

The Good News

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THE CHURCH OF GOD

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AN OPEN LETTER *to our newly begotten brethren recently baptized*

by Herbert W. Armstrong

GREETINGS! newly baptized Brethren in Christ Jesus:
This year again there is joy and rejoicing among the angels in heaven over your repentance and having been begotten to a lively hope as *children of God* thru Jesus Christ our Lord!

And there is new joy in the hearts of ALL our true brethren and co-workers in Christ over your recent conversion from the desires and will of the flesh and the ways and customs of the world, to the government of God in your life now, that you may have reward in His Kingdom at the coming of Christ, in the World Tomorrow!

You will Meet Trials

You have entered upon a new life—a life of great happiness and joy—a life to continue FOREVER—yet, in this present evil world it will not be an easy life.

As a matter of fact you have left behind the "easy way"—the popular, broad road that leads to destruction. You have passed the cross-roads and turned off onto the narrow, rutty, bumpy, rocky and HARD and DIFFICULT road which very few people in this world ever are willing to enter—but which leads to SUCCESS, to USEFULNESS, to HAPPINESS, JOY, and ETERNAL LIFE.

It leads to rewards—not of idleness and ease, but to usefulness and service and accomplishment and success—so great that I know your mind can't possibly grasp it, now. BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY THE PRICE!

It won't come easy! All your temptations, trials, persecutions and hardships will come from *other people*—or from the devil—or from the consequences of sin, which means violations of God's laws and ways. You must remember you still have to live IN a world organized and living in disregard of God's laws—a world governed by the sway of Satan, and according to the impulses of pride and vanity, the lusts of the flesh, and the greed and tempers of human nature. If you were still OF this world, the world would love its own. But because you have renounced this world and its ways, and are no longer OF it, the world will hate you, persecute you, turn against you, even as it hated and persecuted your Saviour before you.

Why You Must Suffer

"My PEACE I give unto you . . . that my JOY might remain in you, and that your joy might be full," said Jesus. "These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have PEACE. In

the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

You will meet many afflictions—trials, tests, troubles—even more than before. But, if you trust in Him, the Eternal will deliver you out of them ALL (Psalm 34:19). ALL who will live Godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution (II Tim. 3:12).

But WHY? Because God has called you to surrender your life to HIM—to GIVE your life into HIS HANDS—that He may transform you into a perfect, holy, righteous CHARACTER. God is CREATOR! And now, with your consent, according to your own free will, you have placed yourself in His Hands to CHANGE you—to CREATE out of you the Supreme Masterpiece of all His Creation!

What Is Character?

And CHARACTER means SELF-DIRECTION, WITH GOD'S HELP, INTO GOD'S WAY OF LIFE. You'll find it is a new and different way of life from the way you have lived up to now. It means SELF-DENIAL! It means SELF-DISCIPLINE! It means resisting all that is evil or wrong in your nature. It means *breaking up wrong habits*—rooting them out of your life—and instilling into your life

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scattered abroad

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NEW habits—and making these newer right ways fixed HABIT.

This is not easy. It takes WILL POWER. It requires DETERMINATION.

Besides all this, God will permit trials and tests to come upon you—severe problems. He will permit CIRCUMSTANCES to drive you to HIM for HELP—for deliverance! You may soon think no one in the world is troubled like you are. You will begin to wonder why you have greater trouble to face than anyone else on earth—not realizing that all other real Christians are going thru the same tests! Perhaps closest relatives will turn against you, probably because of the Word of God—the TRUTH you have embraced and started to live.

But, if you learn the lesson of FAITH—and if you have PATIENCE—you may KNOW that you will be delivered out of every trouble that comes up. God has PROMISED to deliver you from every trial—if you obey and trust Him. You see, you are now His very own child—actually begotten of Him just as much as you were begotten of your human father. When God gave you the precious gift of His Holy Spirit—placed His Spirit within you to renew your mind, give you a sounder, more understanding mind, fill you with His love, faith, patience, power, goodness—His own character. In short, you became an actual begotten SON—or daughter—of GOD. Not merely a creature or being He created—but His very own child, actually begotten of Him by His seed, so to speak—His SPIRIT, entering within you. He is now your FATHER! Not figuratively, but actually—REALLY!

Now you can go to Him just as any child can go to his father, for counsel

and advice, for wisdom, for direction, for HELP in any time of need. Would a good human father deny his own child any good thing the child might really need? Neither will your heavenly Father deny you anything that is really for your good. If a human father heard the screams of his child, ran and found his child imprisoned in a burning building, would he break inside and rescue his child from danger? Your heavenly Father has given you His written PROMISE to deliver you from every danger, trouble, or trial—if you call on Him, obey Him and RELY on Him!

Since you are now a real begotten child of God—now one of the FAMILY of God, which is His true Church—you are one of His heirs. Angels are not sons, but servants. And a servant is not an heir like a son. You are now a co-heir with Christ, to inherit, with Him, ALL THINGS—eternal life, this earth as an everlasting possession, eternal happiness and joy!

Think of what that means!

But we are now only heirs—only begotten sons. And just as it was necessary for us to grow physically from the time we were begotten in our mothers' wombs until we developed ready to be born, finally separated from the dependence on the mother for nourishment and sustenance, and coming into individual and separate existence, so the begotten spiritual infant must grow and develop spiritually, being fed the spiritual food, the Word of God, by the Mother of us all, the true Church, until, at the com-

ing of Christ we shall be CHANGED, finally BORN of God, to have eternal life inherent in ourselves, and to be actual INHERITORS and POSSESSORS of the wonderful Kingdom of God!

In order to GROW in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord (II Peter 3:18); in order to develop spiritually and overcome, and have perfected in you the CHARACTER of God ready to be fully BORN of God, you must do two things daily without fail!

You must not only read, but eagerly, earnestly STUDY the Word of God to learn how to live—you must live according to God's teachings in His Bible—you must make it your guide for everything you do. In this way, God talks to you!

But you must also talk to Him! You must go to a private place, alone with God, and have long talks with Him—yes, EVERY DAY! Unburden your heart to Him. Take all your problems, your interests, your plans, your troubles to Him. Talk over everything with Him, continually. Then, even when going about your work—when walking down the street—when driving your car, or wherever you are or whatever you do, talk with God as you work, or as you drive or walk along. Go to a private place, and kneel in prayer (on both knees) as often as you can, and at least once every day. But talk with God often in between. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!

Keep close to Him. You can't afford to be without the SECURITY of His constant guidance and protection.

Question Box

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

Should You Spend Your Second Tithe at Home?

If for some unforeseen circumstance you are unable to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, what should you do with your second tithe? Many that we have met on the baptizing tours, and others by letters, have asked about this problem.

First, let us understand the purpose of the second tithe. God, in His Word, commands us to assemble at His set feasts. In order to make our attendance possible, God ordained that we set aside a second tithe to cover expense to and from the festival (Deut. 14:23-26; 16:13-15).

In ancient times, when travel expenses were of little consequence, the tithe was used to cover food expenses primarily. But today, since the purpose

of the second tithe is to enable us to attend the festivals, much more of it has to be spent for transportation than for food.

Now let us notice where the second tithe was to be spent. "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there . . . that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee: then shalt thou turn it into money . . . and shalt GO unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose . . . and thou shalt eat (Please continue on page 10)

Whose Opinion Counts?

We have all been reared with the modern concept that in religious matters a man should be governed primarily by what HE thinks. Is this God's way?

by Roderick C. Meredith

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

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

As a minister of Jesus Christ, I was trying to show him—*not my will*—but GOD'S will. I was proving my points right out of God's word. I had mentioned the opinion and belief of Mr. Armstrong to show that a more experienced servant of the true God was persuaded of this same truth.

Was Mr. Brown impressed?

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

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

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

Authority of Ministers

In Matthew 16:15-20, we read the account of Christ bestowing on Peter the “keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Nearly all commentaries agree that the principal meaning of these “keys” includes the *way* of salvation which the apostles were to proclaim to the world. Based on the principles of this *way*, the apostles, through whom Christ *governs* His Church, were given authority to make decisions which would be bound in heaven. They could “bind,” or *forbid* certain things; and they had authority to “loose,” or *permit* certain things. In other words, they were given the *authority* to make *binding* decisions—based on God's word and the “keys” of salvation they had received. These decisions involved *permitting* or *forbidding* certain things—defining what is *right* and *wrong*!

Matthew 18:15-20 clearly shows that this authority was conferred on *all* the apostles—not just Peter. They were all with Jesus for over three years, learning from Him the *way* of salvation so they could preach it to the world.

Jesus had shown them in dozens of places that *all* decisions must be conformed to God's will and His *law* (Matt. 5:17-19). In their judgments, they were to follow Christ's example when He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek *not mine own will*, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30).

God's true ministers will be yielded and submissive to *God's* will. They will seek His will in diligent study and earnest prayer. They will confer with other true ministers and Bible scholars for, “in multitude of counsellors there is safety (Pro. 11:14). In every way, they will seek God's will and His guidance through the Holy Spirit.

But when God's true servants do make a decision based on His word, *it is to be respected*, for it is *bound in heaven*. You are not showing respect to the man and his “opinion,” but to the *office* in which God has placed His ministers, and by which *Christ rules His Church*.

When the Israelites refused to hearken to God's servant Samuel, God said, “. . . they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected ME, that I should not reign over them” (I Sam. 8:7). If you take the decisions of God's ministers lightly, *you are disrespecting God Himself*!

Be Sure of Ministers

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

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

Notice that Jesus went on to say (Matt. 7:21-23) that many would *pro-*

fess to do good works in His name, but He told them, “depart from me, ye that work *iniquity*,” or “lawlessness.” The word *iniquity* is more correctly translated LAWLESSNESS. Jesus was showing that *professing* ministers who break God's law *are not His ministers* at all! “I *never* knew you,” Jesus will tell them. And God's word shows that these law-breaking ministers never really knew Christ either (I John 2:4).

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

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

Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit, “will guide you *into* all truth” (John 16:13). *Spiritual change, growth, and development* is one of the important signs that a person is really guided by God's Spirit. *No man* gains *all* of God's truth at once. We must all *grow* in knowledge. Some churches and some ministers have known a portion of God's truth. But when they became *unwilling* to *grow* into more truth through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they soon began to twist and pervert what little truth they had, and to *spiritually rot away and die*!

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

God will reveal to you who His true ministers are if you study, pray, and look at their fruits. Once you know, should you respect them and the *office* in which *God has set them*?

Yes, you should!

God's Responsibility

Once God has *revealed* to you by the “fruits” who His true servants are, you should recognize the responsibilities and duties which God has given them. When a matter of church government or policy comes up, realize that

they have the *authority* to decide the issue.

They do *not* have the right to exercise that authority according to their own *human reason*. Jesus Christ is the *living HEAD* of the *true Church* of God—the body of Christ (Col. 1:18). When He was instructing the disciples on how to exercise their authority to enforce church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20), He said that if two or more of them would agree on anything, God would *bind* it in heaven. "For," Jesus said, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Christ himself will in Spirit be with and *guide* His servants in making right decisions. These words of His have *meaning!* Jesus said that He *would* guide His servants in directing the Church. He said that they *should* make decisions—based on *God's revealed will* and *guided by His Spirit*. These decisions were to include church *discipline* and what is to be "bound" or "loosed"—defining what is *permitted* or *forbidden* to God's people by "RIGHTLY dividing the word of truth."

Christ Himself—the Head of the Church—has *promised* to guide His ministers in directing the Church. Their decisions, then, will also be *God's* decisions. They are *BINDING* on God's Church. His *true Church* will be *OBEDIENT!* It is government *by God, through* His servants.

It is God's *RESPONSIBILITY* to chasten His Servants if they abuse their authority. *YOU can't read their hearts*. But God *CAN!* Their authority came from *Him*, not from some "board" of men. God "sets" or *appoints* the true ministers and teachers to guide and rule His Church (I Cor. 12:28). He *alone* has the power to remove them from office. He can do it by circumstances, by affliction—by *DEATH* if need be!

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

Your Part

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

In order to recognize perverse teachings, and in order to "grow in grace and knowledge," you need to *pray* and to *study* God's word continually. If you do this intelligently you will never be

deceived. Remember the important *test* Christ gave was to examine the "fruits" in a minister's life and work. A *false* minister simply *cannot* produce the fruits—people converted in *obedience* to God's law and His way.

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

A good example is the Bereans whom Paul commended because "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). They respectfully listened with open and *ready* minds. Then they *searched* the scriptures to prove *whether those things were so*.

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

Then you need to "*study* to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). The more you *study*, the more you will understand and agree with the instructions of God's *true* servants.

"*Prove* all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21). But *prove* it by the *Bible*—NOT by what you *think*, or *what some denomination teaches!* Remember Jesus said, "Thy *WORD* is *TRUTH*" (John 17:17).

In all your study, however, you should keep an *attitude of respect* for what God's ministers have said. You shouldn't go to the Bible with the idea of *refuting* what they have taught, or of *justifying* your own ideas. But search the scriptures (Acts 17:11) whether *those things* be so—the *things God's servants have taught*.

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

Unity in the Church

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

Many of you, having been disillusioned by false ministers, have come to feel that you could place no reliance on anyone or anything except yourself. You have been in the habit of studying the Bible and accepting *your* conclusion as final. It was between you and God alone. "Me and God," said the German

Kaiser. That is the way some of you have felt and acted—perhaps without realizing it.

But *should* you be an "independent"?

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

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

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

The apostle Paul commands us to be humble, "Endeavoring to keep the *unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Some ministers quote this text to persuade their congregation to blindly follow them in a *false* unity, NOT of the Spirit. The *unity of God's Spirit* is that mutual harmony and love which it produces because we will all be seeking *God's will*. It is *not* a "unity" based on *man's reasoning* swayed by the devil!

God gave some individuals positions of preaching and teaching, "*Till* we all come into the unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:12-13). His ministers are *responsible* for teaching and guiding the flock in the *right* way as God's Spirit reveals *until* they come into the "unity of the faith."

We are all still human and have a lot of *growing* to do. We won't all see eye to eye on every point of doctrine at first. God's children are "knit together"—not in doctrine—but "in *LOVE*" (Col. 2:2).

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

The Final Authority

In Hebrews 13:17, Paul gives an inspired command to, "*Obey* them that have the rule over you, and *submit yourselves*: for they watch for your souls, as *they that must give account*, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Here, and in verse seven, God is commanding *obedience* to His Ministers. It is *they* who "must give account." They are *responsible* for teaching you the *truth*. When there is a doubt as to the meaning of a scripture, or when there is a Church policy to be decided upon, God's ministers are given the *AUTHORITY* (Please continue on page 12)

Prove God's CALENDAR Correct!

Prove all things! God commands us to! Against what will we check the NEW MOON dates of God's Sacred Calendar to be certain they are correct?

by Kenneth C. Herrmann

ALMANAC DATES for the new moon sometimes disagree with those on the Sacred Calendar. Here is a point that has in years past caused some church members to become upset, to begin to stumble.

One member will look for the first faint crescent of the new moon in our western sky and actually see this "new moon" a day or two *ahead of the date divinely appointed* as indicated on our Sacred Calendar. Another will look on the Roman Calendar or in an almanac.

Are these individuals justified in being skeptical of our work in publishing this calendar? Or have they failed to read the instructions that go with it?

God-Given Oracles

How did the men of Berea prove the words of Paul and Silas? First—and this is important—"they listened with all readiness of mind." They paid close attention to the instructions given. Then, they "searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so."

Again and again they compared with God's Word to see if the testimony of those men were true. The Scriptures were the standard against which the testimony of Paul and Silas would stand or fall.

Without such a standard to compare with, any attempt to prove a thing becomes futile, subject to all the weakness and vanity of human nature and subject to human misinterpretation. Think for a moment! How would you prove that a rug you bought was 9 by 12 feet? You would need a ruler, a standard to measure by. How would you know the ruler to be correct? The final word on the matter would come from the Bureau of Standards in Washington which keeps masters on hand for every weight or measurement.

Now how will you check the new moons? Are you certain the first day of the month is in the correct place or should it be a day or two earlier? Where is the master, the standard to go by?

Here is the answer! What advantage did Paul have being a Jew? "Unto them [the Jews] were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1, 2). Oracles are communications from God. These must be our final authority in the problem with regard to new moon dates. The

question now arises, where is the oracle which will solve the problem of new moon dates? Is the Jewish calendar such an oracle?

Who gave the Jewish people their calendar? Suppose you found it to be the *same Person* who preached for 3½ years, chose 12 disciples to be apostles and then gave His life on the cross, to be resurrected three days later. Would you be willing to hear Him?

Notice Stephen's testimony to the High Priest concerning Moses and Christ, "This is he [Moses], that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel [or messenger—Christ] which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:38).

How to Prove It

Now consider this:

The One who became Jesus Christ spoke to Moses and Aaron (not to the entire congregation) saying, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." These two men were to instruct the people to use this Sacred Calendar.

God gave the Calendar. *Man* is to use it. Is man to stand in judgment of God as to whether this divine communication, this oracle, is proper or not? Hardly.

The knowledge of the inner working of the Calendar was retained by God's appointed physical priesthood until the year 360 A.D. In that year the Jewish leaders published the information for all to know, so the broken and scattered Jewish nation (and Christians as well) would be able to continue the observance of God's Feast Days *in accordance with the new moons as calculated from Jerusalem*.

Jerusalem was always the point from which the new moons were observed and sanctified. It was the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, that determined when the new moon was apparent. And it was *their responsibility* to notify the Jewish communities of the beginning of the months.

However, by 360 A.D. when oppression and persecution threatened the continued existence of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leaders took an extraordinary

step to allow the scattered Jews to keep the new moons, festivals and Holy Days always at the same time. They then made public the system of calendar computations that hitherto had been an apparently guarded secret of the priesthood.

Thus, all Jews (and Christians) throughout the world could know when the new moon would occur according to Jerusalem time and consequently they could celebrate the same day all over the earth in unity.

It should be obvious now how to prove all things. Check them against the Oracles of God. What are these Oracles preserved by God through the Jewish people? Three: The Scriptures, The Sabbath, and The Calendar.

It was God's prerogative to give these communications and commands. It was God's responsibility to see that they were preserved down to our time. It was God's judgment that a stiffnecked, rebellious, unchanging Jewish people should be given the assignment to preserve His Calendar, His Sabbath, His Scripture. With God behind them you may be sure that they carried out this task.

It is our responsibility as God's people to search out these Oracles, to study and obey them.

Do the Jews Obey?

The matter of whether the Jews have obeyed these Scriptures, rested on this Sabbath, kept the correct days in the correct manner on this Calendar, is an entirely different question.

There is no need to follow the Jews in their rebellion. Stephen continues, "Our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt." In rejecting Moses, they rejected Christ whom he represented.

If you reject Moses today, if you reject the Oracles given through Moses, you also reject the One who sent him. The overwhelming majority of those of you who read this had ancestors who did reject Moses and Christ as their leaders and were condemned to die in the wilderness.

The real reason now becomes apparent why it is so hard for us to turn our hearts and minds to the true way that

God has given to us. We have inherited this same stiffnecked rebellious nature. Why not get back to the truth and then remain firm in it.

We Answer the Questions

Doesn't the faint crescent of the new moon become visible at an earlier time to the observer in California than to an observer in Jerusalem?

Yes, it does and for a number of reasons.

Mainly that the day travels from east to west across the globe. A day starts on the eastern coast of China or Australia (or even earlier with the islands just to the west of the International Date Line). It requires 24 hours to make a complete circuit arriving once more at the International Date Line. The moment of sunset thus travels westward across the earth. It would occur in Jerusalem 10 hours earlier than in California, which is 10,000 miles farther west.

This 10 hour difference would allow the moon to move 5 degrees eastward through the background of stars away from the sun's position. The crescent of the new moon could thus be seen one day earlier by California observers about 40 per cent of the time. What are God's instructions? If the people of Jerusalem, where God's permanent headquarters are to be, cannot see this crescent of the moon following sunset, then the entire world east and west of that city must delay beginning the month till the following sunset.

This is the ordinance as it was given by God. We are not free to begin earlier because of the way we see it.

Another 6 hour difference as to the date for the new moon is introduced by the practice of delaying the ending of a day till midnight. Your almanac and Roman calendar "new moon" dates follow this pagan practice. This factor alone would shift the date of the new moon one day earlier 25 per cent of the time. Yet this pagan source is the one that many of you have used to check God's Sacred Calendar. Isn't it time we shift our allegiance to God's Oracles and away from the customs and terminology of the heathen?

Still another factor makes this crescent of the new moon visible earlier in California. Just as the path of an eclipse of the sun moves from west to east across the earth so the moment at which the crescent would become visible (if the observer's time were just after sunset) also moves from west to east across the globe and for the same reason. Up to 6½ hours are required for this moment to cross the earth.

Thus while the day comes to us from the east, the month (or the moment the month might begin) sweeps across the

earth from the west. It is natural for the western observer to want to begin his month too early. But it is *God's Calendar* and *His month* based on that calendar that we ought to follow.

A Difference in Latitude

Another question: Does one's latitude also make a difference in his ability to see this crescent of the new moon in the west just after the sun goes down?

Yes, this also affects the problem on all except two days of the year, the day of the spring equinox (March 21) and of the autumnal equinox (September 23).

On these two days the sunset line runs straight north and south on the surface of the earth from south pole to the north. Latitude thus makes no difference in sunset time on these two days. Sunset would be six o'clock (sun time) for everyone. (The fact that standard time is commonly used for an entire time belt and is based on mean solar time would mean that the time shown by our clocks might vary up to 50 minutes and in certain localities over an hour from sun time.)

During the summer months the sunset line curves toward the northeast with a portion of the north polar region in continual sunlight. During the winter months the sunset line curves toward the northwest with a portion of the north polar region in darkness 24 hours a day. (These statements are for the northern hemisphere only. The conditions are reversed south of the equator.)

The moment at which an observer at any point on the earth might see the crescent of a new moon and want to begin his month varies widely. Even the factor of whether the moon is north or south of the ecliptic, slightly affects the ability of the observer to see the crescent, especially in the extreme latitudes.

Conjunction or Crescent

A third question: Is the new moon noted on the Roman calendar or in an almanac or astronomy book the same term as the new moon on God's Sacred Calendar? Not at all. The term "new moon" from these secular sources refers to the conjunction (or molad) of the sun and moon rather than the visible crescent which could first be seen about six hours later.

The astronomer's "new moon" is the moment an eclipse of the sun might occur. (The moon is usually above or below the sun rather than in front of it. Thus eclipses do not occur at each of these "new moons".) But remember that this conjunction occurs at least 6 hours before any observer anywhere can see the new moon crescent with his eyes.

God's new moon on the other hand is the beginning day of a month, a day that begins at sunset at least 6 hours

after this conjunction. Both the conjunction and sunset must be calculated for the Jerusalem area not for our local area. Then the first day of the new month moves west across the earth.

Delay for Preparation

A fourth question: Isn't the first day of God's Sacred Calendar sometimes delayed for special reasons?

Yes. One reason for delaying the beginning of a month is to prevent the day of Atonement (Annual Sabbath) from falling on a Friday which is a preparation day. Another is to prevent any of the autumn annual festivals from falling on a Sunday. All feasts which follow Pentecost represent the *second part* of God's Plan. They must not fall on Sunday which would represent the *first part* of God's Plan which began 1900 years ago.

Timed for the Future

A final question: Don't the Jews themselves admit that the computation of the length of the month and length of the year upon which this Sacred Calendar is based are not quite in perfect accord with the present day figures provided by the very exacting measurements of our modern astronomers?

Yes, this is true. It would be more surprising if it were not true. There are slow accumulative changes in the length of the month and year over centuries of time.

This minute variation which makes 19 Sacred Years slightly longer than 19 astronomical years is a very important clue to chronology. But that subject is too long for this article! This variation, however, does not affect the mathematical calculation of new moons.

Is it unusual that the One who planned the Sacred Calendar should be one step ahead of both the astronomers of the time of Moses and the present twentieth century? With a perfect understanding of the movements of the heavens as well as the needs of man, God looked forward over a six thousand year period and prepared a Calendar that would keep in harmony with the heavens throughout the entire time.

It was this system that was restored to the children of Israel as they were being freed from bondage and it is this system that is preserved for us today by God through the Jewish people.

No need exists for any change or alteration in the Sacred Calendar prior to Christ's return and we look for no such change from the Jewish people. The published dates of the Jews and of our Sacred Calendar which cover the entire twentieth century are absolutely correct, God's people will continue to follow them.

(Please continue on page 10)

Local Assemblies Are *NOT* Social Clubs!

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

HERE is what our newly converted brethren need to know. 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 pitfalls are there. And they are a very real and potential danger!

You have heard me say often that most of the worldly churches have degenerated into SOCIAL CLUBS.

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!*

When the PURPOSE of assembling in a local group departs from God's purpose—when the *method* of conducting the local assembly departs from the Bible instructions and example, members often are driven *away* from God and into loss of eternal life!

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 Britain 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 uncovered, 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 seemingly 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!

(Please continue on next page)

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!

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 one, true 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 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 all 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 to the ministers, "You are sinners yourselves, so you can't tell others their sins—instead, show love by ENCOURAGING them in their sins"?

He does not!

God's Command

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!

God's ministers will never allow local assemblies to become mere social clubs!

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? Notice the inspired definition of love:

"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!

Should You ASSEMBLE Without a Minister?

We know you brethren long for local church fellowship. We know you need it. BUT, should you assemble by yourselves without a minister whom God has sent to feed the local flock?

by Herman L. Hoeb

HUNDREDS OF new members have been added to God's Church this past summer. Many will attend the Feast of Tabernacles this year. They will return home from the holidays filled with the joys of personal fellowship.

Soon they begin to visit with nearby brethren. With *social* fellowship comes the inevitable desire to assemble on the sabbaths for round-table discussions.

Many feel the necessity of *social* contact with brethren. They equally desire to learn more about the Bible. What could be better than meeting each sabbath for Bible study, it is reasoned! And think of the *social* fellowship!

Immediately some will think of Hebrews 10:25. "We should assemble ourselves together," they will say.

But what happens?

Wherever groups gather together a dominant individual inevitably arises. By force of personality others begin to look to him—even though he may *not* understand the Bible as well as they. He becomes a leader. Yet he may *not* be capable of keeping order. He is usually the center of arguments, doubts and divisions. Dissension and errors gradually arise. Some brethren leave in disgust—soured on the truth.

Is this *God's way* of feeding the flock?

New Testament Example

There are two methods by which we can LEARN the solution to this problem: 1) by New Testament *example*, 2) by Jesus' *instruction*.

First, let us understand the example of the Bible itself. We are experiencing today the same problem which confronted the early, inspired, Spirit-filled Church of God. The apostolic Church was a *scattered* Church (Acts 11:19). So are you brethren today! But what did that early scattered Church do?

Open your Bibles to Acts 11. Notice that some "which were scattered abroad" (verse 19) "came to Antioch . . . and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem." What did they do? Notice it! "*They sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch*" (verses 20-22).

Barnabas was a trained teacher (Acts 13:1). Barnabas also sought out Paul (verses 25-26), who had already been trained personally by Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:17-18). They were eminently qualified to feed the flock.

Jesus Christ directed His apostles at Jerusalem to send pastors lest the Antioch brethren would assemble without leadership. The SAME example occurs in Acts 14.

The apostles, Barnabas and Paul, fled the city of Iconium because of persecution (verses 1-5). They came to Lystra where the Jews soon attacked them as they were conducting their evangelistic work. Thereupon they fled to Derbe (verse 20). In each of these cities the apostles were prevented momentarily from continuing their ministry. They soon returned, however, to confirm the disciples in the faith (verse 21). Now observe verse 23: "And when they had ordained them *elders* in EVERY church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord."

Paul did *not* establish churches without pastors! EVERY local church had its pastor. Jesus called His people sheep. They need a shepherd. Paul therefore gave them pastors, or shepherds, who would feed the flock. We are NO different today. God's people still need pastors to lead them into truth.

And notice, too, that they were *ordained*, with prayer and fasting, *by the apostles*. God did not leave it to the brethren to gather together and to follow anyone who had a desire to become an elder. In these cities, where hundreds were being converted. Paul established local churches and ordained elders for EVERY church! But before ordaining elders, Paul's practice was to teach them personally, both in public and in their homes. He said so in Acts 20:17, 20.

This is God's pattern—God's WAY.

If we are to enter the Kingdom of God, *we* must come under the government of God. We must learn to conduct ourselves God's WAY. Christianity is a WAY of life.

Joined to Christ

To many people, a local congregation becomes a place of *social* rather than

spiritual fellowship. People join themselves together, instead of *being joined to Christ*. In John 15:5, Jesus said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." What would you think if the branches would say to themselves, let us bundle ourselves together? Yet that is exactly what you are doing when you meet of *your own accord without ministers!*

To be a Christian you need to "abide" in Christ—you need to *live* by His instruction. Do the branches of a grapevine receive their sap from each other? Or do they receive it from the central stump? You need to receive your spiritual power from Christ—the vine. Not from a branch—an individual who thinks he would like to hold a study group on the sabbath.

Your *spiritual* fellowship is not merely with one another, but "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" through the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:3). Notice what John writes in verse 6: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and *walk in darkness*, we lie, and *do not the truth*." If you claim to have real fellowship with God, and "walk in darkness"—disobey the instruction of the Bible—you are not doing the truth. You are actually cut off from real fellowship with the Heavenly Father.

"But if we walk in the light"—if we obey the Biblical instruction—"we have fellowship with one another" (verse 7). How plain! In order to have real fellowship with one another, you need to *abide* in the teachings of Jesus and His apostles—you need to follow the example and the instruction of the Bible, which is ABSOLUTE and FINAL AUTHORITY!

New Testament Instruction

Now let us turn once again to Hebrews 10:24-25. What is the *purpose* of assembling in local churches? "To provoke unto love and to good works . . . exhorting one another."

Notice carefully that Paul explains the *purpose* of our assembling, but *he does not explain HOW* the local assembly should be conducted. To understand *this*, we must turn to other verses which explain this phase fully.

In Eph. 4:11-17 Paul explains that

Christ gave evangelists, pastors and teachers and other ministerial offices "for the perfecting of the saints . . . 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 . . . that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness . . . but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things."

What is the purpose of the ministry?

To instruct the brethren to grow in love and in good deeds—exactly as Heb. 10:24 mentions. Then God intends *the pastors* to set the right example and to instruct the flock which should assemble *with* a minister. IF BRETHREN COULD ACCOMPLISH THIS BY ASSEMBLING WITHOUT A MINISTER, THEN JESUS WASTED HIS TIME TO TRAIN INDIVIDUALS TO BECOME PASTORS OR ELDERS. Then He was mistaken in training the disciples to preach and to feed the flock, if the flock could feed itself!

The very fact that the ministry is FOR the edifying of the church is PROOF POSITIVE that assembling without a shepherd will NOT lead to *unity* and perfection in knowledge. Without a pastor, disunity, contention and error will inevitably arise in a local group. *Experience proves it!*

Where Two or Three Gather Together

But didn't Jesus promise that wherever two or three brethren gather together, He will be in their midst?

The common misapplication of this text comes from careless reading. Christ was discussing with His apostles the matter of making binding decisions in the church (Mat. 18:17). He promises to back every decision—even where only two or three are gathered together IN HIS NAME!

What does "in His name" mean?

It means "by His authority"! We baptize "in the name of Jesus Christ"—"by His authority." But Jesus never gave authority for His converts to hold meetings by themselves without a pastor! Any who do so are not acting according to Jesus' commands. They are going contrary to Christ's authority. He does not promise to be in their midst. Besides, according to the pattern laid down in Lev. 23:2-4, *God orders His ministers* to convoke assemblies—to order meetings. God tells us upon which days we must meet, and He orders His ministers to tell the people when and where He wants the assemblies held. It is God's doing, not man's. Ministers are God's bond-servants and the shepherds of the flock.

Now we can also understand clearly other New Testament passages. In writ-

ing to Philemon, Paul spoke of "the church in thy house" (Philemon 2). This is not speaking of brethren gathering for discussion groups or Bible studies. It is speaking of a *church*—an organized body of saints—over whom Philemon presided. Notice that Paul addressed him as "fellow-laborer" (verse 1). In verse 24 Paul lists "Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my *fellow-laborers*." These men were elders and evangelists laboring with Paul in the ministry. Philemon was also a "fellow-laborer"—a minister. Paul even calls him "a partner" (verse 17). The church in his house was NOT without a pastor.

Be THANKFUL

Another important consideration many brethren still overlook is that the local church is for the instruction of those who are converted. *It is not the place to convert outsiders!* Yet it seems that some, not understanding this important principle, want to hold sabbath study groups to convert outsiders. And sometimes the unconverted are the very ones who dominate the meeting!

Mr. Armstrong has learned by experience that every group needs competent spiritual leadership. It cannot be left to zealous, but unwise, desire to have Christian fellowship. True fellowship comes by *obedience to God's way*. Even though many of you are scattered and have no regular sabbath service, yet be thankful that you are being instructed through two magazines, The PLAIN TRUTH and The GOOD NEWS, and The Ambassador College Correspondence Course.

You can hear the daily broadcasts—you actually hear Mr. Armstrong on the radio *in your own homes!* When the "World Tomorrow" Broadcast is on the air, you are attending, in a sense, a church service *with a minister*. This is how God is feeding His flock!

Let's realize our blessings and be thankful, no matter where we are. But let's be obedient and doers of God's way. He knows best!

Instead of murmuring about the lack of trained ministerial help—we are trying our best to train those whom God gives—why not do as Jesus said: "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers few: PRAY therefore the Lord of the Harvest"—Jesus—"that he send forth laborers into his harvest?" (Luke 10:2). That is your duty, brethren!

Question Box

(Continued from page 2)

there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice" (Deut. 14:22-27).

The second tithe—the tenth that God

wants *us* to use, which is another and separate tenth from the first tithe that He reserves for Himself for the carrying out of the gospel—the second tithe we are to use to attend *the festivals*. But let us read further: "Thou mayest NOT eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine . . . but thou MUST eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter" (Deut. 12:17-18).

Here is a positive command *not* to use the second tithe at home if you are unable to attend. You *must* use it to enable you to attend the festivals at the place which God chooses. If the money is spent for any other purpose, then you are breaking a command of God—you are not learning to *fear* His authority—and you are cheating yourself of the wonderful blessing of fellowship with others of like faith.

If for unforeseen circumstances you are unable to attend the festivals, and if you are prosperous, it would be the right and brotherly duty to enable others to use your tithe. It can be sent to Pasadena, with an explanation that it is to enable others to attend the festival. But if you are like most of the brethren, not having many worldly goods, and a small income or none at all, and if you are unable to come to the festival, you should save it until the next year or for two years, if necessary, when you will then have enough to assemble where God has chosen to place His name. Meantime, you will be observing the festivals at home just as you would at the feast.

In many cases we try to aid the poorer brethren through the extra second tithe of those *few* who have more than enough. But only those who have faithfully saved their insufficient second tithe deserve the extra help. If you haven't tried to save your little, God cannot deem you worthy of His extra assistance.

CALENDAR

(Continued from page 6)

Now We Ask You Questions

Now it is our turn to *ask you to prove all things*. Have you already proved that the Sacred Calendar which we publish is identical with that preserved by God through the Jewish people?

Are the ministers in the Church of God able, in due time, to clear up puzzling questions and seeming contradictions about the calendar? Do they "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and give the sense and cause the people to understand the reading?"

Does the *Old Testament* Have Authority Over Christians Today?

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

by Herman L. Hoeb

THE OLD covenant was the marriage agreement that united the LORD and the nation Israel into a husband and wife relationship. When Israel *sinned*, the covenant was broken. When Christ, the husband, *died*, the covenant ceased to be in force. Death *ended* the *marriage* agreement—the old covenant.

Today the terms and conditions of a new covenant—a new marriage agreement—are opened to us as Christians. In the new covenant the laws of God will be written in our hearts and minds not on tables of stone or in a book (II Cor. 3:3).

Therefore, since the old covenant is abolished, why refer to Exodus 20—a part of the old covenant—to prove that the ten commandments are still 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? No! Let's notice when it really commenced.

The Sabbath—which is part of the law—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. Therefore God's law existed before Abraham. That's why Abraham had to OBEY God's law (Gen. 26:5).

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. Scripture proves the statutes and laws 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 laws 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).

The prophets *received* the laws from God. God, not man, instituted them. We received the laws of God through the written record of the prophets who recorded them for us when the Old Testament was still in force.

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 doc-

trines (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!

Whose Opinion Counts?

(Continued from page 4)

ITY to make those decisions to be based on His *revealed* will. And He holds *them* RESPONSIBLE for seeking *His* will!

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

And even then, if there is ever a

case when you have a *real conviction* that one of God's ministers is teaching something contrary to His will, you ought to, "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). But *knowing* that any true minister of God will be honest in seeking the truth, be sure to discuss the matter privately with him. Remember that you are not to rebuke an elder or minister, "but intreat him as a father" (I Tim. 5:1). Then, any *true* minister of God will *study* and *pray* over the matter, and in due time will either show you your error—or he will confess his mistake and be thankful to find and teach the *truth*.

God himself has chosen ministers who are still quite *human*. But His ministers will remain yielded to Him and be willing to *grow*. It is HIS *responsibility* to remove them if they don't.

In all matters, then, it's *God's opinion* that really *counts*!

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

God's ministers need your *prayers*, and your *love* and *co-operation* in carry-

ing on this great work He has committed to all of us. Mr. Armstrong has set a wonderful example by his love, humility, wisdom, zeal, and his constant willingness to *grow* into more truth as God reveals it. God's *true* ministers will continue to seek and to teach *His* will—not their own.

We realize the *great responsibility* we have as God's ministers. We pray that you true brethren will respect the *authority* God has given us with which to carry on His work. This work of God is rapidly growing! To accomplish our mission successfully, we need to practice the way of *order* and *church government* which God has commanded. This way of God will be a great blessing to us—and to the *millions* who will hear the *true gospel* because we have been *willing* to set aside our selfish interests and to work together in *harmony*—under God's guidance—in carrying out His great work.

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

WE THOUGHT that you would like a preview of Dr. Meredith's forthcoming diary to appear next year in The PLAIN TRUTH. Here is a candid picture of Dr. Meredith with the Pygmies in the Ituri Forest in the Belgian Congo.

