

HERBERT ARMSTRONG'S LETTER TO NEWLY BAPTISED MEMBERS

GREETINGS! newly baptised brethren in Christ Jesus:

There is joy and rejoicing among the angels in heaven over your repentance and having been begotten to a lively hope as a child of God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

And there is new joy in the hearts of ALL our true brethren and co-workers in Christ over your recent conversion from the desires and will of the flesh and the ways and customs of the world, to the Government of God in your life now, that you may have reward in His Kingdom at the coming of Christ, in the world tomorrow!

You have entered upon a new life--a life of great happiness and joy--a life to continue FOREVER--yet, in this present evil world it will not be an easy life.

As a matter of fact, you have left behind the "easy way"--the popular, broad road that leads to destruction. You have passed the crossroads and turned off onto the narrow, rutty, bumpy, rocky and HARD and DIFFICULT road that very few people in this world ever are willing to enter--but that leads to SUCCESS, to USEFULNESS, to HAPPINESS, JOY and ETERNAL LIFE.

It leads to rewards--not of idleness and ease, but to usefulness and service and accomplishment and success--so great that I know your mind can't possibly grasp it, now, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY THE PRICE!

It won't come easy! All your temptations, trials, persecutions and hardships will come from other people--or from the devil--or from the consequences of sin, which means violations of God's laws and ways. You must remember you still have to live IN a world organised and living in disregard of God's laws--a world governed by the sway of Satan, and according to the impulses of pride and vanity, the lusts of the flesh and the greed and tempers of human nature.

If you were still OF this world, the world would love its own. But because you have renounced this world and its way, and are no longer OF it, the world will hate you, persecute you, turn against you, even as it hated and persecuted your Saviour before you.

"My PEACE I give unto you...that my JOY might remain in you, and that your BY might be full," said Jesus (John 14:27, 15:11). "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have PEACE. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

You will meet many afflictions--trials, tests, troubles--even more than before. But, if you trust in Him, the Eternal will deliver you out of them ALL (Ps. 34:19). ALL who will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution (II Tim. 3:12).

But WHY? Because God has called you to surrender your life to HIM--to GIVE your life into HIS HANDS--that He may transform you into a perfect, holy, righteous CHARACTER. God is CREATOR!

And now, with your consent, according to your own free will, you have placed yourself in His hands to CHANGE you--to CREATE out of you the supreme masterpiece of all His creation!

And CHARACTER means SELF-DIRECTION, WITH GOD'S HELP, INTO GOD'S WAY OF LIFE. You'll find it is a new and different way of life from the way you have lived up to now. It means SELF-DENIAL! It means SELFDISCIPLINE! It means resisting all that is evil or wrong in your nature. It means breaking up wrong habits--rooting them out of your life--and instilling into your life NEW habits--and making these newer right ways fixed HABIT.

This is not easy. It takes WILLPOWER. It requires DETERMINATION.

Besides all this, God will permit trials and tests to come upon you--severe problems. He will permit CIRCUMSTANCES to drive you to HIM for HELP--for deliverance! You may soon think no one in the world is troubled like you are. You will begin to wonder why you have greater trouble to face than anyone else on earth--not realising that all other real Christians are going through the same tests! Perhaps closest relatives will turn against you, probably because of the Word of God--the TRUTH you have embraced and started to live.

But, if you learn the lesson of FAITH--and if you have PATIENCE--you may KNOW that you will be delivered out of every trouble that comes up. God has PROMISED to deliver you from every trial--if you obey and trust Him. You see, you are now His very own child--actually begotten of Him just as much as you were begotten of your human father.

God gave you the precious gift of His Holy Spirit--placed His Spirit within you to renew your mind, give you a sounder, more understanding mind, fill you with His love, faith, patience, power, goodness --His own character.

In short, you became an actual begotten SON--or daughter--of GOD. Not merely a creature or being He created--but His very own child, actually begotten of Him by His seed, so to speak--His SPIRIT, entering within you. He is now your FATHER! Not figuratively, but actually--REALLY!

Now you can go to Him just as any child can go to his father, for counsel and advice, for wisdom, for direction, for HELP in any time of need. Would a good human father deny his own child any good thing the child might really need? Neither will your heavenly Father deny you anything that is really for your good.

If a human father heard the screams of his child, ran and found his child imprisoned in a burning building, would he break inside and rescue his child from danger? Your heavenly Father has given you His written PROMISE to deliver you from every danger, trouble or trial--if you call on Him, obey Him and RELY Him!

Since you are now a real begotten child of God--now one of the FAMILY of God, which is His true Church--you are one of His heirs. Angels are not sons, but servants. And a servant is not an heir like a son. You are now a coheir with Christ, to inherit, with Him, ALL THINGS--eternal life, this earth as an everlasting possession, eternal happiness and joy!

Think of what that means! But we are now only heirs--only begotten sons. And just as it was necessary for us to grow physically from the time we were begotten in our mothers' wombs until we developed ready to be born, finally separated from the dependence on the mother for nourishment and sustenance, and coming into individual and separate existence, so the begotten spiritual infant must grow and develop spiritually, being fed the spiritual food, the Word of God, by the mother of us all, the true Church, until, at the coming of Christ, we shall be CHANGED, finally BORN of God, to have eternal life inherent in ourselves, and to be actual INHERITORS and POSSESSORS of the wonderful Kingdom of God!

In order to GROW in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord (II Pet. 3:18)--in order to develop spiritually and overcome, and have perfected in you the CHARACTER of God ready to be fully BORN of God--you must do two things daily without fail!

You must not only read, but eagerly, earnestly STUDY the Word of God to learn how to live--you must live according to God's teachings in His Bible--you must make it your guide for everything you do. In this way, God talks to you!

But you must also talk to Him! You must go to a private place, alone with God, and have long talks with Him--yes, EVERY DAY! Unburden your heart to Him. Take all your problems, your interests, your plans, your troubles to Him. Talk over everything with Him, continually. Then, even when going about your work--when walking down the street--when driving your car, or wherever you are or whatever you do, talk with God as you work, or as you drive or walk along. Go to a private place, and kneel in prayer (on both knees) as often as you can, and at least once every day. But talk with God often in between. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!

Keep close to Him. You can't afford to be without the SECURITY of His constant guidance and protection.

Herbert W Armstrong