

the
PLAIN TRUTH

a magazine of understanding

VOLUME XXII, NUMBER 4

APRIL, 1957



—Wide World Photo

DARKEST AFRICA

It is difficult to believe that this is a scene in Africa. These are seven-story modern apartments built at Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo. Here is an illustration of the rapid progress that can be made in Africa once the Negro becomes acquainted with Western Civilization. This cover picture on Africa introduces a vitally important article on the controversial RACE QUESTION appearing on page 3 of this issue.

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VOL. XXII

NO. 4

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Sent FREE to all who request it, as the Lord provides. Address all communications to the editor, Box 111, Pasadena, California. Our readers in England should address the editor, B.C.M. Ambassador, London W.C. 1.

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By the Radio Church of God

NOTICE: Be sure to notify us immediately of any change in your address. Please include both old and new addresses. IMPORTANT!

Heart to Heart Talk with the Editor

THERE is a commonly-assumed idea in the world that it doesn't make any difference what one believes, if he is sincere. One man's beliefs are often considered to be as good as another's.

The idea seems to be that it doesn't make so much difference *what* one believes, if he is sincere.

For example, there is the much-used admonition: "Attend the Church of your choice." Each church denomination holds to a combination of beliefs that differ from every other denomination. Yet the average church member considers that these differences are not of great importance. In fact, the average church member doesn't know what those differences are. He probably has only a vague and hazy idea of what his own denomination believes.

You hear the explanation: "All our church denominations worship the same God, and all are on the way to the same place. They are just taking different routes, going different ways—but all

lead to the same destination in the end."

Do you believe that?

Can you tell me where you can find any such teaching in the BIBLE? Yes, sadly, it is only too true that these different WAYS all lead to the same destination—but that destination is *not* what they expect!

There is only ONE WAY that leads to everlasting LIFE, and Jesus said "FEW there be that find it." Christ is that way. But Christ not only taught the condition of believing *in* Him—He also taught the condition of BELIEVING HIM—believing HIS GOSPEL that He brought from God.

The SALVATION Jesus preached is not a matter of *destination*—of geographical location. It is a matter of inheriting ETERNAL LIFE, instead of the eternal DEATH each of us has brought upon himself by transgressing God's spiritual Law. It is a matter of WHAT we are to become, not WHERE—although Jesus said the meek shall inherit THE EARTH, not heaven.

But the point I want to make is that it *does* make all the difference between death and life for eternity WHAT we believe, and WHAT we do!

Jesus was sent from God as the messenger of the New Covenant. He brought a definite MESSAGE, concerning the GOVERNMENT of God—being born into the FAMILY of God. His Message concerned a WAY of life—a way totally at variance with the ways of this world—a way based on living by EVERY WORD OF GOD. He said it is necessary to BELIEVE that MESSAGE!

Sin is the transgression of GOD'S LAW (I John 3:4). God *alone* decides *what* we must obey to be saved—to qualify to receive His precious GIFT of eternal life. But God made each of us a free moral agent. He decreed that each individual must decide for himself, *not* WHAT is right or wrong, but WHETHER to obey. God has not left any individual free to decide for himself WHAT is sin, but compels every individual to decide for himself WHETHER to sin, or to obey.

WHY are there so many sects and denominations professing the Christian religion? What caused all this division? What brought on this BABYLON? Why, different beliefs, of course!

Splits and divisions were beginning

before the New Testament was fully written. Jude, in writing about SALVATION, said it was necessary to write into the inspired WORD OF GOD that we should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Not new and different ideas of men—but the faith, the truth, *once delivered*. It came FROM GOD. God had it *delivered* to mankind. It was delivered by his Messenger—CHRIST! It is recorded in the written Word, the BIBLE.

Why was this admonition necessary? Because certain men had crept in unawares—the church members were not aware of the deception—turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. Lasciviousness is license—permission to believe and do as a man pleases, instead of THE TRUE FAITH, as GOD DELIVERED IT.

Two cannot walk together except they be AGREED (Amos 3:3). A house divided against itself (in disagreement) cannot stand. When some in the Church departed from the faith *delivered* to men from God, and began to believe that which seemed right in their own eyes, they soon split off from the Church into a new group of their own. During the second and third centuries of the Christian era, some fifty "Christian" sects and denominations appeared.

Then, in the early fourth century, the Emperor Constantine assumed command over the professing Christian religion. He appointed the Council of Nicea. He commanded the church leaders to decide *among themselves* what would be the church doctrines and beliefs. What came out of that Nicene Council was a mixture of original *delivered* Truth and pagan error, as decided by these human ecclesiastical leaders. The police power of the state forced all to accept and believe this same thing.

Authoritative religion held sway over the western world for centuries. And during these centuries the Church remained UNITED—not in the TRUTH *once delivered*, but in *traditions of men*.

Then at last there rose up a leader powerful enough to oppose the Church belief and practise, and the LUTHERAN Church was founded. Soon other leaders arose with still different beliefs. New and different sects and denominations followed—the Wesleys, Calvin, Fox and

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of Christ! We are commanded to observe the MEMORIAL OF HIS DEATH—"Do this in remembrance of Me," commanded Jesus! The early inspired true New Testament Church did observe *that* memorial, but it never observed Easter or Lent! God never commanded Easter in honor of the resurrection! Easter is in honor of the false Messiah—Tammuz.

Easter and Lent celebrate the resurrection of a false Christ. Paul warned that this very custom would develop—"For if he that cometh preacheth *another* Jesus, whom we have not preached"—and that is exactly what has happened (II Cor. 11:4). Lent celebrated *another* Jesus, a false Messiah from Babylon!

The celebration of a festival on Sunday in honor of the resurrection comes directly from PAGANISM. The pagans celebrated the resurrection of Tammuz, the false Messiah, immediately after Lent. This festival crept into the professing Christian world after the death of the apostles. The Christians began to neglect *the annual memorial* of Christ's death. They substituted a Sunday Easter in its stead. (If you want to know what the inspired New Testament Church really observed, also include in your letter a request for Mr. Armstrong's booklet "When and How Often Should We Observe the Lord's Supper?" It will give you the amazing answer.)

Notice that immediately after the Lenten observance, the prophet Ezekiel sees the people observing an Easter sunrise service: "Then said He unto me, 'Hast thou seen this?'"—the Lenten fast. "'Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see GREATER ABOMINATIONS than these.'" What does the prophet see: people bowing down toward the sun in the East. Easter sunrise services—the climax to the 40 days of Lent! (Ezek. 8:16).

God calls the sunrise service an ABOMINATION! — Sun-Worship! It is a sin! It does make a difference to God. He labels Lent and Easter exactly what they are—pagan festivals!

Your eternal destiny depends upon what God SAYS, not upon what *seems* right to you.

And don't delay writing for Mr. Armstrong's booklets. If you have not yet read them, request them *immediately*.

Heart to Heart Talk with the Editor

(Continued from page 2)

others. Differences of belief divided and re-divided these — new offshoots continued, more and more denominations and sects arose, until today there are more than 400 different churches in the United States alone.

This is not harmony, peace, and UNITY—this is strife, disagreement, and DIVISION. What is the difference between one denomination and another? Different BELIEFS about either doctrine or practise or both.

Is this what God once DELIVERED to the true Church of God? No, these sectarian beliefs disagree with God's TRUTH which GOD *delivered* to His Church! What, then, is the real BASIS for each of these hundreds of Churches? Each one is based on its own peculiar DISAGREEMENT in part or in total with GOD'S TRUTH *once delivered*.

What, then, must of necessity be the basic foundation that would identify the ONE and ONLY *true* Church of God,—if such exists today? Why, complete ACCEPTANCE of ALL of the *faith once delivered*—that is, believing, and obeying that Truth and instruction delivered from God to His Church thru Christ and thru His written Word!

That means a Church made up of people who have, first, *repented* of their *own* ways, beliefs and practises, and those of the world—and who have accepted, without reservation, the WORD OF GOD—people who now LIVE by every Word of God, which means they STUDY the Bible to be corrected, reprov'd, and instructed in GOD'S ways. It means people whose lives no longer are conformed to this world, but are transformed by the power of God's Holy Spirit into the pattern GOD HAS DELIVERED thru His written Word!

This means a Church composed of people who regard the Holy Bible as the SUPREME AUTHORITY over all lives—who actually *tremble* before this inspired Word—who *fear* to disobey it—who regard it as the sole source of TRUTH and the right way to happiness, peace, and eternal life. And in OBEYING

the instructions contained therein, they will be found carrying out the Great Commission of Christ — proclaiming with a LOUD VOICE *His* Gospel, just as Jesus brought it from God the Father, to all the world as a witness.

And when you find that Church, you will find UNITY, not in the various conflicting ideas and beliefs of men, but in GOD'S TRUTH. They will ALL BELIEVE THE SAME THING, because they must be people who have *repented* of their *own* ideas or convictions, or the beliefs and practises and customs of the world, and whose lives are now devoted to seeking GOD'S truths and HIS WAYS.

In the world you find men of conflicting beliefs CLAIMING that they seek to find God's Truth—but they are not fully honest in this. They usually refuse to accept God's Truth unless it is what they want to believe, or what their group believes. They do not always let Scripture correct them where they are wrong.

Here, then, is the UNITY you will find in God's true Church:

They will ". . . stand fast in ONE SPIRIT, with ONE MIND, striving together for the faith of the Gospel" (Phil. 1:27).

The ONE MIND is the MIND OF CHRIST, now in them by the power of the Holy Spirit. "Let this MIND be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:2).

They will be of the SAME MIND, IN THE LORD—not apart from the Lord (Phil. 4:2). Here is GOD'S WAY to UNITY: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that ye all speak the same thing*, and that there be NO DIVISIONS among you" (I Cor. 1:10). If all these professing Christian denominations were in truth Christian, there would be NO DIVISIONS—but there are more than 400 divisions in America alone!

Just speaking the *same thing* is not enough. That is what the leaders at the Nicene Council agreed to do—but it must be the SAME THING as the WORD OF GOD!

Here at headquarters of the Church of God, *we do all speak the same thing!*

Our ministers are men who have gone thru the *real experience* of conversion—who have been CONQUERED by the Eternal God, who have known what it is