December 1968

I Love God Because...

In Retrospect

Another Look At War
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The Birth of the Child

The Book of Revelation in chapter twelve describes for us in symbolic language the church, as she appears in the midst of this world from the heavenly point of view. In verses one and two the church, as she was manifest in the old dispensation, is symbolized by a woman with child. This is evident from verse five. There we read that the child that she delivers is a man-child, who was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. This child was caught up to God’s right hand in the heavens. It is the Christ.

The church is, therefore, symbolized by a woman pained to be delivered of a child. This could be said of the church at anytime in the Old Dispensation. The promise of the Seed was given already to Adam and Eve in the protovangel of Gen. 3:15. It was because of sin and guilt that the church was filled with travail to be delivered of that Seed. For He would take away all sin and guilt. He would give her the victory over sin and death. And it was only in Christ that this was possible!

Now as a woman nears the time of delivery her travail increases, but also so does her anxiousness for the birth of her child. For at the moment of birth she knows that she will have a joy that overcomes all her burdens she now bears. She will have an infant child to love, hold, and care for. Thus it was for the church; as the time approached the birth of Christ she was filled with more travail. The glory of the theocracy was lost, the temple was incomplete without the ark. More and more it was becoming difficult to serve God properly. And it was at this time that the church, the true remnant according to election, hoped for the promised Seed without ceasing. They looked forward to the unbounded joy that would be theirs in Christ. The birth of Immanuel and His walk in our midst would dispel all of the churches burdens. What a day to look forward to! But, beloved, what a wonderful day to commemorate! The promised Seed was brought forth! He delivered us from our sins, and even now guides us to everlasting glory!

Also today, the nominally Christian world looks forward with anxiousness to the day we commemorate our Lord’s birth. They look forward to the profits that will be made during the Christmas buying spree. They look forward to feasting on roast turkey, and to the holiday from work. They look forward excitedly to this day, as school children, for it marks the beginning of vacation from a week or two of school. They look forward to Christmas bonuses, and to the gifts that they will receive. They look for the day of the year that goes far toward being the day when the lusts of the flesh are most nearly satisfied.

Covenant young people, do not allow yourselves to be so wrapped up with this atmosphere that you do not see the joy which the church has always held so dear. Pray for grace to thank God for the wonderful gift of the Son, Who delivers us from the depths of sin and guilt into glory!

Rev. R. G. Moore
God's Love Toward Us
As Revealed in the Birth of His Son
by MRS. LEON KAMPS

I LOVE GOD BECAUSE . . .

Because? Only because He First loved me. That truth is fundamental and essential in our confession to true faith.

This time of year we are surrounded by all the clamor of the world as the holidays come upon us. In fact, so great is that clamor that even many of God's children are caught up in it. It's Christmas time and everyone loves everyone else. How exciting . . . and yet . . . how false. Christmas dashes in upon us before we can even declare ourselves ready and is suddenly gone. We give a sigh of relief that the hustle and tension are finally over. But we don't seem very alarmed that we really spent little if any time meditating about the measureless love of God revealed in the birth of the Christ-child.

That's so old! It really doesn't take much time to think about it! Or . . . does it? The more you search into it the more you realize how little you do know. Yes, the fact of that love is older than time itself, for it is from all eternity. But the beauty of it is experienced and renewed from generation to generation.

God's love toward us — those are really very deep and thought provoking words. So much so that men have written books on it!

So carelessly do we live before God that we even come to think of ourselves as not such a bad guy after all. Where is the sinner, who, for a short time at least, is sincerely sorry for his sins and lives in perfection the rest of his life? The Scriptures and the catechism tell us that we daily increase our sins.

God commands us to love Him with all of our heart, mind, body, soul, and strength. We may comfort ourselves with our own image of God but that doesn't change God. His demand is obedience in perfection. Even in spite of the Armenian idea that by free will you seek out and choose God — God does not save man as long as there is the possibility that man can merit and bring about his own salvation.

We must see ourselves just as we are — rotten with sin all the way through. As long as we hold any idea that we are at least a tiny bit good, then do we deny the sovereignty of God, seek glory for ourselves, and say that our salvation is not really a hopeless situation in view of our sin.

When we humbly confess that our salvation is completely of God, then are we spiritually ready to grow in knowledge and rejoice. We must see how impossible it is for us to love God in the perfection He demands and deserves. Then do we see how that through doing the impossible God becomes revealed as God who really IS God. The self-revelation of God and His glory is the purpose of all His works, even the work of redemption.

Now that we are confessing how impossible it is to do anything of ourselves to please God, are we ready to learn such things as:

1. Christ must be one of us in human nature and not merely appear to be so, because God demands that the same human nature which sinned must make satisfaction.

2. The Christ mediator must be man, perfectly righteous, without the sin of Adam, and all of His life and death must be perfectly committed to the living God.

3. Through Christ, the God-man, God purposed to reveal Himself and to realize His everlasting covenant and thus to glorify His holy name in the highest possible degree.

Now you have begun but only a small beginning. You have not arrived at or finished learning about God just because you have been schooled in it all your life and think that now you know enough. As long as you make pride your companion you will have a stumbling block. Set it aside in repentance and you will be lifted up to singing and rejoicing over the measureless love of God toward His people.
The world will never be honest and tell you what Christmas really is, but God will. He tells us that it is His love toward His people revealed in the birth of His only begotten Son.

Keep your pride and become stagnant like swampy water. Or . . . by grace set it aside and rejoice in a real and true Christmas. May God bless you and strengthen you as you seek the true meaning of Christmas in Him.

To God be the glory alone and forever. Amen.

CONTRIBUTION

IN RETROSPECT

by TILLIE EERDMANS

As another year, the year of our Lord 1968, draws to a close, we look at ourselves in retrospect. What do we see? We see tiny babes, little rebels, putting all their disobedient strength against mothers’ will, until even the task of diaper changing becomes difficult. We see small children, confronted by some misdemeanor, immediately jump on the defensive with the excuse it is brother’s or sister’s, playmate’s or teacher’s fault. We see you, young people, when instructed to do some task, rebel and go your own sweet way, so that as parents we have to demand of you obedience. Then each one of you thinks he is getting the worst end of the deal, and obeys grudgingly, saying that brother or sister or friend has it better than you do. We see you, young people, Protestant Reformed young people, singing the songs of Edom, wearing the dress and fashions of this world, your closets bursting with clothes, until we as parents are hard pressed to provide, not the needs, but the desires and demands of our young people.

And what do you see in us, young people? You see adults tearing at each other’s throats, murdering one another with our tongues, destroying the name of a brother, seeing the mote in the brother’s eye and not the beam in our own. You see us seeking after pleasures even as you do, so that there is little time for the study and meditation of the Word of God. You see us often forgetting to pray, or saying merely words; and also like you desiring the latest fashions of this world, until we no longer act or look like the people of God. And you are confused. We have provoked you to anger in that we demand of you obedience to the law of God, and you do not see in us that all consuming love of God.

Our own walk is so often not in harmony with our confession.

On Sunday, we sit in the House of God and we hear the powerful, efficacious Word of God calling us to repentance. And the truth of the Word of God grips our heart. God shows us the wretchedness, the horribleness of our sins, until we cry out, “God be merciful to me, the sinner.” We see ourselves as a people who have gone astray, who have turned every one to his own way. We see ourselves as a people who have caused the Name of our God to be mocked because our confession and our life are not consistent. It is only then, when our prayer becomes a heart-cry and is no longer just mere idle words, that God sends the peace, the blessed peace of forgiveness. It is only then when we see ourselves as the sinner that we fall upon our faces and cry to our Father for mercy. It is only then that He heals the broken heart, only then that He reveals to us His marvelous grace. His tender mercies, His loving-kindness. Then we can confess our sins to our God and to our brother, and we have the wonderful blessed fellowship of the saints, and the peace that passeth all understanding. The love of God in Christ Jesus will then be made manifest in our lives and our churches once more will become a light that shineth in darkness, a city that is set on a hill that giveth light to all that are without. The Name of our God will be magnified. Let us then, as this year draws to a close, see our own beam of sin, and let us as little children, young people, fathers and mothers, laymen and ministers, cry out to our God that he may fill our hearts with His consuming love, that we may live, not as the world liveth, but indeed as the people of God, strangers and pil-
grims here below, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Then we will have the testimony of the people of God that we are one of them, and the Name of our God will be glorified in us and through us. Praise His Name. Hallelujah!

FLEEING YOUTHFUL LUSTS

"But flee youthful lusts . . . ." II Timothy 2:22a.

Paul is writing to Timothy his dear and beloved son in the Lord. Timothy is a young minister. Paul has great concern for the life and conduct of his youthful servant in Christ, and of his deportment in the church of God. He must give leadership in the church to old and young. Shall he do so, then he must walk wisely, judiciously and uprightly.

Hence, Paul warns Timothy for certain pitfalls.

They are the pitfalls which are peculiar to youth. Youth is a wonderful time in one’s life. But it is also the time of peculiar temptations. Did not David pray and do we not sing “Sins of youth remember not”? Speaking generally, it may safely be said that youth is one step from childhood and two steps from maturity of manhood! Physically the youth has suddenly become an adolescent, but in his judgment he is not mature; his counsel is short-sighted and hasty; he is given to form snap judgments, and “rushes where angels fear to tread.” Youth is the time of bewilderment, the period of storm and stress.

Were it not for the grace of God in their hearts the covenant youth of today would be just as wild and unsettled as the youth of our mother world. And let it not be forgotten that no one is immune to his environment. The spirit of the “age” affects us. The spirit which now works in the children of disobedience has a strong appeal to the flesh of youth in the church. There is such a thing as style: style in dress, in hair-cuts, or lack of them, in both boys and girls. Often the mores of the community affect us. And so there is need of vigilance. The price of our liberty in Christ is eternal vigilance and battle.

Paul takes full cognizance of this in his writing to Timothy, a young preacher. This pastor, viewing things from his study, believes that what Paul has to say to Timothy applies equally well to you, my beloved covenant young people. It applies to you whether you are members of the federation board, or whether you are simply one of the young people in your local society and catechism class.

The warning which Paul addresses to you is: “But flee youthful lusts!”

Youth has its own lusts in distinction from those of the men and women of maturer years.

They are youthful lusts.
According to the Holland translation these lusts are “things lusted after” (begeerlijk-heden). These lusts are not merely the evil desires of the flesh such as fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness and all kinds of moral delinquency. It does not seem contextually likely that Paul had such in mind here. Yes, these too are aberrations of youth, departures from the holy law of God. But, once more, this is not what Paul is referring too.

Paul is speaking here of such faults in youth which are spoken of in Ecclesiastes 11:10, “for childhood and youth are vanity.” Youth easily gets caught up in the vicious circle of the Vanity of vanities. So easily youth forgets that the entire matter of the meaning of man’s existence is summed up in these words “fear God and keep His commandments, for that is the whole duty of man.” Many an old man has, in the evening of his life, been heard to speak of the folly of his youth, when he did not refer to the sins of adultery, but to what Paul says of youthful lusts!

There is so much in life that has no true purpose. Youthful lusts promise gold and give mere worthless tinsel. All is so transitory in this life. Also the joys and fun of youth. Youth envisions conquering the world; it will solve the problems. Youth is impatient with the “solutions” of the former generation(s). It is time for a new program and new policies, which must be executed with vigor. Today men often worship at the shrine called “Youth.” Remember the brief era of President Kennedy. The world has its slogans, but soon it is discarded for another idol just as worthless.

Thus it was already in the days of the Greeks.

It is noteworthy that the term for “youthful” in the Greek original is a word which means: make changes, especially political changes, to make innovations or revolutionary movements. It is further worthy of observation that in the entire Bible this is the only place where Paul or any other writer uses this term for “youthful.”

It is the lust which is peculiar to youth!

Sometimes from my study window I look out and see the programs of our youth. I see good young men and women at the helm of the Federation Board and of the individual societies. They work hard; they do their utmost to make life a bit interesting for their fellow young people. And that is commendable.

However, I do believe that we live in times of an affluent society; and all kinds of money is at our disposal, and thus there are more opportunities for doing things differently than the former generation. A warning note may be sounded in this situation: flee youthful lusts.

Decisions often are taken by youth which are rash by the standards of older brethren and sisters in the Lord.

Young people, we live in a college-cultured age!

Beware of the spirit of Athens. Flee youthful lusts!

\* neoterizoo = to make changes, especially to attempt political changes, make innovations, or revolutionary movements, to tamper with the established customs. Liddell and Scott.

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CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

JIM LANTING

On July 29, 1968, Pope Paul promulgated his seventh encyclical, Humanae Vitae (Of Human Life), which condemned all methods of contraception on the grounds that it is an attempt to violate God’s natural laws. The decision is reflected by a distinct minority of Catholics, and it created an unprecedented storm of protest and dissent among both the Catholic laity and hierarchy. Millions of Catholics, including priests and even bishops, declared that they could not accept, without qualification, the teachings of Humanae Vitae, but in the same breath stated that their disagreement would not affect their stand-ings as Catholics. Thus, a more basic issue than contraception emerged, that of Catholic freedom versus authority.

Priest-Sociologist Andrew Greeley in a column in U.S. diocesan newspapers quoted
a bishop as saying that there are two Catholicisms — an "official church" belonging to the Pope and hierarchy, and an undefined "free church," consisting of a large number of dissenting laymen and priests. Other officials suggested that the church is suffering from a "silent schism" of rebels who are remaining Catholic in name but are "hanging loose" from the institutional church. The "silent schism" became rather overt and noisy during the regular semi-annual conference of Catholic bishops in Washington. On the day before the bishops met, an unruly crowd of 3,500 laymen rallied at the Mayflower Hotel, led by one of the nation's most prominent Catholic laymen, Senator Eugene McCarthy. Later, about 100 priests staged a sit-in in the lobby of a Washington hotel, conducting silent vigils, gospel sing-a-longs and rallies to illustrate the need for a liberal pastoral letter from the Bishop Convention.

Solemnly confronted by their own internal divisions, the bishops labored in lengthy sessions, some lasting until four a.m. to produce a pastoral letter that would pacify the dissident constituency. They finally issued a statement which, while urging faithfulness to the pope's teaching, made clear that U. S. Catholics who practice contraception will not be barred from the sacraments. "No one following the teaching of the church can deny the objective evil of contraception itself," the bishops said. "With pastoral solicitude we urge those who have resorted to artificial contraception never to lose heart but to continue to take full advantage of the strength which comes from the sacrament of penance and the grace, healing, and peace in the Eucharist." Comparison of the first and final draft reveals little change and indicates that the debate, although intense, touched on points of phrasing and emphasis rather than deep doctrinal differences. The point of tension seemed to be between theological accuracy and pastoral solicitude. As one bishop put it, "We deliberately tried to strike a neutral chord which was orthodox but open."

The apparent success to this approach surprised even the bishops, who insisted that they did not intend to produce a liberal document. The dissident priests, however, found enough assurance in the implication of the letter to declare their position vindicated. One bishop summed up the disagreement by saying that "the current hangup on contraception tries to make it a special sin — unlike other sins. This error can easily be erased by pointing out that the preaching of marital chastity, like temperance and the other ideal moral standards, presupposes that no one is a saint all at once."

By issuing an encyclical that is simply not acceptable to a large segment of the Catholic church, Pope Paul has inadvertently raised the question of papal authority, one which has been raised many times in the past and one which will be raised countless times in the future. The Catholic church is again realizing the gross blunder and error of the papal claim to monarchic supremacy. One Catholic liberal claims that "We have the structures which fit a theology that is no longer accepted, but we don't have the structures to fit an emerging theology." Valid or not, the liberals seemingly have had their fill of prohibitory pontificating. But if the Catholic church continues to strike those neutral chords to dull dissenters, they will soon realize that theirs is a sonata of inevitable contention which no amount of improvisation can ever harmonize.

The 1968 Fall Retreat

The Federation Board can stamp the Fall Retreat held at Camp Manitou-lin on the 8th and 9th of November a success. The Retreat was planned to provide an adequate balance of discussion groups, activities and free time. There was always something going on so that not one of the 80 young people and their chaperons ever tired of any one activity.

The young people spent much of their time discussing the topics relating to our churches' mission program, prayer, and the Christian's role in politics. These well-chosen topics stimulated very lively discussions which sometimes lasted far longer than the time set aside for them.

If there was any one thing which set this retreat apart from the previous one it had
to be the cold weather. Friday night the question being asked was whether to go to sleep and possibly freeze to death, or to stay awake all night and think about it.

But when it was time to return home no one had any complaints. In fact, everyone agreed that these two days had been well spent.

Ben Wigger
"Love, Not War" is a modern motto reflecting a present day philosophy. It seems to offer an alternative to war, that alternative being "love." Of course, it has never been that simple, as though man by his own free will could just as well push the "love" button as that other button men are afraid might plunge humankind into nuclear destruction. It is not that simple now, either, as history is only repeating itself. War is not the only evil that destroys the earth and the race of man upon it. There were the Canaanites: they were destroying the earth and man with their horrible abominations, most of them too horrible to mention, but you may read of them in Leviticus, Chapters 18 and 20. Things became so bad among these vile people that they literally stunk with sin. They corrupted all the nations with whom they ever came into contact. Israel was in great danger of being so corrupted by them that they would soon become like them. Things worsened, and eventually came to war. It would not have been love to have tolerated the Canaanites any further. It would not have been love to future generations. Then as an alternative to the war against the Canaanites, so called "love" was not that alternative. So called "love" would only have added to the sin of the Canaanites.

But what is really meant by the motto, "Love, Not War" is "Lust, Not War," that is, Let us enjoy our lusts! Let not war interfere! But the motto is self-contradictory. What is the cause of war? That cause of it is latent in that very motto as "lust" is now commonly conceived. Let James explain it. "From whence come wars and fighting among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (Jas. 4:1). Lust in all its forms is the great principal cause of war, whether that sin appear in the form of pride, covetousness, ambition, envy, hate. These are horrible idols, which like Agur's horseleech, never cease crying "Give! give!" (Prov. 30:15). The blood of thousands has been sacrificed to these insatiable idols.

We ask the question, Is war a judgment? God judges men not only at the end of time in the day of judgment, but also in every moment of time, in peace as well as in war. But war is one of the heavier forms of divine judgment in this life. War becomes a means in the hands of God whereby one ungodly nation punishes another, or where heathen nations punish each other. This was the case when the four kings made war against the five kings of Genesis 14. While wicked men war one against another, God has his own ways of warring against them. We read that "the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits," which is a preindication of judgment. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell into those pits. God has His arsenals of judgment everywhere about men,
ready to break out upon them when it is God's time. This world, this life is a "vale of Siddim," a "vale of tears." A Valley of Fields appears, upon cursory view, to be a lush, lovely and comforting place. But it is treacherously "mined" with dangerous pits. Many a Mr. Vain-confidence falls therein and is dashed to pieces. The munitions of God are everywhere. In Noah's day there was water all about, in the earth beneath, and in the heavens above, though the ark to all appearances gave no promise before the Deluge of ever getting afloat. So there are divinely hidden pitfalls strategically laid about to fatally entrap the enemies of God's kingdom. You remember how Demas fell down the shaft of a silver mine and broke his neck! In the last day the earth shall be destroyed by fire. Men mock such an idea. But that consuming element is in every part of our cosmosical environment. It is in the air, in the form of lightning, in the water, which consists of highly flammable materials, hydrogen and oxygen, in the suns of space, and in the bowels of the earth, as volcanoes reveal. Some scientists believe that the very core of this planet is liquid fire, perhaps molten, liquid iron! But when it is time for that final conflagration, it will, for God, be as easy as speaking a mere word to call forth fire to melt all the elements with a fervent heat.

Another question we raise is, Is war ever justifiable? The five kings mentioned were fighting, in the first war ever mentioned in Scripture, for freedom from a foreign power. It may not be easy to say which side was justifiable in its warring, although men and nations have the right to defend themselves, as in this case it was a war of the world against the world. But with Abram it was different. He used the Blitzkrieg (lightning war) method of attack, but in faith, and out of love to his brethren. He was running down a case of kidnapping. He had the right to punish such a crime. The whole land was his by no less authority than the promise of the covenant of God. He, therefore, had the right to punish the crime as a magistrate and act as an executioner under the institution of God. War, then, may be justifiable. The conscientious objector does not believe so. To him, no war is ever justifiable, but all war is sinful, so making it impossible for the true Christian to partake in any war. This is the position that war in and of itself is sinful. The motto of pacifism is, "A bad peace is better than a good war." That is definitely not the theme of John Bunyan's "The Holy War." In that marvelous story the town of Mansoul made peace with Diabolus. That was the saddest day of history. But apply that specious motto, and all David's wars against the Philistines, from Goliath on, were nothing to be compared to Jehoshaphat's making peace with the king of Israel. Yet the divine verdict with regard to Jehoshaphat's act was that his doing this was to "help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord." The truth is, "a bad peace" is deserving of wrath as I Kings 22:44 and II Chronicles 19:2 do show. Joshua, king of Israel, also held to the stupid philosophy of that motto. That is why he struck the ground with his arrows only three times, rather than five or six times.

Is war of self-defense justifiable? Not always. Jeremiah had the unpleasant duty to warn Israel against taking steps of self-defense against the Babylonians. They were, instead, to put their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon (Jer. 27:9-11). Then again, it may be justifiable. Think of Israel under Moses defending himself against Amalek. "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim." That this war had God's sanction is clear from verse 14 of Exodus 17. War as such cannot be sinful, since God commanded it against the Amalekites until they were exterminated. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

In war, victory is not always to the deserving. The present war now going on, the so-called Vietnam War, has continued for years and years, yet has not been a victory for us, but, if anything, a victory for our enemy. But is our country any more deserving of victory than our enemy? Even if it were, victory does not always go to the deserving. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (Eccles. 9:11). Power-mad dictators have thought that God is on their side with the strongest battalions and the latest weapons of destruction. But the Philistines learned differently. So did
Napoleon. So did the French in spite of their boasted Maginot Line. So Hitler learned with his Siegfried Line. There is a popular presumption that God always gives victory to those in the right. But the power which strikes for the holiest cause is not always triumphant. History bears this out. God in His sovereignty, Scripture teaches, is independent of task forces, hydrogen bombs and intercontinental ballistic missiles. He can save by many or by few, and gives the victory to whomsoever He will, sometimes to the enemy against the right, in order to chastise the righteous, stir them up to repentance, prayer and faith, or to teach them some important spiritual lesson. In the times of the Judges, the victory did not always go to the righteous. Many times they went down into defeat. Yet it must be said that ultimately the battle goes to the righteous. Their battle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness. They are greatly outnumbered in the battle. In Jesus’ day there were but a handful of disciples, where two or three were gathered together in His name, the church in seed form, then a little flock, a hundred twenty-seven in one place, five hundred brethren in another place, but to them it was God’s good pleasure to give the kingdom! The church in almost every age has been weak. The children of the kingdom have always been a small, despised company, yet they finally prevail over the hordes of the earth. As David was given victory over Goliath, so God’s people triumph over the wicked majority which greatly outnumber them. “They quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (Heb. 11:34). The Lord uses the kings of the earth and their wars to bring His church to victory. “Who hath raised up from the East?” Cyrus, of course! “Righteousness shall call him to its foot,” that is, to the service of righteousness. The reprobate serve the cause of election. Righteousness “shall give the nations before him, and make him rule over kings” (Isa. 41:2, 3, Hebrew). “He giveth them as the dust to the sword, as the driven stubble to his bow. He pursueth them, and passeth on safely, even by a way that he had not gone with his feet” (ASV). So the little army of the church is successful against the world and its allies. God’s strength is made perfect in weakness, and the weakness of God is stronger than men! “Righteousness (one of the names of our Lord, Jehovah-tsidkenu, the Lord-our-righteousness!) shall call him to his service.” The Lord is the Author and Guide of world history from beginning to end.

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CRITIQUE

AGATHA LUBBERS

The Truth About THE PLAIN TRUTH (3)

This is the third in a series of articles which concerns itself with Anglo-Israelism as it is represented by Herbert W. Armstrong. Those who have followed this series will know that Herbert W. Armstrong is the founder and editor of the monthly periodical, The Plain Truth, and is founder of the radio broadcast, THE WORLD TO-
MORROW. The official name of the “church” founded by Armstrong is the RADIO CHURCH OF GOD. There are commentators who have referred to this church and the theories held by Armstrong as “the new Galatianism.” Implied in this name is a righteousness which is by works. This is a “gospel” which is not the Gospel (cf. Galatians 1:6-8).

The inside story of THE WORLD TOMORROW broadcast is sketchy. Armstrong is reported to have begun his life in the business world as an advertising and promotional man. He worked for the Merchants Trade Journal in Des Moines, Iowa. Armstrong was highly unsuccessful for several years. An advertising business was wiped out in 1920 by depression. In 1924 Armstrong moved to the Pacific Northwest and here two businesses were failures.

Armstrong was “converted” through the influence of his wife. After many disagreements she convinced him that her new found “faith” was the way to peace and happiness. Her new-found “faith” demanded obedience to God’s spiritual laws which are summed up in the ten commandments. Keeping these commandments was necessary for salvation because by the keeping of these commandments one turns from disobedience to obedience as a prior condition to receiving God’s free gift. Armstrong could not at first accept this “faith” of his wife because he looked back to his Sunday School days when he had been taught that works were not necessary to gain salvation. Finally, however, he seemed to conclude that his wife had found the “truth.”

In June, 1931, Armstrong began an evangelistic campaign in Eugene, Oregon. This campaign resulted in the founding of Ambassador College in Pasadena, California, in the founding of the Plain Truth Magazine in February, 1934, and in the founding of the WORLD TOMORROW RADIO PROGRAM in January, 1934. Today there are branch headquarters in Vancouver, B.C. Columbia; Johannesburg, South Africa; New South Wales, Australia; Manila in the Philippine Islands; Dusseldorf, West Germany; and Geneva, Switzerland. An Ambassador College has also been founded in St. Albans, Hertfordshire, England.

Roderick Meredith, the biographer of Armstrong, writes The Inside Story of the World Tomorrow Broadcast. In this biography Meredith is at great pains to disprove any association of the WORLD TOMORROW BROADCAST or the RADIO CHURCH OF GOD with Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Seventh-Day Adventists, or the Mormons. Meredith says, “...there never was any association in any way with any such sects as some accusers have falsely claimed.”

The Seventh-Day Adventist denomination has done a complete resume of Herbert W. Armstrong and his association with them. George Burnside writes for the Ministerial Association and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Bulletin for the Ministerial Association of Seventh-Day Adventist Ministers as follows:

Mr. Armstrong is an off-shoot of an off-shoot of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

It is claimed in this report of George Burnside, Ministerial Association Secretary, that Armstrong joined a church which had apostatized from the main branch of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. This group called themselves the Church of God (Adventist). Sometime later Armstrong followed a group in another split which called themselves the Church of God (Seventh-day). After this Armstrong went on his own calling his church THE RADIO CHURCH OF GOD. By this time he had accepted British Israelism and was not completely compatible in his beliefs with the Church of God (Seventh-day).

The Theology of the Radio Church of God

Mr. Armstrong’s theology in many areas paralleled Seventh-Day Adventism. His insistence upon the observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath, his insistence upon an abstinence from certain articles of food as unclean, his maintaining a general Adventist system of prophetic interpretation, his extreme legalism and observance of feasts, and his denunciation of the doctrines of hell and eternal punishment for which he substituted the Adventist doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked are all very similar to Seventh-day Adventist theology.

Armstrong also owes a debt to Jehovah’s Witnesses. He agrees with them because he also denies the doctrine of the Trinity and the bodily resurrection of Christ.

Armstrong is likewise indebted to the
Mormon Church. His insistence that man may become as God was appropriated from the Mormons with no acknowledgement to Joseph Smith or Brigham Young.

Armstrong claims like so many other non-Christian cultists that he received a Divine mandate. This is no different than the various cultist claims of the ancient period in the history of the Christian Church. The Montanists, Gnostics, Marcionites, and Ebionites all believed that they had received a Divine mandate to propagate their heretical and anti-Christian views.

Armstrong claims that his church is separate from the apostate Church. The apostate church is the Mother of more than 500 daughter denominations who call themselves “Christian” but God calls them “Mystery, Babylon the Great.” Armstrong speaks the truth in the context of falsehood. He hereby claims that RADIO CHURCH OF GOD is the extension of the true church.

THE RADIO CHURCH OF GOD denies the Trinity and insists upon the divinity of man. Armstrong says: “You are setting out on a training to become creator – to become God.” In this sense he is like the Mormons because they believe and teach the rationalistic and anti-Christian doctrine of the perfectibility of man. Man can become gods and members of the God-family. This was and is the devil’s lie. He came with this lie to Adam and Even in the perfection of Paradise.

Armstrong denies the Trinity because he has no room in his theology for the deity or personality of the Holy Spirit. He reduces the divinity of the Spirit of God to the “love of God.” In his ramblings he reminds one of the cultists of the second century in the ancient church. Every major cult has perverted and corrupted the doctrine of the Trinity.

In the theological system of Armstrong the “new birth” has been given a new twist. Armstrong divides “new birth” into two segments. The first segment includes the impregnation of life by the Holy Spirit of God. This is called “begetting.” The “new birth” itself takes place not at the moment of faith nor at conception but at the resurrection of the body. Followers of Mr. Armstrong’s thinking must await rebirth until the final resurrection. One’s whole life is a gestation period which begins with the first conception and must depend for its final culmination upon the keeping of the commandments. Armstrong’s views deny the Scriptural teaching of Paul that salvation is an accomplished fact. Salvation according to the Bible is a present possession (Titus 3:4-7, Romans 6:5).

The resurrection of Christ has been redefined in the system of Armstrong until it comes to mean “merely the conquest of death by the spiritual nature of Jesus.”

Armstrong denies the Biblical doctrine of salvation and atonement. Salvation according to Armstrong is a “process.” He claims that the Bible reveals “that none is as yet saved.” “... people have been taught falsely that Christ completed the plan of salvation on the cross when actually it was only begun there.” The Bible definitely teaches that salvation is an accomplished fact. (Cfr. Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 9:26, 28.)

Armstrong insists that the law or the ten commandments must be kept in order to be saved. We know that the Bible teaches that we have the law written in our hearts (that’s the Church) and that we walk by grace according to the law of God. We do all of these things in principle because we are saved. It is impossible for one to not to do this who has been grafted into Christ. (See Heidelberg Catechism, Questions and Answers 63 and 64.)

Armstrong also teaches a universalism – all men are saved. He does this when he teaches a millenial second chance for unregenerate men.

Armstrong is an advocate of keeping the Mosaic system which required the abstinence from certain foods. All of these things have been abrogated by the Holy Spirit and the RADIO CHURCH OF GOD has contrary to the Scriptures reimposed them upon the adherents to its theological system. This is not Christianity. This is anti-Scriptural. This is anti-Christian.

Armstrong also indicted God for the sinful nature of man. Armstrong virtually makes God the author of sin. He says: “God had made man’s natural mind so that it wants to do things that are contrary to His laws...” In Romans 8:7 the Scriptures teach “... the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” This text does not teach that God is the author of
sin. It only teaches the inability of the carnal mind to do anything but sin once it has become subject to the bondage of sin. By grace we are saved.

The Apostle John says concerning sin: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” John 8:44. James says concerning sin in a man: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his lust, and enticed.” James 1:13-14.

The Armstrong cult insists that Christ had a sinful nature that needed to be made perfect. Christ according to Armstrong had to cleanse himself from sin and every man must go through the same cleansing process. Christ becomes really an example for the church according to Armstrong. This is the same as the teaching of the moralist and the Modernist of the twentieth century. This teaching of Armstrong is also contrary to the correct understanding of the term “perfecting” in the Scriptures. To “perfect” when used in connection with the man Christ Jesus, our Lord, who is also very God and therefore a real righteous man, means to come to completion. To maintain what Armstrong teaches is once again a denial of James 1:13-14 (see above) and is a denial of Hebrews 2:10. “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect (to bring the captain of their salvation to completion, A.L.) through sufferings.”

This is a historical fact. God in Christ Jesus works through history because he has chosen so to work. It is also a denial of Hebrews 5:9: “And being made perfect (complete—A.L.) he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong who has been described by one magazine as “Mr. Confusion” is someone that must be read with extreme caution. The lie comes in the garb of the truth in much so-called preaching today. This is also true of the programs and magazine articles of Mr. Armstrong.

What does Armstrong think of the Christ? That’s the basic question.

“Therefore if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:23-24.

(I am indebted for much of the factual material concerning the Armstrong theories and Anglo-Israelism to the book The Kingdom of the Cult by Walter R. Martin. This book was published by Zondervan Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1965.)

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**NEWS**

**Miscellaneous**

On November 8 and 9, the young people held a fall retreat designed after the retreat held this spring. The theme was “Thanksgiving” and several discussion groups were held. Games were played and a good time was had by the young people and their chaperons.

On November 24, Beacon Lights sponsored a sing-spiration at the Southeast Church. The event was well attended and special numbers were given.

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**from, for, and about our churches**

by JUDY HENSON

Loveland’s bulletin carried an announcement that their pastor would be traveling to Redlands to conduct church visitation.

**Membership**

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Gleason and family have transferred from Loveland to Hudsonville.

On November 3, Jack Pfau from South Holland made confession of faith.

On December 15, public confession of faith was made by Bruce Bomers, Lois
Engelsma, Sally Elzinga, Rich Huizinga, Mrs. D. Huizinga, Phil Jonker, Joanna Kamp, Jackie Knott, Larry Koole, Mary Kuiper, Marie Kuiper, Betty Meulenberg, David Miedema, Janis Miedema, and Bob Velt-house, all from Hope.

**Marriages**

Mr. David Poortinga and Miss Potts on November 8 in South Holland.

Mr. Dave Moelker and Miss Bonnie Meulenberg on November 8, in Hope.

**Servicemen**

The address of Tom Graeser from Hope is:

Tom Graeser
2076-008
Forming Element BKS-25B-02
Coast Guard Training Center
Cape May, New Jersey 08204