

The

APRIL 1979

Good News

**FROM THE DUST
OF TIME**

But by Prayer
and Fasting
Forgive Us
Our Debts



A Legacy of Persecution

The Good News

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APRIL 1979

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COVER: Decanters dating back to the 7th century B.C., the time of the Old Testament kings of Israel. The decanters were discovered at the Jerusalem excavations in which Ambassador College participated.

Letters

'GN' resurrected

I have just received my first copy of the revived (or should I say resurrected!) *Good News* magazine. It's just great!

Thank you for all your efforts that go into producing this magazine. I strongly believe it is going to contribute a lot to increasing the spiritual strength of the Church. I also feel that my personal growth will be faster with all the spiritual content the magazine contains.

I'm sure you must be bumping into Dr. Hoeh, Mr. Meredith, Mr. Knowles and others who have written the articles. Please tell them that their work is much appreciated and thank them. (I have written to Mr. Armstrong myself separately.)

Tilak Peris
Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

'Ministudy' a blessing

The new *Good News* is a spiritual spellbinder. I haven't been this excited in a long time. Thank our Heavenly Father for you and the work you are doing.

P.S. The "Ministudy" is a real blessing. I am completely enthralled. *The Good News* is another sign that the Eternal is carrying us forward with greater and greater strength.

Marcia Dungan
Campbell, Ala.

I would like to tell you how very much I enjoyed the "Ministudy" in the January, 1979, issue of *Good News*.

I am praying nightly that the State of California has their "minds" enlightened as to how necessary this Work is.

Looking forward to seeing Mr. Armstrong, under Christ, leading our Church and continuing to supply us with the spiritual food we need — *now* more than ever. Thanks again.

Clare Gough
Bay Shore, N.Y.

We appreciate our readers' comments on the "Ministudy" and welcome suggestions for future subjects to be covered in this section.

Aid to perfection

Really enjoyed Les Stocker's article on *m'zimmah* in the January issue. That kind of article helps us "go on to perfection" and to appreciate how beautiful and precise the Word of God is.

Charles C. Bosserman
Snohomish, Wash.

PERSONAL

BY HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

God commands that we in His Church "all speak the same thing." But WHY? HOW? Christ's apostle is accused of using "total thought control" over the Church. What is the TRUTH?

THERE'S NO QUESTION about it — God commands emphatically that we in His Church do "all speak the same thing" (I Cor. 1:10).

For many years I have striven to bring all God's children into a unity of belief (Ps. 133:1).

Did you ever stop to think how many things we believe and proclaim to the world that are *contrary* to the doctrines and teachings of all other churches calling themselves "Christian"?

I am writing a book, titled *A VOICE CRIES OUT Amid RELIGIOUS CONFUSION*. This book will say that of all the religions and all the more than 250 denominations and sects in "Christianity," *NOT ONE*, except the Worldwide Church of God, knows WHO and WHAT God is! *NOT ONE* knows what, and why, MAN IS! *NOT ONE* knows the TRUTH about the nation Israel — WHY God chose them, yet gave none but their prophets His Holy Spirit — where they are today. *NOT ONE* knows what is the TRUE GOSPEL Christ proclaimed! *NOT ONE* knows what happens in the hereafter — the transcendent human potential. *NOT ONE* knows the real function of the Church and purpose of its being.

None but God's true Church

NONE but God's one and only TRUE CHURCH has the full knowledge God has revealed to His own Church.

NOT ONE knows what salvation really is!

Doesn't it, then, become abundantly apparent that we must all know precisely what God has prepared for those who love Him — and that we speak these amazing TRUTHS *as they are* — all speaking the same thing?

Now *WHY* does God command that we all speak the same thing — believe the same doctrines and truths?

And *HOW* has Christ provided that we all come to know, believe and speak "the same thing"? By psychological mind control? *NEVER!*

But first, *WHY* is it important that we all believe and speak the same DOCTRINES? Continue in I Corinthians 1:10: "that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Will God's Kingdom be divided?

UNDERSTAND this! If we are led by the Spirit of God we shall enter into His Kingdom of God at the time of Christ's coming and the resurrection. *Will GOD'S Kingdom be divided?*

Again, we are, so to speak, in the process of being trained for entrance into the Kingdom of God, where WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS (I Cor. 6:3).

A kingdom or a house divided against itself cannot stand! Even two cannot walk together except they be agreed! (Amos 3:3).

A few years ago, when I had high hopes that my son, Garner Ted, might qualify in God's sight for very high office in God's Kingdom, I said

to him, "Ted, I often think of you and me as a father-and-son team, and how wonderful it would seem if we could be like the Father-and-Son divine Team that heads the entire universe! But to walk together as God and Christ do, we would have to remember that the Son agreed completely with the Father in all things. He said, 'I have not spoken of myself; the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say'" (John 12:49).

But as soon as I mentioned that the Divine Son was in total agreement with His Father, Ted would immediately change the subject.

How do we come to know WHO and WHAT God is, and the other truths mentioned above that are not known by any other church or religion? Jesus Christ revealed them to His apostle, who taught these precious truths to you! And how precious they are!

A corollary to I Corinthians 1:10 is Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

"Avoid them" means just that. Walk away from them. Do not invite them into your home. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (II John 10).

(Continued on page 23)

AND NOW CHRIST SETS CHURCH BACK ON TRACK DOCTRINALLY

God commands we all "speak the same thing." But what is Christ's means of giving us that "same thing"?

By Herbert W. Armstrong

UNTIL ABOUT 1969 we in God's Church *did* all "speak the same thing." By 1978 many of the ministers were speaking *different* things! God had withdrawn from us His blessing and power that for 35 YEARS caused the Work of His Church to grow at the approximate rate of 30 percent every year over the preceding year!

WHAT CAUSED GOD TO WITHDRAW HIS BLESSING AND POWER?

Precisely the same thing that choked the growth of the Church of God at Corinth from A.D. 56, 25 years after the Church was founded at Jerusalem. They were

following different leaders, speaking different things, watering down the sacred and precious truths of Christ!

Christ's apostle wrote to the Corinthian church, in A.D. 56, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).

A Church divided cannot stand

They were starting to follow different leaders teaching different doctrines. The Church was becoming divided! And a church divided against itself cannot stand!

Once such division starts among ministers it is a difficult matter to correct. For most who have gone doc-

trinally afield will today — just as in Corinth in A.D. 56 — not be willing to change back from error and watered-down doctrines to God's TRUTH!

This same defection was occurring in the church at Rome. And God said through the apostle Paul, "Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark them* which cause divisions and offences *contrary* to the doctrine which ye have learned; *and avoid them*. For they . . . by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18). Jesus Christ showed me that, much as it hurt, the No. 1 deceiver with watered-down doctrines, in authority, whom I had to mark and put out of God's Church, was my only living son whom I loved as only a father can. Other liberals have had to go since. **GOD'S CHURCH MUST BE CLEANED UP! We must all SPEAK**

God says we in His Church must all believe and speak the SAME THING . . . what is truth and right and good as opposed to what is evil and sin.

THE SAME THING, as God commands!

But *HOW*? How does Jesus Christ put His doctrines into His Church? How did He in A.D. 31? How in A.D. 1933?

DID THE CHURCH OF GOD, of A.D. 31, believe and proclaim the TRUE doctrines? How did they come to believe as they believed? Did their doctrines come as a result of a vote of ministers on the ideas, opinions and convictions of the ministers in the Church?

HOW must the true Church of God *today* receive its doctrinal beliefs? Doesn't every human individual, by himself, KNOW right from wrong — what is TRUTH and what is error? Is not the ability to know right from wrong acknowledged by society as the test of sanity or insanity? Does not mankind automatically know what is truth — what is good and right, as contrasted from what is wrong, evil and sin?

Emphatically NO!

Yet God says we in His Church must all believe and speak the SAME THING — we must be AGREED on what is truth and right and good as opposed to what is evil and sin.

Brethren, WE HAVE NOT OBEYED THAT COMMAND OF JESUS CHRIST! We have not *all* believed the same thing! There *HAVE BEEN DIVISIONS* among us for that very reason!

We therefore have been GUILTY before God of DISOBEYING HIS EXPLICIT COMMAND! I said, "*have been.*" But God's time of trial and test is upon us! God says, through Daniel, that at "the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried" (Daniel 12:9-10).

God's sifting time is upon us! God is allowing those duped by Satan to bring upon us the GREATEST TIME OF TRIAL AND TESTING that His Church has undergone in our lifetime!

When I pray, as I do many times a day during this supreme trial of the forces of State government of America's most populous state and the forces of the public press lined up against us, falsely accusing us, picturing us to the public as if already tried and proved guilty — as CRIMI-

NALS — I not only petition God to deliver us, *but I also THANK GOD for this trial and test!* We are being STRENGTHENED by it! We are being brought closer to God and welded CLOSER TOGETHER than ever before! God, through this trial, is weeding out from our midst the liberals who did NOT believe or "speak the same thing." These I have LOVED SINCERELY, EVEN AS I HAVE LOVED MY OWN SON!

I WONDER, DO WE SOMETIMES LOVE even the sin *within us* that we hate to purge it out? At least I know how I have so sincerely loved those individuals whom Christ has been purging out — that we MAY all be united in speaking the SAME THING — speaking GOD'S TRUTH!

Now *HOW* may we obey Christ by all speaking the same thing, when we — especially a small portion of the ministers — have not all *believed* the same thing?

I can tell you how my son, when he was executive vice president, with a small group of liberals at headquarters, tried to bring us into harmony. Some of the ministers did not believe many of the doctrines Christ had put into His Church. A minority (yet perhaps close to a dozen field ministers) had liberal leanings — did not believe the SAME THINGS Christ had put into His Church. So, *behind my back* — unknown to me, while I was in another part of the world carrying Christ's Gospel into other nations — they produced what they called a Systematic Theology Project, *changing and watering down* — making more liberal — many doctrines Christ had put into God's Church.

WHY did they do this? The one who wrote most of it stated to me in writing, "My only goal in coordinating the project was to bring doctrinal consistency, stability and unity to the ministry and the Church."

This reminds me of a saying we used to have on the tennis courts. "The idea was fine, but the execution was rotten."

These deluded and misguided "scholars" were in fact IGNORANT of the central truism: that the "same

thing" we must all speak *must be what CHRIST speaks*; and for unity in what He speaks, the doctrines MUST BE PUT INTO THE CHURCH BY JESUS CHRIST! Not by compromising, watering down Christ's teachings to satisfy rebellious liberals. JESUS CHRIST is the living HEAD of the Church. They overlooked that!

God's unity — not confusion

So it has become necessary for CHRIST, the HEAD of the Church, to SET GOD'S CHURCH BACK ON THE TRACK OF GOD'S UNITY — not confusion by trying to satisfy rebellious men by COMPROMISING GOD'S TRUTH!

Now *HOW* did God put His doctrines and teachings into His Church in A.D. 31? — before many in the Church turned to another gospel (Galatians 1:6-7)? And *HOW* did the living Christ put God's doctrines and teachings into His Church TODAY — before these "intellectual liberals" began trying to compromise and water down?

Only by His chosen apostles!

As I quoted in the beginning, in I Corinthians 1:10 Christ says we must all speak the same thing. *WHAT* "same thing"? That which comes from the MIND of CHRIST — "Let *this* mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

Rooting out spiritual CANCER

The Corinthian church was not in harmony. It was divided. *We* had gotten out of harmony. *We* were divided! Those who do have the mind of Christ and are surrendered to the Spirit of God, are being used by Jesus Christ in *rooting out* that spiritual CANCER from God's Church!

Ministers are being called in for conferences. The first thing we at headquarters are concerned about is *their attitude!* If the attitude is good, any doctrinal differences can be straightened out, and we may proceed in peace, harmony and UNITY in the faith — all speaking the same thing that CHRIST speaks! If the attitude is resentful, rebellious, bitter,

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But by Prayer and Fasting

In special connection to the crisis suffered by the Work, Pastoral Administration Director Roderick C. Meredith shares this timely message with the entire membership of the Worldwide Church of God.

By Roderick C. Meredith

These are trying times. Make no mistake about it, we need God's help and His direct intervention — now.

For times such as these, the apostle Paul instructs us, "... be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers," — he refers to evil spirit powers and princes — "against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits] in high places" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

That's exactly what *we* are fighting. A higher power — Satan the devil — is our real antagonist. And it's time we all recognize that.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (verse 13). We need that armor of God.

We need spiritual help in resisting ourselves, in overcoming the world, which strikes at us from many different directions, and in resisting and overcoming Satan the devil, who is also striking at us in remarkable and unusual ways he has never used against us before.

A means to spiritual help

In Matthew 4:1-2, we read what our Savior did to acquire spiritual strength, in connection with the same devil's attack on Him. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted [or tried] of the devil. And when he had *fasted*" — notice what He did — "*fasted* forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered."

If you turn back to Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, you find that Moses was the prototype of Jesus, and that Moses

took *neither bread nor water* when he fasted. In like manner, the Son of God fasted to humble Himself, lest He forget how weak He was in the flesh, and to get close to God spiritually.

"And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:3). Imagine how hungry Jesus was after 40 days and nights of total fasting. The very cells of His body were crying out in a type of hunger that you and I have never experienced. But still He kept His wits, fasting for the right reason and in the right way, with praying and meditating. And He was close in spirit to the invisible God.

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (verse 4). And that's what you and I have to learn to live by, more and more as these days continue, before the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The devil had to leave Christ because of the spiritual strength able to be expressed through Him in His *physical* weakness. We too can live by the same strength that Jesus had.

But should Christians fast?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples to give generously from the heart and to pray to God continually. Then, in Matthew 6:16, He said, "Moreover when ye fast..." He just took for granted they would fast. He didn't say, *if* you fast. He said, "... when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." In other words, that *is* their reward — just whatever praise they get from other

people for showing off their fasting.

"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head..." In other words, comb your hair as usual, wash your face, "That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, will reward thee openly." And God Almighty will certainly do that for those of us who come before Him in fasting as Jesus Christ said we should.

Later, the disciples of John the Baptist came unto Him and asked, "... why do we and the Pharisees fast oft but thy disciples fast not?" (Matthew 9:14). Jesus explained that as long as He was with them, it was like a wedding and a time to rejoice. "... but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them and *then shall they fast*," He said.

He went on to give some examples to make His point that some things are not fitting or sensible. But when their time to fast did come, Jesus' disciples would fast, and they would do it for different reasons and in a whole new situation, with a whole new attitude and a whole new approach to God.

We Christians are not to punish ourselves thinking if we do maybe God will hear our prayers. God is not interested in such penance. That is just as if you or I would take whips and beat each other's backs and say, "Look at our suffering, God, so hear us." The idea of our fasting is quite different from that. We seek the invisible God. We learn to fast to humble ourselves. To make ourselves realize how weak we are, and that we are little children saying:

"Father, we are up against a great army, and there are great forces around us, and we don't always know what we should do. We need your help. We need guidance. And we

need deliverance. We recognize that we are merely flesh that is slowly decaying toward death, and so we are fasting. You are our God. You are our banner. You are our shield. You are our refuge. You are our high tower. You're our champion. You're our deliverer. We are your little children. Please help us draw near to You."

When nothing but fasting will do

I think most of us are familiar with the story that begins in Mark 9:17. A man came to Christ and addressed Him, "... Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit ... I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not."

And so Jesus said, "... O faithless generation ... bring him unto me." And then, of course, the unclean spirit threw the son on the ground where he lay foaming at the mouth, while Jesus questioned the father about him and reassured him. "... If thou canst believe, all things are possible ..." Then He rebuked the foul spirit. He didn't talk to the boy. He talked directly to the demon: "... Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him." And the spirit obeyed.

But what connection does this have with fasting? Notice:

"When he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

Now the word *fasting* should be in all your Bibles, though some modern translations incorrectly leave it out. Some of the big problems in our lives and in God's Church and some of the attacks by Satan the devil can only be overcome by prayer *plus* fasting.

Remember, we are fighting "wicked spirits in high places," not just human beings. And that's why we must have the spiritual power that can come only from God. But to get it, our own attitudes must be right.

The acceptable fast

In many places the King James Version, though certainly accurate, is not as clear as it might be. *The Living Bible* is basically more clear and accurate here. So I want to use it now, in Isaiah 58, starting in verse 3:

"'We have fasted before you,' they say. 'Why aren't you impressed? Why don't you see our sacrifices? Why don't you hear our prayers? We've done much penance and you don't even notice it!' I'll tell you why! Because you're living in evil pleasure even while you are fasting, and you keep right on oppressing your workers."

We've got to be sure to treat our fellowman right and not hate one another and fight one another, and gossip against one another and put one another down and judge one another.

"Look, what good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling?"

This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. Is this what I want — this doing of penance and bowing like reeds in the wind and putting on sackcloth and covering yourselves with ashes?" You know how it goes: just showing an outward, Oh, God! Oh, God! Is this what God wants? A lot of hollering and Pentecostal-type fervor?

"Is that what you call fasting?"

"No, the kind of fast I want is that you stop oppressing those who work for you and treat them fairly and give them what they earn. I want you to share your food with the hungry, and

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Prepare for Your Fast Physically

1. Before you fast, prepare your body for the shock. Don't eat a great big meal and maybe even have a big sweet dessert, or indulge in a pepper steak or some really good, hot Mexican food just before your fast begins.

Do you know what's wrong with that? It makes you crave water. And all during the fast you suffer, "Oh, I'm going to die!" when what you need is a clear, but humbled mind. So you need to taper off on food, especially sweets and strong spices. Have a lot of water the day before to help begin to cleanse your system.

2. Perhaps have a big dish of prunes or take an enema before or even during the fast. This may be very important if you are going to fast more than one day. But for even one day, your headache will be lessened, and your health will be better. You'll get more benefit if you'll help your bowels to be clean. You won't have all kinds of poisons in your body during your fast.

3. Fast regularly enough for the body to adjust itself to the idea. Some people who think they are about to die when they fast could actually find it easy if they fasted a day every month or two.

4. After the fast, begin eating again slowly. Don't swallow down a great, huge steak in about the

first 10 minutes. It will actually do you more good if you'll eat a little lighter meal. Or eat a meal spread out over a couple of hours in stages, maybe beginning with a nice, warm cream soup.

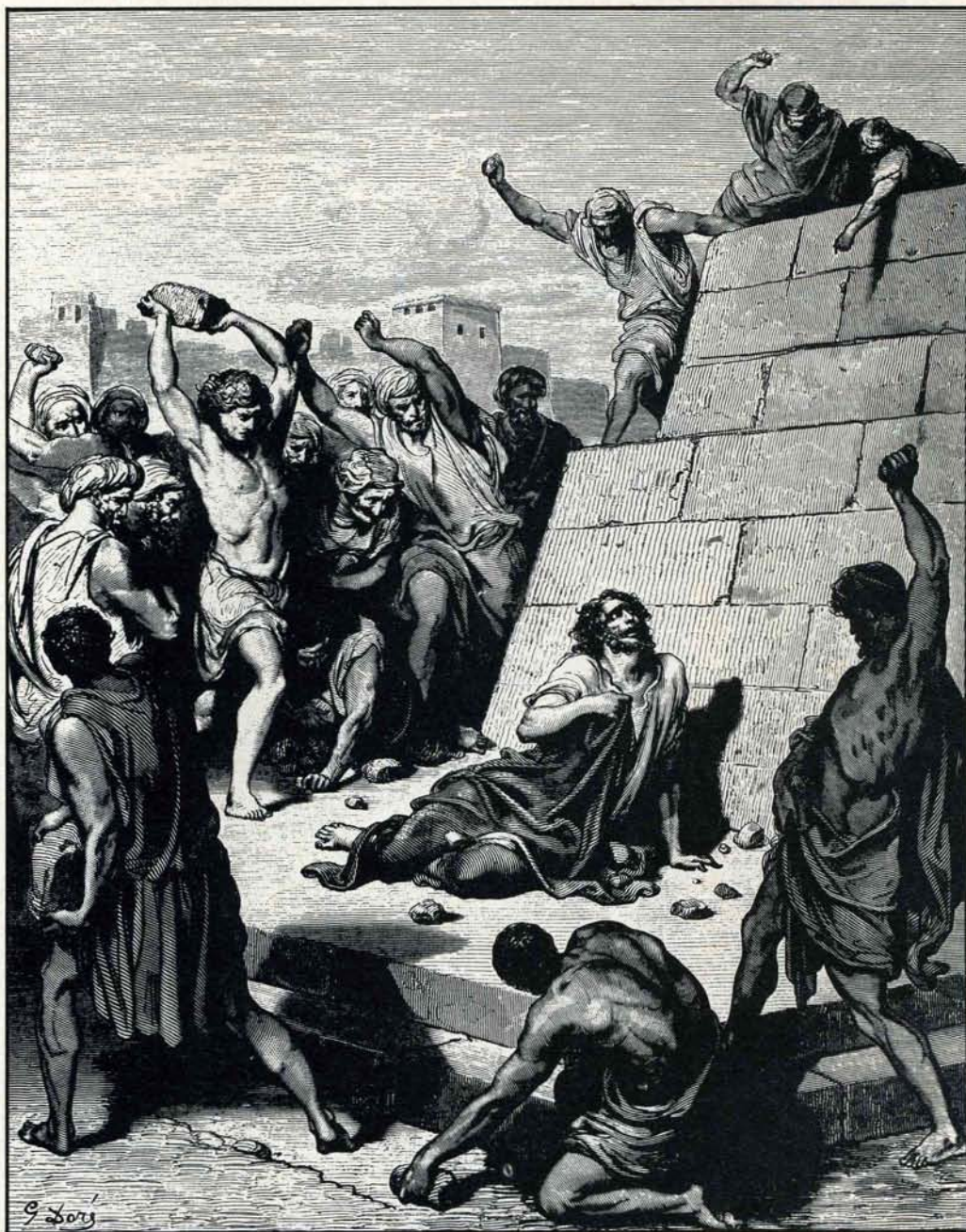
Of course, if you've fasted several days it's better — even necessary — to end the fast with just something like some stewed prunes and some toast and maybe a poached or soft-boiled egg.

Spiritual keys to fasting

Spiritual key No. 1. Do not fast to get. And do not think you fast for the Work. We fast to get closer to God. God does not bargain with you to do *your* will if you'll just fast a few days! That's not the way He works! Fast to humble yourself and to seek God's will — yes, God's correction and God's guidance in your life — and to grasp God's perspective in the situation.

Spiritual key No. 2. Divide your time during the fast as Herbert Armstrong indicated in his autobiography. He used to divide his waking time for three activities. He would study the Bible for about an hour. Then he would meditate on what he had studied for about an hour, sometimes sitting, sometimes walking around. Then he would pray for about an hour. Bible study, meditation and then prayer. □

A Legacy of Persecution



Since the dawn of man persecution has followed those who believe and worship the true God. That persecution, though relatively dormant now, is still occurring today and is prophesied to engulf the true Church in the not-too-distant future.

By Raymond F. McNair

From the beginning of time man has persecuted his fellowman. When some members of society didn't agree with certain other members of their society, it was only natural that the one would persecute the other. Unchecked, human nature naturally gravitates toward persecuting those who are different. This is especially true in the subset of society called religion.

In the beginning . . .

The first religious persecution in recorded history involved the two sons of Adam and Eve.

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock [thus showing Abel's faith in the Lamb of God's future sacrifice] and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" (Genesis 4:3-5).

When Cain realized that God favored his brother Abel and his offering, he began plotting to destroy him. "And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him" (verse 8).

This was only the beginning of a history of persecution for those loyal to God. The Old Testament scriptures are full of many such examples, including the persecution of Joseph (Genesis 37), of Elijah (I Kings 18-19), the children of Israel (Exodus 1), the Jews (Esther 3), David (I Samuel 16-31) and many others.

The common denominator in all of these cases was God's willingness to avenge His people and to deliver them from their persecutors.

Deliverance

In the book of Daniel there are two thrilling examples of God's intervention on behalf of four individuals who kept His commandments.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were commanded to worship a gi-

gantic image of gold, which King Nebuchadnezzar had made (Daniel 3:1-18). If they wouldn't obey the king and worship his golden image they were to be "cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace" (verse 15).

They flatly refused to obey the king's order, saying: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up" (verses 17, 18).

Their refusal to comply with the king's command caused them to be flung into the overheated furnace, but the Lord delivered them, after which even the king acknowledged that their God was the true God (verse 28).

The prophet Daniel, a man of unusual wisdom and ability, was later to become the target of severe persecution. Daniel's enemies were exceedingly envious of him because of his high position before King Darius (Daniel 6:2-3). They succeeded in getting royal assent to have Daniel thrown into a den of lions (verses 4-16).

But King Darius had been tricked into his decision, and he reassured his friend Daniel before casting him into the lions' den: "Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee" (verse 16).

Early the next morning, King Darius went to the lions' den to see how Daniel had fared. "And the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" (verse 20).

Daniel's confident, reassuring answer was heard: "O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angels and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt" (verses 21, 22).

Then the king cast those who persecuted Daniel into the den: "And the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den" (verse 24).

Even though God can and does deliver His people from persecution, He often allows the righteous to suffer. The purpose for that will be explained later. But are all those who suffer persecution assured of God's protection and blessing?

Some have misunderstood Jesus Christ's teaching on this subject. Jesus did not say that all who suffer persecution are (or will be) blessed.

"Blessed," Jesus said, "are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10).

Christ did not either say or mean that all who are persecuted are blessed, but only those who are persecuted "for righteousness' sake."

The Communists have long been persecuted in many countries. The Nazis were persecuted in Germany at the close of World War II. And even those who embrace atheism can suffer persecution for their beliefs as well. The question is, what is the nature of their persecution?

Two kinds of persecution

There are two kinds of persecution mentioned in the Bible: 1) persecution brought on a believer because of righteousness and 2) persecution brought upon a believer because of unrighteousness. How do we know which is which? Only God can determine that. But there are criteria for judging what really constitutes righteousness.

"All thy [God's] commandments are righteousness," David wrote (Psalm 119:172). God's law is the basis for judging what is right and wrong.

Clearly, Christ tells us that those who keep His commands — and are persecuted for such — are the ones who will be blessed. Furthermore, we are told that Satan is the persecutor of those who keep God's commandments: "And the dragon [Satan, verse 9] was wroth with the woman [God's true Church, Ephesians 5:22-33], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17).

Since Satan is the "accuser of the brethren" (Revelation 12:10), the instigator and actual perpetrator of persecution, we should not condemn

ULTIMATE PERSECUTION (opposite page) is depicted in this artist's conception of the stoning of Stephen, who is mentioned in Acts 6 and 7.

our persecutors. Christ said: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). The persecutors of the Church are deceived, and as Christ said, "they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Who will suffer persecution?

Persecution is not reserved for prophets, or apostles or those believers mentioned in the Bible. It will come upon all of God's people.

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12).

The people of the world despise God's way of life, and those who live according to His commandments are going to be persecuted as were Christ and the apostles. We can learn a great deal about the meaning and purpose of persecution by examining the apostle Paul's example. According to tradition, Paul, as well as most if not all of the other apostles (with the possible exception of John), suffered severe persecution and eventual martyrdom.

The list of sufferings and persecutions that can be applied to Paul is a long one. It is amplified in II Corinthians.

Here Paul was exhorting the Corinthians to beware of false apostles, who were exalting themselves and boasting of their greatness.

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (II Corinthians 11:23-27).

But Paul counted it all joy to suffer for Christ's sake.

Peter admonished Christians to take their "fiery trials" patiently:

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (I Peter 4:12-14).

Future persecution

Few professing Christians realize what terrible persecution is prophesied to occur in the near future. Besides the horrible deaths of much of the world's population due to famine, disease and war, a great martyrdom of Christians will also take place. Notice the prophecy in Revelation 6:

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Revelation 6:9).

"And they (those slain) cried with a loud voice, saying How long, O Lord, holy and true, does thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Here the innocent blood of God's people who had been martyred in the past symbolically cried out to God for revenge, as did the blood of Abel (Genesis 4:10).

God's answer to them foretells the great martyrdom that is to come: "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed [in the future] as they were [killed], should be fulfilled" (Revelation 6:11).

The coming persecution and murders will be brought about by "religious" people, those who profess to believe in Christ. This bold statement will shock many. But it shouldn't. Read John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Historically, the persecution of true Christians has been carried out by those who profess to believe in Christ. Revelation 17 shows that in the end time it will be the same.

The true Church is depicted in symbol as a woman — a pure, chaste, virtuous woman. But there is also an

apostate church mentioned, known as the "great whore" and "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). This symbolism represents today's professing Christianity. And John saw what would take place.

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (verse 6). In other words, this church will be persecuting and murdering the people of God. But, of course, they will not think that they are destroying God's chosen people.

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 6:2).

Today's modern Christians have not had to spill their own blood in order to demonstrate their abiding faith in God and Christ. How many of us are asleep at the switch and will be caught unawares when the persecution starts?

The purpose of persecution

The creator God understands human nature. He knows that humans tend to become complacent and indifferent when things go too well. Just as strenuous physical exercise builds muscles and strength, the spiritual exercise of faith during persecution develops spiritual strength and stamina. God can also use persecution for "the furtherance of the gospel" (Philippians 1:12).

Persecution was intended by God to build faith, strength and spiritual character. The legacy of persecution in God's Church is also a legacy of obedience to and faith in the living God, carried on by those who, in many cases, gave their lives in the service of God and Christ.

There's coming a time in the near future when God will once again avenge His saints, and the persecution of God's people will be finished. All those who have suffered for righteousness' sake will be rewarded. They will be granted the "crown of life" (Revelation 2:10) and will also be given high positions in the government of God.

It is easy then, to understand why Christ said, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10). □

'And this Gospel shall be preached...'

Matthew 24:14

Sermon Summaries from Ministers of the Worldwide Church of God

Probably the most marvelous of all modern inventions is the computer. In some ways it is designed and operates on the same principles as the human brain. But, of course, a computer is much simpler than any brain. Nevertheless there are enough similarities to make it profitable to apply some analogies to the spiritual — the Christian life.

The computer is basically a matter of the on or off condition, the zero or one, the positive or the negative, the north pole or the south pole of many individual bits. All information is stored that way, and all those calculations of the trajectories of our space shots, or computer models of society or of the world or whatever, are made up of an orderly array of these simple on or off, zero or one, conditions.

The advantage of the computer is the speed with which its calculations can be accomplished and the speed with which it can store and retrieve information. The access time of our computer at the college is about a half of a millionth of a second, to go in, get information, bring it back and use it. And I think I've heard that the individual zero or one, on-off condition is now approaching the order of 15 to 20 nanoseconds (or billionths of a second) in some of our more sophisticated computers. You might understand how fast a billionth of a second is if you multiply upward, the other way. One billion seconds takes approximately 31 years.

But all of a computer's speedy "thinking" has to be thought out carefully in advance. It has to be set up to do this slowly and painstakingly by programing. In other words, it takes time to communicate with the machine. To make this easier and faster, programing languages have been developed so you can talk to the machine in English, and it can interpret your language into its language.

The newer machines are developed with more efficient languages, and if the operator hasn't learned the newer, more efficient language yet, it can take the older language, convert it into the newer language, and do that until you have time to learn it.

Computers can now also learn by doing. They can be programed so that if you ask them to solve a problem, they can learn how *not* to solve it, and if you ask them to solve it the second time, they'll do it more quickly than they did the first time.

The comput-

er has one outstanding feature in which it is superior to the human mind. The mind of God has this capability, and we as human beings need to develop it if we are to become like God. It is the ability to remember with crystal clarity stored data, past experience that has been fed into it and to use it in solving a problem.

Israel forgot

You've heard many times that it is typical of Israel that Israel forgot God. On the other hand, we find in Exodus 2:24, "And God heard their groaning, and God *remembered* his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." So it is typical of God to remember and typical of human beings to forget. In the song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32, Israel was told: "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee? *Remember* the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee" (verses 6-7).

"Jacob is the lot of his [God's] inheritance. He found him in a desert land . . . he kept him the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young . . . beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him" (verses 9-12).

He brought them out, He gave them the honey out of the rock, He brought them into the promised land. He gave them all of the good things.

"But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" (verse 15). So that is the human inability, to properly esteem what has happened to them in the past, the great blessings God has given.

Verse 18: "Of the Rock that begat thee, thou art unmindful, and hast *forgotten* God that formed thee." If we, the called-out ones, can change this natural human proclivity with the power of God, then we can be spared, and we can be different.

God formed us for a purpose: He wanted a process to occur in our minds. He wants us to program our minds to this goal.

Verses 46-47: "And he said unto them, *Set your hearts*

PROGRAMMING YOURSELF TO REMEMBER

God formed us for a purpose: He wanted a process to occur in our minds. He wants us to program our minds to this goal.

unto all the words which I testify among you this day . . . For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

If they would set their heart to remember, to indelibly print in their minds what he was telling them, it would be their life. It would be the source of decision making in their lives, of problem solving, of direction for the activities of their lives. They would still have individual choice, but be able to choose within the parameters of the law, which God gave them for blessing and not cursing.

If they could have looked as vividly into their memories as a computer does and applied it, they would not have gone astray. But they were not able.

While you're in the input mode

In Ecclesiastes 12:1 we are commanded to keep in mind the knowledge of God while we're young, while we have the opportunity to benefit from it: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth . . ."

So while you're young, while your life is in front of you, while you still have the opportunity for decision making, problem solving, choices, if you will remember your Creator, you're going to make decisions properly. And your life is going to be happy; it's going to be abundant.

Apply the inputs of knowledge, and you won't have to apply as many inputs of experience. You won't have to experience the evil if you will apply the inputs of knowledge that are given to you.

Now originally there were two young human beings whose minds were basically blank. But God was able to communicate with them for a short time. And you would have thought, since they had fresh blank minds, not cluttered with other numbers, experiences or times, and they weren't dulled by age or anything, that they could have remembered everything God told them quite vividly a few moments, hours or days later. Wouldn't you? But it seems it didn't stick.

Because in Genesis 3:6: "... when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof . . ." She failed to use all the knowledge in her mind and made her decision without it.

The same thing occurred in Joshua 7:1, where "... Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel."

He had been told not to touch the spoils. It should have been in his mind. His mind should have gone into the search mode or the recall mode: What was I told about this? I was told to leave it alone, therefore it is a firm, steady, steadfast, clear-cut decision, I'm going to leave it alone. The decision is, no. (And if you go through the problem a thousand times with the same information, you'll come up with the same decision.)

He should have recalled the fact that he was told that he should not covet and told specifically here not to take of the spoil. But he took. And many people lost their lives because of it.

James 1:14 tells us that basically the same problem occurs today if we're not careful: "... every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." When lust becomes all-consuming, it blots out and prevents the recall of knowledge, commands, instructions, even of past experiences where the same mistake was made and the penalty incurred.

"When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (verse 15). So because we forget and don't keep the knowledge in mind, we pay the penalty.

"Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above . . ." (verses 16-17). Certainly God maintains the program He has in mind, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Programing ourselves

With human beings, the writing of the program does not occur all at once or immediately. Perhaps we are also like the computer in that it takes a lot of time to translate to a language the computer understands. But it does occur, it must occur, if we're going to be like God.

Hebrews 8 recounts the remedy, showing how the new covenant is made. Verses 6-7: "... He [Christ] is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second."

If the information that was given by that first covenant had been stored in human minds, so that it would have been used on down through their lifetimes, there would have been no need for a second covenant — because the fault was with them, with their incapacity to remember and to apply.

"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah . . . For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts . . ."

The writing indelibly in our human minds to the point that we will recall it and use it is the essence of the new covenant. The law hasn't changed; that's part of the basic program of the universe.

Remember the future

If you have II Peter, chapters two and three, programed into your minds, you will be able to reject false ideas about the new covenant. If you program this, if you remember it vividly and with clarity, it will give you the capability to know there will be people telling you something different about the new covenant and about many other things. So

We need to develop and revitalize our search and application ability to make efficient use of the knowledge that is in our mind and conscience.

let's activate our minds, put them in the learn mode and make sure we have this printed in our minds.

II Peter 2:1: "... there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

Verse 3, "And through covetousness [itself a violation of the commandment of God, itself a rejection of what should have been programed into their mind by the basic Tenth Commandment] shall they with feigned words [deceit, falsehood] make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

Verse 18: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh..." When you hear these false teachings, you will know they are false. Remember, they were prophesied to come. And let that be a flag, a signal to you to search further and examine and find out.

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." Promised liberty, but really brought into bondage, "again entangled [in]... the pollutions of the world" (paraphrased).

Peter continues in chapter 3: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." That is the purpose of his writing, to stir up minds to remember, that they would apply it to the situations of false teachers.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?..." They'll say things have always continued on, and they'll try to get you to forget what is prophesied for the future, and that God is really going to intervene in world affairs.

If you keep in mind that Jesus Christ is going to return, that the "day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," and that the elements are going to "melt with fervent heat," it will direct you away from folly and error. You will see "what manner of persons ought ye to be..." Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

And verse 17: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." In other words, Remember!

In addition to that, you should "... grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..." You should grow in the understanding, the development of character, having the program of God's law written more firmly in your mind to affect every deci-

sion, so the access time — the recall time — is instantaneous. Consider that the Holy Spirit is the means by which your mind can be softened, whereby the law of God can be written there — indelibly printed — so that it remains.

There's one other key ingredient of the future: uncertainty. Because you don't know certain things, you must all the more keep in mind what you do know to decide what to do and to plan.

Memory rejection

Computer models might tell the world how to avoid mass starvation and famine. Your spiritual computer can tell you what to do. But they can make neither you nor society do it. You can take what your memory tells you and reject it. That's what we usually do.

Rejecting what is in your memory is called going against your conscience, and Paul talks about the conscience becoming seared because you constantly reject the knowledge that is there. It's bad business to reject your conscience. Because it may not give you a clear message the next time. It begins to say, over a period of time, "If you don't like what I tell you, I won't tell you anymore." Instead, we need to develop and revitalize our search and application ability to make efficient use of the knowledge that is in our mind and conscience.

Maybe it scares you to think that God is programing your mind. But it's not a rigid type of programing, not the limitation of the program of a man-made computer. It is merely setting in your mind the basic pattern of law, of the way choices should be made. Within that pattern is great flexibility, great opportunity for individuality, for choice, for you to be an individual in the family of God, different in some respects than either God the Father or the Son, but programed like them in basic purpose.

You can look around you at the design in nature, at each other and see the individuality God has created. So there is no need to fear that you're going to be put in some kind of a straitjacket where you can't be free. The only way you *can* be free and have the opportunities of all eternity to express yourself is to let that law be written, programed, in your hearts and minds.

If we can, as individuals, do in our minds what we've been able to build a stupid little machine to do, to remember what we have learned and apply it vividly and clearly to the present and to the decisions that we make in the future, then we can have the mind of God, and we can qualify for great rewards in His Kingdom, and He will place us there. □

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Forgive Us Our

It is said that the man who never makes a mistake never accomplishes anything. Nevertheless, if it is easy to make mistakes, it is terribly hard — and most inconvenient — to admit them.

More often than not, we tend to reason according to our prejudices. We know, of course, when we are offended, but hardly when we offend someone else. We each have our particular ways of evaluating the circumstances or justifying ourselves. What we think not only seems right to us, but also perfectly reasonable. In the back of our minds, even though we may deny this, we consider ourselves to be just a little better than the others — if not in knowledge, at least in character and attitude!

The word *forgiveness* is frequently on our lips, rarely in our hearts. We use glib clichés, such as “excuse me” or “pardon me,” only as a matter of etiquette and politeness; they are rather meaningless, since they don’t spring from our earnest desire to ask for forgiveness or to grant it.

Do you know *how* to forgive? Have you ever learned to forgive? Do you treat others the way you want them to treat you, even when forgiveness is concerned? Christ said: “. . . when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark 11:25-26).

An absolute condition

This teaching of Christ underlines a condition that is *indispensable* to our salvation. Unfortunately, it seems to often escape our attention. Christ taught us that we cannot be saved if we have not learned to forgive those who offend us. In other

words, to obtain mercy we have to show mercy. If we don’t forgive one another, God will not forgive us. And if He doesn’t forgive us, we can never enter His Kingdom.

From childhood, most “Christians” have learned to recite (rather passively) what is known to be the “Lord’s prayer” — a *model* prayer that sums up all of our needs as well as the basic principles of Christianity. In all probability, you too have recited this prayer many a time, and some of you may still do so. But just what does it mean to you? Do you really know what you are telling God, the solemn commitment you are making, the definite condition you are setting when you say to Him: “Our Father which art in heaven . . . forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matthew 6:9-12)?

By your own words, you are engaging yourself into a covenant with Him, agreeing that He should *only* forgive you as you yourself forgive others — show mercy to you as you yourself show mercy to others! Think of it!

Do you realize that to forgive someone is to *forget* his mistakes — whatever his motives or the consequences? Your salvation depends upon your totally forgetting the offenses committed against you.

Let’s suppose you are with someone who has “done you dirty” or hurt you badly — maybe to the extent of having ruined your life. Can you look at him with kindness and gentleness, without feeling any resentment toward him? Can you treat him as your brother, someone you *love*, someone you would be willing to die for if necessary?

Humanly speaking, you cannot. It is not possible to express such love without the help of God’s Holy Spirit. Consider the way the apostle Paul strived to overcome his nature in or-

der to attain the goal, “Brethren . . . this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark . . .” (Philippians 3:13-14).

Paul also wrote: “. . . be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

The spirit of revenge or vindictiveness has no place in forgiveness. God alone has the right to seek vengeance, and He does so always with compassion and love.

God is merciful

One of the most comforting truths, for us all, is the fact that God is very, very merciful. He does not treat us the way we treat one another.

To be a Christian is to be *Christ-like*, to learn more and more to think and act like Him — to prove ourselves compassionate, merciful, loving, just as He is toward us. If you are truly Christian, you must be willing to take the first step to make peace between your neighbor and you, even if he is the one at fault. Christ said: “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone . . .” (Matthew 18:15).

Notice again! Christ clearly indicates that the one who must take the first step is not necessarily the one who has sinned! A true Christian neither harbors bitterness, nor does he act from a spirit of pride or superiority. He doesn’t wait for others to first do their part. He seeks reconciliation in order to live at peace with everyone.

When Peter asked Christ how often we should forgive one another, he was told “until seventy times seven” — that is, *always*. After saying this, Christ gave a parable showing how

Debts

By Dibar Apartian

we human beings are sometimes cruel, merciless, wanting to exact what is due us. He compared the Kingdom of heaven to a king who called his servants to account. One of them owed him a large sum of money, but was unable to repay it. How did the master react when his servant bowed down before him, begging for more time? "Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt" (Matthew 18:23-27).

Is this the way *you* would have acted? But the parable doesn't end at this point. The servant, in turn, was a creditor. Someone owed him some money, very little, hardly more than a few pennies. How did he treat his debtor? Did he also show mercy? Did he have as much compassion for his debtor as his master had for him?

You know the answer. "... he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt" (verses 28-30).

Naturally, when his master found out what had taken place, he punished the selfish and merciless servant and required full payment of his debts. And Christ added: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (verse 35).

Jesus Christ *never* sinned. He never hurt anyone. Quite the contrary. He always pardoned those who offended Him. As Peter writes, "... when he [Christ] suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:23). When His persecutors mocked and ridiculed Him, when

they tortured and crucified Him, He prayed for them, saying: "... Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do ..." (Luke 23:34).

If He — your Lord and Master — could *forgive* others without ever having been guilty of anything, how much more you, a sinner, need to forgive your fellowmen!

The Spirit in Christ — the Spirit of LOVE, compassion and mercy — was also in Stephen, the first Christian martyr, who cried out while his persecutors were stoning him to death: "... Lord, lay not this sin to their charge ..." (Acts 7:60).

Can you think and act like him? You should if God's Spirit is in you!

Your sins will be forgotten — one day

Solomon was inspired to write that "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression" (Proverbs 19:11).

What a beautiful teaching! — yet how different from our human way of reasoning! In order to gain "glory" we must *forget* — yes, *forget* and not remember one another's sins. Do you know what really prevents us from forgetting offenses? It is our self-righteousness, our pride, the vanity in us. We are prejudiced. We know we are not to judge, but keep on judging according to our measure of justice. An offense committed against us automatically becomes far worse than one committed against someone else or any offense we commit ourselves.

We all have a tendency of pitying ourselves, believing that nobody — but nobody — really understands us, sometimes not even God! A disparaging remark, a half-truth, a harsh word of correction, and we are ready to fight back!

Strange as it may seem, if Christianity is considered today to be an

unpractical or an unlivable religion, it is simply because too few people are truly willing to live by it. Its principles clash with those of our carnal nature, which seeks its own satisfaction, justice and glory. The only way to fight this pull is by letting the Spirit of God, in us, guide us in everything we do and say.

The Christian way, for sure, is not always easy, but it is the *only one* that procures peace of mind and leads to salvation. The more we forgive our debtors the closer we get to the supreme purpose for which we have been created: to inherit eternal life, to live and serve forever in the Kingdom of God.

As human beings, we are much too carnal, vain and selfish. Made out of the dust of the earth, we are mortal beings. But if we die in Christ, we will be born of the Spirit at the time of the resurrection of the dead. We will be spirit — immortal members of God's family!

At that time we will no longer walk ashamed of past mistakes or live in anxiety, because God has promised that He will *forget* all of our sins. He will wipe them out. Just imagine! God will no more remember your sins!

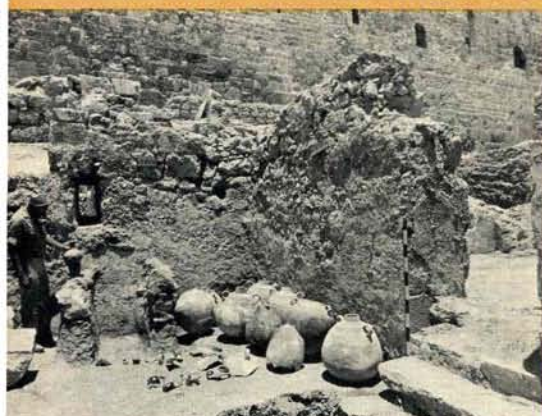
"... After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

Be sure to have this magnificent promise in mind the next time you pray to God, and say: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." □

RIGHT: The Jehu Stele, depicting Jehu paying tribute to Shalmaneser III, was carved in stone during the ninth century B.C. FAR

RIGHT: Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria, is immortalized as the victor in this eighth-century mural.

BELOW: Byzantine pottery from sixth-century Jerusalem. BOTTOM: Excavation around the southwest corner of the Temple reveals a street and steps from the time of Jesus (Herodian period).



Staff Photo

From the Dust of Time THE REVELATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

By Herman L. Hoeh

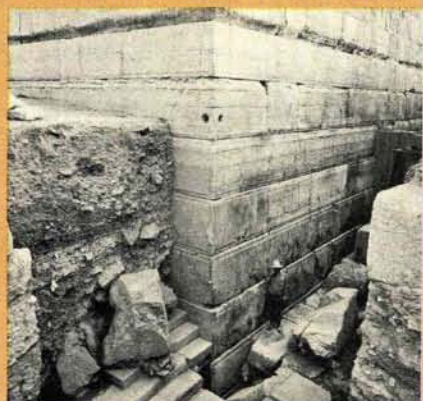
The managing editor of *The Good News* has placed before me a remarkable task. In updating our members and co-workers on the Jerusalem excavations, he has asked me to do this accompanying article. I have been requested to touch upon the beginnings of archaeology, how it informs mankind, the accuracy of applicable dating methods and its relevance or relationship to Biblical revelation. And I am to make it highly interesting to you readers!

That is as challenging as many an archaeological excavation.

There is one — and only one — means of achieving this major task. I am going to have to *show you how to dig* for the answers in your own community library, bookshop and museum. You will become knowledgeable armchair archaeologists.

But first, let us understand a little about what archaeology is and its purpose.

The word “archaeology” comes from the Greek *archaia* (meaning



Staff Photo



British Museum

“ancient things”) and *logos* (in this case, meaning “theory or science”). Historically, the word has had various shades of meaning. Since the late 1700s, however, it has been defined as a branch of learning that studies the material remains of man’s past.

Excavation often seems to the general public to be the most important and glamorous aspect of archaeology. It is, of course, exciting, and it is a prerequisite to any worthwhile endeavor of this kind. But interpretation of the data collected through excavations is the key to deciphering ancient findings. Making historical judgments, based on the interpretation, is the most important task of an archaeologist. It helps us piece together clues to the lifestyle and traditions of ancient peoples.

How you can understand

Now that you have a general definition of the purpose of archaeology, let’s examine ways that you can be-

come more knowledgeable about this subject.

I have had the privilege of visiting archaeological excavations in the United States, Britain, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, the Soviet Union, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Iraq, Rhodesia, Thailand and Tonga in the South Pacific. I have participated in excavations in the Gaza Strip and in Syria on the Euphrates. Most of you will never have that opportunity in this life.

You will have to dig in libraries and museums to discover the treasure of archaeology. That is how I commenced.

And, in addition, you can search out men and women of understanding in the field of archaeology — such as at a local university. To be a knowledgeable armchair archaeologist you need to read *and* to listen to and converse with men and women in the field of archaeology and the related sciences. And to make your studies really valuable, read and un-



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derstand your Bible. Find out how true archaeology and the Bible complement each other.

The Work’s participation

Ambassador College has participated with Hebrew University the past 10 years in the Jerusalem excavations. That contact has provided our students and the leadership of the Church and college with experience and knowledge in archaeology. You can acquire similar experience and

knowledge through continuing education and extension programs from colleges and universities near you. The cultures studied may not be Middle Eastern, of course, but the techniques and methods of excavating are fundamentally the same. That is the fastest way to understand the limitations as well as the breadth and depth of archaeology.

In addition to our 10-year participation in Israel, we have completed three years of cooperation in the Mesopotamia Project with the Institute of Archaeology at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). The Institute is under the direction of Giorgio Buccellati, a personal friend of many years.

One of the services of the UCLA institute is the preparation of reviews of new books and journals of interest to people in the field of archaeology. A free mimeographed catalog listing all books thus far reviewed is available on request. This is a unique solution of obtaining valuable reviews on archaeological books you may check out from nearby central libraries or on occasion purchase.

Publishing too

Now that I have mentioned books, let me point out that the Ambassador Foundation, through our own Gateway Publishers, has also assisted Israel's Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology in publishing *Investigations at Lachish: The Sanctuary and the Residency (Lachish V)* by Yohanan Aharoni. The volume is addressed primarily to the scholarly world.

For those of you who know your Bible, Lachish was one of the major cities of Judah. It is mentioned in Joshua 10:13 and 12:11. King Amaziah was slain there (II Kings 14:19).

Lachish was virtually the second capital of Judah. *Lachish V* sheds much new light on the city from the end of the Canaanite period through the Israelite period.

Besides the excavation report, this book deals with the history of the city and its most important buildings. The destruction of Stratum III during the campaign of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, in 701 B.C. is supported by new archaeological and historical investigation. The magnifi-

cent building on the top of Tel Lachish, defined by earlier excavators as a Persian residency, is examined and its interpretation as an Assyrian governor's palace is offered by the late Yohanan Aharoni.

In around-the-world efforts to reach leaders and educators with the good news of the wonderful world tomorrow, Herbert W. Armstrong and his staff have had the privilege of meeting Dr. Abdel-Kader Hatem. He is a former first deputy prime minister of Egypt and close friend of Egypt's President Anwar Sadat. Dr. Hatem has, since 1962, been minister of culture, information and tourism. Out of mutual respect we had Gateway Publishers copyright in 1976 Dr. Hatem's book, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, a volume addressed to the lay public.

We ought to know what the ancient Egyptians thought. The first books of the Bible were written by men who spent major parts of their lives in Egypt. *Life in Ancient Egypt* reveals from a modern Egyptian's special point of view the art, literature, education and science of the ancient Nile valley. Dr. Hatem also lucidly describes medicine, ethics, religious thought, architecture, sentiment and beauty in the land of the pharaohs. All this background material was locked away from modern man until unlocked by linguists and archaeologists.

Digging through biblical archaeology

It is important to know where to commence reading. So many volumes are published today, even in the field of archaeology. The logical start is with the city of Jerusalem. And the best volume for a beginner is *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968-1974*. This finely illustrated work (in color and black and white) of the world's most significant city is published by the Israel Exploration Society, with which we have enjoyed splendid cooperation beginning 1968.

One of the chapters in this volume is "The Archaeological Excavations Near the Temple Mount." It is written by Professor Binyamin Mazar. In a personal footnote on page 25 he writes: "J. [Yosef] Aviram has been of the greatest assistance as adminis-

trative director. Special gratitude is expressed to the Ambassador College of Pasadena, California, for considerable assistance in supporting the excavations." Yosef Aviram, a member of the Board of Governors of the Israel Museum, is a loyal friend of Ambassador Foundation.

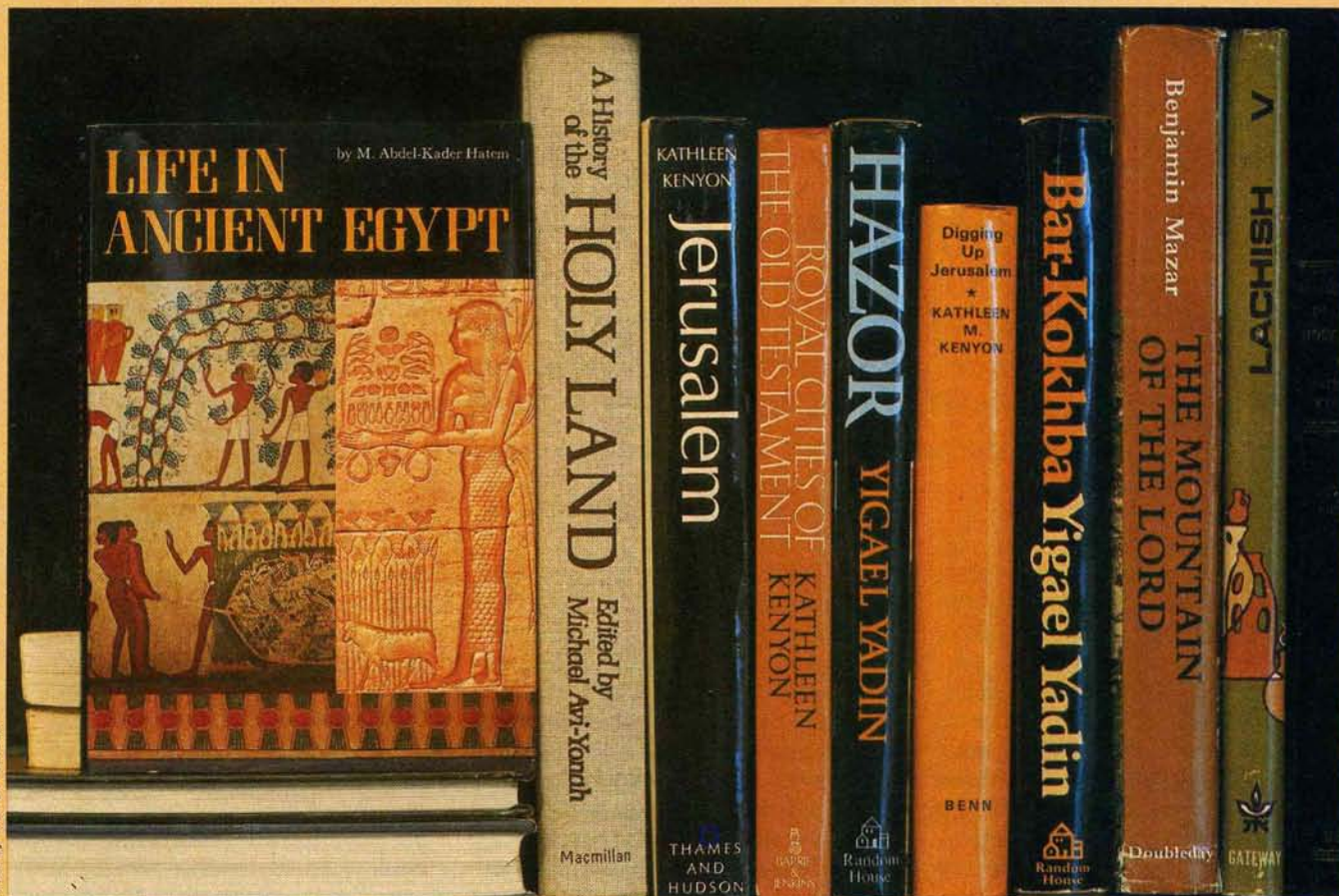
You might follow the previous work with *The Mountain of the Lord*, another volume by Professor Mazar, assisted by Gaalyah Cornfeld. It is published by Doubleday. This volume presents an immense time frame from the patriarchs to David to Jesus and into the 20th century. It is readily obtainable in public libraries since it is published outside Israel.

In its 160 pages of text and 160 pages of exciting photographs, including color plates, this book tells the story for the public of the massive archaeological project that we know as the Jerusalem excavations, in which many of you have indirectly had a part. Shown are dramatic photos of supporting pillars of Herod's royal portico. Each pillar is so thick that three men with arms outstretched could not span them. Also shown is the fallen upper cornerstone of the temple mount on which a priest stood and blew the trumpet to herald the coming of the Sabbath, along with many other exciting photographs.

As we expand our horizons, the next volume you would find valuable is *A History of the Holy Land*. It was edited by the late Michael Avi-Yonah and is published by the Macmillan Co. The sweep of this volume is immense — from pre-Canaanite times through Israelite, Roman, Byzantine, Arabic, Crusader, Ottoman, British and now the Israeli periods.

This book provides valuable material important to the understanding of the demographic, political and geographic setting of the Bible and to the study of current world history. It provides one of the best visual supports for the ideas that took root and flourished in Palestine, from whence they indelibly influenced the course of Western civilization.

The contributions (made possible through your help) of the Ambassador Foundation to Israel's Department of Antiquities have helped to support the excavations of Professor Avi-Yonah conducted in Jerusalem



ARMCHAIR ARCHAEOLOGISTS can find many beautifully illustrated books in the library that cover various aspects of biblical archaeology. These books can also be purchased at many bookstores if a personal library on the subject is desired.

in areas away from the temple mount. Before his death Professor Avi-Yonah was a consistent listener to the Jerusalem addresses of Mr. Armstrong.

Another Israeli friend of the Ambassador Foundation is Yigael Yadin. Professor Yadin is a master of on-site details with an ingenious mind. He is recognized as one of the most able archaeological lecturers anywhere in the world.

Three of his numerous books, *Masada*, *Bar-Kokhba* and *Hazor*, have gained world recognition for their wealth of facts, their photographic beauty and their significance to the accuracy of Palestinian archaeology. To fail to read at least one of these is to deny yourself the experience of living an almost day-to-day adventure in archaeology.

Masada is the tragic story of the closing years of the Jews' first revolt against Rome at the time of the destruction of the second temple. *Bar-Kokhba* is the spectacular account of the rediscovery of the legendary hero

of the second Jewish revolt against Rome. Out of a crevice in a canyon near the Dead Sea, where it had lain for over 19 centuries, came a woman's bag. Out of the bag came a fragile batch of papyrus inside which were wrapped four wooden slats. And on these strips of wood the name Bar-Kokhba, guerrilla leader of the revolt against Hadrian's Rome. In addition were a spectacular range of clothes, glass and kitchen utensils of A.D. 132.

Hazor is the rediscovery of a great citadel of the Canaanites — "for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms" (Joshua 11:10). Hazor was found, after excavation, to be the largest city in all Canaan. Professor Yadin's attempt to reconstruct archaeological evidence for Joshua 11 and Judges 4 leads him to invert the order of biblical events. You must always be aware of human reasonings. The foundation of knowledge is the Bible. Apparent conflicts of evidence must be reexamined.

I would be remiss at this point not

to bring to your attention the role of the late Dame Kathleen Kenyon of England, who excavated Jericho and Jerusalem. Her *Royal Cities of the Old Testament* and *Jerusalem: Excavating 3,000 Years of History and Archaeology in the Holy Land* present a clear and enthralling description of archaeological evidence as it relates to the Bible.

To complete our digging into biblical archaeology for this month we need *The Archaeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* by Jack Finegan. It is published by Princeton University Press. His book is like taking a journey. He first investigates sites connected with John the Baptist, then proceeds through the cities made famous by Jesus' life. Each site is illustrated. The accompanying text contains a bibliography of the most important literature on the subject. You may pursue each area in depth as you have time and energy.

But, you might ask, why have no
(Continued on page 29)

The Parables of Jesus: **THE KINGDOM**

We learned from the article last month on the background of the parables of Jesus, what parables are and why Jesus used them. We also saw that there are three distinct sets or groupings of parables, each having a different theme. In this article we begin to examine the first six parables of the first group.

By Brian Knowles

As Jesus sat in a small fishing craft just offshore on the Sea (or lake) of Galilee, He began to address the large crowd assembled on the shore. He spoke in parables about the Kingdom of God.

In this first group of parables, Jesus gave to the people six parables without any explanation. Later, He privately explained the meaning of all these to His own disciples. He also gave the disciples four additional parables, which were self-explanatory. These last four parables contained a special message within the overall theme pertaining directly to the disciples' future apostolic ministry.

It is important to realize that the parables were *doctrinal* in nature: "And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his *doctrine*" (Mark 4:2).

A doctrine is a biblical principle, teaching or truth that is accepted as authoritative. It constitutes part of the dogma of real Christianity. Therefore, we cannot underestimate the importance of seeking understanding of the parables of Jesus!

The first parable Jesus gave is of special significance because it is a pacesetter of sorts. It is typical of all such parables, and the method of explanation also follows the same basic pattern. Jesus said to His disciples: "... Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?" (Mark 4:13.)

The parable of the sower

"Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way

side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred" (Mark 4:3-8).

This first parable is a simple story liberally laced with local color. It is found in three of the four gospel accounts — Matthew, Mark and Luke. Each gospel mentions a point or two not found in the other accounts. We will use Mark's more concise gospel as our basic reference.

Jesus describes a scene very familiar to His audience: A sower went out to sow grain in his field. The seed falls on four different types of ground: 1) the wayside, 2) stony ground, 3) among thorns and 4) good ground. Each represents a different category of person who hears the Word of God at some point in his life. Each responds differently.

We are not told who the sower is, but it is explained that "the sower soweth *the word*" (verse 14). We must assume that whoever disseminates God's Word (God or one of His human instruments) is the sower. The seed in the parable, then, represents the Gospel message and all that it includes.

Each person who hears it reacts

differently. Not everyone responds with equal enthusiasm. Nor does the Word of God bear the same fruit in each individual it touches.

Those by the wayside

The people in this first category hear the Gospel message, but they are immediately dissuaded from *doing* anything about it. God's truth is never allowed to take root in their lives. They are easy prey for the devil, who subtly convinces them to disbelieve what they hear. "... *Satan cometh immediately*, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts" (verse 15).

There are many ways by which this happens: A snide remark about the message from a "friend" who is supposedly in the know about such things. A sudden change of personal circumstances may lead to a temporary diversion — which becomes permanent.

A minor disagreement about a small point can lead the prospective Christian to "throw out the baby with the bath water." It could be any number of things, but the result is always the same! The person rejects the Gospel of the Kingdom of God before it gets a chance to take root.

On stony ground

These persons advance somewhat further than those in the first category. Their initial reaction to the Word of God is enthusiastic. They are happy to hear the truth preached. They may even become baptized. "Then they that *gladly* received his word were baptized ..." (Acts 2:41).

But unfortunately, their enthusiasm soon wears thin. They "... have no root in themselves, and so *endure but for a time*: afterward, when *affliction* or *persecution* ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended" (Mark 4:17).

These babes in Christ never allow their spiritual roots to go down quite deeply enough to draw on the pure, nourishing water of God's spiritual power (John 7:38, 39; Acts 1:8). When persecution comes along, they are not strong enough to withstand. They have no persevering power in the face of the ridicule and derision of those who do not share their beliefs.

Such people are only willing to obey God as long as it does not cost them anything in terms of personal prestige and respect. They are willing to compromise the Word of God rather than suffer for it.

Did not Jesus say in another place: "... If any man will come after me, let him ... take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24)?

Among thorns

The third type of person progresses somewhat further. He too begins to bear fruit and live a life of obedience to Christ. His life changes as he yields to the Word of God. But he too has a hang-up. At some point in his Christian life, "... the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it *becometh unfruitful*" (Mark 4:19).

In order to become unfruitful, he must have at one time *been* fruitful. Here is someone who has actually begun to bear substantial fruit as a result of God's Word. He has made spiritual progress. He may have been in the Church for some time. Others may even consider him well established in the Body of Christ.

But sooner or later, plain old *materialism* or sensuality creeps in and smothers his spirituality.

Perhaps it is a craving for material success in the world of business or industry. A desire to be at the top of the financial heap can divert a person's focus of attention from spiritual to material things.

For this reason, the apostle Paul warned the Colossians about drifting into materialism: "Set your affection on things above, *not* on things on the

earth" (Colossians 3:2). He also said that "... to be carnally [physically] minded is death ..." (Romans 8:6).

There are many pitfalls that can tear a person away from the abundant life to which God has called him. It could be money, the desire for financial success, another woman or man, a job or an inordinate desire of any kind. It could be a craving for liquor or food (not that eating and drinking are wrong, but drunkenness and gluttony are) or possibly even narcotic drugs.

Whatever it is, it diverts one from his life in Christ — choking out the influence of God's Holy Spirit and any further bearing of good fruit.

On good ground

This category describes people who are converted and who make continual growth and progress in the faith. They bear the good fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

But not all bear the same amount of fruit. Some are much more productive than others. Many do not realize their maximum potential as Christians — they merely get by with a modicum of effort.

Yet it is Christ's will that we bear *much* fruit. Those who are *closest* to Jesus Christ bear the most fruit. Jesus said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth *much fruit*: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Which category are *you* in?

The wheat and the tares

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servant said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the

time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matthew 13:24-30).

The second parable is also taken from a description of rural life in the province of Galilee. Any farmer of the day would have known about tares (darnel). They were weeds that grew with the wheat and looked much like it as long as the wheat remained in the blade stage. When they grew to maturity, however, they were readily distinguishable.

This is a simple illustration pointing out that both the converted and unconverted have to coexist in the same society until the time of the great harvest of lives at Christ's return. During that time Jesus Christ will make a separation between those who are His and those who are not.

The best account of this parable is found in Matthew 13:24-30. (The explanation is given in verses 36-43.) Each element has vital meaning. Notice Matthew's explanation:

"The field is the world; the good seed [true Christians] are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one [Satan — compare John 8:44, I John 3:8]; The enemy that sowed them is the devil [the god of this society, II Corinthians 4:4]; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [Greek: *aionos*, meaning *age*]."

This parable graphically shows the fate of those who insist on following the devil when *they know better!* Those who are incorrigibly wicked will be thrown into a lake of fire and be *burned* into ashes (Malachi 4:3).

John spoke of this in the book of Revelation: "And death [the dead] and hell [the grave — *hades*] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the *second death*. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14-15). In order to die twice, one must first *live* twice. This means a *resurrection* must occur.

This is not immortal *life* as a "soul" in an ever-burning hellfire — it is complete extinction and oblivion *forever!* And this is *doctrine!* □

(To be continued next month)

PROVE ALL THINGS

Be Ready Always to Give an Answer

"... be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

High on a hill overlooking the cool, blue water of the Aegean Sea lived a kindly, white-haired patriarch in his small, but comfortable, Grecian villa. Having lived a most active life, he now enjoyed his semiretirement and often pondered about the past and his close association with "the Lord." Today was special, for, as was his custom, this day was reserved for a religious observance. After all, this day — Sunday — was "the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). Fact or fiction?

Although the story appears to be plausible, it is almost totally false, with the greatest fallacy being the conclusion, which almost all professing Christianity has swallowed hook, line and sinker. It's important that we are not deceived about the true meaning of "the Lord's day." The proof is available and irrefutable.

The aged patriarch was the apostle John who even in his latter years suffered much persecution for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the last decade of the first century A.D., he was banished by the Roman emperor Domitian to the desolate island of Patmos, used by the Roman government as a place for criminals.

It is in this setting that the final inspired words of the Bible were given to John, to record the revelation of Jesus Christ in order to "shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1).

John was given the distinct privilege to view and document the panorama of prophecy, especially focusing in on the events that are to transpire in this last generation. With this in mind we can understand why John wrote, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10).

What follows is a graphic description of end-time events that will

change not only the earth but its inhabitants as well. The central theme is "the day of the Lord," a time when God will intervene in the affairs of man. And yet some try to explain away the "Lord's day" as a reference to Sunday observance.

Note this interpretation of Revelation 1:10: "It was Sunday and I was worshiping, when suddenly I heard a loud voice behind me" (*Living Prophecies*, by Kenneth N. Taylor). Other Sunday-keeping scholars show more objectivity. In the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, edited by T.K. Cheyne and J.S. Black, c. 1902, under the article "Lord's Day," they acknowledge that while many scholars accept the term to refer to Sunday observance, "... the presence of the article and the connection in which the phrase occurs both favor the other interpretation [supported by a weighty minority of scholars], according to which 'the day of the Lord' here stands for 'the day of Yahwe,' the day of judgment."

The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Dictionary, by Siegfried H. Horn, c. 1960, comments in the article, "Day of the Lord": "Consistently in both the Old and New Testament this and similar expressions denote the time when God intervenes in human affairs to execute judgment upon evildoers or to deliver His people from the hands of their oppressors, or both."

The Companion Bible, appendix 197:2, shows that the key to unlocking the meaning of the book of Revelation is the understanding that "the Lord's day" is "the Day of the Lord" (see Isaiah 2:12). "The Day of the Lord" being yet future, it follows that the whole book must concern the things belonging to 'that day' and consequently is wholly prophecy... the book concerns the future

and the day of the unveiling (the apocalypse) of the great 'King of kings and Lord of lords.'"

Although Christendom has accepted Sunday keeping as one of its basic tenets, "we cannot say with certainty how far back the practice of marking the first day of the week by acts of worship is traceable... the time when the Christian Sunday began to be observed in Palestine... remains utterly obscure" (*The Encyclopaedia Biblica*, article, "Lord's Day").

Continuing with their comments regarding Acts 20:6-7 where Paul was meeting with the brethren "to break bread." "Even here, however, we must be careful not to infer too much. The passage furnishes no conclusive proof that the first day of the week was the regular day for celebrating the Lord's Supper, or that a universal Christian custom is here referred to."

The late Catholic Cardinal James Gibbons in his book, *The Faith of Our Fathers*, asked some rather incisive and penetrating questions: "... is not the observance of this law among the most prominent of our sacred duties?" And now for the astounding answer, and we applaud his honesty and candor: "But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify." At least we know where he stands.

As we can see from all the references quoted, "the Lord's day" in Revelation 1:10 plainly refers to the future "day of the Lord."

There is another aspect to "the Lord's day." Is it really Sunday? Mark 2:28 is quite instructive. Read it for yourself. — By Val J. Aspenns □

MINI STUDY

The BAPTISMS of the Bible

The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief monthly excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development and increased understanding of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Corinthians 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

Instructions: The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and *read in your Bible* the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

The religious world is in great confusion regarding the various baptisms mentioned in the Bible. We hear about baptism by immersion, sprinkling and pouring. There is the baptism by the Holy Spirit, which John the Baptist spoke of, and the baptism mentioned in Matthew 28:19. Last, but not least, is the baptism with fire. Let's begin this study by examining water baptism as it was practiced by the original New Testament Church.

The most common method of baptism practiced by professing Christianity today is sprinkling. Yet when we study the Bible, we find that the word *sprinkle* occurs only a few times in the New Testament and always in connection with the blood of Christ — but never referring to baptism. The word *pouring* is also mentioned several times in the New Testament — but not once in regard to baptism!

The word *baptize* is not an English word per se. It is a Greek word. And the New Testament was written in the Greek language. In translating the Bible into English, the translators left this word untranslated. Literally, in the Greek, the word is *baptizo*.

The definition is "immerse." It means "to plunge into" or "put into." It does not mean

"to sprinkle" or "to pour." The Greek word for "sprinkle" is *rantizo* and "to pour" is *cheo*.

Therefore, sprinkling or pouring are not forms of baptism. Immersion — being placed *completely down under water* — is. Water baptism symbolizes the burial of the old carnal, sinful self. Only total immersion can properly symbolize death and burial; sprinkling or pouring are not symbols of a burial by any stretch of the imagination!

Let's notice what the Bible teaches concerning the proper mode or method of water baptism.

1. Why was John baptizing in Aenon near Jerusalem? John 3:23.

John would have needed only a cupful of water to sprinkle, or a pitcher full to pour — but baptizing requires "*much water*."

2. How does the baptism of Christ prove that He was immersed? Matthew 3:16.

Jesus had to be put *down into* the water, for He "went up straightway *out of the water* . . ." It is ridiculous to think He could have come "up . . . out" of a sprinkle or a pour!

3. When Philip baptized the eunuch, did they both go *into* the water? Acts 8:38.

There was no purpose whatever for Philip to go *into* the water, except that there was no other way he could plunge the eunuch *into* the river. Had sprinkling or pouring been the proper method of baptism, Philip would have needed only to bend over and scoop up the water.

The above biblical evidence clearly shows that immersion — being placed *completely under water* — was the only method of baptism practiced by the original Holy Spirit-inspired and -led Church of God.

Water baptism is an outward sign of inward repentance. It demonstrates to God one's willingness and desire to permanently put away his or her old life of sin and begin living a new life of obedience to God. Its meaning is *strictly symbolic* in the sense that water baptism itself has no mystical or magical effects on the person who is immersed. Its only physical effect is to get the person thoroughly wet! Nor is the Holy Spirit giv-

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en by water baptism. Yet baptism is *commanded* by God for salvation (Acts 2:38).

Surprisingly, there are several other distinct baptisms or immersions mentioned in the Bible.

4. Did John the Baptist speak of other kinds of baptism? Matthew 3:11.

John had just been warning the hypocritical religionists to demonstrate some fruits or results of their alleged repentance (verses 5-8). Notice again what he said: "I baptize [immerse] you with water for repentance, but he [Jesus] who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize [immerse] you with the Holy Spirit and [immerse you] with fire" (verse 11, Revised Standard Version). Here John referred to two other kinds of immersion — neither of them in water.

First, let's understand what it means to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

5. Did Jesus promise His disciples that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:4-5. When did the Holy Spirit come? Acts 2:1-4.

On that day of Pentecost, 50 days after Christ's resurrection, Jesus' promise and the prophecy of John the Baptist were fulfilled. God began His spiritual Church on earth by putting the Holy Spirit within His disciples. Notice how this was the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

6. Is God's Church the "body" of Christ? I Corinthians 12:12, 14, 27; Colossians 1:18.

7. How do we become members of that Body? Can we join it? Or must we be "put into" it by God's Spirit? I Corinthians 12:13.

Notice that this scripture does not say we are baptized *in* the Holy Spirit — but *by* it! The receiving of the Holy Spirit in our minds as a spiritual begetting actually *puts us into* the spiritual Body of Christ, which is His Church!

So just being physically baptized in water does not put you into God's Spirit-led Church. You must be put into the Church by the Spirit of God.

In Romans 8:9, Paul tells us plainly that unless the Spirit of Christ dwells within us, we do not belong to Him. Also, each "member" of Christ's "body" — His Church — is joined to the other by the common bond of God's Holy Spirit residing in them. So when we become Christ's by receiving His Spirit, we are then "put into" His Body — the Church of God — *by the Holy Spirit*.

The Scriptures plainly show that it is the receiving of the Holy Spirit that automatically plunges us "into" the Church of God. This immersion into the Church by the Holy Spirit is termed by the Scriptures as "the baptism *with*," "the baptism *by*" or "the baptism *of* the Holy Spirit."

8. Another "baptism" referred to in the Scriptures, and directly connected with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is mentioned in Matthew 28:19. Exactly what does this verse say? Be sure to read verse 19.

The key expression in verse 19 is the phrase "in the name of." In Greek it is *eis to onoma*, an expression nowhere else used in the New Testament. Other literature in Greek from that time period has been found with this expression and shows its full meaning: "This phrase . . . is frequent in the papyri with reference to payments made 'to the account of any one' . . . The usage is of interest in connection with Matthew 28:19, where the meaning would seem to be 'baptized into the possession of the Father, etc.' " (J. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, page 451).

The Bible teaches that our receiving of the Holy Spirit following water baptism and the "laying on of hands" of God's minister (Acts 8:14-18), *begets* us as the literal "sons of God" (Romans 8:14; I John 3:1), finally to become His *born again* sons at the resurrection.

Matthew 28:19 further illustrates that when we receive the Spirit of God, we automatically (through this miraculous begetting) become the *unborn* children of the divine family called *God*. This becomes our baptism or immersion into the Family of God, thus enabling us to imbibe of their spiritual nature. (At present, the literal spiritual Family of God consists only of the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the *divine nature* and *power* of the God Family, not a third person as so many have erroneously assumed.)

9. But what about the baptism with fire? Should a Christian seek it? What did John the Baptist prophesy concerning it? Matthew 3:11.

The populace came in great crowds to see John — mostly out of curiosity. But John was speaking in particular to the unrepentant religionists, as well as those who did repent. Notice carefully that some of those to whom John spoke — the repentant — were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit later.

But the others present — among them many hypocritical, unrepentant Pharisees and Sadducees — were going to be baptized with fire — *immersed* in hell fire — unless they repented. They would be *burned up* as chaff (Matthew 3:12). This fire is the ultimate fate of all the incorrigible wicked (Revelation 21:8; Malachi 4:1-3).

Surely no one will seek the baptism with fire once he or she understands what it really is! —

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

Completely AVOIDING those excommunicated who hold and speak a different doctrine is IMPORTANT with God. To the Thessalonians *God made this a command*: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from us [that is, from Christ's true apostles] . . . And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him" (II Thess. 3:6, 14).

This is SO IMPORTANT to GOD that He had the apostle John, in the 90s, A.D., write, as quoted above, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine" (as received through Christ's apostles), "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (II John 10).

My own son, whom I love, does NOT speak this same thing CHRIST put into GOD'S CHURCH.

WHY DOES GOD COMMAND US TO ACTUALLY SHUN A DISFELLOW-SHIPED MEMBER? WHY DOES GOD WANT US — COMMAND US! — to mark and avoid those who come with a different doctrine? Because they created DIVISION among God's people! "And" (Rom. 16:18) "by good words and fair speeches" they DECEIVE those who listen — they claim to serve God — but they DO NOT AGREE with God.

One of my son's "fair speeches" intended to deceive and draw away members tries to turn the very command of God, that we *must* all speak the same thing, into an accusation that I am using MIND CONTROL over our members.

So he sends out a "fair speech" in writing, attempting to associate God's Church with the Jim Jones Guyana cult. He says: "For too many years" (when he was in God's Church) "I tried with all my being to encourage our brethren to think for themselves." In other words, to QUESTION and doubt the validity of the doctrines CHRIST had put in the Church. He continues, "The demoniac preacher Jim Jones used extreme forms of total dictatorial con-

trol over his followers." Then he spoke of "total thought control" — inferring that now, all of a sudden, I am another "Jim Jones" and exercising "total thought control" over *you* members.

He says that when I say, with I Corinthians 1:10, that we "all speak the same thing," I am using *mind control* over you, and he sends out letters and booklets EMPHASIZING that HE DOES NOT AGREE WITH OR PREACH THE SAME THING as his father. Thus he not only breaks God's Fifth Commandment by dishonoring his father, but he seeks to misrepresent and pull over a following for himself (Acts 20:30).

But, LET'S FACE IT!

God *does* command that we all "speak the same thing" (I Cor. 1:10). But now we need to ask *HOW* that can be done. *HOW*, without mind control, has God provided that we may all come to speak the same thing?

TRUE doctrines were revealed

After God inspired Paul to command that we must all speak the same doctrines, HOW does Paul say we all come to that sameness of doctrine and belief?

First, he shows *WHY* all did not speak the same teachings. He said some looked to Peter, some to Cephas, some to Apollos, some to Paul. In other words, they were all looking to MEN — and not all to the same man.

Coming to chapter 2, Paul says he did not come to them with clever and enticing words. Then he said the TRUE DOCTRINES were REVEALED, and that the natural carnal mind *could not understand*. Paul had the truth because, 1) he had really repented when God struck him down temporarily blind and spoke to him. Then later, 2) he explained he had been with and had seen Christ. His teaching came directly from Jesus Christ. So had Peter's!

But Paul shows, I Corinthians 2:7-14, that NO ONE can come into the truth with a natural carnal mind. It requires the receiving of the Holy Spirit of God. As God said through Paul another time, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

No one will ever come to under-

stand the TRUTH except by receiving the Holy Spirit. But EVEN SO, all these Corinthians were supposed to have received the Holy Spirit — YET THEY BELIEVED DIFFERENT THINGS, because they followed *different men*!

God put His TRUE DOCTRINES into His Church through His apostles by THEIR WRITINGS. Jesus is the Word of God in PERSON! The Bible is the Word of God in PRINT!

Today, Christ has put the TRUE DOCTRINES into God's Church through the apostle *whom HE chose* — not elected by men!

How doctrines are revealed

In our case, the 20th-century "time of the end," how did God put His doctrines, beliefs and teachings into the Church?

Answer: By His chosen apostle, just as all doctrines, teachings and practices were put into the Church in A.D. 31 by Christ and the apostles — who, with the prophets, form the FOUNDATION of the Church.

Jesus specially prepared me for this purpose, just as He specially prepared the apostles of the first century. He brought me to see that what I had been taught in a Protestant church was false — the opposite of the Bible. Jesus Christ is the Word of God in PERSON. The Bible is the Word of God in WRITING.

The living Christ brought me to two severe challenges, which forced me to see I had been wrong. He swept my mind clean of all previous beliefs and doctrines and taught me His doctrines and beliefs.

Still, as was Peter and Paul — and Moses, Elijah, David and Daniel — I am human and could make a mistake.

BUT, if you have proved that this is, indeed, God's true Church for this present time, then you *MUST BELIEVE* that if and when I make a mistake, the LIVING CHRIST will correct me! Indeed HE HAS DONE so!

Now to the very CRUX of the question of HOW we must all come to believe and speak the SAME THING!

Christ put His doctrines in God's Church in A.D. 31 through the apostles HE had chosen and taught. In our time, now, the same living Christ called, prepared and chose me as His

Of all the religions and all the . . . denominations . . . in "Christianity," NOT ONE, except the Worldwide Church of God, knows WHO and WHAT God is!

servant to put His doctrines into God's Church today!

Christ's responsibility to set Church right

If I make a mistake, it is *CHRIST'S* responsibility to set me straight! But DO YOU *BELIEVE* CHRIST IS STILL ALIVE AND *WILL DO IT*? Or, if you think our Church doctrines are wrong on some point, do you think it is *YOUR* responsibility to set the Church right?

Back in the earlier years of the present decade, some wanted a doctrinal committee to question all we believed — and in truth it gravitated into an effort to TRY by inductive reasoning and research to prove Christ's doctrines in the Church are in error!

Since that time, Christ has led me to see our doctrine and teaching on two subjects were indeed in error. Yet NONE of the arguments of the "intellectual liberals" were valid. God opened my eyes to see the error from an entirely different approach and viewpoint than the "scholars" had presented.

One of these was fixing the day of Pentecost. Every known translation of the Bible, in 1927 when I first studied and set the date, translated into English, said, count the 50 days FROM a specific Sunday. One day FROM Sunday is Monday, and 50 days FROM a Sunday is a Monday. For 40 years God's true Church observed this Festival one day late.

Finally I found, on evidence from Jewish Old Testament teachers and from two of the translators of the Revised Standard Version, that FROM was a mistranslation. It should have been translated ON or, count beginning on a Sunday. I had not made the original mistake — the translators had. But I IMMEDIATELY changed it upon PROOF.

The other major doctrinal change made is one that needs a deal of UP-DATING! It concerned "divorce and remarriage." All the arguments of the "scholarly" liberals on this subject were false. Again I think it fair to say the real error was due to translating.

This caused me, and the many with whom I counsel on such questions, to pass over a verse in I Corinthians 7, without recognizing its real meaning.

Now suppose a member thinks he or she has found an error in our doctrines. How must you proceed? If you have found truth, we all want to know and embrace it! But how MUST you proceed? NEVER by trying to convince another member of your "finding," lest you fall guilty of Romans 16:17-18.

WHAT, then?

Take it to your local minister or write to headquarters. What must a local pastor do? Send it to headquarters. If it is felt to be a valid truth, it will be brought to me personally, and the LIVING CHRIST will make it clear to my mind!

We have covered the question of how does the living Christ put His doctrines into the Church. But the Church is made up of many members. How does each member come to understand each doctrine?

How Christ put His Church back on track

Now let us pull together all that has gone before.

1) We have to admit that at this time a year ago, those in God's Church were NOT all speaking the SAME THING. And we were DIVIDED!

2) The living Christ, Head of the Church, began to move swiftly to correct this evil in our midst. The spearhead of the liberal movement was my own son, Garner Ted, because he was wielding executive vice presidential AUTHORITY — AND MORE — for his whole attitude and approach was that of making himself chief top authority. However, he was under the influence of a small group of "intellectuals" who used him.

3) Christ has been moving swiftly to set the Church doctrines back on track, through articles in *The Worldwide News* and *The Good News*.

4) The ministry and pastoral direction is fast being put back on God's track. This of necessity means that I, personally, am going to suffer

abuse and persecution and false rumors from a few ex-ministers. But I must be concerned with PLEASING GOD, not man.

Now we have to ask, *HOW* did this division and doctrinal disagreement get its ugly head inside the Church, and *HOW* safeguard the Church from any further Trojan-horse invasions?

I have said through the years, over the air and in print and before audiences, "Don't believe me because I say it — look in your own Bible and believe what you find there!"

But I DO NOT — or, at least, SHOULD NOT HAVE ever said that to our own brethren! But my son writes: "I tried with all my being to encourage our brethren to think for themselves." In other words don't believe our deep-rooted Church teachings — think out NEW, DIFFERENT beliefs for yourself!

But GOD'S WAY is THIS! This is the way the original first-century apostles preached. They spoke the TRUTH with POWER! To the unconverted Thessalonians, the Bereans were complimented for checking up on Paul's preaching (Acts 17:11). But none should be accepted IN THE CHURCH until that person either has come to KNOW and accept and believe Christ's true doctrine, OR has repented SO THOROUGHLY, CONQUERED BY GOD and with an attitude of a little child, so that the minister doing the baptising feels sure he or she will accept and believe fully Christ's true doctrines in His Church.

In other words, Christ commands that we all speak the same thing. THAT BECOMES A QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP!

Yet I must add one comment concerning the above paragraph. Paul shows in I Corinthians 2 that the carnal unconverted mind cannot comprehend and come to real understanding of spiritual knowledge. There is no PROMISE in the Bible that one will receive the Holy Spirit prior to baptism (though Cornelius and his house did).

In Matthew 28:19-20, in the great commission, Jesus mentioned "teaching them to observe . . . [commandments]," *after* mentioning baptism.

That is why I myself have baptized some prior to coming into full doctrinal teaching, but these were cases where I felt sure they were so completely surrendered to Christ that

they would — as in fact they *did* — accept doctrinal teaching.

I said at the ministers' conference that I feel we have been too lax in baptising people before they were completely REPENTANT and FULLY BELIEVED Christ and what He says in the Bible.

Once in the Church, WE *MUST*

ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING! I have covered earlier in this "Personal" how a member should proceed who thinks he has found where the Church is in error on a doctrine, or where he thinks he has discovered "new light" the Church does not yet have. It must be cleared finally by Christ's apostle. □

WHY MY SON NO LONGER STANDS "BACK TO BACK" WITH ME

SIX YEARS AGO my son, Garner Ted, and I often said, "As long as we two stand *back to back* TOGETHER, no one can overthrow God's Church!" How many times we said that! And as for me, I *meant it!*

HOW was that close UNITY broken?

Several times I said to my son in private: "Ted, I have often thought of the position we are in, as father and son. It should, if we will let it, be a HEADQUARTERS TEAM, just like the Divine Headquarters Team governing the whole universe — the Divine FATHER-and-Son TEAM of God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. HOW WONDERFUL, if you and I could be TOGETHER *as they are*, that our HUMAN father-and-son team would be a HUMAN type of the Divine Father-and-Son Team.

"But," I would add, knowing that my son was not in full harmony with his father, "God the Father and Christ the Son are PERFECTLY TOGETHER on every point, *because Jesus said*, 'I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak' (John 12:49).

"It was not a matter of the Son telling the Father what to believe and speak, but the Father told the Son — and in our case the human father is the one through whom Christ has put HIS TEACHINGS into the Church. In our case, it is the human father

whom Christ has made His apostle."

But always — and this conversation took place more than once — at this point my son would change the subject.

For years, in our case, it was the father trying to stand *back to back* with the son, but the son drifting the other way.

1) He began to assume FULL control — forbidding any in the Work to take anything over his head. Many of those leading ministers who were loyal to Christ's apostle — and who held tightly to the DOCTRINES Christ had put into the Church through His apostle — were demoted in office or shanghaied away to another part of the world. Such men as Herman Hoeh, Raymond McNair, Roderick Meredith, Norman Smith, Dibar Apartian, Dennis Luker — just to name a few.

But COMPLETELY SHUTTING OFF all authority above him, he shut JESUS CHRIST off. And:

2) He began to water down, liberalize and secularize CHRIST'S TRUE DOCTRINES!

3) And by these methods, he was causing great DIVISION in God's Church.

4) Although Ted had said to me, "Dad, you have never had to work with anyone over you," and I answered, "Oh yes I have, and even now I have the living Christ over me," — and in other words, I learned that Ted had a somewhat normal attitude of resentment against his father — notwithstanding all this, Ted was falling under the influence of liberals, who moved in and surrounded him.

I do not believe that some 10 or 12 years ago Ted would have tried to liberalize doctrines and, in effect, put the living Christ out of God's Church and college. He has accused his father of senility and being easily influenced. That is not true. But I have noticed that nearly always he who ACCUSES is GUILTY of the very thing he accuses in another. It has not been *my* mind that was going senile!

Has he gone out and sought to proclaim the true Gospel to people we had never reached before? *THINK ON THAT!* His sole effort has been to DESTROY his father and GOD'S CHURCH, and draw tithe payers after him! The few radio stations he has gone on were in areas where Worldwide Church of God members were heaviest!

He stood over me right here in my office and said, angrily and with raised voice, "Dad, I could DESTROY you!" He has certainly been trying. Those who influenced Ted into liberalism and a conspiracy to "take over" are now out. I hope my son never falls under such an influence again.

I have been asked, "If he repents, would I receive him back in?" A REAL repentance, yes! But NOT back into the ministry. However, three times before I have brought him back on what I honestly felt was a repentance, only to learn it was a temporary remorse — not a real repentance. I do pray continually for his REAL conversion, prefaced by a REAL repentance, and an honest faith.

And I urge all you brethren to pray with me for that. □

DOCTRINALLY

(Continued from page 3)

the one having it is "hooked" on a spiritual drug far worse than physical heroin. I have warned against this attitude for 49 years — ever since I began to preach in 1930.

It is only common sense to realize that if everyone teaches what he, personally, believes, or if we follow different leaders each speaking his own thing, WE HAVE ONLY CONFUSION!

Our teaching and doctrines MUST COME FROM GOD! Through CHRIST! And through His apostle!

But HOW? Must some speak what they don't believe? We must BELIEVE what Christ SAYS, to be saved!

Jesus Christ is the Word of God in PERSON. The Bible is the same Word of God IN PRINT! The very first man to be used in writing down the Word of God as CHRIST (in the Old Testament, Yahweh) inspired, was Moses, and he wrote more words of it than any other. Now did Moses seek this commission for himself? No, Moses had been reared a prince in the palace of Egypt's pharaoh, and he probably cared little or nothing about being a leader for God.

But God called to him in the incident of the burning bush (Exodus 3).

Immediately Moses protested. "I'm slow of speech," he objected, "I stutter." God was a bit angry at this. God said He had provided for that. He had appointed Moses' brother, Aaron, to be his spokesman. Moses accepted God's rebuke and became strong and faithful in the Lord.

He believed what God said!

One-man leadership challenged

God has always, in dealing with humans, worked through ONE MAN at a time — one who believed God! Some in ancient Israel challenged this one-man leadership. Some, likewise, have challenged it today!

First, Moses' own brother and sister challenged his one-man leadership. Miriam and Aaron said, "Hath the Eternal indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?" (Numbers 12:2). And the Eternal heard it. . . . And the Eternal came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam:

and they both came forth. . . . My servant Moses is not so" (as the others), "who is faithful in all mine house. . . . Wherefore then were ye NOT AFRAID to speak against my servant Moses?" (verses 5-8).

"And the anger of the Eternal was kindled against them" (verse 9). And Miriam was afflicted with leprosy for a while.

Yet, though our members and ministers all know this, some are NOT AFRAID to speak contemptuously, in hostility or defamingly against Christ's apostle today! They need not fear ME! For I will not turn on them or strike them.

Why, then, do they not fear God? It must be one of two things. Either they do not really comprehend this teaching of the incident about Aaron and Miriam, or they do not believe that God has chosen me as His apostle and human leader today. Or, perhaps they think God is NOT the same yesterday, today and forever! In any event, this is a matter between them and Jesus Christ.

But there was an even *more* significant incident of opposition to Moses' leadership.

That is the case of Korah, Dathan, Abiram and On. "And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes . . . famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses. . . . Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Eternal is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Eternal?" (Numbers 16:1-3).

They accused Moses of appointing himself — though there had been ample evidence by the fruits of Moses' leadership and even miracles God did through him, that they were without excuse, just as many are today.

What happened to them? "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up. . . . They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation" (verses 32-33).

God is the same today

GOD IS ON HIS THRONE! And He is the SAME GOD! He has not changed!

Once again, the same God is going, very soon now, to shake this whole world — to produce astounding miracles — and those who take His Word lightly and ought to know better are going to have to REALIZE that He is the SAME GOD TODAY!

We are in the trying and sifting time, right now, for God's Church! Notice it, in Daniel 12:9-10:

At "the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall UNDERSTAND" (Daniel 12:9-10).

My children in Christ, can we not see that we are IN THAT TIME, NOW? GOD IS TRYING us as never before. He is drawing those of us who both love and fear Him closer to Him and to each other! He is permitting trials and tests, such as we never experienced before, to come upon us, so that we will RELY ON HIM in unshaken faith! But the self-minded among us, even the few in the ministry, DO NOT UNDERSTAND! They do not believe God is the SAME TODAY AND WILL ACT THE SAME — IN HIS OWN TIME! They do not tremble at His Word (Isaiah 66:5). But THEY SHALL!

God has always worked through one man, primarily, at a time. God chose David and worked through him. Two of his sons, at different times, conspired to wrest his throne from him. But God protected David, and those sons were destroyed!

At this point I noticed beside my typewriter a letter I had not seen before from Queensland, Australia. I paused to read it. I quote a sentence from it that is apropos to what I have been writing. This member wrote: "Take courage, Mr. Armstrong. God took it personally when Miriam spoke against Moses, and when Israel spoke against Samuel." How SIGNIFICANT that this letter caught my eye at this stage of this article. The letter continues: "NO DOUBT but that God also takes it *personally* when they speak [and act] against you [and His Church]."

Peter's preeminence

In founding God's Church, Jesus worked primarily through one man, Peter, even though He originally chose His 12 disciples. Few have ever noticed how Peter was the real lead-

If everyone teaches what he, personally, believes, or if we follow different leaders each speaking his own thing, WE HAVE ONLY CONFUSION!

er. Jesus had told His disciples to go NOT to the gentiles, but to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel." The "House of Israel" *never* refers to the Jews — always to the kingdom that became known as "the lost ten tribes." They were in Western Europe and Britain when Jesus gave this instruction.

Undoubtedly it was *after* Peter and the original apostles had left the Middle East and traveled to Britain that we read only of Paul and those under him.

Notice now PETER's preeminence. Few have ever put all these scriptures together as I shall now do. This shows PETER was leader.

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called *PETER* and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea . . . And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:18-19). This is the first mention of calling His disciples. It is significant that PETER is named first.

Matthew 10:2: "Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called *PETER* . . ." Notice PETER is called "*the first*."

Matthew 16:16-19: "Simon *PETER* answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee [*PETER*], That thou art *PETER*, and upon this rock I will build my church . . . And I will give unto thee [*PETER*] the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou [*PETER*] shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou [*Peter*] shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

In Matthew 18 Jesus appears to be speaking to the 12 apostles as a group, and in verse 18 the binding and loosing is again mentioned. *The binding and loosing was given to apostles*, but PETER was unquestioned

leader of the original 12 apostles.

John 21:15-17: The commission, "Feed my sheep" is three times given to *PETER*.

Acts 2:14: On the Day of Pentecost, it was *PETER* who gave the first sermon, converting some 3,000. Verse 38, *PETER* gives the instructions for baptism.

Acts 3:4, 12: It was *PETER* who healed the cripple. And it was *PETER* who gave the sermon to the assembled crowd, and God added 2,000 more to the Church.

Acts 4:8: It was *PETER* who spoke boldly to the rulers, after imprisonment, and, verse 19, said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

Acts 5:3, 15: It was *PETER* who spoke to Ananias and Sapphira, causing them to drop dead. Verse 15, it was *PETER's* shadow as he walked by that healed the sick.

Acts 5:29: *PETER* said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Acts 8: *PETER* with John went to Samaria. Verses 18-23: It was *PETER* who rebuked the first pope, Simon the sorcerer.

Acts 9:32-34: *PETER* heals Aneas.

Acts 9:38-41: *PETER* raises Dorcas from death.

Acts 10:1,9: *PETER* used by Christ to be the first to open salvation to gentiles. Verses 19-24. Circumcision not required.

Acts 11:1-2, 18: Apostles hear from *PETER* how God had granted repentance to gentiles and salvation with eternal life.

Acts 15: Here is the crux chapter, not generally understood. Paul and Barnabas had come to the church at Antioch. Certain Pharisees had come down from Judea and taught that "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Paul and Barnabas had much dissension and disputation with them.

How doctrinal disputes are settled in the Church

Now here was a classic EXAMPLE of HOW DOCTRINES were put into the

Church, and doctrinal disputes settled in the Church!

It was determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others go up to Jerusalem for apostolic settlement through the Holy Spirit.

"And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." Now notice, "*there had been much disputing*" between the apostles and elders. They were not of one mind!

How was the matter settled? By the Holy Spirit, but through WHOM? "*PETER* rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago *God made choice among us*." Notice, *PETER* was specially chosen, "that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."

Notice, it was GOD leading Peter, as chief apostle. For these gentiles to be required to be circumcised would obligate them to become "a debtor to do the whole [ritual] law" (Galatians 5:3). Therefore Peter concluded, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

PETER had spoken! God had made choice among them, choosing *PETER* to open salvation to the gentiles, and, now, to SETTLE this dispute over what God required of uncircumcised gentile converts. And that settled the matter!

Notice, once Peter had settled the dispute, "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." Paul and Barnabas were NOT disputing Peter's decision. They were NOT giving their input to the disputed ques-

God COMMANDS that we all SPEAK THE SAME THING! It must be that which the mind of Christ speaks — and He speaks only as the Father commanded.

tion — the question had been SETTLED — by PETER! Paul and Barnabas merely gave the ministers gathered there the NEWS of what God had wrought through their ministry.

Then James rose. James was pastor of the Jerusalem headquarters church. In today's language, we would call him chairman of the meeting. He did not make the decision. PETER had already made it. He merely said, "Simeon [PETER] hath declared . . ." — And James merely CONFIRMED Peter's decision, making it official. That ought to make clear this crucial 15th chapter of Acts — the one classic example of settling any disputed doctrine in the Church. And, though there were other apostles, *God worked primarily* through ONE man — PETER! Has God changed? Or is He the SAME still today?

Finally, notice Galatians 2:7: "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto PETER."

The Jerusalem conference (Acts 15) showed that PETER was predominant over even Paul, although Paul was the ONE MAN God worked through *primarily* in the ministry to gentiles.

The CHURCH is GOD'S Church. The HEAD of the Church, under GOD, is Jesus Christ. Under Christ, on the human level, is His chosen apostle, through whom He has *raised up* and *built* this SPIRITUAL TEMPLE to which the reigning CHRIST shall soon come in glory (Ephesians 2:20-21).

All must speak the same thing

Now in closing, back to the theme of this article. God COMMANDS that we all SPEAK THE SAME THING! It must be that thing which the mind of Christ speaks — and He speaks only as the Father commanded (John 12:49).

All doctrines in the Church as it began, A.D. 31, were put in *by the apostles*. All doctrines in the present Philadelphia era were put into the Church by Jesus Christ through His chosen apostle.

Now *WHY* does Christ use such caution in putting *HIS* doctrines into God's Church through His apostle?

LET ME MAKE THAT POINT CLEAR!

You have just read a case in point — Acts 15. This crucial crux chapter has been misinterpreted, twisted and distorted. I have tried to take space to MAKE IT CLEAR in this article. The other apostles and ministers were all in confusion, arguing and disputing. But CHRIST silenced them by speaking through His CHOSEN chief apostle, PETER!

Let us UNDERSTAND!

First of all, in human history, God spoke direct in person to Adam and Eve. They did not believe what He said!

But God *chose* Moses, and God chooses only a man who believes what God says. Moses wrote more words in the Bible than any person. The prophets were chosen by God — not by themselves — and they *believed* what God inspired and wrote it for us.

Christ came and preached to many THOUSANDS. Yet only 120 believed what He said! And even of the apostles, there was disputing until Christ spoke through PETER, whom HE chose!

In our day, God brought about my conversion in a manner UNIQUE in our time. He CONQUERED me, first, by making me realize 1) that what I had previously believed was untrue, and 2) that I had to REPENT and BELIEVE — that is, turn *from* former ways and beliefs, to a different WAY OF LIFE — GOD'S WAY — and to BELIEVE WHAT GOD SAYS! — my mind SWEEPED CLEAN of all previous beliefs.

When Christ chose His apostle for this time, He chose one who 1) does *believe* what God says, and 2) *will not* compromise or water down truths and doctrines Christ has given, and 3) has an OPEN MIND to receive further truth from Christ, and to be willing to acknowledge error when PROVED and turn from it! I do TREMBLE at the Word of God! I LOVE it! And I FEAR to go contrary to it or to

mislead you, my brethren and my children in the Lord!

As long as this Church believed and spoke THE SAME THING Christ put in it through His apostle, HE BLESSED IT, and it GREW 30 percent a year for 35 years. But when my son Garner Ted came to take over more authority than had been delegated to him, surrounding himself with a group of liberals, who LED him, and misled him into watering down God's doctrines — under their false influence a Laodicean lukewarmness and indifference, losing the LOVE of God's TRUTH, found root in the Church. Christ BUILT this Church through His chosen apostle! We did, perhaps imperfectly, but certainly in general, SPEAK THE SAME THING! We GREW in Christ's KNOWLEDGE and truth as well as in size and scope of the Work.

Then my son fell under the influence of a group of liberals, with whom he surrounded himself. He began to DISAGREE with Church doctrines more and more! AND GOD WITHDREW HIS BLESSING!

For months now, the living CHRIST has been setting His Church BACK ON THE TRACK! Also His college. The liberal element MUST GO! Either the liberals must TURN FROM their liberalism (as defined in my recent article) [March GN], and put IT out of themselves and the Church, or they must go out with it! I hope the former.

God has allowed this terrible trial and test to come upon us, with the government of the state of California trying to take over and manage and operate God's Church! In defiance of the Constitution of the United States! They do not, now, and they SHALL NOT, operate, manage or destroy the Church and Work of the LIVING GOD! His authority is infinitely greater than theirs. Perhaps, like those who crucified Jesus, they know not what they do (Luke 23:34). But they are drawing God's Church closer to Him and to each other. PRAISE GOD for cleaning up His Church! □

ARCHAEOLOGY

(Continued from page 17)

figures been given to indicate the cost of each book? Answer: You ought first examine these books in your nearest central library. You will find each book, for you, may differ. One is worth reading; another is worth studying. Only when you plan to use a book as a handy reference again and again should you consider buying it. The best solution to this problem is to consider the paperbacks titled *The Biblical Archaeology*

gist Reader, volumes 1, 2 and 3.

But they are meant to complement, not substitute for the excellently illustrated volumes I have previously mentioned.

By this time you may think you will have penetrated in depth the subject of biblical archaeology upon reading these 15 books. May I surprise you?

You have only scratched the surface!

And I am sure the managing editor of *The Good News* agrees with that. We have, after all, only looked at the temple mount, the city of Jeru-

salem and some of the sites in Palestine. We have only made passing reference to Egypt and Mesopotamia at the beginning.

What of the rest of the world? How did the people inhabiting the distant reaches of Africa, India, China, the Pacific, the vast plains of Russia, distant Ireland and the Americas come to settle where they did? But that is going too far afield from Babel for this one article!

But by reading the material listed in this article you will be on your way to becoming a competent armchair archaeologist. □

Prayer and Fasting

(Continued from page 5)

bring right into your own homes those who are helpless, poor and destitute. Clothe those who are cold and don't hide from relatives who need your help."

We need to do these things. Help others out.

"If you do these things God will shed his own glorious light upon you. He will heal you; your godliness will lead you forward and goodness will be a shield before you, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. Then, when you call, the Lord will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' He will quickly reply. All you need to do is to stop oppressing the weak and stop making false accusations and spreading vicious rumors!

"Feed the hungry! Help those in trouble! Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be bright as day. And the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy you with all good things, and keep you healthy too; and you will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring."

And so, brethren, we do need to fast. We do need to get closer to God. But we can only get there by restraining ourselves, not only from food and drink, but also from pride and strife, and quarreling and vindictiveness and oppressing one another. We should help and serve one another.

Prayer and fasting go together

There was a time when the prophet Daniel really, desperately wanted to know what was going to happen in

the future. "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (Daniel 9:3). Prayer always goes along with fasting.

How often in my Christian life have I somehow got caught in a wrong mood or situation just before a day of fasting, and gone through the day in more or less a normal, carnal manner. I went to my work and taught my classes, but I did not set aside extra time to study this Book, perhaps on my knees, or to pray to God a long time. Or to meditate and drink in of God's ideas and attitudes.

So what did I get out of it? A good headache sometimes. Sometimes I lost a little weight and maybe the body was a little more purified. Maybe there was a certain help God gave me in spite of my weakness the next day. Because as the food comes back in, the strength flows back, and one has a little extra zest. You know, when you quit hitting yourself on the head it feels real good when you stop. You get the picture.

But the fasting didn't do me nearly as much good as if I had been really drinking in of God's Word and praying and meditating during that day of fasting. And that's what Daniel was doing.

"And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned . . ." He didn't say, "Oh, we've been good, and we've done no wrong, and You don't have any right to spank us."

No, he said, "Father, I'm sorry. We've sinned 'and have committed iniquity and done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments . . . Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces . . .'"

Verse 17, "Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, *for the Lord's sake*." Not for our righteousness — we have none — but for yours.

When we reach that attitude, our fasting is doing some good.

Notice Daniel's result. An archangel came to him and told him: "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved . . ." (verse 23). Why was Daniel greatly loved? Because he humbled himself sincerely to God.

Don't fast unless you do intend to use it to get closer to God (unless it's strictly a health fast). Be sure you do take time to study, to meditate and to pray, or you won't get the good out of it that you would and you should.

James 4:5: "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace [grace greater than the lust of the human spirit]. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." And this is a vital point.

Verse 9: "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*" And that is a promise, brethren. □

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