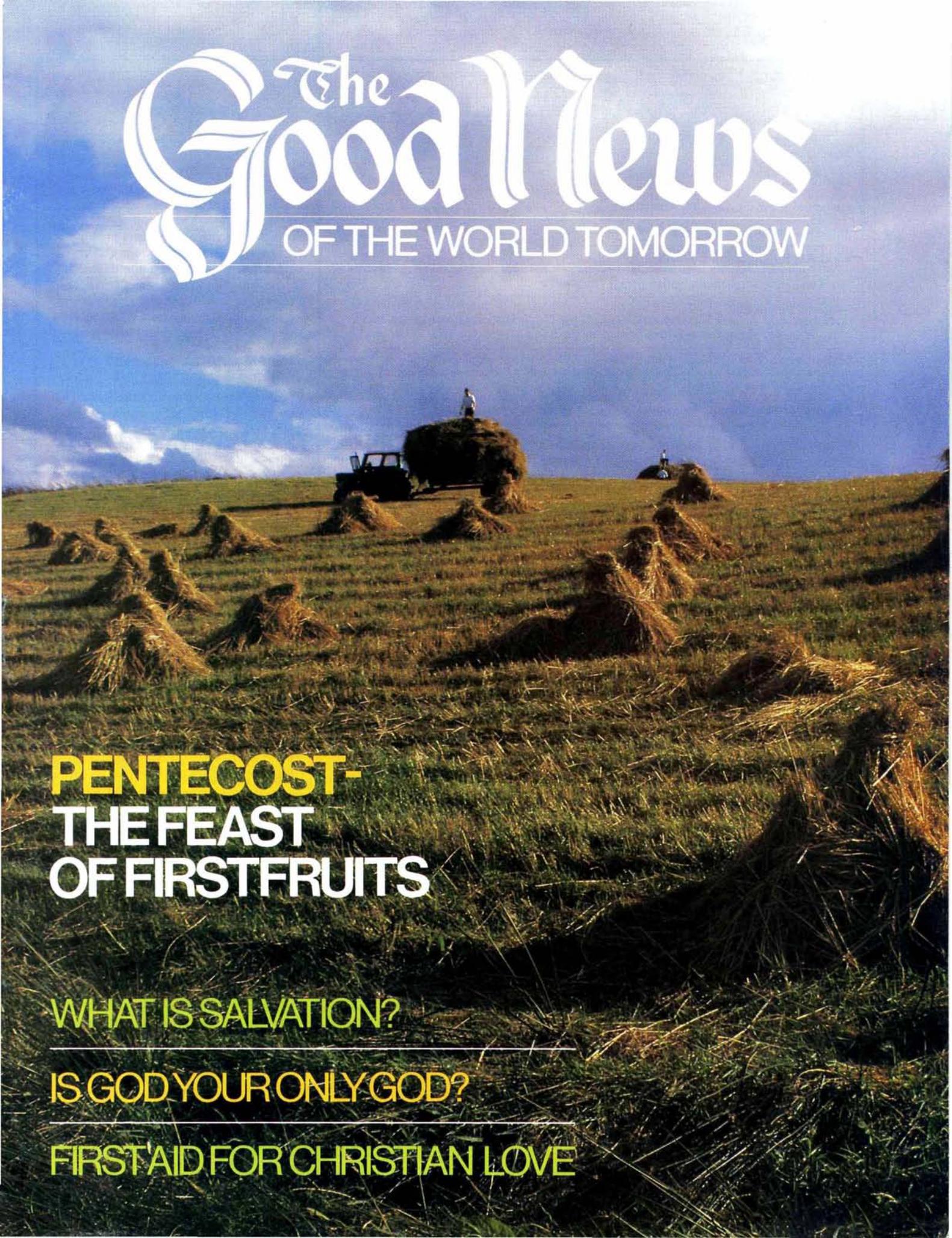


The Good News OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

A photograph of a rural landscape under a blue sky with scattered clouds. In the foreground, there are numerous large, round straw bales scattered across a green field. A dark-colored tractor is parked on the left side of the frame. Two small figures, possibly people, are visible on top of some of the larger straw bales. The terrain is slightly hilly.

**PENTECOST-
THE FEAST
OF FIRSTFRUITS**

WHAT IS SALVATION?

IS GOD YOUR ONLY GOD?

FIRST AID FOR CHRISTIAN LOVE

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

MAY 1982

CIRCULATION: 110,000

VOL. XXIX, NO. 5

Contents:

Personal From Herbert W. Armstrong	1
What Does Pentecost Mean to You?	2
First Aid for Christian Love	4
Do You "Esteem Others Better Than Yourself"?	7
What Is Salvation?	9
Why Was Abraham Called "the Friend of God"?	12
Is God Your Only God?	14
Is There a Place of Safety?	17
Ministudy: The Role of Righteous Angels Today	23

EDITOR IN CHIEF: **Herbert W. Armstrong**
MANAGING EDITOR: **Dexter H. Faulkner**

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: **Sheila Graham, Norman Shoaf**
GRAPHICS: **Greg S. Smith, Minette Collins Smith**
CONTRIBUTORS: **Dibar Apartian, Neil Earle, John Halford, Selmer L. Hegvold, Herman L. Hoeh, Shirley King Johnson, George Kackos, Ellis LaRavia, Richard Rice, Richard Sedliacik, Clayton Steep**

Published by the Worldwide Church of God
PUBLISHER: **Herbert W. Armstrong**
TREASURER: **Leroy Neff**
PRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION: **Roger Lippross**

The Good News is published monthly (except combined June-July and October-November issues) by the Worldwide Church of God, 300 W. Green St., Pasadena, Calif., 91123. Copyright © 1982 Worldwide Church of God. All rights reserved. Reentered as second-class matter at the Manila Central Post Office on Jan. 18, 1974.

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE GOOD NEWS OFFICE NEAREST YOU.

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

United States: 300 W. Green St., Pasadena, Calif., 91123

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

Mexico: Institución Ambassador, Apartado Postal 5-595, México 5, D.F.

Colombia: Apartado Aéreo 11430, Bogotá 1, D.E.

United Kingdom, rest of Europe and the Middle East: P.O. Box 111, Borehamwood, Herts., WD6 1LU England

Zimbabwe: P.O. Box U.A.30 Union Ave., Salisbury

South Africa: P.O. Box 1060, Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa 2000

Ghana: P.O. Box 9617, Kotoka Int'l. Airport, Accra

Kenya and the rest of East and Central Africa: P.O. Box 47135, Nairobi, Kenya

Mauritius and other Indian Ocean Isles: P.O. Box 888, Port Louis, Mauritius

Nigeria: P.M.B. 21006, Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria

Australia, India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia: G.P.O. Box 345, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia

New Zealand and Pacific Isles: P.O. Box 2709, Auckland 1, New Zealand

The Philippines: P.O. Box 1111, M.C.C., Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines 3117

Caribbean: P.O. Box 6063, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00936

Switzerland: Case Postale 10, 91 rue de la Servette, CH-1211, Geneva 7

Scandinavia: Box 2513 Solli, Oslo 2, Norway

Be sure to notify us immediately of any change in your address. Please include your old mailing label and your new address. U.S. POSTMASTER: Send address change to: The Good News, Box 111, Pasadena, Calif., 91123.

COVER: Pentecost, the Feast of Firstfruits, is typified by the early grain harvest. Read "What Does Pentecost Mean to You?", beginning on page 2. Photo by Greg S. Smith.

Letters

Emotional maturity

I wish to express my gratitude for the February *Good News*. I've been one to hide all emotion. Thank you for the article that helped me see that I am to use my emotions in the right ways ("There's a Hidden Enemy in Your Home!"). Besides this the whole issue was the best I've read.

Russell E. Johnson
Terre Haute, Ind.

"The Proverbs 31 Husband!"

In your February *Good News* Mr. Ronald Kelly wrote an article titled "The Proverbs 31 Husband!", which my husband and I felt was one of the best-balanced articles on showing how a husband and wife can become a terrific team.

This is the first letter I have ever written about any article I've read since my husband and I have been in the Church (13 years). This time I felt I had to express our feelings, as through the years before the Church and since being in the Church we've seen a lot and have learned a lot and during our growing up we have come to see that besides the key to "give instead of get," there is another key equally as important, we feel, and that's balance. We are realizing that to gain growth there come changes. To grow depends on how you go about making those changes . . .

Mrs. Eugene Morris
Bonneau, S.C.

Helpful suggestions

Thank you so much for the article in our *Good News* on yielding (February). . . It is just amazing how all of the necessary characteristics do work together in forming the right character. Maybe it didn't just happen that you all put the one on "What Are the Works of Faith?" along with it in the same magazine. How thankful we are for this needed spiritual food . . .

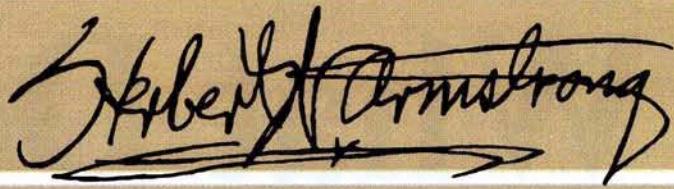
Anne Panella
Browns Mills, N.J.

"Love Thy Neighbor"

I want to thank you for the lessons I found in the *Good News* for February. I really enjoyed the one about who your neighbor is. I don't believe very many know anything about it. I am so anxious to serve God and do His will. I read nearly all of it at one sitting.

James Fowler
Phoenix, Ariz.

Personal From



How did you come to be here on earth? Did you just happen, an accident of blind, unintelligent, unknowing, lifeless EVOLUTION?

Or were you put here and given life by an all-knowing, all-intelligent, purposeful, *living*, supreme God, who designed and created the human mind and body?

Let me tell you — and I can prove it, and so can you if you are willing — that the great Creator brought YOU into existence on this earth FOR A GREAT AND MIGHTY PURPOSE!

You were born into a world that has developed a certain type civilization. The instant you were born you knew — NOTHING! But your eyes opened, you looked about and knowledge of what you saw began registering in your memory — began putting knowledge into your mind. Your ears heard sounds, and thus additional knowledge entered through the sense of hearing. Very elementary at first, but gradually, each bit of new knowledge, entering your mind through your senses of taste, smell, feel, sight and hearing, was *added* to what had previously been stored there.

Gradually you came to know, and take up with, the customs, ways, generally accepted ideas and beliefs of this world. You accepted them, took them for granted without question.

Some of them were good — many of them were BAD. But you took them for granted without realizing they were bad.

Human nature, you see, wants to BE good — that is, to believe it is good — to be considered good. It just doesn't want to DO good.

Because GOOD is the WAY of God's invisible, inexorable, spiritual LAW. That LAW is, simply, LOVE.

It is love toward God in the form of trusting and willing OBEDIENCE to God's every command and direction, knowing it is for our highest good. It is love toward God in the form of being GOD-centered — having the mind continually (consciously or subconsciously) in contact with God, relying on God, seeking guidance from God, worshipful in the sense of gratitude, obedience, faith and complete trust. It is love toward fellowMAN — in the sense of outgoing concern, equal to love and concern for self.

Now NO MAN exercises *that kind* of love *naturally*. You simply were not born with that kind of love. YOU DON'T HAVE IT!

That is, not unless you have received it from God through His GIFT of His Holy Spirit.

THAT love — God's love — that of His Holy Spirit — travels a certain road. It is the road that leads to peace, to happiness, to confident assurance, security, well-being, ENJOYMENT without kickbacks, prosperity — every good thing the heart desires.

Everyone wants that result. That is to say, everyone wants to have the RESULT of doing good.

But no one, it seems, *naturally* wants to GO that way — to DO good.

That WAY — *doing* good — is the WAY of God's law.

This world is *not* FULL of happiness, peace, joy and universal prosperity. It is pretty well filled with strife — in the home, in business, in politics, in war between nations. It is pretty well filled with unhappiness, frustrations, insecurity. It is pretty well filled with crime and violence,

with broken homes and unhappy, quarreling homes, with sickness and disease, with frustrations, failures, tragedies.

Now God is *not* the author of all these troubles in the world.

God has, FOR A GREAT PURPOSE, made humans free moral agents, and allotted 6,000 years for mankind to *make a choice* — whether to accept God's government over him, to be ruled by God's law of LOVE, or whether to set up his own ideas of man-made government, following what comes *naturally* — HUMAN NATURE. That 6,000 years is about up. When it is — a very few more years, perhaps less than 10 — God Almighty is going to step in, intervene supernaturally and in divine POWER abolish governments and ways of society — rule all nations with GOD's laws — and BRING PEACE AND HAPPINESS TO HUMANITY!

HOW can that be done?

It's simple!

There is A WAY of personal, group and organized living that will automatically produce that utopia. And there is A WAY that has, for 6,000 years, produced curses, war, strife and violence, frustration, failure — everything this world has. God is simply going to *enforce*, with divine power, HIS WAY. He is going to take over all governments, in a super WORLD GOVERNMENT ruled by the very CREATOR. It will rule by GOD'S LAWS — the WAY of love!

Why do some people — even college professors and some who are intellectually inclined — become Communists? Because they see many things WRONG in this world — they want to BE right — they grasp communism as a last straw and only hope, under the delusion that THEY CAN HAVE A

(Continued on page 26)

What Does PENTECOST Mean to You?

DO YOU KNOW what is the most universally believed *false* doctrine in the Christian world? God's *annual* Sabbaths were given to keep the true Church in the true knowledge of our Maker's master plan.

The one original, yet persecuted Church of God, stands alone in keeping these annual festivals. And it *alone* has that basic UNDERSTANDING.

That universally believed false doctrine is that all humanity is LOST — consigned to an eternally burning hell — unless they "get saved" by accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior *NOW!* They say that we, now, are in the ONLY day of salvation — that when Christ returns to earth the door to salvation will be CLOSED! Unless you are "saved" now, you are LOST!

I once heard the world's most famous evangelist tell a massive audience (on television) that we, now, are in the ONLY day of salvation — that tomorrow may be too late. Many are frightened into "making their decision for Christ."

By Herbert W. Armstrong

That false belief implies that when Jesus Christ returns in supreme POWER and GLORY, He will be helpless to save you! On the contrary God's Word says Jesus is coming 1) to restore the government of God, setting up the KINGDOM OF GOD, and 2) to call ALL people still living to salvation and eternal life.

What is the TRUTH?

What, then, is the TRUTH that the Feast of Firstfruits is given to teach us?

It teaches us the very opposite of what this world's "Christianity" believes.

It teaches us that we of the TRUE Church are the "FIRST-FRUITs" ONLY — the FIRST to receive salvation through Christ. It teaches us that *all others* are NOT YET CALLED. It teaches us that as Jesus said, "NO MAN CAN come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44).

But isn't God the Father desperately trying to draw *all* humans now? Emphatically *no!* — *not yet!* Was God unjust? No! Never!

Notice what God did, right

after our first parents rejected God as their RULER, their Revealer of knowledge and as their Savior with the gift of everlasting life.

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:22-24).

Thus, ALL MANKIND was BARRED from access to God or receiving eternal life — all but the comparative FEW God would specially call for some performance leading to the Kingdom of God.

In effect, God said to MANKIND through Adam and Eve: "You have made your own decision. You have rejected me as your God and your Ruler, Revealer of knowledge and Savior. Therefore I have cut you and the whole world that will spring from you off from all contact with me. Go and form your own

governments, your own religions, your own production and dissemination of knowledge. However, I shall reserve the prerogative to specially call into my service such as I shall choose, *for a part in* preparing for the Kingdom of God. Otherwise, the world that will develop from you is CUT OFF from all contact with me for 6,000 years, when the Kingdom of God shall be established, ruling ALL NATIONS!"

Far from trying to get every human saved spiritually during the 6,000 years, God CUT OFF all humanity — save the comparative FEW He would specially call.

THAT IS WHY Jesus said "No man can come to me" during this 6,000-year period *except God the Father specially calls them* — and He has called this few *not just* for salvation, but for a special service preparing for the Kingdom of God, as well.

After that 6,000 years expires, Christ will come again to earth, this time in SUPREME POWER AND GLORY, to set up GOD'S GOVERNMENT. Satan shall be banished. Then, during the seventh thousand years, God will call EVERYBODY then living.

And after the seventh millennium, God will resurrect to mortal life all the billions of people who had not been called for spiritual salvation.

Is God discriminating?

Those who *have been* called have had to overcome Satan. Those called later shall not.

WHY this difference? We might reason: Is God discriminating against us, who have to resist and overcome Satan, when all converted during the Millennium will not? But there is no injustice with God. Yet there is a DIFFERENCE!

THINK ON THIS! God is calling ONLY a comparative FEW now. Is that an evil or a blessing? It is a tremendous blessing, for, referring to God's Church for this Church dispensation ONLY, Jesus says: "And he that overcometh

[overcomes Satan and self and the world], and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . ." (Rev. 2:26-27), and, "To him that overcometh [Satan, the world and self] will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Those promises pertain *only* to those called before Christ's return. So some wanting to accuse God might ask: "Isn't this UNFAIR to those not called NOW? They have no chance to know, now, the joys of God's Holy Spirit. And they have no promise of exalted position or power when they are 'saved' later!"

Absolutely NO! There is no injustice with God. I'm sure those NOT now called do not feel they are discriminated against. They *don't want* to be called. And as for high and glorified position, that is a responsibility, and I do not know of anyone uncalled who has any sense whatever of dissatisfaction because he may not have such exalted position in the world TOMORROW, ruled by the Kingdom of God.

But nevertheless, this is an interesting point. Those called now do have Satan, Satan's world and their own human nature to overcome — and that requires effort, self-denial and willpower, which most humans would not want to pay.

Highest positions already allotted

But what about those who *shall be* called for the first time, and converted, after Christ returns? Shall they not have any opportunity to inherit a high and lofty position?

Probably the highest and most lofty positions in both Church and State in the world to come already have been allotted.

We know that each of the original 12 apostles will be ruler over one of the 12 nations springing from the 12 tribes of Israel. We know that David will be king over them and those under them. We

may well assume that Abraham will have even a higher position. Those are not only the highest honors — they are likewise the highest and most demanding responsibilities.

Probably the chief seats of authority in the world tomorrow ruled by the KINGDOM OF GOD will be already filled at Christ's coming. But, during the thousand years, population (human) will increase and new positions in government and in spiritual administration will increase. Also, in the Great White Throne Judgment later.

Called to more than salvation

But for us now, it is imperative that we understand that those CALLED and inducted by God into His Church NOW, have been called for MORE THAN JUST SPIRITUAL SALVATION AND THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE. We are called, every one of us, for a PART in preparing for the Kingdom of God!

For our part now, in this present "Philadelphia era," each of you is called for the mission of *loyally backing up* the GREAT COMMISSION of proclaiming the true Gospel to the whole world — and one important thing more: When Jesus comes to RULE, His Wife THE CHURCH will have made herself ready — to be holy and without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And we in the Church as a whole HAVE NOT ATTAINED FULLY TO THAT HOLY STATURE AS YET.

And our work is not finished until we do allow God to bring us unitedly to that state — ready to leave this world of flesh and blood and to enter an entirely NEW WORLD — the Church made immortal, composed of SPIRIT! Our job to which God has called us is far from finished!

In this connection, I have thought and come to understand better WHY God brought me back to life, after both heart and breathing had totally ceased. If mouth-to-mouth resuscitation

(Continued on page 25)

First Aid for Christian Love

Our greatest tests as Christians are just ahead now! Here's how to protect and promote the love we should have for one another.

By John Halford

Daddy," asked my daughter, "what do you do when two of your best friends don't like each other?"

My daughter was faced with a dilemma. Here were two people, both of whom she liked. If she was with one or the other, everything was fine. But whenever the three of them were all together, tension and hostility filled the air. It really put my daughter in a difficult position.

If you think about it, isn't that just how Jesus Christ must feel sometimes?

Christ loves His people — true Christians — His Church — every last one of us. He calls us His friends (John 15:14). He eagerly looks forward to having us spend eternity together with Him. He commands us to learn to get along now — He wants the people in His Church to grow in an atmosphere of harmony and peace. Christ wants His friends to be friendly with each other.

Most of the time we are this way, as we should be.

As Pastor General Herbert W.

Armstrong has explained, human beings cannot solve difficulties and have proper relationships between them.

pital brought the truth of this scripture home to me forcibly.

Saturday

night, a doctor explained, was a bad time in the emergency room. Several wounded people were in the waiting room, and most of them had been stabbed, punched, battered or shot.

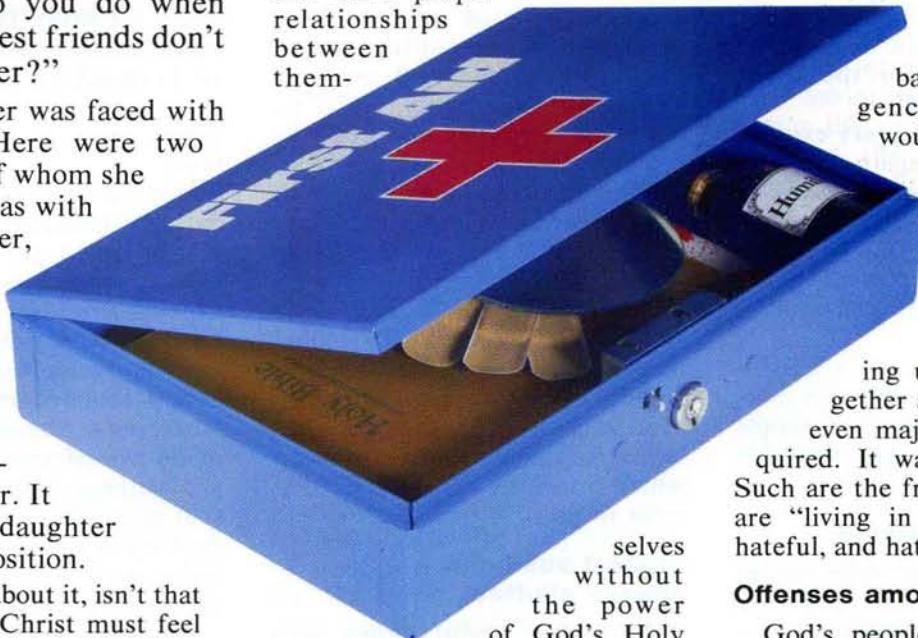
All needed patching up or stitching together and, in some cases, even major surgery was required. It was a sad situation! Such are the fruits of people who are "living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

Offenses among Christians

God's people generally aren't this way. We don't physically assault each other, intentionally wounding other parts of Christ's Body.

But offenses do come, as Christ warned they would (Matt. 18:7). We aren't perfect yet. Even if we don't cause major physical wounds, we still do thoughtless, carnal things that cause emotional cuts and bruises on the Body of Christ.

But even small cuts and scratches can become infected and cause serious problems. Anybody who has traveled in some of



selves without the power of God's Holy Spirit. But we, if we are converted Christians, have the Holy Spirit. We are without excuse. The fights, quarrels, resentments and hatreds typical of human nature belong in our past — they should not be part of our lives now.

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Tit. 3:3).

A Saturday-night visit to the emergency ward of a big-city hos-

the world's poorer countries where standards of cleanliness aren't high knows how important it is to carry a first-aid kit.

You don't need much — some antiseptic, a bottle of lotion, some bandages — just enough to protect yourself from sunburn and to quickly clean and cover small scratches or cuts before infection can get in and spread throughout the body.

Each little wound left exposed to a hostile environment can cause serious poisoning — and even kill.

It's the same way with Christian love. A small offense, a minor quarrel between brethren, can fester and spread, until eventually eternal lives are endangered. But some simple spiritual "first aid" will prevent problems from becoming too serious.

In His Word, God has given us several tried and tested remedies that will quickly heal the problems that sometimes flare up among us. Some, like suntan lotion, can help prevent injury. Others, like antiseptic solution and bandages, will cleanse and cover a wound before infection can spread.

Let's open up the spiritual first-aid box — the Bible — and see what is there.

Apply first aid promptly

The first thing to remember about first aid is that it should be applied promptly. A wound should not be left untreated any longer than necessary.

Christ made this clear in the Sermon on the Mount: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23-24).

Today we don't bring gifts to altars. But it is easy to see the principle. Let's not fool ourselves — we can't carry on a relationship with God and ignore the fact that we have caused offense and hurt to someone else.

We should by all means pray about the problem to get in the

right attitude. We need the help of God's Spirit to be able to say: "I am sorry. I was wrong." But having done that, we must get up and solve the problem.

Christ's instruction implies that we should do something about the problem right away — make a phone call, write a note, pay a visit — get it straightened out. If we tell the one we have offended that we are sorry and try to relieve the tension between two friends, then God will be eager to accept us both.

We shouldn't talk ourselves out of trying to be reconciled. Nor should we delay. Paul warned, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26). The Phillips translation puts it, "Never go to bed angry."

Go to your brother

But what if our brother won't be reconciled? Christ gave us a first-aid remedy for this, too.

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (Matt. 18:15).

If we would just do this, probably 90 percent of all our quarrels and hard feelings would be cleared up at the outset. Yet we all seem to want to avoid using this simple remedy.

Sure, it's hard, and it's humbling. There is even a risk that we won't be received and that matters will get worse. But that seldom happens.

What usually happens is that the offended and offending parties will quickly make up, feeling rather ashamed of themselves. They will end up with a much better understanding of each other, and their friendship will be deepened and strengthened.

And if our brother will not hear us?

"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (verse 16).

In the unlikely event that the other person won't accept us, we should take with us one or, at

most, two other members, and try again. This will probably work. The other person will see that we are serious. Also, there will then be one or two witnesses to attest to the fact that we have tried to make up. It will no longer be just our word against his.

Note that the quarrel still need not be public knowledge. The instruction does not say to "spread the problem all around and get a whole group of people on your side, then pick your two most ardent supporters and once again besiege the offender." Doing so would be tantamount to starting a civil war in God's Church.

But what if the offended or offending person still won't be reconciled? "And if he shall neglect to hear them [us and our witnesses], tell it unto the church" (verse 17). Obviously, a serious problem is brewing — one that may go deeper than the superficial wound we are trying to treat with first aid. Better get help from the experts — go and tell the ministry.

From then on, the problem is out of our hands, except that we should continue to pray about it. The minister may have to take serious disciplinary action, even going to the extreme of putting the unforgiving member out of the Church (verse 17).

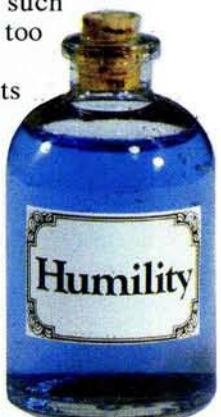
But most quarrels among brethren never get this far. Most of the time, going to our brother is enough. Christ's Church is a healthy body — easily able to fight off infection, if the infection is treated promptly.

Personality conflicts

A physical first-aid kit usually contains something to prevent chafing and blisters, such as from a shoe that's too tight.

Personality conflicts in God's Church are like blisters. Some people just seem to rub each other the wrong way.

Our spiritual first-aid kit contains two items to help in case of



these spiritual blisters. These items are labeled "Forbear" and "Don't judge."

Forbear means "to tolerate," "put up with" and "be patient with." "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. 3:13).

Rather than reacting, we should overlook the things others do that annoy us.

If anyone is entitled to bear a few grudges, Jesus Christ is. Our sins put Him to death — our sickness and carelessness with our health caused Him to have to undergo a terrible beating. But Christ has totally forgiven us and bears no grudges.

How is it that God can overlook great offenses without bearing grudges or seeking revenge, and yet we cannot?

Just as we are not anxious to hurt our children or see them injured, even when they seem to be "looking for trouble," so God as a loving Father pities His children (Ps. 103:13). Although He will not put up with rebellion and lack of effort forever (verse 9), He is not anxious to punish (verse 10). If a person's overall motivation is right, God will be patient, longsuffering and forbearing. The way we act must often irritate Him, but He looks on the intent of the heart.

Human beings find it hard to do this. Without God's Spirit leading us in our personal relationships, we judge by what we see — or what we think we see. But our vision is often obscured.

Seeing the problem clearly

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" asked Christ (Matt. 7:3). "Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?" (verse 4).

Christ, of course, was us-

ing an analogy. But if we did really have a piece of timber sticking out of our eye, would we trust our vision driving or even crossing the road? No — we couldn't see straight.

The beam typifies a self-righteous, super-critical but grossly distorted point of view. We are all subject to it. We evaluate others too harshly, and tend to see not a person *with* a problem, but a person *as* a problem. We say: "He's so stubborn." "She's too fearful." "They're so selfish."

Stubborn, fearful, selfish. These are serious problems that need drastic remedies, for they could keep a person out of God's Kingdom. But are we sure we have seen the problem clearly?

"Thou hypocrite," said Christ, "first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (verse 5). The Bible teaches us that when we judge a person, it is possible that we are doing the same thing ourselves (Rom. 2:1). In other words, we see our own sins more clearly in other people. (Our spiritual first-aid kit had better have a mirror.)

Maybe, when we have gotten the beam out of our eye, we will see more clearly the other person's problem. And perhaps, after glancing in the mirror and seeing ourselves with the same problem, we will be more anxious to give the other person the benefit of the doubt. Instead of viewing others with a spirit of judging and criticism, we will see them with empathy and compassion.

Maybe we will see the man we at one time thought was stubborn as

actually being *persistent*. We will realize that the lady we saw

as fearful is just cautious. That couple we thought were selfish will appear as good examples of frugality.

But maybe there is a bit of a mote in our

brother's eye. Then we will be able to see it clearly. The Bible says to restore such a one in meekness, aware that we can, and probably do, make the same mistakes (Gal. 6:1).

We should always be careful about criticizing others. Sometimes, a problem is just none of our business. We shouldn't appoint ourselves to go around "restoring" people.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4).

The lesson is that we shouldn't go around meddling in every problem we see. A first-aid kit, in the hands of a hypochondriac, does more harm than good.

First aid saves lives

But, properly used, our spiritual first-aid kit can save much suffering and hurt for the Body of Christ.

Today, Christ's Body — the Church — must live in the very hostile and unclean environment of this world. The world is getting worse all the time.

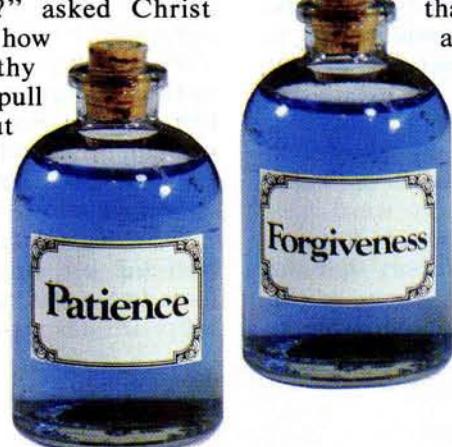
Satan, knowing his time is short, is stepping up his efforts to poison the atmosphere, spiritually and physically. Paul prophesied that the last days of this age would be "perilous times" when men and women would exist "without natural affection" (II Tim. 3:1, 3).

In a time like this, the little cuts and bruises we occasionally inflict on one another can become inflamed and infected. Little grievances become major offenses, and smoldering dislike can be easily whipped into the flames of hatred.

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another" (Matt. 24:10).

The greatest tests of our Christian love are just ahead. We must learn now to keep that love sound and healthy, free of infection and threat of disease.

Christian first aid saves lives — eternal lives. □



Do You 'Esteem Others Better Than Yourself'?

*God commands us as Christians to do so! What does it mean?
And how can we fulfill this instruction?*

By Richard Rice

Can you imagine the president of a large corporation esteeming a lowly, production-line laborer better than himself?

Or a professional baseball player considering an insignificant batboy of greater importance?

How about a top-ranking government official being more concerned with the comfort and happiness of his constituents than his own?

In this age of vanity, competition and greed, it's hard to imagine any of these situations taking place. Satan has so bombarded this society with a spirit of hardness, indifference and self-importance that we automatically think of our own interests first and others' second. We want the chief seat, the top honors and the best advantages, without concern for anyone else.

Yet God requires all true Christians to esteem others above themselves.

Esteeming others better

Notice Paul's inspired command to the Philippians: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3).

Did Paul mean that he as an apostle should look on the members of the Church as being above

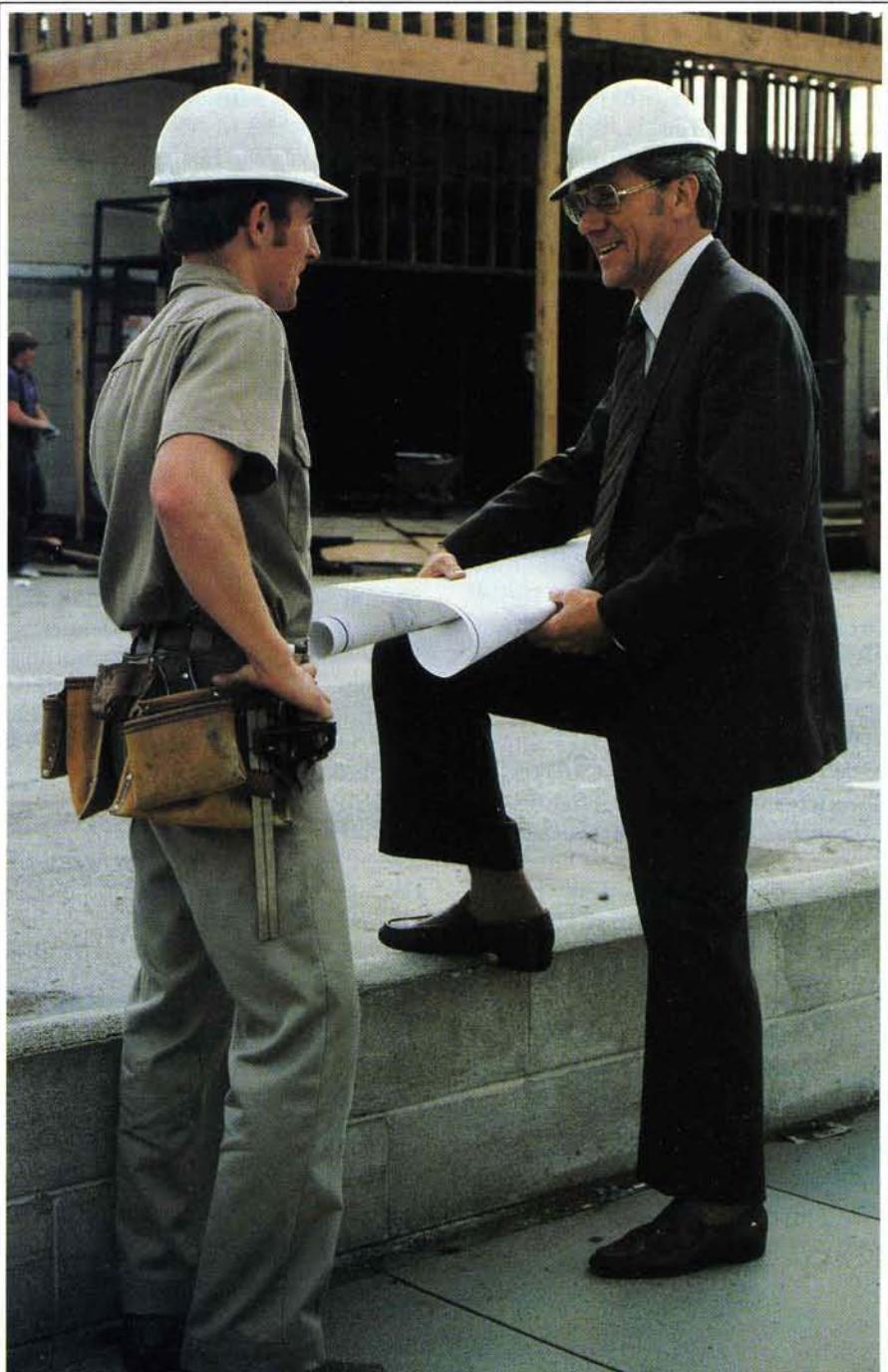


Photo by Scott Smith

his office, or that a pastor should consider his position less important than that of an usher?

Did he mean that a husband should think of his responsibility as being less than that of his wife and children?

Are we required to have feelings of inferiority about ourselves? Should we feign humility over our abilities when we are better skilled or more qualified than others to do a task or hold an office?

Of course not!

To understand, let's first notice several other translations of this verse. The Williams translation says, "Practice treating one another as your superiors." The 20th century New Testament states it, "Each of you should . . . regard others of more account than himself." The New American Standard Bible has it, "Let each of you regard one another as more important than himself."

This verse, then, has to do with being lowly in mind — abasing and humbling oneself in preference to others. It means putting the interests, cares and comforts of our fellowman above our own — forgetting ourselves in sacrifice and service.

Paul further admonished: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another . . . Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:10, 16).

Moreover, we as Christians should extend this attitude of honor to the unconverted of the world. God doesn't want His people to totally isolate themselves from non-Christians, but rather to be an example of His love, kindness and good works.

Christ said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). And again, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Esteeming others above ourselves, then, describes the attitude God wants Christians to develop as a basic approach to life — whether toward each other or toward the world. It can only come through dying to one's self, taking on God's nature and being filled with His mighty love.

Christ set the example

Jesus Christ set a perfect example, throughout His life, of obeying this principle. Notice that just after commanding Christians to esteem others better than themselves, Paul said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

This verse shows that Jesus Christ practiced the very admonition that Paul enjoined. Christ did not strive to please Himself, but to put the needs and feelings of others above His own.

"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself" (Rom. 15:2-3). Paul wrote, "Christ . . . being in the form of God . . . took upon him the form of a servant . . . humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8).

Time and again Christ exemplified an attitude of service toward all within His reach.

He expressed a special love and compassion for the poor and uneducated — the down-and-outers. He was a friend of publicans and sinners. He took a personal interest in little children, thus showing that His concern reached out to all classes and age groups.

Jesus stooped to heal and console the sick and afflicted. He called and dealt with the weak of the world, including His own disciples — He considered them friends, prayed for them and expressed a keen desire for their success.

Our Savior even had concern for the thief on the cross while He Himself was dying. He humbled Himself at every turn and became a lowly servant.

And He did so not only because He loved people, but also to set an example for us to follow!

In order to develop this attitude we must first realize that God has called us out of the world not only to repent of our sins, but also to repent of what we are — greedy, grasping, selfish people. He wants us to turn to Him with all our hearts so that He can infuse in us the very mind and nature of His Son Jesus Christ.

The new disposition that God wants us to acquire is a complete reversal of our former motivation. God wants us to empty ourselves of vanity and self-centeredness so that the happiness and well-being of others becomes uppermost in our minds.

God's desire is for us to lose our sense of self-consciousness and replace it with an attitude of outgoing concern for all — an attitude of wanting to see them grow, advance and prosper.

As we yield to God and His Holy Spirit, a miraculous change will occur in our lives. We will take on a new heart, nature and outlook. We will become kinder, more thoughtful and compassionate. We'll find that serving others will become a sheer joy and delight.

Moreover, this new disposition will become a daily habit — a spontaneous way of life (Gal. 5:22-23).

What we can do

Here are some practical ways for each of us to fulfill God's command to esteem others better than ourselves.

- *Care for the fatherless and the widows.* James wrote, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27).

A major test of how converted we are is how we respond to the needs of people less fortunate than ourselves.

- *Invite into your home for dinner and fellowship fellow Christians who can't repay you.* Notice Christ's instructions about how we are to share the resources with which God blesses us: "Then (Continued on page 25)

What Is Salvation?

Why do we need salvation? How do we get it — and when? What do we receive when we do obtain it?

By Herbert W. Armstrong

WHY DO we find many religions in the world?

Some people today say that religion is merely a superstition. And others today spread propaganda that religion is the opiate of the people! But MOST of the people in the world embrace some ONE of the world's many religions!

How many of them ever stop to ask, sanely and candidly, why? Why do they need religion — and what does it offer them?

Of all the world's great religions, the only one that offers forgiveness of sin and salvation is the Christian religion. The sin question and the receiving of SALVATION is the very heart and center of the Christian religion.

But just what is this thing that is called *salvation*? It is something everybody (who knows anything about Christianity) has *heard* about — and yet, do you realize that almost nobody — even of those who profess the Christian religion — really KNOWS what salvation is!

Why world is in ignorance

A man 82 years of age, who had been for many years an elder in one of the major Christian denominations, came to me once and said: "I have heard many hundreds of sermons about Christ, and about salvation — but in all my 82 years of life I have never heard one explanation of

the plain WHYS and WHEREFORES of SALVATION. What is this thing we call salvation, anyway? WHY do we need it? How do we get it, and when? And what do we get, when we get it, anyway?"

Those things he asked me. In his 82 years this man had never heard a plain and simple explanation that made it clear.

Many of *you* have heard sermons *about* salvation, but not many OF YOU have ever heard a plain, clear *explanation* of just *what* it is, *why* you need it — and most of you have been deceived and unconsciously misled about *how* to obtain it!

The HOLY BIBLE is the only textbook of the TRUE religion of the Creator GOD, as brought and revealed by Jesus Christ. You can prove that! And you can *prove* that the *Holy Bible* is the inspired revelation of the Creator who created this earth and put life upon this earth — who is the very source of life, the Supreme Ruler of the entire universe.

Now the prophecies of the Bible say very plainly that all nations — with their many religions — are today deceived, and that even among professing Christians, it is the *many* who have been deceived — who have turned away from the truth and accepted fables.

It's time that we wake up and realize the state of religious affairs in this world today!

It's time to wake up to the fact that pagan doctrines and practices began, even 1,900 years ago,

creeping into Christianity — and that today most of us have been reared from childhood in the assumption that these pagan teachings and practices are true and that they came from the Bible. Most of you have never known any better.

Why should you? — you haven't taken the trouble to look into the Bible *for yourselves* to see just what it *does* say!

Only ONE authority

Now let's see if we can understand plainly and clearly just what are the whys and wherefores of this thing called salvation.

The sole authority on this subject is the Bible. If the professing Christian world has turned from the truth (and remember that the Bible is TRUTH), and if it has turned to beliefs of MEN, then you must *expect* that what you are going to find, in the Bible, will be DIFFERENT from what you have been led to believe the Bible says!

Yes, it's going to be very surprising, so prepare yourself for some surprises — and expect to find something different from what you have believed!

The apostle Paul, who was the apostle to the gentile nations, under inspiration of GOD, instructed the young evangelist Timothy *how to find* the true way of salvation. You will read of that in II Timothy 3:15-16:

"From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures." The only Scriptures that Timothy had known from a child were those

that we call the Old Testament Scriptures. None of the New Testament had been written when Timothy was a child.

"From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Then he continued, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Before all of the New Testament had been written, God inspired Jude to write about SALVATION in Jude 3 and 4:

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation [he was writing about salvation], it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for" — what? — "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares." This was before A.D. 90, before all of the Bible was even written.

Even then there were "certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness [license to do what you please], and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," turning men away from THE WAY of GOD into the ways that might seem right to men.

Let us go back to the *faith once delivered unto the saints*, for it is only the Holy Scriptures that are able to make us "wise unto salvation." In them, in the Scriptures, we are to find the faith that was once delivered!

All Scripture is INSPIRED of GOD — and is profitable to CORRECT us where we have been in error! So you can expect some correction in what you have believed!

What is salvation?

First, what does this word *salvation* mean?

The expression *to be saved* means TWO different things:

1) Deliverance from trouble or danger — deliverance from sin and its consequences, from DEATH. We often hear of the expression "to save someone from a house that is on fire." You would want to be saved, to be rescued from the penalty of sin.

2) Salvation means to *preserve* — to *keep*, i.e., to keep us *alive eternally* by the GIFT of eternal LIFE.

The Holy Scriptures do NOT say that the penalty of sin is to live forever in the torment of a hell fire. No, they say precisely the opposite!

Many of *you* have heard sermons *about* salvation, but not many OF YOU have ever heard a plain, clear *explanation* of just *what* it is, *why* you need it — and most of you have been deceived and unconsciously misled about *how* to obtain it!

You've been taught that the Bible says that the wages of sin is eternal *life* in hell fire. Romans 6:23 says just the opposite! Notice — this is in your Bible: "The wages of sin is death."

That is the wages you're going to collect for sinning. *Death* is the thing that stares *you* in the face, that stares every man in the face.

"But the gift of God is eternal life." You do not now have eternal life abiding within you! It is a free gift of God, and you don't have it unless you obtain it. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

You need deliverance from the eternal DEATH penalty that you already have incurred — from that everlasting punishment,

which is death, that you have brought on yourself as the *penalty* of violating God's law. Everyone has sinned and brought that penalty upon himself.

In order to be delivered *from* total and eternal death, in order to *save* your life — that is, to *KEEP* or to *PRESERVE* you *ALIVE* forevermore, and throughout all eternity — you need to receive the gift of eternal life, because *you do not possess it* from natural, human, fleshly birth. It is not inherent in you — and it can COME to you ONLY as a divine GIFT from God!

What do you need to be saved FROM? From the *penalty of sin*. To be saved FROM the penalty of sin, *you must stop sinning*.

What is SIN?

But how can anyone stop *sining*, unless he knows *what sin is*? Most people SUPPOSE that sin is doing something that *you think* is wrong — that hurts your *conscience*. Many seem to think that sin is the **BEST** way to live, but that a harsh and stern God denies us — the forbidden fruit that is really sweeter. They think God isn't quite fair.

All right, now answer this: How many sermons have you ever heard in all of your life, explaining FROM THE BIBLE *what sin IS*? How many sermons have you ever heard giving you the Bible definition, reading right from the Bible "SIN is . . ." and then giving you the definition of what it is? How many have you ever heard to read, right out of the BIBLE, the BIBLE definition of sin?

Not very many, I'm sure! No, it usually is just taken for granted that everyone automatically KNOWS what sin is — it is almost universally *assumed* that sin is doing what YOU THINK is wrong — or what society or each church denomination says is wrong — or that which troubles your CONSCIENCE!

But the Bible says, "There is a WAY which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12,

16:25). Your Bible says that *what seems right to a man is the way that will end in DEATH*; therefore, it is the way of sin. What one man THINKS is wrong, another thinks is RIGHT. And what hurts one man's conscience will not disturb another man's conscience at all!

Millions of people today believe that sin is the more DESIRABLE and ENJOYABLE way — the way that is BEST for us — and so they put off turning from sin just as long as possible. They want to ENJOY sin right up to the last minute, and then get in on a deathbed repentance just before they die!

Exactly what is sin? Here is the plain Bible answer: "SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW" (I John 3:4).

Sin is what God, in His law, says is wrong! Repentance means we quit breaking God's law!

Let's come to UNDERSTANDING!

To understand the plain whys and wherefores of salvation, we need to be corrected, first of all, on two points: 1) that God created man MORTAL, not IMMORTAL, and 2) that God's inexorable spiritual law is GOOD, and that *sin is the transgression of that spiritual law that God set in motion.*

So let's begin now at the very beginning. Let's turn, now, to the Scriptures that are able to make us wise unto salvation — and are profitable to correct us! The only Scriptures that Timothy had known from his youth were the Old Testament. So let's turn back to the very first chapter in the Bible, in Genesis, the first chapter.

Beginning with the 24th verse: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind" — that is, they would reproduce in the same form and shape, the SAME IMAGE, the same likeness, so that each calf looks just like its mother

before it. They reproduce after their kind, the same form, *the same image*, exactly.

"And God said, Let us make man in OUR IMAGE" (verse 26). Here, the word for God is *Elohim*, and it's a uniplural word.

This was written, originally by Moses, in the Hebrew tongue thousands of years ago. The word translated into the English word *God* is, in the Hebrew language, *Elohim*. *Elohim* is uniplural. It means more than one person. In other words, one family, a kingdom of persons — one kingdom, but more than one person. Only

YOU need deliverance
from the eternal
DEATH penalty that
you already have
incurred . . . that you
have brought on
yourself as the
penalty of violating
God's law. Everyone
has sinned and
brought that penalty
upon himself.

one God, because Elohim is not a person. GOD IS A KINGDOM! God is a Family!

We have the mineral kingdom and we have the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom. There is an angel kingdom that God created, and then high above all is the *creating kingdom*, the GOD KINGDOM.

In the God Family there is the *Father*. Jesus Christ is called the *Son of God*, and we can become sons of God. There is a Father and a Son — a family relationship. And so, *God is more than one person.*

What is man?

"And God said, Let us make man in OUR image, after our likeness" (the same form and

shape), *after OUR kind. GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF!*

That is the very purpose of God, to reproduce Himself. But what is man? And what is man made out of? Let's read a little further, now, in chapter 2, verse 7, of Genesis:

"And the Lord God formed man of the *dust* of the ground," not out of spirit. He formed man of the dust of the ground. Man is dust. ("Unto dust shalt thou return," said God to the first man — Genesis 3:19.) "And [He] breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," just as He had done into the nostrils of animals.

Man, too, became a living soul — not that man has an immortal soul, but he became a living soul.

The Hebrew word for "soul" is *nephesh*. It means "the life of animals, animal life, mortal life that is certain to die." That is the meaning as Moses wrote that word.

So man has NO IMMORTALITY. Man was made flesh and blood — the same as ANIMALS, and he is considered to be as the animal kingdom, mortal, subject to death.

BUT since God is reproducing Himself, man can be born of God — born of the SPIRIT of God.

Now Adam could have been begotten of God so that he could have been born of God. You will read in Genesis 2:8-9: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of *life* also in the midst of the garden."

There was the tree that would have given man immortality. He didn't have immortality, but it was made available in this garden through the tree of life. There was also another tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Spirit of God was AVAILABLE through that tree of life. It was offered to Adam. God freely

(Continued on page 27)



Scenes from Abraham's life. Abraham fathered Ishmael by Sarah's handmaid Hagar, only to eventually banish both boy and mother. Abraham proved his friendship with God when he was willing to sacrifice Isaac, his only son by Sarah.

opinions and preferences does not make for a close relationship.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" the prophet Amos asked (Amos 3:3). The answer, of course, is no. Two people walking together over a distance must be in exact agreement as to where they are headed, the direction they are going and the speed with which they are traveling. If they are not in precise agreement, after going a short distance they will no longer be walking together.

Abraham walked with God. That means Abraham was in precise agreement with God. He was in step all the way. God said of him, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Gen. 26:5).

Abraham agreed with God. He did not follow the ways of the world of his day. Being in agreement with the world and its wrong ways is what the

Bible terms "the friendship of the world." James wrote that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God" (Jas. 4:4). James went on to say that "whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Abraham was not a friend of the world around him. He forsook it, choosing rather to be a friend of God.

Notice the account in Genesis 12:1-4. God told Abraham to leave his homeland, his familiar surroundings. He was to come out of the society — the "world" — of his time, just as Christians must be willing to come out of the world today.

In obedience, through faith, Abraham "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). It was sufficient that God had told him to go. "So Abram departed," says Genesis 12:4.

Spiritually speaking, Chris-

Why Was Abraham Called 'the Friend of God'?

Even more important for you, how can you build a relationship like that?

By Clayton Steep

"My friend." That's how God referred to the patriarch Abraham (Isa. 41:8).

What a remarkable relationship! A limited, physical, mortal being thought of by the all-powerful, immortal, all-knowing, supreme God as His dearly loved friend.

How was such a relationship possible? What constitutes that kind of friendship? Have you ever analyzed this question?

You have encountered many people in your life. You will no doubt encounter many more. Dozens, hundreds, even thousands of individuals become acquaintances, but only some of them become close friends. Why? Exactly what is a friend? What is friendship?

Agreement

Think about it. Your very best friends — your "bosom buddies" — are those who agree with you on the greatest number of really important issues. Friends think alike. The constant clashing of

Illustration by Winston Taylor

tians must come out of the world around them, forsaking its ways that are in opposition to God's ways, even though, physically, they continue to live in the world (John 17:14-16).

Ability to freely confide

Isn't it true that your closest friends are those individuals in whom you can best confide? You can communicate your deep feelings and convictions to them, knowing you have a supportive listener. You can discuss what is on your mind, sharing your joys, your observations, your plans and, yes, your regrets and sorrows. In the most intense friendships, nothing needs be held back.

Jesus said to His disciples, "I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

Best friends are not only persons in whom you can confide, they in turn confide in you. Trustful confidence is a two-way street.

We ought to have that kind of relationship with our God. God confides in us through His Word and His Spirit. We must confide in Him. We must spend time talking to Him, pouring out our hearts to Him, telling Him "every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer" (Phil. 4:6, Phillips translation).

Abraham was open with God and talked freely to Him, as the biblical accounts of various events in his life show. Of him God could truly say, "I know him" (Gen. 18:19). Abraham was not like those Jesus talked about, who have a form of religion, who even do wonderful works, but who never become really acquainted with God. "I never knew you" is what Jesus will have to say to them one day (Matt. 7:23).

Loyalty

We've all heard of fair-weather friends. When everything is going smoothly they are pleased to be on friendly terms. But as soon as problems develop or they have to

give more than they could possibly gain from a relationship, they suddenly become distant.

Even physical brothers and sisters may bicker and squabble. When a genuine outside threat presents itself, however, they often close ranks and support each other. Then, when the adversity has passed, they may go back to squabbling again.

That's why Solomon declared that real friendship is a stronger bond than flesh and blood ties alone. He wrote that "a brother is born for adversity," in contrast to "a friend [who] loveth at all times" (Prov. 17:17). Further, he stated that "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24).

This world is filled with lonely people — people who have few or no real friends. Perhaps at some time or another they were disappointed or betrayed by other human beings, had hopes shattered, were disillusioned.

Real friends are loyal to each other when the going is easy and when it is rough. They support each other. And sacrifice for each other. The ultimate degree of friendship was described by Jesus when He stated, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Jesus went all the way for us. If we want to be His friends, we must be willing to go all the way in proving our loyalty to Him.

"Ye are my friends," said Jesus, "if ye do whatsoever I command you" (verse 14). Such a statement, made by any mere human being, could be considered the height of arrogance. Not so in Jesus' case, however. Being God, everything He commands us to do is right and good — good for us and good for everybody else.

Certainly, there are times when doing what God commands us to do may not seem, judging by human reason alone (see Proverbs 14:12), to be best. This is where loyalty is put to the test.

God commanded Abraham to slay, as a sacrifice, his only son

Isaac. Abraham could have thought of many reasons why he should not slay Isaac. After all, if Isaac were to be killed, how could God bless Abraham's descendants? And besides, killing another human is a sin, isn't it? And also... And on and on.

But no, Abraham did as God commanded. He was loyal to his Creator. He proved his faith by his works. "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and [as a result] he was called the Friend of God" (Jas. 2:23).

Dependability

A friend is dependable.

God says to us, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). We can depend on Him. Do we give Him reason to believe the same of us, that we will never leave or forsake Him, that He can depend on us?

How we as Christians cope with the trials, obstacles and temptations of this life reveals to God to what extent He can depend on us to do His will in the future. He needs to know He can depend on us to do what is right before He can grant us immortality and the awesome powers of the God Family.

Probably Abraham's willingness to slay his son, more than any other single action, made him God's friend — proved to God that he could be depended on. "For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me," God proclaimed (Gen. 22:12).

Notice the words of Nehemiah 9:7-8: "Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram... And foundest his heart faithful before thee." What a commendation!

If we walk with God, if we confide in Him and let Him confide in us, if we are loyal to Him, and if He sees He can depend on us, then God will find our hearts faithful to Him also, just as He did the heart of Abraham, His friend. □

Is God Your ONLY God

Sure, all of us as co-workers and members know about the Ten Commandments! We have read *The Ten Commandments* booklet and we've probably heard a lot about them.

We know that breaking them constitutes sin, and we know what basic points to avoid so we won't transgress them, especially in the letter.

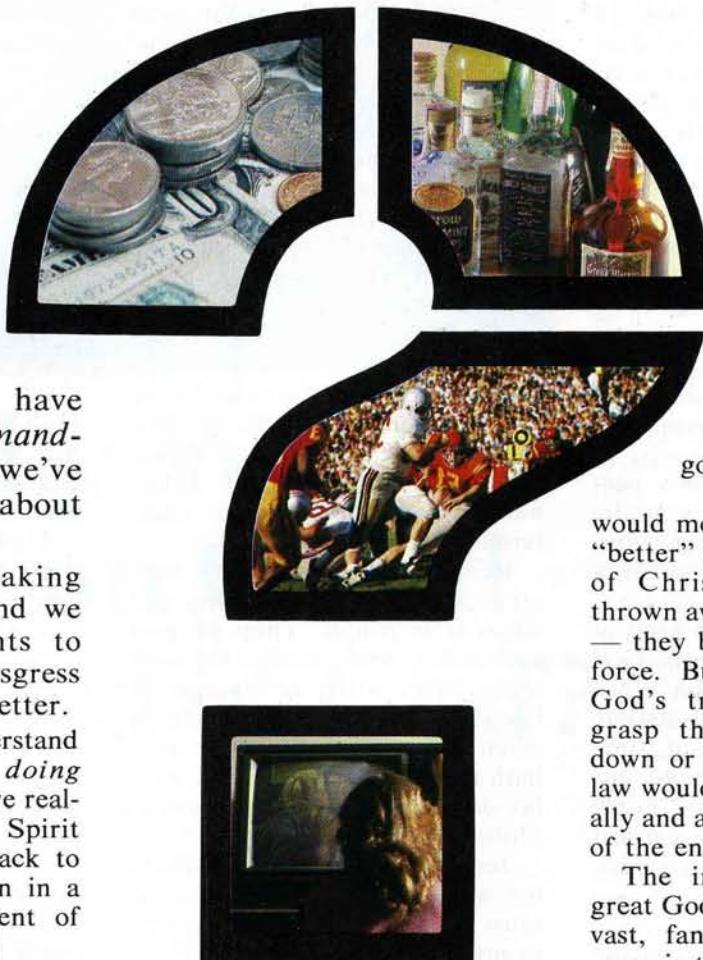
But do we really understand the positive, practical, *doing* aspects of God's law? Do we really see how God's Holy Spirit should flow through us back to God and out to fellowman in a continual, joyous fulfillment of God's royal law of liberty?

For, as we should come to understand more deeply, the Ten Commandments truly do bring liberty.

The way to success

God's law is for our good, as Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong has so often said.

God gave His law to promote the health, happiness and welfare of mankind. God's law is the way to success, accomplishment and joy — the way to freedom from every headache and heartache, from every war and financial panic, literally from every sorrow that imposes itself on a confused and misguided human race.



Could you be worshiping a false god? Here is practical instruction to help you fully obey the First Commandment.

By Roderick C. Meredith

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7). And, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12).

Many people wish God would modify His law to make it "better" or "easier" for us. Much of Christianity, in fact, has thrown away God's law altogether — they believe it is no longer in force. But we who understand God's truth must profoundly grasp that changing, watering down or doing away with God's law would only harm us individually and add to the collective woes of the entire human race!

The infinite wisdom of the great God who designed all of the vast, fantastically intricate universe is the same wisdom behind the "perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25) — the Ten Commandments.

Remember God's purpose

Keep in mind this fundamental principle: The Ten Commandments are a vital part of God's supreme purpose on earth.

God intends that each of us develop a sense of awe and worship toward Him and His right ways before we are made like Him by being born into His very Family. And we must learn to love our neighbors as ourselves before being made, along with many of those neighbors, members of God's own Family and we

have to share eternity together.

Our Creator wants to be sure we have deeply inculcated into ourselves the way to humility, love and service before He gives us eternal life in a situation that could be an eternal "hell" if we do not know how to enjoy that unending togetherness.

These are real needs we must consider as we think on the purposes of God's law and the lessons we must learn. For eternity is a long, long time.

The First Commandment

Notice the first of God's Ten Commandments: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:2-3).

We need to be sure that the true God — the Creator and Ruler of all — is the God whom we worship and obey and by whom we have been conquered!

Many professing "members" of God's Church talk against the Church, the Work and to some extent even the very way of God, and yet think of themselves as converted Christians.

In fact, though, such people have never been converted — never have been truly conquered by God.

After conversion, nothing should remain, in your sight, that is equal or anywhere near equal to God. God and His will are to be the very center of your being. God and God alone is to be worshiped and adored.

God says He brought us "out of the land of Egypt." If we are converted, then God indeed has called us out of sin, out of this Satan-influenced society.

So ask yourself if you have really come out of spiritual Egypt.

There are professing Christians who saturate their minds with entirely too much television, even letting their children watch it

constantly. Some drink too much alcohol, think and talk about carnal interests all the time and devote too little thought to God's Kingdom and His Work of preparing for it.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me," says God. Whatever captures your highest interest is your god.

What is your god?

Think about it: If money, material possessions, sex, self-importance, sports, music, family, fun or any combination of these things captures your interest, time, talents and energies more

builder described above. But Satan has many devices — many means of getting every single one of us distracted from the great goal of the Kingdom of God.

Some are virtually obsessed with money or making money. Or their jobs. Or their desire to be important. Some idolize sports. Some are so totally involved with their relatives and friends that God and the Work of God come in second best. And some concentrate on simply seeking pleasure or fun.

But remember: God is not the God of your life if He has to step down occasionally to allow another god to reign. There is no place in God's plan for a second god in your life.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33).

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death" (Rom. 8:5-6).

How do you spend your time?

We might think of the little old lady who tends her garden all day long, spending most of her free time that way. Or the teenage boy who, hour after hour, works on his car, fixing it, polishing it, looking at it and showing it off to his friends.

Your life is composed of so much time. How you spend your time determines how you spend your life. A converted Christian has given his life to God.

Have you?

Do you really seek God first in the use of your time and energy? Do you discipline yourself to get to bed on time so you can rise in time to pray and commune with God first thing in the morning, before anything else interferes?

Have you organized your life so you may regularly study and drink in the words and thoughts of the Bible? Have you developed the habit of meditating

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3).

than anything else, it becomes the god you serve and worship.

Take, for example, the case of John Doe. John is really "into" his body — he is constantly exercising, looking at his muscles in the mirror, taking massive doses of vitamins and other supplements, attending health lectures, weighing himself and worrying about how many grams of this or that are in his daily diet.

Now, what is John Doe's chief interest in life? God? Christ? God's Work? The millions of spiritually blind and often physically suffering humans around the world who need our help?

No.

His chief interest — his god — is, literally, his own human flesh, which he serves and worships more than anything else.

Each of us must make certain that our time, talents, interests and enthusiasm are wrapped up in God, in our personal Savior Jesus Christ, in the great purpose of God and in the Work of God more than anything else.

Our personal weaknesses may not be as obvious — to us, at least — as the self-worship of the body

on the Bible and on God's law?

Do you regularly seek God with all your heart through fasting (and this does not mean just on the Day of Atonement)?

Using these spiritual tools to draw closer to God will enrich your life and make God much more real to you. Mentally and emotionally, you can then walk with Him through each day.

You will come to sincerely want what He wants, think as He thinks and have Jesus Christ literally living within you through the Holy Spirit (Gal. 2:20).

Worship and adore God

Jesus said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matt. 22:37-38).

As you learn to fervently pray, to commune with God each day, to always be in a spirit of prayer — as you seek to be like God and desire to be with Him forever — you will learn what it means to love God "with all thy heart." God will become the greatest reality in your life.

You will do the same necessary things you always did, but with a new emphasis.

You will eat, but you will eat good, wholesome foods, and in moderation, to better serve God and honor Him.

You will exercise, but only in right balance, so you may "glorify God in your body" (I Cor. 6:20) and have the strength and grace to serve Him better.

Your entire life will take on new meaning. In your whole outlook and motivation, you will become a "new creature" in Christ (II Cor. 5:17).

You will love your husband or wife more than ever, and with a deeper love — a love filled with the recognition that your mate is a potential God, a precious thing in the sight of the Creator. Your mate will become more precious to you, too. And you will do all you can to encourage and enrich your mate's life — serving, helping, gladly sacrificing for his or her ultimate good.

Why? Because these things all tie in with God's great purpose for you, which you will fervently desire to fulfill.

If your conversion is to be deep and genuine, you must make God the very center of your existence.

Learn to take delight in seeing God in everything. Appreciate beautiful sunrises and think of God. Listen to beautiful music and think of the Creator of every good and every perfect gift (Jas. 1:17).

Walk out under the stars at night and think of God and His awesome majesty and power, and of His love for us weak human beings on this earth, a little ball in the darkness of space.

Think constantly of God as your Father, your Protector, your Deliverer, your Sustainer, the One who blesses you.

As Jesus said, begin your prayers in this manner: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9). Learn to spend the first part of your prayers in thanking, praising and hallowing God.

Go into detail. Thank Him fervently for your very life, for protecting you, feeding you, clothing you, housing you, perhaps giving you a mate and children and a home. Thank Him for the good things that happen each day.

And thank and praise Him most of all for calling you to understand the purpose of human existence, to have a part in His Church and in His Work. Thank Him that your life can really count for something in this age when so many people lack meaning in their lives.

Learn to exult in God

Some of us have tended to crush and repress our emotions, many of which are right emotions that should be expressed. Many times we don't show the affection we should to our parents, our mates, our children and even to God.

But David, our future king, was not like that, and he was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). As a young man deeply in

love thinks on his beloved, so David thought of God. He constantly pictured God's strength and greatness, His massive intellect and creative powers, His steady help, deliverance, love, mercy and forgiveness to man — all this and much more.

"I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High" (Ps. 9:1-2).

David surely did pour out his "whole heart" in worshiping and praising God. And let us remember that "worship" involves singing hymns and psalms to God, coming into His presence with thanksgiving in public as well as private (Ps. 95:1-2).

This attitude of worship involves the total surrender of the human spirit to the Creator. It involves the all-encompassing realization that you have no life apart from God, that your whole being belongs to Him to use as He sees fit (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Then you may say with King David: "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Ps. 42:1-2, Revised Standard Version).

You will then desire that total oneness with God that Jesus prayed we would all attain (John 17:11, 21-23).

As we attain this oneness with God, we will yearn to fulfill God's purpose for creating us — desiring to obey Him, to walk and talk with Him, to be like Him and with Him forever.

We will gladly give ourselves in unconditional surrender to our Maker — having no reservations, having no hidden corners of our lives — knowing deeply within ourselves that as an acorn is destined to become an oak, as a child is destined to become an adult, our destiny is to become part of God's Family, to become God as God is God!

Only in this way can all of us who are truly called of God keep the full intent and spirit of the First Commandment. □

Is There a Place of Safety?

Is the Church going to flee to a place of safety from the coming Great Tribulation? Or will God just protect us wherever we are? What does the Bible say?

By Leroy Neff

This world is about to be plunged into a holocaust more terrible than the eyes of man have ever seen!

This horrible period, the time when Satan's wrath reaches its peak just before the end of this age, was described by Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:21-22:

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

God will be forced to supernaturally intervene on this earth to prevent man's total annihilation. This intervention will be brought about by Jesus Christ, who will return in glory and power to re-establish God's government on earth and set up the Kingdom of God.

But what will happen to God's Church during the Great Tribulation? Notice Christ's promise to the Philadelphia church in Revelation 3:10:

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all

the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

The Philadelphia church is to be protected from the Great Tribulation. But how?

Are we going to go to some wilderness area where there is no food or shelter? Will we be whisked away on a fleet of surplus World War II planes? Are secret plans for this escape being made even now?

Or will God Himself protect us in our homes or wherever we are when the Great Tribulation begins?

There are secret plans

The Church does not have any secret plans about a "place of safety." But God does!

God has revealed enough in the Bible to make it clear that He will provide for His Church to go to a place of protection at the right time, to the right place and in the right way.

Will God protect His people wherever they are during the Great Tribulation, as some claim? Of course God can, but will He?

God could have miraculously protected Noah and his family for the more than one year they were in the ark, but He didn't choose to. Noah and his family had to go into the ark, their "place of safety."

God could have supernaturally

protected Lot and his family in Sodom, but instead God sent angels to lead him out of that wicked city, so Lot and his family could go to their "place of safety."

It is not what God *could do*, but what He *will do*, that counts!

Some Church members set dates about when they think the Church will flee. They count back three and a half years from the date they think Christ is going to return. But since no one knows when Christ is going to return (Matt. 25:13), such guesses are useless.

A few have gotten "prepared" by collecting passports, silver coins and special food — they want to be sure they are ready when the time comes. One family apparently even moved to the nation of Jordan, thinking that the Church was going there in 1972. They wanted to be there to greet the Church on arrival!

Some people get really excited about this subject of the Great Tribulation and the "place of safety."

No "place of safety"

Just what does the Bible say about all this? Does the Bible say, "The Church is going to flee to a place of safety"?

No, it certainly does not! The

statement is scripturally inaccurate on two counts: 1) The Bible nowhere says that the Church will "flee" in the end time and 2) the Bible nowhere uses the phrase "place of safety." Try to find it in a concordance if you think otherwise.

Such faulty beliefs are commonly held by some in the Church because they misunderstand what the Scriptures really do say.

The Philadelphia church is to be protected from the Great Tribulation. But how? Are we going to go to some wilderness area . . . Or will God Himself protect us . . . wherever we are . . . ?

In order to better understand this subject, we need to review four different but related events.

Early Church migrated

The first event occurred as a result of Christ's warning in Luke 21:20-21 (compare Matthew 24:15-22):

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in . . . the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto."

This prophecy was fulfilled after events in Judea in the fall of A.D. 66. Jerusalem was surrounded and besieged by the Roman army under Cestius Gallus. After a few days, for no apparent reason, the siege was lifted and the Romans departed from the area.

Sometime after this (the exact time is not known), before Gen. Vespasian and the Roman forces returned and besieged Jerusalem starting at the Passover in A.D. 69, the true Church did leave Jerusalem and Judea for protection.

They did not "flee" in the literal sense. The Greek word in Luke 21:21 means "to escape or run

away, to take flight" (not flying in the air).

The only ancient reference to this "escape" is found in the writings of Eusebius, who lived from A.D. 260(?) to 340(?). Eusebius said the Church went to Pella sometime between A.D. 66 and 70. Pella is northeast of Jerusalem beyond the Jordan River, south of the Sea of Galilee.

"But the members of the church in Jerusalem were in-

structed by a prophecy, revealed to the leaders, to abandon the city before the war and to take up residence in one of the cities of Perea which was named Pella. From Jerusalem the followers of Christ migrated to Pella" (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 5).

When did the Church move or "migrate" to Pella? It had to be late in the period A.D. 66 to 70. Had the Church moved early in the period they would have been killed or captured by Vespasian's army, which was active in northern Palestine. They would not have been harmed later, however, before the final siege of Jerusalem.

Some believe the Church left after the "sound" was heard, in the Temple, of a great multitude saying, "Let us remove hence." This incident was reported by the Jewish historian Josephus, who said it occurred on a Pentecost (see Josephus, *Wars*, book VI, chapter 5, section 3 for the report on this and other unusual events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem).

This move or migration of the Church was no emergency "flight" as described by Luke and Matthew, but it made protection

possible for the Church during and after the fall of Jerusalem.

Those in Judea flee

The second event we need to understand involves this same prophecy. There will be an end-time fulfillment of this text, but it is an urgent, emergency escape.

"Then let them which be in Judaea *flee* into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:16-21).

There are several points we should notice here. This refers to people of God in Judea. Those people of God's Church who happen to be in this geographical area when the abomination of desolation or surrounding of Jerusalem comes to pass must literally flee for their lives! They will not even be able to go back into their homes to retrieve clothing, food, Bibles or family. Those left inside the homes will have to flee in the same manner as soon as they become aware of these events.

People in this circumstance will be in such danger that they must not call attention to the fact that they are fleeing, or they will be captured and unable to escape. They must flee, run away, escape (not fly in the sky by plane) to the mountains. Jerusalem is surrounded by hills or mountains; these mountains may not be the ultimate destination, but would have to be passed through to ultimate protection.

Church fled to the wilderness

The third prophecy we must understand concerns God's Church from about A.D. 325 to about 1585. Notice Revelation

12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

This scripture describes the Church after Christ's ascension to God's throne (verse 5) and before the end-time "war in heaven" (verse 7).

In this case the woman also "fled" ("fled" here comes from a word related to the word translated "flight" in Matthew 24:20). The period mentioned is 1,260 days, which in this place prophetically refers to 1,260 years according to the "day for a year" principle found in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5.

The Church in this text flees into the "wilderness," a solitary, lonely, desert place.

Here is what happened historically:

The Church was severely persecuted during the reigns of both Emperor Diocletian and Emperor Galerius from A.D. 303 to 313, especially in the eastern provinces (see Revelation 2:10).

In A.D. 325 Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea. Catholicism became the state religion. In order for God's Church to fully obey God and put into practice their beliefs, they had to "flee" from the centers of influence and into the less-populated areas.

In the early period of this "exile" the true Christians were most numerous in what today is eastern Turkey. In later centuries they were found in scattered areas of Europe, especially in the mountains and small valleys, still away from major population centers.

Around 1585, 1,260 years later, Catholic domination of the throne in England ended. This brought to a close the period when the Church had to carry on in the wilderness, or less populated, lonely areas of Europe and Asia Minor, instead of the greater population centers where Catholic and later even Protestant churches flourished.

The fourth related event we need to understand concerns the very end time, just three and a half years before Christ's return.

The Church that flies to her place

After the war in heaven pitting Michael and his angels against the devil and his angels (Rev. 12:7), Satan is cast to the earth and starts a new, vigorous persecution against the Church (verse 13).

After this we read: "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into *her place*, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (verse 14).

Note that the woman (the Church) is given two wings of a great eagle, that she might "fly." Here the Greek word literally means "fly" (as a bird or plane does), not flee or escape by other means. She flies to "her place,"

go to "her place" (verse 14). The word *place* is singular, not plural, so it must be just *one* place.

Where is that one place? It is said to be in "the wilderness." That indicates a solitary, sparsely populated area.

This place of God's protection may quite possibly be in the area anciently occupied by Edom, Moab and Ammon, since that area will escape the final invasion of the king of the north (Dan. 11:41). Other prophecies show that this same area will later be taken over by people from the east (Ezek. 25).

Several texts, including Isaiah 16:1-4, 33:13-17 and 42:11-12, indicate that Petra, located in this wilderness area, might be the place.

The word *Petra*, which comes from a Greek word meaning "rock," is called *Sela* in Hebrew. The area is very rocky and is generally entered through a narrow pathway with precipitous rock walls on each side.

The place . . . will apparently be safe from Satan. But it will not yet be God's Kingdom. Those who go will not yet have "endured to the end." They will not yet have it made.

which could imply ownership. Here she is nourished (fed physically and spiritually) for three and a half years ("time, and times, and half a time").

Verse 17 shows that there are certain others in the Church who do not make this flight. They face not just persecution from Satan but *war* with him, and there is no indication of divine protection for them.

Are there many places?

Some people claim that there will be many "places of safety." They say God will simply protect us wherever we happen to be during the Great Tribulation. But the scripture says the Church will

The area has been inhabited at various times over past millennia and is noted for the many man-made caves cut out of its reddish rock.

If this is the place where God takes His people in the end time, it will be found to be very inhospitable. There is no water, food, facilities or conveniences here for soft people used to 20th-century conveniences and stores. The temperatures in this desert area are extreme in both summer and winter, and even from night to day.

If Petra is the place, it would certainly not be the Kingdom of God on earth (the Kingdom of God will come three and a half

years later). Petra would not be paradise. It would probably be the greatest trial ever for many of God's people.

Truly a "place of safety"?

Wherever the place, will it be a *place of safety*? It will apparently be safe from Satan. But it will not

yet be God's Kingdom. Those who go will not yet have "endured to the end." They will not yet have it made. They will still be able to sin and fall away. To some the "place of safety" could prove to be a place of danger and the place where they finally lose out on salvation.

In this place it will be necessary to live together in peace and harmony 24 hours a day for 1,260 days. Some in God's Church can't get along in peace with other members of the Church for any length of time *now*. Some husbands and wives can't get along in peace with their converted

Will You Be Protected?

When this world is plunged into the greatest time of trouble in history — into what Matthew 24:21 calls "great tribulation" — will there be any way of escape?

Probably everyone in God's Church has heard something about a "place of safety." Many have formed convictions about what this "place of safety" will be like and how they will get there.

Is there really a place of safety? If so, how does one prepare for it? Should we be doing anything now?

God pictures, in Revelation 12:14, a woman living in perilous times, persecuted by the devil. This woman is "given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

This woman symbolizes the Church of God, that group of people who are individually begotten and led by the Holy Spirit — who are living in obedience to God (Rom. 8:9, Acts 5:32). God says of His Church, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

In Luke 21:36, Christ said to His disciples, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

God's Word clearly shows that there is a place prepared for God's Church — a place where the Church will be nourished and protected from the face of the serpent during the cataclysmic events preceding Christ's Second Coming.

But just because the Church as a whole will be protected does not necessarily mean that we as individuals will be. Each of us is responsible for ourselves, to make sure that we are keeping the "word of God's patience."

Now what is the woman protected from? Revelation 12:13 shows that the woman — God's Church — will be protected from Satan's wrath, after Satan is cast down to the earth (verse 9). Satan's persecution of the Church is in the time of "great tribulation," which will be, according to Matthew 24:21, "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

For the Church to escape, it will be given the two wings to fly "into the wilderness." A wilderness, in Bible terms, is what we would call a desolate place, often mountainous. God has chosen not to reveal, directly in Scripture, the place.

If we don't know where we are going, we certainly do not know when to go there. But we will know when the time comes. Christ showed that, just as we know by the leafing of the trees that summer is nigh, we will know that the end is near when we see occurring the events He listed in Matthew 24 (Matt. 24:32-33).

When God brought ancient Israel out of Egypt, He led them out (Ex. 13:18, 21), going before them in a pillar of fire. God described this to Israel as "how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself" (Ex. 19:4).

The promised end-time flight to a place of protection is also to be on eagle's wings — the Church is to be "given two wings of a great eagle,

that she might fly into the wilderness" (Rev. 12:14). This phrase is similar, but not identical, to that in the verse above. It does not, for example, say that God will go before the Church in a literal pillar of fire this time, but it does say that the Church will go in connection with some kind of divine intervention to "the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished."

Can our flight from Satan be compared to Israel's flight from Egypt?

Satan rules this world (II Cor. 4:4) as he did ancient Egypt. We, as Christians, must come out of this evil world so we can worship God in truth. When world crises worsen and Satan is stirred up against us, he will use those who are committing the very sins we avoid and preach against us to try to destroy us.

Let's compare the attitude God required of Israel in their flight with what He requires of us today.

After God had administered all but the last of the plagues on Egypt He told the Israelites, through Moses, that their firstborn would be spared only if they prepared and kept the Passover in a certain way. How was their attitude?

Excellent!

They obeyed God, "and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they" (Ex. 12:28).

That is the kind of attitude we should have today. Do we? Are we keeping all of God's laws and following the leadership of God's modern-day apostle?

Unlike the Egyptians, the Israelites did not lose any of their firstborn sons, and found that it was easy to "spoil" the Egyptians of their jewelry. The Egyptians urged the Israel-

spouses for one day, let alone 1,260 days! Obviously some are going to have to change and overcome a lot to survive such a "trial."

How will the Church go to "her place"? Even though the scripture seems to indicate air transportation, that is not the

only possible explanation. A similar statement is found in Exodus 19:4: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." The ancient Israelites never heard of modern air transportation. They walked out of Egypt!

Just who will go to this place, away "from the face of the serpent [Satan]"?

Who will be taken?

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all

ites to pack and get out quickly. The Israelites' attitude?

Still excellent. Again, they did just as God told them to do (verse 35).

Nothing in the Scriptures tells us that when we depart for the place of protection we can take all our belongings; in fact, Jesus tells those who are specifically in Judea to flee into the mountains when they see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, and not to come down from the housetops or return from the fields to take anything (Matt. 24:15-18).

What would our attitude be if we were told to leave behind our homes, families, friends — everything? Would we go quickly and enthusiastically, or would we have unfinished business or obligations that we would just have to "sacrifice" ourselves for, and stay behind?

Suppose we heard that Mr. Armstrong and other Church leaders, together with a multitude of Church members who were standing up for the truth, were being deported — thrust out of the land.

What would our attitude be? Would we stand up, too? Would we pack our bags and join them? Or would we hold back, preferring not to get involved? When Israel finally left Egypt they were thrust out.

Being ready involves not only watching and praying, but also being fully committed to right action when the word comes. As Christ said in Luke 21:36, we must not only pray that we will be taken to a place of refuge, we must watch, pray, keep close to God and truly be *worthy* of escape.

Are we, then, ready for the place where God's Church will be protected? If not, we will not be going there — unless we realize the gravity of the times and are willing to make some major changes in our lives.

When God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, He led them into

a place where Pharaoh thought they were trapped. Pharaoh changed his mind about letting Israel go and pursued after them.

When Pharaoh and his army came into sight behind them, did the Israelites remember all God's miracles and trust God to protect them? What was their attitude at this juncture?

They lost confidence and were "sore afraid" (Ex. 14:10)! They cried out to God and turned on Moses, saying, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" (verse 11).

How will we feel if that wonderful place of protection we have imagined — comfortably prepared especially for us — turns out to be a desolate wilderness?

Will we know, in faith, that God is with us even though we don't see a pillar of cloud or fire? Or will we say: "Why did you bring us out here? This is an unwatered place with no green thing growing! It is dry and hot in the summer and cold in the winter, with rocks the size of baseballs to walk on. Shall we live in holes in the rocks with no furniture or running water, and with nothing to eat?"

Doesn't that sound just like the ancient Israelites? Hardly any of the ancient Israelites made it into the promised land because of their attitude. All through their travels they murmured and rebelled.

Are we going to let that happen to us, or will we get our attitudes right before God? It takes more than just getting them right at the last moment — we need to live in a right attitude over a period of time to form a right habit. It is what we habitually do that characterizes us and allows us to be accounted worthy.

Wherever and whatever that place will be, we can be sure that it will be a place of testing — a final exam, so to speak — where the begotten children of God will be polished and

shaped into the kind of people God will account worthy to be born into His Family.

Those who get there won't be murmurers or complainers. They will be thankful to dwell even in holes of rocks if that is what God prepares. They will sing the praises of the most high God, who led them there and protected them from the horrors that Jacob's natural descendants will have to endure.

When Satan casts "out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood" (Rev. 12:15), will we despair or trust God? Will we get together with our close friends, ponder the situation and decide what to do next?

Then, after destroying one another's faith with doubtful words, will we give up, saying: "I knew this was all for nothing — coming out into this forsaken wilderness. Why have you brought us out here to die?"

Do we think we are ready? Will we trust God to save us? If not, we must start right now — drawing close to God, watching, praying, studying and learning to say "Yes, Lord" rather than murmuring about Church decisions and policies.

"He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil, he will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him, his water will be sure. Your eyes will see the king in his beauty" (Isa. 33:15-17, Revised Standard Version).

It is to be hoped that all of us will be wherever the place is that God has prepared for His Church. By the grace of God we can make it! — *By Jack R. Elliott □*

the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

The Philadelphia church is kept from this sore trial that is going to come on all the world. This verse does not refer to any period of temptation the whole world went through during the time the original, small church at Philadelphia existed. It can only refer to the Great Tribulation, but different words are used.

This trial takes place for an

These people will become worthy through Christ's sacrifice and forgiveness of sin, and not as a result of their own "worthiness."

Matthew adds other points that we should notice (Matt. 24:42-51). Those who are ready will be doing God's Work, giving "meat in due season." They will, in other words, be doing their part in preaching the Gospel to the world as a witness.

They will be *giving* of them-

People "accounted worthy" to escape . . . will be *giving* of themselves, not trying to *get* . . .
Those . . . trying . . . to save their own lives . . . may find that such safety will not be provided . . .

"hour." Is this an indefinite time, or does it refer to the same "hour" the 10 kings receive power with the beast (Rev. 17:12)? (Compare Revelation 13:5.) Such a time of trouble can only refer to the Great Tribulation.

Luke's gospel gives further information about who will escape "all these things":

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be *accounted worthy* to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

Who are these people "accounted worthy" to escape?

Those worthy will be watching. In plain language, they will be observing world, national and local events, especially as they relate to prophecy, so that they will not be caught unawares by the snare that will trap the rest of the world.

Those worthy will be praying always — each day — not neglecting this essential part of Christian life. Their prayers of intercession, prayers for help, prayers for forgiveness and prayers for God's Kingdom to come will be continually going up to God.

selves, not trying to *get* from others. Such people who are giving their lives in God's service will save their lives:

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24).

Those who are trying desperately to save their own lives by going to a "place of safety" may find that such safety will not be provided for them.

Many Church members have expressed concern about their children and unconverted relatives. Will they be protected during this time? Other scriptures and biblical principles should make the answer clear.

Those obedient minor children (notice the example of the children under 20 years of age — Numbers 14:29) would undoubtedly be protected with their converted, worthy parents.

Unconverted spouses who are supportive of God's Church may become converted at a late date (see I Corinthians 7:16). Unconverted and antagonistic spouses would obviously not receive protection and mercy from God at such a time.

When God shows the Church's leadership what to do, some

members undoubtedly will decide that it is too early, too late, the wrong place or the wrong way to go, and so will not go.

Others will probably find that leaving family, homes, jobs, friends and personal possessions and comforts is more than they can bear, and they, too, will remain behind.

Certainly there will be much personal sadness and sorrow over those loved ones left behind. They will have to go through the greatest time of trouble in all history, the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. Going through this time will not be the picnic or holiday some seem to think it will be!

Concentrate on giving

Wherever it is, whenever it is, the place of God's protection is one where the Church will be nourished physically and spiritually for three and a half years. It has been aptly called the "place of final training." That term implies a lot of *previous* training. We need to be acquiring that training now.

Why are so many people so excited about this so-called place of safety?

In too many cases, people are looking only for an escape from the coming holocaust. They are looking for a way to save their own skins! They are trying to save their lives, but in the process they may lose them, just as Christ said.

We are supposed to *give* our lives, not try to save them. It is through the process of giving our lives that our lives may be saved.

The main lesson we all need to learn is to do the job God has given us — preaching the Gospel to the world as a witness, and getting close to God spiritually and staying there.

Forget about trying to save yourself and concentrate on helping others. Do your part and God will protect and provide for you during the soon-coming Great Tribulation. □

MINISTUDY

The Role of Righteous Angels Today

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

In Genesis 1:1 we are told that "God created the heaven and the earth." But physical matter — this earth, the stars, the galaxies — was not the first thing God created.

1. What did God create before bringing the material universe into existence? Job 38:4-7. What are these "stars"? Rev. 1:20.

In Job 38:7 "morning stars" and "sons of God" refer to angels. Notice that Revelation 12:4-9 also speaks of the angels who followed Satan's rebellion as the "stars of heaven." And in Isaiah 14:12 we learn that Lucifer, before he sinned, was called "son of the morning" or "day star," as some Bible margins render it.

Angels are individually created beings. They cannot marry and reproduce (Matt. 22:30), but are called "sons of God" because God created each angel as a separate, immortal spirit being, and in that sense is the angels' Father (Heb. 12:9).

And so we find the angels shouting for joy at the creation of the earth, long before the creation of man. They were joyful because the earth was to be their home or abode.

2. But does the Bible plainly speak of angels who sinned? II Pet. 2:4, Jude 6. How many angels remained obedient to God's government? Rev. 12:4.

The Bible indicates that two thirds of the angels remained loyal to God. They did not follow Lucifer (now Satan) in his rebellion against the government of God (Isa. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:13-15). These countless millions of angels are God's servants, helping to carry out His plan for mankind.

3. The Bible describes various types of angels whose appearance and function differ. Are there cherubim at God's throne? Ps. 99:1. And seraphim? Isa. 6:1-7. Are there also "beasts" and "elders" surrounding God's throne? Rev. 4:2-11.

Cherubim are associated with God's

throne, either transporting it about or carrying out directives from that throne, such as guarding the tree of life after Adam and Eve sinned (Gen. 3:24). Lucifer, an anointed cherub (Ezek. 28:14), was given, before Adam was created, authority to administer God's government over the earth and millions of angels.

The best description of cherubim is found in the book of Ezekiel. In chapters 1, 9 and 10, we read of cherubim transporting God's throne. They are large, powerful, apparently four-faced creatures with four wings.

The seraphim seem to bear a general resemblance to the human figure and have six wings, whereas the four "beasts" or, better translated, "living creatures" appear to have the combined features of cherubim and seraphim. No description of the 24 elders is given in the Bible except that they are dressed in white clothing, each having a golden crown on his head.

4. Does God also have angels who continually walk through the earth to observe and report to Him overall conditions? Rev. 5:6, Zech. 4:10, II Chron. 16:9. Do other untold millions of angels serve God at the throne, in heaven, from which God rules the universe? Dan. 7:9-10.

5. In Hebrews 1 and 2 the apostle Paul speaks about the difference between man and angels. Are we told that "the world to come" will not be ruled by angels? Heb. 2:5. But if we become the Spirit-born sons of God, are we promised rulership over angels? Heb. 2:6-8, I Cor. 6:2-3.

Although man has been made a little lower than the angels for now, in the future he will be placed over all of God's creation, including angels.

6. In what other way, besides composition, do angels and man differ? Heb. 1:5, 13.

Man, now lower than angels, has a destiny far higher! Man was created to be literally

MINISTUDY

begotten by God's spiritual reproductive process and then actually be born into the divine God Family. Angels are not begotten and born of God. Angels are not destined to become part of God's Family.

7. What is God's purpose for His created angels? Heb. 1:7, 14. Are Spirit-begotten Christians the "heirs" Paul is talking about? Rom. 8:16-17, Gal. 3:26-29, 4:6-7.

Angels, higher than man is now, were created to be God's servants, messengers and representatives in God's universe-ruling government. Angels are commissioned to minister to the Spirit-begotten children of God, who are His spiritual heirs.

To illustrate the primary activity of God's angels today, we might consider the status of the young son of a wealthy man. While still a child, the son is under the care of an adult servant or guardian chosen by the boy's father. The servant is older, farther advanced in knowledge, much more developed physically and mentally — but has much less potential. For when the son is mature, he will inherit his father's wealth and power. Therefore the servant, older and more mature, is only a servant ministering to the young heir. Likewise, angels are ministering to Spirit-begotten humans today.

8. Do God's children have assigned to them angels who are in close contact with the Father in heaven? Matt. 18:10.

9. Are angels powerful? II Pet. 2:11. Do the angels of God keep close to God's obedient children to protect them from accidents, calamities, plagues and other evils? Ps. 34:7, 91:1-12. Will God's angels also fight our enemies? Ps. 35:1, 5-6.

God's angels are assigned to help God's heirs along the road to eternal life — to save them from premature death and accidents, to fight their battles and to protect them from the devil and his demons.

10. Do God's holy angels have the power to sometimes manifest themselves in the physical likeness of men in order to carry out their duties? Dan. 9:21, Heb. 13:2. Also read Genesis 18 and 19:1-22.

Angels are also messengers. They appeared to Abraham, Lot, Hagar, Moses, Gideon, Elijah and many of the prophets and apostles. When God's angels manifest themselves to human beings, they do so in the form of ordinary men. Paul points out in Hebrews 13:2 that they sometimes travel

incognito on God's business, not revealing that they are angels. But righteous angels never capriciously appear and disappear merely to amuse themselves or men.

11. Why did the prophet Elisha ask God to open the eyes of his servant? II Kings 6:15-17. No wonder Elisha did not fear his enemies. He saw one of God's spirit armies upon the mountain!

12. Did God commission a special angel to watch over the children of Israel and bring them into the promised land? Ex. 23:20-23.

13. Is Michael the chief guardian of the descendants of ancient Israel? Dan. 12:1. (The Revised Standard Version renders this verse: "At that [end] time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people.")

The Bible mentions by name three angels of high rank: Lucifer (Isa. 14:12), now Satan the devil; Gabriel, who appeared to Daniel on two occasions (Dan. 8:16, 9:21), to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:19), and later to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-27); and Michael, called one of the chief princes (Dan. 10:13) and whom Jude identifies as an archangel (Jude 9). Michael is specifically assigned to minister to the 12 tribes of Israel.

14. Was Gabriel (apparently of archangel rank) sent to give Daniel understanding of visions, and even to fight spiritual battles with fallen angels ("princes") of the devil in order that God's will be carried out among the governments of men? Dan. 8:15-16, 9:21-22, 10:10-14, 20-21.

We can see that the spirit world is teeming with activity. God works (John 5:17) and His angelic servants are busy helping to carry out His will. Satan and his demons are just as busy trying to thwart and destroy the plan of God.

15. What did an angel of God do when the civil rulers put some of the apostles in prison? Acts 5:17-20. Did this enable the apostles to continue preaching the truth of God? Verse 21.

We have covered only a few of the many verses showing how God's angels serve God and God's saints today. Let's be grateful to God for sending His angels to assist in and watch over His Work and over those who are His Spirit-begotten children — His heirs soon to be born into the universe-ruling Family of God! □

Esteem Others

(Continued from page 8)

said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:12-14).

• *Donate food and clothing to the poor and destitute.* God has blessed many of us with tremendous material abundance, and He wants to see how we use it:

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:17-18).

• *Pitch in to help friends and neighbors caught in desperate straits.* Do we refuse to or, by neglect, fail to respond when we are aware of others in need?

Pitching in might involve helping a farmer gather his crops before they are damaged by inclement weather, assisting a family with household chores when either father or mother is sick or cutting firewood for a widow before winter sets in.

• *Encourage those who are downcast or heavily burdened.* As Solomon wrote, "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad" (Prov. 12:25).

Radiate enthusiasm — it's contagious. Be sincerely cheerful. Try to pick up the spirits of those around you.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).

• *Befriend children and teenagers.* Today's society is, literally, an obstacle course for young

people. Problems, temptations and wrong influences can overwhelm youths. Whether by example or by direct involvement, where possible and where wise, help steer young people in the right direction (Prov. 22:6).

• *Don't be ashamed or embarrassed to do the most menial tasks in serving your brethren in God's Church.* Christ, the supreme servant, set the example for us to follow (John 13:2-5). Is it too much to ask for us to clean the home of someone who is sick, bathe or provide transportation for an invalid or clean up after a church social?

• *Be grateful. Say "Thank you" for even the smallest things that others do for you.* A note of appreciation or a phone call to someone who renders you a service shows that you recognize and esteem his generosity. Paul wrote that we should give thanks for everything (I Thess. 5:18).

• *Help a fellow employee succeed.* Has a fellow worker fallen ill? Perhaps you could offer to handle some of his responsibilities. It may prevent him from losing his job.

• *If you're a boss, treat your employees with fairness, honesty and concern for their welfare.* Notice Paul's admonition: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven" (Col. 4:1).

A "now" command

Esteeming others better than ourselves is simply a matter of expressing love and humility and thinking of them first. It is putting their lives, comforts and interests above our own. It is the essence of true Christianity and sums up the meaning of genuine godly love.

Every command of God is a "now" command — not a suggestion to be put off until tomorrow or next week. Now is the time to humble ourselves and get down to business. Let's strive to become holy vessels in which God can live and manifest His way of life to all mankind.

Why not start right now? □

PENTECOST

(Continued from page 3)

had not been successfully employed, I would have remained totally unconscious until the resurrection. Incidentally, regardless of number of days or years till the resurrection, it would have seemed the next second to me.

God's Church made ready

And in this train of thinking, I have had to ask myself, "What has Christ been doing with my life since I was brought back, in August, 1977?" I know God called me to reestablish on earth His GOVERNMENT and the proclaiming worldwide of the GREAT COMMISSION — the now imminent KINGDOM OF GOD. All that has been my job since conversion in 1927 — and that job is not yet finished. (Although we have no way of knowing HOW FAR we must reach people in all parts of the world, God does not expect us to reach every human on earth with His message, and we may be closer to what He expects than we think.)

But my efforts as Christ's apostle, since the heart failure, have been almost wholly devoted to preparing God's Church — the spiritual temple to which Christ will come.

Repeatedly the *Good News* headlines have blared forth, "And now, CHRIST SETS (this, that and other thing) BACK ON THE TRACK."

The living Christ as HEAD of this Church has been using His chosen apostle to TURN HIS CHURCH AROUND — set it back on GOD's track!

I could write much more along this line, but I want to leave that thought with you now.

As we come to God's Feast of Firstfruits (Pentecost), let us bear forcibly in mind we in God's Church must be MADE READY — for Christ is coming SOON — and we are NOT YET FULLY READY to be instantly changed and caught up to meet our Lord as He comes in clouds! □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

PART IN MAKING THIS A BETTER WORLD! They want to BE right — but they don't want to DO right. So they grasp the straw that makes the lying and false PROMISES of producing the solution. But communism is only another IDEA OF MAN BASED ON HUMAN NATURE. It is a theoretical WAY that would destroy what little good there might be in this world's society. It is the most false of false hopes.

But YOU can have a part in actually bringing PEACE, happiness, joy and abundance to humanity. God Almighty is *going to do it* — whether or not you have a part in it! But He is not going to do it alone. He is going to take certain human beings, born in the very LIKENESS of God, who REPENT of their carnal human nature — who cry out to God to CHANGE that nature — and give them the matchless supreme GIFT of His divine LOVE that will travel THE WAY toward peace, happiness and joy.

These are they who, through real repentance of what they are as well as what they have done, through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as well as in His resurrected LIFE and POWER, are forgiven their guilty past, given contact with God, *changed, converted*, receiving HIS HOLY SPIRIT, being begotten as HIS CHILDREN, receiving the DIVINE nature.

In other words, they REPENT of human nature — they REPENT of hostility to authority — of resentment against God's law. They SURRENDER unconditionally to God, and wholeheartedly WANT Him to rule in their lives.

They CHANGE (through God's power given by His grace) from rebellion to submission — from SELF-centeredness to GOD-centeredness. They let Jesus Christ (in Spirit) come into their lives and actually live their lives for them (Gal. 2:20).

They change from THE WAY that has brought all the curses upon this unhappy world to THE WAY that will bring a brilliant,

joyous UTOPIA to earth in a very few years when God sends the living Jesus Christ in all power and glory to RULE ALL NATIONS and bring the happy, peaceful WORLD TOMORROW!

This CHANGE is conversion. This is what it means to *become* a Christian.

A Christian is NOT merely one who PROFESSES Christ. God's own instruction to us — the Bible — says that if one has not received God's Holy Spirit, he is NONE of His — he is NOT a Christian (Rom. 8:9). God gives His Holy Spirit ONLY to them who OBEY Him (Acts 5:32). This implants within the mind the *divine nature* — it means a CHANGED MIND!

But it does *not* remove the HUMAN nature. The *mind* governs whether the converted Christian now follows the pulls, the impulses, the desires of human nature, or whether he resists them and is LED BY the newly received divine nature. "As many as are LED BY the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). But one's *human* nature cries out to be satisfied — does not like to be repressed.

Just *receiving* God's Spirit is not enough. One must be LED by God's Spirit.

His Spirit opens the mind to UNDERSTANDING of spiritual truth, and the KNOWLEDGE of God's law. It opens the mind to THE WAY one should follow. God's Spirit also is the love of God — God's own divine love — flooding into the human heart, and flowing on out in love to God and love to neighbor.

One must therefore GROW in spiritual knowledge and in God's grace (II Pet. 3:18). He must become a DOER of God's law — actually LIVING in THE WAY of peace and happiness and joy.

This means he must OVERCOME his own carnal nature, his old habits, the temptations of the world — HE MUST BE CHANGED! He must develop toward perfect spiritual and righteous CHARACTER. The real Christian is undergoing a life of TRAINING to become a RULER in God's Kingdom — in the happy and peaceful WORLD TOMORROW.

One cannot learn everything in a minute, a day or a year. One does not become perfect at one jump. It is a continuous PROCESS. No Christian becomes perfect at the very beginning. He does not overcome or root out all the sins, the wrong habits, all at once. He must do it little by little.

But, "he that overcometh, and keepeth MY WORKS unto the end," says Jesus Christ, "to him will I give power over THE NATIONS: AND HE SHALL RULE THEM" (Rev. 2:26-27).

WHY do THE NATIONS of this earth need ruling by Christ and those trained under a Christian life?

Because all the unhappiness — everything WRONG with this world — has come from living THE WAY of hostility to God's law and GOD's government. Because the only way this world can have PEACE, PROSPERITY, HAPPINESS is to be forced to build a society based on THE WAY that produces these desired blessings.

If you have started on THAT RIGHT WAY, don't get discouraged because you have slipped and fallen down along the road a few times. Get up and KEEP GOING. Even if you have sinned and are truly sorry, you can repent and Christ is your High Priest to forgive. Read and study I John 1:7-10 and 2:1-2. This is written to converted CHRISTIANS.

At the time of Christ's coming, the dead in Christ will be resurrected and rise to meet the descending Christ in the air. At that instant those *living* who have been thus *changed*, begotten by God's Spirit, will be changed in composition, from mortal to immortal — from matter to spirit — from human to divine.

THEY are then to RULE with and under the all-powerful, living Christ, until ALL NATIONS beat their swords into plowshares and PEACE shines forth on this weary earth!

Jesus Christ taught His followers to PRAY: "THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH" (Matt. 6:10)! How about it? Shall we pray that prayer?

I DO! □

Salvation?

(Continued from page 11)

gave it to him so that he would be begotten as a child of God, but now notice verses 15 through 17:

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." That included this tree of life and immortality. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Man must CHOOSE

Man possessed FREE MORAL AGENCY. God made man a FREE MORAL AGENT. Man had to CHOOSE. The very fact that God said, "in the day that thou eatest thereof" — the very thing God condemned and forbade him to partake of — means that God allowed him to do it.

God said later to His people, "I have set before you life and death," the right way of living, and the wrong way, "blessings and curses." He said to man, "CHOOSE!" He commanded the man to choose the right way, but He allows man to choose disobedience and the wrong way. That's what God allows, and that is precisely what man has chosen.

God is the Supreme Ruler! God has decreed, as the Supreme Ruler, that man must CHOOSE. Man must make his own choice whether to obey God — whether to OBEY the laws that God set in motion — or whether to disobey.

God is the Creator, not only of the LIFE of man and animals, but God is the Creator of force, and of energy and of every LAW that exists.

God's spiritual law

God also set spiritual laws in motion that regulate man's happiness, that regulate man's relationship with his Maker, with his Creator and with his neighbors.

That law was given in LOVE, and that law is LOVE. It's the very essence of love. It is the very principle of God's nature. It is love toward God, so that we can have the blessings of God, and the things that we need to receive from God. It is love toward our neighbor so we'll be kept in a right relationship with our neighbors, and have peace and be happy.

That's the law that God commanded man to obey. And when man breaks that law, man brings heartaches and headaches, and he brings every kind of wretchedness and unhappiness that this world

God is the Supreme Ruler! God has decreed, as the Supreme Ruler, that man must CHOOSE. Man must make his own choice whether to obey God — whether to OBEY the laws that God set in motion — or whether to DISobey.

has reaped because of its disobedience to God.

Adam chose disobedience. Mankind ever since has chosen DISOBEDIENCE. Adam, our first parent, the first created man, was driven out of the garden of Eden and away from access to that tree of life.

Now turn to Genesis 3:22-24: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, LEST he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, AND LIVE FOR EVER . . ." If man had taken of that tree, he would have lived forever.

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove

out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way." Why? "To keep the way of the tree of life" — lest he go back and gain immortality.

The man did not have immortality. He did not have eternal life. He was born subject to death. God said that when he took of that wrong tree, he would die, and men have been dying ever since.

World is cut off from God

From that very minute mortal man was cut off from contact with God! He was cut off from access to the Spirit of God and the gift of eternal life!

God imparted precious and sacred knowledge to the first man, knowledge of what man is, knowledge of God and contact with the Creator. But observe: Man rejected God's knowledge — and God allowed man to go his own way. He has been allowing it ever since.

God set apart 6,000 years for man to go his own way. That 6,000 years is just about up! But we're still rebelling against God, and the way of God, and the way that would bring us peace, happiness, joy and everything that the human heart really wants and desires.

Later, humans multiplied and they spread out into different nations — cut off from God and from knowledge about the possibility of eternal life. Man then began to evolve HIS own religions, his own ideas. Man evolved and set in motion his own pattern of society — and his own kinds of governments — all cut off from God!

Man set up ways on this earth and a civilization diametrically contrary to the ways of God — ways that would have brought peace to the world and happiness and prosperity to all of the individuals in the world.

You people in the many different nations reading *The Good News of the World Tomorrow* —

you, too, are the children of this first man and this first woman, no matter what your nationality or your race. You, too, are mortal humans who were put here on this earth by the one Creator God. You, too, were born *cut off* from God and from the *truth* about life, *cut off* from the way of peace, the way to happiness and the *gift* of eternal life.

About 4,000 years after Adam, God sent His own begotten Son, begotten by God as a human son, born of the virgin Mary. This Son of God was also a son of man, because He was born of a human woman. Jesus Christ was human. But Jesus had within Him that which Adam had REJECTED, and had been separated from — the HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD!

What is the Holy Spirit?

WHAT is this Holy Spirit that comes from God?

It is the very SPIRIT — the very LIFE — the very essence of GOD the CREATOR! God, according to John 4:24, *is* a SPIRIT, but man is mortal. Man is flesh. God is composed of spirit.

Spirit is not like matter. Man is composed of matter. Matter occupies a definite amount of physical space, and has weight. But God's Spirit emanates from Him like the air — like space. It is force, it is power, it is life, it is character!

When God's Spirit, emanating from the very PERSON of God, enters into a man, it IMPREGNATES that man with the very LIFE of GOD — it plants within that man or woman the divine nature of God, to develop the very character of God, until we, through His Spirit, become LIKE God — until we think as God thinks — until we see things with the same attitude as God sees them, and we act as God acts.

Christ died in your stead

Jesus Christ HAD the Spirit of the living GOD! And Jesus Christ was wholly OBEDIENT to the inexorable SPIRITUAL LAWS that God had set in motion. These laws are

spiritual PRINCIPLES that regulate man's relationships and his happiness! Never once did Jesus Christ disobey, though He was tempted in every way as you and I. Never once did He sin — that is, never once did He transgress God's spiritual law. Never did He bring the penalty — *eternal death* — upon Himself.

Therefore, He was able to take on Himself *your* penalty and to *pay it in your stead!*

Jesus Christ had received the gift of eternal life from God the FATHER! He did not *have* to die because of any penalty that He

If and when you come to realize that sin is **WRONG** . . . and to REPENT of your disobedience . . . then you may . . . accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior . . . and by *your faith* in His blood and His resurrection, your guilty past is forgiven.

had incurred or brought on Himself.

But because He loved *all* mankind — because of His great love for YOU, even before you were born — He GAVE His life for YOU. He permitted misguided men to nail Him to a cross — to pierce His side. He bled to death — dying IN YOUR STEAD, that by HIS SHED BLOOD ON THE CROSS, *your* transgressions of the LAWS OF GOD might be FORGIVEN! Jesus Christ had to die because you have transgressed the laws of God.

How to be saved

Consequently, if and when you come to realize that sin is **WRONG** — and that God's laws are **RIGHT** and for *your GOOD* — and to

REPENT of your disobedience of the Supreme CREATOR GOD — to fully SURRENDER to Him, and henceforth to be OBEDIENT to Him and to His laws, *then* you may in living FAITH accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior from your own folly — and by *your faith* in His blood and His resurrection, your guilty past is forgiven. The penalty that you have incurred is paid in full by your Savior, Jesus Christ.

You are then *justified* of your guilty past, and since there is no longer any disobedience to cut you off from God, you are reconciled to God the Creator. Contact with Him is established and thereupon *God has PROMISED you the gift of His Holy Spirit.* He has promised that He will implant within YOUR MIND *His* Spirit — His LIFE — HIS NATURE — HIS ATTITUDE — His very CHARACTER!

By the very essence of the Holy Spirit of God, you then become a BEGOTTEN CHILD of the living Creator GOD!

Even then, you are still human. You still have your old human nature, also, and it will strive against this new nature of God that He has now implanted within you. You're not yet perfect as God is perfect.

You are now only prepared to start to live a NEW life of GROWING spiritually — of DEVELOPING the very character of God — of *resisting* all the desires and impulses of the flesh, which your newly SPIRIT-led mind will reveal to you are wrong and in disobedience of the laws of GOD.

You now start a life of growing daily into closer contact with God through daily PRAYER to Him — and through daily BIBLE STUDY of His inspired revelation of knowledge and of truth, the Holy Bible. You will encounter troubles, problems, trials and tests to try you, to develop CHARACTER within you.

But now you will be close to GOD — and you can take all of these troubles to Him in prayer — and He will give you wisdom

to know what to do — He will even change circumstances to bring you out of them. He will give you strength and power for deliverance and for mastery.

Mortal man, cut off from God and the KNOWLEDGE that only God can reveal, has created his own religions, in which he has tried to assure himself that he already has immortality. Men, separated from the real truth that only GOD can reveal, originated the false idea of the immortality of the soul. *There is no such idea to be found anywhere in the one Book through which God Almighty reveals the truth to mankind!*

Man is MORTAL, and the most certain thing in mortal life is that we shall DIE, unless we turn to GOD, repent of transgressing His ways of life, surrender unconditionally to Him, accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior and gain contact with God the Father through Him!

Now, how are we to be saved?

KEEP the commandments!

A young man came to Jesus and said, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" And Jesus said, "If thou wilt enter into life" — if you want to inherit eternal life — "*keep the commandments*" (Matt. 19:16-17).

Peter said that the way is first to REPENT, AND THEN BE BAPTIZED, signifying faith in Christ. Baptism is the outward expression of that inner faith in Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. After baptism you are promised that you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Romans 8:11 promises that if the Holy Spirit dwells in you, God the Father, who raised up Christ from the dead, will also immortalize, or make immortal, your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

Turn now to I John 3:1, 2: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons

of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." This is speaking of real Christians. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God" — yes, already begotten as sons of God when we receive His Spirit — "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Do you know that Jesus Christ is now glorified in heaven as very God? His face shines like the sun in full strength. His eyes like flames of fire. We are to be like Him. "Our vile body [is to be]

After baptism you are promised that you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Romans 8:11 promises that if the Holy Spirit dwells in you, God the Father, who raised up Christ from the dead, will also immortalize, or make immortal, your mortal bodies . . .

fashioned like unto his glorious body" — to be glorified fully with Him, to enter into the God Family, the very Family of God, the Kingdom of God, and be born by a resurrection into that Kingdom (Phil. 3:21). That is what salvation means. That is how you get it.

These are the plain WHYS and WHEREFORES of SALVATION.

Personal counsel

If YOU are ready to really REPENT of your disobedience to GOD, to HIS SPIRITUAL LAW — if you are now ready to SURRENDER YOUR WILL to God, and you want to become one of HIS CHILDREN — if you are now ready to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior in real living FAITH and

live a life of OBEDIENCE, write and tell me.

We have dedicated, consecrated, converted, fully instructed and trained, ordained MINISTERS in all parts of the world — available to call on you, visit you in your home, answer your questions, explain the Bible to you — IF YOU REQUEST IT! But none of them will EVER call on you, unless YOU of your own free will request it! Paul had visited the elders (ministers) at Ephesus from house to house — BUT, regarding the general public, Jesus said, "Go NOT from house to house" (Luke 10:7).

Neither Jesus nor Peter nor Paul nor any of the original true apostles ever approached people and personally URGED conversion on them. God has made every human a FREE MORAL AGENT. God compels each to MAKE HIS OWN DECISION, and the true GOD will never force you to be converted.

But if you, of your own volition, want to know MORE about the Bible — if you'd like to ask questions about it — why not write to the editor and request a personal visit? We may be able to have one of God's own ministers call on you quite soon. And let me suggest that you jot down on paper the questions you are going to want to ask. I've learned, personally, by nearly 55 years' experience, that you'll forget them unless you do.

Hundreds and hundreds — yes, thousands upon thousands — are being converted — their lives CHANGED — by this WORK OF GOD, through *The World Tomorrow* broadcast worldwide, through *The Plain Truth*, the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course, through this magazine and other vital free literature we send upon request.

But if you have any questions about the Bible or the Christian LIFE, write me. I cannot call and visit with you personally any more (as I used to do and wish I still could), but God has now given me many truly called and chosen men who CAN. □

TEST YOURSELF:

A MONTHLY BOOKLET **QUIZ**

NUMBER

1

• What Do You Mean... Salvation?

- What is salvation — a place? A destination? A condition? A reward?
- Where would you turn in your Bible to find what salvation is?
- When do you receive salvation?
- Jesus Christ talked about an inheritance prepared from the foundation of the world. What is this inheritance?
- At conversion, are you an inheritor or an heir or what?
- What are the two things you must do to gain contact with God?
- Then what does God do?

Few subjects have caused as much confusion among professing Christians as salvation. Even theologians, it seems, can't explain it! Are you able to correctly answer all the questions above? Why not get out and reread our booklet, *What Do You Mean... Salvation?* Or, if you haven't read it, you may request a free copy by using the literature request card inside this issue or by writing to the *Good News* office at the address nearest you.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN... SALVATION?

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Pasadena, Calif.
Permit No. 703