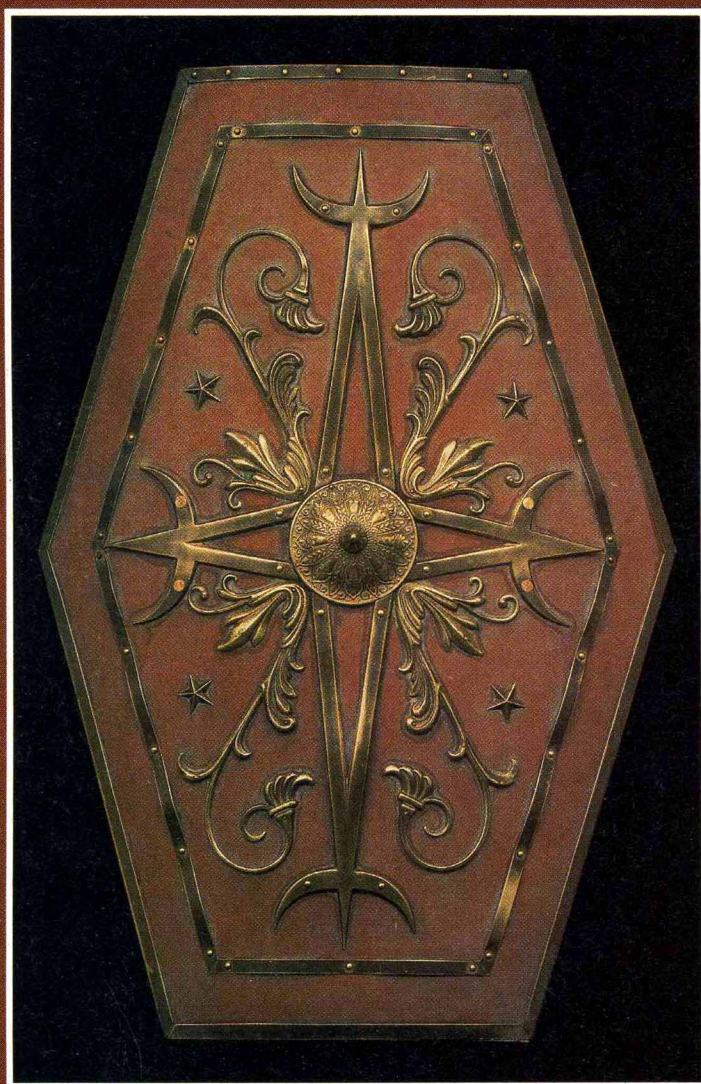


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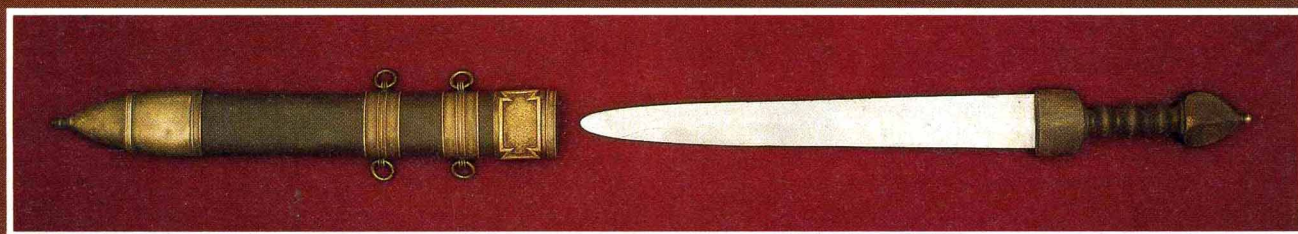
**CHRIST
READYING CHURCH**
by Herbert W. Armstrong See Page 3

June / July 1979



THE CHRISTIAN'S DEFENSE:

'Take on the
Armour of God'



The Good News

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COVER: The shield, helmet and sword from the Roman period symbolize the spiritual armor of God mentioned in Ephesians 6. Photos by Warren Watson.

Letters

Timely cover

To comment on the cover of the March, 1979, *Good News*.

First of all, the outline is in royal purple. Next I see the unleavened bread, then the wine and pause to reflect on what they mean! Then I see the Bible opened to I Corinthians 11, where the Passover service is discussed. Truly an outstanding cover for this season of the year!

Robert Nickamp
Carmi, Ill.

Suggestions

A topic I'd like to see in "Ministudy" is *meditation* in a how-to, and what-to, context . . .

Generally I really like new *GN*. I do *not* appreciate reprinting verbatim Mr. Armstrong's excellent, helpful articles, which were already in *Worldwide News*.

Cal Smith
Wichita, Kan.

Herbert W. Armstrong's articles are many times motivated by some current event or condition in the world or within the Church. The Worldwide News, which is printed biweekly, is used to convey these timely messages quickly to the brethren.

The article is then published, many times with the addition of full-color photos, in The Good News. This procedure also benefits those co-workers who do not regularly receive the WN.

Joyfully received

Thank you for the article in the (March, 1979) *Good News*, "The Fruits of the Spirit: Joy." I really needed that, and it has helped me a great deal. Please give my personal thanks to Dibar Apar-tian (who wrote the article).

Debora Byrd
Upper Darby, Pa.

For the first time

We appreciate and enjoy *The Good News* magazine. The March issue is especially good. The article on the Passover and Unleavened Bread really impressed me.

For the first time I came to understand the meaning of the Passover. As I read it, everything seemed so clear and understandable. I also appreciate having the recipes too.

Esther Gregory
Conroe, Tex.

Gospel to Japanese Leaders

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Mr. Armstrong continues proclaiming the Gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD in nations around the world.

For some 20 months, due to total heart failure in August, 1977, I was prevented from proclaiming Christ's Gospel in person in the far-flung nations around the world.

But God has been with me. There has been NO diminishing of the vital faculties, especially of mind. And while I was having for the time to defer the ORDEAL of physically demanding worldwide travel, I have been able to WRITE almost faster than you brethren can read and to continue FULL LEADERSHIP of God's Work here on earth.

I want to mention a point we were discussing here in the hotel suite yesterday afternoon. I have not realized it before. Probably *you* have not realized

it. But the United States is the ONLY nation on earth that retires people at age 60 or 65. In the United States most have come to suppose that people naturally begin to lose their mental faculties even as early as 55.

WHY?

This general national assumption is NOT TRUE! Many large corporations have adopted a RETIREMENT POLICY that all employees, and even executives, *must* retire at age 65 — and some at age 60. The same is true of schoolteachers.

I even retired one man at age 55 on his urgent request, although in a manner that did not increase the Work's expenses, even though we had to hire another to take his place. But he had worked for us 25 years. I remember he wanted to travel — not to other parts of the world — but to see other parts of the United States, as he phrased it, "before I have to



meet my Maker." In other words, even at age 55 this man was THINKING, in his mind, that he was approaching "the age of death."

The age of wisdom

WHY do Americans think that way? Here in Japan a man of 65 is just coming into the age of the BEGINNING of wisdom! A man in his 80s is not regarded as old or senile, but as more mature — of higher stature — of having a BETTER mind, of attaining to the "age of wisdom."

But I remember one of my grandmothers at age 55. In those days, when I was probably 5 or 6 years old, all women wore hats outdoors. Young women had rather decorative hats, with artificial roses, or objects of bright colors and with a sophisticated STYLE. Hats were not intended to cover or keep warm the head — but to be an added DECORATION. But by 55 or maybe younger, all women wore "old ladies" bonnets. They were shaped like an old covered wagon and always black, as were their clothes. They dressed in the style that all "old women" dressed. By their dress as

Japanese Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira greets Herbert W. Armstrong on his return to Japan, left, in the presence of Congressman Kasio Shionoya and Stanley Rader. Above: Senior Congressman Ide shares the banquet table with Mr. Armstrong during a dinner in his honor April 25.





well as their manner, they proclaimed loudly, I am OLD. I expect to die right away. My days of usefulness are over.

But times did change. Although I remember that both my grandmothers wore old-ladies bonnets and dressed like old women, my mother did not. My mother was 95½ when she died, and right up to the day of her death, in her 90s, she dressed like a younger woman, or at least like a middle-aged woman. Many of our readers will remember her. And at age 95 she was still happy, jolly and had a good sense of humor.

Somehow, between the generation of her mother and her own generation, women had at least begun to dispose of the custom of wearing old-ladies bonnets and somber and unattractive clothes.

12 Japanese sons

But back to what I started. There must have been 250 or 300 or more at the banquet last night. It was held in a large banquet room at this hotel (the Imperial), and this is a large

hotel with several private dining rooms. Many of the elite congressmen (members of the Diet — the Japanese congress or parliament) who call themselves my “Japanese sons” were there. The speakers’ table seated at least a dozen, some of whom spoke briefly, all of whom stood one at a time to be introduced. All others, including wives, were seated at many round tables — 10 or 12 seated at each table.

All who spoke were saying complimentary things about me. During the evening a few other members of the Japanese Diet said they each wanted to be counted as one of my Japanese sons, all of whom are important Diet members — the number of my Japanese sons in the Diet is now 12.

All speeches were translated. If a Japanese official spoke briefly, he spoke, of course, in Japanese, but after every sentence the interpreter translated the sentence into English. And vice versa. Of course the whole thing was in my honor, so I was the chief speaker. Both Stanley Rader and Osamo Gotoh spoke briefly.

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong are welcomed by Dr. Makato Fujita, a Waseda University official, and Senator Toshio Yamaguchi at the April 25 dinner in the Imperial Hotel.

I had said earlier that I was not going to plan ahead what to say, or speak from any notes. I knew the living Christ would put into my mind what I should say — and He did!

There were at least a half dozen ambassadors representing other nations present (with their wives). So, I knew that a number of different religions were represented.

Suppose you were to be asked to stand up and speak to some 300 highly distinguished people, some believing the Buddhist, Shintoist, Islamic or Taoist religions, not knowing anything about the true GOD, and you knew that Jesus Christ wanted you to

(Continued on page 23)

Now Christ Moves Swiftly to Make Church Ready!

It IS later than we think! And this Church is not yet ready! Christ calls us to HEED, NOW!

By Herbert W. Armstrong

AT THE TIME of Christ's return to earth in supreme power and glory, God's Word says to us, "*Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready*" (Rev. 19:7).

The very much alive Jesus Christ is coming to marry His Church. But, brethren, WE ARE NOT READY, and it's high time we WAKE UP and begin to realize that fact! I know that God has now awakened *me* to realize it, and has laid on me the URGENCY of sounding the warning with all the power He gives me!

A chosen generation

Brethren, we are DIFFERENT from other people! *You are different* from your next-door neighbor! God says we are a *different* people.

"But," He says through Peter, "ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, *a peculiar people*; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath *called you* out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

There is a WHOLE DYNAMIC MIND-JARRING SERMON IN THAT ONE VERSE!

LISTEN! HEED! Jesus said, "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him*" (John 6:44). Probably your next-door neighbor has not been called by God. If so, he simply cannot UNDERSTAND what you can — what Christ has opened your mind to see.

When God drove Adam and Eve

out of the Garden of Eden, He CLOSED the entrance so NONE but the *precious FEW specially called* could have access to God's Holy Spirit, symbolized by the "tree of life."

God has called NO ONE JUST to receive salvation (eternal life). Everyone God has called has been called for a special purpose preparatory for His KINGDOM.

I wonder how many — if ANY — of our brethren understand that GOD WAS NOT TRYING TO "SAVE" THE WORLD in the years between Adam and Noah! Instead of SAVING the world in Noah's day, GOD CAUSED ALL TO BE DROWNED EXCEPT THE EIGHT IN NOAH'S ARK! Of course they will be brought back to mortal physical life in the Great White Throne Judgment. Then they may be saved and given eternal life if they repent, turn to GOD'S WAY OF LOVE, PEACE AND ETERNAL LIFE.

Jesus Christ did not come to save the world over 1,900 years ago. He did not plead with ANY, as Billy Graham does, to "make their decision for Christ," or to "give their hearts to Him." The living Christ has NOT been trying to save the world since. He is NOT trying to save it today, Billy Graham and hundreds of other evangelists to the contrary notwithstanding!

Called for a special purpose

But God has called a VERY FEW for a SPECIAL PURPOSE! And everyone He did call — Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc., was called for a SPECIAL MISSION preparing for the KINGDOM OF GOD! *YOU* were called for a very SPECIAL PURPOSE — not JUST for salvation and eternal life, but for a part in backing Christ's apostle preparing for the KINGDOM.

What about the next-door neighbor who has not been called? He simply is not being judged *as you are*. He will be called when he has no Satan to resist and overcome, *but* he probably will not be called to reign or rule with Christ, either.

Look again at the passage in I Peter 2:9, "Ye are a CHOSEN generation." God has specially called and chosen *you*! And WHY? To stand loyally behind Christ's apostle and HELP in whatever way He opens to you in spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom of God! Yes, you were specially called for a JOB to do! Not JUST to "get saved" — to receive eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

I sometimes wonder how many of you really comprehend what I have so many times said! God is NOT calling everybody to salvation — *YET!* Have not all, without realizing it, simply accepted the one MOST GENERALLY BELIEVED *FALSE TEACHING* — that God is now desperately trying to get everybody "saved"? That this is the ONLY "day of salvation" — that after Christ returns IT WILL BE TOO LATE?

I think all Protestant churches — Methodist (if not modernist), Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregationalists, Church of Christ — all of them, believe *now* is the *only* day of salvation.

But if Jesus told the truth when He said, "*NO MAN CAN COME TO ME, except the Father which hath sent me draw him*" (John 6:44), then most — those uncalled by God — simply CAN'T come to Christ *now*, and there is no other way to salvation and eternal life, *EXCEPT through Jesus Christ!*

Let me dwell a bit on that wonder-
(Continued on page 24)

A CORRECTION

By Herbert W. Armstrong

In a recent issue of *The Good News* I mentioned that often I have said to the public, on the air or in *The Plain Truth*, "Don't believe what I say because I say it, but look into your own Bible and believe what you see there."

But then I said in this article that I do not say that to our own members. I think some may have gotten the idea I said members should not read the Bible or even read over what I have said to better understand by seeing it all in context for themselves.

Apparently some got the idea I said nonmembers must believe only what THEY SEE FOR THEMSELVES in the Bible, but that members must NOT read the Bible or believe it, but believe ONLY WHAT I say or write. Of course I did not mean that.

What I did mean is that members should have checked up in the Bible and assured themselves what God's Church teaches is true *BEFORE* being baptized and coming into the Church. What I meant was that members should not *disbelieve* everything we teach and read the Bible *for the purpose* of trying to prove that we teach falsely.

I suppose the reason that came to mind is that we did have, a few years ago, a group of self-professed "intellectuals" who started a "doctrinal committee," when their sole PURPOSE was to HARM God's Church by trying to MISUSE the Bible and MISinterpret it to try to convince others that the Church taught falsely — when in fact, this is the ONLY church on earth that DOES have the TRUTH!

Bible study encouraged

Let me make it crystal CLEAR! I encourage nonmembers to SEE the truth for themselves in their own Bibles. But, after one becomes a MEMBER, he is supposed to *know* we have the truth. He has checked up — he has seen it in his own Bible. There-

fore I do NOT encourage members to QUESTION all over again what we preach.

I most certainly have always encouraged all members to read and study the Bible continually — to increase their own knowledge and understanding — but NOT to deliberately try to DISAGREE with the Church and study *for the PURPOSE* of disagreeing and causing dissension and division in the Church.

But, in continuous Bible study to ADD to one's store of biblical knowledge, if one comes across a knowledge of something new to the Church — something not proclaimed or preached in the Church, he may go to his local pastor with it, or he may contact headquarters at Pasadena or he may bring it personally to me.

If it is either contrary to Church doctrine or something in ADDITION to Church doctrine, he MAY NOT spread it to other lay members. IF his new understanding is correct and biblical, it will be brought to me personally, even though he takes it first to his local minister or one in Pastoral Administration at Pasadena. And God has always seen to it that my mind is open and able to see NEW TRUTH, or to admit ERROR if PROVED and then correct it.

I know many will say Herbert Armstrong is human and subject to being prejudiced or closed-minded. I am human all right, but the living CHRIST has chosen me and MADE ME HIS APOSTLE. He is the DIVINE Head of this Church. Do you not think *HE*, the ALMIGHTY Christ, has power to see that my mind will be opened to either new truth or to correct error? Otherwise YOU QUESTION JESUS CHRIST!

Church is a spiritual organism

REMEMBER, this Church may be made up of mortal humans, of which YOU are one and I am one. But this Church of God is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM — *not* a humanly organized and purely humanly led and influenced

operation of MAN, started BY man, run by man!

I'm afraid that is the point many of us have not realized. I shall write a separate article on that subject.

Those of us IN God's Church are HUMAN. But God has called each one of us or else we should never have been accepted into this holy fellowship. Our call has come from GOD! The HOLY SPIRIT of God has actually entered into each of us, or else we do not belong in this Church. It is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, not a human organization, though it is well ORGANIZED ON GOD'S PATTERN and not as other purely human organizations.

Now, do you not, then, understand that the living CHRIST has PUT HIS POWER, by the Holy Spirit, into His own chosen apostle, so that He is able to open His apostle's mind to either new truth — as He has done repeatedly for 52 years — OR to recognize and purge out ERROR? Does CHRIST have that power — or do you question *His* power? It is not my human goodness — for that is nothing to brag about. I am talking about the LIVING JESUS' power and ability!

You must study the Bible

SO UNDERSTAND. I certainly did not mean to say those in the Church must not study the Bible. Indeed everyone MUST! What I did mean is, if ever you think you see in your Bible that what I, or the Church, teach is in error — or if you see a biblical TRUTH the Church does NOT preach, then YOU MUST NOT MENTION THAT TO ANY OTHER MEMBER, OR TO ANYONE EXCEPT YOUR LOCAL PASTOR, OR WRITE TO THE PASADENA OFFICE OR DIRECT TO ME.

Jesus Christ, through His POWER of the Holy Spirit, is guiding and ruling and heading this Church. It is ENERGIZED by a POWER that is MILLIONS OF TIMES GREATER THAN A HYDROGEN BOMB — yet this supreme POWER of God's Holy Spirit is NOT SEEN — therefore the world knows NOTHING OF IT! □

ENLIST

IN THE ARMY OF GOD

By Raymond McNair

Satan the devil is your adversary. He is the one who seeks to destroy God's Church, and you along with it. Be prepared to fight and win in the battle for spiritual survival.

"This charge I commit unto you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on you, that you by them might war a good warfare" (I Tim. 1:18, paraphrased).

Paul knew that the Christian, both in Paul's day and throughout coming generations, would be involved in many struggles and battles with evil. That's why he told Timothy to wage a good warfare.

"Therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier" (II Tim. 2:3-4, paraphrased).

Not a new thing

War is not a new thing to the Church of God. Again and again in the Bible the analogy of God's people being involved in war is drawn. The Church has always been in a war, though we wrestle not against human beings. Our real struggle is against the spiritual forces that Satan marshals against us in trying to discredit or to destroy the very Work of God.

Yet we know that Christ has said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). God's Church will continue throughout every age. But will you continue with it? That is the crucial question.

To insure that you will not become a

casualty in the monumental battle against Satan's demonic kingdom, you should enlist in the army of God.

But first, before you can be accepted in any army, you must go through a battery of tests to determine your physical and mental fitness.

God wants those who really believe in the cause; those who are strong enough to begin the journey and those who are strong enough to endure, with God's help, right through to the end.

Some who have sat in God's Church have thrown the precious knowledge of God's truth away. They're absent without leave, AWOL from God's Church, walking on dangerous ground. So it's important that you be tested first.

Basic training

Then let's assume you are chosen to serve. Even though you have passed the initial test, you're still a green recruit. The next step is basic training.

Two of the basics in this training are proper nourishment — both physical and mental — and exercise. The Bible shows that the diet of the Christian soldier is the Word of God. You're to be fed on the milk and the meat of the Word. And you must exercise discipline in your study of the Bible and in your prayers. Study diligently and pray frequently in order to remain spiritually strong.

While in basic training, you will learn to use weapons. An alert recruit will learn everything he or she can about the Christian soldier's weapons and be able to use them effectively. These weapons are described in Ephesians 6 (see article, page 27).

Another lesson you as a recruit must learn is how to take orders. When your commanders tell you, "Go in this direction," you will go in that direction. Each man can't charge off with his bayonet, running in whatever direction *he* chooses. An army, in order to win its battles, has to be unified. It is directed from the top, as is God's army.

Upon completion of basic training the recruit is ready for a tour of duty. The use of weapons is firmly understood, and the individual is at the peak of his or her mental and physical condition and, in the case of God's army, is full of the Holy Spirit.

Be not afraid

At that point, those things that cannot be taught in basic training or learned from a book must come into play. Courage, for example. In Deuteronomy 20:1, God said to the people of Israel: "When you go out to battle against your enemies, and you see horses, and chariots, and a people more than you (in numbers), be not afraid of them: for the Lord your God is with you, who brought you up out of

(Continued on page 26)

Do you want to be loved and understood? Of course you do! Everybody does. But many people live and die without ever having felt truly loved and understood. Why? What's the reason for this paradox?

According to statistics, a great number of those over 55 years of age do not participate in any of the activities of their community. They virtually have no social life. They are, for various reasons, social outcasts!

Why? Why should it be so? Does life stop at 55? Is seclusion from society a natural offshoot of growing old? Why should old age spell loneliness? A person doesn't only die when his heart stops beating, he also dies when he has nothing to live for. Growing old, for many people, means recalling with nostalgia pleasant moments of the past, complaining about the present and worrying about the future.

A few decades ago, it was said that old age was when you had gold in your mouth, silver in your hands and lead in your feet. In these inflationary times, this is no longer the case. Old age, for too many, is when they only have lead in their feet.

When you shed tears over the good old days, you actually shed tears over your inability to cope with the present. But it doesn't help. Pitying yourself won't solve your problems. It cannot change anything. Although life is a struggle for everyone, particularly for those who are handicapped or aged, life always smiles at those who smile at it, courageously. As the saying goes, A smile warms the heart of the one who gets it and doesn't cost a penny to the one who gives it.

Life is meant to be shared. True success is measured with the measure of help we give one another, the genuine interest we show each other, the



The Good 'Old' Days

By Dibar Apartian

love we express for our neighbor — no matter what the circumstances.

To know how to grow old is to know how to live!

Life is to be loved

Recently, I heard someone say, "After all, death doesn't really scare me, because life doesn't interest me anymore!"

What a tragic statement. The man didn't understand what life is all about, neither did he know what happens after death.

Nevertheless, in his ignorance, he wished to die. No wonder he was terribly fed up with everything, unhappy and ungrateful toward the Creator who had given him life.

Life carries in itself a hope of fulfillment. So long as you are alive, you can hope to learn, to improve, to change, to accomplish your projects, even some of your wildest dreams. But death puts an end to everything — including your hopes.

Solomon wrote, "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten" (Eccl. 9:5).

Before God opened your eyes to the truth, you neither knew what life was all about, nor did you understand the meaning of death. But *now* you do.

Think of it! As a member of God's Church, you are called for a purpose. You are a begotten child of God, with the promise of inheriting eternal life. Consequently you ought to love life, *here and now* — enjoy every moment of it in a way that will glorify God. The more you contribute to the well-being and happiness of others, the happier you yourself will be.

Do you know what actually makes you lose interest in life? It is your vanity, your feelings of greed, jealousy and prejudice, as well as your complexes and fears. The sooner you get rid of them, the sooner you begin to live. As the French writer Jean de La Bruyere once said, "Most people spend the first half of their life making the second half miserable!"

"All this is fine!" you may say. "But just how do we overcome the fear of aging? What is this thing called the art of living?"

First of all, you must *trust* God implicitly. Remind yourself that, whatever the circumstances, whatever

your age, He is truly interested in you — and that He loves you. He wants you in His Kingdom and has a job for you. You are *important* to Him!

But the time to prepare for that job is here and now. Start working by using your talents, however small, in a constructive way — the give way Herbert Armstrong often speaks of. Be positive! There is always something you can do for someone else, always something you can give him.

The apostle Paul wrote: "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Tit. 2:2-5).

This is the give way that makes life worthwhile, interesting and most exciting. It prevents you from wanting to isolate yourself from your community, which not only needs your participation, but may also show its own appreciation of you in times and ways you least expect.

Arthur Rubinstein, now in his early 90s, stated during an interview he gave in Paris about his life and activities, "Happiness only surrenders itself to those who court it."

Are you *really* old? If so, be happy because your community needs your experience and wisdom. The Church of God also has need of you. But remember that you, in turn, need your community and the Church. Your love of life depends upon your participation in the activities of both your community and the Church. An active life precludes boredom; it engenders hope, faith and love. Isolation, seclusion or exclusion engender fear. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (I John 4:18).

One of the most important lessons we all must learn is to *live the present* and not the past. Perhaps the greatest service older people can render younger ones is to show them by their own example and positive attitude that one can be happy at any age.

You — of all the people on the

face of the earth — should be the least concerned about your age.

What death is

Before you came into the truth, you probably believed, as most people do in the world, that life continued after death somewhere in this vast universe. But now, you know better. To die is *not to live*. Death does not mean another life or continuation of life; it is the cessation of life.

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity" (Eccl. 3:19).

Man is a mortal being, made out of the dust of the earth. He became a living creature when God "breathed in his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7). This breath of life does not remain in us when we die. There is neither memory, nor knowledge nor consciousness in death.

We were born to *develop character*, which in itself is a lifelong process. Age has no power to stop it.

"But, how can we develop character if we have no longer the strength, the means or the ability to be useful?" you may ask. "Isn't it a bit too late for us to grow spiritually or to develop character? Life is already behind us."

You are mistaken! Life is not — and it *cannot* be — behind you. Life is *now*. It is never too late for anyone at any age to grow spiritually.

As a baptized member of God's Church, as one being called by Him, your relentless efforts to grow spiritually until you draw your last breath actually represent your token of salvation. *Today* is your day of salvation — not yesterday. *Today* is the day of your judgment (I Pet. 4:17).

If you are unable to undo the past, nevertheless you have full dominion over the present. You can straighten your life, change your attitude, improve your outlook, control your thoughts and desires, discipline yourself — in short, get each day closer to God. This is how you are being judged *today*.

Don't you honestly think that your calling is an important enough reason for you to be wanting to *live* and

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The Final Authority

Major religious thought today, at least in the Christian faith, regards man as a rational being, responsible for making his own decisions regarding religious matters. Does God agree with this reasoning, or is there a final authority that man can live by?

By Roderick C. Meredith

After years of study and prayer, Mr. Armstrong has come to see that this is binding on us today," I said to Mr. Brown. "The Bible reveals it, and as Christians we must obey."

"Well, here's the way I look at it," he began, and then continued to give his personal opinion based on human reason with little knowledge of the Bible to guide him.

As a minister of Jesus Christ, I was trying to show him, not my will, but God's will. I proved my points right out of God's Word. I mentioned the opinion and belief of Herbert Armstrong to show that a more experienced servant of the true God was persuaded of this same truth.

Was Mr. Brown impressed?

Not at all. On the contrary, he proceeded to put his human reason and feeling on the same plane as our studied belief in God's Word. In his own mind, Mr. Brown reasoned that his opinion was just as good as our opinion.

But was it a matter of two differing opinions of equal value? Or do God's true ministers carry authority to speak in His name? If so, how much is that authority to be respected?

These are questions that every true Christian should understand. Mr. Brown was supposed to be converted. Is such an attitude as his the mark of a truly converted person?

Authority of ministers

In Matthew 16:15-20, we read the account of Christ bestowing on Peter the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." Nearly all commentaries agree the principal meaning of these keys includes the way of salvation that the apostles were to proclaim to the world.

Jesus has shown in dozens of places that all decisions must be con-

formed to God's will and His law (Matt. 5:17-19). Christ's example when He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30) was to be followed.

God's true ministers will be yielded and submissive to God's will. They will seek His will in diligent study and earnest prayer. In every way, they will seek God's will and His guidance through the Holy Spirit.

When the Israelites refused to hearken to God's servant Samuel, God said, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (I Sam. 8:7).

Be sure of ministers

All of your respect to any minister should be based upon the fact that you have first proved to yourself that he really is a true servant of God.

Jesus continually warned: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:15-16). You need to look at the "fruit," the results in proclaiming the true Gospel, in leading the flock into the truth and ways of God, in healing the sick — the accomplishments in the work of the ministry, carrying out the commission of Christ.

Notice that Jesus went on to say (Matt. 7:21-23) that many would profess to do good works in His name, but He told them, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity," or lawlessness. The word *iniquity* is more correctly translated *lawlessness*. Jesus was showing that professing ministers who break God's law are not His ministers at all! "I never

knew you," Jesus will tell them. And God's Word shows that these law-breaking ministers never really knew Christ either (I John 2:4).

Satan and his ministers appear as "angels of light" (II Cor. 11:14). But they teach that you are free to disobey God's law.

Another way to examine their fruit is to see if they are willing to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). Some "Christians" — even some who profess to be in the Church of God — *refuse* to grow into more truth!

Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit "will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Spiritual change, growth and development is one of the important signs that a person is guided by God's Spirit. No man gains all of God's truth at once. We must all grow in knowledge.

Some churches and some ministers have known a portion of God's truth. But when they became unwilling to grow into more truth through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they soon began to twist and pervert what little truth they had and to spiritually rot away and die!

To prove whether or not a man is truly God's servant, look to the fruits of submission to all of God's commands, of a real understanding of God's Word, of a willingness to grow in grace and knowledge, of the underlying motive of love behind every thought and deed.

Once you know who God's true ministers are, should you respect them and the office in which God has set them? Yes, you should!

God's responsibility

Once God has revealed to you by the fruits who His true servants are,

you should recognize the responsibilities and duties God has given them.

They do not have the right to exercise that authority according to their own human reason. Jesus Christ is the living Head of the true Church of God, the Body of Christ (Col. 1:18).

It is God's *responsibility* to chasten His servants if they abuse their authority. You can't read their hearts. But God can! Their authority came from Him, not from some board of men. God sets or appoints the true ministers and teachers to guide and rule His Church (I Cor. 12:28). He alone has the power to remove them from office.

Remember that even though Samuel's sons were abusing their office (I Sam. 8:1-7), the people had no right whatsoever to put them out! It was up to God to decide if, when and how this was to be done. In taking this authority in their own hands, the people rejected the rule of God — the Kingdom of God! If you plan to enter that Kingdom, learn now to obey those whom God sets in authority.

Your part

Christians must be alert to the prophecy that even from among their leaders some would arise speaking perverse things — twisting God's Word (Acts 20:29-31).

In order to recognize perverse teachings, and in order to "grow in grace and knowledge," you need to pray and study God's Word continually. If you do this intelligently you will never be deceived. Remember, the important test Christ gave us was to examine the fruits in a minister's life and work. A false minister simply cannot produce the fruits — people converted in obedience to God's law and His way.

So respect and obey God's true ministers, but constantly study to acquire the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5) and to perceive a deceiver who might arise.

The apostle James tells Christian believers to "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21). Once God reveals to you who His true ministers are, listen respectfully and with open minds to their instruction.

Then you need to "study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,

rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). The more you study, the more you will understand and agree with the instructions of God's true servants.

You shouldn't, of course, go to the Bible with the idea of refuting what they have taught or of justifying your own ideas.

The respect to God's ministers is respect to God Himself who calls any true minister to that office, and it is respect to the Holy Spirit through which God will inspire and direct His servants.

Unity in the Church

Many of you brethren have had to come out of this Babylonish system and its churches. You have been regarded — and perhaps have regarded yourself — as an independent or radical in matters of belief.

Many of you, having been disillusioned by false ministers, have come to feel that you could place no reliance on anyone or anything except yourself. You have been in the habit of studying the Bible and accepting your conclusion as final. It was between you and God alone. "Me and God," said the German kaiser. That is the way some of you have felt and acted — perhaps without realizing it.

But should you be an independent Christian?

Didn't Jesus build a Church that will endure forever? Haven't we just shown you that God's true ministers, whom He sets in His Church, speak in His name with authority?

If you have really been converted, you have been baptized or put into God's Church by receiving His Spirit. You are then no longer an independent, but a member of the true Church of God, the Body of Christ.

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33). Even though you may be separated from church fellowship, you belong to God's Church, which has order and government in it, not confusion.

The apostle Paul commands us to be humble. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Some ministers quote this text to persuade their congregation to blindly follow them in a false unity, *not* of the Spirit. The unity of God's Spirit is that mutual

harmony and love that it produces because we will all be seeking God's will. It is not a unity based on man's reasoning swayed by the devil!

God gave some individuals positions of preaching and teaching. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:11-13). His ministers are responsible for teaching and guiding the flock in the right way, as God's Spirit reveals, until they come into the "unity of the faith."

We are still human and have a lot of growing to do. We won't all see eye to eye on every point of doctrine at first.

But God has set His ministers in the Church to preserve order and to teach and instruct the brethren with authority so that each one may finally come to have "the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:5).

The final authority

In Hebrews 13:17, Paul gives an inspired command to, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Here, and in verse 7, God is commanding obedience to His ministers. It is they who "must give account." And He holds them responsible for seeking His will!

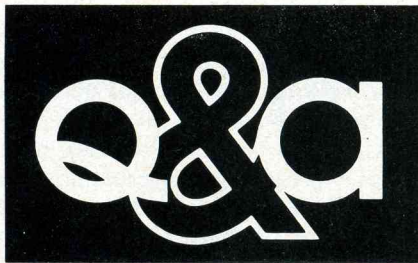
This, of course, applies only to those whom you know by the fruits are God's true ministers.

And even then, if there is ever a case when you have a real conviction that one of God's ministers is teaching something contrary to His will, you ought to "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

But knowing that any true minister of God will be honest in seeking the truth, be sure to discuss the matter privately with him. Remember that you are not to rebuke an elder or minister, "but entreat him as a father" (I Tim. 5:1). Then, any true minister of God will study and pray over the matter, and in due time will either show you your error, or he will confess his mistake and be thankful to find and teach the truth.

God Himself has chosen ministers who are still quite human. But His ministers will remain yielded to Him and be willing to grow. It is His responsi-

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Revelation 19:20-21 states those who receive the mark of the beast or worship his image are slain by Christ at His second coming. How can people without the Holy Spirit escape the destruction? It says elsewhere you can serve only one master, either God or Satan.

**James A.D.
Weldon, Tex.**

Notice that the contest of Revelation 19:19-21 is the specific battle by which Christ defeats the beast and the false prophet.

"And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him [Christ] who sits upon the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image.

"These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur. And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh" (Revised Standard Version).

So "the rest" spoken of in verse 21 are *not* the whole of humanity except the saved. Rather, they are only those in the beast's army gathered to fight Christ. Others of humanity are not slain but survive into the millenium and will then have a chance to become undeceived.

You tell me that Christ died for my sins. How could He die for my sins, as not having yet been born, I had not sinned at that time?

**J.B.
Vancouver, B.C.**

We are told in the Bible that Christ was "... slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). That is, it was designed in the plan of God before any man ever sinned

that He would die for man's sins.

God knew that mankind would sin. Why? Because He created human beings incomplete — weak, you might say — in character. And He allowed them to be subjected to Satan's influence.

But no matter whether in the entire span of human existence one human sinned or all, God so loved His mortal creations that He gave the life of His only-begotten Son as payment for their sins (John 3:16-17). The life of the preexistent Creator God (Colossians 1:16), the Logos, when He Himself became a man, was necessarily worth more than the sum total of all the beings He had created (Colossians 1:19-20).

Did God know "from the foundation of the world" that you personally would sin, and that Christ would die for you? No. Did He know that you as an individual would even exist? No. (Not unless your existence, as exactly the person you are, with your exact genetic inheritance, appearance, abilities and character, was required in His plan for a special purpose, in which case He would have intervened to bring it about. But there have been few such cases: Jesus Christ Himself, perhaps John the Baptizer, Noah and a small handful of others.)

God is omniscient — all-knowing — but there are some things He does not know. How can that be? God doesn't know a lot of things — because they haven't happened yet.

He *can* know exactly what will happen beforehand. But only one way — by forcing it to happen that way. He has the power. That is how He will insure that His plan and basic prophecies are fulfilled (Isaiah 46:11). Otherwise, He can only look at trends and probabilities with His overall knowledge of past performances and capabilities, to forecast general likelihoods in the future.

Did Christ know He was dying for you — that is, the exact person you are, bearing your exact name? No. But did He die for you personally, as one of the sinners of the whole human race? Absolutely yes.

When a person makes a mistake and sins, what must one do to get right with God?

**K.M.
Pasadena, Calif.**

All of us from time to time stumble spiritually and transgress God's perfect and immutable laws. That's sin, and it sets off a chain of wide-ranging repercussions. We not only do spiritual damage to ourselves but, depending on circumstances, hurt our fellowman — our co-worker on the job, the wife, our children.

However, the primary offense is against God. To be forgiven then, one must first confess and repent before the Creator God who alone is able to forgive. King David, after being brought to awareness of his horrendous sins of adultery and murder, acknowledged his faults before God saying, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight..." (Psalm 51:4). God heard, and forgave.

In the book of Psalms David never ceased to extol the magnitude of God's mercy (see Psalm 136). Once God forgives, it is as though that sin is totally forgotten. God will never again dig it up and throw it back in our faces. "I, even I, am he that blot-teth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25). If only we would forgive and forget like God does.

But does God's forgiveness absolve us any responsibility towards those whom we may have hurt or offended? Of course not! Jesus Christ taught, "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" (Matthew 5:23-24).

God's laws are practical, and God expects that restitution be made whenever possible. The stolen item must be returned or replaced, the hurt feelings ought to be soothed and nurtured, the injury must be tended to and cared for. The Bible shows quite clearly that we must personally do all we can to compensate for the injury, harm or loss we may have caused. The ministry can counsel, explain the law of God more clearly, recommend solutions and clarify our responsibilities toward God and man, but forgiveness comes from God alone.

‘And this Gospel shall be preached...’

Matthew 24:14

Sermon Summaries from Ministers of the Worldwide Church of God

Most people, if asked what they consider important for the success of nations or individuals, would place wealth, position, education, intellect, natural abilities and talents at the top of their list. But these things count for little without another ingredient — one that is not inherited or inborn, but has to be developed — character.

And when you reflect that character is the only thing that you will take with you from this life into the life that is to come, it comes to be extremely important.

What is character? Rather than try to define it, I'll describe character as basically ability in self-discipline and self-control. This obviously implies choosing the right direction for your life, then forcing yourself to go that way. That's what character is all about.

Freedom to choose

Let's look at the ingredients necessary to develop character. First of all, we have to have freedom of choice, the latitude to choose the way we're going to go. This means that there have to be alternatives. If you can only go one way, you can't develop character.

Let's look at the example of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis 2:16-17. All the essential ingredients to develop character were there in the garden of Eden.

"The [Eternal] God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 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."

First, God commanded or instructed the man, told him what he should do. God did not force man to go a certain way or restrain him from going the wrong way. But the definition of right and wrong was given to him, and he was warned of the wrong way: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The opportunity to eat of the wrong tree was certainly there. So, man — and woman — was free to choose.

Then, as you read on in chapter 3, the serpent comes up to Eve, and she eats the forbidden

fruit, and Adam eats. But what was God doing when all that was going on?

What if you or I had been there? What would we have done if we had been in God's place?

Some of us would have been like the "B.C." comic strip character. We would have used a club — bam, bam, bam — on the head of the serpent, as soon as he said the first word. Perhaps we would have grabbed Adam and Eve and shook them and not allowed them to sin. But God stood back and heard everything, saw everything and did nothing to stop it. God did not stand over them with a rod or with a whip to prevent them from sinning.

Adam and Eve used no self-discipline, no self-control. Neither of them did anything to stop their desire to take of the fruit and eat it. No character was developed. As a matter of fact, they were worse off than before because they established a pattern for themselves and their children after them of doing things their way, rather than as God told them to do.

Right choice would have led to right character development, but they chose to make the wrong decision, and they paid the penalty for it. But I want to stress that God gave them the freedom to make that choice. You see, sooner or later, God had to find out what they were going to do.

God is not merely concerned with the actions of individuals here and now. He desires children in His spiritual family who are able to rule and lead and carry out His instructions totally and completely. We as individuals are constantly faced with choices. Situations come up every day in our lives in which we are confronted with an alternative or a series of alternatives and must make a choice. How we choose determines whether or not we will develop character in the process.

Maturity a factor

Galatians 4:1: "Now I say, That the heir [the one who is to inherit the father's position and wealth], as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant [the word *servant* in the Greek actually means *slave*], though he be lord of all" — potentially master of everything when he grows up. Like a slave, he "is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father."

How many of us remember complaining as a young person in the family: "I'm treated just like a slave around here. I don't have any freedoms." You know, it's true. Because a child obviously is not mature enough to have the

HOW TO DEVELOP RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER

The Word of God gives many analogies of the Christian life . . . mastery of the body, warfare, pulling down strongholds. And all . . . indicate struggle.

freedom to do as he pleases. A 3- or 4-year-old must be told what time to go to bed, perhaps even put to bed, told what time to get up and be given a balanced diet instead of the ice cream and candy he would choose if he had total freedom.

But when the child matures, through education, discipline and training he learns to make the right decisions in his life. Then he is given more freedom and, of course, learns that responsibility goes with that freedom.

You and I as adults are faced with choices constantly — we have to look at the situation before us and determine what we are going to do. Will we yield to the pressure of our friends, of society, of our own human nature? We are free. No one's going to stop us unless it's illegal or hurts others. It is up to us as to whether we build character or tear down even what our parents helped us build.

God doesn't use force

We read in Romans 1:19, "That which may be known of God is manifest in them [the human race]; for God hath shewed it unto them." Now God has not shown all of His spiritual truth to man, but He has shown him many things, even certain basic laws of morality. Every society has knowledge of that.

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God [at one time they did], they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations [reasonings], and their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (verses 20-23).

They made the choice: "I don't want God in my life, I will not express my gratitude and appreciation to Him, I will not humble myself before God, I want nothing to do with Him. I reject Him in my life." So God said, "Okay, if you want to do that, go ahead." Then God "gave them up to uncleanness," allowed them to go that way of following their own desires.

We find here a principle of God: God does not compel man to follow His ways. He teaches. He shows. He commands. But He certainly does not compel or force one to go that way.

Some of the bad results of mankind's wrong choice are apparent in our world today: sexual uncleanness, including homosexuality and lesbianism. We find in verse 26:

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men."

Instead of building character, mankind has made for itself a curse. Verses 29-31:

"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperings, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."

Yes, you're free. But with that freedom, you have responsibility. Jesus was free when tempted by Satan (Matt. 4) to choose the easy way that Satan was offering or the more difficult way of His Father. He exercised self-control, self-discipline, to make the right decision.

That's the example to look to when we are confronted with temptations. We are free, but as Christ, we should be absolutely determined to make the right choice.

Peer pressure

This leads to another aspect of character development. Along with your freedom of choice must come the acceptance of responsibility for your decisions.

Let's go back to Genesis 3:12-13, with the case of Adam and Eve. I've always found this rather humorous. God faced the man first of all, and Adam said, "The woman whom *thou* gavest to be with me, *she* gave me of the tree, and I did eat." He didn't accept any responsibility.

"And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Adam put all the blame on Eve, partly on God. The woman blamed the serpent. And as the saying goes, the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on — no one to blame.

Now, you know something? My kids have never done anything bad in their lives. It's always "Johnny did it. I just did what Johnny did." They express the same human nature that was in Adam and Eve. Peer pressure always turns out to be the culprit. Somebody else did it, or "Everybody does it." So "They're really to blame, I'm not." But this is no excuse.

However strong the influence of your mate, your girl friend, your boyfriend, your friend or your parents, it is your responsibility because you made the choice. Therefore you have to answer for it.

Romans 14:12, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

We need to understand how we are influenced by peer pressure and be on our guard. Choose your friends carefully, because they are going to have an impact on your life. Choose those who will set a right example, not be a wrong influence on you.

I Corinthians 15:33, "Be not deceived: evil communications [associations, as it ought to be rendered] corrupt good manners."

Galatians 6:4-5: "Let every man prove his own work

How good it feels spiritually, when you meet a problem and you're successful with it, fighting a temptation and being victorious over it.

[put yourself to the test, because you will answer if you do wrong], and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.”

You can have the right satisfaction in the character *you* have developed, the right choice that you made under the circumstances.

Paul goes on to say, “Every man shall bear his own burden.” And in verses 7 and 8: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption [no character]; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Character development through difficulty

We come to another point then: Character development by definition is always difficult.

In Matthew 7:13 Christ talks about the Christian way: “Enter ye in at the strait [very narrow, constrictive, hard-to-squeeze-through] gate.” It takes effort to do so. “For wide is the gate [that’s the other choice we could make], and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.”

So that’s the way the Bible describes it. The Word of God gives us many analogies of the Christian life, such as mastery of the body, warfare, pulling down strongholds. And all of these things indicate struggle, sweat, effort.

Maybe we can understand a bit of the reason. Quoting from a book on physical exercise about how physical strength is developed:

“Strength may be defined as the ability to exert force against a resistance. The only way to increase strength is to cause a muscle to pull against heavy resistance.”

I’m sure you see the spiritual parallels. The only way we can develop spiritual strength, spiritual character, is to exercise the spiritual muscle against a resistance, these hard choices we have to make, the trials, tests, problems, alternatives.

The apostle Peter talks about character development and strengthening and about the positive approach we should have toward it in I Peter 1:6:

“Wherein [that is, in the promised incorruptible inheritance] ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [or trials].” What is developed in your spiritual character by these trials is vital.

Notice in verse 7, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

The feel of success

I know of no greater satisfaction in life than having achieved success. If you play bridge, you know what it’s like to go through the trauma of going after trick after

trick trying to make a grand slam. But you also know the tremendous exhilaration that comes when you win that trick. It makes it all worthwhile.

How good it feels spiritually, when you meet a problem and you’re successful with it, fighting a temptation and being victorious over it. There’s nothing more satisfying than that, is there? On the other hand, I know of nothing that is more of a letdown than when you have been confronted by a temptation and yielded to it.

In II Corinthians 4:7-11, Paul speaks about this difficulty that we all so often face in our life, and the kind of attitude and approach he had. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed [many things we may not understand], but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.”

If we have the goal that Paul had, it becomes much easier. Verse 16-17: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment [compared to eternity], worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Character is eternal.

Again a rather classic scripture, I Corinthians 9:24-27: “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that you may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery [or as my margin has, everyone who exercises self-control — character development, right choices, determination to train himself for the Kingdom of God] is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection [the self-discipline and control again that is part and parcel of character]; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

There is one other ingredient we need to develop holy, godly, righteous character that I have not mentioned. We must have power from God — His Holy Spirit. But that is another whole sermon. □



Leon Walker, whose sermon is reproduced here, has been a minister in God’s Church for 16 years and is acting dean of faculty at Ambassador College.

“And he saw a poor widow put in two copper coins. And he said, ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them’ ” (Luke 21:3, RSV).



The Widow's Mite

By John Halford

I had just finished speaking in an eastern U.S. city, when I felt a tugging at my sleeve and looked down. There was a little black lady — not more than 4 feet 7 — very old and very crippled with arthritis.

"Hold this." She held out her purse. She said, "Hold it still."

"Yes, ma'am."

'Open it'

She tried to get her fingers to undo the clasp, but they just wouldn't work. So she said, "Open it."

I opened it. And she went rummaging around inside, among the bits of paper and junk and food coupons — the trivia of poverty, it's been called. Eventually she got out a dollar bill, crinkled and crumpled, mended with Scotch tape and obviously much treasured.

She handed it to me and said, "Take this and give it to somebody over there in Southeast Asia who needs it."

"Oh look, ma'am, I couldn't do that. You may need that in case of an emergency, and I just would feel bad taking it. I would really feel better if you would keep it."

She drew herself up to her full 4 feet 7, fixed me with a beady eye, and said: "Young man, your trouble is you're rich, and you no longer know the value of a dollar. If you give this to someone who's poor, they'll know what to do with it, even if you don't. So you take it and give it to someone who'll appreciate it."

Though I couldn't see it at first, she knew the value of her offering in God's eyes. Mark 12:41-44: "Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing [which is practically nothing]." And He called His disciples and said (paraphrasing): "Did you see what she did? That poor widow cast in more than all the rest. Because they gave some of

their abundance, but she, in her poverty gave everything she had — even all her living."

The widow's mite shared

Herbert W. Armstrong explained in *The Plain Truth* several years ago just how a widow of small means can share the knowledge of this way of life with more people by contributing only the two mites, \$2, 10 times a year, less than once a month.

Mr. Armstrong wrote: "Our research shows that she would pay for 96 people listening to *The World Tomorrow* by radio a half hour every day for one year — 365 full broadcasts. But much MORE than that. Her two widow's mites contributed once a month, skipping two months in the year, would ALSO pay the cost of 70 other people viewing *The World Tomorrow* on television, a half hour every week for a whole year — and television reaches people much more effectively than radio.

"But much more yet. In addition to this, she would also be paying the cost of seven people reading *The Plain Truth* every month for a year (based on the conservative estimate that each copy is read by at least three people). She would also enable six people to read *Tomorrow's World* (or now *The Good News*), every issue for a year, and IN ADDITION, also pay for two students taking the Correspondence Course 12 lessons for the year."

Mr. Armstrong continued, showing that the widow's small contribution would cause nearly 1,000 people to be reached with God's message.

The feeding of the 5,000

This principle can be applied to many things besides finance. Remember the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6?

A great company came to Jesus, and He said to Philip, "Where will we buy bread that these may eat?" He said it to test Philip, for Jesus Himself knew what He would do. And all Philip could think of to an-

swer was, "Two hundred pennyworth [nearly a year's wages] of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." (We can't even afford to give them a hamburger, let alone a full meal.)

"One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, 'Well, make the men sit down,'" and you know how the story ended.

The point is, what they had was so insignificant, it was scarcely going to make any difference. Yet the owner was willing to give it all (that's generosity, right?). So Christ was able to do the job. He took what was available, and He fed the 5,000.

So don't underestimate the value of the two fishes and the five barley loaves, or the crumpled-up dollar, to God.

Don't underestimate God

I have personally, after landing in India and going out to Calcutta and seeing those teeming millions of people, thought, There's no way the Church can reach them. But don't underestimate what God can do with a little.

Our Burmese brethren are probably the poorest, the most humble, the smallest little people God has called. They have nothing. They earn nothing (\$50 a year). Sometimes they own only the clothes on their backs.

Yet they want to know what they can do. I tell them, "Pray, do what you can." And who knows what God may do through them and through others like them in West Africa, the West Indies, Guyana and elsewhere?

Ephesians 4:16, "From [Christ] the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effective working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body." □

The Parables of Jesus: **FOR DISCIPLES ONLY**

The theme for this first group of 10 parables is the Kingdom of God. We have covered the first six parables, which were given to the people but explained only to the disciples. Now we examine the remaining four parables given to the disciples only, which deal with important doctrinal points concerning the Kingdom.

By Brian Knowles

JESUS had addressed the first six parables in this series directly to the people who were standing on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. But because of their spiritual blindness He did not explain the meaning to them. It was only to the disciples that He later revealed the meaning.

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them" (Matt. 13:34). The people at the time never really realized what they had been told! Actually Christ had given them precious information that had been kept secret since the world was formed, but it was *hidden* in the parables (verse 35).

"Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him" (Matt. 13:36).

Now the setting had changed. Jesus was no longer sitting in the boat on the Sea of Galilee. He was in a house (His own or perhaps Peter's). The disciples asked for an explanation of the parable of the tares (verse 36). Jesus explained not only that parable but all the parables He had given to the people (Mark 4:34).

Following the explanation of the parables given to the people, Jesus then *added* four more parables that pertained directly to the work of the future apostles. These were not given to the people at that time, but to the disciples only. The meaning was not hidden — there was no need. In fact, the meaning of each of these four last parables is self-explanatory.

Jesus continued with the same

theme, that of the Kingdom of God, but He spoke of things that had to do with the ministry of the apostles. The disciples were still *not converted* at this point. They were not yet fully resolved to carry out their apostolic commissions. You will recall that following Christ's crucifixion Peter had said, "I go a fishing" (John 21:3).

And, following Peter's example, the others said the same thing. But Christ had intended that they should become fishers of *men*!

These four parables were designed to show the disciples the incredible value and pricelessness of their apostolic calling. They were intended to illustrate the true worth of the knowledge of the Kingdom of God. And the last of these parables indicated how they were to preach and teach others about the Kingdom of God.

Let's examine them one at a time.

The hidden treasure

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field (Matt. 13:44)."

Here we see a person who stumbles unexpectedly upon a valuable treasure in a field through which he is passing. He is not seeking it. He just happens upon it. But in so doing he immediately recognizes its tremendous value and takes steps to acquire the field — even at the cost of selling all his earthly possessions.

We may learn *two* lessons from this brief parable. One: Not everyone who is called is *seeking* the truth of God. Most are just going about their lives oblivious to the need to search for life's meaning. Their whole goal in life is self-perpetuation and perhaps material success. Then, quite unexpectedly, God intervenes in their lives and calls them to His Kingdom (John 6:44).

The second lesson: A wise person will immediately recognize the value and meaning of that high calling. He will take steps to see that from that time forth nothing jeopardizes his efforts to pursue eternal life. He will abandon his material goals and "seek first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33).

He will not care what the cost is — although he should soberly count that cost before he sets about becoming a real Christian: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? . . . So likewise, *whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*" (Luke 14:28, 33).

Jesus was pointing the disciples to the importance of their calling as apostles. But the principle applies to all who are called of God to His Kingdom.

What are you willing to give up to achieve salvation?

The pearl of great price

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking

goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it (Matt. 13:45-46)."

Notice the difference between this and the previous parable. The merchant was *seeking* "goodly pearls." Since the pearl of great price represents the Kingdom, we must conclude that describes a person searching for spiritual truth.

There are many such people in the world. Not everyone stumbles upon the truth; some are actually seeking knowledge of God and His Kingdom.

Consider the moving example of a man named Simeon: "And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

"And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2:25-30).

Simeon had *yearned* for God's Kingdom and His Christ! And God rewarded him by allowing him to see the Messiah before his death and indeed to prophesy concerning Him!

God has not yet given us the privilege of seeing Christ as did Simeon. But we have been offered that pearl of great price — we know of the Kingdom of God and how to achieve salvation.

If we are patient and endure to the very end — if we have really been willing to forsake everything and have given God's Kingdom top priority in our lives — we too will someday gaze upon the face of the living Christ, this time in all its brilliance and glory as the returning Creator God.

Notice what the scripture says: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, 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" (I John 3:2).

Whether you were searching for the truth of God or not, will you now recognize *the value* of what you have within your grasp?

The net cast into the sea

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:47-50)."

As Peter and the others went out as "fishers of men," there was no guarantee that every person they caught would be of top spiritual quality. The Gospel message attracts all kinds of people. Not everyone is truly converted and headed for the Kingdom. Simon Magus, in Acts the eighth chapter, is a good example of a person who was attracted by the power of the apostles (he was even baptized), but his motives were wrong.

There are those who fellowship with true brethren of the body of Christ. They eat with them, attend services with them and pay lip service to righteousness, but they are *not* children of the Kingdom!

Jude spoke of such as "spots in your feasts of charity, *when they feast with you*, feeding themselves *without fear*" (Jude 12). Such people do not truly have the fear and respect of God that a genuinely converted person must have. They appear as Christians and teachers outwardly, but inwardly they are hypocrites and spiritually unclean.

Peter also warned of such individuals. He wrote: "But there were false prophets also *among the people*, even as there shall be false teachers *among you*, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (II Pet. 2:1).

These are not outsiders — they are insiders among the people of the Church of God. They are caught in

the net along with those who are headed for the Kingdom of God. But at the return of Christ, such people will be separated — God's angels will "sever the wicked *from among the just*."

Upon completion of this parable Jesus asked them, "Have ye understood all these things?" They answered in the affirmative (Matt. 13:51). He then gave them one last parable, which could only apply to the ministry of Christ.

The householder's treasure

"Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old (Matt. 13:52)."

Here was an obvious reference to the disciples, who had been "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven" by the previous parables! They had learned some entirely new things — as Jesus had said in verse 35: "That it might be fulfilled . . . I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

But they also would preach some "old" things — things from the Old Testament prophets and writers, as well as the new truths that Christ had personally given to them.

The Jewish people to whom the apostles preached were familiar with many of the Old Testament teachings used by the apostles in the preaching of the Gospel. In addition, they heard many new truths that were given directly to the disciples by Christ.

The complete message of the New Testament combines the words and lessons of the Old Testament with the revelation of Jesus Christ. Therefore some things are new and some are old. This is amply demonstrated by the fact that the New Testament writers included some 850 references to the Old Testament in their writings — 280 of which are direct quotes!

This completes the first set of Galilean parables. "And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence" (Matt. 13:53). □

Old Testament Personalities

SAMUEL



Illustration by G. Dore

About 1140 B.C., when God still ruled Israel through judges, there was a Levite named Elkanah who had two wives. One, Hannah, was favored of her husband, but had no children. The other was Peninnah.

Each year the family journeyed to Shiloh to worship the Eternal. This is where Joshua, about 300 years before, had placed the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant containing the Law of God. And each year Peninnah would chide Hannah for having no children.

Praying for a son

When the time came once again for the trip, Hannah was provoked to tears.

While at Shiloh, she prayed earnestly to God for a son, vowing that if God would grant her petition, she would make the child a Nazarite, dedicated to serving the Eternal all the days of his life (see Num. 6:2-8). And as she silently prayed, Eli the priest thought she was drunk, for she was moving her lips but making no sound (I Sam. 1:13).

He rebuked her, but she explained her grief. And Eli said, "May the God of Israel grant you your prayer." That day Hannah went out from the tabernacle with complete faith that God would give her a son. And God did.

She named the child Samuel (meaning *asked of God*), and when he was weaned, about 3 years old, she took him to Eli. There he grew up ministering to the Eternal God (priestly duties). He wore the linen garment of a priest, and each year his mother made him a new coat.

Eli's wicked sons

Now Eli was not a young man. He had already judged Israel nearly 30 years and had given most of the administrative duties over to his sons, Hophni and Phinehas. But they were corrupt.

Whenever the people came to make an offering, Hophni and Phinehas took the best portion of the meat for themselves. The leftovers

were presented to God. They also committed fornication with the women who served at the door of the tabernacle.

Eli scolded them about their behavior, but he was too old and weak to administer discipline. They paid no attention. By the law of Moses, they should have been taken out and stoned to death for polluting the tabernacle and sinning against God.

God sent a prophet to Eli, condemning him for allowing his sons to behave so wickedly. The man prophesied that Eli's priestly line would be destroyed except for a remnant, and that Hophni and Phinehas would die on the same day. In the place of this Levitical line, God would raise up a new priest, one who would be faithful.

God speaks to Samuel

Samuel was yet a child, but he was loved by both God and the people he served. Unknown to him, he was being groomed by God to take over the priesthood after Eli's death.

What happened next was remarkable, indeed. God had not spoken directly with men for many years, and even the word of a prophet was rare. But now He spoke directly to young Samuel (I Sam. 3:1-4).

God called to Samuel just after he and Eli had gone to bed for the night. Upon hearing his name, the boy thought Eli was calling and ran to his room. But the old priest told him he hadn't called and sent him back to bed. This happened twice more before Eli realized the voice may have been from God. He advised Samuel to await God's message.

The lad did as he was told, and the Eternal God came and stood by his bed. There He pronounced again the punishment on the house of Eli. He told Samuel that Eli had sinned by not taking action against his own sons, and now nothing could make the house of Eli clean (verse 14).

In the morning Samuel obediently related to Eli all that had happened. Eli simply said, "It is the Eternal: let Him do what seems good to him."

Through the years that followed, God continued to appear and speak to Samuel in Shiloh, and the young man grew to adulthood holding God's word in high esteem. All Israel

knew he was appointed to be a great prophet.

Philistines capture the ark

Now the Philistines were oppressing Israel and slew about 4,000 men in one battle. Bewildered, the elders of Israel asked Hophni and Phinehas to carry the ark of God into battle, hoping this would give them the victory.

But the Philistines won the battle, captured the ark and slew Hophni and Phinehas (on the same day, as prophesied). When Eli heard the tragic news of the ark, he fell over backwards off his bench and broke his neck. He died at 98 years of age, leaving Samuel in charge of the priesthood.

The Philistines, after rough treatment by God, eagerly sent the ark back to Israel seven months later (see I Sam. 5 and 6). After a brief and unfortunate stay at an Israeli town called Beth-shemesh, the ark was taken to Kirjath-jearim, to the house of Abinadab, where it remained until the time of King David.

Samuel preaches repentance

The Philistines had now oppressed Israel for about 20 years, and the people lamented to God for deliverance. (Samson evidently had just begun his own private war against them in the southwest.)

Samuel knew God had shown Israel no mercy because of the wickedness of both the people and the priesthood under Eli. The people were bowing down to the false gods, Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the priests had made a mockery of the office, intent only on serving their own pleasure (I Sam. 7:3-4).

So Samuel spoke to all Israel. He told them to *change* — to purge the land of false gods and to turn to the Eternal God, serving Him with all their hearts. Then, he said, God would deliver Israel from the Philistines.

The people obeyed Samuel and destroyed their idols.

Then he called all Israel to Mizpeh for prayer. He spoke before the people and poured water out upon the ground before God as a symbol of His Holy Spirit (see John 7:37). Then the people fasted and prayed, repenting of their national sins. They

SAUL'S BLESSING (opposite page) by Samuel marked God's choice of the first king of Israel. From I Samuel 9, 10.

God told Samuel to do as the people requested, saying, "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (I Sam. 8:7). So on that day, the people rejected God as their king.

began to serve God once more, and He heard their prayers.

The Philistines sent a great army toward Mizpeh, intending to smash any possible uprising, but God sent powerful thunder and lightning directly into the Philistine camp. They were thrown into confusion and defeated.

This marked the first military victory for Israel in 20 years. They even recaptured some of their lands along the Mediterranean Sea. The Philistines didn't dare to fight against God's people as long as Samuel governed.

Samuel, in the meantime, worked tirelessly serving all Israel. He traveled a regular circuit — from Ramah, his home, to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh — each year to make judgments for the people. For God was king in Israel, and Samuel was his administrator (I Sam. 7:15-17). As long as the people obeyed God, there was no oppression by the Philistines or Amorites.

God's government rejected

Samuel served Israel long and well. Besides making his circuit every year, he also apparently taught a group of prophets at Geba (I Sam. 10:5, 10). He was dedicated to keeping the people directed toward God.

As he grew older, however, the rigorous duties of his office were more than he could handle alone. He made his two sons, Joel and Abiah, judges in the south of Israel, but they began to misuse the office by taking bribes and polluting justice.

Worried about the future, the elders began to wonder who would rule after Samuel's death. He couldn't live forever, and his sons were corrupt. There was also some fear about a possible invasion by Nahash, king of Ammon.

Up to this time — from Moses to Samuel (nearly 400 years) — Israel had been a *theocracy*. God had been their king. When they served Him, times were good. When they disobeyed and served other gods, He

abandoned them to foreign oppression. Now many of them began to reason that it was time to have a *monarchy*, a human king of their own who would provide constant protection against anyone at any time who threatened their security.

The elders, lacking faith in God, decided this was in the best interests of all Israel. So they met with Samuel to make their request official. He knew what they wanted was wrong, but prayed to God about it.

God told Samuel to do as the people requested, saying, "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (I Sam. 8:7). So on that day, the people rejected God as their king.

Through Samuel, God told the people what to expect under a human king. Their young men would be made into soldiers and laborers for the government. Their daughters would be drafted into service as military cooks and suppliers.

There would be heavy taxes to maintain the government and armies. Their servants and animals would be taken for any work the king desired, and eventually the people would all end up servants to the government. Then they would cry out because of oppression, expecting God to hear.

Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to Samuel, and were promised a king.

Samuel establishes the monarchy

God, in reviewing all Israel, told Samuel that a young man named Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, would be king. Through a series of events, Saul was introduced to Samuel and anointed. Later, at a great public gathering, Saul's office was confirmed.

Some didn't like the choice and openly spoke out against it. But later, after God gave Saul his first military victory, Samuel called another meeting of all Israel, and all the tribes were united under Saul's leadership.

At this meeting, Samuel also made his very moving farewell speech to the people (I Sam. 12). He pointed out that God, when He had been their king, had always served them faithfully. And so had Samuel administered fairly.

He also told them they had behaved foolishly in wanting a human king, but if the people and the king obeyed God, all would be well. Disobedience, however, would surely bring God's wrath.

Then, calling on God to confirm his speech, he asked for thunder and rain. Black clouds suddenly gathered in the heavens. Thunder clapped, and it poured down rain. The people were amazed and frightened of both God and Samuel, for it was the dry season, harvest time, and what they were seeing was a miracle. They admitted their sin. Yet they wanted Saul as king and asked Samuel to pray to God on their behalf.

Now Saul was humble in God's sight at first, but later he repeatedly sinned and disqualified himself from being king. While he yet held office, God chose the young shepherd, David, as his replacement. Samuel anointed him as God's chosen king when he was but a youth. It was years later, after the death of Saul, that David took control of the kingdom officially.

His last years

Samuel continued to judge Israel during this transition from a theocratic government to a monarchy. He worked hard to make the new government a success, consulting God at every turn. After the anointing of King Saul, he even wrote a book about how the kingdom ought to be run, for the benefit of both the king and the people (I Sam. 10:25).

Samuel died during the reign of Saul, and all Israel mourned him. He was buried at his home in Ramah, the last judge of Israel and faithful to God all the years of his life. — *By Art Ferdig* □

MINI STUDY

PART TWO

How You Can Bear the Fruit of the Spirit

HOLY SPIRIT

The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief monthly excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development and increased understanding of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

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

11. What is the fourth fruit of the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22.

Longsuffering is an old English word for patience. It is also forbearance and clemency — which is the ability to have mercy. One who is short-tempered and easily upset with the faults and inadequacies of others is inviting real trouble for himself, as human relationships will inevitably suffer. He may also find himself suffering from a variety of emotionally induced illnesses!

Patience is that steadiness of mind by which you *wait* for the result to be achieved. One who is patient does not become frustrated because problems don't always lend themselves to immediate solutions. The godly long-suffering (or patience) Paul is referring to can come *only through the Holy Spirit*.

12. Is gentleness also an important fruit or result of having the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22.

Gentleness means first of all usefulness, then willingness, graciousness, affability — one who obliges. A gentleman and a lady know how to attend to other people's needs, they have taken the time to learn the social graces, they are courteous.

But gentleness is much more. Notice Paul's statement to the Thessalonians, "But we were

gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (I Thess. 2:7). The apostle used this analogy to describe how he and others of God's ministers dealt with the members of God's Church. A nurse must be firm and loving, kind and sure, able and compassionate — all at once! It takes a qualified as well as a *willing* person to be a good nurse.

The gentle person is willing to take extra steps to look out for the needs of others. He or she is willing to dirty the hands to do whatever is necessary.

13. Is goodness also a remarkable attribute of the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22.

Goodness describes a person possessing godlike qualities of virtue, uprightness and true character. This fruit of the Holy Spirit could probably be described as a summary fruit — summing up the character of a person who is exhibiting the other fruits listed by Paul, and as a result is daily becoming more godlike.

14. Is faith one of the vital fruits of the Spirit of God? Gal. 5:22. Is this the very faith of Jesus Christ? Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:9.

Mountains of words have been written and spoken about faith. For many, faith is nothing more than an elusive spiritual essence. But in reality, the faith Paul is talking about is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8) imparted through the Holy Spirit from Jesus Christ.

15. How was the faith of Christ manifested by the great men of God? Read all of Hebrews, chapter 11.

The patriarchs and prophets of God possessed God's Holy Spirit, which was administered by Christ (I Pet. 1:10-11). These men (and women) thus *exercised* the faith of Christ in performing righteous deeds. "By faith Moses . . . refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter . . . forsook Egypt . . . kept the passover . . . passed through the Red Sea . . . [and others] through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought [worked] righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions" (excerpts from Heb. 11).

Faith to these men and women was not just a mere word. Faith was *active* and *alive*! They had a charge — a responsibility before God to keep.

MINI STUDY

Each one had a particular Work to do — *and he or she did it!*

After pondering these remarkable examples of faith, one can better understand why Herbert W. Armstrong says so much about the Work of God that must be done today. He has been given a special commission by God that he has been — and now is — *faithful* to carry out. And it is being done by the very *faith of Christ!*

The original Greek word for faith is *pistis* — which means *firm conviction, assurance, fidelity*. Fidelity is another way of describing one who is careful to preserve that which has been committed to his trust. Years of experience have shown that those who are increasing in the fruit of God's Spirit are the ones who *remain faithful* to God's charge — who have their whole hearts in the very Work of God — those who, in whatever way they are able, have an *active* part in helping to fulfill Christ's commission to His Church.

16. Will meekness also be one of the traits of a Spirit-led individual? Gal. 5:23. Who set an outstanding example in this regard? Num. 12:3.

Many falsely assume that meekness is always synonymous with weakness. Moses became so dedicated to God and filled with the Holy Spirit, he was considered to be the meekest man on earth. No longer did he seek to exalt himself, but became lowly and humble in attitude.

When God was about to disinherit and destroy the children of Israel because of their many rebellions, Moses — in spite of many false personal accusations against him — entreated God to save them (Num. 14), and in meekness he instructed those who "oppose[d] themselves" (a required trait of a servant of God — see II Tim. 2:24-25). A meek person is not revengeful.

17. What is the last, and one of the least understood fruits of the Holy Spirit mentioned by Paul? Gal. 5:23.

The world has often misunderstood the meaning of the word *temperance*. Temperance does *not* mean abstinence! Temperance means *self-control*, continence, self-government, *moderation* — particularly in reference to sensual appetites. The proverbs of Solomon are replete with exhortations about temperance — a vital attribute of God's Spirit.

18. When one receives the Holy Spirit, will these precious fruits suddenly appear overnight — almost all at once? II Pet. 3:18; Matt. 5:48. (Recall from previous studies that the sense of Matthew 5:48 is "*Become perfect*" — a gradual process.)

Fruit does not appear overnight on a tree. It takes *time*, water, the nutrients of the soil and

sunlight to grow. Likewise, it takes time to grow spiritually and manifest the "fruit of the Spirit"!

Spirit must be used and renewed

One is spiritually minded to the degree that he has and uses God's Spirit in his life. You must draw on and *use* the Holy Spirit every day to produce the "fruit of the Spirit." Notice:

19. Even though the members of the Church of God in Corinth were begotten by the Holy Spirit from the Father (I Cor. 3:16), were many of them not showing the *fruit* of God's Spirit? Verses 1-3.

There was strife and arguing, debating, contentions and divisions among the Corinthian brethren. These are some of the "works of the flesh" mentioned in Gal. 5:19-21! Notice why they were manifesting these unspiritual characteristics.

20. Must the Holy Spirit clearly be put to *use*? II Tim. 1:6-7.

Even though the members of God's Church at Corinth had the Spirit as a begetting, they seemed to have lost sight of the fact that God's Spirit must also be *used* and *drawn upon* to produce its fruit. They were producing fleshly works — "doing what comes naturally" — simply because they were not "stirring up" the *Spirit of Christ* and drawing on it to produce the results of the mind of Christ! (Phil. 2:5; 1:11.)

Another probable and perhaps obvious reason some in that church were acting carnal was because they also lacked a *supply* of the Spirit of Christ in the first place. Notice:

21. Does one receive all at once enough of the Spirit of Christ to last as long as he or she lives, or must the supply be replenished every day? Phil. 1:19; II Cor. 4:16. Also notice Jesus' profound analogy in John 7:37-39.

The Spirit of Christ is *active* — *dynamic*! It is a moving force that can't be bottled up within you. Jesus compared it to "living water" that comes *into you*, and then flows *out from you*. It *circulates* like electricity in a complete circuit — from God, into you, and then out from you manifesting the "fruit of the Spirit," and then back to God.

Since the Spirit must flow into and out from us, then obviously it must be continually supplied. Therefore, the supply of the Holy Spirit must be *renewed in us daily* through contact with God in believing prayer (Luke 11:13).

To put it in the vernacular, our spiritual battery must be continually charged up. We must daily plug into the power source. That source of the Holy Spirit is *GOD!* Once plugged in, and as we *use* the Holy Spirit, we can indeed bear the "fruit of the Spirit." — *Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik*

Gospel to Japanese

(Continued from page 2)

proclaim to them the good news of the KINGDOM OF GOD. And you had to get this Gospel message over to these important people.

JUST HOW WOULD YOU GO ABOUT IT? If you had two or three days beforehand to think and plan what to say, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

How the living Christ guides

I think all you brethren ought to KNOW a little about how Jesus Christ leads His chosen apostle to do it.

I KNEW the living Christ *would* guide me. Like you I am only human, but I TRUSTED the living Jesus. He did put in my mind what to say.

Many of you may hear a tape recording of what I did say. But as I now remember it, I mentioned that I do have private meetings with many heads of nations — that I talk with them about their problems and world problems. That their problems are greater than any of them have power to solve. I then said I had read an editorial in one of the world's leading news magazines that said our "WORLD PROBLEMS AND EVILS are now so great it would seem that the world's ONLY HOPE lies in the intervention of a GREAT HAND FROM SOMEPLACE." In this manner I brought to the attention of these many government officials of different religions the supreme GOD — and I then explained that this great "Unseen Hand" was the UNSEEN CREATOR WHO MADE OF ONE BLOOD ALL OF THE NATIONS REPRESENTED AT THIS BANQUET.

I did not know until I stood up before the loudspeaker microphone that I would say that. But you see, Jesus Christ put words in my mouth that showed them I was speaking of the SUPREME CREATOR, regardless of their religion. Jesus gave me the words to show GOD'S POWER without offense to any because of his religious belief.

Ambassador of the great God

I then said many consider me an ambassador without portfolio (that is, no official political authority). But in fact, I told them, I was an official ambassador of the GREAT GOD who

created us all. And I brought them from Him GOOD NEWS — news of the world's *only hope* — that we are now in the very LAST DAYS of this present man-made civilization, with more problems and evils than mankind CAN SOLVE — and that SOON NOW — in OUR GENERATION — God will *intervene*, and set up the WORLD RULING KINGDOM OF GOD — that we shall then have world peace, happiness, JOY — and economic ABUNDANCE for ALL in ALL NATIONS.

I said: "I don't ask you to BELIEVE what I say. We humans won't bring this about — it will be DONE TO US — and IN SPITE OF US — whether we believe it or not — whether we want it or not. But I have just ANNOUNCED IT TO YOU, and it DEFINITELY SHALL HAPPEN!"

Thus, in few words, and even waiting at every sentence for the interpreter to repeat it in the Japanese language, Jesus Christ through me DELIVERED THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM to some 300 of the leaders of Japan and several other nations.

And I might mention THIS is what the attorney general's office in California is trying to call "siphoning off millions of dollars every year for my own use." In the past two years we have not spent one tenth of \$1 million on this important Work of carrying the GOSPEL into nations worldwide.

For the past 10 years, this part of the Work has cost less than \$1 million a year — whereas our budget calls for SEVERAL million dollars per year for SALARIES to ministers and the staff at headquarters — several million for radio, for TV, for printing.

I must break off now and hurry into a business suit — for I am to have a meeting in less than two hours with Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira. I have met and visited with every Japanese prime minister in the past 10 years — Prime Minister Eisaku Sato, Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, Prime Minister Takeo Miki, Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda and now Prime Minister Ohira. I have been highly honored in Japan.

There's the saying that a prophet is not honored in his own country. That's where the PERSECUTION comes from. But here, I am honored above *any* unofficial non-Japanese. And though the persecution comes in

many forms *at home*, I am DEEPLY GRATEFUL that you brethren of God's Church have deep LOVE for me, and you have certainly proved that. I love and pray for you continually.

Official visit to China planned

LATER: In flight back home, April 29.

I have now had private personal meetings with the last FIVE prime ministers of Japan.

Perhaps the most important news of all that I can give you of this trip is that definite plans are under way for me to make an official visit to COMMUNIST CHINA — officially the People's Republic of China, in company with two or three of the highest members of the Japanese Diet. Two of the high-ranking members of Japan's lawmaking Diet are definitely working on arrangements. The trip will be made in our own G-II jet, and probably in August. Private meetings are being set up with the Communist Party Chairman and Prime Minister Huo Guofeng and the deputy prime minister, Deng Xiaoping.

As you know, I have been waiting a long time for the HEAD of our Church Jesus Christ to open doors — IF He wanted His apostle to go to the LEADERS of China and the Soviet Union. Of course, I can't know yet what Christ may have in mind, but He is able to open doors wherever He wants me to go as His ambassador and apostle.

Plans are now being made for a visit with the government heads and many other leaders in a country I have never yet visited — Tunisia, on the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, west of Egypt. And, of course, I already have had a personal meeting with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt.

Before leaving Japan on this present trip, I had further meetings with a few other Japanese leaders.

This has certainly been a very successful trip. We are now on the descent for a refueling at Cold Bay, Alaska, the farthestmost western tip of Alaska, where the Aleutian Islands virtually join up with Alaska at its farthest western tip.

I close asking you to continue your earnest and fervent prayers for me and the Work. □

Make Church Ready!

(Continued from page 3)

ful verse, "But ye" (who are called and in God's Church) are "a *CHOSEN* GENERATION, a royal priesthood." Why "ROYAL"? We have been *SPECIALLY* chosen by God to have opportunity to qualify to *SIT WITH CHRIST IN HIS THRONE* (Rev. 3:21). We, called now, have to battle and overcome Satan, but, in so doing, we qualify to be a KING or a priest (Rev. 5:10). On the other hand, those called *AFTER* Christ comes to reign will not have to overcome Satan — yet there is no promise of becoming "royalty" by those called after the beginning of the Kingdom on through eternity!

Next, in I Peter 2:9, "an *HOLY NATION, a PECULIAR PEOPLE*."

We are to become *DIFFERENT*! What makes us different? We are *ENERGIZED* by the *HOLY SPIRIT* of God.

Are we, today, a *HOLY Church*? I don't want to accuse or judge. But surely not the deeply *HOLY* people we must be if we the Church shall have made ourselves ready. And we must be *DIFFERENT*!

How are humans different?

Let me dwell on that a bit. Are *HUMANS different* from dogs, cats, horses, cows? Not only in form and shape, but the *BIGGEST DIFFERENCE* is *MENTAL*. We have *MINDS* that can *THINK, REASON, MEDITATE, MAKE CHOICES* and *DECISIONS*!

Horses and cows have *BRAINS* almost exactly in design, form, shape, like ours! Elephants, dolphins, whales, have *LARGER* brains, and if not entirely as perfect physically, at least 95 percent as good quality as the human brain. But they do not have one thousandth of 1 percent as much thinking, reasoning, knowing, designing power, as we humans.

WHY are we so much better than they, mentally? Our *BRAIN* is no better — to speak of. The *DIFFERENCE* is that God put a *SPIRIT* (in form of essence like air or water — *not* a "ghost" or spirit person) *in* every human.

BUT — and this word "BUT" is a very big three-letter word sometimes! *BUT* God made us to *NEED ANOTHER SPIRIT* — the *Holy Spirit* of

God, that comes from the very *PERSON* of God, as a *PART* of Him.

In other words, God did not make Adam *COMPLETE*. I have said before that God is *CREATOR* — yet He creates in *DUAL STAGES*! What God created, as described in the first chapter of Genesis, was the *PHYSICAL* man and woman. But God was not *THROUGH* creating humans. The *PHYSICAL* person is merely the *physical MATERIAL* with which God may *BEGIN* the *SPIRITUAL* creation — that is, fully developed *SPIRITUAL, HOLY* and *RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER*!

Only the few called now

Now Adam and Eve *REJECTED* God's *HOLY SPIRIT*, and deliberately decided to remain *INCOMPLETE* — that is, *PHYSICAL ONLY*.

God drove them *OUT* from the Garden of Eden and barred the entrance so *NO MAN*, unless specially *CALLED* by God, could have access to God or His *Holy Spirit*.

God has called *ONLY* a *COMPARATIVE VERY FEW* — of which I hope *YOU* who are reading this are one! Apparently God called "righteous Abel" — second son of Adam and Eve. Enoch walked with God. God called Noah, Abraham, Moses and, in a sense, the *WHOLE ANCIENT CHILDREN OF ISRAEL* — but God did *NOT* make His *Holy Spirit* accessible to Israelites, *EXCEPT THEIR PROPHETS*.

Now I assume, and surely fervently *HOPE*, that God has called *YOU* who are reading this!

If so, and you have received and are being led by His *Holy Spirit*, you are *NO LONGER LIKE* others around you, possibly your next-door neighbors.

Does that make you *BETTER* than they? Of your own self, *NO*! Yet *YOU ARE DIFFERENT* — for you have now that second needed *Spirit* — the *HOLY SPIRIT* of God, which Adam and Eve rejected.

And (assuming you have and are being really *LED BY* the *HOLY SPIRIT*) that makes you as *DIFFERENT* from others around you as *THEY* are different from cows, elephants and dogs.

They are different from animals because they have that *ONE HUMAN SPIRIT*. But *THEY* are confined to knowing and thinking *ONLY* about *physical* things.

If *YOU* have received the *HOLY SPIRIT* of God, that opens up your

mind to comprehend *SPIRITUAL* things, to have *SPIRITUAL* knowledge, to have a mind that *THINKS* about both physical and spiritual things and values.

So that makes you one of a *PECULIAR* people — *DIFFERENT* from others. But remember that before you received God's *Holy Spirit*, you were just another human like your next-door neighbors, and you certainly should not feel any *BETTER* than they today — but you should be *THANKFUL* to the *GOD OF GLORY* that He has called you — made you *PART* of this *CHOSEN GENERATION*, and put within you His *GIFT*!

And even after you received God's *Holy Spirit*, He expected you to "GROW IN GRACE AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST!"

Church to be without blemish

But now let us look a little further to be sure whether we, individually, as part of a complete *SPIRITUAL ORGANISM* — *GOD'S CHURCH* — are *READY* for His coming when we shall rise to meet Him in the clouds of the air.

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . That he might present it to himself a *GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT, OR WRINKLE, OR ANY SUCH THING; BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH*" (Eph. 5:25-27).

Brethren, each look at your own self. Are *you* without a single *spiritual blemish*?

When we *REPENT, BELIEVE* and receive God's *GIFT* of the *HOLY SPIRIT*, we must confess we are *NOT* holy, without *spiritual spot or wrinkle*, or a single *spiritual blemish*. But we must "GROW in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18).

Brethren, *WE ARE SIMPLY NOT YET READY* for that divine wedding, as a part of God's Church, with a *HOLY* and *PERFECT CHRIST*!

But *DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED*! No one is that perfect when first converted. The Christian life is a life of *constant GROWTH*!

PREPARING for God's Kingdom

Let me mention as briefly as I can three of Jesus' parables about the Christian life, *PREPARING* for God's Kingdom.

First, take the parable of the sower and the seed. In the first three categories, the seed (the preaching of God's Word) either took no root at all, or those hearing it had no depth of mind and purpose and quickly fell away, or became offended, dissident, bitter at persecution or even at GOD'S TRUTH. None of these went on to finally make it into God's Kingdom.

But the fourth group were on fertile ground — the seed of God's Word took root and brought forth a harvest of spiritual righteousness — the spots, wrinkles and spiritual blemishes were gradually overcome and removed. Even so, some grew spiritually more than others — some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold and some a hundredfold.

UNDERSTAND THIS! Those who produced spiritually only thirtyfold will be given eternal life in the Kingdom. We are NOT SAVED BY OUR WORKS — but we ARE rewarded according to our works. The parables of the pounds and of the talents show that.

Jesus pictured Himself (Luke 19) as a man going to God's throne in heaven to be crowned and officially given God's Kingdom. He gave each of 10 servants (symbolic of the 10 tribes of the house of Israel) a pound each. This represented giving each one at conversion one unit of the HOLY SPIRIT.

On His return, crowned and with supreme divine AUTHORITY to rule God's Kingdom over the whole earth, He called each to accounting. One had increased the one unit of God's Holy Spirit, in standing solidly back of God's apostle in proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and helping, praying fervently and remaining loyal — in Bible study, increasing his own spiritual knowledge, 10 times what he started out with.

Earth's King Christ rewarded him by making him ruler over 10 cities. Another had increased his one unit of God's Spirit five times. He didn't get as great a reward — he was given rule over five cities — but he was only REWARDED according to his works — he was "saved" by grace — he didn't earn his salvation.

A third one had not grown in grace and in Christ's knowledge — nor had he contributed to GOD'S WORK by tithes, fervent praying or loyalty. HE HAD THE ONE UNIT OF THE HOLY

SPIRIT ORIGINALLY GIVEN AS GOD'S GIFT TAKEN AWAY. HE DID NOT GET HIS SALVATION OR ETERNAL LIFE —

So, as I said, DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED! True, time is now short. But certain prophesied events still must occur before Christ comes — though He might come any second to any one of us — if we were taken by sudden death.

But to conclude, GOD'S CHURCH IS NOT YET READY! But God brought me back from death in August of 1977, and has since been using me in VOLUMINOUS WRITING, and in taking over *DIRECT PERSONAL LEADERSHIP* OF THE CHURCH, THE COLLEGE AND *THE WORK* — and through me Christ our LIVING HEAD has been turning God's Church around, PUTTING IT BACK ON GOD'S TRACK!

Church is making rapid progress

The Church as a whole IS MAKING RAPID AND VITALLY IMPORTANT PROGRESS! Christ NOW is moving to put His Church back on God's track SPIRITUALLY!

He has allowed the terrible persecution from the HUMAN government of the state of California to come upon us to TRY US, to WAKE US UP — to cause us to START ANEW AND AFRESH in His Work.

The few (six) members and expelled members (now *all* out) thought that, when they and their attorney managed to persuade a deputy attorney general, and then, with him, in an unlawful SECRET meeting with Judge [Jerry] Pacht in his chambers (his private office), won official assurance of the power of the largest state in population in the Union, that they could DESTROY this Church the judge called "a bowl of spiders."

It was a MASSIVE strike. Without warning, and with a number of ARMED LAW ENFORCEMENT MEN, they descended on the headquarters of GOD'S CHURCH!

But, brethren, the entire state of California is a tiny speck compared to GOD and the supernatural power of God.

Do you suppose that, when news was telephoned to me that I panicked, in FEAR?

NO! NEVER! I always remember that those with us are more and

mightier than those (the whole LAW ENFORCEMENT — even the military National Guard) of America's largest state!

Brethren, I KNOW the supreme almighty divine POWER Jesus Christ has set behind His chosen apostle! They arrested the apostle Peter more than once — threw him in jail — even bound him with CHAINS. But Christ sent an ANGEL to break the chains, and the prison locks and lead Peter and John out of the prison — to carry on with the mission God gave them.

Brethren, we must be the same kind of staunch, fearless, STRONG soldiers and ambassadors for Christ that Peter, John and Paul were.

God ALLOWED the State of California to go as far as they did. And the TRUTH is, the judges, lawyers and state officials now are looking for some way to GET OUT OF THIS without losing too much face!

But I don't think the all-powerful Jesus Christ whom I serve is going to let them off so easily!

Actually, what they have done — and the CBS most-listened-to program *60 Minutes* have only CATA-PULTED God's WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD into the public limelight a thousand times more than we were before!

I am preparing a series of full-page ads in leading newspapers — Los Angeles, Calif., *Times*, New York *Times*, Washington *Post*, Chicago, Ill., *Tribune* and dozens of others. People will read them, because now EVERYBODY has heard of the WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD. One ad will have as a headline: Just What IS the WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD?

The ad will tell them briefly the shameful, unconstitutional thing the State of California did, and also that this Church is the ONLY VOICE ON EARTH PROCLAIMING TO THIS DYING WORLD ITS *ONLY HOPE*! No one for over 1,900 years has proclaimed the message brought from God by JESUS CHRIST!

People are going to hear the GOSPEL now as NEVER BEFORE.

But all this will take MONEY — more money than our membership can give. Beside giving all we can, we must PRAY MORE FERVENTLY, MORE IN EARNEST — MORE PASSIONATELY THAN EVER BEFORE! □

THE ARMY OF GOD

(Continued from page 5)
the land of Egypt" (paraphrased).

As we look around us today and see the world's mighty governments and its giant armies, we don't have any might in comparison to them. But God's power marshaled on our side is like a spiritual hydrogen bomb.

"And it shall be," God told His people, "when you come near unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, you approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be you terrified because of them; For the Lord your God is he who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

"...What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brother's (in war) heart faint as well as his heart" (verses 2-8).

The fearful and fainthearted were told that they were not even wanted near the other brave men. God wants people in His army who will strap on the armor of God and fight with undaunted veracity until total victory is won.

Our courageous Leader

Although bravery is a quality that must be nurtured throughout an individual's life, it can be motivated and brought to the fore if the leader commands the same quality.

God the Father is the Commander in Chief of the spiritual militia that He has called to fight against Satan. Our Captain, the Bible says, is Jesus Christ. Christ's example as a courageous leader is shown in Joshua 5.

Notice God's instructions to the Israelites who had just crossed over Jordan and were ready to begin clearing the land of the Canaanites. "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand" (verse 13). Joshua *boldly* went up to him and said, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?"

And the great Personage standing there with a sword in His hand said, "Nay; but as captain of the host of the Eternal am I now come. And

Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy."

You see, the Lord Himself appeared to Joshua, drew His sword out of His scabbard, and said that He was the Captain of the Lord's host. He would go before them to lead their troops, the host of Israel, the army that He had chosen, to total victory.

This was a great sign, undoubtedly given to inspire Joshua and his people during their soon-coming military campaign.

During one such campaign, the sun stood still, and God actually worked a miracle, by stopping this earth from rotating on its axis. From the vantage point of human beings, this caused the sun to stand still for about 24 hours. God actually fought for His people.

The Captain of our salvation

In Hebrews 2:10, we also read that Jesus Christ is called the Captain of our salvation. As the Church of the living God, we are a *spiritual army*! We're in a *warfare*. And you know who our Captain is? It's not a human being. Sure, we have officers, and our chief human officer is Herbert W. Armstrong, a warrior. But Christ is the Captain of our salvation.

Christ is also our shield in battle. Notice Psalm 33:8. "Let all the earth fear the Eternal: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him." It's time people began to stand in awe of God in this Church too. If we do, we are going to shake kingdoms with our message far more powerfully than we have ever done in the past.

"For he spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Eternal standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Eternal; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."

Blessed (verses 9-12 above) are those people in the Church of God

whom God has chosen for his inheritance. "The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. A horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them who fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the Lord; he is our help and our shield" (verses 13-20).

As long as we please God we have nothing to fear in any battle. We are now in a war. And the only question I have concerns *when* we will win, not whether we will win.

In Psalm 34:7 we read, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Do we fully realize that if we please God and have a right heart, a right attitude and keep close to and in constant communion with the Captain of the host, the Captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ, then God's angels will protect us from danger?

Strength and endurance

Another quality one must have before entering the heat of battle is strength; endurance to withstand the physical and mental strain of war.

II Samuel 23:8-19 mentions three of David's mighty men, and it says that one of them was named Eleazar.

At a time when most of the army of Israel were running away from the Philistines, Eleazar stood there for his God, for his king and for his country, and he fought until he couldn't let go of the sword. His hand "was weary," and they had to pry his fingers back to let his sword drop. He had the endurance absolutely necessary for him to win the victory. The endurance that is so necessary for you and me, brethren, if we are going to win the victory.

Put on the whole armor

Ephesians 6 says that we are in a warfare and that we are soldiers for Christ. We must look upon ourselves

that way — that we are fighting a battle against Satan. The devil wants to elbow Mr. Armstrong aside, so he can destroy the Work of the living God and His Church. But he shall not succeed. In Ephesians 6 it says:

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Eternal, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Or as the margin says, against wicked spirits in high places. These satanic beings inspire leaders in this world to destroy God's people.

We are to have the whole armor of

God. Above all, we must take the shield of faith, which is the faith — the assurance in God — that He is faithful. He will never leave or forsake us. God is on our side. He will fight our battles for us.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (verse 18).

We should be praying constantly, for Mr. Armstrong, for God's true ministers and for all of God's people.

Are you suffering battle fatigue?

Most of us have received our basic training. Many have had years of experience now in the army of God — fighting minor skirmishes through-

out the years. But now we're in a major conflict, a fierce battle with Satan, who would wish above all things that we would quit and give up at a time when we're so close to victory. How many of us now are suffering from a sickness common to battle-weary soldiers — battle fatigue?

There is a way that you can survive the world's spiritual holocaust, but it will not be easy. It will take rigorous and determined training to prepare physically, mentally and spiritually.

You will have to endure great tests. It is by any standard the toughest challenge you'll ever face. But the reward for victory is greater than anything your mind can imagine. The time to enlist is now. Join forces with Jesus Christ and become a good soldier in the army of God. □

'The Armour of God'

Ephesians 6 shows that the Christian soldier should put on the whole armor of God before entering into spiritual battle. Armor refers to any body covering designed for protection in combat — in this case it is protection for the soul. But Satan, through his subtle influence, can convince us to take it off; usually a piece at a time until completely unprotected.

For the sake of those who are in danger of believing it is easier to fight with less of the spiritual weight of God's armor, I offer the following scenario:

The devil is like a demoniac general, eagerly plotting the demise of his enemy — in this case, you and me. He deals in subtleties, launching surprise attacks here and there until we're caught completely off guard.

His plan begins by inspiring discouragement and doubt among God's troops, about the Church, about its leaders, about our calling, hoping eventually to convince us that we can no longer have faith even in Christ's leadership and protection.

Once that happens, it is so easy for us to unfasten the support of truth that God has fastened to our loins (verse 14), thereby becoming a little more vulnerable to attack.

Later in the battle, without that girdle of truth to protect our vital

organs, it becomes more natural to agree that the weight of our armor is quite heavy (perhaps we should water down God's commandments just a bit or change Church government). That is where the weary soldier takes off another piece of equipment, the breastplate of righteousness (verse 14).

Only partially protected now, the

The helmet of salvation

The breastplate of righteousness

Feet shod with the Gospel of peace



The sword of the spirit (Word of God)

The girdle of truth

The shield of faith

soldier searches more desperately for an effective battle plan (listening to any “smooth saying”), but is led ever closer toward the inevitable ambush.

Removing his boots for speed, he runs to and fro in the midst of battle, but with feet that are no longer shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace (verse 15). He loses the realization of the Church's great commis-

sion, which is to preach the true Gospel to the world.

Satan's attack nears its apex. After a barrage of manipulation and disorientation, the Christian lays aside His shield of faith — the coup de grace, so to speak. Now he or she can no longer quench the fiery darts of the wicked (verse 16). Another casualty is recorded in the great conflict.

After the Christian is down, his blood poured out over the field, Satan's henchmen remove his helmet of salvation (verse 17), once so earnestly cherished, the last gesture that seals his fate.

Brethren, don't let the above come true in your life. Don't be misled by subtle rationalizations from those “angels of light” (II Cor. 11:14) who fight against God's Church. This Philadelphia era has been raised up to do the work of Elijah in preparation of “restoring all things” (Matt. 17:11). It is no wonder then that Satan is fighting us now with great zeal and passion.

Before it is too late, make sure the armor of God is fastened tightly around your body and soul. And through your constant “prayer and supplication in the Spirit” God will grant you living faith, so that we may boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear” (Heb. 13:6). — *By Gerald Waterhouse* □

The Final Authority

(Continued from page 9)

bility to remove them if they don't.

In all matters, then, it's God's opinion that really counts! He is the final authority!

God has specially called His ministers to act as His spokesmen — teaching the people His will. Christ set the example (Matt. 7:29) when He astonished the people by teaching with *authority*. That authority is to be respected! It is not respect to the man, but to the office and to

God who placed him in the office.

God's ministers need your prayers and your love and cooperation in carrying on this great Work He has committed to all of us. Mr. Armstrong has set a wonderful example by his love, humility, wisdom, zeal and his constant willingness to grow into more truth as God reveals it.

To accomplish our mission successfully, we need to practice the way of order and Church government that God has commanded. This way of God will be a great blessing to us and to the millions who will hear the true Gospel because we have been willing

to set aside our selfish interests and to work together in harmony, under God's guidance, in carrying out His great Work.

Let us all submit ourselves to God's government in His Church and in His Kingdom to come. As the true Church of God, let us go forward together with love and unity, guided by divine wisdom and inspired by a contagious zeal to carry out with God's power and authority the great Work of proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom as a witness to all nations before Christ's soon return as King of kings. □

Good 'Old' Days

(Continued from page 7)

learn and grow — regardless of your age?

The Christian hope

The apostle Paul wrote: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen . . . then is our preaching vain . . . For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

You do firmly believe this, don't you? But Satan wants you to forget it. He will do anything to make you doubt God's Word. And don't let him make you think that you are too old to learn or have nothing to live for anymore. Just remember that you have the promise of *eternal life* to live for!

When God put the first man in the garden of Eden, He instructed him to "dress it and to keep it." This commandment also applies to the care of our character. We must develop it and cultivate it until the end. Age does not enter into the picture. God is ageless. His Spirit in you will help you keep your mind active, jovial and in good health. It provides you the strength you need to endure your trials and difficulties. God knows that you can make it. That's why He has called you at this end time. Don't

lose your crown by giving up, or thinking that you are too old to be useful. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16:31).

We all reap in life what we sow. No one has even been — or ever can be — too old to sow the good seeds of love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, perseverance and faith. Put God to the test. Sow daily those seeds, and you will reap the fruits, regardless of your age.

Death is your enemy, not your friend. Don't wish it. It is the last enemy you will conquer with the power of God, provided that you sow the seeds of the fruit of the Spirit.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery," Paul wrote under God's inspiration, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:51-55).

Be hard at work

When you diligently read and study God's Word, can't you see why you must be hard at work growing in grace and knowledge and in helping others to appreciate life, to be grateful to be alive? You won't be able to fulfill your tasks by keeping others at

arm's length or by isolating yourself. Love is sharing and giving, and you, a begotten child of God, have much to share and to give.

You are "the light of the world," said Christ. "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).

You are "the salt of the earth," He also stated. Of what value is the salt if it loses its savor? It is your duty to let people around you know what it means to be truly Christian. The help you give your fellowmen, your encouraging example, your cheerful words, your contagious smiles, your confident attitude, your prayers and your faith — all this is well *within your means*. You are never too old to sow these good seeds.

You have an important part to play in this world of confusion and darkness. Not too many people know why they were born or why they will die. But you do, and you have the opportunity to show them the *way* to live. Not too many have the ultimate goal you have. Isn't this a good enough reason for you to want to share it with others?

You soon will be living in a different world — the world tomorrow — where all people from all walks of life will be able to receive God's Spirit. At that time, they too will know what true happiness is. They will experience the peace of mind and the joy that come from the Spirit of God.

Today, they don't understand this or believe it. But you do! Your world tomorrow has already started here and now. Live it in your home, in your community, in the Church of God *today!* □



NEWTRENDS

Compiled in conjunction with the News Bureau of the Worldwide Church of God

- GREECE - COMMON MARKET LINK NEAR: The government of Greece has successfully ended year-long negotiations on the terms under which it will join the European Economic Community Jan. 1, 1981, making it the EEC's 10th member. Greece will have five years after this date to make a full transition to EEC regulations. French Foreign Minister Jean-Francois Poncet said that for the EEC to expand southwards to embrace Greece, and later Spain and Portugal, was a step in the direction of history and of economic logic.
- BRITISH DEPART MALTA: Britain closed its last military bases in Malta March 31, severing a once vital link with its empire and leaving this small island to fend for itself for the first time in modern history. Withdrawal of the remaining 500 servicemen, according to a Reuters dispatch from Valletta, Malta's capital, "will end a British military presence dating back to the capture of the island from the French during the Napoleonic wars in 1800." The British navy docks alone once employed 20,000 men. Malta's socialist Prime Minister Dom Mintoff is seeking aid from Western Europe, Algeria and Libya to offset loss of British money. The pro-British lobby in Malta reacted initially with anger against the closure. Said a government spokesman, "They find it hard to accept that the empire is gone."
- SOVIET NAVAL POWER GROWS: Rear Adm. Summer Shapiro, director of U.S. Naval Intelligence, warns there are strong indications the Kremlin intends to use its growing navy to extend "Soviet military, political and economic influence throughout the world." He sees the steady qualitative improvement in the Soviet navy, now numbering 266 ships, as a "direct threat" to American interests and a "significant challenge" in many ocean areas. Giving concern to Western military analysts are the expansion of the Soviet submarine-launched ballistic missile force and the development of a new deep-diving submarine armed with MIRV-ed nuclear missiles.
- AMERICA'S RETREAT IN THE NEAR EAST TAKES ON PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE: Turkey, heavily in debt, plagued by high unemployment and inflation, still bitter at the American arms embargo, has recently seen violent clashes between extreme left-wing and fascist elements. While the future of America's monitoring stations is in doubt, the Turkish government has simultaneously made overtures to the Soviet Union and professed its desire to increase its ties to Western Europe. Meanwhile, the United States has alienated one of its few remaining friends in the Near East -- Pakistan -- by shutting off economic and military aid, and, at the same time, has apparently ignored an opportunity to aid Moslem guerrillas in Afghanistan who are trying to overthrow a Soviet-dominated government. Numerous prophecies indicate that much of the Near East would be under the thumb of Gog and Magog -- the Soviet Union -- in the last days.
- WORLD CROPLAND LOSSES PORTEND FOOD CRISIS: Rapid reduction in cropland soil fertility and availability are a grave global problem, reports Lester E. Brown, president of the Worldwatch Institute. Soil erosion, desert encroachment, urban sprawl, highway development and years of destructive agricultural practices are now removing more than two acres from production for every one gained. Don't look for technology to make up the difference, says Mr. Brown. Advanced agricultural societies have raised yields about as far as they can economically afford. Yields per acre have leveled off or declined in many nations, including the United States, France and China, leading grain producers in their areas of the world.

Edited by Gene H. Hogberg

WHY ARE SO MANY AMERICAN FAMILIES DISAPPEARING?



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