

MARCH 1985

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

**THERE'S
A HIDDEN
ENEMY
IN YOUR
HOME!**

See Page 3



**Let God Fight
Your Battles!**

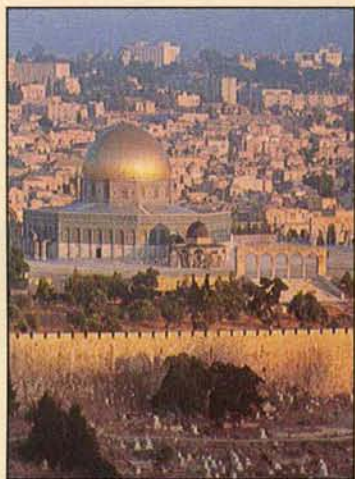
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**Danger of
Make-Believe**
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COVER: There's a hidden enemy in your home! You haven't seen this enemy. He's right in your family — he's made you all suffer — he's broken up many families, caused untold suffering and a world of unhappiness. Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong explains exactly who this enemy is and how to defeat him in the article beginning on page 3. Photo by Nathan Faulkner.

Editor-in-Chief

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

Managing Editor

Dexter H. Faulkner

Assistant Managing Editor

Norman L. Shoaf

Contributors

Dibar K. Apartian

Jerold W. Aust

K. Neil Earle

John A. Halford

George M. Kackos

Ronald D. Kelly

James P. Lichtenstein

Graemme J. Marshall

L. Leroy Neff

Bernard W. Schnippert

Richard H. Sedliacik

Clayton D. Steep

Philip Stevens

Earl H. Williams

Graphics

Greg S. Smith

Minette Collins Smith

Editorial Assistant

Colleen M. Dixon

PUBLISHED BY THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

Publisher

Herbert W. Armstrong

Treasurer

L. Leroy Neff

Director of Publishing Services

Ray L. Wright

Production Director

Roger G. Lippross

Production Manager

Ron Taylor

Circulation Manager

Boyd L. Leeson

International Editions

Dutch: Bram de Bree

French: Dibar K. Apartian

German: John B. Karlson

Spanish: Don Walls

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Australia: P.O. Box 202, Burleigh Heads, Queensland 4220

Bahamas: P.O. Box N3934, Nassau NP

Barbados: P.O. Box 1021, Bridgetown

Bermuda: P.O. Box 908, Hamilton 5-24

Colombia: Apartado Aéreo 11430, Bogotá 1, D.E.

Denmark: Box 211, DK-8100 Aarhus C

Fiji: P.O. Box 3938, Samabula, Suva

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5-595, México 06500, D.F.

New Zealand and Pacific Isles: P.O. Box 2709,

Auckland 1

Nigeria: P.M.B. 21006, Ikeja, Lagos State

Norway: Box 2513, Solli, Oslo 2

Philippines: P.O. Box 1111, Makati, Metro Manila 3117

Puerto Rico: G.P.O. Box 6063, San Juan, Puerto Rico

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Singapore: P.O. Box 111, Farrer Road Post Office, Singapore 9128

Solomon Islands: P.O. Box 508, Honiara

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Sri Lanka: P.O. Box 1824, Colombo

Sweden: Box 5380, S-102 46 Stockholm

Tonga: P.O. Box 127, Nuku'alofa

Trinidad: P.O. Bag 114, Port of Spain

United Kingdom: P.O. Box 111, Borehamwood,

Herts., WD6 1LU

Zambia: P.O. Box 50117, Lusaka

Zimbabwe: P.O. Box U.A. 30, Union Ave.,

Harare

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PERSONAL FROM

Robert H. Armstrong

Let God Fight Your Battles!

The world you live in today is a very *troubled* world. You not only have your own *personal* problems, but you also suffer from the deliberate **OPPOSITION** and **ANTAGONISM** of the world around you.

It is time you considered how to conquer these troubles — how to be **FREE** from them — how to let **GOD** fight your battles instead!

One lesson not yet learned

First, *understand this*: If the **WORLD** today is not happy — if world conditions are in a chaotic state, if lives are empty and purposeless, if minds are filled with fears and worries, bodies wracked with sickness and disease — **THERE IS A REASON!**

Conditions are *exactly what we make them!*

Mortal **HUMANS**, groping in the darkness of confusion, have made conditions what they are. Humanity is **REAPING** what it has **SOWN!** Only the direct and all-powerful supernatural intervention of **ALMIGHTY GOD** can deliver this world from *all* its troubles.

What the world doesn't know is that God will not cause *its present ways of wrong living* to bring any *human* utopia. Rather, **GOD ALMIGHTY** WILL SOON HAVE TO STEP IN AND **RULE** OVER THE WORLD — bringing it

INTO THE *WAYS* of His just laws, which *alone* can produce this happy TOMORROW!

WE, TOO, AS **GOD'S PEOPLE**, HAVE LESSONS TO LEARN. Even though stubborn and rebellious mankind brings upon the world even **DARKER** days in the immediate future, **REMEMBER** — it's **DARKEST** just before **DAWN**. Take hope in the **SURE** knowledge *that* the *new* world of **GOD's** making — and **RULING** — is **VERY** near today!

But in the meantime, what about YOU and your own private life and problems?

Let us consider some of *your own private*, personal **TROUBLES**. I know that you have them! And I want to *tell* you something — I want to tell you **GOOD** news. YOU are carrying a lot of worries and fears and troubles *that you don't need to carry!*

Life is simply filled with private, personal battles. We have to battle fears and worries. Sometimes it seems we have to battle **PEOPLE** who appear to be enemies — often it's a husband, a wife or a mother-in-law — and whether you realize it or not, YOU also have to battle **YOURSELF!**

It is like having to fight a host of **ENEMIES** — all these **TROUBLES**, these **CIRCUMSTANCES**, these adverse **CONDITIONS**, these **TEMPTATIONS!** But there is a way you may **FREE** yourself from these troubles that confront you. There is a **WAY OUT!** You can be **FREE** from fighting all of these enemies except just **ONE** — your own self — and you can receive a lot of

HELP and **KNOWLEDGE** and **POWER** in doing that!

Here's where that help can be found!

Jesus Christ is the deliverer

The eternal Creator-RULER of the universe — the God who gives you the very air you breathe — sent His own begotten SON, Jesus Christ, into this world more than 1,900 years ago to **BRING YOU THE WAY OF DELIVERANCE** from all your trials, your worries, your problems.

WHY, then, do some of you not **LISTEN** to the way He taught us? And WHY do so many people think of Him as a dead Christ hanging on a cross? **GOD ALMIGHTY** RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD!

Jesus Christ is our **LIVING** Savior and High Priest, just as the Creator is a **LIVING RULER** OF ALL THE UNIVERSE!

DO YOU REALIZE THAT **JESUS CHRIST**, THE **LIVING**, **RESURRECTED** CHRIST, TO WHOM IS GIVEN **ALL POWER**, HAS A **PRESENT** MISSION TO PERFORM? Do you realize that His present mission is to **FIGHT YOUR BATTLES** FOR YOU — to **DELIVER YOU** — to **FREE** you from all your fears, your **TROUBLES** and even the *circumstances that beset you?*

Thousands of you would come to me for help in your troubles if I had time to see and talk to you — you'd come with husband-and-wife troubles, funeral troubles — every kind of trouble. Yes, you'd come to me because I'm *human*

— one you can *see* — whose voice you *hear*.

But *because* I'm only human, I have not the ability, the strength nor the *TIME* to render such a personal ministry to so many in different parts of the world.

Now think this over carefully, and **ANSWER THIS!** **WHY** do you fight your *own* battles, when **HE** — the **LIVING Savior** — is living in **ALL POWER** to fight them for you?

He's **REAL**. He's **DIVINE**. **WHY** do some of you go on worrying, when **HE** is right there in **ALL THE POWER OF THE DIVINE CREATOR** to **FREE** you from all your worries?

WHY? There is one of two reasons. Either you have not fully **KNOWN** of this great, all-encompassing **DIVINE SOURCE OF POWER** that **YOU** can call on at will — you have not **REALIZED** what **ALL-CONQUERING HELP** you can have — or else you have, through lack of faith or neglect, **FAILED** to **CALL ON** that supernatural **HELP** in your times of need!

CAN I open your eyes to see that God is a God of **LOVE** — that God in all His supreme power wills above all things for you to **PROSPER** and **BE IN HEALTH** and to find the way to the **HAPPY, FULL, ABUNDANT LIFE**? That Jesus Christ is a **LIVING SAVIOR**, to whom you can go **AT ALL TIMES** — a Savior to save you from your present everyday fears and worries, adverse circumstances, troubles, sicknesses and trials, as well as to save you from eternal **DEATH** at the end?

Notice what Scripture commands: "Let us therefore *come boldly* to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find *grace to help in time of need*" (Hebrews 4:16).

God is interested in your life now

God's salvation is **NOT** something you collect *only* after you die — **IT IS A PRACTICAL, COMMONSENSE, USEFUL** salvation that starts in your everyday life **RIGHT HERE AND NOW!**

What *needless* pains some have been suffering. What **NEEDLESS**

fears and worries *you* may have been carrying around. What **WONDERFUL TIMES** — what **HAPPINESS** you may have cheated yourself out of, just because you have not **REALIZED** and taken advantage of the very **PRESENT** and all-powerful **HELP** of your **LIVING Savior!**

Actually what is happening is that you may have found yourself faced with foes far more powerful than you. These foes may come in forms of troubles, of unforeseen circumstances, of worries, of sicknesses or even of other persons. These foes **NEED** not make your life unhappy.

Old Testament illustration

Did you ever really think through the full meaning of I Corinthians 10:11 — that the incidents in the lives of God's people of Old Testament times were written into the Bible for **OUR LEARNING AND HELP**?

I want now to turn to the experience of a man who lived in that time. This man found that he could **RELY** on the almighty **GOD**. This man was faced with a **FAR** more terrifying trouble than has ever beset you. He found the **HAPPY SOLUTION**. His experience will show you what **YOU** can do, this very day!

Once you **UNDERSTAND**, you will have to learn to **TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD** — **TO CALL UPON GOD IN PRAYER** — you will have to **ASK GOD** for what you need — and you may have to learn how to **PRAY**.

GOD ALMIGHTY will actually *intervene in your life* and help **YOU** and fight **YOUR** battles for you. Remember, God is no respecter of persons. He will not do more for one than another. He will do as much for **YOU** as for any person who ever lived. He will do as much for *you* — if you obey Him and *rely* on Him — as for any ancient king of Israel or Judah!

You may have a problem that completely overwhelms you. You may be at your wit's end — you may not know where to turn or what to do! It may be a family problem, a personal problem, a

financial problem, a problem of sickness or disease.

But let me tell you now as Jesus Christ's apostle of a man who came upon a situation probably far more terrifying than yours — one that would throw fright and terror into the stoutest heart.

The solution this man used will solve **YOUR** problems — put an **END** to *your* troubles. The same God who heard and delivered him will hear and deliver you — **IF** you will obey Him and trust Him.

The fact that this man was an ancient king makes no difference. God is no respecter of persons — He will do as much for **YOU**. God is the **SAME** today and tomorrow as He was yesterday.

This man was King Hezekiah of the ancient kingdom of **JUDAH**. He was an ordinary human mortal, the same as **YOU** today.

God intervenes for a man

The vast armies of Assyria were marching westward and southward to invade Judah. The Jews were greatly outnumbered. They had no army or power to stand up against such a powerful foe.

They were **HELPLESS**. They faced certain defeat — just as **YOU** may feel **HELPLESS** in the face of your troubles today.

If some of *you* try to solve *your* problem or overcome your bad habits or resist sin in nothing more than your **OWN** power and strength, you, too, will find yourself outnumbered, overpowered and doomed to defeat!

You must learn, as this ancient king did, that **GOD** stands ready and willing to fight your battles for you.

Read his experience in II Chronicles 32, from the Moffatt translation:

"It was after this, after all this loyal service, that Sancherib king of Assyria invaded Judah, besieging the fortified towns and meaning to seize them. When Hezekiah saw that Sancherib had come determined to attack Jerusalem, he and his nobles and his chiefs

(Continued on page 11)

There's a Hidden Enemy in Your Home!

*Have we been overlooking
the very first lesson in true Christian living?*

By Herbert W. Armstrong

There's an enemy in your home, probably. You haven't seen this enemy. He's right in your family — he's made you all suffer — he's broken up many families, caused untold suffering and a world of unhappiness.

But you never saw him. He's kept hidden from your sight.

It's high time you opened your eyes and took a good look at him, so you can recognize him for the villain he is.

The psychologists call him "emotional immaturity."

But that's something many people know nothing about. It's something "educated" people talk and write about, but seldom understand.

What is emotional maturity?

It is not something to be learned about by college graduates. It is something that ought to be taught in the first grade — and taught to 4-, 6- and 8-year-olds in the home. It is the technical art of putting into practice the Ten Commandments. It is the real secret to human happiness. *But it is just not taught!* How,

after all, can parents teach their children, when they themselves are emotionally immature? How can teachers instill emotional maturity in children when they have not grown up emotionally themselves?

Yet here is the real secret of ability to *live* the Ten Commandments. It's the real secret to Christian living and perfection. It's the real distinguishing mark of the truly educated person.

That it is not realized and instilled in children while they are growing up — that it is not a required basic course of training in all colleges — is a terrible indictment against education, religion, society.

One author defines emotional maturity as development from the state of taking to the state of giving. Taking is the way of Satan. Giving is the way of God, and the principle of His law. LOVE is *giving*. A little baby learns, generally, only how to *take*. He will take his bottle, his rattle, his toy. It becomes his human nature to *take*. Humans know absolutely NOTHING at birth. But a baby responds to Satan's negative influence, develops a selfish nature and begins to reach out to *take* whatever attracts or tempts

him. Humans must be *taught* to give. Giving is something that *has to be* LEARNED. But how many begin teaching their babies this principle — the very *principle* of God's law and of true love?

What we overlook

Let us define it further. All human beings are actuated by their emotions. But do we ever stop to ask and analyze what *are* these emotions?

An emotion is a strong *feeling* — a disturbance — a departure from the normal calm state of rational thinking and acting — an *impulse* toward an action that has not been reasoned and approved by the mind.

Among the emotions are such feelings or impulses as fear, anger, disgust, grief, joy, surprise, yearning.

And first cousin to emotion are our *moods*. An emotionally immature person is usually one who is moody and has never learned to control his moods.

More and more I am impressed that one of the most important truths we humans overlook is that human beings are not equipped with instinct, like dumb animals, to guide us into the proper

course. Animals do not have the mind power, knowledge, ability to reason and mentally direct their actions. God endowed them, instead, with instinct that guides them along in the channel He intended.

God endowed man, in His own image, with MIND. Man must first learn and acquire knowledge. He is endowed, also, with capacity to reason from that knowledge — to think, to plan, to arrive at conclusions, to make decisions. God intended man's mind to direct his actions. But man must *learn* to do this, and he can never achieve God's PURPOSE in placing him on this earth until he does.

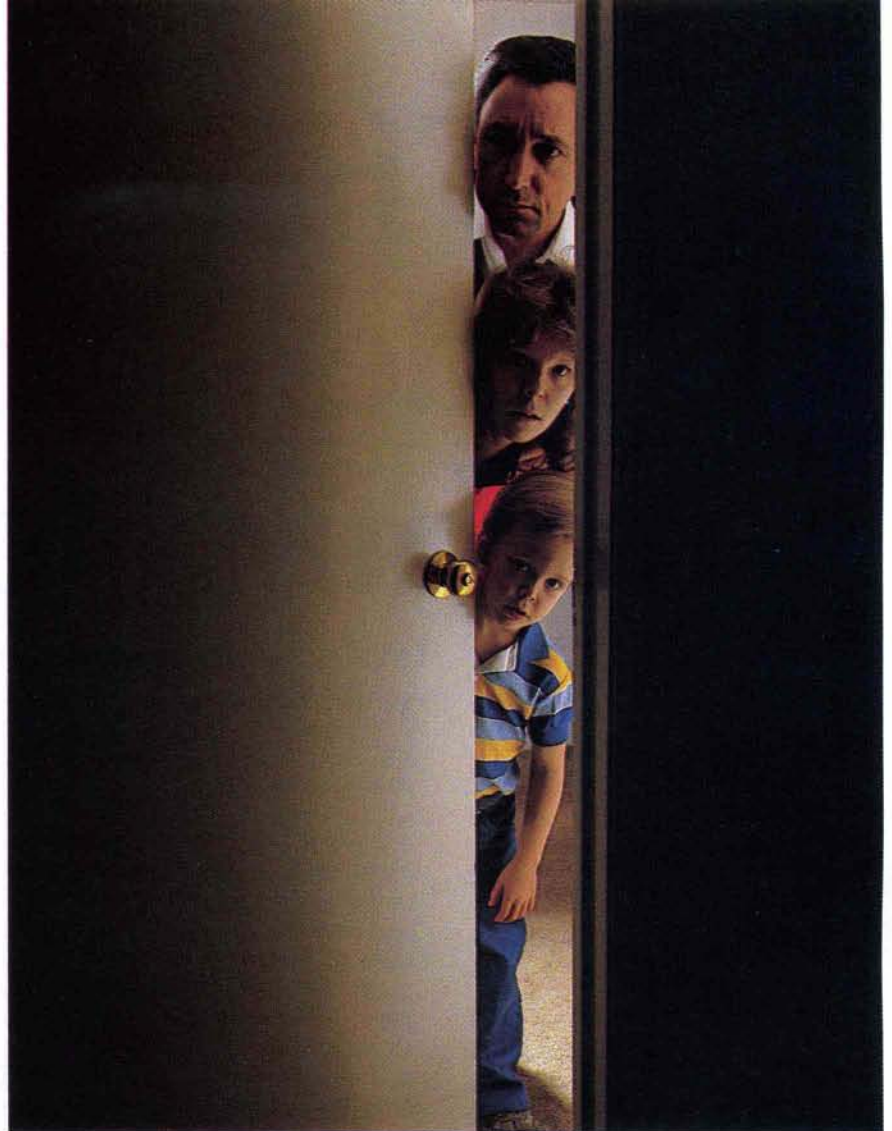
The development of right CHARACTER is the purpose of human life. And character is ability to come to right knowledge and wisdom and then to direct the mind and body into this right course. But we poor humans act as though we believed man to be merely the highest of the dumb brutes — as if man were equipped with instinct, and the purpose of life were merely to ENJOY such feelings, sensations, emotions and moods as impulse attracts us to, *without thinking or mental direction!*

A tragic case

I once knew a tragic example, a man highly educated, whose life had been devoted to the field of education, assuming readily the responsibility of teaching others, when he himself had not learned this central truth of life.

His mind was stored with knowledge of science, history, mathematics, literature. He had knowledge of facts about the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars. He had acquired knowledge about many other *things*, but not about *himself* — his moods, his feelings, his drives, impulses and desires. He had not stopped to study and analyze them, let alone learn to control them.

As a child he had been pampered, petted, spoiled — permitted to have his way, never taught self-restraint, self-control or how to understand his moods, feelings and desires, and to control and



Emotional maturity is the key to human happiness. It's the secret to Christian living and perfection. It's the distinguishing mark of the truly educated person.

guide them according to the sound reasoning of the *mind*, instead of impulsively following them without mental direction.

He was married, had a fine family, an honored position with rare opportunities. But letting *feelings, moods, impulses* dominate his mind, instead of making his mind rationally and wisely direct them, his marriage crashed, his home was broken up and he fled in fear from his high position and brilliant future.

He not only wrecked his own life, he forced great sorrow, unhappiness and suffering on many others. His emotions had so

dominated his mind that he came to see circumstances through the eyes of his feelings, and his understanding became warped and distorted.

Physically he grew to normal maturity, and was reasonably proficient in athletics. He possessed a number of university degrees. He was mentally mature so far as this world's faulty education instructs. But, emotionally, he was still somewhere between ages 8 and 12! And, sadly, his spiritual age was no older.

The great tragedy of our generation is that nearly all people mature physically, perhaps half to

Photo by Nathan Faulkner

two thirds mature mentally, *but very few ever grow up emotionally or spiritually.*

One is not a fully mature man or woman, as God intended, until *emotional and spiritual* maturity has been reached!

Should start in child training

The time to start this emotional "growing up" is the same time mental training is begun. It should be started *in the home*, within the first months of a child's life.

Parents, **STUDY** your own children. Remember that training of the emotions involves control and right direction of feelings, tempers, impulses. It means control over anger, jealousy, hatred, fear, grief, resentment, selfishness, vanity. And since the **RIGHT** direction is the way of God's law — and since that is the way of **LOVE**, and love is the principle of giving instead of taking — it means the teaching of your children to use their own minds to understand their moods and guiding them in the direction of **GIVING** — of love toward others, equal with love toward self.

Yelling, loud talking, bursts of temper, rudeness — all these are lack of emotional "growing up." Emotional immaturity is simply letting human nature run sway without any control from a right-thinking, reasoning mind. Teach your children to let their **MINDS** direct their natures properly and wisely.

I remember the first funeral I was called on to officiate. At funerals many people let their emotions of grief run uncontrolled. A great fear seized me. I was afraid I would not be able to keep calm and control my own feelings, and I knew I must do that and, with calm tenderness and sympathy, comfort the bereaved. I was much younger then, and in the emotional struggle that went on inside my mind over ability to carry this responsibility, I began to go to pieces.

I announced to my family I just couldn't do it. We were at the time visiting in my father's home, and he came over to me,

put his hands on my shoulders, and calmly shook me, saying in a voice of authority with which he had not spoken to me since I was a child: "Here! Snap out of it! This is your responsibility! This family is broken up in sorrow, and they are relying on you. You can't back out of it! Wake up! Come to yourself! Get a grip on yourself! You *are* going through with this, and you're going to do it with credit and calm dignity and sincerity!"

That, I remember, sobered and calmed me and brought me back to my right senses, and I replied quietly, "Yes, Dad, of course I will."

Then I went to a private room, closed the door and talked to my heavenly Father about it, and received from Him the emotional control I had lacked for this ordeal — and that first funeral was an ordeal. But when I literally placed myself in God's hands as His instrument, He used me, and the words He spoke through my mouth resulted in the conversion of the bereaved parents.

I found it difficult, as I was later more and more frequently called upon to officiate at funerals, to so control my own emotions as to achieve right *balance* — that outer calmness, without going to the opposite extreme of hardening my senses so that I would not feel proper sympathy. It was through God's help and much prayer that I was able to achieve emotional control, with dignity and poise, yet with extreme tenderness, gentleness and heartfelt sympathy for those in sorrow, so that I could give them the help they needed in their greatest trial, and still not break down with them.

Emotion in religion

Surely no one can achieve real Christian growth and perfection until he has acquired emotional stability. Our tempers, feelings, emotions were given to us for a purpose! They are not to be nullified — merely intelligently *guided* by mind control into the proper channels of God's law!

Of all the phases of life, there

is none in which emotional immaturity is more apparent than in religion.

Here, too, people are prone to go to extremes. Either they deliberately work up the emotions to a frenzy or they make their religion a wholly mental expression, restraining the emotions and feelings entirely.

Many, usually the more illiterate or at least less educated, follow a religion that is almost wholly emotional. In "meeting," the preachers say nothing that is thought provoking, but only that which is emotion arousing. They do not teach or instruct, they generate unrestrained emotion.

They ask the congregation such questions as "Are you happy?" — echoed by thunderous "Amens" or shouts of "HALLELUJAH!" The main job of the preacher is to generate wild shouting, uncontrolled emotion, until the whole congregation is out of control in a frenzy of fanatical exuberance.

Then there are the more quiet emotional sects — but who also accept the counterfeit of sentimentality and emotion for deep spirituality. Indeed it seems *most* fundamentalist groups accept one form or another of **EMOTION** in place of true spirituality.

But emotion is not spirituality. Emotion is *physical* reaction. While a certain emotional reaction *should* naturally follow true and deep spiritual experience, nevertheless it is a physical reaction *from* that experience and is not, in itself, spiritual experience. Emotion is produced by the nervous system of the fleshly body. It is, therefore, of the **FLESH**, not of the **SPIRIT**!

The Holy Spirit of God is given only to those who **OBEY** God (Acts 5:32). Most religious bodies who mistake the emotional counterfeit for genuine spirituality preach that "God's law is done away" — preach a doctrine of "salvation without works," by which they mean without obedience to God or to God's law.

No one is a real Christian unless he has received and is

(Continued on page 13)

DANGER of Make-Believe

What are you really like inside? The character you display outwardly must be more than "special effects."

By John A. Halford

Jeff and Susie, newly wed and very much in love, sit by the ocean gazing into each other's eyes. In the background a gorgeous sunset lights up the sky.

What a beautiful picture!

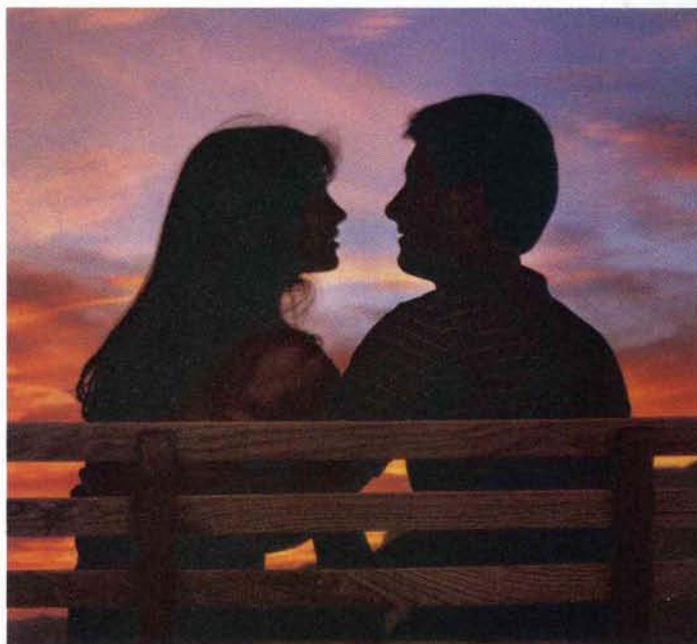
What a fake!

Oh, Jeff and Susie are real, and their love for each other is real. But Jeff is sitting on a pile of blocks — Susie on a low stool — in the Ambassador College

Photo Studios in Pasadena. The oceanside park bench is made out of some old floorboards a staff photographer arranged on two low stands.

And the "sunset"? A 35-mm. slide projected on the wall. The photographer used a long focal lens to compact the distance, increasing the illusion of reality. Then he arranged the light to show Jeff and Susie in silhouette, and calculated the exposure.

The result? A fake that only an expert could tell was not the real thing. Only in the movie and photography profession, they don't call it a fake. It is known as a



"special effect" — an elaborate form of make-believe.

We have all seen some incredible special effects created on the cinema and TV screen and wondered, "How did they do that?" Today, creating special effects is a highly skilled profession.

A job for experts

Some techniques are well known — "tons" of foam rubber rocks that crash down on the hero as he rides through the canyon, or a brawl in the saloon as cowboys hit each other over the head with balsa chairs.

But did you realize that the

river of molten lava that threatens to engulf the heroine is actually oatmeal mixed with gray paint — or that the delicious looking ice cream in the commercial is really creamed potato (the real stuff would melt under the hot studio lights)?

By painting scenes on glass, special-effects artists can produce what are known as *mattes*, which mask out unwanted parts of a scene. In this way a city skyline can be removed to give a mod-

ern scene a 19th-century look or, by adding a skyline, project it far into the future. And who hasn't heard of the studio towns with streets of solid-looking buildings that are only 18-inch-thick facades?

By using laser and computer technology today's special effects are becoming ever more sophisticated, as spacemen soar through the galaxies battling legions of aliens and a never-ending array of monsters. The skill of special-effects experts continues to astonish us.

But maybe it shouldn't, because most of us have spent life-

Photo by Hal Finch

times creating some impressive special effects of our own.

You — a special-effects artist

You see, a special effect is a deception or make-believe created to give an impression of reality. In building our personalities we have all resorted to some "special effects" to disguise unwanted scenes and make others look like something they are not.

When people look at you, what do they see? What you are really like? Or what *you want* them to see?

Most of us have a facade or image that is not the real us. Maybe you like people to think you are the sporty type, or maybe the debonair and sophisticated man or woman about town. Or perhaps you like to appear a cool, macho man. Or a dear little old lady who couldn't hurt a fly. Whatever it is, you have learned to talk, act and perhaps even dress according to an image you want to portray.

In fact, you may have become so good at your special effect that even you are deceived. Perhaps even you can't remember what the real you is like. In one way or another you have become a skilled special-effects artist.

What's so bad about that? Nothing, if this life is to be like a movie, just a time to pretend. But your life is not meant to be used like that. It is not a frivolous game of make-believe.

If you are a Christian, your life has a vital purpose, and it must be used for that purpose. Your life must be used to build character — character like Jesus Christ had — so that one day you, too, can become a born child of God.

A Christian life, therefore, is serious business. It is time to face reality. There is no room for the pretense, false fronts and special effects that we have so carefully built to obscure the truth.

The real danger of make-believe

God has promised to help rebuild us until we have holy, righteous character. But He must

build on a solid foundation. He wants to deal with the real you, whatever that may be. His goal is to help you become "a perfect man" with "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13) — not just a convincing look-alike.

There is nothing particularly wrong in using special effects in the film industry. They have to. Otherwise things just wouldn't look right. But have you noticed how people who spend all their lives in a make-believe world become so accustomed to sham and falseness that they no longer seem to be able to distinguish real from false, or right from wrong?

Many actors and movie stars actually pride themselves on their cosmopolitan, tolerant, modern approach to adultery, fornication, perversions, drunkenness and other vices condemned by God's laws. Even whole cities have become well known for their permissive, freewheeling life-styles.

The ancient city of Corinth was like that. Corinth was a seaport, and because of its position had become rich through trade. The people of many nations mingled freely, and the city had become a byword for the liberal approach to life. "To corinthisianize" had become a synonym for a life-style of debauchery.

This attitude permeated Corinthian society and had even affected the members of the Church of God that the apostle Paul had raised up there. They had become so liberal in their thinking that when a member became involved in an incestuous relationship with his mother (or it might have been his stepmother), the other members weren't shocked — they seemed even to be proud of the situation.

Paul wrote those brethren a stern letter. He was horrified that God's chosen people in Corinth had become so tolerant of a situation that would have appalled normal, decent, unconverted people elsewhere.

He wrote: "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even

named among the Gentiles — that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you" (I Corinthians 5:1-2).

Paul confronted them with their tolerant attitude toward a serious sin. He commanded the Corinthians to disfellowship or excommunicate the erring member until such time as he learned a lesson and repented.

This was not just a fit of prudishness on Paul's part. He knew that if this lackadaisical approach to immorality continued, it would not be long before the entire church was affected.

Today we might say, "One rotten apple can spoil the whole bunch." Paul used another analogy, one that was readily understood by the Corinthians:

"Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (verses 6-7).

Leaven and sin

Paul used the simple analogy of the action of a leavening agent in bread making to show the effect of sin in the Christian life.

When a leavening agent (usually yeast) is mixed with dough, it begins to react. The lump of dough expands to many times its original size. The leavening agent literally puffs up the lump of dough with gas. This is what gives bread its light, soft consistency. It isn't really like that — it is a special effect — a make-believe. Bread dough baked without leaven is hard and flat, more like a crust or cracker than the familiar loaf.

The Corinthian church would have known exactly what Paul meant. Once a year, in the first month of the year according to the biblical calendar (approximating spring in the Northern Hemisphere today), God commanded a festival to be observed. It was

called the Days of Unleavened Bread. You can read it described in Leviticus 23:6.

The Days of Unleavened Bread lasted for seven days. The first and last days were Holy Days to be observed as Sabbaths. And on each of the seven days when the people ate bread, they were supposed to eat unleavened bread — bread baked without special effects. Moreover, they were told to literally put out of their homes all leavening agents and all products that contained leaven, according to the commandment in Exodus 12:18-20.

Jesus Christ observed this Festival when He was on earth (Mark 14:12, Luke 22:7), and so

Bread, and even fewer actually observe them. This should not be. God commanded that these days be observed by His people forever (Exodus 12:17). Jesus nowhere said we should not keep them. Quite the contrary (Matthew 5:17-19). Jesus warned against replacing God's commandments with human ideas (Mark 7:7).

Why unleavened bread today?

Now all this should make us think. Not only does God want us to be *aware* of the Days of Unleavened Bread, but He also expects us to *keep* them. Why?

Leaven is used frequently in the Bible as a type or analogy of sin. There is, of course, nothing wrong with using leaven or leavened products the other 51 weeks of the year. It is only an analogy of sin. But it is an effective one.

Just as leaven acts on a lump of dough, puffing it up and distorting it out of all proportion, so does sin act with an individual. God cannot work with a character that is puffed up and distorted.

Jesus said to be careful about pretending to be something you are not (Luke 12:1). Don't masquerade as a right-

eous, God-fearing person while still clinging to your sins. In other words, avoid sham, fake, spiritual special effects in your life.

That was the charge that Paul leveled at his Corinthian brethren. Stop pretending to be God's Church while tolerating sin in your midst, he thundered. If the incestuous member persists in his reprehensible behavior, put him out before he contaminates the rest of you. Face the truth. Don't be hypocrites — be sincere.

The Corinthians understood Paul's stern warning, because they had gone through the act of putting all leavened products out

of their homes, searching even for hidden scraps and crumbs that may have fallen into cracks and crevices. They had begun to eat unleavened bread — hard, chewy crusts baked without any special effects.

Now Paul was teaching them the spiritual point: The leaven was a type of their sins, sins that had to be located and gotten rid of. The bread baked without special effects was a type of the solid, genuine, bedrock character and attitude that God can build on.

"You desire truth in the inward parts," wrote David (Psalm 51:6) — not just an outward show.

The Corinthians got the point, and this story has a happy ending. They did what Paul commanded. The man repented of his sins, and Paul instructed that he be restored to full fellowship (II Corinthians 2:6-8). One day we may well meet these Corinthians in the Kingdom of God.

God doesn't waste our time. He instituted the Days of Unleavened Bread as an annual reminder of the need to put sin out of our lives and become genuine so that He can build perfect character in us. The physical aspects of these days — the literal putting out of leaven and eating unleavened bread — are designed to help us grasp the spiritual significance.

The Days of Unleavened Bread in 1985 are from April 6 to April 12, with April 6 and April 12 being the Holy Days to be observed as Sabbaths.

The Worldwide Church of God offers, free, a color calendar showing the Days of Unleavened Bread and all of God's other true festivals and Holy Days for 1985-1986. You may have a copy of this calendar by mailing the envelope in this issue or by writing to our address nearest you.

We also offer, free, a booklet entitled *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?* It explains the annual festivals ordained by God and reveals the shocking truth behind the holidays most observe today. You may request a copy of it with the Holy Day calendar. □



did the early Christian Church. It is obvious that the Corinthian church was keeping, or was about to keep, these Days of Unleavened Bread when Paul wrote the letter, since he wrote: "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Corinthians 5:8).

In later centuries, however, this and other festivals and Holy Days commanded by God were replaced by holidays of human invention. So today, not many professing Christians have even heard of the Days of Unleavened

What Satan

Doesn't Want You to Know

By Clayton D. Steep

Satan the devil is very clever.

No wonder. Before he became the devil, he was a resplendent spiritual being — an archangel. At that time he was “full of wisdom” (Ezekiel 28:12).

When Satan rebelled against God's government, however, all of that wisdom became perverted (verse 17). It became tricky and deceitful. That is one of the reasons he has been able to fool all humanity (Revelation 12:9). He has deceived the whole world, as the Bible clearly states.

When you think about it, that is no small accomplishment. You've heard the saying: “You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.” But don't you believe it — Satan has done it. Starting with Eve and, through her, Adam, Satan has fooled all humanity in every

generation. How does he do this? He doesn't appear personally to every individual and lie to each one, as he did to Eve. He doesn't have to. He has a more effective method.

All humanity deceived

It wasn't long after the development of radio broadcasting that the governments of various nations discovered what a powerful tool radio could be to spread propaganda — to influence, confuse, even deceive their own or enemy populations. Radio, and now television, too, have at times been used effectively to that end.

The airwaves have been used, especially in wartime, to promulgate blatant lies, as well as what is labeled “disinformation.” Disinformation is a sort of mixture of truth and error — enough truth to make it sound authentic, but enough error to render the whole misleading and deceptive.

Satan long ago realized the

potential of media propaganda. He is the father of the lie (John 8:44), the first and most effective minister of propaganda ever.

In the same way broadcasting has at times been misused by human propagandists, Satan “broadcasts” his deceptive message. He is the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). He emits an attitude of rebellion. He radiates a spirit of defiance, of disobedience. Some of his message consists of outright lies; some of it is disinformation — a mixture of truth and deceit.

But the thrust of his message is always the same: Do not totally submit to the government of God!

Satan's fall

When Satan was still a righteous archangel, God made him ruler of this earth. But that position did not satisfy him. He wanted more. He became driven by vanity and greed. He wanted control over everything, not just this earth. His desire was to be like God (Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:12-15).

So Lucifer mounted a rebellion against God's throne in heaven. But he was defeated and cast back down to earth, as were the angels that rebelled with him. Jesus was there and saw it happen. He recalled, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

Though Satan has fallen, God

has not yet removed him from his position of being "the ruler of this world," as Jesus acknowledged him to be (John 14:30). The devil has authority over the kingdoms on earth (Luke 4:5-6).

Jesus Himself, at His fast-approaching return to this earth, will take the rulership of the world from him. Satan will then be bound, not allowed to deceive the nations for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:3).

Until then, his work of deceiving all humanity continues.

The whole world?

"Well," some will exclaim, "I can agree that Satan has deceived many people. I'm sure he has the atheists in his camp. And there are certain tribes of people that openly claim to be devil-worshippers. And then there are individuals in every nation who are just plain evil. I'm sure Satan has deceived those people.

"But the whole world? Come now, what about all those churches that teach professing Christians that Satan is the wicked one, that he is the enemy of God and man? How can it be said all those people are deceived?"

What about that? It is a fact that vast numbers of people simply do what they believe is right. They would never knowingly choose to have anything to do with Satan. Many are, by any of the world's standards, exceptionally "good" people. Can such be deceived?

There are sincere theologians who teach against the works of the devil and his demons, some of them eloquently, even going so far as to try casting demons out. Is it possible for such to be deluded by the very devil they preach against?

And if you are one of those who have come out of Satan's world, spiritually speaking, as all true Christians have, does that mean you are now immune to being misled by Satan's evil influence?

Can Satan fool you?

It is vital that we understand, that we not be "ignorant of his devices," lest he get the advan-

tage over us (II Corinthians 2:11). Here is one of Satan's most important devices. Here is something the devil for sure does not want you to know.

Satan compromises

Satan is a compromiser. He is flexible. He will bend. He will engage in give and take as long as — and this is the ultraimportant point — as long as he gets his way in the end. That is to say, as long as those he is dealing with stop short of fully submitting to God's government.

The Bible clearly states, as we have seen, that Satan has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9). How has he accomplished this? By compromising.

The devil has something for everybody. The broad highway leading to destruction — the highway humanity is following — is broader than perhaps you realized. It is divided into innumerable lanes. Everybody is sure to find at least one of these lanes appealing. But they all lead to the same destination: perdition.

If the devil had his preference, he no doubt would want everybody to be God-hating, atheistic anarchists bent only on doing evil. But he hasn't succeeded in bringing about such a condition.

True, there are a few individuals in the world who are like that. But most are not. There are devil-worshippers. They, too, are small in number. But they do exist. There are those who deny Satan is real and those who have no opinion in the matter. Satan doesn't really care, though. As long as they don't obey God.

You've seen the pictures of Satan as a funny-looking, red-faced personality with a goatee, little horns growing out of the top of his head and a long, pointed tail. He is portrayed cavorting amidst flame and smoke, brandishing his pitchfork and emitting gleefully evil peals of laughter. This concept is accurate to some, ridiculous to others.

Satan doesn't care either way. If people want to poke fun at the devil, to think of him as a superstition, a fable, it makes no differ-

ence to him, as long as he has them going his direction.

Do you know that, if he must, Satan is even willing to allow you to obey many of God's laws? As long as there is at least one point of the law — whichever one it may be for you — that you refuse to keep!

The reason is that Satan knows God has ordained that to break one point of His law of love is to break it all (James 2:10-11). Therefore, to refuse to submit to one point is to rebel against God's entire divine code of behavior. Anyone guilty of such an attitude of rebellion obviously is not totally submitted to God.

That's good enough for Satan.

God's law in force

There are those in the world who may preach powerfully against Satan and his evil works. They may condemn his ways as corrupt. They may accurately show how he gets to people through much of today's music and entertainment. They may say to resist the devil. They may even urge acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

Believe it or not, all this, too, can fit into the parameters of Satan's scheme. How? It can be possible if church denominations, however eloquent the sermons may be, stop short of teaching that we must obey all of God's holy laws — if, instead, they say God's laws have been done away with, that they are no longer binding upon Christians.

Listen to what Jesus taught! He declared: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Yes, Jesus showed how to fulfill God's royal law. In this He set Christians an example that they are to follow, because they also are expected to fulfill the law (James 2:8-12). It is a question of law — of government, of obedience to God's way of life as revealed in His Word — and don't ever let anyone tell you any differently.

Total submission to God's law is what makes the difference

between Satan's broad, all-encompassing, something-for-everybody way to destruction and God's narrow way that leads to life (verses 13-14).

But the devil doesn't want you to know that. He wants you to think that what makes the difference is whether or not a church "preaches Christ" and believes Christ is the Savior. He doesn't want you to know you can believe Jesus Christ is the Savior, even worship Him, all in vain (Matthew 7:21-23, Mark 7:7)!

Don't trust appearances

Satan is an expert in making evil look good. By compromising he can take something that is evil and combine it with enough good to make it look perfectly innocent. His strategy is to use disguise (Matthew 7:15). He made Eve believe that the innocent-looking but forbidden fruit was good for her (Genesis 3:1-6). When he tried to get Jesus to disobey God, he quoted good, valid scriptures (Matthew 4:6).

But beware: A glass of good water with a few drops of cyanide in it still looks like an innocent, perfectly good glass of water.

Satan is deceitful. Your only hope of not being fooled by him is to study and believe God's Word and obey God's laws. You need to ask for God's Holy Spirit to give you light and understanding.

Do what Satan doesn't want you to do: Surrender to God. Then "resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

That's how to get rid of Satan's influence in your life. That's how to come to the place where you can make the same victorious statement Jesus made when He declared concerning the devil, "He has nothing in Me" (John 14:30)!

For more information on this powerful and supremely evil being known as Satan the devil, send for our free booklet *Did God Create a Devil?* It contains much more that Satan definitely doesn't want you to know! Just use the literature request envelope or write to our mailing address nearest you. □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 2)

agreed to stop the water of the fountains outside the town. . . .

"Then, appointing officers over the citizens, he gathered them in the open space at the gate of the city, and encouraged them. 'Be firm,' he said, 'be brave, be not daunted nor dismayed for the king of Assyria or for all his host; we have with us One greater than all he has; he has a mortal force, but we have with us the Eternal our God, to help us and to fight our battles'" (verses 1-3, 6-8).

Continuing: "His officers said even worse things against God the Eternal and his servant Hezekiah.

tains, in the camp of the king of Assyria, till he had to go home in disgrace. He [later] went into the temple of his god, and there his own offspring murdered him with their swords. So the Eternal rescued Hezekiah and the citizens of Jerusalem from Sancherib the king of Assyria as well as from all other foes, *protecting them on every side*" (verses 21-22).

That experience was written into the very WORD OF GOD for *your* learning and to SHOW YOU THE WAY TODAY! Perhaps YOU are faced with a foe more powerful than you. It may be some TEMPTATION. It may be some circumstance or condition or trouble. Some serious WORRY.

Then let me ask you, WHAT

If you will let GOD have HIS way in *your* life, then you will have begun to learn how to let Him fight *your* battles, solve *your* problems and deliver *you* from so many troubles and worries that you are suffering.

(Sancherib also wrote letters, insulting the Eternal the God of Israel and attacking him thus: 'As the gods of the nations elsewhere in the world have failed to save their folk from me, so shall Hezekiah's God fail to save his folk.') The officers shouted aloud in Hebrew to the citizens of Jerusalem on the walls, to terrify them and scare them, that they might capture the city. They talked about the God of Jerusalem as one of the gods of the nations on earth, mere handmade idols" (verses 16-19).

Now notice what the king of Judah did: "King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz PRAYED over this and cried to heaven" (verse 20).

They PRAYED for help. They did not know exactly HOW God would intervene. But they knew God would ACT! Here's what happened: "Then the Eternal sent an angel who swept off all the gallant fighters, the leaders, and cap-

ARE YOU RELYING ON to withstand the siege of this trouble — to deliver you from it?

Rely on God and His power

What do some of you do when some fear, worry, trouble comes up against you? Do you not first FEAR AND WORRY, and then either try to RUN FROM this trouble or else try to meet it in your own power and strength — with your own thinking and planning and doing?

Do YOU ever search your own heart and life to see if it is YOUR fault? In almost every in-law or marital trouble, for example, both are at fault.

Did you never realize that the very CREATOR who caused you to be born — who gives you the life you have — who called you into His truth — is able and anxious to fight all these battles for you just as He did Hezekiah's — if you will only turn to Him and ask Him for wisdom and guidance,

RELY on Him and TRUST Him with the result?

Two examples

I know of a lady who, when in her middle 20s, had a problem that was MOST SERIOUS in her life. Three times this girl had been disappointed in love. She had at last been tempted to marry a man she had no right to marry. She brought her problem to me, as God's representative. I found she was looking ONLY AT PHYSICAL APPEARANCES.

She reasoned that, so far as she could see, if she obeyed God and refused to marry this man, she might *never* be married.

I counseled her to OBEY GOD — to stop looking at the material circumstances and using human reason to disobey God. I counseled her to do, first of all, WHAT GOD INSTRUCTS IN THE BIBLE, and then to TRUST HIM for the outcome.

But that girl did not RELY ON GOD — she relied on her human reason. She obeyed impulse and temptation and married the man. He left her to commit adultery with another woman on their very wedding night. Her life became miserable, terribly unhappy.

Then at another time, another similar case was brought to me. THIS young woman rejected the temptation — she obeyed God and RELIED ON THE ETERNAL to work out circumstances — she *trusted* Him with the result. Her faith was tried and tested. God did not answer AT ONCE — but in due time, just the RIGHT man came into her life, they fell in love, they were married and GOD HAS BLESSED THEIR MARRIAGE WITH SUPREME HAPPINESS.

The experience of King Jehoshaphat

Now I want to bring you one more case history — a REMARKABLE experience that will show you the way out of *all your difficulties* and troubles.

If you will let GOD have His way in *your* life, then you will have begun to learn how to let Him fight *your* battles, solve *your* problems and deliver *you*

from *so* many troubles you are suffering.

Now, notice the experience written for OUR learning and help today:

"It was after this that the Moabites and Ammonites, with some of the Meunim, made war on Jehoshaphat. Word came to Jehoshaphat that a huge host was moving against him from Edom, over the Dead Sea, and that they were already at Hazazon-tamar (or Engedi). *Jehoshaphat was afraid*" (II Chronicles 20:1-3, Moffatt).

Is fear your usual reaction, too? But observe what the king of Judah did.

"He resolved to have recourse to the Eternal, and proclaimed a *fast* all over Judah. So Judah assembled to seek help from the Eternal; people came from every town in Judah to worship the Eternal" (verses 3-4).

Jehoshaphat did exactly what God wants *you* to do today when faced with any temptation or trouble — HE TOOK IT TO GOD IN PRAYER AND FASTING!

And as he continued to ask God for help, he said (verses 6-10): "O Eternal, the God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven, and ruler of all realms on earth? Such power and might is thine that no one can resist thee. O our God, didst not thou evict the natives of this land before thy people Israel, giving the land to the offspring of Abraham thy friend, for all time? And they settled in it, they have built a sanctuary in it to thine honour, thinking that if evil befell them, the sword in judgment, or pestilence, or famine, they would stand in front of this temple and before thee (for in this temple is thy presence) and cry to thee in their distress, till thou didst hear and save them.

"Now here are the Ammonites and Moabites and folk from mount Seir, whom thou didst not allow Israel to invade, when Israel came out of the land of Egypt — no, Israel turned away from them and did not destroy them!"

There was no reason for these neighbors to be enemies. Some-

times your own neighbors become your enemies, too, don't they?

But notice what the king said to God: "Look how they reward us, coming to eject us from thy very own country which thou hast given us to be ours. O our God, *wilt thou not deal with them? We are helpless against this mighty host* that is attacking us; we know not what to do, but we look to thee" (verses 11-12).

God answers prayer

Now I want you to notice! Jehoshaphat cried out for God to come to their aid. Here is God's answer (verses 14-17):

"Jehaziel . . . was inspired by the spirit of the Eternal in the midst of the gathering to cry, 'Listen, all ye men of Judah, ye citizens of Jerusalem, and you, O king Jehoshaphat; *the Eternal's message to you is this: "FEAR NOT, falter not before this vast army; it is for God, not for you, to fight them. March down against them to-morrow; they are coming up by the ascent of Haziz, and you will come upon them at the end of the ravine in front of the desert of Jeruel. You will not need to do any fighting; take up your position, stand still, and watch the victory of the Eternal, who is on your side, O Judah and Jerusalem. Fear not, falter not. Move out against them to-morrow, for the Eternal is on your side."*'"

And notice that Jehoshaphat *obeyed* after God instructed him. Verses 20-23 declare: "Next morning they rose and moved into the open country round Tekoa. As they advanced, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Listen, men of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem! Take hold of the Eternal your God and you will keep hold of life; hold by his prophets, and you will prosper.'

"After this counsel to the nation, he appointed the Eternal's singers to praise him in sacred vestments, marching in front of the army and chanting, Give thanks to the Eternal, for his kindness never fails.

"As they began to sing and praise him, the Eternal set men in

ambush against the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the folk from mount Seir, who had attacked Judah, and they were routed. The Ammonites and the Moabites *turned on the* natives of mount Seir, determined to wipe them out."

They turned against one another! That is how God answered Jehoshaphat. "And then, after destroying the natives of Seir, they all helped to kill one another. So when the men of Judah reached their post of attack looking over the open country, they saw the host were so many corpses stretched upon the ground; not a man had escaped" (verses 23-24).

Jehoshaphat did not merely leave this trouble with God and then do nothing about it himself. First, he prayed and asked for wisdom, guidance and **HELP**. Then he **DID WHAT GOD SAID**. He had to do **HIS PART** — but the **BATTLE WAS GOD'S**, and Jehoshaphat did not try to fight **GOD'S** battle. He merely did *his own* part. But he **BELIEVED** God, and **RELIED** on God.

The point I want you to **REMEMBER** is that **YOUR** battles are not really yours, but **GOD'S**. If you look to Him, He makes them **HIS** battles, and **HE** fights them for you. How **FUTILE** for you to try to fight **GOD'S** battles for **HIM**.

God says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).

In the New Testament we read, "By **GRACE** are ye saved through **FAITH**" (Ephesians 2:8, Authorized Version). Yes, but the **FAITH** that saves us is a *living* faith that is practical — it **WORKS** — it really **RELIES** on God! So **PUT IT TO PRACTICE!**

God does not promise us an **EASY** time during this life in this world. But He **DOES** promise to fight our battles for us — to deliver us from **EVERY** trouble and affliction.

WILL YOU LET HIM DO IT, AND LEARN HOW HAPPY YOUR LIFE MAY BECOME? GOD HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND! □

Hidden Enemy

(Continued from page 5)

being *led* (in obedience to God's law) by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, 14), and the Holy Spirit *in us* is the **LOVE OF GOD** (Romans 5:5), which is the *only* love that fulfills God's law. And also the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of a **SOUND MIND** (II Timothy 1:7).

True spirituality, therefore, is **SOUND MINDEDNESS**, for true spirituality can come *only* from the **SPIRIT OF GOD** within us. True spirituality is **RATIONAL**.

On the other hand, true spirituality is not a mere mental religion divorced from all feeling and emotion. There are the purely mental religions that do not even believe in the Holy Spirit of God.

And there are some of **US**, perhaps, who have come to know God's truth — who have surrendered to God, truly repented of our own way, turned from the ways of the world and who are devoted to studying the Bible to learn *God's* way so that we may *live by every word of God* — and who also pray a great deal, but who yet **LACK** the very second **FRUIT** of God's Spirit — **JOY!**

NOT emotionless maturity

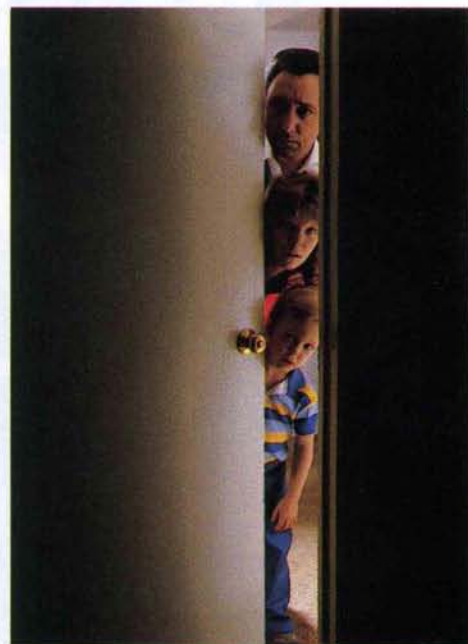
Emotional *maturity* does not mean *emotionless* maturity any more than it means uncontrolled emotion. The truly emotionally mature are Spirit-guided by sound Spirit-mindedness — by God's Word — and the emotions are **CONTROLLED**, but not anesthetized. The emotionally grown-up **DO** express enthusiasm, **JOY**, happiness. They **DO feel** and express gratitude, reverence, adoration in their worship of God. They do feel and express compassion, mercy, sympathy.

God is a spirit, and they that *worship* Him must worship in **SPIRIT** and in **TRUTH**. One cannot worship in **SPIRIT** unless he has received and is led by God's Spirit. One cannot worship in **TRUTH** without **UNDERSTANDING** of God's Word with a sound mind. But this kind of worship is not

devoid of *feeling* and resultant emotional expression. Even though the emotion is *physical* reaction, it does truly *accompany* or *react from* true spiritual experience. But it is not a substitute for it.

The emotionally mature will properly express sympathy in a most sincere manner, from the heart. They will express, on occasion, when called for, sorrow, anguish, compassion. And they will also express good cheer, happiness, enthusiasm, zeal and that happiness that is brimful and running over, called **JOY!**

It sort of sums up, then, that the emotionally mature *combine* the controlled expression of emotion *with* physical health and an

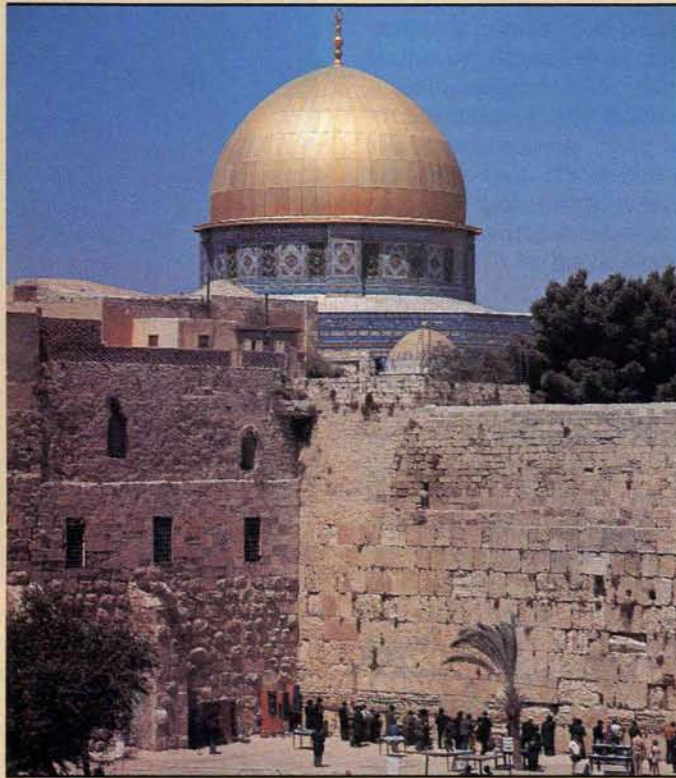


educated mind that is Spirit-begotten and Spirit-led, doesn't it? In other words, emotional maturity develops hand in hand with physical, mental and spiritual growth, the four blending into, finally, the perfect spiritual **CHARACTER** we were put here to become.

You probably have a long way yet to go. **YOU** have a grave responsibility, if you have children, in their **EMOTIONAL** training as well as their physical health, mental education and spiritual guidance. We shall all be called to account someday. How will **YOU** answer? □

COMING

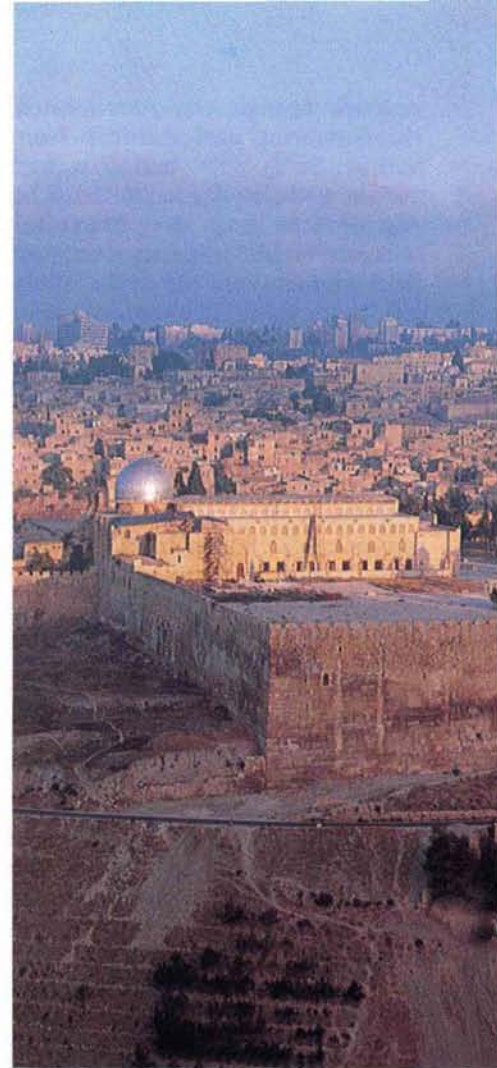
A Temple in Jerusalem?



Part Two

Is the construction of a temple in Jerusalem necessary to fulfill prophecy? The future holds some startling possibilities.

By Ronald D. Kelly



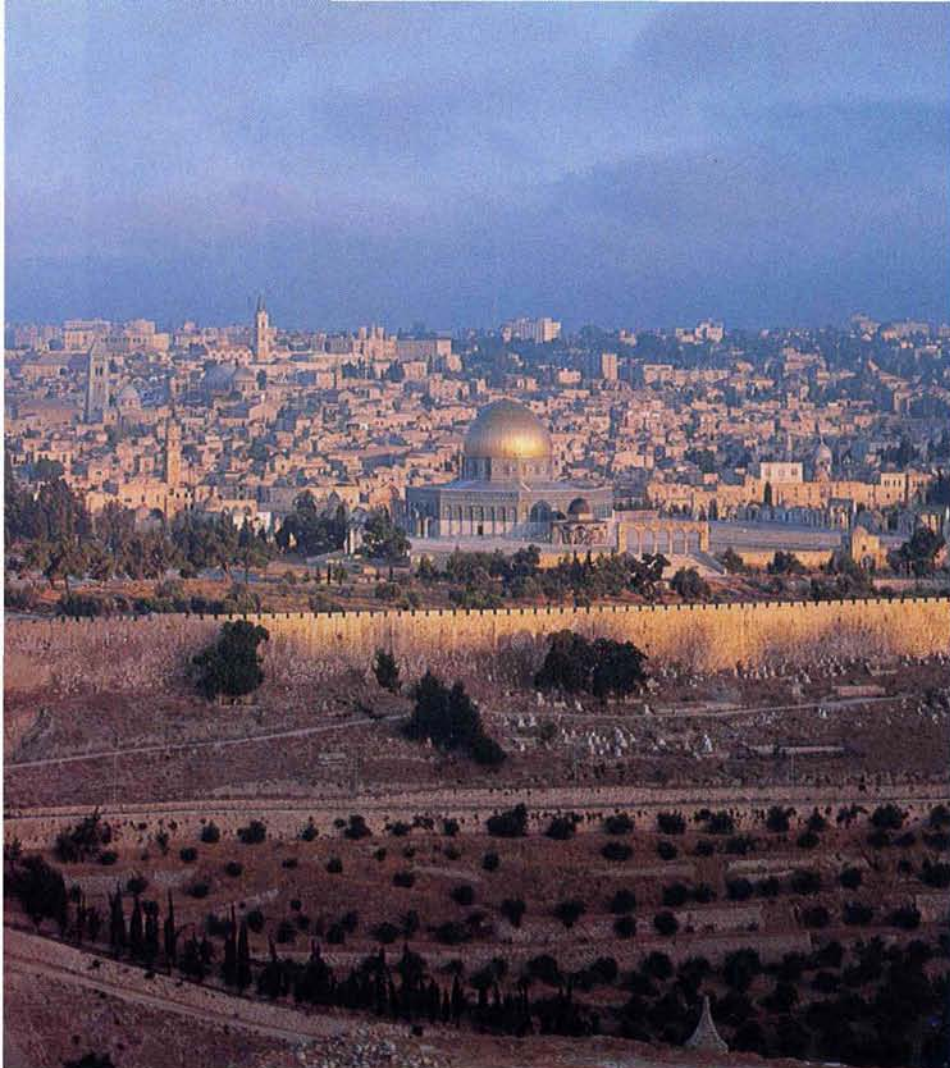
Will there have to be a temple in Jerusalem before prophesied end-time events can take place? Must sacrifices be offered on the Temple Mount?

Or will a physical building and sacrifices not be necessary until the Messiah has come and God's Kingdom is set up on earth?

The answers are important for Jews and Christians alike!

The Temple is probably the most famous building in all human history. Last month we traced its history until the time devout Nehemiah, a high-ranking Jew in the Persian government, obtained permission to lead an expedition to Jerusalem and complete the building of a second Temple.

Now to continue with this sec-



Western Wall (far left), considered holy by Jews; Dome of the Rock mosque is in background. Left, Temple Mount (foreground) and Jerusalem skyline.

ond installment: In 457 B.C. the Persian king Artaxerxes issued a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. This is a most important date.

During the Babylonian exile more than 100 years before, God revealed an unusual prophecy to Daniel. He said: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times" (Daniel 9:25).

This amazing prophecy, dated from 457 B.C., predicted not only the rebuilding of Jerusalem, but the coming of the Messiah.

From this, many thought the Messiah would appear in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. But that is not what the prophet meant. He did prophesy the reconstruc-

tion and resettlement of Judea. However, the 69-weeks prophecy was not a period of 69 literal weeks, but prophetic weeks.

God reveals in prophetic symbol that a day equals a year in prophecy (Ezekiel 4:6, Numbers 14:34). To know how many years till the fulfillment, we would have to know how many days are in 69 weeks. Since there are seven days in a week, we would multiply seven times 69 and arrive at 483. The Messiah would not appear, then, till 483 years after Artaxerxes' decree.

That would bring us to the year A.D. 27, as we count the years. In that year, according to the New Testament, Jesus of Nazareth, when He was about 30 years of age, began His public ministry (Luke 3:21-23).

The Messiah had indeed arrived. Most of the world did not accept Him at that time. He had come to die for the sins of the

world. After only 3½ years of active ministry, He was put to death by crucifixion.

For more than 1,900 years the Christian world has been waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus. And for longer than that, the Jews have looked for the appearance of the Messiah. Christian and Jew both are concerned about Jerusalem, a temple and animal sacrifices in relationship to the coming of the Messiah. But more about that later.

Continued trying times

Now back to the second Temple. After the reform period of Ezra and Nehemiah, there was a time of great turmoil in Judea. The Persian empire fell to the onslaught of the Macedonian ruler, Alexander the Great. After Alexander's death, his empire was divided among his leading generals.

Judea lay in the path of two constantly warring factions, the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria. Wars raged back and forth for nearly three centuries. In 175 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes became ruler of the Seleucids in Syria. In 168 he attempted a campaign to Egypt, but was thwarted by the rising Roman power. He turned his wrath on the Jews.

Jerusalem was again ravaged by war. The city was captured and a Syrian garrison headquartered near the Temple Mount. The Temple sacrifices, observance of the seventh-day Sabbath and feast days, along with circumcision, were forbidden to all Jews. The penalty for practicing any of these was death. After about two months, the crowning blow was struck. Antiochus set up an altar to the Greek god Zeus on the Temple Mount and offered swine upon it. It was, as had been prophesied, an abomination of desolation (Daniel 11:31).

This date, to live in infamy in Jewish history, was the 25th of Kislev (the month of November-December on the Roman calen-

dar) in 167 B.C. This event also had been prophesied in the book of Daniel. In Daniel 8:13-14, New International Version, God revealed: "Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, 'How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled — the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?' He said to me, 'It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.'"

In other words, there would be 2,300 evening and morning sacrifices that would not be offered — a period of 1,150 days or just more than three years till God would permit restoration of the sacrifices.

Those three years were to be among the most trying in Jewish history. Jews were forced to eat pork and worship pagan gods. Those who refused were mercilessly killed. In the Judean hills, a band of zealous Jews under the leadership of a Jewish priest named Mattathias steadily grew in numbers and strength. They became known as the Maccabees — the "hammerers."

After the death of Mattathias, his son Judas took command of the Jewish forces. They gained one victory after another and finally, on the 25th of Kislev in 164 B.C. (exactly three years to the day from the setting up of the Zeus statue on the Temple Mount), the Maccabees liberated Jerusalem, tore down the pagan gods from the Temple Mount and relit the lights of the Menorah.

To this day the Jewish eight-day winter festival of Hanukkah, or Festival of Lights, recalls the cleansing of the Temple in the days of the Maccabees.

In all probability it had been 1,150 days or 2,300 evenings and mornings since Antiochus had forbidden Jewish sacrifices.

Roman dominion

During the next century, Jerusalem was to undergo great change. By 63 B.C., the Roman

general Pompey marched his legions into Judea. Huge war machines hurled boulders into the city and at the Temple.

Jerusalem once again succumbed to foreign forces.

After the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., an Edomite noble named Herod was appointed king of Judea in 37 B.C. He was a loyal subject of Rome, and was at the same time one of the most infamous personalities of his day.

Herod was a cruel taskmaster, even putting to death his wife and several sons, whom he suspected of subterfuge. But his building programs made that area of the world a showplace. He built palaces at Herodium, Jericho and on Masada. He built and named the seaport city of Caesarea after emperor Augustus.

But there was great unrest in Judea. To settle the Jews, Herod undertook a grand project — the rebuilding of the Temple of God in Jerusalem to make it a showplace, one of the most magnificent buildings in the empire.

Plans were drawn up in about 22 B.C. with construction beginning in 19 B.C.

A huge retaining wall was erected on the southwest corner. Tons of fill dirt were hauled in. Natural rock outcroppings were carved flat.

Glistening white marble set off by sparkling gold formed the outer walls of the Temple itself. Solomon's Temple had not been more than 40 feet high and maybe 115 by 70 feet in length and width. Herod's newly renovated masterpiece would be more than 100 feet wide, 130 feet long and 150 feet high.

Some 162 huge Corinthian columns formed a colonnade on the southern edge of the courtyard. It was in this area that Jesus of Nazareth would turn over the moneychangers' tables and drive out the animals. Here also Jesus would teach His disciples, and later those disciples would teach others in the early days of the New Testament Church.

But this renovated second Temple would not exist in a time

of peace any more than Solomon's original Temple or the one built by Zerubbabel.

In A.D. 70, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the beautiful Temple of Herod. No Jewish temple has to this day ever been rebuilt on Mt. Moriah.

All that remains from the glory of the past is a lower portion of the retaining wall including a 150-foot section on the southwest corner of the Temple Mount. It is considered holy by the Jews, since it is all that remains from the glorious days of the first and second Temples. This Western Wall came into Jewish possession in 1967 after the Six Day War.

What about the future?

Ever since the Six Day War, speculation has run rampant on whether, how and when the Jews would again worship on the Temple Mount, offer animal sacrifices or build a temple.

Today observant Jews do not even go on the Temple Mount. There are two major reasons.

First, the Temple Mount is now, and has been for centuries, under Muslim control. The Dome of the Rock mosque, built in the late seventh century A.D., now occupies the traditional site of the Temple. Muslim law does not permit other religions to worship on the Temple Mount.

Second, Jewish religious law does not permit Jews on the Mount since the exact location of the Holy of Holies is not known. Only the high priest was permitted in the Holy of Holies, so Jews do not wish to even accidentally enter that location.

Many fundamentalist Christians believe that three important events have to occur in the Holy Land before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. One is that Israel must again become a Jewish nation, second that Jerusalem must be a Jewish city and third that a temple must be built on the Temple Mount. Two of those three events have taken place.

Jews themselves are divided on the matter of the Jewish state and the building of a temple. Some ultraorthodox Jews do not even



Dome of the Tablets, controversial site recently proposed for Second Temple, is rejected by professional archaeologists.

recognize the state of Israel and believe it should not be a nation till the Messiah appears.

On the other hand, the Jewish dream of centuries began to be fulfilled when Jews began to resettle in the Holy Land. By 1948 the Jewish state of Israel had been declared a nation. Many Bible students viewed this as a fulfillment of prophecy. Then in 1967, when Israel occupied all of Jerusalem, the West Bank territory and the Golan Heights, many felt the prophesied time of the end was at hand.

It seemed to some that very soon the Jews would take over the Temple Mount, offer animal sacrifices and construct the long-awaited temple.

But time has passed and a temple does not seem to be forthcoming. Many questions yet remain to be answered: Would the Dome of the Rock have to be torn down to construct a Jewish temple? Is

the site of the Dome of the Rock even the site of the first and second Jewish Temples? Is a temple necessary to offer sacrifices? Could worship services be conducted on the Temple Mount apart from a temple?

These and other questions are being given careful consideration. The Jewish high court in 1983 decided that the Temple Mount was indeed a holy site for Jews. They also declared that Jews have rights of access and worship on the Temple Mount. However, the political situation in Jerusalem is so delicate that no move has yet been made to attempt Jewish worship atop the Mount.

For a number of years now, certain Jews have been undergoing preparation and education for Temple Mount service, should that become a reality. A 15-year training program of priests at Yeshivah Ateret Hachochanim is preparing priests for temple ser-

vice. Other groups are studying priestly ritual and the manufacture of priestly garments.

From the example during the days of Zerubbabel, it seems evident that religious worship services and a sacrificial altar could be set up even if no temple is built. There is some support, if not for a temple, for a synagogue on the Temple Mount.

Archaeological studies have led some to believe that the site of the Holy of Holies was not where the Dome of the Rock is situated, but more than 100 yards to the north. If so, a Jewish structure could be built without destroying the Muslim holy place, if the political problems could be worked out.

Prophecy will be fulfilled

All in all, it makes for a great deal of speculation. Some scoff at biblical prophecy. Others look eagerly for events to fulfill it.

There is no doubt that some of the prophecies that looked forward from the Babylonian captivity were fulfilled, at least in type, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Other prophecies about the temple will not be fulfilled until God's Kingdom is established.

But many Bible prophecies pertain to events that will soon take place in Europe and the Middle East before the end of this age. Certainly we should be aware of events in the Middle East and in Jerusalem. We will soon see the establishment of God's peaceful government on the earth!

Events brought about by people are not necessary to fulfill prophecy. God will inspire those events He has prophesied. We'll wait and watch with interest to see what happens in the coming months and years.

For more information on this critical region and coming events there, send for our free booklet *The Middle East in Prophecy*. Just use the literature request envelope in this issue or write to our address nearest you. □

Watch World Events

How can you get a better grasp of this fast-paced world of ours?

By Gene H. Hogberg

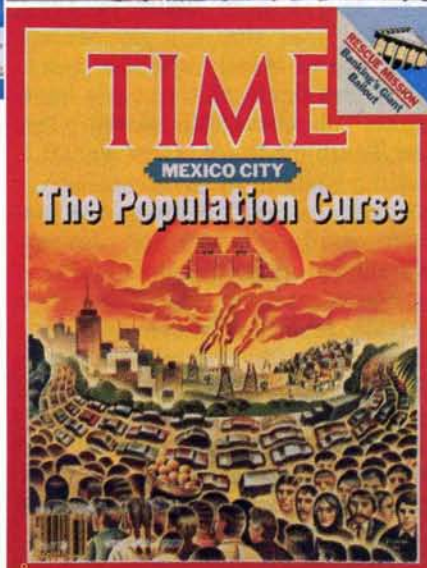
What events and trends in the world are of most significance as we approach "the end of the age" — the end of 6,000 years of human misrule, and the dawning of the world tomorrow?

Most importantly, for the purposes of this article, which news sources are most beneficial and reliable in the job we all have of watching world events (Luke 21:36)? What's the best way to judge the value of a newspaper? And what is the overall approach of the news media in analyzing current events?

The correct perspective

First of all, when studying world events from the viewpoint of Bible prophecy, one must know what to look for. We have not been left without guideposts in this vital area.

The 24th chapter of Matthew constitutes one of the most



important prophetic passages in the New Testament. This chapter details the signs of Jesus Christ's Second Coming and the end of this age.

Hallmarks of the end time, we have been taught, will be religious deception (verses 4-5, 11), "wars and rumors of wars" (verse 6), famines, pestilences, earthquakes (verse 7) and religious persecution and martyrdom for some (verse 9). Through it all, the true Gospel of God will be

proclaimed with ever-increasing power till — before the end — it will have a powerful impact upon all nations (verse 14).

In addition to focusing our attention on the broad outline of Matthew 24, we need to keep a sharp eye on events in Europe, leading up to the final, 10-nation revival of the Roman Empire. The Middle East also merits continuous news monitoring, especially the growth of religious radicalism.

Plummeting morals in the Western world, the decay of family life, environmental destruction and the threat of a global economic catastrophe show

we are near the end of humanity's profligate ways.

We need not go into detail at this point concerning these prophesied end-time conditions. The *Plain Truth* magazine continually devotes considerable space to these very trends. (If you are not already a reader of *The Plain Truth*, you may have a free subscription by writing to our address nearest you. See the inside front cover for a list.)

Identity of America, Britain

There is another extremely important area that opens our eyes to what to look for. This key is the national identity of the United States, the British people and the democracies of north-western Europe. These nations are, in the main, the descendants of the ancient House of Israel — the so-called "lost 10 tribes." (Write for our free book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* for more information.)

The modern-day self-appointed "shepherds of Israel" (Ezekiel 34:2) do not understand this vital key to prophecy, or they simply dismiss it. They have not "sought what was lost" (verse 4).

This understanding is so vital in comprehending world events that without it one is left prophetically rudderless.

Equipped with this understanding, we can readily grasp the portent behind one of the single most significant trends in the world over the past two decades — the decline of British and American power and the corresponding rise in the military might of the Soviet Union.

This major trend affects nearly everything in the world today, from the changed power relationships in the Middle East to the need for Europe to unite.

Approach of news media

No news analysts, aside from those in the true Church of God, are going to look at the world from the above perspectives of Bible prophecy.

But some analysts are definitely better than others in helping us watch world events. Such analysts

belong to what has been called the *realistic* school of international relations.

Generally speaking, realists look at the world the way it really is. They are not blinded to political and moral evils in this world. They can plainly see the various power struggles among the nations, the principal one being the East-West conflict centered in Moscow and Washington.

They believe that major powers act the way they do because of historical precedence and national character and are not likely to "change their spots" and moderate their policies.

Realists understand that in the world — which the Bible reveals is not God's world but lies under the influence of Satan (Revelation 12:9, II Corinthians 4:4) — lofty, abstract principles such as "social justice" and "human rights" are unattainable, even if all people and nations knew what these concepts really meant. To the realist, the lesser evil is preferable to some human-defined, absolute "good."

The second broad approach toward the world and society, taken by many political leaders and the majority of news analysts of the popular press of the Western world, is the *idealistic*, also called the *utopian* or *liberal*, approach.

Basically speaking, the idealistic school holds that human nature is inherently good and has infinite malleability. Those holding to this approach believe man has the power to make society better and better according to constantly changing (supposedly improving) human standards.

Regarding the moral basis of society, the idealistic or liberal school rests on a shifting ground of no absolutes. The results of this "enlightened" approach, cut off from biblically based or influenced tradition, are all too obvious: the New Morality, living together, feminism, gay rights and the drive to "unisex" society — even the Bible.

Choosing a newspaper

In general, the news media of the Western world hold marked

liberal views, in almost reverse proportion to the public at large.

Knowing the two broad approaches to current events analysis should help us better select from the news sources available to us.

For some Christians, this is rather difficult, especially if they live in more closed societies. In these instances, choices of news sources are limited. Newspapers, radio and television are often either government controlled or heavily supervised to reflect official government positions.

In pluralistic Western societies, on the other hand, a wider selection of newspapers, magazines and electronic media is available.

In Britain and other countries in Europe, entire newspapers generally reflect a certain philosophy. The *Daily Telegraph*, for example, an excellent news source for the Church's News Bureau, is conservative in tone, in both presentation of news and commentary. The *Guardian*, on the other hand, reflects a definite left-of-center viewpoint.

The *Times* of London is in the middle of the road, politically. The *Times* is regarded as the best-written, most informative newspaper in the English language.

Throughout Europe, another excellent news source is the *International Herald Tribune*, an American-style newspaper jointly operated by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

For their own experience, people in the United States should scan copies of the *Times* of London or the *Daily Telegraph* in their nearest big-city library, if for no other reason than to realize what they are missing on a daily basis in their newspapers. Reading the *Times* each day is an education.

Choosing a newspaper in the United States presents more of a problem. With the exception of the relatively new *USA Today* (a bit shallow on in-depth analysis of international news), the United States does not have national

newspapers as does Britain. Two specialized newspapers, however, enjoy national circulation.

The business-oriented *Wall Street Journal* now has the largest circulation of any American newspaper. Day in and day out, its editorial pages contain some of the most sound-minded analyses of the news.

The small-circulation *Christian Science Monitor* presents perhaps the greatest scope of international news of any daily U.S. newspaper.

The highly informative (but editorially liberal) *New York Times* is steadily expanding its circulation nationwide.

Americans who do not regularly read the above sources are limited to local or regional newspapers. And far fewer of them exist now than before the advent of television. Television and nightly television news have all but destroyed the afternoon newspaper in America. Many cities are now one-newspaper towns.

When a choice between two or more newspapers is available, the prime consideration in deciding which paper to subscribe to should revolve around the stable of columnists who appear on the newspaper's editorial-opinion pages. Newspapers of the same size will vary little, in general, concerning the hard news of the day. The difference in a newspaper's relative worth will usually show up on the opinion page. In this regard one should note how many syndicated realist columnists appear regularly.

Who are some journalists of the realist school? Here are a few notable names in the United States to watch for: William Safire, George F. Will, Evans and Novak, Patrick J. Buchanan, James J. Kilpatrick, Norman Podhoretz, Phyllis Schlafly and Georgie Ann Geyer.

One may not always agree with everything these journalists write, but more often than not they present topics worth reading.

Beneficial magazines

It also helps, budget permitting, to read a weekly newsmaga-

zine in addition to a newspaper.

The magazine *U.S. News & World Report* has always provided the News Bureau with important information every week. *U.S. News* concentrates on essential facts and figures, with helpful, readily understandable charts and graphs.

Regarding *Time* and *Newsweek*, personal preference is the key. These magazines are most helpful in covering major stories in depth. The overall slant, of course, remains American and liberal, especially in *Time*.

Unfamiliar to many Americans but respected around the world is Britain's *Economist*, probably the most comprehensive newsweekly published anywhere, usually containing important news items that escape American eyes.

Business Week is another fine publication with a good "International Outlook" section on world affairs and excellent occasional in-depth reports. However, as a business magazine, it ranks below the fortnightly *Fortune*.

A leading journal of opinion today is *The New Republic*, which is published weekly. It often contains thought-provoking articles on a wide range of political and social affairs topics, representing a fairly broad viewpoint.

Another supplemental news source worth mentioning is *Commentary*, a monthly published by the American Jewish Committee. *Commentary* is one of the most influential journals in America.

The fortnightly *National Review*, while essentially political in tone, often has articles of broad social significance.

A person may not wish to subscribe to any of the magazines mentioned above. But one should at least scan them, as well as the selection of other newspapers and periodicals available at libraries.

One might come across other informative English-language newsmagazines, such as *Maclean's* from Canada, *The Bulletin* from Australia and *Asiaweek* from Hong Kong (which covers the whole gamut of Asian affairs).

An excellent source covering

events in Europe, especially the Common Market countries, is *Europe*. It is published every other month by the European Economic Community Commission's office in Washington, D.C. Similar magazines are available in all member countries of the Common Market.

Also take a look at *World Press Review*, a supplemental American news source that reprints news articles and editorials from the international press, representing a wide spectrum of viewpoints.

Why not make a trip to the library a monthly or semimonthly habit?

Remember that time is precious — we are counseled to "redeem" it (Ephesians 5:16). Don't waste time on the scandal tabloids sold in grocery stores, nor on most of the many popular personality magazines (*People* is probably the best of the generally poor lot).

Have sound-minded approach

One last area needs to be addressed, specifically because it affects a few members of God's Church: This is the fascination with theories that purport to explain world events as a grand conspiracy.

There are variants of the conspiracy theory of history, but they nearly all revolve around an elite cabal of bankers, financiers and wealthy capitalists who are said to be manipulating events internationally with the goal of subjugating the United States and Western nations to the control of a totalitarian, one-world government. The conspirators, it is claimed, not only manipulate Western-world leaders like puppets, but secretly control the governments of the Soviet Union and mainland China.

Conspiracy theory literature is, in general, very negative, accusatory and often anti-Semitic.

There is undeniable evidence of similarity of thinking (internationalist, moderately left of center) on the part of the majority of members of certain organizations often accused of being part of the

conspiracy, such as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission.

Yet the fact that such organizations exist and that the viewpoint of most of their members is similar does not itself prove deliberate, calculated conspiratorial intent.

Knowing the fruits of the flesh — “contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies” (Galatians 5:20) — it is illogical to believe that the alleged conspirators could pursue such a unified, single-minded course of action for any length of time.

America and Britain are going down not because of the willful

machination of unseen manipulators but for a compendium of national sins spelled out in Isaiah 1:4-6: “Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. . . . The whole head [government] is sick, and the whole heart [national morale and morality] faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head [meaning the entire society and all its components], there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.”

For 51 years, the pages of *The*

Plain Truth have pinpointed humanity's problems as being a direct result of sin and lack of the knowledge of God and His laws (Hosea 4:1). The English-speaking world is suffering the national curses of disobedience (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28).

Let's keep a sound-minded approach (II Timothy 1:7). And let's never think that we are privy to information important to salvation beyond what God has revealed to His Church through His chosen apostle.

In this way, and by using the steps outlined in this article, we'll know better what to look for — and how to look — as prophecy unfolds before our eyes. □

Illustration by Monte Wolverton

Television as a News Source

Television can be an informative supplement to your news diet, providing that the newscasts are selected properly.

Unfortunately, however, many people waste hours each day looking at what they *think* is news, and rarely watch those newscasts and special programs that could really help.

This is especially true in the United States, because of the overall dominance of the medium of commercial television.

It's a pity that Americans cannot view Britain's high-quality BBC news or similar first-class, noncommercial newscasts in other parts of the world.

In the United States, the most worthwhile regularly scheduled commercial newscasts on world and national affairs are the nightly 30-minute (actually 22 minutes of news plus the commercials and station breaks) ABC, CBS and NBC network programs.

Also seen in many areas is the so-called fourth network news program known as *International Network News*, or *INN*. In addition, many viewers can receive the Cable News Network (CNN)

whose prime time newscasts are helpful.

There are, in addition, supplemental television programs of value, such as Public Television's *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour* as well as specially scheduled programs. In these cases, let the *TV Guide* be your guide.

Be cautious, however, of the newscasts in your area. They can be time wasters. All too often a local newscast is only entertainment disguised as news!

Local newscasts, such as the 5 to 6 o'clock or 6 to 7 o'clock “news hours” are big business in America, generating from a third to a half of a television station's income.

The ratings wars between the channels during these time slots are fierce. To stay at the top of the market, a station will do anything to make its local “news” juicier: scandals, exposés — anything to hook the unwary viewer.

Worst of all, the on-screen anchorpersons (“news readers” to our British readers) are hired more for their good looks than for their journalistic ability.

The local news game is now so

competitive that TV news executives, frantic in their search for new talent, resort to high-powered consulting agencies (called “news doctors” in the trade) who maintain thousands of videotapes of prospective “news stars.”

Are your ratings slumping? Is your present “news star” getting a little gray at the temples? Has he (or she) lost his (or her) sex appeal?

Go to the “news doctor” and find a new “pretty face”!

Knowing that this is the way TV news functions, concentrate on those newscasts that present world and national affairs and take local television news with a huge dose of salt.

To those who feel that television places them on a starvation news diet, one remedy might involve the purchase of a relatively inexpensive portable shortwave radio receiver. The top-notch BBC *World Service* from London can be easily picked up nearly everywhere in the world, together with transmissions from Radio Australia, Radio South Africa and the English-language services of several other nations. □

LETTERS

Understanding opened

I realize that your Mail Processing Department at Pasadena is a gigantic operation and that you receive thousands of letters daily. Nevertheless, I feel compelled to write in response to Mr. Armstrong's "Personal" in the October-November issue of *The Good News*.

Mr. Armstrong wrote: "But first we must reach past their prejudices and plant the right KNOWLEDGE in their consciousness. That requires an EDUCATIONAL, not a religious, program." How very true these words are!

I had never been "religious." I did not attend church or read religious literature, nor had I ever bothered with the Bible. Although I was not actually antagonistic, I did feel intensely put off by all the sentimentality, emotionalism and holier-than-thou attitudes that worldly churches portrayed. Religious people and their talk used to embarrass me, hence I shied away from any such situations — until I discovered my first *Plain Truth*.

I picked up a copy at a stand in a small country airport in Queensland, Australia. At first I was very wary, expecting to be preached to. But instead I received a wonderful, exciting surprise.

That was less than one and a half years ago. Recently I became a baptized member of God's Church. I simply had to write and show my appreciation for the tremendous educational messages brought to us through the pages of *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*, by the people in God's Church. Had they been presented in a religious language, I know I would never have responded.

It's not difficult to see where God is working. I can only hope that this letter may reach *Plain Truth* and *Good News* writers responsible for such inspiring messages of hope.

Zoë Summers
New Milton, England

I cannot thank you enough for sending me the *Good News* magazine. I didn't realize until I read it that I was spiritually starving to death. The warmth of the writers comes through and they express themselves so well, I find myself drawn to rereading *The Good News* again and again.

Deanna Bush
Mount Clare, W.Va.

Your magazine, along with *The Plain Truth* and other publications of the Worldwide Church of God, have opened

my understanding to some of the misunderstood mysteries of the Word of God.

Like most professing Christians, I knew very little concerning the Kingdom of God until about 10 years ago after I started reading your publications and listening to the *World Tomorrow* broadcast, and now I have acquired a vast volume of biblical understanding. Thank God for the truth!

Daniel Sanders
Hampton, S.C.

Thanks to you, Mr. Armstrong! I thought I was a real Christian, until I started reading your *Plain Truth* and other literature about 35 years ago.

My husband and I were running a small country store. A good customer and friend received the mail at our store and was getting the *Plain Truth* magazine and let me read it. I was shocked, too — I found I wasn't keeping the commandments. I didn't know what to do. I was teaching a class in Sunday school. What would the people think of me?

We soon sold out and moved to town. Then I started keeping the Sabbath. My husband died in 1969, after 50 years together. I quit going to Sunday services and have been trying to keep the true Sabbath holy ever since. The Bible says we can't serve two masters.

I'm still getting *The Plain Truth* and also *The Good News* and *Youth 85*. So thanks to you, Mr. Armstrong. God chose you to open the eyes of the people, to show us where we have gone wrong, and you have helped so much to turn us back to Christ.

Mrs. Roy Charles
Bernie, Mo.

December issue

The December *Good News* had three articles that really impressed me very much.

K. Neil Earle's "How to Win Over Worry" will always be close to my mind as I have been terribly sick from worry and his article cured me. I will pray for him to keep writing articles like this. So many people are sick from worry today. This article was wonderful.

"Overcoming Prayer Block" by John A. Halford was really very good. I am a free-lance writer myself and I know what writer's block is. Most people today don't really know how to pray or what prayer is.

The Ministudy "Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray" was really good. I myself didn't know how to pray properly or

understand prayer the way these two articles described it. I prayed with what I believed was communication with God, but I never understood it the way these two articles tell it.

Bertha R. Selfridge
Butler, Pa.

Thank you, Mr. Earle, for your helpful article "How to Win Over Worry." At some point in our lives, all of us worry over one thing or another. If we just follow the points in your article, we can eliminate all worry from our lives.

I hope all the contributors on the *Good News* staff realize how much these articles are appreciated by us in the Church. Keep up the good work.

Carolyn Helton
Jacksonville, Fla.

I thank you for sending the *Good News* magazine, which I just finished reading yesterday. I enjoyed the whole magazine, especially the articles about praying. I was sure surprised to learn about the right way to pray, which I had never been shown before.

Elmer D. Fleck
Shipshewana, Ind.

Appreciate free subscriptions

Please renew my subscription. Every issue is exciting to me. I am a housewife and enjoy reading and studying the Bible. I often read the Bible, but now I have found how to rightly divide the Word of God. There is a big difference between reading and studying the Bible.

Mrs. Carl Nave
Elizabethton, Tenn.

I am a disabled veteran on a fixed income, so I have very little money. There is no way I could have gotten this valuable magazine without the free opportunity you have given me. I appreciate it so much. It has been a great blessing to me.

Reader
Waycross, Ga.

All our publications, including *The Good News*, *The Plain Truth*, *Youth 85*, the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course and all our booklets and reprints are sent free to all who request them. As Jesus Christ said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). It is the commission of God's Church to publish the true Gospel in all the world as a witness to all nations (Mark 13:10).

Why Water Baptism?

The most direct biblical passage concerning water baptism is found in Acts 2:36-41. In his inspired sermon on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, the apostle Peter convicted his listeners for their part in having put the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to death.

Several thousand became filled with guilt and shame. Their spontaneous response was, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (verse 37).

A very good question.

When a person comes to recognize, as this first-century group did, that he has been living contrary to the laws and purposes of his Creator, what should he do?

Notice the inspired answer to that question: "And Peter said to them, '*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*'" (verse 38, Revised Standard Version).

Last month's study made clear the necessity of real repentance for salvation. But the very next step, as stated in Acts 2:38, is baptism. In this study, let's look into the Bible to learn the real meaning and purpose of baptism, and why it is a required step in God's great master plan of salvation.

There is great confusion in the religious world about how baptism should be done. Some churches sprinkle or pour only a small amount of water; others practice complete immersion. What does the Bible instruct regarding this commanded practice?

The method practiced by the majority of professing Christian churches today is sprinkling. Yet the word *sprinkle* occurs only a few times in the New Testament, and always in connection with the blood of Jesus Christ — but never does it refer to baptism. *Pouring* is also mentioned several times — but not in regard to baptism.

The word *baptize* is not an English word per se. In translating the New Testament from Greek into English, the translators left this word untranslated. The Greek word is *baptizo*.

The definition of the word *baptize* is "immerse." It means "plunge into" or "put into." It does not mean "sprinkle" or "pour." The Greek word for "sprinkle" is *rantizo* and "pour" is *cheo*.

Therefore, sprinkling and pouring are not

forms of baptism. Immersion — being placed *completely under water* — is. Water baptism has great symbolic meaning, as we will soon see.

But first, let's notice several examples of immersion (baptism) as recorded in the New Testament.

1. Why was John the Baptist baptizing in the river Aenon? John 3:23.

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

2. Even though Jesus Christ had no sins to repent of, was He baptized by John, setting an example for us to follow? Matthew 3:13-15, I Peter 2:21. How does Jesus' baptism 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" (Authorized Version). It would have been impossible for Him to have come "up . . . out" of a sprinkle or pour!

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

There was no reason 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 a proper method of baptism, Philip would have needed only to bend over and scoop up the water while standing next to the water.

The above examples clearly show that total immersion in water was the method practiced by the Church Jesus founded. And that is the method we are to practice today!

But what is the purpose of baptism? What does it mean?

The meaning of baptism is strictly symbolic. We need to understand that symbolism to know why God requires baptism of those He calls to become true Christians.

Water baptism itself has no mystical or magical effects. Its only physical effect is to get a person thoroughly wet! Nor is the Holy Spirit given by water baptism. Yet baptism is commanded by God for salvation (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:38).

Baptism is simply 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. Let's make sure we understand clearly.

4. After Jesus was crucified for our sins, what happened to His dead body? I Corinthians 15:3-4, Romans 8:11.

After three days and three nights in the grave, Jesus Christ was made alive and given immortal, spirit life by God's Spirit. His resurrection shows He triumphed over sin and death.

5. Is baptism symbolic of one's death, burial and resurrection from a "grave"? Colossians 2:12-13, Romans 6:3-13.

Just as Jesus died for our sins and was buried, our baptism — being immersed in a watery "grave" — pictures the symbolic death and burial of our old sinful life. And as Jesus was resurrected "in newness of life," our coming up out of the waters of baptism is symbolic of our being brought out of the "grave" to live a new life of obedience to God, free from the guilt of past sins and the death penalty those sins have incurred.

Baptism, as these verses show, pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also pictures the death and burial of the sinner and his resurrection to begin living a Christian life surrendered to God — to walk henceforth "in newness of life." After baptism he reckons himself as dead, so far as sin is concerned, but alive to God through His Son Jesus Christ (Romans 6:11).

6. After baptism and the receipt of God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), does Jesus Christ begin to live within us through His Spirit? Romans 8:9-10, Colossians 1:27-29.

God's Spirit gives us the spiritual strength, as we yield to God, to resist the sinful influences of the devil, the world and our carnal natures. And it imparts to us the faith and love of God to obey His spiritual law of love (Romans 5:5, 13:10).

The apostle Paul said: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20, AV).

Water baptism is simply an ordinance by which we express our faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior — our acceptance of His death, burial and resurrection for us. Baptism is also an expression of our repentance from sin and our desire to totally destroy and bury our old, sinful life.

Baptism clearly shows our realization of our own sins, vanities and wretchedness. It is an outward acknowledgment that our selfish, vain and sinful old self must die so that we might rise to live a new life of spiritual obedience to God's

commandments as made possible through His Holy Spirit.

Finally, baptism shows our total, absolute surrender to God. It symbolizes the complete burial of the old sinful self and our beginning a new life surrendered to the will and authority of God.

Have you already been baptized? If so, was it done by immersion as God commands? Had you really repented? Did you know what repentance is? Did you come to feel deeply broken up over and thoroughly abhor your past way of life, which was contrary to God's way?

Did you not only feel this as a deep and very real emotion, but did you thoroughly understand that you are to strive to obey the living God and His law from that day forward? Had you really come to Jesus Christ in unconditional surrender, admitting your rebellion against God's way? Had you really repented of living by the standards of this world?

If you were baptized by immersion, did you fully understand that you were being buried, and that a "new you" was to emerge from the water?

Did you have hands laid upon you, and prayer given for the receipt of God's Spirit? (We will learn more about the Holy Spirit of God in next month's study.)

If you did not properly fulfill all the requirements for baptism that we have covered in this and the previous study, then your baptism was not valid in God's sight!

In this brief study we were able to cover only a few major points about water baptism. For additional information, be sure to request your copy of the free booklet *All About Water Baptism*. Also, an entire lesson of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course covers this important subject in depth. Be sure to enroll in the course today, if you are not already a student.

No matter what your previous religious history and experience may have been, you need to check up on yourself to see where you stand with God. □



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You Can Be Positive in Today's World

Sure, there's a better world coming in the future, but how can you stay positive in this evil age? The Bible tells!

By Colin Adair

Terrorism! Murder! Financial crises! War! Family break-ups! Weather upsets! Famine! Pollution!

Every day, terrifying tragedies jump out at us in startling headlines from the front pages of our newspapers.

Just hearing the morning news is enough to make anyone start the day gloomy and pessimistic.

Thinking only of today's difficult times and the even more traumatic times to come can lead us into discouragement and dependency. While Jesus Christ tells us to watch world events (Luke 21:36), He also expects us to think and act in a positive manner. We should not become overwhelmed or dismayed by what we see happening or what we know is prophesied to strike the earth.

Paul, in Colossians 3:15, says, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful."

God's peace should reign

supreme in our minds. We as God's people are called to peace. Those whom God has called and chosen to be in His Family have the assurance that nothing can force them to fall prey to Satan.

Consider John 6:37 and 39: "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. . . . This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."

Most people are in bondage to the uncertainty, fear, worry and anxiety of the times in which we live. The Christian is different. He has tranquility and peace of mind. Romans 8:15 explains, "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption [sonship] by which we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'"

Formula for a right attitude

But does God simply tell us to have peace of mind, without telling us how? No indeed. In Philippians 4:8, God gives us a formula

that, if followed, will guarantee that we stay in a positive frame of mind: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Authorized Version).

In other words, God wants us to focus our minds not on the negative side of this life, but on the positive.

Let's examine this verse phrase by phrase, noting some examples in each area where Paul said we should direct our thoughts.

Focus on truth

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true . . ."

God's promises are true and sure. In Psalms 119:160 we read that God's Word is true in its entirety. God has revealed the purpose of life, that He is reproducing Himself and desires that every human being enter His Family (Romans 8:14-17).

In spite of the appalling conditions now prevalent in this world, God will soon restore health and well-being to humanity and make the earth a sparkling, magnificent gem (Isaiah 35). That is what is true!

It's also true that humanity's greatest enemy — death — will be abolished, and that all our loved ones will see God (I Corinthians 15:26).

One of Jesus Christ's names, in fact, is True: "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True" (Revelation 19:11).

When we read the Bible we can

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure



know absolutely that whatever God has promised, He will do, because He speaks truth and cannot lie (Numbers 23:19). This should be a great comfort to us. There is never any need to doubt what God says.

"Whatsoever things are honest [or honorable] . . ."

Dishonesty is everywhere. People write checks knowing that they will bounce. Advertising is notorious for its exaggerated claims and outright falsehoods. Theft has reached into every person's pocket.

But occasionally, when a little honesty comes to light — when a taxi driver returns a watch left by a passenger, for instance, or a dry-cleaning worker hands in money found in a pocket — we see a little light in the darkness. Think what the world tomorrow will be like when similar examples will be the norm, not rare exceptions.

Now let's turn to the other meaning of this phrase — "honorable." What can you think of that

means far more than fair or equitable. It also refers to righteousness. God's commandments are just (Romans 7:12), and are an excellent subject for meditation. David said that God's law is perfect, sure, right and pure (Psalm 19:7-8), and that meditation on it made him wiser than his teachers. God's laws and statutes are excellent subjects to think on, for God's commandments reveal just what a righteous and just God He is.

In God's Kingdom, Jesus Christ will rule justly. We can look forward to disputes being settled justly, whether among nations or individuals, for God can read the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Notice the attitude of the world's coming ruler, Jesus Christ: "His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isaiah 11:3-4).

Under God's rule, humanity will receive the benefits of its labor. No human or government will take away that which rightfully belongs to any individual. Imagine how wonderful the world will be when everyone can rest assured that his problem will be resolved justly.

"Whatsoever things are pure . . ."

Purity means clarity or freedom from anything that weakens or pollutes. And what is the most important thing of all for anyone to keep pure? Character.

Developing pure character — the courage and conviction to find out what is right and the will and

ability to *do* what is right, despite temptations to compromise — is the very purpose for which man was put on the earth.

Pure love and friendship are hard to find in this era of me-first attitudes. But we can learn to love with purity, without reservation or deceit.

I Peter 1:22 states, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart."

I Timothy 1:5 reads, "Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart." Keeping God's commandments leads to being able to love with pure motives.

"Whatsoever things are lovely . . ."

God's creation is the quintessence of loveliness. The majesty of the Rocky Mountains of North America, the Alps of Europe and New Zealand, the fjords of Scandinavia, lift the spirit. Think of

...whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things ”

is honorable?

Hebrews 13:4 tells us that the marriage union is honorable. If you are married, think of the ways you can honor your spouse and your marriage by giving of yourself.

The Bible tells us that anyone who fears God should be honored (Psalm 15:4).

The elderly couple who have reared fine children or led lives of service to others are worthy of honor (Proverbs 16:31). So is the young man or woman who shows character and clings to high values. Even the child who strives diligently to master long division is worthy of honor.

"Whatsoever things are just . . ."

In the Bible, the word *just*



the spectacularly or subtly beautiful places you have seen, either in person or in pictures.

Many of humanity's highest works and achievements can also be called truly beautiful. Learn to admire and enjoy beauty and loveliness in art, literature, poetry, dress, ornament and music. Enjoy what is lovely now, anticipating the time when God will make the earth a lovely place to live, a place where beauty will be perfected.

"Whatsoever things are of good report..."

Remember what God said about His Son Jesus when John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River? "And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17). Words of praise and appreciation

from a parent or respected person are like music to a son's or a daughter's ears.

Rejoice when others succeed, not when they fail. And don't forget that there's potential for success in all people. God likes to hear good reports of His people. He has planned for everyone to receive a good report at Jesus' return if they accept His way.

What else is of good report? The work of God is growing all over the world. The true Gospel of God's Kingdom is reaching more people now than ever before, adding hope and happiness to these people's lives every day. That's definitely a good report.

How encouraging to think of what God is accomplishing!

"If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise..."

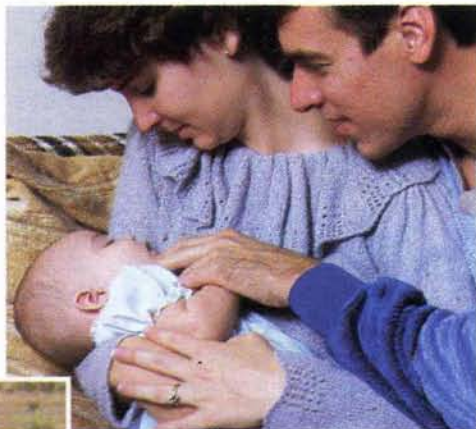
How often do we count our blessings? Do we praise God for what we have? We may not have perfect health, but we can be encouraged by the strength and hope that others, with even more serious problems, show. Remem-

with the admonition, "Think on these things."

Thought leads to action. Dwelling upon sinful pleasures leads to sin, but a positive approach to life leads to success.

David had a positive approach toward his battle with Goliath. He understood what Proverbs 23:7 explains: "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." David knew that he could beat the Philistine giant because he had faith God was on his side. He didn't let negative thoughts about Goliath's size and power deter him.

In his match with Goliath, David was battling for his physi-



cal life. We are in a similar battle, but our eternal life is at stake.

Satan would like to have us feel it is useless to go on. He would like us to think only on the hopelessness of this world. If he can get us into a negative frame of mind, he can destroy us!

But God is on our side with a full arsenal of spiritual weapons!

As Christians we are to be lights to the world (Matthew 5:14-16). We must stand positive about the future and the ultimate destiny of humankind. A negative Christian cannot inspire others to follow God's way.

We need to keep our thinking positive and work on qualifying for God's Kingdom with the assurance that the greatest power in the universe is behind us, waiting to share His glory and character for eternity. □



ber the man who complained that he had no shoes? He changed his attitude when he saw a man who had no feet.

God is to be praised for all He has done for us. Read the Psalms, for instance. They are full of words of praise for the great God who made heaven and earth.

As a person thinks...

Philippians 4:8 ends

Photos: Good News, Youth 85, Hal Finch

PROVE ALL THINGS

Sin—A Matter of Life and Death

“Sin is fun!” So scribbled the graffiti author on a decaying brick tenement wall deep in the slums of a large city.

While the elements may soon wash these words from the masonry, false beliefs about sin, like this one, will long engrave the minds of millions of humans everywhere. Few people, graffiti artists and professing Christians alike, really understand the biblical doctrine of sin!

This state of spiritual blindness is dangerous, for our Savior Jesus Christ gave His life to pay the penalty for sin.

Surely, anything that demanded the life of God Himself must truly be a matter of life and death for you and me!

The basic doctrine

In spite of the supreme importance of understanding what sin is and what it does, the actual biblical teaching about sin is easy to state in a few words:

Sin is transgression against the way of God as defined by God's perfect law. Although the penalty of sin is death, forgiveness is gladly given by God to those who repent and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and continue in God's way.

The usual teachings of this world

Although the biblical truth about sin is easy to define (and, when fully understood, also deeply profound), nonetheless the veritable hodgepodge of human mis-

conceptions about the topic is a nightmare of confusion.

Some believe that there is no such thing as sin. Others feel that sin is not sin unless the act in question “hurts somebody,” or is against some sort of personal code. Others include almost any and everything under the definition of sin — such as all movies or even wearing any type of clothing but drab, all-black fashions out of the 17th or 18th century. Others divide sin into various categories such as “original sin” and “mortal” and “venial” sins.

Truly, this subject needs to be made plain.

The Bible teaching

When it comes to understanding the subject of sin, the Bible does indeed devote much time to this doctrine, and in the plainest words.

For example, the Bible leaves no doubt about the definition of sin when it proclaims, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (I John 3:4, Authorized Version).

This statement that sin is the transgression of the law goes a

long way in dispelling many myths about sin, such as the falsehoods that there is no sin or that sin is only sin when it “hurts somebody” or transgresses your own personal code. It says plainly that sin is disobedience to God's law, period, regardless of intentions, beliefs or personal codes to the contrary.

But sin in this context means far more than only a technical or in-the-letter violation of one of the Ten Commandments. It includes, as I John 5:17 states, “all unrighteousness.” For we find that Jesus Christ expanded the law of God to include not only transgression in the letter (however broadly defined), but also transgression in the *spirit and intent* of the law (Matthew 5:21-28).

Thus sin includes not only wrong actions we commit, but also the evil attitudes of mind and thoughts of the heart of every one of us.

Since sin is the transgression of the law, it is obvious that there is no sin without law (Romans 7:7). God's law is in force today. That alone will come as a shock to many people.

Yet, the law is not our enemy but our friend, even though it defines sins: “The law is holy . . . and just and good” (verse 12).

This is because God's law exists not merely to provide meaningless dos and don'ts for God's amusement (like mere artificial rules in a board game), but to reveal and define to humans what actions and attitudes are harmful if engaged in.

Certainly, when we see how far



and how deeply sin can permeate each of our lives, we can easily see how "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

And yet, it is vitally important to realize much more about this subject of sin.

For example, we must know that pure temptation, not followed by wrong actions or attitudes or thoughts, is by itself decidedly not sin. It is plain that Jesus Christ Himself was tempted severely (Matthew 4:1), in "all points . . . as we are" (Hebrews 4:15), and yet did not sin. Therefore we see that sin comes only when the temptation takes root in us — "conceives" (James 1:14-15) — and brings forth its evil results.

We must also realize that God is not the author of such temptation or its resultant sin. Rather, Satan was the first sinner and is hence its author (Ezekiel 28:13-15). And humans, in turn, sin when drawn away by the lusts of their own nature (James 1:14-15) or tempted by the unseen but powerful evil hand of Satan and his demons (Genesis 3:1-6, Ephesians 6:12).

Further, we need to be aware that sin came into the human race from Satan, but through Adam, the first man. Nonetheless, we are all guilty of our own sins and not, instead, born with the sin of Adam staining us (as the teachers of the false doctrine of "original sin" would have us believe). For, as the apostle Paul wrote, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12, AV).

Hence, the blame for sin belongs in two distinct places — on Satan as its instigator and upon us as its willing participants. Truly, this important lesson is the one taught by the symbolism of the two goats in the sacrificial ritual performed by ancient Israel

on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).

No discussion of the topic of sin would scratch its surface, however, without explaining the most important characteristic of sin — its penalty. That penalty is the ultimate — death! "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Such a direct and plain Bible statement may astound those who cling to the false belief in the immortality of the soul and who would think that the penalty would be to burn forever in hell fire, but God's plain and direct statement cannot be gainsayed nor doubted. "The wages of sin is death"!

And notice that the wages is the same for all sin, great and small. God does not categorize sin spiritually, calling some "mortal" and others "venial." All sin is mortal in the sense that it generates the death penalty if unrepented of.

That is not to say that some sin is not more morally depraved than other sin, or involves more character destruction, or incurs greater bad results here on earth now. But the spiritual penalty for all sin — the spiritual death penalty — is equal in every case of sin.

Yet the wages of sin are not only death, but include the suffering that such sin may bring in this life, such as broken marriages, wars and every other type of suffering, and the alienation and cutting off of the sinner from the living, eternal God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Certainly, we who have all sinned and therefore stand in jeopardy of suffering alienation from God and ultimate death, need an escape from and a protection and antidote to this horrible enemy of sin. Thankfully, we have it, through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 7:13-25).

But the details of this escape from and antidote to sin cannot

be handled in this space and must await the discussion of the doctrine of justification.

With all that has been said about sin, one question still remains: Why does God allow sin?

The answer is that sin is a natural possibility arising out of the freedom of choice — the free moral agency — God has given us humans.

Since we have freedom to choose, we have freedom to sin. And we must have freedom to choose if we are to build the character God wants to build in us, since character is by definition the choosing of right over evil.

Key verses

Since the topic of sin is so vital to the understanding of the Bible, it is good to remember a few key verses on the subject. Here are some:

I John 3:4 says sin is the transgression of God's law. Romans 6:23 shows that the penalty of sin is death. Isaiah 59:1-2 shows that sin cuts one off from God. Romans 3:23 states that all have sinned. I John 1:9 shows that God is faithful to forgive our sins when we repent of them.

This subject of sin is too important to lie misunderstood in the minds of those whom God would call to salvation. Sin is transgression against the way of God as defined by His perfect law. Although the penalty of sin is death, forgiveness is gladly given by God to those who repent — turn from sinning — and who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and dedicate their lives to living God's way, obeying His perfect law.

Yes, sin may be "fun" for a while, but its penalty is anything but fun — death! Yet we who can learn what sin is, and who repent of it bitterly, can rely upon the merciful forgiveness of the great God who yearns to give us His Kingdom and eternal life. □

COMING

IN THE GOOD NEWS

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