

The Good News

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God's Church is *Different!*

Do you fully comprehend the GREAT GULF that lies between our Church—God's Church—and ALL OTHERS?

by Roderick C. Meredith

WE NEED to take stock once in a while to realize the true *nature* of our calling. We need to understand the *place* of God's true Church in the tremendous historical events now unfolding before our very eyes!

Do YOU think of yourself as a member of a *Church*?

If you are truly *converted* and *led* by God's Holy Spirit, then you are a *church member!* And if you **REJECT** your opportunities and responsibilities as a member of the *body of Christ—the Church of God*—then you will *never* be given eternal life in God's kingdom!

Jesus Founded the True Church

Jesus Christ said: "I will *build* MY church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18). This statement emphasizes the fact that *Jesus* was going to build the *true Church*. He called it "MY Church"—not Luther's, Calvin's, Wesley's or that of some other man.

Jesus also said that the gates of "hell"—meaning *hades* or the GRAVE—would *never* prevail against His Church. This is *doubly* so. First, because He definitely implied by this statement that His Church would *never cease to exist*. And, secondly, because the hope of all Christ's true followers is in the *resurrection from the dead*.

The Church Jesus promised to build is to endure down through the ages and be doing His work *at His second coming*.

Jesus began building His Church by calling and training disciples soon after His temptation in the wilderness. "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, *Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Mat. 4:17). Immediately after this, He *called* Peter and Andrew to be His disciples "And he saith unto them, *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*" (verse 19).

Jesus "called" or *specialy selected* His disciples and future ministers. They did not just decide to "enter the ministry." And He always taught them the good news of the kingdom of heaven, or *Kingdom of God* as it is rendered by Mark, Luke and John.

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the *gospel of the kingdom*, and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people" (Mat. 4:23).

Mark records the beginning of Jesus' ministry: "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the *gospel of the kingdom of God*" (Mark 1:14).

Jesus *always* preached about the kingdom or GOVERNMENT of God. This was the **ONLY** message He taught His disciples who were to carry on the Church He was *founding!*

ONLY God's Church Has the True Gospel

After teaching the message of God's *kingdom* and *government* throughout

His earthly ministry, and telling those who would be saved, "If thou wilt enter into life, *keep the commandments*" (Mat. 19:17), Jesus gave His apostles a parting commission of how to carry out His work until He came again. Jesus commanded: "*Go ye* therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: *teaching them to observe ALL THINGS whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you* always, even unto the end of the world" (Mat. 28:19-20).

In Mark's account, notice the importance of *believing the true gospel*: "And he said unto them, *Go ye* into all the world, and preach *the gospel* to every creature. He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved; but he that *believeth not* shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

The apostles were commanded to go forth and preach exactly the **SAME** gospel that Jesus had proclaimed throughout His earthly ministry—the *good news of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD*. Men were instructed to *repent* of their ways and **BELIEVE** that message in order to be saved.

DID the apostles and ministers of God's Church preach that same message?

When the Church was scattered because of persecution, Philip preached the truth to the people of Samaria. "But when they *believed* Philip preaching the things concerning the **KINGDOM OF GOD**

**The
Good News**

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THE CHURCH OF GOD
*ministering to its members
scattered abroad*

VOL. VI NUMBER 7

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and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

In his farewell address to the elders of the gentile church at Ephesus, the apostle Paul stated: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the KINGDOM OF GOD, shall see my face no more" (Acts 20:25).

The last record of Paul's ministry contained in the book of Acts shows that he was still preaching and teaching this SAME message. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the KINGDOM OF GOD, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31).

The TRUE GOSPEL was being proclaimed in the churches until the death of the apostles. It was the message of God's coming kingdom or government, and His RULE over the lives of converted Christians now. It included the proclamation of Christ as a king or ruler. Notice how the apostles were accused of preaching these very things by their enemies: "These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another KING, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7).

How different was this message from the sentimental platitudes used by most modern ministers to exalt the person of Christ as Saviour, but to DO AWAY with His message of God's RULE and coming kingdom!

ONLY the Church of God continues to preach this true gospel! ONLY God's Church is teaching the nations "to observe ALL THINGS" set forth by exam-

ple and command in the inspired Word of God!

As the body of Jesus Christ — the physical instrument He is using to carry out His work — we must always be willing to do WHATEVER Jesus commands in His Word. He is our King! He is our Master!

The CONVERTED Attitude

God's Church is different in that it cannot be "joined" or "embraced" like so many churches of this world. Its members have all had to come to a place of repentance and total SURRENDER of their personal wills before God has placed them in His Church by filling them with the Holy Spirit.

Peter said under inspiration: "REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Members of God's true Church must all turn away from their SINS—from breaking God's laws. For the Holy Spirit is given to them that OBEY God (Acts 5:32).

Do you realize that this very qualification ELIMINATES ALL organized, professing "Christian" groups from being the true body of Christ except the obedient, yielded, growing branch of the Church of God?

For without the Holy Spirit, man has only the natural, carnal mind and is NOT a "Christian" at all! "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the LAW of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

The natural, unconverted mind of man REBELS against God and against His law. And only the Holy Spirit can overcome this inherent rebellion and enable man to have contact with God and Christ. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).

How important it is to grasp that ONLY those who have surrendered to God—who have REPENTED of breaking His laws—and who are now filled with His Holy Spirit, only these individuals comprise the true Church of God. Through His Spirit then, all such true Christians are filled with God's very nature—His character. He lives His life in them.

Only these God-ruled, God-directed people make up the true Church. They are the obedient "body" or instrument through whom Christ can work. "For as many as are LED BY the Spirit of God, they (and they alone) are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

How totally DIFFERENT this is from the worldly conception of "joining" a church! Yet even as we consider this, it is important to realize also that many professing members of God's Church

sometimes lose their first love for the truth and fall into a wrong attitude.

Examine yourself! Have you gone through a process of deep, sincere repentance and conversion? If so, have you remained in the attitude of complete yieldedness to God and His Word?

Attitude is the Deciding Factor

To those of us in God's ministry, one of the most sorrowful lessons we have had to learn is that many people we had thought converted were NEVER actually converted at all. In every single case, without exception, we can now look back and realize that although they seemed sincere at the time, there was something "different" about them. Often, they did not really display a humble spirit—a surrendered will.

They usually could not take CORRECTION in a right spirit. At such times, they would seek to justify the self, and would become argumentative and bitter toward the minister who was trying to help them. As long as the spiritual mirror of God's law was directed toward the faults and mistakes of others, they could smile and rejoice in different individual points of Bible truth. But they did not like the word of God to correct THEM—to have THEIR mistakes, THEIR sins pointed out in the light of God's word.

But now, without going into the many and varied traits of such people, what about YOU?

Are YOU Really in God's Church?

Can you take the CORRECTION and REPROOF and INSTRUCTION for which the Bible is profitable? (II Timothy 3:16). Can you take it in a right spirit when a brother in the Church or one of God's ministers uses the "spiritual sword" of God's word to point out and exhort you to overcome YOUR faults?

Are you still "hanging on" to part of your life to do with it as you please? Or do you agree with Paul's statement: "For ye are DEAD, and your life is hid with Christ in God"? (Col. 3:3).

The key to the whole matter is whether you have totally surrendered your life, your self-will, your vanity, your entire being to God, His way, His laws, His RULE—His government in His Church now, and in His kingdom to come.

The entire principle may be expressed by comparing your attitude with that of Jesus Christ. Under similar circumstances, facing immediate pain, suffering, humiliation and DEATH in order to obey God, would you say as He did: "Nevertheless not my will, but THINE, be done"? (Luke 22:42).

Do you REALLY have that kind of attitude in your heart? If you do, then (Please continue on page 8)

SATAN'S FATE!

During the annual ministerial conferences at the Headquarters Church in Pasadena, God's ministers went into this vital question. Here is the truth about Satan, and the startling proof about his final end!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

THIS WORLD is totally deceived. In His very first words to His disciples in the Olivet Prophecy, Jesus sternly warned, "Take heed that no man deceive you, for MANY shall come *in my name*, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many! (Matt. 24:4-5).

Most of you brethren are well aware of the false doctrines circulated about in modern "Churchianity" about Satan the Devil. The familiar tunes of the "preachy-toned" tent-camp evangelist shouting, "We're sure gonna twist ole Satan's tail tonight!" is just one example. Some believe he is merely the embodiment of all that is evil, and therefore not a real *being*, but just a BAD "idea" in the minds of men. Others believe Satan appears as a red, dancing monster with wings like a bat, horns, a tail and a pitchfork. Still others believe Satan is merely the lustful and evil part of human nature.

But what is the truth?

Surely most of you know, after having studied your Bibles, listening to the WORLD TOMORROW broadcast and reading the articles in the PLAIN TRUTH and GOOD NEWS that *Satan is the god of this present world*.

Paul expressly calls him that! "In whom the god of *this world* (Gk. *aión*, or "age") hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, LEST THE light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:4).

In trying to overthrow Christ, Satan boasted, "All this power will I give you (all the kingdoms of the world), and the glory of them, for that is *delivered unto me*, and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Luke 4:5-6).

Had Satan made this statement falsely, Christ would certainly have refuted it! And yet, Christ said not one word to contradict Satan's presumptuous remarks about the kingdoms of this world. Jesus *did*, however, rebuke the Devil for *tempting Him by means of the kingdoms of this world*.

Jesus warned His disciples that the *majority* would be deceived, and going in the broad, wide, *easy* way—the way of following that which seems *right* to a

man—to destruction! (Matt. 7:13).

The deceiver is called the "prince of the power of the air" in Eph. 2:2. John's vision plainly showed Satan as the deceiver of the WHOLE WORLD, who was cast down with his angels, who are now called demons (Rev. 12:9).

How it Happened

God reveals *how* Satan became the god of this world—and why! Perhaps many have falsely assumed the Devil is the god of this world *against* the will of God! Many, perhaps, have unknowingly followed another *deception* of Satan by believing the *false* idea of this world of some kind of GREAT CONTROVERSY between God and Satan! This doctrine represents the Devil as being much more powerful than God! After all—the world is totally wrapped up in sin, isn't it? Such religious teachings represent just one more example of the thoroughness with which Satan has done his work of deception.

Let's understand it!

Your Bible reveals Satan as a CREATED being—created of God. In Ezekiel the 28th chapter, God uses the king of Tyre (a type of Babylon) as a type of Satan the Devil. The type blends into the antitype, which is Satan, in the middle of verse 12. "Thou sealest up the sum *full* of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." This could not be talking about any man!

Reading on, "*Thou* has been in Eden the garden of God, every precious stone was thy covering . . . *in the day that thou wast created!*" (vs. 13). Again, in verse 15, God shows Satan as a *created* being. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that *thou wast created*, TILL INIQUITY was found in thee."

Another chief text about the origin and *history* of Satan is found in Isaiah the 14th chapter. Here, God uses the king of *Babylon* as a type of Satan. "How art thou *fallen* from heaven, O LUCIFER, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the *ground*, which did weaken the nations!" (vs. 12)

Remember, Satan was *cast down* from heaven to this earth! (Rev. 12:4). *Jesus saw it happen!* "I beheld Satan as

lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

Lucifer means *shining star of the dawn*, or light bringer! In his original office, Lucifer was assigned to *this earth*, as proved by Ezek. 28:13. While he was perfect in his ways from his creation, he became lustful for more power—more authority—from the standpoint of vanity! This, by the way, is a vital lesson for us to learn! Lucifer was a CREATED being. He was created *perfect*. But CHARACTER is that which cannot be instantaneously created—but must be *developed* through trial, testing and experience! Lucifer had not *gained* his perfection through years of earnest fighting against the self, of sacrifice, of humility and obedience!

As a created spirit being, he visualized himself as exalted *above* God. He said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north, I will ascend *above the heights of the clouds* (clouds cover this earth!), I will be like the most High!" (Isa. 14:13-14).

Chaos and Confusion

As a result of this attempted rebellion, the earth became empty, waste, and in total confusion!

The word "was" in Genesis 1:2 should be rightly translated, "*became*." Notice! "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was (BECAME) without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:1-2).

God is NOT the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33), and did not originally *create* the world in chaos and confusion! He tells you so! ". . . God Himself that formed the earth and made it, He hath established it, He created it NOT in VAIN (waste)" (Isa. 45:18). The Hebrew words used in Genesis 1 and in Isaiah 45 are the *same*: "tohu and bohu," which mean empty and in confusion.

Lucifer's attempted usurpation of God's throne resulted in the *ruin* of the surface of this earth. When God created Adam on the earth, Satan was *already* here—*pretending* to be a "light bringer,"

but now an *evil* spirit, in rebellion against the government of God.

Counterfeit Doctrines

Many of you have heard how Satan began his deception by introducing the doctrine of the "immortality of the soul" to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He told her, "Thou shalt not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). Since that time, the Devil has succeeded in palming off *his own aspirations* and *his ultimate destination* on gullible human beings as their chief religious doctrines—which are NOT found in the Bible!

Listen!

Satan (Lucifer) wanted to go to heaven! The churches teach a doctrine of going some day to heaven! Lucifer is a *spirit*, and is therefore *immortal*! The churches believe *man* has an immortal spirit! Christ said an everlasting fire awaits Satan and his angels. The churches teach an everlasting fire awaits all "sinners." Satan FELL from his attempt to overthrow God. The pagan misconception is that man FELL!

These are only a *few* of the more prevalent doctrines that Satan has palmed off as truth to this gullible world.

Satan's Work

God shows that fully one third of all the multiplied millions of the angels followed Lucifer in his rebellion, and were cast down to the earth with him! (Rev. 12:4 with Rev. 1:20). These fallen angels, remember, are SPIRITS, not human beings! To accomplish his *work* of deception, with the ultimate goal of *destroying* human beings, Satan utilizes these millions of disobedient spirits! He is called the PRINCE of demons (Matt. 12:24).

Contrary to the belief of some, Satan the Devil does *not* have some kind of spiritual *essence* which is a counterpart of God's Holy Spirit! Satan cannot be everywhere present, as can God through His Spirit. Satan cannot act directly upon nations through a spirit! Instead, he utilizes the natural pulls of human nature, and his demons!

Satan himself is always concerned with the *top level* jobs in his attempt to destroy God's plan. Notice how he began—by trying to destroy Adam and Eve—the very FIRST (and therefore a primary aim) humans on the earth. Again, when God sent His own Son, Satan tried by many clever subtleties to cause Christ to SIN against the law of God. All through Christ's ministry, Satan tried to have Him killed—to thwart His every purpose! Finally, when it was time according to *God's* purpose to ALLOW Christ to be killed, Satan the Devil was a DIRECT instrument in executing Christ. He entered *personally* into Judas! (John 13:27).

It is not at all inconceivable that Satan could personally, individually tempt one of God's people! However, many people attribute many insignificant things to the Devil—not realizing that he is concerned with the top level jobs in his evil plan! Many of these things are nothing more than the pulls of their own human nature!

But make no mistake about it!

Peter warns us that Satan is as a "roaring lion, walking about, SEEKING whom he may devour!" (I Peter 5:8). Perhaps more often than any of us realize, a demon is attempting to influence us—either directly, or through another person.

Since the Devil is concerned directly with the *primary targets* in trying to upset God's plan, it also follows that the MOST IMPORTANT TARGET ON EARTH IS GOD'S TRUE CHURCH!

God thunders a warning at every one of us that the Devil *is yet* to come down to this earth in GREAT WRATH—knowing he has but a short time left—to PERSECUTE God's Church, OUR Church! "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make *war* with the remnant of her seed, which *keep the commandments of God*, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ!" (Rev. 12:17).

Paul said he was not IGNORANT of Satan's devices (II Cor. 2:11).

Are you?

What About the Everlasting Fire?

The time is rapidly drawing nearer when Satan the Devil will no longer be *permitted* to deceive the nations! At this present time, God is directly ALLOWING Satan to be used as His instrument in blinding the world, so the lesson of mankind will be so firmly and completely etched in its own blood that there will never again be a society existing in total rebellion against God's government! God is the One who has "concluded (shut up) them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy on all" (Rom. 11:32). He says He is *not willing* that ANY should perish, but that ALL should finally come to repentance! (II Pet. 3:9).

At the beginning of Christ's millennial rule over the nations, Satan is to be BOUND, and cast into an abyss (Rev. 20:1-3). This condition of restraint will last during the thousand years, and then the Devil will be allowed freedom to deceive the nations again! (vs. 3).

Jesus said He is going to cast unrepentant, carnal minded humans into "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). This parable of the sheep and the goats is another example of a parable of Christ that makes no special reference to the *time element*, but is showing a spiritual lesson and principle to be learned! The *separation* described in verse 32 takes

place over a period of 1,100 years!

Notice, however, that these wicked HUMAN BEINGS are cast into an everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.

Fire is a physical, chemical thing! Fire is the combustion of physical objects with oxygen which *changes* the physical objects into ashes and gaseous vapors!

Notice that the wicked (the *same* ones Christ referred to) are to be ASHES under the feet of the righteous! (Mal. 4:3). Therefore, this fire Christ spoke of in Matthew 25 is a fire that CONSUMES human beings! But Satan is a SPIRIT being! And *spirit beings are not affected by fire!*

Yes—it is *possible* that Almighty God could create a fire that would perhaps consume a spirit—since ALL THINGS are possible with God! (Matt. 19:26). But it is not a question of what God CAN do—it is a question of what has God WILLED to do!

Let's continue!

The word "everlasting" in Matthew 25:41 is "aonian" in the Greek language. "Aonian" comes from the root "aion" which means *age*! The correct translation into the English language should be "AGE-LASTING fire."

Does the Bible bear this up?

Yes, it does!

The Age-Lasting Fire

Next, let's notice carefully some significant facts about the fire Christ will use to destroy His enemies!

When Jesus returns to this earth as KING, His first act will be to destroy, NOT ALL the wicked, but that "wicked ONE" who is going to be working miracles and deceiving the world! (II Thess. 2:8). Together with this great false prophet, Christ will lay hold of the Beast who is yet to arise, and throw them *both* into a *lake of fire*, burning with brimstone! (Rev. 19:20).

These two are human beings—physical, breathing *men*, who are alive and drawing breath at this instant! The fire will CONSUME them. *This lake of fire is going to be burning all during the millennium!*

During Christ's time, the Valley of Hinnom, just outside of Jerusalem, was the place where refuse and the bodies of criminals were thrown—into fires that were kept constantly burning. God uses this as a *type* of the coming *lake of fire*! My father, mother and brother saw this valley, called "Gehenna" in the Bible—and thus were actually looking into HELL, believe it or not!

During the millennial reign of Christ and His saints, this valley will once more be kept perpetually burning—and the incorrigibly wicked ones who WILL

(Please continue on page 6)

What's the Use of Working?

Here, reprinted from the November, 1951, issue, is the answer to an important problem that arises in the minds of many brethren.

by Herman L. Hoeb

“I AM STRIVING to win the prize of God's great Kingdom. Why must I be forced by circumstances to spend my time working for a living when my chief concern is to aid in God's work?”

Has this been a question in your mind?

Then here's God's answer to dispel your worries!

Occupations Not a Curse

Every one of us probably has pondered the reasons why God permits events to befall us which *seemingly* keep us from achieving our goal in life—having an *active* part in God's work. The mistake is in our question, not with His lack of concern for us. Without thinking, we hold uppermost in our minds the erroneous concept that God is pleased *only* with preaching. That's false! The purpose of ministers is to instruct people in the law of God, to guide them so they can gain life and have it more abundantly here and now (John 10:10).

The intent of the law is LOVE: its end, abundance of spiritual and material blessings. Do you see that *action* must bring this about? that *work is the only method whereby the goal of life may be attained?* You are not wasting your life if your labor is truly productive, whether it be manufacturing, carpentry or farming. It is not wrong to labor in these occupations or the myriads of other unnamed ones, if God has called you and equipped you for that service. Your job gives you a living and affords the means to make others' lives happy and abundant—through your labor.

A Wrong View

The necessity of laboring in a world composed of matter, where all is destined to perish, deceives many into concluding that nothing spiritual could come of the use of matter. *How far from the truth this is!*

This material world, with all its creatures, was shaped by the omnipotent hand of the Creator to *serve as the channel for expressing the supreme spiritual principle* LOVE. God has permitted every human being the use of this massive earth to *work out love* toward fellow men. Spiritual principles can't be separated from matter entirely. God's eternal laws and statutes were instituted to teach us the *proper use of*

material objects, to regulate our material relationships with other men.

God yearns to see us observe His commands by using with diligence both mind and hand, the creation He has made for us. So let's turn to several scriptures to find the many reasons which should cause us to rejoice in material accomplishment as we do in spiritual accomplishment, that should make earning a living a blessing, not a curse—for all comes from God.

Bible Reasons for Having a Job

We know we should labor to give tithes and offerings. But scripture also explains other important results of fruitful effort. Ephesians 4:28 states a comprehensive purpose: let each “labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”

We cannot execute the injunction committed to us by Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” unless we zealously produce those articles which render it possible for us to give, not only money, but also goods and foodstuffs. A great joy it is to be able to turn out superior products or food for our neighbors.

The holy commands are not idle or void sayings; they are full of meaning. They constrain us to conduct our occupations with the utmost wisdom in order to possess the necessities by which others can enjoy happiness and material prosperity as we give. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecc. 9:10). Not only are we thus encouraging hope in others who have needs, but we also are reaping a reward ourselves in this present world; for it is more blessed to give than to receive. Love, carried out in labor, is productive both ways, to others and to ourselves. Solomon said: “Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man rejoice in his own works” (Ecc. 3:22).

TO LIVE IS TO LABOR! no matter if it seems straining on our bodies for the moment. Working benefits others and returns joys upon the doer. Lust, the imposing motive which makes men think they can *own* happiness through getting, does not produce a lasting abundance. It brings, instead, mental fears, and physical satiety. It produces in the heart of men, not expanding love and

inspiration for further labors, but an inflated and swollen sense of pride that eventually ruins the individual who aspires to *take* success and prosperity from another's endeavor.

Romans 12:17 and II Corinthians 8:21 give further basic reasons for every Christian having an honorable job. “Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” The occupations in which you are, the type of work you perform, is your example to a gainsaying and perverse world of that right way of life. Your job permits God to manifest through you now a forerunner of the prosperous civilization He plans for all in the thousand years to come. Receiving money from labor that produces nothing beneficial, which is often true of our modern society, *discredits God*. A fruitful occupation is one method by which the gospel of peace can be indirectly preached. This brings us to our third basic reason for being thankful about our station in life.

Training Ground

“What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth? I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it” (Ecc. 3:9, 10).

This life is a training ground for eternity. We take nothing from it but *experience, ingrained in our character*.

This earth is the arena in which we attempt with failures and with hard-earned successes to complete our transitory years. God has provided us with every tool to finish life's course and to make secure that hope of immortality in the family of God. *The family of God is a laboring family* (John 5:17).

But by nature we lack the family characteristics of God. So, if we had not been put into a material world which compels us to work for a livelihood, we would not be fitted and trained to inherit a portion in the household of God. We have to strive against the laziness of human nature by working with our hands and minds for God in service to men.

Good Deeds Shine

Viewing good works through God's magnifying glass gives us a much larger perspective of divine love which we can let shine into the eyes of the world. Our obedience to God is not seen by empty

words: it is seen in the occurrence of profitable labor and good deeds. While serving others, we have the opportunity to show fidelity and abhorrence of purloining (Titus 2:9, 10). Through productive labor we have the opportunity to prove to others, who lack inspiration, the gain in doing work heartily (Col. 3:22). *Have you filled the shrivelled hearts of others with smiles from work gladly done?*

A Common Example

"By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands, the house droppeth through" Ecc. 10:18; Pro. 24:30-34). Is this your home?

I hope it isn't. But if it is, you ought to consider very carefully that others measure our belief by how we live. It is our life to set an example for others so they will be stirred to procure from the seeds of toil and labor the bumper crop of joy, peace, love and prosperity.

The time will come, too, when those who fail to appreciate our acts *today*, will recall them *tomorrow* when God shall open their hearts and eyes to serve Him in the judgment at the last day (I Peter 2:12).

Be Balanced

The foundation of Scripture provides us with a perfect balance for life. We are to set our affections and hopes on the enduring promises of God. *We are not to spend our days fabricating an illusionary house of material prosperity which will terminate in death.* Yet, because we do set our hopes on the promise of eternal inheritance in the earth and because we know the laws of life from the revelation of God, we can use the present world to the glory of God. Ours is not to build useless enterprises and foolish gadgets that please the vanity of men and women. Ours is to produce useful articles that benefit God-instituted homes. Ours is to cause hope and joy to spring forth from the faces of young and old by the goods and nutritious foods we provide. And all this beside tithes and offerings we give!

Has anyone of us now any reason to think that God has not given ample opportunity to do Him service beside preaching?

A Different World

Neither worldly businessmen nor shackled laborers possess this *Bible concept* of work. But time has already proved, though the world is blind to it, that there is no permanent success in anything made in the world *except* the good others can derive, and the joy and training it instills in those who do pro-

ductive laboring. Looking at our occupations with this attitude—a view which directs our endeavors to the service of the Kingdom of God rather than to perishable goals—we are privileged to depict in miniature the *World Tomorrow* when the bountiful Creator will bless the honest and diligent labors of His people and crown their works with joy (Isaiah 65:23). Everyone in the Church of God has a whole world of opportunity to give his supreme material efforts to a land needing the best in commodities. How different we can make our work by comparison to shoddily manufactured products. How rich and flavorsome we can raise our food in comparison to that produced by greedy and ignorant methods in which poisons deteriorate the soil and valuable insects are destroyed and in which the land is not allowed to rest every seventh year according to command.

Is *your* life giving others a view of the coming Kingdom of God?

SATAN'S FATE!

(Continued from page 4)

to continue in rebellion to God's laws will be THROWN INTO this "lake of fire" as a stern witness to all the rest of the world!

Next, turn to Revelation 20:10. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet WERE CAST." There is no verb "are," in the original Greek as the King James revisers have added in italics! See the Companion Bible, Diaglott, or any concordance!

Notice that the Devil WILL BE CAST into THE (not just "a," but the definite article "the" is in the Greek) lake of fire where the Beast and False Prophet WERE CAST!

THIS IS THE SAME FIRE!

It was burning at the precise *beginning* of the millennium when the Beast and False Prophet were thrown into its flames; it will be burning at the END of the millennium, when Satan is thrown into the same fire!

That's WHY it is called an AGE-LASTING fire in Matthew 25:41—because it does, literally, LAST for an age—the millennial age!

What About the Demons?

Christ said the fire was being prepared for the Devil AND his angels! So they, too, are to be thrown into the lake of fire!

A commonly misunderstood explanation of this is found in I Peter 3:19-20. People have assumed, because they base

their religious philosophies on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, that Christ was busy PREACHING to some supposed "souls" of men in hell! What folly! Let's understand what really happened!

Your Bible plainly states the TIME element in these verses. Christ did the preaching, NOT during the three days and nights of His tomb when He was DEAD (I Cor. 15:3 & 20) but "WHEN once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing . . ." (I Peter 3:20).

But notice to whom Christ witnessed about the flood! "By which also He went and preached unto the SPIRITS IN PRISON!" (vs. 19).

Who were these "spirits?" Certainly not MEN—nor the "souls" of men, since men do not *have* immortal souls!

Turn to II Peter 2:4 for the answer! "For if God spared not the angels (spirits) that *sinned*, but cast them down to PRISON ("hell" is a mistranslation from the Greek "tartaroo" which means a condition or position of *restraint*, as an imprisonment!) and delivered them into CHAINS of darkness to be reserved unto judgment."

The "spirits in prison" are the sinning angels, or the DEMONS that have perverted their ways and followed Satan, and are BOUND to the earth—imprisoned here by the power of God until their day of JUDGMENT.

The Lake of Fire

The final enemy of Christ is death itself. When the plan of God is finally completed, even death is to be completely destroyed! (I Cor. 15:26) Just before the establishment of the *new* heavens and new earth, all that is corrupt, all that is physically combustible, will be consumed in a vast, WORLD-WIDE lake of fire!

This tremendous conflagration will be so intense, so white hot, that the surface of the whole earth will literally melt with the fervor of the flames! Peter describes this awesome time as a melting of the very elements, a time when all the works on the earth are burned up—dissolved! (II Pet. 3:10-11).

Christ shows this time occurs *after* the final Great White Throne Judgment when God's plan is complete—and all who have been added to His family are already born of Him. After this final judgment, even death and the grave are destroyed (Rev. 20:13-15).

The surface of the earth will become for a time just as if it were the blazing surface of the sun! This is the great Gehenna Fire that Christ talked of, that will destroy the wicked.

It is into this vast, seething lake of fire that Satan and his angels will be cast.

But remember! This fire is PHYSICAL! It *consumes* the bodies of the wicked, and is so intense it even melts the rocks and elements of the earth until they are liquefied.

But Satan and his angels are spirit beings! Fire is PHYSICAL, and cannot BURN spiritual beings! Spirit is NOT COMBUSTIBLE!

The New Heavens and New Earth

In the glorious picture of the new heavens and new earth, John wrote a description of the temple, and the beauty of God's new creation. A key scripture is Revelation 21:27! God expressly shows Satan and his angels will not BE in the new heavens and the new earth! "And there shall IN NO WISE ENTER INTO IT anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Satan will not be there! And the fire will BURN UP the wicked, and the works of the earth (Rev. 20:14, 21:8).

Peter tells us we can look forward to the new heavens and new earth wherein dwells *righteousness!* (II Pet. 3:13). It is evident from God's word that Satan and his angels will not be anywhere in the new heavens and new earth!

Then where are they?

Let's go on—and see what your Bible actually reveals!

How a Spirit Can Suffer

Since fire cannot consume spirits—then how can they be punished? Many people fail to realize that *mental* torment is *far worse* than physical torment!

God created our bodies with a type of "safety device" against too much pain! When the physical human body is subjected to extreme pain, it will reach a certain point and then lapse into unconsciousness! The mind does not continue to register the pain—even though the body continues to suffer! Mothers recognize the truth of this immediately. The thought of seeing their children suffer—having to stand the *mental* agonies of seeing their own children being tortured—would be far worse than having to suffer physical pain themselves.

A *disembodied* spirit is an *uncomfortable, miserable* spirit! Jesus described this condition of mental torment when He said, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking *rest*, and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out" (Luke 11:24).

This is further illustrated by the account of Christ's experience with the many demons who had entered the man in the country of the Gadarenes. Jesus commanded the spirits to come out of the man, and they "besought him *much* that he would not send them away out

of the country" (Mark 5:10). "And all the demons besought him, saying, send us into the swine, that we may *enter into* them" (vs. 12).

When Philip was performing miracles at Samaria, he cast out many demons, who came out of people "crying with *loud voice*" (Acts 8:7) showing their frustration and anger at being deprived of their dwelling place! (See also Luke 8:28.)

God says the demons *know* of His power—they are aware of the great AUTHORITY of God! We are told that willful sinners are going to be left with a certain FEARFUL looking for of *judgment* (Heb. 10:26-27) and that it is a FEARFUL thing to fall into the hands of the living God! (vs. 31).

James said, "Thou believest that there is one God? Thou doest well, the demons also believe, and TREMBLE!" (James 2:19). They FEAR the awesome judgment awaiting them, and are therefore in TORMENT! "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because FEAR HATH TORMENT (I John 4:18).

When Satan comes down to the earth in great wrath, it is because he knows he has but a SHORT TIME left! (Rev. 12:12).

His punishment will plainly be *mental, spiritual*, NOT PHYSICAL!

Satan Will Not Be Destroyed!

Many have misunderstood verse 16 of Ezekiel 28. Notice that God is speaking of the beginning of the creation in this account of Satan's original rebellion. But, just as the Bible so often uses DUAL meanings, so THIS is history and prophecy at the same time! God refers to the "stones of fire" in verse 13. Notice how these same stones are used in the description of the Holy City! Compare with Revelation 21:18-21. Remember, the "mountain" (nation, or government) of God is ultimately going to be ON THIS EARTH! God CAST LUCIFER OUT of that mountain, throwing him DOWN from his attempt to be above God's throne! God's throne is then to be ON THIS EARTH! God will *again* cast Satan out of His presence!

"... therefore I WILL (both past and future) cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, FROM the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezek. 28:16). The word *destroy* is explained by the word FROM! God does NOT say Satan is to be DESTROYED! He DOES say Satan is to be DESTROYED FROM a certain place—the midst of the stones of fire, or the location of God's seat of authority.

Now, let's notice further proof that Satan is NOT to be destroyed. Turn to Revelation 20, and verse 10. I did not explain this verse sooner for a definite

purpose, as you will see.

Notice that the Devil is cast into the lake of fire where the Beast and False Prophet *were cast*, AND shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever!

This expressly states Satan will be tormented for the AGES OF THE AGES! (See Critical Commentary, Ivan Panin N.T., and Diaglott.) This expression in the Greek means for all eternity—for time everlasting!

BUT!

Notice carefully the verse states Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire AND tormented forever! It does not say that he will *remain in the fire* forever! The fire is on this earth! The fire is an AGE-LASTING fire, which will *not* be burning after God's new heaven and new earth are established! Since Satan is to be tormented FOREVER, and the fire is to finally *consume* the physical objects it is burning until it burns out, Satan does *not* remain in this lake of fire forever!

Satan is a spirit! Fire cannot consume spirit!—and A SPIRIT CANNOT DIE!

Jesus Christ said so!

For a clinching proof, turn to Luke the twentieth chapter. In verse 34, Christ begins to explain to the hypocritical Sadducees about the resurrection. "... The children of the world marry, and are given in marriage, but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (age), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage, NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE, for they are equal unto the angels..." (vs. 34-36).

Jesus tells us the angels *cannot die!* Satan is a fallen angel! Therefore Satan *cannot die!*

"Reserved unto Judgment!"

Remember, Peter and Jude both attest to the fact that the sinning demons are reserved unto a time of JUDGMENT! Without realizing it, many people have assumed the "judgment" is a final SENTENCING that is passed in one instant at Christ's coming!

Such is not the case!

A judge must investigate the merits of each case and ARRIVE at a decision based on the facts! God is calling out His children to become Kings and PRIESTS with Christ—and to RULE THIS EARTH!

A vital part of the job of each of God's children will be JUDGMENT! Believe it or not, the Creator of all that exists is actually permitting us to have an opportunity to become judges of this world! Many have not understood the scriptures already mentioned in I Peter 3:19-20 and II Peter 2:4, simply because they have not understood an important phase of that judgment!

The Apostle Paul gives us the amazing answer in I Corinthians 6:2-3! "Do ye

not know that the saints shall *judge the world*? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? KNOW YE NOT THAT WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS?"

There it is!

We shall judge angels! Remember, the wicked spirits, including Satan, are presently being reserved, being kept in restraint, *unto judgment!* That judging is yet to be done!

Now do you see?

The Bible plainly reveals Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, but the lake of fire will *end* when the new heavens and new earth are established, and Satan is to be tormented unto the *ages of the ages!* It also shows his torment *while* in that fire is going to be MENTAL, at seeing all he has strived toward, worked for, plotted for, *burned up.* Christ preached to the spirits on this earth *during the time of the flood* as a WITNESS to them! The flood was a type of the yet future destruction of the earth—this time by FIRE! Christ was warning them of the impending destruction of all their works—and their banishment from this earth! The *exact nature* of their ETERNAL punishment is YET TO BE DECIDED!

YOUR BIBLE REVEALS YOU MAY BE INSTRUMENTAL IN DECIDING THAT PUNISHMENT!

Jude gave a slight indication of the possibility of the *nature* of that punishment when he used the demons as a *type* in warning Christians about false teachers who had crept in unawares. In reading through the book of Jude, you come to verse 6, where the demons are mentioned, to the next few verses, where these "filthy dreamers" are described. Notice how their error is EXACTLY that of the sinning angels in that they too tried to *usurp* authority! "They . . . ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain-saying of Core . . ." (verse 11). See Numbers 16, where Korah tried to *usurp* the position of God's chosen servants.

Jude continues to describe, "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, *wandering stars* (see Rev. 1:20, where stars are symbols of *angels*) TO WHOM IS RESERVED THE BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS FOR EVER!" (verse 13).

Notice, in Enoch's prophecy, he spoke of coming *judgment*, ". . . Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute *judgment* upon all . . ." (verses 14-15).

As has already been proved—the *angels* (demons) are definitely included among those to be judged by the saints! Could this be an indication of their final fate? They are *miserable* when disembodied—wandering through "dry places, seeking rest!" Could this statement in Jude give us a picture of their punishment? ". . . wandering stars, to whom

is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever!" (Jude 13).

Your Responsibility

Part of our awesome responsibility is going to be the judging of angels! Satan's ultimate destination apparently is yet to be decided—*by the saints!* Are you preparing yourself for such a job?

Such an overwhelming responsibility demands a tremendous amount of wisdom and knowledge! God Almighty has called you and me to much more than just some inactive, "fluff-fluff" eternity of laziness and ease! God says it has not entered into the *heart* of man the things He has prepared for us! (I Cor. 2:9).

God's Church is Different!

(Continued from page 2)

you may make many mistakes along the way because of human weakness, but when the really BIG tests come along—you will stand firm because your *will* has been surrendered to God.

So *cultivate* this spirit and attitude. Ask God to *clean you up*—to *root out* any human self-will that is left.

Remember that God's Church is a SURRENDERED Church! It is a *praying* Church. It is the *Spirit-led* Church that Jesus Christ built.

In determining *who* is in His Church, God looks on the *heart*. And *your heart MUST BE RIGHT.*

God's Church GROWS!

Speaking to His disciples of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ said: "Howbeit when he, the *Spirit of truth*, is come, he will *guide you INTO all truth*: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and *he will show you things to come*" (John 16:13).

The Church that is guided by God's Spirit is constantly GROWING in *truth* and in an understanding of "things to come." Because Christ is IN this Church, its ministers are able to warn *you* of the *exact, specific* events destined to occur in *your lifetime.*

The apostle Peter instructed: "GROW in *grace*, and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

Have you noticed that during the course of every single year we have published some NEW TRUTH in the pages of either the GOOD NEWS or The PLAIN TRUTH magazine? We are warning this nation of the *specific punishments* that are coming—*step by step*—on our rebellious people.

If you live in any of the areas affected by the drought and floods, you are EXPERIENCING the *reality* of these warnings!

WHY—if this is *not* the only true Church—are not the *other* churches and their ministers also proclaiming these warnings? WHY—if these people are really converted—don't they *grow* in grace and knowledge. *Why* don't they "hunger and thirst for *righteousness*," for *correction*, for *instruction* from God's Word?

Why do they REJECT new *truth* when it is freely offered to them? In all these things, why don't they show more of the "fruits" of God's Spirit?

Answering these questions should make us realize more fully than ever the great DIFFERENCE between God's Church and all others. It should make us APPRECIATE even more that God has called us to be in His Church at this time.

We Have a Mission to Perform

But remember Paul's statement to the brethren at Corinth: "Now ye are the BODY of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:27). Christ's Church is His *body*—the physical *instrument* He can guide and empower through the Holy Spirit in carrying His message to this dying world.

Christ works *through* His Church!

And it is Christ who said: "And this *gospel of the kingdom* (GOVERNMENT of God) shall be preached in ALL THE WORLD for a *witness* unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Mat. 24:14).

God's Church is different in that it is BUSY doing the work of Christ! It is now beginning to proclaim His message to the *entire world!*

But the job is BIG and the laborers are *very few.* The help of EVERY MEMBER is NEEDED!

Your *prayers*, your *encouragement*, your *tithes*, your *offerings*, your *witness* to others are *all important!*

YOU are a member of a Church—God's Church. Its attitudes and objectives are truly *different!*

If Christ has put you in His Church, you will need to *surrender* the "self" constantly—day by day. You will need to *study* and *pray*—to GROW in grace and knowledge.

You should be BUSY in the work of Christ's *body*—doing *everything* within your power to help proclaim His message as a last "witness" to this world.

Then—and *only then*—can you hope to hear Christ's words: "*Well done*, thou good and faithful servant."

This is the blessed *reward* that the members of God's Church hope some day to receive!