

What Is a REAL Christian?



**What Is a
REAL
Christian?**

THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD.

It is a free educational service in the public interest, published by the Worldwide Church of God.

Chapter One: Text by Clayton D. Steep

© 1983 Worldwide Church of God

Chapter Two: Text by Roderick C. Meredith

© 1985 Worldwide Church of God

Chapter Three: Original text by Leslie L. McCullough

© 1964 Worldwide Church of God

Chapter Four: Original text by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986)

© 1953 Worldwide Church of God

Chapter Five: Original text by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986)

© 1966, 1970, 1972, 1977 Worldwide Church of God

Chapter Six: Original text by Roderick C. Meredith

© 1956, 1969, 1972 Worldwide Church of God

All Rights Reserved

Printed in U.S.A.

ISBN 0-943093-97-X

Table of Contents

<i>Chapter One</i>	
WHAT IS A REAL CHRISTIAN?	1
<i>Chapter Two</i>	
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW A REAL CHRISTIAN?	9
<i>Chapter Three</i>	
JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN— REPENTANCE?	16
<i>Chapter Four</i>	
TRUE SPIRITUALITY: WHAT IS IT—DO YOU KNOW?	21
<i>Chapter Five</i>	
SHOULD YOU TRY TO “CONVERT” OTHERS?	27
<i>Chapter Six</i>	
WHAT IS “WORLDLINESS”?	33

WHAT IS A REAL CHRISTIAN?

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN? What is true Christianity? It is time to clear away the uncertainty.

Jesus clearly explained what a real Christian is like. He left no doubt. As we consider what he said, we need to ask ourselves why the qualities he described seem to be so hard to find even in Christian-professing nations.

Take, for instance, one of Jesus' teachings in what is often referred to as the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Luke 6. Surely nothing is more central to Christianity than this portion of the Scriptures. But how often do you see Jesus' statement in verse 27 put into practice? It says: "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you."

Some of the most bloody battles in history have been waged by Christian nations. "No nations are more warlike than those which profess Christianity," observed Pierre Bayle, a 17th-century French philosopher of Christian Europe. He could have written the same thing of the 20th century!

Professing Christians have risen up in war against each other. (And, of course, so have other religions.) They have blown each other to pieces on the battlefield, all the while praying to the same God for victory.

The English poet Shelley commented: "The same means that have supported every other popular belief have sup-

ported Christianity. War, imprisonment, assassination and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is.”

How can this be? The one who is supposed to be the founder of the Christian religion—the one whom professing Christians call “Lord”—taught his followers, “Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you” (Luke 6:27-28).

This instruction of Jesus is hardly followed by Christian nations in times of war. But then how often is it followed by professing Christians in times of peace? Where is it put into practice in neighborhoods, in social circles, among the people you know on a day-to-day basis?

Jesus also said: “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (verse 31). That has been called the Golden Rule. It is thought of as a good slogan to hang on the wall, or to dangle from a charm bracelet, or to teach little children.

But live by it? That is something else!

Jesus, however, did not mean it as a suggestion. He didn’t give it as a thought for the day. For Jesus it was a living law that he commanded his followers—Christians—to apply in their daily lives.

But Will It Work?

“Be ye therefore merciful,” continued Jesus, “as your Father [God] also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (verses 36-37).

How often does merciful kindness govern what is taking place? Think of the competition and greed in business—the cheating, the gouging. A primary emphasis in today’s world is on getting the advantage over others, even if it is necessary to hurt them a little to do it. And today’s western world is a Christian world—or is it?

The political sphere resounds with name calling, propaganda and condemnation.

Gossip and backbiting are ever popular themes in private conversation. Movies, novels and television programs—

including children's shows—dwell on the idea of getting even or seeking revenge.

All of this in Christian lands!

Where is forgiveness practiced as a way of life? Instances of genuine mercy from one human being toward another in the media are remarkable and memorable be-

cause they are so uncommon. Jesus' teaching covered the great themes of life, and it reaches down even to simple lacks of consideration such as being responsible for a blaring radio, a loud motorcycle, a barking dog, litter, damage to public facilities, graffiti—factors that make life unpleasant for others. Yet so commonplace are infringements of the principles Jesus gave, it makes one wonder: Where are the Christians?

Clearly, only a person who does what Jesus said to do has the right to call him "Lord."

The Bible describes a society when its religion is a mere form, not having the power to change people's lives. It reads like the front page of many newspapers.

"For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, *holding the form of religion but denying the power of it*" (II Tim. 3:2-5, RSV).

It all sounds so familiar!

As Jesus was speaking, he knew there were some listening to him, who would call him their "Lord," who would profess to belong to him, but who would not put his teachings into practice.

These are the words of Jesus to them: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). A "lord" is a ruler, a master, one who is to be obeyed. In plain words, Jesus said: "If you don't obey me, don't call me 'Lord!'"

Too often people talk about “the Lord,” or “the Lord Jesus,” when they don’t have the faintest idea what Jesus said his followers are to do. Jesus exclaimed: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

That, in simple terms, is one facet of what makes a person a Christian. He or she *does* what Jesus said to do. He or she follows Christ. The ones who are allowed to become members of his spiritual family are “these which hear the word of God, *and do it*” (Luke 8:21).

“Ye are my friends,” Jesus stated, “*if ye do whatsoever I command you*” (John 15:14).

Again, “If ye love me, *keep my commandments*” (John 14:15).

Clearly, only a person who does what Jesus said to do—who puts into practice the great principles he taught—has the right to call him “Lord.”

A Way of Life

True Christianity involves faith and belief—but it is not merely a set of beliefs. It is not casually joining a church or being born into the Christian religion. It is not something to be practiced one day a week or at odd intervals.

It is a way of life. Early Christians referred to original Christianity as “the *way* of the Lord” (Acts 18:25) and “the *way* of God” (verse 26). “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” Christ declared (John 14:6).

True Christianity is the Christian way of life. No one can follow what Jesus taught without experiencing a marked change in life and life-style.

Notice how this fact is illustrated in the following example: A rich young man once came to Jesus and asked: “Good Master, what good thing shall *I do*, that I may have eternal life” (Matt. 19:16).

This man knew following Christ involved *doing* something. He asked: “What good thing shall *I do*?”

Many today would have answered: “Why, there is nothing to do. Just accept Christ and it’s all done for you.”

How different was Jesus’ answer! “And he [Jesus] said

unto him . . . if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (verse 17).

There was no doubt that Jesus was talking about the Ten Commandments. When the young man asked, “Which ones?”, Jesus named specifically the commandments having to do with showing love toward one’s neighbor. To this, the rich man responded that he had been keeping those commandments since childhood (verse 20). The young man, of course, had been reared a Jew. But he wanted to become a follower of Christ.

Jesus required in his followers true depth of conversion. He knew the young man had a problem—keeping in their true intent those commandments regarding love toward, giving to, one’s neighbor. So Jesus bluntly told him that his wealth was an obstacle to him, that he needed to get rid of it. Only after that could he become a follower of Jesus—a Christian. Of course, just because one is wealthy does not prevent a person from being a Christian. Abraham was righteous before God and a very wealthy man. But human nature and one’s attitude tend toward concentration on self and one’s wealth instead of on others’ needs.

Sadly, the young man departed, unwilling to change his attitude toward life.

Most people, it is true, do not have excess wealth as their major problem. The fact remains, though, that keeping the Ten Commandments is essential if you are to develop character and inherit God’s free gift of eternal life. So said Jesus!

True Conversion

Maybe you think you have been keeping the Ten Commandments fairly well—like the rich young man. Have you really? Try something. Read them off one by one (they are found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5), learn how to apply them (as explained by Jesus—Matt. 5:21-32) and see if there is not room for improvement in your life. In this materialistic, industrial age, you may be especially surprised at what the fourth and tenth commandments have to say. (Write for a copy of our free booklet *The Ten Commandments*, which explains the commandments in detail.)

Being a real Christian involves developing the mind and

attitude of Christ, thinking the way he did every moment of every day.

Every activity, every social situation, every endeavor, every goal and plan—Christ has revealed principles that bear on every facet of life. We are even to let our innermost thoughts be ruled by the *Lord Jesus*, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” as the apostle Paul expressed it (II Cor. 10:5).

To some that sounds extreme. But it’s in the Christian Bible. The apostle Paul was only repeating what the Bible says time and again: To do God’s will is to follow his way of life totally. There is a price to pay, however, and for some that price may be too high. That price is surrender of the SELF.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts . . . ,” God says through the prophet Isaiah, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:7-9).

A real Christian is one who seeks God’s way of life, his thoughts, his will. What Isaiah was describing is genuine repentance—the kind of repentance necessary to begin the Christian way of life. (We will further explain this kind of repentance in chapter three). When multitudes asked the apostle Peter how to become Christians, Peter responded that they must repent—profoundly *change* (Acts 2:38).

But these inspired instructions are seldom followed today. Why? Why in the mass evangelistic campaigns of the Christian world are people encouraged to make a spur-of-the-moment “decision for Christ” and to come forward in an “altar call,” and to be pronounced “saved” or “born again”? That is not how Peter said to receive the Holy Spirit, which is God’s free gift that leads to eternal life. No wonder such “conversions” often last only a matter of days or weeks!

Why Do So Few Know?

Here is where many people stumble. They begin to *think* they know what real Christianity is all about. Then they look around them at the people they know. Or they think of

individuals they have known in the past—friends, relatives, perhaps. And they use them as standards of comparison. They say to themselves: “Uncle Henry and Aunt Ruth and my friend John did not obey Jesus’ explicit instructions. But they weren’t ‘bad’ people either. They lived the way they thought was right. I’ll take my chances along with them and with the millions and millions of other professing Christians who are just average good people. Surely God won’t deny eternal life or salvation to them! God is merciful.”

God is merciful. That’s true. But then what did Jesus mean when he said keeping the commandments and other lesser requirements are necessary for the development of character if we are to inherit God’s free gift of eternal life? He meant exactly what he said. Uncle Henry and Aunt Ruth and friend John and all the millions who have professed Christianity without ever understanding what it really is to become a Christian—a follower of Jesus Christ—will eventually have their opportunity to understand. They too will learn that in order to have the mind of Christ in us, to think the way Jesus thought, it is necessary to keep the commandments. And that involves deep heart-felt repentance, belief in Christ’s message of the kingdom of God, baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit. One must come to a realization of what one really is like and what one *should* be.

If learning this doesn’t happen during this life, then it will happen in a future period of judgment when God’s government rules the earth. At that time all the dead who have not had an opportunity for salvation will be resurrected and given the opportunity to choose the way of life based on obedience to God’s laws—the only way to true happiness. That period of time is described in Ezekiel 16:55 and 60-63, Matthew 11:20-24, Luke 10:12-14

N*o one can follow what Jesus taught without experiencing a marked change in life and life-style.*

and Revelation 20:11-12. This period of judgment occurs after the 1,000 years (Rev. 20:2-4). "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished . . ." (verse 5). This judgment will provide for a life-time of new experience—like the judgment in this life-time that is occurring on true Christians today (I Pet. 4:17).

Every human who ever lived will have an opportunity to receive salvation—the opportunity to inherit eternal life in the kingdom or family of God as God's free gift. For most people that time will come after they have lived their entire lives, died and are brought back to life in a future resurrection. God is just not trying to save the entire world now. That's why the Scripture says that in general, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* [in a future resurrection!] the judgment [not a sentencing, but for the vast majority of human beings a period of testing and judging—their first and only genuine opportunity for salvation]" (Heb. 9:27).

Jesus told his disciples: "Enter ye in at the strait [restricted] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many [the millions, the hundreds and thousands of millions] there be which go in thereat: because strait [restricted] and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW [talking about now, this *present* age] there be which find it" (Matt. 7:13-14). You probably have not understood this before. So why not write for our free booklet *Is God Trying to Save the World Now?*

Don't make the mistake of judging what the Bible describes as true Christianity by the beliefs of people you have known who may not even have understood what real Christianity is.

To be a real Christian one must become willing to do what Jesus said to do. He showed the way to truly abundant living. His words are recorded in the Scriptures. But they will only profit someone who reads them there *and* then decides to yield himself or herself to God and follow them. "If ye know these things," Jesus exclaimed, "happy are ye *if ye do them*" (John 13:17).

HOW WOULD YOU KNOW A REAL CHRISTIAN?

THINK ABOUT IT. Is it merely left to each individual to decide for himself or herself what the term *Christian* means?

Could it be that God—*the* ultimate authority—decides? Yet he does not whisper in our ears about who is and who is not a Christian. Or about anything else. How, then, does the God of creation communicate to us his understanding?

God's mind is found revealed in the inspired book we call the Holy Bible. Jesus himself said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). Jesus also stated, "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

The apostle Paul wrote: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16).

Are we willing to be taught and guided by the very inspired words of God? Are we willing to let the Bible tell us—in plain language—what is "Christian" and what is not?

What the BIBLE Says About "Christianity"

How many Christians really study the Bible to find out what God's will is? It may be shocking to realize, but religious surveys have repeatedly found that most people who are aware of the Bible are not even able to name the four gospels—let alone have any idea what is in them! As we saw

in the first chapter, to be his real followers—*genuine*—Christians—we must learn to do what Jesus taught (Luke 6:46). The key is not merely believing *on* Jesus Christ, but believing him and doing what he says. Jesus magnified the Ten Commandments and gave them even greater force. He said that we are not only not to kill, but are to avoid the kind of anger which is, in fact, the spirit of murder (Matt. 5:21-22).

Christians are not only to remain faithful to their mates and never commit adultery, but, Jesus said: “I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28).

Later in this same passage, Jesus said: “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” (verse 44).

The unvarnished words of Jesus of Nazareth are POWERFUL. How difficult it is to make these inspired words of Christ “acceptable” to mainstream Christianity today!

For what would happen if they were obeyed literally as the inspired teachings of the Son of God? If everyone truly loved his enemies, there would be no more wars and no more murders—none!

Under Jesus’ teachings, there would be no more adultery—none! Think about the impact that would have on the divorce rate. For regarding marriage, Jesus said: “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6).

The Key of OBEDIENCE

John was the apostle whom Jesus loved most. He wrote about the deepest meanings of Christianity and about how we are able to have fellowship with God and with Christ.

He revealed how one can know who is and who is not a real Christian: “And hereby we do know that we know him, *if* we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (I John 2:3-4).

Why?

To “know” God and Christ— and they are “one,” in full

harmony as Jesus said—you need to *experience* the kind of character they possess. And God's very character is expressed in his law—the Ten Commandments. Those who say they are Christians and yet do not keep God's commandments do not know by experience the character of God!

What is the character of God like? Notice! "For God is love" (I John 4:8).

Again, "For this *is* the love of God, that we keep his *commandments*: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

So a true Christian will "walk with God," will live by God's law of love—the Ten Commandments. And, by exercising this kind of godly character, he will come to understand and "know" God. The true Christian will have God living *in* him.

The HOLY SPIRIT Gives Power

At this point, some may be wondering how they can become "perfect." They have heard ministers say: "The law is spiritual, and you can't keep it."

Both points are absolutely right! The law of God *is* spiritual. And man, by himself, cut off from God, cannot keep that spiritual law perfectly.

The answer?

First, God does not demand instant perfection. Rather, through his inspired Word, he tells us, "but GROW in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18).

The true Christian life is one of learning, overcoming and growing toward the God-like character that is our ideal. It is not based on the false premise that we don't even have to *try* to keep God's law and follow the example Jesus set for us. For Jesus said, "I have kept my Father's commandments"

Unless Christ dwells in you through the Holy Spirit, you cannot be a truly converted Christian!

(John 15:10). And Paul wrote: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1).

But how can we keep the spiritual principles of the Ten Commandments when we ourselves are weak, physical and inherently sinful human beings?

Notice the apostle Paul’s description of the problem: “The carnal [natural] mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:7-8). Paul is clearly saying that what causes the normal, fleshly (carnal) human being a “problem” with God is that he is antagonistic to God’s law and will not submit to it!

We all are certainly “in the flesh,” in the sense that we are *human*, aren’t we? But is that what Paul means? Continue reading: “But ye are not in the flesh, but *in the Spirit*, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (verse 9). In other words, unless Christ dwells in you through the Holy Spirit, you are not his; you are not a truly converted Christian!

Again: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (verse 14).

This is the ultimate key to true Christianity! If you have been deeply humbled and converted by your Creator, have surrendered—even though not yet perfectly—to allow God and Christ to live *in* you through the power of the Holy Spirit, then and only then are you truly a Christian!

Of course, you will still have human nature, the world around you and the invisible influence of Satan the devil to overcome. You will grow in grace and in knowledge. You will be studying the Bible for instruction with an open mind and heart. You will be praying for understanding of what you read and for the spiritual strength to live God’s way.

Then, through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, you will be growing in the knowledge and in the very character of Jesus Christ. God will be making you his child by putting his very nature in you through the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:4). Step by step, you will reflect in your daily life the character and the obedience to God the Father that Jesus demonstrated in his human flesh. You will become more and

more Christ-like. You will then truly become “a Christian”—one in whom Christ lives through the presence of the Holy Spirit!

This is the Bible definition of a Christian.

Christ Must Be “in” the True Christian

As you truly study and research the Bible to understand it, and as you pray to God daily on your knees for guidance and strength, you can come to know what the life of a real Christian is like. God will become more and more real to you. You will see that his laws are *living* laws—just like the law of gravity. They work *automatically*—no matter whether you, or this or that theologian, believes in them or not.

With this in mind, it will become progressively easier for you not to have self before the true God, not to bow down to physical representations of the spiritual family of God, not to take God’s name in vain. And, as God becomes increasingly the very center of your life as a true Christian, you will want to keep holy his Sabbath—the very day Jesus made holy.

Through all of this Bible study, prayer and dedication of your life to live as Jesus did, you will come to know God in a way very few people in our modern age ever experience. For Christ will be living *in* you. That’s what true Christianity is all about!

The apostle Paul stated: “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 [not merely “in” as in some translations] the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

How will Christ “live” his life in you through the Holy Spirit?

Will he refuse to keep in and through you his Father’s law—the Ten Commandments—which he faithfully kept and even magnified during his human life on earth? Will he keep in and through you different days holy than the ones his Father commanded and that he kept during his physical lifetime?

No!

For your Bible says very plainly, “Jesus Christ the same

yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). The true Christ of the Bible is the Word—the Spokesman of the Hebrew Scriptures (John 1:1-3). He was the God of Israel—the Rock that protected and guided ancient Israel throughout their history (I Cor. 10:4). *He* is the one who gave and spoke the Ten Commandments! And with respect to eternal spiritual principles he said, “For I am the Lord, I change not . . .” (Mal. 3:6).

So the key is to realize that the true Christ of your Bible will live exactly the same life *in you* that he lived on earth some 1,900 years ago! Jesus said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). Jesus came to reveal the Father (Luke 10:22). God and Christ preexisted together from eternity. They are one in mind and purpose and in character. Through the Holy Spirit, they both come to live in, strengthen and guide the true Christian! As Jesus said: “If a man love me, he will keep my words [the “words” of the Bible!]: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

How did this kind of preaching and teaching come to be so misunderstood by traditional Christianity in our present society?

Apostasy Prophesied!

How did there come to be so many who have been deceived into thinking they were Christians, yet who have not had the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, enabling them to live by every word of God?

The apostle Paul warned first century Christians: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the day of Christ’s return to earth to restore the government of God] shall not come, except there come a falling away first . . .” (II Thess. 2:3).

Throughout the New Testament we are warned of men who would come unawares into the fellowship of the church, even in the time of Jesus’ apostles in the first century A.D., preaching “another Jesus” (II Cor. 11:4)—not the Jesus of the Bible! And it is clearly indicated that those false teachers and their spiritual descendants would lead astray the *vast majority* of those who call themselves and think themselves Christians.

In other words, false teachers have taken over the name of Jesus Christ and of Christianity. They are willing to have you believe in *their* concept of Jesus, but they deny the message he preached, the law of God that he magnified, and the way of life he set us an example in living!

The true Christians are described in the Bible as comparatively few in number—the little flock (Luke 12:32), the “woman” who, as the Scriptures prophesied, fled from the politico-religious system that dominated the Western world during the Middle Ages (Rev. 12:6).

But, since the days of the apostles, there have always been true Christians who believed in living by the inspired words of the Bible, and who grasped the key of understanding that Jesus is to live his very life in them by the power of the Holy Spirit. Scattered and persecuted, often labeled in the footnotes of church history books as heretics, these people have constituted the true Church of God.

Aiming toward perfection, they walk in the way of life of the Ten Commandments. They keep holy the days God made holy—the same days Jesus and the apostles kept. They study and understand prophecy and the awesome purpose that is being worked out here below among men and nations. They know what is just ahead on the world scene and are preparing for and announcing specific prophesied events to come as Jesus foretold them!

The real Christ of true Christianity is destined soon to return to this earth as *King of kings*. God’s angels will shout, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). Christ will be *King* over all the earth. And real Christians, having lived and died over the centuries, will rise in the first resurrection and become *kings* under him. Those who assumed they were Christians, but were deceived, will not be there to rule with Christ. They will yet have to become converted!

Before Jesus gets here, what could be more vital for you than to make sure what his message really is and to get your life in line with it?

JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN— REPENTANCE?

WHAT DOES religion have to do with the way one lives? Based on the way most people are living, they would have to answer: “Little or nothing!”

No wonder Jesus Christ quoted the prophet Isaiah in speaking of the religious leaders and people of his day: “. . . This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mark 7:6).

In our day millions of people attend church services and may even talk of all “uniting in the brotherhood of Christianity.” But how many live the way Jesus Christ commanded? Many are willing to honor him with their lips, but how many want to do the things he taught?

Religion is often superficial. What is lacking is deeply sincere repentance. This is what distinguishes real Christianity from traditional Christianity.

What is repentance anyway? Where does it come from? What does it mean?

A dictionary definition of repentance is: “To feel self-reproach, compunction, or contrition for past conduct, to feel such sorrow for sin or fault as to be disposed to change one’s life for the better.”

The Bible definition includes all of that and much more!

Godly repentance means to stop sinning (sin is the transgression of God’s law—I John 3:4), to turn and go the

other way—to change your way of life! It's not always easy to say, "I'm sorry." But it's even harder to mean it. Godly repentance has to come from the heart and involves a fundamental change of attitude and mind.

Speaking of a sinful people, God says: "And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: . . . they rebel against me . . . They return, but not to the most High . . ." (Hos. 7:14, 16).

People have made an outward show of returning to God or repenting, but they haven't done it with their hearts! What the world calls repentance is too often outward, superficial, worldly repentance with no real sincerity or deep feeling.

Repent of What?

What is it we need to repent of or feel sorrow for in becoming a real Christian? Some Christians might answer one thing or another, and others—from different societies or religions—might answer altogether differently. But again, what does God say constitutes sin? What would God have a person repent of?

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4).

Sin is breaking God's law.

Any time you break or disobey any one of the holy, righteous commandments of God, you have sinned and you need to repent of that sin. No one is excluded. No man, woman or child (other than Jesus Christ) has ever lived who hasn't disobeyed and broken God's law (Rom. 3:10, 23). Therefore, everyone must face the need to repent deeply, and sometimes bitterly. To become a genuine Christian we each must ask the Father in heaven that Christ's shed blood cover our sins, that the sacrifice of his life be accepted in our stead so the penalty for our sins can be removed from us. Then we need to begin to obey God. We need to establish a new and different approach to life. We now begin to keep his commandments—all his commandments—with zeal.

How Repentance Starts

Of course, we can't just drum up the deep feeling of abhorrence for our sins by ourselves. It has to come from

God, for “the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance” (Rom. 2:4).

It is God who helps us to see our own wretchedness and shortcomings. He opens our minds and starts us on the way toward repentance.

The Bible names dozens of individuals who are going to be in the kingdom of God. David, Daniel and other servants of God found how to reach the Creator of the universe. Their example will help us to see how we might attain the same goal. They all had one very essential thing in common. As soon as they realized God was displeased with them or their nation’s ways, they set out to correct the situation.

How does God call individuals to repentance? Through chastening. Often he allows financial problems, family problems, sickness, or other serious situations to develop so that we realize our need of him.

These trials are proof of the Father’s love for each one whom he calls to repentance. Notice Hebrews 12:6-7. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”

Instead of fighting these problems in our own strength, we need to learn the lesson God is teaching us. We need to begin to seek him. He doesn’t need us. We do need him! Every real Christian must learn that lesson.

Daniel was inspired to record his own reactions in such a case as this for our instruction. “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (Dan. 9:3).

Nehemiah’s example is also recorded for us. When he found that his nation which had returned to Palestine was in affliction and reproach, here’s what he did. “And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven” (Neh. 1:4). He immediately set out to draw close to God. He didn’t do it in a half-hearted, matter-of-fact way. He did it earnestly, sincerely and with all his heart. He set himself to find God and his will by prayer and fasting.

Daniel and Nehemiah earnestly desired to find God’s

will. They were willing to do whatever was required to draw close to him and receive his forgiveness. They were willing to do without food and water if necessary to demonstrate to God their sincere desire to know his way. If David, Daniel or Nehemiah had lived in our day, they would be real Christians!

Today, earnest supplication of God shows him that you mean business. He doesn't want a temporary, fleeting repentance that is brought about by an emotional appeal or the pressures of those around us. Salvation is a personal matter between you and God. But it has to be on his terms.

In the days of ancient Israel, God told King Solomon exactly what steps to follow if he found God's displeasure on his nation. God is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). If we apply these principles in our lives, he will answer just as he told Solomon he would.

Read this description of repentance for yourself in II Chronicles 7:12-14. "And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said unto him . . . If my people, which are called by my name shall *humble* themselves, and *pray*, and *seek* my face, and *turn* from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

If you read the examples of the biblical servants of God, you will notice that they freely acknowledged their own sins and shortcomings. It takes a deeply sincere person to say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts:

and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24).

If we are earnestly seeking God and his way, this is the attitude we will be reflecting. We will freely admit our own sins and shortcomings and be earnestly importuning God to show us the right way. Jeremiah said, "O Lord, I know that

No one is excluded. No man, woman or child has ever lived who hasn't broken God's law.

the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing” (Jer. 10:23-24).

Once we begin to learn that lesson, and look to God to show us how to live and how to change our lives, we are on our way to real life-long repentance.

The steps are simple. Yet it is not easy to completely give of oneself, to admit one’s own faults and sincerely ask for God’s forgiveness.

Turn from Our Own Ways

Many people of this day and age profess to be repentant—profess Christianity—and yet continue to live in all the wretchedness of their sinful ways. One of the most important of all the steps in coming to true repentance is to distinguish the difference between merely being sorry for having to suffer the consequences and stopping the habit of sinning! Millions who claim membership in a church loudly proclaim their belief in Jesus Christ. They “testify” for Christ, but the fruit of genuine repentance is not there.

All too often repentance is worldly repentance (See II Cor. 7:10). What we really need to come to see and understand is the kind of repentance God wants us to experience. “Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful . . .” (Joel 2:12-13).

God doesn’t want the worldly kind of repentance. He doesn’t just want your name on the membership rolls of some church. What God wants and what you should come to deeply desire is to sincerely acknowledge your sins, ask for forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ *and change*. God wants you to say, “I’m sorry”—and mean it! He wants you to stop bringing sorrow and heartache upon yourself by breaking his laws and to start living his way of life that leads to happiness. That is *real* repentance! That is how to experience being a real Christian.

TRUE SPIRITUALITY: WHAT IS IT— DO YOU KNOW?

YOU MAY have heard comments like the following: “He is so SPIRITUAL.” Or, “Those people are not very spiritual.”

But what *is* true spirituality—do you know?

We need, just now, to be warned against being deceived into a false standard of spirituality. We need to examine the true scriptural standard.

Four Things Usually Accepted As Sure Evidence

There are four things generally regarded as sure evidence of a spiritual mind:

- 1) Speech, noise, emotion, demonstration.
- 2) Knowledge of Scripture.
- 3) “Faith.”
- 4) Rigid standard of righteousness.

Let us take a brief look at each of these and then see how the Bible defines spirituality.

1) The most commonly accepted evidence of spirituality is the way people talk about or demonstrate religious sentiment.

Some people have deliberately cultivated spiritual-sounding language. Or, perhaps, they have unconsciously acquired the habit of using “spiritual” sounding expressions. People say, “My, isn’t Brother so-and-so *spiritual*?”

Many think a church service does not amount to anything unless there is more or less noise, mass enthusiasm and a great deal of emotion worked up and visibly expressed.

They never enjoy a sermon, no matter how edifying, unless the preacher is full of certain emotional enthusiasm, fluent in the accepted spiritual phraseology and able to generate in his audience the usual emotional reactions and outbursts expected in this type of meeting. If such manifestations are present, these individuals enjoy themselves immensely, whether they learn anything really worthwhile or not.

This is not to discount or to criticize the natural emotional expression resulting spontaneously from a genuine spiritual experience, or true spiritual expressions springing naturally from an honest heart. Far from it.

Some people are naturally emotional. Some are not. We shall see from the Scriptures that emotion and spiritual phrases are not, of themselves, the essence of spirituality. They may be the natural result, the honest and spontaneous expression of it; or, if deliberately generated and "worked up," put on for show and effect, they may be only its counterfeit. And the sad part is that those who deal in counterfeits always *insist* they have the genuine.

"By their *fruits* . . .," Jesus said, we shall KNOW (Matt. 7:20).

It is important that we get a right balance.

2) The second class is well indoctrinated. Usually these people do not believe in much, if any, noise or any spiritual manifestations. They have a great deal of head knowledge, but most of this class have a great deal of misunderstanding, and often they have odd personal theories resulting from misapplied scriptures.

They love to try to trap and corner others with the Scriptures, and especially do they delight in it if they are able to corner some minister. Arguing Scripture is for them a great interest in life.

These misguided people believe their arguments, contentions and beliefs will win their eternal salvation, without real repentance, or living a surrendered, righteous life in Christ Jesus, showing the fruits of the Spirit in their lives.

3) And then there is the “faith” group. These say they are saved “by FAITH, and faith ALONE.” They are not so much concerned about the Holy Spirit, and seldom mention such things as repentance, utter surrender or any need of submission and obedience to God’s will and law.

Their religion never works any profound changes in their lives. Since “Jesus died for our sins,” we do not have to obey, they contend. “Just BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” is their sole condition to salvation. The invitation of the ministers of this group is, “Give the preacher your hand, and the Lord your heart.”

And when, later, you ask such “converts” what they did—what really happened—when they “gave the Lord their heart,” they usually just look blank. They do not know. It really did not MEAN anything. It was merely a FORM. The churches of this class should be called social clubs—they are not salvation-oriented institutions.

4) Finally, there are those whose spirituality consists of a rigid standard of righteousness. In fact, they usually are so strict about following God’s commandments that they fall into the error of keeping the strict LETTER of the law in their own strength. They are scrupulously honest, severely punctual, critically exact.

But, as Paul said of the strictest sect of his day, they are “going about to establish their OWN righteousness,” and have not “submitted themselves unto the right-

eousness of God” (Rom. 10:3). And they are usually harsh, stern, critical, intolerant of those who do not live up to their particular ideas of righteousness.

Some, in great sincerity, retreat totally or partially from society into monastic orders to attain a higher degree of spirituality.

The spiritual mind is the surrendered, yielded mind. It is the mind that has given up wanting its own way.

The True Scriptural Standard

Now, let us turn to God's Word, and humbly seek GOD'S standard of spirituality.

Of the true spiritual mind, God says to us, through Paul, "Let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

But HOW can you have the mind that was in Christ Jesus in YOU? Jesus says: "Behold, I stand at the door [of your heart] and knock: if any man hear my voice and OPEN the door, I *will come in to him*" (Rev. 3:20).

And Jesus meant exactly what he said! He will come in, through his Spirit, and LIVE his life of true righteousness in you, if only you will surrender all of SELF and let him IN.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God *dwell* IN you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, HE IS NONE of HIS." Unless his Spirit abides within you, producing true righteousness, you are not a real Christian! "And *if Christ be* IN you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:9-10).

When God first begets us as his children, he takes us who have been proud, worldly, sensual, disobedient. His aim is to make us like himself. This transformation (not *reformation*) is a tremendous undertaking. It requires a miracle.

God stands pledged, upon real, thorough repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 2:38), to start the performance of this tremendous miracle by putting his Holy Spirit literally WITHIN you! But God will work the complete change in your life ONLY if you are willing to SUBMIT to the process!

The FIRST condition is real, deep, thorough repentance. You will have to be willing to accept correction and repeated chastisements at his loving hands, for "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Heb. 12:6).

The spiritual mind is the *surrendered, yielded* mind. It is the mind that has given up wanting its own way. It is the mind that has been CONQUERED in its rebellion against God.

It is the mind that, henceforth, is *willing* to obey God no matter what the cost, and that continually studies God's Word, not to argue and strive and corner others, but to *learn* more of God's will, and to WALK in it!

It is a mind FILLED to overflowing with real LOVE for God and all fellowmen—even one’s enemies—and that has sympathy, patience and kindness for others in their ideas and beliefs, their faults and mistakes, that speaks softly, gently, kindly, that seeks only to help and to serve. It is the mind that has DIED to SELF.

True Spirituality

The real spiritual mind can say with the apostle Paul, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME” (Gal. 2:20). When you can say that, then you have the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

The real spiritual mind is a SOUND mind (II Tim. 1:7)!

To those being carried away with a false and pseudo spirituality, where genuine manifestations of the Spirit were being counterfeited by DEMONSTRATIONS of SELF in a fanatical emotionalism, Paul, correcting them, said, “Brethren, *be not CHILDREN in understanding*” (I Cor. 14:20).

True, Paul said to these same Corinthians, “I would rather that ye all spake with tongues [the miraculous ability to speak in foreign languages], BUT,” he added, “*rather* that ye prophesied [preached]; for greater is he that prophesieth [preaches] than he that speaketh with tongues” (verse 5).

True, Paul said to those overly emotional Corinthians, “I speak with tongues more than ye all: YET,” he continued, “in the church I had rather speak five words *with my understanding*, that I by my voice may teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (verses 18-19).

And also he said, “God is not the author of confusion,” and, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (verses 33, 40). Let us get a proper balance, and put these spiritual gifts in the position of their relative *scriptural* importance.

We have a free booklet that makes this whole question abundantly clear. It is titled *The Tongues Question*. You may have a copy simply by writing for it.

“By their FRUITS,” not by their tongues, their language, their emotion, their ability to argue, their empty profession of faith, their self-righteousness, said Jesus, shall we KNOW their true spirituality.

And the true FRUIT of God’s Spirit is “love” first of all,

then “joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5:22-23). *These things*, expressed in living character, determine true spirituality.

These things are the expression of “the LOVE of God,” which has been “shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5), and thus the Holy Spirit *in us* is simply GOD’S LAW *in action* in our lives, for LOVE is the fulfilling of the law.

And that, and that alone, is true Christian spirituality.

The Four Substitutes

REAL spiritual-mindedness is the mind of LOVE, for God is LOVE.

So let us review our four SUBSTITUTES for spirituality in the light of God’s Word:

1) “Though I *speak* with the tongues of men and of *angels*, and have not LOVE, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal” (I Cor. 13:1, *New King James Version*). Did you ever hear one speak with the tongues of ANGELS? Spiritual TALK, “tongues” or “manifestations” are only a lot of wind, or a noise like beating old tin pans, *if you have not* LOVE.

2) “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and . . . ALL KNOWLEDGE,” and

3) “Though I have ALL FAITH, so that I could remove mountains, but have not LOVE, I *am* NOTHING” (verse 2).

4) “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not LOVE, *it profits me* NOTHING” (verse 3).

What is it to have LOVE? The next four verses of this chapter tell. Here is TRUE spiritual-mindedness: “LOVE is very patient, very kind.” Are YOU? “LOVE knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient” (verses 4-7, *Moffatt Translation*).

Read those four verses again, substituting your own name wherever “LOVE” appears. Try it as a test on yourself. It will tell you how truly SPIRITUAL you are, whether you are a real Christian. Let us seek more genuine SPIRITUAL-MINDEDNESS!

SHOULD YOU TRY TO “CONVERT” OTHERS?

HAVE YOU tried to induce others to read *The Plain Truth* or tune in to the *World Tomorrow* program? Perhaps your wife—your husband—one of your family—a close relative, or friend?

Have YOU tried to get others converted—“saved,” as many express it? Have you started to “preach”?

If you have, you have probably stirred controversy, antagonism—lost a friend, or even a wife or husband.

But if you haven’t started—DON’T!

The Plain Truth

Many of our readers—yes, tens of thousands of you, out of our several million readers of *The Plain Truth*—have been led to accept God’s truth. You have learned to love your Creator’s truth which he reveals—and which we make plain. The truth becomes the most precious thing in your life. You become excited about it. You are filled with enthusiastic zeal over it.

Before, like all unconverted people, you were self-centered, selfish. But now, your mind is God-centered. Now, instead of exclusive self-concern you have an enthusiastic outgoing concern for others. Especially for those in your own family—your relatives, your closest friends. You want to share this wonderful truth. You want them to inherit eternal

life in the kingdom of God. You want to save them from perishing.

Your motives are well-intended. Your zeal is splendid—but you may be like one woman who had more zeal than wisdom. This woman tried by her TALK to “save” her husband and her teenage son. But instead of arguing them into salvation, she turned them to hostility and resentment against God! This woman tried to save her neighbors—almost her whole town. She only turned them all against her.

But, some will ask, didn’t Jesus tell us we are the light of the world—and that we must let our light shine?

Oh yes! But did you notice HOW he said we must let our light shine? Listen: “ye are the light of the world . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may SEE your GOOD WORKS . . .” (Matt. 5:14, 16). Notice that carefully! He did not say “that they may HEAR your good ARGUMENTS.” He said “that they may see your good works!”

But now wait a minute!

Should you ever tell anyone about our television program, or let anyone see *The Plain Truth*? Yes, by all means—but be careful HOW you do it. To just mention the program to a friend, and suggest that he or she might find it interesting is fine. But, don’t go too far! Don’t urge, argue, or try to teach religion.

For those of you who can receive our television program, did you ever notice that it is not at all like other religious programs? It never starts out with religious hymns, and a voice in a sentimental syrupy tone saying, “Dear friends, I trust that this program will bring a blessing to your hearts— isn’t it wonderful to know the Lord?” Do you know what happens when such religious programs start on a TV station? Well, most people who are tuned in change channels quickly. Either they tune to a different program, or they turn the television set off. Only the “religious audience”—an infinitesimally small part of the whole viewing audience—remains. And they probably tune in specially because they are regular viewers of that particular program.

But do you know why millions of people buy and read popular magazines? These magazines are filled with articles about people—about their everyday problems—about world

conditions—human-interest subjects. Many are interested in those things. But only a very small few by comparison are interested in a sentimental, emotional, religious telecast that sounds just like a church service.

On the *World Tomorrow* program we want all people to hear the Good News. So we talk about the things all people want to hear! We talk about the very questions, problems, conditions, and subjects that cause multiple millions to buy and read these other magazines, and the news magazines.

But we make these interest-gripping subjects far more interesting by injecting spark and meaning into them by use of biblical material that astonishes—in a nonreligious-sounding manner—giving the surprising, eye-opening, practical and authoritative answers to the many increasingly disturbing questions, problems, and happenings of our day. In this way, we open people's eyes to the real answers to the otherwise UNanswerable problems that plague governments, science, and people generally.

People are astonished to learn that such answers are in the Bible. They are being told by educators that "there are no answers. There are no solutions." Then they hear the answers on our program—answers that make sense. It surprises people to learn that the Bible is up-to-date, dealing with today's conditions, news, problems. Then there's a lot in how it is done. It is done in the professional manner of a network news analyst, or a network documentary. So, if you want to lead people to watch or listen to the *World Tomorrow* program, talk to them about it in these terms.

You might do many of your friends a great service by letting them see your copy of *The Plain Truth*. Don't urge them to read it. Don't argue about it or try to talk them into

God made every human a free moral agent . . . Every individual must make his or her own decision.

reading it. If it doesn't grab their interest, forget it! If it does, tell them they may have a year's subscription, already paid—no cost to them—and show them the mailing address or phone number, so they may request it.

A Nearly Universal Mistake

A nearly universal mistake is committed by the newly converted. Especially is this true where a husband or wife yields to God's truth without the other doing so. Dozens and scores of marriages have ended in divorce because the newly converted mate tried to *talk* the unconverted one into accepting his or her religion. In very few, if any, instances has the unconverted mate been talked into accepting it.

Of all things evil and harmful you as a newly converted Christian could do, the very worst would be to try to talk your husband or wife into your religion. Whatever else you do, NEVER commit this tragic error. If you love your husband or wife, don't do it! If you love your Savior who died for you, and now lives for you, DON'T DO IT!

Remember these scriptures: "No man can come to me," said Jesus, "except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44, 65). Again Jesus speaks this time to Christian women through the apostle Peter's letter: "Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, *without a word*, may be won by the *conduct* of their wives, when they *observe* your chaste *conduct . . .*" (I Pet. 3:1-2, *New King James Version*).

God made every human a free moral agent. Thank God!—no one has power to force on you any unwanted religion. Every individual must make his or her own decision. A religious difference between husband and wife is a serious handicap.

But if such difference already exists, do not make matters worse by talking religion to your mate. Do all your talking to God in prayer. Let your mate see your happy, pleasant, cheerful, joyful, loving way of life—not hear your arguments or nagging! Allow your mate complete religious latitude and freedom—whether to be converted, religious, irreligious, or atheistic!

Never try to talk anyone into accepting Bible truth or

being converted. Never try to force God's precious truth on anyone. That's not God's way!

Do you know how the apostle Paul won individuals to Christ? Not the way some attempt to do it today. He said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:22). When he talked to an unconverted

Let your mate see your good works, in a manner that he or she will naturally approve.

Jew, do you suppose he spoke as a Christian, thinking he is "witnessing for Christ"? Do you suppose Paul said to the unconverted Jew: "Have you received Christ as your personal Savior? Oh, won't you just kneel with me right here, dear brother, and give your heart to the Lord right now?"

Or, do you suppose he said: "Look here, my Jewish sinner-friend, you're on the way to hell. Your religion is all wrong. Every day you re-

ject Christ as your Savior you are crucifying him afresh. You are worse than a thief or a murderer. I'm going to keep after you, and pester you with my arguments, and drum them into your stubborn ears, and beat them into that stiff, rebellious mind of yours until I force you to become a Christian."

No, that is not the way Paul spoke to unconverted Jews. Paul said: "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew" (I Cor. 9:20, 22). Paul spoke to others from *their* point of view! He talked to a Jew just like another Jew—from the Jewish viewpoint—showing sympathy and understanding of the Jew's way of looking at Christianity. They were hostile to the idea of Jesus being the promised Messiah. Paul did not arouse hostility—he put it down. He got on the inside, so to speak, just as one of them, so that they were sympathetic toward him, not hostile. He became as a Jew, "that I might gain the Jews." Even so he gained only a small minority, yet it was a large number.

Perhaps you have had your eyes opened to the fact that

sin is the transgression of God's law. Many professing Christians have been taught, and consequently sincerely believe, that "the law is done away." Paul was inspired to write that the carnal mind is hostile to God and to God's law, "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

If you say to your unconverted mate who is hostile to God's law, "You're just a rebellious sinner. You've got to repent, and obey God's commandments if you are going to be saved"—you have not only aroused hostility, you have yourself been hostile, and you probably have broken up your marriage.

How did Paul talk to such people? Listen: "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews . . . To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:20-22).

One of the main principles of successful advertising is that to get results you must first learn the attitude of your reading audience toward whatever product or service you are advertising. You must not antagonize those whom you expect to persuade. You must approach them from their point of view—not from yours, especially if your viewpoint is contrary to theirs. To win them to your point of view, you must approach them from their viewpoint. Otherwise you only arouse hostility.

If you believe God's truth, and your husband or wife does not, never talk religion to him or her. If your mate normally thinks and speaks only of material and worldly things, then you must speak of material things to your spouse. If our radio or television program has, probably because of your own aggressiveness in trying to get your mate to listen, become a sore spot, go off to some private room to hear or watch it. Keep the volume turned down. Make every effort NOT to *antagonize* your husband or wife.

And again, when you *talk* about it, talk to God in prayer. Let your mate see your good works, in a manner that he or she will naturally approve. Avoid every hostility. Be pleasant. Keep cheerful. *Be happy*. Radiate *joy*. Give love and warm affection. Do everything to cause your husband or wife to like you. *That is the Christian way!*

WHAT IS “WORLDLINESS”?

THE PROBLEM of “worldliness” revolves around *material* things and their uses. A real Christian understands God’s overall attitude toward the physical things and circumstances surrounding us.

Notice these inspired words of the apostle John: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health” (III John 2).

Yes, it is God’s will to bless us in material goods as we learn to use them properly.

Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Solomon wrote: “The substance [material wealth] of a diligent man is precious” (Prov. 12:27), and he exhorted: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Eccl. 9:10).

If we work hard, if we use our God-given minds, if we are diligent, it is God’s will that we be blessed and prosper materially, and that we live a happy, full, abundant life.

The danger in material wealth is that most people come to set their hearts on it. They get so involved in making a living, in making an impression on their business and social acquaintances, and participating in general in this world’s ways and customs, that they find it almost impossible to accept and obey God’s truth when they encounter it.

Material prosperity as such is certainly not “worldliness”! In fact, the lack of sufficient material goods usually indicates a society that suffers from a lack of diligence and wisdom. God’s concern is that we learn to evaluate material things properly, and to use them wisely for our own good and the good of others.

Are Physical Pleasures Evil?

Since just having wealth or physical goods is not a sin, what about the physical pleasures people indulge in? Are they necessarily evil?

One of the principal texts often used to condemn the pleasures of the “world” is I John 2:15-16. Let’s examine it carefully. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

You will notice that it is the LUST of the flesh, eyes and life that God condemns. Lust is illicit, illegal desire. Lust is desiring or using something contrary to God’s will and to his revealed laws.

Sex, for example, is not evil—it is the *wrong use* of sex, outside of marriage, in a way God never intended that is sin. The motion picture is not “sin”—it is the *wrong use* of this invention that becomes sin. There was a time in the United States when dancing, liquor, a deck of cards were commonly preached against! These things are not “sinful” or “worldly.” It is only the wrong use of these things which violates God’s will.

Remember that it is the lust of the flesh and eyes that constitutes “worldliness.” The lawful pleasurable use of your five senses—as such—is not “worldly.”

“Sinful” Pleasures?

How can we prove what is worldly or sinful?

Only by the Word of God and the inspired example of Jesus Christ and other servants of God. And much of this proof will be up to you and to your honesty before God.

Let’s be honest—and look at the plain, clear principles

involved, and the examples of Christ and his servants and prophets. Let's look for truth—not an excuse to get around it!

First of all, is drinking a sin?

The principle is this: Jesus Christ set us an example that we should follow in his steps (I Pet. 2:21). Jesus Christ is the

same yesterday, and today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Jesus has not changed! He would still be living the same kind of life if he were to come in the flesh today as he did live 1,900 years ago.

Now notice his example in John 2:1-11. Here is the account of how Jesus turned water into wine. If you will look up the meaning of the word "firkin" (verse 6), you will see that this amounted to many gallons of wine!

The danger in having material wealth is that most people come to set their hearts on it.

The account is very clear. It simply shows that—according to Jewish custom—they were having real wine at the wedding feast, and ran out. Jesus helped them, for it was a time of rejoicing, and there were probably several hundred people there.

So he turned the water into wine—and it was real, fermented wine. They would never have said to the bridegroom: "Thou hast kept the good wine until now"—if Jesus had provided only grape juice—which they would have regarded as an inferior beverage for this occasion.

Also, the original Greek word used here is *oinos*, and it always means the fermented juice of the grape—nothing else.

Overindulgence in drink, however, is NOT to be tampered with! Alcoholism is a curse today!

God gave wine and alcoholic beverages to learn to use properly—and to develop CHARACTER by the proper exercise of wisdom and self-control. This proper use of alcohol and moderation in drinking is a great responsibility to God. But it is only the wrong use that becomes sin. (Write for a free

proper educational or recreational experience. It is only their wrong use which becomes sin. The same principles apply to the subject of music.

But Do Avoid What Really IS “Worldliness”!

God does want us to have a happy and abundant life.

The Ten Commandments—as spiritually magnified by Jesus Christ—reveal a way of life. They teach us how to love, worship and serve our God and how to love and serve our fellow humans. Any activity, atmosphere or “system” which tends to break or cause you to break the spirit of the Ten Commandments is, however, real “worldliness.” If you want to be a man or woman of God, develop God’s character, be finally born into his family to help rule this world under Jesus Christ, you must avoid this kind of actual worldliness!

“Love not the world,” we are instructed in I John 2:15. The apostle James asked those to whom he wrote if they did not know “that the friendship of the world is enmity with

God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas. 4:4). What does this mean—we are not to “love the world”? Does this mean we are to hate the people in it?

Certainly not.

For James wrote that we should keep the royal law: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Jas. 2:8).

To understand the meaning of these and similar passages we need to know the definitions for the Greek

word translated “world” in the New Testament. One of these—the one used in I John 2:15 and James 4:4—is *cosmos*, which means the society or system of things men have set up on this earth.

These passages simply mean that true Christians are not to love the system or society that men have set up here on

Jesus set us an example that we should follow in his steps. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

earth—a system based on competition, greed, selfishness and vanity.

And yet it is so easy to get wrapped up and want to be part of this vanity-filled, competitive and, humanly speaking, “exciting” system! This is perhaps of greatest danger to young people.

It just seems natural and “right” to consume one’s time with the clubs, lodges, activities and social life of the people and society around us. To think, talk and dress, style one’s hair, use make-up and act like others do.

This world’s music videos bombard minds with countless examples of wrong emphasis on sex and various implications involving the MISUSE of God’s gift of sex; plus endless examples of violence, bloodshed and rebellion against authority.

Prepare for Tomorrow’s World

The true Christian simply cannot be part and parcel of this kind of God-defying world. Nor can he participate in the world of cut-throat competition, shady deals, dirty jokes and misused sex; or in the cocktail lounge or “jet set” world of lust and vanity. And the permissive world of the “swingers,” the “wife swappers,” the drug users—all this is “worldliness” and must be avoided.

The person who would avoid what the Bible really does describe as “worldly,” the person who would surrender to God and yet at the same time live a happy and balanced life—this person must have definable values, definable goals and a way of life to achieve these. He or she is a person who carefully studies, meditates on and lives by every word of God (Matt. 4:4). He or she is one who, following Christ’s example, rises in the morning and prays to God for help, wisdom, love and guidance. He or she is one who is carefully and diligently studying and following the inspired example of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible.

Such a person will be filled with joy, building real balance and character with the goal of living forever with God in tomorrow’s unending world.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE

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

The Worldwide Church of God maintains personal representatives (most are ordained ministers) throughout the United States and many other areas of the world. They are available to counsel with those who *request* personal consultation.

If you have spiritual matters to discuss or questions to ask about biblical topics such as repentance, baptism or Christian living, please feel free to write us for information concerning a personal meeting. Some of our mailing addresses are as follows:

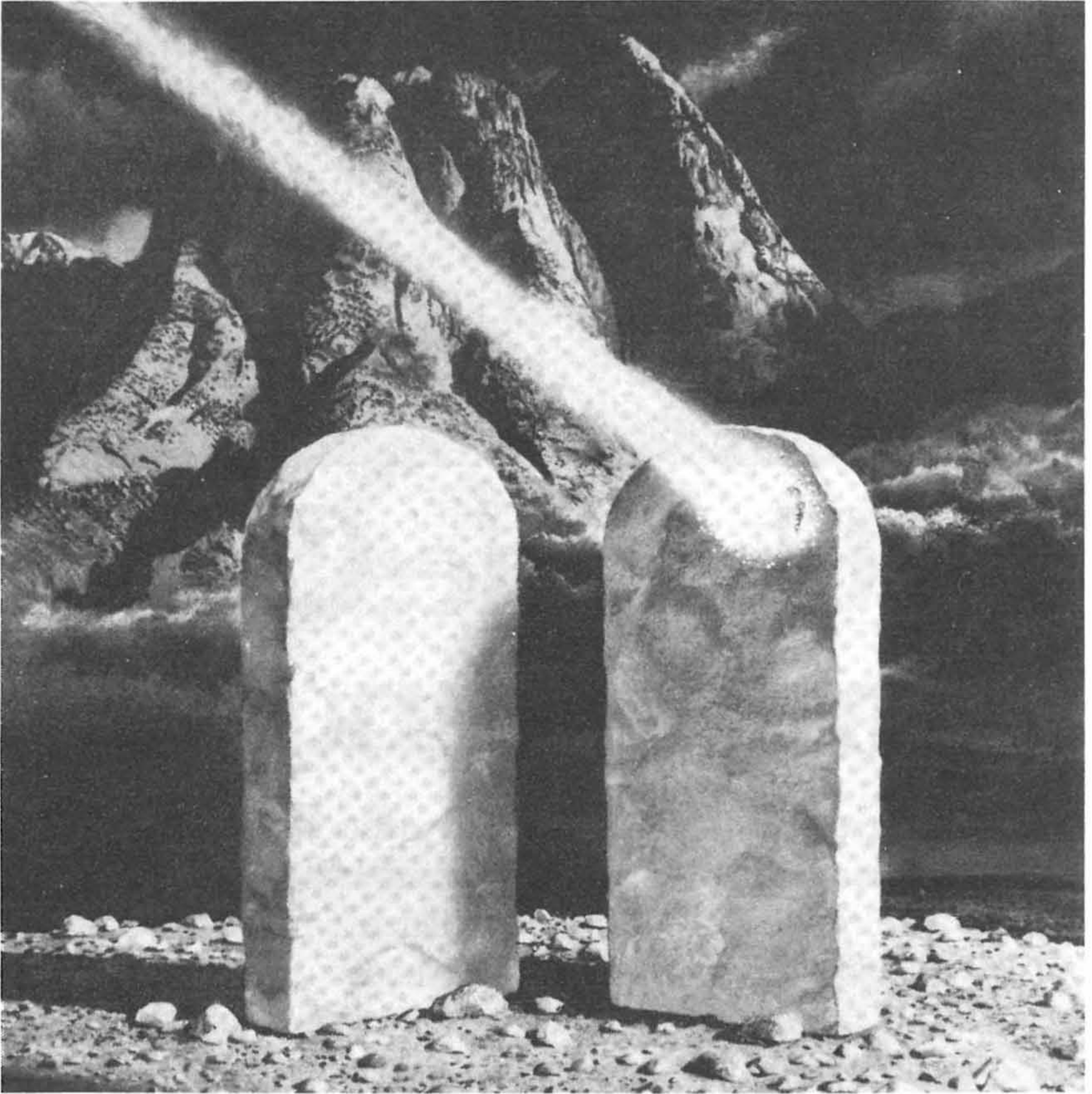
- United States: Pasadena, California 91123. (Or simply dial this toll-free

number in the *continental* U.S., Alaska and Hawaii: 1-800-423-4444.)

- United Kingdom, Europe and Middle East: P.O. Box 111, Borehamwood, Herts., England WD6 1LU. (Or dial this number in the U.K.: Radlett 01-953-1633.)
- Australia: P.O. Box 202, Burleigh Heads, Queensland 4220. (Or dial this number: 075-35-4233—reverse the charges.)
- Canada: P.O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2M2. (Or dial this toll-free number: 1-800-663-2345.)
- South Africa: P.O. Box 5644, Cape Town 8000. (Or dial this number: 021-452202.)

Other areas of the world should check at the end of this booklet for the address of our nearest office.

“Thou Shalt NOT!”



The Ten Commandments represent God's eternal law of love. These great positive and negative principles are in force today. In fact, the breaking of them is the direct cause of all the unhappiness in today's world. To find out how each of the Ten Commandments applies to your personal life, write for your free copy of the booklet titled *The Ten Commandments.*

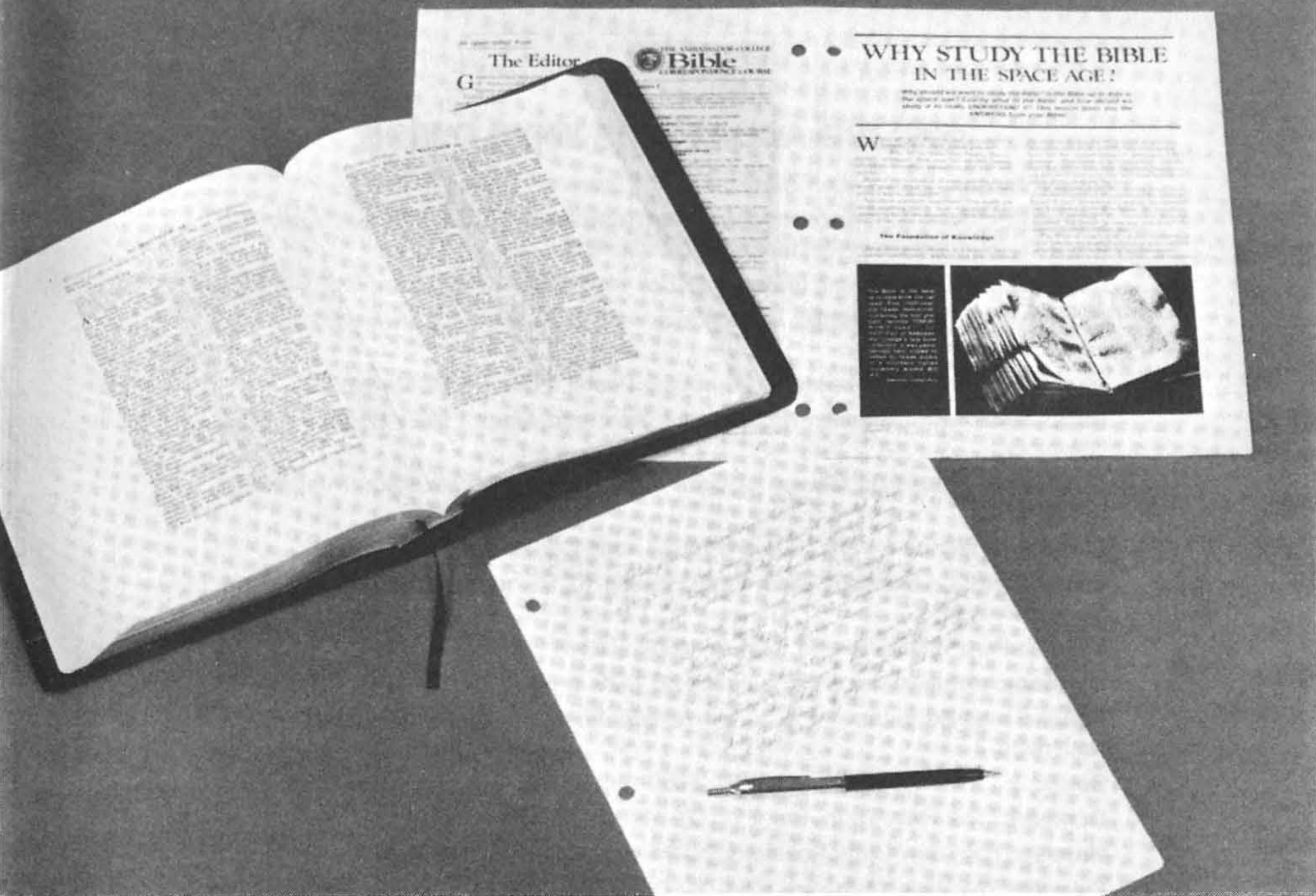


A Unique Course Understanding

Have you found it difficult—even impossible—to understand what the Bible says? The Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course can help you begin to comprehend the Bible as never before. More than 2,000,000 people have enrolled in this unique course!

These informative, eye-opening lessons make plain the answers to the “unanswerable” problems facing millions today. They explain the very purpose of human life. You will study the plain truths of your Bible!

You will learn the truth about the purpose of life, about what Bible prophecy says concerning world events today, about the God-inspired way to true happiness. All these topics and more are presented in step-by-step detail. A different major subject is explored in each monthly lesson.



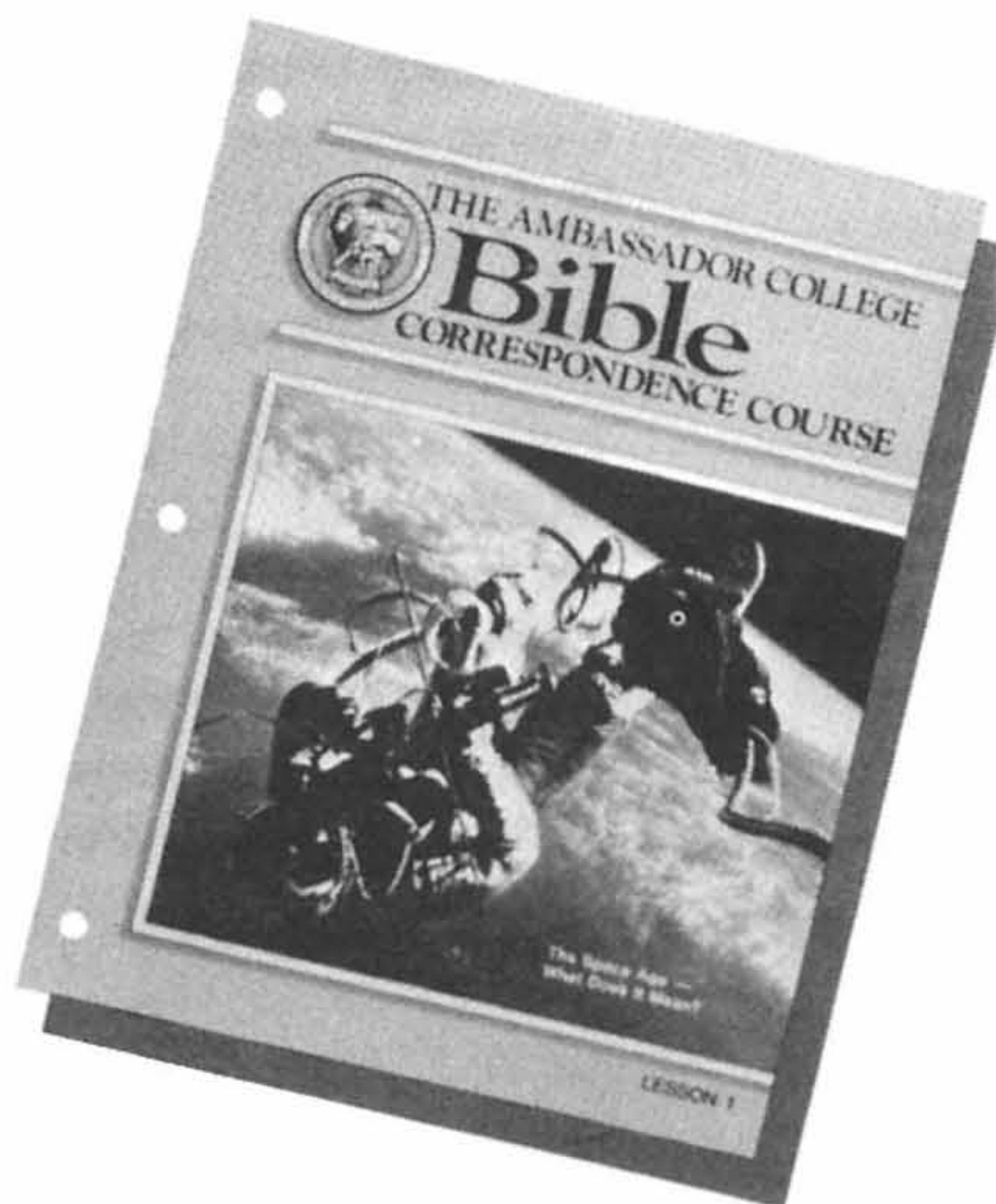
in Bible

And the Bible itself is the only textbook you will need.

You will find each lesson richly rewarding, and periodic quizzes will help you evaluate your progress. There is no tuition fee or obligation—these lessons are absolutely free! Why not request a sample lesson? Send your request in the reply envelope or write to our address nearest you.

Free of Charge

*Just mail the reply envelope
stitched into this booklet.*



MAILING ADDRESSES WORLDWIDE

United States: Worldwide Church of God, Pasadena, California 91123

United Kingdom, Europe (except as listed) and Middle East: The Plain Truth, P.O. Box 111, Borehamwood, Herts, England WD6 1LU

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

Canada (French language): Le Monde à Venir, B.P. 121, Succ. A, Montreal, P. Q. H3C 1C5

Mexico: Institución Ambassador, Apartado Postal 5-595, 06502 Mexico D.F.

South America: Institución Ambassador, Apartado Aéreo 11430, Bogotá 1, D.E., Colombia

Caribbean: Worldwide Church of God, G.P.O. Box 6063, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00936-6063

France: Le Monde à Venir, B.P. 64, 75662 Paris Cédex 14

Switzerland: Le Monde à Venir, Case Postale 10, 91 rue de la Servette, CH-1211 Genève 7, Suisse

Italy: La Pura Verità, Casella Postale 10349 I-00144 Roma EUR, Italia

Germany: Ambassador College, Postfach 1129, D-5300 Bonn 1, West Germany

Holland and Belgium: Ambassador College, Postbus 444, 3430 AK Nieuwegein, Nederland

Belgium: Le Monde à Venir, B.P. 31, 6000 Charleroi 1, Belgique

Denmark: The Plain Truth, Box 211, DK-8100 Aarhus C

Norway: The Plain Truth, Postboks 2513 Solli, N-0203 Oslo 2

Sweden: The Plain Truth, Box 5380, S-102 46, Stockholm

Australia: Worldwide Church of God, P.O. Box 202, Burleigh Heads, Queensland 4220

India: Worldwide Church of God, P.O. Box 6727, Bombay 400 052, India

Sri Lanka: Worldwide Church of God, P.O. Box 1824, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Malaysia: Worldwide Church of God, P.O. Box 430, Jalan Sultan, 46750 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Singapore: Worldwide Church of God, P.O. Box 111, Farrer Road Post Office, Singapore 9128

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

The Philippines: Worldwide Church of God, P.O. Box 1111, MCPO, 1299 Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines

Israel: Ambassador College, P.O. Box 19111, Jerusalem

South Africa: Ambassador College, P.O. Box 5644, Cape Town 8000

Zimbabwe: Ambassador College, Box UA30, Union Avenue, Harare, Zimbabwe

Nigeria: Worldwide Church of God, PMB 21006, Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria

Ghana: Worldwide Church of God, P.O. Box 9617, Kotoka International Airport, Accra

Kenya: Worldwide Church of God, P.O. Box 47135, Nairobi

Mauritius: Ambassador College, P.O. Box 888, Port Louis, Mauritius

THIS BOOKLET IS PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE BY THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

It is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the membership of the Church and others who have elected to support the work of the Church. Contributions are welcomed and gratefully accepted. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support this worldwide Work of God are gladly welcomed as co-workers in this major effort to preach the gospel to all nations.

339717/8808/1.0