January 2000

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AN EXAMINATION OF MR. ARMSTRONG'S 1940 GOOD NEWS LETTER ABOUT 'THE CALENDAR'

In 1940 Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote "a GOOD NEWS letter", the contents of which was devoted to a discussion of "the calendar". This letter has become the foundation for what the Church of God has taught about the calendar for the past 60 years. It is also the foundation for the 3 calendar articles Kenneth Herrmann wrote in the 1950's.

I have no desire of any kind to find faults with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Most of the things about God's way of life that I know today I have learned from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, and for that I am very thankful. Also, I don't think I'm smarter or cleverer (a motive some may want to imply) than was Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. But, like Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, I want to know the truth; I don't want to base my life on assumptions carelessly taken for granted.

It is because people have repeatedly referred back to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's 1940 article, looking to it as proof and support for the present Jewish calendar that makes it, I believe, important to examine this article itself. WHAT Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong said in that article must stand or fall on its own merits. If what he stated was true and correct, then it was CORRECT, not because Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong said so, but because it really was correct! If there are errors in what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong said 60 years ago, then it was WRONG. The content of that article (or letter) must stand or fall on its own merits, not on the reputation of a man! It must be evaluated against the Bible, the Word of God.

So this is what I will do in this article.

First I will present the entire text of that 4-page letter, without comments or alterations. In that way you will have an exact copy of that letter in your possession. It ensures that you will know that I am not quoting anything out of context, as far as that 1940 GN letter is concerned.

After that I will give my comments and observations on that article.

So here is a copy of the 1940 GOOD NEWS letter by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

START OF LETTER:

GOOD NEWS LETTER 1940

HOW TO FIGURE PASSOVER

PASSOVER IS ON THE 14TH OF THE FIRST MONTH, ABIB (Nisan).

The PROBLEM is to figure WHEN is 1st day of month Abib.

Because the Catholics and Protestants figure "Easter" a month earlier than the Hebrew calendar sets Passover this year, and because Brother Dodd has published the date March 22 as

Passover, while both Stanberry and Salem organizations have published the date as April 21st, many of the brethren are in doubt, and want the FACTS.

Briefly, after very exhaustive study, and counsel with brethren who have also made through study of the question for years, the facts are these:

1) The Bible YEAR is SOLAR, while the Bible MONTH is LUNAR.

2) PROOF the Bible month is LUNAR; that is, each month begins with a new moon: By studying Numbers 28 and 29, we learn offerings were held DAILY (vs. 3-4), WEEKLY on every Sabbath (vs. 9), MONTHLY on the 1st day of each month (vs. 11), and YEARLY on the annual holydays (vs. 16 and on thru chapter 29). Compare with I Chr. 23:31; II Chr. 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; etc., where the same sacrifices and meat and drink offerings are mentioned, and in each case the MONTHLY offerings are on the NEW MOON. Since Nu. 28:11 says this is in the "beginnings of your months," or the first day of each month, we have Bible proof the 1st day of each month is calculated by the New Moon.

3) The Bible YEAR is SOLAR. This is proved by the festivals and the holydays. A month is between 29 and 30 days. A 12-month year, or a lunar year, is approximately 354 days, whereas a solar year is a little more than 365 days. Thus a lunar year is about 11 days less than a solar year. If the Bible year were lunar, always 12 months, Passover would come about 11 days earlier each year. Thus, in about nine years it would come in the MIDWINTER; in another 9 in the FALL, and a few years later Passover would come in the SUMMER. In 34 years it and all the holydays would

make the round of all four seasons. But Passover ALWAYS comes in the SPRING, at time of the early grain harvest. On the morrow after the Sabbath during Feast of Unleavened Bread, the priest waved the wave-sheaf, and none of the early Spring grain could be used until this was done. (Lev. 23). Pentecost ALWAYS came in the summer, Tabernacles ALWAYS in the Fall at time of, or right after, Fall harvest. (Lev. 23:29) These were SET feasts, set for DEFINITE SEASONS of the year (Ex. 23:14-17; 34:18, 22-23; Deut. 16:9, 13, 16; Lev. 23:4; Nu. 28:2; Ex. 13:10).

4) These facts prove there had to be an intercalary, or 13th, month ADDED to the year SEVEN TIMES in each 19 years. God has set the sun, the earth, and the moon in motion so that once every 19 years the sun and moon come into conjunction. That is, once in 19 years there will be a new moon on March 21st, for example. There are SEVEN more new moons in each 19-year solar-lunar cycle than there are solar months, (12 to the year). Thus God's great time cycle, written in the heavens, is based upon SEVEN -- God's complete number, signifying Sabbath -- added to TWELVE, the number of Tribes of Israel, number of Jesus' original apostles, etc.! Since this is true, the ONLY POSSIBLE METHOD by which months can begin on new moons, and yet the solar year can be retained, is to add a 13th month every two or three years, 7 times in 19 years. Nowhere do the Scriptures specifically mention an intercalary month, yet these facts of astronomy and these Bible facts PROVE it was used.

5) Now, our problem is, WHEN, and HOW OFTEN, DID God ordain these intercalary months should be added?

Research reveals two basic points on this question, 1st, GOD DID NOT RECORD IT IN THE BIBLE, which gives us absolutely NOTHING more to go on that I have stated above. 2nd, History is vague on the subject, shedding little light that can be accerted (sic) and trusted. Yet we know God gave HIS PEOPLE a FIXED RULE for calculating TIME PERIODS, and for figuring WHEN to hold the Festivals of Jehovah. Otherwise, the prophecies, so full of definite time-periods, can never be understood. Otherwise God's people could not obey Him!

We learn in the Bible the men of old did have understanding of the times. They knew how to figure time. "Of the children of Issachar, were men that HAD UNDERSTANDING OF THE TIMES, to know what Israel ought to do." (I Chron. 12:32). See Esth. 1:13.

In Dan 7:25, the "little horn," or papacy, was to "think to change TIMES" as well as laws. Notice, only to THINK to change them -- to deceive the world in general, but not God's people.

Thus with the LAW and the Sabbath. The world is deceived. But have WE lost "TIME" in respect to the Sabbath? No! This Scripture, then, indicates TIME HAS NOT BEEN LOST! The true sacred calendar is no more lost than the weekly Sabbath. Then WHO HAS PRESERVED THIS TIME, this sacred CALENDAR? To whom did God give it? To whom were "the oracles of God COMMITTED?" To ISRAEL AND JUDAH, of course! Israel LOST the Sabbath, LOST time, LOST even her national name and identity. But JUDAH NEVER DID. Judah has kept TIME in respect to the weekly SABBATH. The Jews rejected Christ. They apostatized in doctrine, BUT THEY WERE STRICT, STICKLERS FOR THE LETTER. Would such a people have lost their CALENDAR? If so, TIME IS LOST! There is no other source thru whom God could have committed AND PRESERVED His calendar. He did COMMIT it to them. Therefore it must be thru them He has preserved it! They had the calendar correct at the time of Christ. They figured Passover, all the feasts, as He did. In 70 A.D. the Jews were scattered into every nation. The present "Jewish calendar" had come down intact without change since 100 A.D. -- that much is proved by history. Could they have changed it, and all changed it the same way, while scattered all over the world, and that within a thirty-year period between 70 and 100 A.D.? IF THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR EVER WAS CHANGED FROM THE WAY COMMITTED IT TO THEM, IT HAD TO BE DURING THOSE THIRTY YEARS.

The Jews in one part of the world, without knowing what the Jews in the other parts of the world were doing, all had to get it changed in exactly the same way! That, of course, was utterly

IMPOSSIBLE!

Further PROOF comes thru the continuous observance of Passover by one Jewish sect, going by the name of "Samaritans."

In the "Encyclopedia Britannica", 14th edition, Vol. 17, page 357, we read:

"The Samaritans have throughout their history observed the Passover with all its Pentateuchal ceremonial and still observe it down to the present day. THEY SACRIFICE THE PASCHAL LAMB, which is probably the oldest religious rite that HAS BEEN CONTINUOUSLY KEPT UP." Here are the ONLY people who have kept Passover, continuously, thru all generations without a break, exactly as God gave it to them under the old Testament form. They have NEVER made any change in their doctrines regarding Passover, or the manner of observing it. Could THEY have lost the calendar -- the way of figuring WHEN to take it -- as God committed it to them? Hardly! Yet they use today the same calendar all the Jews use -- the sacred original Hebrew calendar!

Interesting, too, is the fact they observe Passover on the eve, or night part of the 14th, not on the 15th. They kill the lamb between sunset and dark at the very beginning of the 14th. They observe the FEAST the night of the 15th. Also, they have continued to figure Pentecost from the morrow after the WEEKLY SABBATH during the days of unleavened bread, the true Bible way

-- instead of from the first annual Sabbath.

In conclusion, unless God has preserved His sacred calendar thru the Jew, then WE DO NOT KNOW how to figure Passover or ANY of the holydays this year. For there is NO AUTHORITY for any other day.

There is NO BIBLE AUTHORITY WHATSOEVER for figuring the 1st day of the 1st month from the new

moon NEAREST the Spring equinox!

As soon as I learned of Brother Dodd's published dates for the festivals this year, I sent him a telegram asking for his authority for his dates. His reply is that he bases his method of figuring on certain statements of profane history found in encyclopedias. He replies "in some Bible dictionary, or Encyclopedia, or Jewish encyclopedia, I read something like this:

'The ancient reckoning of Passover was from the actual sight of the New Moon nearest the Vernal Equinox ....'"

But, we ask (tho Brother Dodd is quoting from memory, and was unable to find the clipping or reference, or state WHERE he had read this), how did the man who wrote the article in the

encyclopedia KNOW this was the ancient method of reckoning? Did He offer proof? The Jews, continuing the observance of all the seven annual festivals EVERY YEAR continuously, tho scattered all over the world, say it was figured anciently as they figure it today, by the Jewish calendar. What more dependable record has come down from Moses' time?

Bro. Dodd also cited Josphesus, Jewish historian, to indicate that Passover could never be earlier than March 20th, or later than April 19th. Yet in Hastings Bible Dictionary, I find this same Josephus quoted as saying the Vernal equinox (March 21), always occurred in Nisan, which means the year always began with the New Moon PRIOR to March 21st. They quote one more author to this same effect, (Muss-Arnolt, p. 77). Thus one writer says Josephus (Ant. I, X.5) to figure the new moon PRIOR to March 21st, another uses the same Josephus to prove we ought to take the new moon NEAREST the same date, or about half the time the new moon FOLLOWING March 21st, while in the Britannica I find statements supposed to be historic that it ALWAYS began with the first new moon AFTER March 21st.

Surely we can see that profane history only contradicts itself, is inaccurate, cannot be depended upon, and HAS NO AUTHORITY WHATSOEVER. There is no Bible authority for any of it.

God did not commit His oracles, or the preservation of His TIMES to profane history, or to the Roman Catholics, but to the Israelites. And they have been preserved BY THE JEWS.

The Catholics are the ones who have thought to CHANGE the Times. They say the paschal new moon this year is the one BEFORE March 21st, and figure Easter accordingly. The Jews say it is the one AFTER March 21st.

After thorough study of the Bible, of the Hebrew calendar, of history, and every angle, -- after going into the matter with all the Eugene brethren, and other brethren who have made a special study of this question, we have unanimously agreed that the Hebrew calendar has been preserved correct by the Jews.

The New moon occurs, IN JERUSALEM, (World Almanac), at exactly 10:18 P.M., the night of April 7th, which is the eve of April 8th. However, God had the new moon observed by the naked eye and by this method the first day of the 1st month begins the following sunset, April 8th. Thus Passover comes AFTER SUNSET APRIL 21st and the HOLY CONVOCATION after sunset April 22nd, which is Abib 15th. The second holyday begins sunset April 28th, with holy convocation held during the day-time, April 29. Pentecost this year is JUNE 17th, sunset, until sunset June 18th, instead of June 12th as erroneously figured on our calendar printed three years ago.

* * * * *

SACRED CALENDAR FOR 1940

PASSOVER, after sunset, April 21st

UNLEAVENED BREAD, April 21 to 29th

First Sabbath, meeting after sunset April 22nd,

Second Sabbath, daytime April 29th

PENTECOST, daytime meeting, June 18th

TRUMPETS SABBATH, October 3rd

ATONEMENT (fast), October 12th

TABERNACLES, sunset Oct. 16th to sunset Oct. 24th

* * * * *

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

END OF LETTER!

That's the full text of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's letter. Now let's take a closer look at what he said back then in 1940.

1) THE PROBLEM Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong faced was NOT: do we accept the present Jewish calendar or do we accept some other calendar? The problem was NOT: are there perhaps some problems with the present Jewish calendar which make it unacceptable in the sight of God? The man "Brother Dodd" appears to have accepted the Jewish calendar (as evidenced by "Brother Dodd's" reliance on Jewish sources, including "The Jewish Encyclopedia" and the Jewish historian Josephus) in general terms. The only thing this "Brother Dodd" apparently felt needed changing was that he wanted to start the year one new moon earlier than the Jewish calendar was going to start for that particular year.

FOR THE RECORD: It is very easy to prove that "Brother Dodd" was wrong; as with his proposed dates, amongst other things, the wave offering would have been required on Sunday, March 24th, WHICH IS BY A LONG SHOT TOO EARLY FOR ANY BARLEY FOR THIS OFFERING! So it is very easy to reject the wrong dates proposed by "Brother Dodd".

2) The nature of the problem they faced in 1940 means that THEIR STUDY INTO A SOLUTION clearly did NOT examine any problems that no one had brought to their attention! Their focus was simply: Which of two new moons do we use for the start of Nisan: the new moon of March 9th or the new moon of April 7th? [Comment: The molad was April 7th at 4:03 p.m. and the actual new moon for the Jerusalem time zone was April 7th at 10:18 p.m., which is actually the early part of April 8th.]

3) Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong then mentions that they reached a decision "AFTER VERY EXHAUSTIVE STUDY". Exactly what he meant by "very exhaustive study" is seen from the "5 points" he then proceeds to list. They are: the Bible year is solar; the Bible month is lunar; this requires 7 years in every 19 years to have 13 months; "OUR problem" is to figure out when and how often these intercalary months should be added.

This last point leads back to "Brother Dodd", who disagreed with the then current year (the one that would end in March or April of 1940) having 13 months. And that is the extent of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's "exhaustive study" of problems with the Jewish calendar. He spelled it out quite clearly by stating in his "point 5": "Now, OUR PROBLEM IS ..."!

4) It should be fairly easy to recognize that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was not aware of, and therefore did not study into, the following REAL problem areas:

A) THE BIBLE indicates that the year should start in the spring. This is even repeatedly acknowledged in the very first article the Church ever published about the calendar, the 1953 GOOD NEWS article by Kenneth Herrmann. It is repeated in the 1957 GOOD NEWS article. But the present Jewish calendar doesn't do that consistently; it starts the year in the winter about one third of the time.

B) THE BIBLE makes very clear in Exodus 34:22 that the Feast of Tabernacles must ALWAYS be in the autumn. (Even Dr. Herman Hoeh, in his April 1981 GOOD NEWS article, acknowledged that Exodus 34:22 sets a requirement for the calendar.) The word "tekufah" in that verse refers to "THE SEASON of autumn" (which in the Talmud is referred to as "the tekufah of Tishri"). But the present Jewish calendar doesn't do that consistently; it sometimes starts the Feast of Tabernacles BEFORE the end of summer.

C) The 2150-year old Greek calculations that are employed in the present Jewish calendar to establish ONE new moon conjunction (called "the molad") for each year, for the 7th month of each year, are in fact based on AVERAGES; and they are normally in error anywhere from 15 hours too late to 3 hours too early. But the calendar employed by the Jews in the 1st century AD was ALWAYS BASED ON OBSERVATION of each new moon crescent. A calendar based on observation of new moon crescents will ALWAYS stay linked to reality; the new moons are NOT removed from the start of each month. But the errors in the calculated calendar have REMOVED THE WHOLE PROCESS FROM REALITY! Sometimes the start of the new month in the present Jewish calendar coincides with the real new moon and sometimes the start of a new month is only one or two days after the real new moon. So the accurate process based on observation has been replaced by a hit-and-miss process of calculation. It needs to be established whether this hit-and-miss process has God's approval or not. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong DID acknowledge in this letter that "each month begins with a new moon", but this is simply not consistently true for the present Jewish calendar.

D) And once the molad has been established in the present Jewish calendar, Jewish traditions then apply certain "postponement rules", which have the effect of postponing EVERY MONTH OF THE YEAR AWAY FROM THE REAL NEW MOONS. The historical evidence is very clear that these postponement rules were NOT being used during the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and of the original apostles. Nor is there ANY biblical support for these postponement rules. It needs to be examined whether or not these postponement rules have God's approval.

E) Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong also MISUNDERSTOOD what the present Jewish calendar attempts to achieve. He THOUGHT that it was based on REAL new moons. Thus his statement:

"The new moon occurs, IN JERUSALEM, (World Almanac), at exactly 10:18 P.M., the night of April 7th, which is the eve of April 8th. GOD HAD THE NEW MOON OBSERVED BY THE NAKED EYE and by this method the first day of the 1st month begins the following sunset, April 8th." (partly my emphasis)

THIS QUOTATION MAKES CLEAR THAT MR. ARMSTRONG DID NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR!

In the present Jewish calendar there is no attempt to establish ANY connection with visibility! Yet Mr.

Herbert W. Armstrong thought that it DID try to establish visibility! In actual fact there was a 1-day postponement in 1940 for the express purpose of preventing the Day of Atonement from falling on a Friday, yet Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong thought it was for the purpose of establishing the day of first visibility. So, CLEARLY, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong did NOT correctly understand the postponement rules of the present Jewish calendar back in 1940! And if he didn't correctly UNDERSTAND the postponement rules, it follows that he could not have accurately evaluated them either!

[Comment: In 1940 there was a 1-day postponement for the 1st day of the 7th month, and this affected every month of the year. In actual fact this amounted to a 2-day postponement for the start of Nisan if we view it from the Jewish calculations, because the molad of Nisan was at 4:03 p.m. on April 7th, over 6 hours before the actual new moon of Nisan. So while it may have looked like only a 1-day postponement from the real new moon for Nisan, it actually amounted to a 2-day postponement from the calculated MOLAD of Nisan, as per the calculations of the present Jewish calendar. This highlights the errors contained in the Jewish calculations.]

[Comment: This assumption by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in 1940 that the Jewish calendar actually attempts to establish FIRST VISIBILITY of the new moons continued to be accepted by the Church for AT LEAST ANOTHER 17 YEARS! It is still used in Kenneth Herrmann's February 1957 GOOD NEWS article "Which Is The Calendar Christ Used?" In fact, that 1957 article follows Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's 1940 GOOD NEWS letter very closely, indicating that NOTHING HAD CHANGED in the Church's understanding in those 17 years, as far as the calendar is concerned.]

Note further!

It was okay for Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to refer to the REAL new moon time in Jerusalem to make his point, which happened to work out quite well for 1940. But when I today want to do EXACTLY THE SAME THING MR. ARMSTRONG DID IN THAT LETTER (i.e. focus on the REAL new moons in Jerusalem), and show how the present Jewish calendar DIFFERS FROM REALITY, then that is rejected by those who support the present Jewish calendar! Doesn't that sound like a double-standard; it's okay for Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to use REAL new moon times to support the present Jewish calendar, but don't you TODAY dare to use REAL new moon times to show up FLAWS in the present Jewish calendar?

Notice that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong freely acknowledges that GOD expected the calendar to be based on VISIBILITY! Today's Jewish calendar is removed from visibility. Today's calendar has not really "PRESERVED" what had been done during the 1st century AD and earlier.

Note still further!

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote: "God had the new moon observed by the naked eye AND BY THIS METHOD THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH BEGINS THE FOLLOWING SUNSET!"

THIS IS EXACTLY THE PROPOSAL I HAVE MADE! TO START THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH (and the same for the 7th month!) WITH THE SUNSET THAT FOLLOWS THE INVISIBLE NEW MOON CONJUNCTION!

I have proposed EXACTLY what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in 1940!! I have followed in my proposal EXACTLY the same line of reasoning Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong employed back in 1940! But what I have proposed isn't really acceptable, right?

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong THOUGHT that the 1-day postponement (to avoid Atonement on a Friday) was for the purpose of moving from the calculated invisible conjunction (which he assumed the Jewish

calendar calculated accurately) to first visibility. Therefore he appeared to feel that the Jewish calendar BASICALLY achieves first visibility. He didn't realize that, had that molad of Tishri been at exactly the same time of day (it was calculated to be at 8:28 p.m. on a Tuesday evening, October 1st, which was the first part of the Wednesday), but on a Monday evening or on a Sunday evening or on a Wednesday evening or on a Friday evening, THEN NO POSTPONEMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN INVOKED! And then Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's reasoning that "GOD had the new moon observed by the naked eye and BY THIS METHOD the 1st day of the 1st month begins the following sunset" WOULD HAVE BEEN TOTALLY WRONG!

[Comment: The molad was calculated to be AFTER sunset on Tuesday evening, October 1st, at 8:28 p.m.. In actual fact, the new moon was actually BEFORE sunset on Tuesday afternoon at 2:41 p.m.. Thus the molad and the actual conjunction were on different days, separated by a sunset between them.]

Consider this point as well!

Had Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's understanding, that the 1st day of the month begins with the sunset following the conjunction, been correct, THEN THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTIONS TO SUCH A "POSTPONEMENT RULE"!! It would be a logical and consistent way of dealing with the matter. And he actually thought that is what the Jewish calendar achieves; thus the reasoning he has employed. BUT HE WAS WRONG! The postponement rules have everything to do with "maintaining the TRADITIONS of the fathers", and they have nothing at all to do with trying to achieve REALITY (i.e. first visibility of the new crescent).

QUESTION:

WHY CAN WE TODAY NOT ACTUALLY PUT INTO PRACTICE THE LOGICAL WAY MR. ARMSTRONG THOUGHT THE JEWISH CALENDAR OPERATED, TO START THE FIRST DAY WITH THE SUNSET THAT FOLLOWS THE CONJUNCTION?

Let's move on.

F) Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was NOT aware of the fact that the present Jewish calendar unavoidably shifts 9 days away from the seasons for every 2000 years. Therefore this problem was also not addressed by him. Yet, for a calendar that is to be used for several millennia, there simply MUST be a mechanism to deal with this seasonal shifting, a process that the Jews themselves are also very aware of. There is no indication that God approves of His Holy Days moving away from the seasons (i.e. moving to dates that are later in relation to the equinoxes).

G) Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong acknowledged that on the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread the priest had to wave "the wave-sheaf". But Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong did NOT address the fact that in the present Jewish calendar the year sometimes starts TOO EARLY for this to be possible! This is also a problem that MUST be addressed.

H) The starting date employed by the present Jewish calendar (i.e. 3761 BC) is supposedly the date for the creation of Adam and Eve. To be exact, it is claimed that the creation took place in 3760 BC, and that the calendar is then based on the new moon conjunction of the 7th month BEFORE the creation of Adam (thus the date 3761 BC). This claim is based on a work known as the "Seder Olam Rabbah", which was produced not earlier than about 150 AD.

BOTH, this document (Seder Olam Rabbah) as a whole and the supposed date for the creation, ARE TERRIBLY FLAWED! The date for the creation is in error by more than 200 years.

Firstly, this proves that the present Jewish calendar was not in use prior to 150 AD. And secondly, we should ask whether GOD is involved in something that misplaces His creation by more than 200 years?

NONE OF THESE PROBLEMS WERE EXAMINED BY MR. ARMSTRONG in 1940! All he really focused on was: WHEN and HOW OFTEN should a 13th month be added to the year? THIS was the precise problem confronting him at that time.

So the claim that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong already carefully considered all of these problems, that they are nothing new, is simply not true! The internal evidence within this 1940 GOOD NEWS letter proves this. The problem Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong considered was actually quite shallow and should have been very easy to solve; a March 22 Passover date is clearly wrong.

Now let's notice a few other points in the letter.

Under "point 3" Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong stated: "Pentecost ALWAYS came in the summer".

THIS IS ALSO NOT TRUE! Summer starts with the summer solstice on June 21st. And in actual fact Pentecost NEVER comes in the summer in the present Jewish calendar! Year #9 in the present Jewish calendar is the latest year in the seasons, and for that year Pentecost MAY come as late as June 18th about ONCE every century (e.g. 1815, 1967, 2062, etc.). So the facts are: Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong here had a misunderstanding about how the Feast of Pentecost appears in the present Jewish calendar, which is ALWAYS in the spring. However, IF the biblical principle that the year should always start in the spring is followed, THEN Pentecost will very occasionally fall into the season of summer. But this cannot happen in the present Jewish calendar. And it is CERTAINLY wrong to claim that Pentecost "ALWAYS" came in the summer. Even the date Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong gives for Pentecost at the end of this 1940 GOOD NEWS letter is IN THE SPRING (i.e. June 18th; a typing mistake, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong meant June 17th, as June 18th was a Tuesday!).

If Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong didn't realize that in the present Jewish calendar Pentecost NEVER comes "in the summer", how well did he really understand the calendar?

Next notice his comments about "19-year cycles".

"He wrote:

"God has set the sun, the earth, and the moon in motion so that once every 19 years the sun and moon come into conjunction. That is, once in 19 years there will be a new moon on March 21st, for example. There are SEVEN more new moons in each 19-year solar-lunar cycle than there are solar months, (12 to the year). Thus God's great time cycle, written in the heavens, is based upon SEVEN -- God's complete number, signifying Sabbath -- added to TWELVE, the number of Tribes of Israel, number of Jesus' original apostles, etc.!"

By the way Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong talks about "God's great time cycle written in the heavens", it shows that he didn't really understand that these 19-year cycles are not perfect at all! There is actually a 1-day shift for every 216 years, or a 9-day shift for every 2000 years. It is not a perfect cycle at all! It is only an approximation to refer to it as a "19-year cycle".

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's comments make clear that in 1940 he did not give any thoughts to how a "fixed" calendar can possibly deal with such a 9-day shift every 2000 years. While this shift becomes a problem in any "fixed" lunar calendar, it is not a problem at all IF the calendar follows the simple and logical rule to always start the year with the first new moon on or after the spring equinox. As the shift

starts to cause the year to start later after the equinox, the previous new moon before the equinox has moved up to the time of the equinox, and it thus becomes the start of the new year. This process takes several hundred years before such shifts are required.

Talking about the sequence of leap years within a 19-year period, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote:

"Research reveals two basic points on this question, 1st, GOD DID NOT RECORD IT IN THE BIBLE, which gives us absolutely NOTHING more to go on that I have stated above. 2nd, History is vague on the subject, shedding little light that can be accerted and trusted."

One of the obvious reasons why the sequence of leap years is not recorded in the Bible is because IT MUST INEVITABLY CHANGE WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE MILLENNIA! It is simply not possible to apply TODAY the same sequence that may have(theoretically) applied 3500 years ago, in the days of Moses. In those 3500 years all of the Feasts and Holy Days would have shifted to at least 15 days later in the seasons, as related to the two equinoxes, and many years would have Holy Days that are far later in the seasons than is intended by God.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's comments here show quite clearly that he was not aware of this shift by 9 days for every 2000 years.

Now notice Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's unwarranted assumption, which follows right on the heels of the above statement:

"Yet we know God gave HIS PEOPLE a FIXED RULE for calculating TIME PERIODS, and for figuring WHEN to hold the Festivals of Jehovah. Otherwise, the prophecies, so full of definite time-periods, can never be understood. Otherwise God's people could not obey Him!"

Notice!

After first making clear that neither the Bible nor history show us more than has ALREADY been laid out in the article, he simply asserts: "YET WE KNOW GOD GAVE HIS PEOPLE A FIXED RULE"! Without ANY clear statements to this effect, how could Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong possibly make this claim? "A fixed rule"??

THIS UNPROVED ASSUMPTION lies at the heart of every defense of the present Jewish calendar. It is no wonder that after 60 years of going unchallenged, this assumption is believed to be A FACT by many people.

INFORMATION FROM VARIOUS CALENDAR ARTICLES

Let's briefly recap all the calendar information the Church published during Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's time:

1) First came this 1940 GOOD NEWS letter by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

2) The March 1953 GOOD NEWS carried an article by Kenneth Herrmann.

3) This article was run again, with minor changes, in the February 1957 GOOD NEWS.

4) The October 1957 GOOD NEWS carried another article by Kenneth Herrmann.

5) The April 1981 GOOD NEWS carried an article by Dr. Herman Hoeh.

An that is about it.

Now here is THE INFORMATION that all of these articles made available.

1) MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG'S 1940 ARTICLE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT:

A) Barley must be available on the Sunday during Unleavened Bread.

B) "GOD had the new moon observed by the naked eye", first visibility.

C) The time of new moons should be expressed for the Jerusalem area.

2) KENNETH HERRMANN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE BIBLE CLEARLY DEFINES THE COMPONENTS OF A CALENDAR FOR US. Thus he spelled out in his articles:

A) The "DAY" starts and ends at sunset.

B) The "WEEK" starts and ends at sunset on Saturday evening.

C) The "MONTH" starts with the sunset after each "new moon".

D) The "YEAR" starts in the SPRING, not in the middle of winter.

E) He also acknowledged the need for BARLEY during Unleavened Bread.

F) Like Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Kenneth Herrmann also focused on VISIBILITY.

G) He also acknowledged new moons should be expressed in JERUSALEM time.

3) DR. HERMAN HOEH IN 1981 ACKNOWLEDGED THAT:

A) Exodus 34:22 requires the Feast of Tabernacles to be in the autumn. This Scripture sets a specific requirement for the calendar.

[COMMENT: As late as December 1964 it was still freely acknowledged that the year SHOULD start in the spring. For example, The Plain Truth magazine for December 1964 carried an article by William H. Ellis entitled "The Truth About NEW YEAR'S!". In this article the following statements appeared:

"GOD'S SACRED CALENDAR YEAR BEGINS IN THE SPRING -- not in the middle of a dead winter! Notice Exodus 12:1-2, "And the Eternal spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying ..."

"GOD PLACED THE BEGINNING OF THE SACRED YEAR IN THE EARLY SPRING to mark the beginning of the seasonal harvests."

CORRECT!! God placed "the beginning of the year IN THE EARLY SPRING"! But no one seems to care that the Jewish calendar doesn't actually DO this! And it doesn't really require any "additional revelation" to know that God wants the year to start in the spring.]

Note! The three authors who have written about the calendar for the Church (i.e. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Kenneth Herrmann, Dr. Hoeh) have compiled a considerable number of factors that the correct calendar must incorporate or take into account! They have found ALL of these factors in the

Bible! But all three of these authors then continue to claim that God "MUST HAVE" revealed "A FIXED RULE" for the calendar (or something to this effect), and this must be found somewhere outside of the Bible.

That seems incredible to me!

If we are really serious about wanting to know GOD's will about the calendar: why don't we start out by putting all of these "revealed factors" from the above three authors together? Perhaps that will show us WHAT, if anything, is still missing? Why did God actually GIVE us all these "factors" that apply to the calendar, if He didn't want us to make sure that they are all inculcated into the calendar?

Look at what Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and these other two leading men for the subject of the calendar have already shown from the Bible:

1) Use the Jerusalem time standard for the calendar.

2) God had the new moon observed with the naked eye. So EITHER look for the new moon OR use the time of the invisible conjunction and take the sunset after that conjunction as the start of the month. Do this consistently. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong THOUGHT that this is what the Jewish calendar actually achieves, though it doesn't really do that at all.

3) Take the first new moon on or after the spring equinox to start the year. Do this consistently.

4) This will ensure that by the Sunday during Unleavened Bread some barley will be ripe, meeting this biblical requirement.

5) This will also ensure that the Feast of Tabernacles never starts in the summer.

WHAT ELSE NEEDS TO BE REVEALED? THIS QUESTION REQUIRES AN ANSWER!

What "fixed rule" could God possibly have given His people, ABOVE AND BEYOND the above factors? Does the "fixed rule", which is NOT recorded in the Bible, take priority over the above-stated points and principles, which ARE recorded in the Bible? WHY?

WHY would God, after revealing all of the above points to us in His Word, expect us to look elsewhere for some ADDITIONAL information? Does God EVER, anywhere, expect us to have real faith in things that are NOT in the Bible? Where? Where does God EVER instruct us to look in faith to some things that are NOT recorded in the Bible??

The only thing we find in the Bible in this regard is admonitions to guard against putting our trust in man, any man! Look at Jeremiah 17:5.

"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD." (Jeremiah 17:5 AV)

Here we find A CURSE for trusting man. To "make flesh our arm" is a way of saying "TO RELY ON MAN". When we compare the biblical requirements for a calendar, as laid out by the Church's three authors (Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Kenneth Herrmann, Herman Hoeh), with the present Jewish calendar, it becomes obvious that the present Jewish calendar has "DEPARTED FROM THE LORD". The present Jewish calendar treats these biblical requirements with disdain! They are completely ignored and violated. "Traditions" are the most important ingredient of the present Jewish calendar.

Back to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's article.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong then implies that men of the tribe of ISSACHAR were the experts for the calendar, quoting 1 Chronicles 12:32. The problem here is that it is also claimed that God gave His calendar to the LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD. So exactly to whom did God give His calendar information, to the priestly LEVITES or to the non-priestly men of ISSACHAR? If an appeal is made "to the children of Issachar", then the calendar information was obviously NEVER limited to the Levitical priests; then it was always something all in the nation would have had access to.

This is something Mr. Armstrong also clearly did not think through.

Next, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong reasons about Daniel 7:25 and the papacy thinking about "changing times". However, THE FACTS make quite clear that the Catholic Church has very meticulously preserved the knowledge of the cycle of the week! They have carefully preserved the knowledge that Sunday is the FIRST day of the week (thereby preserving the knowledge that Saturday is the seventh day of the week!). Specifically, in 1582 AD it was the Catholic Church that ensured that the weekly cycle was not broken; it was Pope Gregory XIII who ordered that October 4th (a Thursday) should be followed by October 15th (a Friday). This Catholic Pope ensured that the weekly cycle was not broken at that time.

Next, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong refers to "the oracles of God". However, he made no attempt to explain exactly what the Bible means by this expression; he made no attempt to show what the term "oracles of God" is supposed to include. He simply ASSUMED that this term would include the calendar, based on his earlier stated assumption that "God gave His people a fixed rule for calculating time periods". Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong then asserts that "Israel LOST the Sabbath, LOST time".

THIS CLAIM IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE!

In the nations of Israel the weekly cycle has ALWAYS been preserved! Even without any writings from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, the modern nations of Israel have ALWAYS known that Sunday is the FIRST day of the week, and that Saturday is the SEVENTH day of the week; they have never lost this knowledge! The nations of Israel (more so than Judah) have been involved in major ways to publish the Bible in as many languages as possible, thereby preserving the Bible statements that God hallowed THE SEVENTH DAY. This knowledge has always been available in the nations of Israel.

But the point is: they have NOT ACCEPTED this knowledge! They have refused to LIVE BY this knowledge!

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong confused Israel REJECTING TO KEEP THE SEVENTH DAY with having "lost" the knowledge of the seventh day. But they didn't "lose" it at all; they know very well that Sunday is the first day of the week, and that Saturday is the seventh day.

Further, in what way could Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong possibly claim that Israel had "LOST time"? Exactly what is that claim supposed to mean? In the nations of Israel neither the cycle of the week nor the passage of the years have ever "been LOST". So what is this reference to Israel having "LOST time" supposed to be referring to? It is nothing more than an unfounded bias to make a point for supposed "calendar preservation" by the Jews.

For the record: the Jewish calendar has LOST Time!! It claims that Adam and Eve were created in 3760 BC; and they have LOST TIME, because God created Adam and Eve more than 200 years before 3760 BC. So it is WITHOUT CONTRADICTION A FACT that the present Jewish calendar has LOST time, over 200 years of it! Yes, the Jews, such "sticklers for the letter", managed to lose over 200 years with

their calendar! It doesn't seem like Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was aware of this?

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong asks: "Would such a people have lost their CALENDAR? If so, TIME IS LOST!" The answer to this is: The present Jewish calendar makes quite clear that they LOST over 200 years in the process of setting up their calendar. So yes, according to the present Jewish calendar over 200 years of time have been LOST! But in spite of the Jewish calendar having lost over 200 years, time is not lost at all, thanks to the chronological records kept by nations other than the Jews. But this information doesn't do much for those who want to make a case for the present Jewish calendar.

[Comment: The over 200 years lost by the Jewish calendar fall largely into the time between the last part of the Old Testament and the start of the New Testament. The Seder Olam, on which the starting date used by the present Jewish calendar is based, has incorrectly compacted the entire Persian period of about 200 years into a period of only 34 years, thus "losing" almost two centuries. It is interesting to note that this prominent Jewish chronological record (i.e. the Seder Olam) is one of the better-known examples of "time having been lost" by a chronologer.]

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong then writes:

"They had the calendar correct at the time of Christ. They figured Passover, all the feasts, as He did. In 70 A.D. the Jews were scattered into every nation. The present "Jewish calendar" had come down intact without change since 100 A.D. -- that much is proved by history."

Yes, the Jews DID have the calendar correct during the time of Christ. As Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself states later in his letter, the new moons were at that time "observed by the naked eye". It also had no postponement rules at that time. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong seems unaware of the fact that even before 70 AD the Pharisees had managed to kick ALL of the Sadducees out of the Sanhedrin and out of ALL prominence in the affairs of the Jewish people. Nor does Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong seem to be aware of the fact that, once the Pharisees had obtained complete and unrestrained control over the religious affairs of the Jewish people (already before 70 AD), the invention of unbiblical customs and heresies proliferated at a staggering rate.

The proof is provided by a Jewish scholar and authority of the Talmud, Michael J. Rodkinson.

In his book "The History of the Talmud", published by New Talmud Publishing Company in 1903 in New York, Michael J. Rodkinson writes the following in volume I on page 7:

HEADING: CHAPTER II

SUB-TITLE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TALMUD DURING THE LAST CENTURY OF THE SECOND TEMPLE'S EXISTENCE ... (i.e. from 30 BC to 70 AD)

QUOTE: "After the triumph of Simon b. Shetah over the Sadducees, when he had finally cleared the Sanhedrin of them, and ONLY THE PHARISEES REMAINED THERE, the development of the Talmud progressed rapidly, for the number of the sages, the adherents, reverers, sanctifiers of the Talmud, increased greatly ..."

On page 9 of his work he continued to state:

"AS THE INTERPRETATION OF EVERY LETTER AND VOWEL POINT OF THE WRITTEN LAW HAD MULTIPLIED, AND LIBERTY HAD BEEN GIVEN TO EVERY LEARNED MAN TO CONSTRUE BIBLICAL TEXTS AT HIS PLEASURE, the differences of opinion multiplied ..."

Here we have it FREELY ADMITTED that those non-levitical Jewish leaders set about interpreting ALL of the Hebrew Scriptures "AT THEIR PLEASURE", with licence to construe any text as they pleased! This CHAOS of opinions is readily evident when one reads the Talmud, and Michael Rodkinson freely acknowledges this.

AND THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG BELIEVED WERE SUCH "STRICT STICKLERS" THAT THEY NEVER WOULD HAVE MADE ANY CHANGES TO THE CALENDAR!

Yet a Jewish scholar himself freely admits that they interpreted all of the Scriptures "at their pleasure", without any regard as to the real intent of God's instructions!

What credibility can we extend to religious leaders who felt they had the liberty "to construe biblical texts at their pleasure"? They were clearly hypocrites in the way they dealt with the Scriptures; yet they supposedly dealt with something not even recorded in the Bible (their calendar) with the utmost integrity?

Where do the supporters of the present Jewish calendar find the faith to place such confidence in the integrity of religious leaders to faithfully preserve something that had supposedly been handed down from Old Testament times (the secret rules of the calendar), when it is freely admitted that those same leaders interpreted all of the Scriptures to suit their own ends? These are the very leaders in whose steps Hillel II followed almost 300 years later. It didn't bother Hillel II one bit that he placed the Last Great Day a full week before the end of summer; he too was, after all, simply "construing biblical texts at his pleasure".

Next, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's claim that the present Jewish calendar has come down intact without change since 100 AD, that this is proved by history, IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE!

Where did he get his facts from? What are his historical sources? Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong makes a point in this letter that "Brother Dodd" wasn't very clear about his source material for wanting to change the date of the Passover. Yet Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong is equally unclear about where history supposedly proves that the present Jewish calendar has been without change since 100 AD. THE JEWS THEMSELVES don't claim that their present calendar goes back to 100 AD. The starting date of the present Jewish calendar proves beyond any doubts that the very earliest the present Jewish calendar could have come into existence is about 150 AD ... after the destruction of Jerusalem in the 130's AD.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's reasoning about the calendar not having changed during "those 30 years" (between 70 AD and 100 AD) is totally off the point. The real point is that SOMEWHERE between the time of Christ's ministry around 30 AD and the time of Hillel's fixed calendar in 359 AD major changes were introduced to the Jewish calendar. It is not the 30 years between 70 AD and 100 AD that are the issue, it is what happened between 70 AD and 358/9 AD that is the real issue.

Consider the parallel between the development of the Church and the development of the calendar. This isn't necessarily proof for anything, but it is interesting:

FOR THE CHURCH:

The author Jesse Lyman Hurlbut in his book "The Story of the Christian Church" calls the period just after the Book of Acts "the Age of Shadows". He wrote: "... of all the periods in the church's history, it is the one about which we know the least ... For fifty years after St. Paul's life A CURTAIN HANGS OVER THE CHURCH, THROUGH WHICH WE STRIVE VAINLY TO LOOK; and when at last it rises about 120 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church fathers, we find A CHURCH in many aspects VERY DIFFERENT from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul."

FOR THE CALENDAR: (a paraphrase of the above)

During the life of Jesus Christ and of the original apostles we find in use a calendar in which, as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself states, "the new moons were observed by the naked eye". No postponement rules existed in this calendar based on visual observations. And the Day of Atonement fell on both, Fridays and Sundays. Visual observations ensured that the year never started before the spring equinox, which automatically ensured that the Feast of Tabernacles never started before the autumn equinox. But after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD "a curtain hangs over the calendar, through which we strive vainly to look". When it at last rises, about 358 AD, with the fixed calendar of Hillel II "we find A CALENDAR in many respects VERY DIFFERENT from that in the days of Peter and Paul". It had sacrificed its link to reality by resorting to approximations, which in many cases were a day removed from reality; it had acquired 'postponement rules' which further removed it from reality, and it now sometimes started the year in the winter and required the Feast of Tabernacles to sometimes start in the summer.

To me there seems to be a parallel here.

Let's go back to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's letter.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong writes:

"In conclusion, unless God has preserved His sacred calendar thru the Jew, then WE DO NOT KNOW how to figure Passover or ANY of the holydays this year. For there is NO AUTHORITY for any other day."

This conclusion exposes Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's strong bias in favour of the Jewish calendar. It simply doesn't make sense for Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to in one place:

APPEAL TO THE WORLD ALMANAC AND THEN SAY: "God had the new moon observed by the naked eye and BY THIS METHOD the first day of THE FIRST MONTH BEGINS THE FOLLOWING SUNSET"!

And then in the next breath to say:

"UNLESS GOD HAS PRESERVED HIS SACRED CALENDAR THRU THE JEW, WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO FIGURE PASSOVER ..."!

QUESTION:

WHY do we need "the Jew" to tell us exactly which day should be the first day of the first month?

After all, at the end of his letter Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong CORRECTLY figured "the first day of the first month of the year" simply by looking up, IN THE WORLD ALMANAC, the time for the new moon as applied to Jerusalem. WHY couldn't he do the same thing for the SEVENTH month, look it up in the World Almanac and begin the seventh month with the sunset following that new moon? WHY could Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong do it for the FIRST month but not for the SEVENTH month? WHY could he do it for the year 1940 but not for any subsequent years? WHY?

ANOTHER QUESTION:

What if, upon checking with the World Almanac, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had found that the present Jewish calendar is two days out of step with the facts revealed by the Almanac? Would he have

EXPOSED this discrepancy or would he have just SILENTLY IGNORED it? What would he have done if, upon checking the World Almanac, he had found the Jewish calendar to be in disagreement with the facts? What would YOU do today, if you were in the same position?

Is it okay to use an Almanac to support the Jewish calendar, but unacceptable to use the same Almanac to show up the flaws in the Jewish calendar, flaws which are due to the calendar's adherence to Jewish "traditions"?

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's "UNLESS God has ..." argument is clearly without foundation. He himself and the men after him (i.e. Kenneth Herrmann and Dr. Hoeh) have listed sufficient points about a calendar from the Bible to be able to correctly determine ALL of the Holy Days for any given year. That is proved by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's appeal to the "World Almanac" to establish the first day of the year for 1940.

IF Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's argument, that without the Jewish calendar we simply don't know how to figure Passover or any other Holy Day, was really correct, THEN he simply could not have appealed to the "World Almanac" to determine the first day of the year. The very fact that he COULD go to an almanac to determine the first day of the year PROVES that he was really NOT "dependent" on the Jewish calendar for this information.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong continues in his article to show that different reference works, including Josephus, The Jewish Encylopedia, Hastings Bible Dictionary and The Encyclopaedia Britannica, present conflicting information about when the year should start. His conclusion therefore is that we can't trust any of them. He has presented these quotes for the express purpose of justifying rejecting ALL of these sources.

My comments to this are as follows:

1) About 13 years later Kenneth Herrmann clearly spelled out in his article that the year SHOULD start in the spring. So there wasn't any confusion in Kenneth Herrmann's mind about when the year really should start.

2) With all other research into OTHER SUBJECTS the Church has always approached "conflicting historical data" with the view to establishing WHICH ONE IS CORRECT! The Church in those situations never approaches such conflicting information with the goal to justify rejecting it ALL as wrong. A prime example is Dr. Hoeh's "Compendium of World History", where Dr. Hoeh has done a great deal of detective work to see how and why conflicting historical data can be reconciled.

3) Therefore, instead of REJECTING ALL the reports he had access to, why did Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong not attempt to establish which one of those reports (Josephus or Britannica or Hastings or the Jewish Encyclopedia) was right, by comparing them to what he could see in the Bible about when the year should start? He really had NOT made "an exhaustive study" of the calendar question at all!

4) Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong states that he himself found "in Britannica" that the year "ALWAYS began with the first new moon AFTER March 21st"! Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had in fact found THE CORRECT ANSWER HIMSELF! This is precisely correct, that the year should start with the new moon on or after the spring equinox!

5) After giving this correct answer, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong says that "profane history only contradicts itself" and that "there is no Bible authority for any of it". So why didn't he just COMPARE it to the biblical records? That would have shown him, as Kenneth Herrmann acknowledged in his article 13 years later, that the year SHOULD start in the spring.

6) For the record: there is no BIBLE authority for the Jewish calendar either! And while the Jewish calendar doesn't necessarily "only contradict ITSELF", it does quite clearly "contradict BIBLICAL requirements for the calendar". WHY did Mr. Armstrong not examine this more closely? And where does that leave the Jewish calendar?

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong then continues to say:

"The Catholics are the ones who have thought to CHANGE the Times. They say the paschal new moon this year is the one BEFORE March 21st, and figure Easter accordingly. The Jews say it is the one AFTER March 21st."

Here Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong uses "before and after" March 21st (spring equinox) as a criterion. The Catholics were clearly wrong and the Jews were clearly right in this instance. But what about those years where the Jews ALSO say the new moon BEFORE March 21st is the one to start the year with? What if THE JEWS want to start the year in the winter?

For example, in 1937 (3 years before this letter in 1940) the Jewish calendar started the year with March 13th (well before March 21st!), kept the Passover on March 26th, and the wavesheaf would have been required on March 28th. Why was this acceptable in 1937 when it was not acceptable in 1940? Is there a line of division somewhere between a Passover on March 23rd (the evening of March 22nd) which is NOT acceptable, but a Passover on March 26th (the evening of March 25th) which IS acceptable? WHY would there be a line between March 23rd and 26th? On what grounds could such a line be drawn?

Next Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong said:

"After thorough study of the Bible, of the Hebrew calendar, of history, and every angle, -- after going into the matter with all the Eugene brethren, and other brethren who have made a special study of this question, we have unanimously agreed that the Hebrew calendar has been preserved correct by the Jews."

There is a difference between saying:

"After thorough study ... WE HAVE UNANIMOUSLY AGREED THAT the Hebrew calendar has been preserved correct by the Jews" ...

And saying:

"After thorough study ... WE HAVE CONCLUSIVELY PROVED THAT the Hebrew calendar has been preserved correct by the Jews".

To "unanimously agree about something" is simply not the same as PROOF! Something isn't right simply because people "agree" that it is right. In this letter Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong has not presented any PROOF that the Hebrew calendar "has been preserved correct by the Jews".

CORRECT PROOF of faithful preservation would require the following steps:

1) SHOW exactly what God originally "gave".

2) EXAMINE all requirements for a calendar that are mentioned in the Bible.

3) EVALUATE the present Jewish calendar against all these biblical requirements.

4) DEMONSTRATE that all these biblical requirements are indeed met.

5) SHOW that what the Jews have today is indeed A PRESERVATION of something that already existed a long time ago.

The last paragraph of this article (before the calendar dates for 1940) shows quite clearly that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong didn't really understand the working of the present Jewish calendar at all. His attempt to use the new moon times published in the World Almanac in order to prove the start of the Jewish year correct is very naive! It is pure coincidence when the start of the 1st month and the 7th month in the Jewish calendar coincides with "first visibility" of the new crescent. An almanac with REAL new moon dates and times is actually the last thing anyone defending the present Jewish calendar would want to appeal to for support!

YET HIS UNDERLYING REASONING IN THIS REGARD WAS VERY SOUND!

We really SHOULD be able to expect a correct calendar to start the 1st month with the sunset after the invisible conjunction. That actually makes sense! And Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong thought that THIS is what the present Jewish calendar actually achieves. He didn't know that there is a difference between "the molad" and the real new moons, as recorded in almanacs. That is why he didn't hesitate to seek confirmation from data in an almanac. In this regard I myself also for many years believed exactly the same thing as Mr. Armstrong here believed. But my assumptions were wrong!

Note also the concluding sentence of the letter:

"Pentecost this year is JUNE 17th, sunset, until sunset June 18th, instead of June 12th as erroneously figured on our calendar printed three years ago."

THIS is the year when Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong switched from keeping Pentecost on Sivan 6th to always keeping it on a Monday. This is when he implemented HIS WRONG WAY of counting Pentecost, to always arrive at a Monday. This is when he didn't understand Leviticus 23:16, that "the morrow after the seventh Sabbath" must ALWAYS be a Sunday! It took another 34 years before he finally understood Leviticus 23:15-16 correctly. [This is meant as a factual observation.]

In 1940, June 12th was Sivan 6th, a Wednesday. The day June 18th was a TUESDAY! It is assumed that this is a typing mistake, that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong really meant "MONDAY, June 17th as the Day of Pentecost, and not "June 18th".

I don't mean to be critical of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong here, but there is A LESSON in this for all of us; and for the sake of that lesson I will expand on this a little bit.

From the time he first started to keep God's Holy Days in the late 1920's until he implemented the correct way of counting Pentecost in 1974, NEARLY 50 YEARS PASSED! WHY did it take Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong nearly 50 years to figure out the right way of counting for Pentecost? Yet the Scripture (Leviticus 23:15-16) is simple enough for most teenagers to figure out correctly for themselves. So what was the problem?

THE PROBLEM WAS: he approached the calendar question with FALSE ASSUMPTIONS! And those false assumptions simply BLINDED HIS MIND TO THE TRUTH!

Now the same thing happened to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong many times with other things as well, even as it has happened many times to all of us. That's just the way we are, and the way our minds work. We

are no different from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

Regarding Pentecost:

1) FIRST Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong took for granted that the Jews had all of the correct days for all of the Holy Days. Because God had used the Jews to preserve His "sacred" calendar, THEREFORE the Jews obviously had to know how God wants us to "count" for Pentecost. This assumption PREVENTED Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong from reading the Scripture for what it actually said! And this assumption lasted for over a decade, until this letter in 1940.

[Comment: Here is a quote from something Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in 1934, which shows his full acceptance of the Jewish calendar. In "The BULLETIN of the CHURCHES of GOD in Oregon, Vol. I. No. 12, dated April, 1934" the immediate sub-heading below the date reads:

"The BULLETIN is issued, the Lord willing, the first of each month. Address news or letters for the Bulletin to Herbert W. Armstrong, editor, Crow Stage, Eugene, Oregon."

The very first item in that "BULLETIN" was titled "LORD'S SUPPER HELD" and the brief statement below this reads:

"The most solemn and sacred event of the year was observed in taking the Lord's Supper on Thursday night, March 29th, calculated as the 14th Nisen, Hebrew calendar."

A similar statement was published in the "BULLETIN" of March 1935 under the title: "THE LORD'S SUPPER AND DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD ARE HERE!"

This quote illustrates that as early as April 1934 Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was fully accepting of the Jewish calendar. He didn't make any further detailed studies of the calendar until this issue arose that precipitated the "1940 GOOD NEWS letter".]

2) Only then did he see that we actually have to do some "COUNTING", implying that Pentecost would fall on different days of the third month, but always on the same day of the week.

3) But in coming to this new understanding, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong unfortunately only switched from one wrong assumption to another.

4) He simply ASSUMED that his personal understanding of the word "FROM" in Leviticus 23:15 was correct and was the only possible way to understand what God means by "count unto you FROM ...".

5) This assumption FORCED Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to interpret the Hebrew word for "SABBATH" to mean "WEEK" in the context of counting for Pentecost, even though the word "Sabbath" NEVER means "week" anywhere else in the Bible. There is a different Hebrew word that means "week".

6) This assumption again PREVENTED Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong from reading the Scripture at face value on its own merits. It forced him to assume that the word "Sabbath" actually has two different meanings RIGHT WITHIN THE SAME VERSE! Right in Leviticus 23:15 he had to assume that, while the first use of "Sabbath" refers to THE WEEKLY SABBATH, the second use of "Sabbath" SIMPLY HAD TO MEAN "WEEKS"! To uphold his own biased opinion, he was forced to attach a WRONG MEANING to the word "Sabbath". And for the next 34 years EVERYTHING depended upon maintaining this wrong meaning for the word "Sabbath".

[Comment: The Hebrew noun "shabbath" is formed from the Hebrew verb "shabath", which means "to rest". Thus the noun "shabbath" means "a rest day". It is totally illogical to attempt to attach the meaning "a week" to the Hebrew word that means "a rest day" ... since God CLEARLY commanded us: "six days shall you LABOUR AND DO ALL YOUR WORK". However, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's difficulty was also compounded by the fact that many translations, other than the King James Version, further confused the matter by incorrectly translating the Hebrew noun "shabbath" as "weeks", on the wrong assumption (on their part!) that the Jewish understanding of these instructions is correct. Nevertheless, his own wrong interpretation of how God wants us to count forced Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to also hold onto a wrong interpretation of the word "Sabbath" for another 34 years.]

7) Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's "exhaustive study" and his "thorough study of the Bible ... and every angle" also did not include looking into what THE HEBREW WORD translated as "from" in Leviticus 23:15 means. In his thorough study of the Bible Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was obviously limited by his inability to read Hebrew (this is not a criticism, I myself don't read Hebrew either!); thus he was limited to what he could find out from reference works like "Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible", etc.. And in Strong's Concordance the Hebrew word for "from" is simply not found. While the "Appendix to the Main Concordance" does list every occurrence of the word "from" and thus shows that this word appears two times in Leviticus 23:15, it gives the Greek preposition "apo" for New Testament occurrences of "from", but it does NOT give any Hebrew word for Old Testament occurrences of "from". Thus Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong had no readily available way to check out what this Hebrew word translated as "from" in Leviticus 23:15 really means. And in the absence of any further guidelines he simply applied his own understanding of "from" to the counting process for Pentecost.

There is another thing we can notice from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's handling of this change with counting Pentecost.

Until then the Church had been observing Pentecost on Sivan 6th, as do the Jews. In the process of this "exhaustive study" someone must have pointed out to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong that the determination of Pentecost really SHOULD involve some "counting". Had Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong of his own initiative, without any prompting, examined the question of how to count for Pentecost, it is likely that he would have offered some explanation for WHY he was changing the observance of Pentecost from Sivan 6th to a fixed day of the week (a Monday). The fact that he appended this information to the end of his whole article, devoting only one brief sentence to it, and without any explanation of any kind, seems to imply that someone else brought this matter to his attention. The fact that he then still got the date wrong (sunset June 17th till sunset June 18th was a Tuesday!) seems to further indicate that he himself was not the main one who had studied into Pentecost. What is clear from other writings is that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself was the one who came up with what the word "FROM" means; and this is something he vigorously defended for many years to come. He was still defending his way of understanding "from" even after the change to Sunday (for Pentecost) was made in 1974.

And while Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong made the change with Pentecost early in 1940, it was not till more than 3 years later, in June 1943, that he felt the need to "explain" the counting process for Pentecost to the Church.

Below I have reproduced the entire text (about 7 pages), without any alterations or changes from me, of "The GOOD NEWS Letter" dated June 8th, 1943. The whole letter is devoted to explaining Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's wrong way of counting Pentecost. The title he gave this letter is "HOW TO FIGURE PENTECOST".

Here is the complete letter.

The GOOD NEWS

LETTER

A personal letter to all the brethren of The

Churches of God, from your pastor, co-laborer,

and fellow-servant in Christ, Herbert W.

Armstrong, Box 111, Eugene.

----------Number 2 June 8th, 1943

HOW TO FIGURE PENTECOST

GREETINGS, Brethren! Next Monday, June 14th, is a very sacred annual SABBATH-day! It is the annual day of PENTECOST, or Festival of First Fruits. On that day we are commanded to cease our work, just as on the weekly Sabbath, and to assemble in holy convocation.

The Original PENTECOST

Notice Acts 1:1: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." They were ASSEMBLED! Why? And they were all with ONE ACCORD about it, not divided as to which day.

The word "Pentecost" is a GREEK word. It was not used in Old Testament times. It signifies "Fifty," because this day was determined by COUNTING fifty days FROM the morrow after the weekly abbath which falls during the days of unleavened bread. Literally, the Greek word "pentecost" means "fifty-count." Count fifty. Count fifty FROM a certain day. The day we count from is the morrow AFTER the Sabbath. The Sabbath we now call "Saturday." The morrow after Saturday is Sunday. Count one day FROM Sunday. Any little child would readily know it is Monday. Sunday is not one day FROM Sunday. Sunday is Sunday, and one day FROM Sunday is Monday. Seven days from Sunday is the following Sunday. Seven WEEKS from Sunday is the seventh Sunday. And the morrow after that seventh week is Monday. 49 days FROM Sunday is the seventh Sunday, and 50 days after, or counted FROM any Sunday always falls on a MONDAY. That is simple second-grade arithmetic. Yes, thank God, these things are not difficult; they are plain and simple; and they are revealed to BABES who are surrendered of heart and mind and willing to learn God's way, and hidden from the wise and the prudent.

In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the word "Pentecost" is not used. "Pentecost" is a Greek word, used only after the Jews of Palestine came to speak the common language of the time, Greek. Originally, in the Hebrew, this festival was called primarily by two names, "Feast of FIRST FRUITS," and "FEAST OF WEEKS," because it is COUNTED by numbering seven WEEKS from the morrow after the Sabbath, and then adding one day to make fifty. Hence, in the Hebrew, the festival was named "Feast of WEEKS," signifying seven WEEKS were counted from a Sunday, to the morrow after that seventh week, or to a Monday; while in the New Testament it was named Pentecost, meaning "count FIFTY" days from a Sunday, (morrow after the Sabbath), to a MONDAY. Thus the method of counting is embodied into the very NAME of the festival, both in Hebrew and Greek---both in Old Testament and New. And if it is counted any other way, we nullify the very NAME of the festival. It is IMPORTANT that we figure the RIGHT DAY!

Suppose the disciples and the "Jews, devout men out of every nation, had figured only 49 days, by

counting the first Sunday as one day FROM Sunday -- or had figured to the morrow after seven SATURDAYS instead of seven WEEKS numbered from a Sunday, as we are SO PLAINLY directed? They would have assembled, NOT on the day of Pentecost at all, but on a PAGAN SUNDAY, and they would have waited all day IN VAIN -- and WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT. Then they would have gone away, thinking the day had passed, and on the following day, which was the TRUE "Feast of WEEKS," the Holy Spirit would have come, but they would not have been there to receive God's most precious Gift! Yes, it is IMPORTANT we figure the right day.

The MEANING of "Pentecost."

Notice, first, "Pentecost" is not "an upper room" as some seem to believe. It is not an experience. The Scripture does not say "When the EXPERIENCE of Pentecost came," it says "when the DAY OF PENTECOST was fully come." Pentecost is a DAY. The day before, or the day after, is not Pentecost -- is not the FIFTIETH day -- is not the festival of WEEKS.

"Pentecost" is one of the annual Sabbaths, or Holydays OF THE LORD (not of Moses), which the Eternal God set apart for His people FOREVER. If those who were converted into the New Testament CHURCH had not been ASSEMBLED, observing that day, some 50 days after Christ had nailed all things done away to His Cross, they would not have received the Holy Spirit -- the New Testament Church would not have started!

Notice Exodus 23:14-16: "Three times thou shalt keep a east unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread ... and the feast of harvest, the FIRSTFRUITS of thy labors, which thou has sown in the field; and the feast of INGATHERING, which is in the end of the year."

God gave to His CHURCH, at the time when the Church was first called, while His people were still in Egypt, seven annual holydays to picture to the Church GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION, which the Church was to proclaim. The Church, both of Old and New Testaments, was to be used as God's instrumentality in carrying out His PLAN. The holydays were given to keep the Church in the true knowledge and understanding of the Plan the Church was to be used in carrying out.

As the redemptive Plan BEGINS with the crucified Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, so the annual festive season began with the Passover, picturing the Crucifixion. Once we repent of sin, and turn to Jesus Christ as sin-bearer and personal Saviour, with FAITH in His shed blood for the remission of sins, we are JUSTIFIED. But justification has only to do with a guilty PAST. We must then QUIT sinning -- put sin COMPLETELY out of our ives. And this is pictured to us by the SEVEN DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD which follow the Passover. On the 14th day of the first month, God's sacred calendar (month called Abib, or Nisen), is the Passover. And in the 15th day of this same month is the FESTIVAL, for seven days. The first and last of these seven days are HOLY days -- annual Sabbaths. The days of unleavened bread remind us annually we are to put sin COMPLETELY out of our lives, by keeping God's Commandments.

But the Plan cannot stop there. We are justified -- reconciled to God -- by the DEATH of His Son, but we are SAVED, not by His death, but by His LIFE (Rom. 5:10). If Christ remained dead, we could never be saved. For "if Christ be not risen, ... your faith is also vain ... And IF Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are PERISHED." (I Cor. 15:14-18).

And so, during these seven days of unleavened bread, the Eternal commanded: "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he hall wave the sheaf before the Eternal, to be accepted for you: on the MORROW AFTER THE SABBATH the priest shall wave it." (Lev. 23: 0-11).

God used the material food harvest to picture the harvest of SOULS. This was the season of the early GRAIN harvest. This first sheaf of grain pictured the RISEN CHRIST. It had to be accepted BY THE ETERNAL for them -- as Christ had to be accepted of God FOR US. It was ON he morrow after the Sabbath -- the weekly Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread -- that the risen Christ had to be presented to God, to be accepted of Him, for us. It was on this sunday morning -- the day after the weekly Sabbath -- that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene. When she recognized Him, she would run forward and embraced Him for joy. But Jesus restrained her. "Touch me not," He said, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father." And the angel instructed Mary, "Go your way, tell His disciples and Peter He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you." (John 20:17; and Mark 16:7). The same evening Jesus met with them, and then they could touch Him. He was the antetypical Wave Sheaf, and on that Sunday, the morrow after the Sabbath, He was accepted FOR THEM of God. Thus the wave-sheaf pictured the RESURRECTED Christ.

Now notice verse 14, Lev. 23: "And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day." The wave-sheaf was the first sheaf of grain cut. None could be harvested or used UNTIL that first wave-sheaf had been accepted of the Eternal. Likewise he first harvest of souls could not even begin until Christ, first of the first-fruits, had been resurrected and accepted of God. Until then the Holy Spirit could not come -- he New Testament spirit-filled Church could not START. (See John 7:37-39; and 16:7).

Counting Pentecost

Continue now Leviticus 23: "And ye shall COUNT ..." (verse 15). The date of the next annual holy day is determined by COUNTING. We ought to be able to COUNT straight. The directions are plain and simple: ... ye shall COUNT unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering ..."

For almost 1900 years, according to historic records, there has been dispute as to which day to count FROM. Josephus, the Jewish historian who wrote about 70 A.D., shows that in his day most of the Jews counted FROM the annual Sabbath -- the FIRST holyday, Abib 15th. Some counted from the last annual Sabbath, Abib 21. The Jews today count FROM the day they call Passover, which is not Passover at all but Abib 15, the first annual holyday. They do not count from the morrow AFTER that day, but from Abib 16. The Sadducees and another Jewish sect, the Samaritans, counted from the day after the weekly Sabbath occurring during the days of unleavened bread. The Samaritans are the ONLY sect that have continued to observe all these festivals down to the present day exactly as in the days of Moses. They still sacrifice and roast the paschal lamb. They have kept up all these rites continuously without a break. They are the ONLY people who have continued these rites exactly as God originally gave them to the Israelites under the Levitical priesthood of the Old Covenant. hey have NEVER MADE ANY CHANGE in their doctrines or manner of observing the holy days. They use the same calendar -- the original sacred calendar -- that is today called "the Jewish calendar." They kill the Passover lamb between sunset and dark, the night of the 14th Abib. They roast and eat it that same night. They observe the FEAST the following night, same as all Jews, beginning of the 15th. THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO FIGURE PENTECOST FROM THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING THE WEEKLY SABBATH OCCURRING DURING THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD -- just as God originally gave it to the people thru Moses!

Jesus, the great Antetypical Lamb, and after His resurrection, the Antetypical Wave-sheaf, was presented before and accepted of God on the morrow after the WEEKLY Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread, A.D. 31. That is the day we now call Sunday. He was in His grave on the morrow after the annual Sabbath, Abib 16th. So the fulfillment of the type ought to set us straight beyond doubt as to which day to count FROM. We count FROM the day following the weekly Sabbath -- always FROM

a Sunday.

Making it PLAIN!

Let us get that point fixed plainly in mind. we count in order to determine which day is Pentecost. Can we COUNT? We count FROM a Sunday, always. The particular Sunday which follows the weekly Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread.

This particular year Passover was the eve of April 19th -- that is, after sunset Sunday April 18th. The days of unleavened bread were April 20th to 26th inclusive (each day beginning the previous sunset). The weekly Sabbath DURING these days was April 24th. The morrow AFTER the Sabbath was Sunday April 25th -- the day on which the wave-sheaf would have been waved.

Now we have the day to count FROM -- Sunday April 25th. No one should get mixed up in counting 50 days FROM a definite day.

"And ye shall count unto you FROM the morrow after the Sabbath, ... seven sabbaths (weeks) shall be complete, even to the morrow after the seventh sabbath (week) shall ye number FIFTY DAYS." (Lev. 23:15).

Those who have Miscounted Pentecost have done so thru one or more of three errors. Error number one is assuming that the word "Sabbaths" means always and only SATURDAYS -- that is, seventh day of the week. Anyone who understands Hebrew knows the Hebrew word Sabbath, or "shabbaths" as it is in this text, has also the meaning of any PERIOD of seven days, or WEEKS. The Hebrew word "Sabbath" means "rest," "cessation," "holy day" -- as, for instance, all seven annual holydays are SABBATHS, and they are not SATURDAYS; it means also "seven" or period of seven days, or week, and it means also THE seventh DAY of each week.

For instance, the expression first day of the WEEK occurs in eight places in the New Testament. Tho written in the Greek language, God inspired the writing THRU Hebrews, and in every one of these eight places the GREEK word for "week" was not used -- because he Jews always used the word "SABBATH" to express "WEEK." In every one of those eight places the expression is "shabbathon," literally "sabbaths," or "first into the sabbaths."

From the Dictionary of the Bible by Hastings, you'll find the root (of the Heb. "sabbath") means to desist, cease, -- the doubled "b" having an intensive force and implying complete cessation, hence, seven. To say that the word "sabbath" must mean the equivalent of what is today called "Saturday" ALONE, without any other meaning, is simply to express rank ignorance. The ROOT of the word signifies COMPLETE cessation, and since SEVEN is God's number denoting completeness, the number seven is connected with the Hebrew "shabbaths." It means a period of SEVEN days -- ANY period of seven days, or, as we say in English "WEEKS," as well as the seventh day of each week. It is so used elsewhere in the Bible.

The Moffatt translation settles it. Listen: "From the day after the sabbath, the day you bring the sheaf of the waved offering, you shall count SEVEN FULL WEEKS." Not seven SATURDAYS -- seven full WEEKS. They are counted FROM a Sunday. Now if you count your FIRST week to the following SATURDAY, you do not count a FULL week, but only six days, and the instruction is plain -- seven FULL weeks FROM a Sunday, and seven FULL weeks from a Sunday brings you to a Sunday seven weeks later. Then we count to the morrow AFTER that seventh full WEEK, or a MONDAY, making FIFTY DAYS rom the Sunday where we begin counting.

Now suppose this meant seven SATURDAYS, and to the morrow after the seventh Saturday. This would

be ONLY 49 DAYS from the day we count from. It would not be COMPLETE, and the text explicitly commands us to count seven weeks COMPLETE, to a total of FIFTY DAYS from a Sunday. Notice, "FROM the morrow after the Sabbath ...."shall ye number FIFTY DAYS." Those who count seven SATURDAYS instead of seven FULL WEEKS as the Bible says, are not counting FIFTY DAYS (Pentecost) but ONLY FORTY-NINE DAYS. And the 49th day is NOT Pentecost, and those who observe it do NOT observe Pentecost, no matter how well-meaning their intentions, for PENTECOST means FIFTY-count; that is, COUNT FIFTY, not count 49! Now let us PROVE that this word "shabbath" as it is in the original Hebrew means WEEKS here, and not "SATURDAYS." The same identical Hebrew word is used in Lev. 25:8,: "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years: and the space of seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years." There it is FIGURED OUT. It does not mean SATURDAYS -- it means PERIOD OF SEVEN -- seven TIMES SEVEN. and it figures to FORTY NINE. Now counting from Sunday April 25th, seven sabbaths complete are FORTY NINE DAYS, and we count "even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath ... FIFTY DAYS," and this is a MONDAY. If you count it seven SATURDAYS you do not have 49 days, but 48. Seven Saturdays after Sunday April 25th brings you to Saturday June 12, exactly 48 days. The text quoted above FIGURES it for us, and this expression figures out to FORTY NINE, not 48. Then we add one day to make it FIFTY.

You'll find the same identical word used in the same identical meaning in Lev. 25:8, 26:34, 43 and II Chron. 36:21. In all these places it means PERIOD OF SEVEN, or multiply by seven, not seven SATURDAYS.

We are also instructed how to count Pentecost in Deut. 16:9. "Seven WEEKS (not Saturdays) shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the FEAST OF WEEKS unto the Lord thy God." Now here a DIFFERENT Hebrew word is used -- "shabuah", meaning "sevened, i.e., a WEEK. It is another derivation from the Hebrew "Shabbath." Here, even in the King James translation, we are told to count SEVEN WEEKS, not seven Saturdays, FROM the day the first sheaf was cut and waved -- from a Sunday.

Again from the Bible Dictionary: "PENTECOST: The term, adopted from the Greek, means 'fiftieth,' and was applied by Greek- speaking Jews to the second of the three chief Hebrew feasts, because it fell on the fiftieth day AFTER the offering of the barley-sheaf during the Feast of Unleavened Bread." Again, "The Feast of WEEKS came on the 50th day after the barley sheaf was waved, (i.e., the day AFTER the completion of seven WEEKS). Hence we read, (Jer. 5:24) of the 'appointed weeks of harvest.'" There has been in the past a dispute as to WHICH Sabbath, weekly or annual, the wave-sheaf day followed to count FROM, but never as to HOW TO COUNT THE FIFTY DAYS.

Suppose you had borrowed some money. We are all in agreement as to which day we count FROM -- we count fifty days FROM Sunday April 25th. The problem, then, is how to COUNT fifty days. Suppose that on April 25th you had borrowed $1,000 at the bank. You don't want to pay it back a day too soon. You would pay it back ON the day that is PENTECOST, if you borrowed it for FIFTY DAYS.

I have just gone to the bank -- the First National of Eugene. I asked if I had borrowed a thousand dollars on April 25th payable 50 days from date, WHEN I would be expected to pay it. I asked, "Which day do you count as number one, the day you figure from, that is April 25th, or the day following?" "Why," answered the banker, "your note would not be one day old the day it is made. It is not one day old until the day following. You number 'ONE' the day AFTER you borrow the money. You are not a year old the day you are born. You are not a year old until one year AFTER you are born. We have people coming in here almost every day confused on that point," he added, "but when I asked them how they count how old they are, they usually see it. But come back here. We figure when notes are due on our Meilicke Calculating machine. See, I set it here at Sunday, April 25th. Now I set it over here at 50 days. And right here the machine tells you which is the 50th day -- see, it is June 14th. That machine can't figure it

wrong." And, if YOU, dear brethren, are confused or in doubt as to how to count 50 days FROM SUNDAY April 25th, go into the bank and ask them to let you see the calculating machine figure it for you. That ought to settle the matter and convince all who are willing to receive the TRUTH!

In conclusion, let me apologize for not having been able to get this News-LETTER out sooner. We are overloaded with work at the office. I have to be away most of the time. Study this carefully if you are in doubt. And let us all ASSEMBLE with one accord on next Monday, June 14th, the 50th day, PENTECOST, as we are commanded, and God bless you all. With love,

Your pastor, Herbert W. Armstrong

THE END OF MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG'S "GOOD NEWS LETTER"!

Here are some comments on the above letter.

1) In 1974 Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong finally accepted that his way of counting was wrong, that the Hebrew word translated as "from" really means "beginning with"; it refers to INCLUSIVE counting. Since 1974 the Church has understood that Pentecost does indeed fall on a Sunday!

2) This means that ALL of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's arguments about trying to prove that the Hebrew word "shabbath" somehow meant "week" were WRONG! Now, with Pentecost falling on a Sunday, it should be EASY to understand that in Leviticus 23:15-16 the word "shabbath" does indeed refer to the weekly Sabbath, which we know as "Saturday".

3) However, notice HOW CONVINCING all of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's arguments about "shabbath" somehow supposedly also meaning "a period of seven days" can sound, IF WE ACCEPT HIS INCORRECT PREMISE THAT THE WORD "FROM" IMPLIES EXCLUSIVE COUNTING!

The point is: Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong accepted a wrong premise and on that wrong premise he built a host of arguments which can appear to be quite sound and convincing! They were "convincing enough" to hold out for another 31 years before the flaws were finally exposed.

4) So the point in this Pentecost counting exercise is this:

It would have been a total waste of time to focus on each one of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's wrong arguments put forward in support of the Jewish calendar. He would simply have come up with MORE NEW arguments to support his way of counting.

THE ONLY WAY to sort out the problem with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's wrong way of counting was to EXAMINE HIS MAIN PREMISE, THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH HE HAD BUILT HIS WHOLE EXPLANATION! [That's a point I learned from Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong himself, the way he dealt with the subject of evolution!]

And Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's whole explanation hinges on, and depends on, HIS WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THE WORD "FROM" IN LEVITICUS 23:15! Everything else was only peripheral. When it became clear that in the Hebrew text the word used refers to "counting BEGINNING WITH", then ALL of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's arguments in support of a Monday counting were shown to be invalid and inappropriate, irrespective of how many translations render "shabbath" as "weeks" in the passage concerned! The trunk of the tree was really: How did GOD want us to count? What was GOD telling us with the word translated into English as "from"?

Now I believe that there is a lesson for us in this regarding the issue over the Jewish calendar, which we

face today. That lesson includes understanding:

1) You can have very many "convincing arguments" for either side of the question. Those "convincing arguments" don't necessarily lead to the right answer; witness Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's convincing arguments that remained convincing for another 30 years, and even "convinced" such men as Dr. Hoeh and Kenneth Herrmann for a number of years.

2) The real key is TO CORRECTLY IDENTIFY THE PREMISE ON WHICH EVERYTHING IS BUILT, AND BESIDES WHICH ALL OTHER ARGUMENTS ARE ONLY "PERIPHERAL"!

3) With our "calendar question" the foundational premise on which EVERYTHING ELSE hinges, the real trunk of the tree, is: THE CLAIM THAT THE ORACLES OF GOD IN ROMANS 3:2 SIMPLY MUST INCLUDE 'THE SACRED CALENDAR'! Every other argument presented in support of the Jewish calendar is immaterial and of no consequence and of no real value! And, like some of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's arguments in support of a Monday Pentecost, they may even sound very convincing on their own, but they nevertheless are built on that assumed premise that "the oracles of God" must refer to "the calendar"!

4) And so the real problem with the Jewish calendar is that THIS FOUNDATIONAL PREMISE IS NEVER PROVED! IT IS ALWAYS ONLY ASSERTED! SOME OTHER PERIPHERAL POINTS MAY BE PRESENTED AS "PROOF", BUT THE FOUNDATIONAL PREMISE OF ROMANS 3:2 APPLYING TO THE CALENDAR IS NEVER PROVED! WHY IS IT THAT THIS MOST BASIC FOUNDATION IN THE WHOLE QUESTION SHOULD BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT ANY REAL PROOF?

Why should we accept this basic and foundational premise with a blind faith, a faith that refuses to even look at all the evidence that contradicts what this blind faith desperately wants to believe?

Even after changing the observance of Pentecost in 1974 from a Monday to a Sunday Mr. Armstrong NEVER really accepted that HIS WAY of understanding the word "from" was wrong! He continued to justify that HIS UNDERSTANDING of "from" was correct, but that THE TRANSLATORS HAD MADE A MISTAKE when they rendered the Hebrew word into English as "from"; he insisted that they should have rendered it as "BEGINNING WITH".

The point is: He couldn't really accept that HIS WAY OF COUNTING had been the real problem for 34 years.

Similarly: those who defend the Jewish calendar don't really accept that THEIR WAY OF INTERPRETING THE TERM "THE ORACLES OF GOD" IS THE REAL STUMBLING BLOCK TO EVEN HONESTLY ACKNOWLEDGING ALL THE VERY REAL PROBLEMS WITH THE PRESENT JEWISH CALENDAR!

Well, now you have Mr. Armstrong's original writings, from 1940 and 1943, about the calendar and about Pentecost.

Frank W. Nelte