

The

MAY 1981

Good News



**Do Your Children
BEHAVE IN CHURCH?**

SEE PAGE 16

**Why Many Don't
Understand Pentecost**
By Herbert W.
Armstrong

The Good News

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COVER: God's commandment to keep the Sabbath holy applies to the whole family, including children. Read "How You Must Teach Your Children to Behave in Church," beginning on page 16. Photo by Warren Watson.

Letters

"After the Millennium"

This January issue of *The Good News* is the *best* that I have ever read!

Each article . . . leaves a person feeling "stirred to action" and deeply impressed. After reading "After the Millennium — New Heavens and a New Earth," I longed to be a spirit being and freed from the faults and blemishes that I have.

Nobody should be deprived of reading these uplifting articles, and of seeing the insight that God has given you, Mr. Armstrong, and the loyal men and women who contribute to this excellent magazine!

Timothy George Titus
Greenville, S.C.

Faith in action

While studying "It Takes Courage to Be a True Christian!" by Mr. Dibar Apartian (January), and noting that we need both faith and the courage to act on it, a thought suddenly came to me. Along with the usual scriptures quoted on the subject, there is a big proof that "faith without works is dead" . . . It is the very title of one of the New Testament books. . . . *The Book of the Acts* [or works] *of the Apostles*.

How can anyone dispute the fact that faith must be acted upon, with courage, to be alive and valid, when the answer is staring at them from the top of each page of this wonderful book in their Bibles?

Julie Henness
Stanford, Mont.

"Occupy Till I Come"

I am glad in putting this few lines in my letter because it is a testimony in my life. I am a born-again Christian who has been keeping on looking for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ by praying for myself and reading my Bible, not knowing that this is not enough.

I came across . . . *The Good News* and I read a topic, "Occupy Till I Come." I was so touched that I have to sit down again and amend my ways. The magazine says in praying the Bible says we should be occupied not for a season, but till He comes, in preaching, working, helping the Gospel financially and in other aspects of help I can render.

What pains me most is that I found the magazine in a dustbin and I picked it up to wrap a book. But when I got home I read it. I know that it is not your power but God's power that has touched me through your help.

George Ade Olude
Lagos State, Nigeria

Why Many Don't Understand Pentecost

Do you realize thousands of Worldwide Church of God members assemble on the day of Pentecost without really understanding what this Holy Day really means? Test yourself. Read this article and see if you do.

By Herbert W. Armstrong

WE SIMPLY CAN'T understand *WHY* we observe the day of Pentecost just by reading the scriptures that apply specifically to that day — or apply specifically to all of God's festivals, for that matter.

You may read these specific scriptures alone and learn that you are **COMMANDED** to keep them. Actually that's what Mrs. Loma Armstrong and I did.

Do you realize that we kept all these Holy Days *alone*, by ourselves, while the Church of God members we then knew and fellowshiped with (Sardis era, Rev. 3:1-6) "mocked us to scorn"?

"Laughed to scorn"

It was history repeating itself. King Hezekiah of Judah had discovered these days ought to be kept — after both Israel and Judah had ceased observing them for a long time. The Temple at Jerusalem, through disuse, had been filled with filth. Hezekiah had the Temple cleansed. He sent out proclamations to keep the feasts of God. Judah did.

Hezekiah sent messengers up into Israel, the northern kingdom, from city to city in Ephraim and Manas-

seh, to teach them God's Holy Days must be kept. But "they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them" (II Chron. 30:1-10).

I had learned in my intensive, almost night-and-day study of the Sabbath question that we are commanded also to keep the seven annual Holy Days.

I DID NOT KNOW WHY! I knew only that God said, "*DO IT!*" My wife and I did — alone! For seven years!

Parent Philadelphia church kept them

It was not until God used me in raising up the first and parent church of this "Philadelphia era" (Rev. 3:7-13) that they joined with us in keeping these days. At first we kept only the seven annual Sabbaths. It was yet another seven years before God revealed to me **THE REAL MEANING OF THESE DAYS** — and that we should keep the entire Feast of Tabernacles — seven days plus the final eighth day, a Holy Day.

For 14 years we kept these *annual* days holy **BECAUSE WE SAW THAT GOD COMMANDED IT**. We wanted to obey!

In due time God revealed to me, and I to the Church, **WHY!** And even then many in the Church refused to keep more than the Holy Days!

And I feel many observing these festivals today do it because the Church does but do not fully understand **WHY** — the **REAL MEANING** and God's **PURPOSE** in commanding them.

I think of the millions observing Christmas, New Year's, Easter, etc. — days that have **NO REAL MEANING**. God's days have **MEANING**, and this **MEANING** God wants us to understand. That's why they are repeated yearly.

You need to understand what *went before*. Again I repeat: It's like tuning in on a movie in the last 10 or 15 minutes of it. Not having seen what went before — what led up to it — **WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT** — you can't understand what you see — you are **CONFUSED** — it's **MEANINGLESS!**

Angels first

Few know it, but God placed angels on earth long before He created the first man and woman. They were spirit beings, composed of spirit — not matter. This earth was to be their **PROVING GROUND**.

We need to understand that **CHARACTER**, either good or bad, *cannot* be instantly created by fiat. It must be developed by experience over a space of **TIME**. So God created angels with **MINDS** that could have knowledge, could **THINK**, reason, come to conclu-

sions, make decisions. God told them of HIS GOVERNMENT that He set over them. To achieve God's PURPOSE — eventually to finish the creation of the entire UNIVERSE — it was necessary that they all pull together, in harmony and unity. His GOVERNMENT was THE WAY to provide that — and also THE WAY to develop in them holy, righteous and perfect CHARACTER!

God set a super archangel, the cherub LUCIFER, on the throne of the earth over the angels — probably a third of all the angels. *Even the creation of the angels was not complete until CHARACTER, good or evil, had been SET in them.* That required their thinking, reasoning and final decisions as to whether they would choose GOD's way, which for brevity I call "GIVE," or the evil way of "GET."

God's GOVERNMENT is based on His LAW — the way of "GIVE." It is the way of LOVE. It is GIVING first of all a return of the LOVE OF GOD that God gives His creatures — giving it in obedience, reverence, worship, walking in fellowship with God, in a close contact with God.

But Lucifer led the angels into the opposite way of "GET." This is the way of vanity, lust and greed, jealousy, envy, competition, strife, violence, destruction, resentment and bitterness and rebellion against God and His authority over them.

The angels SINNED (II Pet. 2:4). They SET their character as EVIL. Lucifer was disqualified to administer the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, but his jurisdiction was the entire earth, and God would not remove him TILL a successor QUALIFIED to RESTORE the GOVERNMENT OF GOD on earth, and also had been INDUCTED INTO OFFICE.

God to reproduce Himself!

This left God (Hebrew *Elohim*, including GOD and THE WORD, who also was God and later became Jesus Christ — John 1:1-14). The uniplural GOD (*Elohim*) was the ONLY being who could be relied upon never to violate the law of GOD'S GOVERNMENT — for it is IMPOSSIBLE for God to sin.

Now came the MOST STUPENDOUS, AWESOME PROJECT OF ALL!

God would REPRODUCE HIMSELF!

He would do this through creating MAN in His own image, but out of matter. Spirit cannot be changed. But matter could be *changed* from the "GET" way to the "GIVE" way. This required repentance to be granted by God, and the human repenting, and with God's help CHANGING to GOD'S character. After this mortal MAN could, by a resurrection, be changed to SPIRIT composition, with holy, righteous, perfect CHARACTER, made then IMPOSSIBLE ever to sin — born a Child of GOD! WHAT a fantastic, AWESOME PROJECT!

Angelic sin had wrought great devastation to the earth (Gen. 1:2 — Hebrew *tohu* and *bohu*, really meaning "waste, empty, decay"), and I think it is indicated this same state of waste and decay occurred simultaneously to all planets in the universe, since they were LUCIFER'S potential jurisdiction.

So in six days God RENEWED (Ps. 104:30) the face of the earth for occupation by MAN.

The earth was formed of MATTER. God formed MAN of the dust of the ground. WHY? Because, as explained above, matter is subject to CHANGE — spirit is NOT. Once a spirit being is CREATED, he is immortal — changeless — can never be changed. Lucifer's and his angels' creation was not completed until THEY made their decision, choosing which CHARACTER they would SET in them, good or evil. They chose evil and can NEVER CHANGE.

LUCIFER'S name was changed to SATAN the DEVIL. The angels that sinned became DEMONS.

But now, once again, in renewing its face God made the earth BEAUTIFUL. He created fish life, bird life, animal life — each after its own KIND — then said, "Let us [not ME] make MAN in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). In other words, after the GOD kind — GOD WAS REPRODUCING HIMSELF.

That meant ultimately to produce Beings LIKE HIM, actually BORN OF HIM — in HIS FAMILY, and He, GOD, was to become the FATHER of the divine FAMILY, each born of Him, becoming one of HIS CHILDREN.

For the formation of CHARACTER, man must have MIND — capability — as had the angels, to KNOW, to THINK, to REASON, to COME TO CON-

CLUSIONS, TO MAKE CHOICES AND DECISIONS.

To give mortal human MAN this MIND power, God put a human spirit in every man that imparts INTELLECT to the human brain. A number of animals have BRAINS of larger or smaller size — otherwise approximately equal to human brain — EXCEPT they lack spirit to impart powers of INTELLECT.

But this human spirit does not SEE — the BRAIN sees through the eyes. The BRAIN hears through the ears. Knowledge may be stored in the human spirit, working as a COMPUTER to supply instant recall for THINKING. But the spirit is NOT the MAN — only something ADDED to him. It is capable of receiving and storing knowledge only through the human BRAIN and therefore is CONFINED to PHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE ONLY. The spirit does *not* impart human LIFE. The LIFE resides in the BLOOD, and is oxidized and keeps the man alive by breathing AIR — the "BREATH OF LIFE."

BUT — one of the WONDERS of the mighty GOD — this human spirit was made to NEED ANOTHER SPIRIT to JOIN WITH IT — the HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. This is the very LIFE of God — immortal, divine GOD life. Once a man receives God's HOLY SPIRIT as God's GIFT, he is BEGOTTEN (not yet born) as a CHILD OF GOD. He becomes an HEIR — not yet an inheritor — of God. But God's HOLY SPIRIT, imparted to man, joins with his human spirit. ("The Spirit [God's] itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" [Rom. 8:16].) The HOLY SPIRIT adds power to comprehend — to UNDERSTAND — spiritual knowledge and spiritual principles, which carnal man with ONLY the human spirit cannot know.

"For what MAN knoweth the things of a man [unknown to animals], save [by] the spirit of man which is in him? *even so* the things of God knoweth no man, but [by] the Spirit of GOD" (I Cor. 2:11).

The Holy Spirit imparts spiritual UNDERSTANDING, the LOVE of God, the FAITH of Christ and POWER to overcome.

In the Garden of Eden were two trees. One was the "tree of life," which symbolized the Holy Spirit.

Adam NEEDED this Spirit, beside the human spirit already created in him. God offered it freely. But Adam had to make a CHOICE. Also in the midst of the garden was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To take of it was to REJECT God's HOLY SPIRIT — GOD life, God's divine LOVE to fulfill God's law, spiritual knowledge of good and evil — deciding FOR THEMSELVES what is right and what is wrong — whereas GOD'S LAW defines that — and the tree of LIFE also symbolized GOD'S LAW and GOD'S GOVERNMENT, which Satan had rejected.

In effect, Adam said to God, after being instructed by Him and tempted and misled by Satan: "I choose to go MY OWN WAY — to DECIDE FOR MYSELF what is right and what is wrong. I want to be free to DO AS I PLEASE — not bound by and obedient to your LAW. I want to RULE MYSELF — I reject YOU as ruler over me."

As the fountainHEAD of the entire human family, he thereby CUT ALL HUMANITY OFF FROM GOD — cut HUMANITY off from access to the HOLY SPIRIT and any contact with GOD.

God then sentenced him and the human family to 6,000 years of being CUT OFF from contact with God. God adopted a 6,000-year "hands-off" policy toward human affairs.

In effect, God said, "Go, form your OWN governments, your OWN religions, your OWN forms of education, knowledge, production, your OWN society and civilization."

Adam probably did not realize it, and MAN, since, has NOT realized it, but SATAN has been subtly working in the minds of all humanity, swaying humanity HIS WAY — the way of "GET" (Eph. 2:2, II Cor. 4:4).

But — after the 6,000-year trial to PROVE that the way of "GET" leads only to unhappiness, discontent, sorrow, pain and suffering, disease and frustration and DEATH — God's MASTER PLAN called for 1,000 years of the RULE OF *THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD* and the establishment of the KINGDOM OF GOD.

God reserved the prerogative of intervening at any time He deemed necessary for His ultimate PURPOSE—to REPRODUCE HIMSELF and HIS PERFECT, HOLY, RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER in humans, changed

FROM the "GET" to the "GIVE" way and finally made immortal.

Where the Holy Days come in

Now, HERE'S where the annual HOLY DAYS and FESTIVALS picture to God's people annually GOD'S MASTER PLAN for working out HIS PURPOSE here below!

Up to this point I have given you the BACKGROUND without which you simply CANNOT fully understand the annual festivals. So here, in order, are God's HOLY FESTIVALS!

I

THE PASSOVER. This first Festival is NOT a Holy Day or annual Sabbath, but a festival nevertheless. It reminds us annually that Christ died for our sins — for ALL have sinned — and His death paid our penalty in our stead. Jesus was God as well as MAN. God was His only Father. He was begotten in the womb of Mary, not by a male human, but by God the Father through the Holy Spirit. Thus He was able, even though tempted like all other humans — actually far worse — for He had to meet Satan head on in spiritual combat, to overcome Satan and QUALIFY to restore the *GOVERNMENT OF GOD* on THIS EARTH. Until He had qualified, the assurance of the *KINGDOM OF GOD* to replace Satan's invisible rule over mankind could not be announced.

At this point it might be well to explain HOW Satan has ruled MAN. He did not say to Eve, through whom he caused Adam to sin, "Choose MY government, based on 'GET,' instead of God's government, based on 'GIVE.'" He led her, and through her Adam, to believe they were simply setting out ON THEIR OWN, deciding *for themselves* what is right and what is wrong, actually setting up their own human rule. So man has actually *believed* ever since. He has been deceived. He does not know Satan is his *real* ruler.

HOW Satan sways man

Satan is subtle. He DECEIVES. A deceived person *does not know he is deceived* — that he is wrong. He thinks he is RIGHT! Satan has DECEIVED THE WHOLE WORLD (Rev. 12:9). How?

Satan is a SPIRIT being. He is the prince of the POWER OF THE AIR

(Eph. 2:2). I told you about the human spirit in every human. When GOD wanted to communicate with Cyrus, king of Persia, to move him to send out a proclamation to move a contingent of captive Jews back to Jerusalem to build the second Temple, "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom" (Ezra 1:1), saying God had charged him to have this Temple built. God moved Cyrus through Cyrus' human spirit to do His will.

Likewise, Satan, a powerful spirit being next to God in power, and prince of the power of the air, is the SPIRIT "that NOW worketh *in* the children of disobedience" — that is, all humanity. I could not have understood that until I myself began BROADCASTING by radio and television. Every human spirit is TUNED IN ON HIS WAVELENGTH. He does not broadcast in words or music or pictures. You hear no sound. He broadcasts in ATTITUDES — attitudes of vanity, lust and greed, envy and jealousy, the spirit of competition, strife, bitterness and anger, hatred, violence, rebellion against GOD.

Thus he is *the god of this world*, who has been able to have "blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ . . . should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:4). Yes, he is the god of this world's many religions. They know not the TRUE God.

So has Satan continued to RULE THE WORLD, still on the throne of the earth where God placed him when his name was LUCIFER. It is so cleverly done man thinks he is ruling himself.

Christ in the Bible is called the "SECOND ADAM." Where the first Adam fell before Satan's subtlety, the second Adam chose the "GIVE" way and conquered Satan, qualifying to RESTORE *THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD*.

Just a few words at this point of events between the first and second Adam. God must have revealed some truth and His PURPOSE and PLAN to a few, from the time of Adam and Eve. Abel was called righteous by Jesus. Enoch walked with God. Noah was perfect, not only in his generations (ancestry), but in obedience to God. God spoke direct to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and blessed whatever

Joseph did. Then God intervened in this world's affairs by miraculously leading the slave descendants of Abraham out of Egypt. And God began revealing His truth IN WRITING through Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible. And here we find the first record of the annual Holy Day festivals. Yet we must put Leviticus 23 and the other sparse notices of the festivals with other scriptures, as I am here doing, to perfectly UNDERSTAND THEM and their REAL MEANING.

God called Israel, NOT for spiritual salvation, but as a carnal people of THIS WORLD, to whom He could reveal certain knowledge and laws, and test their willingness to obey — to demonstrate that, WITHOUT the Holy Spirit, the natural mind of man is wholly carnal (physical, material, fleshly).

God gave His Holy Spirit ONLY to the prophets of His own choosing for the purpose of doing GOD'S WORK as assigned to them.

The Passover commemorates the Passover night in Egypt, when the death angel flew over Egypt, killing the firstborn in every house where the BLOOD (lamb's) was not on the side posts and upper doorpost of the houses. The Israelites killed and ate roast lamb that night — a type of the crucifixion of Christ, called the Lamb of God.

Therefore the MEANING of Passover is to remind us yearly of Christ's death in payment of the penalty of our sins. But Christ's DEATH does not save us, by imparting ETERNAL LIFE. It merely RECONCILES US TO GOD. Those so reconciled are no longer CUT OFF from God. Through Christ they have been restored to CONTACT with God, who has eternal life to GIVE. Read Romans 5:8-10. We are finally SAVED by His RESURRECTION, not His death. The "blood of Christ" is the START toward eternal life, not the completion of it.

II

Now we come to the SECOND Festival — the SEVEN DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD. Remember, the *first* step is coming to Christ and accepting His shed blood as payment for our sins.

But Jesus said plainly, "NO MAN CAN COME TO ME, EXCEPT THE FATHER WHICH HATH SENT ME DRAW

HIM" (JOHN 6:44). THE WORLD IS CUT OFF FROM GOD. The only way to reestablish contact with God (the Father) is through CHRIST. And except the FATHER DRAW HIM, by means of His Holy Spirit, NO MAN CAN come to Christ.

Jesus selected and directly called His disciples. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16), Jesus said.

ONLY THOSE SPECIALLY CHOSEN (predestinated) BY THE FATHER could, in the day of Jesus and the apostles, come to Christ. So it has been through this Church age; GOD IS NOT TRYING, now, to get the world saved. Rather, we are STILL in the 6,000-year time when MAN IS CUT OFF from God. And GOD IS DRAWING to Christ ONLY those PREDESTINED (CHOSEN) by God!

It was GOD'S PURPOSE that MAN should *write the lesson* in human experience that the "GET" way leads only to unhappiness, discontent, suffering, frustration, destruction — and DEATH! Man has WRITTEN that lesson in human anguish, but HAS NOT YET LEARNED IT! God is going to PROVE, once and for all time, that only HIS WAY and HIS GOVERNMENT can produce PEACE and HAPPINESS and things GOOD!

Now, for those predestinated and CALLED, and DRAWN to Christ by the Father, the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures PUTTING SIN OUT OF OUR LIVES. Leaven puffs up, as does vanity and sin. It is a type of sin — not wrong *in itself*, but putting all leaven out of our dwellings *for seven days* pictures putting the "GET" way out of our lives — turning from "GET" to "GIVE." This is the BEGINNING OF BUILDING INTO OUR LIVES HOLY, RIGHTEOUS, PERFECT, GODLY CHARACTER.

Seven is the number that denotes COMPLETENESS. So it means *complete* change.

Also, it begins the 15th day of God's sacred year, first month, NISAN, the anniversary of the day the Israelites started out of Egypt BY NIGHT. Egypt also is a type of SIN.

The first of these days and the seventh are annual HOLY Sabbaths.

III

The THIRD annual Festival is PENTECOST, so called because of its use in

Acts 2:1. It MEANS "count 50." This one Feast God leaves it to us to COUNT for ourselves, beginning WITH the morrow after the Sabbath during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Forty-eight years ago I checked with every translation into English of the Bible, and every translation of that time said count 50 FROM the Sunday following the weekly Sabbath during the seven-day Festival. Then we discovered — and I forced men on the committee that translated the Revised Standard Version to admit — that it is a misleading translation to those who speak only English and are not familiar with Hebrew usage — that it should be translated "on" or "beginning on."

Originally this Feast was called Feast of Firstfruits, because it portrayed the very FIRST spiritual harvest of God's begotten children.

All seven festivals were based on the annual MATERIAL harvest in the "Holy Land." There were the two harvests yearly — the *first* the early grain harvest, early summer; the main harvest being the fall harvest, with four festivals coming in the seventh month of the sacred calendar. Thus, the annual festivals use the MATERIAL harvest to picture the SPIRITUAL.

FIRST group to receive Holy Spirit

REMEMBER, Adam cut mankind off from God. Man must have CONTACT WITH GOD THE FATHER to receive the Holy Spirit. The "tree of life" in the Garden of Eden meant God freely offered Adam — and his children, who form humanity — the Holy Spirit, but Adam had to make a CHOICE between that and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life represented God's Holy Spirit and the "GIVE" way of life. The other tree represented Satan's "GET" way of life. Adam chose, for the human race, the "GET" way. Then God drove MAN (representing humanity) from the Garden of Eden, "lest he . . . take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Gen. 3:22).

True, God Himself gave Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the prophets His Spirit for SPECIAL PURPOSES and to enable them to do THE WORK He assigned to them — of His own choosing. Other-

(Continued on page 28)

Preparing for Eternal Life - Your Checklist

To enter God's Kingdom, you must make proper preparations now. Here is a checklist of things to do to make sure you succeed.

By Leroy Neff

It was May, 1956. Dick Johnson, 21, newly commissioned Lieutenant Junior Grade in the U.S. Navy, prepared to take off from a naval air station at Norfolk, Va.

He was to pilot a Grumman S2F Navy aircraft, a propeller-driven plane whose twin engines supplied it with more than 3,000 horsepower.

One of Dick's close friends, a fellow officer, told me this true story. Only Dick's name has been changed.

Dick was described as a fine person, steady and dependable. He was a likable young man with high morals. He had completed one and a half years of flight training, and had shown unusual interest in learning well his craft as a military pilot.

On this particular morning Dick reported for duty at 8 a.m. At 8:10 a.m. he had the plane hurtling down the runway to take off. When the aircraft reached flying speed, he pulled back on the stick and the plane started to rise.

Then tragedy struck. The right wing folded and the plane flipped

over and exploded into flames! In a few seconds Dick was dead.

What went wrong? The ensuing investigation clearly showed the cause of the crash.

Pilots are supposed to go through a checklist and perform certain routine inspections before starting a plane's engine, before taxiing, before takeoff, after reaching altitude, before landing, after landing and after shutdown. This checklist is designed with safety in mind, to prevent the pilot or his crew from neglecting any point that could cause an accident.

Before even starting a plane's engine, for example, the exterior of the plane is to be visually checked to make sure that the control surfaces are able to function properly.

The Grumman Company, which manufactured Dick's aircraft, had, with the cooperation of the Navy, prepared a complete checklist for this particular plane.

But the investigation showed that Dick had not gone through this checklist, or he would not have crashed on takeoff. That was his fatal mistake!

This particular aircraft was constructed with folding wings that could be turned up while on board ship, to minimize the storage space

required. When the wings were down, and in the normal position for flying, there were 32 locking pins that had to be secured to hold the wing rigid.

There were two ways to determine whether these pins were locked. One, they could be seen on inspection from the ground and two, the actuating lever in the cockpit could be checked by pushing it fully forward. The difference between the locked and unlocked positions of this lever was only one-fourth to one-half an inch.

If Dick had checked visually on his ground inspection or had checked the lever, he would have known that the pins were not locked. The aircraft could not fly until the pins were locked. He did not check, the pins remained unlocked and the wing could not support the aircraft in flight. The wing folded, the crash occurred and Dick was dead. Just because he did not use his checklist.

There is a spiritual lesson here.

A Christian checklist

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus Christ is coming to this earth again soon. When He comes, the angels will gather the then-resurrected saints, along with the living saints then changed to immortality, and take

them to meet Christ in the air (Matt. 24:30-31, I Thess. 4:16-17).

In order to "take off" successfully and meet Christ in the air, certain preliminary conditions are essential. If even one of these essentials is neglected, we will not be able to rise and meet Christ.

Here, then, is a checklist of items Christians need to be sure of in preparation for being born into the Family of God at Christ's return.

1) Repent and be baptized

Until we have faith toward God, repent, are baptized and are granted forgiveness of past sins, we have not taken the first necessary steps to becoming a Christian (Acts 2:38).

Baptism is necessary not only for the forgiveness of sins, but so that we may receive God's Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands of God's ministers. Without the Holy Spirit, we are not begotten as children of God, and we will never be able to be changed to immortal spirit at Christ's return.

Not only must we be forgiven of past sins and receive God's Spirit, but we must also be forgiven of any subsequent sins we may commit. Christ's prayer outline (Luke 11:1-4, Matt. 6:9-13) includes a request for the forgiveness of sins.

We all sometimes sin, but if we repent of those sins — turn and go the opposite way — and ask for forgiveness, God will grant it. Sins not repented of, and thus unforgiven, cut us off from God (Isa. 59:2).

No one knows when death will end this physical existence. After death, in our next conscious instant, we will stand before God. We had better not stand there unrepentant, with a lot of unforgiven sins!

2) Obey God

From Genesis to Revelation, one of the Bible's major themes is that we must obey God. Adam and Eve did not and were thrust out of the Garden of Eden — and most of mankind has been cut off from God ever since.

Notice, however, how Abraham, the father of the faithful, set the example. God said Abraham "obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Gen. 26:5).

The prophet Moses repeatedly stated that obedience to God would result in blessings, while disobedience would result in cursings.

God's commands and laws show the right way to live and define sin (I John 3:4), and no sinner is going to be in God's Kingdom. In fact, if we do not keep God's commandments, we do not really know God at all and are liars if we say we do (I John 2:3-4). The last chapter in the Bible states that only those who do God's commandments will have a right to the tree of life (Rev. 22:14).

Do we realize the importance of trying to keep every one of God's commandments as perfectly as possible? Some neglect what they consider minor laws or "least commandments" (Matt. 5:19). Some justify or rationalize "white lies" or "minor" transgressions of the Sabbath and other laws.

But sin is sin, and whether it is little or great, it will prevent us from entering God's Kingdom, unless repented of and forgiven.

Dick Johnson neglected one "little thing" in his preflight checklist, and it cost him his life. Don't let what you might consider a little thing keep you out of God's Kingdom.

Some people have the attitude of doing as little as possible — doing just what is required of them and no more. Jesus said that if we do only what is commanded of us, we are still unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10). We must do all God commands, and then go above and beyond in our Christian lives.

3) Good works

Jesus said that Christians are the light of the world. He told His followers, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).

An essential part of Christian living is to do good works (II Tim. 3:17). Performing good works is simply doing good to others, or following the principle of *give* rather than *get*. Good works are expressed in outgoing love and concern, in showing kindness and consideration to others. These good works must be seen by the unconverted.

If we are attached to the true vine, Jesus Christ, we will have much fruit, or many good works (John 15:5).

4) Bible study

God's words are a lamp to our feet; they show us the way to go (Ps. 119:105). Without them we will go astray. There is no other method of learning the right way of life except to read or hear His words.

So how can we know what God expects of us in our Christian lives unless we diligently study His Word? God must talk to us and convey to us the knowledge of His will. Since He does not audibly speak to each of us, we "hear" what it is we are to do by studying His Word.

Don't think you will be able to stand before Christ and say, "They didn't tell me!" The philosophy that what you don't know won't hurt you does not apply in our relationship with God. Ignorance of the law, in this case God's law, is truly no excuse, because we have the opportunity to learn what we should know by studying the Bible.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15, Revised Standard Version).

You cannot leave such essentials of Christian living to someone else. Your wife or husband cannot study God's Word for you. You must do it for yourself. Bible study is an essential part of the Christian's daily life and routine.

5) Prayer

Not only must God regularly talk to us, but we must regularly talk with Him. We must have two-way communication with God to please Him.

The faithful people of God throughout the Scriptures were praying people. David prayed three times daily, as did Daniel (Ps. 55:17, Dan. 6:10). Daniel continued this practice even though he knew it might cause his death. Jesus Christ prayed often and long. On at least one important occasion, just before the selection of the 12 disciples, He prayed all night.

"Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and sup-

plication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6, RSV).

Not only should we make our needs and requests known to God, but we should thank Him for His mercy and all His blessings. Count your blessings and then thank God for all of them. If you can't find much to include, study the Psalms and see how David thanked God. Compare your blessings with those of others who have not been called, to those of others in the poor nations of the world, to those of others suffering from illnesses and handicaps. You have no shortage of things to thank God for.

You can't walk with God if you don't talk with God. Make prayer an important part of your daily life. Make it your habit to spend a long time each day on your knees, in a private place, in prayer. In addition, pray silently at other times during the day as the occasion permits. Notice Nehemiah's example of such a prayer — one that really brought results (Neh. 2:4-8). Occasionally you should also fast, so that you may draw closer to God.

6) Have a right attitude

It is easy to get into a wrong attitude — and sometimes not realize it. Here are some common wrong attitudes.

Envy is one example. You may be envious of someone else, his opportunities or his blessings, when you compare yourself with him.

But remember that we are to

rejoice with others when they receive blessings, rather than envying them (I Cor. 12:26). And we are not to compare ourselves with anyone else in the first place (II Cor. 10:12).

Sometimes God gives one person special opportunities of service, while at other times He gives such opportunities to someone else. We all need to learn to be abased and to abound and take it gracefully. We must never envy or despise others in the process.

Another wrong attitude is to have hurt feelings or bitterness toward others. A root of bitterness, if not torn out quickly, will ultimately consume and destroy a person (Heb. 12:15). Don't let that happen to you.

Some people become upset because of what someone else does or, in some cases, what another person does not or will not do. What difference does it make what someone else does or does not do? God is the Judge of us all, and He will take care of the problem in His own way and time. Why lose your own salvation because of the actions of others?

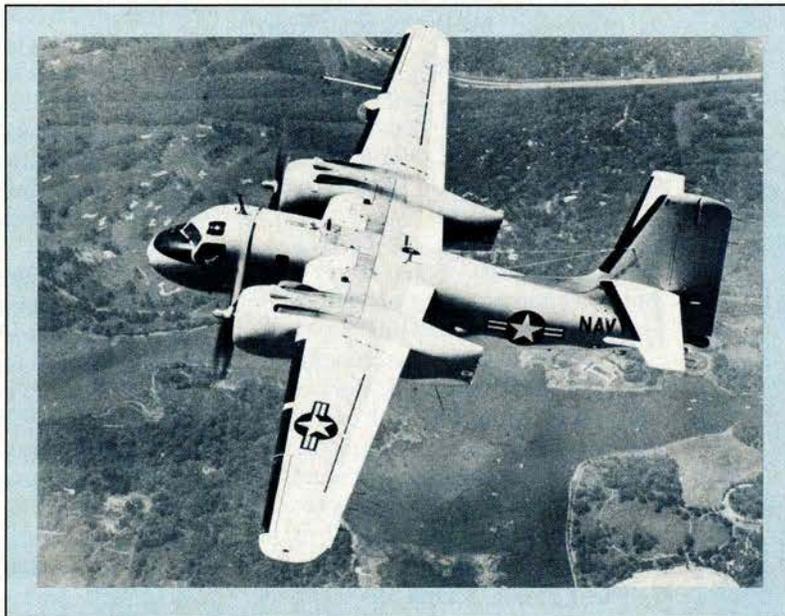


Photo courtesy U.S. Dept. of Defense

Dick failed to perform a complete inspection on a Grumman S2F Navy aircraft like the one above. The mistake was fatal! Christians need to be certain of the items on their own "checklist" in preparing to be born into God's Family. Several specific conditions must be met.

Satan is called the "accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10). Some people get in a wrong attitude and do Satan's work for him by making accusations against others in the Church. If someone sins and you know it, you should follow Christ's instructions in

Matthew 18:15-17, and Paul's in Galatians 6:1, instead of telling other people about it.

One of the worst attitudes to get into is one of rebellion. Satan is the archrebel, and he sometimes is able to influence people in the Church to do what he did and rebel against God. Such rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (I Sam. 15:23).

The kind of attitude we should all have is expressed beautifully in Isaiah 66:2: "But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word" (RSV).

Such a person is not proud or haughty, but is meek and modest. He is childlike, open, teachable and approachable (Matt. 18:3-4). He is respectful of God, His government, His law, His servants, other people and civil authorities.

7) Endure to the end

It will do no good whatever if you fulfill all of the previous six points for a while and then quit. It is the person who endures to the end who will be saved (Matt. 24:13).

In a race the only ones who are rewarded are those who finish. One who drops out after a few laps is not honored. We must not quit, no matter what happens. Through thick and thin, we must keep going. We must be determined to reach our goal, God's Kingdom.

Jesus Christ is going to come again to restore God's government to this earth. At that time He will reward each of us according to our works. That occasion is probably a lot closer than some think.

If you do not fulfill the requirements on this checklist, you may want to take off when Christ comes, but instead you will crash and burn in *Gehenna fire*. Make sure you are continually examining yourself with this "Christian checklist" so that you will not fall short in any of these areas. Then, when Christ returns, you will be able to take off and meet Him in the air. □



Why Boaz Took Ruth to Wife

The rich spiritual content of the book of Ruth, so meaningful during the Pentecost season, is often overlooked.

By Dick Paige

The English Bible does not reflect the original position of the book of Ruth. Today we find it sandwiched between the larger books of Judges and I Samuel.

However, in the Old Testament as preserved by the Jews (Rom. 3:2), Ruth appears in the third division, known as *The Writings*.

It is one of five books known collectively as *The Festival Scrolls*; each book was read in the synagogue at a different festival.

The book of Ruth was the assigned reading for the Feast of Weeks, which we more commonly call by its Greek name, the Feast of Pentecost.

How appropriate this assignment was! For this little book does more than recount the physical origins of the house of David. This book, by analogy, instructs true Christians in the steps leading to our ultimate destiny — to be the Bride of Christ at His return.

The opening scenes of the book take place in Moab, where Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem, and his wife Naomi had gone to live because of a famine in Judah. In Moab Elimelech's two sons married Moabite women.

After the deaths of Elimelech and her two sons, Naomi decided to return to her own country. Both of

her widowed daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, planned to accompany her, but only one, Ruth, did.

Being poor, Ruth went to glean in the fields during the spring harvest. Protected and encouraged by Boaz, Naomi's kinsman, Ruth continued to work in his fields.

At the end of the harvest, at Naomi's advice, Ruth boldly indicated her desire to marry Boaz. However, another kinsman had a prior claim. Boaz redeemed Ruth from this other kinsman and married her. The book closes with Naomi, who had earlier lamented her barrenness, rejoicing in her children through Boaz and Ruth.

There are many interesting analogies in the book of Ruth, several of which are particularly instructive at this Pentecost season.

Ruth's total commitment

"But Ruth replied, 'Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me'" (Ruth 1:16-17, New International Version). Do you understand this statement's full significance? In these few simple yet stirring words, Ruth pledged her willingness to abandon everything: her homeland,

her people, her religion — her whole identity — to follow Naomi.

This total renunciation of self — this total commitment to a new identity and a new destiny — is this not what our baptism symbolizes? After God gave us repentance, didn't we pledge to put our hand to the plow and never look back (Luke 9:62)?

This is the kind of commitment that distinguishes real repentance from the worldly sorrow Paul mentioned (II Cor. 7:10). Our commitment must be as thorough as Ruth's.

Ruth the gleaner

"And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.'

"Naomi said to her, 'Go ahead, my daughter.' So she went out and began to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech" (Ruth 2:2-3, NIV).

Ruth's labor as a gleaner in the fields of Boaz, her future husband, is full of meaning for us.

What does a gleaner do? A gleaner neither sows the seed nor nurtures the crop as it matures. Both these jobs are the responsibility of the husbandman who owns the field. Thus a gleaner is, by definition, one who is allowed to share in and benefit from the enterprise of another.

What a wonderful analogy! God is the Husbandman who is creating righteous character in us. He originated the plan and makes available the power, through His Holy Spirit, to build godly character:

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

What, then, is our role? Like the gleaner, we must be active. We must not

quench the Spirit, but allow it to guide us into a more thorough understanding of God's law. Armed with a godly understanding of right and wrong and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we will be able to overcome temptations.

Being a "spiritual gleaner" requires effort. But our opportunity (our calling) and our profit (godly character) is due to the enterprise of God, the true Husbandman.

Boaz provided for Ruth

A gleaner's work was neither easy nor pleasant. Not only was Ruth exposed to ridicule and possible physical abuse at the hands of the harvesters, but her long hours of labor might have been rewarded with little grain.

Boaz, however, not only provided protection for Ruth (Ruth 2:9), but instructed that grain be deliberately dropped in her path so she would be encouraged and successful in her efforts (verses 15-17).

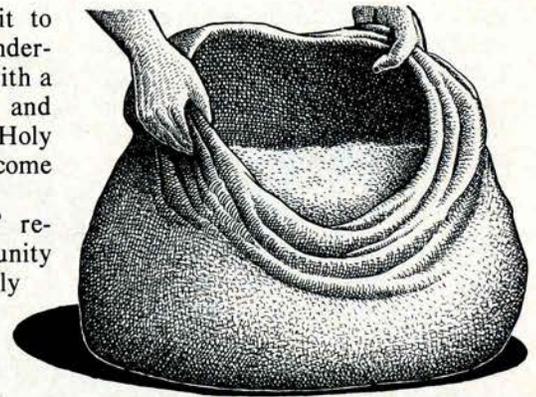
God deals similarly with us. Many times we become discouraged, frustrated in our efforts to use the tools God has made available for our spiritual growth. We may even begin to doubt that God still loves us. There is no reason for such doubts!

Consider Paul's instruction: "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:17-19).

Just as Ruth was under the constant protection and loving care of Boaz, we are safe in the keeping of our heavenly Father and His Son,

Jesus Christ. God is ready to strengthen us in our weaknesses (Isa. 41:10), and He is with us in all our troubles (Isa. 43:1-2).

Therefore, as Paul wrote, "Let us lay aside every weight,



and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1-2).

Ruth boldly sought marriage to Boaz

Acting on Naomi's counsel, Ruth boldly expressed her desire to become the wife of Boaz.

What nerve! After all, Boaz was a wealthy, highly respected landowner, and Ruth was only a penniless gleaner in the fields. Even she admitted she was less than his own female servants (Ruth 2:13). She was also a Moabitess, an unclean gentile.

Yet Boaz readily took Ruth as his wife, because she had found favor in his sight and he loved her.

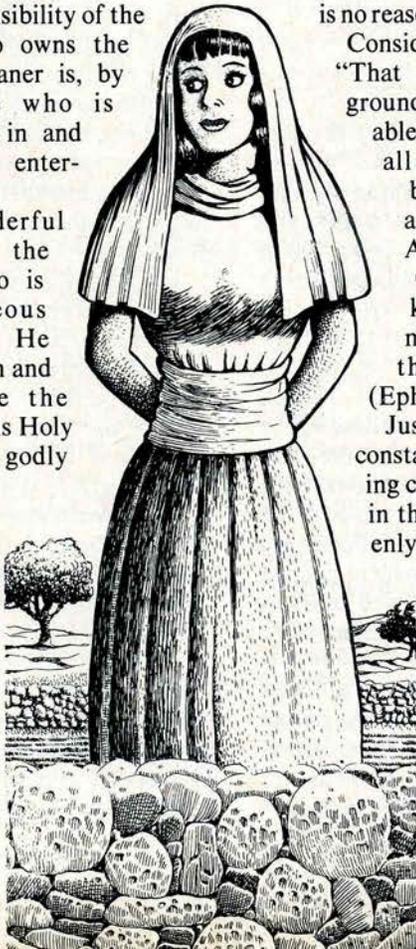
To many outside the Church, our goal — to be born into the Kingdom of God as God's very Children is not only audacious, it is blasphemous. The world simply cannot understand this truth.

Yet Boaz manifested his love toward Ruth while she was still a gleaner in his fields. And that love encouraged her to seek a more permanent relationship with him.

Think how often God has already demonstrated His love for you. Has He not done so to encourage you to believe the plain truth that He wants you in His Family? The Scripture reveals the Church is the future Bride of Christ. Can there be any marriage except between beings on the same plane?

Is not Christ the "firstborn among many brethren"? (Rom. 8:29). Are

Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz to help provide for Naomi and herself. Thanks to Boaz' encouragement and protection, her work was very successful.



we not told that in the resurrection, we shall be as He is (I John 3:2, Phil. 3:20-21)?

Audacious, yes! Blasphemous, no! That is our destiny, if we grow in character and endure to the end.

Boaz redeemed Ruth

Although Boaz loved Ruth and she loved him, Boaz was not free to take her as his wife until he redeemed her from a prior claim.

So, too, Christ must redeem us if we are to marry Him. Our redemption began with Christ's death on Passover (Rom. 5:8-10).

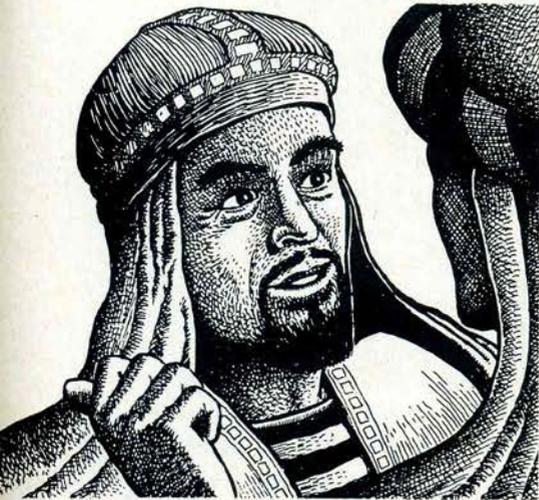
That process is still continuing. For, although we are instructed that we must no longer walk after the flesh but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:13), we are still subject to the downward pulls of Satan, this world and our human nature — we still commit sin (I John 1:8).

Christ must liberate us from the law of the flesh (Rom. 7:23) by delivering us from the flesh through the resurrection. The law of God, believed to have been given to Israel at Mt. Sinai on Pentecost, is being written in our hearts under the New Covenant (Jer. 31:33, Heb. 8:10).

When we are transformed into spirit, we will be fully redeemed from the works of the flesh. We will be Spirit-born Children of God who cannot sin.

Naomi like the Church

Although Ruth is the central figure in the book that bears her name,



Boaz protected Ruth and instructed his harvesters to leave extra grain in the fields for her to gather.

Naomi also played an important role.

It was through Naomi that Ruth was brought into contact with the true God. It was also through Naomi that Ruth was brought into contact with her future husband. Indeed, it was Naomi who encouraged Ruth to seek marriage to Boaz.

The role of Naomi is analogous to that of the Church in our lives.

Through this great Work of God, we were brought into contact with God. The Church has continually encouraged us and guided us, through

Think of it! This Philadelphia era of God's great Work has the opportunity of participating with God in bringing forth so much spiritual fruit that God may have chosen to represent this fruit by the second grain of the spring harvest!

the ministry, in our spiritual development — feeding us first the "milk of the word," and then "meat in due season." The Church has continually urged us to keep our eyes on Christ and on the goal of becoming Christ's Bride at His coming.

The two harvests

Israel's spring harvest season lasted seven weeks. The cutting of the wave sheaf on the day after the Sabbath, in the Days of Unleavened Bread, signaled the beginning of the barley harvest. This was followed by the harvest of wheat (which ripened later), which was concluded by Pentecost at the end of the seven-week period.

Ruth and Naomi returned to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest (Ruth 1:22) and Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz all through the barley harvest and also

through the wheat harvest (Ruth 2:23).

By analogy, Boaz represents Christ, and Ruth, the Church at Christ's coming. The wave sheaf represents Christ, the first of the firstfruits. The spring harvest that began after the offering of the wave sheaf represents the rest of the firstfruits, those called and converted during this age.

What, then, is the significance of Ruth's labors during both the barley harvest and the wheat harvest?

Ancient Israel's spring harvest was a double harvest. It consisted of seven weeks (the number of completion) of harvesting two different grains.

The earlier harvest, beginning with the wave sheaf, was the barley harvest. This was followed until Pentecost by the harvest of the early-ripening wheat. Could the presence of two different grains in the same physical harvest indicate two phases in the spiritual spring harvest?

Following Christ's resurrection, the Gospel was preached throughout the Roman Empire and beyond by the apostles. Those called and converted as a result of their preaching, and its echos to our own generation, could be viewed as one of the grains in the spiritual spring harvest.

In our generation, however, God raised up a new phase of His Work, under the direction of a new apostle, with the same commission — that of preaching the Gospel as a witness to all the world (Matt. 24:14).

We, the members of God's Church today, are the fruit of this end-time Work.

In fact, it is possible that those called, as a result of this Work, to be part of the Body of Christ in this generation could be as numerous as all those called in all previous generations of the Church!

Think of it! This Philadelphia era of God's great Work has the opportunity of participating with God in bringing forth so much spiritual fruit that God may have chosen to represent this fruit by the second grain of the spring harvest!

Let's all heed the exhortation of Christ's apostle, Herbert W. Armstrong. Let's all actively seek to draw closer to God and hold up the arms of His servant as never before. The harvest is truly plenteous! □

'I Believe - Help My Unbelief!'

Do you know the difference between real Christian conviction and mere belief? Whether you stay in God's Church may depend on your answer!

By Dibar Apartian

At the time of his baptism, George (not his real name) said he would never leave God's Church. He would always keep close to God and walk with Him, no matter what happened.

George was a student at Ambassador College. He had waited until his senior year to be baptized because he had wanted to be sure of himself.

That was eight years ago. Today George is no longer with us.

Why? What caused him to turn away from the truth? What made him become an unbeliever? And how can you be sure that you won't follow his bad example?

Are you convinced of your beliefs?

One day the father of a sick boy came to Christ and said, "Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he tear-eth him" (Mark 9:17-18). The man further stated that Christ's disciples had been unable to heal the boy.

"How long is it ago since this came unto him?" asked Christ. The father answered, "Of a child. . . if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us" (verses 21-22).

A pathetic cry from the father, beseeching Christ's help for his son! The man wasn't sure whether Christ would — or could — do anything. But when he heard that "all things are possible" with God, he immediately cried out and said, "Lord, I

believe; help thou mine unbelief" (verses 23-24).

Do you understand the true meaning of that request? The father wanted to believe, but needed help to dissipate his doubts. He needed help to overcome his unbelief.

Every one of us at times has some doubts. We want to believe — we think we believe — but we are not totally convinced.

If, for instance, you were asked, "Do you believe this is God's Church?", your answer would certainly be, "Yes, I do."

But would you give the same positive answer if you were asked, "Are you totally convinced of it?"

To be totally convinced you must have overcome all of your doubts once and for all. If those who have left the Church had been totally convinced that this is God's Church, they would never have left it.

George, the student at Ambassador College, only believed. He was not totally convinced. That's why he is no longer with us.

There is a big difference between believing and being convinced. Once you are convinced, you have passed the point of no return. You can never go back. You have overcome all your arguments and doubts.

Requires conviction

All of us in God's Church need more conviction, not just simple belief. The difference between one who stays in the Church and one who leaves is the difference between believing with conviction and believing without conviction.

The Bible defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

A major part of faith is conviction, a quality some in God's Church lack today. Did you know that the words *convicted*, *convinced* and even *confute* are derived from the same root?

In Acts 18 we learn that Apollos, a Jew, used the Old Testament to prove to his own people that Christ was the Messiah. Eloquent in speech and well versed in the Scriptures, "he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John" (verse 25, Revised Standard Version).

Why was Apollos able to convince the people? The fact that he himself was totally convinced of his beliefs helped considerably.

"For he powerfully *confuted* [the same Greek word is translated *convinced*] the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus" (verse 28).

Can you do that? Can you "confute" someone with the Scriptures, as Apollos did, showing that Christ is Jesus? You should be able to if you are totally convinced of this truth, and if you are conquered by the Spirit of God.

Notice the Bible's simple, beautiful description of Abraham's conviction: "No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully *convinced* [or, "fully *persuaded*," according to the King James Version] that God was

able to do what he had promised" (Rom. 4:20-21, RSV).

This is faith with conviction. It opens all doors and helps you resist all temptations. It overcomes all feelings of discouragement or defeat. If you have this sort of conviction, you can be sure you will always remain in God's Church.

Faith in action

Do you sometimes take the truth for granted? Don't! Make the effort to check up on things, to prove and understand them.

Conviction requires action. It requires effort. Deepening your conviction requires greater effort. You have to work harder, push harder, study and pray more.

Unfortunately, some in God's Church are not doing that. And their belief has no conviction!

One day four men brought a paralytic to Christ. But they could not get near Jesus because of the crowd around Him.

The men knew — they were convinced — that if Christ saw the paralytic He would heal him. Consequently, their task was to find a way to get near Him. They were determined to do their part.

"And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay" (Mark 2:4, RSV).

Imagine! They came right through the roof. Their faith stirred them to action. Removing the roof was not an easy task. It took ingenuity and effort, but they succeeded.

Christ marveled and said, "My son, your sins are forgiven" (verse 5). And the man was healed.

Can you neglect your responsibilities and honestly expect God to do everything for you? Conviction requires much more than folding your arms and passively waiting for something to happen.

The Bible also relates the story of a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for 12 years. She "came up behind him [Christ] and touched the fringe of his garment; for she said to herself, 'If I only touch his garment, I shall be made well'" (Matt. 9:20-21, RSV). Notice! The woman was convinced in her mind that if she

touched Christ's garment she would be made well. She found her way through the crowd to Christ and touched Him.

Christ turned and said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well" (verse 22). And she was healed.

Is your faith without conviction — without action?

God's Church today is on the right track. But each one of us needs conviction to be able to remain on the right track. It is high time we all realize this! Faith requires conviction and action!

Jesus gave us an example in every-

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thing — in attitude, conviction and love. He knew why He was on earth. He was totally convinced of His mission and what His Father expected of Him. We, too, must be convinced of our calling and of our mission. The conviction of Christ must be in us through God's Holy Spirit.

A positive attitude

Look how Christ prayed before Lazarus was brought back to life. He lifted His eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me" (John 11:41, RSV).

What a positive way to start a prayer! That's total conviction. Before asking anything of God, Christ stated, "I thank thee that thou hast heard me."

How did Christ know God heard Him? Because of His conviction: "I knew that thou hearest me always" (verse 42). Then Christ added, "I

have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me."

That was Christ's whole prayer. The only thing left for Him to do was to order Lazarus to come forth. And Lazarus came forth.

If you ever hear Herbert W. Armstrong's prayer when he anoints someone, you will know what prayer with conviction is. Humbly, but boldly and forcefully, Mr. Armstrong claims God's promise of healing. He reminds God that when we repent of our sins and turn to Him in faith, He promises to heal us. All of us need this type of conviction in our prayers.

Some don't want to be convinced

Some people pass by the truth without noticing it. Others stumble on it. Still others learn something about the truth but are not willing to be convinced by it, for fear of having to change their way of life!

King Agrippa was in that last group. He didn't want to be convinced. He felt he had no need of conversion.

When Festus asserted that the apostle Paul's great learning had driven him mad, Paul answered: "I am not mad . . . I am speaking the sober [simple, plain] truth. For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am persuaded [convinced] that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:25-26, RSV).

Then Paul asked: "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe" (verse 27).

Yes, indeed, King Agrippa believed, but was not willing to be convinced. "In a short time you think to make me a Christian!" he argued (verse 28).

He was happy to be a king, happy to live the way he did. No need for him to change anything — certainly not to become a Christian, which would have meant giving up many things in his life, turning away from lust and observing the teachings of the Bible. All that was too much to ask of King Agrippa.

Could this be your attitude? Do you sometimes deceive yourself, hoping God will "understand" when you know you are neglecting your part? Do you close your mind to certain

aspects of the truth that would require changing things in your life that you don't want to change?

James wrote, "Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (Jas. 2:17, RSV).

The "works" mentioned in this verse refer to your part in faith. These "works" may require changing your habits, your ways of thinking and living. It may mean, for you, praying more, studying more or being a better example.

If you're not fulfilling your part, you cannot be convinced that God will answer your prayers. "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe — and shudder" (verse 19). Yes, even demons believe, but they are not convinced to obey God!

The disciples of Christ, before their conversion, were not really convinced. They only believed in Christ. Think of it! After spending three and a half years with Him, after hearing Him teach day and night, they still had doubts in their minds. They were not totally convinced of the truth. They lacked God's Spirit. They could go no farther than the limits imposed by their human minds.

The disciples were indignant when Christ told them that soon they would all fall away because of Him, and that "the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

Peter objected vehemently to this pronouncement. "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away," Peter assured Christ (Matt. 26:33, RSV).

Peter was sure of himself, wasn't he? Yes, but not fully convinced, even though he thought he was! He believed with his carnal mind, without having the spiritual strength to back his belief.

Christ told him, "Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times" (verse 34).

Once again, Peter didn't agree with that statement. He would prove his Master wrong! "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you," he answered (verse 35). Ironically, all of the disciples said the same thing to Christ. Nevertheless, when the Roman soldiers came to arrest Christ, they all "forsook him and fled" (verse 56).

However, the disciples' attitudes totally changed after their conversion. They became men of courage, faith and conviction after receiving God's Spirit!

Today in the Church of God we, too, have received this Spirit of faith and courage and conviction. We must allow it to convince us. Unfortunately, some just aren't using God's Spirit to help them grow in conviction.

Do you perhaps believe that if you personally witnessed a great miracle you would be convinced? Humans are prone to forget — even a miracle!

You have read many times the par-

If you are completely convinced and convicted of God's truth, nothing can make you turn away from God. You won't have any doubt that you are in God's Church and that Christ is the Head of that Church. You can trust Him implicitly!

able of the rich man and Lazarus. When the rich man saw what was happening to him, he cried out for help for the other members of his family:

"I beg you, father [Abraham], to send him [Lazarus] to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:27-28, RSV).

Abraham answered, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (verse 29). The rich man wanted a miracle, hoping it would help his five brothers to be convinced. "No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent."

That's human reasoning! That's what the world wants to believe. Christians, today, think they would repent and believe if they saw Christ return with power and glory! But

they are mistaken. Miracles by themselves cannot convince anyone permanently.

As Abraham said, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead" (verse 31).

Likewise, if you cannot be convinced with what is already revealed in the Bible, no miracle can ever convince you! Actually, conviction requires that you do something — not that a miracle or anything else be done for you.

The miracle of your calling

The greatest miracle in your life took place when God called you and gave you His Spirit after your baptism.

As John wrote, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent" (Rev. 3:3).

Yes, indeed, remember the way you were called, how it all happened, the miracle of being among the very few chosen ones!

Read and study the Bible with this in mind. Learn how the men of God fought, how they endeavored to overcome their doubts and difficulties.

Yet, in the final analysis, it was always God who led them to victory. They didn't win their battles — God did. He wins all of our battles. But we must be convinced of it and do our part — fulfill our obligations.

If you are completely convinced and convicted of God's truth, nothing can make you turn away from God. You won't have any doubt that you are in God's Church and that Christ is the Head of the Church. You can trust Him implicitly!

As Paul wrote: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything . . . will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39, RSV).

This is full conviction. It is living faith! □

Good News from Thailand

By John Halford,
ACEPT Program Coordinator

Pople — hundreds of thousands of them. Homeless, frightened, needing help.

This is the picture of the flood tide of refugees entering Thailand from Cambodia and Laos since the Communist takeovers in those countries.

Thailand, with limited space and resources, has provided temporary shelter and assistance for the refugees, but critically needs to resettle them as quickly as possible.

The refugees' most critical need is to receive basic cultural and language training so they *can* be resettled. Most are simple peasants, used to the uncomplicated life of the rice paddies or quiet towns in their native lands. They are pitifully unprepared to forge out new lives in other countries, particularly in the West.

ACEPT begins

It is time we shared with you some of the experiences of the Ambassador College students and graduates who have been in Thailand participating in ACEPT (Ambassador College Educational Program in Thailand). ACEPT began last year.

Our friendship with the Thai community in Los Angeles, Calif., dated from the time Herbert W. Armstrong visited Thailand in 1971 and met King Bhumipol.

His Grace the 18th Supreme Patriarch of Terevada Buddhism in the Kingdom of Thailand, Ariawongsagayana, asked host Herman L. Hoeh

that the college help share his nation's load of finding homes for the refugees.

The ACEPT program, with Deputy Chancellor Raymond F. McNair's encouragement, was designed to help these people accept and be accepted in their new homelands. A proposal was submitted to Mr. Armstrong,



Good News photos

who gave his approval for a pilot program to begin in August, 1980. ACEPT and Wat Thai of Los Angeles, under the leadership of Abbot Phrathepsopon, jointly sponsor the program.

A full third of the Ambassador student body volunteered to go. Eleven were selected for the first group: Harry Curley, Bill Hall, Doug and Rosa Peitz, Randy Redel, Cyrille Richarde, Kevin Richardson, Diane Kinder, Mary Light, April Waybright and Gladys Whyte.

Mrs. Whyte is a deaconess from Canada, a grandmother, who had come to Ambassador to participate in the Diploma Program. When she applied for the ACEPT program we thought she was joking.

"You're too old," I told her.

"Mr. Armstrong wouldn't like to hear you say that," she replied, gently but firmly. Touché.

"OK, but you're not fit enough."

"Mr. Sneider says I am." Harry Sneider is the college's weight training and athletic coach and is well known for his rigorous standards.

Mrs. Whyte is tougher than she looks. She had been a combat nurse in World War II, and was used to dealing with human crises. She is well loved by the college students for her sense of humor and common sense. Mrs. Whyte felt she would be an asset to the program. And she was right.

Steve Pelfrey was chosen as group leader. Mr. Pelfrey graduated from college several years ago. He had spent his junior year in Chiang Mai University in Thailand, and spoke the

Thai language fluently. Mr. Pelfrey left for Thailand in June, 1980, to make advance arrangements.

The United Nations and the Thai authorities assigned us to Ban Thong refugee camp in the extreme



north of the country, close to the Lao-tian border. Ban Thong held about 6,000 refugees, mainly lowland Lao and people from the many hill tribes such as Hmong and Yao. These hill tribesmen were staunch allies of the United States during the Indochinese war, and have been specially persecuted by the Communists.

Mr. Pelfrey found favor with the right people. The authorities gave us a cautious go-ahead.

"Remember you are taking your Ambassador College values with you," Mr. McNair told the 12 the night before they left. "Don't let your standards drop."

Ambassador's outpost in Thailand

Ambassador, with its fine buildings and beautiful grounds, is the finest educational environment in the world. How do you trans-

but no beds — Thais sleep on the floor. The landlord agreed, however, to provide Western-style mattresses and mosquito nets. Other basic necessities were bought from the stores in Chiang Khong.

We saw on a quick walk around the neighborhood that the local people had mastered the art of making some needed items from bamboo. The students' first efforts to imitate these crafts showed clearly why bamboo construction is an art. Later efforts proved more substantial, and it was



While ACEPT volunteers teach mainly young adults, curious refugee children are always around and make friends. Left, the second group of students pose with John Halford, second from left, and Herman Hoeh, sixth from right.

plant that into the rough life of the Thai-Laotian border area and the often sordid confines of a refugee camp?

We were able to rent two houses on the outskirts of Chiang Khong about 10 miles from the camp. They were solid, clean and weatherproof.

There was some basic furniture,

not long before shelves, a bench and an extra table were built. Cyrille Richarde even made a sign to go over the entrance to our buildings. Others built an outdoor oven and dug proper drains. The undergrowth was trimmed and the yard tidied. Mr. Armstrong's portrait was hung on the

wall — and Ambassador had its outpost in Thailand!

Demanding but rewarding

All involved with ACEPT agree that it is the most demanding but rewarding challenge of their lives.

How do you teach someone your language if you can't speak his? Before leaving the United States, all ACEPT teachers learn the Laubach method, which has been designed for just this situation. The method requires skilled communication and observation. At first, progress is painfully slow, but eventually a working vocabulary is built up between student and teacher.

Other volunteer agencies, who at first regarded us as enthusiastic amateurs, have come to respect ACEPT. Recently we were asked to extend the program to nearby Chiang Kham refugee camp.

Why is ACEPT so rewarding? Diane Kinder explained it this way: "It's what we are trained to do — to serve. And here we have the opportunities to help some of the most tragic people on earth."

Or, as Randy Redel put it: "We can't solve the whole problem yet. That must wait for God's Kingdom. But in a very small way, we have the opportunity to teach them our ways and show them our paths" (Isa. 2:3).

ACEPT is a small but bright light in a very dark area. It will at best make

only a dent in the vast misery that is the lot of the world's millions of refugees. So why do it?

"Because we were asked!" explains Mr. Hoeh. "Thailand's religious leaders saw the college and knew we were the kind of people who believed in giving. We gave them what we had — ourselves. Not to proselyte, but to teach and to serve. It has been an opportunity to show Thailand what Christianity should be like."

Sandra Atkinson, part of the second group of students sent to Thailand, wrote, "We were very proud to be able to represent God, His Work, His college and His apostle so far away from home." □

How You Must Teach Your Children to Behave in Church

Every member of God's Church around the world should read every word of this letter.

By Richard D. Armstrong



**Editor's note from
Herbert W. Armstrong:**

The following letter was written by my son, Richard D. Armstrong, four and a half months before he died from an automobile accident.

He was then pastor of the Fresno, Calif., Church of God. Destruction resulting from lack of training and supervision of children had occurred at the hall where the church met. One more infraction would have put the church out of the hall.

Such a thing as this could happen at any church. It was promptly corrected at Fresno, but it should sound a loud and emphatic **WARNING** to the members of all other churches that such an incident is never allowed to be repeated elsewhere.

As I reread this letter, the realization comes forcibly upon my mind that many of our brethren — especially those newer in God's Church — may not fully realize the **SERIOUSNESS** of strict training and vigilant enforcement of the behavior of children at Church services.

Brethren, we need to be REAWAKENED!

We need to realize the extreme seriousness of this matter. **GOD IS HOLDING EVERY ONE OF YOU PARENTS RESPONSIBLE!**

My son Dick, as we called him, *loved* the brethren at Fresno. Previously he had been pastor of three churches, at Houston, San Antonio and Corpus Christi, Tex.

He had told us with feeling how, although he was younger in physical years than many members, they seemed like his own *spiritual* children — and he loved them as a parent loves a child.

At Fresno it was the same. Possibly Richard D. Armstrong was the most *loved* minister in the Church of God — because he, himself, felt such deep love and concern for Christ's flock, over which he was a shepherd.

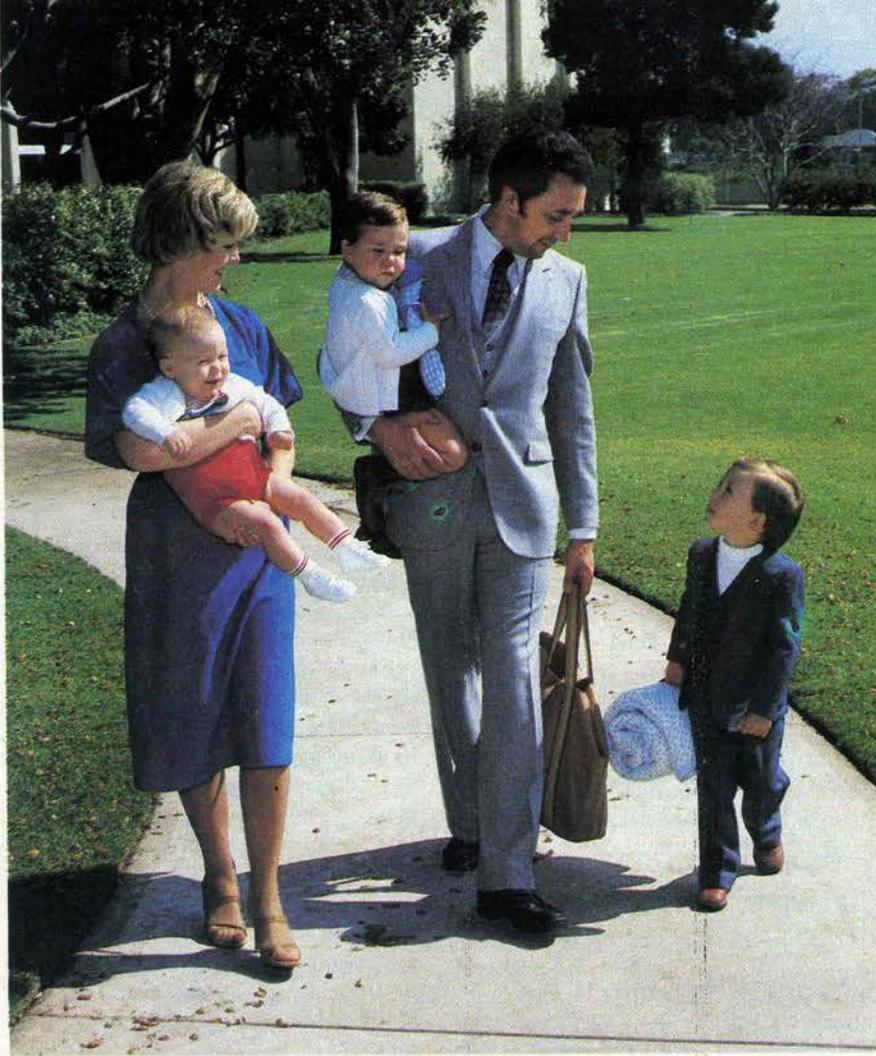
I do not think my son really wrote this letter, except as God's instrument. The living **CHRIST**, I feel, actually authored it.

But it contains a dynamic **SERMON** on the responsibility of parents for the training and the behavior of their children at Church services.

As the brethren at Fresno were his *spiritual* children, and God held him **RESPONSIBLE** for *their* behavior in controlling their children, this letter is also an example of how to deal with children. My son patiently made the truth **PLAIN** to them — explained thoroughly. But he also **TOOK ACTION!** He took such action as to prevent a recurrence of the mischief.

I want every minister of Christ, in all the churches, to take the same action, that parents may **FEAR** to neglect the discipline of their children, lest they be publicly and severely rebuked and held to account before all.

I want every member to read every word.



Photos by Warren Watson

March 12, 1958

I received some very sad news just as I was leaving church last week. Mr. Kelly, the janitor who sets up the chairs for our meetings and through whom we rent the hall, came to me visibly shaken and very nervous, but he had a very great problem he had to tell me about. Mr. Kelly has always been most courteous and friendly to all of us.

He said that he hated to tell me, but our children had torn apart one of the toilets on the third floor where we hold our meetings. They had torn the float clear out of the toilet, taken all of the paper from several of the toilets and poked it into one and tried to flush this toilet and flooded it all over the floor.

He said that they had left it in a

complete, total, disgraceful mess and that furthermore, several of our children had gone down to the second floor and gone into a meeting. The lodge members who own the building were complaining and asking Mr. Kelly to make sure that it didn't happen again, or we will be thrown out. We shall not be allowed to meet here any longer *IF THIS EVER HAPPENS AGAIN!*

The Church of God Almighty, the very Body of Jesus Christ, must not suffer such a humiliating thing because we are not obedient to God's commandments. We shall not allow such a condition to continue. I hope you can imagine how I felt after the joy of having the chorale and such a wonderful meeting, and then to have a blow such as this.

I hate to have to give an answer for the church, and I feel that I should go to those who are responsible — you, the parents. We don't know which child was responsible. But we do know that this type of

incident happens when we have children left *unrestrained* to play about on their own before, during and after church.

God says in Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Brethren, I have to give an account to God when something like this happens and it is up to me to see to it that it doesn't happen again.

Go right on in your Bible and read through the first chapter of James. We are having our trials of faith that we should count all joy, because it works out patience and builds stronger character in us. We do have these problems. They must be solved, and they must be solved by the Scriptures — God's way.

In verse 13 of this first chapter of James, God says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." We are tempted of our own lusts, and even so is a child, and if there is no parental control any child, and every child, does get into mischief.

I want to make this clear. There is no child who is specifically at fault, but all the children without exception have been too noisy, have been left to run free to themselves at services, and this must cease. God says in Hebrews 12:14-15: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby MANY be defiled." It is up to us to settle this particular problem according to God's will and from the Scriptures, and not let any root of bitterness spring up in us.

Notice James 1:22: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." It is not taking you into the Kingdom of Heaven if you simply agree with everything that God's Church teaches concerning such doctrines as heaven and hell, the Holy Days, paying of tithes and training your

children if you do not do these things. You have to live it.

You may be very familiar with God's laws, but if you don't obey them, you will go into the lake of fire for the knowledge that you do have. You may agree on every doctrine that is preached in the Bible, but if you don't live by them you will be burned as so much refuse in hell.

Many of you have felt that perhaps it would be better to leave your children at home, but the Bible **COMMANDS** you to bring them into the services and it commands them to **BE QUIET!** Let's read the Word of God.

In Exodus 20 are the Ten Commandments. Notice the commandment about the Sabbath. "Remember the sabbath day, to *keep* it **HOLY**" (verse 8). *God made it holy; we keep it that way.* "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God" (verses 9-10). Now notice how you are to keep the Sabbath: "In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, **NOR THY SON, NOR THY DAUGHTER**, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates" (verse 10).

So as you are to keep the Sabbath holy and keep what God has made sacred time, so are your son and daughter, your children. The Sabbath is holy time, sacred to God, and as such our children should not be allowed to run loose like so many wild animals.

I think that most of you know, as I have said before, that at home I have a little dog. My brother gave him to me as a wedding present. I have to teach that dog. I have to teach him to sit still, and to stay still. I have to teach him there are certain pieces of furniture that he dare not touch or come near. I also have to

teach him that though he smells food, every nerve in his body quivering, while my wife and I are eating at the table he cannot sit and

beg, but must lie in the other room with the door open.

I don't have to pen him or cage him like a wild animal, because he is tame. He has been trained. If I can train my dog, you can train your children, and I mean this sincerely. Two hours a week is not too long for your children to sit **STILL** and listen to the services, and to *stay* still **AFTER** the services are over. It is the Sabbath day and it is holy, and your children are to keep it holy as well as you.

The Ten Commandments include your children and the command to keep the seventh day holy. Your

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This is part of the
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children must be **IN CHURCH**, and they must keep the Sabbath **HOLY** the same as you do. This is a part of the Ten Commandments, and there is no use in kidding ourselves. You are just heading for the lake of fire if you don't obey this. Remember it is the parents who are held responsible.

Notice the next command: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (verse 12). It is a dual command. It is not only to the child, it is certainly understood that the parent must teach the child obedience to that command.

These are the commandments of God. Have you ever wondered why in Exodus 21:15 Jesus Christ, the Logos, the Spokesman, says, "He that smiteth his father, or his mother,

shall be surely put to death"? And in verse 17, "He that curseth [the word here means "reviles," not curses, or as it should be even more correctly rendered, "sasses"] his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death"?

I think most of you remember the example in II Kings 2:24, when Elisha looked back and cursed these children who were sassing him and God caused two she bears to come out and tear 42 of them in pieces, but have you ever stopped to realize why?

Because God was so kind that He was not going to let them go on and live building the wrong kind of character that would lead them to the lake of fire. God had them destroyed before it was too late so they could be resurrected in a better world, where if their parents had not taught them any better God would use His force to keep them in line and keep them from living a long life of disobedience that would finally imbed so deeply the wrong kind of character that they would have to be destroyed in hell fire, and would be totally unable to ever live by every Word of God and build good and honest character into themselves.

Your children are living under a different dispensation. You know and understand the laws of God in a way that they couldn't then, and you are held responsible and so are your children. I want you to notice that the same Christ who gave these laws said later, "Suffer little children to come unto me" (Luke 18:16).

You have to shape and mold and develop the character of your children so they will learn to love God and hate evil. Turn to Leviticus 19:32. Starting in verse 30, God says: "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord. Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God. Thou shalt **RISE UP** before the *hoary head*, and **HONOUR** the *face* of the *old man*, and **FEAR THY GOD**: I am the Lord."

How many of our children are so quiet and obedient that when an elder comes into the room they will rise? How many of our children address
(Continued on page 29)

MINI STUDY

SUCCESS Is More Than Money

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

What is success? Is making a lot of money, and experiencing the pleasures of life, real success? Is achieving fame and fortune and status in the eyes of others true success?

Let's learn what real success is from One whose life was the most outstanding success story of all time.

1. What goal did Jesus Christ say should be uppermost in the minds of true Christians? Matt. 6:33. Did He indeed become a *true* success? Phil. 2:5-11, Matt. 28:18.

While on earth as a human being, Jesus did not seek after material possessions. He put *first things first* in order to become a true success. He sought the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!

Even though Christ's life ended in crucifixion, God raised Him from the dead and has put all authority and power into His hands. He was truly the most successful man who has ever lived!

But most people in this money-conscious, money-hungry world are convinced that money, and all the material things it can buy, are real success.

Christ's teachings were centered on becoming a *spiritual success* in life. But He also had something to say about the physical side of life. In His "sermon on the mount," He expounded the basic,

trunk-of-the-tree principle concerning material wealth. Let's carefully notice what He said.

2. Did Jesus show the foolishness of storing up exceedingly great wealth? Luke 12:15-21, Matt. 6:19. Also notice Proverbs 5:10-11 in this regard.

How clearly Jesus' words apply to the dog-eat-dog competition, hoarding and universal thievery of our modern world.

3. What kind of "treasure" did Jesus say we should be striving to store up, and where? Matt. 6:20.

The treasure Christ is referring to here is godly spiritual character and spiritual rewards in God's Kingdom; gaining this treasure is based on our works in this life.

4. What else did Jesus say? Verses 21, 24. ("Mammon" in verse 24 refers to money.)

Jesus knew that devoting one's life to anything physical is worship, and hence idolatry. Setting our hearts on earthly treasures breaks the First Commandment.

5. Do we have to be overly concerned about providing for our physical needs? Read verses 25-32, noticing especially verses 25 and 31.

Jesus answers in verse 25: "Take no *anxious* thought," as the proper translation from the original Greek should read. That is, "Don't worry — don't be overly concerned about — " your physical life. Food, clothing and shelter certainly are necessary, but they are not the most important things in life.

6. What is the summation of the matter? Read verse 33 again.

Yes, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

If your thoughts, your prayers and your energies are oriented primarily toward God's Kingdom and His Work, which is preparing the way for that Kingdom, Jesus shows you need not experience material worries.

If we will truly seek God's Kingdom and obedience to Him *first* — not just kid ourselves that we are, while putting them second or third or fourth in our time, interest, study and application

MINI STUDY

— then He guarantees our sustenance and needs will be met.

7. Does God grant spiritual wisdom to those who obey Him? Ps. 119:97-100, 104. Does this wisdom lead to both spiritual and physical blessings? Prov. 3:16-18. What are we warned not to do when those blessings come? Ps. 62:10, last part.

Don't ever let abundance turn your heart from God. Always keep your heart set on the Work of God's Church and on His coming Kingdom and your part in it.

8. What can happen to the person who begins to trust in his wealth? Prov. 11:28. What did Jesus say the "deceitfulness of riches" can do to those who have heard and believed God's truth? Matt. 13:22, Luke 8:14.

Wealth tends to deceive people into relying on it, and can counteract their faith and zeal toward God.

Affluence can become a stumbling block and actually undermine spiritual values and commitment if we allow our minds to wander from Jesus' instruction in Matthew 6:33.

9. Should we labor merely to accumulate great wealth? Prov. 23:4. Why not? Verse 5.

10. What did Paul tell Timothy would happen to those who desire to be rich? I Tim. 6:9.

Paul did not mean that it is wrong to prosper. God wants everyone to follow the way that will result in full, abundant lives — both spiritually *and* physically (John 10:10, Ill John 2). But notice:

11. Does evil of all kinds grow out of the love of money? I Tim. 6:10.

Money, of itself, is not evil. A proper respect for money, for the great good it can do, is right and proper.

But inordinate love (lust or craving) for money leads to lying, cheating, stealing, prostitution, organized crime, murder, suicide, war — and to personal frustration, discontent and family quarrels. A poor person may be drawn into sin by lust for money just as easily as a rich person.

12. What is God's admonition to the rich? Verses 17-19.

God tells the rich to use their wealth for good. God's way to eternal life and permanent prosperity is absolutely certain, but nothing is as uncertain as this world's riches.

13. What lesson had the apostle Paul learned in life? Phil. 4:11-12.

Paul could be content whether abased (poor and without funds) or abounding (having abundance). He continually gave God thanks in every

circumstance and kept his eye on the Kingdom of God.

14. Are we therefore to be content with the basic necessities of life, if that be the extent of God's material blessings for us today? I Tim. 6:5-8. Should we be satisfied with what we have? Heb. 13:5. Why? Verse 6.

15. Is a "little" with obedience to God better than great wealth with troubles and injustice? Prov. 15:16, 16:8.

16. What does Solomon say to those who think they wouldn't experience any problems if they became wealthy? Eccl. 5:12. Also read verses 13-16, especially in a modern translation if you happen to own one.

King Solomon, the wisest and perhaps the richest man who ever lived, proved that seeking to acquire material things merely to satisfy the ceaseless cravings of the flesh is useless vanity — utter emptiness! He had everything, did everything. In the end, Solomon realized he had nothing but a handful of wind.

17. Has God promised to supply *every* need of the righteous? Phil. 4:19.

Our major necessities are just three: food, clothing and shelter. Expensive furniture, appliances, televisions and stereos, a second or third car for the family, double ovens and many other modern "conveniences" are luxuries one may or may not be able to afford. Luxuries should be purchased only as one is financially able to afford them.

18. Nevertheless, does God often grant the obedient, who put His ways first, some of the "extras" in life they would like to have? Ps. 37:3-4. But, unfortunately, what is the purpose of all too many in asking God for blessings? Jas. 4:3.

19. Are the blessings that come from God free of sorrows? Prov. 10:22.

Those who seek *first* the Kingdom of God and are prospered by Him can be spared both the despair and deprivation of poverty and the manifold troubles of the worldly rich.

Learn to put first things first. Make the spiritual goal of the Kingdom of God your *No. 1* goal in life. And do your part in helping to proclaim the good news of that coming Kingdom to the world.

We, if we are the Spirit-begotten children of God and we develop His holy, righteous character, are destined to become like God — His very own Children by the resurrection — Members of His divine Family!

That is the incredible, awesome, supreme *purpose* of human life. That is the definition of *true* success. □

Just What ARE the True Values?

Are you being fooled by false values? Are they making a fool of you? They could be unless you can distinguish between them and God's true values.

By Bernie Schnippert

How tragic! The prevailing values of our society are the *false* values of Satan the devil!

Satan, the "god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4), has deceived most of mankind into accepting his false standards as the measures by which people judge themselves. But, despite their outward glimmer and glamour, Satan's values have no real substance.

Are you, unwittingly, one of the billions who spend their entire lives connivingly, relentlessly — even desperately — following after the fool's gold of the false values? Don't think you couldn't be! Satan's standards are not easily or quickly recognizable as false values — even by some brethren in God's Church.

But by letting those false values rule your life, you could find yourself as helpless as the inexperienced gold prospector who dumped his ore on the assayer's scale only to be told: "This stuff is worthless, mister. It's fool's gold, and the fool is *you*."

The fool's gold of false values is worth no more than the crumbly heap of worthless ore the naive prospector handed the assayer. Sadly, though, some, even in the Church, have sold all to buy fields that contain not the treasures of God's Kingdom, but only the glitter of mines full of fool's gold. Some of us cannot even recognize or define what the *true* values really are! The motto of Ambassador College is "Recapture True Values." But would you be hard put to say, in a few

words, what it is we in God's Church are trying to "recapture"?

Satan's false values

Jesus Christ is the great spiritual Assayer. It is through Him alone, and through His Word, that we can analyze our values. The Bible is the testing fire through which we must pass each of our values to determine whether they are fool's gold or the eternal riches that perish not. And when we test this world's standards — Satan's false values — we find that they fail miserably.

One false value for which the world generally lusts is wealth — material possessions. Our society is steeped in *materialism*.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with having nice things. God's Church has always taught that wealth of itself is not wrong, and that we should buy the best quality goods we can afford. Jesus Christ came that we "might have life, and . . . have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

But when the desire for wealth or material possessions takes the place of God's true values in our lives — when we set our lusts upon or put our trust in these things — then these desires become a snare:

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim. 6:9-10).

In the end, wealth becomes a great

disappointment, for money and material possessions all perish — you can't take them with you when you die. None can purchase for you any part in God's Kingdom. That's why Christ tells us in Luke 12:15, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Christ goes on to describe a man who, after accumulating great possessions, selfishly decided to keep acquiring and storing them for himself, as though he could take them past the grave. God said to the man, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (verse 20).

And Christ said elsewhere: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

Anyone who makes mammon his ultimate aim will find himself, in the end, with values as worthless as a lump of fool's gold.

Another false value is *fame*. Not every person will admit to wishing for fame, but most carnal human beings do long after one of fame's children — prestige, popularity, awe in the eyes of others.

Again, fame of itself is not wrong. Jesus Christ Himself was famous in His own day: "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about" (Luke 4:14). Similar-

ly, the fame of Solomon spread so much throughout the world that the Queen of Sheba made a special trip to see him. She wanted to see whether the reputation he had among the people was rightly deserved (I Kings 10:1-13). It was.

But when fame becomes an end in itself, and a person desires notoriety before God's true values and His Kingdom, then fame becomes a false value and a catalyst of much evil. Such was the type of evil fame — infamy — that Absalom, David's son, garnered for himself when he sought to turn the heart of the people from his father to himself.

Part of Absalom's fame resulted, apparently, because he flaunted his good looks: "But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him" (II Sam. 14:25). So great was Absalom's vanity that he apparently made a great production of weighing his hair each year and publicizing the results (verse 26).

But Absalom's vanity and desire for fame ended in his downfall — his long hair caught in the branches of a tree and literally hung him from his head, and his foe killed him (II Sam. 18:9, 14).

Likewise, the inward, twisted pursuit of fame engaged in by the people of this world will prove to be a waste of time and effort. Their balloon will burst in their faces when Christ asks to see their fruits and they have none to show.

Another false value those in Satan's society strive after is *power*. The author of the lust for power is Satan. He was unhappy with the responsibility God gave him originally, and became envious of God Himself:

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13-14).

Those who fall into the trap of wanting more and more power are merely mimicking the greatest usurper of power ever — the god of this world, Satan the devil. And the

curse that will befall Satan, the father of power lust, will certainly come upon those who adopt his selfish attitudes as their own codes for living.

One false value is often disguised as a true value, and it does indeed have good elements within it. But nonetheless it must be classed as a false value. It is *knowledge*.

Knowledge is good, of course, if it builds upon the foundation of all truth, the Word of God. But acquiring knowledge as an end in itself leads to vanity ("Knowledge puffeth up" — I Cor. 8:1). And knowledge not based on God's Word and God's truth leads away from eternal life

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because its use produces wrong results.

Many people in this society worship knowledge almost like a god. But a person is not saved according to how much of this world's education he has, nor according to the size of his vocabulary, nor according to how many letters he has after his name. In fact, many people have devoted their lives to becoming educated in this world's knowledge, only to become specialists in the very philosophies of Satan himself, such as evolution, false psychology and wrong business practices.

Romans 1:28 remarks, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." As Solomon said, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

Those who have made man's

knowledge — apart from God — a god in itself have merely learned how to run faster toward unrighteousness than those who have not yearned so greatly to soak up Satan's mind and substance.

This is not to say that one cannot be a Christian and be educated. But true education must be in harmony with and build upon God's laws and truth, rather than be in opposition to them. And knowledge should never become one's god.

Can't follow both

The false values examined above are each damaging in their own ways. But they do have certain things in common.

First, none of them has any lasting value. They are temporary. They will burn up or disappear when Christ renews the world and replaces this system with His own (Heb. 1:11, II Pet. 3:10).

A second thing they have in common is that, to us human beings, who view things superficially at times, they all look like they have great value. They are "deceitful" (Matt. 13:22), both to those who have excelled in the false values and to those who have not but wish they had. However, such counterfeit values, though perhaps looking good on the surface, have no more real value than the fool's gold spoken of earlier. God will not accept them as the basis upon which to transform any human into an immortal, spirit-composed God Being.

Third, practicing false values chokes out the true values that God's Word teaches and promotes. Human beings simply cannot maintain true values and false values at the same time. Our minds are singular; they seek one set of goals at a time. We simply cannot serve both God and mammon (Matt. 6:24).

God's true values

What, then, are the true values? The true values parallel the false values in the sense that for each false value there is a corresponding true value with which we should replace it.

The first of these true values is *character*. While the people of this world strive and struggle to have more money or material possessions,

true Christians should be hungering and thirsting for righteousness (Matt. 5:6). Physical possessions are ephemeral, but character will remain with us forever — character is a special type of wealth. It is the quality that God's whole plan was set in motion to produce!

The basic qualities of character — the fruits of God's Spirit as described in Galatians 5:22-23 — are the true riches: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Instead of vainly seeking after the second false value of prestige or fame, the true Christian seeks to build and preserve proper *group relationships*. The false value of fame is based upon vanity and self. But giving oneself to build a group serves both the individual and the others involved. These group relationships include one's marriage, one's family, God's Church and one's friends.

Like fame, proper group relationships are based upon the feelings we have for other people or the feelings they have for us. But unlike fame, proper group relationships are based upon helping, encouraging and giving to the others in our group, and not upon pushing others down so we may exalt ourselves.

Such relationships are exemplified by the Church, which, far from being a catapult for the selfish desires of any particular person, is rather the epitome of concern for one another: "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (I Cor. 12:25-26).

Rather than seeking to exalt himself, the person who embraces this second true value cherishes family and friends and is training himself to become a Member of the Family of God and the Wife of Christ at His return.

Instead of seeking the third false value of power, a Christian should seek *service*. Even Christ Himself, who existed before the foundation of the earth and shared great power with God, so treasured the value of

service that He set aside His power to become a servant.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself" (Phil. 2:5-8).

In Matthew 20:26-27, Christ announced that "whosoever will be great [i.e., have great power] among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

Those who strive for service —

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who elevate the goal of serving to one of their chief values in life — will find themselves in the group of sheep who gave the hungry meat and the thirsty drink, and who clothed the naked stranger. They will "inherit the kingdom prepared for [them] from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

And instead of seeking only for worldly knowledge, a true Christian should seek *wisdom*. Wisdom may be defined as the correct use of true knowledge, based on the foundation of God's Word. A person armed with real wisdom is well equipped for this world and for the world tomorrow. "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it" (Prov. 8:11).

Build upon a rock

Christ defined a wise man as one who hears the sayings of God and follows them: "Therefore whosoever

heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24). In this parable, the rains and flood beat upon the house built on the rock of hearing and doing Christ's sayings, but it did not fall. And the wise, the ones who hear and do Christ's sayings, will be the ones who enter God's Kingdom: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (verse 21).

Just as the false values have certain things in common, so also do the true values.

First, the true values are far different from the false values because the true values have lasting rewards: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19-20).

And second, the true values, to a carnal mind, do not look like they will help a person reach happiness, but they do. One does not see the "value" in the true values until he begins to apply the true values in his life. This simple fact — that one must obey and honor the true values in faith (believing that they are of benefit) — is the very reason most people never apply them in the first place. To the carnal mind, they just do not seem correct (Prov. 14:12).

God's true values are a golden treasure God hid in the field of this life. It is for these values that we should "sell all" spiritually, and then with joy "buy" the truth: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44).

God's values are no worthless mine shaft filled with glittery false values. Instead, they are the substance of our quest for eternal life.

But what about you? Are you seeking the true riches of the true values? Or is the fool's gold of false values making a fool of you? □

What Is True Humility?

Why is it valuable? How can you tell if you have it?

By Clayton Steep

“I am humble and proud of it!”

You’ve probably heard someone say that in jest at one time or another. The statement’s humor is based on the conflict between the words *humble* and *proud*. Most people understand that humility is the opposite of pride, but they might have difficulty defining any further exactly what humility is.

Just what is humility? Whatever it is, we need it to please God! Humility is one of the three great qualities God looks for in those who worship Him: “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to *do justly*, and to *love mercy*, and to *walk humbly with thy God*” (Mic. 6:8).

God is supreme. He owns everything. All wealth and power and glory belong to Him. He alone has life to give. He possesses perfect righteousness, perfect character. No other creature even approaches His magnificence. And yet who is it this great Being wants to dwell with?

“For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’” (Isa. 57:15, Revised Standard Version). Throughout the Bible God puts much emphasis on humility.

An attitude

Humility is a state of mind, a way of thinking and looking at things. The

apostle Paul referred to “humbleness of mind” as a positive quality (Col. 3:12).

A person who is humble realizes his true worth. He doesn’t think he is better than he really is. This flies directly in the face of modern psychology, which says human beings should build up self-confidence, that we should love, honor and exalt the self and have a “high self-image.”

Jesus didn’t have *self-confidence*. He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30)! The apostle Paul lamented, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing . . . O wretched man that I am!” (Rom. 7:18, 24).

Of course, it is not right to have an “I’m-no-good-and-I’ll-never-be-any-good” attitude either. Through God’s Spirit we can *become* of value. That’s what the miracle of conversion is all about. Without the Holy Spirit we are as worms (Ps. 22:6, Isa. 41:14). With God’s Spirit, we can become members of God’s Family.

A humble person recognizes where he is on the road to total conversion. A Christian should not “think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly [realistically, truthfully]” (Rom. 12:3).

After we yield to God, any good in us — any holy character we have, all that is of value — comes from our Creator, the Giver of every good gift.

Having a humble attitude requires a deep understanding that without God we can do nothing (John 15:5),

but that through Him we can do all things (Phil. 4:13).

Obedience to God’s laws

In every decision we make, we either do God’s will or we do our own carnal will. There is a constant conflict between the two opposing forces, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other” (Gal. 5:17).

Whenever we do our own will, we exalt the self, because God tells us to do the opposite of whatever our carnal wills dictate. However, when we exalt God and His will, we abase the self and its will. Picture a seesaw. Your carnal will is on one end and God’s will is on the other. Because they are opposites, when one is exalted, the other is abased.

Exalt God and His ways in your life by obeying His laws and fulfilling His will. In so doing, your self — which is contrary to God — will be humbled.

Putting others first

“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another,” instructed Paul (Rom. 12:10).

Picture the seesaw once again. You are on one end; anyone else is on the other. Exalt that other person, and at the same time you abase your own selfish vanity. This is humility in action.

“Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of

you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4, RSV).

You might say that humility is giving instead of getting. It is serving others. That is the mind of Christ (verses 5-8).

One example of humility Jesus gave was washing the feet of His disciples. We repeat the ceremony once a year. Why? Because brethren need the dirt washed off their feet once a year? No, their feet have already been washed and manicured within hours of the Passover service. We show by the ceremony that we are willing throughout the coming year to bend our knees and humble ourselves to serve others.

We need to take to heart Peter's admonishment: "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5).

Occasional fasting

The Bible refers to fasting as afflicting or humbling the soul (Ps. 35:13, Lev. 23:27, Isa. 58:3-5).

Though members of God's Church, we are still physical beings. When our physical flesh is satisfied and content (exalted!) over a long period, our spiritual condition tends toward complacency and even begins to go downhill. So God has given us a physical tool to stir up and revive our spiritual development. The tool is fasting — temporarily abstaining from food.

Recall once again the seesaw: On one end is the body's desire for food and satisfac-

tion, on the other end is the need for spiritual rejuvenation through a special session of intense prayer and study. Fasting temporarily puts down and humbles the physical so as to give an occasion to exalt and fulfill the spiritual and get it back on the track.

Being receptive to instruction

Humility is the opposite of the "I-know-it-all" attitude. "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom" (Prov. 11:2). The humble are teachable.

That's one reason "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called [to understand the truth in this age]: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to con-

found the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor. 1:26-28).

Paul later wrote: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him [first] become [what the world would call] a fool, that he may be [truly] wise" (1 Cor. 3:18).

God wants us to be receptive to His teachings. We must put down our own opinions, notions and persuasions and pray like David: "Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation" (Ps. 25:4-5).

God says, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a
(Continued on page 29)

Beware of False Humility

There is a humility that stresses outward show. It is not what God is looking for in us.

Many in the world try to "humiliate" or afflict themselves outwardly as a kind of penance or spiritual exercise. They lie on beds of nails, or slash themselves with knives, or flail themselves with whips. Some crawl on their knees over rough stones until their flesh is torn and bleeding. Others take vows of abstinence, forego all pleasures in life or just give up something for "Lent," depending on the degree of self-affliction desired.

Such is the kind of humility — however sincere it may be — the apostle Paul wrote to warn against.

Notice Colossians 2:18 in the

Revised Standard Version: "Let no one disqualify you [of your reward], insisting on self-abasement."

This type of humility consists mostly of negative rules and precepts: "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not

touch" (verse 21). "These have indeed an appearance [yes, it is mostly outward show, substituting for true humility] of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body" (verse 23).

God wants our humility to be inward and genuine — not a performance just to be seen by other humans. Once inside and genuine, humility's fruits will become outwardly evident.

True, we as Christians may not practice asceticism like the world does. But sometimes without realizing it, we may follow the same line of reasoning by feeling guilty if we ever enjoy ourselves in a lawful way.

Some may feel it is not right to own anything of quality and that therefore we ought always to buy inferior goods. Others may feel we should own practically nothing and just be "God's poor."

There are many other ways in which a humility-for-show may be evidenced if we are not careful; even such a small thing as avoiding the use of the capital letter *I* when writing about oneself could be done in an I'm-more-humble-than-most attitude. The point is that God wants to see in us true inward humility and obedience, not merely acts that are outward in form only. □

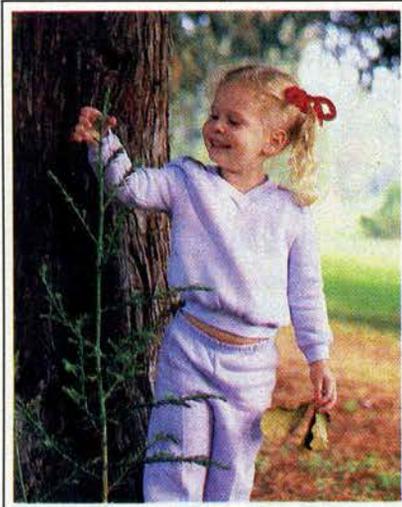


Photo by Hal Finch

Jesus Christ said the person who humbles himself as a little child will be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 18:4). Little children are a wonderful example of true humility, and we are to be more like them.

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Chapter 5

Jesus Goes to Samaria and Nazareth

By Shirley King Johnson

When the Spring Holy Days were ended, Jesus went on into Judea. More people were now following Jesus than had followed John the Baptist. When the Pharisees heard this, they made an issue of the fact that Jesus had taken His first disciples from among those who had originally been following John. Jesus turned northward toward Galilee, perhaps to avoid friction with John's converts (John 4:1-3).

The woman at the well

Along the way, He had to pass through Samaria. The disciples, striding along with Him, murmured their disapproval. The Jews despised the Samaritans because they were descendants of people who had been moved into the land by the Assyrians centuries before. These people practiced the religion that Jeroboam had introduced to northern Israel, causing them to sin (II Kings 17:26-29, 32-34).

The road that Jesus chose to travel brought them to Sychar. They stopped to rest beside Jacob's well, in the very field that Jacob had given to Joseph. Deciding to go on into the village to buy food, the disciples left Jesus sitting in the shade of a sycamore tree near the well (John 4:6, 8).

When they returned, the disciples were amazed to see that Jesus was talking to a Samaritan woman. She had come to fill a water jar at the well and Jesus had struck up a conversation. He had carefully brought their exchange of words to the subject of the Kingdom of God and she became convinced that He was the Messiah.

Wanting to share the exciting news, she left her water jar and hurried back to tell her relatives and friends. Through her efforts, other Samaritans of Sychar became interested in the message He brought about God's government. They urged Him to remain in their village, and Jesus and His disciples stayed two days. Many of the people believed that He was sent from God (verses 41-42).

Healing the nobleman's son

Jesus traveled on into Galilee to preach the Gospel. When He came to Cana, where He had changed water into wine, a nobleman who lived in Capernaum approached Him with an air of urgency.

"Please, sir, help me!" the official pleaded. "My son is dying! Come to my house and heal him or he'll not live through the day" (verse 47).

Jesus did not reply at once. He looked into

Glancing down, Jesus saw that the Isaiah scroll was rolled to the words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor."

Smiling, He began to read aloud in a voice that projected to the farthest corners of the building.

the distraught face. "If I don't do miracles, you won't believe my message," He replied with a slight shake of His head.

"Sir, come with me before my child dies." The officer's voice broke with emotion.

Jesus gently laid a hand on the man's sagging shoulder. "Go home, friend. Your son will live. He'll be well by the time you get back to him."

The man's face changed as hope came into his eyes. "Thank you! Thank you very much!"

On the road back to Capernaum, the official met his servants. They were on their way to find him to explain that there was no need to bother the Prophet, Jesus, because the boy had recovered. By questioning his servants further, the official learned that the boy had begun to heal at precisely the time he had talked with Jesus. "It is a miracle!" declared the man. "A miracle!"

A hometown welcome

Jesus moved on to His hometown of Nazareth, where He stayed in His mother's home. When it was time to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, Jesus had already discerned an attitude of hostility against Him.

The arrival of Jesus at the synagogue caused whispered comments and turning of heads. The leaders asked Jesus to read from the scrolls and He stepped forward without hesitation. As He glanced about the small building He saw the familiar faces of people He had known during the days of His youth. But He had become the most discussed person in all of Judea and Galilee and the faces were not friendly or smiling. The atmosphere was charged with satanic influence.

Glancing down, Jesus saw that the Isaiah

scroll was rolled to the words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor." Smiling, He began to read aloud in a voice that projected to the farthest corners of the building. When He had finished, He sat down and explained this scripture in His own words (Luke 4:21). He declared that He had come to fulfill the prophet's writings. He said that today they were eyewitnesses to the appearance of the very God of Israel in their midst, witnesses to an announcement that He was going to set up His Father's government on earth.

As He continued to speak, hostile murmurings broke out here and there. "I don't expect you to believe me," He said candidly. "A prophet is never accepted in his own area."

Concluding with examples of God's goodness to all nations in addition to the Jews, He said, "There were many lepers in Israel in the days of the prophet Elisha, but none was healed except the Syrian Naaman" (verse 27).

The mention of the Syrian's name roused action. Enraged, everyone in the congregation rushed to the front, seized Jesus and hustled Him down the aisle and out of the building.

The mob leaders rushed Jesus to the top of the winding street. The street ended in a precipice that overlooked a gorge below Nazareth. They intended to pitch Jesus over the edge to His death, but watchful angels caused the men to become confused. They released their intended victim, and failed to notice when He passed through their midst.

When Jesus rejoined His disciples, He greeted them cheerfully. "Come along, fellows. We'll go on down to Capernaum. The atmosphere will be more pleasant there." □

Pentecost

(Continued from page 4)

wise none can come to the Father but through CHRIST. And Jesus said plainly, "NO MAN CAN COME TO ME, EXCEPT THE FATHER WHICH HATH SENT ME DRAW HIM" (John 6:44). (John 6:44).

It is PLAIN, then, that spiritual salvation was CLOSED to all humanity, except those I have mentioned, until after Christ's ascension to heaven.

Jesus had said to His disciples on the eve of His crucifixion: "But now I go my way to him that sent me . . . It is expedient for YOU that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter [Holy Spirit] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:5-7).

It was on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover week, that the Holy Spirit CAME and entered into those of the CHURCH — numbering 120. It was the *FIRST TIME* there was any spiritual GROUP salvation. It was the day the CHURCH OF GOD was begotten. Three thousand more were ADDED. These were those God had CALLED — had been predestinated to be called THEN and not in the Millennium, when EVERYBODY LIVING will be called. On that day Peter, now inspired by the Holy Spirit, said, "For the PROMISE [of the Holy Spirit] is unto you, and to your children . . . *even as many as the Lord our God shall call*" (Acts 2:39). And in verse 47, "And THE LORD added to the church daily such as should be saved." The apostles did not go out soliciting converts — God CALLED them — it was GOD and not the apostles who ADDED to the Church.

A day or two later 2,000 more were added. Then for a VERY short while the Church membership MULTIPLIED. But soon the persecution SCATTERED the converts, and the growth apparently diminished. Soon the true Gospel was SUPPRESSED. It's possible the Church membership is the LARGEST today it has ever been. For THE PURPOSE of the Church is:

1) To stand back of the apostles in prayers, tithes and offerings in getting the GOSPEL ANNOUNCED to the WORLD — and it's a BIGGER WORLD to be reached today.

2) To DEVELOP HOLY, RIGHTEOUS AND PERFECT CHARACTER in those called and to sit with Christ on His throne when He comes to rule the world and to be given power to RULE the WORLD.

So *REALIZE THIS!* Pentecost is to remind us every year that we (the Church) are only the FIRST small harvest of God's calling people for salvation OUT OF A WORLD THAT IS WHOLLY, except for us, CUT OFF FROM GOD, AND THAT HAS BEEN SINCE ADAM! The WORLD as a whole is still CUT OFF!

We are those who have been PRE-DESTINATED to be called NOW!

We have been called to receive the HOLY SPIRIT. WHAT IS the Holy Spirit? It is that second Spirit man needs to go with the human spirit in every human. It is the impregnation of GOD life, which makes us His CHILDREN NOW, even though only begotten and not yet BORN — HEIRS, not yet INHERITORS — begotten into the GOD FAMILY.

It is the Spirit of UNDERSTANDING, imparting to the physical brain SPIRITUAL INTELLECT, ability to comprehend SPIRITUAL knowledge. It is the LOVE of God placed within us — divine LOVE. It is the FAITH of CHRIST, the same FAITH with which Jesus performed His miracles, now given to us — placed within us. It is also spiritual POWER to overcome. The spiritual POWER to help us turn from and resist the "GET" way and turn to the "GIVE" way.

It is the POWER by which we may develop the HOLY, RIGHTEOUS, PERFECT CHARACTER, which is GOD'S PURPOSE for having PUT humanity on the earth — that GOD MAY THUS REPRODUCE HIMSELF!

IV

First of the AUTUMN festivals is the FEAST OF TRUMPETS, on the first day of the seventh month, sacred calendar. This represents the COMING OF CHRIST IN SUPREME ALMIGHTY POWER AND GLORY to set up the *KINGDOM OF GOD*, to RESTORE *THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD*.

V

The fifth Festival is another one-day HOLY DAY — the FAST day — picturing the putting away of SATAN, since his Successor has not only

QUALIFIED (more than 1,900 years ago), but now is INDUCTED INTO OFFICE. *AT LAST* the world is rid of Satan — at ONE with God.

VI

On the 15th day of the seventh month begins the FEAST OF TABERNACLES — the MILLENNIUM — the time of the physical FALL HARVEST in Jerusalem and environs and the time when ALL THEN LIVING SHALL BE CALLED and given the chance to repent, believe and receive salvation. This Feast lasts SEVEN DAYS, with the first day an annual Sabbath.

VII

This is followed, the very next day, by a HOLY DAY, picturing the GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT — the time when ALL who ever lived and were not CALLED shall be RESURRECTED MORTAL, just as they were — human flesh and blood. They will be able to see and KNOW the results of the 6,000 years of the "GET" way of man, cut off from God, as well as the 1,000 years of the "GIVE" way under Christ. They will every one be "CALLED" — given opportunity to REPENT and BELIEVE and receive the Holy Spirit and eternal life in the *KINGDOM OF GOD!*

That concludes the Festivals of God. They vividly picture His MASTER PLAN. All that remains will be the resurrection of those who WERE CALLED but, like Lucifer, rejected the call and the *KINGDOM OF GOD!* They shall go into the LAKE OF FIRE — the second death for each — to become ashes under the soles of our feet and all memory of them blotted from our minds.

On beyond this, we, the GOD FAMILY, BILLIONS of us, all of us possessing HOLY, RIGHTEOUS AND PERFECT CHARACTER, all of us UNABLE TO SIN, shall then go on and COMPLETE THE BEAUTIFICATION AND CREATION OF THE ENTIRE VAST UNIVERSE, constantly looking forward in joyous anticipation and ecstasy to still GREATER and more marvelous and awesome things to do throughout the whole endless UNIVERSE — always looking back on supreme and glorious accomplishments that only an ALMIGHTY GOD could do!

And THAT is the awesome human POTENTIAL! □

Humility?

(Continued from page 25)

contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2). That is teachable humility!

Modest conduct

Humility is knowing when to be inconspicuous. Jesus said we should not call attention to ourselves every time we do a good work. We should give alms, pray and fast anonymously — in secret. God is watching. That's all that counts. "Thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:1-18).

We should not be exalting the self by always trying to outdress everyone else, showing off, boasting, exaggerating, always telling the funniest joke, talking the loudest, getting ahead of the Joneses, always winning every game just for vanity's sake. "Let us not be desirous of vain glory," Paul instructed (Gal. 5:26).

It must be pointed out that meekness is not weakness. Jesus was meek and lowly (Matt. 11:29), but He was not weak. He was the Son of God, yet He came to earth to serve, not to be served (Matt. 20:26-28). Study His actions — how He lived — and observe the perfect combination of strength and humility.

The rewards of humility

"Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his commands; seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the wrath of the Lord" (Zeph. 2:3, RSV).

Did you notice that the humble are told to seek humility? That's because humility is something we grow in by degrees. Humility (meekness), one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23), must be developed.

But it will be rewarded. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Pet. 5:6).

A humble person — one whose self is abased — is the raw material the Almighty Creator can take and form into a Member of His Family. "The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life" (Prov. 22:4, RSV). □

Your Children

(Continued from page 18)

their minister as "Mr." rather than by his first name? How many of them address you as "Father" and "Mother," and not just as "Pop" or "Mom," or by your first name? They should literally obey this command in Leviticus to rise before those who are elders and learn to show honor and respect them.

This is the *Word of God*! Are you willing to *obey* it? Are you *LIVING* by it?

Notice Deuteronomy 6:7. God gives us commandments and judgments, and one of them is that we teach *DILIGENTLY* all of these unto our children.

You know . . . the laws of God . . . and you are held responsible and so are your children. . . . You have to shape . . . the character of your children so they will . . . love God and hate evil.

Frankly, brethren, one of the major reasons that we are having these problems is the fact that you are not holding Bible studies in your own homes with your children. You are not fulfilling your responsibility, your duties toward them to teach them to live by the Word of God. You should not try to wheedle and plead them into looking at it your way. You should *COMMAND* them. You are the *AUTHORITY* of *God Almighty* to your children. God has given you that authority. It is up to you to exercise it.

Notice Leviticus 20:9: "Every one that curseth [the King James says *curseth*, but this should be rendered "sasses"] his father or his mother shall be surely put to death . . . his blood shall be upon him." Brethren, I have seen children stand and sass their parents right here in the hall where we meet. This should not be, but I can't correct it — only you can.

There is one thing that I can correct, and that is the situation of the children running loose and wild during church. Now I have asked one of the men of the Fresno church to get

up and go out several times during the services and see if there are any children outside, and if they are running around playing on the stairs or in the toilets, he is going to bring them in and we will stop the services — interrupt them right there — and ask you, the parents, to give an account.

We are the Church of God. We bear the name of God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth. We cannot destroy property that does not belong to us, but that God blessed us with. Again, let me say that this shall not happen again. I have given this man instructions to grab any child he sees misbehaving during church by the nap of the neck and haul him right in to me and I am going to ask *you*, the *PARENT*, what is wrong. I am

also requiring henceforth that *EVERY CHILD STAY INSIDE THE ROOM WHERE WE MEET UNTIL YOU THE PARENTS ARE READY TO LEAVE* the building.

Now, I wish you to understand that this is done in love, but I am trying to live by every Word of God. I am trying to fulfill what God has said in Hebrews 13:17, watching for your souls as one who must give account to God Almighty, and I do not intend to have the Church of God suffer the humiliation of being thrown out of the place that God has given us to meet because we cannot keep our children in check. So henceforth, your children will stay inside the meeting room and *KEEP QUIET*. They shall not play. It is the Sabbath, sacred, holy time to God, and your children are commanded to keep it.

Sincerely,

In the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ,

Richard D. Armstrong,
Pastor,
Church of God,
Fresno, Calif. □

What is FAITH?

**“When the Son of man cometh,
shall he find faith on the earth?”**

Luke 18:8

YOUR WHOLE FUTURE hinges on the answers to these questions. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), but today's materialistic world is so out of touch with the things of God that real faith is a rare commodity.

What is faith? Why is it so important? And

what kind of faith is required for salvation? Herbert W. Armstrong's booklet, *What Is Faith?*, tackles these questions head-on and explains the answers right from the Bible.

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