

# The Good News

*International Magazine of The Church of God*



THE SAHARA DESERT?

APRIL 1969



## More About Our Cover...

No, this IS NOT the Sahara Desert in North Africa! This is a photograph taken by our own Ambassador College staff, of TOPSOIL "at rest" in Eastern England! Coarse sand particles are all that remain of this formerly fertile surface soil. For an inside look at how Ambassador College in England has dealt with this problem read the article in this issue, "A Sabbath Rest for the Land," beginning on page 9.

Maidani — Ambassador College

## What our READERS SAY . . .

### January Cover

"In *The* January-February GOOD NEWS you have a truly magnificent picture of the new Administration Building. I for one, am eagerly waiting for the finished portrait you will offer to us Co-Workers in the near future. From the picture in *The* GOOD NEWS I sincerely believe that it is one of the most beautiful, and majestic buildings, landscape included, on the face of this earth. God must be well pleased with it."

Gordon K., Duluth, Minnesota

"By the way, where did you find those mountains you put on the front of *The* GOOD NEWS? I never saw them when I visited the College."

Mrs. E. W. C., Denver, Colorado

### "Does It Really Pay to Tithe?"

In June 1964 my wife and I started to listen to the broadcast and receive *The* PLAIN TRUTH. That time was an extremely low period in our lives financially, but by February 1965 I had a new job with a monthly salary of \$475. New knowledge and truths were beginning to be opened to us, especially the one that says, 'Prove me now herewith' (Malachi 3:10). By each following February my income had increased 30% over the previous February with this current year resulting in a monthly income of \$1,375. Just two days ago we sent in our regular tithe, plus \$30 as a special offering in response to the needs of the Work. You can guess what happened! Today I received a \$300

bonus check from my employer whom I have been with for just four months. That was a 1,000% return on the \$30 offering! Does it really pay to tithe?"

Mr. and Mrs. Donald R.,  
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

"Since this income tax check we received recently is needed so desperately in God's Work, and since God blessed us so much this past year in every way, it is our privilege to return it to God, to use as He sees fit (through you, as His servants) in His Work. If it had not been for tithing, we wouldn't have had *any* interest or other deductions of this nature because God has helped us to get completely out of debt — something that we had never been able to do in the ten previous years of our marriage. Please find a \$500 check enclosed."

Mr. and Mrs. John G. Jr.,  
Chillicothe, Ohio

### Thank you, Mr. Royer!

"Thank you so much for the article in *The* GOOD NEWS about teen-agers by Mr. Royer. Lots of times it's easy to feel sorry for ourselves, but when such a fabulous future is right around the corner, as pointed out in the article, I can't help but strive harder and try to grow more to make it. Every time an article like this comes out, I'm sure every teen-ager in God's Church reads it because it applies to them; I only wish all of them would heed it! Thank you, again, for printing it because I lapped up each and every word."

Jan P., Dassel, Minnesota

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change in your address. Please include both old  
and new address. IMPORTANT!

# Prepare Your Family For God's Sabbath

*In all too many cases our children are neglected or ignored on God's Sabbath. They cause embarrassment to parents, disturb services, are not happy. Read this practical article and find out how every member of your family from the baby to the father can keep God's Sabbath Holy — and joyfully!*

by David Jon Hill

**Y**OU'VE seen martyred Myrtle a million times! Maybe you *are* Myrtle — maybe *your wife* is! Martyred Myrtle is a *family* problem!

A battered blue station wagon pulls into the parking lot. Four doors and the tailgate open and kids tumble out of every opening but the driver's side. Dad smiles broadly at the Deacon or his assistant directing traffic and immediately strikes up a conversation — ignoring his family.

Mother Myrtle struggles out her side — ten-year-old Charlie has already opened the door and is now halfway to the hall, where he saw one of his friends as they pulled in. Phillip, now just seven, is running after Charlie (who doesn't much care for Phillip's company because he's just a *little* kid)! Phillip doesn't notice the car bearing down on him (he's so small the driver doesn't notice *him* either), *but Mother notices!*

Mother yells, "Phillip! Look out for that car!" He sees it just in time, stops in his tracks, the car passes, he dashes on to catch Charlie. Meanwhile Myrtle has dropped her diaper bag — good thing she had the milk in a plastic bottle! Henry, their fourteen-year-old, is nowhere to be seen. Only little Sarah (four now — she was the first child they had after they came into the Truth, so they called her Sarah) was there to be of help. But she is having her hands full keeping hold of Jeremiah, two-and-a-half! So Myrtle warns Sarah to stay right here and keep track of Jeremiah while she puts down the family Bibles, coloring books, and

toy bag on the front seat. Then she sets to work picking up the spilled contents of the diaper bag with her one free hand while she holds baby Lois with the other!

Thankfully an elderly couple, the Smiths, notice her dilemma and come over to help. Mrs. Smith helps her with the diaper bag and offers to carry her books and things into the hall for her. Mr. Smith shuts all the station wagon doors, including the tailgate, and offers to help Sarah with Jeremiah. But Myrtle says she can manage — she doesn't want her husband to think she's bothering other people.

## Destination — Back Row

The arrival storm over, she heads for the hall and the last row of seats near the exit. Hair a little dishevelled, babe in arms, diaper bag clutched in a half-free hand, Sarah clutching her skirt with one hand and Jeremiah with the other, Mrs. Smith riding point, Martyred Mother Myrtle makes her way.

She smiles hello to several of her acquaintances — some in similar circumstances — but she can't shake hands or stop to talk. No hands are free. And she must at all cost reserve the family seats — she has her orders! She *had better be* finding seats for the family; she *had better be* corralling all the children, getting the books, toys, games, etc. sorted out; she *better be* making a final check with the baby, feeding it, changing its diapers; she *better be* etc., etc., etc.!

And the Master of the house? Why he's been "fellowshipping" i.e., he's

been chewing the fat and shooting the breeze with others like himself, (breaking the Sabbath). He's been waiting with one weather eye to be sure he plants himself squarely in front of the Head Deacon, the Local Elder — and he most certainly will be there when the Pastor pulls up! He'll greet him cheerily, all teeth and smiles with a good hard, aggressive "spiritual" handshake (probably just as the minister is trying to help his own family out of the car!).

## Time for Services

Dad sits down just as the song leader asks everyone to stand. Henry is missing — he's with a group of teenagers halfway down the other section. It's too late now! Dad gives Myrtle a furious look for her oversight, then turns a beaming smile toward the podium and begins with great gusto to sing *Depart From Evil!*

Halfway through the second song, *Psalm 127*, just as he is singing, "Lo, children are the gift of God, And sons the blessing. . . ." Dad notices with chagrin that little Jeremiah is vigorously using Sarah's coloring crayons to mark up a Hymnal! Dad is on the aisle and Mom is next to him, then Sarah, Jeremiah, Phillip and finally Charlie. He hoarsely whispers to Charlie (Myrtle has the baby, Phillip can't be counted on, Jeremiah always resists and fights with Sarah) to stop Jerry's destructive and embarrassing actions *right now!*

This disturbs baby Lois who begins to cry and won't accept the tranquilizer

or the bottle. Charlie's action starts Jeremiah into an unpleasant duet with his little sister! A full three rows are conscious of the unpleasant activity by now!! Myrtle leaves quickly for the Mothers' Room, red-faced but thankful to be gone from the scene. Mercifully the last hymn selection is a long one, and one the congregation knows well everything will have a chance to settle down before the prayer... *His Mercy Never Fails*, page 25.

### The Sermonette

Myrtle returns to her seat with the baby quieted just as the first speaker is introduced. She sits down and begins her usual beginning-of-the-services ritual. She takes a pad and a couple of blankets from the diaper bag and arranges the baby on the floor. That done she passes out the Bibles and note pads, then the coloring books, crayons — being sure not to get them mixed up because each is possessive of his own — a few whispered instructions and in only about five minutes the entire family is settled down. Last, but not least, she passes her husband, his Majesty Harried Harry, his Bible! He just uses a Bible, listens and turns to the Scriptures — he makes Myrtle take the notes!

Myrtle asks Harry how to spell the young man's name and what date is it, what was the first scripture — she hopes to catch a clue as to the subject in the remaining minutes of the sermonette. Something about the chain of responsibility, from the Father to the Son to man to woman to the rest of the household (I Cor. 11:3). She looks at Harry and thinks about how he certainly is the boss all right, and he's sitting there smugly thinking the same thing!

It seems however that the speaker's context may have been missed!

### Announcements and Sermon

One more hymn gives Myrtle a chance to dash out with Sarah. When she returns the minister is halfway through the announcements. Well, she never takes notes on announcements anyway. They are always about some new church started somewhere, or an ordination of someone she never heard

of, or the need of someone locally, or a church social — the family could always remember the things that applied to them, no need for notes!

By the time the sermon begins, her family is fairly well settled, as are most others. The general rustle of books, papers and bags; the murmur of whispered conversation; the careless scraping of a hundred chairs; the diminutive din of a dozen miscellaneous noises — all these have basically settled down. The congregation is at last at rest, ready to receive the message.

Harry had eaten fairly heavily just before he left for services, so about twenty minutes into the sermon he dozes off. The hall was warm, it was quiet except for the minister's voice and he found it more and more difficult to concentrate. He slept! Myrtle rudely woke him. Phillip was teasing the girl in the next row. Harry, in anger, reached over and gave Phillip a good *pinch*, with the promise in his eyes of more punishment later. Phillip sat back and sulked for about ten minutes, then decided he needed to go to the bathroom. On his way back to his seat he woke up baby Lois. Myrtle swept her up and disappeared into the "Mother's Room" for the remainder of the sermon.

When the sermon was over and the closing hymn had been sung, Harry's fellow Spokesman, Roger, led the closing prayer. Harry, who always hoped (and feared) that *he* would be asked, wondered why he wasn't!

### Free-For-All

With the services over, Harry made his way to the front, abandoning his family again. He was among the first to congratulate the minister on his fine sermon (which Harry had slept through most of) — then he just sort of stood around hoping some Deacon would ask for help with the song books or something.

His children?

Henry was giggling over someone else's MAD magazine out in the parking lot with a group of his fellow teens. Charlie was playing tag, in a modest way, running between the chairs, bumping into people from time to time. Phillip was up on the stage investigating an empty light socket in the floor

lights — with his fingers! Sarah was looking for mother, quiet and half-lost in the crowd. Lois was being held for a moment by an appreciative matron while Myrtle got a chance for a little conversation (gossip?).

Twenty minutes later the family somehow got back together, miraculously, and left for home. They were home by a quarter to five, with an hour and a half of Sabbath time left on their hands. Charlie and Phillip went outside to play — in their Sabbath clothes. Henry slumped down in a chair and disconsolately checked the TV guide to see what was on at the crack of sundown. Then he got up and raided the refrigerator. Teens are always hungry! Harry got a beer and reluctantly started reading last month's PLAIN TRUTH. Myrtle busied herself with Sarah and Lois, changed her clothes, sat down to feed the baby, and after about an hour began to fix supper.

### Be Honest!

This is not some fairy tale. I've seen it happen! No, every family is not this bad. Yes, there is a degree of the Harried Harry, Martyred Myrtle family Sabbath experience in *nearly every family!*

Now be honest. Recognize and admit where there *are* parallels in *your* family. Harry doesn't act like this maliciously, even deliberately — this is just *the way Harry* is! He would be shocked if he were told how he looked to others, because he sees himself as a believing, manly head of the house, Spokesman-Club-attending, help-the-brethren whenever-possible, loyal, tithe-paying Church of God member! (Jer. 17:9.)

Myrtle can't understand why she has so much trouble with the kids — they get spanked often enough, and Harry certainly is the boss! It's probably just that there are so many, and they came so fast. If she wasn't changing diapers she was pregnant — and it had been that way for more than fifteen years! She can't be everywhere all the time. She picks up after the family, sews for them, cooks washes, irons, cleans etc. And Harry's job makes him so tired he doesn't have much time for the family when he comes home — or he was up late the night before at Spokesman

Club and needs to catch up on sleep tonight.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

### Prepare for the Sabbath

Friday is "preparation day" for the Sabbath. Last-minute things around the home need to be done. Sabbath foods planned if not prepared. The family scrubbed and clean, clothes ready for the Sabbath. But there are some things that require the whole week's preparation, or the Sabbath will be a riot instead of a rest. Too often we overlook many things that can be done *during the week* that will prevent embarrassing problems from arising on the Sabbath. In a sense these preparations are more the job of the woman of the house, but it is certainly the husband's *responsibility* to help her recognize, plan and execute these preparations — and believe it or not the children can also participate!!

It is clearly a problem of responsibility! Each member of the family has an individual responsibility — even the baby! The husband who forces his wife to care for *all* of the children — especially when there are four, five or more — is inconsiderate. He is *not* loving his wife as himself, he is *not* fulfilling his duty to his family.

Ministers and those who have deacon duties may have to abandon their families in order to serve the entire group. BUT in these cases you will probably notice the man has made some *other* provision so that his wife is *not* overburdened, so she may also benefit from the sermons.

### Father: TAKE CHARGE WITH LOVE!

Before next Sabbath, as long before as possible, you men need to sit down with your families, take charge *in love*, and examine your total family conduct. *Take also* the RESPONSIBILITY of being the head of the family. *Write down on paper*, and thoroughly review with each member of the family the Sabbath procedure!

Explain, lovingly and with awe and respect toward God, how the Sabbath is HOLY AND SPECIAL TIME God has set apart from creation. Teach that we are to prepare for that hallowed time,

*ahead* of time, and as thoroughly as possible so that every moment of the Sabbath when it comes may be used for the purpose for which God created it. Show how each member of the family, even a little person (Prov. 20:11) is directly responsible to God for how he conducts himself on this special day.

Show the family how it must function as a well-organized team. Stress total unity, individual responsibility! Where the family is a little larger, explain how mother needs everyone's help. This applies during the week as well as on Sabbath! Each child of walking, talking age should be responsible for his own clothing, closet, dresser, bed or room. There should be a place for everything and everything in its place. This, of course, is impossible to teach to the children unless you parents are *practicing examples* yourselves!

### What about Baby?

This is a common problem. Baby won't sleep at the time of services, he's not used to the time, and the noise and people disturb him. Mother can't keep track of the little one and all the others at the same time. The three-year-old can't hold in for the whole period of the services. All of the crayons, coloring books, games, pencils, papers, Bibles and notebooks make an awful mess and cause a noisy disturbance.

If correction is given during services it causes a further distraction. If correction is *not* given the situation gets worse: squirming, whispering, giggling! Therefore the little ones are: 1) *ignored* with the hope that the minister may give them a quieting glance; 2) they are fixed with a frantic gaze and administered the gas-jet treatment — "ssssshhhh!"

The solution? Train the baby and the little ones at home! Begin from the beginning. Begin NOW! The time of day at which services are held is no surprise. Train the baby at home to take his nap EVERY SINGLE DAY at the same time as services are conducted. Since many women use a little pallet on the floor — and here extreme caution must be exercised to insure warmth and

safety from adult feet — during church services, this is exactly what your practice should be at home *every day during the week*.

Since noise is also a factor, and since we sometimes use different halls for different occasions, it is a good idea to change the *place* in the home often. Have music on the radio going during the nap, or listen to the news at a good volume. Do your cleaning with the vacuum sweeper, or do the dishes at the same time in the same room. In this way the child learns to sleep at a certain *time*. It becomes habit quickly, *regardless of the place or noise*.

Do the training *at home!* Any spanking necessary to discipline the child to this habit, done at home six days a week, will condition him to such an extent that usually a touch and a whispered "no" will suffice on the *seventh day*. This may not work the first few Sabbaths of course. While you are establishing the habit, please *do* get up in services and go to the private place provided and take care of the matter *immediately* — or the child will begin to realize he can get away with fussing *at church*, even though he knows well that he can't *at home!*

For all this training it would be a good idea to — as a family — review Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong's booklet on child rearing. This booklet teaches you *how* to do the training while this present article just deals with *what* to do.

### Daddy and Discipline

Every Dad ought to know, from constant experience at home, that when *he* takes a hand it is more effective than when Mother has to do all the correcting. A babe in arms should be mostly the mother's responsibility. But when the child grows older it needs to know that things are even more serious and that there is a parental unity when Father intervenes. Too many times by far have I seen women commuting to the Mother's Room to administer ineffectual correction to a rebellious youngster time after time during one service. This can be avoided if the husband will always be alert to *his* responsibility. If the wife is not

effective the first time, then the husband should bestir himself. He should take the child out, with dignity, severity and love speak briefly to the child about its conduct, administer the proper correction and return to his seat.

This procedure works at home, at church, in restaurants (wherever there is a *private* place to take care of the correction). The beauty of the plan is that if it is pursued with consistency from the beginning, the child learns *fast*. Soon it is not necessary at all, or at the most a touch, a gesture or a word is sufficient. And the child becomes happy!

You know that the pattern of this age is exactly opposite to these suggestions. Read Isaiah 3 out loud to your family. Comment on it. Get them all to discuss it. Have each see the reasons why this is so wrong a family setting. Inspire them to be completely different. Be a real Spokesman at home for your family: Have a purpose, be crystal clear, get the facts, be organized move to action, attack, inspire: LOVE YOUR FAMILY!

We live in a nation *without* FATHERS! Bring that Father figure back to *your* home, not as a domineering dictator spouting negative no's all the time, in anger — *work* at it in love, in prayer. YOUR family is YOUR *first responsibility*!

### Hallowed Halls?

The Church of God is *not a building*. The Church of God is the Body of Christ, composed of all you *members*. It is the *people*, the called-out-ones, it is YOU! All your family is included in the principle Joshua proclaimed: "... as for *me and my house*, WE will serve the Lord!" (Joshua 24:15.)

What we *do* in every place at every time represents God, and we are judged by Him as well.

We do not have any holy halls, but when we meet during Holy time, or even at any other meeting called in the name of Jesus Christ, and we in prayer request the presence of Christ, that time and place become Holy by His presence!

We live in an age of disrespect for everyone and everything. Teach your

children what a privilege it is to meet where and when we meet. Teach them to come before their Creator with awe, respect, dignity, carefulness, concern, and *love*, because love is always *thoughtful*. Teach each member of your family that God is present at the services. Dress for God. Act for God. Sit, listen and learn for God. Keep the place clean for God. Keep the place quiet for God. Worship God!

### Respect

This teaching will have to be practiced in daily life if you are to expect proper conduct of your children on the Sabbath. Teach at all times the respect for the property of others — and your own property and person. Teach respect for every adult in the congregation, not just the minister and deacons. Show that respect, yourself. The children will imitate you.

Each child should be responsible for *carrying and caring for his books, colors or whatever*. Respect for the song books must be *taught!* And *practiced!*

Even Mother needs respect! When the children see your outgoing love and concern for the woman who bore your children, when they see you interested in her welfare, praising her efforts, squeezing her from time to time or coming up behind her and kissing her on the neck (all your correction of her takes place in private, away from the public *and* the children) — when the children see you anxious to help her into and out of the car, especially when she's burdened with babies and bags; when they see you neat about your person and the house, THE CHILDREN WILL FOLLOW YOUR EXAMPLE.

This is not to be construed with being woman-dominated. This is *not* to indicate that the household should orbit around Mom. But she should be respected as the weaker vessel, yes even "given *honor*" (I Peter 3:7). When this respect begins to permeate the lives of the children, Martyred Myrtle will have her chance to become Merry Myrtle. With everyone carrying his share of the load, she will have more time to apply herself to fulfilling Proverbs 31. If Mother joins her husband in teaching the children (verse 26), before the end she may be blessed

with the fulfillment of verse 28: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

### What About Henry?

What about the young man of the family. He should be learning many responsibilities; he's next in line to take over should Dad die or become incapacitated. This doesn't obviate having fun, but fun and freedom are earned. There is a time for everything also, and Sabbath is a good time for the young man of the house to help control the younger children, help get the family into the meeting hall with Sabbath dignity.

There are many scriptures that show young men (and women) their responsibilities — show how they can get the most out of life: many examples in Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings; specific instructions in Proverbs. Here's the principle of the thing from Ecclesiastes: "Rejoice, O young man, in your adolescence, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your *full-grown* youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Therefore remove (the lusts that end in) sorrow and vexation from your heart and mind, and put away evil from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity — transitory, idle, empty and devoid of truth. Remember (earnestly) also your Creator that (you are not your own, but His property), *now* in the days of your youth, before the evil days come or the years draw near when you will say (of physical pleasures), I have no enjoyment in them" (Eccl. 11:9 - 12:1 *Amplified Bible*).

### Toys for Tots

When you get right down to it, just how much paraphernalia do you need to keep the kiddies occupied during services?

When they are babies, they sleep. As they grow older and don't need a nap any longer, but are not yet school age (a very short period of time) they admittedly need something to absorb their attention or they are going to

(Continued on page 19)

# WHY Do Christians Have TRIALS?

*Some seem to think God's people should never encounter difficulties, meet trials or tests. Is this true? Few understand why Christians have trials!*

by William F. Dankenbring

**A**LL OF God's people meet trials and tests during their Christian life. Trials arise which seem to *completely baffle them!* Problems come seemingly from nowhere. Life becomes confusing, frustrating — and it seems that EVERYTHING goes wrong!

Why?

Have YOU ever felt this way?

There is a reason for such thoughts, feelings and frustrations! They do not just "happen." It is time we all REALIZED the root CAUSE of our problems and difficulties!

WHY do Christians have trials? What is the purpose of troubles, trials, and tribulation? *Should* a Christian have to go through troubles and trials in this life?

It is time you knew the answer, and searched your own life, and learned the purpose of your trials!

## WHY Trials?

Does the Bible teach *smooth sailing* for true Christians whom God is using? Did the men of God, whose lives pleased God as recorded in the Bible, have an easy time of it, or were they constantly meeting trials, tests, troubles of every sort — being continually forced to cry out to God for deliverance?

Listen to God's Word: "MANY are the afflictions of the *righteous*: but the Eternal delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).

"We must through *much tribulation* enter the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

WHY is this so?

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall suffer persecution*" (II Tim. 3:12).

WHY does God allow it?

"If we SUFFER, we shall also reign with Him" (II Tim. 2:12).

But *Why?*

## Overwhelming Trials

God's greatest servants suffered trials. Some of them were so depressed at times that they wanted to DIE. Life became too much of a struggle. Their problems grew too weighty and overpowering. Death seemed to be the "only out."

Job became so discouraged that he groaned, "Oh that my GRIEF were throughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea" (Job 6:2-3).

Moses, the man of God, once felt so overwhelmed he exclaimed to God, "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?" (Num. 11:11, 12.)

Elijah, also, knew trials and discouragement. Fearful of his life, he fled from Jezebel who sought to kill him. He wandered into the wilderness and requested to die (I Kings 19:1-4). He felt like giving up — quitting!

God had to rebuke him, to straighten up his attitude (verses 9-18).

Elijah, too, was human. At times he had problems with his attitude. But because he yielded himself to GOD, as an instrument in His hands, and drew near to God, and prayed FERVENTLY,

he was mightily USED of God and worked miracles (see James 5:16-18).

Trials did not drag Job, Moses, Elijah, or other servants of God down into the muck and mire. Why? Because when they saw their trials and failings, they did not allow depression to take over. They did NOT "give up" and QUIT.

Rather, they REPENTED of their discouragement, their negative attitudes — and they turned to God. He forgave them, and imparted spiritual strength to them — and mightily USED them in His Work!

Because of trials, it seems many are tempted to give up the fight and quit, just before achieving success! Many, for lack of a little more perseverance, have come short and FAILED! They were willing to endure "so far" — and that was *it*.

Rather than face up to their problems, they hid their faces, ran from the problems — *and died*, spiritually! They allowed clouds of depression to befog their vision, lost sight of the GOAL of the Christian life, and began to wander aimlessly, groping in darkness.

Are YOU allowing trials and an attitude of discouragement to make a shipwreck of YOUR spiritual life?

## Was Paul Discouraged by Trials?

What about the apostle Paul? He was used to write more books of the New Testament than any other man. Was he ever discouraged? Depressed?

Paul was human, and undoubtedly he suffered many discouragements. When old friends and long-time converts fell away from God's truth, Paul must have suffered great personal pain and heartache. Paul's life was filled with trou-

bles, trials, turmoils and narrow escapes.

But did he ever allow discouragement from trials to reign in his life?

Let Paul speak for himself. "We are troubled on every side, *yet not distressed*, we are perplexed, *but not in despair*; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the LIFE also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (II Cor. 4:8-10).

Although beset and buffeted by circumstances beyond his control, Paul was not discouraged. He was not a quitter. He declared, "For which cause WE FAINT NOT; but though our outward man perish, *yet the inward man is RE-NEWED day by day*" (II Cor. 4:16).

Paul shared intimately his sufferings as a minister of God with the Corinthians, writing, "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in *afflictions*, . . . behold, we live; as *chastened*, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always REJOICING; as poor, yet making many rich; as *having nothing*, and yet possessing all things" (II Cor. 6:4, 9-10).

Surely, if any man had anything to be discouraged and disheartened about, Paul did! But yet, as we just finished reading, he REJOICED *in his trials* and afflictions, problems and sufferings!

Paul had suffered — personally. Therefore he was able to write the Corinthians and say, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; *who comforteth us in ALL OUR TRIBULATION*, that we may be able to comfort them which are in *any trouble*, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (II Cor. 1:3-5).

Paul had been tempted, so he was able to succor and help others who were suffering, distressed, and even discouraged. Paul could comfort and sympathize with others who had trials and problems.

Paul stayed CLOSE to God.

Discouragement did not have a chance around him! His life was totally

DEDICATED, *devoted* to God! Whether he lived, or died, did not matter with him (Phil. 1:21-24). Whether he abounded, or was abased did not count with him (Phil. 4:11-12).

His eyes were always Godward (Col. 3:1-2). His affection was on things above, not on earthly, sensual, fleshly things. His MIND was centered, concentrated on forgetting past trials, and past failures or discouragements — and his attention was focused on those things which are before, pressing FORWARD to the high calling of Christ Jesus in the Kingdom of God (Phil. 3:13-14).

Paul had totally CONQUERED discouragement! Toward the end of his life, he wrote Timothy in absolute faith and assurance, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: *and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing*" (II Tim. 4:7-8).

Here is an example of resolute faith, determined hope and assurance.

Paul had no room for doubt, discouragement or despair. His life was FILLED with radiant hope and faith toward God.

Yours can be also, if you will draw CLOSE to God through DAILY prayer and diligent Bible study, drinking in of His inspiring, encouraging Word. Your life can be filled with HOPE, and joy, and you can have a POSITIVE approach to every problem, by drawing near to your heavenly Father who gives every good and perfect gift!

But you must be willing to do YOUR part.

#### Still Human

Too often, once we are converted, we *lose sight* of the fact that we STILL *have human nature*. We forget the scripture, "There is a way *which seemeth right* unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of DEATH." That scripture applies not only to the world, brethren — it applies also to true Christians!

Some of God's people assume they AUTOMATICALLY know which way they should go. They fail to see the

pitfalls looming in their path due to the presence of *human nature*! Therefore, in their innocence, they carelessly plod onward, ASSUMING they will naturally do what is right, confident that no great trials will come to them.

And then, suddenly, they find themselves in the midst of TROUBLE — confronted by *unexpected trials*.

And they begin to wonder, "WHY?"

"How could God let this happen?" They are tempted to think GOD has failed them somewhere — *forgetting* that most of our problems are due to our own foolishness — our human nature leading us astray.

Jeremiah was inspired to write, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is NOT *in himself*: it is NOT *in man that walketh to direct his steps*" (Jer. 10:23). Jeremiah meant YOU.

YOU don't know, automatically, of yourself, which way to go, how to make decisions pertaining to your life, what God's will is. You need to constantly check up on yourself, seek the counsel of GOD, keep close to Him in prayer and constant, submissive Bible study.

Notice! Solomon wrote, "Trust in the LORD *with all thine heart*; and LEAN NOT UNTO THINE OWN UNDERSTANDING. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and *he shall direct thy PATHS*" (Prov. 3:5-6).

Do you see?

The way that seems right to a man — *seems right to YOU* — is the WRONG WAY! And IF you are enticed into following *that way*, which looks so good, you will sooner or later find yourself hemmed in by sudden troubles — confronted with towering problems!

And, whenever necessary, God will chasten you to remind you of this great lesson!

David was inspired to write, "BEFORE I was afflicted I went astray: but NOW have I kept thy word" (Psalm 119:67). Notice! His afflictions brought him *back* to God's way! He exclaimed, "It is GOOD *for me* that I have been AFFLICTED; that I might *learn thy statutes*" (verse 71). David knew the value of God's loving chastisement and correction!

Yes, our *trials, troubles*, "afflictions,"

(Continued on page 13)

# A Sabbath Rest for the Land!

*Farming God's way is paying off at Bricket Wood. Soil fertility levels have jumped, and a foundation has been laid for healthy crops and animals. Now read on and learn more about the connection between soil, food and the Sabbatical Year!*

by Colin D. Sutcliffe

“SIX YEARS thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: but in the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie still” (Ex. 23:10).

The new Agriculture Programme here at the campus in Bricket Wood has just finished observing a SABBATICAL YEAR.

Here is a report which brings you an on-the-spot and up-to-date account of just what has taken place. But first let's go back and see what led up to this new programme in Agriculture, that we now find set in the beauty of England's Hertfordshire countryside.

## In the Beginning

By the end of the Ministerial Conference in January, 1967, news of the new Farm Programme at Big Sandy,

Texas, had inspired Mr. McNair and Mr. Hunting to propose a similar change for the farm surrounding the college at Bricket Wood, England.

At this time our farm in England had been operating for some five and a half years, but the decision was made to reorganize it in accordance with the principles already outlined for Big Sandy.

It was also proposed to follow Big Sandy with the introduction of an Agriculture Course at Ambassador College, Bricket Wood.

As a student, in the last semester of my fourth year at Bricket Wood, I suddenly found myself, with my family, transferred for a six-month stay on the Texas campus! While there, I was to learn just what Mr. Schurter and his

ABOVE—Aerial view of “Observatory Field,” Bricket Wood campus. This field has become the center of the farm experimental area. On the left is a thick, 18 inch stand of American Sweet Clover. It has been mown regularly during the Sabbatical Year and left on the field as green manure. As a nitrogen-fixing legume it has done much to raise soil fertility. A future mowing and later, a light cultivation will complete this soil-building demonstration. The fields pictured have undergone similar experiments, ending in the turning back of the crops as green manure or other manure tests. The results during this first Sabbatical year of rest for the Bricket Wood campus is a tremendously increased fertility.

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team of men had discovered about rapid methods of soil rejuvenation and

the application of God's Law to the land.

By early August, 1967, we were back in England, loaded with information and new ideas. It was inspiring to feel that a "mustard seed" of agricultural truth was about to be planted in Europe. "Truth" that is due to grow from all three Ambassador Colleges and spread and overshadow and finally replace the perverted food production system of this world!

### Year of Rest

The fall of 1967 was the beginning of the seventh year of the farm at Bricket Wood and time to begin observing God's commanded year of rest.

No one who rejects this law will ever come to a full understanding of nutritious food production. Let me hasten to point out that we know *we* have not yet come to that "full understanding" — FAR FROM IT! We are still, in a sense, only looking through a veritable "keyhole," but we are at least on our way and headed in the right direction. Nearly everyone else in this world is "on his way" too — unfortunately in the *WRONG* direction!!

By late October the harvest had been gathered in. Jobs like canning and bottling were finished, too. This is the time when farmers and gardeners entering their Sabbatical Year should cut off preparatory work for what would be their next harvest.

### How the "Rest" Is Observed

To know *HOW* the Sabbatical Year is kept, we must first understand God's purpose in commanding its observance. Many think the word "REST" means *let the soil lie IDLE!* Some have even wondered if the farmer should sell his stock (if he has any), padlock the gates and either go for a long holiday, or get himself a job. This is a totally *WRONG* impression!!

The seventh *YEAR* of rest is typified by the seventh *DAY* of rest, and you know that you are *NOT* commanded to observe the weekly Sabbath by climbing into bed and lying perfectly still for the 24 hours!

The weekly Sabbath is a time when we *are* commanded to recharge physically and spiritually — the time when



we lay the foundation for our success during the coming six days. This is done by making the necessary effort to attend God's "holy convocation" or assembly (Lev. 23:3).

Likewise a *YEAR* of rest is the time when we physically recharge our soil and lay the foundation for success during the coming *six* years!

Many make considerable physical effort on the seventh *DAY* and travel *many* miles to be renewed with God's *spiritual* food and people will still continue to do so in the millennium (Isa. 66:23). In a similar way, those "*resting*" the land must make considerable effort to recharge their soil with physical plant food.

*HARVESTING* is the key to the Sabbatical Year! Crops are *NOT* to be planted *for harvesting*. Lev. 25:5 shows that the principle involved is not one of refraining from *planting* or *growing*. The growth of plants is actually encouraged during the Sabbatical Year!

The scripture states: "That which groweth of its own accord *OF YOUR HARVEST*, thou shalt not reap." Here we see it is the *harvesting* that is in question. Even here (when you understand the scriptures) the command is *only* against the harvesting of commercial crops. We are told quite plainly in Ex. 23:10-11 that the poor can come and take whatever their *immediate* needs may be. You can imagine if your farm was situated close by a village, that the poor might require all the volunteer grain and fruit your land would produce in the seventh year!

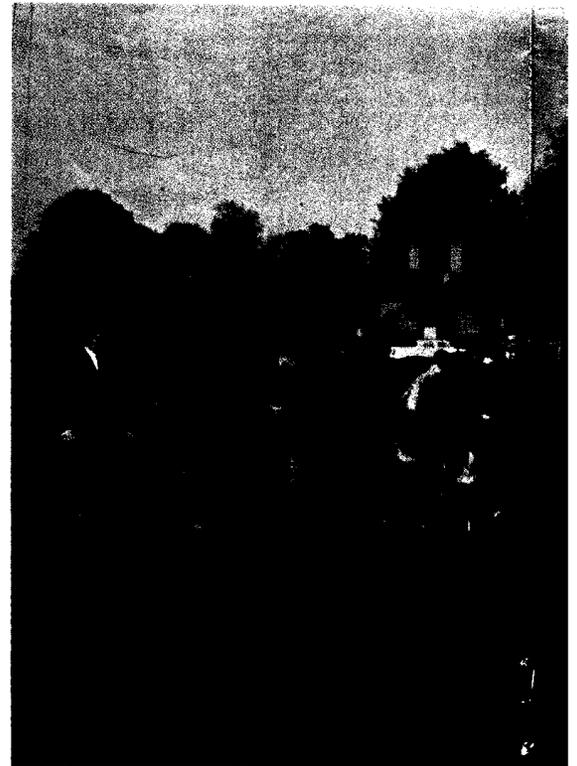
Then what is the specific *PHYSICAL* purpose of the Sabbatical Year? It refers to the principle of building up large reserves or organic residues, both in and on the soil. The diligent farmer will take full advantage of his *one-in-seven-year* opportunity. In that year he should see that his soil grows the biggest *quantity* of the best *quality* plant matter it can produce.

Following a grain harvest, many fields may be almost devoid of volunteer new growth. The farmer will then often need to sow specially balanced pasture mixtures that will make organic

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ABOVE — Author in the midst of a heavy stand of English White Clover. BELOW: Some of the future beef and milk products in Bricket Wood. These cattle are some of the top quality in calf, Dairy Shorthorn heifers and cows in all modern-day Ephraim. (Staff members l. to r. Colin Sutcliffe, James Fraser, Robin Howard.)

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matter available for years to come. (Sometimes this will be done at the sowing of the sixth year crop.)

The Sabbatical Year is also a time for ironing out any mistakes in land management over the past six years of farming or gardening. (Remember, if

you're just a home gardener, the principles outlined here are as applicable to you as to any farmer with a large field.)

It is interesting to note that tests have shown that SEVEN YEARS is the precise time it takes for complete organic decomposition in the average climate. Don't make the mistake of inferring from this that the Sabbatical Year will supply sufficient residues to fully maintain soil fertility. It won't!

**Importance of "Plant Residues"**

Dead plant matter is vital because it is the food for the soil and if the soil is to stay ALIVE — IT MUST BE FED!!

God is of course the Creator and Giver of life, but one thing we tend to forget is that ALL PHYSICAL LIFE ORIGINATES IN THE SOIL! (Gen. 2:7.) That is why it is vital to feed the soil!! The health of MAN, his ANIMALS and his PLANTS, depends



upon a massive population of vigorous earthworms and micro organisms.

People working with the soil must pay constant attention to its level of dead plant matter. The Sabbatical Year is a kind of compulsory protection measure, ordered by the Creator and Sus-

tainer of ALL life. Physically speaking, it is a safety measure that will regularly point the obedient man back to SOIL FERTILITY as our only true source of God-given health and strength!

**THAT IS WHY GOD COMMANDS MEN TO REST THE LAND!!!**

God's system of food production is based on the Biblical principle of "GIVING," but man's carnal mind (Rom. 8:7) causes him to reject God's way of

**RIGHT: One year ago this was our poorest field. This massive top-cover will keep the soil warm all winter and promote continuous soil-building by earthworms "Topping" was carried out in this field many times during the Sabbatical Year. BELOW: Close-up of the fantastic activity going on at the "grass roots level."**

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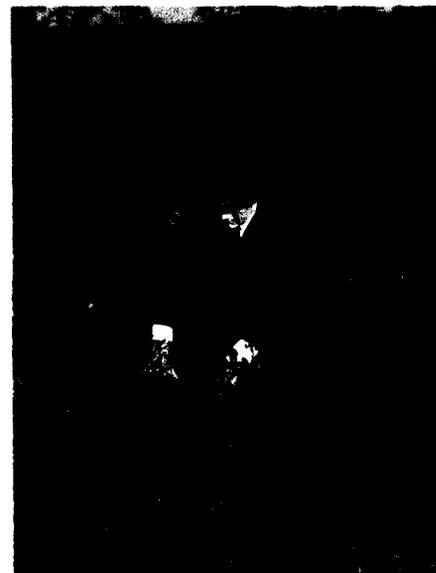


sustaining life. It is like tithing. Man thinks he can't afford to tithe, when in reality he can't afford NOT to do so. Man also thinks he can't afford to give all that plant matter back to the soil. The truth is that the more he gives to the soil, the more it will return to him in abundant crops and health and strength. It is the foundation of man's every physical blessing, but he has always practiced his own "GET" system of agriculture. In following this carnal approach down through history we see that man has always "mined" the fertility of his

soil until disease strikes him down, or desert conditions force him to move on.

**The "GIVE" System!**

"God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15). If you have a *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, look up the Hebrew for the word, "DRESS." You will find that man is to approach his soil with an attitude of serving and giving. See also "KEEP." The context of its Hebrew meaning is



to guard, hedge about, protect, preserve, etc. By no stretch of the imagination could you believe this to have been man's approach to farming.

The most efficient way to GIVE the maximum amount of dead plant matter to the soil is certainly NOT by refraining from planting crops during the seventh year. We should refrain from planting anything we INTEND TO HARVEST. This is precisely what God COMMANDS in Ex. 23:10-11 and in Lev. 25:2-7, 20-22.

Any honest farmer will be forced to admit that it is the frequent harvesting of crops that destroys soil most rapidly. It is therefore no coincidence and no surprise that the most poverty-stricken soils in all modern agriculture are those which are forced to grow "continuous" grain crops!

The return of dead plant matter to the soil is absolutely the only natural way "THE LAND SHALL YIELD HER FRUIT, AND YE SHALL EAT

*YOUR FILL, AND DWELL THERE-  
IN IN SAFETY*" (Lev. 25:19).

Man can scarcely claim to be eating his fill and dwelling in safety today. We live in a world where thousands die daily from sickness, disease and starvation!! These are some of the penalties and curses man has brought on himself through agricultural disobedience!

### Enough for Three Years!

The opposite of what you find this world doing today in food production is usually a fair guide to the course of action God's people should be taking! Farmers and 'truck-gardeners' are failing to conserve and return organic residues to their soil. WHY? It is basically because they have lost the knowledge of the Sabbatical Year and have therefore lost their understanding of the *significance of organic residues* (Job 28:12, 21, 23, 28).

God promises to take care of those who will obey *His LAW OF SOIL FERTILITY* (that's really what the Sabbatical Year is — physically. Of course spiritually, it is a test of man's *FAITH*). In the sixth year God promises enough produce to the obedient to sustain them for three years (Lev. 25:20-22).

This also *nails* harvesting of crops as the focal point behind the Sabbatical Year. Notice there is no command against cattle having calves or producing milk in the seventh year. Neither does God say that cows will give birth to three calves in the sixth year! It now becomes obvious that the promised blessing to carry the farmer over three years *has* to refer to *CROPS*!

The maintenance of livestock is perhaps the most vital key to a balanced agriculture programme (Psalm 104:14). We need to understand that no man would qualify for that sixth year blessing, unless livestock form the foundation of his soil fertility. This is just what God is telling us when He says: "The Sabbath of the land shall be meat [food] for . . . thy cattle and for the beast that are in thy land" (Lev. 25:6-7).

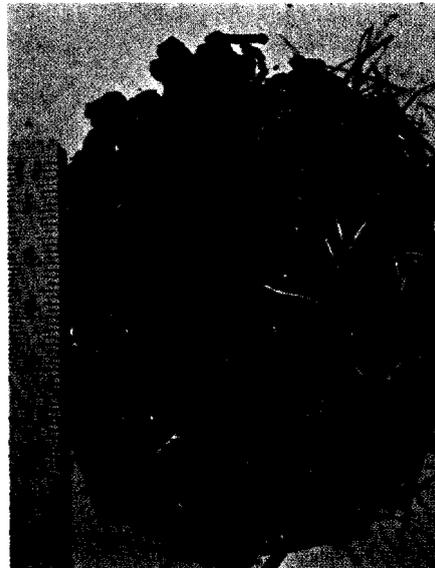
Contrast this with the thousands of farmers today who are specializing in grain and hay production. You can see

what a direct discouragement the Sabbatical Year is against the monoculture of grain.

### Effects of Sabbatical Year

What are the consequences of this seventh-year *compulsory* "free-range" grazing? Some have wondered in the past if all stock are to be cleared off the farm in the Sabbatical Year. The opposite is the case! Animals are to be retained and given the chance to graze ALL the farm at times during the "rest" year. (Some surprising new facts on the effects of this will be brought out later.)

But meanwhile, grazing access to the whole farm lowers the stocking rate and encourages a much greater bulk of *grass* in every pasture! That means



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**A double handful of well-made compost. Imagine adding this fertility builder to your soil! All those earthworms, and more, were in that much compost, just as it was dug from the heap. Note their healthy pink color!**

healthier stock all producing more meat, milk and wool!

If this extra plant growth is not to get wildly out of hand and produce a massive seeding of less desirable plants, it must be "topped" regularly with some type of mower. **THIS IS NOT HARVESTING!** No, not even if you take some of it away to compost it — providing it is returned to that area. We left the "topped" portions of our

pastures to decompose right where they fell from the mower.

During this last year in Bricket Wood, we had sufficient plant growth to use the mower three or four times on some fields. Anyone who has managed a lawn knows that the more often it is cut, the more often it needs cutting. "Topping" pastures has the same effect and the added plant growth is a first class source of food for earthworms and micro-organisms. Remember the increased growth *ABOVE* ground is accompanied by an increase in root growth *BELOW* ground, and together they add many tons of additional manure to the soil during the year of rest. That tonnage is over and above what the grazing animals return in wastes from their own bodies.

Every action in the Sabbatical Year must be planned with the next six years in mind.

What effect does the return of all this plant and animal manure have on the food that finally arrives on your dinner plate?

In our own soils here in Bricket Wood, we found it improved the *texture* and *moisture-holding* ability of the soil. These qualities provide a favourable environment in which earthworms and micro-organisms multiply as they decompose the dead plant matter. Decomposition is a highly complex interaction between the atmosphere, rock particles, organic residues and the life in the soil.

The end product of decomposition and all this interaction is healthy and perfectly balanced plant growth. Man is able to reap the blessings of a fantastically complex system he doesn't understand, simply by obeying God's natural laws! The end result is automatic as long as we obey these laws of soil management. They are simple and easy enough for a little child to follow! (Matt. 11:25; Psalm 8:2, 6, 7.)

Carnal-minded man *REFUSES* to follow God's way and prefers to stumble along from one crisis to another on the advice of a white-coated agricultural "Priesthood" (I Tim. 6:20). Science has now taken over from farmers and is doing a job of food *perversion* that surpasses anything in man's history.

You need to be fully aware that the

system which produces your food is diabolically orientated toward the ultimate destruction of mankind! You had better believe I Peter 5:8 means what it says. Satan aims to use every device to limit God's family. His efforts to bring about the financial collapse of food producers are exceeded only by his efforts toward destroying man through the poor health of his soil, plants and animals!

Now our Creator is beginning to enter the scene with increasingly severe punishments for our rebellion against His laws. This is prophesied to get very much worse in the near future (Hosea 5:4-6; 4:9-10; 2:8-10; Joel 1:14-20).

### What Can YOU Do?

As conditions get worse, more people are going to ask the question, "What can I do?" Answer: FIRST — LOOK TO GOD! Our salvation and

protection lies with Him rather than in a few platefuls of nutritious food; but as well as looking to God you could well follow this practical and productive *example!*

God's Work has not become unbalanced about low quality food, but neither has the subject been ignored. Mr. Armstrong has instituted a farm system which is supplying the bulk of the food consumed on all three campuses.

Ask yourself, are you learning how to grow more and more of your needs? You will be in better health if you do. You can also use the money saved to buy better quality (natural products) in your other needs.

This brings us back to the Sabbatical Year we have just kept on the farm here at Ambassador College, Bricket Wood. The principles in growing food God's way are simple. Anyone can follow them.

## Why Christians Have Trials

(Continued from page 8)

are GOOD for us. That is why God permits them to OCCUR! By means of them God CHASTENS US and teaches us which way we should go! They may "hurt" for a while, but by means of them *we learn to stop sinning*, to stop seeking our OWN way — we learn to be *more cautious*, WE LEARN TO PONDER THE PATHS OF OUR FEET (Prov. 4:26). We also learn to build the qualities of HUMILITY, FAITH, PATIENCE!

Knowing our trials and chastenings are indeed for *our* welfare, the apostle James wrote, "My brethren, COUNT IT ALL JOY when ye fall into divers temptations: knowing this, that the *trying of your FAITH* worketh PATIENCE. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and ENTIRE, WANTING NOTHING" (James 1:2-4).

### Human Nature Responsible

Look at the world around you. Notice how everybody seems bent on GETTING HIS OWN WAY in everything he does! Is this any different from the tiny squalling baby?

In business, ambitious young executive "climbers" knife and stab each

other in the back in order to GET *ahead* themselves! At home, wives try to convince "hubby" that they need a new dress, coat, or should go out for dinner that evening. Children try to convince their parents that they need a larger allowance, more freedom, less restrictions around home. On the international scene, nations try to bully, cajole, or trick other nations into serving their own selfish interests.

No matter WHERE you look, somebody is out to *get the best* of SOMEBODY ELSE! Everybody is out for "number one"! No love is shown, just a false veneer called "love," a sanctimonious "look" which is calculated to disguise the inner deceit! While patting you on the back, a dagger is gently slipped between your ribs!

Your Bible says that YOUR natural, carnal mind is — by its very *nature* — HOSTILE toward God (Rom. 8:). It is *enmity* toward God, toward His way, His divine nature, His WILL! Speaking of the heart of *man*, the prophet Jeremiah was inspired to write, "The HEART is *deceitful* above all things, and *DESPERATELY WICK-*

ED: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

Yes, you, by your very NATURE, do not want to go God's way, do things His way, or SUBMIT to His will!

You are by nature *SELFISH!* Your whole natural life is filled with self-motivation, self-seeking, self-exaltation, self-interests, pleasing the senses of the *self!*

This nature is very obvious in a squalling baby. Babies have no consideration whatsoever for their parents. They don't stop to think of the trouble they cause their parents if they begin to bawl in the middle of the night!

*And we are just little babies grown up!* WE STILL HAVE THE VERY SAME HUMAN NATURE!

*That nature* is responsible for YOUR *trials!*

### God's Holy Spirit

Each one of us has the *same* basically EVIL, selfish, grasping human HEART!

*But that is not all!*

Notice! "But the fruit of the Spirit is *love*, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance . . ." (Gal. 5:22-23).

*How contrary to HUMAN NATURE!*

LOVE is outgoing CONCERN for *other* people — a desire to give, serve, and help. *But human nature is SELF-love* — wanting to give to, serve, and help THE SELF!

God's Spirit is full of JOY. But human nature is so intent upon fulfilling its own selfish aims that it has *no time* for the expression of true JOY! It is trying to get, get, GET — and it is miserable when it cannot obtain its desires.

God's Spirit brings PEACE — contentment and peace of mind. But human nature is always STRIVING to obtain more for the self. It knows no rest, no relaxation. It is full of worry, fears and frustrations!

God's Spirit is *patient*. It is willing to *contentedly* WAIT for God to perform His promises and pour out His blessings *in His own good time*. It is willing to suffer long, and endure reproach for Christ's sake. It is supremely *patient*.

Not so, human nature! It is in a great *rush*, an excited hurry — full of

*haste!* It wants to *get*, and **GET NOW!** *Right now*, it cries in anguish, thinking only of its **OWN** selfish needs and desires!

The Spirit of **GOD** is very *gentle*, tender, loving toward others. Human nature is brusque, hurried, sharp with others, *blunt*, has no consideration for their feelings or weaknesses.

What about goodness? God gives His blessings freely, to all, without respect of persons. God seeks to lavish **GOOD** upon His people! It rejoices God to be able to **BLESS** others! But human nature, on the contrary, is *rude, insolent*, and feels that others are worthless, undeserving of any favor.

Do you **SEE** how rotten and contrary to God's way *human nature IS?*

Notice further! The Spirit of God is the Spirit of *faith* — *patient TRUST*, and *reliance* upon **GOD**! It is willing to put its trust in God and look to **HIM**, *no matter how circumstances may temporarily appear*, knowing that **GOD** is *able* to change and alter circumstances to produce His promised blessings!

But *human nature HAS no faith!* It does **NOT** believe in God's promises. It only believes what it can *see, feel, hear and taste!* It is not willing to trust God for anything. It relies **TOTALLY** upon self, seeks to *work the angles*, and is preoccupied with **LOOKING OUT FOR NUMBER ONE!** "Every man for himself" is its motto.

What about *humility?* The Spirit of God is humble, respects others, and recognizes their potentialities and qualities. It is willing to **GIVE UP** its own comfort, even its own life, in order to serve and help others! It is willing to abase the self and **SACRIFICE** for others! — even as **JESUS CHRIST** Himself was willing to forsake all and suffer the ignominious death of the cross for **OUR sakes!**

But not so, human nature! "Every man at his best state is **ALTOGETHER VANITY!**" Human nature is *proud, insolent*, full of *scorn* for others. Self is placed upon a towering pedestal, enshrined in an ivory tower.

### Importance of CHARACTER

Trials and troubles come upon us because of faults or flaws in our charac-

ter. As long as these faults remained, we *could not* enter God's Kingdom!

There are **MANY** lessons each one of us needs desperately to learn and have ingrained within his character, in order to enter God's Kingdom. We need to learn the **LESSON** to *depend upon God*, and not upon our own selves. We need to learn **FAITH** — reliance upon God instead of looking to our own works to get us what we want.

As human beings, we are naturally proud — so God gives us trials and tests in order to **HUMBLE** us and make us learn by experience that we are *not* sufficient unto ourselves. Pride, cocky conceit and vanity are the **ANTITHESIS** of *God's character*, and these carnal traits must be rooted *out* of our character if we are to become God!

*Patience* is another lesson we learn when God permits trials to come upon us. Perhaps the particular trial remains around for some time, and even though we pray, God does not remove it immediately. Does that cause your faith to waver?

It shouldn't. Rather, you should **LEARN** that God is trying your faith and *patience*. As you faithfully *persevere* in whatever test God gives **YOU**, patiently **WAITING** for His divine and promised *answer*, God will **NOT** let you down. But — He will give you the answer **WHEN** He sees it is right for you — in the *way* He knows is *best* for you! And, in the process, you build **PATIENCE**.

By means of our *trials* we *build the very CHARACTER* God wants so we can enter the Kingdom!

Your *trials* teach you to **STOP** looking to yourself for deliverance — for the solution to your problems. For, the longer you look to self, the greater the **PROBLEM** becomes! Your trials teach you how *human* you are — and how much you need to **REPENT** of *self* — what you **ARE**, as well as the evil you **DO!**

Do you begin to see? You **NEED** *trials!* Without them you could not grow spiritually! Without them and the pressure they put upon you, you would simply coast along, blithely assuming everything is all right — carelessly taking for granted your salvation!

*WE cannot become* **SONS OF GOD** — members of the very God family! — simply by coasting along, not overcoming, not learning the spiritual lessons we need, not **DEVELOPING** the character of Jesus Christ!

God will not entrust **AWESOME POWER** to **US** until He has tested and **PROVED** us! He wants to *know* we will be **FAITHFUL** to the end!

God is **PROVING** you — testing you — and **PURGING YOUR CHARACTER!**

To become a member of the **GOD FAMILY**, you must put **OFF** selfish, untrustworthy *human nature*, and be clothed with the **DIVINE** nature of God! Frustration comes when you follow your own nature, seeking your own way, instead of the way of God. But, God loves you so much that He will **PUNISH** and chasten you to **PURIFY** your character — to bring you back to Him, His way, so that you might enter His glorious **KINGDOM!**

What great love and concern God has for His children! He is concerned **FOR YOU!** *That is why* He permits **TRIALS** in *your* life!

*These trials are the proof of God's love!* Even as a father spans his children, God chastens **YOU** for your own spiritual welfare!

### The Perfect Example

Jesus Christ also had *human nature*.

But *He was never* **FRUSTRATED**. He never felt hopelessly confused or frustrated because of overwhelming problems. Do you know *why?*

Remember! He was human like you and I — He also had **HUMAN NATURE** (Heb. 2:14-18). He was **TEMPTED** *in all points* like as we are (Heb. 4:15). But *He knew* human nature — He knew that human nature only spelled **T-R-O-U-B-L-E** if He surrendered to its impulses, drives, or desires. Jesus *mastered* His human nature — He kept it under control — **ALWAYS!**

Notice!

As Jesus slowly strode into the garden of Gethsemane, just before the crucifixion, His thoughts tossed and turned within Him. He was sorely tempted by His human nature to "for-

get the whole thing." His human nature cried out, "WHY should *you* sacrifice YOUR life!" "Why should *you* suffer?" "What's in this for *you*?"

Those thoughts are very *human*, and Jesus had human nature. *But He did not give in to them!* Jesus never flinched, never faltered in the face of the ordeal. He prayed to the Father, "O my Father, *if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, BUT AS THOU WILT*" (Matt. 26:39).

"... *Nevertheless not my will, BUT THINE, be done*" (Luke 22:42).

Jesus had totally conquered SELF. He COMPLETELY *surrendered* HIS WILL to God. He had brought every thought into subjection to God. *He did NOT seek His OWN WAY!*

But what about YOU? Do you sincerely pray for GOD'S WILL to be done in your OWN life? Are you truly, fully SUBMISSIVE to the *will of God*? Or do you allow your *human* nature to exert its selfish, imperious demands in your life?

WHAT DO THE FRUITS SHOW?

If you have felt confused, bewildered, frustrated — if everything seems to be going WRONG for you — or if you seem to have so many problems that you DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO — then YOU need to stop and take stock of your life.

*Check up on your ATTITUDE!*

Have you been seeking your OWN WILL? Has your own human nature in some devious way deceived you into doing something that was not right in God's sight? Have the tentacles of SIN crept into your life? Have you *trusted in yourself* in some matter, not looking to *God* for direction or counsel? Have you ASSUMED something unnecessarily, without *proving* it first? Have you gone the way that "seemed right" *to you*?

*Look at your life!* LOOK AT YOUR SELF!

Perhaps, now, you are beginning to *see* for the first time just exactly WHY you, you *personally*, feel loaded down with problems and *trials*! Perhaps now you are beginning to realize more fully what *your* HUMAN NATURE is LIKE!

If you feel that you have been virtually *beating your head* against a WALL

— *if you think that everything* has been going wrong — if you feel totally miserable and utterly FRUSTRATED — then don't blame God bitterly for what has happened! Rather, stop and search *yourself* for the FAULT — the reason for your troubles!

### You Are SELFISH!

Analyze yourself! HOW OFTEN do you submit to selfish temptations? *How often* do you exhibit competitiveness, greed or selfishness? How often do you become hasty, rash, in seeking your own way? How often do you become WORRIED, *anxious, or fearful*?

How often are you DEPRESSED, because something you desired did not quite work out the way YOU wanted it? Have you ever been *bitter* because you did not *get your own way* about some matter?

*Have you ever lost faith in God and TRIED TO work things out yourself?* Have you ever faithlessly TAKEN MATTERS INTO *your own hands*, thinking GOD may not work them out for the best?

How often have you permitted human PRIDE and vanity to assert itself in your life — taking pride in *your* accomplishments, boasting about what you have done, bragging on *yourself*?

NO WONDER you have had trials, *frustrations, TROUBLES!* You still have HUMAN NATURE which leads you into SIN. And sin brings problems, troubles, trials, frustrations!

No matter how circumstances may appear, no matter how many howling trials may blow across your path — no matter if you feel you are lost in a thick forest of mountainous trials — *are YOU willing* to say to God, "I know your way is best! I KNOW you permit trials for *my good*, so I might see the foolishness of my own way, so I may be chastened and purified, in order to develop the very character of Jesus Christ!"

What about YOU? Are you still hanging on to some of your carnality? Are you STILL clinging to the flesh, fleshly desires, selfish interests, personal aspirations? Are you *compromising* with God and your own human nature? Are you going only "part way" with Him? Do you still have reservations?

Is there an "escape clause" in your contract with GOD, so that if you don't get YOUR own desires, you can "back out" of the agreement?

If so, you are only fooling yourself. *There IS no middle ground!*

We cannot "kid" God. What we sow, we shall reap. There is NO hiding from God. He KNOWS our innermost thoughts and desires — our HUMAN HEART! *He knows our natural selfishness!*

And God knows that as long as we compromise with Him, or seek to work things out ourselves — seek our OWN way, will, desires, interests — the end result will be greater and greater trials, confusion and bewilderment — leading eventually to DEATH!

God knows that we of our own selves are simply CARNAL — SELFISH!

But He does not want us to *stay* that way! He gives us trials and tests. He chastises us and punishes us in order to cause us to CHANGE!

God DESIRES that each one of us enter His Kingdom as His very own SON! But, in order to DO this, we must CHANGE.

### WHY Discouragement?

Sometimes trials and tests bring discouragement. Sometimes personal problems, faults and weaknesses contribute to depression.

But all these factors concern the one great problem which people have — *they get their eyes off the GOAL*, begin thinking about themselves, and *lose sight* of the *purpose* God is working out in their lives.

They let prayer slide. They neglect Bible study. They thereby lose close CONTACT with God. Discouragement is the end product.

Look in your own life. Hasn't this been the case? Haven't physical matters, personal concerns, taken precedence over the spiritual? When you lose contact with God, the result is ALWAYS failure and depression.

It is vitally important, therefore, to DRAW CLOSE TO GOD whenever discouragement threatens. If we draw near to God, He promises to draw nigh to us! (James 4:8.)

If we draw near, through earnest PRAYER and study of His Word —

which is the most POSITIVE Book ever written! — He will give us spiritual STRENGTH to resist and overcome whatever trial troubles us.

### Change Your OUTLOOK

Have you allowed trials to give you despondent, gloomy thoughts in the past? Even now, do negative thoughts trouble you? Are you discouraged from trials?

*You can change!*

God says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man *his thoughts*: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For *my thoughts* are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD" (Isa. 55:7-8).

Change your THOUGHTS! Learn to rule over them!

Through drawing close to God, and His Holy Spirit, begin to think positively, as GOD HIMSELF THINKS! Be FILLED with God's truth, His thoughts, through the study of His Word!

There is no need for any of God's people to feel depressed or discouraged. YOU can DEFEAT DISCOURAGEMENT before it gets started!

Jesus Christ did not come to bring sorrow and depression. Rather, Jesus Himself said, in unmistakable terms, "...I am come that they might have LIFE, and that they might have it MORE ABUNDANTLY" (John 10:10).

The abundant life is not one filled with worries, frowns, anxieties, depressions, concerns, or negative despondency! It is filled with the fruits of God's Spirit: LOVE, JOY, FAITH!

It is not self-centered, but God-centered. It is not worried about the affairs of this temporary, short, physical life. It is concerned about the TRUE GOAL of life — the Kingdom of God! It is not occupied with material matters. Such things are counted as "dung" (Phil. 3:8).

The abundant Christian life is filled with SPIRITUAL CONCERNS — and is centered on the things of GOD!

It is the truly positive, hopeful, happy life!

It can — *and should* — be YOURS! Notice what Paul wrote Timothy —

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of FEAR; but of POWER, and of LOVE, *and of a sound mind*" (II Tim. 1:6-7).

A SOUND mind is not plagued by fear complexes, phobias, negative attitudes. It is HOPEFUL of the future! God's Spirit gives a *sound mind*. It is the Spirit of *love*.

God says, "There is NO FEAR in love; but perfect love [imparted by the Holy Spirit] *casteth OUT fear*: because fear hath torment" (I John 4:18). The Holy Spirit of God CASTS OUT such negative feelings as fear, worry, moodiness, faithlessness, discouragement. It replaces them with real love, JOY, faith — brimful confidence in God, and supreme HOPE in His Word and promises!

God's Spirit imparts POWER to overcome trials and discouragement! Before its immense power, such minute, weakling attitudes and moods scamper like thousands of jackrabbits before a tornado. They don't stand a CHANCE!

### How to CONQUER Trials

The Word of God gives vital information regarding CONQUERING every human problem, every spiritual problem, including the problem which faces so many from time to time — depression and despair.

Solomon wrote, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). This scripture illustrates a basic principle. As people think in their heart, they ACT — whether negatively, positively, or however. Moods and attitudes begin with thoughts in the heart. The thought is reflected in the personality, the bearing, the manner of expression, the eyes.

Therefore, every thought itself needs to be brought under control. The apostle Paul wrote, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting DOWN *imaginings* [reasonings], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, *and bringing into captivity EVERY THOUGHT* to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5).

God wants us to bring every single thought into CAPTIVITY — control, rule over our very thought-processes! In this way, we can learn to control and RULE OVER our moods, attitudes, and emotions!

The way to cast wrong, negative thoughts OUT of the mind is to place good, POSITIVE thoughts IN the mind. The way to get air OUT of a milk bottle is to pour milk IN!

God explains what kinds of thoughts His people should have. "...Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS" (Phil. 4:8).

Paul told the evangelist Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an EXAMPLE of the believers, in word, in conversation [conduct], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." He commanded him, "MEDITATE *upon these things*; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Tim. 4:12, 15).

A Christian's thoughts are VERY IMPORTANT! They must be *ruled* over, and brought into subjection!

In this way, negative feelings and discouragement from trials CAN BE DEFEATED!

### The Key — Attitude

What is YOUR biggest trial? Stop and think about it for a moment. What has your attitude been toward it — about it? Has it really tested your faith — your perseverance?

Is your trial teaching you to TRUST IN GOD and rely on Him — all the way? Is it building FAITH? Is it teaching you PATIENCE?

Remember, whatever your trial GOD KNOWS IT. He knows ALL ABOUT IT. And He is deeply CONCERNED for *you*, whoever you are! If He wanted, He could lift the trial off your back in an instant — the very fact that He DOESN'T do this shows plainly that He sees the trial is GOOD for you — that you *need* it, in order to develop the character of Christ!

God knows YOUR *problem*. It is not hidden from His eyes! He wants you to

commit it to Him and trust Him with it. He wants you to learn to RELY on Him, in *patient*, living FAITH! At the same time, He wants you to continue growing spiritually, doing YOUR part in overcoming yourself, yielding to Him, and obeying His commandments.

In due time, He WILL DELIVER YOU! That is His Word — His promise — *and it cannot be broken* (John 10:35; Titus 1:2). But you must trust in Him — patiently, perseveringly. You must root out the *sin* that may be causing the trial. You must do your part and trust God to do His.

### WHY Christians Have Trials

There is a reason for every trial! *God is not dead*. He is very much ALIVE, and very much CONCERNED for you! Trials do NOT mean God has *lost* interest in you. God knows every hair on your head (Luke 21:18). He knows all about YOU!

But why, then, do you have trials? Basically, trials come for ONE reason: YOU ARE NOT YET PERFECT! If you were already perfect, you would need no trials. But since you still have a way to go, before attaining perfection, God gives you trials to HELP YOU ALONG!

Trials, troubles are usually due to coming short of the mark — that is, SIN. We usually suffer as a result of sin somehow creeping into our life, deceiving us, and causing us to make unwise decisions. Sin brings trouble, trials — and eventually, if not repented of, DEATH!

Therefore, when we stumble into sin, God PUNISHES us to wake us up and bring us to repentance. When we disobey God, we reap the curses mentioned in Leviticus 26! When we repent, God's blessings are POURED out upon us!

But, that is not the whole story. *Human nature* itself is greatly responsible for many of our trials. It is full of deceit and wickedness — vanity and hostility (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 8:7). It is full of SELF!

Therefore, to help us OVERCOME the downward pulls of human nature, and get RID of self, God gives us trials. He chastens and punishes and corrects us (Heb. 12:6). God's chastening is

PROOF of His great LOVE for us! But often the chastening takes the form of a *trial*.

Why, then, do we have trials?

Because we NEED them! They teach us important lessons of FAITH, humility, reverence and worship for God! They show us how incapable we are, of ourselves, of working out our problems! They refine and purge, purify and strengthen our CHARACTER! They help us change from being carnal and inwardly centered to SPIRITUAL and OUTGOING in our concern!

They change our CHARACTER! The selfish dross is purged away! The spiritual nature of Christ is implanted! In this way we grow to "the measure of the stature of the *fulness of Christ*" (Eph. 4:13).

Notice what God told the Israelites, our forefathers: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to HUMBLE thee, and to *prove* thee, to *know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments*, or no" (Deut. 8:2).

### Rejoice in Trials!

James wrote, "My brethren, *count it all JOY* when ye fall into divers temptations [trials]; knowing this, that the *trying of your faith worketh PATIENCE*. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be *perfect* and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4). Do you count trials as all JOY?

Notice what Peter said: "Beloved, think it not *strange* concerning the FIERY TRIAL which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: BUT REJOICE, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be GLAD ALSO WITH EXCEEDING JOY" (I Peter 4:12-13).

How contrary to human nature!

Peter wrote also, "That the *trial of your FAITH*, being much more PRECIOUS than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:7).

How PRECIOUS are the trials of a Christian! How necessary — how vital to spiritual GROWTH!

How *thankful* we should be, for each one of them! You should stop and THANK God for your trials! Give Him praise for being so concerned about YOU!

But trials HURT, don't they? They bring misery, suffering, heartache and heaviness. HOW, then, can we ever learn to really REJOICE in them?

Of course God does not expect us to consider the actual trial — the pain or sorrow — as joyful. Although the trial itself may bring suffering, we need to realize that the RESULT — the FRUIT — of the trial is what should cause us to rejoice and be THANKFUL!

Trials themselves, while we endure them, can cause heaviness and sorrow (I Peter 1:6). The apostle Paul wrote the Hebrews, "Now no chastening *for the present seemeth to be joyous*, BUT GRIEVOUS" (Heb. 12:11).

But Paul explained, "Nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS unto them which are exercised thereby" (verse 11, last part). Notice! — "AFTERWARD"! When the trial is over, good fruit is borne — the fruit of patience, faith, humility, and RIGHTEOUSNESS.

When we consider the wonderful reason why GOD, in His supreme love, gives us trials, we truly should be thankful and REJOICE! Rather than mope in a cloud of GLOOM, we should REJOICE! "Wherefore *lift up* the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees," the apostle Paul exhorts. Don't be depressed, disillusioned or discouraged. Lift up your head, and praise God for His everlasting concern and mercy!

*PRAISE GOD for giving you a character-building trial!*

This is the attitude you *should* have! Those who gripe and grumble in their trials are MISSING this vital lesson of character development! They are missing out on the real lessons their trials should teach them.

Trials help you to become more and more like Jesus Christ in character, in nature, in compassion and love! It is through suffering ourselves that we learn to have COMPASSION on others who suffer! We can sympathize with others who have trials, because we ourselves have had them! We know what

they are like! We have been *through* them, ourselves!

### More Precious than Gold

How many more trials did Christ have than you? How much more suffering did He go through? He bore the griefs of ALL people on His shoulders. Rejected, despised, spit upon, beaten and bloodied, mocked and ridiculed, and finally, after all that, nailed to a stake and crucified!

Consider what He went through, for YOU — *and be thankful!*

Yes, be THANKFUL for your trials! Remember what the apostle Paul wrote,

“We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Remember, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12). Remember, as David wrote, “MANY are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him *out of them all*” (Psalm 34:19).

Learn to EXPECT trials. Do not be surprised when they come. Realize how VITAL they are to your spiritual growth. Thank God for them — rejoice in them — and commit them into God’s hands, trusting Him for deliverance from them, according to His mercy and compassion!

with showing how much you love and appreciate all your Mom has done for you by sending her flowers, candy, or something she has been wanting.

God feels very strongly about this. He is our spiritual father and we owe Him awe and respect. He wants us to obey Him and His perfect way of living. God will not tolerate a rebellious individual who will not respect Him or earthly parents.

Remember what God says about your physical parents: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be *well with thee*, and thou mayest *live long* on the earth” (Eph. 6:1-3).

God will bless us not only with long life and physical blessings, but also with spiritual blessings and EVERLASTING LIFE!

## The Bible Answers Your Questions

How does a Christian honor unbelieving parents? How can one honor and respect parents who are not following God’s ways? Can we look to them for leadership and example when they are doing things which are not really right in God’s eyes?

The answer is in your Bible!

God clearly *commands* us to honor our parents. He does not say “Honor your parents only if they deserve honoring” or “Honor your parents if they please you.” God says: “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Ex. 20:12).

God condemns those who do not honor and respect their parents. “For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor thy father and mother:’ and, ‘He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death’” (Matt. 15:4).

However, in Ephesians 6:1, God says through Paul, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” Notice Paul says “in the Lord,” that is, as long as it is obedience within God’s laws. God does not tell us to follow the things our parents do if they are not right in God’s sight (Acts 5:29).

But, understand this point: *Obedience to God is not an excuse for dishonoring parents!* Nor does God hold us responsible for their actions.

“Now, lo, if he [a Father] begat a son, that seeth all his father’s sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like . . . he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live . . . When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live” (Ezek. 18:14-19).

God does *not* say to “look down your nose at” and disrespect your parents and the office He has given them! Just because they are not perfect does not allow you — who also are not perfect — to disobey them. Remember that even a truly converted Christian is not perfect. Respect, love, and honor your parents and the office of authority God has given them. Have genuine humility. Obey them all you can!

Do not overlook the good in your folks. Never forget *how much* your parents have fed, clothed, housed and educated you. If you are at home, go out of your way to be on good terms with your father and mother. Help with the chores. Be with your family on outings together so your parents can enjoy their children as long as they can. Never offend them or try to cram your beliefs or religion down their throats. Be a success for your parents in school or on the job. Write to them if you are away from home. When Mother’s Day rolls around, there is nothing wrong

**Question:** Would it make any difference if a Christian were to become engaged in a business partnership or similar close relationship with a nonbeliever? Is this a matter of personal choice, or does the Bible give us clear-cut guidelines that are applicable to associations of this nature?

The Bible is a complete book. It contains the basic guidelines, principles, and knowledge essential to man’s happiness and well-being — knowledge he would generally be unable to acquire for himself. Thankfully, we are given instruction that directly applies to the questions posed above.

In II Corinthians 6:14-15 we read: “Be [become] ye not *unequally yoked together with unbelievers*: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness . . . or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?”

This scripture has direct application to any close relationship or partnership that one might enter, and would include marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian. Let’s consider the wisdom of this instruction.

True Christianity is a *way of life*. It is the *way* that will bring greatest happiness at this time, and eternal life

in God's Kingdom. It is the way of surrender and obedience to God and His commands — of spiritually growing each day more like God so that we may be finally born into His family and Kingdom. But a nonbelieving associate, business partner or mate is very likely going to oppose and fight the way of life God reveals. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

Other Bible principles regarding association between persons of different beliefs are found in Matthew 12:25 and Amos 3:3. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" The answer is obvious — they can't! I Corinthians 1:10 and I Peter 3:8 also show how important it is that there be unity and singleness of mind and purpose in order to have success in such close relationships.

Take for example marriage. In most cases interreligious marriages encounter many problems and obstacles, and they are among the most likely of all marriages to fail. True, there are some "unequally yoked" marriages as well as Christian and non-Christian partnerships that have succeeded. But how much more successful would they have been had they been yoked together with those of like faith!

"He that walketh with wise men," we are told, "*shall be wise*: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20). Wise counsel? Indeed, because every person with whom we come into contact influences us to some degree. It is important, therefore, that we wisely choose our associates. We are warned that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (I Cor. 5:6).

The Bible shows that a true Christian will not include as his close circle of bosom friends those who are yet of the world (James 4:4-8). Does this mean that a Christian cannot have any dealings with one who isn't a Christian? No, the Bible does not imply that we are to cut ourselves off completely from ever having any contact with the unconverted, "for then must ye needs go out of the world" (I Cor. 5:10).

Christ said: "Go ye *into* all the world, and preach the gospel to every

creature" (Mark 16:15). Christians are supposed to be "the salt of the earth . . . the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13, 14) because they have a love for all men. But at the same time we are to come out of this Babylonish civilization referred to as "this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4), established by men under the sway of the Devil. "Wherefore *come out from among them* [the people of the world], *and be ye separate*, saith the Lord . . ." (II Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4).

The teaching of the Bible, when all the scriptures are put together, is that we are to go into the world, but that we are not to become a *part of* the world (termed Babylon) and its society, customs, business practices, moral codes and traditions (I Cor. 2:15-17). God's plagues will fall on those who will not renounce this present evil world (Rev. 18:4).

But what of those already yoked in such a relationship?

If a Christian is already unequally yoked with an unbeliever in a harmonious partnership which does not interfere with his Christian life or growth,

he may continue until God makes it possible to do otherwise. Whenever such a relationship develops to the place where a Christian is not able to *obey* God and *grow* in grace and knowledge as he *must*, then, the Bible instruction is that he should "obey God rather than men" and be prepared to *immediately sever* his association in such a partnership! This of course does *not* include marriage because once it is bound it remains bound until death (Matt. 19:6). Here it becomes the responsibility of the converted person to be a proper light and example until such time as God sees fit to convert the other mate (I Cor. 7:13-16; I Peter 3:1-2). Those in such a position may request the articles: "Be a Positive Christian," "Personal from the Editor," and the booklet, *Your Marriage Can be Happy*, for future help.

So we are given the answer in God's Word. Here then is positive instruction given by a loving God who wants to spare us the bitter fruits of a relationship that is unwise and ill-fated because the other individual has a totally different mind, purpose, and goal.

## PREPARE YOUR FAMILY FOR GOD'S SABBATH

(Continued from page 6)

disturb the services. But don't fall for senseless gimmicks, or just do what everyone else does — *think!*

No matter what you give your child to play with it will educate him one way or the other. If you carelessly pick a coloring book you may be sorry. I have seen some of our youngsters avidly coloring Santa Clauses, Christmas trees, Easter bunnies and hobgoblins — all the things associated with the pagan days — on the Holy Sabbath Day! Now I don't run in fright every time I see a pagan sign, but on the other hand my children's coloring books don't teach them all the niceties of paganism either!

Choose what you will bring to church well. Don't bring toys that make noise. Teach the child, no matter how old, **AT HOME NOT** to throw things! Teach him at home not to be selfish but to share, so he won't let out a wail if he misplaces, or someone inadvertently

takes, his toy. Minimize the number of things you bring. Teach care of personal belongings from the crib on. I remember seeing a little tot just the other day who sat smiling in front of me (quiet enough) and fiendishly tore the head, arms and legs from a doll she had been given! It didn't cost much, it was just plastic. Mother bent over and scooped the remnants into her purse. The child had just *established* a bad characteristic, and the parents hadn't even noticed.

As soon as the child learns to read and write, he can at least follow the scriptures, and later learn to take notes. Taught properly, he can take the right pride in being accurate and neat. Meanwhile, he's learning to pay attention, he's quiet, he's worshipping his Creator on the Sabbath — that's special!

We live in an upside-down age. We expect grown-up things of our children

far too early in life in some categories — judgment, what to eat, how to dress, how to organize their time, driving cars, being alone with the opposite sex. Yet, we expect them to stay children in the small things in which they should grow up quickly — such as how to pay attention, sit quietly, be neat, help others, not think of play *all the time*, learn respect for *all* their elders and even their playmates.

### DANGER

When services are over, it doesn't mean Sabbath is over. On the one hand, there is no need for each child to sit stock-still, not talk with his friends of the same age, or sit and suffer — but on the other hand, each child should not be turned loose like an uncaged animal. We all know it is difficult for little children to sit still for so long, but it's only once a week — and when they get to school, the experience will stand them in good stead. Usually, the family can stay in a general area as a cohesive group, and still manage to fellowship as it should on the Sabbath. If each of the children is being responsible, then Dad will probably be able to mix around without having abandoned his family — he can meet the new people, greet the old, discuss the sermon, etc.

Mother has the baby of course, and this ties her down; but others can come to her. Jeremiah should be with her; the older children could take turns helping with the younger — so that neither Mother, nor they, would feel burdened on any *one* Sabbath. The ones who are “free” on any given Sabbath can seek out their age-group friends, but should always remain within sight and earshot of the family.

There is never any call for children to *run* inside the building. In many areas, it is too dangerous for the children to go outside the building. City traffic, just the traffic in our own parking lot, and more important — a daily growing menace — the danger of violence or a sexual attack on boys or girls. As a whole, the adults should pay more attention to their children on the Sabbath. They should help them have and enjoy conversation. They should be much more aware of the

many ever-present dangers *any* site in today's world presents. In short, they should be more *responsible* — and in so being, teach by *example* and word that all-important character trait of responsibility to their children!

### REWARD!

With these beginning guidelines your family can really benefit from the Sabbath services. When you get home you can all compare notes from the services. A family game of 20 questions with a Biblical topic is lots of fun. One person thinks of something in the Bible — like the five smooth stones David selected to fight Goliath with. Then he lets the others know whether what he's thinking about is Animal, Vegetable or Mineral (or any mixture of the three). Then the rest start asking questions to which the one person answers *only* yes or no. The object of the game is to guess what the object or subject is within the 20-question limit.

In the above case the person would say, “I'm thinking of something that is Mineral.” Probably the first question would be, “Is it in the New Testament?” The answer, of course, would be “No.” This would let everybody know it was in the Old Testament. Then by a logical progression of questions each tries to find out the answer. You'd be surprised how you can pinpoint nearly anything someone comes up with if you are careful with your questions.

This type of game is fun, stimulating to all involved, gets you more and more acquainted with the Bible; and you'll discover the kids reading the Bible just to get a good Vegetable to stump you with! The more the family begins to know about the Bible, the more fun the game becomes. Of course the one who correctly guesses the object gets to pose the next problem, and if no one guesses in the 20 questions, the same person gets to ask another puzzler!

Time passes pleasantly and quickly this way. The family is doing something together. They learn to love and respect each other more. And, most important, they all learn how to keep God's Sabbath holy! And without making it into a tiring burden, an unpleasant time.

There are many other things to do on the Sabbath. A family walk in a park or in the countryside — if not overdone and turned into a hike — on the way home from church is a good idea from time to time. Having another family over for a potluck supper and fellowship is another good idea — but one that needs careful planning and responsible control from both fathers, lest it turn into an everyday visit and not a special Sabbath fellowship. The family, or two families, could plan to go over one of the booklets together, like the new one on dating, and have plenty of time for discussion and questions and comments from the young people. Other booklets on doctrinal subjects, or just a PLAIN TRUTH article could be read. Everyone then makes out a test and passes it to the next person to take, then gets it back to grade.

These are only a few suggestions. I would appreciate it very much if you would send me suggestions of your own of how to keep, profit from and enjoy God's Sabbath with *your* family! Those that are worthwhile can be compiled in a future article to be of help to everyone!

As you and your family responsibly keep and enjoy the Sabbath, you'll notice you'll be able to help and serve the brethren also. There are always widows or women, whose husbands do not attend, who could use some help. Once your family learns to care for itself, they will be able to be of help to others — and enjoy it!

Do your best to remove the slightest trace of Harried Harry and Martyred Myrtle from your family. Change it to *Happy* Harry and *Merry* Myrtle! Make these verses from the Psalms apply to your family: “Sons are a gift of the Eternal, and children are a boon from him . . . happy the man who has a quiver full of them . . . Happy is everyone who reveres the Eternal, who lives His life! You shall earn your daily bread, you happy man and prosperous! Your wife within your house shall be like a fruitful vine; your children, round your table, like slips of olive evergreen. Here is the blessing for one who reveres the Eternal!” (Psalm 127:3; 128:4.)