

A Good Word for the Old Paths

by Ray L. Straub

Jeremiah spent much of his time in misery! "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears," he lamented, "that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people and go from them!"

What was the problem?

"They be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:1-3).

Israel was guilty of falling into many sins including idolatry. The people were aware of their offenses but remained impenitent. "From the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealt falsely" (Jeremiah 6:13).

During this era of terrible sinfulness, Jeremiah gave timeless advice: "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). These valuable words capture the attention of the wise. Israel refused to hear them, and it was that nation's severe loss.

At a time of the year
when we



look forward, it is also good to look backward. New experiences should be sought with proper regard for the old. Lessons learned in the past are often too valuable to be ignored without suffering unnecessary consequences.

It is hardly necessary that one be a good student of history in order to employ observance of the past to establish good guidelines. Observations made in a short lifetime can provide precious insight. All we need is a sincere concern for values that deserve being upheld.

One of these values is an old-fashioned aversion to sin. Sin is harmful to the individual and to society. It destroys. It robs, and it deprives. It is the chosen activity of the unwise and irresponsible. It brings only sorely devastating plague.

Liberal theology suggests that it is inappropriate to think in terms of "personal evil." Instead of thinking in terms of individual involvement with sin, even in extreme atrocities such as the murder of millions of Jews of Nazi Germany, or the recent Jonestown massacre, it becomes fashionable to consider these to be "psychological illnesses that keep people from being good, sociological causes that compel people to turn to Jones or to Hitler — that's what one should be concerned with" (Brown University's John Giles Milhaven, *Time* magazine, Religious Section, December 18, 1978, page 51).

Reports of the rise in crime continue, particularly those of the violent sort. A large percentage of serious fires are caused by arsonists who are for hire. Few doors have but a single lock. Packages are no longer safe in locked cars. Walking alone at night in large cities is unthinkable.

Added to any list of crimes must be the lack of integrity in high office. Scandals in government are almost commonplace. The American citizenry is so callous to graft in high places that they repeatedly return those exposed for dishonesty to their seats in legislatures! Ours is an evil, self-serving society which lives too comfortably with sin.

We need to find the old paths, the good way! The values of honesty and responsibility need to be returned. Sin is worthy only of repudiation, and those who choose to indulge in it need to know that their choice is intolerable.

The old paths also lead us to an increasing knowledge of God and His Will. The most excellent source of this information is the Bible. It deserves more attention than ever!

Being interested in what the Bible contains and being religious are

"The Bible introduces a God who is personal and who seeks reconciliation with man."

not necessarily the same. Many are intensely religious but have a limited knowledge of scripture. Being religious is not, of itself, redemptive, nor even of much value. The religious are fully capable of committing senseless evil.

The Bible is available for study. It reveals the will and personality of God. It offers quality guidance that has been tested over millennia and proven to be superb. It deserves not only the attention, but the allegiance and obedience of mankind.

Not only is it appropriate that individuals study the Bible in their quiet moments when they can concentrate and learn, but it is necessary that individual impressions and conclusions be exposed to group discussion. Collective Bible study greatly enhances the value of individual study. Whether one feels that he is deeply religious or not, he will find significant virtue in group Bible study. This is an "old path" worth walking in.

Added to collective Bible study should be collective worship. God is worthy of worship and praise because He is God, He is good, and He is concerned. The Bible introduces a God who is personal and who seeks reconciliation with man. No endeavor in history has been more meaningful than God's achievement in making available

His peace to humanity. The wise seek it.

Those who are reconciled to God become part of His family, and this relationship is meaningful. It is worth observing, expressing, and giving thanks for. Appreciation is recognizing, and God is worthy.

Following Jesus' ascension into heaven, the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to preach with unheard-of success. Thousands were converted and reconciled to God. This experience had such impact that converts sold their possessions and pooled them into a common fund from which all lived equally. Few causes receive such open and unselfish devotion without coercion.

This arrangement, though temporary, enabled members of the new fellowship to spend much time in collective worship. People were free from sinful obsession with self-service. They sought the happiness and salvation of others, and what an enjoyable and rewarding goal this was! It was a good path, this happiness in collective worship, and it deserves our devotion.

This early Christian community reflected another value which needs to be upheld; that of placing spiritual priorities above materialistic concerns. Eternal values deserve more attention than physical possessions. Jesus advised, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Is it still more appropriate that our children be honest than wealthy, if a choice must be made? Is it still fashionable to prefer the welfare of others above our own? Is it a good choice to attend religious services even though it may demand that we bypass opportunities to earn more money? Is it fiscally responsible to offer as much financial support to a church as it is to entertain ourselves and our family?

There is a truth that everyone will acknowledge but few seem to reflect in their lifestyles. It recognizes that having things does not bring quality nor long-lasting hap-

piness. Momentary thrills cost excessively and leave us empty and alone.

Spiritual values which uphold and promote what is right are worthy of devotion. Jesus assured, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). There is much hungering and thirsting that will forever go unsatisfied because too many have wandered from the old paths of goodness and cannot find their way back.

Faith is worth holding onto. Even though the numbers of those who disregard lasting values increase, faith remains a powerful force to stem the advances of humankind's enemy.

Faith gives substances to our hopes. It gives them the character of reality. Even though sinfulness advances in its scope, its very existence is temporary. Those who are citizens of this world only must be worried and in anguish about lost opportunities to serve themselves more fully, but citizens of the world to come realize that this life is a temporary sojourn on the old paths leading to a better world. There is no doubt. God's Word tells us that our existence will span eternity, and it may be accepted as fact.

Faith brings God onto the believer's side. This creative and sustaining force is all powerful. God allows man the freedom to choose where he will walk. He will not impose Himself upon the person who stumbles along looking for some imaginary personal utopia. God allows people to seek futility and have it.

On the other hand, those who choose to walk the old paths, who seek reconciliation with God, accept an invitation to be part of God's family. That choice activates and empowers a faith which brings many rewarding and sustaining victories.

The general church world may be faulted for her lack of unity, her obsession with programs that serve human needs inadequately, her lack of enthusiasm for her own

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"Take Heed"

by Arne Pedersen

There is a maxim in the Bible that deserves our deepest consideration. It states, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

Great care must be given to the awareness of our commitment to the Lord and our reliance on His power.

In the hustle and excitement of daily activities it is very easy to become self-satisfied with the condition of our lives thereby forgetting to gauge our progress in spiritual matters. Often it requires illness or some other obstacle to slow our pace enough to realize how little we recognize the omnipotence of our Lord.

We struggle along in our own feeble strength and become exhausted with despair; then let down our barrier of self-pride and self-reliance and say, "Lord, help me please!" After the Lord has helped us and the event or problem in life is past it is not long before some get into the "make it on my own" rut again.

Trials in life are necessary and should not overwhelm us. Rather, they should serve to bring us into a closer relationship with the Lord, and to bring the reaction Paul describes in Romans 5:3-5, "But we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Trials and temptations can be terribly painful if it is not understood that God meant for them to be encountered. James 1:2-4 says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

We must not yield to our temptations and allow ourselves to become tossed to and fro by their compelling power. But if we have the Lord securely in our hearts temptations in the proper perspective should serve to make us stronger with each passing experience.

One thing is certain, and that is we cannot endure by our own tenacity. Paul rejoiced in his tribulations and temptations only because he knew he was relying on a greater power than his own. He declared, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

That is it! That is the ingredient that must be in our lives. Christ living within us! Flesh and blood will not withstand the wiles of the Devil, but Christ through the Holy Spirit will! "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4)!

Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. No one before or after him was given the degree of understanding and ability that he possessed. Yet with all this wisdom he failed miserably when he neglected to nourish his relationship with the ever-present Heavenly Father.

The relevance of that statement, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," takes focus as we review in our own minds the frustrations we've

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ry of Jesus' resurrection, it would not detract from the Sabbath in the least. The two are totally unrelated, like New Year's and the Fourth of July.

The Prophet Got Caught

The prophet wasn't killed because he had made an honest mistake. In the first place, he never really believed God had changed His orders, but after the other prophet told him God did, he then had a good excuse to do what he wanted to, so he thought. He could now get something to eat and drink. If God should ask him why he disobeyed, he could blame it on the preacher. Surely God wouldn't be unreasonable and expect him to know the prophet had lied to him.

The prophet's mistake was in forgetting God could look at his heart and thus see through his scheme. God does allow for honest ignorance (I Timothy 1:13) but one must remember He can always tell the difference.

Because the evidence for the Sabbath is so conclusive, why don't we play it safe, keep the Sabbath, and enjoy peace of mind?

God, our heavenly Father, kept the Sabbath (Genesis 2:2), and Jesus, our Lord, kept the Sabbath, (Luke 4:16). How can we possibly go wrong by following their example? If we walk in the path of our Saviour which led to church and the needy on the Sabbath day, (Luke 4:16; Mark 3:5) surely God's favor on our lives would more than compensate for any inconvenience that keeping his Sabbath might bring about. **◀BA▶**

"TAKE HEED"

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encountered during times of trial and temptation.

On our own we will fall! We need the Lord! We must not be too complacent about our own ability to fight the devil, but we must place our life and confidence in the strength of the Lord! "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his word" (Ephesians 6:10). **◀BA▶**

LIFE FOR MODERN MAN

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they become yours. But, remember that when you accept the Christ of the Bible, you accept His laws, His spiritual principles, even His ex-ampleshship as your very own life-style.

Jesus Christ is coming soon. The Bible makes that abundantly clear. He is coming back to present to himself "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). It becomes that way because He sanctifies and cleanses it "with the washing of the water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26).

Accept the Christ of the Bible, make your commitment to Him and renew the Bible in your life. **◀BA▶**

THE GREAT RENEWAL TO COME

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But it will contain none of the false pagan worship or faulty monetary and governmental systems of the present confused world. How refreshing it will be to have ALL THINGS NEW!

A Great Work to be Accomplished

The second advent of Christ will bring an end to the present nations of the world with all their confusion and deceit. It will usher in a great and wonderful age, an era of a thousand years during which the plan of redemption will be fully completed. The redeemed of this age will live and reign with Christ and accomplish a great work with Him during that time of one thousand years.

This time is described in Zechariah 14 and in Revelation 20. It is after this time, when all "enemies," including false cultures, religions, and systems will have been destroyed; that the fullness of renewal as described in Revelation 21, is realized.

When this work is fully accomplished, the Son of God, Jesus, will turn over the kingdom to God. Christ is now with God on God's

throne acting as our High Priest or Mediator. He reigns in the hearts of true Christians but is not now on His own throne, reigning in a literal kingdom. But He will reign for the one thousand years to complete His work.

"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him . . . that God may be all in all" (I Corinthians 15:25, 28).

A Cause for Encouragement

The confusion and wickedness of the present world may cause some to feel discouraged. The struggle for a good life becomes harder with inflation and high costs. But as we come into this new calendar year may we be reminded that some day there will be truly a new day and time. Our belief in God that the Bible is His true Word should leave no doubt but what the new time will come. Even now there is renewal in our lives as we accept Christ and love and obey Him and pray to God the Father in His name. Let us take courage and look up for surely our redemption will come soon. **◀BA▶**

A GOOD WORD FOR THE OLD PATHS

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teachings that have value, her scattered tendencies to exact unneeded wealth from those who have greater monetary needs, along with other shortcomings. However, it must be noted the church has retained, through her traditions, many excellent values. Her virtues outdistance her faults.

The old paths are good. Had Israel returned to them she may have avoided suffering captivity. The old paths are good for us. Those who choose them will walk wisely in the light.

To progress meaningfully is to retain proven values. Looking ahead responsibly includes looking back wisely. The old paths are the good ones which lead to a better life. **◀BA▶**

Where the Christian Begins



by Ray L. Straub

In the minds of Christians, the decision to be a disciple is the best one can make. No other choice is as important or meaningful. While this attitude may seem egotistical, presumptuous and audacious to those of other religious persuasions, it is the solid cornerstone of fundamental Christianity. The choice to receive Christ as Saviour and to accept discipleship is more precious than life itself. It is receiving the gift of *eternal* life.

Where does it all begin in the experience of the individual Christian? For those already involved, it is easy to speak about the satisfaction, peace, joy and love that graces their new lifestyle. We speak of the challenges which

stimulate growth and stability. There are the tender and warm moments when encouragement is given. The bursting through of new insights are fulfilling. Thank God for our many victories. But, where is the gate through which one enters this experience of redemption and reconciliation?

It all begins with the giving of information. Decisions are the product of a variety of knowledge received. Those who are never made aware of anything are seldom required to make a choice. Many of our biological functions are the result of decisions made, based on information carried

through our nervous system.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” (Romans 10:13, 14).

Evangelizing is the process of giving persuasive information. It seeks to build attractiveness into a product, viewpoint or lifestyle. Since we consider God to be the ultimate of everything righteous, and His Word to represent truth, the more accurately our words and deeds reflect God, the more convincing we are in our efforts to gain increased membership in God’s family.

Faith that responds to attractive information about God is a trusting acceptance and recognition of what God has done and promised. It begins by simply responding positively to the “preacher” who brings glad tidings of good things.

In reporting the results of Paul’s meeting with the leaders of the Jewish community in Rome, Luke observed, “And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not” (Acts 28:24). That’s putting it simply. Some responded positively. Some let words of salvation pass by. Some exercised faith in the message; others didn’t. So it is with faith. Some develop and use it; others are unaccepting.

Faith is giving assent to divine revelation. Central to this divine revelation is recognizing and accepting that God is an autonomously moral Being.

To arrive at, accept, and live by such lofty conclusions reflects a growing faith. To regard God as autonomously moral is basic to allowing Him to reign as God and King of our lives. It assigns to Him the complete right to determine what is ultimately right — absolutely righteous.

Having made the decision to allow God to determine and reveal what is moral and redemptive we are open to divine revelation. God communicates His Will to us through our faith.

Faith vouches for the validity of any agreement between God and His children. It is not always easy to look at God's promises without apprehension and doubt. Contracts we just read about hardly seem as real or as binding as those which have been confirmed in other ways, such as an oral review, negotiating with the other party, receiving spendable funds, etc. Without some sort of ceremony, it seems that promises read about cannot be substantial. A working faith does vouch for the genuineness of God's promises.

As necessary as it is, experiencing faith alone does not give us membership in God's family. It leads us to repentance, a feeling of remorse for our ungodly conduct.

Any time that an individual gives thought to taking his life into a new direction, an evaluation of previous views and behavior takes place. There may be little thinking involved in impulsive actions, but one who gives deliberate and serious thought to changes in behavior does so while reviewing his past conduct and thoughts.

If this review is done with a faith in the autonomous moral character of God, it brings to mind the lack of a moral sense that has been guiding us. A sinner giving God a serious look cannot feel good about his own past deeds.

The prospect of a moral and behavioral turnabout is the reason for the Christian's happiness. Thank God that something can be done about our poor thinking and acting habits!

John the Baptist preached, "Repent." Jesus began with the same message, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). When the spectacular coming of the Holy Spirit stirred curiosity and caused people to want a closer kinship with God, they asked, "What shall we do?"

The answer, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). The answer was repeated, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted" (Acts 3:19). Repentance and conversion both involve the concept of "turning around."

Repentance acknowledges that we will cease to match wits with or place our wills against God. It acknowledges that we are tired of living without Him while offending Him. It seeks to fill the God-vacuum in our lives, substituting harmony for disunity in our relationship with Him.

God is absolutely righteous; we are not. He is autonomously moral, we are substantially immoral. He has the ultimate insight; we are self-deceived. There is a serious gulf between our righteousness and God's that we cannot cross by human effort. Anyone who sees no moral problems with his own life has not had an adequate look at God. To see and recognize who God really is finds us in a state of moral futility needing repentance. The enormity of our sins cost God the life of His only begotten Son who had committed no error.

Effective repentance calls to mind and apologizes for specific sins. It is not being truly repentant only to consider the possibility that we *might have erred*, that we *might have* caused offense, that we *might have* behaved humanly, that we *possibly might* fall short of bearing God's image. Such hypothetical admissions are only a response to theology, not to an autonomously moral Being. When one sees how totally righteous God is and how he has wretchedly failed to live up to God's standards, he emotes feelings of guilt, sorrow, humiliation and repentance. A confrontation with God is

JESUS CARES, I KNOW

by Edward M. Brandt

Even in the darkest hour,
Strengthen us with grace and power;
May our faith steadfast remain,
Nevermore to fade or wane.

Even when the tears must flow,
Jesus cares and this I know;
Saviour bless us with Thy peace,
Comfort Lord and never cease.

Wipe away our every tear,
Fill our hearts with joy and cheer;
May our thanks to Thee increase,
As Thy blessings never cease.

not academic, it is dynamic. God is not an idea, He is a righteous entity who reacts to our conduct.

Repentance stimulates our successful determination to put to death the "man of sin." This "man of sin," also called the "carnal nature" the "old man," the "flesh" speaks of our base appetites and the immorality produced when these appetites are not adequately restrained. This immorality is not just sexual misbehavior, although it includes such. It speaks of all acts of aggression against our fellow man when our self-satisfaction is threatened. It speaks of rebellion against God's ways. It refers to the weakness of our will power, meaning that we often sense that positive action would be good, but we don't follow through because we prefer comfort.

The alternative to these base, degenerative influences is to ambitiously pattern our life after Jesus. It is resolving to rise from our weaknesses and excuse-making, calling on God's Spirit and power to aid in fashioning a holy life — one that is determined to reflect godliness.

Repentance says, "I'm tired of weakness and failure, and I am depending upon God to turn things around, to reveal His righteousness through me." Repentance calls into the individual lifestyle an entirely new set of values and goals.

Though repentance is characteristically a negative emotion, laced with guilt, feelings of inadequacy, hurt, humiliation, and self-devastation, it finds its redemption on a positive note. The remorse-producing behavior is replaced by victorious living. Repentance calls upon a God who is the most compassionate and powerful of all powers. It exchanges failure for success; frustration for peace; emptiness for citizenship in the world to come; loneliness for love. Faith allows us to repent while feeling hopeful.

Faith is trusting acceptance of what God has done and promised. It produces repentance that turns us around. The new path is not always comfortable, but it is always worthwhile.

◀BA▶

Are Christians Born Or Begotten?

by Ray L. Straub

Almost everyone who has attended church for any length of time has heard of Nicodemus, even though he is mentioned briefly only three times in the New Testament — each time in John's gospel.

In John 19:39, 40 there is mention of Nicodemus' involvement in placing Jesus into the tomb. In John 7:50, 51 it is reported that he made a statement in defense of Jesus. It is probable that many churchgoers did not know of these instances involving Nicodemus. It is his conversation with Jesus, found at the beginning of John 3, that makes him so well known.

Nicodemus was a member of the prestigious Sanhedrin. This was a position of prominence in the Jewish community. He had heard about Jesus, but he wanted to know more. He came to Jesus by night.

Nicodemus' inquiry came in the form of a statement. He acknowledged that Jesus was a teacher sent from God because no one could perform those miracles unless God were with him. This statement, though exploratory in nature, reflected unusual admiration and respect on the part of Nicodemus for Jesus' ministry.

The Teacher's response was profound! "Unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." This statement confused Nicodemus — which is understandable! He asked the automatic questions, "How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb the second time and be born?"

Good questions! How can a man be born again?

Jesus explained, "Except a man is born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Flesh can only produce flesh. Jesus was referring to a birth of the water and the Spirit.

The second birth involves a spiritual being which cannot be created by the flesh. He comes into being by the Spirit of God.

Jesus compared this spiritual being to the wind. One sees the effects of wind on the leaves of a tree, but he cannot see the wind itself. It is that way with the new spiritual creature. You cannot see this new creature, but you can observe its results. It is important to remember that this is the only interpretation Jesus gave to this analogy. The newly born spiritual being is invisible, but its effects can be seen.

There is considerable difference of opinion in explanations of this new birth. Some consider that we are born again when we receive Christ as Saviour, at our conversion. Others are persuaded that the new birth refers to our future translation (change) to immortality at Jesus' second coming. They feel that one is born again when he receives his immortal, incorruptible, heavenly, spiritual body.

The latter theology suggests that the saints are not born again in this life. The righteous dead will receive their new birth when resurrected. The righteous living will be born again when they are changed from corruption to incorruption at the appearance of Jesus when the trumpet heralds His second advent.

When are we born again? at our

conversion? or when we are resurrected?

The much larger percentage of fundamentalist Christendom believes that a Christian is born again at his conversion. It is dangerous to accept a Bible teaching simply because it is upheld by most churchgoers. Unfortunately, one cannot even rely on the opinions and teachings of prominent theologians.

On the other hand, it is intellectually irresponsible to reject a teaching only because it is embraced by most Christians. Traditional teachings are often correct. One cannot claim to be right only because he sounds different.

There is considerable value in reviewing this teaching carefully, because it is important. This is the message Jesus gave to an important individual who came to the Master by night seeking meaningful insight.

Consider the questions Nicodemus asked in response to Jesus' declaration that a man had to be born again. These inquiries indicate that Nicodemus thought Jesus was referring to the physical body. How can an aging physical body re-enter a physical womb to be physically born a second time?

Jesus clarified this by insisting that the second birth did *not* refer to the physical body. He spoke of a birth of water and the Spirit; not a birth that involves the flesh.

Does our change from mortality to immortality involve the flesh? Yes, it does. The body we have is mortal, corruptible, of the earth. It is the body we received at our physical birth. When Jesus comes this physical body will be replaced by a new, perfect body. This change has everything to do with our *physical* existence. Jesus told Nicodemus that the new birth has nothing to do with the physical body, that which is born of the flesh. Hence, the new birth must be referring to some experience other than the physical change that takes place at the resurrection.

Does our decision to live for Christ — our conversion — deal with our physical body? The

answer is "No." At our conversion our physical body remains the same. The conversion is that of the spirit. Our attitude, outlook, discipline are changed. It is enlightening to recognize Nicodemus' initial misunderstanding and recognize that the new birth does not have reference to the state in which we exist physically.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"

The second birth did not refer to the physical body. He spoke of a birth of water and the Spirit, not a birth that involves the flesh.

(John 1:11-13). Those who are born of God become His *sons*.

The fact that we are children of God is not an obscure or subtle concept in the Bible. Since children are the product of birth it would follow that the second birth is our conversion. Repenting of our sinful participation in worldliness, we convert to serving God. We become part of His family.

We return to the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus for a second consideration. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!" The new English Bible and the Berkeley Version of the New Testament say, "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This language communicates that the new birth is a *condition* to entering God's kingdom, not a *description* of it. It's a contingency as opposed to a report.

The language does not suggest that the new birth is the *physical process* by which we get there, it teaches that it is a *spiritual requirement* before we are qualified

to get there. It does not convey the idea that being born again is getting there. It says, "Be born again, or you will not get there!"

What is this kingdom to which Jesus referred? Is it the 1000-year reign beginning with Jesus' return when the saints receive their immortal, spiritual bodies?

Both John the Baptist and Jesus taught repentance because the kingdom of heaven was at hand. They spoke of a kingdom that preceded the 1,000-year reign. It was a kingdom of the Spirit that began with the preaching of the gospel.

Paul recognized the reality of this kingdom. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:12, 13). When we leave Satan's domain we become citizens of a new kingdom. This takes place upon experiencing the spiritual new birth.

Please note a series of verses from the first general letter of John: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (I John 2:29).

I John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

I John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

I John 5:1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

I John 5:4, "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world."

I John 5:18, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

These several references indicate that when we come to know Christ as Saviour, God becomes our heavenly Father. We are born into His family. We experience a spiritual birth; a spiritual aware-

ness; an awareness of the goodness and presence of God.

The teaching seems so clear and understandable that one wonders how anyone could question it. The doctrine is challenged by suggesting that the language of the text may be challenged.

In the above cited verses the accuracy of the use of the verb "born" is under indictment. It is suggested that the word used in each of these references should be "begotten," not "born." For support, I Peter 1:3 is read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath *begotten* us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Here we note the use of "begotten" in the same context that "born" is employed in other verses.

At this point it is essential that a simple lesson in the exercise of logic be reviewed. A conclusion results from information available. The information is offered as a premise or proposition. A series of these arguments or propositions should lead to an obvious conclusion. This form of deductive reasoning is called a syllogism.

Here is an example of a syllogism:

It does not rain in Palm Springs in July.

I will vacation in Palm Springs in July.

It will not rain where I am vacationing.

This reasoning is flawless. However, one is wise to remember that even though there is nothing wrong with the reasoning, the conclusion may still be in error. How could this be? Because the conclusion is only as valid as the propositions offered. In the above syllogism, the conclusion could be in error if the premise that "It does not rain in Palm Springs in July" is in error.

It is true that the Greek word from which *born* is translated can also be rendered *begotten*. Using this information they suggest that at conversion, man is *begotten* remaining in this *begettal* state until Jesus comes. They equate the

begettal state with *gestation*, the term of pregnancy, which runs from conception to birth.

Were their reasoning set up into a syllogism it would appear:

A converted person is begotten.

To be begotten is synonymous with gestation.

A converted person is in a state of gestation.

This status finds him awaiting the new birth at the resurrection when we receive our spiritual bodies.

Again, the conclusion is only as valid as the arguments offered. In the syllogism just offered, the second premise needs examination.

Born and begotten are translated from the same Greek word. They both refer to the same experience, the only difference being that begotten identifies male involvement.

Is being *begotten* the same as *gestation*?

To beget is to procreate, to generate, to produce. Beget is to identify the male role in procreation. Procreation refers to producing offspring.

It is misleading to label the gestation period the begettal; that one is *begotten* when he is conceived. No authority will support that definition.

This is why born and *begotten* are translated from the same Greek word. They both refer to the same experience, the only difference being that *begotten* identifies male involvement. *If an offspring is not born, he is not begotten*. Both of these terms have reference to procreation, not conception or gestation.

There is more. The Greek word from which *born* is translated in the references that are listed from I John is the same word from which *born* is translated when used in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus as recorded in John 3. The same *born again* Jesus talked

about with Nicodemus is that experienced by people who believe in Jesus and love their brother.

There is no basis upon which to insist that Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being born into immortality; then to insist that the same author (John) wrote about being conceived and remaining in a fetal stage when writing the first general letter is an improper conclusion. Nothing in the context indicates such varying interpretations. Conversion could easily and logically be the experience referred to in both cases.

Notice how Romans 8:1, 14, 16, 17 refer to a spiritual awareness and to the fact that we *are* children of God. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit . . . For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God . . . the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together."

We *are* the sons of God and heirs. If we suffer with him, we *will be glorified together*. This does not suggest that we become sons *when* we are glorified. We become sons and *then* are glorified.

The Bible teaches that our life in Christ begins with the new spiritual birth. This is how we become new creatures in Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Galatians 6:15).

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, *even so we also should walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4). It is the new creature who is expected to walk in newness of life. Old things are passed away. Everything becomes new. →

Ephesians 4:24 refers to "the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Also Colossians 3:9, 10 mentions "the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

These passages offer more evidence that we are born again in this life when we repent of our sinfulness and turn to God seeking help to live righteously. The new birth refers to that new, spiritual creation within us that makes us part of God's family.

It is this interpretation of the new birth which establishes the meaning and importance of baptism, for there are significant spiritual changes in the man who converts from the world to the family of God.

Those who are baptized by immersion give testimony to the world that there has been a death of the man of sin. This refers to that part of us which was controlled by the devil without, abetted by weakness within. If we did not believe that this "man of sin" was put to death, there would be no point in burying him in the watery grave. Our baptism without this "death" would not actually offer the answer of a clear conscience toward God.

Believing there is a man of sin who dies and is buried, we ought to be able to accept the completed concept of baptism which tells us we rise to walk in *newness of life*. Who does this walking in newness of life? Is it done by some unborn creature?

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). Does this product of the Spirit refer to the spiritual body we receive when Jesus returns, or might it refer to a spiritual quality which emerges at our conversion?

Paul indicates that members of God's family are spiritual. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are *spiritual*, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

The qualities of those who experience the spiritual birth are contrasted to those lacking it in

I Corinthians 2:12-14, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is *spiritual* judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

The Bible teaches that children of God reflect a spiritual quality in this life. They enjoy understanding, insight, and strength that the natural man cannot grasp. Question: "From where does this spiritual quality come?" Answer: "From the new birth." That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ◀BA▶

"TEACH ME TO PRAY"

(Continued from page 8)

things at all times, in all places to all people.

There is no limit to the power of love (I Corinthians 13)! It was Mahatma Gandhi who wrote:

"In the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth and Love. He is Love. He is the Supreme Good."

This does not deny the personality of God. Indeed, it confirms His personableness, His individuality, His self-fulfilling nature. We can open ourselves through prayer to the direct experience of God's love in us and for us.

Practices

So prayer is to be a practice in honesty. It is to be regular (morning, noon, and night). It is to be positive. It is to offer full surrender. It is to be receptive. Prayer, to be efficacious, will require patience, for there will be lean periods. The person who

prays honestly and openly will learn that dedication and deep desire bring reinforcement.

Conclusion

It has been suggested we have reaped as we have sown and we may sow and reap anew. For that we praise the Lover of our souls! Prayer is our cup to be filled and this filling enables us to focus our minds positively as it is coupled with reading and studying.

One final suggestion needs to be offered. Prayer is to be by affirmation rather than by petition. Affirm the guaranteed gifts of God to mankind. Confirm that God does and will! This is the prayer of faith!

Friend, pray at first, at last. Pray for the world and for your enemies by name. Be fully forthright with yourself and with God. Determine to affect, not just reflect, your environment.

Simplify your life.

"TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, UNTO A PERFECT MAN, UNTO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST" (Ephesians 4:13). ◀BA▶

Recommended Reading: *How to Pray*, by Dr. R. A. Torrey; *Prayer Can Change Your Life*, by Dr. William R. Parker and Elaine St. Johns; *How to Succeed with People*, by Stephen R. Covey.

DREADFUL SUPERSTITION

(Continued from page 12)

papers fail to carry a column devoted to what the Bible says about today's problems. And it is the Bible that has the answers people need. Our future is not in the stars but in the Bible.

Fortune-telling flourishes most in times of emotional insecurity. In uncertain times like these in which we live, people long for guidance in making decisions. They are frightened and want to be reassured. And what does the Bible say? Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). ◀BA▶

The Unforgivable Sin

by Ray Straub

Some consider their sins to have been so offensive they are not capable of being forgiven. So hideous, odious and abhorrent were their misdeeds that God would hardly be inclined to even look their direction. To them, there is no use repenting. They feel it is useless to even think about establishing a loving relationship with a righteous, divine Being who threatens to pour out His wrath on sinners.

The Christian protests. He assures that no matter how grave the sin, God's grace is adequate to forgive and redeem. The unsaved remain unsure. The Christian is persuaded that complete forgiveness is available for the asking and believing. The non-Christian retains doubts.

The believers are correct. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). This assertion notes that God's mercy is not offered grudgingly. It is available without qualification. Even where sin *abounds*, God's grace *abounds much more*.

Let sinners be encouraged and assured. Even though past misdeeds have been seriously irresponsible, God's response is to forgive when asked, and then to love more intensely than a father. He offers complete reconciliation.

May Christians conclude that every sin of every description is forgivable? No. Most offenses are pardonable, but not all. There is a sin that is of eternal consequence.

Jesus warned, "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation" (Mark 3:28, 29). To blaspheme against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable.

So that this grave offense may be more clearly understood, definitions of the word "blasphemy" will be analyzed, and interpretations will be offered to indicate its specific nature.

Blasphemy is the strongest expression of personal defamation. It intends to bring ill repute upon a personality. It is an intense form of slander. To blaspheme God would be to offer words and conduct injurious to His honor and holiness. It also denotes a deliberate rejection *and* misrepresentation of God's power.

Matthew 9:1-8 gives the story of a palsied man who was brought to Jesus. Noting this shaking paralytic lying on a bed carried by friends, Jesus said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (verse 2).

Scribes standing by accused Jesus of blasphemy. They insisted that only God can forgive sins (Mark 2:7). In their opinion Jesus was wrongfully seizing divine privilege which belonged uniquely to the Almighty. This misrepresentation of God's judgment was blasphemous, according to their errant viewpoint.

John, chapter 10, contains a discussion Jesus had with His countrymen in which He asserted that He was God's Son. They demanded, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly" (verse 24).

"Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?"

"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (verses 32, 33). The charge here is based on Jesus' claim that He was not only human, but also divine. Even now we would regard such a claim to be awesome if true, blasphemous if false.

At His trial Jesus was asked, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death" (Mark 14:61-64).

While a human's claim to be God would seek to elevate his own status, it would totally debase the divine nature. Surely God is not a mere man which logically suggests that a mere man cannot be God. Rejecting Jesus' divinity seemed to be a logical, if irate, conclusion.

The concept of blasphemy held by the Jews took two forms. They considered it slanderous for one to claim to have and exercise an authority, power or privilege that belongs exclusively to God. It desecrates what is inherently holy. Secondly, it was defamatory to claim to be a Son of God in the divine sense when obviously the claim was made by pure flesh-and-blood humanity. For a human to claim god-status was to distort by belittling the imposing, lofty, cosmic nature of God — a blasphemous wickedness!

Jesus' description of the unforgivable sin does not seek to improve on the concept of "blas-

phemy" held by the Jews of His day. Since He used the word without changing its meaning, knowing what ideas it would communicate to His hearers, one may conclude that the Jews' understanding of "blasphemy" represented Jesus' definition of the unpardonable sin accurately. We may use it.

To blaspheme against the Holy Spirit is to give credit to some lower, opposing, unworthy entity, an authority or privilege which belongs exclusively to the Holy Spirit. It is misrepresenting and dishonoring the work and reality of God's Spirit.

Since we have secured our definition from the Bible, we

**To blaspheme against
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determine whether it harmonizes with the context in which Jesus warned about the unforgivable sin.

In Matthew and Mark, the setting is the same. Disbelieving that Jesus was sent by God, scribes accused Jesus of casting out demons through the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

Jesus responded by citing the postulate: "If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand" (Mark 3:24). Satan would not cast out Satan because that would be self-destructing.

Mark gives the reason why Jesus described the unforgivable sin: "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit" (Mark 3:30).

Anyone who recognized and acknowledged God's working through the Holy Spirit in the actions and good deeds of Jesus and gave credit to Satan would be blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. It would misrepresent the power of faith in God, suggesting that such faith rewarded nothing; that it was actually the enemy of

God who performed compassionately!

A blasphemous assertion is not one that comes out of weakness or doubt. It comes from one who is at war with God, knows the divine source of power for good and deceptively insists that the devil should receive the credit. No such attitude is forgivable.

Slandering the works of God's Spirit is not a matter of entertaining foolish and disgraceful thoughts about a distant God with whom there is little or no acquaintance. It does refer to one whose honesty (if there were any present) would acknowledge the evident work of God. Instead of giving thanks to the correct source, there is the rebellious and demeaning compulsion to honor God's enemy.

When Jesus was casting out demons He was demonstrating the overcoming power of God's kingdom which had arrived and was determined to grow. Taking these clear indications of the victorious advance of the kingdom of heaven and appropriating them to Satanic origin could be accomplished only by spirits who defy eternal truth.

Why would Jesus consider forgivable the slanderous words spoken against Himself while warning that such statements against the Holy Spirit would never be forgiven?

It is probable that unkind words spoken against Jesus as a person were from those who remained unconvinced that He came in the spirit of the living God. They had not accepted Him as the only begotten Son of God, conceived of the Holy Spirit. They could not have deliberately assigned a work they knew was of the Holy Spirit to Satanic powers. Had they recognized Jesus' ministry to be of the Holy Spirit only to blaspheme this work by giving the devil the glory, they would undoubtedly have committed the unpardonable sin. In stating that blasphemy against the Son of man was forgivable, Jesus probably had His accusers in mind. Their cynicism against Him was forgivable, but a stern warning was in order.

The context in which caution concerning the unforgivable sin is given in Luke differs from that of Matthew and Mark. Here it is included with a series of Jesus' teachings similar to the Sermon on the Mount.

It is appropriate to give attention to other passages often referred to whenever the topic of the unforgivable sin is considered.

Hebrews 6:4-6

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

In contrast to referring to a sin from which one cannot be *pardoned*, this passage refers to a circumstance under which one will not be *renewed to repentance*. It addresses the possibility of provoking a contrite attitude. It speaks of the likelihood of repentance, not a divine disposition to forgive.

Hebrews 10:26

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

This verse is not describing a specific *kind of sin* which cannot be forgiven. It warns that there is *no other means* by which sins can be forgiven. "Remaineth" is translated from the Greek *apolipo*, meaning "remains, is left." Sinning willfully after having received the knowledge of the truth means turning away from the only recourse available. There is no other way to be saved.

Stating this truth positively, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

"Neither is there salvation in any other:" preached the apostles, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men,

whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). There is no comment here on the severity of any specific sin.

II Peter 2:20-22

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

The chapter in which one finds this passage refers caustically to false prophets, warning them of the serious nature of their mischief. It describes the dismal situation one finds himself in having renounced membership in God's family. While such sins are serious,

they are not characterized as unforgivable.

I John 5:16, 17

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."

This encourages intercessory prayer. Verse 14 assures, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." To offer prayer for the forgiveness of one who has "sinned unto death" would hardly fall into the will of God. The "sin unto death" is not identified, leaving us without definite indication as to its nature.

To commit the unforgivable is the ultimate horror. Thankfully, while sins are atrocious, they are almost all pardonable.

May many experience that abundant grace of God which forgives all!

◀BA▶

Complete Forgiveness

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

In theory it sounds good to be able to return good for evil, and to forgive those who have mistreated us. In real life, however, are we magnanimous enough to treat someone with special kindness who has hurt us in a very definite way? Consider an actual happening.

During the Armenian atrocities of the second World War a young woman and her brother were attacked by a Turkish soldier. The young lady escaped, but her brother was killed. The young lady was a nurse, and later this Turkish soldier who had been so hateful was brought to the hospital where she worked and was placed in her care. He was seriously wounded and needed more than ordinary attention to be kept alive. She did her utmost to save his life.

When he was well enough to recognize who was caring for him, he said, "Why did you not take revenge and let me die?" Her reply clearly set forth the principle by which she lived. "I am a follower of Him who said, 'Love your enemies, and do good to them.'" After pausing to think this over carefully, the soldier said, "I never knew there was such a religion. Tell me about it, for I want that religion."

This was proof of forgiveness by action and it accomplished a worthy result. It was forgiveness without reservation, and a man found a new way of life. This was the same spirit of forgiveness Jesus had when He cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Interview with Garner Ted Armstrong

by Ray L. Straub

Garner Ted Armstrong is a much-publicized evangelist, dedicated to his mission of bringing the gospel of the Kingdom to the world's needy people in these crucial times. As broadcaster for the Worldwide Church of God, he became the world's best known radio voice. Upheaval among the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God resulted in his being dismissed after which he formed and incorporated the Church of God International. He is presently broadcasting on a growing list of radio stations across the United States.

Recently, Ted Armstrong investigated circumstances involved with his father's (Herbert W. Armstrong) past affiliation with the Church of God (Seventh Day). This search led to an interview on February 8, 1979, in offices of the Church of God International in Tyler, Texas.

The ensuing contact between representatives of the Church of God International and the Church of God (Seventh Day) is encouraging. The following interview offers opportunity for readers of the Bible Advocate to become better acquainted with a well-known radio and television personality whose religious background has roots in common with the Church of God (Seventh Day).

Ray L. Straub: How did you get your start as a minister, and how did this happen to develop into the extensive radio and television ministry you conducted?

Garner Ted Armstrong: I began bringing sermonettes in 1953 and 1954 shortly after my baptism. By 1954, before I was ordained, I conducted a three-day series of meetings under a tent up in Colorado on Dwight Webster's property.

By the time I was ordained in 1955, I was preaching full sermons. I taught college classes following my graduation in 1956, until about 1959. I was teaching Freshman Bible, Epistles of Paul, Speech, Freshman Spanish, and Geography.

I began broadcasting as guest on my dad's show — his television program. He did 26 of these in 1955, and he was radiobroadcasting daily then. I started by taping part or all of the radio programs.

In those early days my voice was undeveloped. I was nervous. I came on in a higher voice, "This is Garner Ted Armstrong, speaking for my father, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong." They're funny to listen to now — they're different!

By 1957 and 1958 I was doing almost all of the programs. The year my brother (Dick) was killed I was conducting what was to have been a six-weeks campaign in Springfield, Missouri. We had no church there. The opening night we had 609 people. We rented a downtown theater. I was going to start on Saturday night. All of the local

churches, including the Church of Christ, Baptists, Methodists, etc., had a great big Saturday church page promoting some big event of their own — important choir, guest speakers — this type of thing, in order to prevent their members from coming to hear me. We had done extensive advertising.

I took a big, brown paper wrapping sheet and drew on it 30 little squares. These needed to be filled with notations of completed broadcasts before I left for Springfield. I had to do half-hour radio programs — as many as four in one day, which would really get my voice very, very sore and tired.

I remember completely filling those little squares in less than three weeks, an extra month's radiobroadcasting! My father had already begun to bow out of radio, though he did make a few isolated programs in the late 50's.

I never went to class to study to be a radiobroadcaster. There were no special techniques or anything that I was trying to develop and use.

In my early years, I think I subconsciously tried to imitate my father, but as time went by I gradually adopted my own style. It was not the high-powered bombast. It was a much more reasonable, conversational tone that I got into in the last 10 or 15 years.

Ray L. Straub: The discussion of current issues was more of your own development?

Garner Ted Armstrong: Right.

When did you start your own radio work?

I think that August 1 was the day of the very first program. We were incorporated on July 21 (1978). Shortly after getting our incorporation papers I began broadcasting. I didn't want to begin earlier because I couldn't advertise literature, and I couldn't send out anything as a private person. I didn't want to pay a radio bill or anything else as a private person. I wanted to do it as a member of the corporation.

Was it in Oregon that your brother Dick was killed?

No, it was in the San Luis Obispo area of central California. He was on a baptizing tour with Don Billingsly, and they had a head-on collision. Dick lived for about a week. They took him to U.C.L.A. Medical Center and he died there. This was in 1958.

That cut short my Springfield campaign by two weeks. Dad had come, and after the campaign we began with a church of about 220 people. That was my first evangelistic campaign. I thought it was quite successful, although it was a grueling grind.

I don't suppose you remember much of your Oregon days.

Well, more than you might think. I've had some long chats with my sisters, and they've refreshed my memory. I remember a lot of names of the people up there, two or three of which I put in my booklet ("The True Church — Is It Organized?"). I remember Elder John Kiesz and his wife, Katherine. I remember well the tragedy when their trailer house caught on fire, and they lost a



Ray L. Straub (left) interviewing Garner Ted Armstrong.

child. It was a shock to the church.

I remember an Elder Severson and an Elder Unsicker — some of those names. We went to a camp meeting somewhere right near a bridge and a river, somewhere in central Oregon.

Albany?

I was going to say Jefferson. I remember the camp meeting very well.

It probably was Jefferson. They used to have camp meetings there.

Do you still do in your services what we did in Eugene, Oregon, when I was a boy — read the Ten Commandments in unison? They had this chart on the wall and we all stood up and had commandment reading. That was the way I memorized them as a boy.

You know that church in Eugene was quite a democratic organization when my dad was first preaching there. They had elections. I don't know how often they were held, whether every month, quarterly, or what, but they would elect a lady as secretary. She kept track of the tithes. She reported what the tithes and offerings were. I think on either a Wednesday night prayer meeting or some other time they would have a business meeting the first few minutes of the prayer meeting to elect the other officials of the church, such as deacons. There was an Emil Fischer and his brother. There was also an Elder John Day — very elderly. He had a giant family Bible, and out of respect to him he would participate in the services. He spoke in almost a whisper. I remember how fascinating it was to watch this lit-

tle wizened, gray-headed man just trembling as he would read out of a huge Bible with giant letters.

In an earlier conversation you mentioned the Scrael Hill church.

Dad used to preach at the Scrael Hill church on his way to Portland and/or Seattle. I think maybe he had a Sabbath morning service in Eugene. We jumped into the car and went roaring up to Scrael Hill on those old, narrow, winding, two lane roads. We had a '41 DeSoto, and before that an old Graham. They had done some building, and I'll never forget the stacks of lumber and other building materials piled up there. Wayne Cole was my age. We would sneak out during services, if we could get away with it, and throw rocks at the lumber pile. Scrael Hill was a fairly frequent stop for Dad.

Do you remember a family by the name of Helms?

Mike Helms? Very well. He had some big, strapping young sons who are now in their middle age, I suppose. I might be thinking of the McGills. I think that Mike Helms had an ancient farm truck, and he gave us some assistance in moving from Astoria to the Willamette Valley. I remember standing on the floorboard and clutching the front of this old truck.

I've heard that your family would get food in exchange for his ministerial services because money was so short.

Yes, Dad has written about how the Oregon farmers would tithe on their

crops, bringing fruit, vegetables or canned goods. When the smelt would run in the rivers we would get enough of them to where they would be "running out our ears"!

From your viewpoint, what were some of the circumstances or issues which caused dissatisfaction among a group of ministers of the Worldwide Church of God back in 1974? Several left the church. Was it a doctrinal problem?

Well, I have to be totally candid and honest with you, Ray. Besides the doctrinal problems it was as much a complete disillusionment and disenchantment with church leadership over a host of problems including an alleged cover-up by my father for me. It wasn't even necessary, and the allegations were not true. There was lack of forgiveness and a lack of gentleness and tenderness on the part of the people who became outraged and angry, allowing a root of bitterness to creep into their hearts.

I will never seek absolution for real or imagined personal sins by going to the general public and begging forgiveness. Nor will I ever go to the church membership or any human being, but I go directly to Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

My father and I had some very stormy periods during the last of 1971 and early 1972. I agreed, and he did, that I needed time off. I really was to the point that I was ready for my own private little nervous breakdown if I didn't get out from under some of the weight which was enormous. It was not only the media load, the colleges, the church, all of my executive and administrative responsibilities, but also the incredible doctrinal problems — these 19-year cycles with 1972 looming large on the horizon.

Later massive attacks were seen in the media. Little by little people dropped out. (Al) Carozzo and certain ones went their way in anger over the Divorce and Remarriage doctrine. Not initially, but later, critics were "beating me over the head," attacking my father, making it a personal vendetta of some sort. This eroded the confidence in leadership on the part of many people. Eventually, it became a problem not unlike that which has erupted most recently, striking out against affluence, high living, jet aircraft, thick carpets, paintings on the wall, gold and diamond cuff links, gold-dipped faucets in a bathroom, overseas trips, fabulous homes, etc. Westby used the term "fat cats." That was as much a part of the 1974 rebellion as doctrine. It was all mixed in. →

I think people released their anger and their personal hatred, and a lack of candor on the part of the church leadership was as much at fault. Looking back from the perspective of Tyler, Texas, 1979, I feel sorry for a lot of those guys like Walt Sharp, George Kemnitz, Ken Westby and others who went out in 1974. I think I could have helped them more than I did. I know my father could have helped them if he would have unbent — if someone high up at about that time would have gone to those guys and said, “Hey, look, I’m sorry.” You’d be amazed what those two words could have accomplished. But there was no willingness to unbend. Instead, there was this same thing they’re doing today: “You *will* not question church leadership! You *will* not question your superior! You *will* give absolute obedience, and if you even *ask* a question, you are OUT of the church!”

Unfortunately, that was pretty much the approach in 1974. It was a deep tragedy. I hope eventually some of those wounds can be healed. That is my frank and honest answer to that. It was doctrine, but it was all mixed in with personalities.

No doubt you were able to sense your progressive alienation from the Worldwide Church of God.

Definitely.

How and when did it start?

My father and I were never really what you would call close. He was nearly 40 years old when I was born, and I never knew him in the sense of a father/son relationship. In my boyhood days he was gone from home almost all the time. He was busy traveling, preaching here and there.

My dad was very much an indoor person. We never did go hunting, fishing, hiking, picnicking, swimming, boating, etc., not once in my entire lifetime. I resented religion, and I sat in services only reluctantly. I would go to sleep on the front bench, go out and play in a big cottonwood tree, or chuck rocks at the lumber pile.

I felt my father was autocratic — a very authoritarian figure — and both of my sisters felt the same. This doesn’t mean we didn’t love him or that we don’t love him, because we do. But, I really rebelled against the authoritarian structure in the family.

As a growing teenager I intended, as soon as I was legally able, to get out from under it and get away from home. I joined the navy at age 18 and was gone for four years.

Later, major changes in my personal life made me really want to challenge

Dad. I felt I wanted to disprove him to get him out of my thoughts. So I started reading other church literature. I picked up brochures at the supermarket where we lived in Temple City, distributed by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. I also read Seventh Day Adventist literature, as well as some from other organizations, including some of my dad’s.

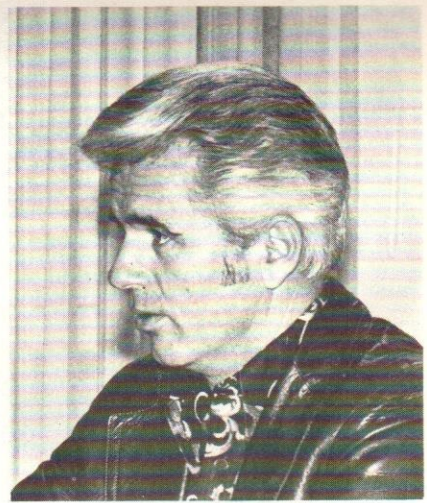
I was going to Ambassador College only for the purpose of studying singing and improving my voice because I wanted to go into entertaining. I began to come across things in the Bible classes that I couldn’t handle. I could show you the very first mark I ever made in my Bible. It was made in connection with an article I read in a national magazine about Christianity as opposed to all the other major religions. The article said, “First, let us understand what Christianity is NOT. It is NOT a way of life.”

Four times on one two-page spread where my first mark is, in the book of Acts (chapter 19) it mentions, “that way,” and it calls it a way of life. That stuck in my mind, and I really had to battle with my thoughts.

I started looking into some of the major booklets. I read the booklet on baptism, and I went to Dad one day and explained that I didn’t feel I could ever be baptized because, frankly, I didn’t think I could ever be forgiven. I felt so unworthy that I felt pretty sure God would make a special exception in my case, and I could never be a member of the church. Dad informed me that my attitude was the surest indication I should be baptized. I was, and my whole life began to change from that point on.

One of the greatest barriers in my life was my resentment of my father’s autocratic authority, and I had to swallow that — get rid of it — which I did successfully. For years that never crept into my consciousness.

However, over the last several years, especially the last 10, since my mother died, rather dramatic changes began to occur. It is impossible to try to calculate the value that my mother was to my dad and the church. The impact, the influence that lovely, wonderful woman had on his life is just incalculable. She was a fantastic buffer, conditioner, go-between, for anybody who had a real tough problem. To get to my dad, people knew they had to go to Mrs. Loma D. Armstrong first. In due respect to my father, she performed the vital function of saying, “No, Herbert. No, Herbert, No, Herbert” so many times in his life when he wanted to do or say something



that needed her influence to sort of ameliorate a situation.

After she died and as my own dimension in the work was increasing to the point that I became, for all practical purposes, the **VISIBLE** leader of the church, there were literally millions of people who didn’t know who Herbert W. Armstrong was. I do not speak of the church. I refer to the general public. That came through no deliberate attempt of mine; it came merely through the impact of being heard on 300 radio stations and 165 television outlets.

I’m afraid that following my mother’s death the influence of Stanley Rader gradually deepened around my father — the constant travel amounting to 300 days a year, being overseas — problems increased. Again out of due respect to Dad, problems developed over what you might call the “boarcub” syndrome — the ego problem of a very hard-driving, self-sacrificing, dedicated, powerful, dynamic, self-made man who could never cooperate with a committee, could never learn to delegate, could never stand to see some other person looking as though he might take away from Dad’s lustre. A sort of competitive thing was grinding away on him. It was unfortunate because competition with my own father was never my intent. I merely wanted to do the work the best I could, to be whatever God wanted me to be. I did not want to upstage my father. In the meantime, Rader pretty much occupied the position of go-between.

Other things developed about three and a half years ago when Dad began to want to marry a lady named Ramona Martin. I battled rather ferociously behind the scenes exchanging lengthy letters. The first one I sent was quite strong, and it was 23 pages in length. I really, sincerely, felt that it (the marriage) was demeaning to my father, not

because of the lady personally.

I wanted my father to be married again, if that was what he wanted and what God wanted. But, I wanted so badly for him to marry a cultured, wonderful woman in her middle age — not that he should marry an old woman, but I didn't think he ought to marry someone in her 30's. I really did battle with him on that.

It was unfortunate. If I had it to do over, I think I would just forget it and leave it in God's hands. I didn't need to step in to fill the void that my mother left. I didn't need to be my dad's adviser in that personal area. Now I would stay out of it.

I was disenchanted with the way the money was being spent — the major buildings. I used to say that my heel prints are probably indelibly impressed in the paving of Ambassador College where I had been dragged with my ears laid back, teeth set, and heels out in front of me, — unwillingly, into one MAJOR financial commitment after another.

I did not agree with the gold, gilded, fabulous, affluent, overdone, extravagant way of spending God's money. I just did not! I always favored something a little more conversant with economy — something without quite so many frills — and I was vociferous and up-front with all of that. That became an abrasive situation.

There were doctrinal problems. I had a serious emotional crisis in 1972. By 1966, I had begun to preach against this idea of 19-year time cycles, that the church was going to flee to Petra. I went to Petra, and the minute I got there I knew the teaching was false.

The first time I preached about not going to Petra my dad was present. He got up in the afternoon and destroyed my morning sermon. That was at the Feast of Trumpets we observed in the early fall of 1966 at Bricket Wood in England. I had been warning our people continuously to be careful about setting dates. I had done some research on my own concerning the cycles and had disproved it.

In 1972, the church was to flee to Petra and Jesus would come by about the early fall of 1975. Those days and years came and went. I did not feel there was sufficient apology for the error. I felt the church needed the cathartic of saying, "We are wrong." Instead of doing that my dad wrote a letter in January, 1972, which is a matter of record, in which he stated that he felt the fulfillment of the second 19-year time cycle was, a.) the obtaining of the financing for the auditorium, and b.)

the opening of what he described as the largest single door in the history of the work, advertising in the *Reader's Digest!* This blew my mind! I just really went crazy with outrage over this!

The major doctrinal difficulties at that time concerned divorce and remarriage and Pentecost. Of course, you folks do not observe the annual sabbaths, but with us it was tremendously important. It was the same controversy that erupted way back among some of the early members of that little church on west 8th Street in Eugene, Oregon. As a boy, I remember that my father ran head-on into people who insisted that he was counting Pentecost incorrectly.

These issues added to the problems. I was concerned about the hurt caused to the many, many families involved. I had the experience many of our ministers had in trying to determine whether people were ready for baptism, whether they really wanted to be converted, really wanted to receive God's Spirit. After two or three hours of talk we would go out to a farm pond to baptise them. We would ask, "Oh, by the way, neither of you have ever been married before, have you?"

"Oh, well, yes, as a matter of fact, we both were. We were very young." In one case one of them had been married maybe for three months, and the other for two or three years previously. Their first marriages "blew up," and now they had been married (to a second mate) for 35 years. I was supposed to sit there and tell these people that for the last 35 years of their life they had been living in adultery! It was making marriage an unpardonable sin. It's making it into something you can't leave behind you in the baptismal pool, and I couldn't reconcile that with the Word of God, and I could not get my father to look at that word, "except — excepting for the cause of *porneia*."

What does (Greek) *porneia* mean? My father insisted that it means only "fornication," sexual intimacy between a man and a woman prior to marriage. I insist, and I will continue to insist, it means sexual indiscretion, impropriety or promiscuity. Ninety-nine per cent of the ministry of the Worldwide Church of God believe the same, but they did not then. This was a major emotional trauma for the church. It cost the church a couple of thousand members and an awful lot of ministers.

As I look back along the course of ten years' time, since my mother died, we entered a really turbulent time. We never had really great, long, protracted periods of peace in the church since that time.

We no sooner had begun growing again after the 1972 crisis, which primarily involved me when we had the 1974 crisis during which Williams, Westby, Kemnitz and several others left our ministry. We lost about 2,000 members. We no sooner began to weather that storm and to calm the church down when some of our people in England erupted. Mr. Charles Hunting, whom I love dearly and have been in contact with from time to time, and Mr. Richard Plache who came back into the church and subsequently was disfellowshipped, I think — I don't know — developed doctrinal differences.

After that it was looking like at long last we were really going to begin growing, and my father married, followed by this huge blowup in 1978.

So, the church has suffered a long, rocky, turbulent time. Mr. Rader has become an inseparable companion and a threat to my father. My father has told me privately he believes Mr. Rader is asserting too much authority, taking too much upon himself. I think this is going to come out before the entire nation in my father's own voice on "60 Minutes," which will be wonderful. People in the Worldwide Church of God are being led to believe Mr. Rader is just a marvelous, converted, wonderful Christian person, and I just say, before God in Christ, that my spirit does not witness with his spirit that he is a son of God.

After being put out of the Worldwide Church of God as you were, I would have thought you might have thrown up your hands and gone fishing.

I would have to say that I toyed with the idea of just doing professional broadcasting, quietly observing the Sabbath or observing the holy days with friends or by ourselves. I was given several offers. There was a fellow named Marcus Lipsky in the Los Angeles area, a multi-millionaire over in the Beverly Hills area who owns the Westside Country Club, to which about half of the Hollywood actors belong. He has had about eight box office successes. He's been a producer of motion picture films.

I spent a whole afternoon with him at his request. He wanted me to take over the entire directing, as well as supervising the script writing. He had a documentary type film in mind having to do with psycho-cybernetics, transcendental meditation, mind over body, etc. He was going for an academy award in that field. He didn't talk dollars, but obviously it would have been a fairly lucrative situation.

Some attorneys out there, together with some marketing analysts surveyed what they thought they could do with a group of financial backers who would put the money up front and produce a syndicated half-hour television commentary with a news-type format, much like some of the documentary programs I have done which had slight Biblical content. They were going to get local, regional and national sponsorship. These marketing analysts actually got right down to the dollars and cents. They offered me a salary of \$150,000 by last July, \$250,000 by this coming July, and \$350,000 the third year, not to exceed the \$350,000. I turned it down.

A guy called from Nashville who wanted me to host a new series he was going to do called, "America Sings." It would have featured the top 25 western and country singers. I would give little vignettes of their background, show pictures of their childhood, interview them and their relatives — a kind of "This Is Your Life" with country and western. They would also do some singing. I was to be the host of the program. This man never talked dollars. I turned that offer down.

I just have had ingrained in me so deeply over the many years that I have been preaching in God's church that that is what I am called to do, and I have the feeling that if I tried to get out of it I may not be successful in some other kind of job. I feel I have the basic mechanics and the professional skills that would be necessary to be successful. I don't know if I would have the heart or the motivation to succeed. I think I would tend to do a bad job. I didn't want to give it the test. I just felt that I'm going to continue to preach the gospel if that's what God wants me to do. If He doesn't, He will show me because He will not bless my efforts. No one is going to help support and that will be the end of it. It will just dry up and go away.

If I had barely hung onto one radio station and within a month had eaten up all my savings, which almost happened — we went down to \$1,000 in the bank — if we had been forced to sell our home in which we have no equity and just quit, I would have said, "Yes, Lord." I mean that would have been, as far as I was concerned, a direct statement from God that He doesn't want Garner Ted Armstrong to be involved in preaching the gospel any further.

I know He does not NEED me. I am not God's right hand man for the hour. I think God really can get along without

me easily, but I don't think I can get along without Him. So, there's no question in my mind but that I'm supposed to do what I'm doing. We started, and it's been growing ever since.

What is your feeling about your dad's claim that he is a special apostle of God? No doubt there has been some change in your thinking on this.

Oh, absolutely. I feel that my father has been as near like an apostle — one of the apostles in this modern period of the church, just as any other person back in history whether we're talking about Peter Waldo, people in the Revolutionary War period, people in England, in this country. This includes his own predecessors in the seventh day Sabbathkeeping movement of our own recent history.

I feel the idea of supremacy, or primacy, as he uses the term, is absolutely inconsistent, and I have proved that in the booklet about the true church. I think I could disprove it in a half-hour Bible study or lecture with anyone who is willing to listen by just wading through Acts 15, Galatians, chapters 1 and 2, before I even get started with many others. Paul stated, "I suppose I was not one whit behind the chiefest apostles (plural)."

I do not claim the office of "apostle," by the way. In the first place, I do not think the word "office" is appropriate for an "apostle." "Apostle" really means "one sent." It is an ecclesiastical title, and it tends to make people think of it as a vertical structure or a hierarchial rank, rather than a calling, a burden, and a commission to simply go out and preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. I would say that an apostle, as I would view it, is a person who is given a portion of the commission of Christ to spread the gospel to a whole area, as Paul was to the Gentiles, and as Peter was to the Jews.

I see in the Bible one ordination, never subsequent ordinations to higher rank as is done in the Worldwide Church of God. Philip is being used for his great miracles and is an evangelist, but he is ordained as a *deacon*. Even the title "deacon" has been misunderstood, I feel, because a deacon was a little more like what we might call an elder who had ministerial functions as well as waiting on tables. Some of these people were called deacons, and it really meant "servant." The two are almost interchangeable. To minister is to serve, and to serve is to minister. The word "minister" is not meant to be a title; it is meant to be a function.

So, I feel when one has been or-

dained and God gives him the gift of inspired foretelling of events, inspired preaching toward world conditions and Bible prophecies of the second coming of Christ, he is an evangelist. If God has given him a special gift of deep, sincere care for people, of preaching, teaching, counseling, anointing, baptizing, and performing the functions of a church pastor, and he settles in a local area to serve the people, he's a pastor. If he's an older man who is apt to teach, but does not necessarily need to preach, he's an elder. I just want to go the Biblical route with those so-called titles, and look at people standing on an equal footing. They stand side by side, not one atop another in a vertical hierarchy.

You express warm feelings toward other Sabbathkeeping Churches of God. When did this attitude on your part come about?

About August of this past year. I can't say that I ever had any feelings except warmth toward them. I was quite pleased when on one occasion I was in Salem, Oregon, for a special Sabbath meeting, and I believe it was a couple of the Helms men who came out to the airport. I shook hands with them, and I thought, "That was tremendous that these men, sort of out of the past would come out here. It was really great!"

What really began making me think was an article I read from a 1939 issue of *Good News* someone sent here. I never had seen it before. In it my father was attacking the form of government then in vogue in the Church of God (Seventh Day) under the leadership of Andrew Dugger. Further, I read the literature sent out by your organization in response to the questions people asked about whether or not Herbert Armstrong was ever a member of your organization, and that just blew my mind! When I saw a reproduction of his own signature, which I obviously recognized, admitting that the parent organization was that one true body, and asking for credentials *months* after he had started the radio program, it really shocked me, and it made me look back even beyond my dad to his roots — to my own roots. I began investigating, telephoning here and there. I called Elder (W. W.) McMicken and spoke with him briefly, and it just opened up a whole new horizon with me that I had never really considered.

I had begun disbelieving the idea of church eras as early as 1966, but it had never really dawned on me that I should open up a dialog with these brethren of the Church of God (Seventh Day). I felt someone ought to make the attempt to

suggest, "Look, why can't we be brothers? Why can't we cooperate together? Why should we act like there is a void between us as big as between us and the Baptists? We're so alike!"

It just never occurred to me earlier because within the confines of the Worldwide Church of God, I was locked into a hierarchy. I was always under authority. Now I am under the authority of the Bible, the Word of God, and Jesus Christ, but that of no human being.

We have a board, and that board has authority. It'll "can" me if I do the wrong thing — pardon my vernacular! There is a board structure, but I do not feel I'm locked into a vertical hierarchy here. Unilaterally, I decided to send for some literature. I received a letter from Steve Kurtright whose name I have seen in the *Bible Advocate*, and I responded. I just felt that there's everything to be gained and nothing to be lost for these people to fellowship together.

That's interesting!

That's the way it happened. It was kind of gradual. After I was on my own, and I took a look at my dad's autobiography, and at some of the papers you had put out, I compared them carefully. It cut a few things loose in my thinking process.

◀BA▶

BY OUR FRUITS WE ARE KNOWN

(Continued from page 13)

His Submission to God's Will. A third incident in Moses' life which shows his true meekness occurred right at the end of his life. Moses had disobeyed God at Meribah and for this was not permitted to go into the Promised Land. For forty years he had led his people toward their new home, but in his old age when sentiment was strong, he could not enter. Yet in all of this Moses did not rebel against God's verdict, but accepted his punishment meekly.

The Fruit of the Spirit is Temperance

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God

will bring thee into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

We are given the freedom to conduct our lives in any manner we choose, but are given the warning we will be held accountable to God for what we do. God gives us the freedom to make our own choices but He expects us as Christians to show restraint. It takes a strong Christian to practice temperance. Practicing self-control is essential if a person is to live a victorious Christian life.

Paul says this about temperance in I Corinthians 9:25, 27, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things, . . . but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Living a Christian life is living a disciplined life. Without being temperate or disciplined in all areas of living, we will not be able to conquer the devil. I Peter 5:8 tells us to, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Overeating and not controlling our tongues are examples of intemperance and are sin the same as stealing, killing, or any other sin. We must be an example for others. Without temperance in our lives neither believers nor unbelievers will think much of our Christianity. Paul says in Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provisions for the flesh." This is what temperance is all about.

Many people claim to have God's Spirit in their lives, only to prove differently by not producing the fruits of the Spirit. Jesus declared in Matthew 7:15-20 that every godly person will bring forth good fruit, but every evil person will bring forth evil fruit. He declared that a good person can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil person bring forth good fruit. That is why He said, "by their fruits ye shall know them."

It is not what people say or claim they are, but it is the fruits they produce in their lives that becomes

a test of their real value — either the works of the flesh or the fruits of the Spirit. BY YOUR FRUITS, YE ARE KNOWN. ▶BA▶

WORLDWIDE CHURCH

(Continued from page 3)

discouraged and give up the principles of righteousness. We hope and pray that all sincere believers will remember their hope is in Christ; not place their trust in human leaders.

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; . . . knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God" (I Thessalonians 1:2, 4).

Since this recent disturbance a number of the membership of the Worldwide church are making inquiry regarding us. We welcome these inquiries, and if we can supply these people with counsel which will further enhance their spiritual lives we will be happy to do so.

We have many basic beliefs regarding the plan of salvation which are compatible with those of the Worldwide church. There are some differences, however. The Church of God (7th Day) is always ready to study these differences with those who inquire, and we believe we have both a doctrine and a fellowship which warrants investigation.

We take the privilege of quoting Paul's admonition to the Philippian church. It is applicable to all who might become discouraged. "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents — which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God" (Philippians 1:27, 28. NASB).

Where It Began

The present moral slippage began with the decline of faith and with the lack of self-restraint among many adults too preoccupied with their own pursuits to keep open their relationship with God and their communication with their children.

— Christianity Today