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the

PLAIN TRUTH

a magazine of understanding



IRELAND

DIVIDED BY FEAR AND HATRED



Personal from...

Why Churches Are Divided

WHY are the churches *divided*? Have the churches *failed*? Do we *really* understand what is the real **PURPOSE**—the divine **MISSION**—of the Church Jesus Christ founded?

Did Jesus Christ intend his Church to become divided?

Did Jesus Christ give his Church the commission to work actively in this world's governments, its society, its commerce and industry, *to make this world a better world*?

Is the divine mission of the Church of God to make this a **BETTER** world? If so, it has failed abysmally.

Should you *join* a church—and if so, *which one*?

WHERE is the original *true* Church that Jesus Christ founded? That is the question that haunted me, back in 1926 and 1927. I had been challenged on a point of God's law in the Bible. I had been *angered* into an intensive, almost night-and-day study of the Bible.

My wife had taken up with a teaching she said she got out of the Bible—a teaching and practice utterly contrary to the **CHURCHES**. On this particular point all the churches appeared to be in agreement—except possibly one I had branded as fanatical.

Yes, I was angered. I was indignant! I was plain **MAD**! My wife taking up with religious fanaticism? Surely *no* advertising man could tolerate *that*! She said it was Bible teaching.

"**LOOK!**" I exclaimed, "you can't tell me all these churches can be wrong!" I firmly believed that. I believed these churches—at least the Protestant churches—were **CHRIST'S** churches, firmly based on the **BIBLE!**

Haven't **YOU** believed it?

So I was goaded into opening the Bible. I was going to *prove* to my wife that "all these churches can't be wrong." Desperately I searched for biblical

evidence to refute my wife's fanaticism. But I couldn't find that evidence. What I *did* find staggered me!

I had been reared in one of the smaller, but older and respected Protestant denominations. From birth I had been taken to Sunday School. I had taken for granted and assumed the usual teaching of the immortality of the soul, the going to heaven or hell at death and the idea that I was "saved" from birth, since I had a "birthright membership" in the church.

When I read Romans 6:23, I stared at that verse in my Bible in shocked, incredible disbelief! It said, "For the wages of sin is **DEATH**; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." I had always believed the wages we earn for **SIN** was *just the opposite of DEATH*. I had been taught that what we get paid for **SIN** was **ETERNAL LIFE**—in hell fire! This verse says eternal life is something we can only receive **AS A GIFT** from God.

But **NO!** Surely no! We already *have* eternal life—so I supposed—we are immortal souls! I learned that many Protestants **INTERPRET** that verse—that is, they **PUT A DIFFERENT MEANING INTO IT**. They *change* the meaning of the words. They manufacture a new definition of the word *death*. They define *death* to mean "separation from God." I looked at this verse again. On the one hand, for sin, we get **DEATH**. On the other hand, the *opposite* of that penalty is **ETERNAL LIFE**. Now, it certainly was clear, if **ETERNAL LIFE** is the very *opposite* of **DEATH**, then **DEATH** cannot mean eternal life!

I was confused! My head was swimming!

But there it was, in plain language. Then I read that **SOULS** can *die*! "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20). Then my startled eyes read, in Revelation 16:3: "and every living *soul* **DIED** in the sea." That said **SOULS** can **DIE**. Then I saw where Jesus said souls can be **DESTROYED!** "... but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

It began to look like some of the churches *were*

wrong, after all! But did not Jesus Christ found his CHURCH? He surely did, and I found where he said the gates of the grave would never prevail against it—IT WOULD EN-DURE—IT COULD NOT BE DE-STROYED! I found where Jesus Christ said he would never leave nor forsake it—where he would always be “in the midst” of it. I found where he was the living HEAD of it! Jesus Christ was resurrected from the grave. HE IS STILL ALIVE!

So *WHERE* was the Church *HE* was guiding, directing and using?

I was perplexed. But I kept searching. I continued studying.

I found where Jesus Christ came to DO THE WORK OF GOD. He came to bring mankind the GOSPEL, from GOD. Yet he said that *of himself*—as a human—by his own human power, he could do nothing—he was utterly *powerless*, of himself, for this divine spiritual MISSION. The Father that dwelt within him—by the power of his Holy Spirit—did the work.

So it was really GOD doing it, by his Holy Spirit, using the individual human body of Jesus as his instrument. GOD carried on his WORK of revealing HIS MESSAGE through the individual human BODY of Jesus Christ.

I saw where God’s true CHURCH is called “THE BODY OF CHRIST” (I Cor. 12:27, 13; Rom. 12:5). How could the CHURCH be the BODY OF CHRIST? I searched. I studied. God’s Word made the truth PLAIN. God *started* his Gospel WORK—proclaiming the Gospel (Good News) of his KINGDOM through the individual human BODY of Jesus. But after his resurrection, Jesus sent the same HOLY SPIRIT to enter, on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, and thereafter, into the COLLECTIVE BODY of those in GOD’S CHURCH.

The CHURCH, then, is the COLLECTIVE BODY Christ uses as HIS INSTRUMENT, empowered by God’s Spirit, to carry on GOD’S WORK. Jesus Christ heads and directs it from heaven!

How does one get into this ONE BODY? By receiving God’s Holy Spirit. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized [immersed] into ONE

BODY.” To baptize is to immerse—to plunge into. It is God’s Holy Spirit that PUTS ONE INTO the only true Church!

But are there MANY churches? No, everywhere the New Testament speaks of the ONE Body—ONE CHURCH. Christ is NOT divided (I Cor. 1:13). There is ONE true Church. All in it “speak the same thing” (I Cor. 1:10) and there is NO DIVISION!

But WHAT is the divine MISSION of that Church? What is its PURPOSE? The answer is to *do* the WORK OF GOD, which Jesus started, and now continues *through* his Church. And *what* did Jesus start DOING?

Mark tells us. “The *beginning* of

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the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). Then, beginning verse 2, Mark records how John the Baptist prepared the way before him. Coming, then, directly to the BEGINNING of the WORK Christ did, Mark says: “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee . . .”—DOING WHAT? “. . . preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: REPENT ye, and BELIEVE the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15).

Two things Jesus commanded his hearers to do: 1) REPENT, and 2) BELIEVE. But believe WHAT? Believe JESUS! Believe his message—his GOSPEL. You have to believe that Gospel—that Good News of the KINGDOM OF GOD, to be saved! JESUS SAID SO!

The KINGDOM OF GOD is the GOVERNMENT of God. It is also the divine FAMILY of God, into which we may be born. It is the UNIVERSE-RULING family! You *repent* of—WHAT? Your rebellion against that GOVERNMENT of God. God governs by his LAW, summed up by the Ten Commandments. Some will say, we must repent of SIN! Yes, SURELY! For sin *IS* the transgression of THE LAW (I John 3:4). It means unconditional SURRENDER to the GOVERNMENT of God—to yield to let God RULE your life, according to HIS laws—it means to live by EVERY WORD IN THE BIBLE (Matt. 4:4).

What is the divine MISSION of God’s true CHURCH? Jesus commissioned his Church: “Go ye into all the world, and PREACH THE GOSPEL to every creature.” Not just *any* gospel. Not a gospel merely *about* the Person of Christ—but HIS Gospel of the Kingdom of God—the Gospel he said we have to BELIEVE in order to be converted and saved!

Again, Matthew records his Great Commission: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [into] 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” (Matt. 28:19-20). In proclaiming his GOSPEL, Jesus specifically said, teach them to OBEY God’s COMMANDMENTS!

Jesus gave a prophecy for our time—just before the END of this world. The SIGN of his coming and the end of this age is this: “And *this* gospel of the KINGDOM [the same Gospel he taught the original apostles] shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *THEN* shall the END come” (Matt. 24:14).

That Gospel was not preached after A.D. 70 to all the world. In every generation it has been preached—to a FEW, but *not* TO ALL THE WORLD—ON ALL CONTINENTS!

Wherever God’s one true Church is—the ONE Church that
(Continued on page 42)

HOW THE U.S. CAN END THE FEAR OF NUCLEAR WAR... NOW!

by Herbert W. Armstrong

There is no end in sight to wars. The only visible prospect is accelerating escalation. Yet there is a SURE way the West could end the fear of nuclear war IMMEDIATELY! This surprising article is the conclusion of the article "1982—THE YEAR OF VIOLENCE?" in the previous number.

MANY ASK, "If there be a God, WHY does God allow wars?"

They argue: "If God is LOVE, He surely wouldn't want all this suffering. And if God is ALL-POWERFUL, He could prevent wars! So why doesn't He?"

The answer is, certainly God could stop it—and in very few years will!

But, why in the future? Why did he ever allow it?

Because a PURPOSE is being worked out here below! Man was put here on earth to develop righteous CHARACTER! That purpose necessitates free moral agency in man. It is absolutely necessary that man be given both the prerogative and the ability to make his own choice, and exercise his own will! Otherwise,—NO CHARACTER!

WHY Must There Be WARS?

There is a way that will prevent WAR and produce PEACE—a way to happiness and abundant well-being for everybody!

The ETERNAL God offered mankind that way—and let mankind choose! The ETERNAL created and set in motion inexorable laws that

work—not only laws of chemistry and physics—but also a basic SPIRITUAL LAW, which is the way to peace, happiness, abundant well-being! That LAW is the basic CAUSE of peace. Its violation is the CAUSE of war!

Yes, it's just that simple!

But a rebellious humanity—priding itself on its rational processes of "intellect"—willingly blinds its minds to simple TRUTH, and embarks on a system of complicated and nonsensical ERROR—MUCH OF IT IN THE NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Human nature is basically rebellious against God and the inexorable laws of God (Rom. 8:7).

The Creator laid before man the KNOWLEDGE of his Law—the knowledge of HOW TO AVOID WARS! But yielding to human nature—vanity, greed, self-centeredness—rebellion against God's Law of PEACE—that is the CAUSE of WARS!

Nations Never Needed Go to War!

In respect to war, the basic point of God's Spiritual Law is the Sixth Commandment. It says, simply, "Thou shalt not kill."

If all nations OBEYED that command of God, and followed the way of LOVE and PEACE there would be no war!

But, an objector argues, "That's a pretty platitude—but it's not practical. It would never work! Any nation that would follow that command would be attacked and beaten by some other nation that was more practical!"

Oh, but that way WOULD WORK! That way is practical!

The Creator understands human nature better than we humans do! He provided for that!

Do you think the Almighty Creator is so impractical that he leaves those who OBEY HIM—who accept HIS GOVERNMENT over them—helpless? Understand this! God Almighty is SUPREME! He created the UNIVERSE—and he RULES SUPREME over the entire vast UNIVERSE. He RULES over the earth—and whatever men do in their politics—their wars—their setting up of their own forms of government—is done ONLY BECAUSE GOD ALLOWS IT!

God is SUPREME in GOVERNMENT! A prime responsibility of GOVERNMENT is to PROTECT its own subjects! So, open your eyes,

now, to the FACTS!

God did take a people—a family of some two million SLAVES, children of God's friend Abraham—and offered to set them up as a special nation UNDER HIS GOVERNMENT!

To any people—whether an individual, a nation, or even all nations—who will voluntarily subject themselves under God's GOVERNMENT, God says the SAME THING—he is no respecter of persons! What he said to these Israelites, he says to ALL:

He said, "... if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries . . . and I will cut them off" (Ex. 23:22-23).

God promised supernaturally to fight any invading enemy to protect the nation and people under HIS government. God, ONLY, has *the right* to take human life! He *created* human life. All lives BELONG to him.

But, did you notice? There were CONDITIONS to God's promise of divine and supernatural protection. During the first 6,000 years of man's sojourn on earth, it is not in God's Master Plan to *force* any nation, or individual, to come under his GOVERNMENT. That is left to man's free CHOICE!

Man must choose which way he will go—the way of give and of submission to God's law and government, or the way of get, of self, of rebellion against the law and government of God.

But these freed slaves—the Israelites—accepted God's offer, and became his nation. They AGREED to obey him and his laws—his government—and he agreed to give them PEACE, *as long as they obeyed and trusted him.*

But human nature is human nature—and facts are facts.

Human Nature at Work

And HUMAN NATURE? Yes, these Israelites were full of it!

These Israelites, even while being blessed and delivered by God with MIRACLES, still were rebellious. After the MIRACLES God had performed in FREEING them from slavery in Egypt, these people began to gripe, grumble, complain and DISOBEY God.

These people—600,000 men, besides women and children—came to the Red Sea. There were no ships, no bridges. They could not swim such a distance. They could not walk on the water. They were STOPPED by this obstacle beyond their own power.

They looked, and within eyesight, Pharaoh's ARMY was coming after them.

Right here, God *demonstrated* he would preserve his people from having to undergo military service, or fighting war, or taking human life!

In spite of their faithless complaining in this initial EXAMPLE of God's faithfulness, he was determined to fight *this* battle and save them.

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord which HE WILL SHEW YOU to day. . . . *The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace*" (Ex. 14:13-14).

The Israelites were not to fight—but STAND STILL! God would fight their wars for them! They were to remain at PEACE!

How GOD Fights for Us!

"Moses stretched his hand out over the sea; Then the Eternal swept the sea along by a strong east wind, all night, till the bed of the sea was dry, and the Israelites marched through the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall to right and left. Thus did the Eternal save Israel that day from the Egyptians. Israel saw the mighty act of the Eternal against the Egyptians. . . ." (Ex. 14:21, 22, 30-31, Moffatt).

After this miraculous delivery from disaster—from a WAR—a whole army of a then great nation destroyed—those Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron . . . and said ". . . would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt . . ." (Ex. 16:3).

Again and again, ". . . they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?" (Ex. 17:7.)

Repeatedly, God had given these people awe-inspiring and miraculous demonstrations of his intention to *fight their battles for them.*

After all of this OVERWHELMING PROOF, these people DOUBTED God's faithfulness—DOUBTED his power—even DOUBTED his very existence. They disobeyed. They went *the way* of SIN!

Moses was distraught, his nerves shattered, his patience about exhausted. After all, Moses was only human!

"What shall I do unto this people?" Moses appealed to God, "they be almost ready to stone me" (Ex. 17:4).

At this juncture, Amalek came against the Israelites in great strength with an invading army. This time God ALLOWED the Israelites to *write the lesson of experience.* He allowed them to SIN. God does not forcibly prevent humans from sinning.

Moses, at the end of his patience trying to induce these stubborn, rebellious people to believe in and TRUST God, said to Joshua, "Choose us out men, and go out, FIGHT with Amalek" (Ex. 17:9).

It was altogether unnecessary for these Israelites to arm themselves and wage WAR. It was WRONG! It was SIN. But God let the decision be theirs!

This incident was the *turning point.*

God's PURPOSE Stands!

Even though God ALLOWS humans to make their own decisions—nevertheless God's PURPOSE must stand! His PURPOSE was to settle these descendants of Abraham in the land he had promised Abraham—"the PROMISED LAND."

God's faithfulness demanded that he plant these people in that land, regardless of their conduct!

These descendants of Abraham had *made their decision* to be a fighting, war-waging nation. That decision was theirs to make. And since they had made it, God used *them* to do the fighting in driving out the inhabitants illegally possessing the land God had allotted to Abraham's descendants. Consequently God gave orders for *them* to do what fighting—and killing—was necessary to accomplish God's PURPOSE of putting them in the land of Promise!

But that did not make war RIGHT. Whether to DO right or

wrong—that is MAN'S decision! These Israelites did not need to fight.

God ALLOWED them to SIN by taking up arms.

Now you know WHY the nation Israel went to war—WHY God himself even *commanded* them to go to war, driving out the pagan nations from the Promised Land.

Many people have wondered WHY, if God's teaching is that WAR IS WRONG, he actually commanded his own nation to fight in war.

The answer is that God made man with FREE MORAL AGENCY—God not only *allows* humans to have a CHOICE—he compels us to choose!

God alone determines WHAT is sin. God *does not allow* MAN to decide WHAT is sin, or WHAT is righteousness. But he does allow man—he actually *compels* man to decide WHETHER to sin.

God made it PLAIN to ancient Israel that they need never go to war. He guaranteed complete protection from outside enemies. He guaranteed PEACE—if they would trust him and obey the laws of his government! He demonstrated his ability—and his POWER! But the Israelites chose WAR. Just as ALL nations have chosen WAR! Just as *our* nations do—needlessly—to-day!

Case History No. 2

The preceding article gave the first actual case history showing, in detail, how the ETERNAL God, by supernatural miracles, did deliver the Israelites at the Red Sea from the army of the then greatest nation on earth, the Egyptians.

Notice Case History No. 2.

This concerns King Asa of the kingdom of Judah. The king of Ethiopia came against the Jews with 300 chariots and an army of ONE MILLION soldiers. They had major size armies in those days, strange as that may seem.

In those days the Jews also had a sizable army—but not nearly large enough to withstand an invasion of a force of a million troops.

Perhaps, had the Ethiopians come with a smaller army, Asa might have gone to war with them relying wholly on his armed force,

instead of on God. But, regardless, the FACT is that in this instance this king *did* rely on God for his defense!

“And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, O Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have NO POWER: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against THEE! So THE LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; *and the Ethiopians fled*” (II Chron. 14:11-12).

But there is an unhappy sequel to this tremendous event—where reliance on GOD put A MILLION ARMED MEN TO FLIGHT!

The king of ISRAEL, Baasha, came with an armed force against the Jews. Incidentally, note carefully, the kingdom of ISRAEL was here fighting against the JEWS of the kingdom of JUDAH! They were two altogether *different nations!* The people of the northern kingdom of ISRAEL *never* were called Jews!

This time Asa neglected to rely on God to fight off the attacking military force! This time he did PRECISELY WHAT THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN ARE DOING TODAY! He *hired* an ALLY—the kingdom of Syria (II Chron. 16:1-3).

“And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa, king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and *not* relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself STRONG in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly.”—JUST LIKE THE UNITED STATES AND ALL NATIONS TODAY!—“therefore from henceforth THOU SHALT HAVE WARS” (II Chron. 16:7-9).

If you wonder why OUR NATIONS

are continually having WARS, *there is your answer!*

Case History No. 3

The next case history involves Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, the next king of Judah.

Three allied armies came against Judah, with a mighty military force.

“And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord. . . .

“And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and RULEST NOT THOU OVER ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE HEATHEN?”—that is, over all gentile nations, as well as Israelitish.

Continue: “and in thine hand is there not POWER and MIGHT, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our GOD, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel . . . ? And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade. . . . Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given to us to inherit. O our GOD, wilt thou not judge them? for WE HAVE NO MIGHT AGAINST THIS GREAT COMPANY that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: BUT OUR EYES ARE UPON THEE” (II Chron. 20:3-7, 10-12).

Could God *be* GOD, and fail to heed a heartrending prayer like that—coming from helpless people who were obeying and TRUSTING him?

Immediately God answered through one of his prophets:

“Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; *for the battle is NOT YOUR'S, BUT GOD'S. . . .*

“Ye shall *not need to fight* in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord. . . . And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the

inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord.

“... Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah. . . . *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.* And . . . he appointed SINGERS unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth forever.

“And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children [soldiers] of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped” (II Chron. 20:15, 17-18, 20-24).

But would not most Americans hoot and jeer in sarcasm, if one suggested that “the great and powerful United States” TODAY humble itself—and trust in the INVISIBLE God—and WORSHIP him, bowing our heads to the ground? Couldn't you just hear the snorts and raucous ridicule of stiffnecked proud Britons at the suggestion that they send before an armed enemy an army of SINGERS, saying, “PRAISE THE ETERNAL!”—instead of relying on the nation's MILITARY strength?

Yes, WOULDN'T it seem RIDICULOUS to suggest that OUR proud nations do this—and march to war SINGING praises “to the beauty of holiness”?

Well perhaps so! But that kind of “foolishness” turned out to be *mighty* PRACTICAL for Jehoshaphat and those Jews!

Someday—and in the next few years—America and Britain will be forced to *WAKE UP* to the sobering REALIZATION of *which* way is *truly* the “foolish” way! And God's true Minister is *telling you*, as you read this, that *you'd* better make the right choice NOW, before it's

too late! For indeed it *is* later than you think!

Case History No. 4

Several years later, “Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. . . . And when Hezekiah [king of Judah] saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, . . . he . . . gathered [the people] . . . together to him in the square at the gate of the city and spoke encouragingly to them, saying, ‘Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him; for there is one greater with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to *fight our battles.*’ And the people took confidence from the words of Hezekiah king of Judah” (II Chron. 32:1-2, 6-8 RSV).

Supposing, in the event of a threat of nuclear war, Western leaders broadcast words like those to all the people in America and Britain—saying we would RELY ON THE ETERNAL OUR GOD to fight this battle FOR US!

Have our EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS so deceived and drugged the minds of our people with rationalism—with agnosticism, atheism and the entire evolutionary philosophy—that people would ridicule our leaders as cowardly mollycoddles, and would our military leaders instantly give the signal to unleash the full all-out NUCLEAR destruction of our vast arsenals?

This is just a hypothetical question. But YOU answer it!—and I think you'll realize that OUR PEOPLES have gone SO FAR away from the ETERNAL our God that, in most minds today, he seems nonexistent! Yet he is *just as REAL*—and as POWERFUL—as in Hezekiah's day!

Continue: “After this Sennacherib, king of Assyria . . . sent his servants to Jerusalem to Hezekiah king of Judah and to all the people of Judah that were in Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria, “On what are you relying, that you stand siege in Jerusalem? Is not Hezekiah misleading you, that he may give you over to die by famine and by thirst,

when he tells you, ‘The Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria’? . . . Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands at all able to deliver their lands out of my hand? . . . How much less will your God deliver you out of my hand!”’

“Then Hezekiah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed because of this and cried to heaven. AND THE LORD SENT AN ANGEL, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. So *he returned with shame of face* to his own land. And when he came into the house of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword. SO THE LORD SAVED HEZEKIAH AND THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand OF ALL HIS ENEMIES; and HE GAVE THEM REST [PEACE] ON EVERY SIDE” (II Chron. 32:9-11, 13, 15, 20-22 RSV).

War is *so needless!*

War is WRONG!

Yes, the United States *could* put an END to the threat of nuclear war IMMEDIATELY—*IF* not only leaders in Washington, but ALSO the PEOPLE AS A WHOLE, could recognize REALITY—could understand that God is REAL—and would *humble themselves* before him, BELIEVE him—RELY ON him!

But, if our people WILL NOT, then *it is decreed*, we shall, in fewer years than you will believe, see OUR CITIES DESTROYED, along with a full third of our populations by a foreign invasion!

The God who is REAL says of OUR PEOPLES: “. . . Prophecy against the prophets of Israel. . . . O Israel, thy prophets are like foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to STAND in the BATTLE IN THE DAY OF THE LORD” (Ezek. 13:2, 4-5).

That is NOT a message to ancient Israel—but to the English-speaking world of TODAY. The “DAY OF THE LORD—a time foretold in

(Continued on page 30)

WHY CHRIST DIED AND ROSE AGAIN

by Herbert W. Armstrong

IT IS revealed that Jesus was “Emmanuel”—that is, “God with us”—GOD in the human flesh. Can God die? Was Jesus really dead, or did only his body die? Here is a brief, pointed answer.

THIS is a question that has perplexed millions. It is an enigma that has never been made clear and plain to many minds.

Yet the Scriptures give us a clear revelation, in plain, simple words—if we can *believe* the Scriptures—which is to believe they mean *exactly what they say*.

We read: “Christ *died* for our sins according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15:3).

“Christ” means “Anointed,” or “Messiah”; and while the name *Jesus* may be used to denote the human man, the title *Christ* certainly refers to the Divine One—the One who was GOD with us. This scripture says he died, and was buried. And it was he—the CHRIST—the Divine One—who ROSE FROM THE DEAD. He did not rise from *life* or a living state, but from DEATH!

“For to this end *Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord* both of the dead and living” (Rom. 14:9). There is the answer. Through his death and resurrection Christ became Lord of

the dead as well as the living. He paid the penalty for our past sins. He made possible the *way* so that both the dead and those now living might have life eternal—not mere temporary existence, but life everlasting.

When Christ rose, he was *revived*. When a boxer is knocked unconscious, the attendants work over him to *revive* him. The expression “He was revived” indicates Christ had been unconscious—that he was dead—not that he rose from a state of conscious mental activity.

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ *died* for the ungodly . . . while we were yet sinners, Christ *died* for us” (Rom. 5:6, 8).

God in the Flesh

Notice again: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was God*” (John 1:1).

The Greek word is *Logos*. It means “Word” or “Spokesman.” This is referring to the One who coexisted with the Father from eternity—who always existed—who is one with the Father, yet, as he himself said, his Father is greater than he.

Always he referred to himself as One *sent* by the Father. He said that the words he spoke were not spoken of himself, but the Father who sent him gave him a commandment what he should say and speak.

The one who gives the orders and sends another is in a position superior to the one sent and who obeys the orders. A husband is set by God in a position, superior, in the family relationship, to that of the wife. Yet they are both human—both on the same level—and they are ONE. Not one God, but *one flesh*.

In the Church, or local congregation, an elder is in authority during a service that all things may be done decently and in order, and he has the rule over the congregation. Yet Christ prayed that the Church would be kept as ONE, *even as* he and the Father are One. The Church is composed of many members, yet ONE BODY. And its members, more than one, are to be kept ONE in the sense of harmony and unity in love and purpose, as Christ and the Father are One—and they form ONE CHURCH, even as the Father and Christ form ONE GOD—yet more

than one member in the God Family.

Christ the Everliving

In the Old Testament the *Logos* is called by different names. God calls people and beings *what they are*.

There was an archangel, perfect in beauty, full of knowledge. He was named what he actually was—LUCIFER, which in English means “Shining Star of the Dawn”—or Lightbringer. But when through pride he decided to compete against God for supremacy of the universe, and to take possession and rule from God, his name was changed to what he now was—Satan, which in English means “Adversary,” or rival or competitor.

Therefore the names of Christ have always been—whether names or titles—words which describe *what he is*. Most frequently he was called *Yahweh*, erroneously translated in the American Standard Version “Jehovah.” In the King James it is rendered “LORD.”

Today we do not know either the correct spelling or pronunciation of this name. It was regarded as so sacred it was never pronounced in ancient Judah, any more than a son who properly honors his father would call him by his first name. Yet we know its MEANING—it means “The Eternal”—or the One in whom is inherent LIFE. *It signifies One who possesses life inherent from eternity to eternity—life source!* He also was called *Yahveh—ropehcha*—God your healer. He gave his name to Moses as “I AM.” That is, the One who IS—who EXISTS—who has life inherent in himself!

He also is the Word or Spokesman. God is Creator—but the Father created all things by, and through, Christ the WORD.

He (Christ) is the One who “SPAKE, and it was done.” He is the One who said, “Let there be light”—and the Holy Spirit (the spiritual essence or power that emanates from both Father and Son) moving upon the face of the water performed the command, and “there was light.”

Yet Jesus spoke, or commanded, only what the Father had commanded him. Father, Word and Holy Spirit combined in perfect harmony in Creation!

Now, the *Logos*—the WORD—was God. “The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him. . . . In him was LIFE. . . . And the Word was made *flesh*, and dwelt among us” (John 1:2-4, 14).

Christ Was CONVERTED Into Flesh

Notice, the “WORD,” who was the ETERNAL—the EVERLIVING—in whom was LIFE—eternal life—by whom all things were made and created—the very God himself—HE WAS MADE FLESH.

Notice, he did not merely enter into some mortal fleshly body—the body of another. He was not separate from the flesh, as One inside the flesh. It says in plain language—IF we believe the scripture—IF we believe it means what it says—*it says he was made flesh!*

That is, he who had existed from eternity—he by whom God created the worlds and all things therein, he who *was* and *is* LIFE, he who was GOD—he *was made flesh*—converted INTO flesh, until he *became* flesh; and then he WAS flesh!

And, being flesh—being human—he divested himself of inherent immortality for the time being. He gave up immortality for us—that he might *die* for us—pay the penalty of our sins in our stead.

But, though human, he did have from birth, what we *may* receive as God’s GIFT, by GRACE, the indwelling of God’s Spirit—that he, even as we, might be resurrected from the DEAD, and given by the Father immortal life—that is, *converted* back into spiritual immortality so that he by the resurrection once again *became* divine Spirit—or very GOD! Thus he made the same resurrection possible for us—that *we* may also become divine Sons of God.

Yes, Jesus was a fleshly MAN. He was God come in human flesh. And, when converted into human flesh, the LIFE that kept him alive resided IN THE BLOOD, as in all who are *flesh* (Lev. 17:11). The breath oxidizes the blood and is called the “breath of life”—of animal or human life.

Jesus was also GOD—he was both human and divine. But he was not GOD inside of, yet separate from, the body of flesh—he, God,

WAS MADE FLESH, until he, still GOD—God *with us*—became God IN (*not* inside of) the human flesh—God manifest IN THE FLESH (I Tim. 3:16)—“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same” (Heb. 2:14).

That is, as we humans are partakers of flesh and blood, Jesus Christ, also, in exactly the same manner, was partaker of flesh and blood.

And why? Why, in order that he *might* DIE!—“that through *death* he might destroy [annul] him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. . . . for verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. . . . made LIKE unto his brethren” (verses 14, 16, 17).

Jesus came NOT in the nature of angels—that is, spirit nature. He was a human being. He was MADE FLESH—made HUMAN. He took on, at birth, HUMAN NATURE. He was tempted in all points like we are. He suffered as we do. He was forced to resist the pull of human nature, even as you and I. He, God, BECAME MAN—man so that he COULD DIE for us, that our sins might be erased and forgiven!

It Was CHRIST Who Died

Jesus DIED! Jesus WAS DEAD!

And for three days and three nights the Second Person of the Godhead—EMMANUEL—GOD with us—GOD *made* human flesh—was DEAD!

And dead matter cannot impart life. Life can come only FROM life. As a human, Jesus was the Son of God the Father. God was his only Father. Mary was his mother. He became the SON OF man at his human birth. And now he was DEAD—yes, DEAD! If he was not DEAD, then the penalty of *your* sins is not yet paid. You are yet in your sins. You are without hope! But Jesus was DEAD!

If there were no other Person in the Godhead, then the Giver of all life was dead and all hope was at an end!

If there were no FATHER in heaven while Jesus Christ lay dead—his blood in which resided his LIFE, shed from his veins, given for you

and for me—then all human life everywhere had come to its doom.

But the Father still reigned in high heaven! And the FATHER had LIFE INHERENT IN HIMSELF!

Life can only come *from* life! And Christ Jesus was now DEAD! His life had gone from him—poured out on Calvary's cross—poured out from his veins! That's where his life resided—in his BLOOD, not in spirit! He did not shed a *spirit* to save us from our sins; He shed his BLOOD, and in so doing GAVE HIS LIFE.

But, "as the Father hath life *in himself*; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). *God the Father raised Jesus from the dead!*

Not Resurrected in Same Body

Now notice carefully. God the Father did not cause Jesus Christ to get back into the body that had died.

Some seem to believe that it was only the *body* that died—that Jesus Christ never died—that Christ was alive, and preached to "spirits in prison" during the three days and nights his BODY was dead. What they believe is that a BODY Christ lived in died, but CHRIST HIMSELF never died. Christ was God, and, they argue, God could not die!

They do not realize that Christ had given up his immortal life inherent in divine glory and been converted into human mortality for the purpose of DEATH.

If they are right, they are lost and doomed to eternal punishment! *If Christ* did not die for their sins—if it was only a mortal *body* that died—then we have no Savior, and we are LOST.

What happened is that the *Logos*—the WORD—the Eternal—was MADE FLESH. He was converted into, CHANGED INTO, *flesh*. Now he was FLESH AND BLOOD, exactly as you and I.

His *life* was in his blood, and he gave his LIFE by the fact his blood

poured out while he was on the cross! He had taken on a HUMAN nature. He was God—but now God changed INTO flesh and blood—God WITH US—Emmanuel!

Yes, the Word was MADE FLESH, and he WAS flesh and blood, not just an immortal spirit IN a body of flesh and blood.

We may argue that God is immortal and could not die. But the Scriptures reveal that GOD SO LOVED US *that while* we were yet sinners, The Eternal, the *Logos*, who was with God and who was God in the Second Person, permitted himself voluntarily to be CHANGED INTO a flesh-and-blood

Jesus came not in the nature of angels—that is, spirit nature. He was a human being. He was made flesh—made human. He took on, at birth, human nature. He, God, became man—man so that he could die for us, that our sins might be erased and forgiven!

MAN, until he BECAME a human who could and did DIE. But God the Father—God in the First Person—still reigned in High Heaven; and he RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD, not from life.

It was CHRIST HIMSELF who was DEAD. He was REVIVED. Nowhere does the Scripture say he was alive and active, or that God had him get back into the human BODY that had died and was now resurrected.

Jesus Christ was DEAD. He was as much out as a boxer knocked senseless—much *more*, for the boxer usually is not dead but only unconscious. Jesus was DEAD—but was REVIVED!

And the resurrected body was no longer human—it was the Christ

resurrected IMMORTAL, once *again* CHANGED! As he had been changed, converted INTO mortal human flesh and blood, subject to death, and for the PURPOSE of DYING FOR OUR SINS, now by a RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, HE WAS AGAIN CHANGED, CONVERTED, INTO IMMORTALITY—and he is alive forevermore! Now a LIVING Savior, not a DEAD Savior. He was dead—but only for three days and three nights.

Now, How About YOU?

Do you realize WHAT a tremendous price was paid that you might be released from the death penalty of YOUR SINS? The very Eternal—the Spokesman of the Godhead, and very GOD himself—permitted himself to be changed into a mortal human—stepped down, descended to the human plane, suffered, was tempted, persecuted, despised, rejected of men, crucified!

If Jesus had been *only* human, his death could have paid the penalty for but *one* other human being who had incurred that penalty by transgression of God's spiritual law (Rom. 6:23). Since God the Father created all things by Jesus Christ (Col. 1:16), and since all things, including man, were made by Jesus Christ, he is our Maker

and therefore God; and his life that he gave was of *greater value* than the total of all human beings (John 1:1-3).

He died and for three days and nights WAS DEAD! He who was IN THE BEGINNING, and WAS GOD! He stooped to human level, submitted to DEATH—trusted the Father to restore him to life! *That* is the PRICE paid for you and for me. He GAVE himself for YOU—and in so doing bought and paid for you! And therefore, *you* BELONG TO HIM! Will you GIVE YOURSELF to him?

That is the only way of salvation—the only way this GREATEST PRICE EVER PAID IN THE UNIVERSE FROM ETERNITY can save you.

You must GIVE YOURSELF up!—

GIVE yourself TO HIM! Give him your life—yourself. Let HIM come into your mind and heart, through his Holy Spirit, and live HIS LIFE IN YOU!

It means full, complete, utter, unconditional SURRENDER. You are no longer your own, you are HIS. Give your life to HIM, and see what great usefulness and accomplishment he will put it to! See what great joys will be yours as a result of the great GOOD he can and will do through you—IF you are his, wholly IN HIS POWER, wholly subjected to HIS WILL.

Yes, Jesus Christ died and was dead! But God the Father RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD. HE LIVES FOREVERMORE!

You are already dead in trespasses and sins unless, or until, you REPENT of sins, surrender to God, GIVE YOURSELF to the LIVING SAVIOR who died for you, but was RAISED to become your High Priest and coming King! We have to DIE in order to LIVE. Give YOURSELF to Christ and he will give you ETERNAL LIFE!

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this LIFE is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life”! (I John 5:11-12.) □

NUCLEAR WAR...

(Continued from page 18)

more than thirty prophecies—is going to strike sooner than you may think! You will *know*, then, how REAL it is. You will wish, then, you had heeded. I am not writing foolishly, but very soberly, ON AUTHORITY of the *living CHRIST!*

Continue this WARNING to OUR nations TODAY: “They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith: and the Lord *hath not sent them*: . . . Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and *there was no peace*” (verses 6, 10).

Perhaps you need to read the free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, and then read this whole chapter seriously! It is a last WARNING from the ETERNAL GOD!

God says to US, TODAY: “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and *make you a new heart and a new spirit*: For *WHY WILL YE DIE*, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore, TURN YOURSELVES, and *LIVE YE*” (EZEK. 18:31-32). □

Battle of the Sexes...

(Continued from page 26)

It won't be easy. For some it's going to take bold decisions, for others unheard-of changes in lifestyles, a lot of deep discussion between husbands and wives, which will include some long-range planning and in-depth introspection and understanding. What does each really want out of life, and what do both want to achieve together as a family unit.

Instead of flying off in separate directions, pulling families apart, two working together, giving each of their individual strengths and talents to gain a common purpose, would be almost certain of attaining the right goals.

The Delusion of Self-fulfillment

As for self-fulfillment, forget *self-fulfillment*. Self-fulfillment has become an obsession in this age. Chasing after that elusive goal is the key to the problem. How frustrating to ask—morning, noon and night: Am I happy? Am I fulfilled?

Male or female, single or married, if you have no more purpose to your life than self-satisfaction, you will be the most miserable of human beings.

Why are you here? What is the purpose of your existence? Is it only to become married and have children? Is it to become professionally trained through years of education and experience just to sacrifice health and principles to reach the top in some profession?

If you're looking to these temporary goals to make your life worth living, to make you happy, you are ensnared in the same trap most in our society have fallen prey to.

Women, the answer is not battling men. We're all in this together, male and female. We need each other to make it. Find out your purpose for being. Write for Herbert W. Armstrong's free booklet *Why Were You Born?* It will open your mind to an understanding of your reason for being that you have not had before, an understanding that comes to you free, but that is priceless. □

Jesus Didn't Rise on Easter Sunday!

He didn't die on Friday, either.

Can you figure three days and three nights between sunset Good Friday and sunrise Easter Sunday? Even theologians have wrestled with this problem. In Matthew 12:40 Jesus said he would be “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” He also said, in verse 39, that this was the only sign he would give that he was the Messiah. Now either Jesus was an impostor or the “Good Friday-Easter” tradition is in error. An enlightening and controversial booklet titled *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday* makes plain the biblical truth. Why not request this important booklet today and see for yourself? It's absolutely free. To request your *free* copy, just write to the *Plain Truth* office nearest you or use the handy literature request card in this issue.

The Resurrection
was not on Sunday



Personal from...

(Continued from page 2)

is CHRIST'S—it will be preaching THAT GOSPEL to the whole world—over *all inhabited continents*—today. For we are *near the END!*

The Gospel of the *living* Christ is the GOOD NEWS of the *coming* KINGDOM OF GOD to *RULE THE WORLD!* It is the Gospel of the divine GOVERNMENT. It teaches people to REPENT of rebellion against GOD'S government—transgression of GOD'S LAWS. It teaches salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the remission of sins through Jesus' shed blood and reconciliation to God by Christ's DEATH; and salvation through his LIFE.

It has NO PART in this world's governments—its members are AMBASSADORS, as in a strange land, of THE KINGDOM OF GOD, soon to destroy and replace all human governments of the nations today. Jesus prayed for his Church: "... Holy Father, keep through *thine own name* those whom thou hast given me, that they may be ONE, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them *in thy name*: ... And now come I to thee; ... I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because *they are not OF the world*, even as I am not OF the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. *They are not OF the world*, even as I am not OF the world. Sanctify them through THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH" (John 17:11-17).

Jesus said his true Church was to be KEPT *in the name* of the Father—GOD. *Twelve times* in the New Testament, the NAME of this one *true* Church is The CHURCH OF GOD! It is GOD'S Church, and Jesus Christ is its guiding, sustaining, directing HEAD!

In this world, churches are named after MEN, or after the SYSTEM men have devised, or the kind of church government MEN have thought out, CONTRARY to God's

Word—or after a significant doctrine they emphasize—or, what men hope to make it—all-encompassing, universal or catholic. But wherever that ONE *true* Church is, it will be named The CHURCH OF GOD. But that is not all. Many have appropriated God's name but are not proclaiming the KINGDOM OF GOD, as the GOVERNMENT of God, which we must OBEY—teaching obedience to God's Law (Ten Commandments) (including the fourth)—teaching REPENTANCE of rebellion and transgressing God's holy LAW—teaching that we may be now BEGOTTEN into the KINGDOM (Family) of God, and may, by the resurrection, be BORN into the GOD FAMILY!

“

Wherever God's one true Church is . . . it will be preaching the good news of the coming Kingdom of God to rule the world!

”

That true Church is preaching the imminency of the coming of CHRIST as KING of kings and LORD of lords, to RULE all nations for a thousand years on earth. Not up in heaven, but ON THIS EARTH (Rev. 5:10).

There is only ONE such Church! It is doing THE WORK OF GOD. It is, as Jesus said it would be, a “little flock,” persecuted, despised by the world. But it does have dedicated, consecrated, converted, fully instructed and trained, ordained MINISTERS in all parts of the world—available to call on you, visit you in your home, answer your questions, explain the Bible to you—*IF YOU REQUEST IT!* But none of them will *EVER* call on you, unless YOU of your own free will request it! Paul had visited the elders (ministers) at Ephesus from house to house—*BUT*, regarding the general public, Jesus said, “GO NOT from house to house” (Luke 10:7).

Neither Jesus, nor Peter, nor Paul, nor any of the original true apostles ever approached people and personally URGED conversion on them. God has made every human a FREE MORAL AGENT. God forces each to MAKE HIS OWN DECISION, and the true GOD will never force you to be converted.

But if you, of your own volition, want to know MORE about the *very* Church that Jesus Christ founded, and heads today—if you'd like to ask questions about it, why not write to the editor and request a personal visit? We might not be able to have one of God's own ministers call on you immediately—but if you'll make the request and be patient, I'm sure that before too long we can get one of these men GOD has called and trained, to visit you. And let me suggest that you JOT DOWN on paper the QUESTIONS you are going to want to ask. I've learned, personally, by more than 45 years' experience, that you'll forget them unless you do.

Hundreds and hundreds—yes, thousands upon thousands—are being *converted*—their lives CHANGED—by this WORK OF GOD, through *The World Tomorrow* broadcast worldwide; through *The Plain Truth*, the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course and other vital free literature we send upon request. Some, not realizing one of God's own called and consecrated ministers could call and explain and answer questions, have JOINED one of the churches of this world. You cannot JOIN the true Church of God—the Almighty GOD *puts you in*.

But if you have questions about fellowship, doctrines or practice—or ANY questions about the Church or the Bible or the Christian LIFE, write me. I cannot call and visit with you personally any more (as I used to do and wish I still could), but God has now given me many truly called and chosen men who CAN. DON'T go to the churches of this world, or join any, UNTIL you hear the full truth and weigh carefully the FACTS, according to your own BIBLE. *Then* make your decision and take what steps GOD shows you. □