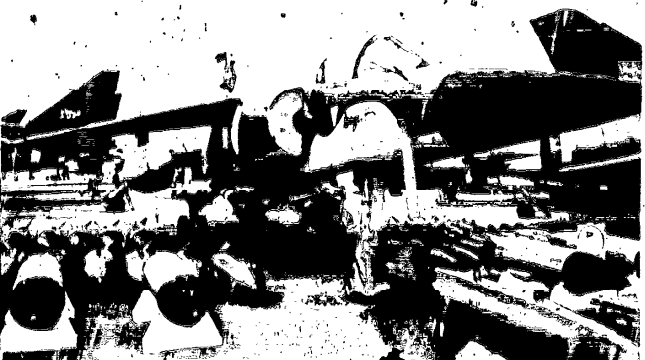




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ABOUT OUR COVER

Making on-the-spot broadcasts in Europe, Garner Ted Armstrong covered President Ford's arrival in Brussels, interviewed a number of EEC and NATO leaders, attended the NATO summit and the Paris Air Show. Report begins on page 16.

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ONLY JESUS CAN SAVE US



Don Lorton

BUT IS THIS WORLD GETTING SAVED?

If Jesus Christ of Nazareth came today to "Face the Nation" or "Meet the Press," what would He say in response to the question: "Aren't you trying to get this world saved"?

by Gagner Ted Armstrong

How far have we really come down the road of solving the huge problems of all of mankind? Not just the age-old problems of food, clothing and shelter plaguing the squalid, underdeveloped countries, but also the giant headaches of our burgeoning Western technocracies: polluting the Earth, gobbling up the remaining nonrenewable resources at a prodigious rate, feeding our monstrous energy slaves. What about the solving of our great crises of the spirit?

How far have we come, in the Western world, toward giving this sick and starving world even a material salvation? Haven't we ex-

ported our way of life to the four corners of the earth? Or don't we see the disease of hippicism — even long after it virtually died in America — in whatever nation you would care to hop into a 747 and fly to?)

The American Dream — Exported?

Aren't we trying to save the rest of the world — Communists from communism, atheists from atheism, Hindus from Hinduism? Haven't we tried to enlighten the world, teach and educate the world, clothe and mobilize the world? Haven't we dreamed of seeing nations even in the fourth world bursting with our technology, gleaming with the glittering artifices and devices of our man-made, modern, industrialized assembly lines and teeming with luxury cars at about two per person?

Is God really — now, at this time — using the Western nations to forge out some sort of last-ditch opening to the manifold and many-sided box canyons into which this world has gotten itself?

Has He ever?

In the past hundred years or so, we have gone about the business of desperately trying to convince other nations of the multiple benefits inherent in the American (and Western) way of life. But now our almost religious fervor is beginning to wane. Watergate, the South Vietnam debacle, the worst inflation and unemployment rates in over three decades, the giving away of billions of dollars to fair-weather friends, the CIA investigations, our sliding confidence in public servants — all have taken their toll on our will. It was President Lyndon Baines Johnson who said in the heat of the Vietnam war: "It is our will that is being tried."

It is highly questionable whether or not we indeed do have the will to police this world any longer. Now we are scurrying about our land on an unbelievable quest of "blame-placing" and "scape-goating." We are beginning (and perhaps, rightly so in a sense) to come to grips with some of our embarrassments, failures, flaws and mistakes — both now and in the past.

But what should our real mission to this world, have been in the first place? To send technocrats to teach others how to build massive mass-production assembly lines so they too could eventually choke in their own smog? To send missionaries to convict and persuade them of our brand of "Christianity"?

What did God Almighty want us to do — as a nation — for the rest of this world?

Our Real National Mission

This is what the nations of the world should be able to say about the United States of America (and the former British Commonwealth of nations): "... For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, *Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.* For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deut. 4:6-8.)

But just as ancient Israel proceeded to fail miserably in their gigantic calling, so have we followed in their footsteps. Our actions and our words cry out as with one voice: "No! We don't keep the Ten Commandments."

Yes, our nation, just on the verge of its 200th birthday, planning a whopping bicentennial celebration, has been given the greatest material blessings given to any nation in all of history! Yes, we are number one in GNP, and in so many material quantifications. Quantitatively speaking, we are it and have been for these many, many years.

But let's not claim we are number one in spreading Christianity when we lead the world in divorce, crime, murder, pornography, the hideous misuse and abuse of the land in which we live and the voracious devouring of our ecological resources. Being number one brings with it the

responsibility of *not* setting a pattern of every assorted form of evil for the entirety of the rest of the world.

Some of us still seem to think that we are the greatest Christian nation that this world has ever known. After all, don't we print, publish and export more Bibles in more languages than any other nation under the sun? Don't at least two-thirds of our peoples possess a copy of the King James Version, and many others of our populace more modern translations? Haven't we sent more missionaries to more countries than any other national collection of peoples? Haven't we diligently gone about the business of desperately trying to save this world spiritually, as well as economically, politically and socially?

Why then have we so utterly failed? Is it because we haven't done what King David said and did? "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. . . . Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee*" (Ps. 51:1-3, 12-13).

Yes, that's part of it. But the true answer is more fundamental than even that.

Look about you at the world of religion and ask yourself this basic question: "Does the entire endeavor of Christian evangelism represent God's best efforts to get this world saved?" If it does, then we can all honestly say that this world is in deep trouble.

The Shocking Truth About Universal Salvation

I posed the question earlier in this article: If Jesus came to "Face the Nation" today, how would He respond to a reporter asking, "Aren't

you trying to get this world saved"? The astonishing, astounding answer would be a resounding "No!"

Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb. 13:8). Over 1900 years ago He was asked virtually the same question.

Jesus frequently spoke to the general public of that day in parables — all sorts of similes, analogies and interesting stories mainly based on the agriculture of His generation. But neither those Jewish people nor even His disciples seemed to have the faintest idea of what He was talking about when He was conversing in parables.

His disciples asked Him why He spoke in parables. They wondered why He was confusing those poor people. Notice it in Matthew's account: "And the disciples came, and said unto him, *Why speakest thou unto them in parables?* He answered . . . Because it is given unto you [the disciples and future apostles] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven [kingdom of God] in Mark, Luke and John, but to them [the general public] *it is not given*" (Matt. 13:10-11).

Conventional "Christianity" has always taught its Sunday-school children that Jesus spoke in parables because He wanted people to better understand the gospel message. But Christ continued in verse 13: "Therefore speak I unto them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, *neither do they understand.*"

Jesus then added: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias [Isaiah], which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's [Jesus' generation — and it is no different today] heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be con-

verted, and I should ~~bl~~ them" (verses 14-15). And then Jesus went on to explain and expound the meaning of a parable to His disciples in the very plainest of language.

Does this sound like Jesus Christ of Nazareth was desperately on a "soul-saving" campaign to the people of His generation? Or didn't He say in another place: "Fear not, *little flock*; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom?" (Luke 12:32.)

Later on in Luke's account someone asked Jesus: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" (Luke 13:23.) Jesus' straight-from-the-shoulder answer was: "Strive to enter in at the strait [narrow] gate: for *many*, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (verse 14).

The Strait Gate

Jesus Christ did not neglect to comment on this vital subject in the Sermon on the Mount. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many there be* which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few there be* that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

These and other scriptures represent a little bit of Christian theology that is just not being taught in the pulpits and under the steeples of this world's "Christianity." But they are as plain as day!

A little earlier in the same account Jesus had said: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (verse 6). I will leave it to you, the reader, to figure out what Jesus was telling His disciples in that verse!

Now come to a couple of crucial verses that John adds to the story. "And he [Jesus] said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:65). And the famous (to God's people)

parallel verse: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..." (verse 44). And God the Father is simply not drawing very many people today! The chaotic conditions troubling every nation in this world today ought to be mute testimony to that fact. There is too little salt on this earth!

The Father wasn't drawing many in Jesus' day either! Even many who appeared to have a modicum of understanding stumbled at Jesus' exposition of the true meaning of the Passover in John 6. Notice verse 66 in particular. "From that time *many of his disciples* went back, and walked no more with him."

Do These Scriptures Contradict?

Many fundamentalists are perhaps more familiar with verses like God being "...longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9); or "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4); and "...all [Israel] shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26).

What about it? Do these two sets of scriptures contradict and fight with one another? Or, since the Bible does not contradict itself (John 10:35; II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:20, 21), is there a more logical, plausible explanation?

God has a great plan and purpose. He is working out with human beings on this earth below — and that plan has an orderly timetable. God has never locked Himself into any effort solely aimed at saving this world today. He is only calling a relative few now in order to further His future plans. These few are called now to get back of His Work today so the whole world, at a future time, may be saved!

My father, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, has repeatedly said over the years that the things that God does through human instruments must start the *smallest*. This is a great principle of God borne out by a few

analogies Jesus gave about the Kingdom of God. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the *least* of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof" (Matt. 13:31-32).

"Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid [the leaven would have to be in very small portions] in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (verse 33).

God is not the author of the babylonish confusion we see about us today; He will do things decently and in order (I Cor. 14:33, 40). His work with human beings is proceeding and growing according to an overall pattern that has been carefully planned in advance.

God is *not* a failure: when He sets out to really save this world, He will save it!

"Every Man in His Own Order"

The resurrection chapter (I Corinthians 15) explains something of how God is going to go about saving all of humanity in general. Beginning in verse 22, the apostle Paul tells how we all die in Adam, but we (Christians) are to be made alive in Christ. Then verse 23: "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Continuing in verse 24: "Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."

That last summary verse was not augmented with any written detail until John wrote the book of Revelation in the 90's A.D. He wrote, in chapter 20, of a thousand-year reign of Christ involving "they that are Christ's at his coming." These saints, the few called and chosen in

this age, are to rule and reign with Christ throughout that utopian, millennial period (verses 3-6).

All who remain alive into that time (those not having been drawn of the Father previously), and those who are born in the millennium, will receive a full chance at salvation. The earth will be as full of the knowledge of God then as the waters cover the sea now (Isa. 11:9).

But that doesn't help those who have lived and died in the past (or who will be killed in future calamities), who maybe never even heard the name of Jesus Christ — which is the only name under heaven by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12). I've spoken before of the proverbial missionary who had a flat tire that prevented him from reaching a dying pagan in time with the name of Jesus Christ.

"The Rest of the Dead"

John was inspired to put in a parenthetical statement in verse 5 of Revelation 20 that clarifies this problem: "But the rest of the dead [those not included in the first-resurrection to eternal life] lived not again until the thousand years were finished." The words following this parenthetical sentence then refer back to the first resurrection. But "the rest of the dead" are those who never grasped the true gospel of the Kingdom of God even if they heard it with their physical ears, plus the many millions and billions who have never even heard the name of Christ.

Verses 11 through 15 input these vital details. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God [a dead person could never stand before anybody unless he or she were truly revived, or "resurrected" in theological language]; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which

were written in the books, according to their works."

Millions have assumed this event was a great "assembly line" of miserable human beings, marching endlessly past a great "courtroom" — each being told in his turn: "You go to heaven." "You go to hell." But that isn't what these verses really say. In truth this great multitude of humanity will be judged by how well they live by the books of the Bible (the word "Bible" simply means "books").

(There isn't sufficient space in this article to explain and expound all these exegetical technicalities, but I wrote an article on the subject shortly after my mother died that does go into that kind of detail. You can have it in booklet form. Simply write for our free publication titled *After Death — Then What?*)

This great resurrection pictured here is, as it were, acted out symbolically by the observance of one of God's annual holy days: fittingly termed "the Last Great Day." More information on that subject can be obtained by writing for another booklet titled *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which? I know many of you readers are new subscribers to the GN and aren't very familiar with many of these subjects we mention in these articles from time to time. So feel free to write for the booklet mentioned in the pages of this magazine. The Bible-paying members of the Worldwide Church of God, plus our co-workers and donors, feel very privileged to be able to help give the vital information contained in these easy-to-read, digest-size booklets we mail out by the many, many tons every single year.*

That gets me back to the subject of the mission of the Church. If God's Church is not to be about the "business" of saving this sick and dying world today, then what is the real reason for its existence?

The Great Commission

The twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Matthew is the focal point of all Bible prophecy. Instead of a

prophetic picture of this world in the process of being saved, you get a pretty grim and dire scenario of a crush of deadly, end-time events that climax in the second coming of Christ. Matthew 24 talks about many false prophets coming into the world actually preaching in Christ's name (verses 4-5), wars and world wars (verses 6-7), severe religious martyrdom (verse 9), and perhaps even an allusion to problems within the true Church itself (verse 10).

Then Jesus gives the great commission to the Church (in the form of a prophecy if some insist on it being worded that way): "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness [not necessarily to convert people, although a few are almost always converted as an automatic spinoff] unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (verse 14; see also Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:6-8). This is really the only verse that technically and specifically dates this whole prophecy. When the great commission is truly finished, God will then permit all of the problems (which I've been talking about on radio and writing about in our publications for over twenty years now, and my father before me another twenty years prior to that — he has been doing God's Work for over 40 years now) to intensify to the point where if Christ did not return, all human life would be erased from off the face of this earth (verses 21-22).

You simply don't get a picture, in Matthew 24, of all of Christianity uniting and by a tremendously energetic human effort saving the world, but precisely and diametrically the opposite picture. The purpose of this Work is to give this world not only a warning and a witness of the future disorder, violence, bewilderment and disintegration of this present society, but also of the good news (gospel) of the coming wonderful world of tomorrow. Then — and only then — will this world ever be saved! □

Q&A

QUESTION: "I have come to the conclusion that the Old Testament and the New Testament are two histories and beliefs; that the Israelites did not believe in the hereafter; and the people who believed in Jesus (the Christians of the New Testament) did. Please give me your viewpoint."

Lola W.,
Santa Cruz, California

ANSWER: Perhaps you have assumed from Matthew 22:23 (and parallels in Mark 12:18-27 and Luke 20:27) that God had not revealed the truth about the afterlife in Old Testament times. True, in ancient days it was not made as clear as it has been today. That is why the pagans, instead of believing in the resurrection (which is what the Bible reveals) fell instead for the deception of demons which claims that death is just a change from bodily life to disembodied spirit life, and that life itself is never interrupted or ceases. And that lack of total clarity extended to the Sadducees ("which say that there is no resurrection") who rejected any and all belief in life after death (Acts 23:8).

But notice how Jesus answered them in verses 31-32 of Matthew 22: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And Jesus referred directly to the Old Testament passages of Exodus 3:6, 16, etc. for his proof.

His reasoning astonished the bystanders, and completely silenced the Sadducees (see also Luke 20:37-40). It was reasoning at its best ac-

ording to the then current Jewish style. God had made promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob not yet fulfilled when they died. There would have to be a resurrection from the dead and those promises fulfilled or God would not be God.

But we should never assume that the Old Testament does not contain much *other* proof of definite nature. Notice how often the Old Testament prophets spoke of man's resurrection back to life.

David wrote, especially speaking of Christ: "... My flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [the grave]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:9-10). Christ's resurrection was a type and a forerunner of many others.

Psalms also speaks of the resurrection as an *awakening*, and as a *morning*: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15). And: "Like sheep they [mankind] are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them *in the morning*; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah" (Ps. 49:14-15).

Job also foresaw a resurrection: "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time [this first life] will I wait, till my change come. Thou [God] shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands" (Job 14:14-15).

He again expressed his faith in chapter 19, verses 25 and 26: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after

my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh [Hebrew, apart from my flesh] shall I see God."

Isaiah adds his voice: "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19).

Ezekiel 37:4-6, 12 speaks of Israelites who will be resurrected to mortal life and be given a chance to be saved (people who never understood enough to have had and lost their chance for salvation).

Then Daniel says, speaking first of those who are saved and present in the first resurrection, then of those coming up in the second resurrection whose decision regarding salvation has not yet been made: "... There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life; and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:1-2).

Daniel himself was told he would be in that first resurrection: "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (verse 13).

Now let's allow Hosea 13:14 to finish the story of God's definite and magnificent promise of a resurrection in the Old Testament: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance [any changing of my mind] shall be hid from mine eyes." □

COPING WITH CHANGE

Never before in history has this world been in such a state of constant flux and change. It seems to be so hard to find anything really solid and permanent. But, believe it or not, there are basic, immutable, precious truths revealed by God which never change.

by C. Wayne Cole

Change is a word that means different things to different people. To some it means challenge, excitement, new frontiers, progress, stimulating growth, while to others it can connote uncertainty, foreboding, disorientation and apprehension. To a few, drifting along with the current, it may mean virtually nothing.

To the Church of God, constructive, proper change should convey exciting, positive things. For as former President Franklin Roosevelt allegedly said, "The most permanent thing in life is change." Repentance means change. Life and growth, even growing old means constant change.

The Acceleration of Change

The world changes — since World War II we have gone through several major "ages."

"Without change time would stop," said Alvin Toffler in *Future Shock*. And as C. P. Snow said, we no longer live in the time when "social change was so slow that it would pass-unnoticed in one person's lifetime." Change now is an avalanche coming at such an accelerated rate that a "new disease" has been created — *future shock*.

So change, especially now in the space age, is an integral, ongoing part of the human experience. No

one person can even keep up with the specialized knowledge in any particular field.

Leaders Uncertain

In 1973 a Europe-America Conference was conducted. Some three hundred delegates from both sides of the Atlantic agreed that "a new era is emerging." They said, "No one can tell for certain what is going to be in this new era, but we know it's coming." These leaders, statesmen, parliamentarians, military leaders and educators were all willing to concede that *the future is uncertain*!

But world leaders and statesmen do not really know how to prepare the populace of this earth for its uncertain future. Nor can they or their followers cope with the dynamics of a constantly changing present. It's all just too confusing and disorienting. As Alvin Toffler stated: "Change is avalanching upon our heads and most people are grotesquely unprepared to cope with it."

There are many reasons for this phenomenon. One reason is that many people view all change as negative. But all change is *not* negative. It can be the most positive thing in the world!

All of us need to look to the positive aspects of any changes that occur in God's Church and His Work. Yet change is often upsetting. It tends to rock the boat of comfort and tranquility to which we all too easily become accustomed. It can be a very disorienting factor in life.

But consider that the life of a Christian begins with what is undoubtedly the most traumatic change of all — *conversion*! The very word "conversion" means "change." After initial conversion, each day, ideally, a little more of the self should die and be replaced with a

little more of Christ — His mind and His character (see Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:5; II Peter 3:18). The life in Christ is a constant mosaic of change and growth. It begins with a basic change of direction and continues throughout one's entire life. It is an ongoing process.

As the Church of God grows closer to the original faith of the early Church, we find ourselves even changing some aspects of doctrine. As Paul said: "We know in part, and we prophesy [preach] in part" (I Cor. 13:9). As Christ reveals knowledge to His Body, as the Church comes to understand the Bible more perfectly, we find ourselves adding new concepts and doctrinal tenets to the fundamental base of solid biblical truth God's true Church has always possessed.

Additional Truth

God continually reveals, by His Spirit, more and more profound truths out of the vast well of His pure Word. Our understanding changes as we grow to a more perfect knowledge of God's plan and purpose. We need not be troubled when God either makes new truth known or reveals we are in error on some point.

Remember that if our eyes are fixed on the "hope that lies within us" — the transcendent God-given destiny of mankind and the unchangeableness of our great God and His promises — we can have a calm, inner peace, notwithstanding minor changes in doctrine.

A Christian Acknowledges Error

The ability to take correction from the Word of God is one of the marks or identifying signs of a true Christian. We should not be afraid or reluctant to change in the face of new evidence and new truth.

Christ promised His Church:

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth..." (John 16:13). This is a continuing process in the Church in all ages. In past ages, sometimes truth was lost in the shuffle; sometimes even the Church itself was almost lost from view! But truth has always emerged in the long run, clean and pristine.

Every once in a while we have to have a "course correction" like an airplane. If you drive an automobile you know you must continually adjust your steering and make course corrections. The same is true as God guides His Church into all truth.

Sometimes this creates certain stresses on the body — just as stresses occur in the structure of an airplane. But the point is, the body is built to take those adjustments — it is designed to withstand the stresses and changes that necessarily occur! As long as we keep our eyes on Christ, we will be able to endure correction and change and come through with flying colors.

Love Sees Us Through

The Church should be rooted and grounded in love. And love, as the apostle Paul taught (1 Cor. 13:8), never fails. No matter what changes occur — internally or externally — love endures through it all. No matter what challenges the Body of Christ faces, it always comes through because it is entrenched in the bedrock of God's love. And that love endures all things.

Granted, initially it is a little disturbing (or, highly disturbing, depending on one's individual orientation and background). But "all things work together for good to them that love God..." (Rom. 8:28). Once the change has been made, the Church emerges all the better for it.

In recent years the Church of

God has changed its teaching in a number of areas. We have gained a more mature understanding of prophecy; we have adjusted our teaching on marriage and divorce, Pentecost and makeup.

Change Can Be Good

But these changes have all been for the greater good of the Church. All have been based on a deeper understanding of the Scriptures and the mind of Christ. Burdens have been lifted and the Church has more truth now — quantitatively speaking — than it ever had in the past!

We are that much closer to the faith once delivered. Yet the old tried-and-tested truths endure. *They shine stronger than ever!*

Those fundamental teachings which make the Church of God unique continue to be taught and practiced. Man's ultimate destiny remains the same — man was born to become born again into the very family of the living God!

Christ's teaching is still true: "... If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." The Church of God continues to believe those basic biblical truths for which it has so long stood. *And it will continue to do so!*

But the Bible is a big Book! As the years go by, the Church will continue to grow in grace and in knowledge. New truths will gradually replace old errors and misunderstandings. Change will continue to occur as it has for the last 40 years and more.

A Work of Change

If you sat down with someone and had a positive discussion of events that have transpired in God's Work over the last 42 years, you would use the word *change* frequently. You would find it ade-

quately descriptive. You would talk about every aspect of the Work from the development and growth of *The World Tomorrow* radio broadcast, personal appearance work by Mr. Herbert Armstrong in the early years, the fantastic success story of the founding of Ambassador College, opening additional campuses, *Plain Truth* growth and format changes, international work development, the reorientation of the GN, Mr. Armstrong's current meeting of world leaders and having many meetings to expand "the way of God," etc., etc. — all of which proves we have the ability to cope with change.

Mr. Armstrong made a very significant statement in his autobiography (page 455): "All I had in mind, as *The World Tomorrow* program was being planned late in 1933, was to serve God faithfully wherever He should lead in that local territory of Lane County, Oregon...."

"But, I most certainly did not sit down, in the fall of 1933, and lay out detailed plans in my human mind for a great, powerful, earth-encircling program to reach and influence the millions in every nation; there was no thought, then, of a gigantic radio program, and a publishing enterprise, starting in Eugene, Oregon, but soon expanding to every inhabited continent.

"No, this work, in the sense of the magnitude to which it has developed, was not of my planning or vision. This is the very *Work of God*, and the vision behind it has been that of Jesus Christ — the planning, His, was merely His instrument."

From those early days the Work has made great progress. When it became clear we were headed into a box canyon, we changed. Most importantly the Work adapted, it grew.

We were and are coping with change! □

On an island west of Turkey, a man named John experienced a strange series of visions. He recorded them in the controversial biblical book of Revelation. Climaxing all the blood and gore pictured in the first nineteen chapters is a thousand-year reign of peace and prosperity revealed in chapter twenty. Following that utopian millennial rule is a period of time termed "the Great White Throne Judgment." This span of time corresponds with a biblical festival called "the Last Great Day." What does this period picture for you?

by John R. Schroeder

feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim as holy convocations [commanded assemblies], my appointed feasts are these" (verse 2).

Then God proceeded to enumerate His festivals to Moses. First, in the spring, was the Passover, followed immediately by seven days of eating unleavened bread (verses 5-8). Less than two months later was the Feast of Firstfruits (verses 10-22), called "Pentecost" in the New Testament. Then came four fall festivals: the Feast of Trumpets (verses 24-25), the Day of Atonement (a day of fasting, verses 26-32), the Feast of Tabernacles (or "feast of booths," verses 34-43), and finally the Last Great Day (same verses). (See the box on page 10 for the meaning of each of these biblical festivals.)

This Last Day follows immedi-

ated: "On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly; you shall do no laborious work . . ." Moses mentions the Feast of Tabernacles twice elsewhere in the Pentateuch (Ex. 23:16; Deut. 16:13) without specifically naming either the Last Great Day or the other two fall holy days.

Following a long lapse of disobedience to God in both Israel and Judah, there was a brief spiritual revival in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Under Ezra the restored remnant of the nation of Judah . . . kept the feast of booths [tabernacles], as it is written [in the Pentateuch]. . . (Ezra 3:4). You will note that the Last Great Day is not directly specified here, but the Bible does prove that this [fall festival] was observed during that period of history. Notice Nehemiah 8:14, 17.

THE LAST GREAT

One of Christ's disciples wrote a book commonly called "the Gospel According to John." In it he penned the following words for posterity: "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, 'If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink.' (John 7:37, Revised Standard Version used throughout article unless otherwise noted).

Jesus Christ was speaking at a festival Moses had inaugurated (not of himself, but directly at the command of God) 1500 years earlier. It was the seventh and final installment of a series of feast days listed chronologically in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus. Notice what God commanded Moses: "Say to the people of Israel. The appointed

days after the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is, as it were, almost an attachment to that seven-day festival. Both festivals are generally described together in Scripture, but they are distinctly separate in every important sense.

The Last Day in History.

Wherever the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned in the Bible, the Last Great Day can be tabularly ascertained whether it is separately mentioned or not. (See Numbers 29:12.) "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month [Jewish sacred calendar] you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work, and you shall keep a feast to the Lord seven days." This is the Feast of Tabernacles. Then in verse 35 Moses speak-

ed: "And they found it written in the law that the Lord had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths [tabernacles] during the feast of the seventh month. . . . And there shall be a great rejoicing. And day after day, from the first day to the last day, [Ezra] read from the book in the hearing of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly according to the ordinance."

In New Testament times Jesus Christ observed the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:22-24). He also kept the Last Great Day (John 7:37). Following Christ's example, the Worldwide Church of God observes this one day festival with unity in the twentieth century.

What great meaning could this feast possibly have that would cause God's Church today to keep a festival inaugurated nearly 3,500 years ago? What great event in God's master plan does this feast picture?

The Resurrection in Prophecy

Turn to the twentieth chapter of Revelation. The beginning few verses document the thousand-year earthly reign of Christ. This period of process peace and prosperity is pictured by the seven-day observance of the Feast of Tabernacles (see Matt. 16:28; 17:1-9).

Then, right in the midst, as it were, of these verses describing the thousand-year reign is a parenthetical statement depicting what is to happen immediately after the millennium (9th over.) Notice it in verse 5: "The rest of the dead did

we proceed.] And the sea gave up the dead in it, Death and Hades [Greek 'the grave'] gave up the dead in them, and all were judged by what they had done [Greek 'according to their works,' see KJV]."

Here John describes a prophetic vision of a great resurrection involving most of humanity who have ever lived on this earth. (The prophets, patriarchs and true Christians, relatively speaking a very small group, will have been brought back to life a thousand years earlier — verses 3-6.) This symbolic description is compacted into a very few verses.

What is the true meaning of John's vision? Is this a resurrection to eternal life in hell fire? To eternal death? What is meant by the term "Great White Throne Judgment?" What is the relationship between

not being imperfect, since He knew the fullness of its great meaning, revealed details about it which are recalled in several verses that people today often overlook. Most of these little-known and even less understood scriptures were recorded by the apostle Matthew. A few are repeated in the Gospel of Luke.

Decrying and condemning the spiritual state of the "lost sheep of Israel," Jesus stated: "... It shall be more tolerable [bearable, Moffatt version] for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Matt. 10:15, KJV). This is the first veiled reference to the Last Great Day in the book of Matthew. Later verses will shed much more light on the meaning.

In Matthew 11 Jesus returned to the same theme. Here Christ indicts

EAT DAY!

not come to life again until the thousand years were ended." So here is a statement that actually tells us when all "the rest of the dead" (those resurrected in the first resurrection as spirit beings) will live. It is immediately after the millennium.

Verses 11 through 14 give more details. "Then I saw a great white throne and he [God] who sat upon it. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done [Greek 'according to their works'] and exclusively those of them [Greek 'they'] were brought in the past, but those works of deeds now being performed after being resurrected. This will become clearer as

the resurrection of an immediately following the millennium and the annual festival which immediately follows, the Festival of Tabernacles (which regulates the millennium).

We must go elsewhere in the Bible to find the answers.

Meaning of the Day Known

The Jewish world of Jesus' day had some knowledge, though no doubt imperfect, of this great resurrection and its relation to the Last Great Day festival. John 11 records a conversation between Jesus and Martha shortly before Jesus resurrected her brother Lazarus. Martha said to Jesus: "I know that he [Lazarus] will rise again in the resurrection [Greek 'the life']" (verse 24).

Jesus, His knowledge of this day

three Galilean towns for their impenitent unresponsiveness to the marvelous miracles He had performed. "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable [bearable Moffatt version] for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell [Greek, the grave] for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in

The Holy Days Explain God's Master Plan

God, in His wisdom, had a great purpose in giving His Church a weekly Sabbath and seven annual Sabbaths. When kept by converted Christians, they impart understanding of God's great plan of redemption and remind His people regularly lest the message be forgotten. When one understands God's holy days' vitally important symbolism and meaning one can also grasp the purpose God is working out here on earth.

Here is a brief overview of the meaning and scope of these days.

Weekly Sabbath

A rest day for man is one of several identifying signs of God's people (Ex. 31). It serves as a weekly reminder to man of creation and the true Creator. Further, it is also symbolic of the thousand-year reign of Christ. (Further information is available in our free booklet *Which Day is the Christian Sabbath?*)

Passover (Nisan 14)

The Passover is a memorial of the death angel's passing over the homes of the Israelites in Egypt, sparing the firstborn (Ex. 12:2-14). The lamb that was sacrificed then was a foreshadowing of Christ, the true Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7). In the New Testament, His sacrifice for our sins is pictured in the Passover ordinances of footwashing (symbolizing humility) and the taking of bread and wine (symbols of Christians' union in the death of Christ).

Days of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15-21)

The seven days of eating unleavened bread begin at sunset after

the Passover (God's days are always calculated from sunset to sunset). The first night commemorates the night Israel started out of Egypt, which is symbolic of newly converted Christians departing from sin. (Ancient, oppressive, slaveholding Egypt is God's illustration of the bondage in which sin puts us.) The final day pictures baptism (1 Cor. 10:2). The first and the last of the seven festival days are annual Sabbaths. The yearly observance of seven days picture our complete deliverance from sin. Personal sin is symbolized by leavening which puffs up and spreads out. Though Christ's blood for the remission of sins is pictured by the Passover, if we fail to go ahead and put sin out of our lives we make a mockery of Christ's sacrifice.

These Days of Unleavened Bread portray our earnest efforts to root out sin from our lives by the removing of all leavening from our premises. This physical housecleaning impresses the importance of spiritual housecleaning or overcoming (1 Cor. 5:7-8).

Pentecost (Sivan)

Pentecost (a Greek word signifying "fiftieth") is determined by counting fifty days from the day during the Days of Unleavened Bread on which the wave sheaf was offered in Old Testament times — the day on which the resurrected Christ was first seen alive. It always occurs on a Sunday during Sivan, the third month of the sacred calendar.

The Bible also calls this day the feast of "firstfruits" and "feast of weeks." These names prefigured the coming (Acts 2) and continuing

function of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost thus is a memorial of the beginning of the New Testament Church, and in a larger sense it depicts the entire time of the New Testament Church to the conclusion of this present first harvest of souls.

Feast of Trumpets (Tishri 1)

A trumpet is a symbol of war (Isa. 2:1). It is also the symbol of victory — the victory of Christ at His second coming. The first day in the seventh month points forward to the day when the last trumpet will sound (Rev. 11:15-19) and the dead in Christ will rise to meet Him at His second coming. Christ will then put down the angry nations, stirred up and deceived by the devil (Rev. 12:9; 11 Cor. 4:4). He will set up the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15), headquartered in Jerusalem, which will eventually spread out to all corners of the earth.

Day of Atonement (Tishri 10)

A day of abstaining from food and drink (called "the fast" in New Testament times — Acts 27:9) pictures the day in the future when the punishment for sin will be paid justly on the head of its instigator, Satan the devil. Mankind will then become "at one" or in complete accord with God, as our sins having been forgiven and forgotten. Fasting helps us realize our own human weakness and need for God.

Feast of Tabernacles (Tishri 15-21)

A seven-day "wedding feast" (see Gen. 29:27-28; Judges 14:2, 10:12; Rev. 19:6-7; Matt. 22:1-14, 25:1-13) pictured the millennium or thousand years when resurrected Christians then, immor-

ta) will rule the earth under Christ (Rev. 5:10; 2:26). This festival is also called the "feast of ingathering" because of its fall harvest time-setting and its symbolization of the great harvest of souls when the whole world has become full of the knowledge of God (Isa. 11:9). Christ's righteous world government will finally bring the peace and abundance all humanity has longed for and so desperately needs.

The Last Great Day (Tishri 22)

The day following the Feast of Tabernacles is called the Last Great Day and is symbolic of a still more joyous occasion in the future. The rest of the dead, those never having had their eyes opened to the truth in their former life (1 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9), will be resurrected to mortal life again after the millennium. This will be their first real chance to understand the true gospel, overcome and gain eternal life. They will live a life complete with trials and tests similar to those of true Christians today (1 Pet. 4:17). The day is symbolically described as the White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20. Those who overcome with the help of God's Holy Spirit will join God's family, living forever with those who were saved during the Church's activity in Satan's world and those who were born and overcame in the succeeding thousand-year rule of Christ.

For a full exegetical explanation of each of these holy days, write for our free booklet *Pagan Holidays - or God's Holy Days - Which?*

- Ronald E. Nelson

Sodom would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable [or bearable] for the land of Sodom in the days of judgment, than for these" (verses 20-24, KJV).

Repentance in That Day

Jesus declared in effect, that if He had performed the same miracles in Tyre and Sidon (two ancient Mediterranean coast cities of the wicked Canaanites), they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. Adam Clarke defines sackcloth and ashes as "an outward sign of deep repentance, and forsaking of sin" (Clarke's Commentary, vol. vi, page 150).

Since these two cities of iniquity would have repented had Jesus performed the same mighty miracles in their heyday, it logically follows that this period of judgment (which will go easier with them than with that generation who dwell at Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum in Jesus' day) will afford their peoples an opportunity to repent of their evil deeds and enter God's Kingdom. Otherwise God becomes a respecter of persons, which the Bible consistently affirms He is not (see Acts 10:24; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9).

"According to tradition, Sidon was the first Phoenician city to be founded" (*The New Bible Dictionary*, p. 3164). It is traditionally said to be the mother of Tyre. "According to Strabo (lib. 14), Tyre was founded c. 2700 B.C." (*ibid.*, p. 3162). It was the principal seaport and commercial center of the Phoenician coast - the New York of the ancient world. Both Tyre and Sidon, as prophesied, have been reduced to relative irrelevance in recent history.

Probably Jesus' reference to these two antiquated cities relates to their heyday when Ezekiel prophesied against them (Ezek. 26:2-21, 25:20-22). However, in relation to the Last Great Day, it refers in principle to most all of their residents from their beginning until now and on into the future. All except those

few who will be in the first resurrection shall be resurrected in the Last Great Day.

Matthew's account jumps back in time from Tyre and Sidon to Sodom and Gomorrah. It was during the days of Abraham that these two cities reached the depths of homosexual degradation. God destroyed them by raining fire and brimstone upon them and their environs. Destruction was universal! That area became a desolate wilderness of drought and heat, salt and rock, to this day.

The spiritual point is this: if Jesus had come to even these two sinful cities as the humble carpenter of Nazareth, but performing mighty works and miracles, the ancient inhabitants would have repented of their revolting sex pervasions and the cities would have still been extant 2000 years later. Again, it logically follows that God will give even these ancient sinners an opportunity to enter His Kingdom. And when He does, they will have an easier time of it during that period of judgment than those during Jesus' earthly ministry who had every opportunity but refused to repent.

Truly, as Christ said to the religious types of His day: "... The tax collectors and the scribes go into the Kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21:31).

Verse 24 of Matthew 11 speaks of this period as "a day of judgment." How long is this "day"? Twenty-four hours or an indeterminate (to say period of time)?

Ancient Nineveh To Be Educated

For the third time in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus returns to the same theme of "the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36) in relation to the non-repentance of His generation. "The men of Nineveh [an ancient Gentile city - the capital of Assyria] shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (verse 41, KJV).

Physical Resurrections Mentioned in the Bible

A number of resurrections to physical life have already pre-figured what is to occur on the Last Great Day.

- 1) I Kings 17:17-24. Elisha raises the widow's son.
- 2) II Kings 4:18-37. Elisha raises the Shunammite's son.
- 3) I Kings 13:20-21. Dead man revives when cast into Elisha's grave and lands upon his bones.
- 4) Matthew 27:52-53. The saints that arose at the time of Christ's death.
- 5) Luke 7:11-17. A dead man

is a widow's only son — brought back to life.

6) Luke 8:49-56. Ruler of the synagogue's daughter brought back to life.

7) John 11:1-46. Lazarus, friend of Jesus, was sick and eventually died. Jesus came after he had already been dead four days (verse 17) and raised him up. Note that this account apparently speaks of the Last Great Day (verses 23-24).

8) Acts 9:36-42. Dorcas, a disciple, fell sick and died. Peter

prayed for her and she immediately revived.

9) Acts 14:19-20. Paul is stoned and then dragged out of town (perhaps dead — so far as anyone could tell).

10) Acts 20:9-12. Paul visits the city of Troas for seven days. While there he preached at length on one occasion. A young man named Eurychus fell from a window when he dozed and was found dead (verse 9). Paul embraced him and the man then revived.

This scripture is highly significant and tells us much more than is readily apparent on the surface. Jonah's ministry occurred in the reign of Jeroboam the II (II Kings, 14:25), 792-753 B.C. His warning and witness to that ancient Assyrian city must have been some time in the eighth century B.C. (see *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, p. 747). At that time more than 120,000 people resided in the city of Nineveh (Jonah 4:11). Jesus referred specifically to those Ninevites who repented at the preaching of Jonah.

Now let's ask a question: How much did these ancient Assyrians, who heard Jonah, know about Jesus' generation prior to their death? The answer is, of course, absolutely nothing; they lived hundreds of years prior to Christ's first coming! How much do they now know? Still absolutely nothing — "The dead know not anything" (Ecc. 9:5). How much will they know when they are resurrected after the millennial period? At that moment, nothing.

Obviously they won't be able to condemn Jesus' generation immedi-

ately. It will require a substantial period of time for those resurrected Ninevites to learn the history of Jesus' generation. And soaking up that history will not, logically, be the first order of business after the great resurrection. Reorientation to the different conditions of life itself will take some little time. Remember, these people are not yet "judged" in the sense that Christians are now (see I Peter 4:17). They are once again physical, flesh-and-blood human beings with a new lease on life (literally!).

So the Last Great Day is not comprised of a single twenty-four hour day. The conversion process requires time. First God must grant repentance (II Tim. 2:25; Acts 11:18; Rom. 2:4). Then a period of unlearning deeply imbedded false concepts and of growing in grace and knowledge must follow (II Peter 3:18). How long must that period be? We have previously postulated 100 years based on Isaiah 65:20. Though the period of time could vary, well be an even century long, we have come to realize that application of this verse is

questionable. At least it will be a period of a number of years, perhaps even more than a hundred.

The Queen of Sheba

But the story does not end with the Ninevites. Jesus caps off the subject with a final comparison. "The queen of the south [or, Sheba] shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12:42, KJV).

Prior to this one, all the other examples in antiquity which Jesus gave were individually anonymous. Christ had reference to large groups of people — citizens of Sidon, Tyre, Sodom, Gomorrah, Nineveh — cities whose ancient inhabitants' personal names have long since been forgotten (except, of course, by God Himself).

The Queen of Sheba was a Sabaeen monarch who journeyed to Jerusalem in the tenth century B.C. to test King Solomon's wisdom. She went away very impressed (see *The*

New Bible Dictionary, p. 1172). But at the time of her resurrection, the Queen of the South will not know a thing about the history of Jesus' generation. That she will learn over a period of time, evaluate and analyze it, and finally come to rightly condemn those who refused Christ in the flesh.

Outline of the Future Revealed

All of these scriptures from the book of Matthew, taken together, tell us even more. Details are revealed here that John omits in his description of the bare symbols he saw in vision (Rev. 20).

First mentioned are the peoples of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then in order: Tyre and Sidon, Sodom again, Nineveh in Jonah's time, and the Queen of Sheba. All of these examples (people who lived in different generations) are compared to the citizens living in the cities and towns of Jesus' generation. Jesus tells us they are all to be resurrected with the generation that lived in Jesus' time.

He gave enough representative examples of generations of people living at widespread and different times in human history to substantiate the fact that most of humanity will be alive together at the same time on this earth. There will be pre-Flood men and woman, all the Israelites (all twelve tribes including the Jewish people, see Rom. 9-11), those who lived during the Middle or Dark Ages, and everyone living even now who for whatever reason has not had opportunity to accept Christ and grow toward salvation (see John 6:44, 65). This group includes all people of all times everywhere on this earth, excepting of course those who will be in the first resurrection: true Christians and the godly patriarchs and prophets prior to Christ.

Whether or not all these people will be resurrected exactly at the same time, on the same hour, on the same day is an academic question. The Scriptures are not that specific.

By gradual course and in order by nation and generation would seem to be God's mind on the matter, since He is not the author of confusion. He works out all things decently and in order (I Cor. 14:33, 40).

Other scriptures — all exegetically explained and expounded in the free booklets announced in the box on recommended reading — show that this great general resurrection is definitely *not* a resurrection to an eternal roasting in hell fire; nor is it a resurrection to an immediate destruction in the biblical lake of fire.

If many of these ancient people described in Matthew's Gospel would have repented if Christ had personally come to them in their day, will they not repent when He is actually ruling and reigning on an earth dominated by peace, prosperity and well-being?

The great last resurrection opens their period of judgment — not sentencing. Sentencing is merely the final act in the process of judgment. A decision must be rendered, based on how each individual responds to the Word of God. And since every individual will have the fullest salvation opportunity, each will be in effect rendering his own verdict. By making choices as he (or she) lives, each person will be judging himself.

It will be more bearable or tolerable for some peoples than others — depending on what they did or did not do in their former lives and how they have already shaped their respective attitudes.

But if a decision had already been rendered and the people were to be immediately sentenced — condemned to be burnt up in a lake of fire together — it is hard to see how their judgment would differ in any respect. How would it be more tolerable or bearable for one group of people than another?

The Last Great Day and You

If you are a true Christian and you remain faithful unto death (enduring to the end), you will be privileged to partake of a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35) at Christ's

second coming. But what about your friends and relatives (living and dead) who have known little of Christ, His gospel, and the Kingdom of God? Are they lost forever — doomed to perish eternally in a lake of fire? No — not at all!

Here is your future legacy: After reigning and ruling with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:3-6) in a world of generation after generation of new people who have never lived before, you will then be privileged to see the resurrection of your ancestors, kinfolks and acquaintances. You will help teach them God's way of salvation. All the more reason to remain faithful to Christ and to His Church — no matter what the future holds.

This, then, is the meaning of the Last Great Day — a one-day festival kept around the globe by the Worldwide Church of God. Can you begin to see why its members observe this annual Sabbath day year after year? □

RECOMMENDED READING

Further study into the subject of God's plan of salvation and the role that death plays in the scheme of things can be pursued in the following list of literature published by the Worldwide Church of God.

After Death — Then What?

What is the fate of the dead? Do the dead know what the living are doing? What if one dies being unconverted? Is he lost forever? This booklet answers these questions from the Bible.

Is This the Only Day of Salvation?

We have reprinted this in-depth article which discusses the meaning and sequence of events surrounding God's plan. Spiritual blindness, the role of the resurrection and conversion are discussed with extensive use of supporting scriptures. Here you will learn some of the most wonderful news of God's Word.

Is There a Real Hell Fire?

Although the word "hell" is in nearly everyone's vocabulary, very little of the real truth is widely known about God's punishment of the wicked. Let this booklet clear up this topic while wiping away several major fallacies.

Pagan Holidays — or God's

Holy Days — Which?

Read about the seven annual Sabbaths of God and the theological basis for observing them in these modern times. A significant thread runs through these holy days of God which will give God's Word greater meaning and interest for you.

Write for your free copies of these booklets and articles. Worldwide mailing addresses are on the inside front cover.



Herbert Armstrong Brings Gospel to Kenya

KENYA PRESIDENT Jomo Kenyatta, an avid grower of roses, offers Mr. Armstrong a blossom from his garden for his lapel.

The gospel was preached in Nairobi! I know — I was there and heard it. You could almost say *felt* it — it was that strong," reported Robert Fahey, manager of the South African office of the Worldwide Church of God, after Mr. Herbert Armstrong's evangelistic campaign in the capital city of Kenya.

The campaign was held June 6, 7 and 8 at the Kenyatta Conference Center. Here is Mr. Fahey's descrip-

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tion of what happened: "The first night Mr. Armstrong talked about conditions in the world today. Later that evening he mentioned that he felt somewhat disappointed that he hadn't gotten into more meat from the Bible. This may have helped him get across his message more powerfully the following two nights.

"The second night was much stronger than the first. Mr. Armstrong showed from the pages of the Bible that before man was created, God's government on earth was administered by Lucifer. Then he explained how Lucifer rebelled and the attitude he exhibited. He finished up the second night by showing that the gospel is the return of the government of God to this earth, which will solve the problems mankind faces and replace the present god of this world.

"I thought that was pretty strong. But the next morning I talked to a few of our members (we have four) in Nairobi. They were very inspired of course, but mentioned that they had a little difficulty with Mr. Armstrong's accent. They are used to English coming with a British flavor. I mentioned this problem to Mr. Armstrong - but I didn't see what he could possibly do about it. How do you change your accent in six hours? He must have prayed about it. To me he sounded exactly the same the third night, but our members and everybody else in the auditorium felt there was no problem whatsoever. They sat transfixed. Nobody looked at their watch. My wife and I sat almost bolt upright as we heard Mr. Armstrong deliver the strongest sermon I think I have ever heard him give. The good news of man's ultimate destiny came through clearly and powerfully.

"To give you an idea, towards the end of the sermon (you have to call

it a sermon) Mr. Armstrong said, 'You know, God's face is not black like yours!' He paused as those words sunk into the hearts and minds of the audience. He had our attention, to say the least! Then he said, 'Nor is it pale and anemic like mine! His face shines like the sun in full strength! And so will yours and mine - we'll all be the same in the God family. There will be no divisions; we'll all be one!'"

This campaign was the culmination of nearly two weeks of meetings with government leaders, interviews by the press, and speaking engagements before local civic organizations.

Mr. Armstrong flew into Nairobi on Monday, May 26. Accompanying him was Dr. Nagendra Singh, a member of the International Court of Justice at the Hague, the Netherlands, and a warm personal friend of Mr. Armstrong. Just before the trip to Kenya, Dr. Singh had honored Mr. Armstrong with a special luncheon and dinner at the Hague. In attendance were members of the International Court of Justice and the diplomatic community, including six representatives from the Russian embassy.

From the moment they touched down in Nairobi, Mr. Armstrong and his entourage were constantly on the go. At the airport they were greeted by a battery of television and newspaper reporters. The following evening Mr. Armstrong, along with General Counsel Stanley Rader, was interviewed for 45 minutes on the government-run television station. The interview was later aired on prime time.

Immediately following the interview, Mr. Armstrong was the guest of honor at a meeting of the Jaycees of Nairobi. After Mr. Armstrong de-

livered a very powerful message of some thirty minutes, a lively question and answer session ensued for more than an hour.

On Wednesday, May 28, Mr. Armstrong was again a guest speaker, this time at the Lion's Club of Nairobi. Later that day, Professor Gotoh and Mr. Rader screened a film about Mr. Armstrong for 400 people. Again, the audience showed a lively interest in Mr. Armstrong and the Work he is conducting. They asked questions for over an hour afterwards.

The highlight of the pre-campaign activities, of course, was the meeting with President Jomo Kenyatta. The "Mzee" or "Grand Old Man" of Kenya "is truly a larger-than-life figure," said Mr. Rader. "It is easy to see how he has been an inspiration to his people."

President Kenyatta asked a number of questions about Mr. Armstrong and his message, and Mr. Armstrong in turn replied forthrightly, alluding to a number of biblical incidents and principles. The discussion lasted almost an hour and at the conclusion Mr. Armstrong was invited to view the National Day Parade that Sunday from the presidential stands.

"During the two weeks Mr. Armstrong was in Nairobi, some 7,000 people submitted their names and requested the *Plain Truth* and other literature," said Mr. Rader. Mr. Fahey counseled with a number of people who requested advice as a result of Mr. Armstrong's messages. Because of the response and interest, another minister, Mr. Harold Jackson, was dispatched a few weeks later to counsel and answer questions.

"The door is not only opened in Kenya," concluded Mr. Fahey, "it looks like its been pulled right off its hinges." □



GARNER TED ARMSTRONG does an on-the-spot broadcast at the Paris Air Show (above). Earlier, in Brussels, he had interviewed Guy Van Haevebeke, information counselor for the European Parliament (right), attended the opening session of the NATO conference (bottom right), and made a broadcast in front of NATO headquarters (upper right).



Lyle Christopherson — GN, Garner Ted Armstrong — GN (bottom right)





Garner Ted Armstrong Covers NATO, Paris Air Show

How deep are the cracks in NATO? What is the future of the Atlantic Alliance? What do leading scientists and technologists believe is the future of the world?

On May 25, Garner Ted Armstrong set out on a special fact-finding trip to answer these and other important questions. A three-man television crew also covered the trip. The interviews and locations they filmed will be seen later this year on the *Garner Ted Armstrong* television program.

The first stop was Brussels, Belgium, headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. There he covered the arrival of President Ford at the airport. Among the dignitaries to greet Mr. Armstrong was Mr. Joseph Luns, secretary-general of NATO. Mr. Armstrong had interviewed the secretary-general a few hours before the American President's arrival.

The next day, Mr. Armstrong interviewed Guy Van Haeverbeke, information counselor for the

European Parliament, a division of the European Economic Community, also headquartered in Brussels. Then they drove to NATO headquarters for the first plenary session attended by the assembled heads of state of all 15 NATO nations.

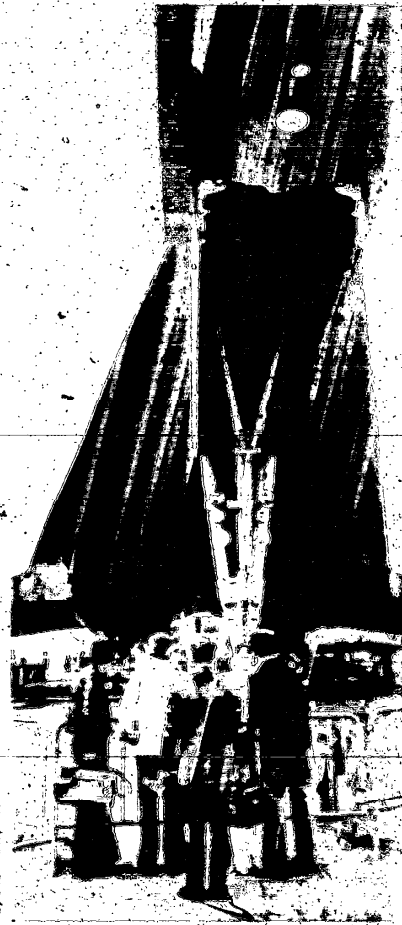
The next morning Mr. Armstrong interviewed Prime Minister Leo Tindemans of Belgium, who had addressed the first plenary session of the conference.

Mr. Armstrong was quite pleased with the interviews and noted that some of the leaders, with their busy schedules, didn't grant interviews to any other programs.

On May 30, Mr. Armstrong went to Paris for the international air show. The latest in aerial warfare was displayed, including the American-made General Dynamics F-16 fighter. The sale of the F-16 to several European nations now replacing their obsolete jets may become what has been called "the arms deal of the century."

The next day, Mr. Armstrong and





CLOCKWISE from upper left: Camera man Ron Prociw shoots film for later use on the telecast. Mr. Armstrong interviews NATO Secretary-General Joseph Laha. Mr. Armstrong and entourage inspect supersonic aircraft. Making notes for broadcast in NATO pressroom.

crew leapfrogged across the Atlantic to Washington D.C. for the opening session of the Second General Assembly of the World Future Society. Describing themselves as "an association of people interested in social and technological developments

during the coming years," the estimated 2,000 futurists at the assembly pondered and prognosticated on what may happen in the next 25 years.

After recording a radio program at the convention, Mr. Armstrong drove to the Capitol grounds and recorded another program on American leadership. Twelve thousand miles, 6500 feet of film, five on-the-spot radio programs and ten days after he had departed, Mr. Armstrong returned to Pasadena. □

Life-Christopherson — GM

The Philippine branch of God's Work has come of age in 1975 — well, almost.

The explanation is that we are now almost self-supporting internally. We are able to pay 80% of our expenses, but we still must rely on the United States and Australia's generosity in providing for the remaining 20%.

We are very thankful that for the past four years — when we were more reliant upon financial help from America — we had been building up our reserves. Thus, we are in a position to initially operate with a slight deficit if necessary for this year without really hurting our financial standing.

Bible Lectures Started

One of the most exciting developments for us this year has been the start of *Plain Truth* lectures similar to those which had taken place in Britain during 1974.

These lectures began in February. Invitations were sent to subscribers of the *Plain Truth* (inserted in their copies) inviting them to hear the topics "Is This the End Time?" and "There's a New World Coming." One lecture series per month was planned and so far the three we have had have proved very successful. Here are the statistics for the three cities covered: Dagupan City (February 8 and 9), 516 total attendance (112 members, 404 new); Baguio City (March 1 and 2), 246 total attendance (103 members, 137 new); San Fernando (April 6, morning and afternoon), 302 total attendance (110 members, 192 new).

All these cities are in Luzon, the main island of the country. The latter part of the year will see us in the Visayas and Mindanao.

You will notice we shifted to a one-day program for the third lecture. We found that having the lectures on two consecutive days wasn't expedient for the people. With the high cost of transportation, low wages, and long traveling distance, many people could not afford to



The Church in the Philippines Comes of Age

come on both days. So in San Fernando we changed to a one-day format with a lecture in the morning at 10:00 and the other in the afternoon at 2:00. This cut in half the time and expense incurred by the subscribers. Follow-up Bible studies were held after each lecture for three consecutive Sundays, and monthly studies have been inaugurated in each case.

By the time you read this, a fourth lecture will have been held in Lucena City, southeast of Manila. It will see the beginning of a more vigorous campaign to reach people with the gospel message. Sample *Plain Truths*, with tickets of invitation attached, will be distributed in the local area to business establishments and public offices. The tickets will carry a free gift subscription to the *Plain Truth* with a coupon that has to be detached and handed in at the lecture itself.

Mr. Armstrong's Campaign

On April 19, Mr. Armstrong conducted his third campaign in Manila. As a result of the three campaigns he has conducted since May of last year, the interest in the Worldwide Church of God has picked up considerably. We have about 30 people regularly attending the Manila church as a result. Almost 800 new subscribers have been added to the *Plain Truth* list as a direct result of publicity activity just prior to the last campaign.

The university lectures on dating and marriage continue. We try to arrange these to coincide with the *Plain Truth* lectures to "kill two birds with one stone" while in a particular city, thus saving time and expense. An average of 500 to 800 students are exposed to the Work in each case, and coupons offering the dating and marriage booklets are distributed during the lectures.

We have just recently been contacted by the University of the Philippines at Dilliman (Manila) in connection with the lecture. U.P. is the largest and most prestigious university in the nation.

Church Growth — A Bumper Year

Church membership this year is way ahead of 1974. As of April there were 1,500 baptized members throughout the country, representing an increase over last year of almost 32 percent. We have eight churches, four regular Bible studies in outlying areas, plus the new monthly *Plain Truth* Bible studies — all of this is accomplished with five ministers and two assistants. We plan to have resident assistants in Naga City and Cebu City this coming fiscal year.

Two new Feast sites in Mindanao will replace the old areas of Don Carlos and Tagum this year, providing better opportunities for the brethren to enjoy the Feast of Tabernacles. Baguio City remains the main feast site in the Philippines.

— Colin Adair,
Regional Director,
the Philippines



Public Bible Lectures— Plain Talk About the Gospel and the Church

Who are we? What is the Worldwide Church of God? What is our message, and what are we trying to accomplish?

Each year tens of thousands of our *Plain Truth* and *Good News* readers write us for more information about the work of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and the teachings of the Worldwide Church of God.

Now we offer you a more direct, personal way to find out what we are all about. The Worldwide Church of God is sponsoring public Bible lectures in hundreds of local

communities around the world. To date, lectures have been held in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, France, Switzerland, Great Britain, West Germany, as well as the United States. (From time to time we report on these lectures in this section of the *Good News*.)

These lectures are conducted by an ordained minister of the Church. They are usually small in size to enable more direct participation by those who are interested.

There's no come-on, no collection,

no altar calls. All you will hear is plain talk about the gospel of the soon-coming Kingdom of God and how you can prepare to become a citizen of that Kingdom. We want to share with you our knowledge of how the Bible relates to today's world and to your life — your problems, your hopes, your future.

Question-and-answer sessions follow each lecture to enable you to get specific answers to your questions.

In the coming months many of you will receive letters of invitation to the lecture nearest you. We hope

Dave Conn — GN



you will take the opportunity to attend. We are sure you will find the meetings stimulating and interesting.

Interested readers are also welcome to attend any weekly church services or regular Bible studies of the Worldwide Church of God, or to request counsel or information from one of our ministers. And again, you will not be brought under any obligation in any way.

For information about the location of churches in your area, or the phone number of the minister near-

est you, call this toll-free number in the continental United States: (1)-800-423-4444. Readers in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5225, collect. Readers in other countries may write to the nearest mailing address listed in the staff box on the inside front cover. □

SCENES FROM PUBLIC Bible lectures conducted in the United States. The Bible lectures are usually small in size and conducted in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. The lecture itself (center) lasts about an hour. Many people bring along a Bible and

notebook to take down the scriptures and principal points discussed. The lectures are often preceded or followed by a film further explaining the mission and message of the Worldwide Church of God. Afterwards, the audience is welcome to ask questions of the minister (upper left) — in this case Dave Albert of Eugene, Oregon. They are also welcome to linger over refreshments (lower right). Literature displays are available for those who want to write for more information on the topic discussed — or any title that catches the eye. Special literature request cards are available to expedite processing in Pasadena.

Part Two

THE ANSWER TO SIN

We all want to be successful, to live a happy and productive life. But too often we miss the mark — sin — and reap unhappiness. This article will help identify the pitfalls of sin and show how they can be avoided.

by Charles V. Dorothy

What does "sin" mean to you? Just another biblical term thrown around by a theologian? A catch-all phrase to describe anything you might consider bad?

Whether you realize it or not, sin can have a big effect on your life. It can trap you up and cause pain and suffering. It can keep you from really enjoying life — from being successful and having the good things you want.

Believe it or not, the Creator has provided a manual to show the right way to live and how to avoid sin. In this manual — the Bible — sin is described as the "transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Just as valid as the law of gravity, there are other physical and spiritual laws that affect our lives. Laws put into effect and sustained by an Almighty God for our good. Laws intended to guide us in the way that brings the right result.

"Sin Splints"

When we break these laws (sin), we don't get the right result. Instead, trouble and pain come our way. Athletes are familiar with the excruciating, stabbing pains of "shin splints." But worse than this, the vast majority of mankind is suffering from "sin splints."

As if to show man how to avoid

sin, the Creator has provided a manual to show the right way to live and how to avoid sin. In this manual — the Bible — sin is described as the "transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Just as valid as the law of gravity, there are other physical and spiritual laws that affect our lives. Laws put into effect and sustained by an Almighty God for our good. Laws intended to guide us in the way that brings the right result.

As we saw in the last article in the July GN, "What Is Sin?", society is set up to appeal to the negative factor in our nature — and we yield too often! That is, we "miss the mark" (Hebrew *ayin kulan*). We saw that vanity often involved in personal appearance, bragging of children, and general senseless frivolity is *ayin* — that is, "nothingness and vanity" (sin). We saw that modern art and music is often greatly "twisted" — bent, wrested and perverted from its right use — *ayin*. We found that "sneakiness," "treachery" (Hebrew *mu'ah*) included word-breaking, disloyalty, petty thieving, etc.

We saw how clearly, how unmistakably the Bible pictures, brands and condemns sin.

Know Your Enemy

These two articles are intended to help you personally to locate, spot and pinpoint the sin in your life — and root it out. Your enemy — sin — has a real target: you. "... Its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Gen. 4:7, R&V). If you do not "master" sin now — while you have the chance — you may end up a *reprobate*: a person who "cannot cease from sin" (11 Pet. 2:13-15.)

Sin, of course, is not a person or personality. Sin is a force, a power.

... Its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Gen. 4:7, R&V). If you do not "master" sin now — while you have the chance — you may end up a *reprobate*: a person who "cannot cease from sin" (11 Pet. 2:13-15.)

To win this battle against sin you must clearly see what sin is. You must know your enemy to defeat him.

More Sin

Before we give the answer to sin, let's discover a few more facets and kinds of sin — both national and personal — which God identifies in the Bible.

Last time we mentioned only sins which were "not necessarily intentional." But the Bible does talk about intentional sin — since all human beings and nations do sin intentionally, sometime or other in life. The Hebrew *zimma* means "meditated wickedness," "a plan for evil," especially with sins of unchastity, incest, rape. Many such sinners (people plotting crime, sexual criminals) roam our streets today. We don't call them sinners; we call them homicidal "maniacs," psychopaths. By what law enforcement officers call the "bleeding hearts," these criminals are labeled "unfortunate" or "misunderstood." The ugly episode of the concubine is termed *zimma* (King James "lewdness") in Judges 20:6: "... For they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel."

The Western world is filled with sexual looseness and lewdness — for which we will be punished! (Read Jeremiah 13, especially verse 27 where "lewdness" is *zimma*.)

Our national lewdness will mean our very destruction! (See how frequently the word "lewdness" — *zim-*

made in Hebrew — is used through the middle chapters of Ezekiel.)

A Worldwide Sin

God is going to intervene soon — because of sin — and shake this earth! All nations, and probably all individuals too, are guilty of revolt, rebellion: "To break away from," "to change allegiance," "to fall away," "apostatize," "rebel" is the definition of the Hebrew *pasha* — another word translated "sin" in the King James translation. God says our teachers have committed *pasha* in Isaiah 43:27: "Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me." Furthermore, Jeremiah shows that the priests and pastors have also rebelled: "The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed [revolted, *pasha*] against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit" (Jér. 2:8).

The leaders, teachers and educators of this world, have rebelled! And, rebellion never goes unpunished (see Prov. 17:11). Make sure that rebellion is not a part of your personal life!

Sin Is Personal

Sin is not only national and worldwide, it is individual and personal.

Can you control your rashness, your temper? The sin of going astray is serious, once requiring the blood of a sin offering (see Lev. 4:13-14 and Numbers 15:27-29). You must be constantly on guard against this sin of piercing, or breaking through the limits of self-control and decency. This sin of going astray through ignorance or tempera-

mental rashness is called *shagag* in Hebrew, and requires the blood of Jesus Christ to wash a person clean.

Even David fell victim to this sin: "Before I was afflicted I went astray [*shagag*]; but now have I kept thy word" (Ps. 119:67). David also overcame, as the phrase "now have I kept thy word" shows.

Worse Wandering

A related word, *shagah*, means "to stray," "swerve," "meander"; that is, either mentally or morally. Does this ancient word have a modern application? Most assuredly. Notice Proverbs 20:1: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." In Isaiah 28:7, *shagah* clearly refers to going astray by too much alcohol.

Sad to say, some of you readers also get carried away by too much alcohol. This is gluttony. The Bible demands self-control and moderation (true "temperance") in all things (Gal 5:23; Phil 4:5).

Do you "get carried away" eating? Some of you reading this article are over-eat, you need to change — stop getting carried away.

Another very common sin included under *shagah* is just exactly what the word says: mind wandering. An uncontrolled, wandering mind (even without the help of alcohol) produces forgetfulness and absentmindedness.

Do you often forget when you should remember? Some forgetting of course is innocent. But forgetting can also be a sin. Sometimes we forget because we want to forget — to remember is unpleasant.

Stop forgetting! If you have to, carry a notebook or three-by-five cards with you at all times. Jot down

things you must remember: important appointments, vocabulary words, a grocery list, daily duties, etc. Make it a habit to check your card or notebook every day.

Moreover, too many of us allow our minds to wander in uncontrolled daydreaming. Possibly a little daydreaming is all right. But you should realize that daydreaming can become wasteful, destructive and therefore sinful.

Are you letting your children get into this ugly habit? If you punish them by "isolation," or by sitting them in a corner with nothing to do, you may be encouraging this negative trait. If you allow them to stay awake, lying in bed for long periods of time, they will pick up this wrong habit. Letting the mind just "flit off" into a never-never land of make-believe and dreams is a vicious, mind- and character-destroying sin.

However, don't confuse daydreaming with using your God-given imagination constructively — creative thinking. Occupy your mind with something constructive.

Faithfulness and Sham

How open and honest are you? Openness, innocence and straightforwardness are earmarks of conversion. The direct opposite qualities — treachery, slipperiness, deceit and sham (Hebrew *bagad*) — are earmarks of carnality and sin. *Bagad* — "act treacherously, faithlessly" (as in marriage, with property or rights, in contracts or in any general way) — includes the idea of slippery dealing — what we sometimes call double dealing. *Bagad* is often translated "perverseness." Business today is filled with double dealers, slippery salesmen, deceitful advertisements, sales "pitches," and

falsified claims for phony products. God condemns slippery, crooked business in Proverbs 11:3, 6.

And what of you? Do you once in a while — as wives — use just a little deceit to convince your husband? And you husbands, do you once in a while exaggerate to impress the men at the office, the wife, the family? Stretching the facts is a form of deceit and sham — slipperiness. And all deceit, all slipperiness is sin.

The New Testament Speaks

Just as there are differences in Hebrew/synonyms for sin, so also the New Testament shows various aspects of sin by using different words. Interestingly enough, the most common word for "sin" in the New Testament is *hamartia*, meaning about the same as Hebrew *khata* — "miss the mark." The English word "sin" translates *hamartia* in the great Bible definition of sin, 1 John 3:4. It was this sin that "entered the world" with Adam. See Romans 5.

Many of us are too talkative. We pass on information often in the form of unconfirmed, rotten rumors. This type of gossip is condemned by the Bible. Titus 2:7-8 shows what we ought to practice: "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech [not gossip and senseless talk], that cannot be condemned . . ." The same verse shows that people in general will set the opposite example in their speech:

that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." This "evil thing" is *phaulos* meaning "evil," "bad," or "worthless" thing, something without basis. Isn't that exactly what gossip is?

It is easy to speak senseless things and to gossip. If we allow ourselves to fall into this easy trap of backyard or water-cooler scuttlebutt, we are guilty of sin.

Check yourself next time you pass on information. Gossip is *phaulos* — evil, worthless talk.

The Answer

Now we're ready for the attack.

Actually, if you read these two articles on sin, and if you got the point, you are already well on your way to changing! You see, the first step in conquering sin is to *see* sin.

You must know your enemy. You must pray, study the Bible, examine your own self and strive to see your sins. If you do not see them, how can you fight them? Paul said he would not have known (understood) sin, unless the law revealed what it was (Rom. 7:7).

If you do not think you have any sins, or have not seen a new sin for a long time, you may be self-righteous. Ask God to show you how you look to Him — and He will do it!

Sin, of course, is not a person or personality. Sin is a force, a power. Sin pulls you down, makes you want to go the wrong way, which makes you want to give up, quit. In short, sin is what robs us of the blessings and good things the Creator intended.

That's the first step. But there are two more steps.

The Second Step

Here is a simple-sounding, but difficult-to-perform point. Pay close attention. You may be missing this vital key. "Hate the evil, and love the good . . ." (Amos 5:15). The Bible commands you to hate — to loathe — your sins.

There is one great reason that sin is difficult to hate — the human mind seems to love sin. . . . We all had our conversation [conduct] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). Here is the point: lusts are pleasant, appealing, strongly pulling desires — desires which are

illegal. The human mind loves its lusts. It hates God's way — hates to give up its lusts.

Can you see this terrible tendency in yourself? Can you realize your mind wants its way — not God's? If so, you can overcome.

But how?

It is simple. God hates sin. Notice Proverbs 6:16: "These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him." Read the rest of the verses of chapter 6 for yourself. When you really hate sin, as God does, you will begin to overcome. Ask for God's mind — ask for help to hate sin.

Another aid in the direction of hating sin is something you can do for yourself. Did you realize the entire Old Testament history is a chronicle of the results of sin? Read, meditate, think deeply on the sufferings and failures of Old Testament men and women who sinned. Meditate on the results of your personal sins. Picture yourself locked out of God's Kingdom — thrust into oblivion. Think about eternal failure, about death. Your sins will kill you if you do not change!

Receiving God's own help through His Holy Spirit, meditating on the results of your sins, will make you an overcomer.

The Third Step

Repent!

II Corinthians 7:10 shows that there are two kinds of sorrow: one worldly, one godly. Worldly sorrow is what Saul demonstrated in 1 Samuel 15, when he begged Samuel to pardon his sin and pray for him. Reading Saul's words would make you think he was really repentant. But the fruits showed otherwise.

Godly sorrow — which Saul did not have — does work a change — *repentance!*

How can you have godly sorrow?

You must become more concerned about God and His Work than yourself. You must draw so close to God that you really care

what God thinks and feels about you. Make no mistake: your sins do affect God your Father. God is not an insensitive monster, but a kind, loving and deeply interested Parent — a Parent who grieves over His errant children.

If you understand God's parenthood, if you are this close to God, you will be able to truly repent toward God when you sin. You will be ashamed of yourself, for what you have done to God personally, to God's love, to God's ways, to His outstretched helping hand. Yes, godly sorrow — sorrow strong enough to make you change — is sorrow to God, not just sorrow for "having messed yourself up."

Worldly sorrow is sorrow all right — maybe to the point of bitter tears — but it is sorrow for having failed yourself. You are sorry because you have not lived up to the "image" you have of yourself. You are sorry because this mistake does not exalt you. It tarnishes your picture — it spoils your self-esteem; it lowers you in your own mind.

That is selfish, worldly sorrow.

For Failure Take This

If you are trying to overcome, but not succeeding, then try this. Analyze the reason you are trying to overcome. Is it purely selfish, in the same way as worldly sorrow described above?

Do you want to overcome so that you may put yourself forward? So that you will rise in the eyes of others? So that you will be advanced? So that you may "get ahead"? So that your position will be raised? If so, your motive for overcoming is selfish. We just naturally want to "get ahead" (walking "after the flesh"). The godly mind (walking "after the Spirit," Romans 8) wants to serve others.

Analyze yourself — honestly now. For what reason do you want to get rid of sin? If it is just for yourself, and not for God, you probably are not overcoming.

Change your motive for overcoming, pray for the desire to serve

others. When you really have a desire to serve others, you will realize why you need to overcome. You will have an ardent goal for changing. Seeing other peoples' sufferings and needs will give you a desire to change for their sakes, to help them.

You will begin to overcome.

The New Building

As you begin to overcome, it will help you to strive for a new habit. Let's put it this way: "Be not overcome of [the habit of] evil, but overcome evil with [the habit of] good" (Rom. 12:21).

Sin is hard to root out because it is customary, usual, pleasant, easy, habitual. Build a new habit. Make yourself do the opposite of sin. Make yourself practice the right way.

To pick a simple example as an illustration, take smiling. Suppose you are a "frowny" person, can't make yourself smile. Well, then, once you find a good reason for smiling — and you do actually smile once — then make yourself smile again. Smile several times in succession. Instead of practicing your old habit of constantly frowning, search for reasons, excuses, opportunities to smile. Smile at yourself. Smile at others. Smile just because it's a good feeling to do differently than your old sinful way. Smile, smile, SMILE! Pretty soon, smiling will be easy.

Work at, build the habit of righteousness. (Connect this with Hebrews 5:14 — note the word "exercised.")

Will You Cease?

The answer to sin is "STOP!" "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, aim yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Pet. 4:1, 2).

Our earnest prayer for you is that you too will cease from sin!

If You'd Like to Know More

Many hundreds have written asking if we have representatives in their areas to counsel with them personally and to answer their questions.

The answer is yes, we do.

The Worldwide Church of God stations personal representatives (most are ordained ministers) in the United States and British Commonwealth and many other areas of the world. These men will visit you, if invited, directly in your own home.

So if you have spiritual matters to discuss or questions to ask about biblical topics such as repentance, baptism, etc., please feel free to write us and request a private appointment. Worldwide mailing addresses are as follows:

• United States P.O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91123 (Or simply dial this toll-free number in the continental U.S. 1-800-423-4444. Readers in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5225 collect.)

• United Kingdom, Europe, India, Africa and the West Indies P.O. Box 111, St Albans, Herts, England

• Australia P.O. Box 202, Brough Heads, Queensland 4220 (Or dial this number, 075-35-4233 — reverse the charges.)

• Canada P.O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2M2

• South Africa P.O. Box 1080, Johannesburg 2000 (Or dial this number 011-218406.)

Other areas of the world should check the inside front cover (stall box) for the address nearest you.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT

By Lester L. Grabbe

It all began in the spring of 1947. Muhammad Agha-Dub, a fifteen-year-old Bedouin boy, stumbled onto the first scrolls on the northeast shores of the Dead Sea. According to one story, he threw a stone at a runaway goat. The stone landed in a cave, and the boy heard the tinkle of breaking pottery. This led him to the manuscripts.

When scholars examined these first manuscripts, they were astonished. Among them was a copy of the book of Isaiah, almost complete and dating from before the time of Jesus.

Surprising Discovery

What caused Biblical archaeologists to leap for joy when news of the Dead Sea Scrolls spread? The reason was clear. Valuable new information was now available in the field of Jewish studies. More important here was background material for the study of the Old Testament biblical text itself.

Previous to the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery, the earliest dated manuscript of the Hebrew Bible came from the early 10th century of the present era. Now scholars possessed manuscript material about 1000 years older — even though some of the books of the Hebrew Bible were represented only by fragments.

Considering the antiquity of the new manuscripts, scholars were not surprised to find a text differing at points from the preserved Hebrew text (known as the Masoretic text). More amazing was the fact that the scroll first discovered — an almost complete copy of the book of Isaiah — agreed for the most part with our present Masoretic text. Despite

some differences, the Isaiah scroll was of the Masoretic text-type.

This realization has caused a number of scholars to downgrade the use of variant readings from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Millar Burrows was in charge of the first unrolling of the Isaiah scroll and the editor-in-chief of its first publication. He was also on the revision committee of the Revised Standard Version, which considered the divergence of the new scroll from the Masoretic text. (Thirteen readings [in Isaiah] in which the manuscript departs from the traditional text were eventually adopted. In these places a marginal note cites "One ancient Ms." meaning the St. Mark's Isaiah scroll. "For myself I must confess that in some cases where I probably voted for the emendation I am now convinced that our decision was a mistake, and the Masoretic reading should have been retained" (*The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 305).)

Another scholar, F. F. Bruce of the University of Manchester, echoed the conclusions of many that "in general the new discoveries have increased our respect for the Masoretic Hebrew text" (*Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 69).

Other Scrolls

As other scrolls were found and deciphered, however, a new picture emerged. Many of the manuscripts contained a text very similar to that of our present Hebrew text. Others contained a text which differed to a considerable degree.

In the quarter of a century since the first publications on the subject, a general scholarly consensus has emerged. Three basic text-types ap-

pear to have been extant at Qumran (the location of the sect preserving the Dead Sea Scrolls) and even in various other parts of the Near East. One of these was the Masoretic text-type which has been used as a basis for the Old Testament of most modern Old Testament translations. Another text is related to the Greek Septuagint translation made about the 3rd-1st centuries B.C. A third textual recension includes the Peshitta still used by the Samaritan sect in Israel, a text differing at a number of points from the Jewish Hebrew Scriptures.

It is clear that the Qumran community had no "official" or "canonical" text, but used a variety of texts. This may seem odd until one considers two factors: 1) the essential message of the various textual traditions was the same; and 2) as a sect which had severed relations with the recognized priestly hierarchy in Jerusalem, the Qumran group may have used and preserved textual recensions which were not accepted by the constituted religious authority.

Canonization

Much of the history of the text and canon of the Old Testament has to be surmised since we have no clear record of the processes involved. The history of the various traditions preserved in the Old Testament — beginning with Genesis and going down into the post-Exilic period — covers a span of many centuries. The documents in which these traditions were preserved are sometimes named in the Bible itself. They include poems, songs, court records, law books, genealogical lists, and the writings of individuals

such as many of the prophetic books.

The same information was often preserved in more than one form or document. Sometimes the wording varied from document to document, and different versions of the same event were preserved. For example, two slightly different versions of a poem (psalm) are found in II Samuel 22 and Psalm 18. The books of Kings and of Chronicles, though both covering the history of Israel under the monarchy, do not always give the same events or record the same details. (It is a situation similar to the life of Jesus which is given in different form in each of the four Gospels.)

The exact time of final editing of the text and canon is uncertain. It was once thought this was done about A.D. 90 at the Synod of Yavneh. However, further research shows Yavneh did not really involve canonization, and the content of the Old Testament was already settled before New Testament times. (For further information, see Jack P. Lewis, "What Do We Mean by Yavneh?" *Journal for the Bible and Religion*, 1964, pp. 125-132 and B. J. Roberts, "The Old Testament Canon: A Suggestion," *Bulletin of John Ryland's Library* 46, 1963-1964, pp. 164-178.)

The preservation, editing and canonization was done by the Jewish community. Their authority to do this is recognized in the New Testament in the statement of the apostle Paul that the Jews "were entrusted with the words (*ta logia*) of God" (Rom. 3:2). Christians who take this statement seriously must look to the Old Testament as preserved in the Jewish community.

Documents Excluded

With the finalizing of the material which was to make up the official religious book, the Jews found it necessary to reject those writings which some might think had religious sanction. This included apocryphal works like the books of Maccabees and pseudëpigraphic writings such as the Book of Enoch. This also included those versions of the Bible books which differed from the edited version included in the canon.

Many of these writings excluded contained useful historical and literary information. I Maccabees, for example, is a prime source of information about the history of Palestine during the 2nd century B.C. Often these writings made no claim of divine inspiration. The book of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) contains some very practical wisdom, often the result of meditating on the biblical Proverbs. But the author did not think his work had canonical authority, nor was his book ever accorded it by the Jews. It always held a place below the Old Testament books in religious authority even though widely used and respected by the Jewish people.

Books which were not religiously offensive were not generally suppressed. Others, such as the Book of Enoch, were felt to be theologically questionable if not downright heretical. Efforts were made to destroy these writings. The success of the Jewish religious authority is evident from the fact that many have been preserved only in Greek translation among non-Jews or by sectarian movements such as the Qumran community. (Fragments of some of the original texts of these have been

found in the same caves as the biblical scrolls.)

Variant versions of some of the biblical books also continued to circulate for a time even among Jews. This was tolerated to a large extent because manuscripts were costly and hard to obtain. However, when these were adopted by groups considered heretical (such as the Samaritans), such nonstandard editions fell into disfavor and were finally suppressed in the regular community.

Many of these texts and writings were eventually lost and no one would have even known they had ever existed if the Dead Sea Scrolls had not been found. But now that we have this information, we can use it as we would any secular document without religious authority.

Antiquity of the Masoretic Text

It used to be assumed by some scholars that the Masoretic text was the product of mediæval Jewish scholarship. A few had thought the best and most original text was preserved in the Septuagint, which was translated long before the time of the Masoretic scholars of the early Middle Ages. The Dead Sea discoveries ended that assumption.

The Masoretic text-type is one (though not the only one) of the recensions found at Qumran. One of the earliest of the Qumran scrolls (dating back to about 200 B.C.) is "proto-Masoretic" (see F. M. Cross, "The Oldest Manuscripts from Qumran," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74, 1955, p. 164). Of two scrolls preserving significant sections of Isaiah, both are of the general Masoretic recension. Yet even

though both are from approximately the same time, one is much closer to the Masoretic text than the other.

In addition to those in the Qumran caves, biblical manuscripts have also been found in other parts of the Judean desert. Most of these date from a slightly later time than the Qumran scrolls — about A.D. 50-130. Though often more fragmentary than the scrolls from Qumran, they represent a text which is almost exactly like the Masoretic text of a thousand years later.

One of the more lengthy of these later scrolls is a manuscript of the Minor Prophets. It was published by J.T. Milik in the series *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* (vol. II, *Les*

Grottes de Murabba'at, pp. 181-205 and Plates LVI-LXXIII). The variants of that manuscript from the Masoretic text are as minor as the variants within the various Masoretic manuscripts themselves.

Other manuscripts from the Judean desert show not only the same text as the Masoretic but even the same verse and paragraph divisions (see Y. Yadin, *Masada*, pp. 171-172, 179). The vowel points were not written down at that time but preserved in the oral reading tradition. However, the antiquity of all features of the Masoretic text are borne out by these and other studies. The fact that some were preserved orally does not negate their authenticity.

Contribution of the Scrolls

The contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to biblical scholarship is manifold. The article has only begun to give some idea of that value. Among other things, they have advanced notably our knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic philology, palaeography, papyrology, and scribal technique.

For example, the Talmud gives certain directions about how biblical manuscripts were to be copied, but this information dates from a much later time. These directions are also not the same as having an actual manuscript. The Scrolls have now given us early manuscripts, showing not only the type of script used but also the manner of spacing, correcting, and even preparation of the parchment and papyrus for writing.

In some cases a variant reading is simply the use of a grammatical form from a later stage of Hebrew. If this form is better known than the form in the Masoretic text, it serves as an explanation of the problematic word. Words are also used in a different way from that previously known, and sometimes even new words or forms turn up. This has helped to clarify a variety of difficult passages in the Old Testament.

A number of the books are provided with sectarian commentaries which represent the interpretation of the Qumran community. Although many of these interpretations are hardly what we would want to use today, they sometimes illustrate the heretical practices common to a large part of Judaism at the time.

In many other ways the Scrolls contribute to the total sum of our knowledge including geographical, historical and bibliographical details of the times.

Yet probably the most important contribution to the Old Testament from the point of view of a believer is the substantiation of the antiquity and careful preservation of the traditional Hebrew text. □

Discovery Sites of the DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The Dead Sea Scroll finds in 1947 were the first such discoveries to be made in the area. Since that time, many important documents have been unearthed. For example, the "Temple Scroll," the largest scroll found to date, did not come into Israeli hands until 1967.

The consensus of scholarly research puts the dates of the scrolls at the time preceding the destruction of the Qumran religious community (which preserved the scrolls) in about A.D. 68.

All the finds have centered around five major areas:

Khirbet Qumran. This is the area on the northwestern shores of the Dead Sea where the original Dead Sea manuscripts were found. Its name comes from the Arabic designation of the ruins of the ancient Essene Qumran community which copied the material found in the area.

This was a "monastic" group whose religious beliefs caused it to withdraw from the mainstream of Jewish civilization. Members of the ascetic Qumran community even refused to worship at the Temple. In

addition to fragments of every book of the Bible but Esther, archaeologists have found remains of Essene literature and Jewish apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings.

Wadi Murabba'at and the Caves of Nahal Hever and Nahal Se'elim. Both of these finds are in the desolate Judean Wilderness west of the Dead Sea. Besides fragments of the Bible, finds in these areas include evidence from the Jewish revolt of A.D. 132-135. This includes letters from "Bar Kokhba" (Simon ben Kosiba), the leader of the revolt himself.

Wadi Daliyeh. In this area north of Jericho were found documents left by refugees from Alexander the Great. This material, written during the time 375-334 before this era, is the earliest extensive collection of papyri yet found in the Palestine area.

Masada. The excavation of this ancient Jewish fortress by the archaeologist Yigael Yadin turned up, among other things, material from both the Hebrew Bible and the Apocrypha.

Letters

The Good News is sponsored and published by the Worldwide Church of God. We thought our readers would be interested in seeing some of the comments we have received from people who have just recently come into contact with the Church. Below are excerpts from some of their letters.

New People Express Enthusiasm

I must let you know how much I enjoyed Sabbath services. It was my first real contact with God's people. As is my custom, I sat in the back, not knowing anyone. Then I got hit with some of that outgoing concern that I have been reading about. Within minutes people just started coming over and introducing themselves. One family, on finding this was my first service, temporarily "adopted" me and had me sit right in the front. The service was excellent, but it was the warmth, friendliness and sincerity that really impressed me.

Patrick G.
Trenton, New Jersey

I have just begun attending Sabbath services and I must say that they are unlike any other church service I have ever attended in my life. The individual members are refreshing. They are bright, attentive and were thoroughly interested in what the pastor was saying (everyone was awake - I couldn't believe it). The members of the Worldwide Church of God probably get more "mileage" out of their Bibles than any people I've ever seen. Also they are so friendly. On that first week I went they greeted me, a total stranger. Now that gives you a warm feeling that makes you want to return again, and again, and again.

James H.
New York, New York

Saturday I attended the Church of God located in Medford, Oregon. I was surprised at the difference between this Church and the other churches that I have attended. I really was made welcome, and I noticed everyone had smiles on their faces.

John D.
White City, Oregon

We have just attended our first Sabbath meeting. Were we surprised! We never believed people would be so friendly and homely, even though we had not previously met. It is most definitely the environment we want to bring up our four-month-old daughter in, and to learn and grow in ourselves.

Mr. & Mrs. Paul F. G.,
Greenfield, Massachusetts

I would like to say a few words about the Worldwide Church of God. I finally attended the Church after thinking about this for a long time. I enjoyed the visit very much. The people were very warm and generous on handshaking. I was surprised to see a few people that I already knew and had worked with in the past.

John P.,
Sacramento, California

I recently attended my first Sabbath service at the Church of God in Greensboro, North Carolina, and it was one of the most wonderful experiences I've had in my lifetime.

I'm so excited now I can hardly write this letter, but I had to let you all know. Everyone was so nice to me, and I loved every minute of it. I must thank you all again for helping me.

Joan W.,
Keeling, Virginia

My sister had counseling the other day from a minister and his wife. She said that they both were graduates of Ambassador College. The most outstanding thing she noticed was the joy and happiness they both radiated. This to me seems to be enough to make anyone desire God's truths. Seldom do you see anyone smile any more, let alone show peace and contentment. By their fruits, you can certainly know God's people. Thank all of you again.

Barbara R.,
Bentham, Kentucky

I attended my first Sabbath day service Saturday. I was truly amazed. I was very warmly welcomed and made to feel that I was one of them. Everybody introduced themselves and talked to me. Another surprise was the songbooks. The songs were taken directly from the Bible. This I never saw before. No offering plates were passed around. There were no long, tiring and agonizing prayers. During the sermon, passages were taken directly from the Bible and explained, and some points brought out with emphasis. The people looked, acted and were happy, friendly, and seemed to want to be where they were and had purpose. I loved every minute I was there. This is the life I want.

Edward H.,
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

I was just recently baptized, and I feel as if a big load has been lifted off my shoulders. I feel so much closer to God and His Son than ever before. I have never been so sure of anything in my life as I am that this is the true Church of God. Thank God for you and your father and everyone that has had any part in showing me the way.

E. W.,
Warrens, Wisconsin

I am finally a member of God's true Church! I was baptized last week, and I am still trying to comprehend what has happened to me since I first heard *The World Tomorrow* broadcast five years ago. It is difficult for me to realize that I am one of the few people who have ever lived to whom God has given the truth about His fantastic plan for mankind. I know that I won't really understand just how privileged I am until Jesus returns. Meanwhile, I intend to be as faithful a member as God shows me how.

Steven H.,
Mt. Vernon, Iowa

A while back I requested a visit from one of your ministers and you sent my letter to him. He got in touch with me to set up a time and place to meet. Usually I don't talk too much to people I have just met, but to him I just seemed to open up. He was courteous, open, and confident. Thank you all for making it possible to meet him.

R. C.,
Asheville, North Carolina

I finally requested a visit from one of your representatives. Yesterday I had the great pleasure of meeting and talking to (one of your ministers and his wife). They are both wonderful people. Today my daughter and I attended our very first Sabbath service. I cannot tell you what a thrill it was for us both. An answer to prayer. We didn't know until we started getting *The Worldwide News* that there was a Church here.

I am happy that we have found the Church at last.

W. W.,
Anchorage, Alaska

[The minister in my area] visited me at my home and invited me to come to the "Worldwide Church" of God. But I didn't have a way to come, as I'm a widow and cannot drive a car, so he told me he knew a lady that lived here in Granite Quarry that attended.

She said she would be glad for me to come with her on the Sabbath. I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed the service. Everyone there was so nice and friendly. I just can hardly wait until the next service. I'm so happy now that I'm attending the Worldwide Church of God as I know this is the Church for me.

F. A.,
Granite Quarry, North Carolina

I met with one of your ministers, and he answered some of my questions. Then I began to attend Church regularly in Portland. I was impressed! Impressed by the people, the ministers and their message. I was equally impressed by [Garner Ted Armstrong's] campaign. And I would like to thank you for coming. I realize how valuable your time is, and how many other people would like to see and hear you in person.

Thank you again!

D. H.,
Astoria, Oregon

Great things are beginning to happen to me. I have been going to Church at Bowling Green, Kentucky. The people are warm and friendly and the ministers are everything you said they would be. I know that many are praying for you, as I am also, that you will be able to continue so great a work.

B. W.,
Powderly, Kentucky

* If you are interested in talking to a minister of the Worldwide Church of God, see the box on page 25 for further information.

Garner Ted Armstrong

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