

A black and white photograph of a rocky coastline. In the foreground, there are large, textured rocks. To the left, a body of water reflects light, with some trees and foliage in the background. The overall scene is serene and natural.

The Good News

International Magazine of The Church of God



More About Our Cover...

The Feast of Tabernacles is nearly here! Pictured is one of two new Feast sites in North America for 1969, the Lake of the Ozarks, in Missouri. The other new site will be in Penticton, British Columbia. Brethren will gather in both these sites and in the other areas around the world to observe what many think of as Old Testament feast days. Read the article beginning on page 7 and learn that, "It DOES Matter which Days We Observe."

Ambassador College

What our READERS SAY...

Scattered Brethren

"Being one of the scattered brethren who is not able to meet with other brethren under the true ministers of God, I really devour all of the magazines and literature. The article about the Transportation Department revealed to me more fully the many tasks that they perform. I am wondering now if similar articles might be written up on different departments at Headquarters, showing us their part in God's great endtime work, that we might pray more specifically for them."

Mrs. Erma W.,
Springfield, Colo.

From Last Year's Feast of Tabernacles:

"After the Feast of Tabernacles, I went back to work to find many surprises in store for me. My boss called me into his office and began telling me the changes he was going to make.

"He said, 'John, I am going to put you in charge of the workshop and you will take over the responsibilities of teaching and guiding the other Jewelers, wherever you can. And with this I am going to increase your salary because I think you have deserved and earned it by your hard work and enthusiasm.' You can imagine what the look on my face was like!

"The One I can thank for this is God who showers blessings upon those who

follow His Laws and this has proved to me that there is a Creator and Provider who is caring and looking after us."

Mr. J. O. K.,
Durban, Natal, South Africa

Money

"I just have to tell you — my husband (not in the Church) heard about the money crisis in the Work and the lack of increase over May of last year and on his own decided to send back the 7-piece dinette we had ordered and put the monthly payments for it into the Work. It never ceases to amaze me how God is working through my husband. He's Catholic. He also plans on paying third tithe this coming year '69-'70. Isn't it wonderful?"

Nadine Sue R.,
Kingsport, Tennessee

"I lost my job during the Feast of Trumpets and Tabernacles. When I came back and talked to all of my supervisors to no avail, they said they would let me know something in a short while, so I found a job elsewhere. It didn't pay much. It kept dawning on my mind to go and talk to the president of the company. Well, he said he thought they (the other supervisors) had already put me to work, so within three days I had a job with the Sabbath and all the Holy Days off! I know it pays to tithe, and to trust God."

E. G., Bluefield, Virginia

The Good News

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*ministering to its members
scattered abroad*

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and new address. IMPORTANT!

Personal

From the Editor

IN TEN YEARS the world has experienced a KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION! Its fund of knowledge — especially in technological, scientific, and medical fields — has DOUBLED. The world's TROUBLES also have doubled in the same decade.

But what about *GOD-revealed knowledge*?

That knowledge — knowledge new to us — has burst on our consciousness like a shocking EXPLOSION!

God said, at “the time of the end, many shall run to and fro, and KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED” (Dan. 12:4).

Do you realize HOW MUCH vital knowledge, revealed by GOD, has come to God's Church in the last two decades? When I look back on it, in retrospect, it is AMAZING!

Many in God's Church — actually more than 99% of you, have come into the Church in that last 20 years. Probably you have never realized *how* THE TRUTH was revealed. Most of you have been put into God's Church by the living Christ with THE TRUTH all laid out in order for you. When *you* came in, you came into a Church that already possessed the Truth. You were able to learn it, and come to full understanding, in a very short time, comparatively.

That is *not* the way Mrs. Armstrong and I came in!

We don't have ALL the Truth God's revelation (the Bible) holds for us, even yet. I believe we now have MOST that is vital to us at this particular time! But I had to come into God's Truth a single doctrine, or a single bit of Truth, at a time. It was not all laid out *in order*, in a clear-cut, plain, well-organized pattern — as it is today for YOU!

So I thought it would be interesting — and profitable — to you, to start at the beginning and give you, briefly, the story of HOW God put His Truth into His Church of this “Philadelphia” era.

The “Philadelphia” era of God's Church had not come into existence when God first called me.

I'm sure most of you know something of the early background: of my early life in the advertising

profession, having my business taken away by nationwide conditions beyond my control three times — of being angered into my first actual STUDY of the Bible.

Mrs. Armstrong had been, in my view, “deceived” into taking up with religious fanaticism. She had begun keeping what I then called “the Jewish Sabbath.” Unable to argue her out of it, I started to study the Bible to find where the Bible commanded “Thou shalt keep SUNDAY!”

Of course I couldn't find it. But the study widened in scope and lasted about six months, before Truth began to clear before my mixed-up and befogged vision. I was simultaneously challenged on the theory of evolution.

Both challenges — the Sabbath and evolution — took me to the first chapter of Genesis. The simultaneous study of the evolutionary theory brought on an intensive study into the question: Does GOD exist? For evolution is the atheist's attempt to explain the presence of a CREATION without a Creator.

That six-months' study proved these BASIC Truths:

- 1) God does exist.
- 2) Evolution stands DISPROVED — an error — a false theory.
- 3) The Bible (in its original writings) is the inspired INSTRUCTION BOOK of the Creator GOD to mankind — infallible.
- 4) The SABBATH is binding today, the SIGN that identifies GOD to us, and identifies US as HIS PEOPLE.
- 5) At the very last of this study, the fact that the *annual* Holy Days and Festivals of God are also binding became apparent.
- 6) Also I had learned that the wages of sin is DEATH, not eternal life in hell fire — that it is eternal punishment, not eternal punishing.

7) I had learned also that eternal life is God's GIFT by His grace, imparted to us by His Holy Spirit.

Brethren, do you see, from this, HOW METHODICALLY God began revealing His Truth to me? Those seven points are BASIC — the FOUNDATION! Knowledge of the TRUE God; getting rid of the false god

(evolution); PROOF of the AUTHORITY of the Bible — the SOURCE of knowledge; the Sabbath as God's SIGN; the annual Sabbaths, picturing God's PLAN (though I did not yet — at that time — understand their meaning); the PENALTY for sin; and the need of God's Holy Spirit for salvation and eternal life!

But now the details had to be filled in.

I had *not yet* received God's Holy Spirit. I was still searching with a carnal mind — but, with this knowledge, I had SURRENDERED my will, my hostility against God, all rebellion against HIS Law. I had REPENTED, and I had come to BELIEVE in Jesus Christ as personal Saviour.

But I was still puzzled about water baptism. My parents, and ancestors for 200 years and more, had been "Quakers." I had been brought up in that church, though I didn't know much about what they believed. I did know they did NOT believe in water baptism.

So I next studied that question diligently, in the Bible. I went to four preachers for help, but relied solely on the Bible for final decision. A Seventh-Day Adventist preacher seemed coldly legalistic, lacking spiritual warmth. A Church of God (seventh-day, Stanberry, Missouri) preacher didn't want to be bothered and was insulting. A Quaker minister was friendly, but had to admit, finally, that he himself questioned his church's doctrine on this point and only went along with it because other "holy men of God" (as *he* called them) in his church did. A Baptist minister had the best and clearest explanation, and was warm and friendly and, I felt, more spiritual in a sane and sensible way. So I asked him to baptize me, not into his church, but into Christ. For this I had to obtain permission from the rather august and dignified Board of the Church. On being baptized I *knew* God then and there gave me HIS HOLY SPIRIT!

Now I had added one technical doctrine to my spiritual knowledge.

Very soon after this my wife was taken ill with multiple acute conditions under which she could not have lived another 24 hours. She had blood poisoning from a rosebush thorn, moving toward her heart; a dog bite that was acute; quinsy with a big hard lump completely blocking her throat so nothing could pass; and lockjaw. She had not had a bite of food, a drop of water, nor a wink of sleep in three days and three nights. The doctor could do nothing — said she could not live another 24 hours, without sleep and the blood poison moving rapidly toward her heart.

A neighbor lady asked if I would allow a man and wife to come and pray for her. Reluctantly, and embarrassed, I consented. They came about seven in the evening. I questioned and cross-examined them. I didn't want any fanaticism. They answered all questions with the Bible. They read Scriptures new to me. My wife and I both began to believe. They knelt by her bed, anointed her, and the man just talked quietly and earnestly to God, reminding God He had PROMISED to heal, saying we EXPECTED Him to keep His promise, and then thanking Him for it. I had never heard a prayer like that.

The couple left quietly. My wife asked me to walk her out to the street sidewalk and back. The lump in her throat had disappeared — her jaw was unlocked. She laid down in bed again, went soundly to sleep, did not awaken until eleven next morning — completely healed of EVERYTHING!

After that I pursued an intensified study into all that the Bible revealed about HEALING of sickness and disease.

Now came a study about heaven and hell. Then a more intensified study of the Kingdom of God, and the coming millennial reign under Christ a thousand years on this earth.

Meanwhile, I was pursuing an intensified study of PROPHECY. The prophecies about a "beast" or the "four beasts" of Daniel 7 were a problem. I read many booklets and pamphlets on the subject — all clearly in error. Finally, I began putting down in chart form on paper all the Bible reveals on it, and the meaning cleared up.

Also, even during the initial six-months' study before baptism, a minister in Florida I had contacted by mail, wrote saying that unless I knew of the identity of the United States and the British as the Birthright people of Israel — heading the so-called "Lost Ten Tribes," I was IGNORANT! So I obtained all the literature I could find on the subject, comparing every point with the Bible. I found many errors — errors in every book or pamphlet I could find on the subject. But what I did find in the Bible PROVED our identity. This was the needed KEY to unlock all the prophecies!

I studied seventh-day Church of God literature, and Seventh-Day Adventist literature. I found the Adventist doctrine about going to heaven for a thousand years completely unscriptural. The Church of God taught correctly a millennium on earth, but didn't

seem to know much about what will happen during that time. So I delved deeper into those details.

I studied the popular "rapture theory" about the second coming of Christ, found the Bible proved it false — dug out the TRUTH from the Bible. Then came such subjects and doctrines as "the Mark of the Beast," law and grace, Bible teaching about angels. Another subject that had come up during the very first year was the origin of Satan, and the true meaning of Genesis 1. The true meaning of the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant, and many similar doctrinal questions continued to clear up.

Little by little, a doctrine at a time, a question or subject at a time, TRUTH was emerging. But the Bible is like a jigsaw puzzle.

One must get all the individual pieces put together in their right relation to other pieces before the WHOLE PICTURE comes clear!

You brethren today get the TRUTH all put together in ORDER. You get the WHOLE picture. I had to study, and grope, and search, and study, and discard error, day by day, month by month, year after year. I had to REALLY WORK AT IT!

It was a continuous process. By the time Ambassador College was founded, in 1947 (20 years after my conversion), I felt that we had the Truth rather thoroughly. I did not then realize HOW MUCH MORE was still to come. What has come since is like a BOMB — containing the MOST IMPORTANT knowledge — had suddenly exploded, opening up the BIG TRUTH!

I had tried to fellowship with the Church of God which, in my early days of conversion, was located at Stanberry, Missouri. But their ministers fought me, did all they could to discredit me, break up the broadcast, hinder and stop THE VERY WORK OF GOD! Soon they became divided, with one group making headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.

Then they split and re-split until I lost all knowledge of HOW MANY splintering groups there are. One established headquarters at Denver, Colorado, another in Los Angeles, another in a town near Jefferson, Oregon, another in Stockton, California, and another in or near Nampa, Idaho, and the man who headed it when I first came in contact with them went to Jerusalem, Israel, which he calls "world headquarters."

Even though they fought me, and very unfairly, I do not wish to impute motives or speak disrespectfully of them, because we find them described and identified in Jesus' own prophetic message in Revela-

tion 3:1-6. Even though it describes them as spiritually dead, they are the remnant of what is, or HAS BEEN, one of the seven successive eras of GOD'S TRUE CHURCH. As we are, and are doing the Work of, the "Philadelphia" era (Rev. 3:7-13), so they were the "Sardis" era.

I never became a member of that church, though I was ordained by a group who had been in it, locally organized and incorporated as the "Oregon Conference." But when I had contact with them they refused to correct error or to accept any truth new to them. They ceased to GROW spiritually and IN KNOWLEDGE. And, of course, what has THE NAME of the living Church, but ceases to GROW, SOON DIES (Rev. 3:1). I do not rejoice in that, but say it in sorrow, because there were many in that church that I loved.

But in my days of trying to work with them, between 1927 and somewhere around 1941 to 1947, there was so much controversy over what constituted God's CHURCH GOVERNMENT that I, myself, became completely confused on that point. I could see that their systems were so wrong that I assumed that God's Church is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, and not a church ORGANIZATION. I did not want to assume any rule or authority that I ought not, and consequently when troublemakers and wrong attitudes came into our little Church in Eugene, Oregon, I wielded no authority whatsoever, and the result was a church split in two.

Perhaps the *beginning* of the Biblical KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION we have enjoyed since the college was founded was the clearing up of the Biblical teaching on CHURCH GOVERNMENT. Personally I had gotten so CLOSE to all the errors among the "Sardis" people — with a "General Conference" type government at Stanberry, and a "12 apostles — seven deacons — and 70 elders" type at Salem, West Virginia, that I was like the man so close to one tree he couldn't see the forest.

Ambassador College started with only FOUR students. The three male students were Herman Hoeh (now Dr. Hoeh), Raymond Cole (now District Superintendent of the New York District), and my elder son Richard David. The second year there were added Raymond McNair (now Deputy Chancellor of Ambassador College in England, and Director over the Work in Britain), his brother Marion, and Kenneth Herrmann (now Registrar of Ambassador College, Pasadena campus). Perhaps my son Dick and Raymond Cole had been, like myself, too close to

all the confusion in Oregon. But the others were free from that, and God was able to reveal clearly, through them, precisely what is His form of Church Government.

Once clearly seen, it was put in operation. I had to repent of neglecting to assume the responsibility God had charged me with in Oregon. God's government is always government from the TOP — GOD the Father — on down. Christ is the living HEAD of this Church. There is authority in the Church. Troublemakers, bent on dividing and breaking up God's Church, are not tolerated. THERE IS NO DIVISION, but happy harmony and order, in LOVE!

Many NEW truths have come to light in the past twenty years. Some has been revealed through various of God's ministers — my son Garner Ted, Mr. Roderick Meredith, Dr. Herman Hoeh, Mr. Raymond McNair, Mr. Albert Portune, Mr. Charles Hunting, Dr. Ernest Martin, Dr. Charles Dorothy, and others. And also God has continued to reveal important and basic truths through me.

Among these have been the TRUTH about the PURPOSE of human life — the fact that God is not merely one Person, or a "trinity," but the divine FAMILY or KINGDOM. The truth that we are now only BEGOTTEN, and that being BORN AGAIN is to be actually BORN into that very FAMILY, as sons of God, even as the living Jesus Christ is a divine Son of God. THAT Truth is BASIC — and I did not understand it until after the college was founded. I could "see" it, even up in Oregon, but was AFRAID to accept it — it seemed like "blasphemy" to assume we humans could become members of the DIVINE FAMILY that IS God! But finally I *had* to accept it, when faced with the fact that it is taught throughout the New Testament!

Another BIG Truth is the final COMPLETE knowledge of what man IS! This came through my year-after-year perplexed search to learn the difference between human MIND and animal brain. The fact that there is a human spirit IN man — a spirit that imparts the power of intellect to the human brain — converting it from pure physical BRAIN to human MIND. This makes clearer than ever the need of God's HOLY SPIRIT, which bears witness *with our spirit* that we are, indeed, the CHILDREN OF GOD!

Another is the knowledge that human nature is NOT, after all, as I believed and taught for years, a mixture of good and evil. It is ALL bad. Human nature wants to CONSIDER ITSELF GOOD, while *doing* evil. It is a "pull" like gravity in the direction of evil — SELF!

Another is the origin of what the world regards as the Christian Church, by the Simon referred to in the 8th chapter of Acts — the fact that the "Christian" churches of this world are not, and never were, the same Church Jesus Christ founded in 31 A.D. The knowledge of the "lost century" — 69 to about 170 A.D.

And now that God has placed HIS COLLEGE in Jerusalem, preparing the way for the coming Messiah to sit on David's throne — at the very place where that throne originally was located, opens up a whole new labyrinth of prophecies concerning Jerusalem and events to occur in the next three to ten years!

Yes, the WORLD'S "knowledge explosion" may have resulted in DOUBLING the worlds ills and troubles and problems. But our OWN KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION of GOD-REVEALED KNOWLEDGE is opening before our eyes the WHOLE FUTURE GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE AND OBEY HIM.

The Bible Answers Your Questions

Please address any questions YOU would like answered in this column to the Editor.

Many have asked if it is all right to wear a garment made of mixed fabrics. They wonder about the meaning of Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:11.

Notice that these scriptures contain the basic principle that materials of widely different character and texture

are not to be mixed together. But many do not realize that these verses do allow a number of mixtures and combinations that are within God's laws. Let's understand what they are.

There are two basic kinds of natural fibers from which today's garments are made. The first is plant cellulose fiber.

It produces fabrics such as linen and cotton. The second is animal protein fiber. Materials such as wool and silk are in this category. Because these two basic kinds of fibers differ markedly in strength, washability, absorption, etc., they should not be mixed.

However, a garment made of various combinations of cellulose material — for example, a mixture of cotton and linen — is acceptable since it is a combination of fibers which are basically similar. Likewise, garments made

(Continued on page 17)

It DOES Matter Which Days We Observe!

Here is an astounding proof, making plain which days the inspired New Testament Church observed.

by Herman L. Hoch

WHY DOES God's Church today observe Old Testament, so-called "Jewish" Feasts and Holy Days?

The New Testament Proofs

The Church of God is the New Testament Church. Its Head, Jesus Christ, preached the New Testament Gospel. Nowhere did Jesus during His entire New Testament ministry ever observe the temporary customs of the law of Moses.

Christ never once offered an animal in sacrifice.

Yet Jesus kept God's annual Holy Days. Read it, in John 7:2, 10, 14 and 37.

Jesus set us an example that we should follow His steps! The Apostle John was inspired to write: "He that saith he abideth in him [Jesus Christ] ought himself also so to walk, even as He [Christ] walked" (I John 2:6).

Don't let anyone carelessly say: "I don't see as it makes any difference." It does make a difference — to God!

Now look at I Corinthians 5:7-8. Here we have a New Testament command to a church congregation predominantly of Gentile origin. Notice Paul's instruction. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump . . ." Why? Why put out leaven, the type of sin?

"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" Sin has been paid for. Christ paid for and conquered sin in the flesh! Therefore, says Paul, let us keep sin out of our lives! How? By what annual reminder? Here is the apostle's answer:

"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven" — that is, put away leaven, a type of sin, out of your houses

each feast — "neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness," but *keep the feast* "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

No Easter here. No Lent here. But instead the New Testament Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.

In I Corinthians 11:18-34 the apostle explained in detail how to keep the Passover in the local congregation.

Now turn to Acts 20:6. "And we [Luke and those with him] sailed away from Philippi [a Gentile city] after the days of unleavened bread . . ." Notice. Luke did not sail after Easter or some other pagan holiday of the Roman calendar. They sailed away after they had observed the Days of Unleavened Bread!

Example of the Colossian Church

But the strongest proof of all is found in Paul's letter to the Colossian Christians. It is there and yet you may never have noticed it! The very scripture most often quoted *against* God's truth is, in fact, the strongest proof that God's festivals were being kept!

The Gentile converts at Colossae, like the Thessalonians, "became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus" (I Thess. 2:14). The Churches of God in Judaea kept God's festivals. They followed the example of the Headquarters Church in Jerusalem. And the scattered Churches of God in the Gentile world followed their example!

Notice Paul's commendation of the converts at Colossae. "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (Col. 2:5).

The Church of God at Colossae was following Christ — doing the things He did, keeping the days He kept. They had

ceased their pagan customs. They had quit their heathen practices. "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He [Christ] reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable . . . if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel . . ." (Col. 1:21-23).

These Gentile converts, verse 27, had been called out of the world — called to separate from the traditions of the world — but they still lived in a world steeped with pagan superstition and custom. They were under pressure from their neighbors to give up their new-found faith. Their Gentile neighbors did not like them taking up with Biblical practices. They did not want any "Jewish practices" developing in their community! They wanted everybody to continue with the traditions and doctrines of the pagan philosophers, whom the world respected. They weren't about to have their pagan holidays replaced by God's holy days, or their sun-worship rites superseded by the weekly sabbath, or the pagan Roman calendar replaced by God's calendar.

Gentle Colossians Were Ascetic

Colossae was a very ascetic community. The people there did not believe in enjoying pleasure. They believed in a religion of severity. They believed in rigidly suppressing the body "in order to purify the soul." They thought that any indulgence of the senses was wrong. They fasted often, punished themselves, were vegetarians in part, refused to eat even those *clean* meats God created for us, and thought drinking wine was terrible!

To keep everybody "in line" they brought social pressure, and instituted

local "blue laws" (see *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170*, by W. M. Ramsay, chapter X). These pagan ascetic beliefs were commonly known to the heathen by the name "philosophy." Paul used this very word in Colossians 2:8: "Beware lest any man spoil you through PHILOSOPHY and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments [or basic concepts] of the world, and not after Christ."

Philosophy was the doctrine that one could pay for his own sins by denying himself the pleasures of the body. It was a pagan doctrine which denied the need of a Saviour. It was called philosophy because the pagan philosophers were responsible for its introduction.

The early Catholic writers used this same expression in their day to mean asceticism. Read it for yourself: "It was very common . . . to call an ascetic mode of life 'philosophical,' or 'the life of a philosopher' . . . The growing sentiment had its roots partly in the prevailing ideas of contemporary philosophy, which instinctively emphasized strongly the dualism of spirit and matter . . ." "The Neo-Platonic philosophy of the times, through its doctrine of the purification of the soul by its liberation from the body or sensuous things, taught celibacy and ascetic practices generally." (From pp. 252 and 546 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, second series, edited by Schaff and Wace.)

Those who followed this philosophy were stern ascetics. They were the opposite of many others who loved pleasure and indulged in the sins of the flesh, whose motto was "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Not so the Grecian Gentiles at Colossae. They severely judged their Christian neighbors for the least infraction of ascetic behavior. They did not like to see the Christians freely eating meat good for food, or drinking wine moderately, or keeping the weekly sabbath and the annual festivals. That is why Paul wrote: "Let no man therefore judge you for eating or drinking, or in connection with the observance of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (Col. 2:16, margin).

Here were Gentile converts, judged

by relatives and neighbors for doing the things Jesus did. Judged for keeping holy the days God made holy! Notice with your own eyes this startling proof here revealed!

"Let No MAN Judge You . . ."

In Colossians 2:16, Paul is thought by many to have abolished the days God made holy.

First stop to consider! Is it logical that Paul would have commanded the Gentiles in Corinth and elsewhere to observe God's festivals (1 Cor. 5:7-8), and then contradict himself by telling the Colossians not to observe them? Yet most churches would make Paul just that inconsistent!

The truth is so plain here in Colossians. What is Paul writing to the saints in Colossae? "Let no man therefore judge you . . ." Does this say "God has abolished these"? Look at the verse again. It says, "Let no man . . . judge you" concerning these matters. To judge is not to abolish. Paul is warning the Colossians not to let any man judge them about certain matters. Why?

"But why do you judge your brother? . . . for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ . . . So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10, 12).

God is the judge. Not man. It is by the Word of God that we are going to be judged, not by the ideas of man (John 12:48). Since we are to live as those who are to be judged BY THE WORD OF GOD, then we have to go to other passages of scripture to find how God will judge us with reference to meats, drinks and festive occasions. It doesn't matter what human beings think, but it does matter what *GOD THINKS*.

Now consider Col. 2:8 again. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit" — it does not say the law of Moses. It does speak of pagans who adhered to "philosophy."

Continuing: "After the rudiments [fundamental beliefs] of the world, and not after Christ." The evil doctrines Paul is condemning were of the world. The world then was a GENTILE world. It was a pagan Roman world, filled with foolish and vain traditions. The Jews

prided themselves on being racially separate from the world. So these traditions were Gentile traditions which Paul warns us to beware of!

Now verses 9 and on: "For in Him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." God dwelt in Christ, not in the philosophers. "And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power" (verse 10). We are made perfect in Christ, not through asceticism and human traditions. Christ is the Head over all. He is the One we must look to, not to the highly vaunted philosophers.

"In whom [Christ] also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (verse 11). Paul elsewhere reveals we are to be circumcised "in the heart" (Romans 2:29).

Christ conquered sin in the flesh. If we surrender ourselves to Christ, He will enter into us through His Holy Spirit and clean us up, conquer our sins — circumcise our hearts or minds spiritually. He enables us to completely cut away sin out of our lives — enables us to bury all our past sins in the waters of baptism, as you read in Col. 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God" — faith in God's ability to supply us with the Holy Spirit and raise us from a dead past to new life just as He "hath raised Him [Christ] from the dead."

Sin, Not Law, Blotted Out

"And you," Paul continues, "being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh" — these people were, prior to conversion, uncircumcised Gentiles — "hath He [the Father] quickened together with Him [Christ], having forgiven you all trespasses" (verse 13).

God forgives sin. These Gentile converts had sinned. They had been following the foul, heathenish practices of the world about them. They had been trying to pay for their own hurt consciences by penance, by asceticism. But they hadn't found forgiveness.

Now things were different. They had really been forgiven. They were no longer bound to their past sins. They

had no longer the guilt of following human customs, human ordinances, human decrees and vanity. Their sins had been blotted out; Christ had taken them away.

What Was Nailed to the Cross?

Notice that Christ was nailed to the stake or cross. He bore our sins. When He shed His blood in our stead, He thereby blotted out all our sins by paying for them in full with His own life. It is SIN which was blotted out. Notice Acts 3:19, "that your SINS may be BLOTTED OUT." "Have mercy upon me," cried David, "blot out my TRANSGRESSIONS . . . Hide thy face from my SINS, and BLOT OUT all mine INIQUITIES" (Psalm 51:1, 9).

Now we all can better understand Colossians 2:14. Notice this verse as it stands in the King James Version. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."

Haven't you assumed this verse to mean God's law? But look at the verse again.

What is blotted out? Sin! It does not say "the Ten Commandments." It does not read "law of Moses," or "works of the law." It reads "handwriting of ordinances."

What "ordinances" were these?

Sinful Pagan Customs

Let the Bible answer. Paul tells us in verses 20 to 23 of this same chapter!

"Wherefore if ye" — the Gentile converts — "be dead with Christ from the rudiments [fundamental principles or ideas] of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances"? (verse 20). ORDINANCES! Notice it. But which ordinances?

The answer is in the next verse: "(Touch not; taste not; handle not; which are all to perish with the using;) AFTER THE COMMANDMENTS AND DOCTRINES OF MEN?"

There you are! They were human traditions! Ways of sin! Continuing: "Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in *will worship*" — pagan asceticism — "and humility, and neglecting of the body" — appearing outwardly humble and self-denying, but inwardly

self-righteous — "*but are of no value against indulgence of the flesh*" (Last part from Panin trans.).

Did you catch it? These evil practices were pagan ordinances, or customs of men — based on the commandments and doctrines of pagan speculative philosophy. They were heathen ordinances, heathen customs forbidding people from touching, tasting and handling those things God allows. We see the same customs today: don't dance, don't drink, etc., in today's Christianity!

So the original inspired Greek for "handwriting of ordinances" is not even referring to Moses' laws! In fact this is not a proper translation! The original Greek reads *cheirographon tois dogmasin*. It does not mean a code of laws.

The Greek word for "handwriting" originally referred to "a note of hand, or writing in which one acknowledges that money has either been deposited with him or lent to him by another, to be returned at an appointed time" (From Thayer's *Lexicon*).

It came later to refer to any acknowledgment of debt. We all owe a debt to God because of sin. That is the meaning of the word "handwriting" here — an acknowledgment of debt.

But how was it originally incurred? What did the Colossians do that brought on that debt of sin? The answer is in verse 15. What was blotted out were trespasses (verse 13, last part) incurred through following sinful ordinances, believing lying dogmas — like the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which was at the root of pagan asceticism!

Nothing is said here about any "law of Moses." Those Gentiles had never heard of or kept that law!

So the written record of sins which were blotted out involved the frightful practice of evil pagan ordinances for which Christ paid the penalty and God forgave us.

How the Colossians OBEYED

The Colossian Christians had been taught Christ's gospel. They believed and obeyed. Christ was living His life in them as they yielded to Him. They were being knit together in love (Col. 2:2). Love is the fulfillment of the Law (Romans 13:10). The Colossians were

keeping God's law. Like other Gentiles they had not heard of God's law before it was preached to them. (See Romans 2:12, 13.) They did not know the way of love. But now they not only knew it, they were practicing it!

They were no longer ascetics, trying to conquer the flesh by themselves. They were conquering themselves through the Holy Spirit. But God gives His Holy Spirit only to those "who obey Him" (Acts 5:32). Because the Colossian Christians were obeying God, it made their neighbors feel self-condemned and inferior. Their neighbors began sitting in judgment of them — condemning them — for following the ways of Christ which they had newly learned. And what were these Christians being judged for?

Notice it! It was not for keeping Christmas and Easter and Sunday pagan holidays — not for total abstinence from meats and alcohol! No indeed! But —

"Let no man therefore judge you for eating and drinking" (margin) — the Colossians were no longer ascetics — "or in connection with the observance of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths."

That is why they were being judged — "in connection with the observance" (as Moffatt translates it) of God's festivals, His calendar measured by the new moon, and the Sabbath!

The once-pagan Colossians never kept these days before! They were heathen prior to conversion. Now that they had learned the Gospel, they were keeping holy the days God made holy. And Paul is warning them not to return to or be influenced by their old pagan ways — the ways of their relatives and neighbors who hated God's law and His festivals.

The original Greek in verse 16 — *en broosei* and *en posei* — means "in eating and in drinking." It does not mean meat and drink offerings. Every competent scholar acknowledges this to be the true meaning.

These verses are speaking of the Christian liberty to enjoy life! Jesus came eating and drinking (Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:34). Jesus set us the example. He was no ascetic! And neither were the Colossian Christians any

longer! They were daily enjoying the Christian life in temperance and self-control, and especially in connection with each Feast, every new month and the weekly Sabbaths!

And what does the apostle mean when he tells the Colossians not to let any MAN judge them "in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days"?

The phrase "in respect of," as found in the common versions is ambiguous. It is rendered "in part of" in the margin of the King James Version.

Now what is the real meaning of the ambiguous phrase "in respect of"? The Greek word translated "respect" literally means "a part" or "a portion." See *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*.

It was in connection with the sacrificial part or portion that the carnal Gentiles were judging their converted neighbors. They reasoned — as many do today — that one can't keep God's days holy without the Mosaic sacrifices. Nonsense. Don't let any man sit in judgment of this matter. Let God speak out!

God commanded no sacrifices except the Passover, which is still continued under different symbols today, when He revealed the holy days to Israel. (See Jer. 7:22-23.)

The weekly and annual Sabbaths were not instituted for the purpose of sacrifice. God says: "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people: and walk ye in all ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you" (Jeremiah 7:22, 23).

So we see that Paul is telling the Colossians to know the word of God so thoroughly that they could refute any MAN who would dare to sit in judgment of them for trusting in the sacrifice of Christ.

What Was Foreshadowed?

Now notice Col. 2:17. "Which are a shadow of things to come . . ." Or, better translated, "which foreshadow things to come." Did these Scriptural

days foreshadow things to come? Indeed!

Do the weekly Sabbaths foreshadow good things to come? Indeed they do! Not only is the weekly Sabbath a memorial of creation — but it also foreshadows the seventh 1000 years, in which man shall rest from his labors of sin.

In speaking of the seventh day of the week, in Hebrews 4:4, the Apostle Paul goes right on to show that the seventh day foreshadows God's thousand year millennial rest. But does that do away with the weekly Sabbath? Not at all! "There remaineth therefore a keeping of a Sabbath to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9, margin). Sabbath keeping is a TEST OF OBEDIENCE. No one shall enter into an eternal rest unless he first, here and now, is willing to enter into the rest of each Sabbath, each seventh day of the week. And that is exactly what the Colossians were doing — observing the weekly Sabbaths.

In like manner the annual festivals were instituted as memorials of events which also foreshadow the plan of God. They were given to the Church in order to keep the Church in the knowledge of that plan.

Only one festival has been entirely fulfilled in type — the Passover. Yet Jesus said that each year we are to celebrate it again: "DO THIS in remembrance of Me."

Some claim that Colossians 2:16 refers "to annual feasts, new moons, and annual sabbaths" — not to the weekly Sabbaths.

This is not true! Whenever the expression "Sabbath days" is used with "holy days" and "new moons," the *weekly* Sabbaths are always meant! There is no exception. Read I Chron. 23:31; II Chron. 2:4; 31:3; Ezra 3:5; Neh. 10:33.

All annual holy days ARE annual Sabbaths!

Notice that in all these verses the weekly Sabbaths are referred to IN THE PLURAL just as in Colossians 2:16! Col. 2:16 includes BOTH weekly AND annual Sabbaths! If it abolishes one, it abolishes the other. But as it establishes one, so it establishes the other as New Testament practice.

The Body of Christ

"Let no man therefore judge you . . ." in these matters, said Paul, "but [rather] the body of Christ" (Col. 2:17, last part).

This verse has troubled many. Yet it should not. Notice that the word "is" in the King James Version is in italics. It does not appear in the original. The original Greek says only: "the body of Christ." What is the body of Christ? How does Paul use this expression in Colossians?

Turn to chapter 1. In verse 18 we find that Christ "is the Head of the body, THE CHURCH." See also Col. 2:19.

The true Church of God is the body of Christ. Just as the Spirit of God once dwelled in the earthly body of Jesus Christ, so now the Holy Spirit dwells in each member of the Church and together we constitute one body, doing the very work Christ did. We are therefore Christ's body today! And Christ is the Head as the husband is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23).

No man is to sit in judgment of our Christian conduct, Paul is declaring in Colossians 2:16-17. Man does not determine how we should live. But it is the responsibility of the Church — the body of Christ — to determine these matters! The Church is to teach how to observe the festivals — to explain the meaning of self-control, etc.

So these little-understood verses ought to be translated clearly: "Let no man therefore judge you . . . but [rather] let the body of Christ [determine it]." Greek scholars recognize that the first expression "let no man" demands that there be a subsequent expression which tells who is to do the judging of the matter!

How plain these verses are. How clear that the Colossians were keeping holy the time God made holy!

Let us now keep the Feasts this autumn with real deep joy, thankful that the great God of Heaven is our Judge and not *any* man. Let us also *keep the Feast* with deep appreciation of the wonderful world tomorrow it pictures when all of today's *judging* fellow humans will be KEEPING THE FEAST with us!!!

Have You Had the Mumps Yet?

Vaccination is the world's most potent weapon to fight against contagious diseases. But what is yours? — Do you know?

by Dibar K. Apartian

HAVE YOU had the mumps — yet? Ghastly! What a question! You may expect to be asked if you have had your morning cup of coffee yet — or even perhaps your daily vitamin C supply. But *mumps*? Really — that's unorthodox.

Mumps is said to be *contagious* — and it is. But what does “contagious” mean? Are we supposed to catch anything and everything which is contagious? Is this automatic? Is there such a law in the Bible?

Mumps is also said to usually attack children between five and fifteen years of age — consequently, we *expect* our children to catch it. This is considered normal, conventional. In fact, we sometimes go as far as to *hope* — almost prayerfully — that our children will come down with their “childhood” diseases *as soon as possible!* The reason, of course, is that as children, they do usually get over them very rapidly, whereas quite the contrary is true so far as adults are concerned.

What Causes Contagious Disease?

This type of reasoning is *natural* — and makes sense. Nevertheless, something is lacking in it; something is misleading. If we only catch contagious diseases because *they are* contagious, then where is *our* share in the sin which produces them? If children are *bound* to catch a “childhood” disease — because of contagion — then just where does SIN fit into the picture?

In accordance with the Bible, sickness is a result of sin. Contagious diseases are NOT exempt from this law. Nor are the “childhood” diseases. But then, doesn't it sound rather strange when you say, “I hope my children will catch measles or mumps before they grow older”? It's

like hoping that they would sin — or have their share of the sin — *as soon as possible* so that the ensuing punishment will be milder.

Of course, we never think of it that way; we don't think of *sin* when our children — or we ourselves — come down with a contagious disease. Somehow, even though we ask to be anointed, we consider that, in this particular instance, the sin really wasn't *ours*, but *partly* or even *mostly someone else's* — perhaps the very ones' through whom we were contaminated.

A contagious disease is contagious, that's for sure, yet, when properly understood, we are *not at all guiltless* in succumbing to it. Such a happening is not merely or necessarily a question of time and chance. Moreover, you can't repent of someone else's sins — but only of your own.

The question then is to know where *you have sinned*, or what is *your share* of the sin which made you succumb to contagion.

Any Particular Sin?

Last Friday afternoon, returning home from work, I told my wife that I had a strange sensation under my left ear — possibly even a swelling.

“Oh, dear, you're not coming down with the mumps, are you?” she chuckled. “You'll never live it down! It's going to be *embarrassing*.”

It was! But not quite the way I had expected it to be. My embarrassment was not only before men — but *before GOD!* You see, I had never thought of it before, but it suddenly occurred to me that if something is “embarrassing” before men, it must *first* of all be “embarrassing” before God. Truly, I did feel embarrassed before God for having caught the mumps — for the way I took the

disease for granted — for my little understanding of the necessary repentance at the time I was anointed for it.

As I tossed around in my bed, deep in thought — and my jowls practically hanging over my shoulders — I asked myself *what did I actually do* to catch the mumps, *how come* I got it! If, as a general rule, mumps is for kids — and grown ups only occasionally catch it — what then, I wondered, is the particular sin children must commit more often than adults, to make them susceptible to the mumps?

You would think I was delirious, but I wasn't, really! When you have much time to think, you try to be philosophical about things — and you follow a certain line of thought which somehow seems quite “logical” to you!

Sin Is Sin

You can't categorize sin, except for the fact that it can be *physical* or *spiritual*. But it is useless and nonsense to try to pinpoint any particular sin — especially in the case of a contagious disease — and label it as the *cause* of mumps or measles or whooping cough. It just doesn't work that way. Even though sinful actions produce obvious results (for instance, if you have a bad fall, you may break a bone) — nevertheless, sin is sin; whatever its extent, it still represents the *transgression* of God's laws.

In my particular case, I could think of a number of reasons why I should be down with the mumps — and each one, *individually*, would be valid, because each one, *individually*, represented a transgression of God's laws. Granted, our human bodies are pitifully degenerate — but don't I have *my own share* of responsibility in the matter? Don't I contribute to the general degeneration by the very life I lead in this present

corrupt world? And don't our bodies — if they are properly taken care of — have the right amount of antibodies to fight against any contagious disease? Did I — and do I — take care of my body just the way God intended me to? In all this, haven't I fallen short? Haven't I sinned? Wouldn't you consider it sin if you have allowed your body to be in a *rundown condition*, susceptible to catching any kind of disease?

And how about the fact of being *careless* — yes, just plain CARELESSNESS in following faithfully all of God's laws?

Think seriously! Don't you really consider such things as sin?

Any human being, anywhere and anytime, is liable to catch any sickness (including, of course, the contagious ones), if he has been careless of his *diet* — careless of his *sleeping habits* — careless of his *physical exercise* — careless of the *rules of hygiene* — careless of . . . (You know, this type of enumeration reminds me of the amusing record I once heard at Mr. Herbert Armstrong's home — on that record, former President Johnson was naming *ad infinitum* all the medical doctors who were consulted when he suffered a simple cold! However, if Mr. Johnson's list, by the laws of mathematics, is bound to come to an end, the list of *our human carelessness* never can and never will . . .).

Carelessness Is Sin

It is high time we begin to associate carelessness with sin, because to be careless in keeping God's laws means plainly not keeping them. No justification or compromise is possible; it's like being half alive!

Of course, it is so easy — so very easy — to be careless: all it takes is not to use your head or to neglect doing what you ought to do.

If you took time to think about these things, to meditate seriously on what sin and its ramifications actually are, you wouldn't first of all ask yourself, as I did, "Where did I get the bug? Who gave it to me? Wasn't I bound to catch the disease because of its contagious nature?" Rather than seek the answers to

such questions, or blame someone else, you would search your heart to know where *you have gone wrong*, where you have failed in doing your share, where you have been careless and negligent in taking proper care of God's temple.

And then — there is another phase. In case of sickness — whether contagious or not — after we repent of it, after we are anointed, we sometimes tend to believe that if God, in His infinite mercy, allowed our plans to be changed, it was to protect us perhaps from another calamity or accident, a more serious one, which otherwise would have been our lot.

Let me explain this.

Did God Really Cause This

Have you ever wondered — when sick or undergoing some hardship — just what is the underlying lesson God wants you to learn? *You should*, because there's always a lesson for each one of us to learn in all the occurrences in life. But in so doing, have you also *assumed*, subconsciously perhaps, a somewhat self-righteous attitude, seeking first what other calamity you were spared of, or the "meaning" of the adverse circumstances — rather than admitting you brought them on yourself?

I am sure you get the point. There is always — for each one of us — a lesson to learn in whatever happens to us. But all the changes brought in our lives as a result of such circumstances are *not* necessarily of God's doing — or a divine "sign" of His intervention. When our plans are upset — and they always are in such circumstances — we tell ourselves, "it must be God's will." This way of thinking is rather convenient since it makes us *de-emphasize our sin!* In other words, in our eagerness to rationalize the "divine" intervention, we forget that the mess we are in is because of sin.

No doubt, God can and does — *when HE so chooses* — intervene in a dramatic way in our lives, causing our plans to be upset, our decisions to be reversed, trips and appointments cancelled, and all sorts of such things. However, more often than not, such upsetting of our plans is most often imposed on us *by our sins* — and not necessarily by God.

My Plans Upset

The same was true, to be sure, in the case of *my mumps*. (For once, I hate that adjective "my"; in this particular case, it is most appalling to me!) Nevertheless, in my vanity, I in turn seemed more preoccupied to know just *why* God allowed the sudden changes in my plans and schedule than the part my sins played in the matter. For one thing, this sickness would set me back in my work; it would prevent me from making new broadcasts to the French-speaking people for a certain length of time — and would upset, of course, my regular schedule as well as all of my immediate plans. "Why — oh, why did God allow this to happen?" I asked myself, as though *He* were responsible for it, quite oblivious to the reasons for my catching the mumps.

Incidentally, we were expecting a visitor from Europe, the teen-age daughter of close friends from Belgium; both she and we — especially our children — had been looking forward to her visit. In view of the fact that she speaks only French, my children would be forced to converse with her in that language. What an excellent opportunity for them!

But we had to postpone her trip; just a few hours before her departure, we contacted her parents to call it off, at least temporarily.

Now — was this necessarily God's will? It could have been, of course. But was it *really*? I presume you can be philosophical about it and reason your way around, looking out for all kinds of plausible arguments to prove that such was indeed the case. But would that necessarily be true?

You might say perhaps that God stopped her from flying that day because her plane might have crashed. Actually it didn't. The plane landed very safely — and there were no airplane crashes reported anywhere in the world that day! You might think of numerous other reasons. But please try to see the point: whatever the circumstances, even though "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose," nevertheless, when our thinking

(Continued on page 16)

Are YOU Guilty of *BLASPHEMY?*

Don't be too sure you're not. Read this article to check up on yourself.

by David L. Antion

BLASPHEMY is a most dangerous sin. Yet many who would *not think of blaspheming* may be at this precise moment *committing this great sin!*

Blasphemy is NOT just swearing or taking God's name in vain. There are many forms of blasphemy, and some of these ways of blasphemy bring dire consequences. Don't be ignorant. Study this article and be sure you stop every form of blasphemy now!

Definition

Notice this Bible proof that blasphemy and swearing or cursing are *not* the same thing. In Lev. 24:10-16, we find the account of the Israelitish woman's son who strode through the camp and got into a fight with one of the men of Israel. And in the fight, the son of the Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, *blasphemed* the name of the Eternal, "*and cursed.*" Notice that he did two things. He blasphemed *AND* cursed. For this terrible sin he was put to death. And this is the word that came from God: "Whosoever *curseth* his God shall bear his sin. And he that *blasphemeth* the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death" (verses 15-16).

Again, in this law it is made clear that cursing and blaspheming are two separate offenses. Notice too, that blasphemy is an offense punishable by DEATH.

Webster's dictionary defines blasphemy as "indignity offered to God in words, writing, or signs" "Blasphemy applies strictly to any intentional utterance defying or offering indignity to the Supreme Being." "Impious or irreverent speech" is also blasphemy. It also includes swearing and profanity.

However, the Bible definition covers much more territory than Webster's. And the real truth as to the spirit of the law is going to surprise you.

The Hebrew word translated "blasphemy" in Leviticus 24 means to violently poke holes through, to jab at or perforate. Other words translated "blasphemy" concur with the English definition of the word.

Prophesied for End Time

The God-given prophecy written by the Apostle Paul of these last days reveals the fact that blasphemy would abound. "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, BLASPHEMERS, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (II Tim. 3:1-2).

Yes, our world today is filled with blasphemers. This very country which writes on its currency, "In God We Trust" is filled with blasphemers. Notice the prophesied condition that would exist now.

"Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that My people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; *and My name continually every-day is blasphemed*" (Isaiah 52:5). How many millions of times each day do you

think God's name is taken in vain, used in gutter filth, cursed as a means of venting anger?

God says through Ezekiel, "And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy *blasphemies* which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel saying, they are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against Me, and have multiplied your words against Me: *I have heard them*" (Ezek. 35:12-13). This was a prophecy against Mount Seir, but God is the same in His dealing with nations and He has also heard the great blasphemies spoken against Him in this nation.

Of this land today God says, "For the land is full of adulterers; for because of *swearing* the land mourneth" (Jer. 23:10). Even the very land mourns underneath the mountain of sin caused by swearing. In the next verse God tells us that even the prophet and priest are profane in this land. Yes, even many of them swear. Swearing even occurs over television, in churches, in the so-called high society of "nice people." And even some in God's Church today are swearing and do not realize it. And remember that swearing is a form of blasphemy!

Taking God's Name in Vain

One would think he would never hear swearing over television, especially over the "nicer" shows. However, one night on the show "LASSIE," the little boy in the show swore several times. He did not say the name of God directly, but he swore nevertheless. Brethren, it is time many of you knew

that such words as "Gee," "Gosh," "Golly," "darn," and various combinations of these words are actually swear-word derivatives of the names of God, Jesus Christ and of the word "damn." They are the more "polite" forms of **SWEARING!** And even members of God's Church use these words in their speech. We need desperately to eradicate these words from our conversation and stop this form of blasphemy!

It is easy for us to swear or blaspheme. Why? Why is it not as easy to praise God and bless His holy name? The reason is *human nature*. God has put in human nature the downward pulls of sin. And one of these pulls is blasphemy. Jesus said, "For from *within*, out of the *heart* of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders . . . [and] *blasphemy* . . ." (Mark 7:21-22). It is part of human nature, then, to blaspheme. But, it is a part that must be overcome. Paul says, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, *blasphemy*, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8).

Examples of Blasphemy

When Hezekiah was king of Judah, Sennacherib planned to invade and conquer the nation of Judah. He boasted against Judah thus: "Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Harken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria . . . Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. *Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land* out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, *that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?*" (Isa. 36: 14-16, 18, 20.)

Here the king of Assyria challenged God. He tried to bring God down to the level of an idol, to that of physical things. He spoke out intentionally defying God and His power to deliver Judah and Jerusalem. God called it blasphemy.

"And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have **BLASPHEMED** me" (Isa. 37:6). Again in verse 10 of this same chapter the king of Assyria blasphemed God. He accused God of trying to deceive His people. God labels this accusation blasphemy in verse 23.

Do men or nations get away with blasphemy against the Most High God? God said He would defend Jerusalem and He accepted the challenge given by the king of Assyria. Who won? Notice: "Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, *they were all dead corpses*" (verse 36).

Notice that this was blasphemy but that the king of Assyria never did curse God's name. But he did show irreverence and indignity to God. He did challenge God and His power.

Other Forms of Blasphemy

Here are other misdeeds that God labels blasphemy in His Word. Let us look at them and let each analyze himself in the light of God's Word. Think over your own actions of late and see if you are blaspheming.

In Ezekiel 20:27 we read, "Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord ETERNAL; Yet in this your fathers have *blasphemed* me, IN THAT THEY HAVE COMMITTED A TRESPASS AGAINST ME." They blasphemed God by trespassing or sinning against Him. And this particular sin that they did was to pervert the way of worshipping God. They sacrificed to idols and established their own religion after God gave them the blessings of the land. This is happening today in the United States of America. This people has polluted the true religion of God.

Those of us in the true Church of God must be careful that we do not detract from or add to God's Word. We must be careful that we do not participate in idolatrous worship. For that is what the Israelites did and God

calls it *blasphemy*. IF YOU BLASPHEME GOD, YOU WILL PAY FOR IT UNLESS YOU REPENT! Those participating in pagan holidays are having a part in the idolatrous worship condemned in Ezekiel 20:28 which God labels as a form of blasphemy.

Blasphemy by Hypocrisy

Another form of blasphemy brought out is in Revelation 2:9. "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the *blasphemy* of them *which say they are Jews, and are not*, but are the synagogue of Satan." Notice that God considers it blasphemy for people to say they are Jews — spiritual Jews. What is a spiritual Jew? According to Romans 2:29 it is one who has been circumcised in the heart — that is, has received the Holy Spirit and is, therefore, a Christian. There were people then saying they were Christians — true spiritual Jews — but who were not. God calls this blasphemy. Therefore to profess to do what is right and not to do it is blasphemy according to this principle. How many are doing this very thing?

Are you one who by your attendance in a local church profess to be keeping God's commandments and Sabbaths and yet are not doing it at all? Are you claiming to be a member of God's true Church — claiming to be a true Christian and follower of Jesus Christ; yet constantly putting up with sins that you know you have, never bothering to overcome sins and weaknesses? Are you just content with the same faults day after day — yet all the time claiming to be a spiritual Jew. **THIS IS BLASPHEMY!**

Another way to blaspheme God is shown in Acts 13:44-45. "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the *word of God*." Let us note right here that they were coming to hear God's Word. Jesus said the word of God was truth in John 17:17. But notice verse 45, "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and *spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming*." When they spoke against the things spoken by the apostle Paul, they did two

things. They contradicted *and* blasphemed!

It follows then, that when we speak against the things spoken by one of God's ministers that we are blaspheming the very God we profess. When we speak against the doctrines of God's Church which are truths of God's Word, we blaspheme. Brethren, some of you are guilty of this very thing. You don't agree with a doctrine of God's Church and you speak out against it. Perhaps you just cannot understand it at the time. It does not say that it is blasphemy if you don't agree or can't understand. **BUT IT IS BLASPHEMY TO SPEAK AGAINST THE WORD OF GOD, SPOKEN BY HIS MINISTERS!**

When you blaspheme you border on the most dangerous sin of all. You are getting close to the cliff that will topple you into the lake of fire. If you don't understand something spoken by a minister, then ask the minister about it. Pray about it. Search your own heart to make sure you are not deceiving yourself. *But above all, don't speak against it.* To do this IS BLASPHEMY!

Causing Blasphemy

You may be one who is not blaspheming directly yourself. But you may be the cause of blasphemy to God and His Word. If you are, then you are at least 50% guilty of the sin of blasphemy. If by your actions you cause others to blaspheme the name of God perhaps you are more guilty than they of this sin.

The Apostle Paul condemned the Jews for this very thing. "You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? For, as it is written, 'THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU'" (Rom. 2:23-24, RSV). Yes, the Jews were responsible for causing God's name to be blasphemed. With their bad examples and sin-filled lives they caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the very name of God Almighty.

Let us look at ourselves today. How is your example in front of unconverted neighbors and relatives? What kind of example did you set the world on your way to the Feast of Taber-

nacles? And while you were at the feast, many of you stayed in private homes in surrounding communities. What kind of example did you set? Were you clean? Or did you leave the place dirty and filthy? Some stayed in rented trailers. When you returned your trailer was it dirty and messy inside? Did you give it back in better shape than you had taken it?

Many of those from whom you rented trailers and rooms knew that you were going to a religious festival. Some even knew the name of the Church. Did you by your example cause or give occasion for those people to blaspheme the God we worship — the only true and living God? Were you impolite to the unconverted people in nearby towns or to the merchants? Did you give occasion for them to speak against the Church of God — the very Body of Jesus Christ? If you did, **YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE SIN OF BLASPHEMY!**

Notice what it cost King David, a man after God's own heart, for doing what some of us have done. After being told of his terrible sin of adultery and murder, David said, "I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, the LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. *Howbeit*, because by this deed [his sins] thou hast given great occasion [opportunity] to the enemies of the LORD to *blaspheme*, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die" (II Sam. 12:13-14). It cost David his son because he participated in this sin of blasphemy by giving the enemies of God the opportunity to speak against the religion and way of God. What will some of us have to pay to learn this lesson?

Let us set a right and holy example before the world by keeping God's commandments. And also by being polite, thoughtful, kind, neat, and clean in all our ways. Why do we always insist on paying a dear price to learn the consequences of sin?

Women Blaspheme

Here are two specific Bible ways in which we can cause others to blaspheme. First, for the women in

God's Church. Here are God's instructions and the reason for them. God says "to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, *obedient to their own husbands*, **THAT THE WORD OF GOD BE NOT BLASPHEMED**" (Titus 2:5). If you *disobey* your husbands, if you are not discreet, chaste, *keepers at home*, good mothers and wives, you are causing God's Word to be blasphemed — indeed you are blaspheming it yourself!

Through this whole article so far we have also been showing the punishment that one will reap when he blasphemes. *We will reap what we sow.*

Women who have husbands who are not members have a great responsibility. If you are not the right kind of wife, if you are disrespectful, sloppy, and otherwise setting a bad Christian example — you are giving "great occasion" for your non-member husband to speak blasphemously against God's Word, and Church.

Has your husband ever said, "Why don't you throw that Bible away? And don't ever talk to me about God, Jesus Christ or religion. I don't want any part with God or religion *if THAT'S the way Christians act.*" Actually those are words of blasphemy, said in ignorance, of course. And some husbands have even said more blasphemous things than that.

Stop and think. On His great throne, God Almighty hears every word uttered. He hears the blasphemy of atheists, skeptics, etc. He has heard Khrushchev's blasphemy and that of all the atheistic Communists. *God is sick of it!* And then, we, by our misdeeds and foolish actions, cause more blasphemy. Blasphemy that would otherwise never have been spoken. What sin! Are we not more guilty in one sense than those who do the actual blaspheming? *We who profess to do God's will and then cause others to blaspheme our God because of our foolishness and wrong actions.* This form of blasphemy must be stopped!

Blasphemy on the Job?

God gives warning to most of the men of the church. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, *that the name of God and His doctrine be*

not blasphemed" (I Tim. 6:1). In modern day terminology this applies to those men who work for an employer. They are to give that employer the honor due him. And part of the way to do this is to perform your work well.

Your employer will know that you belong to God's Church. You tell him you must have the Sabbath day off, Holy Days, etc. Then, if you do sloppy, half-hearted work, you will give occasion for him to blaspheme. Plus, you yourself are actually blaspheming. You are professing to do God's will and are not. God says that His name *and* His doctrine will be blasphemed if you do not honor your employer properly. Part of His doctrine is "whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

Leads to Unpardonable Sin

Blasphemy is dangerous. And it ought to be considered so because one form of blasphemy is the unpardonable sin. Let us understand this.

The case of *blasphemy against the Holy Spirit* is shown in Matthew 12:22-32. "Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a demon, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand; And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the SPIRIT OF GOD, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you." Then Jesus said in verse 31, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men . . ."

Notice in this statement that Jesus said there were different manners or

kinds of blasphemy just as there were different kinds of sin. All the other types of blasphemy can be forgiven. The Apostle Paul was one who was forgiven of blasphemy that he had done in ignorance. See I Timothy 1:13.

"But," Jesus went on in verse 31 and 32, "*the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And . . . whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*"

What did the Pharisees do or say against the Holy Spirit that Christ should say this to them? Let us notice.

In verse 23, after the people saw the miracle, "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?" The people let the work performed by the Holy Spirit in this miracle prick their hearts. They were ready to acknowledge that God was working through His Son Jesus Christ. And that Jesus was not just an ordinary man but that He truly was the Messiah who was prophesied to come. They let the manifested power of the Holy Spirit convict them, and begin to bring them to repentance.

But the Pharisees, who saw the same miracle, who saw the blind and dumb man speak and see, did not allow the work of the Holy Spirit to convict them. They hardened their hearts. They probably had a feeling that they should give God glory. They knew that what Jesus did was an act of God — that it was good and right. But instead of allowing this wonderful work to soften their hearts and bring them to repentance, they hardened themselves and spoke against the miracle done by the Holy Spirit.

They said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils [or demons]." This was blasphemy! They called a work done by the Holy Spirit — a work done to bring them to repentance — the work of Satan the Devil. Instead of repenting, they struck back at God's Holy Spirit — which is the power that brings us to repentance. They spoke against and blasphemed the only power that could make them repent. They therefore seared their consciences and

hardened their hearts to the point they could never repent. Therefore they could never be forgiven.

If we get into a habit of blaspheming God, His Word, His doctrine by our words and misdeeds, we are only a step away from blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. We are walking the cliff, so to speak. It is a dangerous walk, for one slip could mean our eternal end.

Let us put away all forms of blasphemy. Let us eradicate even such terms from our speech as "Gee," "Gosh," etc., which are polite forms of swearing. Let us not *profess* RIGHTEOUSNESS and then *commit* SIN! Let us not claim to be spiritual Jews when we are not. We also must be careful about speaking against the word of God as spoken by His ministers. And we need to be careful of the example we set in front of others — in the home and at work.

All these things are included in the sin of *blasphemy*. And above all, let us never attribute work done by and through the power of God's Holy Spirit as being the work of Satan the Devil. For if we harden our hearts to this extent we shall have committed the sin of which Jesus Christ said, ". . . it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

HAVE YOU HAD THE MUMPS?

(Continued from page 12)

is biased or *unbalanced* — when we have *blinded* our eyes to the very cause that made us change our plans — when we *forget* that we have sinned — then we are on dangerous ground.

As you see, it all depends on how you look at things — and just how close you are to God. But whatever the outcome, it does not justify your sins.

Mr. Ronald Dart, Deputy Director of the Foreign Work, and I were scheduled to visit — the middle part of July — the three main islands where God's people regularly convene: *Barbados, Trinidad and Martinique*. Of course, we had to call it off temporarily.

Now — was this God's will? Once again, it could have been, but I have no

proof. Moreover, as I write these lines, our trip was called off not because of my sickness, but because of an important matter which Mr. Dart had to handle urgently in South Africa. In this sudden change of plans, I could see God's directing Hand; it was quite obvious.

But the point is this: whatever the case, we should avoid *rationalizing*. When our plans are shattered by illness or accident, instead of looking out for reasons why it happened to be that way, we must first examine ourselves to see what we have done wrong — repent of it, and trust God to make things work out the best possible way.

If God, in His infinite wisdom, uses a certain circumstance in our lives to make us do, or abstain from doing, a certain thing — will this make us *less guilty* of our wrong actions? Can we consider ourselves *less sinners* because something good came out of it all *by the grace of God*? Are we, for that matter, automatically forgiven of our sins? Shouldn't we rather repent just as much — or perhaps *even more* deeply — for having been careless and not having kept God's laws the way we should have, rather than justify or rationalize the circumstances?

Let's straighten our views and see things the way they actually are. If we do our share, God will always do His. Let's recognize our share of guilt in catching a contagious disease, and if God — through His mercy — works things out for the best, let us be ever more grateful to Him.

Yes — It Was Embarrassing!

I had to be well past my teen-age years — and be a man over 40 — to finally be able to say, sadly, that I have at last had the mumps!

Yet, it is only today that I fully grasp the meaning of a "childhood" or contagious disease which is usually looked upon as "unavoidable." I was accustomed to taking them for granted, *de-emphasizing* their "sin" aspect. The words "childhood" or "contagious" had somehow misled my thinking, making me — subconsciously perhaps — disassociate them with sin.

It was embarrassing!

But my worst embarrassment, as I understood this point, was *before God*! I

was embarrassed for having *overlooked* my part — the sinful part I myself have played in today's human degeneration; I was embarrassed for having acted rather *self-righteously* in the presence of a childhood or contagious disease — I was embarrassed for having been *careless* in doing my part — embarrassed for my *negligence* in doing my share in keeping my body in top shape — embarrassed for not having fully *discerned my guilt*, but for having instead *rationalized* its consequences. No, I didn't catch the mumps just because of someone else's sins; I had *my own part*, a big part in it, even though it was overlooked and *de-emphasized* by the reasonings of my carnal mind.

It was most embarrassing, indeed!

Whether children or adults, we all are subject to catching a "childhood" or contagious disease, not necessarily because of contagion, but *because of sin*

under one form or another. Contagion is a result of sin. We all sin. A "childhood" disease may be more serious with an adult because an adult is more directly responsible for his actions — he should know better how to take care of himself; consequently, the penalty in his case can be expected to be heavier.

My wife was right. Having mumps can be a most *embarrassing experience* — but not just before men. No, that isn't where it hurts most — but before God especially, because sin is always *against Him*.

In a way, I have learned quite a bit from this experience with the mumps. In its ugliness, and with all the inconveniences it caused — it taught me important things. Next time, when the opportunity presents itself, I will think twice — and ponder the meaning of my words before asking someone, "Have you had the mumps yet? . . ."

THE BIBLE ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

(Continued from page 6)

from a mixture of protein fibers such as wool, mohair, silk, etc., are all right.

Another part of this question concerns the mixture of synthetic, man-made fabrics such as dacron, nylon, polyester, rayon, etc., with either cellulose or protein fibers. Unknown to many, a garment made from a combination of synthetic and either cellulose or protein material does not break the above principle. This is because today's synthetic materials are made to have essentially the same characteristics of the natural fibers they are combined with. They would not mix properly if they were not made this way. Thus, the resulting fabric from such combinations is acceptable since it is a mixture of essentially like rather than dissimilar fibers.

However, it should also be noted that such combinations produce a cheaper *garment* quality-wise than one made with the best grade of pure fabric. On the other hand, a garment made from low-grade natural fibers is usually improved by the addition of compatible man-made fibers. Such mixtures enable

the manufacturer to use a *cheap* grade of wool or cotton by fortifying it with a cheap man-made fiber. Far too often, the motivation for such combinations stems from the greed for profit. Any good tailor knows that the best quality clothing is made from 100 percent wool, cotton, etc. Nevertheless, one need not throw away or destroy clothing which may be of a poor quality or wrong mixture. Such materials are NOT sin in themselves. Rather, God does not want a manufacturer to produce shoddy materials and take advantage of his customers.

A wise principle to follow in purchasing either a pure or mixed garment is to purchase the *best quality* you can afford for yourself and your family. We honor God in what we wear. Cheap imitations (both in character and wearing apparel) that appear to be genuine do not honor God! So remember, be a *quality* Christian and buy the *best quality clothing* you can afford! But don't go deeply into debt buying better quality than you can afford. That's not being genuine either!

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

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HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
PRESIDENT and PASTOR

OFFICE OF
CHARLES F. HUNTING, *Minister*

An Open Letter

Dear Brethren,

NOW THAT the nightmare is over, Mrs. Hunting, Chris and I want to express our heartfelt thanks for the great concern and sympathy you expressed to us as a result of Chris's near-fatal accident. Also to thank you for the tremendous encouragement your many cards and letters were to Chris.

Because so many of you did fast and pray for him, as well as send cards and letters of encouragement, I wanted to write a personal thanks from us to all of you via *The GOOD NEWS*, and let you rejoice with us and help your faith be strengthened by the miraculous outcome.

We thought you might like to hear just a little more of the details of the accident and its miraculous conclusion.

Mr. Paul Suckling, a Local Elder, and Chris were visiting in the Birmingham, England area. About 11:30 in the morning, a car coming around a curve was attempting to pass a number of large trucks.

It was only a two-lane road. Mr. Suckling, seeing the oncoming vehicle, tried to jump the curb and get on to a wide grass verge on his side of the road to avoid a sure head-on collision — he didn't make it. The car bounced off the curb, skidded sideways directly into the path of a large semi-truck (articulated lorry)!

The full force of the crash took place right where Chris was sitting. So hard was the impact that the dividing post between the two doors on his side was pushed within nine inches of the center of the car. Both Mr. Suckling and Chris had their safety-belts on. This no doubt saved both their lives. Someone called an ambulance from a hospital six miles away. Both men were pulled unconscious from the car. The woman who had caused the accident took one look at Chris and went into a state of shock. Mr. Suckling

quickly regained consciousness, even though he had head injuries, lacerations requiring many stitches and a broken collar-bone.

In the back of the ambulance Chris's lifeblood was gushing from multiple external lacerations and internal hemorrhages. An intern was trying to hold his wildly-thrashing body quiet. Mr. Suckling knew that his chances of helping Chris would soon pass once Chris was in the hospital. He told the intern he was going to anoint him — and did. At that instant Chris quietened down and no longer needed to be restrained.

At almost the exact time of the accident, Mrs. Hunting and I were in the London Airport just returning from the Ministerial Conference via New York. We were completely unaware of the tragedy. I took Mrs. Hunting home, then somewhat excitedly drove on to the College, anxious to get back to work. Dr. Martin and Mrs. Walker met me at the College. I was perplexed by their conduct — there was no friendly greeting, just a total preoccupation with something that seemed to be troubling them. They broke the news to me. Mr. Suckling had insisted on calling the College immediately after the accident, even before he was given any attention.

While they were breaking the news, another call came. An insistent head nurse said I must come up immediately. The obvious implication — Chris didn't have long to live. If I wanted to see him alive, I had to hurry.

Mr. Walker and I departed immediately after breaking the news to Mrs. Hunting.

We arrived at the hospital about two hours later. A distraught Mrs. Suckling met us. The nurse took me to see Chris, emphasizing the seriousness of his

condition. He was in a shocking state. Had I really understood how horrible his condition was, perhaps my reaction would have been different. But I had seen the tragedy of broken bodies in war and heard the cries and groans of dying men during World War II.

I looked at his unconscious form. He was bleeding from the nose, ear, skull and other parts of his body. His eyes had been closed by the rush of blood from a fractured skull, forming two great, ugly welts. He was bandaged and covered with a sheet. His life was being sustained by a resuscitation machine.

I left him and was taken to the doctor's office to hear his verdict. He offered little hope. He had already put in his report that Chris would not live. We found out why later.

The doctor said I should remain within the immediate vicinity. Mr. Walker drove me to a nearby hotel. In the loneliness of the hotel room I was finally left without the responsibility of maintaining my composure for the sake of Mr. and Mrs. Suckling, the hospital staff and Mr. Walker.

The full scope of the horrible tragedy finally dawned on me. You will possibly assume I am referring to Chris's condition — that was only a small part of it.

Brethren, I felt for the first time in my life just a little of the horror and sadness millions of parents must have felt throughout history — and will continue to feel — as they have viewed and will view the plight of their own children caught in the hell of war, accidents and diseases. What a horribly sad world it is for people who don't have the hope we do. I did cry for them and prayed to God that it would soon be over.

For Chris, I got down on my knees and told God I was literally taking hold of the horns of the altar of mercy and that's all I asked God for — mercy for our son.

My thoughts went like this. All I wanted for him was his life — and that only if he needed more time. He was my firstborn, and I had hoped he would have children for the millennium who might bear our name that we could watch over. But I mainly wanted him to have the time necessary to qualify for the first resurrection.

My thoughts were also on how I would try to explain to the brethren in God's Church why God had permitted his death. Death did look certain. How

would people in God's Church, the students at the College, react? How could they be encouraged? I was already thinking of the kind of letter I would write to you — much different than this one.

Next morning I went back to the hospital. Even while many of us were praying, both lungs had collapsed, but for some reason they had started again. Now the doctor thought he might just, by the barest possibility, stay alive. He was more hopeful. But a greater, more tragic possibility loomed up to strike the first real fear in my mind.

Chris's death was not my great fear. Chris was unconscious. His skull was fractured in two places. The cerebral and spinal fluid had drained out. A savage blow had been struck on his left side. So savage was the smash that his left ear had been torn off, except for a small shred. The doctor had sewn the ear back on. But what about the brain damage? This was the side that controlled all other sensory perception. His hearing, his sight, his speaking. What about the brain damage? This was the real fear.

We were prepared for his life to be taken. We even adjusted our minds to the possibility of having to take care of a living vegetable. Neither of those would have been as bad — others of you have had to face these same problems.

The real fear — that the damage to the left side of his brain would leave him deaf, dumb and blind, but still conscious.

How could we encourage him for the next few years? Would he turn in bitterness against God that had given him life? These thoughts did strike real fear in me.

It was Friday when the doctor said, "Come back on Wednesday." This would be the first time he could possibly return to any sign of consciousness. I returned to Bricket Wood. Saturday morning we heard dramatic news. Chris could hear! He had responded to a command by a nurse to stick his thumbs up. Unbelievable! At least, although still unaware of his surroundings — that part of his brain was being healed. I had no difficulty preaching the sermon at Bricket Wood that Sabbath.

Then even bigger news. Sunday morning — less than three full days after the accident — he identified Mr. Paul Suckling's mother. We saw him that Sunday and he recognized us.

We telexed the following message to Mr. H. W.

Armstrong in Pasadena and to Mr. McNair in Big Sandy:

Thrilling news. After being called to hospital on Thursday to be a witness to imminent death of our firstborn, then when a slight chance of life seemed possible being faced with the bleak future of a son who might be nothing more than a vegetable because of severe brain injury — listen to this — Chris is now fully conscious. Can hear, see and is writing clear, lucid notes to nurses about his recent trip. There is no brain injury. What a merciful and wonderful Being we serve. We thank you all for prayers.

God had certainly heard the prayers of His people.

It was only now that we began to learn the full extent of Chris's injuries. They were.

- (1) Skull fractured in two places. Severe concussion.
- (2) Three broken ribs.
- (3) Punctured right lung, both lungs collapsed, causing near suffocation.
- (4) Collar-bone badly shattered.
- (5) Left ear virtually torn off.
- (6) Multiple head lacerations clear into the ear-bone on the left side of the head.
- (7) Pelvis broken in three places.
- (8) Internal injuries — extent unknown — but severe enough to cause internal hemorrhaging.
- (9) Basal spinal injuries — doctor recommended an operation.
- (10) Loss of blood which should have caused his death.
- (11) Severe leg and foot injuries.

On Monday — four days after the accident — he was able to write notes and joke with the hospital personnel.

One nurse said she had never seen anything like this in all her years of nursing experience. A doctor just threw up his hands and said he couldn't understand it. Another doctor said there had been two distinct miracles.

Chris became an over-the-weekend celebrity. Doctors and nurses stopped by to view this phenomenon. A remarkable thing had taken place. Normally head injuries of this severity would cause a person to be both profane and violent. With Chris, it didn't

work this way. He laughed and joked with the doctors and hospital personnel.

After seven days he was taken to a general ward. He could have gone home in twelve days, but we waited until the fourteenth day because of the bad weather and icy road conditions.

Of course, this is only part of the story. We know why Chris is alive today. The medical people did all they could. His lungs still collapsed. The normal recovery date for full use of the mind in these severe cases is usually at least 9 to 12 months. Some have been in that same hospital with lesser brain damage for over 9 months — one for over a year.

The doctor gave Chris's exceptional stamina as the reason for recovery. Chris happens to have very little physical stamina. He then said Chris came from healthy stock. This is slightly ironical. Mrs. Hunting and I have both had to be very careful with our health. I came into the Work as a severe asthmatic case.

One thing is sure — God heard our prayers — all of us — and answered them. It should be great encouragement to us to know that God did hear us.

Chris still has his work cut out for him. He needs to develop patience for full recovery. God has spared his life. Now he has to use wisdom and judgment for full recovery.

He started walking in the third week — in spite of a fractured pelvis, spinal and leg injuries. In the fifth week he began to take steps without any support. He has had no casts for pelvis or collar-bone fracture and is medically out of danger from any brain damage.

Chris, Mrs. Hunting and I are all so very grateful for the great concern you have shown, for the letters, calls, cards and most of all your prayers. Many, many thanks.

Today, just five months after this near-fatal accident, Chris drives, works six hours a day, runs, swims, exercises, and by the starting of school should be fully recovered.

What a merciful and wonderful God we are privileged to serve.

Your fellow-servant in Christ,

Charles F. Hunting