corrects His spiritual children.

All of these biblical analogies can aid us in comprehending the love of God for His human creation. But none of them is truly adequate to convey a really profound understanding of God’s love.

Humanly we are limited. We see as if through a darkened glass. The whole of God’s tremendous love is much greater than we can understand. But we can indeed be grateful God is not limited, and that neither is His boundless love and concern for His human creation — especially His spiritually begotten children. □



# PARENTS—

## how not to provoke your teen-agers

**Ephesians 4:6 and Colossians 3:21 tell us not to provoke our children to wrath. Yet, perhaps without realizing it, many parents are doing just that. Check up on yourself and see what you can do to improve your relationship with the children God has given you.**

by Arch Bradley  
and Gil Goethals

**T**HIS IS what a teen-age daughter of parents in God's Church, with tears rolling down her cheeks, recently told her local minister.

"I *want* to please my parents, but I can never please my dad no matter how hard I work — he always expects more. I try, but I can't get all the work done. I want to talk to him but he doesn't have the time to listen.

"When dad comes home from work we don't get love, we get 'chewed out.' If I go someplace and don't call in right away, I am in trouble.

"I am never allowed any mistakes. I must bend to every demand no matter what. I am never allowed to make my own decisions.

"Dad always thinks I am going to do something wrong, almost to the point where I feel I might as well."

### A Typical Example?

How many of the rest of us are being "too hard" and too unbending in dealing with our teen-agers? Paul mentioned this as an all-too-likely situation in Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers, do

not irritate and provoke your children to anger — do not exasperate them to resentment — but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord" (*The Amplified Bible*).

This common parental tendency has alienated all too many of our sons and daughters from family and from the Church. We've "turned them off," and many teen-agers have simply turned their backs on the Church, reasoning that, "If that's what Christianity is, they can have it!" The result: we have presented a stumblingblock to many others who yet faithfully attend.

Let's take a candid look, then find a realistic solution to the problem.

### Why Parents Are Strict

First, let's realize and admit that parents are *not* deliberately trying to drive their children away from the Church, nor intentionally making life unbearable for them. And teen-agers need to realize this — that parents really *do* desire the *best* for their children.

And parents want to prevent at all costs their sons and daughters from making the same mistakes, and suffering the same resulting penalties that they have lived through.

Parents — isn't it true that you want desperately to *protect* your teen-agers from having to learn from the "school of hard knocks"? Don't you want them to have a better life than you had, to steer the shortest and straightest course to success and happiness? You desire, as Christ put it, "That they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

But in our zeal to accomplish this, we often become *overly* strict and uncompromising about relatively unim-

portant matters. To our teen-agers, we appear unreasonable, unthoughtful, unreachable, unsympathetic and dictatorial.

When does a teen-ager become an adult? At what age? The father of a 21-year-old man recently related how he woke up one day and had to face the fact that his "little boy" had become a *man*. Yet, in the father's mind his son was still his *boy*, which points up the fact that during those teen-age years we parents often fail to recognize the development that is taking place and continue to treat our teen-agers purely as *children*.

Actually, terrific changes are occurring *gradually* throughout their teen-age years. But it is hard — sometimes even traumatic — for us to realize that our children are growing up. And we often unthinkingly deal with them totally as *children* when in fact they are already well into the process of *maturing* and undergoing the transformation from little boy or girl to young man or woman.

But though you may still think of your sixteen-year-old as your "little boy," it is not realistic to expect to dominate him as you did when he was ten. Because he is *not* a ten-year-old anymore. Granted, he does not yet have the mind of a thirty- fifty- or sixty-year-old — but he's not supposed to have. He would be abnormal if he did!

The sixteen-year-old realizes his interests, mental abilities, emotions, etc., have developed greatly since he was ten years old. He knows he is far along the road toward adulthood. So if he is treated like a small child, he resents it and a "generation gap" can begin to develop.



## Teen-agers Deserve Respect Also

Obviously, a complete cessation of parental supervision is not the answer. Your teen-age sons or daughters are not out from under your supervision while at home, and they *should* respect your authority. But you also must mix with your supervision a great deal of respect for them, as befits individuals who are no longer little children.

They aren't perfect yet, and don't claim to be, so don't try to demand perfection of them. Think instead of how God deals with His spiritual sons. He gives us time to *grow* toward perfection. He is extremely patient with us, overlooking and forgiving multitudes of shortcomings and mistakes. Rather than reminding us of each and every little error we make, He simply overlooks and forgets many of them, encouraging us to "stay in there and keep plugging."

Notice Psalm 78:37-39, which relates God's great patience with ancient Israel: "For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant. But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away and cometh not again."

Let's play that part back again! "*For he remembered that they were but flesh.*" God is realistic — He knows you and I have not attained to anything near His level of perfection. He realizes perfection is a *process* and respects our efforts toward it. Let's deal with our teen-agers likewise — with respect and great patience, not expecting *instant* perfection in all points of life.

In many cases our teen-agers are experiencing more problems and trying circumstances, through opposition to their beliefs at school, than we are at home or on the job. And in most cases doing a tremendous job of sticking to their guns. There are few desires or pulls greater than the desire to "fit in" or be like the crowd. Yet often our teen-agers cannot fully participate in

school affairs and hence cannot "belong."

Let's face it. If you don't attend school dances and athletic events, which so frequently occur on the Sabbath, if you keep the annual Holy Days, don't dabble in dope, do refuse premarital sex, rarely date anyone at school and don't mirror the permissive attitude toward everything in general, it is *hard!*

Most of our teen-agers are nevertheless doing an admirable job. Some of us might not do as well as they if we were subjected to the same pressures. So let's give them the backing, patience, appreciation and respect which they so greatly deserve. The Apostle John showed his respect for young men who had "overcome the wicked one" (I John 2:13). Let's pay the same respect to our teen-agers who daily resist Satan's influence on and through this society.

## Listen to Your Teen-agers

Remember the quote introducing this article? "I want to talk but my dad doesn't have time to listen." You need to take time with your sons and daughters. *Listen* to their ideas, opinions, evaluations of situations and problems. Has God patiently and attentively listened to your prayers? Certainly He has. Even when some of your requests may have been unjustified and "off base," He has continued to respect and hear you.

But here is the chief cause for the communication gap that so often exists between parents and children. Many parents complain that their sons and daughters do not talk to them or let them know what's on their minds. Actually, the problem often is that the parents will not listen — and the teen-agers know it.

Here are two basic points of courtesy in listening. 1) Don't interrupt your teen-agers when they are expressing themselves to you, regardless of how you feel about what is being discussed. Remember the proverb: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Prov. 18:13). 2) When your teen-agers are explaining something or trying to prove a point, reserve your

judgment or decision until they have "had their say." In other words, listen with an *open mind*. Give them the same courtesy in this regard that you would or should show friends or individuals where you work. Doing otherwise can contribute toward "provoking them to anger" which God warns against.

## Let Them Make Decisions

The purpose of child rearing is not to build robots who instinctively obey on command, but to teach budding young free moral agents — potential God beings — how to make wise decisions.

We do not mean to say that parents should allow their sons and daughters to make *all* decisions, directing their lives without any attention whatsoever from mother and dad. But there is a right balance. "I am never allowed any mistakes," said the girl we quoted earlier. "I must bend to every demand no matter what. I am never allowed to make my own decisions. Dad always thinks I am going to do something wrong, almost to the point where I feel I might as well."

God allowed the Israelites of old to make their own decisions — even when they were wrong ones! He knew that they could not learn any other way. When Samuel had grown old and Israel wanted a physical king to rule over them, God allowed them to make a decision *even though He knew* it was a bad one.

"Give us a king like all the other nations have," they pleaded. Samuel was terribly upset and went to God for advice. "Do as they say," God replied, "for I am the one they are rejecting, not you — they don't want me to be their king any longer. Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have continually forsaken me and followed other gods. And now they are giving you the same treatment. Do as they ask, but warn them about what it will be like to have a king!" (I Sam. 8:5-9, *The Living Bible*).

Samuel informed the people of the consequences of their decision (verses 10-18). He told them it would mean many disadvantages and would lead to many problems from which God would not deliver them.



"But the people refused to listen to Samuel's warning. 'Even so, we still want a king,' they said, 'for we want to be like the nations around us. He will govern us and lead us to battle.' So Samuel told God what the people had said, and God replied again, 'Then do as they say and give them a king'" (verses 19-22).

Notice how God handled the situation overall. In spite of God's warnings, the nation of Israel was convinced that it needed a physical king. That was their decision. And God honored it. He entreated them as a father does a child, and warned them of the dangers of their decision. When Israel accepted those dangers and stuck with her decision, God then honored that decision.

We can use this same approach, using wisdom of course. We can and should give our teen-agers parental advice and counsel, but leaving some decisions to them.

On the other hand, you certainly wouldn't allow your teen-ager to decide if he or she is going to have an all-day party in your house on the Sabbath. You are responsible before God for what goes on in your house on the Sabbath. This is a decision for you to make, not your children.

### Do Things Together

Young people want to be active, to experience and learn new things — and rightly so. There are plenty of *good* things for them to experience. And a wise parent will pitch in and participate with his children in many of these activities and interests. It is important to find common interests with your teen-agers and pursue them *together!* For instance, if your children like the outdoors, you might want to take up backpacking with them and make it a *family* affair.

Think back on your own childhood. Some of the fondest memories are sure to be those of doing things as a family and with your parents. The same will be true of your children when they are your age. So build fond memories into your children's lives now. Build the rapport and friendship between parents and teen-agers that God intends, and which will serve them well for all their life to come.

### Expect the Best

One of the greatest ways that we can help our young people is to look at what they *can* do, at their *virtues*, their *accomplishments*, instead of mistakes or shortcomings. *Be positive* with your children! Expect the *best* of them, not the worst.

And compliment them on their right decisions, actions and jobs well done.

"'Nothing kills confidence faster,' said Yale's outstanding swimming coach Bob Kiphuth, 'than always keeping the pressure on. If you work your heart out at the high jump and finally clear the bar at six feet, you deserve appreciation.' But if the coach comes over and says, 'Come on, you can do

gave him another job, equally dangerous, equally important. This time he came through so heroically that he was awarded a decoration.

"When a friend tried to congratulate him, the young officer cried out: 'But what else could I do? I failed my commander and he went on trusting me!'" (*ibid.*).

"If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him" (I Cor. 13:7, *The Living Bible*). You do love your teen-agers. So show it!

Sure, teen-agers are going to make mistakes. But we *all* do. Let them know you appreciate their efforts to



Warren Watson — Ambassador College

**Communication and mutual understanding are vital keys to a harmonious relationship between parents and their teen-age children.**

better than that!' you are going to wonder if it was worth it" (*What a Supervisor Should Know About Employee Relations*, The Dartnell Corporation).

Use this principle in your own child rearing. A teen-ager will respond a whole lot faster to positive encouragement than nagging criticism. Here is another example:

"A young officer was given an important assignment. He failed miserably. To everyone's surprise, the colonel

avoid and overcome them. As the old song goes, "Accentuate the positive."

In conclusion, here is another scripture very much like the one with which we started: "Fathers, do not provoke or irritate or fret your children — do not be hard on them or harass them; lest they become discouraged and sullen and morose and feel inferior and frustrated; do not break their spirit" (Col. 3:21, *Amplified Bible*).

The stakes are high! A year from now, will your teen-agers be attending services and growing in God's truth? Or — will they have become negative, disillusioned and sour toward God's Church? What you do will largely determine which they do! □



# Give Yourself a “FINANCIAL PHYSICAL”

**If you are like most people, chances are you have spent more hours playing the high-finance and real-estate game of Monopoly than you have in seriously analyzing your own REAL-LIFE financial situation. Here's a good way to check up on your financial picture.**

by Robert D. Ellsworth

IT'S AMAZING how many people can spend endless hours enjoying the thrill of vicarious financial adventure — perhaps even winning — while their own personal financial ships are rapidly sinking. Unfortunately, winning at Monopoly is small consolation for losing the more serious game of personal financial management!

This article is aimed at helping you spend some profitable time examining your personal “monopoly” — your home, your family, and your very real financial picture. Your “empire.” Because in the true-to-life game of monopoly we play every day, the stakes are much higher — and win or lose, the game is “for keeps.”

Best of all, the *real* game, if played properly, can be much more exciting and challenging. If you're careful, diligent, and follow *all* the rules, you can't help but win!

## Are You Fiscally Fit?

To assist you in winning this game, we have provided on the following page a personal *work sheet* for your own financial self-analysis. Like the Annual Statement of a corporation, it is designed to measure your financial sound-

ness. Think of it as a “financial checkup” or a “fiscal physical.” Fill it out. Find out where you stand.

Only by realistically evaluating your present financial picture can you ever hope to improve your future one. So Part I of this form is designed to help you see where you stand on a monthly basis. It compares monthly expenses with monthly income. Surprisingly, many people don't know whether they are getting further ahead or further behind as the months go by. Part II of the form will give you a picture of your net worth. Like the balance sheet of a corporate financial statement, it will compare your total assets with total liabilities.

As Ben Franklin put it, “A small leak can sink a great ship.” But by putting your finances down in black and white, you will be able to eliminate guesswork and be able to locate for more profitable use that “extra, where did it go?” money you never seem able to account for.

Accurate knowledge of where your money is going, and a realistic picture of your net worth, is a vital step to financial security. Then you can stop unnecessary spending and waste, and become an organized and efficient manager of your money.

## A Biblical Principle

We are instructed in the book of Proverbs: “Be thou *diligent* to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds” (Prov. 27:23). It is this kind of a disciplined and knowledgeable *control* of our financial situations that can make the difference between always “just getting by” and actually attaining the financial goals we have set for ourselves.

Again, the Proverbs counsel us: “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let *all*

thy ways be established [well ordered and well considered]” (Prov. 4:26).

Organizing your personal finances can be fun and rewarding. It will bring a deep sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. It can help influence your children to spend their money intelligently. And it can provide the *extra money* for those more important things in life you may be neglecting or having to put off.

Statistics reveal that few people have ever really taken the time to *organize* and *control* their personal spending habits. Most people don't plan to fail. They just fail to plan. Too many people — the vast majority, in fact — have only dreamed of financial security, but they have never taken the steps necessary to attain it. What will you do to make your future the exception and not the rule?

All financial experts will agree that you don't have to be a monetary genius to make your money do more. It is through learning, organizing and diligent effort that you find practical and effective ways to get the most value for the money you spend. This is all the more important as inflation continues to spiral upwards and many of our currencies become worth less and less.

During the last several years, as chronic inflation has been getting more and more out of hand, many helpful books have appeared which give sound and practical ideas for improving the purchasing power of your money. Many of these are in paperback — check your local bookstore.

We hope this “financial physical” will inspire you to develop a knowledgeable approach to spending, provide a firm footing for a sound budget, and enable you to become more financially stable for the building of a happy, successful family life. □



# PERSONAL FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

<b>PART 1</b>  What Are You Spending?	<b>A MONTHLY EXPENSES</b> (per month) <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>1. Tithes &amp; Offerings .....</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Rent – or House Payment .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Groceries (Include Milk &amp; Bakery) .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>4. Telephone and Water .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>5. Gas and Electricity .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>6. Clothing (Include Cleaning) .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>7. Medical Care .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>8. Transportation (Include Operating Cost of Car) .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>9. Recreation .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>10. Insurance:</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>    House and Contents .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>    Automobile .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>    Other .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>11. Miscellaneous .....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: right;"><b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....</td></tr> </table>	1. Tithes & Offerings .....	\$ .....	2. Rent – or House Payment .....	.....	3. Groceries (Include Milk & Bakery) .....	.....	4. Telephone and Water .....	.....	5. Gas and Electricity .....	.....	6. Clothing (Include Cleaning) .....	.....	7. Medical Care .....	.....	8. Transportation (Include Operating Cost of Car) .....	.....	9. Recreation .....	.....	10. Insurance:		House and Contents .....	.....	Automobile .....	.....	Other .....	.....	11. Miscellaneous .....	.....	<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....		<b>C REGULAR SAVINGS</b> (per month) <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>1. ....</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>2. ....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>3. ....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: right;"><b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....</td></tr> </table>	1. ....	\$ .....	2. ....	.....	3. ....	.....	<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....	
	1. Tithes & Offerings .....	\$ .....																																						
	2. Rent – or House Payment .....	.....																																						
3. Groceries (Include Milk & Bakery) .....	.....																																							
4. Telephone and Water .....	.....																																							
5. Gas and Electricity .....	.....																																							
6. Clothing (Include Cleaning) .....	.....																																							
7. Medical Care .....	.....																																							
8. Transportation (Include Operating Cost of Car) .....	.....																																							
9. Recreation .....	.....																																							
10. Insurance:																																								
House and Contents .....	.....																																							
Automobile .....	.....																																							
Other .....	.....																																							
11. Miscellaneous .....	.....																																							
<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....																																								
1. ....	\$ .....																																							
2. ....	.....																																							
3. ....	.....																																							
<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....																																								
<b>B ALL OTHER PAYMENTS</b> (per month) <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>1. ....</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>2. ....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>3. ....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>4. ....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td>5. ....</td><td>.....</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: right;"><b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....</td></tr> </table>	1. ....	\$ .....	2. ....	.....	3. ....	.....	4. ....	.....	5. ....	.....	<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....		<b>D TOTAL TAKEN FROM NET PAY MONTHLY</b> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>1. Total Monthly Expenses Box A</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Total Monthly Payments Box B</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Total Regular Monthly Savings Box C</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: right;"><b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....</td></tr> </table>	1. Total Monthly Expenses Box A	\$ .....	2. Total Monthly Payments Box B	\$ .....	3. Total Regular Monthly Savings Box C	\$ .....	<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....																				
1. ....	\$ .....																																							
2. ....	.....																																							
3. ....	.....																																							
4. ....	.....																																							
5. ....	.....																																							
<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....																																								
1. Total Monthly Expenses Box A	\$ .....																																							
2. Total Monthly Payments Box B	\$ .....																																							
3. Total Regular Monthly Savings Box C	\$ .....																																							
<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....																																								
<b>E NET MONTHLY INCOME</b> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>1. Your Take-home Wage Per Month</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Spouse's Take-home Wage Per Month</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>3. All Other Income Per Month:</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>    a. ....</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>    b. ....</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: right;"><b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....</td></tr> </table>	1. Your Take-home Wage Per Month	\$ .....	2. Spouse's Take-home Wage Per Month	\$ .....	3. All Other Income Per Month:		a. ....	\$ .....	b. ....	\$ .....	<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....		<b>F WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT FINANCIAL POSITION?</b> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>1. Total of Box E .....</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Total of Box D .....</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> <tr><td>3. UNENCUMBERED BALANCE</td><td>\$ .....</td></tr> </table>	1. Total of Box E .....	\$ .....	2. Total of Box D .....	\$ .....	3. UNENCUMBERED BALANCE	\$ .....																					
1. Your Take-home Wage Per Month	\$ .....																																							
2. Spouse's Take-home Wage Per Month	\$ .....																																							
3. All Other Income Per Month:																																								
a. ....	\$ .....																																							
b. ....	\$ .....																																							
<b>TOTAL</b> \$ .....																																								
1. Total of Box E .....	\$ .....																																							
2. Total of Box D .....	\$ .....																																							
3. UNENCUMBERED BALANCE	\$ .....																																							

<b>PART 2</b>  Financial Data – Net Worth	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Assets</th> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Liabilities</th> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> </tr> <tr> <td>Cash and Checking</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">100</td> <td>Current Bills</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Savings Account <i>Ret</i></td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">5500</td> <td>Mortgage</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">8500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Government Bonds</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Auto Loans</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">3000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurance Cash Values</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Securities Loans</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mutual Funds/Securities</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Real Estate Loans</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Real Estate/Home(s)</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">25000</td> <td>Bank Loans</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Automobile(s)</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">5000</td> <td>Consumer Loans</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;">2000</td> <td>Other</td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total Assets</b></td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"><b>35600</b></td> <td><b>Total Liabilities</b></td> <td style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"><b>11600</b></td> </tr> </table>	Assets		Liabilities		Cash and Checking	100	Current Bills	100	Savings Account <i>Ret</i>	5500	Mortgage	8500	Government Bonds		Auto Loans	3000	Insurance Cash Values		Securities Loans		Mutual Funds/Securities		Real Estate Loans		Real Estate/Home(s)	25000	Bank Loans		Automobile(s)	5000	Consumer Loans		Other	2000	Other		<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>35600</b>	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>11600</b>	
Assets		Liabilities																																								
Cash and Checking	100	Current Bills	100																																							
Savings Account <i>Ret</i>	5500	Mortgage	8500																																							
Government Bonds		Auto Loans	3000																																							
Insurance Cash Values		Securities Loans																																								
Mutual Funds/Securities		Real Estate Loans																																								
Real Estate/Home(s)	25000	Bank Loans																																								
Automobile(s)	5000	Consumer Loans																																								
Other	2000	Other																																								
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>35600</b>	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>11600</b>																																							
Estimated Family Net Worth* \$ <u>24000</u>		*Note: Subtract liabilities from assets to determine estimated family net worth																																								



# Are You Just "ENDURING TO THE END"?

**Some in God's Church simply intend to "tough it out" until Christ returns. Literally, they are "ENDURING to the end" (Matt. 24:13) — but not the way Christ intended. Are you making their mistake?**

by Richard A. Wiedenheft

**T**HINK BACK to the time just before your first contact with the message proclaimed by God's Church. Your life had probably become somewhat frustrating and purposeless. You had problems and worries. You saw inequities and wrongs all around you. Perhaps you wondered, "What is it all about?"

Something was missing!

And then came the thrill and challenge of God's truth. You saw in it the answers to many gnawing doubts, the solutions to problems — real, positive, workable principles that could make your life fuller, happier and more abundant.

You seized God's way with zest and put those principles into action — at the cost of your hobbies, perhaps of your job, your friends, even your family. But it was well worth the sacrifice because your life now had meaning and direction — and you had the promise of *eternal life!* You abounded with the zeal that God calls the "first love" for His truth.

## Routine of Christian Living

As the days, weeks and months rolled by, however, you discovered that *you were still you*, that life still had its frustrations, disappointments and heartaches. Even as a converted and changed Christian, you continued to have trials and tests, some of which were burdensome and wearing.

And so your "first love" began to

fade, your original childlike excitement now tempered with the mature realization that God's way is not a magical, mystical solution to all ills — that it requires hard work on your part.

Are you now therefore one of those who are simply "waiting it out" — tolerating your problems and shortcomings — hoping that somehow when Christ appears in the clouds your whole mental attitude will be instantly changed? Are you looking for God's Kingdom to bring you "instant happiness"?

Brethren, don't be deceived. God is not going to end all our problems, trials and tests for us while we are rising to meet Christ in the air — we must be working on and conquering them now, by our own hard effort magnified and made effective through God's spiritual help!

God promises eternal spirit life and rulership in His Kingdom *only* to those who *in this life* develop righteous spiritual character — who practice love, joy, peace, happiness and overcome and solve their problems *now!*

## God's People Should Be Happy

Jesus explained to His disciples that one who is faithful in little will be faithful in much (Luke 16:10). If we learn here and now to lead full, happy, purposeful physical lives, to master and overcome our afflictions, God knows we can be happy for all eternity in His Kingdom.

In John 10:10 Christ told the Pharisees: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly.*" God intended our physical life to be an abundant one — not necessarily full of wealth and earthly possessions, but full of love, joy, peace and happiness.

"Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance . . ." are among the fruits of God's Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Notice that *love, joy and peace* head the list. These are the spiritual works by which God is judging us.

Can we really evidence love, joy, and peace if we are just "waiting it out"? Obviously not. Putting up with our shortcomings and allowing circumstances subject to our control to toss us about — hoping that Christ will return before our endurance runs out — is not the way to peace and happiness!

When Christ returns He wants to find His servants "so doing" (Matt. 24:46) — actively and aggressively making changes in themselves; actually solving problems — not simply "marking time" and putting up with their lacks — not relying on someone else to push them into overcoming. He wants to find in us ever-increasing joy and the sense of purpose that comes only with spiritual growth.

Take a test.

Can you say that since you were put into God's Church you have been very blessed — and that you are being spiri-



tually blessed more all the time?  
If not, something is amiss.

If you don't feel very blessed and happy — and increasingly so as time passes, you *may* be "missing the boat."

### **Trials, Yes! Unhappiness, No!**

Certainly God did promise trials and tribulation for true Christians. Anyone who will live godly is in for some rough times.

But even in the face of trials, a Christian should not become unhappy and frustrated. James commanded, "My brethren, count it *all joy* when ye fall into divers temptations [trials]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3).

No crisis or dilemma seems cause for us to shout for joy — at least not in the immediate physical sense. But we are commanded by our Creator to rejoice in the *long range* good that a trial can produce. We can have the vision and foresight to know that God is absolutely in control, allowing a problem only for our ultimate spiritual good.

Trials can be traumatic; but they need not destroy the overall contentment and joy we have in knowing we are now learning how to live so we can reign for all eternity with Christ.

*Nothing* must be allowed to blur our vision of our goal. Then, *nothing* can destroy our happiness! Christ exhorted His disciples: "... rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you" — or because of any supernatural abilities we might be given — "... but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). That is our cause for great rejoicing, regardless of our physical circumstances.

### **Be Deeply Converted**

Although the temporary physical blessings of this life can add to our happiness, we must never let the lack or desire for them destroy or ruin our rejoicing. No attempt to base our life and happiness on physical things which can so easily be taken from us can ever succeed.

But to be able to get our minds off the physical things of this world, we must be *deeply converted* — we must

strive to rid ourselves of the habits, aspirations and vanity of our carnal lives. We must understand and despise the carnality we see in our own minds. We must be willing to accept correction and admit our weaknesses and faults.

We should pray for God to show us our errors and shortcomings, to correct us in His mercy; and we should also ask God's ministers to help us see where we need to change.

Admitting error, accepting correction, then striving to overcome, must become a daily challenge for us — knowing that we are qualifying for an eternal goal which is the foundation of our happiness.

With this spiritual goal in mind, we can greatly appreciate any physical blessings God has granted us and use them to the fullest. Sin and unhappiness come from misuse or abuse — but happiness, peace and joy come from the *proper* appreciation and use of all that God has created.

Enjoy the taste of delicious food; be inspired by beautiful music; be thrilled by the fellowship of other members of God's family; appreciate the glory of God's creation. In proper balance drink in of all of God's physical creation, but always seek His Kingdom *first* (Matt. 6:33).

### **Solve Your Problems**

As true Christians, we must actually solve the problems of this life. Never think or say, "I can't do things any different. That is the way I am," or, "I can't help it if conditions are that way" — and slip into a do-nothing attitude.

Too many of us are satisfied with second place — with less than a fulfilling marriage, with less than obedient children. We bounce from job to job without direction. We allow circumstances to shape our lives. We slip by from paycheck to paycheck just keeping our financial noses above water. We allow our own physical bodies to remain too fat, or enervated, or in pain, when it lies within our power to correct the situation — if we only would exert the effort to do so.

Are you developing and using your mind, broadening your mental hori-

zons, learning in fields you have previously ignored or had no opportunity? Then again, perhaps you are already too broad in your interests and need to narrow them down and begin to *specialize* in certain fields.

Granted, there are limitations to what we can alter in this life — but are we really changing to the utmost? It's true that change is often arduous, embarrassing and traumatic, but are we really measuring it as we should in comparison to the jubilation beyond?

Are you solving and overcoming problems — putting them into the past? Or engaged in a simple endurance contest?

### **Accentuate the Positive**

A basic human tendency is to see the negative side of things. It doesn't matter who you are, you can always find something to be discouraged about if you want to. There is always trouble in the world, in the nation, in every community. There are aches and pains, discouragement and disappointment in our personal lives.

But one thing is sure: worrying about these problems, brooding about them, being unhappy about them, won't make them go away.

So what should we do?

We must learn to thrust our problems into the hands of God through prayer and meditate about the positive aspects of our life and His way. We of all people do know who we are — we know where we're going. We have the absolute promise that "... all things work together for *good* to them that love God..." (Rom. 8:28). Before us lies the greatest goal that a human being could imagine — the promised goal of being in God's family for all eternity.

Brethren, let's accentuate the *positive!*

Let's *recapture* the original zest and happiness we experienced when we first began to walk in God's way of life.

Remember, this physical existence is the training and testing ground for an eternal spiritual life in God's glorious family. Eternal happiness is available only to those who learn true happiness here and now! □



The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel. 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; 3 To acquire the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; 4 To give success to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. 5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: 6 You shall understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of

# MAKE PROVERBS WORK FOR YOU!

**D**O YOU know how to act in every circumstance? The book of Proverbs offers you that important knowledge.

Proverbs begins, "These are the proverbs of King Solomon of Israel, David's son: he wrote them to teach his people how to live — how to act in every circumstance" (Prov. 1:1-2, *The Living Bible*).

Proverbs can teach you, for example, how to get ahead in your job — to earn more money, obtain a better position, etc. — and to do it all God's way. Proverbs can show you how to be respected in a right way, how to have peace of mind, how to cultivate friends and avoid arguments; to avoid accidents, rear successful children, be able to say the right thing at the right time to avoid "putting your foot in your mouth."

Here is a formula for making Proverbs a *living* part of your life so you can not only handle difficult or awkward situations, but also use Proverbs as a

***Have you learned to put Proverbs into daily practice in your life? Here is a sensible approach to getting more out of these practical, God-inspired scriptures.***

by Arch Bradley

spiritual tool to overcome specific personal problems and build distinctive spiritual strengths into your character and personality. Whatever your lack may be, you can put Proverbs to work on your problem.

### Analyze Yourself

What do you need to work on? What area of your life has been a chronic disappointment, embarrassment, or thorn in your side? The first

thing to do is define your problem and your goal. Pinpoint a character weakness, or a situation in your life which you know needs improvement.

Don't hesitate to seek counsel about this when you feel it is needed. Of course you should ask God for guidance. You might also ask your husband or wife or a friend when or if you feel it is necessary or expedient. Feel free to ask your local minister.

It is best to choose only *one* goal to work on at a time. An army can rarely wage war successfully against three or four nations simultaneously. Neither can we overcome *all* of our problems at once.

Let's take a hypothetical example to demonstrate exactly how to use Proverbs in daily life. Let's assume you have had problems at work. You just haven't received the promotions you feel you deserve. Other men with less seniority have seemingly passed you up and are now supervisors or foremen. You naturally feel you have let your



family and yourself down by missing the promotions and accompanying salary increases.

We have defined the problem — now let's define your overall goal. In this case, your solution to the problem — your goal — is to *become a successful employee.*

### Research

Now is the time to do "homework" on the subject. Since Proverbs gives us guidelines about "how to act in every circumstance," let's find which specific Proverbs tell us how to act in circumstances on our job in order to be successful. There are two ways to accomplish this. You can comb the Proverbs for scriptures relating to employment situations by quickly reading through Proverbs and jotting down applicable scriptures as you come to them, or by using various topical Bibles and concordances.

Then it is helpful to take each scripture individually and think of the various ways it applies to your job situation — how you *may* be breaking the particular principle, and how you can *rectify* the situation. Write the scripture down. It is helpful to write its meaning in your own words as it applies to you, and at the same time you might want to list various facets that apply to your situation.

Let's take a few scriptures to demonstrate.

### A Practical Example

Proverbs 24:27 — "Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house." Applied in modern terms, this proverb stresses becoming established and as secure and successful as possible in our employment as a very high priority regarding this physical life.

Obviously, an individual should establish and secure his source or means of income *before* he starts spending it! The Bible specifically mentions doing this even before buying or building a home. Of course, spending money on luxuries and pleasures when our job is insecure is very unwise. So we see the thrust of this verse is very important: it puts things in *perspective* for us, placing

a man's job at the top of the list of daily physical priorities.

Here is another good one we can apply to employment — Proverbs 13:18. "Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honored." Again, applying this to our hypothetical example, let's ask ourselves if we have followed this proverb on the job. Do we take correction? Do we follow the boss' orders? Do we carry out his wishes? Have we shown a willingness and eagerness to eliminate bad work habits and cultivate good ones?

Further, we are open to new ideas for improving the quality and quantity of our work? Do we spend time, on our own, thinking of how to accomplish tasks more efficiently? Have we even taken the initiative to learn additional job-related skills — if need be on our own time? Do we take advantage of training meetings and handbooks, even though it means studying after work hours? How about night classes? We must be willing to learn more than is required of us in order to be successful employees.

This is how to get ahead *God's way* — by going above and beyond what is expected of us. This scripture states a very *practical* and *reliable* law of success. Do you see how you can apply it and all of its applications to your job each and every day? You can actually measure yourself by this scripture. And by meditating on the many ways to apply it in your work, you can literally change your employment future and over a period of time your family's standard of living!

Remember to find proverbs which *specifically* deal with your problem and the many-faceted aspects of it. Avoid generalizations such as, "Be industrious." Break it down much finer than that by asking, "*How* can I be more industrious?" Then find various proverbs to answer that question.

### Check Bible Helps and Translations

As we all know, precise meanings of scriptures are hidden at times by King James language. Therefore, it is very helpful to check reliable references and translations to dig the meaning out of

scriptures we might not otherwise understand clearly.

*The Living Bible* is helpful in some instances by rendering the Proverbs into modern English. Of course, we must realize it is a paraphrased rendition of the Scriptures, not a translation. Therefore, it is always wise to check individual passages with the King James Version.

Proverbs 10:4-5 is a simple example of *The Living Bible's* modern-English approach. The King James reads, "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." *The Living Bible* reads, "Lazy men are soon poor; hard workers get rich. A wise youth makes hay while the sun shines, but what a shame to see a lad who sleeps away his hour of opportunity."

Here is another interesting one to apply to our hypothetical job problem as well as other areas of life. Proverbs 10:19 reads, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." *The Living Bible* reads, "Don't talk so much. You keep putting your foot in your mouth. Be sensible and turn off the flow!"

It is helpful to write down, in your own words, how each proverb specifically applies to *your* individual problem — in this case, your job. You might ask yourself these questions. "Do I talk when I should be working — am I too gabby or windy? Do I try to tell others how to perform their jobs when I should be concentrating on my *own*? Are my coffee breaks too long because I'm 'shooting the bull' with the fellows or because I'm too involved in those ten o'clock 'hen parties' with the girls? Do I get right to work when I arrive each morning, or do I waste ten or fifteen minutes discussing politics, my new car, etc.?" Answer questions such as these *honestly*.

With this particular example, you would be wise to write out *exactly* what you intend to do *tomorrow* to control that tongue and be a more profitable employee. Do you see how prayerful study and specific application



of just *one* proverb can change your entire approach to your job?

Continuing with our "example study," let's take one more scripture from *The Living Bible* to see how clearly it can drive a lesson home.

Do you admit mistakes when your supervisor points them out? Many men do not grow in their jobs because they justify their mistakes, try to cover them up, or they refuse to take advice and learn to accomplish responsibilities by means of new, more effective approaches. They simply want to do things "their way." "If you profit from constructive criticism you will be elected to the wise men's hall of fame. But to reject criticism is to harm yourself and your own best interests" (Prov. 15:31-32, *The Living Bible*).

The man who not only *readily* accepts and acts on constructive criticism and advice, but actually *seeks* it will be successful — God's way!

Although the King James Version is usually clear, *The Living Bible* often adds a little more emphasis, clarity, color, interest, and even humor at times! The Moffatt translation and *The Amplified Bible* are also useful. However, remember to check their meanings with the King James Version to verify their accuracy.

### Proverbs by Soncino

The Soncino Press publishes a very good non-technical reference work on Proverbs — perhaps the most helpful for the most of us who are uneducated linguistically and can't tell Hebrew from Swahili.

Here is an example of how the Soncino Proverbs can clarify and bring out the depth of meaning of the Scriptures. Proverbs 29:11 in the King James translation states: "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterward." Soncino mentions that the word "spirit" (King James, "mind") is a synonym for "anger" as also in Proverbs 16:32 and Proverbs 25:28. Soncino mentions that "A fool, when roused, gives full vent to his temper and fails to exercise restraint."

How about this principle in relation to your conduct on the job? Failure to get along with others, cooperate with supervisors and keep a cool head under

pressure are all problems which rob many men of success, as well as often actually *costing* them their jobs.

Soncino goes on to mention that a wise man holds his anger back, keeps his mouth shut, and doesn't "fly off the handle" because he realizes the consequences such behavior bequeaths to him.

Apply this in your job situation. Are you generally well-liked by other employees? Or do they think of you as a loner, someone always wanting your way? Are you willing to listen and, at times, accept constructive suggestions about improving your work which might be contrary to your personal approach? Just how *easy* are you to get along with? Are you a "hot head" and a little proud of it because it is a family trait? Do you pride yourself in always getting the best of anyone in an argument? Remember, Jesus had favor with *both* God and men (Luke 2:52).

From this example, do you see how helpful the Proverbs really are when we examine them individually and apply them in *detail* to particular problems? Now we are making Proverbs "work for us." We are allowing them to point us in the right direction and give us positive, concrete, specific, workable action to take to attain our goal. Do you see how we can use this same approach to deal with literally *any* problem area of our lives?

Are you regularly late for work? Proverbs 6:9-11 reveals a basic cause for tardiness. "But you — all you do is sleep. When will you wake up? Let me sleep a little longer! Sure, just a little more! And as you sleep, poverty creeps upon you like a robber and destroys you; want attacks you in full armor" (*The Living Bible*).

The message is, get out of the sack earlier in the morning and you can get to work on time! Soncino opens the meaning to these verses. It mentions that they refer to "... the waking hours of the day. A rabbi included 'morning sleep' among the faults which 'put a man out of the world.' On waking or being aroused, he does not get up to work but pleads for a longer stay in bed."

Pretty specific instruction, isn't it? Here's another interesting proverb

for our sample study showing the value of Soncino. Proverbs 14:23 states, "In all labor there is profit." Soncino mentions that "labor" should be more accurately translated "toil" since the Hebrew word includes the idea of what is *painful*. It also states, "However laborious the work and small the wage, some advantage is derived."

Put this verse together with Proverbs 20:4 ("The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold . . .") and we see a very emphatic point made — that work is *not* all pleasure. It is *painful*, *taxing* and *uncomfortable* at times. An unsuccessful employee will procrastinate, quit or make excuses when confronted with a difficult, dirty or trying task, while the "go-getter" grits his teeth and gets it done. As Proverbs 14:23 states, he will profit from his efforts in the end — that salary raise will come through, the promotion will be rewarded. How do *you* stack up?

### Put Proverbs to Work

This sample study should be useful to you in itself, but don't let it end here. Understand the *approach* and apply it for yourself as you "zero in" on other aspects of your life you want to improve.

You can make Proverbs work for you in any aspect of your life and any facet of daily living and character. Do you want to be respected by others in the right way? Want peace of mind? Want to know how to cultivate friends? Avoid arguments? Avoid accidents? Rear successful children? Be able to say the right thing at the right time and avoid "putting your foot in your mouth"? Have foresight instead of hindsight?

All of these and innumerable other aspects of living are revealed in the Proverbs — but you must dig them out, with God's help extract their meaning, apply them to your personal life and *act* on them!

Then *continue* studying Proverbs to *continue* making progress toward your goals. Keep searching for scriptures you have overlooked, or for new applications of Bible principles in your specific situations. You will then be armed with the same wisdom Solomon had — the very wisdom of God! □



# Laughter-

# Your Best Medicine

**Does God laugh? Would Jesus ever tell a joke? What type of humor should Christians enjoy? This refreshing article reveals both the biblical principles and the medicinal qualities of laughter and humor — and how they can add spice to your life!**

by Hugh E. Wilson

**H**OW LONG has it been since you allowed yourself a good laugh? Are you still young at heart? Can you “take a joke”? Have you learned the *art* of laughing at yourself and some of the silly mistakes we all make?

An unbalanced society has sometimes left us unbalanced even in our approach to good clean fun and humor. Often we take *ourselves* too seriously and miss out on the enjoyment in life that God wants us to have. Certainly our job, calling, and responsibilities are to be taken seriously. But too often we find ourselves just having to endure life or solemnly trying to “hang in there,” when a little humor could make our lives much more enjoyable.

## “The Importance of Having Fun”

The famous and beloved comedian Bob Hope wrote an article titled “The Importance of Having Fun.” Discussing the many beneficial aspects of humor, he wrote:

“Having entertained wounded GIs

in three wars, I have seen the healing power of laughter. Science has confirmed that having fun — just feeling happy or joyous — has a measurable effect on our health and well-being. It is a great relaxer: a simple ping-pong match even relaxed tensions between the United States and mainland China. Increasingly, fun, pleasure and games are being used in ingenious ways for everything from teaching children (television’s *Sesame Street*) to helping hospital patients get well more quickly. . . .

“Hospitals now are finding that happier patients can be cured more quickly and effectively. The prescription is fun and cheerful surroundings. I first learned of laughter’s benefits when I began visiting hospitals in World War II, and I’m still seeing it in Vietnam. I don’t do much: just a hello, a hand-shake and a quip or two for each patient, but it always seems to give them a little lift.”

Speaking about those who have heavy responsibilities to shoulder, Bob Hope continued: “Each of our recent Presidents has had a good sense of humor, and has found that an interlude of jokes and relaxation is a necessary respite from the heavy burden of office. Moreover, none has seemed to mind the kidding I’ve aimed at him. ‘Harry Truman runs the country with an iron hand,’ I said in entertaining him once, ‘and he plays the piano the same way.’ When I performed for Eisenhower, I poked fun at his frequent travels. ‘It’s a good thing we’re paying him a salary,’ I said. ‘Think where we’d be if we paid him by the mile.’ I also got some laughs about playing golf with him. ‘The General plays like a real military

man,’ I said. ‘He strokes the ball toward the hole and yells, fall in!’”

## Science Sees the Pun

In a syndicated newspaper column, *Your Good Health*, Dr. T. R. Van Dellen tells of the medicinal qualities of laughter: “Laughter has a relaxing effect on the nervous system and is said to improve digestion and well-being. Although we have no proof that a hearty laugh benefits the heart, it is conceivable that laughter lowers the blood pressure when it is high and raises it when it is low. Laughter also is good exercise. When someone has a hearty laugh, the diaphragm shakes up and down and air is drawn into the lungs by means of long, deep intake and expelled in a series of bursts.”

In concluding his article, Dr. Van Dellen wrote: “This [laughter] is one of our most precious possessions and those with this trait are able to ward off the buffets of the outside world and convert them into pleasure. Humor helps conserve energy that would otherwise be expended in anger, pain, horror, fear, or despair.”

Pioneer researcher Dr. Edward Podolsky proved that laughter at the dinner table helps, to make the digestive juices work better. For his interesting study, Dr. Podolsky fed two groups of college students the same diet for two weeks. One group was “entertained” with scientific lectures. The second group was treated to the patter and monologue of a professional comedian. To the surprise of practically no one, the group of collegians who laughed through their meals checked in with healthier, “noticeably improved digestion.”



John Eppingham, in the *National Enquirer*, gave some further interesting facts in an article entitled "What Your Sense of Humor Reveals About Your Personality":

"Virtually everybody likes to laugh," he observed, "to be amused, to have their funnybones tickled — but people vary tremendously in their capacity to appreciate humor and to respond to it. Some go through life finding very little that strikes them as laughable. Others seek amusement and diversion as some seek happiness — by running after it — and the result more often than not is disappointment. Still others have the ability to see the funny side of almost any situation.

"It goes without saying that the better your sense of humor, the more enjoyment you are getting out of life. And scientists have also found that your sense of humor reveals a great deal about your character, personality and general outlook on life."

#### It's in the Book

Is there humor in the Bible? Yes indeed! Over thirty scriptures speak directly of laughter. And God inspired them. Our loving Father favors good uplifting humor.

God is a happy individual. I Timothy 1:11 reads: "According to the glorious gospel of the *blessed* [the Greek here means "happy"] God, which was committed to my trust." Psalm 16:11

states: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: *in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*"

God is not a stern Judge who solemnly judges away 24 hours a day, looking for a way or chance to "get us." Not at all. Due to wrong teachings in the past, some of us have formed gross misconceptions concerning God. His life is filled with fun and enjoyment. He enjoys eternal life and wants us to enjoy our physical lives.

Both He and Jesus probably stop work at times to have a good laugh, especially at some of the silly things we humans do and the situations we get ourselves into. God is balanced in every aspect of His life and wants us to be also.

#### Tell It Like It Is

God reveals His sense of humor in three basic ways. The first becomes obvious when we analyze *ourselves*. We are made in His image, mentally as well as physically. He has given us the ability to have a sense of humor. Therefore it is a part of His own character and personality. Also, He had this ability first to be able to pass it on to us.

The second proof of God's humor is seen in nature. Since the whole creation — not ourselves alone — is a reflection of God's thinking and character, we should be able to learn a considerable

amount about His sense of humor by observing the other things He created.

Remember the fun and laughs you had observing the waddle of a duck? Or watching a penguin on TV or in a zoo? How about the duckbill platypus? The bray of a jackass? Monkeys at the zoo? And do you remember the Walt Disney films about the animal world? Do you recall the scene where the ducks were landing on a frozen lake, skidding into one another?

Biblical humor is the third expression of this aspect of God's mind. Humorous incidents in the Bible generally contain a lesson, and an analysis usually reveals a principle or purpose behind them. To really enjoy humor in the Bible we need a vivid imagination and the ability to read between the lines. We must vicariously project ourselves into the account, remembering they are true stories that happened to real people.

Balaam's ass and the conversation that ensued in Numbers 22 is a case in point. It's really funny to read the account (verses 21-31) using *The Living Bible*.

As the episode begins, God opens the donkey's eyes to see an angel of the Lord standing in the road blocking the way. Balaam, however, cannot see the angel. Unable to pass by the angel, the donkey runs off the road into the field. Balaam naturally is more than a little befuddled by his formerly faithful don-



Everybody loves a friendly grin — especially dentists.



Lots of laughter produces crow's feet around the eyes, but so does scowling.



Guffawing is good for one's health — unless there are flies around to inhale.



key's actions. Thinking his usually trusty steed is indulging in a little stubbornness to assert her independence, he shouts her!

But the frightened donkey still can't get by the angel holding the sword. So in confusion the ass veers again to the side, this time scraping poor Balaam's foot against a wall. Balaam angrily smites the donkey again.

Now remember that the princes of Moab were along all this time, and by now probably were clutching their sides and laughing uproariously. But let's pick up the story in *The Living Bible*, beginning in verse 26:

"Then the angel of the Lord moved farther down the road and stood in a place so narrow that the donkey could not get by at all. So she lay down in the road! In a great fit of temper Balaam beat her again with his staff.

"Then the Lord caused the donkey to speak! 'What have I done that deserves your beating me these three times?' she asked.

"'Because you have made me look like a fool!' Balaam shouted. 'I wish I had a sword with me, for I would kill you.'

"'Have I ever done anything like this before in my entire life?' the donkey asked.

"'No,' he admitted."

What a hilarious experience it must have been to have observed their expressions and antics as God completely

embarrassed, confused and emotionally unraveled this highly respected, dignified pagan priest with a common old flop-eared ass!

This is but one of many similar humorous incidents you will find as you read and study your Bible. Try to develop an eye for them and you will find your Bible study becoming much more interesting, colorful and entertaining. You will also find yourself looking on the "lighter side" of your own life more often.

### Like Father Like Son

Our Savior enjoyed good clean humor with His disciples. We have one account where He used a little good-natured ribbing of two of His disciples. James and John were sons of Zebedee — a fisherman. Before conversion both sons were apparently incompassionate, quick to act and to judge. They had a cock-sure "hellfire and damnation" approach to life (see Mark 9:38). Due to their temper and other traits of human nature, Jesus nicknamed them "Boanerges" meaning "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17), which meant they were a couple of loud-talking "hot heads."

Another example concerns the authority and job of John the baptist. The multitude of skeptics and the just plain curious had listened to all kinds of tales concerning John's mode of living, his appearance and message. And many had gone out to see him like

those of today who attend a sideshow or carnival hoping to see the world's fattest lady or the circus freak from Borneo with four arms and two heads. Jesus used a bit of sarcasm on them as He got a point across in a humorous way.

He said, "When you went out into the barren wilderness to see John, what did you expect him to be like? Grass blowing in the wind [a weak-kneed, odd fanatic]? Or were you expecting to see a man dressed as a prince in a palace?" (Matt. 11:7-8, *The Living Bible*.) He probably spoke in a joking tone and manner to get the point across.

### Did You Hear the One About . . . ?

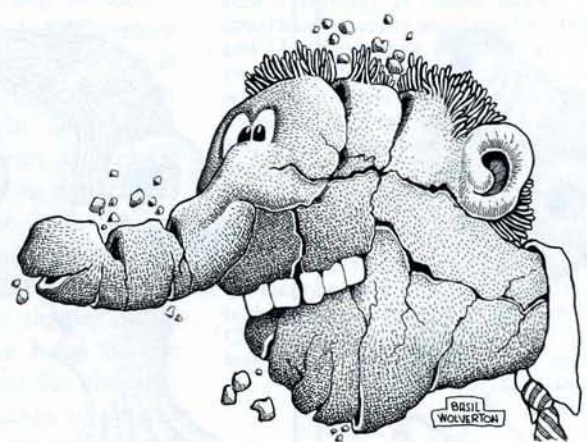
Should you tell jokes? That is pretty much an individual matter. But remember, what's funny to one is not to another. There is an art in being a good joke teller.

A lot depends on the current circumstances and mood of the audience at that time. What was really funny on club night might not be so funny if you told it after Sabbath services. Also, the joke another person told successfully might not fit your style or personality. Maybe your conscience would bother you to tell the same one he or she told. If so, then you're better off not telling it.

Ethnic jokes? Possibly. Simple jokes about the Irish, Scots, Jews, Poles, etc.,



If you have dentures, don't forget them when you show enjoyment.



One who rarely laughs risks cracking his face when he does.



can be O.K., *IF* they show a lesson or principle in a *positive* way and do not present a race or nationality in a bad light or make it a "put down." But be extremely careful. Many persons are abnormally sensitive about their race or national origin and can easily become offended even though you had no intention whatever of holding them up to ridicule or derision.

### Be Christian About It

Here are some *general* guidelines to use in telling jokes. To begin with, we should be careful not to make light of or make fun out of sin. Be positive.

Use tact and do not carry the joke too far.

Be careful of barbs or digs. Don't inject a hidden dagger so you leave the hearer figuratively bleeding when it's over. Analyze your motive and purpose for telling the joke. Humor can hurt and be cruel if not used with proper wisdom and forethought.

Good jokes are non-offensive. Sometimes it's fine to do a little "kidding" with people, but they must know and understand that you *are* kidding and that is all you mean by it.

Finally, as God's chosen people, we should certainly avoid the kind of "dirty jokes" we all knew and heard before conversion. Let's be as careful and circumspect in this aspect of our Christian lives as with everything else we do and say.

### A Time for Everything

We are all striving for a better balance in life. Among the many things that go to make a balanced life is humor. There is "a time to weep, and a time to *laugh*; a time to mourn, and a time to dance..." (Eccl. 3:4).

All too often (and this is a real irony) many in this society have to cheer up *Christians!* But it should be the other way around. They should see our light, our happy faces and personalities that radiate warmth, joy and friendliness, and demonstrate that God's way really works. This is one of the chief ways we honor God.

### Do Yourself a Favor

In his book, *Man of Steel and Velvet*, Aubrey Andelin states, "It has been observed that a characteristic of healthy and long-lived persons is a sense of humor. It is as though their optimistic attitude were supplying a physical nourishment to their bodies — a sort of vitamin supplement. These people realize that to take themselves too seriously is a deadly mistake. Life is going on anyway, and somehow things always work out regardless of how gloomy the picture looks at some low point. Humor will often bring the picture into sharper focus. Abraham Lincoln was gifted in this respect, and through this means cut down gigantic problems to a size he could manage. Bitterness and rancor are impossible

when one's sense of humor is functioning" (page 89).

The habit of happiness is extremely valuable. Despondent or negative attitudes can perk up. Homes can be made happier. Dispositions and personalities can be brightened. Life can take on a fuller meaning.

Learn to enjoy life to the degree that God wants you to. Begin to look at the lighter side of life. Be on the lookout for humorous happenings that you can share with others. Cultivate the habit of joy in your life.

No living creature can laugh except man. Trees may bleed when they are wounded. Beasts in the field will cry in pain and hunger. Yet only humans have the gift of laughter and can use it as they will. We can choose to smile and improve our digestion, and chuckle to lighten our burdens.

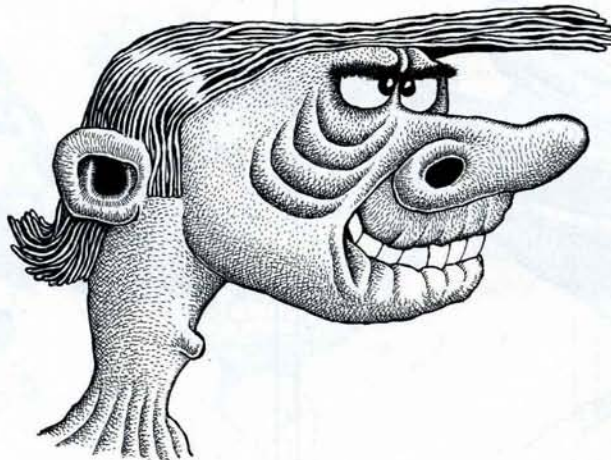
Proverbs 17:22 shows that "A merry [cheerful] heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit dries the bones."

Proverbs 15:13 shows also the effects of joy and sorrow: "A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."

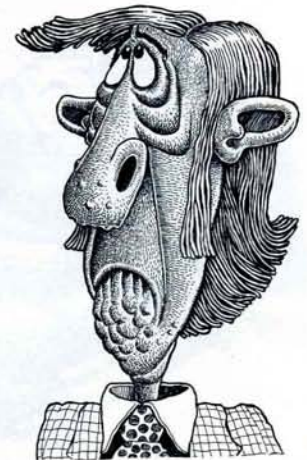
Humor is highly contagious. Laughter is probably the best "medicine" you could ever take for some of your troubles. So take a dose! Laugh a little, live a little and thank God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon you. □



"I laugh only when I'm tickled — and I'm not ticklish!"



Grin and bear it!



"Nothing in this world is ridiculous enough to laugh at."



## “GOOD LIFE”?

(Continued from page 4)

what it was like to be tired, hungry, upset and sad. To be in pain. To be hated. He went through persecution, and the pain of the cross *for us!*

What will Jesus' reward be? Notice: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Because Jesus suffered death for us, He is now crowned with glory and with honor (Heb. 2:9). He will soon return to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, reigning over all nations (Rev. 19:11-16).

While He walked on this earth 1900 years ago, Jesus was tempted just as we are. And He is therefore able now to help you when you are wrestling with a particular trial. He will succor, comfort, encourage and strengthen you. "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

He will intercede with the Father for you, saying, "Father, I know what it is like — I've been down there, I've been through it. I wrestled with the identical problems. So Father, forgive him and have patience with him — and he will make it!"

### To The Wall!

Let's face facts. Is it really absurd to be a Christian? To some people, of course, it is. But to us, it is not.

We have the REAL truth. This is it. There is nothing else. Don't give it up for a handful of nothing, as Esau did.

The early apostles were so convinced of the reality of God's Kingdom that they rejoiced even when they were whipped, beaten and thrown in prison.

Even so, when trials, tests and troubles seem to take you *right to the wall*, then realize that the very fact that you are at the wall is *proof* that you are one of God's children being prepared for

the World Tomorrow! Yes, it is *proof*.

Trials don't always come as a sudden gigantic cataclysm. They can be a problem you wrestle with in your own mind, that no other human ever knows. They might seem to carry you to the very breaking point! You may wonder how much longer you can hang on, you may be down on your knees praying, meditating, looking for an answer — a way out — and suddenly you realize why this trial has come upon you. Then you say to yourself, "Because I am a son of God, it's right that I be tried. Because the Bible says, 'Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials'" (James 1:2, RSV).

Remember Peter's words: "For it is a fine thing if a man endure the pain of undeserved suffering because God is in his thoughts. What credit is there in fortitude when you have done wrong and are beaten for it? *But when you have behaved well and suffer for it, your fortitude is a fine thing in the sight of God. To that you were called*, because Christ suffered on your behalf, and thereby left you an example" (I Pet. 2:19-21, NEB).

Jesus saw trials in the right perspective. He didn't fight back carnally in His life. He didn't accuse, He didn't start movements and campaigns to "get even" with someone. He understood why He had to go through trials, so He endured them all.

Can YOU follow His example — and overcome every trial with resolution and absolute trusting faith in God?

Notice Hebrews 12:1-4: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

Go on! Endure! Consider Jesus who

endured such contradiction of sinners, such adversaries, such ridicule, reproach, scorn, abuse — you have not yet endured the same degree of infamy.

Brethren, don't faint when your mind is stretched to the limit. Don't faint when your back is to the wall. God tests and spans every son whom He dearly loves (verse 6). These things are necessary so that we may become kings, priests and governors in the God Kingdom, and rule with justice, wisdom, compassion and patience.

Let's lift up our hands which hang down and the feeble knees which sometimes knock together (verse 12). Let's put our minds on the truth and the reality of what life is all about, and not be turned aside from our purpose and lose our heritage.

Let's *rededicate* our lives as LIVING SACRIFICES for God's Work, and prepare to receive the future "big payoff" which God wants to give us! □

## Readers Say . . .

(Continued from inside front cover)

mother and I kept taking it from each other to read it first. Well, anyway, I just finished reading Mr. Armstrong's article, "Are We Ashamed of God's Truth?" and I must say that I was so happy I started crying. I'm 17 years old and entering my senior year in high school. I've planned to go to Ambassador ever since I can remember. When we went to keep God's Holy Days I always got tired of saying, "We went on vacation." So about two years ago I started telling them the truth about where I went and why.

I couldn't believe what happened; all my friends say, "Wow! That's really neat!" So now everybody at school knows I go to church on Saturday and keep the Holy Days and I have lots more friends than I did two years ago. I discuss Ambassador College with them openly, and it makes me feel a lot better. All I can say is that I think God's brethren are going to be much happier and successful since Mr. Armstrong's article. This is definitely God's Church, and I am very fortunate to be a part of it. God has blessed me with so much, especially loving parents. My father isn't in the Church, but he mentioned to me the other day how lucky I was to belong to a group like the Church. I can't possibly say all I want, and how happy God's Church has made me.

L.J., Dayton,  
Nevada

I have just completed reading the April-June GOOD NEWS, and had to write and express my feelings on this issue. Personally, I think it is the best yet. Overall, every article was inspiring and exciting to read. It not only made us aware of the



Work in the Philippines, and our duty and privilege in working for God on our job, it stirred the spirit with "A Message to Garcia." Not forgetting, of course, the ones on willpower, meditation and Bible I.Q.

But the one that impressed me the most was the article by Garner Ted, "Are We Ashamed of God's Truth?" This really has given each one of us something to do, in presenting ourselves as a light to the world, and in displaying the PT more openly. It certainly makes one desire to know God's Word more thoroughly to give an answer when asked. I just want to thank you and all the staff for such a tremendous issue and I pray you will be able to keep it up.

G.W.,  
England

It has been made clear that the Work of God has come to the sign of "full speed ahead." I have been watching out for that on the world scene, but as I read the GOOD NEWS I feel a stir and a movement inside of me, and I hope and pray that I can continue to be part of that Work. Thank you, editors, for that love and motivation. The April-June edition of the GOOD NEWS has also made me aware of the teamwork and closely knit articles that magnify the overall purpose.

W.C., Elk Grove,  
Illinois

Mr. Armstrong, I thank all who have written articles in the GOOD NEWS of April-June. Each one of them was very necessary and encouraging. Please thank Mr. Hunting for his well-explained article about the purpose of public miracles. We, as God's begotten ones, have proven (I hope by now) that God is, was, and always will be. Each day and each minute of our lives in this world at this present time is a miracle. God gave us His Spirit and we have His Word. I see miracles of God's creation as I live in a farm-style of life. Everytime I put my foot out of the door I see life all around me which are miracles.

B.T., Kennard,  
Texas

The articles in the April-June GOOD NEWS were very good. The one on public miracles was so impressive and so vital to our understanding. This subject has puzzled many, and I think it is clear now why there haven't been more public miracles — especially spectacular healing miracles. We are very thankful to all who work so diligently to serve God and our people and to get this message to the whole world.

A.M., San Diego,  
California

Thank you so much for all of the tremendous articles in the GOOD NEWS magazine. I was especially glad to find the article, "What Is the Purpose of Public Miracles?" I have often wondered about this over the past ten years — and wondered if it was "lack of faith" on our part or "holding back" on the part of the ministers. Now I am so glad to know the real answers.

Mr. & Mrs. E.V.W., Farmersville,  
California

# ENVOY!

The new 1973 ENVOY is still available. The price per copy is \$7.50. The reduced price is possible due to savings on production costs.

The number of pages and the size of the new yearbook is the same as the previous two editions. Also, the usual high standards in materials selection and printing quality have been maintained.

To order: send your remittance (payable to "The ENVOY") with the order coupon and envelope in your April-June GOOD NEWS. Or, simply address your envelope in care of the ENVOY Department to ensure quick processing.

Your yearbook will be shipped to you by return mail upon receipt of your order.

## The 1973 Envoy

I must confess that I've written few letters to you of this nature. I feel indebted, however, to write you concerning our church magazine. To completely express my thoughts would result in many paragraphs. I'll just keep it brief and try to sum it up by saying that the GOOD NEWS magazine has been one of the greatest blessings in my converted life.

Many were the times I've sat down and read, reread, meditated upon, shed tears over, laughed about, became uplifted from, and discussed with other brethren the well-written and informative articles contained therein — not to mention the many letter excerpts from others who share my feelings.

I'll conclude by gratefully saying thanks to all who have made this possible, and asking you to keep this valuable magazine coming into the homes of its readers.

M.Y., Cambridge Springs,  
Pennsylvania

The April-June issue of the GOOD NEWS was so inspiring that a note to thank all of those responsible for this issue just had to be written. There is so much spiritual food, encouragement, guidelines and inspiration crammed into the 32 pages that I could not put it down for anticipating the next article. It will be used as a spiritual guideline to

enrich my spiritual life daily, and hopefully those contacted each day.

L.M., Houston,  
Texas

It seems like the last two issues of the GOOD NEWS are the *best* we have ever received! The articles are really what we need on how to grow and just plain live. The articles on the foreign Work are also outstanding — thank you for them.

Mr. & Mrs. E.J., La Junta,  
Colorado

Thanks, friends, for all the hard work that went into the April-June GOOD NEWS! Over the past few weeks, I had been allowing myself to fall into a critical, irritable attitude. I even started skipping the vital food of Bible study and prayer. As we all know, this only made the situation worse.

Upon receiving the GOOD NEWS, I soaked it up from cover to cover. The inspired contents within lifted me up (after smashing me down to repentance first) and showed me that I had to stop dwelling on myself. I want to thank you with all my heart for the guidance and love and thoughtfulness you all put into the contents — rest assured that they accomplished the goal you had in mind. From me personally, thanks for forcing me down on my knees in repentance and thanksgiving!

D.S.,  
Colorado

I have been a member of God's Church for less than a year and have only six issues of the GOOD NEWS. Though I have only six of them, they have certainly been inspiring and instructive — especially the articles about God's people in other parts of the world and the problems they must contend with. It makes our own problems here in America seem small by comparison. Please keep all these inspiring human-interest articles coming, as well as the great articles on different aspects of Christian living.

R.H., Port Arthur,  
Texas

I would like to thank you for the article in the last GOOD NEWS, "How Important Is Your Willpower?" by Stephen Martin. I really needed this information, and I know it will be of help to me in the future. I also enjoyed the one on "Meditation" by George Ritter. Also, "How to Increase Your Bible I.Q." by Hugh E. Wilson. All of the articles are wonderful and I pray God will help me to grow in His knowledge from them. So thank you again.

F.M., Hamilton,  
Ohio

My greatest thanks and appreciation for the April-June GOOD NEWS. I've just completed reading every article. I know I haven't digested it, so I'll reread each one more slowly, and determine to use each one in prayer and grow up a lot more — hopefully. I still need and appreciate the GOOD NEWS, just like I did before we were able to attend local services weekly.

L.E., Tazewell,  
Virginia