

The Good News

The National Magazine of
THE CHURCH OF GOD

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WHY Local Assemblies?

Believe it or not, assembling together in local groups or churches may lead to loss of salvation to many—unless these pitfalls are avoided!

by Herbert W. Armstrong

TRUE, we are commanded not to forsake assembling ourselves together—and so much the more in these last days, as we approach the Day of the Eternal and the second coming of Christ.

But there are pitfalls. Those inexperienced and unlearned in all the instruction of God to His ministers would never see them. They would trap the unwary and the innocent. But they are there. And they are a very real and potential danger!

Three New Churches

The indication and hope now is that God will establish at least three new local congregations among us during this present year. We are hoping to place local pastors to conduct regular Sabbath services in the vicinity of George West or Alice, Texas, at Longmont, Colorado, and to raise up a new church in Los Angeles.

Every member of God's true Church will rejoice in this. But we have had to learn to "go slow with God," and to "wait on the Lord." It's human to want to jump off half-cocked, as the saying is—to get in a hurry—to get ahead of The Eternal.

When the PURPOSE of this assembling in a local group departs from God's purpose—when the *method* of conducting the local assembly departs from the Bible instructions and exam-

ple, members often are driven *away* from God and into loss of eternal life!

You have heard me say often that most of the worldly churches have degenerated into social clubs. But of course most of us probably would never believe that could happen to any of *us*! We just don't think of ourselves in that language. Yet some of those oldest in our fellowship have actually fallen into that snare *without realizing it!*

For the safety and welfare of all, I must speak plainly and candidly. God commands His true ministers: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things *without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality*" (I Tim. 5:20-21).

An Unscriptural Attitude

Some, who have attended a local congregation of God's church for years, have gradually succumbed to the influence of Satan and the pull of the flesh, until they have come to look on the purpose and function of the local church something like this (and I summarize their unscriptural view as a warning to ALL!):

"We just want to have peace," they protest, justifying their departure from the BIBLE ways. "We just want to attend church every Sabbath, and enjoy

the fellowship, without having any preacher lambast us, or tell us what's wrong with us, or use the Scriptures to hit at us. We want a pastor who will show LOVE toward us, by letting us do as we please, and as each of us sees it for himself. We don't want a pastor to use the Bible to strike out at us, and tell us we're wrong, and make us feel uncomfortable.

"And another thing," this attitude continues, "we want to have the 'say-so' in what we do, and how our services are conducted. We don't want any part in what our pastor calls 'God's work'—that's just *his* own personal work, and we're not interested, and we don't want to hear about it—we want no part in it. We don't care anything about going into all the world and proclaiming the Gospel. We don't care anything about whether people in Florida or Maine or Alabama are being brought into the truth and converted—they live too far away for us to enjoy fellowship with them, and so we have no interest in them, and don't want to be bothered or made uncomfortable even hearing about them."

Rather astonishing, isn't it, that people who have heard God's TRUTH preached for many years—people who at first accepted it in the love of God, professed it, started out practising it—should, through the years, *fall away* from the truth, reject *new* truth as it is un-

covered, begin to embrace false doctrines and errors, and finally come to such an attitude as above quoted?

It Has Happened Here!

But I assure you, my brethren, that such has happened! I do not here accuse any individual. I say to those concerned, look down deep into your own hearts! If the shoe fits, either put it on and wear it—INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE, TO BE BURNED!—or else REPENT before it is everlastingly TOO LATE! But to those who do *not* share this degenerated carnal attitude, I say, "I *don't* mean you!"

But that's not all. Hear some more of this attitude into which ANY ONE OF US might degenerate, unless we are AWAKE to the *danger!*

These people, if they express how they really feel, would continue to say:

"We just want to ENJOY this fellowship and Sabbath service each Sabbath. We want it to be a *change*—a rest from our weekly work and routines—a place where we can come for diversion and ENJOYMENT, and we want it to be uplifting and encouraging, so that we can go home feeling better pleased with ourselves. We don't want a pastor getting us all upset by showing us our sins—telling us that because we were divorced and remarried we are living in adultery—telling us we are robbing God if we don't pay tithes. Why, we don't think God would be fair if He split up families just because one member has a former living husband or wife—and we don't want any of OUR money to go into a work we don't consider is OUR work, and we don't want any of OUR money to go to the preacher, either. Just because it is taught from Pasadena that divorce and remarriage is adultery—just because Armstrong and his worshippers say it's a sin if we don't pay tithes—well, if we disagree with what is taught at Pasadena, that's our God-given right! We want the right to believe as we reason it out for ourselves. We want a preacher to show LOVE toward us by telling us how good we are, and sending us home better pleased with ourselves, feeling good, encouraged for the week ahead."

Perverted Love!

To these people, the minister who properly uses God's Word as God commands, to correct and reprove, is not showing love. The preacher who will twist the Word of God to lull them to sleep in their sins—actually condemning them to everlasting DEATH—is showing what they call love!

Some of them derive a certain satisfaction out of a disagreement with God's chosen servant. Instead of feeling guilty where the BIBLE condemns what they are doing or believing, it seeming-

ly elevates their ego. If they can convince themselves that God's chosen servant is wrong, and they are right in various points of Scripture, then they feel superior. This helps them ride right over their sins. But they are riding straight into the jaws of ETERNAL DEATH!

We might think: "Why, that couldn't happen to any of OUR people who have heard the TRUTH?" But I assure you, brethren, it has happened already, to a small few! Thank God!—only a few!

What is God's sentence upon them? Listen!

"It is IMPOSSIBLE for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the good Word of God . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh" (Heb. 6:4-6).

Let it be a warning to ALL, and let all FEAR, and TREMBLE before the all-powerful WORD OF GOD!

Why, we would not be the true Church of God, unless a few had turned away from the truth!

It happened in the churches God raised up thru the apostle Paul. Leaders rose up and turned brethren against Paul. To the elders from Ephesus, Paul said:

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

It happened to Paul. It has happened in our experience. But never fear! All such shall be dealt with, by the power of God. God is showing His servants what they must do. And we shall know by the fruits—the RESULTS—whether the power and the authority of GOD in His chosen ministers is the stronger, and master of the situation, or whether perverted and disgruntled human self-will can triumph! God will DEMONSTRATE His power thru His servants! The gates of hell shall not prevail against GOD'S Church!

God's Work Growing

The work of God is multiplying in power and scope! We expect to have at least two or three men graduating this coming June who shall then be prepared to go out and pastor new local congregations. One or two others may have to go to England and to Europe. It begins to appear that in less than a year we shall have to send an evangelistic team to conduct dynamic evangelistic campaigns in two or three cities in England. The indication now is that we

may have from one to three churches raised up in England within about a year.

It appears now, also, that we shall soon have to send two men to India, and possibly to establish a branch headquarters there. The broadcasts are now going to India and to all China, and the entire far-east! An office is soon to be established in London, and a European edition of The PLAIN TRUTH will be printed in London. Plans have been made to have the entire magazine set to type here, the plates or negatives air-mailed to London, and printed and mailed out from there. The letters are now arriving from England and Europe at the rate of about 150 per week. We shall have to establish an office, staffed with at least two of our men, and competent secretaries, within the next two or three months.

Yes, PRAISE GOD!—the work is GROWING as never before!

About early December, I had a report that around 50 were attending regular Sabbath services in the Gladewater (Tex.) tabernacle. But by January 15, when Elder and Mrs. Marion McNair visited Pasadena during mid-winter vacation, the report was that around 70 were attending—and our own grade school with 19 pupils!

Frankly, I had not realized until two or three days ago how many were attending every Sabbath here in Pasadena. I assumed we have around 100 in regular attendance. But I am told by those who have counted a few times recently that *we are now having around 160 or 170 in attendance every Sabbath!* The Portland, Tacoma, and San Diego congregations are growing all the time—around 40 every Sabbath, now, at Portland, 35 at Tacoma, and 25 at San Diego. I understand there are some 30 or more just waiting to attend regularly, as soon as we can send a pastor, in the vicinity of George West or Alice, Texas. Several are waiting for a pastor at Longmont, Colorado.

Purpose of Churches

Brethren, if we are to continue to grow—and to grow SPIRITUALLY as well as in numbers—we must remember that the PURPOSE of the Church is, first, to GO INTO ALL THE WORLD and preach Christ's GOSPEL. The FIRST commission to the Church is just that. Anyone who looks on that Great Commission of Christ as "Armstrong's private work" is just not a member of GOD'S Church. Anyone who does not have his whole heart in that work IS NOT A MEMBER OF GOD'S TRUE CHURCH, and has no right whatsoever to attend or fellowship in any of its local congregations. The very

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Your Part in God's Work

Hundreds of you brethren have asked about this question. As Christ's own gospel now starts around the world, the true answer becomes vitally important! You must KNOW—and ACT!

by Roderick C. Meredith

IS YOUR life literally filled with a dynamic, pulsating, driving PURPOSE? If not, WHY?

Your life *should be* so packed with interest and activity that you begrudge even the few hours which you necessarily must spend in bed asleep. Is your life that *exciting*? Is it full of that kind of *challenge*?

Whether you realize it or not, your DESTINY has been to be placed as a member of the most important *team* on earth! This *team* has the *most important job on earth to do*. Every single member is VITALLY needed! On offense and on defense, every position on this team is *important*.

There should NEVER be any "bench warmers" on this team. The rule book says that *every member must be an ACTIVE participant in the struggle*. Any member who lags too far behind or who quits will be *dropped* from the team roster. Victory *must* be achieved at all costs!

Christ's Body

The *body* of Jesus Christ is the "team" described.

The apostle Paul told the saints at Corinth, "Now ye are the *body* of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:27). Except in Spirit, Jesus is not here on earth any more. The work He began *must* be carried on by others as *His human instruments*.

Jesus committed His work to His church to carry on. That is why Paul calls the church Christ's "body." It is the *organism* through which Christ can now carry out His work. To do this tremendous job, Christ's church must be totally *consecrated* to its calling. It must work with *dynamic ZEAL* and rely with implicit *faith* in the POWER of God Himself to remove otherwise impassable barriers.

You and I did not *ask* to be called at this crucial time, brethren. This is *God's doing*. We in God's Church cannot pat ourselves on the back for having had our minds opened to so much of God's precious *truth*.

On the other hand, we *dare not* shirk the solemn *responsibility* which comes with this knowledge. God has *called* us to be members of Christ's body—the organism through which the work of the gospel *must* be accomplished.

When *you* were baptized, your old "self" was symbolically *buried* in a watery grave. You acknowledged that Christ *paid for you*, and you *gave* your very LIFE to Him. If you are really converted, then "ye are DEAD, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3).

You are no longer to think of your life, your time, and your talents as your *own* any more. Rather, you should regard them as *belonging to Jesus Christ*—who has bought and paid for your life with His perfect life. As the apostle Paul wrote, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:20).

Your body—your very *self*, then, should be given completely to God as an instrument through which He can work.

Have you ever thought of it that way? May God help you to do so if you ever intend to get into the kingdom of God! *You must prove your willingness to let God TOTALLY direct your life*.

Consider yourself, then, a member of Christ's *body*—a member of the most important *team* on earth.

Our Mission

In our day, Christ's church is called upon to *fulfill prophecy*. In describing the very *closing events* of this age just before His return, Jesus prophesied, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Mat. 24:14).

If we are Christ's church—His *body*, then we must yield ourselves completely to Him as instruments in carrying out this mission. In addition to this general commission, we must particularly warn *Israel* and other nations of their coming judgments for sin. And, when

necessary, we must raise up churches and "feed the flock" who are already converted.

In carrying out this world-wide mission, a great many different kinds of talent must be employed, and a great deal of *sacrifice* must be made by each and every member of Christ's church. Some must sacrifice by giving their entire time and lives to this work. Others must give part of their time to active service, and employ the rest of their time and talents in a manner which will aid further in carrying out the gospel.

Everyone in God's church must consider their part in the work of Christ as their highest calling—their *supreme PURPOSE in life*. Each must work, and study, and pray, and sacrifice *daily* to achieve this great purpose. The magnitude of this calling should *fill* every real Christian's life with a driving *purpose* and *zeal* in life.

Our *purpose* is to reach this ENTIRE EARTH with a vital message. It is the *only* message of real HOPE for a world which is on the verge of *total chaos*. Our mission is to act as Ambassadors—as representatives—of Christ, and to let Him use us in warning this world of approaching *doom*, and in telling them the *good news* of the world tomorrow.

If any member of Christ's body fails to bear his full share of the load, the accomplishment of this mission is impeded and delayed. If you are really in God's church and guided by His Spirit, you will recognize both the responsibility and the opportunity given you. How do you stack up to it? *Are you doing your full share?*

Important Jobs

As God opens more great DOORS for the proclaiming of His message, an increasing number of active positions in God's work continually open up. These must be filled by people who are *thoroughly trained* for whatever place they will fill, and who show by their fruits God has called them and that they are fully consecrated to serve Him.

As the radio stations now open up to

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*ministering to its members
 scattered abroad, and
 reporting on campus happenings
 at Ambassador College*

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reach all of India and China, it is even as Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Mat. 9:37). And the injunction to *pray* seems more important than ever: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (verse 38).

Yes, PRAY that God will provide the servants for His work! He *knows* the hearts of men—and He alone can *call* the ones with both the ability *and* the right spirit to fill positions in His work.

You brethren in God's church should realize that as God makes it possible for us to open up offices overseas, to have our own schools, perhaps later our own printing facilities, and other similar projects in conjunction with the gospel work, that we will be asking God to provide the *right* kind of trained and consecrated help.

As mentioned in a previous article, one great problem Mr. Armstrong has to face is the practice of some people who want to "bulldoze" their way into God's work when they are unqualified. Such an attitude and practice can only *bind* the gospel work. But on the other hand, if any of you brethren do have special talents, abilities, and experience which would fit you to take an active part in God's work as you see it developing, you should not be too backward about *asking* God that you might use those abilities if He sees fit.

Then, be sure to write us or contact us otherwise and let us know all about your background, training, experience, and what type of job you feel God may be calling you to perform.

Don't write with the attitude of *demanding* anything. Remember that God

always revealed to His ministers the need to appoint others to any duties in the gospel work. Ask God to show us His will. And *you* should be seeking *God's will* in this—not your own!

God *wants* us to develop our talents and abilities. We should constantly be studying, praying, growing, and overcoming *self* so that we may be prepared if God should call us to active service.

But at the same time, *don't get ahead of God*. His time may not yet be ready. We are commanded to "wait on the Lord" (Ps. 24:14).

God's Doing

The main thing all of us need to cultivate is a willingness to give ourselves completely as instruments for God to work through. We should hold back *nothing*.

God Himself is responsible for the gifts and talents we may possess. Notice the parable of the talents (Mat. 25:14-30). God gave talents "to every man according to his several ability" (verse 15). The Bible shows that God grants spiritual gifts and offices *always according to our natural abilities*. To give eminent spiritual gifts to persons incapable of properly exercising them would only lead to trouble.

Whatever your natural abilities and the place God has fitted you for, remember it is His doing. Glorify and serve God *zealously* in whatever capacity He makes possible at the time. And, according to the direction in which your natural talents lie, ask God to help you perfect them and make it possible for you to employ them actively in His service if He wills.

BEWARE lest you despise the opportunities for service God has made possible, and bog down and *bury* your talent in the sand. Notice in Jesus' parable

that it was the servant with only *one* talent who grew discouraged and lay down on the job.

Could this be *you*?

Different Gifts

In Romans 12:1-8, the apostle Paul exhorts the saints at Rome, "Present your bodies a *living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (verse 1). He goes on to instruct them not to become vain over any spiritual gifts, but to remember that it was all "according as *God* hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (verse 3).

Paul reminds them that they "are *one body* in Christ" (verse 5).

He then speaks of their various opportunities for service as *gifts*. *What are these opportunities for actively serving God?* Do we have these opportunities *today*?

Paul first mentions the gifts of *prophecy* and the *ministry*. These involve a special calling of God and special training such as all of God's prophets and apostles had. The average person in the church could not go back and prepare for such a position. But God has opened up Ambassador College in our day to provide the trained ministry needed in this world-wide gospel crusade by radio and the printing press. We should all *pray earnestly* that God would send here those whom *He* has called for His work.

Teaching is the next gift Paul mentions. As we begin to start our own schools, *converted* and *thoroughly qualified* teachers will be needed. As local churches are formed, elders who *understand* and can *teach* the Word of God will be needed. Paul was inspired to write Timothy, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop (or elder), he desireth a good work" (I Tim. 3:1). An elder must meet all the scriptural requirements, and prove himself worthy of this trust. He must be "apt to *teach*." But he may rejoice in being privileged to actively serve in the church of God.

The next gift mentioned in Romans 12 is that of *exhortation*. This is a gift particularly employed by the ministry, but also should be exercised by the local elders, teachers, and even brethren who should be "exhorting one another" to be faithful as we see the day of Christ's return approaching (Heb. 10:25).

All these gifts mentioned here fit into the same pattern as those described in I Corinthians 12. But in this particular chapter (Romans 12) Paul is describing these functions of service to explain *how* we may present our bodies a "living sacrifice" as He commanded in verse one. Real Christians, then, are to devote

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RADIO LOG

"The WORLD TOMORROW"

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

TO ALL OF EUROPE:
 RADIO LUXEMBOURG — 23:30
 Mondays, Greenwich time.

ABC NETWORK, TRANSCONTINENTAL—Every Sunday. Consult local newspaper radio schedules for time and station, or keep on hand the log printed in the January issue of *The PLAIN TRUTH*.

TO THE NATION & CANADA:
 XEG—1050 on dial, every night,
 8:30 P.M. Central Std. time.

Other stations at usual time.

Study the LAW!

The Old Covenant is abolished. Then why turn to the Old Testament to learn which LAWS we are to observe?

by Herman L. Hoeb

SINCE the old covenant is abolished, why refer to Exodus 20 to prove that the ten commandments are in force today?

And, why refer to Deuteronomy 16 to prove how we ought to observe the annual festivals? To Leviticus 27:30 to prove that tithing is one of God's laws for us today? And why use Deuteronomy 14 to enumerate which are the clean, healthful meats?

Yes, WHY?—since the old covenant is abolished!

The Usual Argument

It is a common assumption—accepted by the great majority of the Christian-professing world—that the Old Testament HAS NO AUTHORITY FOR US TODAY! The usual argument is as follows:

"The laws of the Old Testament are a part of the old covenant. They began with Moses. God never made the old covenant with Abraham; He made it only with the 'Jews' at Sinai. Besides that, Christ abolished the law and built a New Testament church."

You have heard this argument before. What is *wrong* with it?

First, did God's law begin at Sinai with the old covenant? Let's notice when it really commenced. The sabbath began at the close of the six days of physical re-creation—not in the days of Moses. God *hallowed* the seventh day. He made it holy time 2500 years before Moses! Read it in Genesis 2:3. It is *sin* to profane whatever God hallows or makes holy. The heathen—from their own historical records—knew of the sabbath long before the days of Abraham.

Another point of the law is "Thou shalt not commit adultery." How could it have been a "sin against God" for Joseph to commit adultery, if the ten commandments were not in existence prior to Moses? (Gen. 39:9).

Second, how could Abraham keep God's commandments, if they did not exist? (Gen. 26:5). The undeniable fact remains that it was *SIN* to break every one of the ten commandments before Moses.

Here is what most people don't realize. God's inexorable laws have been in active force from the beginning. The fact that God wrote them down on

tables of stone merely means that *God cataloged them for us*. Men write down laws of physics, chemistry, and mathematics in a book. They catalog these laws for ready reference, but their writing the natural laws does *not* originate them anymore than Newton's "law of gravity" brought gravity into being!

WE TURN TO EXODUS 20, not because the old covenant is binding, BUT BECAUSE IN THE OLD COVENANT IS FOUND THE ONLY PORTION OF SCRIPTURE WHERE ALL THE COMMANDMENTS ARE LISTED SYSTEMATICALLY. *Let's remember that!*

The ten commandments are not binding because they were written in stone, but because they are God's law from creation. Only in Exodus 20 do we have all the *points* of the law. James, the bishop of Jerusalem, quoted from Exodus 20 when he wanted to enumerate the points of "the law of liberty"—the ten commandments (James 2:10-11). *We are to follow James' example today* when quoting the commandments.

The Book of the Covenant

The same pitiful argument utilized against the ten commandments is repeated concerning God's statutes and judgments. As we read in the previous issue of *The GOOD NEWS*, the statutes and judgments of God were binding principles BEFORE Sinai (Exodus 18:16).

If they were not in force, how could God have told *Noah* BEFORE THE FLOOD that certain animals were "clean" and others "unclean"? (Gen. 7:2). If the statutes and the judgments began only when they were recorded in the book of the covenant by Moses, what right could God have in taking tithes of Abraham and Jacob 400 years earlier? (Genesis 14:20; 28:22).

Now consider this: Even though the distinction between clean and unclean meats was known to Noah, yet he did

not tell us which the clean are! WE COULD NOT KNOW unless they were later recorded for us. And we find that record in the statutes and judgments (Lev. 11 and Deut. 14) which God commanded Moses to write. No law written by Moses could *make* an animal unclean (unhealthful for food). Moses, under inspiration, merely codified the laws for us. Moses and the prophets "received the lively oracles TO GIVE TO US." (Acts 7:58).

Incorporated into the Bible

You will remember that the ten commandments, as originally given were written in tables of stone by the finger of God. The lesser laws were written as a civil code in the letters of the Hebrew alphabet by Moses in a book. How, then, did the ten commandments come to be written in a book today—the Bible?

Jesus said man shall live by "every word of God." God has committed His revelation of essential knowledge to us in the form of a book—the Bible. He therefore caused the old covenant with its commandments, statutes and judgments to be incorporated into the Bible so we would have a *systematic form* of His laws. We refer to the Old Testament for God's laws—not BECAUSE they are a part of the old covenant, which is no longer in force—BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE A PART OF THE BIBLE, the very Word of God.

In the New Testament Paul quoted twice from the book of the law of Moses (Deut. 25:4) to prove his doctrines (I Cor. 9:9 and I Tim. 5:18). Jesus used the old covenant as the basis for His New Testament teaching in Matthew 5:17-48. Jesus recognized that the old covenant was the *only* portion of scripture where God's laws were systematically arranged. Instead of destroying God's law, he came "to magnify it and make it honorable" (Isaiah 42:21). He said: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me . . ." (John 5:46). In place of the letter of the law Jesus restored its spiritual principles—as it was in the BEGINNING! Jesus and the New Testament church constantly referred to the Old Testament as FINAL AUTHORITY. Let us do the same TODAY!

NOTICE

There was no February issue of *The GOOD NEWS*

Question Box

Your questions answered in these columns! Your opportunity to have discussed those problems pertaining directly to members of God's church.

What Booklets Do We Publish?

Perhaps you have recently been approached by one of your relatives or interested friends about your belief and you found it difficult to answer the questions. Then here is the solution for you!

There are seventeen booklets now being published, plus the "Sacred Calendar" that was printed for the first time last year. If you have not received every one of these, be sure to write for them immediately. Here they are.

The amazing booklet "United States in Prophecy" is now being published in a European edition—"The United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy." It will reveal up-to-date facts about our national identity, and give you the key to dozens of Old Testament prophecies for today.

You may have been confronted by a question about your baptism. Did you explain it convincingly from the Bible? There are many man-made ideas about baptism—sprinkling, pouring, immersion into a church denomination—that you need to be familiar with. The scriptural answer to these and other arguments are presented in the pamphlet "All about Water Baptism." Another related problem is the contention that Christians ought to be baptized by fire! Read the clear explanation to this doctrine in "Baptism by Fire."

A fact that is becoming increasingly known to people in general is the pagan origin of Christmas and Easter. Can you explain to your friends why God forbids us to embrace these pagan holidays? Can you prove how these holidays were cleverly substituted for the annual holy days God has ordained? The astounding origin and history of these holidays are given in the pamphlets "Christmas" and "Easter."

What about the Saturday-Sabbath question? You, of course, understand which day is the Sabbath, but can you thoroughly answer the arguments of Sunday-observers? Many of their arguments are simply explained in the booklet "Which Day Is the Sabbath of the New Testament?" But is the day we call Saturday the same day God sanctified for man in the Genesis account of creation? It has been a long time since creation; perhaps time has been lost? Read the seven absolute proofs that

time has *not* been lost in the booklet "Has Time Been Lost?" The Sabbath was given as a sign to God's people.

If it is a sign of obedience, what is the "Mark of the Beast"? Write for this booklet, too, and see!

It is a universal assumption that Christ's resurrection was on Sunday, and from that supposition it is argued that Sunday is the "Christian Sabbath." Can you explain the true facts about the resurrection? "The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday" is a MUST on your reading list.

Have the people who lived in past ages been lost because they didn't know of Christ's sacrifice for sin? What of the millions living today who have heard the name of Christ but are not believers? Are they doomed? Have you worried about your relatives who have died "unsaved"? The answer to these questions is given in the free booklet "Predestination."

Have you been asked to take communion Sunday morning? The truth about the communion service is given in "When and How Often Should We Observe the Lord's Supper?"

The book of Revelation is supposed to be the book that no one can understand. "The Key to the Book of Revelation" presents you with that key that will unlock the real meaning.

Two pamphlets are available on faith. "What is Faith?" and "What Kind of Faith is Required for Salvation?" Answers to prayers for healing depend on faith. Write for these two booklets, if you have not already done so, and also for the pamphlet "Does God Heal Today?"

Where did Lazarus go when he died? Is the rich man burning in hell today? The real meaning of this much-misunderstood account is given in "Lazarus and the Rich Man" now in booklet form. Another article which appeared in a past issue of the PLAIN TRUTH, "Divorce and Remarriage," is now off the press.

Be sure to write immediately for any of these attractive free booklets that you may not have already received. You NEED them for your personal study to help you understand the Bible.

Also, be sure to write for any back issues of "The PLAIN TRUTH" which you are lacking.

Local Assemblies?

(Continued from page 2)

FIRST purpose, then, of each local congregation is the FIRST purpose of God's Church as a whole—to encourage, pray for, hear reports about, and help in—in whatever manner may be possible—the great work of God of preaching and publishing the true GOSPEL to the world.

After that comes the SECOND commission Christ gave His Church—"FEED THE FLOCK." For this purpose, GOD has set some in His Church, first, apostles, then preachers, and then teachers, to be HIS instruments in feeding the local flocks each Sabbath.

No Elections or Politics

Yes, it is GOD who has set apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers in His Church. The call must come from GOD. These men are merely HIS INSTRUMENTS. He trains them and prepares them. And WHY? To FEED the Church of God, as Paul told the elders at Ephesus (Acts 20). "For the PERFECTING of the saints," writes Paul in Eph. 4:12-13; "for the WORK of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, TILL we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

And HOW does God instruct HIS ministers to preach? Does He say, "Don't tell them their sins"? Does God say, as I know one man is represented to believe, "You are a sinner yourself, so you can't tell others their sins—instead, show love by ENCOURAGING them in their sins"?

God's Command

By your life, He does not! God commands, "CRY ALOUD, and SPARE NOT, and SHOW MY PEOPLE THEIR SINS."

God's instruction to ministers of local churches is this:

"I charge thee therefore before God . . . PREACH THE WORD; keep at it in season, out of season; REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT with all patience and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:1-2). He said the time would come when some in congregations ministered by GOD'S TRUE MINISTERS will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers—turning away their ears from the TRUTH."

Brethren, do you realize what that means? In God's true Church GOD has set HIS ministers in charge. He has given them AUTHORITY. He has authorized them to bind and to loose. He has told them to RULE—to preach the WORD which, like a sharp two-edged

sword cuts both ways—is profitable for correction, reproof, instruction. But this shows the people would try to SELECT THEIR OWN pastor—“heap to themselves teachers.” Not the teachers God set over them—those of THEIR choosing, who will show their kind of perverted “love” by turning them away from the TRUTH, pleasing them with what they want to hear!

God's true ministers *will never do that!*

Should the brethren HATE God's minister when he properly uses God's Word, and declares it boldly? If he does this, God will CHASTEN many in the congregation thru him.

True, God says, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.”

What Is Love?

But what is GOD's kind of LOVE in this regard? “For whom the Lord LOVETH He chasteneth” (Heb. 12:6). “My son, despise NOT thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him,” says God (verse 5). “If ye are without chastisement . . . then are ye bastards, and not sons.” (Verse 8.)

What about those few disgruntled, unhappy and rebellious ones who twist the truth into believing a preacher shows LOVE by condoning them in their sins? “For this is the LOVE of GOD, that we keep His commandments” (I John 5:3). And we break one of God's commandments when we live in adultery. And when we STEAL from God by embezzling HIS TITHE, we break another! There are TEN Commandments—not just one about the Sabbath!

God has given instruction in HIS WORD as to how His ministers whom He has set in authority shall deal with those who have thus departed from HIS LOVE, and who stir up dissension among brethren.

Authority to Act!

We learn by experience. In past years your Pastor tried to show love by not acting drastically or harshly with such people. God has punished him, and brought him to see how such people MUST be dealt with, for a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. And hereafter God's ministers will demonstrate IN POWER, if necessary, the authority God has given, and carry out His instructions, that the love and the spiritual growth of THE MANY shall not be perverted and destroyed by FEW!

If, in any local church, one member, or a few, offend and endanger the spiritual health of the whole body, Jesus' teaching is to “CUT IT OUT,” for it's better to enter into the Kingdom with

one arm, or one foot, than to perish in gehenna fire!

In this way, it shall be possible in the future for ALL the membership to be FILLED with the true LOVE and the JOY of God the Father—and, rejoicing together, we may PRESS FORWARD toward the mark for the prize of the HIGH CALLING of God in Christ Jesus!

Your Part in God's Work

(Continued from page 4)

their very lives as a living sacrifice in zealously exercising these gifts. These are the ways in which we can be active instruments in God's hands.

Now we come to another most important gift. It is also a precious opportunity for active service to God. It is a gift which many of you brethren have been failing to exercise when you could! It is a VITAL gift. It MUST be understood and zealously employed if we are to continue to be God's instruments in carrying His message to all the world!

The Neglected Gift

You brethren may not realize it, but even after we are converted most of us still have a wrong sense of values. This is replaced only gradually by God's standard. We have to study and to be taught God's Word for a long time before we come to have the mind of Christ in viewing material objects and circumstances.

That is precisely why most of us have not understood and leaped at the chance to exercise the next gift mentioned in Romans 12.

Paul commands: “He that GIVETH, let him do it with simplicity” (verse 8). All modern translations show that “simplicity” should be translated liberality.

Yes, God inspired the apostle Paul to write that GIVING was a definite part of the spiritual ministry. He describes this opportunity for service as a “gift” from God. The giver, Paul says, is to be LIBERAL.

Why haven't most of you ever thought of it in this light before?

HERE'S WHY! The America we have all grown up in has been described as “the most materialistic nation on earth.” In this capitalistic society, we have learned to lust for money and the material things money will buy. We almost unconsciously look with suspicion on any religions or charitable enterprise that calls on us to contribute, but doesn't offer an immediate material result in return.

Whether you realize it or not, money—and the material things it will buy—has become the GOD of most Americans. Many visitors from foreign nations notice this and remark about it.

And GOD knows it too! In Malachi 3:6-12, God speaks to the “sons of Jacob”—to America and Britain today—to you! “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes AND OFFERINGS” (verse 8).

Tragic as it seems, brethren, many of you, who have actually been baptized and supposedly converted, changed, and filled with God's Holy Spirit, have been FAILING to heed this solemn warning to modern Israel! Some of you have failed to pay your full tithe regularly to the only work which is carrying Christ's message to the world.

Many of you have failed to give offerings according as God has blessed you. You have failed to obey God's command to give LIBERALLY.

Because of human tendency to worship money and regard it as your “security,” many have failed to exercise their God-given “gift” of GIVING generously of their perishable material treasure that God's work might reach all of suffering humanity. You just haven't thought of this function as a special “gift”—a special opportunity and responsibility to actively serve God.

Should We Apologize?

Should God's ministers have to apologize for the necessity of telling you these vital truths? Should we feel like scoundrels for showing you what God says about the use you should make of your material wealth? Should we feel guilty?

Just who is GUILTY?

Frankly, brethren, although Mr. Armstrong knows he has to, he hates to have to write urgent co-worker letters asking for money for God's work.

But should he get out of the ministry to make money? Would this help God's work?

All of you brethren should well know by the “fruits” that God has called Mr. Armstrong to a job in this work which is growing so big it is more than he can humanly take care of. But who has God called to help provide the money which is so necessary in carrying out His work?

As God's work now reaches out to Europe, India, China and other areas with increasing power, Mr. Armstrong and all of God's servants in this work have much more to do than can humanly be accomplished. We feel whipped and beaten at times by the staggering load of work which we face each day. We have to ask God for more strength and faith to carry our load.

But beloved brethren, *we CANNOT carry your load as well!*

You must understand *your part* in exercising the "gift" of *giving* and the other gifts and functions you may perform in God's church. And you must ACT with *zeal* and *faith!*

Your Part

Each of you brethren should assess your talents, experience, and capabilities to determine how to best serve your God and Creator in carrying out the great commission He has given His church in the closing days of this age. And, of course, you must study and pray for God's guidance in every way.

If you feel God has prepared you and is calling you to some service as an elder, teacher, deacon, or some similar function in His church, then pray about it earnestly and prepare yourself further that your "fruits" will be evident to God's servants. As we have pointed out, you may have to "wait on the Lord" until God opens up the way.

But don't grow discouraged. Remember that *God* is the one directing His work, and in His *perfect wisdom* He knows what is best for the development of *your character*—and for the furtherance of *His work*. So seek *God's will*—not your own.

However, at *all times* perform *diligently* and *zealously* those functions which you can in God's work. God may be using your zeal in those duties as a gauge of what you *could* do if a greater responsibility were placed on your shoulders. Jesus said, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10).

So be cognizant of the *extreme importance* of exercising the gift of GIVING.

As God's work goes to foreign lands, the increase in expenses of conducting this work has leaped. But God has

chosen to start His work in the *wealthiest nation on earth*.

It is our solemn RESPONSIBILITY to shoulder most of the financial burden of proclaiming God's message to all nations. But it is also our great *privilege*, if we will only understand Jesus' words, "It is more blessed to GIVE than to receive" (Acts 20:35). He set the example by giving His very *life* for you and me.

Here's How

But we are to present our bodies as a "living sacrifice." One way some of our more zealous brethren have *glorified* God in exercising the gift of *giving* is this: Realizing that their tithes and offerings were a most important part of their active service to God, they have sought to work extra hours or to get extra part-time work, and have in every *right and honest* way possible sought to employ their talents and abilities to *earn more money to put into the work of God!*

May God bless them for it!

Carnal men are always scheming to make more money in every way possible. They will miss sleep, meals, and drive themselves on because they worship *Mammon*.

How many Christians will show the same ZEAL in earning money to give to *Christ?*

Will YOU?

COMING NEXT ISSUE!

Beginning with the April number, we start publication of a series of articles on foods—with helpful, healthful recipes.

This is plain talk, brethren, but the time has come when those of you who are in God's own church should be told these things. God's servants here in Pasadena are doing our best to give ourselves *completely* to God in carrying out our part in His growing work. *Now all of you must do the same!*

We cannot count on outsiders or even our unconverted co-workers to put forth this kind of effort. But you converted brethren should have the *Spirit* and *power* of God to inspire you to shoulder more of the load!

Mr. Armstrong has spent many sleepless nights in concern and in earnest prayer during the seemingly impossible financial struggles God's work has gone through. He has forced himself to write co-worker letters when he wished and prayed that it wouldn't be necessary. And God has *always* delivered His work!

But as this age draws to a close and God's work suddenly expands to the ends of the earth, *we must have more of you brethren with your whole HEARTS in this work.*

Our Lord and Master said, "Where your *treasure* is, there will your *heart* be also" (Mat. 6:21).

God grant that each of you will put your whole *mind* and *heart* into God's service, and present your *bodies* a "living sacrifice" to Him in every way. Earnestly seek how you may best serve God in a more active manner and be an instrument He can use.

Neglect not the gift of GIVING. It is *vital* at this time. Take this as *your* opportunity and responsibility in God's work. Seek to exercise it more effectively. Go to *extra effort* and *sacrifice* for Christ! *There is no greater purpose in life.*

Hear, and *understand*, and ACT, that you may be worthy of Jesus' words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

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