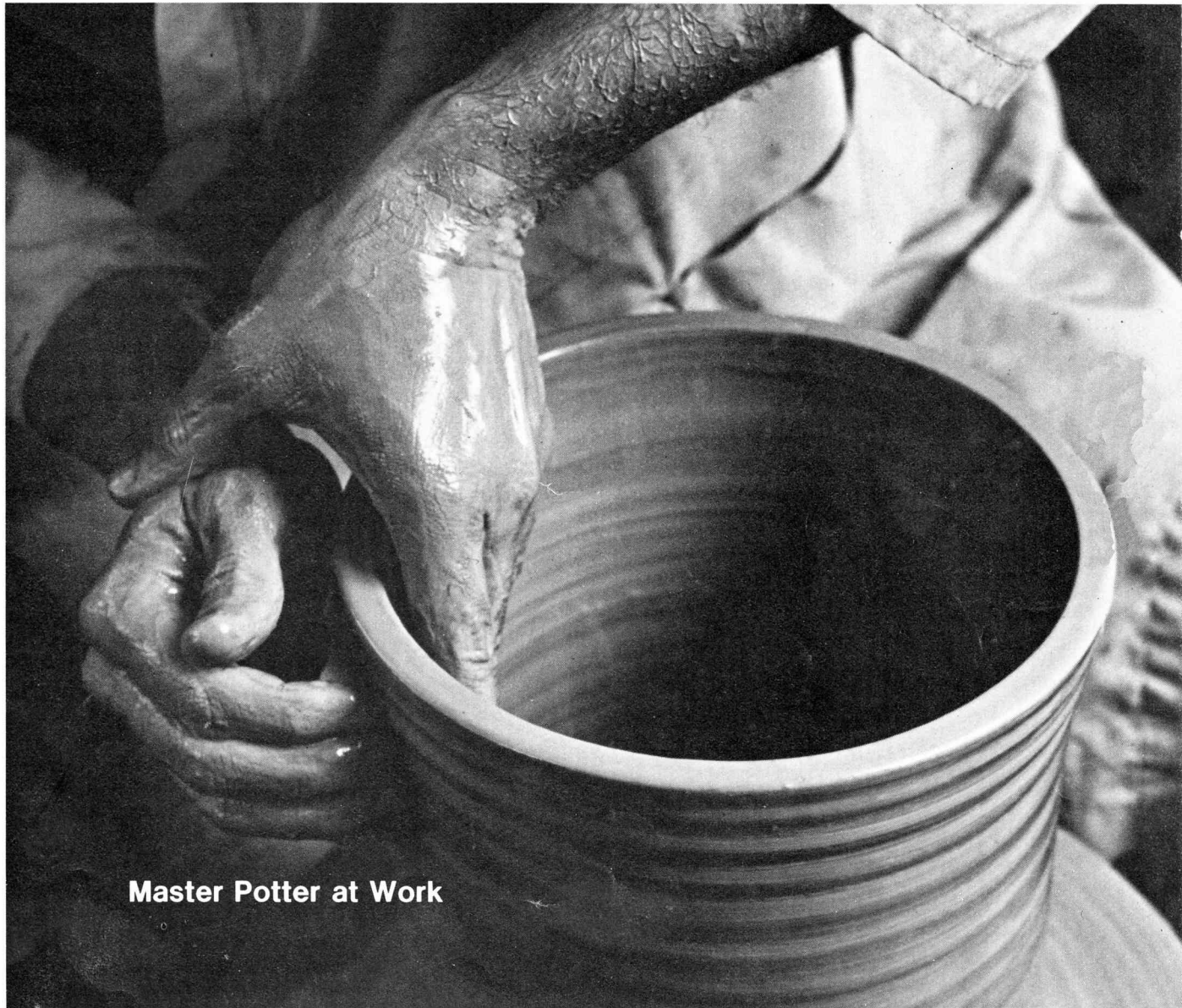




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LESSON 13

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About Our Cover . . .

The great, eternal Creator God who reveals Himself in His inspired Word, the Holy Bible, created mankind for an awesome purpose. Just as a human potter fashions pliable clay to produce a beautiful, useful vessel, God, the Master Potter (Isa. 64:8), is in the process of forming His supreme masterpiece of creative workmanship out of "mortal clay." This very important lesson not only reveals *who* and *what* God is, but also the marvelous plan He is working out on planet earth.

Photo by Warren Watson

WHO AND WHAT IS GOD?

Why is there so much confusion about the true IDENTITY, the real NATURE and PURPOSE of God? How could modern Christianity have become so mixed up about these foundational truths of the Bible? This fascinating study reveals the astounding answers!

WHEN Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was in India years ago, he noticed cows and oxen wandering through the streets. Mr. Armstrong asked his car driver, "Don't these cattle stray quite a distance from home?"

"Oh yes," was the answer.

"But," Mr. Armstrong asked, "when they wander all over the streets so far away, how do their owners know where to find them, to drive them back home for the night?"

The driver smiled. "The owners don't. But the cattle and the oxen *know* their owners and *where* they live. They find their own way home in the evening."

God Not Known Today

The above incident illustrates the scripture found in Isaiah 1:2-4:

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have *forsaken the Lord*, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward."

These words were directed to ancient Israel, a nation to which God had revealed Himself by many evidences and miracles. How much less do other nations today know about God—about *who* and *what* God is!

It seems utterly unbelievable. The religions of this world do not know who or what God really is! Yet religion is the worship of God. But how to worship *WHAT* is unknown!

A World in Religious Confusion!

It seems inconceivable—but you live today in a world of religious confusion! Among the largest of the world's religions are Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity with its hundreds of denominations and sects. The latter is the largest in number of adherents.

And yet there is only *one* church on earth today that really does know *WHO* and *WHAT* God is! That *one* true Church was founded in 31 A.D. by Jesus Christ and is still in existence today!

Modern science does not know whether or not God exists—much less who and what He is. Neither does higher education in our modern world either know or teach the amazing truth about God's real identity. Rather, modern education has given universal acceptance to the fable of evolution. Evolution is the atheist's attempt to explain the existence of a creation without the preexistence of the Creator. It totally excludes God from the picture.

One billion people—almost a fourth of all the people on earth—live in communist China. In very ancient times the religion in China was ancestor worship. Then came Confucianism, rivaled by Taoism. Later, Buddhism was introduced from India. Today communism prevails and therefore the nation is *atheistic*.

India is the second largest nation. What have they known about *who* and *what* God is? Nothing!

Russia is the third largest nation in population. They did have Russian Orthodox Christianity, but now they, too, are *atheistic*.

In ancient Egypt they worshipped the gods Isis and Osiris—Egyptian names for Nimrod and his

mother-wife, Semiramis. The Greeks and Romans anciently had mythological gods such as Jupiter, Hermes, Dionysus, Zeus, Apollo, Diana and many others. But they did not know, and their descendants do not know today, WHO and WHAT the true God is.

The "Unknown God" Revealed

The intellectuals of the world in the first century were the Athenians. Certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered the apostle Paul.

"What will this babbler say?" queried some in ridicule (Acts 17:18). Others sneered sarcastically, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods. . . ."

These learned men brought Paul to Areopagus, the supreme tribunal, on Mars' hill.

"May we know," they asked cynically, "what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears. . ." (verses 19-20).

Here were the world's most scholarly. And Paul was preaching the truth of God to them.

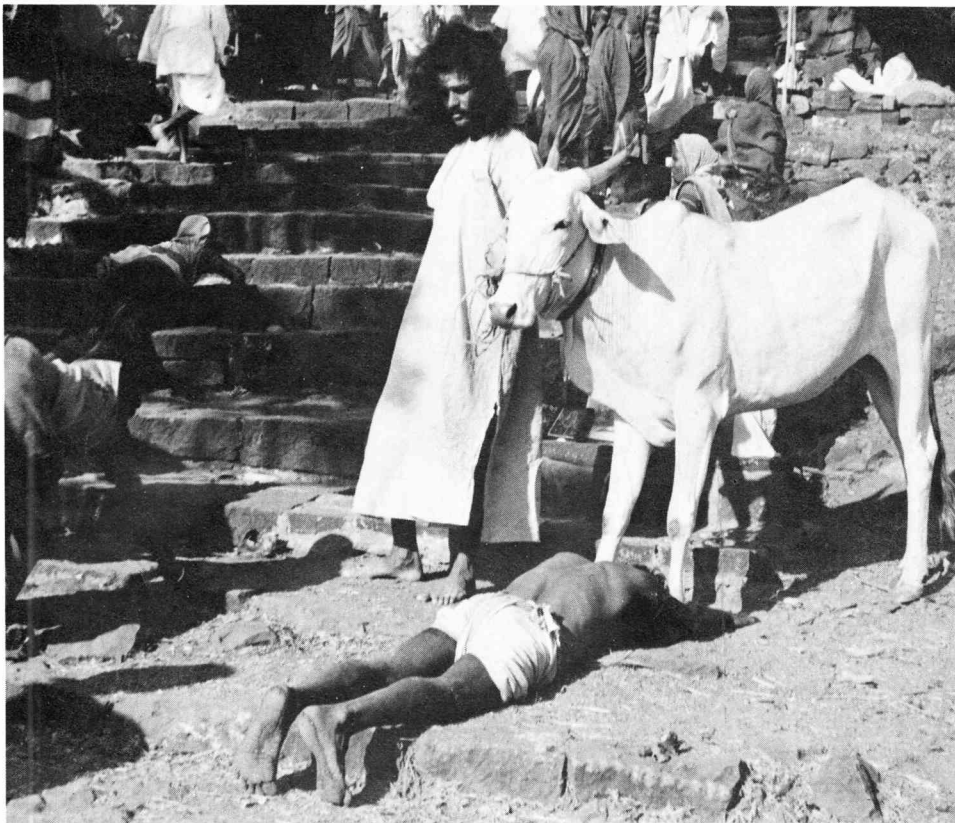
"Ye men of Athens," said the apostle forthrightly and boldly, "I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your [idolatrous] devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom

therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. . ." (verses 22-26).

WHO is God? Creation is the basic proof of God. These Athenian Epicureans and Stoics did not even know that. Perhaps the adherents of many religions do not.

But what is the real NATURE of God? Just WHO and WHAT is God? We need a more concrete understanding than to merely say "the Being who created everything that exists." That is the starting point. Only the one original Church which Jesus founded in A.D. 31 has the full answer.

Be sure to get your Bible right now so you can study this important topic of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up every scripture reference given in answer to the questions asked. This procedure is absolutely essential in your study of the Bible with this course. "Study," said the apostle Paul, "to show thyself approved unto God. . ." (II Tim. 2:15). "Prove all things" for yourself, as Paul exhorted the Thessalonians (I Thess. 5:21). Now we're ready to begin this fascinating study.



WORSHIPPING THE CREATED—White cows are more sacred in India. Pilgrim with a vow lies prostrate at feet of cow, while women crawl up steps of a shrine.

Black Star Photos

LESSON 13

God in Prehistory

If you were asked where in the Bible can one find the very earliest account of the existence of God, you probably would say, “Why, in the very first verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:1, of course.” Wouldn’t that be right?

Wrong!

Let’s go back in time into prehistory, even before the material creation existed.

1. Where, in the time order of God’s existence, is the earliest revelation of WHO and WHAT God is? John 1:1-3.

COMMENT: “The Word” in verse one is translated from the Greek *logos*, which means “spokesman.” It is the *name* for a divine Personage.

2. Was the *Word* made flesh? John 1:14. Did *He* dwell on earth as a human being? Same verse and Matthew 1:23. Was *He* the *only* begotten of God the Father? John 1:14 once again.

COMMENT: The “Word,” then, is a divine Personage who was made flesh nearly 2,000 years ago. He was begotten by God who, through this very begetting, became His “Father.” Yet, at that prehistoric time of the first verse of John 1, the Word was not (yet) the son of God. He was *made* God’s son later, through being begotten or sired by God and born of the virgin Mary as a human being.

Jesus’ begetting by God the Father was unique in the history of the world. Mary, His mother, was the only virgin who has ever conceived a child whose father was the immortal God! In this sense, He is the “only begotten” son of the Father.

So in the beginning verses of John 1, we find revealed originally *two divine Personages*. One is God. And with God at that prehistoric time was another Personage who *also* is God—one who was later begotten and born as Jesus Christ. Yet, at the time described in verse one, Jesus was *not* the “Son” of God and God was *not* His “Father.”

3. Hebrews chapter seven sheds more light on the preexistence of Jesus Christ. Speaking of Melchisedec, who was “king of righteousness” and “king of Salem” (which, incidentally, later became known as *Jerusalem*) in the days of Abraham, we are told that He had been the High Priest of God. Now had Melchisedec also existed from eternity? Heb. 7:3. Is the risen Jesus Christ our *eternal* High Priest today? Verses 25-27.

COMMENT: Since Melchisedec was without descent, was “like unto the Son of God,” and abides as High Priest for ever, and since Jesus Christ is now our eternal High Priest, Melchisedec and Christ (the Word) are *one* and the *same* Person!

Christ, when He was “the Word,” was an immor-

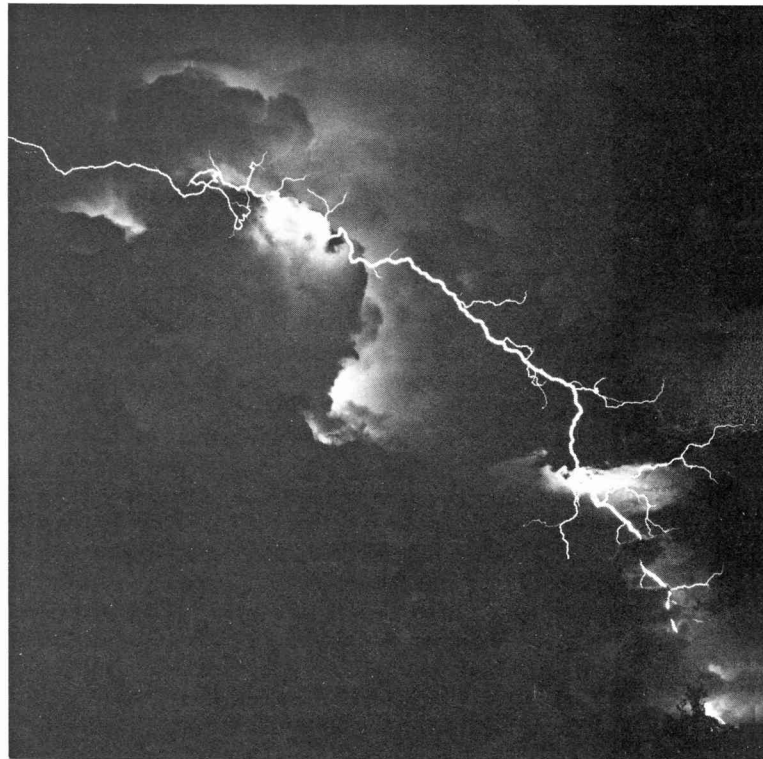


Photo by Harold M. Lambert

AWESOME POWER—The God who created all things and set the forces of nature in motion has existed *eternally*.

tal being who had always existed—there had never been a time when He did not exist—He was literally without “beginning of days.” He was then “like” the Son of God, but He was not yet the Son of God. He also was God, along with God who became the Father. (Students who wish to study the subject of Melchisedec further, can write for an article entitled “The Mystery of Melchisedec Solved!”)

Both members of the Godhead have always existed. The finite human mind can’t quite conceive of how these immortal Supreme Beings could have always existed, but neither can it quite understand what electricity is. Yet, we know electricity exists and is very real!

4. Exactly why did the Word—the second member of the Godhead—become a flesh-and-blood human being? Heb. 2:9-10; John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-10.

COMMENT: Jesus was both human and divine. God was His Father and Mary was His mother. He was both the “Son of God” and the “son of man.” He was born of the virgin Mary so that, as a human, he could die for the sins of all mankind.

As the Son of God and as the Creator of the entire universe and of all mankind, Christ's life was worth more than all other human lives put together! Therefore, He could pay the death penalty of sin for the *entire* human race, so that others could be born into the Family of God and become His younger brothers (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11).

What Does God Look Like?

1. In whose *image* and *likeness* did God make man? Gen. 1:26. Can we therefore conclude that God looks like a man? Same verse.

COMMENT: We know what form and shape is that of a man. God therefore has the form and shape of a man, since man was created in the "image" of God, after His very "likeness."

In various parts of the Bible it is revealed that God has arms and legs. And God has hands and fingers. God has feet and toes and a torso.

2. Recall that the member of the Godhead called the "Word" in prehistory, became flesh and blood and lived on the earth. Did Jesus look so much like any other Jewish man of His day that He had to be pointed out (by a kiss) in a crowd so as to be identified from other men? Luke 22:47-48.

3. Who did Jesus tell Philip that the Father looked like? John 14:9.

4. Even though God the Father looks like a man, what is He composed of? John 4:24. Is He therefore invisible to human eyes? Col. 1:15.

5. Are the Father's and Christ's appearance described as being glorious? John 17:5. What does Jesus, after His resurrection and restoration to former glory, look like? Rev. 1:13-18.

COMMENT: If we could see both God the Father and Christ the Son as they appear today in their glorified state in heaven, their faces (though formed and shaped like human faces) would be as bright as the *SUN in full strength*! Their eyes would be like flames of fire, their feet like burnished brass and their hair as white as snow!

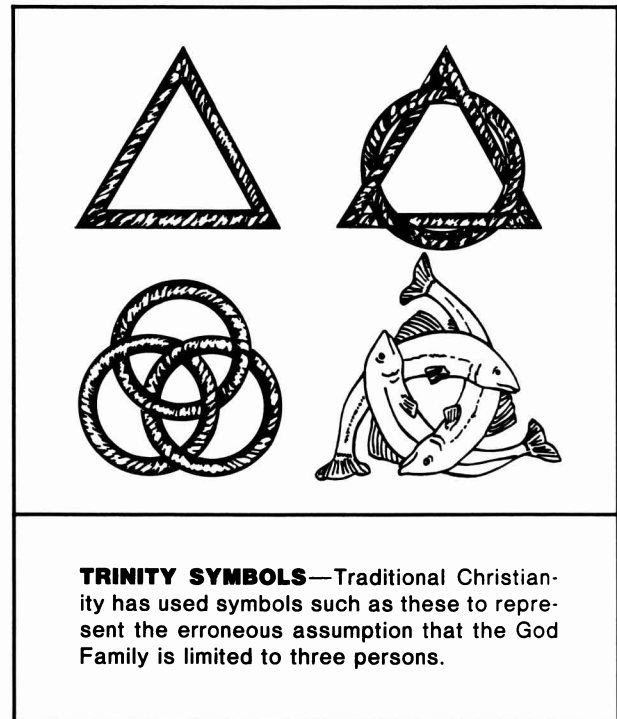
Is God a Limited "Trinity"?

In prehistory, we found that two Supreme Personages—God and the Word—have always existed. But what about the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit the *third Person* of the Godhead? Does the Bible teach that God is a "trinity"?

The generally accepted teaching of traditional Christianity is that God is a "trinity"—God in three Persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (which they call a "Ghost").

But how did this "trinity" doctrine enter traditional Christianity?

It most emphatically did not come from the Bible! We read in Revelation 12:9 that all nations have been deceived by Satan the devil. How, then,



TRINITY SYMBOLS—Traditional Christianity has used symbols such as these to represent the erroneous assumption that the God Family is limited to three persons.

did the wily devil introduce this false doctrine into "Christianity"?

The history of this question is not only interesting, it is *essential* to our understanding the devil's master plot to hide the KEY which unlocks the truth about God's awesome purpose for mankind! It seems incredible that Satan not only could have deceived the whole world, but also "Christianity"—the very religion bearing Christ's name and supposed to be His true religion. Yet, paradoxically, Satan did!

Satan's great deception was accomplished through his great false church, started in A.D. 33 by Simon the Sorcerer, who is mentioned in the eighth chapter of the book of Acts. Simon was none other than the leader of the Babylonian mystery religion.

It is recorded in II Kings 17:23-24 that Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who had invaded and conquered the northern kingdom—the kingdom of Israel—moved the people out of their land of Samaria, north of Jerusalem, and moved into that land people of the Babylonish mystery religion from the provinces of Babylon. They were, of course, gentiles. They inhabited this area of northern Palestine in the time of Christ. The Jews of Judea in Christ's time would have nothing to do with them, calling them contemptuously "dogs," for they still, in the first century, adhered to this pagan Babylonish mystery religion.

In A.D. 33, two years after Jesus Christ from heaven founded the Church of God on the day of Pentecost, the deacon Philip, who later became an evangelist, went to Samaria and preached Christ's

Gospel. This Simon the Sorcerer, who had bewitched the people of that country, came with the crowd to hear him.

1. Did all the people of Samaria follow Simon the Sorcerer? Acts 8:9-11. Were they deceived into believing that he was a man of God? Verse 10.

2. But when these same people believed Philip who was preaching Christ and the Kingdom of God, were they baptized? Acts 8:12. Was Simon baptized with them? Verse 13.

3. When Peter and John came to Samaria to lay hands on the newly baptized for the receipt of the Holy Spirit, did Simon try to literally "buy" from them the *power* to impart the Spirit of God? Acts 8:18-19. Did Peter recognize Simon's attitude was totally wrong, and that he obviously desired only to gain more power and thereby further exalt himself in the eyes of the people? Verses 20-23.

COMMENT: Peter rebuked Simon strongly for the evil intentions of his heart. But Simon refused to repent, as indicated by his merely asking Peter to pray for him (verse 24).

Having been frustrated in trying to exalt himself further in the sight of the people, Simon, who had been baptized by a true servant of God, nevertheless proclaimed himself a Christian apostle and began calling the pagan Babylonian mystery religion "Christianity." He accepted the doctrine of "grace" for the forgiveness of sin (which the pagan religions had never had), but turned grace into *license* to disobey God (Jude 4). He aspired to turn his pagan religion, under the name "Christianity," into a universal religion, to eventually gain thereby the *political rule* of the world.

Simon, the "Pater" or father of his counterfeit religion, did not accomplish this in his lifetime. But succeeding "Paternalisms," with the headquarters moved to Rome did, later, gain political control over the Roman Empire and its medieval successor, called "The Holy Roman Empire." This empire is in the process of again being resurrected in Europe now!

By the sixth decade of the first century, much of the Middle East had turned from the true Gospel to a clever counterfeit (Gal. 1:6-7). As late as the 90s A.D., the apostle John was still alive. He was inspired by God to write the book of Revelation on the Isle of Patmos.

A little later, the church started by Simon in A.D. 33 was trying to turn the true Christian Passover (Christ had instituted the symbols of unleavened bread and wine in place of the lamb of Old Testament Israel) into the Babylonian Easter—named after the goddess Astarte or Ishtar (pronounced "Easter").

After the death of the apostle John, a disciple of his, Polycarp, waged a controversy over the Passover-Easter question with the bishop of Rome, by then leader of the church started by Simon.

Still later, another disciple of Christ's true Christianity, Polycrates, waged a still hotter con-

troversy over the same Passover-Easter question with a later bishop of Rome. This theological battle was called the "Quartodeciman Controversy." Polycrates contended, as Jesus and the original apostles taught, that the Passover should be observed in the new Christian manner introduced by Jesus and taught by the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 11:23-25), using unleavened bread and wine instead of sacrificing a lamb, *on the even* of the 14th of Nisan (first month in the sacred calendar, occurring in the spring). But the church at Rome insisted on the pagan Easter, observed on a Sunday *at sunrise*.

About the same time another controversy was raging between a Dr. Arius of Alexandria (a Christian leader who died in A.D. 336) and a Roman bishop, over calling God a "trinity." Dr. Arius stoutly opposed the trinity doctrine, and had many followers.

In A.D. 325, Emperor Constantine called the Nicene Council to settle these controversies. Constantine was not yet a "Christian" then, but as political ruler he assumed church control. The Council approved both the Easter doctrine and the trinity. Constantine, then civil ruler, made these teachings the law. But he was *not* able to make them the TRUTH!

The word "trinity" is not to be found anywhere in the Bible. That is because *God has not limited Himself to a "trinity."* The surprising truth, once understood, is the most wonderful revelation the human mind could receive or contain.

There is one small passage in the King James



University Press

EMPEROR CONSTANTINE made belief in the "trinity" theory mandatory.

translation of the Bible that is generally used by “trinity” adherents to support this erroneous doctrine. That is I John 5:7, which reads as follows: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

Those words were *added by editors* of the Latin Vulgate translation probably in the early fourth century. They do not appear in any of the older Greek manuscripts nor in any of the other English translations. They were added to the Latin Vulgate during the heat of the controversy between Rome and Dr. Arius and God’s people.

Bible commentaries explain that these words were never written in the apostle John’s manuscript or any existing early copies of it. The apostle John nowhere in his three epistles or the book of Revelation calls Christ the “Word.” He speaks of the Father and the Son (I John 1:3), but never “the Father and the Word,” except in this uninspired verse of I John 5:7.

There was a definite reason why Satan, the archdeceiver, wanted that spurious verse added in the Latin Vulgate. The “trinity” doctrine completely does away with the Gospel of Jesus Christ—the only hope of this world and its mixed-up mankind. It limits the number of members of the God Family to *only three*—with no possibility of expansion!

Jesus’ Gospel is the message He brought to mankind from God the Father—the good news of the coming ruling Kingdom or Family of God. That is the one thing above all else Satan wants to hide from the eyes of man!

By the doctrine of the “trinity,” along with other false doctrines, Satan has thoroughly deceived all traditional Christianity.

Notice the candid admission of one world-famous evangelist who teaches the doctrine: “When I first began to study the Bible years ago, the doctrine of the trinity was one of the most complex problems I had to encounter. I have never fully resolved it for it contains an aspect of mystery. Though I do not totally understand it to this day, I accept it as a revelation of God. . . . To explain and illustrate the trinity is one of the most difficult assignments to a Christian.” The reason it is so difficult is because it is *not true!*

4. Does Genesis 1:1 speak of ONE God?

COMMENT: “In the beginning *God*. . . .” This was written originally by Moses in the Hebrew language. The English word “God” is translated from the Hebrew word *Elohim*—a uniplural noun. It is uniplural in the same sense as the words “family” or “church”—denoting more than one component forming one whole.

God, as we have learned in Lesson 8 and as this lesson explains, is NOT a “trinity” but is a *family* composed at present of the two Persons mentioned

in John 1:1. However, the God Family will not be limited to *only* two persons.

God is in the process of *expanding* His Family. Already many thousands have been *begotten* by God’s Holy Spirit, and will soon be born into that divine Family by a resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ. Still later, millions—even billions—will eventually be born into the Family of God!

Jesus Christ, by His resurrection, was born a divine Son of God (Rom. 1:4). But He is only the *firstborn* of MANY BRETHREN who will also be born into the God Family (Rom. 8:29).

God the Father is the divine Father of the God Family, and when we who are now the *begotten sons of God* are BORN into His Family at Christ’s imminent return, *we shall be like God* (I John 3:2) for we shall then be the *born-again Sons of God!*

God Is Creator

1. Did God create *all things* by Jesus Christ (the Word)? Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:15-17.

2. How did the Word create the universe and everything that exists? Psalms 33:6-9; 104:30; Genesis 1:2-3. Does God tell Christ what to do? John 8:28-29.

COMMENT: Christ at all times does what His Father tells Him to do. He then speaks, as the workman, and the Holy Spirit is the *power* that responds and does what Jesus commands.

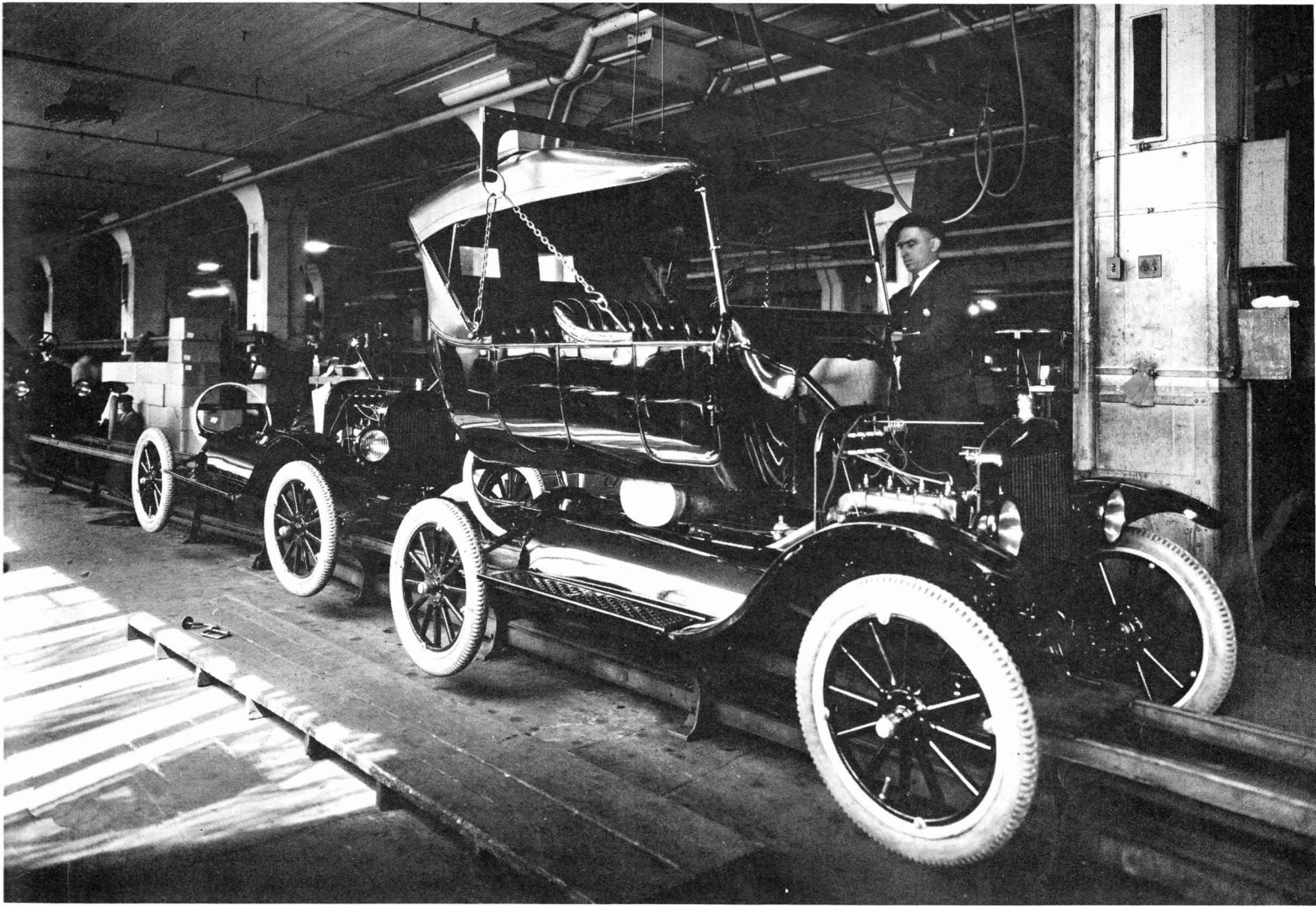
Mr. Herbert Armstrong elaborated on the answer to question number two in an article he wrote. He said:

“In the first week in January, 1914, I was sent by a national magazine to Detroit, Michigan, to interview Henry Ford to obtain material for an article on his sensational new \$5-a-day wage policy. I saw Henry Ford in the administration building, wearing a business suit with white collar and necktie. Then I looked across the breezeway into the giant factory (then the Highland Park factory) and I saw perhaps thousands of men in overalls, working at machines powered with electrical energy. Mr. Ford was called the *maker* of the Ford car. But he made the cars *by* these workmen, who used the *power* of electricity and machines.”

Similarly, God the Father is Creator. He “created all things *by* Jesus Christ,” the Word, who utilized the *power* of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the task!

3. But matter—this earth, the stars, galaxies—was not the first thing God created. What does the Bible reveal was created *before* the material creation? Job 38:4-7.

COMMENT: In verse 7 the Biblical terminology “morning stars” and the “sons of God” refers to angels. Revelation 12:4-9 speaks figuratively of the angels who followed Satan in his rebellion as the “stars of heaven” who were cast down to earth. In Isaiah 14:12, we learn that Satan, before



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FIRST FORD ASSEMBLY LINE putting together a Model-T in 1913. Henry Ford was called the "maker" of the Ford car, but he actually made the cars *by* workmen who used machines powered by electricity.

he sinned, was called "Lucifer, son of the morning"—or, "Day Star" (see margin of most Bibles). Therefore, when the Bible uses the words "morning stars" in Job 38:7, we know that it is referring to God's angels.

In Job 1:6 we read that when the "sons of God" (or angels) presented themselves to God, Satan came among them. Angels here are referred to as "sons of God" only in the sense that God is their Creator. There is no father-son relationship in the same way that Jesus has with God the Father. Angels were not begotten of God as was Jesus Christ—they were created. As we have just learned, He was the "only begotten" son of God to be born of a human mother.

Angels are individually created entities who cannot marry and reproduce offspring as humans do (Matt. 22:30). Neither can they become begotten by God the Father through His Holy Spirit as

humans can, and become the younger brothers of Jesus Christ who is the "firstborn among many brethren," soon also to be born into God's Family. (The subject of spiritual begetting has been thoroughly explained in previous lessons which have laid the foundation for your present studies.) But angels shall forever remain the "sons of God" only in the sense that God created *each* angel a separate, immortal spirit being.

And so we find that the angels who had previously been created, were shouting for joy at the creation of the earth, perhaps multiple thousands or millions of years before the creation of man. How many angels God created and how long ago, He does not reveal. However, the earth, at first, was the abode or home of angels. The next lesson will reveal much more about the creation, purpose and the activities of the angels.

4. Was the entire material universe created when the earth was created? Gen. 1:1.

COMMENT: Genesis 1:1 speaks of God creating the earth and the heavens. In the King James translation the singular form of the word "heaven" is used. But the original Hebrew, as Moses wrote

and as other translations render it, is in the plural form—"heavens"—implying that the whole material universe was created simultaneously with the earth.

A Perfect Creation Becomes Ruined!

Thus far we have learned that two all-knowing, all-powerful, all-perfect Superbeings have existed from eternity. Each possesses supreme mind and creative power. These two Divine Beings composing the nucleus of the God Family, created the entire universe, including man.

As human beings think, plan and design before starting to build or construct, so these two Superbeings thought, planned and designed. There was no hurry. They might have thought and planned for many millions (or even billions) of years, as we count time, before starting the actual making or creating.

But these two original spirit-composed Persons first designed and produced another type of spirit being called "angels," which are invisible to human eyes. God created these beings *before* creating their home or "habitation," which was to be this earth. These angels were so filled with joy and happiness that they literally "sang together" and "shouted for joy" when the earth was first created!

1. In addition to the creation of angels, the earth and heavens, did God also create governmental administrations? Col. 1:16.

COMMENT: God set His government, with His constitution and laws, over His entire creation. And the great archangel Lucifer was placed on a throne to administer God's government on earth. God's Law, by which Lucifer was to rule the other angels, is a way of life. It is the way of love—outgoing concern for the welfare of others—the way of peace, harmony, helping, serving, sharing.

2. Did Lucifer continue to administer God's government on earth according to God's way of life? Or did he rebel and thereby sin greatly? Ezek. 28:13-15; Isa. 14:12-14. Who followed Lucifer in his rebellion? Rev. 12:3-4.

COMMENT: The archangel Lucifer rebelled against God. He did not continue to administer the government of God on the earth. He became a traitor. And in his rebellion, one third of the angels of God followed him in his attempt to invade and "take over" God's headquarters in heaven and "de-throne" the very Creator God Himself! Lucifer became Satan and the angels who followed him in this attempted coup became demons.

3. Did the beautiful and majestic earth become waste and empty, chaotic and in confusion as a result of Lucifer's sin? Gen. 1:2.

COMMENT: The Hebrew words for "without form and void" are *tohu* and *bohu*. Translated into English they mean "chaotic" and "in confusion, waste" and "empty."

The words *tohu* and *bohu* are also used in Jeremiah 4:23 and Isaiah 24:10; 34:11. In each of these scriptures the condition of chaos and confusion was a result of *sin*.

4. How does Isaiah 45:18 clearly show that the earth was *not* a chaotic wasteland when first created by God?

COMMENT: "In vain" is an incorrect translation. In the marginal references of some Bibles you will find that the proper translation is "waste." That is because the original Hebrew word translated "in vain" is *tohu*. This word is the identical word used in Genesis 1:2, meaning confusion, or emptiness or waste—in this case a result of the violation of God's orderly government and His Law.

In Isaiah 45:18 we have the plain statement that God created the earth NOT "tohu," that is, NOT in confusion, NOT in disorder. But in Genesis 1:2, the earth "was," or the earth *became*—as it ought to be translated—chaotic and in confusion! Notice further:

5. What does Genesis 19:26 tell us which further proves that the earth *became* something it was not originally when created by God?

COMMENT: The same Hebrew word translated "was" in Genesis 1:2 is translated "became" in Genesis 19:26. So the word "was" in Genesis 1:2 is denoting a condition that was *different* from a former condition. In other words, it "became" something it had not always been before.

Plainly, the word "was" in Genesis 1:2 has the meaning of "became." The *Rotherham* translation of Genesis 1:2 reads as follows: "Now the earth had become waste and empty." It hadn't always been that way!

God did not create the heavens and the earth originally in a state of confusion. He did not create it all topsy-turvy and chaotic. I Corinthians 14:33 states that "God is *not* the author of confusion." But the devil is! God is the author of peace, of order and of law.

God would not have created the earth in disorder, chaos and in confusion, only later to have to straighten it out. That doesn't make sense!

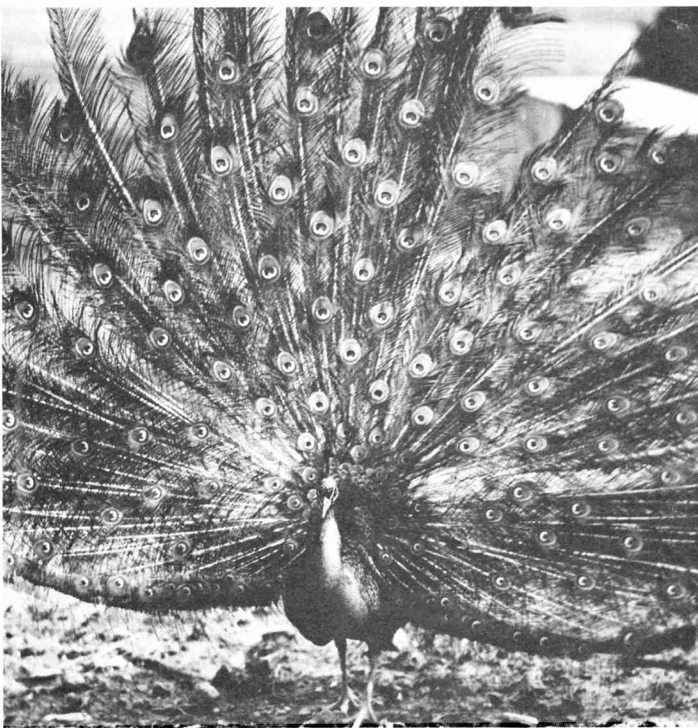
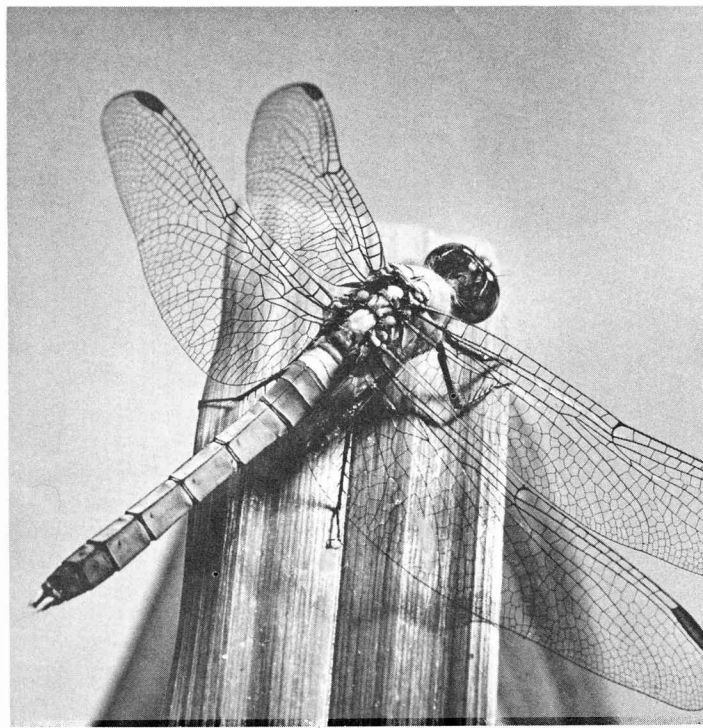
6. After the destruction of the earth's surface due to the sin of the angels, did God then *recreate* the surface of the earth and make it habitable for plant life, animal life, and human life? Read all of the first chapter of Genesis, noticing especially verse 26.

COMMENT: After Lucifer's rebellion and resultant ruination of a perfect earth, God made it a place fit for man to live and then undertook the most stupendous creation of all—that of *reproducing Himself* through human beings! The ultimate creation of God Beings in His God Family, superior to angels! This creation will be the crowning pinnacle of even God's unmatched power—the very zenith of all divine accomplishment!

God reproducing Himself is a project so tran-

*Wide World Photos*

GOD'S CREATIVE HANDIWORK is revealed in His masterpieces of design, engineering and workmanship—from gorgeous landscapes to the breathtaking beauty of a peacock's feathers and the structural perfection of a dragonfly!

*H. Armstrong Roberts Photo**Photo by Jeanne White*

scendently and incredibly awesome it is hard for the human mind to grasp that the great God—who is self-existent, before all else, Creator of all else—is in the process of reproducing Himself into multiplied millions of others just like Himself—divine, supreme in power, perfect in character—each by his own free choice perfectly likeminded with the Father, each having so set himself that he will not—*cannot*—sin!

To accomplish this incredibly awesome feat of reproducing Himself and developing in human beings His own righteous, holy, perfect character, God first made man from the dust of the ground—but in God's own "image," or "likeness." And only after mortal man *first* develops godly character will he be changed from mortality to immortality at the resurrection to eternal life, and be given a *spiritual* body like that of the Creator God Himself!

7. After God's plan for humanity is complete, will He then create new heavens and a new earth? Heb. 1:10-12; Rev. 21:1, 5.

COMMENT: The resultant chaos caused by Lucifer's rebellion is to be seen throughout our own galaxy. Apparently the entire known universe has been affected as well. But God will one day make all things *new*!

In the meantime, God made the earth a habitable place for man. And God has allowed the devastation, clearly visible on other planets (as evidenced by photos of pockmarked landscapes taken by various deep space probes) and in space debris, to remain as *mute testimony* to the results of SIN—of going contrary to God's government and His way of life which produce peace, harmony and joy.

8. Does Isaiah 9:6-7 indicate that the government of God will expand beyond the earth to other parts of our own galaxy, and even throughout the universe?

COMMENT: God promises that there will be *no end* to the increase of His government! Peace, harmony, happiness and eternal joy are the result of living in harmony with the laws of God, and His government. But only those who develop God's righteous character and are born into His Divine Family, will become part of His government, prophesied to soon be restored on this earth.

Duality Principle in Creation

The Bible reveals there is duality in the entirety of God's creative process—including the creation of Godly character within man.

First, it is important to understand that angels were created in *two* stages. The *duality* principle is seen in their creation as it is evident in the creation of the earth and of man.

God created the angels with minds—with the

ability to think, to know, reason, and make choices. But their creation could not be a *finished* creation until character—either good or evil—was developed in them. And this is a process, to be experienced. That character development was the *second stage* of their creation.

God initially instructed them in His way—that of righteous character. It is the way of God's spiritual law—the basis of God's government.

Then came the time of the creation of the physical universe. There is a vital connection between the creation of angels and the creation of the material universe, for here again the *duality* principle is involved.

To illustrate, this physical creation can be compared to the manufacture of unfinished furniture which is sold in stores in most cities. Such furniture may be of fine quality, but lacks being finished—it needs to be sanded, and then lacquer, varnish or paint needs to be applied.

So God created the heavens and the earth—the universe with its countless galaxies, solar systems, and with the countless planets such as our earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, etc. But, like the unfinished furniture, they were not at that time completed. They were a perfect, orderly creation, but *more* was yet to be done with that original creation before it would be finished!

Now we come to the fact of a *double duality* in the creation of the angels and of the earth.

God's Word tells us the earth was inhabited by angels prior to the creation of man. (The subject of angels will be covered in the next lesson.) And Scripture indicates that a *third* of the created angels were placed on earth by God. They were given the opportunity to share in *finishing* the earth—working with its many elements, improving, beautifying, completing it.

This required harmonious teamwork—all working together toward the common God-ordained goal. The earth was the proving ground, to *QUALIFY* the angels by righteous character development *and* by finishing earth's creation—to share with God the same creative participation in the ultimate completion of the myriads of planets of the vast universe!

1. Who did God place in authority on earth to regulate this angelic effort and to administer the government of God over the angels? Review Ezekiel 28:13 and Isaiah 14:12-14.

COMMENT: We learned that Lucifer ultimately turned against God and sinned. And when Lucifer (now Satan) sinned, the government of God and His Law—the means of building and instilling righteous, holy, perfect character—were abolished from the earth.

2. When Jesus Christ returns to earth, will He restore all things as God originally intended—including the government of God over all the world? Acts 3:20-21; Isa. 2:2-3; 11:9.

COMMENT: The government of God is a way of life. It is the way that develops righteous, holy, perfect character. It is the way that produces peace, harmony, happiness, joy, abundance. It is the way of love. Therefore the government of God *must*, and *will be restored* on the earth! That is uppermost in God's mind.

3. What was the first step in God's plan to restore the government of God on the entire earth? Turn to Genesis 1:26 once again.

COMMENT: God created man to have rule over the earth. It now remained for a man to reject the "get" way of life Lucifer had introduced and qualify to replace the disqualified Satan by accepting God's "give" way—the Creator's way of love—to *restore* the government of God to the earth.

God's purpose in creating man on the earth was: 1) to restore the government of God upon this earth, a) complete the physical creation of earth where angels turned it to ruin, and b) in the process, complete the creation of man by developing righteous spiritual character in him; and 2) to establish the Kingdom of God which will become composed of countless divine God-beings who will eventually finish the creation of the vast universe.

This supreme purpose required: 1) that man reject Satan's way, embracing God's way of love, based on God's spiritual law, and 2) that man be made first of matter so that, if he was led into Satan's way of "get," he could be *changed*, "converted" to God's way of love through repentance, baptism and the receipt of the Holy Spirit. This was absolutely necessary because spirit, once a *finished* creation (as the character of the angels who became evil) *cannot* be changed! Spirit is constant and eternal—not subject to change. But physical matter is constantly changing and therefore capable of further change.

The first human, Adam, was created with the potential of qualifying to replace Satan, the former Lucifer, as the world's ruler under God, thus restoring the government of God. But it was necessary that he first resist and reject Satan's "get" way and choose God's way of His Law—the way of love which is the "give" way.

After creating Adam and Eve, their Maker—who is the source of all wisdom and knowledge—instructed them thoroughly in the government and Law of God—even though in Genesis 2 only the most condensed summary of God's instruction to them is revealed. Satan was restrained from any contact with them until God first had completely taught them what they needed to know.

4. What was some of the most important knowledge God revealed to Adam and Eve? Gen. 2:8-9, 15-17.

COMMENT: In the gloriously beautiful Garden of Eden, into which God placed Adam and Eve, were two trees with great symbolic meaning. One was

the "tree of life." Taking its fruit, freely offered, symbolized obedience and faithfulness to God's Law of outgoing love. Partaking of its fruit also symbolized receiving the gift of God's Holy Spirit.

The other was the tree of "the knowledge of good and evil." Taking of its fruit would be *taking to themselves* the knowledge of what is good, and what is evil—of *deciding for themselves* what is right and what is sin. This, of course, meant the *rejection* of God's Law, which defined for them right and wrong.

5. Did Adam, the first man, qualify to replace Satan as earth's ruler? Gen. 3:1-6, 17-19.

COMMENT: The glorious archangel Lucifer, as God originally created him, was the pinnacle of God's creative power in a single being. Few today remotely realize Satan's great power, now turned to cunning deception. Apparently Adam completely underestimated him.

The wily devil got to Adam through his wife Eve. He did not say, "Choose my way." He appeared as a very *subtle* serpent. He cleverly deceived her. Adam chose to follow Satan's way. And mankind everafter has gone the way of Satan.

But God is now in the process, as understood by the duality principle of creation, of creating more members of the very God Family. God knew that if the angels chose the way that resulted in evil character, it left Him and the other member of the Godhead as the only Beings in existence who could be relied upon never to deviate from His government, His laws, and His way of life.

God must have said, "There's just not enough of me." He needed millions or billions of perfect and righteous beings, governed by His government, to complete in beauty, majesty and glory not only the other planets of our solar system, but of our Milky Way, and the countless other galaxies of the limitless, vast universe.

So now comes the next phase of God's overwhelmingly great purpose: the *reproduction of Himself into billions of God-beings!*

6. Notice now the duality principle with regard to Jesus Christ. How is Jesus referred to in I Corinthians 15:45?

COMMENT: The "first" Adam was the first man, created by God from the dust of the earth. The second, or "last Adam" was Jesus, who also was made flesh and blood, but who became an *immortal being* by a resurrection, thus completing in Himself the second phase—the *spiritual* phase—of God's creation of mankind.

Through God's master plan for His spiritual creation of mankind, it had been determined by God and the Word that the Word would in due time divest Himself of His supreme glory, and take on the likeness of human flesh as Jesus Christ. This would make possible the *spiritual* phase of the creation of man—God reproducing Himself—God

creating in man His very own holy, righteous, perfect character!

What a marvelous plan for the extreme and ultimate in creative accomplishment! How great is our God in mind, purpose, planning, designing as well as creating—from the tiniest germ or insect to the greatest sun, dwarfing our own sun into insignificance!

And the incredible human potential is that the great majestic God is, in man, *reproducing Himself*. Man can literally be born into the God Family!

7. How did Jesus speak of this *spiritual* birth? John 3:3-8.

COMMENT: Once again we see the duality principle in action in describing the creation of Sons of God. Man's *first* birth was into the human family which is composed of flesh and blood. His *second* birth will be into the divine Family of God which is composed of spirit and which possesses perfect, Godly character!

God's Character Revealed

The character of both God the Father and Christ the Son is that of spiritual holiness, righteousness and absolute perfection.

That character can be summed up in the one word "love," defined as an out-flowing, loving concern. It is the way of giving, serving, helping, sharing, not the "get" way.

It is the way devoid of coveting, lust and greed, vanity and selfishness, competition, strife, violence and destruction, envy and jealousy, resentment and bitterness.

God's inherent nature is the way of peace, of justice, mercy, happiness and joy radiating outward toward those He has created.

God is Creator, Designer, Educator, Ruler. God has supreme mind. He *is* the embodiment of perfect, holy and righteous character!

Since God possesses perfect, righteous character, He will *not* sin! God will not go contrary to the perfect, holy, spiritual Law which He created and set in living, active, inexorable motion to cause and produce all good. God has so set His will that He *cannot* sin, or transgress His Law.

1. How does the Bible basically define the nature and character of God? I John 4:16. What is the love of God? I John 5:3.

COMMENT: The spiritual Law of God enables us to know what God is like because it describes His very character, which is summed up in one word—LOVE!

2. How did Jesus sum up the Law of God? Matt. 22:36-40.

COMMENT: God's Law is further defined in the two Great Commandments: LOVE to God, and LOVE to neighbor. But the same Law is further defined. It is divided into ten points by the Ten Command-

ments—the first four of which tell us how to love God, and the last six of which tell us how to love neighbor.

3. What very important thing was Jesus prophesied to do regarding God's Law? Isa. 42:21. What are two examples of how Jesus "magnified" the Ten Commandments? Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28.

COMMENT: When a spiritual "magnifying glass," so to speak, is put on the Ten Commandments, they are enlarged in spirit and principle into many more points. And in a larger sense, the *entire Bible* is a magnification of God's Law. The Law is the basis of all Scripture. It defines God's way of life—the way to peace—the way to success—the way to happiness, joy, and eternal life.

Notice how like God His Law really is.

4. Is the Law of God *good*? Rom. 7:12.

COMMENT: God is good!

5. Is the Law of God *just*? Same verse.

COMMENT: God is just!

6. Is the Law of God *holy*? Same verse.

COMMENT: God is holy!

7. Is the Law of God *spiritual*? Rom. 7:14.

COMMENT: God is spiritual!

8. Is the Law of God *perfect*? Psalms 19:7.

COMMENT: God is perfect!

9. Will the character of God ever change? Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8. Therefore, is the Law of God—including all His commandments—immutable and eternal, standing fast forever and ever? Psalms 111:7-8.

COMMENT: God is eternal and so is His Law, for the Law is the very character, the very nature, of God!

God's character travels in the direction of His Law—the way of LOVE. It is the way of giving, serving, helping—of outgoing concern for others. God has that character! He has an outgoing concern for all of humanity. He gave His only begotten Son to reconcile us to Him, and makes the joys of His character and everlasting life possible for us. He showers on us every good and precious gift, including the Holy Spirit which we can receive as a begetting from the Father after we repent and turn from the wrong way of this world, begin to resist it, and turn to Him through faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior!

10. What are some of the divine characteristics or "fruits" of God's nature that begin to be manifest in God's children after their begetting by His Spirit? Gal. 5:22-23; II Tim. 1:7.

COMMENT: Righteous, holy, Godly character is the possession and practice of love, joy, patience, mercy, faith, kindness, gentleness, meekness, temperance, self-restraint, and right self-direction. Character also involves knowledge, wisdom, purpose, ability—all properly controlled and developed through independent choice!

11. Is "love" the greatest single attribute of God's nature? I Cor. 13:1-13. Why? I John



H. Armstrong Roberts Photo

GOD'S PURPOSE for mankind reaches into the depths of the universe! Pictured is a "small" part of our Milky Way galaxy.

4:16. How can we have this divine love? Rom. 5:5.

COMMENT: We can have the same love that is in the Father's heart if we possess His Spirit and practice His commandments—the way He, Himself lives.

There are just two broad principles of life—God's Way, or God's Law, summed up in the Ten Commandments, which we call the "give" way; and then there is Satan's way of competition, greed, vanity, which we call the "get" way of life. All suffering—all unhappiness, fear, misery, and death—has come from the transgression of God's Law and living by Satan's way of "get," instead of living by God's way of "give" which is the only way to peace, happiness and joy.

One third of the angels failed to develop the kind of godly character which would have brought them everlasting peace and happiness because they believed Satan's way of "get" was better than God's way of "give," so they developed evil character. Satan was no longer qualified to remain ruler over this earth. Another had to QUALIFY to *replace* him. So God created Adam and gave him the opportunity to develop the godly character which is required of a just and merciful ruler. But Adam failed.

So Adam's progeny—all mankind—have been born in Satan's world of competition, strife and violence, and have been allowed to sin and disobey God's Law. God has allowed this for a great purpose. He wants man to learn, through *experience*—and experience requires time—that Satan's way of "get" and disobedience to God's spiritual Law

causes only misery, suffering, heartache, and death.

Those who are called of God and choose voluntarily to reject Satan's way of life and live a life of obedience to the government of God while living on an earth still ruled by Satan, are *developing* the holy, righteous and perfect character of God. And they are thus *qualifying* to rule and reign with Jesus Christ, the second Adam, who has qualified to REPLACE Satan as World Ruler and to restore the government of God on earth!

God Now Creating His Supreme Masterpiece!

As Creator, what is the most important creation that God could produce? Was it the angels? Was it the heavens and the earth—the whole universe? Or was it the first man?

It was none of these!

The supreme pinnacle of God's creative works is the creation of His very own perfect, holy, righteous *character* within His own created living beings!

But this is something that even God—with all His mighty and supreme power *cannot* do—of Himself by divine fiat. That ought to take the student's breath! Yes, there is actually something that even God cannot do—by himself, alone.

Ancient King David mused upon God's purpose for man: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained"—great, vast in size and distance—works of God's creation. David then asked, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psa. 8:3-4).

A hundred thousand people, assembled in

Southern California in the Pasadena Rose Bowl on New Year's Day, seen from several thousand feet above, look like tiny insignificant ants! Yes, why should God be mindful of insignificant man?

In the second chapter of Hebrews this same psalm is quoted, and there God's Word proceeds to reveal that in man God has determined to *complete* the very pinnacle of perfection in all His creation! Yet, God cannot do this alone—all by Himself. We were created to have *our part* in this supreme act of creation!

The creation of God's own perfect and righteous spiritual character in man is the *SUPREME GOAL* of God—His *ultimate purpose*! But man must have a part in this supreme masterpiece of all creation!

This creation of character within created beings requires the existence of mind within those beings—the capability of thought processes, reasoning, decision making. Of all living things and beings God has created, only two—angels and humans—have that mind-power. It is, therefore, only in angels and humans that God's perfect spiritual and righteous character may be formed.

Perfect, spiritual character is the ability of a separately created entity with mind and independent free choice to come to the knowledge of the right (God's "give" way) as opposed to the wrong (Satan's "get" way), to decide and will to do the right, even against desires or pulls to do the wrong, and finally overcome pulls toward the wrong until doing the right becomes fixed nature.

Now consider: In the original creation of angels, it was impossible for God to build or create this character in them by divine fiat. That would have made them mere automatons or machines—it would not have been character.

Therefore, the creation of angels could not be completed in the original creation as an act of God. Their creation could not be finished—complete—until their own developed character—either righteous or evil—had been formed and instilled within them—by their *own* volition, decision and will.

After Lucifer's rebellion, along with one-third of the angels, the creation of this third of all angels was finished—they created *evil* character within themselves! Once their fateful course had been set, their creation was completed and, being immortal spirit, they could never change.

The character of both God the Father and Christ the Son, which one-third of the angels *failed* to develop, is that of spiritual holiness, righteousness and absolute perfection—the way of God's Law. God will never sin or transgress His Law. And He is now in the process of creating this *same* Godly character in spirit-begotten Christians as they, by their own volition and with the help of God's Holy Spirit, live His righteous way of life!

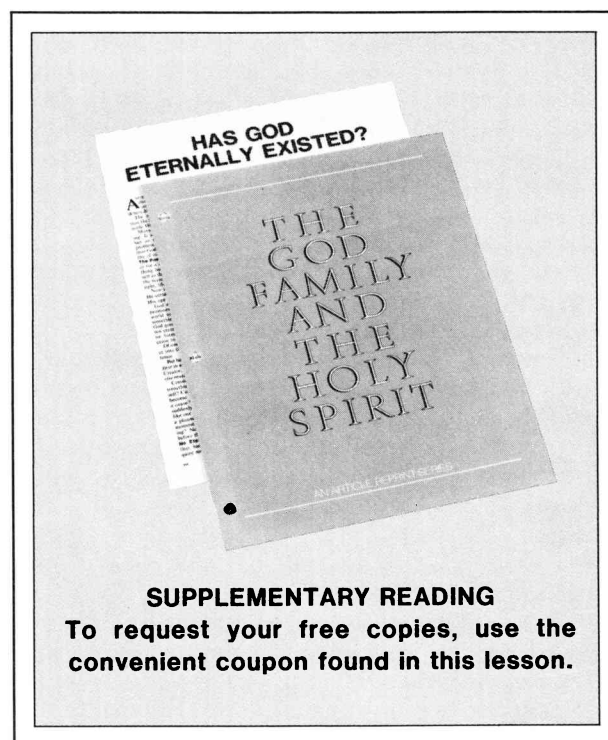
The previous four lessons of the Ambassador

College Bible Correspondence Course reveal the ways and means by which God is creating His perfect, sinless character within man. (You'll find it profitable to review these lessons after completing this lesson.) Lesson 9 shows that those who have been developing evil character by sinning (and all have sinned—Rom. 3:23), must first *repent* of having broken God's holy, righteous law. Then the repentant sinner must be *baptized* "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), as Lesson 10 thoroughly explains.

Next, God's Word promises that those who repent of their sins and are baptized will receive the gift of the *Holy Spirit* directly from God, granting them the spiritual strength necessary for righteous character development. Lesson 11 covers this subject in great detail.

Lesson 12 shows that Christians who have thus been begotten by the Holy Spirit of God and utilize His Spirit will develop and grow in God's holy, righteous character during their mortal lifetime by living according to *His way of life* as revealed in the Bible. This lesson details what God's way of life is all about.

Finally, at the resurrection to eternal life when Jesus Christ returns, the supreme masterpiece of God's creation will have been finished! Those whom God has called and who have voluntarily chosen to work with their Creator in completing His supreme creation within them during their mortal lifetime, will at last be a "finished" creation—created in God's own *spiritual* "image" with His perfect, righteous, holy character!



HAS GOD ETERNALLY EXISTED?

NAME _____

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THE GOD FAMILY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

To request your free copies, use the convenient coupon found in this lesson.