

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

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This monthly religious journal is published for the benefit of the Church of God universally. It is our supreme purpose to reach the world for Christ through the printed page. Our burden is to reveal the truth of God's Word to all mankind, to expose sin and error, war against apostasy, and to eradicate the longstanding traditions of men that have no biblical foundations.

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

- A personal God (John 4:24)
- A divine Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- An infallibly inspired Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Salvation from sin (Matt. 1:21)
- The new birth (John 3:3, 5-7)
- A holy life (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:12)
- Sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23)
- Unity of God's people (John 17:21, Eph. 4)
- Divine, physical healing (James 5:14-16)
- The ordinances (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13; 1 Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (1 John 5:7, 8)

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

- Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
- The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13; John 17:11)

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Guest Editorial

The Truth Concerning the One Thousand Year Reign

The Angel The Key and the Chain

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

This passage of Scripture is one of the most misapplied, misconstrued texts of the entire the Book of Revelation. By the help of God, we want to rightly divide the Word and study the truth concerning the one thousand year reign.

Many truths are incorporated in these verses, but we want to identify who the writer was speaking of and what actually occurred in this passage. The latter portion of verse 4 says, ". . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." We must identify who "they" are and see by the Bible when this thousand years actually occurred.

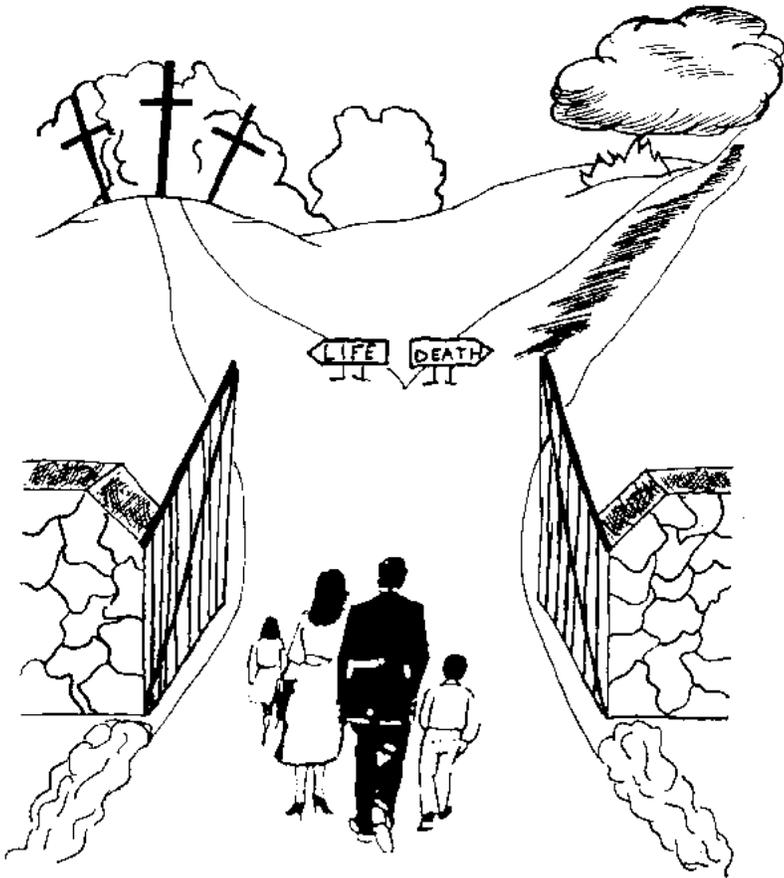
Those of the dispensational

persuasion teach that this is yet a future event. The noted dispensational writer, the late Dr. John R. Rice, in his commentary on the Book of Revelation commented on this passage and stated, "The beginning of the kingdom age, the millennial reign of Christ on earth . . ." The word *millennium* does not appear anywhere in the Scriptures. When we speak of dispensational advocates, we refer to them in that manner because they are of the persuasion that human history is divided into seven dispensations and that we are in the sixth dispensation, the church age, that it will be followed by the seventh dispensation, which they teach is the kingdom age. However, Jesus clearly stated in Luke 16:16, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." You certainly cannot press into something that does not exist. Our Scripture text is the seed bed for the teaching of this supposed one thousand year millennial reign. Let us examine these verses by the help of God to see what truth is conveyed in these verses.

In the Book of Revelation we must recognize that the nature of the Revelation language is not as many men construe it to be. Many read it merely at face value. Revelation 1:1 declares, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it." This lets you know the manner in which He conveys these truths: he said they are *signified*. The word *signified* means "revealed by signs." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines the word *sign* as "a symbol." Therefore, the nature of the language of the Revelation is symbolic.

Let us look at our Scripture text and the symbols employed there to see what they actually convey. The

[continued on page 24]



Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Payday Is Coming

Brother Roger L. Decker

The High Cost of Sin

Sin has wages, and those wages can amount to quite a bit. The pleasure and profit of sin are not called *fruit*, but rather wages. A sinful life might seem to be inviting and pleasant, but it brings bitterness in the end. The patriarch Job said in Job 4:8, "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same."

There is a high cost to sin. Often it is a hidden cost that people do not really consider when they are partaking of it. In the Bible we find that the first man born of a woman grew up and became a murderer, and he was a reviler of God. Cain had to pay a

high cost for his sin. We read in Jude, verse 11, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain-saying of Core." Cain's way was the way of an apostate.

I want you to consider the high cost of sin, and do not forget that a payday is coming. You may rebel against the Word of God and say all kinds of things against it, but a payday is coming. If you sow wickedness, you will not reap good things, and you will not reap blessings from God. You will reap exactly what you have sown.

Genesis 4:1-8 reads: "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she

conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

"And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and

Honor the Lord With the Firstfruits

if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

In these verses of Scripture we read of how deceiving sin is. Verse 3 says that Cain brought God an offering in the process of time. He was a tiller of the ground, and Abel was a keeper of the sheep. Cain was not expected to bring the same offering as Abel. It was not *what* he brought, but it was *when* he brought it. God must be first.

Sin Is Deceptive

Cain thought he could change the way of the Lord and get by. Again, verses 4-5 read: "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."

What was the difference between Cain and Abel? Hebrews 11:4 reads, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." The Hebrew writer let us know that Abel came by faith, but Cain came by duty. Cain knew that he *had* to bring an offering; that is the reason he was in no hurry. On the other hand, Abel came by faith; he believed in God and kept God first in his life. Those who live by faith keep God first in their lives. The Lord does not have respect unto those who offer up offerings to Him out of duty. It is not what you give, but how you approach God.

Cain went to God in the process of time, or out of duty, and sin lay at the door. The Hebrew writer made it plain that Abel came by faith. Friend, that is the only way you can go to God. Hebrews 11:6 reads, "But with-

out faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Abel went to God by faith. He wanted to make sure that God got the first fruits, that God was first above everything else.

God must be kept first. Sin will make you think it does not really matter: just as long as you put God in there somewhere, you will be all right. Sin is deceptive. The Bible says that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. There is a real spirit to rebellion. What happens when one is in witchcraft? It is as if one is in a trance and is not really himself; that one is under a spell. That is just the way one is who is in rebellion. Friend, if you become rebellious, you are going to be as one who is under a spell. The next thing you know, you will find that iniquity is as idolatry, and self will be on the throne of your heart. You will idolize yourself, and you will be under a spell while you are in that condition. All you will think about is yourself. I repeat, rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. You will not even realize why you do the things you do. You will only know that you want to do those things.

There is great danger in fooling around with the Truth. Some people actually feel that somewhere, somehow, somehow God will have something special for them. They think when they get through with all their fooling around, they will get straightened out and everything will be all right. Do you remember the words of Job that you read in the beginning of this message? Job stated in Job 4:8, "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." You will not reap good things when you have been living a wicked life and plowing iniquity, or putting wrong seed in the ground. You should not think that when that seed comes up, everything will be all right, because that is not so. This is the deception that is in sin. What is the deception? It makes you think you are not going to reap what you sow.

I want to emphasize to you that God *must* be first. Jesus instructed in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Proverbs 3:9 says, "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase." The word *firstfruits* means "first in place, time, and order; the first part." When sin begins to work, it works in deceit and darkness to make you think it does not really matter whether God is first.

As time goes on and materialism gets stronger, some people argue more about the standard of God's Word. Why? Old humanistic ideas come in, and people argue about every part of the standard. Many argue about the Bible standard concerning the hair. You should not get hung up on humanistic thoughts. What a barber or a hairdresser might say is not important. The thing that should be most important to the child of God is what God has to say about the matter in the Scriptures.

The Bible also teaches that the Christian is to wear modest apparel. You should not stick up for men wearing shorts when they mow the yard or play basketball. You need to read what the Scriptures say. Some say, "It does not make any difference what you wear. All that matters is what is on the inside. The outside does not have anything to do with it." Friend, you need to rightly divide the Word of Truth. First Samuel 16:7 states, "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." What does man see? He cannot see the heart; he sees only the outside. What is there about you on the outside that would make man want God since he cannot see your heart? If you dress like Jezebel, that will not draw anyone to Christ. On the other hand,

people do begin to inquire when you dress saintly, or godly.

If you think that it does not make any difference how you dress, let me illustrate the importance of having a dress standard. Suppose you are sitting on an airplane ready for take off, and suddenly the flight attendant says, "The pilot will be boarding in just a moment." Then the pilot boards, and he has long hair and blue jeans on and says, "Hi, ya! I'm your pilot. We'll be cruisin' at, oh, I don't know, maybe thirty or forty thousand feet. I'm a pilot, even though I don't dress like one. I've got a uniform at home somewhere." Do not tell me that you would sit in that seat. Undoubtedly, you would unbuckle the seat belt and exit the plane so that you could travel on an airline where the pilot looks as a pilot should look.

Suppose you were to go to a professional baseball game and part of the players walked on the field wearing their uniforms and some were dressed in blue jeans. Then suppose an announcement comes over the public address system, stating, "The players have uniforms, but they didn't want to wear them today. They left them in their lockers." You would expect them to wear their uniforms. Likewise, God expects His people to dress modestly. Child of God, you should be modest at home, at church, and everywhere else you go.

The longer time goes on, the more difficult it will be for you to stand for what is right. I repeat, sin is deceiving. There will always be people around who are rebellious and who could care less about the Bible standard. They may give you many reasons why they think dressing modestly is unnecessary. Nevertheless, you should tell them, "The Word of God requires that saints of God wear modest apparel." When you dress modestly, you will not wear sleeves so short that when you raise your arm, others can see your armpit or your undergarments; that is immodest. Sister, clingy skirts that show your undergarments are im-

modest. Some fabrics look as if one is wearing only a slip; that is immodest.

Some people try to justify their moves away from the Bible standard and say they are free. Well, from what are they really free? Oh, they say that they still love Jesus and that they are still going to Heaven. However, God does not have a Heaven for this group and another Heaven for that group. Either you are in the true Church of God or you are not in the Church of God. People run around justifying this and justifying that when they have drifted into apostasy. Some who once stood for Truth have gone back into Babylon, but God is through with her. He has called a new ministry, the seventh-seal ministry, and the voice of the seventh angel is crying out, "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4).

"God Shall Send Them Strong Delusion"

Everyone has an excuse for what he or she does. Some have gone out and started other churches and call themselves the Church of God. When others ask why, they say, "Oh, that pastor . . ." Well, let me tell you something, there is only one true Church of God in a locality. However, there are many harlots around with supposedly influential men at their helm. Someone may say, "Everybody is the Church of God." Then, who is the message, "Come out of her, my people" for if everyone is the Church of God?

Some people say it makes no difference what the name of the church is. To illustrate the importance of a name, let us consider your own family name. As a parent, did you care what your children were named when they were born? If there is nothing in a name, why not give your children someone else's last name instead of your last name? Why should you care what their last name is if there is nothing in a name? Why put your last name on your children's birth certificates? The truth of the matter is that names are very

important, especially when it comes to receiving an inheritance. The same is true when it comes to the church. The only way you can receive a godly inheritance is by being in the Father's name, the Church of God. Can you read in the Bible about the Baptist Church, the Lutheran Church, the Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church, or the Pentecostal Church? No, not one of them is mentioned in the Bible. However, the Church of God is mentioned in the Bible many times, so there is a Bible foundation for the name "Church of God."

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." Notice that He did not say "churches." Hypocrites run around with false faces and say, "Oh, we are Church of God too, except we have more liberty. We just don't believe as you do." Well, they used to. What happened? They compromised, and now they have liberty to look just like Jezebel. They do not dress modestly anymore. Before they took on that spirit, they had to have disobeyed somewhere along the line and walked against light that God had once revealed to them.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

The Spirit of Rebellion

Friend, you need to be careful that you do not take a light, frivolous attitude against the Gospel and yet think that somewhere along the line God will have something special for you. If you have a light, chaffy attitude, you are throwing yourself open

to the devil. If you get a spirit of rebellion, it is as the sin of witchcraft. You will be under a spell, and you will do things and not even know why. You will end up saying, "Why did I do that? That does not even make sense to me. I didn't even think about it. Why did I stay up all night and drink and party? Why did I lose my morals? Why did I give in? I had no intention of doing that. How could I have allowed that to happen?" Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. The philosophy that many people have today is, "Whatever feels good, do it." Why? They are idols to themselves, and they want the flesh taken care of.

Dear one, payday is coming. Not many people anymore will take the straight Gospel and rejoice concerning the message of the one church, the standard, and the kingdom. When sin begins to work, it works deceit and darkness. All the while, the devil tries to make you think, "Those other things do not really matter. God is loving and forgiving. He does not really care about how I look." Well, if God does not care how you look, then why did He give a woman long hair? If He does not care, why did He not make Eve's hair look the same as Adam's?" Can you picture Eve looking the same way Adam looked? Also, it was not Adam and Steve or Eve and Eva in the garden; it was Adam and Eve. Adam looked like a man and Eve looked like a woman. Today in God's church, a man still looks as a man should look and a woman looks as a woman should look. The woman has long hair, and the man has short hair. The woman wears a skirt or a dress, and the man wears trousers. The godly woman does not wear men's apparel, or slacks. Also, the saints of God do not wear jewelry and pierce their ears, their noses, or their tongues. God does not want earrings on a woman or a man.

Sin divides people. The first sin separated man from God, and then it separated man from man. We can read in the Book of Genesis that sin was the cause of death, both physical

death and spiritual death. Division worked between Cain and Abel. Sin will divide families and friends. It divides brethren and congregations, it divides husbands and wives, and it divides ministers. The devil is not fussy about who sin divides as long as it gets the job accomplished.

Sin wrecks the harmony of the home. It causes men and women to be abusive to one another. Sin causes people to destroy buildings, property, and even church property. Sin has caused some to go so far as to blow up government buildings and take many lives. The spirit of rebellion is in those who do such things.

Sin Is a Destroyer

Sin will destroy your mind, your finances, and your health. It will work on your nervous system. Many people work a lifetime to obtain wealth, and then when they get older, they spend their wealth to maintain their health. Sin is a destroyer of good.

Genesis 4:8 reads, "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." The first person to die on this earth died at the hands of his own brother. Cain had murder in his heart, and when given the opportunity, he carried out the act.

First John 3:11-15 states: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Do you have murder in your heart? Do you have hatred for some-

one in your heart? You should hate the same things that God hates, such as every wicked way, sin, and the devil; but you should not hate your brother. The good news is that you do not have to hate anyone; you can love everyone. You may not love the things they do or love the way they are carrying on, but you should love their souls.

Matthew 5:43-44 reads: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Many marriages are falling apart due to a lack of love. They replace love with lust, and a marriage built on lust will not last. It must be built on love. When you truly love someone, you will not walk out because a difference between you arises. When a couple gets married, normally two different types of personalities are united. That is where love comes in.

The same is true in a congregation. There are many different types of personalities, and that is where love comes in. We all are not the same, but we love one another. We need to strive to get along. If something is going on in a brother's or a sister's life that you disagree with, but it is not sin, you should not judge him or her. Remember, what you put out has a way of coming back around to you. It is a two-edged sword.

We need to be long-suffering with one another. You may disagree with some things that go on in other Christians' lives, but the question is, are those things sin? If something is not sin, you need to leave people with God. You should not let anything get between you and a brother or a sister. Do not become critical of one another.

Too much judging of one another will cause rifts in congregations. The next thing you know, people choose sides; then these people over here do not talk to those people over there. Rifts ought not to be in congrega-

tions. The devil works any way he can to divide and separate. If something is not sin, you should leave it alone. If it is sin, then you should go to the pastor, and the pastor will deal with it. You do not have to deal with it. We should be long-suffering and patient with one another and pray for one another. The greatest weapon that God gave us is prayer.

First Corinthians 13:4 states, "Charity suffereth long." How long will charity suffer? How long did God suffer you? No doubt, He put up with you when people turned their backs on you. How long did God's love suffer with you? Since God suffers long with you, then you should be long-suffering with your brother. You ought to give your brother or your sister the benefit of the doubt, just as God did with you. You need to keep your arms outstretched wide, just as God has kept His arms outstretched for you.

Verses 5-7 read: "[Charity] Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Sin will sear your conscience. First Timothy 4:2 reads, "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." To have a seared conscience is to be rendered insensitive. Sin will cause you to be comfortable with your condition. God's people should not settle back

comfortably. Wherever there is a comfortable religion, there is a comfortable preacher behind the pulpit. Sin will cause you to be insensitive.

Sin Brings Punishment

Genesis 4:9 states, "And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" In other words, Cain was saying, "What do I care about Abel? It is not my job to watch over him." Sin calls for and will put one under the wrath of God. Verses 10-13 read: "And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

"And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear." Look at the deception. Cain's reply was, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." He did not say a thing about his sin; he was only worried about his punishment.

Verses 14-15 read: "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore

whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him." Cain, like so many today, got caught up in his punishment, but he had no remorse for his sin. The only thing he was remorseful about was the reaping.

Sin takes a man away from the presence of God, and possibly into a lost eternity, never to get out. Our Scripture text states in verse 23, "The wages of sin is death." There is a high cost to sin, more than anyone really wants to pay.

Payday is coming. If you keep puffing away on cigarettes, the next thing you know, you are going to get to the place where you can hardly even take a breath. If you keep drinking alcohol, payday is coming. The day will come when you will wish to God that you had never seen one cigarette or tasted one bottle of beer. Friend, you need to be wise and turn to God before it is too late. When the reaping time comes, the pleasure of sin will disappear. It would be best for you to turn from wrong now and turn to that which is right. God is not going to throw you out. He will work with you. He will help you, but you need to come to Christ and repent. Turn to that which is right, and you will find that God will open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing that you cannot contain.

(Cassette C-4660E)

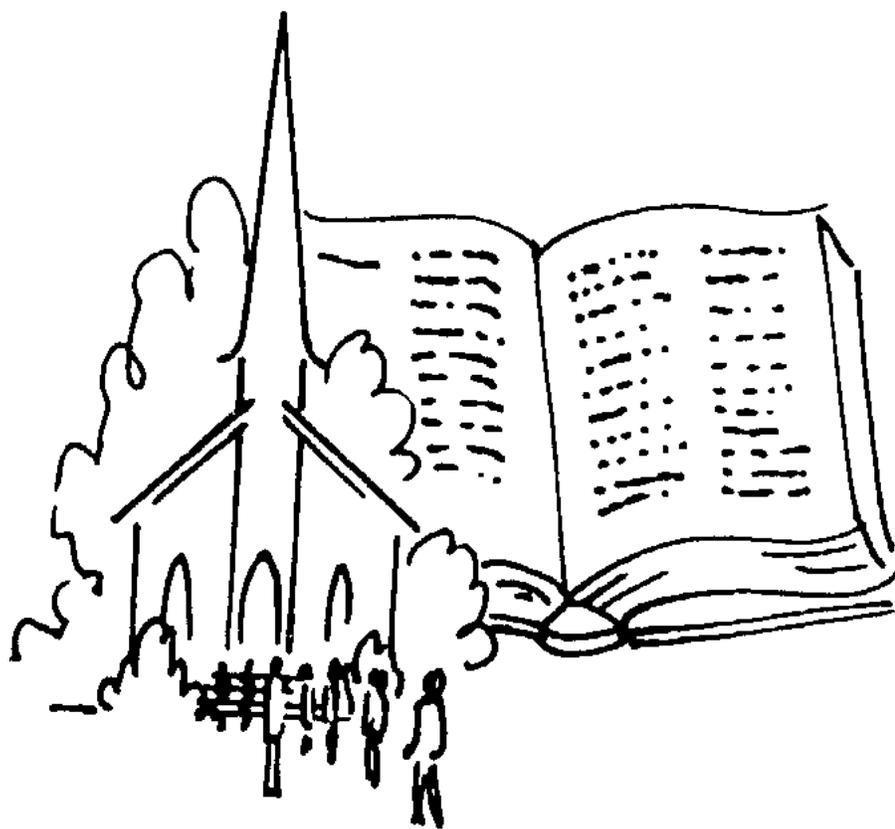
"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

2 Thessalonians 3:3

Revelation 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

A Victorious Church



Brother E. David Stegmeier

How to Propagate the Truth

In our Scripture text we see an absolutely beautiful, vivid picture of the early morning church, the most glorious institution ever brought into existence. The church came down out of Heaven from God. The verses in our Scripture text speak symbolically of the church. The horse represents the

militant phase of the church; she is an army. We sing the old, militant song entitled, "Onward Christian Soldiers." God's people do not know defeat. We are marching on for God. I am more encouraged than I have ever been. The church is more glorious, she is shining in more splendor, and she has more victory than we have ever seen.

Since the inception of the church,

she has had to wage war to maintain her position. The world would like to stamp out the Truth. Is it any wonder that the devil fights so hard against the people of God? Wherever the Truth is heralded, the devil is working and fighting; therefore, we must labor, but not carnally. In our warfare we do not use carnal weapons; in other words, we do not war in the flesh and attack one

another. How do we propagate the Truth? We must do it through prayer, love, and reasoning according to God's Holy Word.

God said in Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD." God's way is a reasonable way. Everything that the Church of God stands for is reasonable. It is a reasonable Gospel, and the doctrines of the Church of God are reasonable.

Concerning the early church, Luke wrote in Acts 28:22, "Everywhere it is spoken against." The church is not a popular institution. Many people speak against the Church of God. Some say, "Oh, they think they are *holier than thou* because they believe in living above sin. I think they are a proud people, because they think they can live above sin." Friend, it is only through the grace of God that we can live above sin. People have always disdained and spoken against true Christianity. However, I am out to prove to the world that it is the best way to live. In the supermarkets people have commented, "Mr. Stegmeier, you are always so happy." I like to say, "It's because of God."

John gave us a picture of the early church. I thank God that she is a conquering institution! She does not know defeat. God's people do not go around looking downcast. We are not defeated; we are a victorious people! The church has always been opposed.

Living Epistles

We read in Revelation 12:1, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman [the New Testament church] clothed with the sun [a symbol of the New Testament], and the moon [a symbol of the Old Testament] under her feet [the foundation]. . . ." We can stand on the Old Testament. I preach often from the Old Testament. A Church of Christ man once said to me, "Brother Stegmeier, you often go to the Old Testament; that is an anti-

quoted Book."

I said, "There are lots of lessons that we can learn from the Old Testament." The early church did not have the New Testament. They were clothed in the Old Testament; they lived it. May God help each of us to be living epistles, known and read of all men. We are to live godly lives and to be consistent Christians. You should not go about your job complaining or joining in with others who complain against the boss, the government, or the weather. As a saint of God, you should be different in the way you dress, in the way you speak, and in your whole manner of living. Once the world sees that you are different, often they will give you an opportunity to testify for God.

Verses 2-3 state: "And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads [a symbol of the first opposing power the church had to deal with, which was Roman paganism]." Throughout the annals of the New Testament period of time, the church has been opposed. All those former, ungodly, evil forces are still around, plus a few more. We are in a battle, Church of God, but we can be victorious.

Verse 7 says, "And there was war. . . ." We are in a heated war; however, we should not look so much at people, but to what is going on. We should consider the principles involved. Our battle is not against people, but against evil spirits.

A Symbol of Purity

Notice the color of the horse in our Scripture text. The Bible says it was white. White is a symbol of purity. The church is clean, holy, and without a taint of sin to mar her beauty. There is no sin in her. I thank God for victory! Verse 2 of our Scripture text says that "he went

forth conquering, and to conquer." This denotes a victorious church. Solomon wrote in Song of Solomon 6:4, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners." He continued in verse 10, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" I thank God for a victorious institution!

We are going to go to the back of the Book of Revelation to see how it comes out in the end. What does the church look like at the end of time? Revelation 19:11 tells us, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse." God's people are still riding white horses. If I remember right, the last time horses were used in a literal battle was when the Polish calvary went against the German mechanized army, and they suffered tremendous defeat. This is a symbolic picture. We are not going to literally ride horses and use carnal weapons. We are in a spiritual battle. It has to be a holy, clean battle. We must fight according to divine principles.

When people talk to me and rise against me, I say, "But the Word says. . . ." The Church of God does not operate in a carnal way. God is in control. I went to a meeting once, and after a little old lady spoke up, I said, "Leave it with God. Do not touch God's anointed." That is what the Bible says. As I grew up, my mother drilled it into my head that we were to leave God's anointed alone. We should not speak against a man of God. We should not touch them, and we should not gossip against them. That lady asked, "What recourse do we have?" I said to her, "Have you ever heard of prayer?"

She replied, "Oh, that is so old-fashioned!" Jeremiah said to "ask for the old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16). The Church of God operates differently than institutions in the world. She still comes under the auspice of the Holy Spirit, and her headquarters is still in Heaven.

Revelation 19:11 states, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him [Christ] was called Faithful and True, [Christ is faithful, and He is looking for faithful men and women who will stand for the Truth. This reference to One called 'Faithful and True' is speaking of Christ. He will be faithful to you, and He will faithfully lead you to Heaven. There has never been a time in my entire life when I have seen God prove untrue. Never! Just recently I have seen some miraculous happenings, and I stood back and said, 'Oh, that is awesome!' God is in control. When things seem insurmountable and you wonder what the answer is and how things will work out, God will work them out miraculously. We are serving a great and wonderful God! He is faithful and true.] and in righteousness he doth judge and make war [a lot of judging and warring is not done righteously]."

God Has Never Failed

Revelation 19:12-21 reads: "His eyes [Many artists have portrayed Christ as a very handsome young man with long auburn hair and a kind look. He is kind, but there is another side to Him. Some conditions make Him very angry. I do not want to stir up His anger. It would be like a flea trying to take on an elephant.] were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; [Christ is victorious. Oh, the blessings that God has bestowed upon His people and the many victories that we have witnessed in our lifetime! Sometimes it looked as though God's work would be thwarted. I wondered what the outcome would be and what the future would hold; nevertheless, God has never failed us.] and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. [Since the very beginning, the battle has been over the Word of God. God has only one church, and she is holy and

clean. Her name came from the Father: the Church of God. She is victorious over sin, and she does not mingle with false religion.] And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses [one song in our hymnals says that we follow Him 'as did the saints of yore'], clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: [The Word of God cannot be changed; you cannot bend it. If you misuse it, you will misuse it to your own detriment, but God sent it to bless you.] and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God [sometimes that goes on in the house of worship].

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. [Notice that this is in capital letters. He is the only King of kings and Lord of lords. I want to be on His side.] And I saw an angel [a good, old-fashioned Church of God minister] standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, [This is going on today. God's people are eating from Father's table; however, many people are eating the sayings of men. Paul told Timothy that the time was going to come when people would turn away from sound doctrine and turn to the teachings and the sayings of men. We are in that day. I want to hear sound doctrine. Do you? Wholesome doctrine is what makes the church strong, mighty, and victorious.] and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

"And I saw the beast [Roman Catholicism], and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered

together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. [We are the only ones on God's side, and the odds are against us, but do not look at the odds. God has *always* stood with His people, and His people have always been outnumbered.] And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet [Protestantism] that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone [that is the end of Roman Catholicism and all other false religions]. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

If the church is to be victorious, it must start with individuals. I refuse to be a hypocrite. I want to live what I preach.

The Blood of Jesus Cleanses

The *Evening Light Hymnal* has a beautiful song about individual victory entitled "The Blood of Jesus." Next to the Bible, our hymnal should be our most prized possession. It contains marvelous songs! The first verse and the chorus read:

*Must I in sinful bondage be,
Deprived of peace and liberty,
When in the promise I can see
The blood of Jesus cleanseth?*

*The blood, the blood, The precious
blood of Jesus,
The blood will work a perfect cure,
Will cleanse the heart and keep it
pure,
The blood, the blood, The precious
blood of Jesus.*

Years ago, and yet today, people have endeavored to take all mention of the blood out of the hymnals and out of the doctrines. However, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. The remainder

of the song reads:

*Must I be doubting, full of fear,
And gloom obscure my pathway
here,
Be up and down in life's career?
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*Must I be under guilt and sin,
And have its blighting force
within,
Beset by wrong, no vict'ry win?
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*Must I suppose I'm right today,
Tomorrow think I've gone
astray,
Let demons hold me in dismay?
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

*Must I by Satan be accused,
And with his galling yoke abused,
Until at length from heav'n
refused?
The blood of Jesus cleanseth.*

To reign in this glorious church, you must have victory over every sin, over every evil habit, and have your temper in control. Also, you must make restitutions. You have to be clean within and without and clear with all mankind. I do not fear to face any man or woman in this world.

In the discourse that Jesus had with the scribes and the Pharisees when they brought the woman taken in adultery, Jesus said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). As saints of God, we are free indeed. The deeds that we do are holy and clean, and we are free to do what is right. When we are reigning with Christ, we enjoy victory over temptations. We can reign over temptations and discouragement. We may become discouraged at times, but that is not the rule. We can reign over disappointment, sorrow, suffering, and heartache. We are more than conquerors in all things. In the end, we will even reign over death and the grave. There is great victory all along the way for the church.

Enemies of the Church

Today we are facing enemies that some church ages have not experienced. We are living in an evening-time apostasy. People who once loved the Truth have departed from it and no longer hold it dear. An apostasy is a falling away, a departing from the Truth. Today we see much of that going on. We are living in a day when we face a trend toward modernism. Only the old-fashioned message can save you from sin and give you victory within. There is no reason to modernize the message of the Church of God.

We are facing an old, ungodly enemy called *apathy*. The work of the church must come first. Too many have the attitude, "I'll work at the church if I have time." Friend, God hates that! That is *apathy*. Another enemy of the church is lukewarmness. Church of God people ought to be involved in the services. It is too exciting to sleep in the church services. Moreover, we are responsible not only for what we hear but also for what we *could* have heard. Lukewarmness and indifference will hinder the Christian. God's work must come first.

What else is the church facing? The church has been a separate people since the very beginning. Some time ago in my community all the ministers were called and asked to bring their congregations to the local school auditorium for prayer. When I was asked, "Will you come and take part?" my reply was, "No." Some people in the community asked individual members of the congregation why I did not come and why I stayed away. The reason was that God does not hear the prayers of sinners, unless it leads to their salvation. The Church of God is separate and distinct.

In Exodus 8:23 God said, "And I will put a division between my people and thy people." It has always been that way. Do not take me wrong. I dearly love people, but when it comes to false religion, I do

not want to mix with it. We have something far better! The Church of God is the only institution that lives without sin. The Mormons claim to have "the family plan," yet they have the highest percentage of divorce in the world. One reason false religion is growing is that people do not know the Bible.

Revelation 18:1-2 says: "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven [everything about the church and its ministry is heavenly], having great power; [I want to see more power in the church! Do you? I want to see souls delivered from satanic forces, see people healed, and see people come out of false religion. Having greater power in the church comes by yielding ourselves to God in a greater way, by allowing Him to have His way and to control our lives.] and the earth was lightened with his glory [God wants us to emit light, understanding, and Truth wherever we go]. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." In Roman Catholicism, more and more, they are uncovering the sin, the wickedness, and the evil that has been going on in that institution. That is just one example. John said in 1 John 4:1 to "try the spirits." How? You can try the spirits by getting into the Book.

My daughter came up with a very profound thought. She said, "Dad, how is it that many people who have opposed God's people are backslidden and are in a terrible condition, yet the Church of God is going on so beautifully? Should that not say something to people?" I have never seen anyone leave a thriving Church of God congregation and prosper spiritually.

Are You Reigning Over Sin?

Again, Revelation 18:2 says, "And he cried mightily with a

strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils. . . ." I have been around some places that once were Church of God congregations but have become devilish. When I was growing up, I knew of a minister who was extremely spiritual. I thought he was one of the most spiritual men I had ever met. However, he fell away and began to stand against the Truth and later began to abuse little girls. It was a terrible, despicable situation. Friend, if you turn away from Truth, there is no telling what you will succumb to. Your only defense is to walk in the light. God is our strength, our victory, and our wisdom; He is everything. Some of that which was once used of God has now become babylonish. God once used them, but they turned away from the Truth and succumbed to evil.

Verses 3-4 state: "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven [from the church], saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The Bible says there will come a time when the voice of God will no longer be heard in Babylon, because all of God's people will be gone. We are nigh that time.

When my wife and I first went to Oregon, many people visited us from Mennonite churches. During one revival meeting, I counted more than one hundred new people. Sad to say, very few people want the

Truth as we are getting down to the end of time. God's people have always been separate and distinct, and because of that, a conflict always ensues.

When old Israel tried to break away from Egypt, the people had a battle on their hands. Sinner friend, if you want to leave sin, you are going to have a battle, but God will help you. When Israel conquered Canaan land, she battled for every inch of ground she gained. Church of God, we are going to have to battle right to the end, but it will be worth it all. I am so glad to be in the conquering church. Friend, are you part of the conquering church? Are you reigning over every sin and every temptation? You can, if you desire to.

Does Jesus Reign Within?

Brother D. S. Warner, a powerful man of God, wrote the song, "Reigning in This Life," which reads:

*Do you triumph, O my brother,
Over all this world of sin?
In each storm of tribulation,
Does your Jesus reign within?*

*One we hail as King immortal,
He did earth and hell subdue;
And bequeathing [or giving] us
his glory,
We are kings anointed too.*

Child of God, you are a king, and you have a royal family. You are rich because you are reigning over sin, self, and the old devil.

*Shall we, then, by sin be humbled?
Must we yield to any foe?
No, by heaven's gift we're reign-
ing*

Over all this world below.

*Oh, what grace and high
promotion,
That in Jesus I should be
Raised from sin to royal honor,
Even reigning, Lord, with thee.*

Do you want to be promoted? You can be promoted from the clutches of sin to the freedom of salvation, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

*All this life is blissful sunshine,
Earth is subject at our feet;
Heaven pours its richest blessings
Round our throne of love complete.*

*Then we'll sing and shout the
story,
Of the wondrous blood divine;
Full salvation, glory, glory!
I am reigning all the time.*

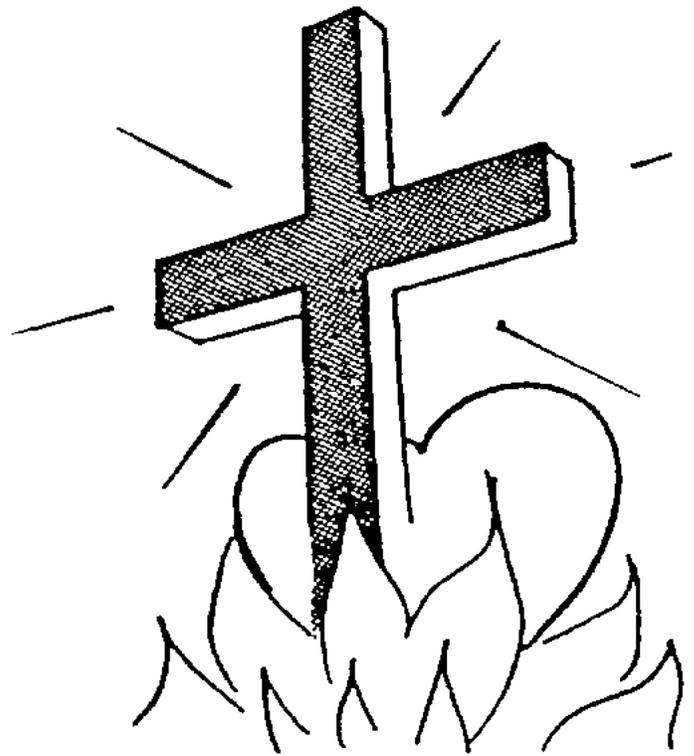
*I am reigning, sweetly reigning,
Far above this world of strife;
In my blessed loving Savior,
I am reigning in this life.*

Friend, if you are not reigning all the time, do not be satisfied. You need to put in for it. God has the very best for you. Just as a father loves his children and is thrilled to give them good things, God is thrilled to bless His children. If you are not enjoying life, if you are being overcome by sin and temptation, if something is controlling you that is not bringing you a blessing, you need to take it to the Lord in prayer and leave it there. The blood can cleanse you and make you free. Will you do that?

(Cassette C-4784E)

Being a father is a wonderful experience. Being a good father is an even greater joy. But being a Christian father who honors God by the way he cares for his family is the greatest joy of all.

"O That There Were Such a Heart in Them, That They Would Fear Me"



Brother Esau Brooks

The Heavenly Vision

I have never given in to the idea that the Church of God is going to dry up and blow away. It does not matter how dark things get around us, there is always a bright uplook. One songwriter penned, *"Though with a scornful wonder man sees her sore oppressed, By schism rent asunder and heresies distressed, Yet saints, their watch are keeping. They are saying, Lord, how long? When God will come down and dry up their tears and take their reproach away."*

When Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church," He was not talking about Peter, but the revelation that the Father had given him. In Matthew 16:13 you can read that Jesus and the disciples were walking down the shores of Philippi, and Jesus asked bluntly, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" The disciples gave their opinions, and then Jesus brought it a little closer in verse 15 when He asked, "But whom say ye that I am?" In verse 16 we read that Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living

God." Jesus answered and said to Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. . . . and upon this rock [which Peter had just declared] I will build my church."

God has a church. Jesus did not say "churches" but "church." There is a world of difference between the two. Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Notice that He did not say "them" but "it." People are getting so confused today that they are referring to the church as *them*, but it is not a "them." She is the only one of her mother. No matter how many stray and lose their vision of this, it remains intact. I am very thankful to God for the vision that He gave me of the church. It does not matter who goes wrong, how many go wrong, or what goes wrong, the church will always be right. Sometimes it may get very lonesome and very dark and discouraging, but stay with God and do not lose hope. There is a brighter future ahead. You must ever keep

Heaven in view. It may get extremely difficult to do that, because the devil is not going to let up. Nevertheless, thank God, the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church. There is still only one church, and there is still only one Truth.

The chorus of one song reads, *"Oh, glory to Jesus! we hail the bright day, And high on our banner salvation display, The mists of confusion are passing away."* The mists of confusion may not be passing away where you live, but it is. I trust that you will still be around when it has passed away completely. This thing works. It works for me, it has worked for others, and it will work for you if you let it. When the Lord saved me, He truly saved me. I did not merely get religion or "churchanity." I got salvation, and salvation works under all circumstances and in every situation. I am not going to tell you that I have not seen some dark times or that I have not passed through some hard places, but I passed through them; then, after I got through them, I left

them back there.

I am not one who believes when the going gets tough, the tough get running. I believe that when the going gets tough, the tough keep going. If you are around the Church of God only to have people smile at you and shake hands with you at every turn of the road, you are in for a rude awakening. The devil is trying to infiltrate the ranks of the people of God the same as he has ever done. Nevertheless, we can be as the great Apostle Paul. After all he went through, he could say in the latter part of his life, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

God's people do not try to verbally hack one another to pieces; that is false religion. Though some places carry the name "Church of God," they are doing just the same as putting honey in a bottle of poison. It does not change the contents. Likewise, putting the name "Church of God" on false religion does not change the contents. To be Church of God, you have to *be* the Church of God. That means you must have the Spirit of the Church of God. If you do not have the Church of God Spirit, you will not be around long. Sooner or later, something will happen and a falling out will come, not with the church, but with you and the church, and you are going to hit the road. I have seen it happen. However, I want to encourage you to know that it does not have to happen to you.

What Kind of Heart Do You Have?

We read in Deuteronomy 5:22-24: "These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me. [No doubt, you have heard the saying, "It is written in stone." Do you know what that means? It means there is no chang-

ing it. We have to be tried to know what sort of works we have.] And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: [God has ever been associated with fire. The Bible tells us that our God is a consuming fire. Much of the trouble that we are seeing today began to surface only after the fire, and many have let the fire in their souls go out. One does not fall out with brethren if the fire is burning in his soul. Why are many so cold and so harsh? They do not have any fire in their souls. It takes fire to make the mountain hot.] we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth."

Verses 25-29 read: "Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die [the Word of God is as a fire: it consumes all the petty differences that arise and makes one want to have his own camp meeting in opposition to another's]. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? [Though some may refer to it as the Old Testament, this is as up to date as today's newspaper. Today God is still speaking through men. They are getting fewer every day, but thank God, there are still a few around. You need to learn how to distinguish the difference between a man through whom God is speaking and one through whom Satan is speaking.] Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear *it*, and do *it* [the lack is with men; they hear, but they will not do]. And the LORD heard the voice of your words,

when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"

The thought that I would like to impress upon your mind is found in these words: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always." Many people do a lot of talking today, but they have no heart. Many have a great lack of heart when it comes to fearing God and keeping *all* His commandments (not just some of them), even when His Word says "that there be no divisions among you" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

It is time for self-examination to come up with a discovery as to what kind of heart you have. What kind of heart are you claiming to be a Christian with? Some people listen to every piece of gossip that floats around. It appears that they hear everything that is being said except what God has to say. There has been a terrible let down. As long as the devil is running loose, there are going to be devil tricks going on. My job and your job is to keep out of the devil's reach. If others want to fall in line with him, God have mercy on their souls. However, we must keep going on for God.

Give More Earnest Heed

In our Scripture lesson Moses was addressing and admonishing people in the closing days of his ministerial life. He was burdened that they would not get away from God. No doubt, you have heard it said, "Not all that glitters is gold." Likewise, not all that is calling itself Church of God is the Church of God. They may carry the name, but they are not the Church of God; they do

not have the Spirit.

I want you to know one thing: God never changes. People are falling away here and there and saying this and that, but God never changes. Division is wrong. Too many are falling out and not enough are falling in line with the Word of God. The devil is not leaving God's people alone; therefore, we have to dig in and refuse to budge. We must stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Church of God, switching sides is disastrous and ruinous. We are living in critical times today. This is no time to play church. It is time to "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1). It might be hard for you to believe that God has not grown mellow and yellow with the passing of years, but you cannot affect God. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 90:2, "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." We read in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." All the changes that we are seeing today are not of God. The shaking times are only to shake loose what has already been loosed.

Our Scripture text states in verse 29, "O that there were such an heart in them. . . ." Who is the *them*? Back then it was the Israelites; today it is those who claim to be God's people. As Moses expressed his burden, he called upon the Israelites to do four things. Deuteronomy 5:1 says, "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, [Today I am saying, 'Hear, O Church of God, hear!' If people are hearing, they are not showing many signs that they are.] the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them." I like that about God. If He has anything to say to me, He speaks it first in my ears. If you will not listen to God when He is talking to you in your ears, He will get someone to proclaim it from the

housetop. The Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness.

No one is going to stand before God's judgment seat and say to God, "I never had a fair chance." God is going to see that you get it. You may do with it as you please and treat it however you want, but you are going to have the chance to know what God wants you to know. You shall know the Truth, and the Truth is still capable of setting you free from whatever you need set free from.

The wishy-washy way that many people have of supposedly serving God comes as a surprise to many of us, for many times we have to say, "I cannot see how people are unaware of the wrongness of this or that. They seem at a loss; they have no discernment. They are ready to follow whatever voice is crying out except the voice of God. When it comes to God, they do not even seem to recognize that it is coming from God. God is a God of judgment. The Bible tells us through the Prophet Isaiah, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment" (Isaiah 1:27). This is speaking of God's judgments, not what people *call* God's judgments.

The Importance of Doing What God Requires

The four things that God, through Moses, was calling to His people were to hear, to learn, to keep, and to do. Those things are still necessary today. Even if some say they hear, they do not seem to be learning. They are not hurting any individual. They are hurting themselves and the cause of God. They cannot say that God did them any wrong, because God has never done anyone wrong. It is wrong that does people wrong; right has ever done people right.

Moses went on to say to his people in Deuteronomy 5:3, "The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." He

was retracing God's dealings with them and their dealings with Him. He wanted them to see the importance of doing all that God was requiring of them. In too many cases, people are relaxed in their sub-normal condition. Like John, I can say that I am only a voice. Dear one, it is time for you to recheck yourself. You do not want God to reach the place that He reached with the antediluvians. He said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3). It seems it is already beginning to happen.

One can preach ever so staunchly and be ever so anointed, yet it seems to make no impression. People come in and go out to do the same as they have ever been doing. Dear one, I pray that if you have been overcome along this line, you will let today be your time of getting straightened out with God. You have a tremendous responsibility. The responsibility of lost souls is upon your hands, and you do not ever want to appear before God's judgment seat with the blood of souls dripping from your hands. You need to make sure that you are doing your part. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Moses went on to remind the Israelites of the things that God was requiring of them, and he also reminded them that it was he who stood between them and the fire of God's wrath to get God's message of mercy across to them. Thank God, we yet have those fulfilling that same purpose of life.

I want you to see the need of having a heart in you that is predisposed to fear God and keep His commandments. Have you ever noticed how much the fear of God has departed from our world? Today men are launching out into areas that I would suppose even angels would dread to tread. It is almost unimaginable what all man is trying to do today. The same old spirit that is out in the political

world, the commercial world, and the scientific world is knocking on our doors. If you are not careful, it will swallow you too.

The heart of the need is a heart that will. Too many are losing the heart they once had toward God, the things of God, and the Word of God. They are getting their heads, their hearts, and their minds filled with what this one or that one is saying. Folks had better cut down on that or they are going to miss Heaven. Friend, you cannot afford to let that happen. How terrible it would be to go to hell for hating a person or for being influenced to hate a person because of some lying gossip that some have chosen to infiltrate your mind with. You must have a heart that fears God and keeps His commandments. You see, if you have a heart that fears God, you have won half the battle, because once you have a disposition to do what is right, it will not be as hard to do what is right thereafter. However, to lose that disposition is a critical thing. May God help you.

Going All the Way With God

Moses stated in Deuteronomy 5:5, "I stood between the LORD and

you at that time, to show you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount)." That is where Lot messed up. The angel told him to escape to the mountain, and he began to complain that he was afraid to go. Dear one, you must go all the way with God to make it. You have to go all the way up to Mount Zion. Let the Jeroboamites tell you that it is too much and let them go on and fall down and worship their golden idols. You must press on to reach the place where God would have you to reach.

Today God is pleading with you, just as He did with those people back then, to observe and do the thing that He has commanded you to do. If you will hear and learn, it will not be so hard to keep in memory and do the things that He is commanding. If you have lost that desire, you do not even have anything to get you started.

In verse 27 of our Scripture lesson, the people said, "Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it." They had no more intentions of doing it than if they had not

said it. I know that God calls pastors and uses pastors; however, we have always overlooked the fact that He gave some, not all, to be pastors. Today some fellows are running around claiming to be pastors who have not even heard the voice of God. This is causing much confusion and harm to the cause of God. They jump into the Scriptures and say that the Bible says to obey them that have the rule over you, but they do not even have a rule over themselves. God is not going to call ones to rule over the church when they do not even have the rule over themselves or their own homes. You have to learn how to distinguish the voice of God from the voices of others. Then when you hear His voice, you will know, "That is God." The reason some pastors are having so much trouble pastoring some people is that they do not know the difference between God's voice and another's voice. If you intend to make it to Heaven, it is time for you to stop and consider this: you must learn, keep, and do. God bless you.

(Cassette C-4703E)

Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Wellston, Ohio	WAJB-FM 92.5	Thursday	8:05 a.m.-8:35 a.m.
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Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

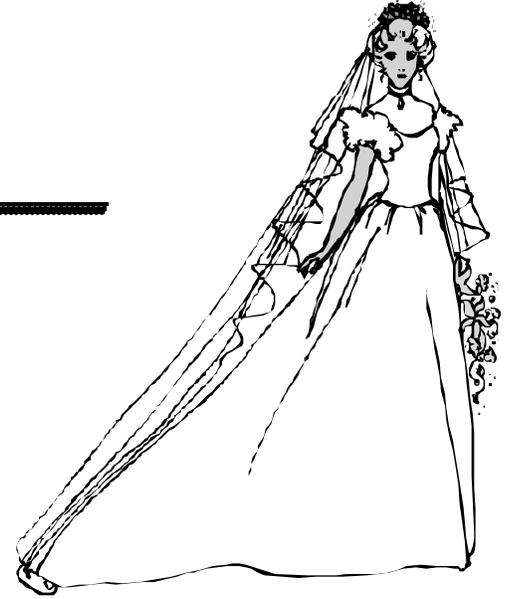
3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before

the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

The Woman— the Church



Brother E. A. Wilson

Some Symbols Answered

I think anyone who reads those five verses with an open mind knows that literalism is out of the question. Here is a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. How could a woman be standing on the moon and clothed with the sun? Think what a big woman she would be! The sun is many thousands of times bigger than the earth, and here is a woman clothed with it. Every star in the sky is many times bigger than the earth, and she has twelve of them around her head.

The Revelation is a book of symbols; it employs natural things to teach spiritual lessons. Jesus was the greatest teacher there ever was, and He taught in parables, taking

natural things to teach spiritual lessons.

John was caught up into heaven in the Spirit, yet he neither got off the earth nor saw literal happenings in God's Heaven. The heaven spoken of all the way through the Revelation is the spiritual heaven. Revelation 12:1 is a picture of the New Testament Church of God, symbolized as a pure woman. She has risen above the old Law, or the moon, and she is lifted up to a heavenly position. How did she get lifted up there? Matthew 3:1-2 states that in those days, John the Baptist came preaching that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. When John was cast into prison, according to Matthew, Chapter 4, Jesus came preaching that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. There is a heavenly kingdom that you can get

into right here on the earth, and all that stands between man and the heavenly kingdom is repentance.

Paul wrote in Ephesians, Chapter 2, speaking of our great salvation, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. . . . And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus [or in the body of Christ]" (verses 1, 6).

Hebrews 3:1 reads, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. . . ." Hebrews 6:4 says, ". . . have tasted of the heavenly gift. . . ." In John 6:58 Jesus said, "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna [literal manna in the wilderness], and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." Hebrews 12:22 states, "But ye are come unto . . . the

heavenly Jerusalem. . . [a heavenly Jerusalem right here on the earth]."

The woman was clothed the with sun, which means she had put on Christ. John 1:4 reads, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." In the Old Testament, the people lived in sin. They ever came confessing their sins but were never able to forsake them. This woman had risen above Old Testament living and moved to a new covenant with a better blood, the blood of Jesus Christ that takes away all sins. Even as the natural moon is a shadow (or a reflection) of the sun, so the old Law was a shadow, or a reflection, of the new covenant. The woman rose above the Old Testament and put on Christ. She was the light of the world. The sun, the moon, and the stars are every avenue of light that God created to light this earth, and the church is surrounded with them.

That "sun" is Christ, or the New Testament. Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, wrote, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings . . ." (Malachi 4:2). Jesus taught this in Matthew, Chapter 13. There He illustrated four kinds of ground to show the hearts of all mankind: the wayside ground, the stony ground, the thorny ground, and the good ground. He said the seed that fell on stony ground sprung up but did not have any root, and when the sun came up, it was scorched. In verse 21 He gave an explanation of what that sun was. The stony ground portrays someone who claims salvation but is offended when persecution arises because of the Word. Jesus used the sun to symbolize the Word. (Many people have shallow experiences yet, but all you have to do is lift up a good standard, or just let the Word be lifted in a strong way, and they wither.)

Revelation 12:1 shows the morning-time church standing in all her beauty and glory. All the right luminaries of the natural world are surrounding her. She is God's ave-

nue of light to a lost and dying world. Revelation 1:20 answers the symbol of the stars. A star led the Wise Men to Christ. Daniel wrote in the Book of Daniel, Chapter 12, that those who turned many to righteousness would be as the stars. The stars are the ministers that guide men and women to Christ. In Revelation 12:2 we find that the church is a woman with child in pain to be delivered. The lesson is that the morning-time church was a fruitful church.

Romans 7:1-3 reads: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

Paul was not teaching a marriage law or a divorce law here. He was writing to those who knew the Law (verse 1), and under Moses' divorce law, a man could put away his wife for any cause, but a woman could not put away her husband for any cause whatsoever. She was bound to him, and there was no way for her to be loosed from the man unless he died. Paul was using an allegory. Verse 4 reads, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another. . . ." Now, how did we get free from the old Mosaic Law? Our husband died; He died for every one of us. There was no way to get free from that Mosaic Law, so Jesus Christ came (according to Colossians 2:14), went to Calvary's Cross, took the Law, and nailed it to His Cross. Thank God, through the body of Christ, you and I are free, as Paul wrote to the Romans, from the Mosaic Law. Through the death of

Christ, we are delivered from that old Law, the law of sin and death.

Romans 7:4 in its entirety reads, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The fruit of marriage is children. (We are living in a strange world where everyone is getting married for every reason other than to have children.) The first man and woman were instructed to replenish the earth. We will not have any husband or wife in Heaven because we are going to a place where no one ever dies. There will not be any generations passing away, so we will not have to bring on another generation to replenish the last one.

The Man Child

The woman who was with child pained to be delivered. Revelation 12:5 reads, "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

Let us consider this man child. Many religious teachers say that this woman who brought forth the man child is the church, and that the man child who was brought forth was Christ, and He ascended up to Heaven. However, that will not add up right, because the church did not produce Christ; Christ produced the church. The church is Christ's bride; therefore, this man child cannot be Christ.

Isaiah got a prophetic picture of this hundreds of years before the church came into being. Isaiah 66:7-13 reads: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to

bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.

"Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

You will note in verse 8 that it was not a single individual who was brought forth. It was a man child, symbolically speaking, and a whole nation was brought forth in one day.

In Isaiah 66:11 the Lord spoke of nursing the breasts of her consolations. Let us get a picture of these babies. I want you to understand the man child. First Peter 2:1-2 reads: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." According to Chapter 1, Peter was speaking to people who had been born again. After you have been born again, you are a newborn babe, and you desire the sincere milk of the Word. First Peter 2:4, 5, and 9 reads: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone [speaking of Christ], disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. . . . But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation. . . ." A new nation was born at once, a nation unheard of before, and that nation was made up of men and women who had repented and had been

born again, and the Word of God speaks of them as being a man child.

In Matthew 21:42-43 Jesus said: "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Someone said that He took it from the Jew and gave it to the Gentile; however, He took it from the Jew and gave it to whosoever will.

In Acts, Chapter 10, we read of Peter at Cornelius' house. Peter thought the literal Jews were God's people and the only ones who would ever be God's people. However, God sent him down to Cornelius' house, and they were baptized with the Holy Ghost right in front of him. Acts 10:34-35 tells us: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons [when you teach anything for the literal Jew alone, you are making God a respecter of persons]: But in every [literal] nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness [not just *believes* in righteousness, but *worketh* righteousness; not just *has faith* in righteousness, but *worketh* righteousness], is accepted with him."

Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 66:7 that before Zion travailed, she brought forth. Jesus Christ, through the Gospel, brought forth a nucleus, namely one hundred twenty. Isaiah also said that as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Jesus told the one hundred twenty to tarry at Jerusalem, and they waited in the Upper Room. They travailed in the Upper Room, and when their travelling came to an end and the Day of Pentecost fully came, they brought forth a new holy nation made up of every nation under heaven. Read the second chapter of Acts. There were Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven

there, and when Peter preached the Gospel, three thousand babies came forth from the womb of the church in one hour's time. No wonder Isaiah said, "Who hath heard such a thing?" Who ever heard of a woman having three thousand babies in one day? Well, the church had them, and she did not quit then. The next day she had five thousand more, and before two years and a half were up, there was more than a hundred thousand numbered. That is quite a family!

Why are the converts called "a man child"? In Galatians, Chapter 4, Paul used an allegory of Abraham's two wives and their children. He said that Hagar was the type of old Sinai, or literal Jerusalem, which existed then, and that Sarah was the type of the New Jerusalem, which is above and is free. I want you to see why the church's converts are called a man child. Galatians 4:28-29 says: "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." The church's converts are called *him*.

Ephesians 2:13-15 reads: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." The church's converts are spoken of as one new man in Christ Jesus, no longer Jew or Gentile, no longer bond or free, no longer male or female; but you are all one in Christ Jesus. The man child that the morning-time church brought forth was her converts, many of them.

Just as soon as they were brought forth, Revelation 12:3-4 says that the dragon (the pagan Roman Empire) stood ready to devour her converts (the man child) as soon as they were brought forth,

and that is exactly what it did. The pagans killed the Christians. Just as fast as a person professed Christianity, if he stood for his profession of Christ, off came his head or he was thrown into the fire. This should help you to unravel Revelation, Chapter 20. John did not see any person reigning with Christ anywhere. He saw the *souls* of them who had lived on the earth and were beheaded for the cause of Christ. They lived in Paradise with Christ and reigned a thousand years.

Many today do not know about travelling. A nonchalant attitude of just saying some prayers for lost people is not availing a thing. We must be reminded again that the Bible, in the Old Testament and the New, says that as soon as Zion travails, she brings forth her children. The word *travail* means "to labor with difficulty," which is hard labor. Are you doing that? The spirits of this day would have you feel that if you wish that people would get saved and say a few prayers for them, they will be saved. Entertainment is doing a big thing. A congregation can get a singing group in and get them to sing and work on people's emotions, and the altars will fill; but just follow them for the next ten days and see if they do not go back to the same hopen they came out of. Wherever people are truly born again, really brought from death to life and come forth with a new-creature experience, there is a church, people who have gotten down to hard work.

As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth children, and there is no need to talk about travail until conception is made. It would be the height of ignorance for a woman to travail if there has not been a conception made. Let us take it from the natural so we can get the picture. Paul took the husband and wife to show Christ and the church in Ephesians, Chapter 5. You have never seen many legitimate children born into a home where a husband and wife like to do everything else

but be with each other. People must have a desire to be saved, and your getting on your face before God can stir up an old-fashioned desire within them to be saved. Church, you are the bride, and Christ is the husband. You must give yourself to Christ, and it is going to take spending much time together. However, you will find that the more you give yourself to Him, the more He will reveal and give Himself to you! People who are close to Christ have a real soul burden. As soon as travelling comes, children will be born; it never fails.

Twin Symbols

The woman is a symbol of the church, and the man child is a symbol of more of the church. Having twin symbols is necessary because part of the church is staying here on earth and part of it is going to Heaven. As soon as the woman brought forth her children, or her converts, the dragon beheaded them, burned them at the stake, or slaughtered them, and their souls were caught up to God and His throne. The woman was in the spiritual heaven, but the souls of her martyred converts were caught up to God and His throne, up in God's Heaven. This is how I know that the church was not in God's Heaven. If she were already in God's Heaven, her converts would not have been caught up. When her converts were killed, they were caught up to God and His throne. We have twin symbols because part of the church is staying right here, and God has kept a seed even to our day. However, her converts still go to Heaven. We work to get men and women saved and to live right by the Word of God; then when death comes on them, they are caught up to God.

Part of the church is over yonder and part of it is here. Paul clarifies this in Ephesians 3:14-15: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." If you know

what the name of the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is, then you will know what the name of the church is. The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Bible, is God. Jesus prayed to His Father in Heaven. God was His Father, and the whole family, both in Heaven and in earth, is kept in the Father's name.

False religion also has twin symbols. Revelation, Chapter 17, shows a mother and her daughters. The mother is papal Rome, and her daughters are every Protestant organization that came out of her. The eighth beast is the mother bringing her daughters back through church amalgamation, the Federated Council of Churches. Every religion on the face of the globe is in that thing except the true church. Communism is in it, unbelieving Jews are in it, and paganism is in it. The Bible says they are going to surround the camp of the saints. I can see the move of it more and more.

Kept in the Father's Name

The next questions that come up are: Why are the church's converts called the man child? and Why are false religion's children called daughters? There is a definite reason for it. The whole family was to be kept in the Father's name. God wanted the church to be perpetuated. He wanted her to keep her same doctrine, her same standard, and even her same name.

Many people think that the Church of God is just a good name; however, it is not a name that some man chose. Before any of us came along, God named the church. Jesus said in John 17:11, "... Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." Throughout the New Testament, you can read about "the church of God."

Jesus prayed for the Father to keep the people in the Father's name. The church is the bride of Christ. Paul taught that, and so does the Revelation. We read in

Romans, Chapter 7, that we have been released from the old Law and married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, Jesus Christ. Jesus took His bride just as the first Adam did. God performed an operation and opened up Adam's side, took out a rib, and made a woman. It is the same way with the second Adam, Jesus Christ. While He hung on Calvary's Cross, one of the soldiers pierced His side, and out flowed blood and water. With that blood and water came forth the bride, the Church of the Living God. Christ purchased her with His own blood.

When Jesus got His bride, He put her in and kept her in the Father's name. The Father's name is the family name. My name is Wilson. No one gave me that name; the minute I was born I was a Wilson. No one had to decide on that, but they chose a given name, Emerson. When I took a bride, she did not become Mrs. Emerson; she became Mrs. Wilson, taking the family name.

What is Jesus' name? The angel told Mary that the holy thing that would be born of her would be called the Son of God. God was His name. The angel also said to call His name Jesus. Jesus was His given name. Therefore, His name is Jesus God. When He took His bride, the church, He did not call her the Church of Christ. *Christ* means "the anointed one." Christ is His office. He did not name His wife after His office. She is the bride of Christ; therefore, the church is called the Church of God, because it is in the Father's name.

I know that some people say the name does not mean anything, but we cannot have unity without a name. Once when I was preaching on the church, a lady became stirred. She came to me after the service and said, "There's nothing in a name."

"Well," I said, "why are there so many names then?"

She said, "To tell people apart."

I said, "That apart business is

what God is against."

When someone today falls out with the pastor or someone else where he is worshiping, he starts another church in his own name, teaching anything he wants, and there is another division. The world looking on says, "My, what a mess! They don't have real salvation or they wouldn't be so messed up."

There is everything in a name when it comes to inheritance. My name is Wilson. My father left some inheritance. If nothing is in a name, why were you not there the day the judge read the will? You were not there because you did not have the right name; so there is something in a name. Likewise, there is also something in a name when it comes to our spiritual inheritance. Romans 8:16-17 reads: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. . . ."

The Beginning of the Last Days

According to Revelation 12:5, this man child was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, or the unbendable Word of God. Let us consider how she was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Isaiah 2:2 begins, "And it shall come to pass in the last days. . . ." The last days began in A.D. 33. Joel, Chapter 2, lets us understand that it will come to pass in the last days that God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh. In Acts, Chapter 2, after the Spirit had fallen on the Apostles, Peter said, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."

God has dealt with people in all eras of time, and now we are in the last era, called the last days, or the Holy Ghost dispensation. There are no days to follow these days. The end of time is after these last days. When it comes to money, would you have a thousand dollars left after the last penny was spent? Neither will there be a thousand years after the last day.

This prophecy set right in after

A.D. 33. Isaiah 2:2-3 reads: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house [the church] shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills [false religion]; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." This was to take place in the last days, and the Word of the Lord was going to start out from Jerusalem.

Now let us read about the fulfillment. In Luke 18:31-33 Jesus told the disciples that they would go up to Jerusalem, and He would be crucified; then *all* things that were spoken by the prophets concerning the Son of man would be accomplished. There is no Old Testament prophecy of the future Second Coming of Christ. They all prophesied of His First Coming.

Let us understand about the Word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem. After Jesus rose from the dead, He said in Luke 24:44-47: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Isaiah said the Word of the Lord would go out from Jerusalem. In other words, it would have its beginning in Jerusalem. Jesus told the disciples to "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." In Acts, Chapter 1, Jesus said when the Holy Ghost came upon the disciples, they

would be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. It began in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.

Judged By the Word of God

Isaiah 2:4 states, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." However, Jesus said there would be wars and rumors of wars right to the end (Matthew 24:6). What ending of war was Isaiah talking about? Isaiah 2:4 let us know that Christ would teach us His ways. What are His ways? He instructed us to do good to those who do us wrong and to pray for those who despitely use us.

Again, Isaiah 2:4 reads, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they. . . ." You need to understand who "they" are. "They" are not the whole world, because there will never be a time when the entire world lives in peace with no wars. Therefore, who is going to "beat their swords into plowshares," an expression which means to quit fighting and having wars? The Word of the Lord was to go forth from Jerusalem, and the Lord would judge among the nations. He judges among the nations by His Word.

The Great Commission in Mark 16:15-16 was this: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "They" are those who take the rebuke and believe the Gospel. The Gospel puts a rebuke on people for their sinful conditions. Friend, if you will take the rebuke, humble yourself, and repent, the Lord will bring you into an experience of salvation and you will not learn war anymore. You will get rid

of the implements of war. Instead of a sword, you will have a plowshare, and you will begin plowing. Instead of a spear, you will have a pruninghook, and you will begin pruning yourself, cutting back here and there so that you can be more fruitful for God.

The Word of the Lord will go out from Jerusalem, and through that, He will judge among the nations. Is He doing it? Everywhere the Gospel is preached, it makes people either believers or unbelievers.

The Bible says He will rebuke many. It does not say that He will rebuke all. Everyone will not take His rebuke. If you will take His rebuke and repent and be saved, you will beat your sword into a plowshare. This does not mean that after you are saved you will never be tempted to retaliate in any way. You have a flesh to work on; in other words, you have some perfecting to do. It would be wonderful if your sword were changed into a plowshare immediately, but you have to beat it. Many people are not willing to put forth the effort that it takes to get victory over things in their lives. They are ever wanting God to do it for them. God will give them the grace and the wisdom, but they must take the sword, put it into the fire, and beat it into a plowshare. In 1 Corinthians 9:27 Paul said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." We must put forth effort.

The Word of the Lord does the judging, and it makes everyone either a believer or an unbeliever. In John 12:48 Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." The Lord will judge among the nations and rebuke many people. Those who take His rebuke (or hear and obey the Word) will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. He

teaches people His ways and His paths, and when they take the teachings of Jesus, they will never learn war. Jesus does not teach people how to fight. Isaiah 11:9 reads, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain. . . ." This was not a prophecy that covered the whole world; it was telling what was going to go on in God's holy mountain.

The Lord judges all nations in His holy mountain, because all nations flow into it. There are Jews, Japanese, Italians, etc. On the Day of Pentecost, every nation under heaven was there, and three thousand of them flowed into Zion; and in Zion, or His holy mountain, they do not hurt or destroy. They beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks.

One New Man in Christ

The devil is putting many good things which God ordained for us to enjoy right now out in an age that does not even exist. When Jesus appears in the clouds again, the earth will not be burned over; it will be burned up and the heavens will be dissolved. Second Peter 3:13 reads, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." We will be with the Lord in that new place forever.

You will be a new creature if you will hear and obey the Word of the Lord and take the rebuke of the Gospel. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:21-22: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

The swords are not made into plowshares in a millennial age. The Bible lets you know that everyone who is born again is a divine plowman. When teaching about the Kingdom of God, Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the

kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). They make the plows from the swords they used to carry and the pruninghooks from the spears they used to carry. They do not hurt or destroy in God's holy mountain.

The rod of iron is the Word of God, and it goes forth from Jerusalem, or Mount Zion, and all nations flow into it. When men and women hear the Gospel and come in through the door, Christ Jesus, they are born again. After they get in, their rule is not a man-made creed, but the Lord rules with the Word of God. He does not beat or knock anyone around. There will never be a time when Christ, literally and by force, makes nations serve Him, because the service of Christ is a service of love.

Unsaved people will not be subject to the rod of iron. The carnal, fleshly, unregenerate individual is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7). Therefore, what good would it do for Jesus to come back on the earth and take a rod and try to make carnal minds serve Him? When you become a new creature in Christ Jesus, you are changed.

God in His Word uses animals to show the different dispositions of men. A person may be like a wolf or a lion before salvation comes, but when salvation comes, the lion will lie down with the lamb. In other words, that individual will become meek. The animals are not going to be changed. Each of them is exactly as God made it, except some that men have crossed. Basically, the wild animals are just the same as God made them. They do not need changed. It is man who fell and who needs to be changed.

Jesus sent word to Herod once, saying, "Go ye, and tell that fox . . ." (Luke 13:32). Herod was not a fox; he was the king. Jesus called him a fox because he had a sly nature. In Matthew 7:15 Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." They are not wolves; they are men. He called

them wolves because they divide the flock. He called the saints sheep, and He called the hypocrites goats. He used animals to show the different dispositions of men.

There will not be a time when the animals change, and there will not be a time in a future millennial age when man will be changed. The time to be changed is *now*. When death comes on you or the end of time comes, there will be no change in your soul whatsoever; however, you will get a new body.

Church of God, we need to spend more time in prayer. Let us do more travailing so that we can see more conception and more children brought into the Kingdom of God. We want you to get what God reveals to you from His Word. You need to listen to the Word of God and obey it. We trust the Holy Spirit to reveal to you just what you need.

(Cassette C-363)

God's Minorities

During the time NOAH was building the ark, he was very much in the minority—but he won!

When JOSEPH was sold into Egypt by his brothers, he was a decided minority—but he won!

When GIDEON and his three hundred followers, with their pitchers and lamps, put the Midianites to flight, they were in an insignificant minority—but they won!

When ELIJAH prayed down fire from heaven and put the prophets of Baal to shame, he was in a notable minority—but he won!

When DAVID, ridiculed by his brothers, went out to meet Goliath, in size he was in a decided minority—but he won!

When MARTIN LUTHER nailed his theses on the door of the cathedral, he was a lonesome minority—but he won!

When JESUS CHRIST was crucified by the Roman soldiers, he was a conspicuous minority—but he won!

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

Book of the Revelation is comprised of seven distinct series, and each series begins at the inception of the Gospel Day and goes through to the consummation. Revelation, Chapter 1, is predominantly an introductory chapter. Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3, is the letter series, which lists the seven congregations in Asia Minor by name, with each of the names and congregations representing a period of this Gospel Day.

In Chapter 4 the scene changes. Chapters 4 and 5 are an introduction to the seal series, and the seals commence in Revelation, Chapter 6. There are also other series through the Revelation. Revelation, Chapter 20, begins the sixth series. This chapter is an entire series in itself. How do we know that? The preceding chapter closes with the end of time.

Revelation 19:20 reads, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." This verse takes us to the end of time. Revelation, Chapter 20, commences a new series; therefore, its time setting is the beginning of the Gospel Day. The last verse of the chapter (verse 15) reads, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This takes us to the close of the Gospel dispensation.

Verse 1 says, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven." Remember, these are symbolic representations. These angels are not celestial beings. The word *angel* in the original Greek is the word **aggelos**, which means "a messenger or a symbol of a minister or a ministry." Revelation 1:20 says, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels [messengers or ministers] of the seven churches [or the Greek says *congregations*]."

Those *angels* connote messen-

gers delivering a divine message. We can see that by reading Galatians 4:13-14, where the Apostle Paul declared: "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God." What did he do? Verse 13 tells us he preached the Gospel to them.

Revelation 22:8-9 states: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." That angel was not a celestial being. He was a divine agent employed to convey a message from God to man. When the Scripture says that the angel came down from heaven, the angel is a picture of a ministry. Verse 1 says, ". . . an angel come down from heaven," This ministry is a divinely called ministry.

Look at the calling of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:1 where he said, "Paul, *called* to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. In Galatians 1:1 he wrote, "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ." Paul received a divine call, but where did this divine call come from? It came from Jesus Christ. We can see this call described in Acts 9:3 when Paul was on the road to Damascus: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven." Verse 15 tells us, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

Our Scripture text says in verse 1, "I saw an angel come down from heaven." This lets us know that the call to declare and deliver that message (the call to the ministry) was a heavenly call. It came down from

God out of heaven. Notice that he still had power. This coming down is not referring to a fall, or an apostasy, because when he came down he still had power. It was denoting a divine call from Heaven.

Notice what this angel is equipped with when he received the call. Again, verse 1 of the Scripture lesson reads, "And I saw an angel [a messenger or a minister] come down from heaven [he received a divine call that came from Heaven, and he was automatically equipped with something], having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." When the call came, he was equipped with what verse 1 denotes as "the key and a great chain."

What are these symbolic of? In Matthew 16:19 Jesus declared, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Jesus spoke of "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Notice that the word *keys* is used in Matthew's Gospel in the plural. When the plural is employed without a specific number attached to it, it represents two. What are the two keys given to the ministry that enables them to "bind" as Matthew 16:19 says, or as Revelation 20:2 says "bound him"? The two keys are the Word and the Spirit.

In our Scripture text in verse 1, what does it symbolize when the word *key* (singular) is employed? In Luke 11:52 Jesus said, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge." Where does knowledge come from? Jeremiah gave a prophetic utterance in Jeremiah 3:15. He said, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

Where do the ministry get this knowledge and what is the source of the knowledge with which they feed the saints? What is the charge to the ministry? In 2 Timothy 4:2 the charge is to "preach the word."

Knowledge is derived from the Word. It is the Word that pastors feed the saints, and the Word is this key of knowledge.

We can see it illustrated Revelation 3:7, which says, "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." What is the key of David? Verse 8 reads, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word." The key that opens the door is the Word, and it is the Word that opens men's understanding and gives them knowledge concerning Truth. The key of the Word opens and shuts; however, it takes more than the Word to overcome the power of the enemy.

In Revelation 9:1 we see a fallen ministry, and they had the key: "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: [the stars are the messengers or the ministers] And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit."

Without the other key, or the chain, all they did was let the forces of the enemy out. They had no power to bind. Revelation 9:3 states, "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth." The key without the chain loosed the power of the enemy in a greater way. A false ministry today is trying to preach the Bible without the Spirit of God, and it is causing more confusion and letting more of the devil loose. Verse 1 of our Scripture lesson says that this angel had both the key and a great chain. I repeat, without the chain they merely let the forces of the enemy out.

What is the great chain? Stop and consider where the power to bind resides? Is it merely in the

Word? No, or that fallen angel could have bound rather than to have turned things loose. In 1 Corinthians 2:4 Paul said, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." The power to bind is in the Spirit.

In Matthew 12:28-29 Jesus said: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?" What was He talking about? Who binds the strong man in verse 29? In verse 28 He let us know that the power to bind is through the Spirit

of God.

In the New Testament we are not ministers of only the letter. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:6 "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." We are able ministers of the New Testament because we are ministers of the Spirit. The ministry we see portrayed in Revelation 20:1 had both the key and a great chain, or in other words, both the Word and the Spirit. That is still the evidence of a true God-called ministry. In the next issue we will examine what the angel did once he was equipped.

Brother Earl R. Borders

Youth Corner

Saved at the Keyhole

Maggie Shields was one of the maids in the big house in the west end of Edinburgh. She had been ill and felt that she was going to die, and she knew that she was much too shy to ask her mistress, though she knew her to be an earnest Christian.

Then one day, the staff was informed that there was to be a meeting in the home where they worked. It would be addressed by John Thompson who was preaching in one of the slum districts of the great city.

How glad Maggie was to hear to news! "Now," she thought to herself, "perhaps I will hear how I can be saved." But when the day came and the people were gathered together, the door was shut and Maggie was left outside—all alone in the big hall. A thought struck her, and tiptoeing to the door of the great room, she bent down until her ear was at the keyhole, and there she stayed, listening and listening.

John Thompson had prayed much about the message to present to these rich people, and it seemed to him that if John 3:16 was good news for the sinful poor, it would be just as good news for the sinful rich. John Thompson preached and left, making up his mind that this would be his first and last meeting in such aristocratic company!

Three weeks later, at the end of a

service in the slum quarter of Edinburgh, he saw Lady Thornton approaching him. Expecting another invitation to speak, he was just about to refuse when she said, "Mr. Thompson, are you too busy to visit a maid of mine who is dying in the hospital? She is especially asking to see you." Agreeing, he got the number of the ward and bed, and the next day he set out.

Maggie Shields was lying propped up in bed when her visitor was announced. How surprised he was when she told him how she had listened to his preaching at Lady Thornton's house three weeks before!

"With my ear to the keyhole," she said, "I heard you say that 'whosoever' included everyone, rich or poor, and that if anyone put his name into God's 'whosoever,' he would be saved. That was just what I wanted and needed, and there, standing at the door, I said in my heart, 'Well, if none of those ladies and gentlemen put their names in God's whosoever today, Maggie Shields will.' All at once the burden of my sin rolled away from my heart, for I did believe in the Lord Jesus as my Lord and Savior, and peace and joy have filled my heart ever since. I just wanted to tell you how I was saved at the keyhole, and though I am only a poor servant girl, I can die happy now, for that 'whosoever' took me in!"

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