

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1982

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



EVOLUTION

Does the Bible
Teach It?

**He Couldn't Afford
to Tithe**
By Herbert W.
Armstrong

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

OCT.-NOV. 1982

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COVER: Can the theory of evolution be harmonized with what the Bible says about how the universe came into existence? For the answer, read the article beginning on page 14. Photo by Greg S. Smith and Scott Smith.

Letters

Can't put it down

OK, OK, you win! I must confess that in the late '70s I could easily lay down *The Good News* and forget it, but the last few issues have been very difficult to let go until they're finished. We are back on the track teaching God's Word with conviction. Let's keep at it.

Lawton Collins
Cincinnati, Ohio

Encouraging talk

Mr. Armstrong, we would like to thank you for your encouraging heart-to-heart talk you had with us in the June-July *Good News* ("How YOU Can Overcome"). We really appreciated it a lot and it really helps us when you feel you can share with us in this way your feelings. It helps us to realize we are not alone, even though we knew it all along, but your concern helps us to be able to hang on and pray more earnestly for more of God's Holy Spirit to be able to overcome and endure unto the end.

Mr. and Mrs. John P. Hamby
Greenville, S.C.

Unbelieving mates

After reading the June-July, 1982, *Good News*, I just have to write and tell you how uplifted and inspired I was by the article "Special Blessings for Those With Unbelieving Mates."

I have been in the Church for nine years now. I began this Christian life with some apprehension due to a rather hostile unconverted mate. This turned to discouragement and some self-pity as the whole situation seemed so hopeless unless he was converted. However, over the years I have learned to become more positive and hopeful — but that article was just tremendous! I had never thought of those spiritual pillars in the Bible — Joseph, Moses, David, etc. — all having unconverted mates.

I can definitely say I have seen God's hand at work in this complex situation, also. There have been many times my husband has reeled in bewilderment when he came up against the power of God's Spirit flowing out.

Suddenly, my situation seems much more vital and important and my role not so insignificant in God's overall scheme. It makes me want to try harder.

Thank you very much. With each *Good News*, it seems impossible for the articles to improve, but they always do!

Reader
New Zealand

The Man Who Couldn't Afford to Tithe

By Herbert W. Armstrong

It was late in 1933 — the very depth of the Great Depression. Ed Smith was a well driller by profession, but nobody seemed able to afford to have wells drilled.

Ed and his wife Emma attended services I was then holding in a one-room country schoolhouse 12 miles west of Eugene, Ore. Ed made no profession of Christianity until later. But he attended services, and went up and down the countryside discussing Bible doctrines with his professing Christian neighbors.

"You've got to pay tithes and obey God," he insisted. "The Bible says so. It's PLAIN!"

One of his neighbors became irritated.

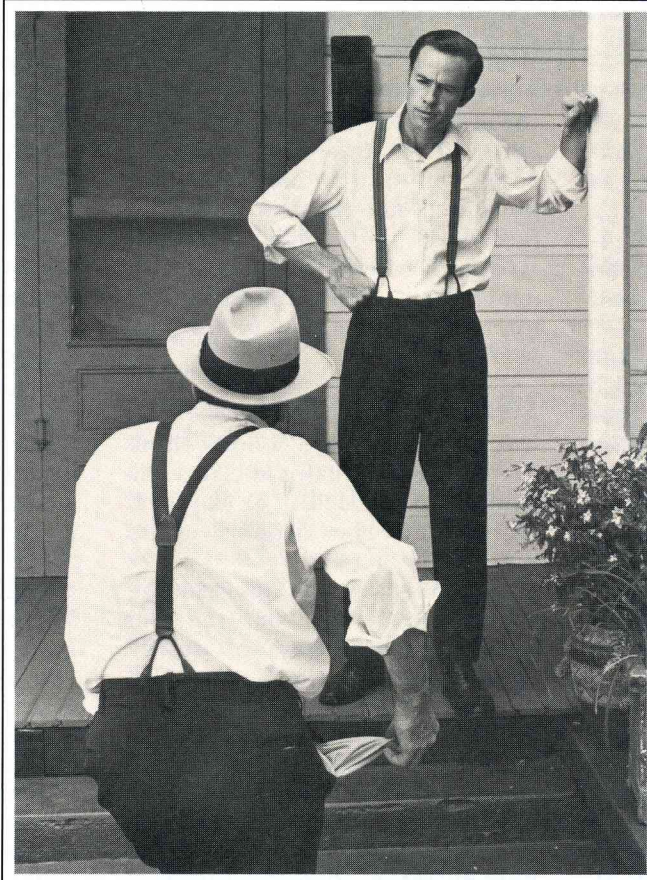
"Look here, Ed," the neighbor exploded, "why do you come around here trying to talk me into these things, when you don't obey the Bible or pay tithes yourself?"

"Because," came Ed's quick and ready answer, "I don't profess to be a Christian, and you do. Besides," he added, "I can't afford to tithe, anyway."

Thousands like him

There are thousands who, like Ed Smith, reason in their own minds that they can't afford to tithe, even though, like Ed Smith,

they realize the Bible commands it. I heard about the above conversation, and preached a sermon on the question of whether the



unconverted should obey the Ten Commandments and pay tithes, or whether, as Ed had reasoned, these things were only for Christians.

I pointed out that God's law was put in motion for *man's good* — it *is* THE WAY of life that brings peace, happiness, prosperity — the full, abundant, interesting life — success, joy *here and now*, as well as eternal life through Christ for the saved.

I showed that it PAYS, and is

the only sensible way of life, entirely apart from the matter of salvation — and that, even if one is finally lost, he who sins little shall be punished with *few* stripes, but he who sins much with *many* stripes (Luke 12:47-48).

I pointed out God's promises to *prosper* the tithepayer, and that this is a definite LAW God has set in motion, which operates inexorably and automatically on the just and the unjust alike.

Ed began to obey the Bible. At the very next service — we were holding services at this little schoolhouse three times a week, and three other nights a week in a hall in downtown Eugene at the time — Mrs. Smith smilingly handed me a \$1 bill. "That's Ed's first tithe," she said triumphantly. "We are now down to \$10, and Ed decided to start tithing with what we have on hand."

The very next service she came to me with another happy smile.

"Here's a \$5 bill," she said. "The very next day after Ed gave God's Work a tenth of all he had, a customer who had owed him \$50 for a year came and paid up. So here's the tithe of that \$50. After paying the total \$6 tithe, we now have \$54 on hand instead of the \$10 we had the other day."

It was beginning to *pay!* But only *beginning!* By the next service, as I remember it, Ed had received his first order in one or

Photo by G.A. Belluche

two years to drill a new well, for which he received cash payment. Before he finished that job, another was contracted. Soon he had three or four jobs coming in at once, and was forced to begin employing men to work for him.

Ed Smith was only one of many I have known who learned by experience that one cannot afford *not* to pay God the tithe that BELONGS to God!

I remember Ed Smith did encounter some troubles of a different nature later, when his wife and son were sent to the state

give (Deut. 16:16-17). It is only when they withhold and misappropriate the tithe and offerings that He fails to prosper them. For through John He tells us, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health" (III John 2). "Honour the Lord [Eternal] with thy substance, and with the *firstfruits* of all thine increase: *So shall thy barns be filled with plenty*, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov. 3:9-10).

Try it! "Prove me now here-with," challenges the Eternal to us, in a prophecy for *our* day

HIM, not to you (Deut. 10:14). You are in the position of steward handling that which *belongs to another*. He is your silent partner, and the first tenth, in addition to offerings, is His share. The rest He gives freely to you.

But if you appropriate for yourself His share, *you are stealing*, and ROBBING GOD (Mal. 3:8). Would you pay your debts with money another man had left in your trust? If a man working in a bank does that, we call it *embezzlement!*

The only *sure way* to know you have God as partner and that He is taking care of your interests is to obey Him in tithing.

When God receives His portion of all your income, God becomes your partner, sharing in your profits. He causes His partners to prosper, so if you are in debt, take God into partnership *first*, and watch Him prosper you until finally you are out of debt! Remember the debt you owe God comes *FIRST*.

Some will say, "I never tithed, and I know God never frowned on me, for I have the feeling in my heart that I am His child without having to tithe."

God has blessed you according as you have *yielded* to Him according to the light He has revealed to you, from His Word! While you have the light, *WALK* in it, *lest darkness come upon you!* (John 12:35-36). "GROW in grace, and in the KNOWLEDGE of our Lord" (II Pet. 3:18). See also Romans 11:22.

If every professing Christian would accept this plain instruction from God, honoring HIM instead of themselves with their substance, the Work of the Eternal would go forth with such mighty power that the world would be shaken to its foundations!

Seek ye *FIRST* the Kingdom, and your material needs shall be *ADDED*. Try it! Take God at His Word! Prove HIM (Mal. 3:10)! *See how you begin to prosper!* Be a faithful steward; make God your *PARTNER!* Receive His *BLESSING!* God's Work is waiting upon YOU! □

"Prove me now," challenges the Eternal . . .

tuberculosis hospital, and he finally broke down in real repentance, accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. He came to me, according to the command of James 5:14-15, and both his wife and son were completely healed and returned home.

This is a true story, and the name is not fictitious. Ed Smith died a number of years ago, but I'm happy to remember these incidents in his life in the hope they may start many others on the right and *profitable*, as well as the Christian, way of life.

Why did God ordain tithing? Was it to place increased burden and taxation upon us? Let us not misunderstand God's love and wisdom!

It isn't that God really *needs* your first tenth. He could have established some different system for carrying on His Work. But to have done so would have robbed *us* of the blessing that flows back to us if we are faithful in tithes and offerings!

The tither is invariably a prosperous man. I do not mean necessarily *wealthy* — but one whose actual needs are always supplied. Tithers, if faithful and obedient to the Eternal, are not often found in want. "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit *that may abound to YOUR account*" (Phil. 4:17).

God promises His children shall always have something to

(Mal. 3:10), "if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" — financial blessings! Are you behind financially? In debt? Your unfaithfulness in tithing and offerings *may be the reason!*

Tithing while in debt

Yet so many say, "I don't think it would be right for me to tithe while I'm in debt." Yes, it *is* right, and the other way is *WRONG*.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12, 16:25). God's Word tells us what is *RIGHT*, and God tells us to pay to His Work the *firstfruits* of all our income (Prov. 3:9-10).

Regarding our material and financial needs, even debts, God says, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). *The tithe is the debt that you owe God*. This debt is *FIRST* in time and principle. Pay your debts to God, make Him your *PARTNER* in your finances and receive His blessing in temporal affairs. This will enable you to pay your debts, or to get a job, or to have your needs supplied more quickly than if you evade His debt.

Remember your *ALL* belongs to

Should a Nonmember Tithe?

Is tithing only for Christians? Would God prosper non-Christians who tithe? Read, here, the living experiences of those who have put tithing to the test.

By Herman L. Hoeh

So you have read of Ed Smith, the man who couldn't afford to tithe.

Now stop for a moment and put yourself in Ed Smith's shoes. You have just learned the answer to the question whether the unconverted should obey God's Ten Commandments and pay tithes — or whether, as Ed Smith reasoned, these are only for Christians.

Ed Smith got the point.

But have you?

Have you understood that God is a God of love? That He is concerned about you? That He knows what you need?

God has your interest and welfare in mind.

God set laws in motion that, if obeyed, produce happiness, peace, prosperity — everything one could desire. God's laws were instituted for man's good — your good. They are a way of life. They produce an abundant, interesting life here and now — as well as eternal life through Jesus Christ.

God's overall spiritual law is summed up in the one word *love*. Love to God and love to neighbor. It is further subdivided into 10 points — the Ten Commandments — which reveal how we should love God and love neighbor. If the Ten Commandments were obeyed by the nations today, there would be no war. And

among individuals there would be no murder, no adultery, no stealing, no lying. Can you imagine a world like that — free from mental anguish and suffering, free from nagging fears and worries?

Such a happy world could be — if only we would learn that God's laws were set in motion for our good.

People deprive themselves of blessings

When any human being breaks the laws God set in motion, he automatically deprives himself of blessings — deprives himself of joy, of peace of mind, of the prosperity that could be his. When any human being obeys the laws God set in motion, he automatically begins to receive blessings — inner happiness, peace of mind, increasing prosperity on the job.

The way of obedience is the way of blessings. The way of disobedience brings the lack of those desired blessings.

A professing Christian who commits adultery automatically cuts himself off from the blessings of a happy marriage. A non-Christian who obeys the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14) automatically receives the blessings of a happier home.

A professing Christian who does not tithe is stealing from God — he is breaking one of the Ten Commandments. He automatically cuts himself off from financial blessings that could have

been his. A non-Christian who pays God his tithes automatically receives financial blessings because he is obeying a law set in motion to bring prosperity — to keep one out of needless debt.

It is that simple!

Many of you, right now, are heavily in debt. You want to cut yourself off from the only source that could give you wisdom to keep out of debt — God. You are not likely to deliver yourself from debt until you begin to obey the financial law of tithing.

Yes, strange as it seems, you — even if a non-Christian — can prosper and be free from debt if you make God your financial partner. In this partnership God gives you 90 percent of the income. Think how much more prosperous the world would now be if each nation had made God a national partner.

If each nation had been faithful in tithe paying, there would be no mounting national debt and no significant private debt.

It pays to tithe

The 10 percent, which God has reserved for Himself since the creation of the world, is called a tithe. It is an old English word meaning "tenth." The first tithe, or tenth, belongs to God (as explained in the preceding article).

There is a reward that comes from tithing. God prospers the tither and delivers him out of debt. Do you believe God can do for you what He did for wealthy

Abraham? Or are you a doubter? Do you want His blessings, or to be deprived of them?

Notice Malachi 3:9-12, a prophecy for today: "Ye are cursed with the curse, yet ye rob Me, even this whole nation" (Jewish Publication Society translation). That means professing Christian and non-Christian alike! "Bring ye," God continues to the professing Christian and non-Christian alike, "the whole tithe into the storehouse . . . and try Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall be more than sufficiency. . . . And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts."

That is God's promise — and God cannot lie. God is no respecter of persons — it is not a matter of spiritual conversion. It is a financial matter.

Of course, the matter of attitude is all important. God loves a cheerful giver — not one who gives grudgingly or of necessity (II Cor. 9:7). If a person merely "gives to get" — simply as a legal necessity — he cannot expect God to bless him. Nor could one expect God to bless a tither if he employs fiscal foolishness in managing the remaining 90 percent of his income.

We publish a booklet entitled *Managing Your Personal Finances*. It explains how to properly administer that remaining 90 percent. Write for your free copy.

We have received hundreds of letters over the years from non-Christians who have learned the lesson of tithing. They have put tithing to the test — and found it pays!

Suppose you were a policeman. Would it pay you to tithe? Here is your answer:

I have been a subscriber to your magazines for several years now. In addition I've consumed a considerable amount of literature that you have always freely given. I've

read this material, compared it to the Bible and the traditions in which I was reared, asked many questions of "experts" on theology, and I've counseled with ministers of God's Church. I have been profoundly affected by the knowledge I've garnered.

I made the decision to tithe and discovered that my family does very nicely on the 90 percent God lets me keep. Our financial status has not soared, but the fact is we have prospered better than we did on 100 percent. It is truly a delight to see the visible evidence of God's laws in motion. . . .

My job [has been] a California highway patrolman. . . .

J.E.T.

Red Bluff, Calif.

Maybe you are a woman who has to earn your own living. Here's a letter from one who has found a better way to make her income work for her:

After I sent you a check for the first time, I got a pay raise. My boss also informed me that if I keep learning the job as I have been, he was going to try to get me promoted. If the promotion goes through, I will be the first female without a college degree to ever be in that position with this company — perhaps in the business.

Pat V.

Midland, Tex.

Maybe you are a teenager?

Here is some money. I deliver papers. Since I have started tithing, I have been making much more. My summer camp fund is really growing.

Brice T.

Los Alamos, N.M.

Take the case of this ranching family from Huntington, Ore., the same state Ed Smith the well driller came from:

Enclosed is a check for our first monthly tithe. We have a

small cattle ranch and our monthly budget is very small. My husband made out the check this afternoon. Within hours we had some badly needed rain. God blesses His own in many different ways. To us rain is a very big blessing.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Q.

Huntington, Ore.

Who says God won't open up the "windows of heaven" and bless those who tithe for the first time?

Perhaps you are unemployed. Does it pay to begin tithing even if you haven't found a job yet?

After a year of not working, I am called back to work now. I had never thought much about tithing before I received your magazine. When I received my tax returns, I sent one tenth. No sooner had I sent my tithe money to you than I received this offer for work in Prince George, B.C., and my son was told to go to Thompson, Man. So I cannot thank you enough for your magazine.

Mrs. K.B.

Prince George, B.C.

Maybe you are on the frontier in Alaska. Does it pay to tithe there, with living costs so high?

Tithing is definitely profitable. Within three months, God put me in a rewarding job with two times the amount of money per month. If tithing works, the other laws must work too.

Craig H.F.

Anchorage, Alaska

They do! Thousands have proved it.

Some people remain doubters for years until — but let Harvey S. tell his own story:

In February I sent a tithe for my January income. Less than a week later I received a check from an unexpected source for \$2,500. A couple of weeks after that a man paid

(Continued on page 28)

What Is Real Christianity?

Jesus Christ lived and taught a unique, tremendous way of life. This article, the first of a series, explores the process of conversion and what true Christian character is.

They called Christ's disciples "these that have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

The blunt, ruggedly honest young Teacher from Galilee revolutionized human concepts of morality in His series of verbal lightning flashes known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Most professing Christians are lulled by the familiar, pithy phrases found in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. But Christ's brief epigrams, known as the "beatitudes," or "blessings," are actually shocking, profound. And they are the very essence, the hallmark, of Christianity.

The plain truth is that the Sermon on the Mount totally inverts conventional religion — yes, even this world's so-called Christianity.

What is the precise, biblical definition of Christianity?

The Bible definition

The word *Christian* was coined in the Syrian city of Antioch only a few years after the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 (Acts 11:26). On that Pentecost the promised Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49) descended from heaven in a brilliant display of power (Acts 2:1-4). It welded Christ's 12 disciples into

By Neil Earle

the very nucleus of the Church of God.

Until then — until God actually placed the Holy Spirit within them — even the 12 disciples were not converted. Christ Himself said so (Luke 22:31-32).

Before that time, God's Spirit worked with the disciples and opened their minds to certain truths, but was not yet actively inside their minds doing a transforming work (John 14:17).

Now understand why the most specific scriptural definition of real Christianity is directly connected with this Holy Spirit:

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9).

There it is! A true Christian possesses the energizing presence of the very Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit is not any third person of the Godhead. God's Spirit is defined in Luke 1:35 as "the power of the Highest." It is the dynamic power of God, emanating from Him like light from a light bulb and filling the entire universe (Ps. 139:7). It is something that can be "poured out" or "quenched" (Acts 2:17, I Thess. 5:19). It is a mighty, moving force, not a person (John 7:37-39).

No wonder the word *trinity* isn't found in the Bible. For more information about the false "trinity" doctrine, write for our free article reprint series, "The God Family and the Holy Spirit."

God's Spirit is the active, indwelling presence of "the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4) at work in a human mind. It fashions, molds and shapes that mind into the image of our Father in heaven (Phil. 2:5).

Now how may we receive this Spirit of God?

Peter outlined the steps in Acts 2:38. After a process of genuine change — of turning from one's carnal, selfish way to the way of outflowing love and obeying God's commandments — demonstrated by bearing "fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8), comes the baptism ceremony.

The Greek word *baptizo*, translated "baptism" in the New Testament, means total immersion in water, symbolizing the death and burial of the old self, of the old, sinful way of life (Rom. 6:1-6). At baptism the new convert makes a statement of intent, as it were, to leave his past behind. He surrenders sovereignty over his failed, sin-filled life to God.

Then comes another ceremony: the "laying on of hands" (Heb. 6:1-2). Physical representatives of Jesus Christ, men empowered to discern repentance and grant the Holy Spirit by the laying on of

their hands, facilitate contact with God's Spirit (Acts 8:14-18, John 20:21-23).

How many professing Christians really understand this? Incredible as it may seem, God is calling only a tiny minority of all who ever lived to understand these truths. God is not trying to save this world now. Only a few, chosen ones really respond to God, repent, fight the obstacles in their paths and thus qualify to receive the Holy Spirit, "whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). Few really want to surrender all the way to God. Write for our free reprint, "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?"

A changed life

Now understand Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Some few believe God's servants. They begin to see the wretchedness and futility of the way of life they have followed. They are awakened to the sham and abomination inherent in such pagan spectacles as Christmas, Easter and Sunday-keeping (Jer. 10:1-8, Luke 16:15). They realize they have accepted doctrines diametrically opposed to what the Bible actually teaches.

These few feel "pricked in their heart" — they are sincerely and deeply sorry for the sins they have committed (Acts 2:37). They want to change their lives. After counseling with God's ministers, they resolve to dedicate their lives to living God's way, accept the baptism covenant and receive the Holy Spirit.

What, then? Is that the end? Absolutely not! This only starts the Christian journey. The work of overcoming now begins in earnest.

Baptism signals but the first effort in a lifelong struggle to "put off the old man" (Col. 3:9-10). Self-will is still active after baptism. Though past sins are

forgiven, the Christian may stumble and sin anew. The new convert must increase the Holy Spirit of power through prayer — much prayer — Bible study, fasting regularly (Luke 11:9-13). It takes sincere, mighty effort to replace the carnal, selfish, fleshly mind with the mind of Christ Himself. This is difficult, a lifelong struggle, and requires God's constant help and continual forgiveness.

But this is the very purpose for human life, the only reason God gave us this temporary, fleshly existence (I Tim. 6:12). Only by imitating Christ in every way do we prepare for an eternal life of usefulness and accomplishment in the Kingdom of God.

Now how, exactly, may we qualify to help Christ straighten out this sick planet in the world tomorrow? For that is the true Christian's goal, even though almost no one understands it. How deceived this world is (Rev. 12:9)! Paul asked, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (I Cor. 6:2). Revelation 5:10 says "we shall reign on the earth." In Revelation 2:26 Christ promised His followers "power over the nations."

In the Sermon on the Mount Christ gave specialized instructions to His future inner cabinet, those who would be sitting with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21). This vital seminar for future kings and priests (Rev. 1:6) is found in Matthew 5, 6 and 7.

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him" (Matt. 5:1). Notice how Christ avoided the crowds. It was time for some deep spiritual discourses that would challenge even His own disciples.

Later on, Christ explained why He taught in parables, and it was not to make the meaning clearer! Read it: "Because it is given unto you [His disciples] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. 13:11).

What a shocker! But it was true. Only the few — the small minority — earnestly seek God's

way of life, desperately make the necessary changes to qualify for an eternal life of rulership and service in the Kingdom of God.

"Blessed are . . ."

"And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:2-3).

Who, exactly, are the poor in spirit? Not those lacking in the precious, energizing Holy Spirit of God! "Poor in spirit" refers to a lack of human spirit, carnal pride, stubborn self-will. It is humility — a yielded, submissive attitude before God.

Blessed are those who rate themselves as insignificant — who are of no great stature in their own eyes, Jesus is saying. Blessed are those who deeply feel their utter dependence upon God for anything truly worthwhile and lasting.

This is completely opposed to worldly concepts of "finding yourself," self-reliance, "I'm OK, you're OK" or tapping the hidden power of the "inner you." Here Christ demands the puncturing of vanity, pride, deceit, the stubborn selfishness rooted deep inside us (Ps. 39:5-6).

Christ loves the poor in spirit (Isa. 66:2). He brilliantly portrayed their sincere, humble attitude in His parable of the Pharisee and the publican: "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).

A contradiction? How can mourners rejoice? Yet the Teacher from Galilee skillfully planned every word. He Himself lived these words on that meaningful occasion when He revealed, through His tears, His passionate concern for His fellow human beings: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under

her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37).

Christ, dynamic adversary of the money changers (John 2:13-17), was also a man of infinite compassion (Mark 6:34). No one was more concerned for others, more sensitively attuned to the pain and mortification of the pariahs of His day (Luke 5:12-13).

Compassion and warmth surcharged His ministry. He felt wrenching, stabbing pity for the agonies we inflict upon ourselves in this sin-sick world (Matt. 9:12-13). The deeply committed "man of sorrows" burned inwardly to finish His part in God's Work and bring salvation that much closer to mankind (Isa. 53:3, Luke 12:50).

Do we? Ezekiel 9:4 reveals that God is going to spare those only who "sigh and cry" for the daily atrocities perpetrated on this planet.

Meekness in action

"Blessed are the meek," Jesus continued, "for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

The fiery, bombastic Moses (Ex. 2:11-12), one of history's outstanding leaders, was actually "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). How come? Aren't the meek the weak?

Absolutely not! The Greek word *praus*, translated "meek" in Matthew 5:5, refers to steel-like strength, but strength under control. Moses was forceful and vigorous, yet teachable and yielded to God's direction (Num. 12:7).

Meek men can really take charge when they must. Christ did when He routed the money changers (John 2:13-17).

The meek are "peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated" (Jas. 3:17). They are easy to correct and admonish (Prov. 17:10). This willingness to listen to sound advice, to defer to authority, saves much needless trauma.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

Psalms 119:172 states, "All thy

commandments are righteousness." In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus emphatically clarified His devotion to the laws of God (Matt. 5:17). How will He guide the nations without law (Isa. 42:1-4)?

Christ thundered: "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:18-19).

Don't be deceived: Those not striving to obey God's commandments in every aspect of their lives are simply not converted. They fear men or follow their own ideas. They have not yet surrendered to God (Prov. 29:25).

A challenging statement

Next came one of Jesus' most

Don't be deceived: Those not striving to obey God's commandments in every aspect of their lives are simply not converted. . . . They have not yet surrendered to God . . .

challenging statements: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

This is an absolute measure of our conversion. Why? Because the polar opposites of mercy and forgiveness are hate, revenge, spite.

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, wrote, "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding" (Prov. 14:29). What did he mean?

Simply this: Pardoning offenses and forgiving injustices demonstrates faith in godly principles (Prov. 19:11), our conviction that God's laws regulate this universe.

God doesn't need us to police the universe for Him by retaliat-

ing, taking revenge on our enemies. No one ever evades the consequences of breaking God's law (Isa. 57:21).

The revenge-takers don't believe this. They stubbornly insist on doing God's work for Him by cruel action or crueler words.

True Christians have a special incentive for being merciful: They are deeply conscious that their personal sins caused the brutal death of the perfect and spotless Son of God (I Tim. 1:15). God forgives us only through the atoning work of "Christ our passover" (I Cor. 5:7).

God hates the unthinking hardness demonstrated by the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:28, a man who had just received merciful pardon from his master (verses 23-27). Beware of tempting God this way.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," Christ taught (Matt. 5:8).

Yet how can sinful human beings achieve purity and perfection? None can (Rom. 3:10). But

our attitude, our basic motive and intent, our overall life's direction can indeed please God (Jer. 29:13).

We actually become what we think about, desire, muse upon: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). So how about it? What dominates our thinking most of the time? God's Work? God's laws? Or the various secular, worldly ways we are prone to follow to please our acquaintances in the world?

Those who are truly converted and growing gradually find their attitudes, interests and goals transformed (II Cor. 4:16). They change from purposeless, contentious people into stable, optimistic

(Continued on page 21)

How to Make the Sabbath a Delight

God's Sabbath should be a delight and pleasure to God's people. You need to understand how it can be so for you.

By Leroy Neff



Throughout history, the vast majority of people have not experienced the pleasure that comes from keeping God's Sabbath correctly.

Indeed, most people have not realized that this law of God, or any of God's other laws, exists, let alone kept it!

And even among those who knew of God's Sabbath command, many rejected or ignored it. Or they failed to keep it properly and reap its full benefits.

Even some in God's Church today do not know how to properly observe the Sabbath!

Do you really know what God has instructed? If not — and if you don't follow God's instructions — you are missing out on one of God's great blessings.

When was the Sabbath made?

This article is written in the hope that you may learn more about God's Fourth Commandment, so that you may rejoice — you and your family — in God's Sabbath. Let's start at the beginning.

God created the Sabbath for man as a blessing, to fill a need that all mankind has (Mark 2:27). God put that need in man when He designed and made man. Man needs, for physical rejuvenation, periodic rest and change from his normal physical activities. He also needs time for spiritual rejuvenation.

God made the Sabbath, but when did He make it? He made it when He made man: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Gen. 2:2-3).

From the time of creation until the Exodus, about 2,500 years later, we find no specific mention of the Sabbath in the Bible. Obviously, however, "righteous" Abel (Heb. 11:4), Enoch (who pleased God — verse 5), Noah (a just man — Gen. 6:9), Abraham (the father of the faithful), Jacob, Joseph and others kept God's Sabbath. These people were righteous in God's sight, and righteousness is keeping God's com-

mandments (Ps. 119:172).

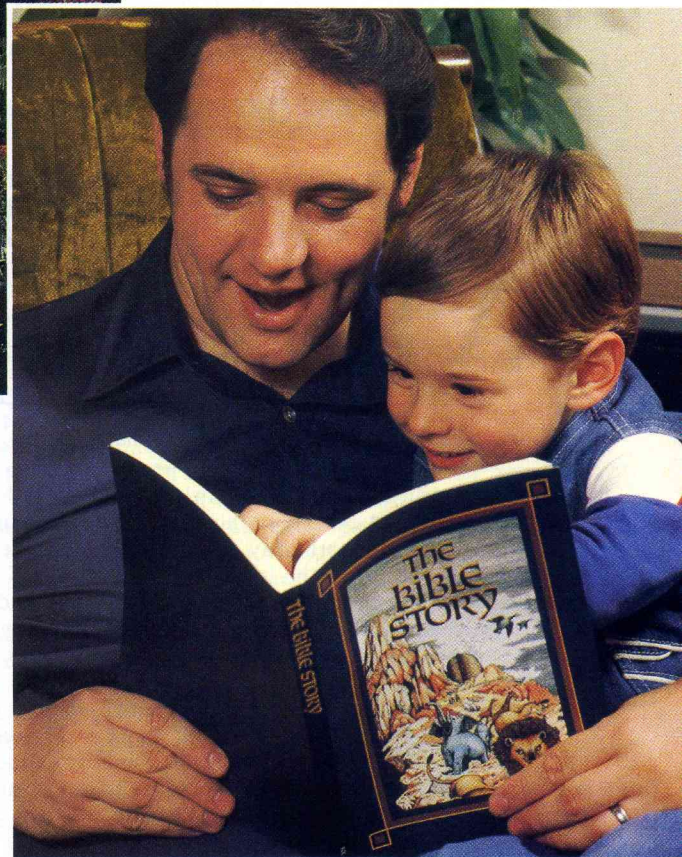
After the Exodus from Egypt, God found it necessary to test Israel and see if they would obey this specific command concerning the Sabbath (Ex. 16). Whether Israel had lost the truth about the Sabbath or whether they had become confused about it during the years in Egypt is unclear. In any event, God made it clear at this time which day the Sabbath was, by a series of miracles. He also made it clear as to how it should be kept.

Now notice: Exodus 16 describes events several weeks before Israel's arrival at Mt. Sinai. When some of the people did not follow God's instruction about the Sabbath, God said, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" (verse 28). The Sabbath had been a command since man's creation, whether or not people knew about it personally all of this time. For biblical proof, write for our free reprint article, "Were the Ten Commandments in Force Before Moses?"

These Israelites were camping in the desert and possessed rudimentary facilities to gather food and fuel, to make fire or heat, to cook, prepare and serve necessary



Time for family closeness — one of the many benefits of properly keeping God's Sabbath. Enjoying the beauty of God's creation as husband and wife and teaching children about God and God's way are two ways to make the Sabbath day special.



food. God, through Moses, instructed the Israelites to make certain preparations on the sixth day of the week, which corresponds with our Friday today.

Preparations included gathering a double amount of manna as well as fuel for the Sabbath (or Saturday). Also see Numbers 15:32-36. The Israelites were also to do any heavy cooking, such as baking and boiling, before the Sabbath (Ex. 16:23). For more information on which day of the week God's Sabbath falls on, request our free booklet, *Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?*

Some did not follow God's instruction and went out to gather food on the Sabbath (verse 27). God again had to specifically instruct them, "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" (verse 29). Their "place" did not include desert searches for food on the Sabbath.

Today we do not normally live under the same conditions that the Israelites lived in then. But it should be evident from these examples that gathering fuel, gathering food and heavy food preparation should be done before the Sabbath, not during it.

The Bible next mentions the

Sabbath in Exodus 20, where God personally recited the Ten Commandments to the whole nation. The Fourth Command, which instructs about the Sabbath, has the longest text of any command. We need to notice several points as we read this command: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy . . ." (Ex. 20:8).

The Fourth Commandment explained

God first said "Remember." Some of the Israelites had shown a few weeks earlier that they did not remember. In order to remember, you first must know, and Israel had been told.

Today many people have read this command but they do not remember to do what the command specifies. It is the only command people are told to "remember," and it is the one command of the 10 that most people promptly forget or consider of insufficient importance.

Even in the Church it is easy to forget or to neglect taking the

action necessary for obedience. When sunset comes Friday evening we always ought to remember that this time, until the next sunset, is God's Sabbath. It is the very test commandment for God's people, to show whether, even in this, we will obey God.

Sabbath means rest

The next point we should see in this passage is that this is the *Sabbath*. The word *sabbath* is taken from the Hebrew and literally relates to a repose, intermission, cessation or rest. The Sabbath is a day of rest, but that does not mean it is a day of idleness. God tells us things we should do

on the Sabbath, as well as things we should not do.

The command refers to the Sabbath as a day — 24 hours from even to even (sunset to sunset — Lev. 23:32). God next said that we should “keep it holy.” This means that it already is holy. Only God can make a thing, a person or time holy. He made the Sabbath holy at the creation of man, when He hallowed the day (Ex. 20:11).

“Six days shalt thou labour, and

do all thy work” (verse 9). God has given us six of the seven days of the week to do whatever we need or desire to do. He does not specify exactly how we should use these other days, but He does specify what we should and should not do on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not the day to do the business of earning a living or to do our normal, routine activities.

And, as verse 10 shows, no one under the jurisdiction of a Christian (minor child, employee, even

animals) should be required to work on the Sabbath.

The Sabbath covenant

God explains why the Sabbath should be kept, and why it is holy to Him in the next verse: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (verse 11).

The Sabbath was so important

God's Sabbath— A Special Blessing

By Marc Segall

Shouldn't we, God's spiritual people, be real experts on how to celebrate the Sabbath day as Christ, Lord of the Sabbath, intended? We are, after all, the people specially distinguished by the Sabbath — we are set apart by this unique sign (Ex. 31:13-17).

God gives us special instruction in Isaiah 58:13 on how to keep this day. This verse tells us not to tread our feet on the Sabbath day, which means, figuratively, that we aren't supposed to keep the Sabbath the way we choose to, but the way God says to. God says to call the Sabbath day “a delight.”

We know that we should not work or do our business on this day — it is a time of rest and drawing closer to God. It is a holy convocation. We are not to seek our own ways or pleasures on this weekly Holy Day.

Yet how, specifically, can we “delight” in the Sabbath day? Here are some practical suggestions:

- **Preparation.** Proper Sabbath observance begins before the sun ever sets Friday evening. We should begin thinking early in the week about how we can make the Sabbath special and memorable. How, for instance, can we make the evening meal extra special and enjoyable — something to

really look forward to? What will we do during that 24-hour period?

Discuss the coming Sabbath among your family — really “talk it up” and build excited anticipation for this unique day. If you do, God's Holy Day will not just happen, but will be a day full of purpose — full of benefit for the whole family.

Friday is the day to put the finishing touches on your Sabbath plans — to spruce up the house, to get the chores accomplished to last two days and to prepare the Sabbath meals. “To tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to day,” says Exodus 16:23.

The dinner meal should be the finest, most delicious meal of the entire week. Make your *pièce de résistance* dish and plan a healthy, tasty dessert as a special treat.

With a little imagination, you can add a touch of class to this scrumptious beginning for the Sabbath. Prepare a relaxing setting for the meal. The children can create a colorful centerpiece for the table using flowers, leaves, pine cones or paper cut-outs. A lovely tablecloth, candles and cloth napkins can set a pleasing mood. Think about some inspiring, tranquil music your family can listen

to during or after the meal. All this extra effort sounds like special preparations for company. But think of what this effort will say to your family, since they are the ones being honored.

Another special addition to the Sabbath meal is to invite a widow, widower or unmarried brother or sister in the Church to enjoy this occasion. Your guests will be able to experience real family unity in the Church and you will have added the element of pure religion to your Sabbath day (Jas. 1:27).

- **Family activities.** Follow your leisurely Sabbath meal with a good conversation. Maybe your talk can center around the theme of the Millennium and God's Kingdom. Or make a game out of trying to name all the countries where members of God's Church live, or all the countries Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong, Christ's apostle, has visited to preach the Gospel.

You can make the Sabbath an enjoyable learning experience for your children by playing other games, also, such as naming Bible books or characters or Bible charades. Smaller children can play Bible alphabet games (e.g., think of Bible objects or leaders beginning with various letters) or draw pictures recreating various scenes and stories mentioned in Scripture.

The Sabbath doesn't have to be a drag or a bore for teenagers, either. Teens can involve themselves in activities carefully tailored to focus their minds on God and the Bible and help them keep the spirit of the Fourth Commandment. With publications like *Youth 82*, *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News* available,

to God that He made a separate Sabbath covenant between Himself and Israel in addition to the covenant concerning His overall relationship with the nation (Ex. 19:3-8). This special Sabbath covenant is found in Exodus 31:13-17.

“Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord

that doth sanctify you” (Ex. 31:13). This covenant points out that the Sabbath is a sign to God, showing Him who His people are, and to the people, that they may know who God is. A person who does not have this identifying sign is not a servant of the great Creator God.

God here charges Israel “to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant” (verse 16).

As long as the people of Israel

exist and are having generations (bearing children), this covenant applies.

After Israel entered the promised land, they seldom obeyed God for long, as you can read in the Old Testament’s historical books. The result? God sent the northern 10 tribes of Israel and later Judah into captivity. The prime reason (but, of course, not the only reason) they were sent into captivity was because of Sabbath breaking (see Ezekiel

teens can use the quiet time that the Sabbath offers as a chance to get in some lifesaving reading. Parents can even take information from these magazines and devise games like Bible baseball, complete with rewards for the best answers.

• *Rest and celebrate together.*

Extra rest and sleep are appropriate on the Sabbath. Many of us, in the day-to-day fulfillment of our jobs, have to start early and work late. The Sabbath provides an opportunity for rest and refreshment for everyone in the family.

When you wake up, fill your mind with thoughts of what a special day this is. Remember who you are (1 Pet. 2:9-10) and “be glad in the Lord” (Ps. 32:11). Be reminded of your true identity in God’s sight and of what a magnificent future you have to look forward to.

Play your most inspiring and uplifting music during the day. It will lift your attitude, soothe your nerves and remind you of the purpose of the Sabbath. As the Sabbath breakfast is laid out, listening to and sometimes singing along with beautiful songs can set the mood for a fine meal. To make the morning meal special, too, try to have a wide variety of easy-to-prepare yet delicious entrees and juices.

Afterward, Dad and the children can clear the table and put things away so Mom can have a little private time to herself. It seems moms have the most to do on the Sabbath, yet they, too, need time to pray, study and relax. Everyone else should make sure Mom gets to rest on the Sabbath.

• *Ending the Sabbath.*

The Sabbath is a time for meeting with

other Christians to be instructed in God’s way of life and for fellowship (Heb. 10:25). The box on page 12 offers information on how to make the most of Sabbath services.

On the way home from services, one might occasionally plan a special stop, as long as the stop is not too far out of the way (Acts 1:12). A spectacular natural setting like a botanical garden or scenic park gives you and your family an opportunity to see God’s creative genius (Rom. 1:20). What a perfect place to consider, in a limited way, how this entire earth might be when the world enjoys its sabbath, the Millennium.

As your eyes drink in beauty and your ears absorb soothing sounds, the week’s pressures fade. As you walk hand in hand or arm in arm with your loved ones, the cares of this life temporarily vanish. It is God’s Sabbath day, and nothing else really matters.

When you get home from services, you can end the Sabbath in a special way. Gather around the table and discuss this Sabbath in retrospect. As the last light fades in the western sky, you all can feel inner peace and the strength with which to face the tasks of the coming week. You have not wasted the Sabbath day. You have used it as the Lord of this most impor-

tant day intended.

We must know how to make the Sabbath day a delight, honorable and holy. If we neglect to treat the Sabbath as the special blessing it is, then how can we as parents make the Sabbath a wonderful and positive experience that our children will look forward to each week? God tells us in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:18-21 that we should bless our children with a deep sense of appreciation for the laws of God, that we should help our children understand that keeping those laws is a rewarding experience.

If we do, then when our children are older, they will not depart from God’s laws (Prov. 22:6), but will be in better position to embrace God’s way of life when God begins working with them. □



20). The northern 10 tribes of Israel, in captivity, actually forgot who they were, because they stopped keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath was the sign that identified who they were, as the Sabbath covenant had explained. The 10 tribes were thus "lost" in history! Our free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, explains where those 10 tribes are today.

Many people returned to Jerusalem, however, after Judah's captivity, and most were very strict concerning Sabbath observance. However, there were still a few who rebelled. They did their normal work and bought and sold food on the Sabbath (Neh. 13:15-22). Nehemiah understood, as we should today, that the routine work of earning a living, buying and selling and transporting

goods from place to place profanes the Sabbath.

Christ's instruction

By the time of Christ, the religious Jews had added a large number of dos and don'ts to the keeping of the Fourth Commandment. These additions were not inspired by God and actually went far beyond the spirit and
(Continued on page 29)

What About Church Services?

If you received a call from the White House in Washington, D.C., asking you to come and visit the President of the United States, or a message from Buckingham Palace in London, England, requesting your presence before the Queen, wouldn't you be excited?

No doubt you would be. You would immediately begin preparing. You would devote great attention to your manners, dress, what to talk about and a host of other important details. You would go to great lengths to ensure that you would do properly everything you had to do — after all, you would be going before some of the most important people on earth.

Should we as God's people give any less attention to detail when we come before the great, omnipotent God who created and rules this universe? We are literally coming into God's presence when we attend Sabbath services.

Participating in church services is, for true Christians, a major part of observing the Sabbath. We appear at Sabbath services, which are commanded assemblies (Heb. 10:25), to be taught by God, through His ministers. The Sabbath day is holy time and the services are holy due to the presence of God (Ex. 3:5).

How we conduct ourselves in those services matters a great deal to God and determines, in large part, how much we will delight in God's Sabbath.

Here are several areas to which we can devote more attention in order to benefit more from Sabbath services:

- **Being prompt.** We should arrive at the meeting place at least a few minutes early so we can get settled and be ready when services begin. Coming in late causes us to miss part of the services and disrupts others in the audience, not to mention insulting God. God is orderly and wants us to be punctual. He has set the example by fulfilling many carefully

By Dan Creed

timed prophecies exactly when they were supposed to be fulfilled. Matthew 24:22 tells us that if God does not intervene in this world's affairs in the dark days ahead, no humans will be left alive. What if God allowed Himself to be late?

- **Singing.** For most of us, the song service is the only part of the church service in which we participate verbally. Singing is a major way we can worship and praise God (Ps. 95:1-2, 100:1-2), and we should participate wholeheartedly, collectively raising our voices in honor to God. We should teach our children to stand and participate as well. Also, we should make sure we handle church hymnals carefully. The hymnals are, in fact, God's property. Children should not write on, color or tear the pages.

- **Dress.** How we dress is important when we come into God's presence. In one of Christ's parables, the king (Christ, symbolically) expelled from the wedding celebration someone who wasn't dressed properly. Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong has always stressed that, when we appear at Sabbath services, we should wear the finest we have. Church services are not a fashion show, but we dress in our best to honor God. If we dress carelessly or are improperly groomed, we are guilty of treating God with contempt.

- **Benefiting from services.** God's children are to dwell together in unity (Ps. 133:1). God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33). Consequently, at God's services we should conduct ourselves in an orderly manner.

We should listen attentively throughout the services, realizing that God has prepared a spiritual feast for each of us (Isa. 55:1). Unnecessary talking, passing

notes and sleeping are not characteristics of a good listener. Taking notes can improve how we listen.

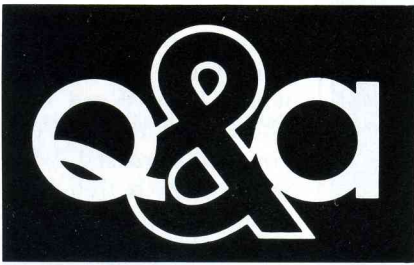
Our children should not do schoolwork, read other books or play games. As they grow older they can learn to follow along in the Bible and take notes. Children and teenagers can understand what is being said if we teach them properly (I Cor. 7:14, Deut. 6:7).

There should be as little walking around the meeting hall as possible — walking around distracts the audience and disrupts the speaker. If we need to leave the room, we should go and return as quietly as possible. It is proper to wait for special music to be over before coming back into the room. If a baby is making noise, leave quickly and take care of the problem. Mothers should not linger and visit in the mothers' room.

When services are over, we should police the area where we and our families have been sitting, picking up any trash we might have left. This sets a good example for both those in and outside the Church. Our children should not abuse the facilities by tying up elevators, running up and down stairs and in lobbies or going into restricted areas. The Church has actually lost halls on occasion because of the misconduct of our own people. This casts a bad light on God's Church.

And after services, we shouldn't just rush out immediately. Since it is the Sabbath, we normally would not have any pressing responsibilities elsewhere. Church services are the perfect opportunity for fellowship with God's people as well as being instructed in God's way (Mal. 3:16). Is there somewhere else we would rather be?

Each of us has an awesome responsibility at church services. We are in the presence of God, so let's remember our Sabbath manners. □



How could the earth possibly hold, during the Great White Throne Judgment, all the people who have ever lived (Rev. 20:5, 11-12)? The earth is too crowded even now.

This world in its present state can hold few more people. Many cities are pitifully crowded. Farmers are desperately searching for more tillable land. Thousands starve to death daily — and the world's population is only about 4.5 billion.

How could this same earth hold approximately 40 billion more people — nearly 10 times the number of people living on earth today?

The key is this: They will not live in this world, this age, this society. They will be resurrected after a thousand years of renovation by God's government (Rev. 20:4-5). Let's examine some of the physical changes this government will effect:

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" (Isa. 40:4).

Much of the world is pock-marked with gigantic mountain ranges that are too high and forbidding to be of use. These mountains will be miraculously lowered to a tillable altitude, and valleys will be raised. There will be the beauty of rolling hills and variety in God's creation, but no more useless areas such as the Himalayas, Antarctic ranges and the higher Andes.

"The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly" (Isa. 35:1-2). Only about 10 percent of the earth's land area is being used today. Why? Mainly because des-

erts or polar iceboxes monopolize each major continent. "The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water" (verse 7). When God restores the right climate, these areas will all begin to blossom with a beauty unseen in this present world.

These changes will take time, but God and His transformed saints have 1,000 years to prepare every square inch for these multitudes.

Now the question is: Will the earth's land hold all these people? Simple mathematics, 50 million square miles of land surface divided among 40 billion people, gives us a roomy 4- or 5-acre plot for each medium-sized family of four to six members.

This is the perfect size: large enough to feed a family and allow for plenty of elbowroom, but small enough to discourage large-scale, greedy profit farming. This fits in perfectly with God's prophecy in Micah 4:4: "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid."

God's Word stands wonderfully true under any test.

Revelation 2:6 mentions the Nicolaitans, whose deeds Christ says He hates. Who were the Nicolaitans?

The word *Nicolaitan* means "a follower of Nicolas." It comes from two Greek words, *nikos* and *laos*. *Nikos* means "conqueror" or "destroyer" and *laos* means "people." The original Nicolas was the conqueror or destroyer of the people! That was Nimrod — the archrebel who conquered the people and founded man-made civilization within two centuries after the Flood.

While Nimrod was alive he put himself in the place of God. And when he died, his admirers continued to worship him as a divine hero. They called him "Baal," a name meaning "master" or "lord" found throughout the Old Testament.

Nimrod also had other names, one of which was "Santa," commonly used throughout Asia

Minor. "Santa Claus" is but a shortened form of "Santa Nicholas" or "Saint Nicholas."

Thus, many unknowingly honor this Nicholas even in our day by observing ancient pagan customs associated with December 25th, the "Saturnalia" or birthday of Nimrod. Of course, these customs have been renamed and made to appear innocent.

Our booklet entitled *The Plain Truth About Christmas* explains this subject in greater detail. It is free upon request.

Would you explain the celebration of Hanukkah or, as it is sometimes called, the Festival of Lights? James 1:17 says God is the "Father of lights." Would this pertain to Hanukkah?

James' reference to God as the "Father of lights" has no connection with the observance of Hanukkah.

Hanukkah is observed in honor of the rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccabaeus in the second century B.C. It is an eight-day festival in which candles are lit, one on the first evening, two on the second and so on until eight are lit on the last evening, symbolizing that the light of faith is certain to grow.

Jesus, a physical Jew, was present at the Festival of Dedication (John 10:22). We learn from Christ's example that it is not wrong to acknowledge certain national holidays, as long as they are not derived from paganism and do not violate God's law. Thanksgiving, an American holiday, is an example.

Modern Hanukkah customs are similar to Christmas celebrations, because many Jews, especially in the United States and Canada, have adopted Christmas customs and attached them to the celebration of Hanukkah.

Our free booklet, *Pagan Holidays — Or God's Holy Days — Which?*, explains in detail the God-ordained Holy Days that picture God's awesome plan and that true Christians are commanded to observe. Why not write for it? □

Some 30 years ago I attended a get-together at the apartment of the young woman who was later to become my wife. The party was for faculty members at the university where she and I taught.

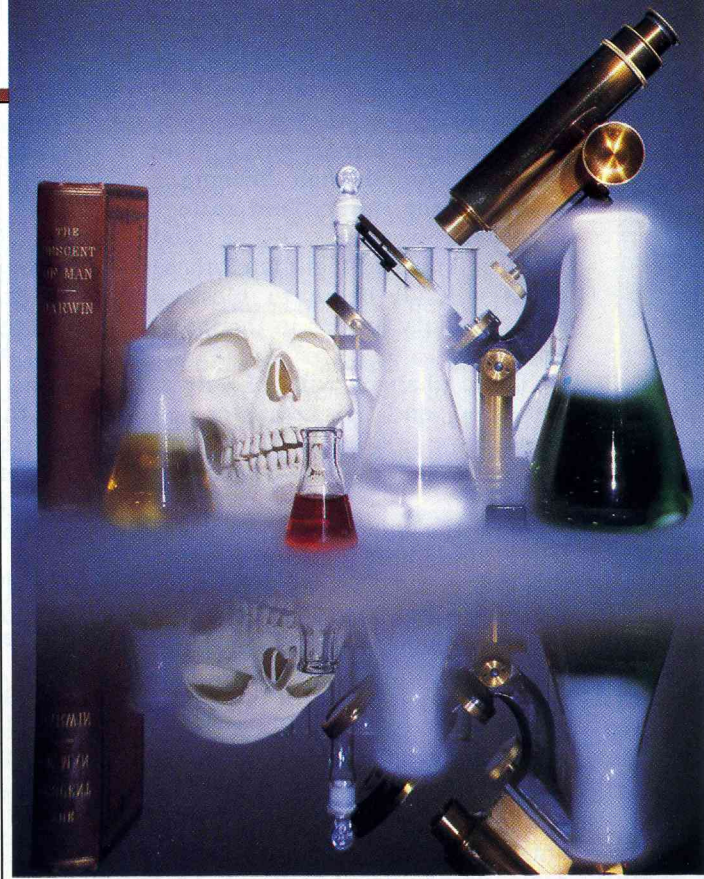
Such get-togethers provided for interesting and stimulating evenings, I remember, because of the scintillating discussions we would all get into. Sometimes our discussions turned into rather heated debates, since the group represented a wide diversity of disciplines at the university.

On this particular evening we were discussing a prospective faculty member for the biology department. This man was supposed to teach microbiology.

"How can he teach microbiology? He doesn't even believe in evolution!" asked one woman, a teacher on the music faculty.

"Why," I asked, "does one have to believe the theory of evolution as a prerequisite for teaching microbiology? Evolution is no more than a theory, you know — and a stupid theory at that." I taught physics and chemistry.

"Well, believing in evolution is not a prerequisite," the lady replied, "but how he can teach microbiology and not believe in evolution I can't understand.



If you are a true Christian, you accept what God's Word says about creation. Are you embarrassed with your own belief that evolution is an erroneous — even ridiculous — theory dreamed up by men bent on excluding God from their personal lives?

Mr. Armstrong's study

Early in his study to prove whether God existed, Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong realized that he would have to, in addition to studying the Bible, do an in-depth study of evolution.

What he found was that the theory of evolution was diametrically opposed to what the Bible said. The two could in no way be harmonized (contrary to what some today would like to believe). Mr. Armstrong made no apology for what he finally proved.

Note that Mr. Armstrong did not study the findings of the popular writers on evolution. He studied the writings of the acknowledged au-

thorities on the subject — those who originated the idea.

If the trunk of the tree fell, all the rest of the tree would fall with it.

Mr. Armstrong found that even these recognized authorities on evolution often strongly criticized the theory — in fact, they themselves, in many cases, actually refuted it. Yet they still accepted the theory! Educated? Not really, Mr. Armstrong con-

And They Call It Science!

Doesn't every educated person accept evolution as fact? Are you embarrassed because you don't?

By Sidney M. Hegvold

And what do you mean, anyway, about evolution being a stupid theory?"

And there we were — off again.

The point is this: It seems that, in this world, those who are considered to be educated automatically accept evolution as fact. It is considered ignorant or backwoodsy to simply believe what God, in His Word, says about how life came to be on this earth.

cluded. Could we conclude differently?

How evolution spreads its message

When I was an undergraduate student, I was required to study physical geology as part of the physics curriculum I was taking. I found the subject both interesting and profitable. On the other hand, historical geology was a recommended elective. I read over the text they were using for historical geology and was amazed — it was complete fiction being taught as science. I have called this latter course “hysterical geology” ever since.

Blending science and fiction is a most effective method of proclaiming the message of evolution.

Evolution can be defined as a natural history of the cosmos, including organic beings, expressed in physical terms as a mechanical process. This process, theoretically, applies to everything — the entire universe. Evolution teaches that complex life forms evolved from simpler life forms, and assumes that at some point in history life came from the nonliving.

During the past few decades, explosive new “discoveries” in astronomy have opened vistas in which the investigators’ creative imaginations can run rampant. I put “discoveries” in quotes because the actual discoveries are most often nothing more than some insignificant specks of light found on astronomers’ photographs of space. The “spectacular, explosive discoveries” are really theoretical evaluations made by the astronomers as they attempt to explain what the specks mean.

These discoveries are presented to the public in awesome media blitzes — books, magazines, television and movie productions — that make little attempt to separate fact from fiction. Audiences mesmerized by the productions are left to assume that what they have been presented with is fact.

And so evolution is most effectively taught.

How to know the truth

We know that the earth was originally created long before the events of the week recorded in Genesis 1 and 2.

Mr. Armstrong recognized long ago that the Bible account shows that the earth *came* to the state of chaos depicted in Genesis 1:2 — that God did not create it that way. That state of chaos resulted from the rebellion of Lucifer and one third of the angels, who became Satan and his demons (Isa. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:12-15, Jude 6). How long that state of chaos existed before God performed the *recreation* described in Genesis, no one knows.

Genesis 1:2 tells us the entire earth was covered with water just before the recreation about 6,000 years ago. During the recreation week God separated the land masses from the water, revealing the mountains and continents that existed until the days of Noah, at least.

But what about the “scientific” studies “proving” that great geologic ages took place and lasted for billions of years before what has happened in just the past 6,000 years?

In every instance scientists assume these long periods of time because they extrapolate from life forms now existing back to some simple, primitive form that they assume existed. What was that pristine form? No one knows. But scientists believe it would have taken multiple billions of years for that original form to develop into the diverse life forms we see today in the world around us.

The scientists try to arrange the facts to fit their theories (and end up in confusion!) rather than reasoning from the facts.

The apologists ask whether God would deceive us. Of course He wouldn’t! But how would something that had never existed before appear when first created? Did God make the first trees with

growth rings? Most likely. Why? Because God planned how trees should grow and look in the future, so He would have created mature trees in that form.

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Such questions are familiar. But only those who believe in evolution would have difficulty answering them. How the egg evolved is one of the big, unanswered questions of evolution. Creating mature forms, whether the created form is living or not, is certainly not deceptive on God’s part.

What does a fossil tell you? Only that that particular form of life lived sometime in the past. The fossil does not reveal just how long ago it lived.

One can do no better than to quote Mr. Armstrong on this point: “Then such knowledge as: HOW the earth came; WHEN it came — how old it is; how old is human life upon it — the mystery of origins. These questions absorb the time, thought, research and thinking of scientists, philosophers, historians — yet they can come up only with GUESSES, THEORIES, HYPOTHESES — but NO PROOF — the definite KNOWLEDGE they could know ONLY by revelation” (*The Missing Dimension in Sex*, third edition, 1981, page 22).

But won’t I appear uneducated?

That all sounds backwoods and uneducated, don’t you think? It just doesn’t seem logical, somehow.

Yet God even explains this problem: The carnal, natural mind cannot understand the things of God. God must reveal them to us through His Spirit (I Cor. 2:9-12).

One of cosmology’s modern concepts is that of the Big Bang Theory. According to this theory, all of the matter in the universe was initially compacted into a superatom that was billions of times smaller than an electron — many times smaller than anything

(Continued on page 21)

Can You Recognize Counterfeit



Many people miss out on the blessings of faith simply because they think they have faith when they really don't. What about you?

By Bernie Schnippert

Could you be fooling yourself about your faith?

Physically tired and spiritually exhausted, another minister and I sat in a coffee shop, sipping pensively on cups of Sanka and rehearsing the last two hours. We couldn't believe what had just almost happened.

We, two ministers of the Worldwide Church of God, had just visited a severely depressed woman and her husband (both "members"), and had come within an inch of being physically thrown out of the house!

Why? Simply because we saw that the woman probably lacked the faith necessary to be healed of a serious tumor she had growing in her body, and we had, in love and tact, told her so.

The reaction we received gave us quite a jolt. She became furious! To think that we would "accuse" her — *her* — of lacking faith. She, after all, was a "leading member" and a constant server in the church. She said hello to the ministry each week, and she helped the elderly people, and, and . . . well, *how could we* accuse *her* of such a thing?

How could we? It was simple. She lacked faith. And we felt an obligation to, in love, tell her so she wouldn't continue to labor under the false notion that she had faith when she did not.

This woman's problem of misjudging the amount of her own faith is not unique. Many people — perhaps all of us, at some time — have mistaken our natural, human desires, fears or emotions for faith. The woman I described above was deceiving herself by confusing her human, carnal longing for health as faith. Yes, she may have known what faith is — in other words, she may have been able to recite the Bible definition (Heb. 11:1) — but she didn't know what faith is *not*.

Do you?

Your need to discern your own faith is important, because the

stakes are high indeed. For, the promises God makes to us to heal us or to answer our prayers or to put us into His Kingdom all depend upon faith.

But take notice: God will save us, heal us or answer our prayers according to the real faith we have, not according to the faith we think we have, or wish we had, or want others to think we have, or that we should have. God is not fooled by our human substitutes for faith.

But are you?

False substitutes for faith

Sadly, some people, even in God's Church, are fooled by emotions, fears or wishes that disguise themselves as faith. And this is true even for people who may have been in God's Church for years. That is why many people lack faith today. They think they have it when they do not.

But the real tragedy occurs when these people meet trials that demand real faith, and instead of real faith they find only a poor substitute. The substitute quickly crumbles under pressure and they are left with nothing. Such a person who finds his false faith crumbling beneath him quickly learns about his lack of faith the hard way — by experience.

But there is a better way to learn. That way is to recognize how deceitful our human nature is and to identify the false substitutes for faith before they take root and block the growth of real, godly faith.

Here are some of the most common human substitutes and counterfeits for faith:

- *Wishing.* Wishing is simply wanting something to happen. All of us at one time or another wish for something. We wish for a new house or a new car, or we even wish to be healed. And wishing may not necessarily be wrong as long as our wishing doesn't degenerate into daydreaming or coveting. But it's most important that we do not confuse wishing for faith. Wishing is wishing, and faith is faith.

- *Hope.* Hope is an optimistic expectation that you will get the results you want. Hope is a necessary element of the human experience (Prov. 13:12). And I Corinthians 13:13 shows that hope is a positive Christian quality. But that does not mean it is faith.

An example of a situation that most of us have experienced at one time or another will serve to illustrate the difference between faith and hope. Most people at some time must approach their bosses and ask for time off from their jobs. If the person has an optimistic expectation that the boss will grant his wish, then that person has hope.

But faith is more than just an optimistic expectation — faith is believing that God will do what He says, in His Word, He will do. For instance, God has not said that He will not allow you to lose your job, although He has said that He will never allow the righteous to starve (Ps. 37:25).

The point is that faith and hope are different. We must be careful not to confuse the two.

- *A positive attitude.* This is the ability to look at the facts and concentrate on a possible positive outcome. A good illustration is a gambler. Everyone knows that the house always wins in the end, but a gambler is able to look at the odds, which are drastically against him, and somehow believe that with the next pull of the slot machine handle or roll of the dice he will be a big winner.

It certainly requires a positive attitude to concentrate only on the narrow potential for winning and ignore the overwhelming odds for losing. And it is true that having a positive attitude is a good quality — a characteristic we should all strive to obtain. We are, after all, to concentrate on good, happy positive things (Phil. 4:8). But a positive attitude is not faith and should not be confused with faith.

- *Emotional enthusiasm.* A temporary surge of emotional enthusiasm is just that. A person who has thousands of dollars in

the stock market on a day when his stock skyrockets may feel a flush of warmth and the prospect of potential wealth. Such an experience would give a person an emotional high. Certainly the children of Israel must have felt that way when they came out of the land of Egypt with a "high hand" (Ex. 14:8).

But the enthusiasm that comes from winning on the stock market or leaving the captivity of ancient Egypt — or from hearing a powerful prayer for healing — is not faith.

- *Fear of punishment.* It's amazing how some people can be motivated into doing something because they fear the punishment of disobeying. Ancient Israel, after refusing to enter the promised land, had a dramatic change of heart and wanted to charge in after being told they would be punished for not doing so (Num. 14:40).

It would be easy for some to assume that the Israelites had, overnight, developed a great surge of real faith, so that they now were ready to put aside their fears of giants or war and, instead, stalk into the land with renewed bravery. But the fact is that they did not develop faith overnight. Instead, they developed a fear of the punishment that would come upon them (wandering 40 years in the wilderness) if they didn't do what they were told.

Unfortunately, some people obey God only out of fear of punishment. Fear of punishment certainly should not be confused with faith. It may be a motivation in obeying God, but if we lack faith we should obey anyway and ask God for the faith.

- *Fear of a worse alternative.* Some people put off operations or decide not to seek a doctor's help not because they have deep faith in God for healing, but because they are afraid of the surgery or afraid of the doctors.

This was the real reason why the woman I spoke of at the beginning of this article did not want to see a physician. She,

clearly, did not have the faith. But she was also fearful of the alternative to trusting on God — a surgeon's knife. I could not blame her for having the fear, but can find fault with her for confusing the fear with faith. Such a mistake can be deadly.

• *Peer pressure.* Suppose a person came into God's Church and had to ask his employer for time off to keep God's Sabbath, even though the person did not have the faith to trust in God if he were to lose his job. If the employer threatened to fire him, the person might capitulate and work on the Sabbath anyway.

Why would such a person not stand up to his boss and take off the Sabbath after he had asked for it? There could be many reasons, of course, but one reason is that, often, such a person does not have the faith to trust God in the first place. His real motivation for asking for the Sabbath off was fear of what other people in the Church would think if he didn't keep the day. But unfortunately, not even peer pressure, in the long run, can make a person obey if he doesn't have the faith to back it up.

• *Guilt.* A person's conscience can be a powerful motivator toward obedience. Someone may tithe, for example, not because he has real faith or not even because he might fear God's punishment, but because he would feel guilty if he didn't. The person is not motivated by faith but by guilt.

Of course, tithing because of guilt may be better than not tithing at all — we truly understand God's way only after we begin following it (Ps. 111:10) — but the tither should not confuse and misdiagnose his guilt as faith. God is not deceived, although the person might be. No wonder some are not blessed for tithing.

• *Intimidation.* Have you ever bought something, not because you wanted it or needed it, but because the salesman was slick and aggressive and talked you into it? Sure you have. We all have. Many a used-car salesman has sold many a used car to many a person solely by intimidating him into the purchase. And a

minister who gives a powerful sermon might unintentionally intimidate you into obeying God in some area.

Of course, obeying God is good. But someone who is obeying solely because he is intimidated is not obeying out of faith.

• *Resignation or hopelessness.* Most of God's ministers, at one time or another, meet a person who, on his deathbed after having tried all of the doctors' methods and approaches, comes to us and asks to be anointed for healing (Jas. 5:14). Sometimes, of course, the person has real faith and will be healed (Luke 8:43-48). Other times, the person comes for anointing or for advice simply because there are no other alternatives left. Out of sheer hopelessness or resignation, a person may seek God's help.

Of course, we should take all of our trials to God. Trials are a tool God Himself uses to draw men to Him. But one who seeks God or "prays about it" simply because there is nothing else to do is not exercising faith. He is simply exercising good old carnal logic and doing what any soldier in a foxhole, under the thunder of blasting shells, would do.

• *Self-righteousness.* Believe it or not, people sometimes obey God, pray for healing or other needs or even endure trials not because they have the real faith that God is looking for, but simply because they have told other people in similar situations that they wouldn't do whatever the other "weak" people had done instead of seeking God.

One may put on a show of righteousness by toughing it out. But such a show of righteousness occasioned merely by self-righteousness is unrighteousness in God's eyes (Isa. 64:6).

• *Stubbornness.* From time to time a person will be confronted by a great trial and will see it through to the end in grand style, keeping a stiff upper lip. We may assume the motivating factor behind his great steadfastness is a deep and abiding faith in God. It may be. But it also might be plain old human stubbornness.

Stubbornness can be a good quality at times. It may help a person or group of people hold on and endure in times of stress or trial. But it won't get you into God's Kingdom, because it's not faith. In fact, stubbornness can be as much of a liability as it may be an asset. If you don't believe that, read the story of ancient Israel and their legacy of being stiff-necked (Deut. 9:6)

What faith is

An article on what faith is not would not be complete without a simple definition of faith. Faith is easy to define: The Bible tells us. Faith is simply the belief that God exists and that He will do what He, in His Word, says He will (Heb. 11:6).

Read that again. Faith is not merely wishing, nor hoping, nor a positive mental attitude, nor a temporary surge of emotional enthusiasm, nor fear of punishment, nor fear of a worse alternative, nor peer pressure, guilt, intimidation, resignation, self-righteousness, nor stubbornness. But it is confidently knowing that God will do what He says He will do, when He says He'll do it.

This faith — real, saving faith — comes only from God. It is a gift only He can give, and it in no way comes, in any part or fragment, from our own human nature or attitudes, such as the false "faiths" listed above do (Eph. 2:8).

True faith is a gift God wants to give you. He will give it to you when you ask. But you will not ask until you see that you don't have it and that you may have been fooling yourself with worthless counterfeits. For an in-depth study of the kind of faith required for salvation, write for a free copy of our booklet, *What Is Faith?*

And, finally, realize this: All of the false "faiths" have two deadly things in common: First, none of them fool God. And second, all of them can fool us humans unless we ask God to show us our human self-deceptions.

Don't you be fooled — know what faith is, and what it is not! □

You Were Born to Rule!

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

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

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

Why were you born? What is the purpose for human life? Why are we here? Where are we going, and what will we do when we get there?

The Bible reveals that you were born for a tremendous purpose. But few really grasp the magnitude of the awesome future God offers mankind.

Believe it or not, you were born to rule!

Just as surely as Prince Charles of England was born into Britain's royal family to be a king, you are destined, when "born again" into the universe-ruling Family of God, to reign as an even greater and eternal king. Incredible as it may sound, your Bible reveals that you were born to ultimately help rule the universe.

To fully understand God's incredible purpose for humankind, we need to go back to the first chapter of Genesis.

1. What do the very first words of the Bible tell us about God? Gen. 1:1.

The original Hebrew word translated *God* in verse 1 is *Elohim*. *Elohim* is a uniplural or collective noun, like the words *church*, *family* and *kingdom*.

In other words, the term *Elohim* stands for a group composed of two or more individuals. *Elohim* in Genesis 1:1 means the God Kingdom or Family.

2. But who are the individuals presently composing *Elohim*? John 1:1-2. Was it the "Word" who created all things? Verse 3. What did the Word later become? Verse 14. Who, then, is the Word? Eph. 3:9. And who is the other divine member of the God Family? I Cor. 8:6.

John 1:1 and Genesis 1:1 take us back to the same time in prehistory — to the original creation of the universe. Both verses reveal that the two supreme beings composing the God Family created all things.

The Greek word translated into English as *Word* in John 1:1 is *Logos*. It means "spokesman" or "one who speaks." It was actually the *Logos* — the Spokesman, the Word of the God Family — who "spoke, and it [the creation] was done" by the power of the Spirit of God (Ps. 33:6-9, 104:30). And so everything was created and made by the divine being who later became the human Jesus Christ.

Nearly 2,000 years ago this same divine personage was begotten in the virgin Mary's womb by God who, through this miraculous begetting, became His Father. Yet at that prehistoric time of John 1:1 the Word was not yet the Son of God. He was "made" God's Son later, through being begotten or sired by God and born of Mary as a human being.

3. Is the God Family eternal, or ever living? Ps. 90:2, 102:25-27.

Both members of the Godhead have always existed, though our finite human minds can't quite understand how. Neither can we quite understand what electricity is, yet we know electricity exists.

But what does all of this have to do with your being born to rule?

Everything! For God is even now in the process of expanding His universe-ruling

MINISTRY

Family. And you can become a member of that eternal, spirit-composed Family.

4. After whose "image" and "likeness" was man created? Gen. 1:26-27.

In God's pattern for all life, kind reproduces like kind. And just as each created form of plant or animal life reproduces after its own kind, so humans reproduce humans. But unlike any of the animals God created, man was created in God's own "image" and "likeness." God made man like Himself — same form and shape. And He is now in the process of creating man after His own kind.

Notice again what God said in Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our image." The original Hebrew here indicates far more than merely the outward form and shape of God. "Image" also refers to mind and character. God intended for man, to whom He gave the gift of a thinking, reasoning mind, to develop the very mind and character of God.

The attributes of human mind and character truly make man God's unique physical creation. God has shared some of His own qualities with human beings and expects us to develop the "image" of God's perfect mind and holy character.

Simply stated, God is reproducing Himself. All human beings, past, present and future, have the awesome potential to become God's literal children — members of God's own divine Family.

5. Is God still in the process of forming and molding man as a potter works with clay? Isa. 64:8. Did Job realize God was forming a special creation in his life? Job 14:14-15.

Notice the latter part of verse 15: "Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." The "work" was Job. Job knew he was a piece of divine workmanship in the hands of the Master Potter.

6. Are the Spirit-begotten children of God clearly being fashioned by God for a specific purpose? Eph. 2:10.

"We" in New Testament language usually refers to God's Spirit-begotten children, as Paul intended in verse 10. God's begotten sons are His "workmanship." They are being "created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

God, through the power of the Holy Spirit He has put into His children (after their repentance and baptism), is forming in His

people His perfect spiritual character. With their obedient cooperation, He is creating in them His own character-image. He is creating them to be the supreme masterpiece of all His works of creation — individuals who will ultimately be capable of exercising the awesome powers of the God Family.

And so man, the material creation, is only the first phase of this creative process. The clay model has to be fashioned by experience, and with the aid of God's Holy Spirit, into the finished spiritual masterpiece possessing the very character of God.

An analogy of this process would be a caterpillar going through a metamorphosis and emerging as a beautiful butterfly. Humans must undergo a spiritual metamorphosis or change into perfect, spiritual members of the divine Family of God.

7. Does God plainly show that it is His purpose to expand His divine Family by bringing many sons into it? Heb. 2:9-10, Rev. 21:7. Isn't Jesus Christ actually the first of many sons of God? Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:18.

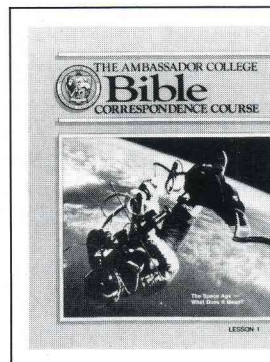
To be conformed to the image of Christ means to become like Him — to be glorified as He is glorified — to be part of the divine Family of God as much as Christ now is.

8. But what must happen to flesh-and-blood human beings before they can enter God's Family? I Cor. 15:49-53, John 3:3-8.

Jesus said we must be "born again" — changed into spirit. Yes, born again — this time born of the Spirit of God as divine Sons in the Family of God!

Next month we'll study more about this incredibly wonderful truth. And we'll see what life as powerful spirit beings will be like, living and working with Jesus Christ and other born-again members of God's universe-ruling Family.

(This subject to be continued.)



ENROLL IN FREE BIBLE COURSE

The short study you've just completed is a sample of the study method used in each monthly lesson of the newly expanded Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. You can enroll in this free course by writing to the *Good News* office nearest you. See inside front cover for addresses.

Christianity

(Continued from page 7)

tic “ambassadors for Christ” (II Cor. 5:20).

Christ’s next statement devastates the so-called Christianity of our godless society: “Blessed are the peacemakers,” Jesus promised, “for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt. 5:9).

This world’s Christianity indicted

Christ here exposes society for what it is: Satan’s organized system of *get* appropriating the name of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 11:14)! How else explain the wars and hostilities, the fiendish bloodbaths, of the so-called Christian countries? How could real Christians shamelessly endorse the countless conflicts in which professing Christians of this world have been involved?

Could such hatred possibly be traced back to the Teacher who said: “Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . . And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain” (Matt. 5:39-41)?

Jesus portrayed here the inoffensive, willing attitude, the lengths to which true Christians should go to avoid and settle strife (verse 24). A contentious Christian is actually a contradiction in terms. Christ trained ambassadors of light, men of goodwill (I Thess. 5:5). Yet they have met bitter opposition, just as He said they would.

Why is that? Why are true Christians persecuted? Jesus explained: “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14). James warned, “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas. 4:4).

Listen: Those who literally obey Christ’s simplest precepts could end up splitting their families right down the middle (Matt. 10:35-36). When we reject this world’s customs and habits, it

startles and disturbs our former friends, relatives and associates (I Pet. 4:3-4). Persecution is inevitable.

No wonder Christ concluded the beatitudes with the right mental orientation His people would need as they struggle to disengage from Satan’s system:

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:10).

Jesus did not praise those who invite persecution, as some enjoy doing. Rather, Jesus promised tribulation to even the most inoffensive person who quietly attempts to live by the Sermon on the Mount. Shocking? Obey Christ, and you’ll encounter persecution (II Tim. 3:12). Jesus Christ’s simplest teachings are spiritual blockbusters far too revolutionary for those who join denominations like social clubs to improve their civic status.

For example, Jesus counseled His followers to trust Him for deliverance or, sometimes, to flee the scene altogether (Heb. 13:6, Matt. 10:23) and not to retaliate. Yet this is considered naive, impractical. Meanwhile the sins that drove Cain to murder Abel proliferate until today this planet could incinerate in a 25-minute nuclear holocaust.

The best way

Whose way is best, after all? Surely we see by now that conventional Christianity is only one more brand of this world’s myriad religions, and not the Church Christ founded!

Yet to those few who accept real Christianity, those who quietly begin the inner struggle, the spiritual battle, the crucifixion of self, Christ promises, “Great is your reward in heaven” (Matt. 5:12).

Yes, reserved in heaven, to be bestowed at Christ’s return, is a literal crown, a challenging assignment in the government of God for those who, while reviled, falsely accused, savagely smeared by Satan’s world, win by practicing real Christianity (II Tim. 4:8).

Are you one of them? □

Science!

(Continued from page 15)

any microscope could hope to reveal.

You are holding a magazine in your hands. The matter this magazine is made up of would have been compacted into that superatom. Are you sitting in a chair? It also would have been part of that atom. Are you in a building? The building was in the superatom. You must be living in or near some village or city. It, too, was compacted into that superatom. Your state or country was also in that initial atom. The continents, the oceans — the entire earth — were in that superatom. The moon, the sun, all the stars in all the galaxies — every last bit of matter now in the universe was compacted into that superatom.

And that superatom was billions of times smaller than an electron!

Remember, now, this is a scientific theory.

It’s scientific because it was developed using Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity. It’s scientific because it relies on the theory of evolution. It’s scientific because it rejects the possibility that anything exists beyond the physical — namely, God! (Read I Corinthians 2:9-12 again.)

Now tell me that believing this scientific theory, like all of evolution’s elements, doesn’t take faith. Think: Does that really sound more educated than “In the beginning God . . .” (Gen. 1:1)?

A well-known physicist who developed a theory about the origin of our solar system published his findings several years ago in a popular scientific journal. He concluded his article with this sentence: “Because in the beginning was the plasma.”

“In the beginning was the plasma,” eh?

I think, and I hope you think (without being ashamed of it), that the Bible account is much better in all respects. God’s revealed truth is the authority for the truly educated: “In the beginning God . . .” □

Jane, 13, is an extremely quiet child. A loner with few friends, she is not particularly concerned about her personal appearance. Unhappiness, frustration and discouragement nag her waking hours. Academic tests show she is bright, yet she is struggling in school.

Jane's brother John, 10, is confident, outgoing, lovable and affectionate. He, too, is bright, and excels in both classwork and athletics.

Jane and John belong to the same middle-class family. They live in a nice house in a friendly neighborhood. Each has a private, attractively furnished bedroom and a closet full of fairly new clothing.

Their parents both work and are considered average people in the midwestern United States. They have achieved moderate professional and financial success. They see themselves as concerned parents with a problem daughter. They don't understand why their daughter is struggling in school — why she always seems moody and unhappy. Is she sick? Is something genetically wrong with her? How do we solve the problem with her? they ask themselves.

Well, Jane's problem is not genetic, nor is it purely physical. But what is wrong with the Jane of this imaginary family is occurring all too frequently in society today.

Most parents mean well, but they may be so involved with other considerations — earning a living, personal pursuits, their own problems — that they overlook the simple, basic needs of their children. Paramount to a child's proper development is the environment in which he or she grows up. And the right environment involves much more than relative physical prosperity.

An inadequate environment

Some 3,500 years ago another

family — this one real — experienced similar problems. The parents had similar backgrounds and seemed ideally suited to one another.

The husband, Isaac, was the son of Abraham and Sarah. God promised Isaac to Abraham and Sarah after they were past the childbearing age. A special wife, Rebekah, had been selected for Isaac. Rebekah was of the offspring of Abraham's brother Nahor.

Isaac and Rebekah did not produce children for several years. Isaac prayed to God that he and Rebekah might have children. In due time, twin sons were born to the happy couple.

One son, Esau, was what some today would call a "macho man," aggressive, rugged, an outdoorsman and a hunter. He was the apple of Isaac's eye. Rebekah, however, loved Jacob, who was more quiet, perhaps gentler, a stay-close-to-home type (Gen. 25:27-28).

Several problems for the children arose out of this parental conflict. As Jacob and Esau began to mature, the boys became competitive. The parents were not, as a team, mutually loving their sons and providing for the individual needs of each.

Neither did Jacob and Esau have respect and regard for one another. At an opportune time, Jacob bargained for his brother's birthright (Esau was firstborn), purchasing it for a mere serving of lentils. Instead of showing concern for Esau's welfare, Jacob used his brother's discomfort to "get" for himself. The possessions to be inherited from Isaac were great. True, Esau had insufficient regard for his birthright, but Jacob didn't have respect for his brother, either.

When Isaac grew old and was about to die, he called Esau to kill some venison, his favorite food, and prepare it for him. Isaac

intended to bless Esau afterward (Gen. 27:1-4).

Rebekah overheard the conversation and, showing apparently little or no concern for her older son Esau, devised a plan to allow Jacob to receive the blessing instead. She prepared two goats for Isaac and placed their skins upon Jacob's neck and hands to make him appear as Esau.

The deception worked perfectly. Isaac's sight was so poor that he accepted Jacob as Esau and gave him the blessing instead.

Esau, as we might expect, was furious. Not only was his birthright gone, but now he had lost also his blessing (Gen. 27:35-36). The enraged Esau sought to kill Jacob as soon as Isaac died (verses 41-42). Again, Rebekah became aware of Esau's intent and caused Jacob to flee to her brother's homeland. There he remained for many years.

In addition to this family strife, Esau had married contrary to the wishes of his mother and father (Gen. 26:34-35). Apparently, because Isaac and Rebekah each had a favorite son, they did little to raise the children as a united family.

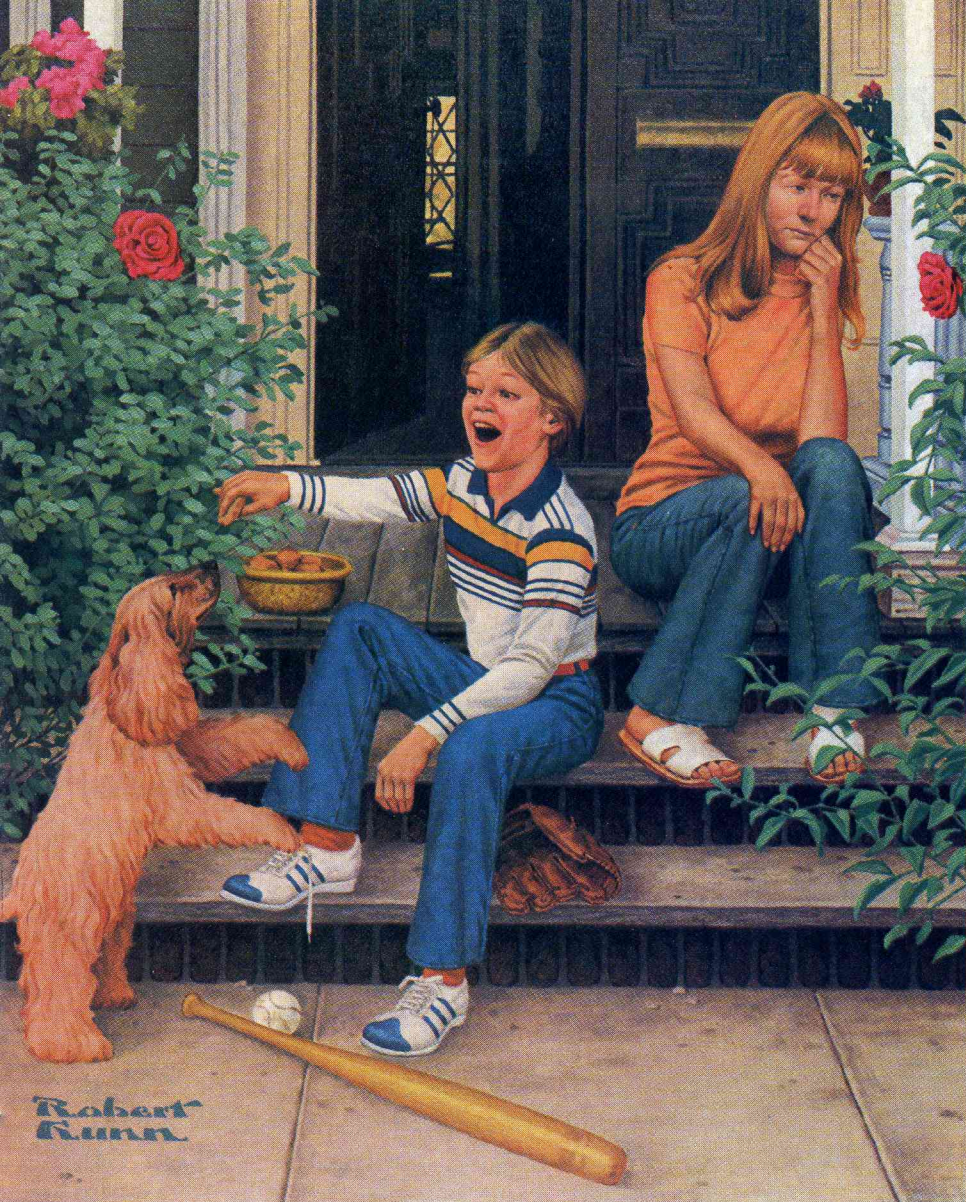
Parents should work together

In this brief story of this special family that God was using, we see internal conflict, hatred, deceit and disrespect. Isaac sought the interest of Esau. Rebekah preferred Jacob. Family and personal conflict was the result.

They were not working together as parents, with mutual love for both of the children. Rather, the parents were divided and created a divisive spirit between their offspring.

It is not uncommon for parents to make choices and show favoritism among their children, often in (seemingly) minor ways.

In the imaginary modern-day family that we examined earlier,



one of the children became an emotionally troubled low achiever, largely because her parents did not properly discern and respond to her individual needs.

Jane's and John's parents were preoccupied with their own professions. They were not cognizant of the needs of their daughter as she grew, and the problem, no doubt, started early in the child's life. Jane had been born first. Her parents were delighted with her.

When Jane was 3 years old, a son was born into the same family. From that time forward, John received most of the attention and affection. Slowly, Jane became introverted, uncommunicative and frustrated. The change was gradual. Jane's parents were so undiscerning of her emotional

needs that they didn't even notice.

On the other hand, John was cute. He demanded his parents' attention. Perhaps they most wanted a son to begin with. They devoted most of their limited time to the boy, and he developed a warm, loving personality.

This explanation may seem simplistic, but it is, with many variations, a common syndrome within families. The ultimate, devastating effect is the same on the children: frustration, anxiety, low self-esteem, unhappiness, moodiness and even suicide.

God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). God will give everyone the marvelous opportunity of being in His Family. God is love — perfect love (I John 4:8) — and He expresses that

perfect love toward all mankind. He is preparing each for a special position in His Family and Kingdom, and cares for each of us individually so that each of us, with our special talents and potentials, may achieve that tremendous goal.

We have to learn to emulate that kind of godly love in our child rearing, properly overseeing the growth and development of each of our children. We must help each of our children achieve to the full.

Encourage children

Children don't always fulfill the ambitions or expectations of their parents — nor should they. But if parents don't face this fact, they can unwittingly and selfishly become catalysts for failure in their children, rather than the inspiration for success.

All children are not the same. They are male and female. Some are zealous, high achievers, and some are not. Some have athletic ability, or musical talent, or mechanical aptitudes, and others do not. We should be delighted with our children, looking to and developing their individual strong points — not expecting or even wanting them to be all alike. That doesn't mean we must be delighted with everything they do or don't do, but our children must know we care and care a great deal.

Talking with children, honestly discussing values, problems and the purpose of life, is invaluable. Caring also includes properly correcting children for their own welfare.

When we truly care, our children will react positively. They will succeed. And their children will be better off, too.

We are called upon, in this end time, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers (Mal. 4:5-6). Our responsibility as parents is heavy, indeed.

But our opportunity is great, as well, and the end result will be supremely rewarding if we will strive to do what God expects. □

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Chapter 11

Jairus' Daughter Lives

By Shirley King Johnson

The disciples brought the boat to land on the southeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, in the country of the Gadarenes (Mark 5:1, Luke 8:26).

Tombs had been made in caves along the steep banks, and a man came out of one of the tombs to watch the disciples land.

This unfortunate man was an outcast of society — he was possessed by evil spirits and was extremely dangerous. Night and day he roamed through the hilly area where the tombs were, screaming and crying and frightening anyone who passed by that way.

Christ rebukes the demons

As Jesus and the disciples came ashore, the man rushed forward and flung himself



down before Jesus. The man was covered with scars where he had cut himself with jagged rocks. He was a fearful sight. The 12 disciples kept behind Jesus.

“What have I got to do with you, Jesus, son of the most high God?” demanded the man, or rather the demons in him. “I beg you — don’t torment me!”

“What’s your name?” Jesus asked in a stern voice.

“Legion,” replied the demons. “We are many. Don’t send us away — send us into the swine feeding on the hill.” A large number of pigs were chomping and grunting as they fed on

roots and nuts on the steep slope.

Jesus ordered the demons to go into the pigs. The disciples watched in amazement

Astonished but overjoyed, Jairus and his wife looked on as Jesus took their daughter’s hand and their daughter rose.

A sick woman . . . huddled at the edge of the crowd. . . . As Jesus strode through the crowd, the woman . . . touched the hem of His garment. Her illness was immediately healed.

as the pigs suddenly thrashed about in a wild frenzy. Rushing down the slope, the pigs spilled into the sea and were drowned.

The people who had been tending the pigs ran off to the village to report to the owners what they had seen (Mark 5:2, Luke 8:27-34).

Meanwhile, Jesus and the disciples gathered figs, wild plums and berries and sat down to eat. The man who had been newly released from demon possession sat beside Jesus, smiling and eager to watch and listen as Jesus talked.

Toward the north, across the sea, Mt. Hermon looked down, lifting its brow into a sky that had been swept clean of storm clouds and now was a bright blue.

But their peace was broken. The swineherds returned — and with them came what appeared to be the entire population of the village. All were angry at the loss of the swine and confused — even fearful — about what had happened with the former demoniac. The people were apprehensive about what Jesus would do next and asked Him to leave.

Without comment, Jesus led the disciples down to the boat. The man Jesus had delivered from demonism begged to be allowed to accompany Him, but Jesus laid a hand gently on his shoulder. “Go home and tell your loved ones how much God has done for you,” Jesus said (Mark 5:15-20, Luke 8:35-39).

Jairus comes to Christ

Crossing the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum, the group landed at the fishing wharf and tied their boat with Zebedee’s fleet.

The shore was awash with battered boats that had been damaged by a great

storm. The storm was the subject of everyone’s conversation.

Jesus stopped to talk to Zebedee, and a crowd began to grow into a multitude of men, women and children.

A ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum pushed his way up to Jesus and bowed at His feet.

“Jesus of Nazareth, my little girl is dying! Heal her, please! Touch her with your hands, I beg of you. There is no hope if you don’t come.” Tears choked his voice.

“Jairus, of course I’ll go with you,” responded Jesus, recognizing him. As Jairus, Jesus and Jesus’ disciples started on their way toward Jairus’ house, the crowd thronged about them.

“Who touched me?”

A sick woman who had suffered intensely for 12 years huddled at the edge of the crowd. She had been seriously ill all these years, and none of the many doctors she had visited was able to help her. The doctors did relieve her of her life savings, but her physical condition just grew worse.

As Jesus strode through the crowd, the woman reached out and touched the hem of His garment. Her illness was immediately healed.

Jesus stopped. “Who touched me?”

Peter’s eyebrows went up. “This mob is all around us, crushing in on us. How can you ask that?”

Jesus waited. “Someone who had faith for healing touched me a moment ago.”

Frightened to be noticed, the woman moved forward a step and bowed. “I did it. I knew that if I could only touch your clothing, I would be healed. Surely you don’t mind.” Looking up into His eyes, she was no longer afraid.

“Daughter, your faith has healed you,”

A messenger . . . rushed up . . . “Jairus,” he began, trembling, “. . . Your — your daughter has died. I’m very sorry.” . . . “Don’t lose faith,” urged Jesus. “Your daughter will be all right . . .”

He said. “Go in peace and be free from your suffering.”

Jairus’ daughter raised

As the woman thanked Jesus with tears of gratitude, a messenger from Jairus’ house rushed up to the crowd. “Jairus,” he began, trembling, “don’t bother the rabbi. Your — your daughter has died. I’m very sorry.”

Jairus covered his face and gave a shriek of anguish.

“Don’t lose faith,” urged Jesus. “Your daughter will be all right. Please take me to her.”

Jairus moved numbly on up the street and the group came to his house. Relatives and friends had already begun their death wailing — they were overcome with honest grief. Flutists added haunting notes to the din.

With a sweep of His hand, Jesus asked them to stop. “Why are you making all this noise? The child is not dead. She’s only sleeping.”

This startling announcement made the crowd pause. But after a moment the uproar broke out again — but now with scornful laughter added to the wailing.

Jairus sought out his weeping wife and brought her to Jesus. “Don’t cry,” Jesus said, consoling the distraught mother. “Your little girl is only sleeping.” He turned to Jairus. “I want this house cleared of the mourners.”

Jairus hesitated a moment. He opened his mouth as if to say something and then closed it. “Yes, sir.” He moved about, telling the people to go away. When the house was quiet, Jairus turned to Jesus.

“Thank you,” said Jesus, smiling. “Where is the child?”

Jairus and his wife silently took Jesus and

the disciples to a chamber where a small girl lay on a beautifully draped bed.

Going directly to the bedside, Jesus took hold of one of the girl’s hands.

“Rise, young lady,” He said softly.

The girl’s eyelids fluttered open and her large brown eyes looked up at Jesus in surprise.

Her parents embraced her with happy exclamations.

“Give her something to eat,” Jesus said as the child sat on the edge of the bed. “She must be hungry.”

“I’ll fix all of her favorite foods!” exclaimed the girl’s mother, pleased that she had her daughter back and that she could show her daughter love.

“Don’t talk to anyone about what’s happened,” Jesus commanded the parents. But news of the miracle swept throughout the region (Matt. 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43, Luke 8:40-56).

Two blind men see

Jesus and His disciples left Jairus and his now happy family and began walking toward the house. Two blind men followed them, tapping with sticks on the cobblestone street.

“Son of David, be merciful to us!” the blind men called.

When Jesus and the disciples had come into the house, the blind men came to Him.

“Do you believe that I’m able to give you sight?” Jesus asked.

“Yes, Rabbi,” they replied, moving closer.

“Let it be according to your faith.” He lightly touched their eyelids. Healed, they went away proclaiming the happy news of the miracle, despite Jesus’ admonition to tell no one (Matt. 9:27-31). □

What Was Uzzah's Mistake?

By Philip Stevens

Stunned — trembling — Ahio stood back! One moment he and his brother Uzzah had been driving the ox cart toward Nachon's threshing floor. The next moment, Uzzah was lying on the ground dead!

And why? When the oxen stumbled and the cart shook, Uzzah had merely put out his hand to steady the ark of the covenant, which was being carried in the cart. God struck Uzzah down (II Sam. 6:3-7).

Perhaps you have wondered about this incident. Why did God deal with Uzzah in such a harsh manner? Why did God take his life for trying to steady the ark when it was about to fall to the ground?

A closer study of this episode reveals valuable insight into how God views our lives now and our future opportunities.

Explicit instructions

The men of Israel had actually ignored explicit instructions from God concerning the transport of the ark.

God commanded that only the priests, the sons of Levi, were to bear the ark of the covenant (Deut. 10:8). Notice that when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River under the command of Joshua, it was the priests who carried the ark (Josh. 3:3, 6, 8, 17, 4:9-10, 16-18).

Further, God instructed that the ark be carried on their shoulders:

"But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none [oxen and carts]: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was

that they should bear upon their shoulders" (Num. 7:1-9).

Nobody other than Aaron and his sons was to touch any holy articles at all, including the ark. The penalty for violating this law?

"And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary . . . after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die" (Num. 4:15).

God told Moses to equip the ark with four rings, one in each of the four corners. Staves were to be passed through these rings so that the ark could be lifted and carried by means of the staves (Ex. 25:12-14).

Therefore, on two points the ark was being transported in a fashion totally unacceptable to God:

1) Uzzah was not of the Levitical priesthood. The genealogy in the book of Chronicles shows that Uzzah was David's nephew. He was the son of Abinadab, David's brother (I Chron. 2:13).

2) Instead of having the ark carried, David had it put in a cart (I Chron. 13:7).

Even King David, who was accompanying the ark, had obviously forgotten these conditions. He had actually chosen to do what "was right in the eyes of all the people" rather than consult God's clear law in the matter (verses 1-13).

Learning the lesson

Subsequently, David gave some serious thought to the situa-

tion and corrected the wrong that had occurred.

He gave these instructions, this time basing his orders on God's law: "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever" (I Chron. 15:2).

Action followed! "[David] said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel . . . For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us [by killing Uzzah], for that we sought him not after the due order. . . .

"And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord" (verses 12-15).

What it means today

Perhaps we would feel sorry for Uzzah. On the surface, after all, it would appear that he was merely the unwitting victim of unfortunate circumstances. But remember that the events of biblical history are recorded as examples for us today (I Cor. 10:11, Rom. 15:4).

Certainly we can learn from this incident that God does not compromise with His commands. In this case God acted to halt a dangerous trend — certain of His laws were being ignored and others would have soon been cast aside. God

stamped out disobedience before it spread.

Another valuable lesson is that God on occasion allows suffering so that spiritual lessons can be brought home to us in a more forceful manner. As Paul put it to the Christians at Rome, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

Our eternal well-being is of primary importance to God. In order for us to learn important spiritual lessons, severe trials are sometimes necessary. God called us and is constantly aware of our circumstances. He promises that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our capability to handle the situation (I Cor. 10:13).

How reassuring! It behooves us to constantly and carefully examine our lives to see if we have moved out of line with God's law.

Often we carry out this examination only when we are going through a severe trial. It is far better to be continually studying God's Word and measuring ourselves against its teachings. Had Uzzah and those around him been studying God's commands in the form that was available to them, Uzzah probably would have lived to a ripe old age.

Uzzah not lost

Uzzah is not lost, however. He will have another chance to study God's law and bring his life into harmony with God's way (and reap the benefits!). That chance, which will take place during the Great White Throne Judgment, is the hope of everyone who has ever lived and died without knowing of God's truth — the vast majority of people who have ever lived! God wants us all to eventually become actual members of His Family.

For more information, write now for a free copy of our article reprint entitled "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" See the inside front cover for the address of our office nearest you. □

Nonmember

(Continued from page 4)

he has owed me for two years! Then I got a gift of \$250 out of the clear blue — not expected at all. My stepson came to live with us and pays room and board. All of this from one tithe. The very first time in my life I ever freely gave 10 percent of my income. You can't make me believe it was coincidence at all.

**Harvey S.
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.**

Here's a letter from a man who used to be in debt — until he found the way to lend to others:

It has been a real pleasure tithing to this great Work again this year. A man I used to borrow money from to finance my livestock operations said to me recently, "You never borrow money from me anymore." Others borrow from me now. Surely tithing is an active law!

**L.P.
Bland, Va.**

Learning the hard way

Perhaps you think you are like Ed Smith, who couldn't afford to tithe? Here is an example of one young man who found out the hard way:

I am a New Zealander, age 17. This is a true story you will appreciate.

Last year, as a student, I learned of tithing. I recorded all the money I earned and decided to pay God my first tenth. I kept putting off paying God anything. I was broke — had laboring jobs.

Then one week I sent God my first tithe. Things financially got worse . . . [Then] \$200 for an insurance claim on my stolen clothes came through long overdue, and although I thought I had important things to spend it on, I decided to send God a tithe on the \$200.

Then I met two friends at an employment agency. I knew it was more than coincidence. I

prayed for the opportunity of taking a job with NCR (National Cash Registers). I had to take exams, and passed all with an average of 80 percent for the lot. I got the job.

**David T.
Sydney, Australia**

This young man put his finger on the problem. It doesn't pay to put off tithing. God's laws are permanent, living laws. The man who begins tithing will soon have unexpected breaks as David has found out.

So don't make the excuse of procrastinating as the young husband mentioned in the next letter did. God will find you out and test your word:

Enclosed is my husband's first check for God's Work. He did not believe in tithing and is still somewhat skeptical. When he received his paycheck last weekend, he began making excuses as to why he could not begin tithing right then, but promised that we would begin "with the next check we get"! Two hours later the mailman brought our income tax refund check and my husband had to admit that it was "the next check" with which he had promised to begin tithing.

**Donna T.
Torrance, Calif.**

God challenges us to prove Him. And He is ready to help us whenever we turn to Him for financial help.

Yes, tithing pays. It is a financial law God set in motion for man's good. It works for the young and old, for the wage earner and housewife, for the Christian and the non-Christian alike.

It's all explained in our FREE booklet, *Ending Your Financial Worries*.

Running away from God's laws is like running away from every good thing. God sets before everyone the way of life and prosperity — and its opposite, the way of poverty, suffering and death. God commands you to choose.

Which of the paths will you take? □

Sabbath

(Continued from page 12)

intent of God's law. Some even believed that it was sinful to carry a purse with money, reasoning that since one could not buy anything anyway, carrying money would be carrying a burden on the Sabbath. Carrying a second handkerchief, since it was not needed, would also be a burden, and therefore was prohibited.

Jesus Christ taught and practiced differently concerning the Sabbath. He said — and even His critics had to agree — that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath (Mark 3:4), that one could, for example, rescue an ox that had, on the Sabbath, fallen into a pit (Luke 14:1-5). Leading an animal to water was not wrong (Luke 13:15).

Christ taught balance, wisdom and having the right attitude in Sabbath observance. The Jews, steeped in physical rituals, could not understand. They would rescue an ox from a pit on the Sabbath, but condemned Christ for healing an unfortunate human being on that day! They, by adding their own traditions and interpretations, had made the Sabbath a burden.

The problem today is that some take Christ's teachings and go to the opposite extreme from the religionists of Christ's time. When Christ said it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath, He was being accused for healing a man with a withered hand. This act did not require work or labor prohibited by the Sabbath command. But this example does not imply that since nursing a sick person is "doing good," a person may be gainfully employed in that occupation on the Sabbath.

Regarding the other example, that of an ox in the ditch, some might conclude that any supposed "emergency" can be taken care of on the Sabbath. Some "emergencies" can wait, especially when they do not affect life or limb of man or beast. After all, an ox normally does not fall into a ditch each Sabbath, or even frequently.

Probably such an occurrence would be rare. And it would not take all day to get the ox out of the pit or ditch.

The Sabbath is a feast

The Sabbath is normally a feast day, not a fast day (Lev. 23:2-3). Obviously, a fast of more than six days includes a Sabbath, and under some circumstances a fast may be appropriate on the Sabbath. But the Sabbath usually ought to be a time for a feast, possibly including some special food delights.

The Sabbath is a holy convocation (Lev. 23:2). A holy convocation is a religious service convened by an authorized minister of Jesus Christ. To neglect such convocations when they are held, except for sickness or occasional unusual circumstances, is to disobey the Sabbath command. Read the solemn warning in Hebrews 10:24-27.

The Sabbath is to be observed each week regardless of pressing duties, rush business or ripe crops (Ex. 34:21).

The Sabbath, when observed rightly, is a delight: "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the Lord has spoken" (Isa. 58:13-14, New International Version).

Have the right approach

You may have heard the phrase "Thank God it's Friday." In the United States people often use this phrase to express their elation that the workweek is nearly finished and a weekend of relaxation lies just ahead.

But this phrase can really mean something important to us as Christians as well. Every Friday we can be thankful because the Sabbath is almost here. The most

enjoyable day of the week is just ahead.

Before sunset Friday evening, we ought to have taken care of necessary business or personal responsibilities so that they are not of concern on the Sabbath. As the Sabbath arrives at our home, we can breathe a sigh of relief. The Sabbath is here.

We have none of the usual weekly responsibilities, no business or job to take care of, none of the concerns that beset us the other six days. This is the day of rest and refreshing that God has provided. A day for holy convocation and fellowship with other Christians and, through other Christians, with Christ. A day without the usual mundane requirements and concerns.

At bedtime we should have no business or anxious thoughts to prevent us from resting well. Unless early church services require otherwise, we shouldn't need to set an alarm clock. We normally should be able to have the best night's rest of the week. When we get up there should be no urgency or need to rush. We can relax and enjoy the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is a time for real family togetherness that may not be possible during the rest of the week, a special time and opportunity to teach children about God and His ways. A day to do good in serving and helping other brethren at services, or to visit the sick, the widows or the elderly. A time when we can, with some leisure, observe and appreciate the beauties and marvels of God's creation, whether flowers or bees or any part of God's creation conveniently available.

It is a day when we can spend extra time in prayer, study or meditation, since we have added time not available during the rest of the week.

The Sabbath is unlike any other day of the week. It is holy time set apart by God for a special and wonderful purpose.

How you observe the Sabbath will determine how well you please God and how much you will be able to rejoice in this most special day of the week. □

TEST YOURSELF 5

A Monthly Booklet Quiz



The Seven Laws of Success

- How many of the seven laws of success can you name?
- What is the relationship between wealth and success?
- At birth, are human beings equipped with instinct?
- How can you avoid always being buffeted by circumstances in life?
- What is the foundation of true knowledge?
- Ordinarily, what are the two main goals of those who are considered successful in the world?
- What is real success?

What is your definition of success? How does someone go about attaining it? Most people pursue this elusive quantity, but few ever really achieve it. What kind of attitude does being truly successful require? Our free booklet, *The Seven Laws of Success*, offers the solid, positive answers to all the questions above. If it's been a while since you've read this booklet, why not reread it? Or, if you haven't read it, request a copy now by writing to our office nearest you.

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