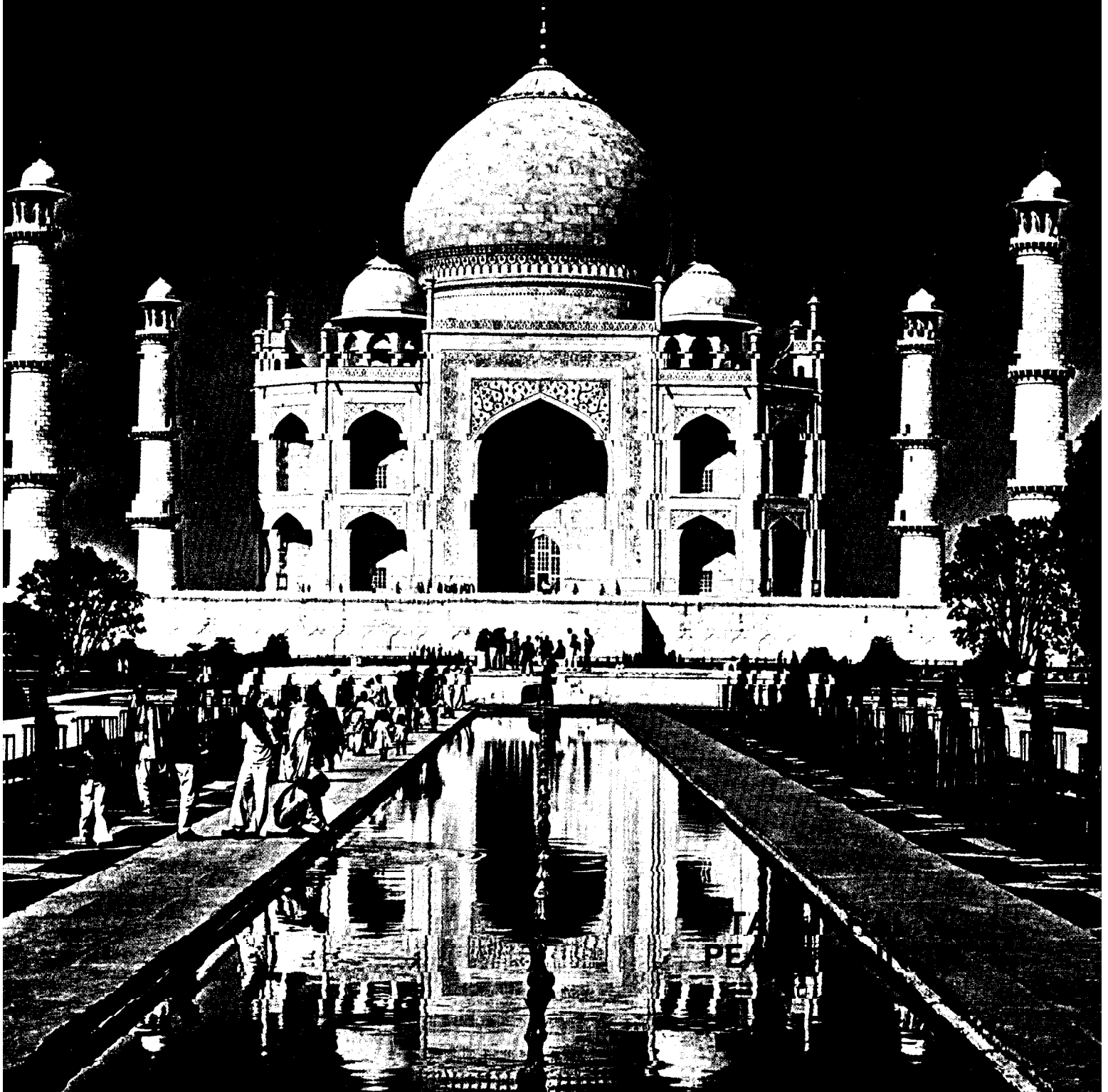
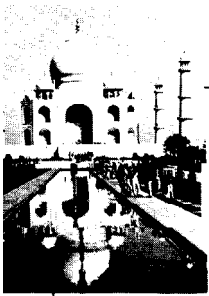


The

Good News

International Magazine of The Church of God





More About Our Cover...

Often described as the most beautiful 17th-century building in the world, the Taj Mahal is a mausoleum of white marble and alabaster at Agra, India. It was built by the Mogul emperor of Hindustan, Shah Jahan, between 1632 and 1650, as a burial place for his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahall. Read about the experiences of our representatives as they visited interested PLAIN TRUTH readers in India and Ceylon, beginning on page 5.

McNair — Ambassador College

What our READERS SAY...

I have received my first issue of *The GOOD NEWS* magazine which I found very inspirational. I read the comments people wrote about *The GOOD NEWS* and would like to have the November-December issue sent to me if it is possible. There are some articles in the magazine I would like to read. In the March-April issue I enjoyed reading about the African baptizing tour by Harold L. Jackson.

J. C., Huntington Park, California

When *The GOOD NEWS* arrives I like to read "What Our Readers Say..." first. After reading the comments in the March-April issue, I realized that I had never written to say what a great issue the November-December *GOOD NEWS* was. Being in a country [Thailand] where there are many illiterate, I see the need for more of God's truth. Just the other day my maid asked me "where the rain came from" and why when it rained there were those "colored strips in the sky." I told her the story of the flood. She said she had asked many Americans she had worked for, but they all said they didn't know. She said she knew my God was older than Buddha.

I've been here 17 months and I wonder why I haven't done more. If I were a writer I would put in words what I see so others would know what it is like here [Bangkok]. Maybe I will be able to tell others what I've seen when I get back to the States.

APO San Francisco, California

The articles in the March-April *GOOD NEWS* were so very helpful. Mr. Jackson's "Diary of the African Baptizing Tour," and Mr. Fahey's report on the Work in South Africa are so good to hear about. Makes one really stop and take notice that people in these far away countries are doing so much sacrificing to get to meet God's ministers; and to take stock of our own selves. The article by Mr. Dankenbring on "What Should the Passover Mean to You?" was so helpful, encouraging and timely.

Mrs. E. B., Springfield, Missouri

I just felt that I must write concerning the series of articles in *The GOOD NEWS* about the Foreign Work. These articles have been a real lift to me by bringing home the various difficulties of both visiting ministers and the people of other lands. We do tend to regard our own problems as the biggest, but when we read these articles, our thoughts and prayers go out toward other people who are a part of God's family. And it shows us just how much the Work is concerned about individual people throughout the world.

K. G. S., Wanaka, Central Otago, New Zealand

I have thoroughly enjoyed *The GOOD NEWS* and was deeply moved to hear about the Foreign Work. Now I can pray more about the Work of God, and really put my 'heart in it.' The article "How You Can Pray More Fervently," was very inspiring to me. Also, "You Can Control Your Tongue" is just what I needed so very much — because my tongue gets me into trouble. Thank Mr. Colin Adair for this fine article. I will be looking forward to more articles like these.

E. M. W., Waelley, Georgia

Let me take this opportunity to thank Mr. Hugh Wilson for his article in *The GOOD NEWS* titled "The Fight of the Century." It came at the right time for me. I read it to my sons ages 12, 11 and 9, and the oldest said it was the best he's heard, with the exception of "Martyred Myrtle," which appeared some time back. It was a very clever analogy and so TRUE!

Mrs. Donald C., Walkersville, Maryland

I have just completed my first-year-cycle in God's Church. It was the most rewarding, fulfilling and happy year of my entire adult life. You can probably understand the reason I feel this way far better than I.

(Continued on back cover)

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THE CHURCH OF GOD

ministering to its members
scattered abroad

July 1972

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How you can build RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER

We understand and believe God's purpose is to build holy, righteous character in human beings. But just what is character? Why is it such a primary objective in our Christian lives? Do you really know HOW to produce GODLY character?

by Albert J. Portune

CHARACTER could be simply defined like this: "Character is that moral or spiritual force within us which impels one to *unyielding integrity*."

We concede that a person has character when in the absence of external constraint or coercion, he or she inherently chooses the path of right, honesty, fairness, goodness and equity.

Character is not expressed by *forced* conformity to a prescribed standard of conduct. But character is expressed and strengthened when that conduct springs from *free choice* of the individual.

Not Born With Character

We are not born with that kind of character. We don't inherit character as we might inherit a strong body, or black hair, or blue eyes, or the height of our frame. We can't be *given* character. Character is a spiritual and moral force that **DEVELOPS** within a person.

But character is difficult to measure. Two people may have character, but they will probably differ in the strength of that character — the strength of which can only be expressed by the degree or amount of temptation, pressure or trial necessary to *overpower* that level of inner moral or spiritual force.

A has character. *B* has character. Subject the two of them to the *same* tests, trials, pressures and temptations.

One may yield, the other may not. The one who doesn't yield has **DEEPER** character than the one who does.

When we are under extreme pressure, temptation and stress — and still *choose* the **RIGHT** course of action — then our character is deep. But when we compromise under moderate conditions of stress and pressure, then our character is shallow.

Peter's Example

Just before His crucifixion, Jesus said to His disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (Matt. 26:31).

But Peter — impetuous as he was — felt that he had the moral force within him to stay steadfast no matter what would occur. "Though all men shall be offended because of thee," answered Peter, "yet will I never be offended" (verse 33).

However, Jesus well knew Peter's weakness and replied, "Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice" (verse 34). But again Peter responded: "Though I should **DIE** with thee, yet will I *not deny thee*" (verse 35).

Later on, Peter did deny Christ. The moral, spiritual force within Peter was not strong enough to cause him to stay steadfast and loyal to Christ.

That same evening, another of the maids saw Peter and said, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." And he denied Him again! He lied! He broke several of the very commandments of God that Jesus Christ had taught.

After awhile still others came to him and said, "Surely you also are one of them; for your speech betrays you." Then Peter began to curse and swear, saying, "I **DON'T KNOW THE MAN**!" (verses 71-75.)

Again, Peter's character *failed the test*.

Then the cock crowed! Peter remembered Jesus had told him he would do this very thing, and he wept bitterly. This trauma in Peter's life so moved him that he repented deeply, and the remembrance of the experience helped him to become a powerful leader in God's Church!

Daniel's Three Friends

Let's review another example, this time in the third chapter of Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar made a huge image of gold and commanded everyone to fall down and worship it when the orchestra played. But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused. They knew God's command said **NOT** to bow down and worship idols. And so they were facing a test of their character!

Notice verse 14: "Nebuchadnezzar

spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?"

"Now listen, I'll be fair with you," Nebuchadnezzar may have whispered. "Forget the past what you have said. You just be ready at the time you hear the sound of the music. If you will fall down next time, and henceforth, and worship the image I have made, O.K."

"But if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour [before an hour is gone] into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Verse 15.)

It was a very clear-cut choice. There could be no compromise, no way out. "Either you WILL bow down — or you DIE!"

"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not [if He doesn't choose to spare our lives], be it known unto thee, O king, that we will NOT serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (verses 16-18).

They wrote their own death warrant!

"Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury. . . ." You can well imagine — the great king had dignified the episode by calling a special meeting, bringing these men personally before him and saying, "I am going to play the music again, and this time YOU ARE GOING TO BOW DOWN, or you are going to DIE!" And these three men of God stood right up to him and said they would NEVER worship the golden image!

". . . and the form of his visage was changed. . ." (verse 19). You know the rest of the story. But what is the lesson?

A *choice* had to be made. And that spiritual and moral force that was within Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego impelled and empowered them to choose the right, no matter what the cost!

What about your OWN character? How much character do you really have? And most important of all — is it *growing* or is it *declining*? Are you consistently making the right choices and following through?

Each of us in God's Church has our own level of character. None of us has been tested in the way Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were — but our character *is* being tested! For there has never been a time in all the history of this era of God's Church since I have been in it that the tests and trials have been as deep and as profound and poignant and real as they are this year!

The Character of God

Character is that one element in God's Plan and in God's Kingdom which even God cannot create at WILL by divine fiat.

God can't just say, "Let there be character," and suddenly there is *character*! It just doesn't come into being that way. Character cannot be made instantaneously because it is a quality of choice — something that we have to *develop* gradually out of *choosing the right* and then DOING IT.

If God had created us so that we would ALWAYS do right, under every circumstance, *automatically* — because there was no other possibility for us — we could have no character. We would be programmed individuals — like mechanical robots. God could create that kind of being by the millions, but we would never be sons of God! For unless there is a *choice* to go one way or the other — there is no character involved.

If the Father, or the Son, had no choice, they would have no character either. But God is a God of *choice*! And God has character so deep, so profound, so *perfect*, that His eternal performance is absolute! The backup of all His laws is not "automatic" in the sense that He cannot under any circumstances cause things to happen otherwise. If that were true, God would not be God. But God, through His righteous character, *will* always do right because He does have *perfect character*.

God has such righteous character that the choice is never a problem. God CHOOSES that He will never lie, for ex-

ample — that is *why* God will never lie. God's Law will ALWAYS go straight down the line, and you can depend on it — because of God's *character*!

It is important to realize that, brethren.

That kind of character is what *we* are to be developing as the begotten sons of God — the kind of ABSOLUTE right performance that comes from the strong, spiritual and moral force from within, which will always produce right, good, holy, proper conduct.

Such conduct is not automatic! But it can be *developed* through continued making of RIGHT CHOICES, even under duress or stress of temptation.

Result of Wrong Choice

But let's notice an outstanding example of a *wrong* choice. Commencing in Ezekiel 28:12, we read: "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering. . . the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast CREATED. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast PERFECT in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, *till iniquity was found in thee.*"

This "anointed cherub" was Lucifer, an angelic being of the very highest order — who had the ability of *choice*.

Now notice Isaiah 14:12-15: "How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart [because you had the ability to think, the ability to weigh, the ability to rationalize and to compare and to CHOOSE], *I will* [I CHOOSE TO] ascend into heaven, *I will* exalt my throne ABOVE the stars of God [all the other angels of God]: *I will* sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north [that's where God's throne is]: *I will* ascend above the heights of the clouds; *I will* be like THE MOST HIGH. Yet thou

shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

Under the stress of temptation and lust, Lucifer CHOSE to do evil. A high angelic being made the WRONG CHOICE — he chose to rebel. That's how he became the devil!

Why Character Is So Important

Satan is going to wander in the blackness of darkness forever, foaming out his own shame (see Jude 13) because he compromised his character. He disqualified himself from his position as one of the covering cherubim over the very throne of the Creator of the universe! He was thrown out of heaven and soon will be driven out of his office on earth because he did not CHOOSE to exercise *self-restraint*, to utilize character to obey God's Law always!

Is character important? It *was* in Satan's case! And what about yours? Do you think it is important to be in the Kingdom of God?

God is reproducing Himself. But He can't make Sons of God *without character*. To become Sons of God, we must develop character that is like God's. Character like His Son's who now sits at His right hand. Without character like that, His Kingdom simply cannot be expanded.

Every single one of us has been called to be a *king*, a *priest* and a *ruler* in the World Tomorrow. Each of us makes choices in our homes, in our cars, on our jobs, or wherever we are every day. If we compromise with what we know is right, do you think it is important to the Creator God?

Every person who becomes a born Son in God's Family is going to be given tremendous POWER! And that power must be backed up by the right kind of CHARACTER — the kind of *deep moral and spiritual force within* that will impel those persons to chose and do the right, honest and pure thing *always!* We must begin developing that kind of character *now*, or we will simply NOT BE GIVEN eternal life. That's why character is *so important!*

Christ Has Led the Way

In Hebrews, the second chapter, God gives us a very clear look at where

we are going and how we are to get there. Notice, beginning in verse 6:

"But one in a certain place testified, saying, *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him [man] over the works of thy hands [and what works they are! The dominion of the heavens and the earth — endless in scope and size, beauty and majesty!]: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not [to be] put under him.*

"But now we see *not yet* all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, *in bringing many sons unto [that same kind of] glory*, to make the CAPTAIN ["pioneer" — as Moffatt renders it — the one who showed the way] of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:6-10).

And in Hebrews 4:14-15, we read: "Seeing that ~~that~~ we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but *was in all points tempted like as we are, YET WITHOUT SIN.*"

Jesus Christ led the way. He is the first one to qualify to be a Son of God. He is the first to reproduce Godly character! How did He do it? By making right choices — continually! BY NEVER COMPROMISING WITH SIN IN THE SLIGHTEST!

In Hebrews 5:7, we find this remarkable statement about Jesus: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet *learned he obedience* [What is obedience? Obedience is choosing the right path, choosing the good, the correct path — in other

words, to paraphrase it — *He learned character*], by the things which he suffered. And being *made perfect* [by always choosing and doing right], he became the AUTHOR of eternal salvation [of the expansion of the Family of God] unto all them that obey him" — who develop character like He did.

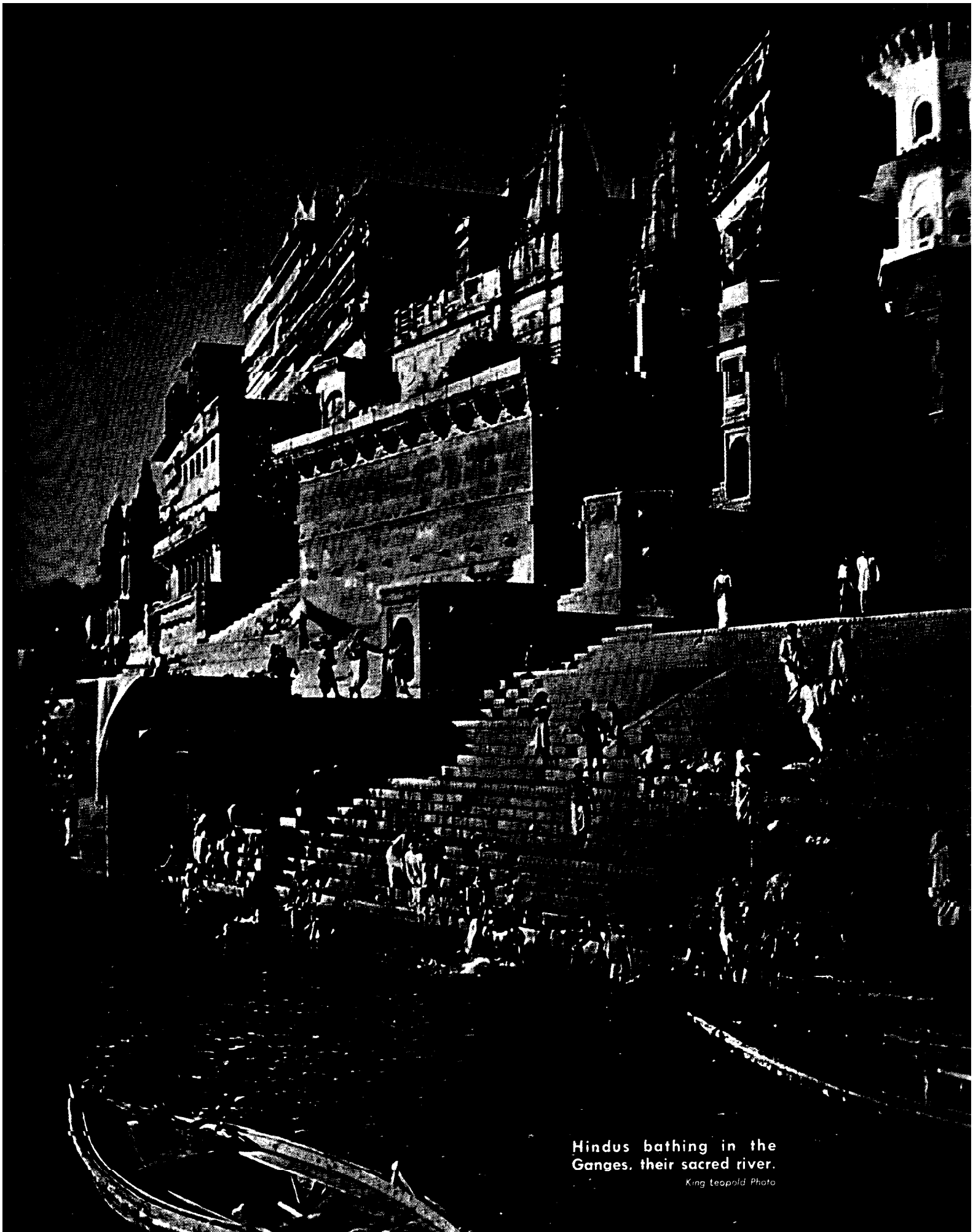
Jesus Christ of Nazareth had to exercise character throughout His mortal life. He didn't automatically become a born-again Son of God. He didn't automatically choose and do right. He could have sinned. He could have failed and He knew it! But He stayed steadfast, and He learned character and obedience because He was put to the test!

Tempted Severely

Jesus was tempted and tried in the same manner we are — only much more so. In Matthew 4, we read how the devil "tempted" Him in one particular instance (out of *many* throughout His human life). Satan told Jesus to turn stones into bread, appealing to His hunger. He may have said words to the effect, "You are HUNGRY, you've got the power, you are the great Son of man, so make yourself some loaves out of these stones here." But hungry, weak, buffeted as He was, Jesus faithfully replied, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every* WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (verse 4). That is the kind of faithful character you and I need in every trial and vicissitude of our lives!

Then the devil took Jesus up on a high place of the Temple, and said, "IF thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Matt. 4:6). Now he tried to appeal to vanity — "IF thou be. . .!" And Jesus said to him, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (verse 7). To be sure, Jesus was *tempted* to shut that sassy mouth, and to throw Himself off and *prove* that He was the Son of God, but He didn't — that would have been sin!

Finally the devil took Him to a high
(Continued on page 16)



Hindus bathing in the
Ganges, their sacred river.

King teapold Photo

Early this year, two representatives of Ambassador College had the opportunity to visit interested PLAIN TRUTH subscribers in India and Ceylon. After touring several thousand miles, they filed this report.

by Richard Frankel
and Chris Carpenter

INDIA is a land of striking contrasts. The visitor to the sub-continent is repeatedly confronted by fabulous wealth and terrible poverty, awesome beauty and awful squalor, tremendous education and vast ignorance, powerful potential and a stagnant economy.

Not the least striking is the grip of a very powerful religion — Hinduism. And yet, despite all the difficulties, God is beginning to work in the lives of many individuals in India and nearby Ceylon. This we found out on our recent seven-week tour.

The Island Nation of Ceylon

We began our tour of South Asia in Ceylon. With a population of over 12 million people, Ceylon is an island nation just east of the southern tip of India.

Here we found that God was calling many to the knowledge of the truth. In Colombo, the capital, we met 21 interested subscribers in less than a week. Two of these were baptized. Several others will probably be baptized on the next tour, which we hope will be in the fall of this year or in the early part of 1973.

In both India and Ceylon the biggest initial stumblingblock to interested people is the keeping of the Sabbath. Ceylon is gradually coming

around to a five and one-half day work week, and this includes working Saturday mornings. In India there is a six day work week, and most people are required to work *all day* on Saturday. Bosses are usually unsympathetic to any request for leave of absence on Saturday. They fear it will set an unwanted precedent for others.

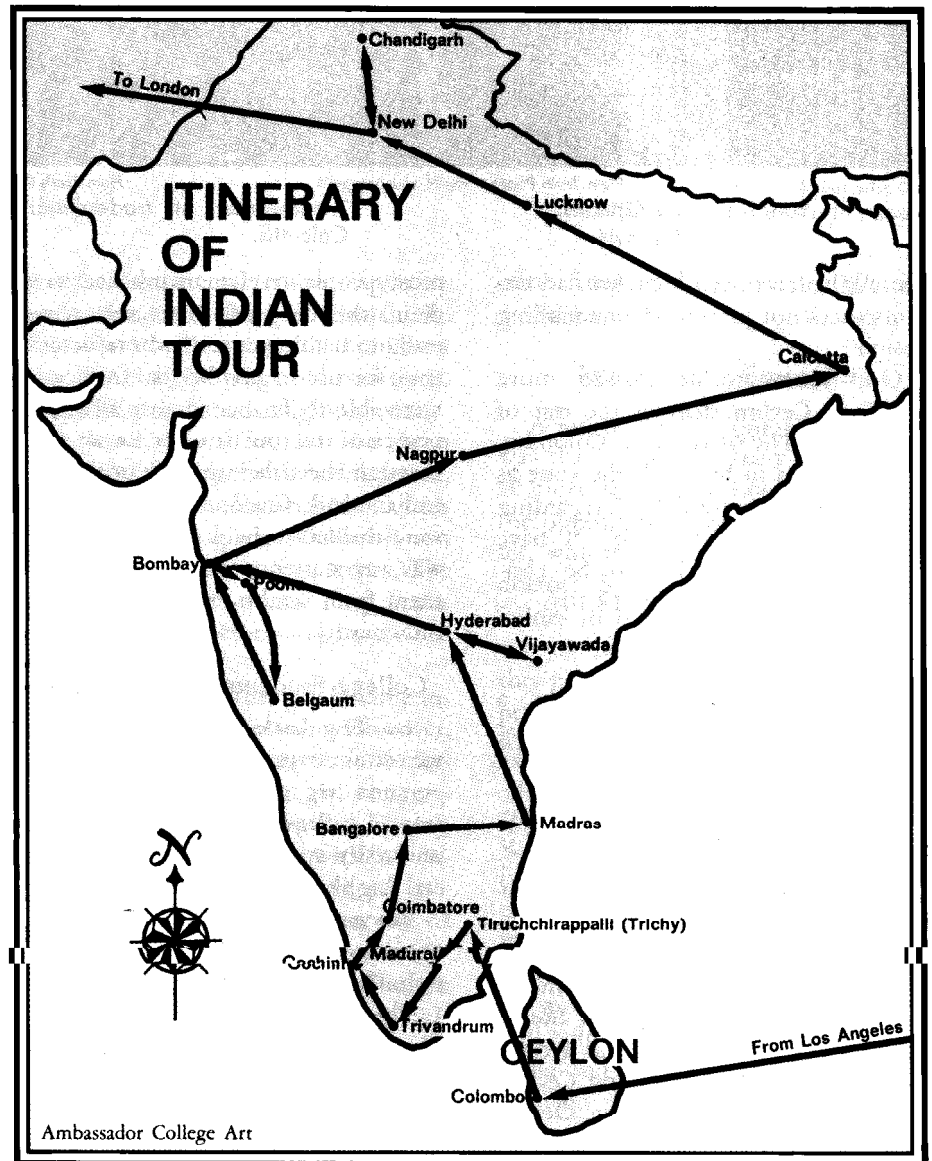
With God's help, however, some individuals have been able to overcome this difficulty. The two young men we baptized in Ceylon were obeying God, including the keeping of His Sabbath. One was the younger brother of a young man baptized in 1969. He is attending teachers' training college and is supposed to have classes on the Sabbath. However, all these Saturday classes are fairly unimportant, and he does not show up for them! So far his

absence has not been noticed because classes are large.

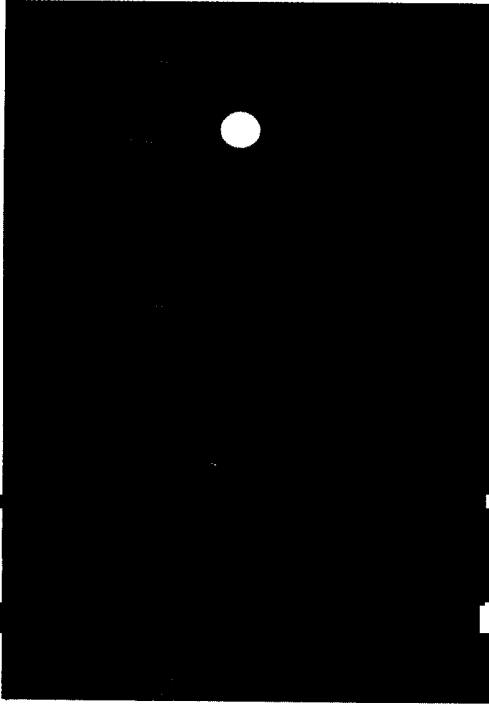
The other young man baptized on this trip has been tried severely on the Sabbath issue. He asked for Saturdays off, but his boss refused. Realizing that he would have to give up his job or disobey God, he went and asked God in prayer to change his employer's mind. He knew that if he lost his job he would not be able to support his family and they would all encounter great hardship. But obedience to God came first in his life.

Later that day, he went to see his boss again. There had been a complete change of heart, and he was allowed to have Saturdays off! God does work things out for those who trust Him.

We met a young lady in Colombo who had also put God first in her life.



INDIA – land of contrasts



Plain Truth Photo
Sunrise on the Ganges.



Plain Truth Photo
Tradesworker at tradeschool in Calcutta.



King Leopold Photo
The Bhakra Dam.

She might have been baptized had circumstances not prevented a counseling session.

God seems to be calling more people in Ceylon than in the rest of South Asia. The situation in Colombo, Ceylon, seems to be much the same as God told the Apostle Paul regarding the *Greek city of Corinth*: "I have much people [who are to be converted] in this city" (Acts 18:10).

On to India

From Ceylon we flew to Trichy, a city in South India. This was the first of about 30 flights we were to take from place to place in India during the next six weeks. Incidentally, a couple of these flights were frightening experiences, and we were certainly glad that all of you pray for the safety of God's ministers.

All totalled we saw about 70 members or prospective members in India.

One thing that impressed us greatly about the people in India and Ceylon was their faithfulness in tithing. Out of the comparatively poor incomes that

most people receive, many had saved their tithes diligently in a bank account ready to hand over to God's representatives for use in His Work. In fact, we were able to finance almost all the expenses of the tour (except for air fares) through the tithes and offerings of the Indian and Ceylonese people! They were thrilled to help the Work in this way, as currency restrictions prevent them from sending any money out of the country.

College Students Very Interested

Looking back on the tour, we can see certain overall patterns. Most of the persons we saw were young men around college age. Many were, in fact, university students. We also met several highly educated professional men — lawyers, doctors, teachers, insurance agents, government employees and technicians.

The questions we were asked were generally very intelligent, and yet basic. Most were concerned with how to live this "way of life." Several of these young people were quite interested in

attending Ambassador College. Of course, government finance restrictions in both India and Ceylon would make such attendance very difficult, though many would be good college material.

What we found very exciting on this tour was that for the first time we were coming into contact with Hindus who had little or no previous contact with Christianity. Most had never read the Bible until they started reading our literature. We experienced, in a small way, the excitement Paul must have felt in seeing the Gospel go to Gentiles who had never before heard of the true God.

The majority of the subscribers we visited were from Roman Catholic backgrounds. We met very few Protestants. In many cases, *they had never had the Bible in their homes until inspired by our magazines to get one!* And then they usually bought a Catholic edition. They were amazed to find the same truths in it as in the King James version quoted by us.

The questions that particularly interested most of these Catholics were



Landscape in the Punjab.

King Leopold Photo



McNair — Ambassador College
Primitive and modern transport in
Hyderabad.

about the exaltation of Mary and the miracles at Lourdes and other Catholic shrines. Many were wrapped up in superstition — concerned about spells, black magic and other demonic influences. We explained from the Bible that miracles were not the proof of God's true servants.

Several of the people we met were unaware of the church aspect of our Work. Their questions centered mainly around news events and social trends. We found the handling of these visits both interesting and challenging. It is not always easy to discuss these subjects without direct reference to the Bible.

A Tragic Case

One Hindu we met told us a rather tragic story which will help to illustrate some of the typical problems faced by people in India and other areas of the East.

He was a young man of 23, training to be a medical doctor. His personal ambition had been to pursue an engineering degree, but he had been forced into medicine by family pressure. Fam-

ily ties and parental control are very much stronger in the East than in the West. Parents discourage their children from breaking from age-old traditions, particularly cherished religious tenets.

A short time after, he had been forced into marriage because his father, a teacher, was in financial difficulties and wanted the dowry which his son would get from the girl's parents. The marriage did not work. They spent only 24 hours together and have since been separated.

Shortly after, another girl became interested in the young man. However, his parents would not agree to a marriage. In desperation the girl committed suicide. Then his aunt died, leaving him, a young bachelor without income, the care of two teen-agers.

The young man was at the end of his rope. He felt his life had been a failure, no longer worth living. Though we tried to encourage him, even this was very difficult because he was also confused about God and religion, and knew little or nothing about the Bible.

Stories like this really made us appre-

ciate freedoms we in the Western world have today.

Encouraging Examples

A much more encouraging example was that of two brothers and a sister, all three striving to obey God despite the opposition of their father. The sister, who is the eldest, is a young lady doctor. She encounters many difficulties in trying to follow a Christian way of life, not the least of which are the pressures of her profession. We pray God will give her the help to resolve her problems.

Her brothers, both also very interested, are 14 and 21. The eldest is studying for an engineering degree, but is faced with the severe problem of important classes on Saturday. A *seemingly* insoluble Sabbath problem is, we repeat, the problem of almost everyone we spoke to. We can all pray that God will help those people He is calling in India and Ceylon to be able to obey Him on this point.

(Continued on page 16)

What is Loyalty?

IN today's world fewer and fewer people can really be trusted. It seems that mankind in general is becoming more disloyal and unfaithful every day.

Politicians are known for prelection promises which somehow never seem to be honored once they are in office. Rare is the officeholder who is *loyal* to the voters who elected him. It seems they always forget, or deliberately ignore, the issues on which they were elected.

National governments are no better than the politicians who compose them. Peace treaties, even mutually favorable pacts, are only made to be *broken*. Because of selfish interests, nations reserve the right to break a treaty when it suits them.

The book of Proverbs sums it up well in chapter 20:6, "Many a person is called kind, but a trustworthy [loyal] man is a rare find" (*Moffatt*).

Our God Is Loyal

But contrasted to man, our God *can* be trusted. We can rely on His many promises. Notice Deuteronomy 7:9: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the *faithful* God, which *KEEPETH* covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations."

You can be *sure* that God will not break His word to give us "... eternal life, which *God that cannot lie*, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

But what about us?

Are We Still Loyal to God?

When we were baptized, we also made a promise to God. Notice Ro-

Why is loyalty such a vital characteristic we, as Christians, must be developing?

by Colin Adair

mans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so *we also should walk in newness of life.*"

This was what we *AGREED* to do. To forsake our own ways and lead a new life in obedience to *all* God's commandments.

Have we forgotten to be *loyal* to that agreement as time has gone by? Have we let sins overtake us again so that the conditions of the contract we made have become blurred? Has Satan, "broadcasting" to all people as he does, persuaded you to be disloyal to God and His laws just a little bit, convincing you it isn't all that important if you don't keep *every* principle of God's law? If so, can you really expect God to feel bound to keep His part of the agreement, seeing you have *broken* yours?

No, brethren, God expects you to be *LOYAL* to Him in everything!

Be Loyal to God's Work

Loyalty goes far beyond simple honesty. Loyalty is required even in cases

when no specific promise or commandment is involved. God has called us to do a job. Loyalty on our part means putting our hearts and efforts into that job.

The church today is like a modern-day Ezekiel, commanded to take a message to the people and show them the way out of their misery and on into the World Tomorrow. God told Ezekiel:

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; *but his blood will I require at thine hand.* Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. 3:17-19).

This stern warning applies to God's Church. If any of us are disloyal in the responsibility God has given us, be it in the paying of God's *tithes* and giving of *offerings* or our *prayers* as an ordinary layman, He says we are preventing His warning message from reaching more people and are thus being *DISLOYAL TO HIS WORK!* Perhaps you never thought of this as being disloyalty, but it is!

Look at it this way. Suppose you are a member of a basketball team and your captain institutes practices three days a week, stressing that the success of the team depends on *every man* showing up faithfully for practice and giving of himself wholeheartedly. But you continually miss practices and treat

the affair lightly. Eventually, the captain would replace you with someone else who would be loyal to the team. Your disloyalty would eventually *remove* you from your position.

So brethren, it is imperative that we REMAIN LOYAL to God's Work to remain on His "team," lest God grant someone else our places.

We are all in this great Work *together*. We must all *work together* as a team. If any one of us lets down, we hold back and affect the whole team!

Loyalty to God's Work means diligence as well. God counts half-heartedness as disloyalty. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently [margin] . . ." (Jer. 48:10). So if you miss out on praying daily, studying the Bible diligently, looking for ways to serve, keeping the Work uppermost in your mind, then it is the same as being disloyal to the Work of God. Perhaps we haven't thought about it this way, but it's true nevertheless.

Learn to be 100 percent loyal to the part God has given you in His Work!

Be Loyal to Those God Sets Over You

God uses human instruments to do His Work and to oversee the Church. We are commanded to "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).

But where should you stand in the event one God has set in an office over you is *not* doing all that he should do? You should still be loyal. The life of David provides an outstanding example in this respect.

David was loyal to King Saul, even when Saul was out to kill him. Even though Saul had been rejected by God, David did not feel it was his prerogative to usurp Saul's authority. David realized he had no right to treat with contempt the office Saul still held.

Notice I Samuel 24:1-6: "And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of

all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave. . . .

"Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's *anointed*, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the *anointed of the LORD*."

In another incident, David again had the opportunity to kill Saul. Humanly speaking it would have seemed the right thing to do, knowing that he would immediately become king himself in Saul's place. But David again restrained himself from such action — out of *loyalty to Saul's office*. "And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's *anointed*, and be guiltless?" (I Sam. 26:9.)

From time to time the ministers of God's Church are transferred to new areas. You need to be as loyal to the new minister as you were to the one who left for another assignment. Remember, it is GOD who places each man in his respective office. We can see the principle clearly by observing the succession of Joshua to the office Moses held.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient" (Num. 27:18-20).

Disloyalty to those over us is abhorrent to God. He cannot use anyone who has this trait. Do you remember what happened to Korah and his associates who despised the office Moses held (Num. 16)? God upholds the office of those over us and expects us to do the same.

Be Loyal to Your Employer

Labor/management relations problems perpetually plague the world of commerce and industry. Workers *strike* to achieve their ends, justified or unjustified. Many are out to make as much money as they can with as little effort as possible. They have no loyalty to company, supervisor, or employer.

But God tells Christian employees to set an example of faithfulness and service, so God's name will *not* be blasphemed. "Let as many servants [employees] as are under the yoke count their own masters [employers] worthy of *all honour*, that the name of God and his doctrine BE NOT BLASPHEMED" (I Tim. 6:1).

"Exhort servants [employees] to be *obedient* unto their own masters [employers], and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but *showing all good fidelity*; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:9-10).

"Servants, be *obedient* to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, *in singleness of your heart*, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God *from the heart*; with goodwill doing service, AS TO THE LORD, and not to men" (Eph. 6:5-7).

Paul made it plain that we are to consider service to our human employer the *same as service to Jesus Christ Himself!*

But what if your company treats its workers selfishly and dishonestly?

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the *froward*. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully" (I Peter 2:18-19).

If you have a good and thoughtful employer, especially one who is also a member of God's Church, it is easy to forget he is *also over* you. But you should *respect* him as an employer and boss, giving him loyalty in man-hours, hard work and dedication, as Paul said in I Timothy 6:2:

"And they that have believing mas-

ters [employers], let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. . . .”

Tardiness, absenteeism, and a slothful approach to work can earn you dismissal from “outside” companies, but some of us expect our brother-employers to put up with such disloyalty without complaint!

Of course the employer who is a fellow member of God’s Church is more hesitant to correct or fire a worker who is also in the faith. But this is all the more reason for us to avoid tardiness, absenteeism and sloth, and to be *one hundred percent faithful and loyal!*

Be Loyal to Those Under You

Loyalty is a two-way street. It is hypocritical being loyal only to those over you and not also to your subordinates. Even David made this mistake. He was disloyal to one of his devoted soldiers who remained absolutely loyal to him, and this led to the greatest of all the sins David committed.

We read the account in II Samuel 11:6-17. Uriah was one of the top warriors in David’s army (II Sam. 23:39), noted for his bravery and valor. Uriah’s unflinching loyalty and devotion contrasted greatly with David’s disloyal and despicable action toward him. To cover up his adultery with Uriah’s wife, David finally resorted to murder.

“And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. And the men of the city went out and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also” (verses 14-17).

David sinned. And for this sin David paid dearly, though he was completely forgiven when he repented.

You who are over others, do you give them the same loyalty you expect to receive from them? Husbands, are

you loyal to your wives, your children? Do you back up your wives when it comes to the important subject of child rearing? Or do you fall down in this respect?

In admonishing servants to be faithful and loyal to their masters, God at the same time tells the masters to be loyal to their servants. Notice Ephesians 6:9: “And you masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.”

And again in Colossians 4:1: “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.” Those who are *not* loyal to those under them, who *defraud* their employees and hold back their just and equal wages, will have to answer to God (see James 5:1-5).

God demands we be loyal to those under our authority, as He — who is over all — is loyal to us!

Be Loyal to Your Word

At the beginning of this article we saw that God is loyal to His Word, that we can have faith in what He said. He expects us to be the same.

Do you recall what Jesus said about not swearing today? The account is in Matthew 5:33-37:

“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, *Swear not at all*; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

In Old Testament times God’s people, like others, often backed up their promises or statements with an oath taken before God, or by using God’s name. They felt this bound them to tell the truth, or to do as they said. But Christ tells us that our word as a New Testament Christian *should be enough!* We shouldn’t *need* to have any-

thing to support what we promise. When we say we will do something, everyone should know we mean it!

Yet it is a sad fact that some of us break promises on the slightest excuse. We don’t see that it matters very much. By this action we manufacture a credibility gap for ourselves. And we *break* the Ninth Commandment which tells us *NOT* to bear false witness!

But what shall we do when we make arrangements or promises with every good and right intention, and then later something crops up preventing us from fulfilling our word? In this case we are obligated to explain about our change of plans and apologize for not being able to carry out what we said. But some of us don’t even do that! Such negligence makes one untrustworthy and disloyal to others. They will find it difficult to believe what such a one says in the future.

Notice Proverbs 13:17: “A wicked [untrustworthy, disloyal] messenger falls into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.” We, brethren, are ambassadors for Christ. We *must* be loyal and faithful, establishing a reputation for being men and women of our word!

Loyalty Will Be Rewarded!

Many ages ago a great archangel became disloyal to his Creator and tried to usurp God’s authority and position. As a result, Lucifer was cast down and soon will be dismissed from his governmental office.

Similarly, no Christian who is disloyal or unfaithful may qualify for a position in God’s future government on earth. We must prove our loyalty to God in *every aspect* of our lives *NOW!* God must know we will *remain loyal* to Him for eternity. He will not have any potential adversaries in His family, so we must prove *HERE* and *NOW* that we will *never* follow the path Satan took! For only the absolutely *LOYAL* will qualify for rewards in the Kingdom of God.

Remember, God is loyal to us. He won’t let *us* down. He promises that “a faithful [loyal] man shall abound with blessings” (Prov. 28:20). So be loyal and you will inherit those blessings! □

Teach Your Children About God

Never before has the younger generation been so ignorant about God and His Law. This article gives you concrete, usable guidelines for teaching YOUR small children about God, about creation, about His plan, about life.

by Arch Bradley

WE receive many letters from perplexed parents who do not know how to give their five-year-old children simple, straightforward answers to their questions about God and the Bible. Here is a typical letter from a member of God's Church:

Please send any literature you have regarding teaching children about God. Yesterday my five-year-old son, Greg, asked me what God looks like. Of course, I answered him, but only in general terms. The blank look on his little face told me I had not fully satisfied his curiosity. I want to teach him the truth about God, but am not sure how to go about it.

How would YOU have answered little Greg? (See Rev. 1:13-17; Gen. 1:27; Ex. 9:3; Job 1:11 for help.) More important, how *have* you answered similar questions for your children? Are you fulfilling your role as TEACHER of your children?

A Test

Let's find out! Give your child a quick quiz. How many of these questions can your three-year-old answer?

How did the first man and woman come to be?

Who built an ark, and why?

Who is God's son?

What does God look like?

Where does God live?

Granted, young children vary a great deal in their ability to learn. But as

soon as they can put words together to make sentences, they should be able to comprehend these things.

Realize, brethren, that God holds you as parents *personally* responsible for reaching your children His way! Hear God's charge: "And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning" (Deut. 6:6-7, *The Living Bible*).

Here are a few basic guidelines to follow as you teach your children some of the most precious and vital knowledge they will ever learn!

Portray God's Word Accurately

Before you attempt to teach your boy or girl a lesson or relate a particular incident from the Bible, be sure you can portray it as God's Word tells it. In other words — "Tell it like it is!"

To do this, YOU must study God's Word daily yourself — know what is in "the Book." Then you will have ready answers to questions like little Greg's.

Beware of letting subtle errors or misconceptions creep into your teaching. Don't rely on books ABOUT the Bible. Many "Bible story" books for children are saturated with unscriptural concepts, or vie for their interest with exciting and violent fiction like cheap novels or comic books. Biblical incidents are often taken out of context. Their real connection with the very purpose of life is ignored.

And even *pictures* are misleading — Biblical characters usually appear in various supposedly "spiritual" positions, generally with arms outstretched toward a rock, tree, or cloud, with far-off, contemplative expressions on their faces. But in reality, Biblical persons were DYNAMIC, ACTIVE, FORCEFUL! And that is what you should convey to your children.

Use an Approach Appropriate for Their Ages

Your children love to hear "stories" from the Bible such as the story of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses and events in the life of Jesus. For example, my three-year-old particularly enjoys hearing about Jesus' childhood — how He grew up in a small mountain town, was able to enjoy swimming in a nearby lake, and hiking in the surrounding hills. One thing for all to beware of, of course, is excessive fictionalizing. I use this opportunity to point out Jesus' perfect character — how He shared His possessions with others, was obedient to His parents, etc.

As your child grows older — say he's eight or ten — teach him how the Proverbs relate to his everyday life. This will take considerable forethought on your part in some cases. But take just *one* proverb at a time — such as Proverbs 15:18 in *The Living Bible*: "A quick-tempered man starts fights; a cool-tempered man tries to stop them."

Before attempting to teach your eight or ten-year-old this lesson, sit down with pencil and paper and think of all the various applications this proverb may have in his relationship with other children, with his teachers at school, with you — in other words, with any and *everyone* he normally comes in contact with.

Think of WHY and HOW your child will benefit by inculcating the principle of this proverb into his life. Write these points down as you think of them and you will have a very effective Bible study.

Another way to teach the Proverbs is to create hypothetical situations, then ask your child to explain the correct course of action based upon one of the Proverbs. This method *stimulates* your child to make God's laws an actual part of his *thinking*.

Always Teach Spiritual Lessons

Remember this. Your child can know the various Bible characters and

stories, but without understanding the LESSONS involved in each incident, he is missing the real *value* of it. Strive to teach your children this vital, overall principle: OBEEDIENCE TO GOD AND HIS LAWS PRODUCES HAPPINESS AND BLESSINGS. DISOBEDIENCE AND REBELLION BRING UNHAPPINESS AND PUNISHMENT!

Emphasize over and over in different ways how *beneficial* and *wonderful* it is to obey God's commandments. Stress to your child how GOOD they are for him. ALWAYS stress the positive — the GOOD life that obedience produces. Remember, you are molding your child's concept of God and His *way*!

Relate Lessons to Their Everyday Life

When you describe how Adam and Eve *disobeyed* God, stress how they had to leave the garden and were very unhappy because of their disobedience. Now relate this to your child's everyday life by explaining that obedience to God *always* brings *good* things! And disobedience produces *bad* things. You can do this in numerous facets of his daily life. This is a language he *understands*.

Another example you could use would be to show him that God created many helpful foods for us to eat. Show him that by eating a well-balanced diet and developing a taste for *many* foods, his muscles and bones will grow bigger and stronger, which will enable him to throw his ball farther, run faster and jump higher. By this simple object lesson, you have proved in one small way in his little mind that obeying God is GOOD!

But remember to keep your explanations SIMPLE. Don't get technical or overly didactic.

Make Lessons Interesting, Colorful and Exciting

Read Ecclesiastes 12:10 in *The Living Bible*: "For the Preacher was not only a wise man, but a *good teacher*; he not only taught what he knew to the people, but taught them in an *interesting manner*."

How do you rate? How would you describe to your child the way David killed a lion, for example?

Here's how you might do it: "As David's sheep grazed peacefully one warm, sunny day, little did they realize the savage danger lurking behind the trees just 50 yards away.

"David looked intently toward the trees. He had seen a faint movement in that direction. He moved closer — to within a stone's throw of the trees, when suddenly the largest lion he had ever seen sprang out upon a helpless bleating lamb!

"Before the tawny beast could kill or seriously harm the lamb with its powerful jaws, David was upon it — challenging this roaring, snarling creature, this bundle of destructive fury, with flashing, rippling muscles and knife-like teeth!

"David quickly and silently asked God for strength.

"Suddenly the lion charged. The earth seemed to tremble under David's feet as he saw the yellow blur leaping toward him, paws outstretched, mouth wide open, ready to snap his neck in one crunching bite!

"David quickly side-stepped the frustrated animal and seized it from behind, killing it with the strength God gave him! Once again God had protected His faithful servant."

Picture stories in your own mind as you tell them and describe things *in detail*. BE ENTHUSIASTIC, and before you know it, *you'll* be enjoying your stories as much as your children!

Have Regular Bible Studies

Make a definite time for teaching your children about God and the Bible. And when possible, have the entire family take part. Also, help your children to look forward to these studies. Remember to keep them *short*, so the children won't get overly tired, or begin to dread them.

Do you recall the serials you used to hear on the radio when you were a child? Each episode ran only a few minutes, and of course it always ended with a note of suspense to be continued next time! Do you remember how eager you were to come back next time to find out what happened? Use the same principle in teaching your chil-

dren. When telling or reading a Bible story, interrupt it at a point of suspense — "to be continued next time!" Cut off Bible study (or "Bible story time," as you might call it to three- or four-year-olds) BEFORE they begin to lose interest.

And remember to take *other* opportunities throughout the day to point out certain lessons or principles of God — especially to very young children. Here is God's instruction regarding this:

"So keep these commandments carefully in mind. Tie them to your hand to remind you to obey them, and tie them to your forehead between your eyes! Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting at home, when you are out walking, at bedtime, and before breakfast! Write them upon the doors of your houses and upon your gates, so that as long as there is sky above the earth, you and your children will enjoy the good life awaiting you in the land the Lord has promised you" (Deut. 11:18-21, *The Living Bible*).

This does not mean, of course, that you should make a fetish out of writing Bible verses all over your walls. It's the *principle* that's important — keep God's laws in mind all the time.

God Holds You Responsible

God holds *you* — not your local minister or the Church — responsible for teaching your children about His way. Do you realize that YOU determine to a tremendous degree what type of person your child will grow up to be? "Teach a child to choose the right path, and when he is older he will remain upon it" (Prov. 22:6, *The Living Bible*).

The great Creator God has granted you your children. He has given you God-like powers over them — you have the power to *mold* and *shape* attitudes that will remain with them the rest of their lives.

What will YOUR child's sense of values and concepts of God be when he is thirty years old? Just what kind of individual will he grow up to be? The answer depends a great deal on how you teach him — *now!* □

NEVER GIVE IN!

When severe trials come into your life, do you easily "give in"? Or do you "gird up your loins" and ENDURE ADVERSITY with unflinching faith in God? This inspiring article shows how YOU can develop that vital ingredient necessary for true success — PERSEVERANCE!

by John D. Schroeder

IN this century, Winston Churchill was an epitome of perseverance — a colossus of refusal to surrender to the adversary.

"Never give in," he said, "never, *never*, NEVER, NEVER, in nothing great or small, large or petty — *never* give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. NEVER yield to force, NEVER yield to the *apparently* overwhelming might of the enemy!"

That "John Bull" determination to overcome any and all obstacles, coupled with his personal abilities and willingness to work, made Churchill's life an inspiration to millions.

And that same quality, *perseverance*, will make the difference between success and failure in our lives.

When Things Go Wrong

Life has its bleak moments — when everything seems wrong — when even obedience to God's laws



Courtesy Col. Frank Reed

BULLDOGGED TENACITY — Winston Churchill inspects captured Nazi missile site near Cherbourg, France, in 1944. Churchill's refusal to give in to a seemingly insurmountable adversary inspired a beleaguered people to press on toward victory!

seems, *on the surface*, only to bring more disheartening results. Sometimes years can go by, with no apparent "blessing" — as we mortals tend to reckon blessings. But we need to realize that God does not always see things as we do.

Take the example of Joseph, the elder son of Jacob and Rachel. One can hardly say he "deserved" his troubles. In his case, the envy of others was to blame.

Joseph's brothers could hardly tolerate his favored position in the family — they hated him for the beautiful coat their father had given him. But when he began to tell them of his highly implicative dreams — that they and their father would one day bow before him — they were "fit to be tied"! So they got rid of him — sold him as a slave and convinced their father that he was dead, stealing and ruining his beautiful coat in the process.

Later, in Egypt, Joseph was sold again — this time to the ruler's chief executioner. Hardly a nice or encouraging

position to be in. And all of this because he was one with whom God was dealing.

Soon, things got *worse!* The executioner's wife made a play for him, and he refused her. He wisely obeyed God. And what did he get for his staunch morality? The proverbial "woman scorned" then deceitfully forced her cruel revenge by seeing him thrown in jail. For obeying God he was thrown in a dark dungeon with no hope of escape or release — a "forgotten man."

Darkest Just Before the Dawn

So there you have it. God begins to deal with the man. Things go well for a little while — and then EVERYTHING falls apart! Or so it appears.

Of course, when we read the rest of the story, everything becomes clear. In just a few more paragraphs, the whole situation is changed. All has worked out beautifully. Joseph was finally recognized, was made RULER directly in association with the chief Pharaoh of Egypt, his entire family was reunited and brought to Egypt to be near him, and was jointly given the best of the nation's land. The complete story is touching and beautiful.

But if YOU had been Joseph... Would you have patiently endured all the affliction, pain, discouragement and suffering, without "giving up" or losing faith in God?

Says the word of God, "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small" (Prov. 24:10, *Amplified Bible*).

YOU wouldn't have been able to see the end from the beginning any more perfectly than Joseph could. The neat and encouraging paragraphs would not yet have been written. You would simply have been robbed of your favorite clothes and sold as a *slave* into the worst possible situation. You would not speak or understand the language of the man you worked for. His wife would have been making seductive passes at you. And YOU — if you had obeyed God — would have found yourself thrown in jail — and forgotten.

You would probably rue the day you got that beautiful garment from your father — and you might even wish you had never had those special

dreams. You would certainly wish you had kept quiet about them. But there you would be. In jail. In a foreign country. Separated from everything and everyone you knew and loved. A prisoner, not guilty, but punished.

This kind of situation is far from being an isolated case. God always deals with people as *He* knows is best. In everything, He wants His people to develop faith in the fact that He is in control — whether or not things may "look good" for the moment.

The golden sky comes at the end of the storm — the "silver linings" in clouds are not apparent at first. And only through our patiently enduring and USING the experiences that come our way do we develop *enduring faith* in God.

Trials must come, though in contrast to Joseph, we are often responsible ourselves for the troubles that come our way. We create our problems through our own shortcomings, or we force God to correct us when we disobey His laws or principles, even when we aren't aware of what mistake we may have been making until God makes it clear to us in His unmistakable ways.

But in either case, to let God do His incredible work in our lives we have to ENDURE chastisement, knowing that God punishes us for our eternal welfare and good, as a loving father spans his children (Heb. 12:5-11).

The Trials of a Prophet

Jeremiah was a prophet of God — a man used mightily in his time. He constantly warned God's people of impending disaster — because of *their* sins. And then he lived through that same disaster!

Jeremiah had been thrown into a cistern by King Zedekiah's subordinates (Jer. 38:6; Lam. 3:52-57). He suffered terribly himself during the overthrow of Jerusalem — because *they* had refused to change. His personal reaction to severe trial is among the finest examples recorded in the history of God's people.

Notice Jeremiah's reaction — his suffering under the stress of God's wrath and his own subsequent change

of attitude and resolve to continue to seek God, to *trust* in Him.

At first, almost to the point of utter despair, he groaned: "I am the man who has seen the afflictions that come from the rod of God's wrath... He has turned against me. Day and night his hand is heavy on me. He has made me old and has broken my bones... He has walled me in; *I cannot escape*; he has fastened me with heavy chains. And though I cry and shout, He will not hear my prayers!" (Lam. 3:1-8, *The Living Bible*.)

Have YOU ever felt so "sure" things could *never* work out? Is there something in this experience that perhaps each of us might use at some time in our lives? There surely is!

Notice how Jeremiah continued his personal lament: "He lurks like a bear, like a lion, waiting to attack me... My own people laugh at me... He has filled me with bitterness... He has made me to eat gravel and broken my teeth; he has rolled me in ashes and dirt... I have forgotten what enjoyment is. ALL HOPE IS GONE; my strength has turned to water, for the Lord has left me..."

"I can NEVER forget these awful years; *always* my soul will live in utter shame" (verses 10-20).

A PROPHET OF GOD uttered those pathetic words — in personal anguish — under severe trial. Amazing, isn't it, that in the lives of those giants whom God has used as examples of success and spiritual power, there have been moments of terrible depression — of near loss of hope.

All hope certainly *appeared* gone. The prophet almost gave in. But not completely. He searched his mind for what he had learned of God through years of experience. He thought *beyond* his immediate trial. And he thereby endured, with the help of God. Notice:

"Yet there *is* one ray of hope: his compassion NEVER ends. It is only the Lord's mercies that have kept us from complete destruction. *Great* is his faithfulness; His lovingkindness begins afresh each day. My soul claims the Lord as my inheritance; therefore *I will hope in him*... The Lord is WONDERFULLY GOOD to those who *wait* for him, to those who *seek* for him. It is

good both to hope and WAIT QUIETLY for the salvation of the Lord!

"It is good for a young man [or woman] to be under discipline, for it causes him to sit apart in silence beneath the Lord's demands, to lie face downward in the dust; then at last there is hope for him [or her]. . . . THE LORD WILL NOT ABANDON HIM FOREVER. Although God gives him grief, yet he will show compassion too, according to the greatness of his loving-kindness. For he does NOT enjoy afflicting men and causing sorrow" (Lam. 3:21-33).

Then Comes Deliverance!

Jeremiah was removed from the trial — just when he thought he was ruined. He cried desperately to God for deliverance, and at the last possible moment, God lifted him from the trial (Lam. 3:54-57).

Trials don't really end things — they make new and better things possible — when stronger, wiser character has been formed.

Remember Job's example? He had been seriously self-righteous and God had let him endure severe trial — to bring him to his senses. But as soon as the lesson was learned, as soon as Job recognized God's unspeakable greatness in contrast with his own helplessness, God could again begin to bless him. "Then, when Job prayed for his friends [he finally got his mind off HIMSELF!], the Lord restored his wealth and happiness! In fact, the Lord gave him TWICE as much as before" (Job 42:10, *The Living Bible*).

After All, WHO ARE WE?

We know God made everything for one central purpose. He wanted a family. As human creatures we certainly understand that desire. God put that desire in us when He created us, even emotionally, in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-27).

God has *not* called us to hurt us, or to take from us the good things we really want. He didn't call us to run us through agonizing experiences. He certainly will not do us harm — or deprive us of any good thing — or subvert any good cause. He called us because He loves us. He wants us, spe-

cifically and individually, to be His children (Deut. 7:8; John 6:44). He wants us to succeed in every possible way — to enjoy total fulfillment, the desire of our (converted) hearts (Ps. 37:4-5). He lives to give us these things — just as quickly as He can train us to use and enjoy them properly.

If we will live by every word of God, we will be the apples of His eye — His special treasure — His SONS! (Zech. 2:8; I John 3:1-3.) And as His sons we need to realize that God is so intensely interested in us — so overwhelmingly fond of us, individually — that He will let us go through whatever is necessary to guarantee our success as His eternal sons in His Family!

Will Endurance Endure — by Itself?

Endurance — perseverance, stick-to-it-iveness — is a law of success. It is indispensable. But *patient waiting* during a time of trial usually will not succeed of itself. Consider the contrast between David and Saul — two men who faced the same trial simultaneously.

The event involved David, King Saul, the armies of Israel and the Philistines with their titanic hero, Goliath — all of whom (except David) had waited for action for forty nerve-racking days (I Sam. 17:16). David took right, swift, aggressive, *decisive* ACTION! He lost no time, but Goliath lost his head.

Saul was willing to wait, procrastinate — but while he waited, he did little, personally, to change circumstances.

On the other hand, David *seized* upon the circumstance, confidently used God's support (he had God's Spirit — he knew God would help) and employed every possible means at his disposal toward SUCCESS, while the king and the nation waited for someone else to TAKE ACTION! David's proper action during the trial allowed God to bring the situation triumphantly to its solution.

Thus we are introduced to the life of David — one of patient endurance under stress. But always David is taking *action*, every possible right action within God's law, to properly resolve

problems as they arise — with God's help.

David was a man whose very approach to life itself was one of success. And when he had to wait — as he did before God removed Saul from office — he applied himself diligently to every task during the interim, keeping loyal to God throughout the experience, and repenting deeply when he stumbled.

David knew that God keeps His promises — that every good thing would come his way in God's good time. So he confidently and patiently worked towards such ends. Any other approach would have been faithless — an insult to the character of God.

The same is just as true of each of us (Ps. 37:4-11). God has called each of us to SUCCEED in a calling which defies human imagination (I Cor. 2:9-11). And he lives to help us through every challenge along the way — IF we will PERSEVERE, always exercising *all seven LAWS* of success.

Elbert Hubbard once said, "The line between failure and success is so fine that we scarcely know when we pass it: so fine that we are often on the line and do not know it. How many a man has thrown up his hands at a time when a little more effort, a little more patience, would have achieved success. As the tide goes all the way out, so it comes all the way in. A little more persistence, a little more effort, and what seemed hopeless failure may turn to glorious success.

"There is no failure except in no longer trying. There is no defeat except from within, no really unsurmountable barrier save our own inherent weakness of purpose."

Because God is for us! (Rom. 8:31.)

Why Succeed?

How about it? Is an overwhelmingly SUCCESSFUL life worth it? For you and me, is it worth it that we should PERSEVERE?

Think seriously for a moment of the millions of under-privileged people — sick people — starving people — war-torn people — halt and maimed people — ignorant, helpless, often innocent people. Think about THEM.

(Continued on back cover)

INSIDE INDIA

(Continued from page 7)

Bombay — the Highpoint

The three days we spent in Bombay, the commercial capital of the country, were the highlight of our visit to India. So far, we have only two members in India, Mr. and Mrs. Kulasingam, in Bombay. But others, especially in Bombay where we met a number of excellent prospects, will undoubtedly be ready for baptism on our next trip.

One is a young doctor of Hindu background. He had given up a job with the Bombay municipality and gone into practice on his own in order to observe the Sabbath. He showed us his business card which had at the bottom: "Closed Friday evenings and Saturdays. Open Sundays." This was very encouraging to us, because he was one of the few we met who were able to keep the Sabbath.

He endeavors also to practice his profession the way God will approve — giving advice on diet, nutrition and hygiene as very important factors in good health. However, people do not respond well to this. Many say, "We came to you for a pill. We did not come to be told how we should live." It certainly takes a great deal of courage to do what this young doctor is doing. We hope he will be ready for baptism next time.

Another young man we saw in Bombay works as an IBM technician. Remarkably enough he does not have to work on Saturday! He comes from a very strong Catholic family. Had his parents known of his change of beliefs, their reaction would have been violent, but he has handled his situation so tactfully that as yet they know nothing of it. This young man, also, we hope, will be baptized next time.

Sabbath Keeping Groups Desire Contact

On the tour we were able to learn a little more about a number of groups in India who have wanted to make contact with us for some time. These people observe the Sabbath, and some of the Holy Days, being affiliated with the Church of God 7th Day (Stan-

berry, Missouri and Denver, Colorado), with the Church of God (Salem, West Virginia) or with another branch of the "Sardis" Church which has headquarters in Jerusalem, Israel.

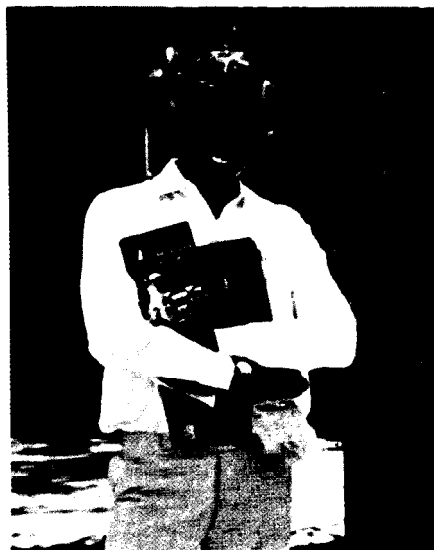
These Indian groups are now seeking means for all of them to work more closely together. There are other groups in Northern India whose leaders we were unable to meet, due to travel difficulties and restrictions.

Unfortunately, it is going to be very difficult for us to make any real contact with these people. Most of them are villagers or mountain people who speak only their own native Indian dialect. Even some of their leaders cannot communicate with us. One minister we did meet in the South spoke Telugu (a southern dialect) — a language we did not speak — but no English.

Only a Beginning

This tour was really only the beginning of any kind of work in India and Ceylon. It's a very small start, but we feel very encouraged and hopeful for the future work in these areas. Since our return from the tour in March, we have already received over 50 *new* requests for visits!

God is calling a number of very fine people who will represent Him as lights to that part of the world. Many still have gross problems to solve in order to obey Him. But with the help of your prayers, He will certainly give them the strength they need! □



Frankel — Ambassador College

One of the many interested students met in India.

CHARACTER

(Continued from page 3)

mountain and showed Him the glory and majesty of all the kingdoms of the world, and said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (verse 9). He could have added, "You won't have to go through any crucifixion — you won't have to go through any trials — you won't have to fight temptation. You won't have to do all this preaching and get yourself kicked in the face for it." All those tempting thoughts he could have used or conjured up in Christ's mind. But Jesus said to him, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (verse 10).

What beautiful character our Pioneer — the Author of our salvation — expressed!

Since God is going to reproduce Himself, build His Kingdom and expand His dominion through us, that's the kind of character WE'RE going to have to develop.

That's the kind of character that you're going to have to WANT with all your being! Perhaps in this life you won't be able to reach the same level or standard of inexorable lack of compromise with God's Law that Jesus did. But you must fervently, energetically, do the BEST YOU ARE ABLE, and to your UTMOST capabilities and talents *strive to exercise that kind of character!*

I hope we really grasp the lesson of Jesus' experience, brethren. Unless there are trials, unless there are tests, unless there are choices, there is no character building.

Every test and every trial you run into in your life — little things that happen between you and your wife at home, between you and your children, between you and your employer — little things of every day, every hour, every moment — are tests to see whether your character will be built sufficiently for you to be made a Son of God!

How to Develop Character

But exactly how can we develop that kind of character? Let's make it really

clear and bring it right down to the “grass roots,” as far as our lives are concerned.

First, let’s realize that God has given His Holy Spirit to us. God’s Spirit makes us different from ordinary men or women. The Holy Spirit enables us to look through our eyes with Godly vision — spiritual vision. We are now able to compare spiritual things with spiritual. For the first time, our minds are open to *really know* what is right and what is wrong!

A Spirit-begotten Christian begins his spiritual life from his baptism — and goes on to develop greater and greater depths of spiritual understanding. As he grows, he comprehends more deeply and finitely what is right and what is wrong about his own life, and also what he personally must *do* about it.

From the moment we receive God’s Spirit, we are then responsible for whatever knowledge of right and wrong that it opens to our minds to see. From that point on, building righteous character begins.

As we grow we will face trials and tests. God tempts no man (James 1:13), but He often *allows* us to be tempted and uses those temptations to *try* us — to see just how much character we have built. Each time we give in to temptation we *tear down* some character. But each time we face trouble or temptation head-on and conquer it, we become a little stronger. Our character has grown a little greater.

We don’t ever have to fail these tests — *IF* we *remain* close to God in prayer and Bible study, continually drawing upon and activating His Holy Spirit in us.

You can always be the winner!

You simply *choose* the right and exert all your own power, and God will supernaturally strengthen you through the mighty **POWER** of His Holy Spirit so you can *resist* any temptation and *endure* any trial that comes your way!

Never Compromise

From the moment of your baptism, you set upon a road along which you repeatedly have to make *decisions* — **CHOICES** — as to whether you will obey

God or disobey. To compromise or not to compromise. The key to character building is: *NEVER COMPROMISE* with God’s standards, with His Law and with His will! You have the power at hand to obey. So **ALWAYS DO** what God shows you is right.

Let me repeat again — **NEVER COMPROMISE!** Every compromise with God’s Law leads to *DEATH!* Every compromise with the principles of God’s Law causes destruction — *character assassination!* No matter how small the compromise with God’s standards, His Law and His will, nothing is more deadly to you!

In James 1:17 we read, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” The Phillips translation of the latter part of that verse is “with whom there is *never the slightest variation* or shadow of inconsistency.”

In other words, with God there is *absolutely no compromise*. God is **UNCOMPROMISINGLY** consistent and never departs from His laws. Therefore, if you want to be in the Family of God, *never compromise*, because compromise is a curse, an eroding, a weakening, a tearing down of character. Even the slightest little compromise is a weakening agent.

Areas Where Compromise Begins

In Luke 18:1, Jesus spoke of prayer: “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought *always to pray*, and not to faint [or to give up prayer].” *Prayer is the pulse of spiritual life!* It is the heartbeat of our spiritual growth and progress. How much do YOU compromise with prayer?

Believe me, brethren, we are vulnerable!

Do you have *heart-rending prayer* with God every day — never fainting — never giving up? How many of us are assassinating our character *by not praying at all?* We can assassinate our character even when we *do* get down on our knees before our God and pray, if we don’t pray properly and put our whole heart into our prayers. The *quality* of our prayer and what we pray about are vital.

Lack of prayer — once allowed to commence — can spread on into the weeks and the months, until prayer is simply no longer a **FORCE** in a person’s life. As a result, his character goes right down the drain.

Take another example of compromise. Jesus said, “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12). We’ve heard those words many times. And yet we all too often don’t perform the loving service for our brethren that we have the power to do. Instead, we sometimes say harsh things to them and about them, usually behind their backs — half truths, three-quarter truths, even whole truths about things *better left unsaid*. Instead of covering a multitude of sins, we expose them to the sun and the air!

Brethren, gossip is like a wound going down into the innermost parts of the belly. To stop it, all we have to do is **SHUT** our mouths and **SHUT** our ears! All we have to do is turn and walk the other way. All you have to do is say, “I don’t want to talk about that anymore.”

Follow Christ’s Example

Jesus Christ qualified to become a son of God because He didn’t compromise with love. In the midst of a jostling crowd, if a woman touched the hem of His garment, He healed her! Jesus wept over the imminent doom of Jerusalem, fed multitudes, comforted the sick, healed the blind, set the lepers free — all acts of love, and examples of righteous character. No compromise! There wasn’t a time when Jesus Christ turned His back on any man — or ever will!

Brethren, *choose* to follow the example of our Pioneer. Don’t compromise with practical opportunities to show love and compassion — whether on your job, at services, at the Feast of Tabernacles, or whatever. Don’t fail to love one another!

Take these times of trial, and testing, and use them to **BUILD** that set-jawed, unyielding, *uncompromising inner integrity* OF **GOD** — the kind of character that our Savior developed. God gave you the **POWER** of His Spirit so you **CAN** do it — if you **CHOOSE** to do so and *refuse to compromise!* □

NEVER GIVE IN

(Continued from page 15)

THEY wait for a perfect *you* (Rom. 8:16-21). A *you* whom God will have developed until you can help them — lift them from their helplessness and give them LIFE! That is your calling — my calling — our calling. And that calling is more than worth ANY sacrifice! We can fulfill that incredible purpose *if* we PERSEVERE, with God's help.

How Jacob BECAME Israel

Jacob was an able person — a very successful cattle breeder. He had worked willingly for fourteen years in exchange for Laban's daughters in marriage. With God's help he had been able to gain equitable compensation for his work from his cheating, opportunist employer (Gen. 31:5-10).

God thought highly of Jacob — respected him for his good qualities. But Jacob had never had to try his mettle against anyone with abilities equal to his. So God needed to try Jacob's mettle in an *even* battle — one that would reveal his character under the greatest possible stress. So *God*, the One who became Jesus Christ, manifested Himself as a human and wrestled with Jacob. (The fact that Jacob actually wrestled with God is made clear from Genesis 32:30 and Hosea 12:3-6.) The account is startling — an incredible eye-opener.

Jacob was no quitter — no matter who the opponent. When faced in personal struggle with none less than God Almighty, he fought with zeal and relentless courage. *Nothing* could make him give up when he KNEW his tenacity was *being tried* — when he KNEW he should *HOLD FAST!*

God told Jacob, "Let me go, for it is dawn."

"But Jacob panted, 'I will *not* let you go *until you bless me.*'"

"What is your name?" the [One who became Christ] asked.

"Jacob," was the reply.

"It isn't anymore!" the man told him. 'It is ISRAEL — one who has power with *God*. Because you have been strong with God, you shall prevail with men'. . . And He blessed him

there" (Gen. 32:26-29, *The Living Bible*).

Jacob never forgot that he had wrestled — and PREVAILED — with God! The very God who is the same, yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). The very God who calls His New Testament Church — God's people from *every* race — spiritual *Israel!* (Gal. 6:16.)

The implication is clear. Jacob had to *qualify* for his new name — and so must we!

God's blessings can often come only after hardship and suffering. Character does not come easily. God expects us to *conquer* — not to give in until we receive our respective blessings. The Kingdom of God, and successful completion of every step along the way, is worth *fighting* for (Matt. 11:12). Certainly Jacob thought so — and God respected him for it. Blessed him for it. Gave him a *new name* for it — a name filled with HONOR!

What to DO When Disaster Strikes

When trials and adversities come into your life, remember these men of God — their faith, patient endurance, and their works.

When your life looks "boxed in," hopeless — when nothing seems to work out right — then pause and consider that your Creator *loves* you and is deeply concerned for you and aware of your every situation. Remember that these trials and tests are really for your own *good* (Rom. 8:28-29).

Then seek God. Draw close to Him in prayer. Ask God to help you see if YOU are doing something wrong — something He forbids — and if you are, CHANGE! Or, if you are *not* doing something you are positively commanded to do, CHANGE!

Then after correcting whatever you came to see was wrong (or if you could clearly see that no sin was involved), *patiently endure* the affliction, committing the outcome into the hands of Jesus Christ — your Savior, Redeemer and High Priest — while you continue to *do all your duty*.

Let CHRIST solve it, and deliver you from it, in His own right time, knowing He would not allow it in the first place unless it were for your good and the good of others.

Christ lives to help, to intercede for, to liberate those who are cast down — *not* to destroy them. He may try our mettle — but He'll bless us, afterwards, for our endurance. We have seen how He helped others, and not being a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), He will certainly help you! So ENDURE, with God's help. Let God help you build your character — so He can bless you in due time.

Don't *ever* give up. Get "quit" out of your vocabulary, for you *cannot* see tomorrow from today's utterly inadequate, terribly limited, *human* viewpoint!

When you are depressed, or "down in the dumps," because of some trial, then pray as David did: "But O my soul, don't be discouraged. Don't be upset. Expect God to act! For I know that I shall again have plenty of reason to praise him for all that he will do. He is my help! *He is my God!*" (Ps. 42:11, *The Living Bible*). □

Readers Say . . .

(Continued from inside front cover)

There is the realization that only the surface has been touched as far as God's great love is concerned.

The reason for this letter is simply to thank you for showing me the *way* through the World Tomorrow broadcasts, all the literature I have received, and, most of all, the Bible Correspondence Course lessons which have led me to real repentance and truth in God's Word. No other media has accomplished this profound thing that has happened to me. With grateful heart, I just want to say "Thank you." Christ has caused it to happen, but you have led the way.

E. B., McCordsville, Indiana

I don't usually write to tell you of the blessings I receive, but this one is so great I feel like telling everyone about it. The amount that I have been able to give last year was three times as much as the year before. But salary increases have not been equal to three times as much as last year, and I now live in a much nicer and more expensive apartment this year. But in spite of my being able to give so much more, I have not had to do without anything that I have really needed. In fact, I have been able to have more luxuries this year, which included eating out frequently and other such things. God certainly does open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings that there just isn't room enough to receive them all. You certainly can't out-give God.

Member, Wichita, Kansas