

# The Good News

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## Help the Underdog!

*It is natural to sympathize with the underdog—the fellow who is persecuted or “picked-on.” How does this apply in God’s Church?*

by Roderick C. Meredith

HAVE you ever had what is known as a “suffering hero” complex? Chances are, you probably have. Most of us have it once in a great while, but quickly solve our problem and get over it.

But with some people, this complex becomes a *fixed mental habit*. When these people are denied what they want—even though they don’t deserve it—they begin to feel sorry for themselves and to place the blame on others. They usually set out immediately to win sympathy for their “cause.” They often lead a great many others into an attitude of bitterness toward those who are supposed to be persecuting them—the “underdogs.”

Psychologists are quite familiar with this complex. Every organization or business of any size has its share of “suffering heroes.” Every political party and religious group has its share. And, in nearly every case, one factor seems to be constant with these “underdogs.” *They place the blame for their troubles and lack of success upon their leaders, whose position and success they secretly envy. But they are unwilling or unable to pay the price to produce the results which would entitle them to similar position and success.*

### Christian “Martyrs”

Even after conversion, you have the same human nature to contend with that

you always did. Only you then have the help of God’s Spirit in overcoming it. *But* the fact remains that even brethren in God’s church are subject to all the temptations and deceits of *human nature*—one of which is the tendency of some to regard themselves as persecuted “martyrs” or “suffering heroes,” if they are unable to have their *own way* in church matters or problems with their brethren. These people get their “feelings” hurt and feel persecuted if they are not allowed to do as *they please*.

Jesus Christ was *never* inclined to get his feelings hurt when He wasn’t allowed to have His *own way*. Just before He had to give His *life* in an agonizing death on the cross, Jesus prayed, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless *not my will, but thine be done*” (Luke 22:42). Jesus was still flesh and blood, and He dreaded what was coming. But He surrendered His *own will*, that *God’s will* might be done. Jesus wasn’t too concerned about His “feelings” or having His *own way* that night before the crucifixion. If He had been, *we would be without a Savior!*

In spite of Jesus’ example, some who call themselves Christians are continually getting their feelings hurt, either by imagining that they are being persecuted, or by sympathizing with someone else whom they mistakenly believe is an “underdog.”

A good example of this might be a

case in which a couple who have come into association with God’s church in the past, are later found to be living in adultery. One of them may have a living husband or wife. Upon realizing this situation, God’s ministers should immediately take it up with the couple—find out if the previous marriage was binding according to God’s laws—and if so, try to give the couple any advice or help possible to aid them in *breaking up* their *adulterous* union. This is only to *help* them keep God’s laws, and to keep God’s church *clean* and *pure* from sin.

But it is only *human nature* for such a couple to start feeling sorry for themselves. They will feel that they are being singled out for “persecution,” and will often accuse God’s ministers of trying to *hurt* them. They will resort to every device of *human reason* to try to show others why their living in ADULTERY is all right. By making others feel that it is a *personal* disagreement, and that they are the “underdog,” they win sympathy.

Why?

Because nearly everyone tends to sympathize with an “underdog,” and because too few people realize that in GOD’S CHURCH such disagreements are not between the people and a human “preacher,” but actually against *God Himself* and the *way* of God! In plain language, anyone who sympathizes with

such people is sympathizing with Satan the Devil!

### How it Starts

Naturally, when we speak of "sympathizing" with evil, we mean the attitude of *condoning* and *agreeing with* the wrong *principle* involved. We *should* have compassion on sinners, just as Christ did.

*But herein lies the trouble.*

Most people confuse the *love* we should have for those who err with an *active sympathy* for their *WRONG* way of life.

God *loves* those of us who are His children. Yet, we read in Hebrews 12:6 that, "whom the Lord *loveth*, he CHASTENETH, and SCOURGETH every son whom he receiveth." God's chastening isn't something that we enjoy. But He does it, nevertheless, for our ultimate *good*.

In like manner, the true ministers of Jesus Christ have the *responsibility* of correcting and rebuking the church (Titus 2:15). As we have fully explained in previous articles, Jesus gave his ministers the *authority*, under God, to make binding decisions in their function of teaching and directing the church (Mat. 16:19; 18:18). In matters involving the governing and directing of the church, Christians are commanded to *obey* those whom Christ has used in *faithfully* preaching the Word to them and in bringing them to the truth (Heb. 13:7, 17). Such *true ministers* are responsible to Christ for ruling His church, and He will guide them through the Holy Spirit.

So, like Jesus, a true minister should—and with God's help always *will*—use his authority in *love* and for the upbuilding of the church.

But God's ministers have to make a great many decisions in directing the work of the gospel which may be misconstrued if all the facts are not known, or if *human reason* is used to *pervert* the facts.

That is *WHY* some misunderstandings may develop even in God's church from time to time, and *why* some person who thinks he is "wronged" will often seek the sympathy of others who are prone to help an "underdog." These things *can* happen in God's own church because He has decreed that we still have our *human nature*, vanity, and selfish desires to overcome. God wants us to build *character* by overcoming this nature, and solving the problems it causes.

Problems arise because brethren often misunderstand the difficulties that God's servants face in carrying on a worldwide ministry. They often do not realize the *authority* vested in ministers by Christ to preserve *order* and *government*

in carrying out this mission, and in directing His church.

### A Common Error

Some brethren who lack understanding want to take it upon themselves to enter the ministry, or to *force themselves* into an active place in God's work. The number of such *requests*, and sometimes *DEMANDS*, of this nature that have come to Mr. Armstrong over the years is rather amusing. And yet it really isn't amusing, because these people usually mean business and their "feelings" are hurt if they are not placed in whatever position *they* think they should have. They overlook the fact that *God* chooses whom He will.

Here again, if God's ministers do not satisfy *their human desires*, then they often turn sour, feel "persecuted," and go around to other brethren seeking sympathy as an "underdog" who is being "picked on."

You might be surprised at the number of "self-called" individuals who think they should take over Mr. Armstrong's broadcast, or take over one of God's churches and make it *their own* church, or take over some other position in the church of *God*.

All such individuals—and all of you brethren—should realize that *God* RULES *His church*! He always has, and He always will. The Father has appointed Jesus Christ as the living Head of His church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). The true church is the *body* of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 12:27). It is the organism through which He carries on His work.

No one should try to "appoint" *himself* as a minister, an elder, a teacher, or to any other position in God's church. The apostle Paul tells us, "And *God hath set* some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (I Cor. 12:28).

Here we find that it is *GOD* who "sets" those in positions of authority in His church.

How do we know when *God* has done the appointing? Do we find scriptural examples of how God directs His work?

### God's Direction

In Luke 6:12-16, we find the account of how Jesus prayed all night to God for guidance before "he *chose* twelve, whom he also named apostles."

Not one of these men appointed himself. Jesus *chose* each one. Later, He told them, "Ye have not chosen me, *but I have chosen you*" (John 15:16).

After Jesus ascended to heaven and the church began to grow, the apostles found that too much of their time was

being taken up with physical service which could be performed by others. So they asked the brethren, "Look ye out among you seven men of *honest report*, full of the *Holy Ghost* and *wisdom*, whom *WE* may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3).

Notice that these men were *appointed* by the apostles, who had already been specially *called* and *chosen* by Jesus. They did *NOT* appoint themselves.

Later, a man named Saul was feverishly engaged in persecuting and destroying the church when he was struck down and blinded by Christ, and brought to repentance. One of the disciples, Ananias, was told in a vision: "He (Paul) is a *chosen vessel* unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

The apostle Paul was specially chosen by God, but this was revealed to one who was *already* in God's church.

Later, God revealed to the prophets and teachers at Antioch that He wanted Paul and Barnabas separated for a special work. Notice that *in every case* God revealed any "calling" to those who were *already* in authority in His church—either the apostles themselves, or the prophets, or the elders and teachers whom they had appointed through *God's direction*.

God's church was governed and supervised *from the top down*. When *calling* or *choosing* someone for an office in the church, God *always* worked through those He had *already set in authority*. That way there would be no division or confusion in His church. That is *God's way*—the *revealed Bible way*. Let us follow it!

### Training Necessary

Another fundamental fact which few realize is that God always used men who were *trained* and *prepared* for the work to which He called them.

*Moses* was reared in the Pharaoh's palace where he would be trained and schooled in the knowledge of the Egyptians—one of the most cultured peoples of that time (Exodus 2).

*Daniel* was instructed in all the wisdom and learning of the Chaldeans—the greatest nation of that era (Dan. 1:4).

The *apostles* were first called "disciples" or students. They were trained and schooled for more than three years by Jesus Christ himself.

*Paul*, the apostle to the Gentiles, was prepared for his mission by studying at the feet of Gamaliel—recognized as probably the greatest Jewish teacher of that time.

In our day, *Herbert Armstrong* was  
(Please continue on page 7)

# Which Old Testament LAWS *are in force today?*

*For the first time we publish the basic principles explaining which commands are still in force. Read how you can prove from Scripture which laws in the Old Testament were changed or abolished, and which we are commanded to observe today!*

by Herman L. Hoeh

LETTERS continue to arrive from you brethren asking us, "Which laws am I to keep?" Others wish advice in order to explain to interested friends why some laws were abolished and others remain in force.

We have never had the opportunity to publish the full answers to these questions before. We had no magazine especially for you brethren. Most of the readers of *The PLAIN TRUTH*—our evangelistic magazine—are not yet able to grasp the deeper truths of God's law and His way of life.

But you brethren do need to KNOW!

Let us notice, first of all, the New Testament teaching.

Jesus—the living Head of our church—told the disciples: "Whoso therefore shall break one of these *least* commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoso shall DO and TEACH them, the same shall be called *great* in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19).

How important it is, then, that we—the disciples of Jesus today—become familiar with the least commandments—that we live by *every word of God*.

## God Is Lawgiver

God's church differs from all others in that it takes the Bible as ABSOLUTE and FINAL AUTHORITY. We are not to argue with God and use human reason to evade the plain commands of Scripture. God is Supreme Lawgiver. He knows what is best for us. He has perfect wisdom and understanding. We can place our confidence in Him and rely on His judgment which He committed to writing for us—in the Bible.

No one can gain entrance into God's church unless that individual first recognizes the authority and rule of God by *repenting and believing* the things written in Scripture. But repentance is not simply one act. It must be a CONSTANT PRACTICE as we grow in knowledge and correct our mistakes. We must continually yield ourselves to every word of

God. It is *not enough* to say, "I repented once and that is sufficient."

The tendency is to use human reason to side-step what seems of lesser importance to us. It is so very easy for us to say: "I don't see why God would want us to keep this. It seems so impractical in this modern age. Now here is the way I see it."

And yet, my brethren, this attitude is exactly what makes other churches carnal and worldly—of the devil. They use their human reason instead of accepting the Bible as *final* AUTHORITY.

It does us good, however, when so many of you ask us questions about the way that God reveals we should live. We know that when you write us you are in earnest to understand the laws of God. So let us all open our minds and come to a new understanding of pure, true Christianity.

## Ten Commandments Binding at Creation

God's church recognizes the eternal binding authority of the ten Commandments. David was inspired to say: "All his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness" (Ps. 110:7-8). Jesus didn't abolish the ten commandments. "Think not," He said, "that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."

The ten commandments constitute the basic spiritual law which regulates human life. It is holy, just and good, said Paul in Romans 7:12 and 14.

We know, also, that we should observe the annual festivals, that we should **tithe**, that we should obey the rules of health pertaining to meats. *But what many do not understand is HOW TO PROVE that we should keep these laws which are not a direct part of the ten commandments.* How are the lesser laws to be distinguished from the ceremonial laws and carnal ordinances so often connected with them?

First, remember that God's basic spir-

itual laws existed from the beginning. When speaking of divorce, Jesus said that "*from the beginning* it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). It was a sin at the beginning of this present creation to commit adultery!

The world strayed so far from the truth that, by the days of Moses, God had to reveal His law anew to the Israelites. Israel had lost a knowledge of God's ways while in Egyptian bondage. Let us notice, however, that God was merely revealing the laws which were already in force. The old covenant did *not* establish the laws.

In Exodus 16:28 we read that the Eternal, when speaking about Israel to Moses, said: "How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws?"

Israel could not refuse what did not exist!

Now turn to Exodus 18:16. Moses told his father-in-law that when the people have a dispute, "I make them know the statutes of God and his judgments."

Notice! *Here are the statutes and judgments of God existing BEFORE the old covenant.* As they existed before the old covenant, they could not be abolished when it ceased to exist. The old covenant could not destroy what it did not bring into force.

But when did the carnal ceremonies and sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood begin? And how can we distinguish them from the statutes and judgments that existed *prior* to the old covenant?

## When Did Sacrificial Laws Begin?

When God brought Israel to the foot of Mt. Sinai, He gave the ten commandments to them. He allowed Moses to declare all the statutes and judgments to Israel (Exodus, chapters 20-24).

Now notice carefully. There is only one sacrifice mentioned in the book of the law—the *passover* sacrifice (Exodus 23:18). God called it "MY sacrifice." Next, turn to Jeremiah 7:22-23. Listen

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to what the Eternal inspired Jeremiah to write: "For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I DID NOT SPEAK . . . OR COMMAND them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this COMMAND I GAVE THEM: 'Obey my voice . . . and walk in ALL THE WAY THAT I COMMAND YOU, that it may be well with you.'"

God did not command sacrifices to be offered originally. This explains why none of those temporary sacrifices were perpetuated by different symbols in the New Testament Church. ONLY THE PASSOVER IS PRESERVED BY DIFFERENT SYMBOLS TODAY—because it began before the old covenant was made. (See its institution in Exodus 12.) The very fact that Jesus substituted unleavened bread and wine for the passover only, and not for the temporary offerings, is absolute proof that the old testament offerings are not binding today!

Paul says (Gal. 3:19) they were added because of transgression—because God's spiritual law was being broken—until Christ should come. They were substitutes for the sacrifice of Christ and as a "reminder of sin" to teach the people the need of the Messiah who would pay the penalty of human transgression (Hebrews 10:3).

"But," many ask, "weren't the sacrifices ordained forever?"

Yes, the Bible does say that the Levitical priesthood and its sacrifices were to be perpetual or forever. But let us understand the real significance of the Hebrew word translated "forever." It means continuous, so long as the factors involved exist.

Notice three scriptures where this meaning is made plain. Men could be

the slaves of a master forever—meaning till the death of one of the parties. (See Exodus 21:6; Lev. 25:46; Deut. 15:17.)

What are the factors surrounding sacrifices? One, the priesthood. Two, the need for sacrifices.

What is the purpose of a priesthood? To offer sacrifices and to act on behalf of men in relation to God (Hebrews 5:1 and 8:3). But how long do offerings for sins need to be made? Paul tells us: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18).

To offer sacrifices for sin after Christ gave His life in full payment for all sins makes a mockery of Him. Therefore, SINCE PHYSICAL OFFERINGS WERE NO LONGER NEEDED—AND HENCE THE PHYSICAL LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD WAS NO LONGER NECESSARY—the old testament offerings are no longer binding. The factors involved in the original law ceased to exist.

Perhaps we have failed to realize that God ALONE has the right to rescind, change or alter material laws. God will change the present chemical and physical laws that govern this temporary universe (Matt. 5:18). In like manner, God has already changed the carnal laws added to the old covenant. *Those carnal laws were subject to change because their everlasting endurance depended upon physical circumstances*—the coming of the promised seed, Christ, who should take upon Himself the sins of the world. When the circumstances were altered, the everlasting obligation to the carnal laws ceased.

GOD WILL NOT, HOWEVER, ALTER HIS SPIRITUAL LAWS. The spiritual laws describe the very character of God. They enable us to know what God is like. Since the character of God remains un-

changing—"I change not, saith the Eternal" (Mal. 3:6) and "Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8)—the spiritual laws could not change. Again, God is LOVE. And God's love is defined in I John 5:3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." We can have the same love that is in the Father's heart, if we practice His commands—the way He, Himself, lives.

## Carnal Laws Distinguished from Others

It is important that we notice, now, that the spiritual principles underlying the material sacrificial laws are still binding. Since God can never rescind His spiritual law—the ten commandments—there is always the need of a Supreme Sacrifice so long as sin exists. That everlasting sacrifice is Jesus, the Christ.

The same holds true for us. Peter says that we are "a royal priesthood"—"a holy priesthood" (I Peter 2:5,9). Since we are a priesthood, of which Jesus Christ is High Priest, then WE NEED TO OFFER SACRIFICES, TOO. What sacrifices can we offer? "I appeal to you," said Paul, "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service" (Romans 12:1, Panin trans.).

Do you see how the spiritual principles underlying sacrifice are perpetuated today, although the carnal law passed away nearly 2000 years ago? The same is true of circumcision. Paul spent many chapters convincing the Jews that circumcision—not a harmful rite in itself—was not needed for salvation. Yet Abraham's children are all to be circumcised—in the heart (Rom. 2:29).

Now let us learn where we can find exactly what constituted the temporary laws. Turn with me to Hebrews 9:9-10. In these two verses we read of the material gifts and sacrifices which included "ONLY meats and drinks and diverse washings—carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation." Notice that the temporary laws did not pertain to murder or theft or sabbath-breaking, but were ONLY those ordinances regulating meat and drink offerings and different washings or ablutions of the unclean. *These external washings were a type of the Holy Spirit cleaning us up within.*

ANY OTHER LAWS NOT INCLUDED IN HEBREWS 9:10 WERE NOT PART OF THE RITUALS ADDED BECAUSE OF SIN!

Remember this point! It will help you to know which rites in the old testament were added to the statutes and judgments already in existence.

## What Is the Law of Moses?

Some people are easily confused by the trick statement that the ten com-

## RADIO LOG

### "The WORLD TOMORROW"

Herbert W. Armstrong analyzes today's news, with the prophecies of The WORLD TOMORROW!

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mandments are the law of Moses. They turn to Luke 2:22-24 in which the ceremonies of the law of Moses are also called part of the law of the Lord.

Why?

Because all law comes from God. Moses is not the lawmaker! He merely told the people the laws that God set in motion (John 1:17).

Let us not let men tell us what constituted the law of Moses. Here is God's definition in Malachi 4:4: "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and judgments that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel."

The law of Moses is NEVER called the ten commandments. It comprises the statutes and judgments which God gave him to communicate to the people. The difference between the law of Moses and the ten commandments is that God spoke the ten words, but Moses delivered the statutes and judgments.

Now, let us recall that when Moses first delivered the statutes and judgments, the law of Moses had no sacrifices connected with it. Jeremiah said so! (Jer. 7:22). But *after* the close of the old covenant (Ex. 24), the Levitical priesthood was established and the laws regulating offerings were added (Exodus 28:1). (Prior to this time offerings were voluntary and young men were priests—Exodus 24:5.)

The law of Moses was originally the civil law, based on the ten commandments. Those civil statutes and judgments are right and good (Psalm 119:7,8).

**BUT ADDED TO THEM WERE OTHER STATUTES AND JUDGMENTS REGULATING MATERIAL RITUALS, SUCH AS SACRIFICES, LIGHTING OF CANDLES, BURNING INCENSE, AND VARIOUS WASHINGS FOR THE UNCLEAN.**

This almost unnoticed fact is what causes so much difficulty in understanding that the LAW OF MOSES WAS COMPOSED OF *two* DISTINCT PARTS: THE CIVIL AND THE RITUALISTIC!

Part of Law of Moses Still in Force!

Jesus said the two great commandments were love to God and love to neighbor. Do you know from where He quoted these laws?

Out of the book of the law!—the laws that Moses spoke to the people. Read it in Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." And Deuteronomy 6:4: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."

In II John 5 and 6, God commands Christians to obey these two basic laws which He communicated to the people by Moses! In II Kings 23:25, Josiah is praised because he "turned to the Lord

with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF MOSES!"

Notice how plain it is. The civil law of Moses expounds the ten commandments by revealing how the ten basic principles are to be applied.

Then why do we read in Acts that Gentile converts do not have to observe the law of Moses, except for four points? (Acts 15.) The answer is made plain in Acts 21:21. The laws of Moses called in question involved "customs." Read it for yourself. The Jews were falsely accusing Paul, saying that he taught Jews living abroad "not to circumcise their children or observe the CUSTOMS!" (Acts 21:21.)

The controversy in the early church did not involve spiritual principles of love and obedience in the *civil* law of Moses. It involved only *ceremonial additions* to the original *civil* law of Moses. The controversy in Acts 15 involved only *customs*—ADDED ceremonies or rituals. This is further proven by noticing the four points which are binding on all Christians everywhere.

These points were connected with rituals. We are not to eat blood, animals which are strangled, meats offered to idols or to practice fornication. These four *spiritual* points involving fornication and eating blood were connected with *customs* or *ceremonies* of the law of Moses. The *civil* law was not involved.

You will find them taken from Leviticus 17:7 and 10. "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto demons, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations." Pagan *idolatry* involved physical *fornication* as well as spiritual whoredom (Numbers 25:1-3).

Continuing from Leviticus 17:10: "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood," says the Eternal. Any animal *strangled* contained blood.

How plain! *Only the ceremonial customs* of the law of Moses have passed away. The many civil laws regulating tithing, clean and unclean meats, the annual sabbaths, and many others are still for the New Testament Church because they explain the ten commandments.

For example: God forbids us to eat unclean meats. To take what He forbids is to covet. One of the ten commandments says: "Thou shalt NOT covet."

Now let us consider the use of the death penalty in old testament times.

#### Ministration of Death

A common question often asked is

this: Why do we not enforce the death penalty for sabbath-breakers or any other violation of the ten commandments?

In the January 1953 GOOD NEWS, we published an article explaining the truth about the administration of death. If you have not already read it, be sure to write in for a back copy.

The answer to this question is found in Matthew 5. Let us turn to this important chapter again. Jesus was anticipating doubts in the minds of the disciples. He commences by saying He came to keep the law, not to destroy it. Then he proceeds to CHANGE the civil laws as they were given to ancient Israel. He magnifies them and makes them honorable. He raises them from narrow, national laws to a spiritual plane regulating the whole of human society. Six times Jesus says: "You have heard it said in olden times. . . . But I say to you. . . ." and He then proceeds to expound the spiritual principles underlying the civil laws of Moses.

In particular, notice Matthew 5:38: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . .'"

Why did Jesus RESTORE THESE SPIRITUAL LAWS as they were from the beginning? Why was Moses commanded to give them only in the letter to ancient Israel?

Ancient Israel was not like the church of God today. It was a national church—a carnal nation organized into the congregation of Israel. They did not have the promise of the Holy Spirit; they were a nation of this world. Moses said that they did not even have the power or strength of will to keep what little he commanded them (Deut. 5:29). And neither do human beings today! People don't want to obey the commandments. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God" (Rom. 8:7). Israel needed punishments for lawbreakers to keep peace and security in the land.

Jesus came to make it possible for us to have the very nature of God acting in us. Therefore He restored the civil law to its original spiritual perfection. And with that restoration the power to administer the death penalty in the church of God passed from men to Him who created man. Today God corrects us as His children. "Vengeance is mine," says God. We are rather to suffer wrong and trust God.

#### How to Apply These Principles

Thus far in our study we have found three main texts which can guide us in  
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# Problems of New Converts

by Ted Armstrong

**D**O YOU know why the majority of American people turn up their noses at "religion" and refuse to have anything to do with it?

You have probably been taught most of your life that it is necessary to GIVE UP everything that is GOOD, everything that is FUN, in order to become "saved." This is the common conception of salvation—and most people take it for granted without ever questioning it.

The churches paint Christianity as a morbid religion with a God who demands penance and suffering from poor helpless mortals. Life, to many professing Christians, is *unhappy, uncomfortable, drab, poverty-stricken*. Salvation is looked upon as the reward for enduring all this *misery* that the Father imposes on us.

What kind of God is it that this common teaching portrays? Is it any wonder that most people don't want to turn to God?

If people could only understand that conversion is *not* a matter of "just how much do I have to give up"! Jesus came that we might have life, of course, *but He also came that we might have it more abundantly* (John 10:10).

## What Conversion Really Is

Jesus came to call us *out* of this world's troubled conditions—to bring us a life just FILLED with interest, with ZEAL, and with USEFULNESS. He did not tell us to bend our backs under a mountain of human woe and suffering! Or to do penance and live in poverty and misery!

Conversion does not mean to cast all material things aside. Instead, conversion makes possible for the first time our intelligent use of the material creation. Jesus Christ did not say: Throw material wealth and all physical pleasures away and seek only the Kingdom of God. Notice what He *did* say: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be ADDED unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

So it is not the giving up of these things that is so important—it is the attitude *toward* them! Seek FIRST the kingdom of God, and THEN (secondarily in importance) shall these things be added to you! We are here to learn how to *use* the material world, not to *abuse* it. We are here to learn how to be *happy* and how to make others happy, too.

The only true way to happiness is set

forth in God's revelation to man—the Bible. And the very first step to finding real happiness is described by Paul in his letter to the Romans, when he said: "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed *by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

Notice. Here is the very STARTING POINT on the way to salvation! *To come out of this world!* Not to be conformed to its way, but to become like God by learning and practicing His will.

## How to Do the Will of God

Everywhere in the Bible the newly converted person is compared to a little *baby* who is completely dependent on its parents for life and protection. For the protection, then, of each newly begotten member in God's family, the Heavenly Father intended that each of us should be "set apart" and separated from the ways of this present world. It keeps us from the dangerous influences that are hidden everywhere. God knows it is the only way that we can "put on the new man"—develop spiritually—CHANGE *from one person to another in CHARACTER* (Eph. 4:24).

But does this mean that we are to abolish all contact with the "outside world"? How are we to come out of this world's society and customs and still live *in* the world?

The process of conversion is not an easy task! Jesus said that he came to bring a SWORD on earth—not peace! (Matt. 10:34.) The sword is the sharp two-edged cutting WORD OF GOD—His *truth!* This word, this sword, HURTS the carnal mind. It causes discomfort to those who are following their natural desires, and who want to do what *seems* right to them.

And who are those usually MOST CONCERNED when they discover that you have turned away from this present world? Why, it is *your own family and relatives*, of course! Jesus prophesied it! He said the truth would set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and that a man's foes would be those of his own household! (Matt. 10:35-36.)

*That* is the real meaning behind the command to come out of this world. The very *purpose* which God has in this command to be separate from the world is to TEST OUR STRENGTH AND OUR

FAITH. If other people in the outside world begin to persecute you, and berate you for your religion, would you be troubled too much? Somewhat, perhaps, but not very much. But—when your own FAMILY begins to accuse, to malign and to persecute you for your "crazy" religion—don't you sometimes begin to weaken just a little?

Yes, it is more difficult than it sounds. We may refuse to work at our jobs on the sabbath, we may discontinue our associations with former friends insofar as those associations disobey God's law, we may quit keeping the worldly holidays; but when it comes to the very members of our families—we sometimes begin to weaken to temptations. How much do we have to give up? Jesus said, "He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37).

Yes, sometimes we must give up the former fellowship, *even with our own families*. If we are *of the world*, the world will love its own. But because God has called us out of this world, it will HATE US (John 15:19).

The problem that confronts each of us, then, is how can we be SEPARATE from this world, and still have CHARITY and LOVE for it? Can we LOVE other people *as ourselves*? We know that the carnal mind is the attitude of ENMITY against God's law, God's rule (Rom. 8:7). The *converted* mind is the *changed* mind—of LOVE directed *away* from self and toward others. "This is my *commandment*, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

## Love ONLY Church Members?

The true Christian attitude is one of LOVE and CHARITABLENESS toward others. We can love others and still not fellowship them. Love and fellowship are not the same! Many, of course, will ask: did not Christ say we are to fellowship the unconverted when he said "And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others"? Doesn't this mean that we are to associate with the world, mingle with the unconverted, go out and fellowship worldly people?

It most certainly does not!

It means exactly what it says! We are to "salute," to greet in a FRIENDLY AND LOVING MANNER, *all* those with whom

we come in contact. We are to be an EXAMPLE of God's character before others, but we are not to fellowship the world.

The very purpose of the Christian calling hinges on our understanding of this principle. We are called to become co-rulers with Jesus Christ—to JUDGE THIS WORLD WITH HIM! Yes—even to judge angels! (I Cor. 6:3.) *Do the judges and jurors fellowship with the ones who are awaiting trial?* No.

But can we find the right balance?

Can we fully understand that we must remain unspotted from the world and yet love those who are ensnared in it? Whoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God! (James 4:4.)

So let's realize that while we must remain in this world, we cannot be of it!

## Help the Underdog

(Continued from page 2)

prepared for his world-wide ministry by being led to enter the advertising and publishing field—where he received the special kind of training necessary to prepare him for conducting the international gospel crusade by radio and the printing press.

Then God miraculously opened the way for Ambassador College—where Mr. Armstrong could train young men to help him just as Jesus did, and as Paul did with the evangelists Timothy, Titus, Silas, and others.

It is GOD'S revealed WILL—not human reason—which has led Mr. Armstrong to see the necessity of *thoroughly training* those who are to be actively used in God's work. This principle holds true in regard to almost any office in God's church.

In I Timothy 3:1-13, Paul instructs Timothy in the qualities which a man must have before he can be ordained as a local elder or deacon. Even of the deacons, Paul wrote, "And let these first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless" (verse 10). A deacon must be "proved" or "tested" in his ability and willingness to exercise his office in a "blameless" manner before being ordained. The evangelists were instructed to be sure that any elder or deacon would submit to God's government before ordaining them.

Yes, God's ministers must be very careful whom they appoint to aid in the spiritual ministry of Jesus Christ. They must be called of God, thoroughly trained and prepared, and able to prove their reliability and complete willingness to obey God's government in His church.

As has been thoroughly explained in previous articles in The GOOD NEWS, Christ has promised to be with, and specially guide, his called servants in matters of church government and discipline (Mat. 18:15-20). That is the way that Christ rules the true church.

The example of how a supposedly converted couple found living in adultery should be helped is only one example of the serious decisions and responsibilities which God's ministers must shoulder. There will be problems of people wanting a job in the work, of people seeking after offices in the church to which God has not called them, of false prophets or disgruntled elders trying to lead off the flock after themselves.

All these problems will not be solved to the complete satisfaction of everyone. This is because very few people keep close enough to God to know His will in directing the church. And when personal desires and ambitions enter into the picture, it is easy even for a converted person to let self-will get in the way of God's will.

These factors will give opportunity for those who continue in self-will to cry out that they are being treated unfairly, that they are "martyrs" or "underdogs." You need to realize this, and ask God to help you get all sides of the case before feeling very sorry for the "underdog."

### Jesus Guides His Church!

Although Jesus specially promised to guide His ministers in exercising their authority to "bind" or "loose" in applying God's law to a particular case, He did not promise that they would never make a mistake in appointing some to offices in the church. Paul told the Ephesian elders whom he ordained: "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

So even though they diligently seek God's direction, God's ministers today may make a few human errors in the appointments of elders, deacons, or others to offices in the church. But that is for CHRIST to judge! God's ministers are responsible to HIM.

If God's ministers seem a little slow in appointing someone to an office in the church, or if they appear to have made a mistake in such an appointment—or in any other decision they may have to make, the truly Christian thing for you to do is not to criticize and condemn, nor to bitterly think that we are persecuting a so-called "underdog," but to get down on your knees before God and ask Him to show us His will, to rebuke and chasten us if necessary, and to guide us in directing His church as He has promised to do.

And while you are at it, you had better ask God also to show you if YOU are the one who is wrong! The Bible reveals that when individuals disagreed with God's called servants, they were nearly always the ones who were wrong.

So mistakes will be made. But God's Word shows that those who criticize or accuse God's servants of being unfair will probably be the ones in the wrong.

In the past, Jesus has always directed His church and His true servants so that they were far more fair and just in directing the church than others would have been. Jesus is "the same yesterday, and TODAY, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). Think it over.

### Help the Underdog

Knowing that the true church of God is a spiritual organism which Christ rules and directs through His ministers, you should be very careful not to let Satan the Devil put a spirit of antagonism in you against them. Once God has shown you where He is working in carrying the true gospel to the world, and whom He is using in this ministry, you should obey them in matters of church government and direction (Heb. 13:8). In matters of faith, you should follow them as they follow Christ (I Cor. 11:1). This way leads to unity, peace, and love as God intends. It avoids strife and confusion which is of the Devil.

If occasions arise where other brethren become disgruntled over a supposed injustice, you had better remind yourself that Christ has promised to guide His church into all truth—and ask Him to do it. If someone in the church feels that he is an "underdog," that he has been wronged or discriminated against by God's servants, and if he comes around to you for sympathy—you should help him.

Yes, you should help the "underdog"!

Here is how. If you are careful to find the real cause of his grievance, you will probably find that the individual is in some manner going contrary to the government of God. He may be trying to disobey some point of God's law. He may be holding a feeling of bitterness toward one of God's ministers because he was unwilling to be corrected on some point; or he may feel "persecuted" because he has not been allowed to appoint himself to some office or function in God's work for which he is not qualified or prepared.

Whatever may be the reason, you will not help him by actively sympathizing with his supposed "cause." This will only make him feel more secure in his error, and seem to substantiate his feeling of bitterness.

If possible, you should try to point

out *his own* mistake, help him get his mind off his own selfish desires, and warn him in a loving way that *such an attitude among God's people is one which Satan the Devil is working day and night to bring about* (I Peter 5:8).

If you are members of a local congregation, you should discuss it with the minister and let him know the real situation so that he may help work out a solution before anything serious arises. If you are one of the many scattered brethren and such a problem should arise, write to us at God's "headquarters church" in Pasadena, and we will try to work out a solution, and will pray with you about it.

Whatever you do, don't become this kind of "underdog" yourself, or let one make you embittered to the extent that you *reject* God's truth and thereby *forfeit* your right to eternal life. The "underdog" and his sympathizers may well be in danger of the *lake of fire*. It seems that if people allow themselves to become embittered and reject a minister, *they also reject Christ's message!* It just doesn't pay to fight God's true servants. When the men of Israel became angry because of Samuel's sons and wanted to reject Samuel, God said, "They have not rejected thee, but *they have rejected ME, that I should not reign over them*" (I Sam. 8:7).

The "underdog" problem will always be solved if the complete *truth* of the particular case is made plain to everyone, if brethren are willing to obey *God's will* in directing the church through His called and chosen ministers, and if all of us *pray earnestly* that God will protect His church and keep it free from all strife and division. Christ's *body*, the true church, is *not* to be divided (I Cor. 1:13). Only by working *together with love and zeal* can we carry out the world-wide mission that Christ has given to all of us in His church.

## Which LAWS are in force?

(Continued from page 5)

studying the laws of the old testament: *Jeremiah 7:22; Hebrews 9:10 and Matthew 5:21 through 44*. These key scriptures explain what constituted the substitutes for Christ and the Holy Spirit, and what laws were mere permissions by Moses to a carnal people *who could not keep the law in the spirit*. Let us not think for a moment that God was unfair to deal with them so. After all, Israel told God that they could keep the law!

Now we can turn to the old covenant and compare it briefly with what we have studied in other passages.

Concerning the laws of *warfare* found in Deuteronomy 20, we find the New Testament teaching us that our warfare is not carnal, but spiritual—that we do not struggle with human beings but with wicked spirits in high places (Matt. 5:38 and Ephesians 6). The laws in Deuteronomy were given to a physical nation to regulate physical conditions.

Concerning *slavery*, Paul says that we should not *become* the slaves of human beings (I Cor. 7:21-24), although if we

were converted while being slaves, we should *abide* in our calling until freedom can be purchased. A great many are in slavery to this day and do not know it! We are to be enterprising and efficient enough that we become the masters of our occupations. The original law took into consideration the fact that slavery was a universal practice that needed to be regulated.

Concerning uncleanness of women during childbirth (Leviticus 12), the customs of the law of Moses were temporary, but based upon principles of health. These laws, *as well as other diverse washings*, were to keep the people mindful of the need to be *externally* pure. It is a good practice, however, that women obtain rest after bearing children.

The Holy Days are to be observed apart from the added ceremonies which were performed by the Levitical priesthood for the people. The Levites, not the people, were to blow the trumpets on the Feast of Trumpets.

Concerning the inheritance of property in Leviticus 27: we are now sojourners and not inheritors. God has not given us permanent possessions during this age. But when the government of God is established during the millennium, then no one will be allowed to take away the rightful inheritance of another, and each individual will be allowed to return to his inheritance during the Jubilee.

In general, you can apply the principles of Matthew 5 to the book of Deuteronomy and portions of the book of Numbers, Leviticus and Exodus. In other cases, where the ceremonial statutes are found, you should compare the verses with Hebrews 9:10 and Jeremiah 7:22. **IF THERE IS NO CHANGE OR ABOLITION OF THE LAWS FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, THEN YOU CAN BE REASONABLY SURE THAT THEY ARE TO BE OBSERVED TODAY.**

### HOLY DAY CALENDAR

For 1954

Passover, after sunset, Fri., April 16.

Days of Unleavened Bread, begin sunset Sat., April 17, end sunset Sat., April 24.

Pentecost, Monday, June 14, beginning previous sunset.

Festival of Trumpets, Tues., Sept. 28.

Day of Atonement, fast day, Thurs., October 7.

Festival of Tabernacles, begins sunset, Monday, October 11, ends sunset Tuesday, October 19.

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