

The

Good News

International Magazine of The Church of God



**BRETHREN
BEHIND
THE WALL**

AUGUST 1972





More About Our Cover...

Looking over and beyond a section of the Berlin Wall into East Germany, one begins to sense the isolation East Germans must feel — especially our brethren behind the wall! Beginning on page 4, Mr. John Karlson of our office in Dusseldorf relates some of the problems brethren in East Germany are facing, and what you can do to help.

Clayton — Ambassador College

What our READERS SAY...

Mr. Armstrong, I want to express deep appreciation for the May-June GOOD NEWS. It has seemed like ages since we last received one, but this one makes up for it.

The article on the Summer Educational Program was a real eye opener. I know some children who will be attending, and now I have a better idea of what they have to look forward to. These children will also have an opportunity to learn first-hand, through experience, just what it is their parents are working for. It's not just for personal salvation, but to give this kind of clean, healthful living to all the world.

As so often happens, I looked at the article on proper fellowshiping and said to myself, "Oh, I know who that applies to!" Surprise! I found out it applied very strongly to me. Please keep this kind of corrective, instructive article coming. I, for one, need them desperately.

The articles on the baptizing tours and the growth of the Work are very inspiring. How God has truly worked in building His Church! We now have a much better idea of the areas for which we need to be praying. Please thank all those who were inspired to write such uplifting articles.

Mrs. Barbara W., Warsaw,
New York

I just finished reading the article on "Christian Fellowship" in the May-June GOOD NEWS. God's Holy Spirit does really inspire His ministers to give us a balanced, helpful and overall picture of the various aspects of Christian living. That article really thrilled me! Thanks very much. We really appreciate your *service* to us. This is the kind of spiritual food we need in these times, in order that we might learn to love one another more fervently to the end! Thanks again for all the hard work that goes into these wonderful uplifting articles.

C. B., Winetka,
Illinois

The May-June issue of *The GOOD NEWS* really hit me all right, especially the article on "What Is Real Christian Fellowship?" I have repented of not fellowshiping enough with all members instead of only a few — the same ones each week. We do want to meet others and get to know them.

Member, Willard,
Ohio

The article by Mr. Waterhouse, "The Foreign Work — Then and Now," in the May-June issue of *The GOOD NEWS* was certainly a fine, inspiring article. Our thanks go to Mr. Waterhouse for it.

B. F., Thornton,
Colorado

I want to tell you how I enjoyed reading Mr. Waterhouse's report in *The GOOD NEWS* about the growth in all areas he visited last year. As I read it, it seemed like I was sitting in the meeting he has held here in Cape Girardeau, Missouri and wished I could have had more to read of the Work and God's plans as he explains and expounds them.

J. P., Paducah,
Kentucky

The GOOD NEWS article about the African baptizing tour is very inspiring, and so is the recent article about the power of God's Spirit. It is quite a revelation to learn that we sometimes, like Christ, can become drained of some of the Holy Spirit, and that we have to go to God in prayer to renew it.

In Mr. Jackson's diary, the paragraph about the woman who contacted all the hotels in the area until she found where the baptizing team was, moved me to tears. I was glad she got to be baptized. It is so thrilling to have these articles about our foreign brethren because they make us aware of what to pray about in the Foreign Work.

The photos of the Summer Educational Program in the May-June GOOD NEWS are beautiful. They sort of make me wish

(Continued on back cover)

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*ministering to its members
scattered abroad*

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WHICH OLD TESTAMENT LAWS ARE IN FORCE TODAY?

Here is how you can know which laws in the Old Testament were changed, or are no longer necessary, and which we are commanded to observe today!

by Herman L. Hoeh

NEW MEMBERS in God's Church often ask, "When I read the Old Testament, how can I know the difference between the ceremonial laws no longer binding on the Church, and those laws which we are to observe today?"

This question is absolutely BASIC.

Christian growth depends in no small measure on understanding the answer to this question.

Ten Commandments Binding at Creation

The patriarch Abraham kept the Commandments. "... Abraham *obeyed my voice,*" said God, "*and kept my charge, my commandments, my STATUTES, and my LAWS*" (Gen. 26:5).

God's *basic spiritual* Law which regulates human life existed from creation. It is "holy, just and good," said Paul in Romans 7:12-14. This Law is summed up in the Ten Commandments God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The Ten Commandments were not new — only the written, codified form in which God spoke and wrote them was new. (Write for the reprint, "Were the Ten Commandments in Force Before Moses?" if you haven't read it.)

The entire Bible was written to illustrate the lives of individuals who repented of sin and kept the spiritual laws God set in motion from creation.

David was inspired to write: "All his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness" (Ps. 111:7-8).

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

God's Church believes David. It also believes Jesus. It does what He commands. He is, after all, the Head of the Church of God!

Other Laws Based on Ten Commandments

Abraham kept the Ten Commandments. He also kept God's STATUTES and LAWS. What were these statutes and laws?

Statutes are expressions of a law-maker, usually commanding or forbidding that certain things be done. In addition to the broad principles of the Ten Commandments, God gave to the patriarchs STATUTES for the general well-being of the people — together with JUDGMENTS for the protection of everyone's legal rights. *Judgments* are binding *decisions* of judges based on God's previously revealed Law. These decisions are used to settle similar future disputes and to render a sentence or verdict.

In general the Ten Commandments apply to individual conduct, the statutes to national or church affairs, and the judgments to decisions rendered according to the principles of the Ten Commandments and the statutes.

The world had strayed so far from the truth by the days of Moses, that God had to reveal His laws and statutes anew to the Israelites. Ancient Israel had lost much of the knowledge of

God's ways while in Egyptian bondage. Notice, however, that God was revealing laws which were *already* in force.

In Exodus 16:28 God challenged Israel: "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?"

Israel could not refuse what did not exist!

In Exodus 18:16 we read that Moses explained to his father-in-law what he did when the people had a dispute: "I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws."

Both these instances occurred *before* the nation reached Sinai — before the Old Covenant was made.

As these statutes and laws existed before the Old Covenant, they were not thereby abolished in A.D. 31 when the Old Covenant marriage agreement ceased at the death of Christ. The Old Covenant could not destroy what it did not bring into force. The Old Covenant, remember, was a MARRIAGE AGREEMENT in which Israel promised to obey the Eternal (Christ) who was the Husband, and He, in turn, promised to provide for the nation. To obey the Husband meant to keep God's laws which were already in force! (Our fine reprint "The New Covenant — Does It Abolish God's Law?" explains that the Old Covenant was a marriage agreement.)

Magnifying the Law

The statutes and lesser laws of God magnify the Ten Commandments. The First Commandment says, for example, "Thou shalt have no other gods before

me.” The statutes regarding annual festivals magnify this principle — explain how, in a positive way, to ensure that one worships the one true God: “Three times [in the year] thou shalt keep a feast UNTO ME . . .” (Ex. 23:14). Those who obey keep in special contact with the Creator God.

Many additional laws — such as Exodus 22:16, 19, for example — specify in greater detail how the Seventh Commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery [or moral uncleanness],” is to be applied.

Notice also that God made provision for additional *judgments* to be established over the centuries (see Numbers 27:6-11 for example). The judgments are binding *decisions* based on God’s previously revealed law.

But when did the carnal ceremonies and sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood begin? When did they cease to have force and effect? And how can we distinguish them from the statutes and laws that existed *prior* to the Old Covenant?

When Did Sacrificial Laws Begin?

When God brought Israel to the foot of Mt. Sinai, He gave the Ten Commandments to them. He allowed Moses to declare to Israel the statutes and judgments which the people didn’t want to hear (Exodus, chapters 20-24). These statutes and judgments **MAGNIFY** the Ten Commandments.

Now notice carefully. There is only one sacrifice mentioned thus far in the book of the law — the *Passover* sacrifice (Ex. 23:18). God called it “MY sacrifice.” The Passover was instituted in Egypt, weeks before Sinai. It had to be included in the Old Covenant, but it was not instituted by the Old Covenant.

Next, turn to Jeremiah 7:22-23. Listen to what the Eternal inspired Jeremiah to write: “For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I DID NOT SPEAK . . . OR COMMAND them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this COMMAND I GAVE THEM: ‘OBEY my voice . . . and walk in ALL THE WAY THAT I COMMAND YOU, that it may be well with you’” (*Revised Standard Version*).

God did not command these sacrifices to be offered originally. This explains why none of those temporary sacrifices were perpetuated by different symbols in the New Testament Church. Only the Passover is continued with the different New Testament SYMBOLS of unleavened bread and wine. Why is the Passover continued today? — because it began *before* the Old Covenant was made! (See its institution in Exodus 12 before the Israelites left Egypt.)

The very fact that Jesus substituted unleavened bread and wine for the Passover lamb only, and not for the temporary Levitical offerings, is proof that the ceremonial Old Testament offerings are not binding today! — but that the Passover, in its New Testament form, *is* binding!

Paul explains that the temporary rituals and sacrifices were afterward “*added* because of transgressions” (Gal. 3:19) — because God’s spiritual Law was being broken — to last *until* Christ should come. They foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ and were a “reminder of sin” to teach the people the need of the Messiah — the true Passover Lamb — who would pay the penalty of human transgression (Heb. 10:3-10).

Notice that these temporary rituals did *not* define sin. They were reminders of sin. *God’s spiritual laws define* sin. The laws which define sin — which explain what sin is — these laws we are to keep today.

Sacrifices FOREVER?

The principle of voluntary offering of sacrifices existed before Moses. Christ volunteered to offer Himself from the *beginning* to pay for the sins of mankind. Cain and Abel made offerings to God (Gen. 4:3-4). But in the period from Moses to Christ the practice of giving offerings was reduced to a ritualistic plane and regulated in great detail. Why? Because the children of Israel were a physical, carnal people without the promise of the Holy Spirit. They could not offer themselves in spiritual obedience to God (Deut. 29:4), so they performed ritualistic washings and offered animals and other physical types instead — as a type of the true

spiritual worship to come (John 4:24).

They *needed to be reminded* of Jesus’ then future sacrifice, so God gave them physical types in the “law of Moses,” “until the seed should come” (Gal. 3:19).

Today, however, we offer *spiritual* offerings and sacrifices: we are being “built into . . . a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (I Peter 2:5,9 RSV). We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to God, our spiritual service (Rom. 12:1).

It is a *spiritual principle* to offer one’s self in living obedience — to sacrifice the self — to God. God Almighty is worthy to receive such service.

“But,” some have asked, “weren’t the Levitical sacrifices ordained *forever*?” Let us look at what the Bible really says. We may find some surprises.

Yes, the Bible does say that the sacrificial rites and other ritualistic functions belong to the Levitical priesthood forever. But *nowhere* are the people commanded to offer bloody sacrifices forever. Let us understand the real significance of the Hebrew word *olam* translated “forever.” It means *continuous, so long as the factors involved exist*.

Take for example the three statements found in Exodus 21:6, Leviticus 25:46 and Deuteronomy 15:17. All three speak of men being the slaves of a master *forever* — which obviously can only mean continuous until the death of one of the parties.

Now what factors may limit the duration of the offering of sacrifices? One, the *need* of a physical, human priesthood. Two, the *need* for sacrifices. And three, the existence of a temple or tabernacle.

In other words, as long as sacrifices are offered, the functions of the physical priesthood will never be transferred from the family of Levi. It is theirs forever. “For if he [Christ] were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law” (Heb. 8:4). The physical priesthood is Aaron’s, of the tribe of Levi. The spiritual priesthood is Jesus’, who is of the order of Melchizedek, not Aaron.

What is the purpose of a priesthood? To offer sacrifices and to act on

behalf of men in relation to God (Heb. 5:1 and 8:3). But how long do physical offerings as reminders of sin need to be made? Paul tells us: "Now where remission of these [sins] is, *there is no more offering for sin*" (Heb. 10:18).

To offer sacrifices today as reminders of sins already paid for by Jesus, who gave His life in full payment for all sins, is needless after A.D. 31 when Jesus died to pay for the sins of the world. God signalled this fact to the Jews in A.D. 70 by allowing the destruction of the temple.

Moreover, since the Holy Spirit was made available to mankind beginning Pentecost Monday, June 18, A.D. 31, physical offerings and various washings which are types of the Holy Spirit are no longer needed and hence no longer binding. The factors involved ceased to exist.

The ritual laws were subject to change because they were only types of the promised seed, Christ (who was to take upon Himself the sins of the world) and of the Holy Spirit which would regenerate men spiritually. When the circumstances were altered in A.D. 31, at the crucifixion, and on Pentecost, the obligation to practice the ritualistic laws ceased. These rituals had no further use when the Lamb of God died for our sins and when the Holy Spirit became available for men in general. But note that they did not cease because they were part of the Old Covenant. They were added after the Old Covenant or marriage agreement was ratified (Exodus 24). The rituals ceased to be needed because the true sacrifice for sin had been offered.

But what about God's spiritual laws?

God ALONE Changes Laws

Perhaps some have failed to realize that God ALONE has the right to add to or alter His laws, and that HE WILL NOT ALTER HIS SPIRITUAL LAWS. The spiritual laws describe the very character of God. They enable us to know what God is like. Since the character of God remains *unchanging* — "I change not," says the Eternal (Mal. 3:6) and "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8) — God's spiritual laws cannot change.

Ritual Laws Distinguished from Others

In Hebrews 9:9-10 we read of the material gifts and sacrifices which included "ONLY meats and drinks and diverse washings and carnal ordinances, imposed until the time of reformation."

Notice that these temporary laws did not pertain to murder or theft or sabbath breaking, but were ONLY those ordinances regulating meat and drink offerings and different washings or ablutions of the unclean. (These external washings were a type of the Holy Spirit cleaning us up from within.)

Any other laws not included in Hebrews 9:10 were *not* part of the rituals added because of sin!

Remember this point!

It will help you to know which rites in the Old Testament were added to the statutes and judgments already in existence.

What Is the Law of Moses?

Some people are easily confused by the trick argument of some that the Ten Commandments are the law of Moses. They read in Luke 2:22-24 that the ordinances of the "law of Moses" are also called part of the "law of the Lord."

Why is the "law of Moses" also called the "law of the Lord"? Because all law comes from God! Moses was not the lawmaker! He merely told the people the laws that God set in motion (John 1:17).

However, the Bible NEVER calls the law of Moses the Ten Commandments. The law of Moses comprises statutes and judgments which God gave him to communicate to the people. The difference between the law of Moses and the Ten Commandments is that God spoke the Ten Commandments, but *Moses* delivered the statutes and judgments.

Now, let us recall that when Moses first delivered the statutes and judgments, *the law of Moses had no sacrifices connected with it*. Jeremiah said so! (Jer. 7:22.) The law of Moses was originally the civil law, based on the principles of the Ten Commandments. These civil statutes and judgments are also right and good (Ps. 119:7, 8).

Some of these civil laws were included in the Old Covenant (Ex. 21-24) and others were promulgated at later times (Deut. 12:1, and following chapters for example).

After the ratification of the Old Covenant (Ex. 24), the Levitical priesthood was established and the laws regulating offerings were added to the law of Moses (Ex. 28:1). (Prior to this time offerings were voluntary and young men were priests — Exodus 24:5.)

Therefore the law of Moses *has more than one part!*

Notice God's definition of the original part of that law in Malachi 4:4 (RSV): "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel."

This law we are not to forget. We are to keep it!

But added later to this law were other statutes regulating material rituals, such as sacrifices, lighting of candles, burning incense and various washings for the unclean.

This almost unnoticed fact that the law of *Moses* was composed of *two* distinct parts — the civil and the ritualistic — is what causes so much difficulty in understanding.

Part of Law of Moses Still in Force!

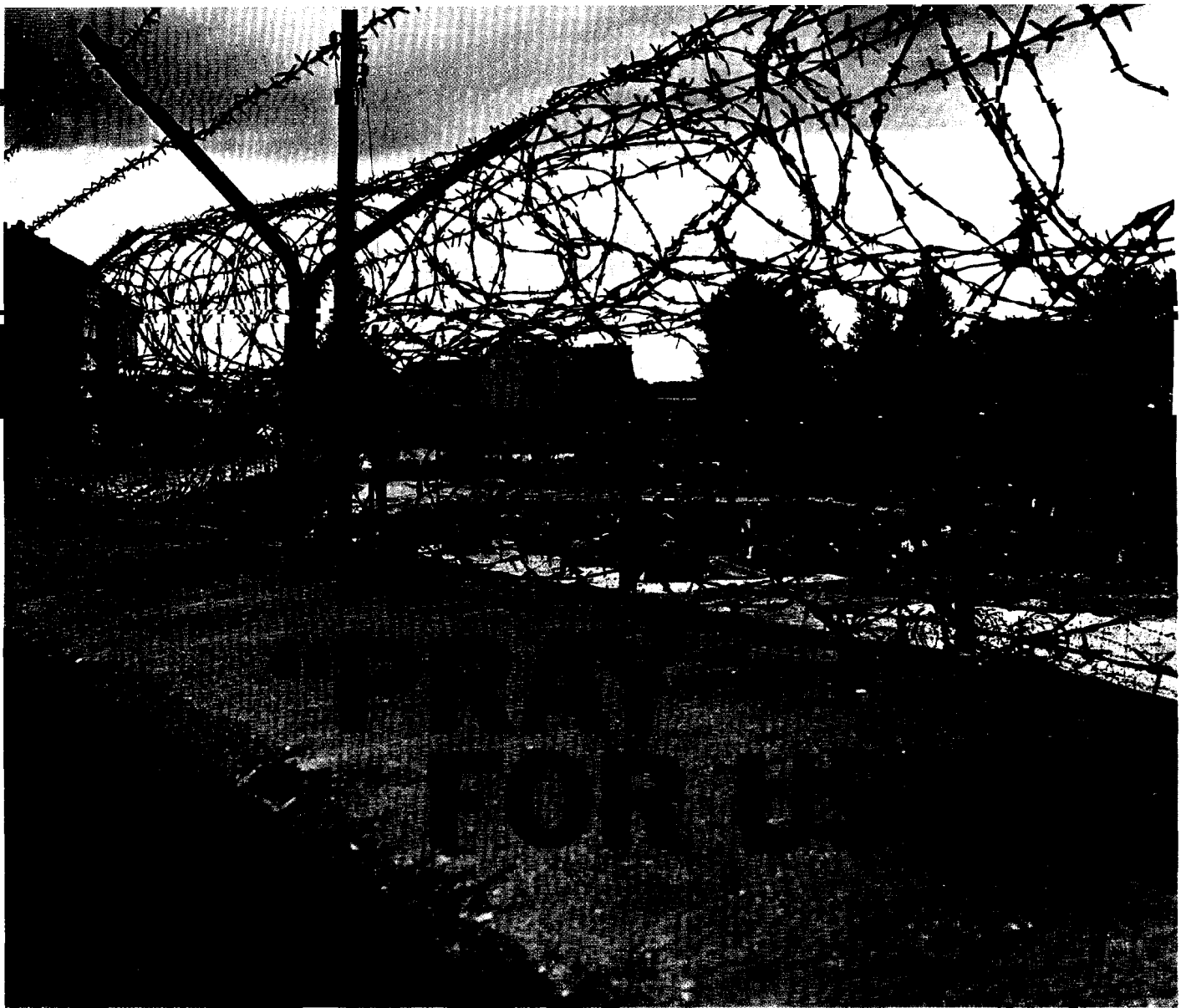
Jesus said the two great commandments were love to God and love to neighbor. Do you know from where He quoted these laws?

Out of the book of the law! — the laws that *Moses* spoke to the people. Read it in Leviticus 19:18 (RSV): "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." And Deuteronomy 6:5: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."

In II John 5 and 6, God commands Christians to obey these two basic laws which He communicated to the people by Moses! In II Kings 23:25, Josiah is praised because he did so. He "turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, ACCORDING TO ALL THE LAW OF MOSES!"

Notice how plain it is. The civil law of Moses expounds the Ten Command-

(Continued on page 16)



Christopherson — Ambassador College

Behind the Iron Curtain, in East Germany, you have a number of brethren who are not able to meet on a regular basis because of unique problems and difficulties. Here is a special report on God's Church behind the Berlin Wall.

by John Karlson

OF ALL the Iron Curtain countries, East Germany is the strictest. And yet, impossible as it may seem in man's eyes, God has called a small group of fourteen people behind the Iron Curtain and has made it possible for them to have contact with God's ministers, be baptized, and become members of His true Church.

Several years ago, when the East German postal authorities were not as strict as they are today, the German edition of *The PLAIN TRUTH* and much of the literature did get through to some people behind the Iron Curtain who had heard the broadcast and were interested in learning more. But more and more literature was confiscated by the postal authorities, so other means had to be found to get the magazine and literature to the people.

For a while a special edition of the

magazine was printed on onionskin paper and mailed to our subscribers in normal, letter-sized envelopes addressed by hand. This worked very well until gradually the authorities caught on and once more the magazines began to be confiscated. Again new methods had to be found.

We then tried using a special stamp, showing that our literature was sent as a free gift, of no commercial value, and as such was allowed by East German law. This system worked until the law was changed.

Over a period of years less and less literature has gotten through to those interested, until today, the avenues are virtually closed. Even Radio Luxembourg, which at one time could be heard throughout East Germany, is now being jammed in many parts of the country. God has seemingly allowed

these doors to be closed for the time being.

However, of those who were receiving the magazines and literature, a few scattered families and individuals were really willing to live by the Bible. These people began writing for visits.

Although the doors for getting literature into East Germany seem tightly closed at present, one door is still open — the door of personal contact. God has made possible periodic visits by some of His ministers to baptize and teach the brethren behind the Iron Curtain, so that even though they are not able to meet on a regular basis, they have been able to meet with God's ministers four or five times per year, and have services during the Days of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Needless to say, without God's direct intervention, none of this would be possible, and the same thing is true in the individual lives of these brethren. One man, for instance, who had been the secretary of the Communist Party in the city where he lived and had a preferred job because of his position, quit the party (which caused no small uproar, since nothing like that had ever happened before), trusting God to help him find a new job. Today he still has the *same* preferred job he had back then as party secretary, has the *Sabbath off and gets off for all the Feasts and Holy Days!*

Our brethren behind the Iron Curtain have problems to overcome and trials to endure, being no different in this than any other members of God's Church. Their biggest disadvantage, however, is that of not being able to gather with the rest of their German-speaking brethren in England for the *Feast of Tabernacles*. To them the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain are more than just names; they are actual limiting *barriers* which keep them from being able to meet with the rest of God's Church.

We have tried to compensate for this as much as possible. For example, the Düsseldorf office staff, plus brethren from West Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Holland, twice have traveled to East Germany to attend the weddings of some of our brethren

there, conducted by God's ministers. In these cases the brethren were able to fellowship from early morning until late at night under the very best of conditions.

What You Can Do

Often the question arises, "What can we do for our brethren behind the Iron Curtain?"

There is one request which they have voiced over and over again: "*Ask the brethren to pray for us!*" This is the one thing we can do to really help them.

Cut off as they are from regular contact with our literature, and regular fellowship with God's people, our brethren behind the Berlin Wall fer-

vently desire your continuing, earnest prayers on their behalf. They believe in the miracle-working power of prayer as you do. They know, as the Apostle James wrote, that the effective fervent prayers of righteous men avail *much* (James 5:16). Pray that God will *again* make it possible for the broadcast and our literature to reach the brethren behind the Iron Curtain.

The next time you hear *The WORLD TOMORROW* broadcast, or receive *The PLAIN TRUTH* or *GOOD NEWS*, *The Correspondence Course* or some booklets through the mail; the next time you attend a Sabbath service, a Bible study or a Spokesmans Club meeting, *remember* your brethren behind the Iron Curtain. They will surely appreciate it! □

English-German sign located at a barbed wire section of the Berlin Wall.

Ambassador College Photo



PECULIAR PEOPLE LTD.?

by Basil Wolverton

Did God really mean for us to be "peculiar"? (Titus 2:14.) Or did He mean something else entirely than the usual modern meaning of the word? This amusing article will help you see in what way you should NOT be "peculiar" — especially at the Feast of Tabernacles.

IN THE King James translation of the Bible, God's people are referred to as a "peculiar people" (Titus 2:14), an unfortunate wording almost as unhelpful as the one which mentions *Easter* instead of *Passover*!

Actually, the original Greek says we are a people "special to God." We are a "purchased" people (I Pet. 2:9) — purchased by the blood of Christ (I Cor. 6:20).

But that doesn't mean we are PERFECT! Some of us, perhaps especially at the Feast of Tabernacles, engage in some ludicrous behavior.

We do things or say things we ought not. That's to be expected of course, knowing human nature, but some of these situations cast a bad light on God's Church, and they are all so unnecessary. With a little forethought, most of these situations can be easily and totally avoided.

Those who cause these little incidents don't sit up nights planning

them. Sometimes the perpetrators are part-time inconsiderates. At best, their antics are ridiculous and even amusing.

When Feast time rolls around, are you sometimes "peculiar" in the sense of being "odd"? Check yourself and your behavior against that of the following compiled and categorized care causers:

DOME DUSTERS are the people who walk along a row of seats at the Feast and heedlessly drag coats, blankets, bags, Bibles, notebooks and even small children across the heads of those seated in the row just in front. Hairdos are harried, toupees twisted, scarves pulled loose and general hirsute havoc created as a result. Then just about the time the victims have started to recover, the offenders have decided that there is better seating back somewhere whence they came. They return, repeating their destructive performance, this time brushing all hair in the opposite direction!

It's always easy to tell in which direction a careless coat dragger just moved.



The conversation crasher always makes his entrance when a conversation is in progress.



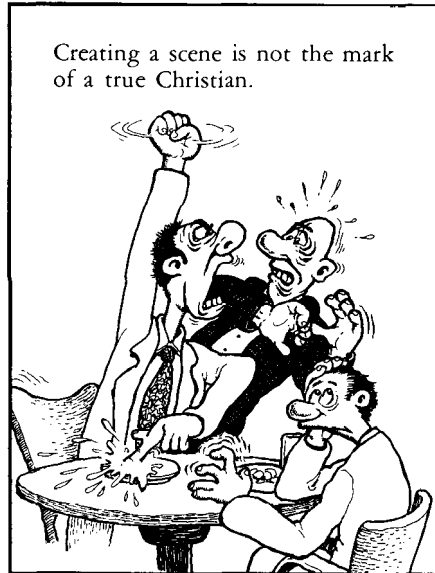
About the only way to avoid "dome dusters," who always seem to strike without warning, is to stay hunched forward in an awkward posture that would indicate to others that a stomach ache is in progress. This could be deeply fascinating to onlookers — until they are suddenly aware that dome dusters are passing over *them!*

God's Word says, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31). None of us likes to have our domes dusted. So don't become a "dome duster" at the Feast this year.

AISLE IDLERS — Having picked their seats and staked them out with piles of personal property, they spend the last twenty minutes or so before services knotting in the aisles to visit with other aisle idlers while streams of people struggle to get around them. Finally aisle traffic becomes so intense that it breaks up the clumps of dawdlers. With most of eight days for visiting, these busy spots would seem to be poor places to renew acquaintances and talk over old times, but having been deprived of the opportunity to finish their conversations, the "aisle idlers" can look forward to reuniting next day, same time, same place.

The Bible says there is a time and a place for all things (Eccl. 3:1, 7), but in the aisle, just before services, is NOT the place nor the time for last-minute fellowshipping! Don't you be an "aisle idler."

WAITER WORRIERS are those few who unthinkingly create awkward



scenes in restaurants by loudly informing the help about unclean foods or other problems. To muddle matters even more, some "waiter worriers" have a peculiar, groundless belief that members of the Church should expect special treatment and service from others, especially those working in public places. They tend to be impolite, boisterous, demanding and noisy. Of course all this causes embarrassment to normal Church members who happen to be present, and may help convince waiters, waitresses and other onlooking strangers that all God's people are frantic fanatics!

Do you abide by the admonition of the Apostle Paul: "Let all things be done *decently and in order*" (I Cor. 14:40)?

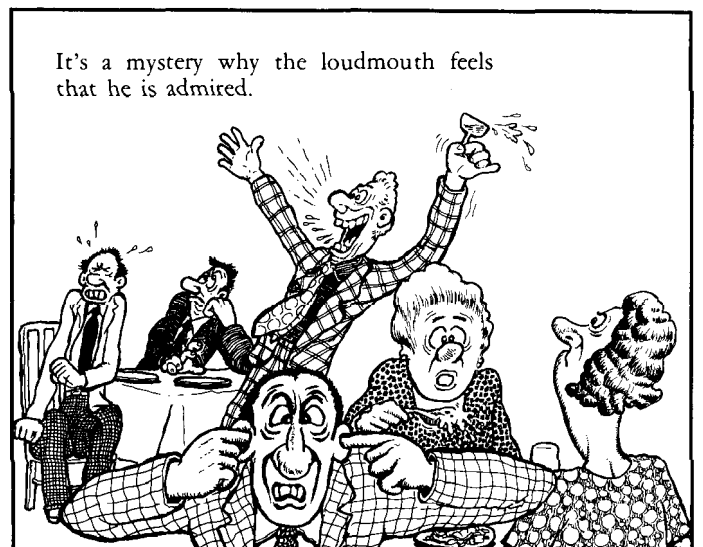
CONVERSATION CRASHERS are

the enthusiastic, super-social ones who try to spread themselves out in all social directions at the same time. They have an uncanny adroitness for barging in for long visits with friends just when those friends are visiting with other friends, whether they are at a dining table, in a motel room or a phone booth. True, everybody should be happy to see everybody else, but there are favorable times for everything. Surprise visits can perforate plans previously made with other friends.

Don't be a "butt-in-ski" type. Control that urge to say "hello" until you have a fitting opportunity. Remember and apply the principle: "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (Prov. 15:2).

RESTROOM RESORTER REGARDERS — What is there about people walking to restrooms during services that is so profoundly fascinating to so many others? A weary mother carrying or dragging an offspring out for relief can unwillingly command the attention of a host of heads, turning in slow unison, as though they were all hooked to the same set of neck muscles. She's stared at as if the beholders had never before beheld a human being. One might well imagine that all those fixed eyes do precious little for the watched woman, who understandably might never return to those parts.

These starers also have their counterparts in **BABY BAWLER BEHOLDERS** and **COUGHER CONTEMPLATORS**, whose



Study the Bible Profitably

Many have expressed the fact that they have difficulty in buckling down and really studying their Bibles as they should. Here's what you can do to make Bible study more interesting, profitable and inspiring.

by Dean R. Wilson and
Richard Wiedenheft

WHEN GOD first began to open our minds to the understanding of the Bible, most of us zealously began to study it hours on end. There didn't seem to be enough opportunity or time to read the Word of God. The study was thrilling and exciting, as well as educational. We devoured the broadcast, *The PLAIN TRUTH* and the *Correspondence Course*, hungrily.

Then came that never-to-be-forgotten time when God's minister made his first visit to your home. Questions gushed forth, answers were eagerly absorbed, only to be followed by more questions. Two or three hours flew by. And when the visit was over, you anxiously awaited another opportunity to learn more, direct from God's minister.

First Zeal Begins to Wane

These are things that took place in our own personal lives only a few short years ago, and in some cases only a few short months ago.

If someone had told you at that time you would ever have trouble with Bible study, you would have said, "Not me, I'll *never* run out of things to study."

Yet what has happened? The sudden flush of zeal often begins to wane. Many of us have indeed begun to run into difficulty with personal Bible study: not only how to study, but also what to study. Other interests creep in. We begin to make excuses about not having enough *time* for Bible study.

Some even conclude they don't need to study the Bible anymore. Having read it through once or twice, they think that's enough. Now they can slack off and spend that time on *other* pursuits.

What is the cause of such Bible study problems? And what can we do about it?

It is not necessarily true that members so plagued have lost their first love for God's truth. Many have just not learned how to proceed from the basics to the more detailed "meat" of God's Word.

We are to begin studying God's Word as a little child, but eventually we must progress from that point to where we can absorb stronger meat. "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have [had] their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:13-14).

So how are we to GROW in Bible study?

Learning the Story Flow

The simplest way to study the Bible is the way those of you who have "read the Book" have already used — you just read the Bible as you would any other book.

To get the most from this method, get the overview and remember the highlights. Become familiar with the main characters and events of the scriptures. Don't take time to worry about

specific words or verses — aim at getting a panoramic view of a particular book, or of the entire Bible.

A *modern translation* may make this type of Bible study much more interesting for you — since your main concern is not the technical meaning of specific verses or words.

The story flow approach is especially good for children and beginners in Bible study, who are generally not interested in the explanation of difficult verses or the harmonization of so-called "Bible difficulties." They will, however, be fascinated by the examples of men and women with whom they can identify as they learn about the promises given to Abraham, the wisdom of Solomon, the trials of Job, the adventures of Elijah, the life of Christ. Thus the overall lessons and principles of God's Word will be ingrained in their minds.

Brethren, that is one way to study your Bible and the way to commence to experience the excitement and thrill of growing in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. But it is not the only way to study. There are several keys to more effective, interesting Bible study. Let's examine them.

Line Upon Line

The Word of God was inspired to be written unlike a textbook, for example, where all the basic knowledge and understanding on a given subject is gathered together in one place. In the Bible, bits of the truth about a subject

are scattered all throughout its pages.

To clearly understand a particular subject, we must study *all* that God's Word says about it in different places, adding one point to another. This is the way to learn, as the Prophet Isaiah wrote: "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10).

The Bereans were seeking for these scattered but related parts of the truth when they "... searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). They turned from book to book (or scroll to scroll), comparing different portions, reading parallel accounts — confirming the truth of Paul's teaching.

Had the Bereans access to a modern concordance, topical Bible, or other Bible helps, they would certainly have made use of them.

An Outstanding Example

Consider an example of this from a Canadian listener:

I have studied your article "The Answer to Unanswered Prayer." At first I thought that the writer of the article "jumped the gun" a little bit. I thought that he got carried away a little with enthusiasm and idealism. I had the impression that he was *over-doing* the subject. I decided to find out for myself — the subject being important as it is. I checked up on every scripture quotation in the Bible and studied it in its complete context. Then I looked up in the concordance to find every passage in the Bible referring to prayer or texts dealing with the subject of "asking," "supplication," etc. It was a tremendous, time-consuming task. But it was worth it. I got the answer. I had written each verse or group of verses on a separate slip of paper. Then I sorted these slips according to the subject as given in the article, like "believe," "be fervent," "fear," etc. This way I found out first-hand that the Bible does say everything the writer claimed in the article. And in the process I gained invaluable side benefits.

This listener read the article, then did as the Bereans did. He, too, *searched* the Scriptures to find out "if these things be so."

But notice *how* he searched! He looked up every scripture quoted and read it in its complete context. Then he went further and used a concordance,

which is almost a must for all who really intend to dig into the Bible on any given subject. He dug out every scripture he could find that could possibly have anything to do with the subject, and listed them on pieces of paper according to subject and word. After this, he compiled all the information he had found.

As the listener said, it was time-consuming. But he was more than willing to spend his precious time digging out the valuable word of God on this subject.

Bible study that is really going to be profitable *will* be time-consuming and will take work. But God says in II Timothy 2:15, "Study [be diligent] to shew thyself approved... *A WORK-MAN...*" We must be willing to put in effort, spend time, to be approved of God. For only by putting forth effort will we ever be able to rightly divide the word of truth (II Tim. 2:15). Then Bible study will *really* produce fruit, become profitable, thrilling and inspiring.

What Such Study Produces

For an illustrative example of how the Bible provides us a bit of the truth here and a bit there, let's reconstruct the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ.

John 19:31 and 42 explain very clearly that Jesus was crucified on the *preparation day* (the day preceding a Sabbath). That Sabbath was an *high day* (an annual Sabbath rather than the regular weekly Sabbath).

Now notice Mark 15:42-43. "And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, [there came] Joseph of Arimathea... and asked for the body of Jesus" (RSV).

Mark 16:1 continues, "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene... bought spices, that they might go and anoint him" (RSV). The women bought spices, *AFTER* the Sabbath.

Luke 23:54-56 reads, "It was the day of the Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women... saw the tomb, and how his body was laid; then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested

according to the commandment" (RSV). The women prepared spices *BEFORE* they rested on the Sabbath.

But Mark says they hadn't even bought the spices until after the Sabbath!

Putting it all together — remembering that John pointed out that the day following the death of Christ was an *high day* — we must conclude that *two* Sabbaths were involved: an annual "high" Sabbath and the regular weekly Sabbath. The women watched where the body was laid just before the annual Sabbath began. After the annual Sabbath, they purchased and prepared spices, on the "preparation" day — and then rested again on the weekly Sabbath. Then early on the morning of the first day of the week they came to the tomb.

It is fascinating to put all the pieces of the puzzle together. (For more information on this particular subject, write for our booklet, *The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday*.)

Hezekiah's Passover

Another interesting piece of Biblical detective work involves the captivity of Israel while Judah still continued as a nation.

II Kings 17:18 states, "Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only."

"Were *all* the Israelites taken captive?" many have asked. "What about II Chronicles 30 and the Passover kept by Hezekiah?"

II Chronicles 30:11 states, "Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem" — to keep the Passover.

How could all the Israelites have been carried away as captives by the Assyrians if some were keeping the Passover with Hezekiah?

A little Bible sleuthing reveals the answer.

Hezekiah kept this Passover in the second month of the first year of his reign (see II Chron. 30:1-13).

II Kings 18:9-10 states, "And it came to pass in the *fourth year* of king Hezekiah... that Shalmaneser king of

Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah . . . Samaria was taken."

The answer is simple — the siege against Samaria didn't even begin until the *fourth year* of Hezekiah. The Israelites had attended the Passover in Jerusalem in his *first year!*

This kind of Biblical detective work — reading, studying and searching — is the excitement of this type of Bible study! Try it sometime — you may again find yourself engrossed in the pages of God's Word for hours at a time.

Study Helps

Now how can one find the complementary verses or passages that add to or explain another passage? The first and most obvious method of locating such verses is by simple reading of the Book — and *thinking about* what you read — so you will recognize and remember such points.

Next, perhaps, is the use of the notes and references in the center column of your Bible. (If you have a Bible with only the text, it will probably be worth your while to buy one with center column or marginal references.) Though these references can sometimes be misleading, they are often helpful in pointing you to related verses.

Then if you want to become a bit more technical, there are the exhaustive concordances in which you can check every occurrence of a certain key word — say you want to study faith, or prayer, or fasting, or tithing, the Holy Spirit, sin, law, baptism, soul, Sabbath, judging, dancing, Day of the Lord, etc. The small lexicons in the back of these concordances will also show you how the same original Hebrew or Greek word is translated elsewhere in the Bible.

In addition, a *topical Bible* may list other verses on the same subject but which do not contain the actual key word you are using. Compare them — and notice the obvious, overall picture these verses paint.

Another aid to comparative and

problem-solving type Bible study is what is known as a *harmony*. Harmonies of the four Gospels and of Kings, Chronicles and Samuel utilize parallel columns to place the separate accounts of the same events together. Realize that these harmonies were arranged by men — and they may not always be correct; but for the most part they provide considerable help in trying to piece together Biblical history.

Commentaries can also be a help, but take them with a "grain of salt." They were written by men and are not inspired by God. Though their technical, historical and etymological *background material* may sometimes be accurate, they should never be relied upon to establish doctrine.

But — however you study the Book — keep in mind your purpose and reason for studying.

Meditative Study

A purely intellectual and academic study of God's Word is worthless by itself. It is of no value at all unless translated into a right way of life!

One of the reasons that David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22) was that he learned to put God's Word *in action*.

David exclaimed: "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97). David read and studied the Law, he *thought* about it — and he APPLIED it to himself. He used it as a mirror to compare himself with God's character.

Paul wrote to Timothy that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, *for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" (II Tim. 3:16).

God's Word is the yardstick by which you should measure your life. And the only way you can effectively do this is to *read and know the yardstick — and compare yourself to it!* That takes *meditation* — controlled thinking with a positive purpose.

I Corinthians 13, the "love chapter," is an excellent place to start. Read it thoughtfully — focusing each verse on yourself. "Charity [love] suffers long, and is kind . . ." (verse 4). Ask yourself, "How patient am I? How tolerant am I of others' actions and attitudes? Am I

always kind and understanding, or do I often speak sharply and impatiently?"

Substitute your own name for "charity" and see how well you measure up to the Word of God.

Other chapters that are good for self-analysis and correction are Romans 12, Galatians 5, Matthew 5-7 and John 14-17. The entire book of Proverbs is chock-full of useful wisdom and instruction. But do not think that only certain chapters or passages are profitable in this way. Whatever part of the Bible you read, wherever you study — make a deliberate effort to learn from it *principles* to apply to your own life.

This type of Bible study can be done effectively *on your knees* — in conjunction with prayer. Ask God to help you understand His Word — to show you His nature and will. *Pray* for understanding of how you can be a better Christian — a better person, a more helpful neighbor, a more loving parent. And then *study* and meditate on God's Word — expecting and looking for correction and instruction in how to CHANGE.

God's Word was also intended for encouragement and inspiration. Many of the Psalms are effective for uplifting, meditative study. Psalm 1, for example, speaks of the blessings God promises to those who obey him and *meditate* on His law. "And he [the righteous] shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (verse 3).

Throughout the Bible you can read of the tremendous miracles God has worked for His people — the deep love and compassion He has for all human beings.

Through regular Bible study you can be *inspired* to serve, obey, and trust God! You can be moved to change — to get in harmony with His will!

Effective Bible study means more than a simple scholastic effort. A lot of head knowledge can put one in the same boat with Satan — he believes and trembles, but he won't obey (James 2:19).

God wants you to fear and tremble before His Word — and to USE that

(Continued on back cover)

What Was Really

“NAILED TO THE CROSS”?

Does Colossians 2:14-17 prove the Ten Commandments, Sabbaths and Holy Days were “against us,” “contrary to us,” and were therefore blotted out — “nailed to the cross”? Just what do these verses really mean? Could YOU EXPLAIN them?

by William F. Dankenbring

NINETEEN hundred years ago, on a stony slab of ground jutting upward near Jerusalem, a young man was nailed to an upright stake, suffering a uniquely harsh form of execution.

The one who was put to death was not merely a man — but also GOD in the flesh! And His death was a potential atonement for the sins of *all* mankind!

We know Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty of our sins. But when He was nailed to that stake, what *else* was nailed there? Do you know?

A Much Misunderstood Scripture

Many fundamentalist theologians point to Colossians 2:14-17 in an attempt to prove that the entire law of God, sabbath days, and God’s annual festivals were done away — nullified and abrogated at the death of Christ. According to them, these verses say that the Ten Commandments were “against us,” and so Christ took them out of the way, “nailing them to His cross” when He died.

What do these verses in Colossians 2 really mean? Could you explain them clearly? Do you understand what was actually “nailed to the cross”?

We know that mere men are not our authority. The *opinions* of fallible men cannot be our guide in matters dealing with our salvation. Rather, the

Word of God must be our GUIDE — our mainstay — our bulwark of faith and foundation of belief (II Tim. 3:16).

Before examining Colossians 2:14-17 word by word, comparing it with other scriptures, let’s understand *who* the Colossians were, and *why* Paul wrote to them.

The City of Colossae

Colossae was a city in Asia Minor near Laodicea, in the province of Phrygia, on the south side of the Maeander river. At one time the city was controlled by the Macedonians. It was later transferred to the Seleucids, and finally became subject to Rome.

The Colossians were Gentiles and pagans. In the apostles’ time, the city, like the other cities of Asia Minor, was wholly given over to the worship of false gods and goddesses. Those of the saints who lived in Colossae had formerly been steeped in the same pagan idolatry.

Because pagan teachings and anti-Christian influences were rife in the city, and deceptive teachings of numerous religious philosophies abounded, the Apostle Paul was deeply concerned for the brethren in Colossae. He was actually *alarmed* lest false teachers, propounders of a mixture of Oriental philosophy and Judaistic beliefs, should again deceive them and subvert their faith in Christ.

In chapter 2, verse 8, Paul warned

the brethren in Colossae: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the *tradition of men*, after the *rudiments* [elements] of *the world*, and not after Christ.”

Here Paul clearly outlined the danger. False teachings of PHILOSOPHY — pagan philosophical ideas — as well as traditions of MEN, and elementary concepts of THE WORLD were rife in Colossae and threatened to subvert new believers in Christ, deceiving them, pressuring them into returning to their old PAGAN practices and beliefs!

It is important to note that in that day the word “philosophy” was often used to describe an *ascetic approach* to life.

Notice! This truth is made even clearer if we drop down to verses 20-23: “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the *RUDIMENTS of the world* [the teachings of *the world* around them, the PAGAN philosophies] why, as though living in *the world*, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the *commandments and doctrines* OF MEN?” (Verses 20-22.)

These “ordinances,” or religious customs and decrees, *seemed* to be wise and good to the human mind (verse 23). They involved “neglecting of the body” and various forms of ASCETICISM — abstinence from pleasure, strict codes of conduct. These religious cus-

toms involved numerous *taboos* ("Touch not; taste not; handle not," etc.). But they were merely the ideas and teachings of MEN (verse 22) — *they did not come from the Bible!*

We will see later just what these "ordinances," commandments and doctrines of *men* were. So now let's examine Colossians 2:14-17, and understand it in its proper context.

Is God's Law "AGAINST Us"?

In Colossians 2:13-14 we read: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; *blotting out the handwriting of ORDINANCES* that was *against* us, which was *contrary* to us, and took it out of the way, *NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS.*"

Just what do these verses mean? *If*, as certain fundamentalists assert, the Ten Commandments are "against us," and "contrary to us," then the Bible must contradict itself, because the same Apostle Paul wrote elsewhere of the Law of God: "Wherefore the law is HOLY, and the commandment *holy*, and *just*, and *good*" (Rom. 7:12). He wrote: "For we know that the law is *spiritual*..." (verse 14). How then can God's Law be "against us" or "contrary to us"?

The clear answer is — *it isn't!*

The Ten Commandments — which summarize the Law of God — are GOOD for us. They show us how to love and worship God, and how to love our neighbor. Read the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. Do you see any *one* of them which is "against us"? Of course not! Each one of the Ten Commandments is a GOOD commandment, ordained for our welfare, established for our eternal benefit!

This is why Jesus told a young rich man, "...but if thou wilt enter into life, *KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS*" (Matt. 19:17).

Which commandments did Jesus mean?

He went right on to tell us: "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and,

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (verses 18-19).

He was clearly talking about the Ten Commandments, because He went right on to list several of them, pointing out which law He was talking about!

Now Jesus could have told the young rich man, "Listen! There is nothing you must *do* to gain eternal life. Just believe on me. The Ten Commandments are (or will be) done away — abolished!" But He didn't say that. Why? Obviously, because it is not true. Because Jesus knew that to inherit eternal life a man must *KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS!*

If we believe the words of Jesus, our Savior, then the Ten Commandments are still in effect and in force today!

But this being true, then what "ordinances" was the Apostle Paul talking about in Colossians 2:14?

The "Handwriting of Ordinances"

First, notice that what was blotted out was the "HANDWRITING of ordinances." Why did Paul use this strange-sounding expression if he merely meant the Ten Commandments?

The original Greek word here translated "handwriting" is *cheirographon* and actually means "a (hand-written) document, specif. a document of indebtedness, bond" (Arndt-Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament*). The Arndt-Gingrich lexicon translates the expression in Colossians 2:14, "*the bond that stood against us.*"

Thus, the original Greek, according to the most up-to-date scholars and authorities, shows that a "bond" or "note of indebtedness" was against us. What was this particular "bond" or "I.O.U." note?

Again, notice the original Greek. The whole expression is: *cheirographon tois dogmasin*. The whole expression in English should be translated "the note of indebtedness in the decrees." The last word, *dogmasin*, is the dative plural of *dogma*, which actually means "decree, ordinance, decision, command" (Arndt, Gingrich). It is used in Luke 2:1 in reference to a decree from Caesar Augustus. It is also used in Acts

17:7, again referring to the "decrees of Caesar." In Acts 16:4 it is used in reference to "decrees...ordained of the apostles" (obviously Paul wasn't referring to THESE decrees being blotted out!).

The same Greek word is also found in Ephesians 2:15, where we find that Christ has reconciled Jews and Gentiles: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the ENMITY [hostility, hatred that existed between Jews and Gentiles], even the law of commandments contained in *ordinances [dogmas]...*" (Eph. 2:14-15).

But here again the question comes up: "What is this law of commandments contained in ordinances?" The original Greek is *ton nomon ton entolon en dogmasin*. Literally, it should be translated "the law of commandments in decrees." Some have *assumed* falsely that it refers to God's Law, or the Ten Commandments — but, as we have already seen, God's Law is SPIRITUAL and endures forever (read Psalm 111:7-8; Rom. 7:14). Whatever *this* law is — it is subject to abolition, and one that consists of "commandments or decrees" — the SAME DECREES mentioned in Colossians 2:14!

So this brings us back to Colossians 2. The decrees (or "ordinances") are mentioned both in verse 14 and in verse 20. As we have already seen, verse 20 plainly refers to MAN-MADE regulations, restrictions, decrees or ordinances — not the laws of God! Let's notice it once again: Paul wrote, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living *in the world*, are ye subject to ordinances [Greek *dogmatizesthe*, literally "bind yourself with decrees"]...*after the commandments and doctrines of MEN?*"

Isn't it plain?

These particular "ordinances," or decrees, were NOT those of the apostles, or of God, but restrictions, or regulations and taboos imposed by MEN!

But precisely what restrictions, or regulations? The parenthetical expression in verse 21 explains. These decrees consisted of various ascetic do's and

don'ts such as "Touch not, taste not, handle not" — *pagan religious injunctions* and teachings of non-Christian philosophers.

Some of these pagans, of course, were masquerading AS Christians (compare II Cor. 11:13-15), but had substituted their own regulations and practices for the teachings of Christ!

The Ordinances of God

The word *dogma* is never used in the New Testament to refer to the statutes or Old Testament ordinances of God, or the Ten Commandments. You can check this for yourself in the *Englishman's Greek Concordance of the Bible*. When the Old Testament ordinances of the Levitical priesthood are mentioned in the New Testament, God inspired the Apostle Paul to use other words.

You may notice the word "ordinances" in the *King James Version* of Hebrews 9:10. Paul wrote of the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical priesthood: "Which stood only in meats and drinks [meat and drink offerings], and divers washings, and carnal [fleshly] ORDINANCES, imposed on them *until* the time of reformation." The Greek word here is *dikaïomasi*, not *dogma*.

The same word is used in Hebrews 9:1 speaking of "ordinances *gdikaïomata* of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary," referring to the Levitical priesthood's ordinances and service of the tabernacle. These are superseded today, since they were only imposed till the coming of the Holy Spirit ("the time of reformation"), which made them unnecessary — spirit-begotten Christians now being able to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). However, nowhere in the New Testament are these ordinances called *dogma*.

The *King James Version* also uses the word "ordinances" in Luke 1:6, speaking of the parents of John the Baptist, Zacharias and Elizabeth: "And they were both *righteous* before God, walking in all the commandments and ORDINANCES *gdikaïomasin* of the Lord blameless."

"Ordinance" also appears in the *King James Version* in Romans 13:2, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the

[governmental] power, resisteth the ordinance of God. . . ." But the Greek word here is *diatage*, not *dogma*.

I Peter 2:13 reiterates: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. . ." — Greek *ktisis*.

Finally, "ordinances" is used in I Corinthians 11:2: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances [*paradosis*], as I delivered them to you."

On the other hand, when Paul refers to *dogma* in Ephesians and Colossians, he means HUMAN RELIGIOUS DECREES — ascetic regulations or at best pseudo-Christian taboos!

The Way of Death

The "ordinances" — *dogma* — referred to in Colossians may have *seemed* good to the natural mind — but there is a way which "seems right" and ends in DEATH (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).

These religious decrees were perversions of the *truth* of God. They led to DEATH. These "ordinances" and "commandments of MEN" caused people to break GOD'S commandments — to SIN. And "the wages of sin is DEATH" (Rom. 6:23).

What, then, was the *cheirographon* ("bond of indebtedness") of ordinances?

It was the "debt note" that was incurred as a result of having followed *human* religious taboos and decrees!

What was the "debt" incurred from following those "ordinances"?

The debt of *forfeiting one's life!*

Now note this carefully. Obedience to the Ten Commandments never led anybody into SIN. Rather, as David said to God, "All thy commandments are *righteousness*" (Ps. 119:172). Rather, as the Apostle John said: "*Sin* is the TRANSGRESSION of the law" (I John 3:4). Sin results from BREAKING the Ten Commandments! Not from *keeping* them.

These *human* religious ordinances caused people to break God's commandments, thereby leading them into SIN. And the penalty was DEATH!

So now let's recapitulate:

Obviously, the Ten Commandments are not "against us." Keeping them, through the power of God's indwelling Holy Spirit, is the way to eternal

LIFE! What is "against us" is the *debt note* associated with *man*-devised dogmas, religious decrees, or commandments which take us AWAY from keeping the commandments of God, and cause us to *break* God's Law. These religious decrees were the "ordinances" Paul wrote about.

Legalistic Asceticism

The Pharisees of Jesus' time had also fallen into the same ascetic spiritual trap as the Gentiles. They had strayed away from properly keeping the Law of God. They added a rigmarole of religious taboos and stringent decrees of asceticism to the law of God. They developed a whole system of religious regulations and traditions which, not uncommonly, were *against* the law of God, but which appeared "holy" and "righteous" in the eyes of the common people.

Christ rebuked them for these human-devised laws and decrees, "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit IN VAIN do they WORSHIP me, teaching for doctrines the COMMANDMENTS OF MEN. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of MEN, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do" (Mark 7:6-8).

These *human* inventions and additions were included in the decrees Paul condemned in the epistle to the Colossians. Whether added by Jews, Gentiles, Pharisees, ascetics, philosophers or whoever, such *dogma* was wrong!

What Was "Nailed to the Cross"?

That which was really "nailed to the cross" was NOT the Ten Commandments at all! Rather, it was the figurative record of our indebtedness due to *sin* — which we incurred as a result of *breaking* God's Laws in order to follow human precepts — which was "nailed to the cross"!

Before we knew the truth of God, we followed the wrong way of life. We became slaves to sin (Rom. 6:12-14, 16, 23). Due to false teaching, we broke God's Laws and incurred a "debt" — we owed God our LIVES! Because we

had sinned, we were "as good as dead" in the sight of God. When we repented of having broken God's Law we acknowledged our *debt*. It is as if we had sent God an I.O.U., a legal certificate, stating: "Because I have followed wrong teachings, and the traditions of men, I have broken your Law. Therefore, I owe you my life. I have incurred the death penalty for my sins.

Signed: John Doe."

But when Christ died for our sins, He took that death penalty upon Himself. In His Person, OUR SINS were "nailed to the cross," or stake. As the Apostle Paul wrote: "For he hath made him [Christ] to be *sin for us*, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

He ransomed us from the grave. He paid our debt-note due to sin FOR us, in our stead! He DIED for us! Therefore, God tore up the I.O.U.

Consequently, when we repent of our sins and accept Christ's payment for them, we are no longer under the death penalty. We have been forgiven. The penalty of death has been REMOVED. We now have peace with God (Rom. 5:1).

But What About Verses 16-17?

Those who quote Colossians 2:14 in a vain attempt to prove God's Law is abolished generally go on to use verses 16 and 17 of this same chapter to argue that Christians should not be concerned if people "judge" them for not observing the Sabbath days. But do these verses show that the Sabbath or holy days of God are *abolished*? Absolutely not!

Read carefully what Paul wrote, word for word; "Let no man [or, no one] therefore judge you in meat or in drink [Greek: eating or drinking], or in respect [*merci*, part] of an holyday [i.e., in connection with the observance of a festival], or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow [foreshadowing, or prophetic type] of things to come; but the body ["is" is in italics in the *King James Version*, and was inserted by the translators — it doesn't belong in the verse] of Christ" (Col. 2:16-17).

In more modern English, we could translate the verses this way: "Let no

one judge you regarding eating or drinking, or [other] part of a holy day . . . but [let] the body of Christ."

In other words, Paul was telling the brethren at Colossae not to be worried, anxious, or concerned about Gentile neighbors or other human beings who dared to "sit in judgment" on them for eating, drinking and rejoicing instead of being ascetic, in observing God's annual Holy Days and Sabbath days. They were not to allow outsiders to "judge" them, but rather to let the "body of Christ," the Church of God, which is in training to "judge" even the angels (I Cor. 6:2-3).

God tells us how to observe His Holy Days through His Word and through the guidelines of His Church. His ministers instruct the people how these days are to be observed. Therefore, brethren should be concerned with how the CHURCH OF GOD would view certain activities on or connected with the Holy Days, or Sabbath days, and not with the ignorant opinions and gossip of unconverted neighbors or surrounding people.

Doesn't that make this scriptural passage clear?

A Modern Application

Now let's apply this principle, brethren. During the Feast of Tabernacles each year, some unconverted people at various festival areas have misunderstood what we were doing there. Sometimes ignorant rumors were circulated. Several years ago in Big Sandy, a rumor circulated that God's people were having a drunken orgy at the Feast. The supposed "evidence"? The large number of beer cans and bottles which were collected in the trash! Unfortunately, the rumor-mongers didn't stop to think that where several thousand people were gathered at a single site, in the course of several days a considerable number of cans or bottles would naturally accumulate!

That is one example of unconverted neighbors passing judgment on God's people for the way they observed the festivals. Another example was even more ludicrous: somehow the rumor was circulated that we were performing animal sacrifices at the Feast site! One person even came and asked to see the

channel that drained away the blood!

Of course, such gossip, rumors and evil speakings should not cause us to become unduly upset or to cease to observe the annual festivals! We are not to let these unconverted people who don't have the facts "judge" us. Rather, we should let the "body of Christ" — *the Church of God* — JUDGE THE MANNER in which we observe the annual festivals. As we are always instructed, we should observe moderation in all things, and never go to excess. We should never unnecessarily give people occasion to vilify or bring reproach upon the Church. We should be wise in the way in which we observe the festivals; we should be careful in our eating and drinking, as the Church has "*judged*," so that we do not carelessly and unnecessarily leave people with the wrong impression. But, on the other hand, we should not be worried or overly concerned about ignorant gossip or false accusations.

Our eating and drinking — or anything — in *any part* or portion of a Holy Day, ought to be done as the Church — the "body of Christ" — judges. This even includes, of course, driving down the street, following directions of festival traffic and parking attendants, the way we keep our temporary homes, and our example while eating out at restaurants. If we remember and follow this admonition, then we will *avoid* much needless gossip, fanciful tales and tall stories.

It should be crystal clear by now, brethren, what was really "nailed to the cross." Jesus Christ was nailed there, bearing our sins upon Himself!

None of the laws, statutes, or ordinances of God were nailed to that upright stake. None of the Holy Days of God were nailed there. None of the Ten Commandments, including the fourth, were nailed there.

Rather, Christ Himself was nailed there bearing the "debt-note" of our sins for us — paying the *penalty* of our sins in our stead when we repent of sin and accept His sacrifice for us — so that we can inherit eternal life.

Let's be thankful for His supreme sacrifice — and for the fact that He was resurrected from the dead, and ever lives to make intercession for us! □

OLD TESTAMENT

(Continued from page 3)

ments by revealing how the ten basic principles are to be applied. We are to *keep* this part of the law, not in the old strictness of the letter, but according to its full spirit and intent.

Ceremonial Part NO LONGER in Force

Then why do we read in Acts 15 that Gentile converts do not have to observe the "law of Moses," except for four points? The answer is made plain in Acts 21:21.

The laws of Moses, here called in question, involved "customs." Read it for yourself. The Jews were mistakenly accusing Paul, saying that he taught Jews living abroad "not to circumcise their children or observe the CUSTOMS" (Acts 21:21).

The controversy in the early Church did not involve the spiritual intent of the *civil* law of Moses. It involved the *ceremonial additions* to the original *civil* law of Moses — *customs* — ADDED ceremonies or rituals.

Why Four Points Specified in Acts 15

This fact is further proven by noticing the four points, included in the law of Moses, which are binding on all Christians everywhere. We are not to eat blood, animals which have been strangled, meats offered to idols (when another's conscience could be defiled), or to commit fornication (Acts 15:20).

These four points were originally part of the civil law of Moses. But these points were also *included later* within the added ceremonies because Gentiles ate their sacrifices with the blood, often strangled their animals, presented them to idols and commonly committed fornication in their religious ceremonies. *To prevent these pagan customs being practiced by Israel*, God included the four civil points of the law along with the rituals (Lev. 17:7, 10; Num. 25:1-3).

Because some would have thought, therefore, that they were abolished along with the temporary rituals when those ceremonies were declared no

longer binding (in Acts 15), these four points had to be specifically declared still in effect. Since these four points were part of the civil law before the addition of the rituals, they remained binding *after* the abolition of the physical sacrifices and washings!

How plain! Only the *ceremonial customs* of the law of Moses have passed away.

The *civil* law of Moses *which defined sin* was not called in question in Acts 15 — it was not involved. (Paul, of course, explains elsewhere that the civil law, once administered in the letter, is now to be observed in the spirit and full intent of its meaning — II Cor. 3.)

The many civil laws regulating tithing, clean and unclean meats, the annual sabbaths, and many others are still for the New Testament Church because they help explain what sin is. They were *not* part of the *ceremonial* law of Moses mentioned in Hebrews 9:10 and in Acts 15.

One other point must be clarified. Certain Jews accused Paul of teaching against physical circumcision, which was instituted long before the law of Moses and therefore was not really a part of it.

Circumcision, in its spiritual intent, is not done away — like the Ten Commandments it is still in force. But, like the Passover, the *manner* of circumcision has been *changed*. Circumcision is now *of the heart*, not of the male foreskin (Rom. 2:28-29; Col. 2:11; Deut. 10:16; 30:6).

A Different Administration

Now let us consider the use of the death penalty in Old Testament times.

A question sometimes asked is this: Why do we not enforce the death penalty for sabbath breakers or for any other violation of the Ten Commandments?

The answer to this question is found in Matthew 5, where Jesus gave instructions, not for a civil government as in the Old Testament, but for a spiritual CHURCH.

In Matthew 5:38-42, Christ revealed that a true Christian should be willing to suffer wrong done to him, if necessary (see also I Peter 2:19-20; Rom. 13:1-7). Jesus said, "Ye have heard it

said an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other cheek also."

He commenced by saying He came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it. He then proceeded to MAGNIFY the APPLICATION of the civil laws as they were given to ancient Israel — not abolishing them, but *magnifying* them and making them more honorable (Isa. 42:21).

He raised them from narrow, national laws — given to a carnal nation to be administered according to the strict letter — to a spiritual plane regulating the whole of human society. Six times Jesus said: "You have heard it said in olden times. . . . But I say to you. . . ." And He then proceeded to expound the *spiritual principles underlying the civil laws of Moses*.

An Eye for an Eye?

The intent and underlying principle of the law of God is love of God and neighbor (Matt. 22:36-40). For a spirit-begotten New Testament Church, Christ showed *how* to love our fellowmen better.

But the instructions given to Moses about "an eye for an eye" were not intended as some people take them. They were laws set up to regulate a human society, with all its faults, in a fair and just manner. And these *principles* are still in effect today.

Many have read the command in Exodus 21:24-25 with shocked amazement at the assumed "cruelty" of the God of the Old Testament. They suppose anyone causing a person accidentally to lose sight of an eye would immediately be seized, held down, and have *his* eye gouged out in just retribution!

But is this a right understanding of the verse?

The context in which we find this command of "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" is explaining the principle of *just recompense* for any wrong done. The very next verse shows that if a person causes his slave to lose his eye or tooth, the slave must be freed as a PAYMENT for the injury — workmen's compensation. Verses 18 and 19 of the same chapter discuss the matter of one per-

son injuring another. What is the punishment? "... he shall *pay* for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed." It was a matter of *payment* or recompense — not revenge by inflicting the same injury.

Then verse 22 shows that a person should be punished if he causes a pregnant woman to have a miscarriage. What is the punishment in this case? Again it is "... and he shall *pay* as the judges determine." The whole context of the "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" command is concerned with the matter of *just recompense* or *payment* for the injury caused — an "eye-value" for an eye, a "tooth-value" for a tooth.

The principle of a "life for a life" definitely applied in *extreme* cases,

where no other penalty would be just and adequate (Ex. 21:12-17, 23).

Why the "Letter of the Law"?

Why did Moses give the spiritual principles only in the letter to ancient Israel?

Ancient Israel was a national church — a physical nation organized into the congregation of Israel. The people did not have the promise of the Holy Spirit; they were a nation of *this* world. Moses said they did not even have the power or strength of will to keep what little he commanded them (Deut. 5:29).

And neither do most human beings today! People don't want to obey the commandments. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not sub-

ject to the law of God..." (Rom. 8:7). For that reason Israel needed punishments for lawbreakers to keep peace and security and ensure obedience in the land. So God ordained that human judges exercise certain of His divine prerogatives and execute punishments on their fellowmen.

Jesus — who was the LORD who spoke to Moses — *gave the civil law to Moses in the strict letter at Mount Sinai for a physical church*. Fifteen centuries later that same Jesus emphasized the SPIRITUAL intent of the law. He also made it possible for the members of His *spiritual* Church — the New Testament Church of God — to keep all His binding laws by sending God's Holy Spirit! □

QUESTION BOX

Should a minister be called "Reverend"?

In Psalm 111:9 we read: "... He [God] hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and REVEREND is *His name*." Other translations of this verse describe God's name as "glorious," "awesome," "inspiring awe," "majestic" and "terrible." The *Jewish Publication Society* translation renders it: "Holy and awful [that is, full of awe, worthy of worship] is his name."

According to *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver and Briggs, the original Hebrew word which is translated "reverend" means to "inspire reverence, godly fear and awe: as an attribute of God... (the) great and awful (God)..."

In this sense, it becomes obvious that the word "reverend" cannot be properly applied to any man. It can only apply to God!

No mere man has a name which is worthy of reverence, a respect so profound it borders on or actually includes worship. Until born again at the resurrection, no man can claim to be "glorious," "awesome," or "majestic." For a man to assume such a title is to claim attributes which only belong to God.

Although society has the custom of

using "reverend" to apply to a minister, the Bible nowhere sanctions this usage. Therefore, we are not to call any minister "reverend" — the Church of God has *no such custom!*

Proper titles given in the New Testament for God's ministers are "elder," "pastor," "evangelist," or even "apostle" — depending on the office to which God has called each man. In no place in the Bible are Paul, Peter, James or John — or any of God's ministers — ever addressed as "reverend."

If we follow the Bible example, then we ought not ever use the title "reverend" for *any* minister.

Should Christian brethren close personal letters to one another "In Jesus' name"?

To Almighty God in heaven a name has a great deal of meaning.

It is so very important, in fact, that one of the Ten Commandments warns, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). Jesus Christ's *name* identifies Him as our Savior. It conveys to our minds His reputation, and responsibilities.

Yes, a name is important in God's sight!

But just what does the phrase "in Jesus' name" signify? Do you know?

God's ministers — when performing the duties of their *office* — close their letters with this phrase. Mr. Armstrong closes his letters to co-workers and members of God's Church this way.

The phrase "in Jesus' name" is just another way of saying, "by Jesus Christ's authority," or "as the direct representative of Jesus Christ."

When closing a letter, God's ministers use this phrase to signify that they are acting as *representatives* of Jesus Christ, doing the work of Christ and His true Church as His called and chosen ministers. It also shows that Jesus Christ — the living Head of this Church — *backs up* what they have written in the body of their letters.

Since, when you are writing a *personal* letter to someone else in God's Church, you are NOT acting as Christ's representative, it would be wrong to sign your letter "in Jesus Christ's name." Doing so could actually be taking Christ's name *in vain!* For the phrase "in vain" (Ex. 20:7) means "to no useful purpose."

However, it would not be wrong to close a letter to a friend with a phrase like, "in Christian fellowship" or "in Christian love." Using this type of closing to a personal letter is perfectly acceptable in God's sight. It conveys that close, truly deep relationship we have together in and through Jesus Christ, as members of His Church. □

Readers Say . . .

(Continued from inside front cover)

the grown-ups in God's Church could visit the place, too.

V. B., Madisonville,
Tennessee

I want to tell you I really enjoyed *The GOOD NEWS* magazine that I received recently. The articles about Africa were of special interest to me. It surely makes one feel a part of the Work to receive news of what God is doing in other parts of the world.

C. W., Willard,
Missouri

Thank you for sending *The GOOD NEWS* magazine, and especially the article with information concerning our brethren in Africa. I had never thought too much about this continent because I didn't feel in any way connected with it. Now I see we have brethren there. Not only that, my contact with God's Work has expanded my thinking tremendously. I can now see what a curse wrong education is and feel real sympathy for the victims of this miseducation. Thank you for opening my eyes to the needs of others. By contrast, I can see how greatly I've been blessed (with the knowledge of God, and also materially).

J. H., Phoenix,
Arizona

Just finished reading Mr. Harold Jackson's final installment on the African tour. It was a very interesting, informative and heartrending story of our brethren in Africa. I thank God for these men who give their time and themselves in writing these articles, for how else could we know about our brothers and sisters in other countries? I just pray that those patient, persevering people in Nigeria will soon be rewarded with a visit from one of God's ministers.

I can imagine how Mr. Jackson must have felt when he found signs of his nocturnal visitor. We live on a homestead here in Alaska, and it still gives me a shock when I go outside on a winter morning and see where moose have been just outside our windows, and they can't compare to an elephant!

I am very happy to join the African brethren in praying that God's Kingdom will come *very* soon. I also pray that the young student who traveled 200 miles without getting to see Mr. Jackson will not give up, but will continue to hang on.

Thank you again for these informative "armchair travelogues" that keep us aware of what is going on elsewhere in the Work, and the specific needs for prayer.

J. L., Stirling,
Alaska

Mr. Jackson's diary of the African tour was (or I should say is) very interesting. The incident with the armed policeman was funny and I laughed, too. Also, the article by Mr. Robert G. Morton was very

enlightening. I've often wondered why the tribes continue to carry on so many wars.

O. W., Macon,
Georgia

Please tell Mr. Jackson his second installment of the African baptizing tour was even more interesting and humorous than the first. Thank you for all the wonderful articles in *The GOOD NEWS*. I have devoured all of them and am going to read them again.

O. W., St. Augustine,
Florida

I want to say thank you for the wonderful articles in the May-June *GOOD NEWS*. I especially liked the one by Mr. Harold L. Jackson about the African tour. There is a lot to pray about! It's very uplifting to read about the adventures of God's ministers and the "little" miracles He performs for His people.

D. B., White Marsh,
Maryland

We are all thankful, I'm sure, for the information on the Foreign Work by Mr. Dart given in *The GOOD NEWS*; also the baptizing tour articles. In the March-April issue, Mr. Harold Jackson's article on the African baptizing tour was very good. It shed light on what is going on in parts of this huge continent, and the zeal of certain people God is calling there. Thank you for all of this.

M. L., Whittier,
California

We were very glad to receive our *GOOD NEWS* magazine. I just couldn't put it down until I read it all! We really enjoyed the articles on the Foreign Work. It made us feel that we could pray more fervently for *all* the work all over the world. Also, the itinerary of the tour was very interesting and made me want to get out our atlas and look up these places on the map. Besides being interesting, it gave me a better picture of how worldwide this Work really is — a fact I hadn't realized as much before.

The article on prayer was also very helpful as all of us tend to get into a "rut" at times with our prayers. We could never read enough articles of this kind. And the article on how to control our tongues — well, that really hit home! Being a woman, I know exactly how easy it is to gossip and not be careful of what we say. We are truly so thankful for the men who write these articles and for the information we receive. We are praying for the continued progress of our *worldwide Work*! Thank you.

B. H., Bean Station,
Tennessee

I would like to tell you how I enjoyed reading my March-April *GOOD NEWS* from cover to cover. Having grown up around Negro people, the articles on Africa and the news of what God is doing there was surely uplifting to me, knowing that many are

hearing God's message in this end time.

The articles, "Spiritual 'Thalidomide'" and "What Should the Passover Mean to You?" were very timely. Thank you for sending them at just the right time.

E. H., Baltimore,
Maryland

We really appreciate the tremendous articles we've been receiving in *The PLAIN TRUTH* and *GOOD NEWS* magazines. The one on the Passover by Mr. Dankenbring was especially striking. It made me really stop and think about my own spiritual condition. Please keep them coming. We need every article.

R. N., Longview,
Texas

BIBLE STUDY

(Continued from page 11)

Word for self-examination and correction so the mind of Christ can become a part of you (Phil. 2:5).

A Crash Program

Examine yourself. Have YOU been studying the Bible regularly? Have you even read it through from Genesis to Revelation yet? [Editor's note: Ambassador College recently published a new reprint article titled "Read the Book." It was written for *TOMORROW'S WORLD* magazine several years ago by Mr. David Jon Hill. This article shows you how to go about reading your Bible from cover to cover. Write for your copy, even if you read it before in *TOMORROW'S WORLD*. It will do you good to read it again — especially in conjunction with this fine article on Bible study.]

How well do you KNOW the Bible — its content and message? How capable are you of wielding that spiritual SWORD that cuts both ways (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12)?

Brethren, as God opens your mind to understand more of His Word, you will find yourself embarked on a fascinating study of the most important document on earth. So don't neglect studying your Bible. Don't let carelessness, pressure, or other activities crowd out the most valuable educational opportunity at your disposal.

STUDY THE BOOK! □