

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

Guest Editorial

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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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CONTENTS

The Spirit of Antichrist	3
Christians Rate Him Highly	8
Radio Log	12
In Memoriam	13
Especially for Young People	14
Make Ready a People Prepared for the Lord	16
Are You Reigning With Christ?	19
What Is Your Word Worth?	23
Prayer Is the Key	25
Winter Camp Meeting Information	26

Vol. 34 December 2004 No. 12

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

John 3:19-21

Condemnation

It has been said, "Condemnation is the worst 'nation' a person can live in." To be condemned is to be convinced of wrong (sin), found guilty for crimes committed, and required to make recompense. Ones found in this condition many times fail to acknowledge their sin and wrong, thus go on in life trying to cover it. This may be done for a while, but in time you can "be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). If not in this life, it will face you when you reach the judgment bar of God. It would be far better to deal with sin and wrong now while there is yet time to be forgiven. At the Judgment there will be no time to ask for forgiveness, no time to say "I'm sorry."

There is another danger to overriding condemnation, which is meant to reprove. That danger is trying to smooth it over by going on as if nothing is wrong, as if you are not guilty. There is the possibility of having your conscience seared where you get past feeling.

Great multitudes are under the hand of condemnation because they love sin. They refuse to come to the light because the deeds of their lives are evil. Also, they allow foolish pride to hinder them from doing what they know they need to do. Pride is a terrible tyrant and will cause many to loose their souls eternally. In Isaiah 5:18 we read, "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope." In simple terms, pride (vanity) is like a cart rope that will drag a man's sin behind him to the Judgment.

Oftentimes those who are under condemnation try to live in that condition day after day. They put on a front as if all were well and try to act happy. To look at them, one would not suspect there was anything wrong or that anything was covered in their lives. Sin is deceitful, but God is faithful.

Living with the thought of doing wrong and sinning against God and against society troubles the mind. It will eat away at your conscience and, in time, will appear to all. It is as the Psalmist David stated in Psalm 51:3, "My sin is ever before me." Knowing that you have grieved God brings torment to the soul and mind. In some cases, condemnation has brought ones down to a sick bed, realizing there are things deep within their lives that need to be dealt with and cleared with God.

Condemnation has at times brought men so low to despair that they felt there was no way out of their dilemma. With their health wrecked, their minds almost destroyed with grief and guilt, the thought is presented to them of ending it all. They think that surely this would take care of the gnawing

[continued on page 15]

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many

antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest [or made known] that they were not all of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

The Spirit of Antichrist



Brother Roger L. Decker

"The Truth Shall Make You Free"

There are many misconceptions concerning the doctrines set forth in the New Testament, especially those teachings centered around the Kingdom of God. There are teachings of millenniums, raptures, antichrist, purgatory, and so on. The list is seemingly exhaustless. Too many have become silent on these doctrines with the thought that if they preached on them, people would be offended. However, if the Truth is offensive to people, then it is because they have been found in error.

How can you know when one is speaking the Truth? There are at

least two ways. First, you must follow in your Bible. God has made it possible for all people in the United States to have the privilege of buying a Bible. You should take one with you to the house of God. Who should carry a Bible but a Christian? While the man of God is preaching, you can ask God to reveal the Truth to you and to give you understanding.

John revealed another way that you can know when someone is speaking the Truth. He said in 1 John 2:20, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." The word *unction* simply means "anointing." John said in 1 John 2:27, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in

you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

John was saying that we, as Christians, have an anointing; we "have an unction from the Holy One." That verse of Scripture in no way is doing away with pastors and evangelists and teachers and other functions of the ministry. John was saying that you do not need any man to teach you what you have known from the beginning. What is that which you have known from the beginning? Verse 24 tells us, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye

have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father."

The expression "from the beginning" was used nine times in 1 John and two times in 2 John. From the beginning, they heard from the Apostles the truth concerning the death, the burial, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. What they heard was not tradition or hearsay but facts. The Truth was the first thing they heard in the beginning. The Truth is like a mirror before you: it is a revealer of your true condition before God. Jesus, speaking in John 8:32, said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Who Are the Antichrists?

The devil would like to get you to believe that an antichrist only exists in the future. What does the word *antichrist* mean? It simply means "an opponent of the Messiah." In a book called "Armageddon, Appointment With Destiny," the subject of *antichrist* was mentioned. First, the writer said that the antichrist will be a world leader. Second, he said the antichrist will force the Jews to stop their sacrifices in the rebuilt temple. Third, he said the antichrist will set up an idol of himself called the Abomination in the temple, to be worshiped as God until he is destroyed at the end of the seven years when Christ returns. To those who know the Truth, it sounds absurd that anyone could teach such a doctrine and that people would believe it. The way that such a doctrine is set forth is by sowing error with Truth.

Let us look closely at the subject of antichrist. I want to start with 1 John 2:18, which reads, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." Looking at this Scripture, we note that even then many antichrists had already come. John said they had heard that antichrist would

come. This was the first time the word *antichrist* was used in the Bible. It had not been used until John used it. However, Jesus referred to those who were antichrist, but He called them false prophets and false christs. He said in Matthew 24:24, "For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." John said there were *many* antichrists even then. John mentioned *antichrists* four times and *antichrist* one time.

Many names have been attached to the supposed antichrist. Every time a world leader rises to power, especially one who is a tyrant, he has been labeled "antichrist." There have been names such as Hitler, Stalin, Khrushchev, Mussolini, Castro, and Saddam Hussein. Each of these was supposedly the antichrist, according to many religionists. Nevertheless, antichrists are not world leaders, political leaders, atheists, or communists.

Who are the antichrists? They are apostates, or those who have defected from the Truth. They are those who have been involved in a falling away. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." One has to give heed to a seducing spirit before he gives heed to doctrines of devils.

The Morning-Time Apostasy

A great falling away took place in the morning time. Revelation 8:8 states, "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood." I want you to notice one thing. It just did not slip into the sea; it was *cast* into the sea. God cannot stand apostasy, or defecting from Truth. When people will not stand for God, they always go into wickedness; they go into humanism. There was Holy Ghost fire in the morning-

time church. Revelation 8:8 says, "... burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood."

Antichrists were present in John's day, even before the world leaders that I mentioned were born. John was not talking about Nero or an Egyptian pharaoh or a sadistic leader. Again, 1 John 2:18 reads, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." You need to understand the setting of when 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John were written. They were written at a time when there was a falling away. Apostasy was already in motion when John returned from the Isle of Patmos and wrote those three epistles. Those letters are so plain that even sinners can understand them. He let you know who is in the church and who is out. He let you know that you should not hate your brother. If you do, you are the same as a murderer.

John also let you know that no sin is in the church. A child of God does not commit sin. Most people have lost track of that biblical Truth. Apostasy will take away the simple truths of the Bible, and then humanism will come in. When that happens, preachers will be afraid of offending the people. Friend, if the Truth offends you, it is not the Truth's fault; it is your fault.

When John wrote those three epistles, people were falling away from the Truth and had already affected the church of the morning time. When the spirit of apostasy comes in, many people are touched by the long tentacles of Satan. Families are torn asunder, friends are separated, and many become confused; then people do not know who is right and who is wrong. I have visited people in the hospital who had terminal diseases. Some have said, "I don't know who is right or which church is right." I said, "One thing you do know, and that is, you need to repent. You need to take care of that part first, and God will help

you with who is right when *you* get right." Some people use that as an excuse not to go anywhere to church. When apostasy hits, the spiritual strength of those who are touched by the long tentacles of Satan is slowly drained until they are confused, misled, and ensnared in the devil's grasp.

The Deceivableness of Unrighteousness

Antichrists are comfortable, professed Christians who are neither hot nor cold, and they are not about to change. They hunt until they find a leader who will not try to change them but who will accept them as they are. They no longer love the Truth, because they have changed their minds about it. Having a love for the Truth is the only way you can finish your course successfully.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12: "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 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 [or for this reason] God shall send them strong delusion [if you do not want the Truth, God will let you go, and He will help you not to believe the Truth], that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Now, Paul did not say that those people did not *have* the Truth, that they did not *know* the Truth, or that they did not know those who spoke the Truth; however, it does say they did not *love* the Truth. Many times

the reason pastors have such a difficult time keeping the people out of the world and have to preach the same things repeatedly is that people lose their love for the Truth.

Because the people that Paul wrote about received not the love of the Truth, they preferred error and delusion rather than the pure, simple Gospel by which they might have been saved. If you want to fuss over the dress standard, God will let you have your way. If you want to dress worldly, God will let you. He will not go into the store and pick out your clothes for you. Sister, if you want to cut your hair, God will let you do it, and He will let a luke-warm, professing Christian brag on you. Since I have been a pastor, no sister has ever come to me and said, "The Lord showed me that I am to cut off my hair." Christians should dress modestly. They should not show their midribs when they raise their arms.

Children of God are to be examples among the world as well as among those who believe. Paul was an example to those who believed. He lived holy and righteously. He wrote in 1 Thessalonians 2:10, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe."

Today some who profess to be Christians are worldly one moment and profess to be Christians the next. Some are never satisfied with how they look. If they have gray hair, they dye it brown. God knows more about matching your skin and your eyes with your hair color.

The Church of God is a holy people. You will find the name "Church of God" scattered throughout the New Testament. She is the only one God calls overseers to oversee, and it is the church that He purchased with His own blood.

Failing to Abide in the Truth

The spirit of antichrist is a spirit that opposes the Truth, and that spirit works on the people of God. The

devil wants people to look to the future for an antichrist while that spirit is working among the people of God. John said in verse 18 of our Scripture lesson that "even now are there many antichrists." He wrote that around A.D. 96-98, and antichrists were present in his day.

Where did the antichrists come from? According to the Bible, you are going to find that they were not world leaders. The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: [Now, that makes sense, doesn't it? That is very easy to understand.] but they went out, that they might be made manifest [or made known] that they were not all of us."

Who were the antichrists? They were people who worshiped with the saints of God, in the same services. John said they went out from them. They had been in Church of God congregations. They were not world leaders such as Khrushchev, Stalin, Saddam Hussein, Nero, or an Egyptian pharaoh. According to John, they had their start with the Church of God. Why did they go out? John said they were not of us. Division affected the church of the morning time. Why is that spirit called *antichrist*? It is very simple: because it portrays a divided Christ, and Christ is not divided.

Our anchor is secure only as long as it is in Jesus Christ. The devil is powerless as long as we love the Truth and stay with the Truth. In 1 John 2:21-22 we read: "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."

Antichrists deny the Father and the Son. How do they do that? John let us know that they deny the Father and the Son by not letting that abide which they had heard from the beginning. He was not talking about infidels or atheists who deny the existence of the Father and the Son,

but he was talking about people who did not let that abide which they heard from the beginning. John was talking about those who talk the talk but do not walk the walk. When people get caught up in apostasy, they say everything is wonderful, and they have no burdens. All they talk about is the love of God. God is love, but He has some other characteristics besides love. He is also a God of judgment. The Bible lets us know that Zion, or the church, shall be redeemed with judgment.

When people have the spirit of antichrist, their works betray their walk. You cannot know the Father and the Son and disobey God. You cannot live in sin, or practice sin, and still know Jesus Christ. John wrote in 1 John 3:6-9: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [Christ] is righteous.

"He that committeth sin is of the devil [that is very clear; you do not need to get out the *Strong's Concordance* to understand it]; for the devil sinneth from the beginning [you cannot go back any further with the devil than the beginning; he was never an angel of light]. For this purpose [or for this reason] the Son of God was manifested [or made known], that he might destroy the works of the devil. [What are the works of the devil? Sin.] Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."

Those verses of Scripture let you know that one has the Spirit of God when he is born again. Why? There is no other way one can stop sinning except by the Spirit of God. There would be nothing to mortify your members. John stated in 1 John 3:9, ". . . for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Mortify the Deeds of the Flesh

We read in Romans 6:1-6: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God

forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? [He was not talking about water baptism, because that is not how you get into Christ. You get into Christ through a spiritual baptism.] Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

When the old man is crucified, you quit sinning. When do you quit sinning? You stop serving sin when you get saved. The old man is crucified, that henceforth you should not serve sin. When does the old man die? The old man dies when you die out to sin, and you die out to sin when you are saved; then you need a pastor to perfect you. Although the child of God is already perfect, God gave evangelists, pastors, and teachers to make them more perfect.

When you are saved, you are perfect in the sense that your record has no sin. You are as pure as a newborn baby. I like to liken it to a big blackboard with all your sins recorded there, and God just takes His big eraser and cleans up the whole blackboard. You are free from sin and the old man dies; henceforth, you no longer serve sin. You cannot keep yourself. If you do not have the Spirit of God, you cannot mortify the deeds of the flesh.

Romans 8:8-13 states: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his [if he does not have the Spirit of God, then he is not saved]. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but

the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

You cannot mortify the deeds of the body if you do not have the Spirit of God. There is no other way to live holy. When you go to an altar of prayer and repent, God does not just turn you loose for you to go your way and try to keep the flesh under in your own strength. No, you mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit. If you mortify the deeds of the body, then you will live.

Take Heed

How does one deny the Lord? One does so by denying His Word. Many antichrists are in the world today. Paul, speaking to the elders in Acts 20:28-31, stated: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this [Paul was not in question about this], that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Again, who are the antichrists? They are religious people who refuse to line up with the Truth. Child of God, you need to be on your guard or you could be seduced. Many people have been drawn away and have followed grievous wolves. John said they went out from us; in other words, they were religious people. In 1 John 2:26 John said, "These things

have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." Another translation says, "I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray."

Antichrist spirits are out there, and they are dressed up in sheep's clothing. May God help the church to have discernment. You may ask,

"How can you tell who they are?" You can watch their tracks. Sheep do not make wolf tracks. Today it seems that many people have a difficult time being pastored. They do not want anyone to tell them what to do. Friend, if you ever get inside Heaven, you must have a pastor, and you are going to have to be pastored.

What is the spirit of antichrist? Division. They went out from us to make it known that they were not of us. Is the spirit of antichrist working on you?

(Cassette C-5081M)

Loaves and Fishes

Many people today hesitate to give just because they do not have millions to further the cause of Christ. However, if we would notice those who gave in Bible times, we could learn some priceless lessons.

It was the widow's mite and the lad's lunch that are recorded in Holy Writ. We do not know the names of either the widow or the little boy, but through the centuries, many thousands have been inspired by their sacrificial giving.

Just suppose that when the lad was approached by the disciples, that he had replied: "Not so! It isn't my fault that these people forgot to bring their own lunches!" And he would have gone over behind some thornbush and eaten his lunch alone. But oh, the lesson he has left for us to follow! He gave willingly of what little he had, and Jesus blessed it. How his heart must have rejoiced! And there were seven baskets full left over! I like to think that he was permitted to take one of those baskets home with him and say, "Look, Mother, what Jesus did today!"

Have you ever wondered where the empty baskets came from? Well, our God has a way of providing whatever is needed for the occasion whenever He finds willing hearts to serve Him.

One of my aims, when I get to Heaven, is to have a talk with that little lad and thank him personally for his generosity. I want to meet that widow who gave her mite. I am sure we will share many experiences together. You know, she could have said: "I cannot give like other folks, so I won't give at all. I don't want anyone to see my putting in a mite along with their generous offerings."

There is a little gem of truth that I once read: "Between the great things we cannot do and the small things we will not do, the danger is that we shall do nothing." The widow and the little boy gave from hearts of love and compassion. That is the only way we can give today and still have God's approval on our gifts.



We all are happy and grateful to hear of those who can give their thousands for the cause of Christ, but we must not overlook those who can give only their "mites." The Lord takes pleasure in our willing offerings, whether they consist of our money, our talents, or our time. Many times He places us in circumstances where our gifts cost us to where it hurts. Some who give their thousands may do it grudgingly, where others who give their "mites" may be giving all they have with willing hearts.

No matter what our treasures may be, whether large or small, if we close the door on them and refuse to give liberally, they will leak out somewhere and we will find ourselves empty-handed. There is an old saying: "Bless your one loaf and pass it out to the multitudes, and it will feed them and return to you seven baskets full. Hoard it and guard it, and it will shrivel down to a mildewed crust."

Selected

Christians Rate Him Highly



Brother Irwin Seshier

Are You on the Winning Side?

Church, we are in a battle, and sometimes things will get tough. Often things do not go the way we think they should go, but God is in control. He will help us and prepare us for those rough times. At times we may not think there is a way out, but He knows the way out. We may get a little weary once in a while, and others may say things about us that are not true, but we have to keep going for the Lord.

God is so good to us. Child of God, you need to ask yourself this question: Where would I be if I did not have God in my life? The answer is, you would be wandering aimlessly on the plains of sin. No one cares for you as much as Jesus

does. Many people out in the world will turn their backs on you. When circumstances become really tough and hard to bare, there is One who will stand with you, and His name is Jesus. He will be there to help you.

I am on the winning side. Are you? The song entitled "On the Winning Side" reads:

*Along the way of life are many foes
That daily war against my soul;
But constant victory
My Savior gives to me
As I press on to the goal.*

*The battle may be long and hard to
win,
And Satan's host may press me sore;
But though I may be tried
I'm on the winning side,*

I shall triumph evermore.

*On the winning side,
I'm on the winning side,
I'm on the winning side with Jesus;
Though hot may be the fray,
My soul can boldly say,
I'm on the winning side with Jesus.*

Dear one, how does God rate in your life? How do you rate His goodness and His grace? Can you say that He is on the top of your priority list?

We read in Psalm 23:1, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." When you have Christ in your soul, He satisfies that "want." People are trying to do so many things, especially at this time of the year. They go to Christmas parties and attend this and that, trying to

satisfy something down deep inside that will never be satisfied. I thank the Lord that we have something that does satisfy!

Psalms 108:1 says, "O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory." The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 11:1, "In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?"

Oftentimes we depend upon consumer ratings and the word of mouth to influence our purchases. We depend upon other consumers to tell us whether or not a product is good. We depend upon others to tell us how we should invest our money, how we should deal with property, and to advise us concerning retirement benefits. At times some people put more faith and confidence in men than they do God.

I am so glad that God knows all about us, and He understands us. At times things seem to come in from every angle. Sometimes you feel that you do not know what to do or that you do not know how to handle a situation, but God knows how to take care of it. He knows all about you, saint. He knows more about you than you even know.

God Is Great and Giving

In the world the movie industry has ratings on their films. They try to tell you which films are appropriate for certain age groups. Well, I will give you the rating system of my Lord. First of all, we will start with the "G" rating. God is *great!* There is no denial of that. Hebrews 13:20 states, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." God is great, God is good, and God is wonderful!

The Prophet Isaiah penned in Isaiah 12:6, "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." It is great to be a Christian! The world is so eager to tell you how great they feel, but we have some-

thing much greater than the world has.

Another category under the "G" rating is *godly*. We read in Hebrews 12:28, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

Another word under the "G" rating is *giving*. God is so good to us. He is so willing to give us everything we need. Christian friend, you need to trust Him more, with your whole heart and soul. He gave you eternal life. He was there when no one else was there. He gave us His Son, who died upon Calvary's tree, so that we could be free. That was the ultimate sacrifice. So many people can say they have given this or that, but who can say that he gave his only son to die for the sins of this old world? Oh, what a giving God! We ought to give more thanks to God for what He has done for us.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:7, "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." We can do nothing without God. We cannot serve God in our own strength. God has to be in everything we do. There are too many places today where people are merely going through the motions when it comes to their service to God, and then they wonder why they do not feel God's presence in their services.

To God be the glory for all He has done. I am so glad there are no programs in the true Church of God. You cannot program the Holy Spirit. You cannot direct the Holy Spirit to do things *your* way. The Lord does not want you to merely have a form of religion.

If you think, "Every Sunday I have to get up, go to church, sit there for two to three hours and listen to that preacher over and over," that should not be. You should have a desire to go to church and listen to the Word of God. You should not take the precious Truth for granted. We have the Truth today because

many people sacrificed their lives for it. I love the Church of God, don't you? Many times people are so quick to criticize rather than to look at the good things. I thank the Lord that He looks past our faults and sees our needs, and He gives us exactly what we need.

God Is Gracious

Another word under the "G" rating is *gracious*. Our God is a gracious God. We read in Jonah 4:2, "And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." No one is more gracious than God is. No one is as kind, compassionate, considerate, and so willing to care for us as God is.

Many people out in the world say they care for you, but Jesus really means it. People can change their minds. When your back is to the wall, Jesus will be there for you. When situations arise and no one is there to help you, Jesus will be there. He will be there for you in times of trouble. He is a gracious God, so much more than you realize. You should not take God for granted for all the things He has done for you.

What is another word under the "G" rating that describes the Lord? He is a *gallant* God: He is brave, strong, polite, bold, courageous, and cordial. Aren't you glad for that? The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." You might be surprised what you could do when you have the Lord on your side. You may think, "Well, I cannot do this or that." No, you must have the power of God in your life. That is the key. Your strength is not in yourself, but it is through Jesus Christ, and you need to give Him the glory. He is the One who made you, and He knows all about you.

A Powerful, Personal God

The next rating I want to deal with is "PG." The movie industry calls this "Parental Guidance," but I look at it as something else. The first one is *past guilt*. Christian friend, aren't you glad that you no longer have past guilt? The sins that you once committed are gone, never to be remembered against you anymore. Do you remember the day and the hour when He cleansed you from sin? So many people can tell you exactly where they were when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, but do you remember when Jesus took away your sins and gave you new life, new desires, and a new outlook on life?

So many people say, "Well, I'm going to turn over a leaf." Well, I am glad that God gave me a brand-new tree, a tree planted by living waters. Do you know what happens when you get planted by stagnant waters? You become stagnant. God does not want you to dip your spiritual roots in the cesspools that inhibit your spiritual welfare.

Listening to those who point fingers at others is not a good way to get spiritual help. You need to be careful of what you listen to and of whom you listen to. Should someone want to talk about something that you are unsure of, you should recommend that the individual go to God in prayer and earnestly seek His face.

Child of God, do you remember how bad you really were out in sin? Then one day you realized that this life of sin was not for you, and you wanted to do better. You became sick of sin, but you lacked one thing in your life, and that was the power to overcome sin. There is power in sin. You cannot fight sin on your own. You must have that Higher Power to fight sin. Thank God, His power will win every time. You do not have to go on your own thinking or on your own understanding. God's Word will win every time. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any

twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." God's Word gets right into the inner man.

Another phrase we want to consider under the "PG" rating is that God is a *personal God*. Aren't you thankful for that? Saint, we each are on a journey, and we need God. We need Someone who has walked the road before us. We need Someone who can help us to avoid pitfalls and who can warn us to watch out for the snares of the enemy. Psalm 32:8 reads, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

Psalm 73:24 states, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." I am so thankful that God is our own personal God, that He helps us in the time of trouble and that He watches out for us and shows us exactly what we need to do. Isaiah 58:11 says, "And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." The child of God is like a spring of water, not stagnant water.

As a Christian, you cannot do whatever you want to do. A few years ago, I went on a field trip with the sixth grade class at school. We went to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. That was one of the best trips I have ever been on, but it would have been nothing at all had we not had a personal tour guide to explain the battles that took place and many other interesting details concerning the Civil War.

To be a tour guide there, one has to study the Civil War extensively and know all there is to know about that war. Then one has to go through strenuous testing procedures. A guide has to be certified, and then he must take tests periodically in order to stay certified.

The tour guide will take you through the woods and show you

important embattlements and strategies and will tell you how the soldiers dressed and what they ate, which was very little. You would not know the many important details unless you had a personal guide to tell you all those things.

How much more important is it for our Heavenly Father to show us the correct way? When we might want to go our own way, He will lead us another way. Saint, you have a personal guide who will steer you away from danger. He knows what is best for you.

God Provides Abundantly

What is another "PG" rating for the Lord? It stands for *present goodness*; it is always fresh and never stale. I repeat, God is a present help in the time of trouble. He is never dull or ready to expire. You know, when you go to the store and go to the dairy case for a gallon of milk or a container of cottage cheese, it is good to check the date on the container. If it is about to expire, we look for the freshest one. We do not purchase something that is going to expire that day or the next day. We search for one that has a longer shelf life.

There are no expiration dates on God's present goodness. He is always ready to fill your spiritual hungering. God does not give you a "rain check," like stores hand out when certain advertised items are out of stock. He is willing to help us right then.

At times when you are physically hungry, you may think, "I am so hungry that I could sit down and eat and eat and eat." However, after one plate of generous helpings, you sit back and say, "I'm not as hungry as I thought I was," and the physical desire for food is satisfied. On the other hand, as a child of God, when it comes to spiritual food, you do not care how long the man of God preaches.

Another phrase under the "PG" rating in describing God is *providing galore*. He just blesses and blesses and

blesses. He never stops providing for His people. I thank the Lord for the wonderful provisions. When situations arise and things look bleak, do not worry. God will provide. He is ready to provide for you when you need Him.

A classic example of how God is ready to provide is found in Genesis 22:8, which reads, "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." God will provide abundantly, and He does all things well. Saint, when He saved you, He did a complete work, didn't He? Perhaps you were feeling really down, thinking there was no way out, but He did a complete work on you.

Purified Gabble

The last phrase under the "PG" rating that I want to mention is *purified gabble*. When you got saved, you did not talk the way you used to talk. He cleaned up your language, didn't He? I remember when I was a child, my mother would say, "If you don't watch what you are saying, I'm going to wash your mouth out with soap." I thank the Lord for the cleansing by the Word. It cleans up your mouth, and you see things differently. He gives you spiritual eyesight; then you do not rely on the physical so much.

As a Christian, you do not go to the same places you once did when you were in sin. You also have spiritual hearing. You do not stand around the water cooler anymore and listen to dirty jokes, do you? You act differently, talk differently, and walk differently. You may even smell differently. Your clothes no longer reek of alcohol and tobacco smoke. You have gotten rid of the cigarette habit. You did not do it on your own; God helped you to get rid of those habits. You got cleaned up inside and out. What a change!

When you have changed, people will notice. People will notice that you no longer come to work with a frown, mumbling under your breath

and complaining. Now that you are saved, you have a new life. Now you go to work with a smile on your face, shaking hands with people that you did not like before, and telling people, "Have a nice day!" The change that God makes in your life is something that you cannot hide. You do not need to walk around with a big sign that says, "I am saved." All you need to do is live the life, and people will automatically notice a change.

If a person goes to an altar of prayer to get saved and then the next day he acts the very same way he has always acted, there has not been a definite change. When God changes you, you will know it and people around you will know it. In the New Testament you can read about Zaccheus, who climbed up in the top of a tree so that he could see Jesus. When Jesus stopped at that tree and looked up and told Zaccheus to come down, something happened. Somewhere between the top of the tree and the ground, a change took place in Zaccheus' heart.

Redeemed and Living Righteously

The next rating that we want to consider is the "R" rating. I cannot think of a more blessed word to start with than *redeemed*. Christian friend, aren't you glad for redemption? What does the word *redeem* mean? It means "to regain possession of by paying a price, to set free, to ransom, to rescue from sin and its penalties." You know, there are penalties that you have to pay when you are living in sin. When you are redeemed, God will make it all worthwhile to you. He paid the price for us. I thank the Lord for that. Titus 2:14 reads, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Another word that I want you to consider with the "R" rating is *rejoice*. As a saint, you have something to shout about. The world does not understand. They go to ball games and whoop it up and cheer, but

when it comes to church, they think one should not get too excited. Well, if you are redeemed, you have something to be excited about! Romans 12:15 states, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." This is something to get excited about, but you must have something down in your heart and soul that you can rejoice about.

The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 2:16, "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." He wrote in Philippians 3:1, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

I want you to consider a few more words in the "R" rating: *righteous* and *remembrance*. To be righteous simply means to be morally right and just. There is nothing wrong in doing right. Too many people are doing things illegally, immorally, unjustly, ungodly, and unrighteously, hoping they do not get caught. That is no way to live.

Next, I mentioned *remembrance*. You need to remember what He did for you: remember that He died for you. You never want to forget that. You need to remember how good He has been to you. Remember, you have Someone who cares for you. Young person, Ecclesiastes 12:1 instructs, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Psalm 20:7 says, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ

The last word I want to consider under the "R" rating is *revived*. If you have cooled off in your experience, Christ can revive you. Right when you think you are going down for the very last time, when you think there is no hope and no possible way that you can be rescued, God can

revive you. He can put life back into your soul. So many people in nominal religion are walking around dead, spiritually speaking. They just go through the motions and play church, mustering up a bake sale, a rummage sale, or a soup supper. The only real life they have in the church are the trees and the shrubs that grow out in front of the church building. Friend, Jesus has something better for you than that.

How does Jesus rate you today? Are there things that you need to make right in your life? Is there a brother or a sister that you need to ask forgiveness of? Is everything clear with your pastor? Have you been running down the precious Church of God? Friend, you need to be very careful in this present day. The devil is using every available weapon to do his dirty work. He does not care about your situation. All he

cares about is bringing down the precious Church of God.

Christian friend, you need to be careful. Others are watching your life and listening to what you say. You need to obey God. You have something that money cannot buy. Money cannot buy true salvation. If you are a child of God, you have unsearchable riches. Fanny Crosby wrote about these unsearchable riches:

*O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Wealth that can never be told;
Riches exhaustless of mercy and
grace,
Precious, more precious than gold!*

*O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Who shall their greatness declare?
Jewels whose luster our lives may
adorn,
Pearls that the poorest may wear.*

*O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Freely, how freely they flow,
Making the souls of the faithful and
true
Happy wherever they go!*

*O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Who would not gladly endure
Trials, afflictions, and crosses on earth,
Riches like these to secure?*

*Precious, more precious;
Wealth that can never be told;
O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Precious, more precious than gold!*

Friend, how do you rate with the Lord? If you have a need in your soul, won't you earnestly seek God's face? He will supply your every need.

(Cassette C-4019A)

Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Wellston, Ohio	WAJB-FM 92.5	Thursday	8:05 a.m.-8:35 a.m.
North Little Rock, Arkansas	KMTL-AM 760	Saturday	2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
Little Rock, Arkansas	KAAY-AM 1090	Saturday	9:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	7:15 a.m.-8:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.

Tune in to the radio station nearest you to hear an inspiring message from the Word of God. If you enjoy the broadcast, let us hear from you!



IN
MEMORIAM

April 22, 1915 – July 31, 2004

Myrtle L. Mullen



Sister Myrtle L. (Davis) Mullen was brought into this life on April 22, 1915. She was the daughter of James E. and Eva L. Davis of Yakima, Washington. She was one of eight children born into the Davis family. Sister Mullen became acquainted with the Lord at an early age. When God spoke to her, she answered the call and gave her heart to Him.

As time went by, Sister Mullen continued to labor faithfully for the Lord in the Church of God congregation at Medford, Oregon. One beautiful day, Brother Robert Mullen came along. As they were introduced, God placed a real love in their hearts for each other. For a very short time, Brother Mullen was Sister Myrtle's pastor.

On June 14, 1937, they were joined together by God in the bond of holy matrimony. They were married for sixty-six years. Brother and Sister Mullen's lives were blest as they worked together in the Kingdom of God. The many years of ministry found them working with souls and leading many to the Lord. Among the number of souls won to the Lord during their ministry are those of Brother E. David Stegmeier and Brother and Sister Patrick Brower (the current pastor and his wife of the congregation in Hamilton, Montana).

Brother and Sister Mullen's first pastorate was in Medford, Oregon. Later, God called them to pastor a

work in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Next, they went to Grants Pass, Oregon; then to Plains, Montana; and finally, to Hamilton, Montana. It was in Hamilton that they finished their work for the Lord.

During their many years of service in the ministry, Brother and Sister Mullen were able to meet some of the old pioneer ministers of the Church of God reformation. Those older brethren were strong in the Lord. They taught and believed in divine physical healing for the body. Brother and Sister Mullen were eager to accept all the Truth of God's Word. Through the influence of these faithful men preaching the Word of God, Brother and Sister Mullen took their stand for the doctrine of divine healing.

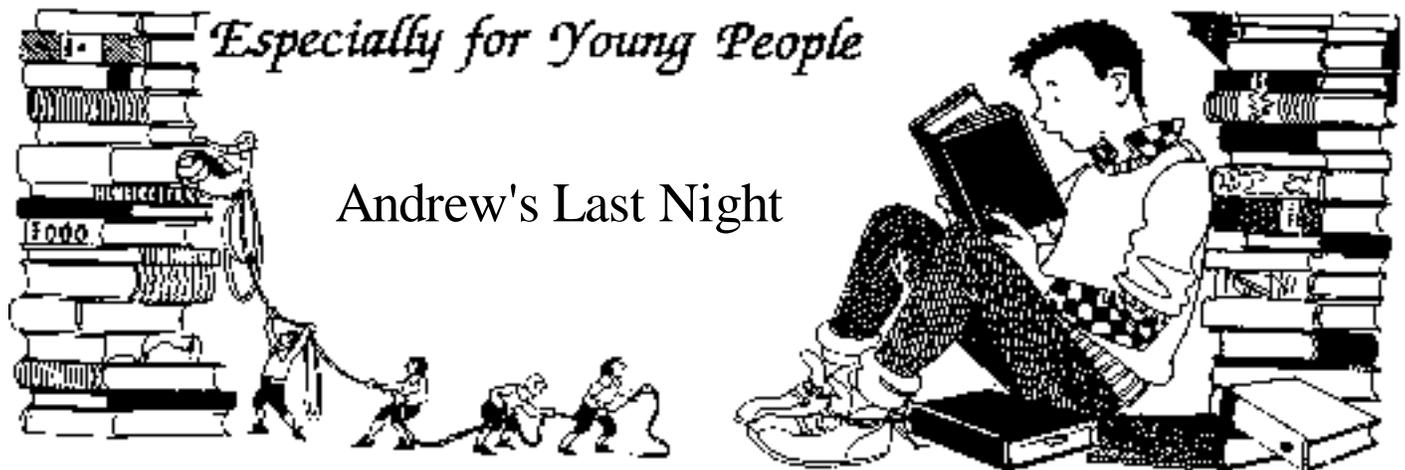
Sister Mullen was a very active person in Gospel work. She was always busy using her talent in the music ministry. Sister Mullen carried a deep love for the Lord and His eternal Truth. She also carried a burden for those who were lost in sin and others who were not prospering in their relationship with God. Often she would stand in the service and exhort and encourage ones to draw up close to the Lord.

Later in life Sister Mullen became seriously afflicted with blindness. Yet, she continued to trust in the God she knew would never fail her. That would have hindered some and

caused them to lay their work and talent aside, but not so with dear Sister Mullen. She continued to use her talents for the Lord. We can remember her leading the singing. She would have someone stand beside her to help her with the words as she led the congregation in the songs.

Sister Mullen was a very precious saint and was loved by all those who knew her. She was a prime example of one who would not allow anything to stand in her way of serving God, not even her handicap could stop her. Her life has touched many, and her influence will continue to live on even as the Scripture states. Revelation 14:13 says, ". . . Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

On Saturday, July 31, 2004, the Lord saw fit in His wisdom to call the soul of Sister Mullen to leave her house of clay and go home to be with Him. The Psalmist penned the words in Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." She has run her race and finished her course with victory. All of life's trials and burdens are past. All of her heartaches and afflictions have been laid aside. Sister Mullen is now in the arms of Jesus, experiencing the joys of Lord, even as He has promised.



Andrew's Last Night

It was evening. The house doctor accompanying the surgeon had paid an unusually late visit to the male ward of the hospital, and the surgeon was now preparing to leave when he met the nurse at the door. "It's a pity," he said, "but that fine young fellow at the top of the ward will be dead by morning. It's a pity, but we've done our very best."

Startled out of her usual calm, she answered, "Oh! Is that possible, doctor? But you told him he was 'doing fine,' and he is quite expecting to live."

"Well, he has put up a grand fight for life, and there is no use in depressing him. He will probably be unconscious in a few hours and never know he is dying." With these words the great surgeon went down the corridor.

The nurse stood for a moment hesitating; then she said to the house doctor, "Will you not tell him, doctor? His friends are all far away, and he may have something to settle or some message to send. It is hard that he should not know. Do tell him."

"No, no, I shall not tell him. It is easier for him not to know," said the doctor. Then he added, "You can tell him if you like."

"Then I must," she said, but within herself she thought, "How can I? Will he believe me in the face of the doctor's cheering words? Is it of any use, after all, to upset him?"

Still her first thought returned, "He may have something to settle or

some message to send." She finished her evening duties; then with slow steps made her way up to the ward, pondering how she was to impart her dread tidings.

The night nurse was already at her post, and the lights turned down in the ward when she took her seat by the one who, she knew, was dying.

"This is kind of you to come and pay me another visit," he said. "The doctor said I am doing fine. Does he think it will be long before I can be moved? You will write to my mother, won't you, and make the best of it to her?"

She was silent a moment, then she said gently, "I'm afraid the doctor made you think what is not true, Andrew. You are very hurt. There is more danger than any of us thought at first."

It was Andrew's turn to be silent; then, as a look of dismay came into his eyes, he said, "You do not mean I am going to die?"

Her grave look and the tear that rolled down her cheek answered him.

Again, there was a pause. He had been a strong man, had faced death over and over again on the battlefield; but this was different. It was night in a hospital ward, all was quiet, with nothing to distract or take off the solemnity of knowing he had God and eternity to face. Presently, with quivering lips, he spoke only two words: "How long?"

She dared not hide from him the

stern truth, and then came a low, despairing cry. "But I can't die! I can't die! I'm not ready to die! What must I do to be saved?"

She had said to the doctor, "He might have something to settle," but she had thought of earthly things—things of time. He had indeed something to settle, but it meant for eternity. All she answered was, "I don't know. I'm not saved."

Then, with pleading voice, he said, "Won't you pray for me? Do pray," but the sad answer came, "I can't. I don't know how."

What a moment for both of these souls! Both of them were lost. In the case of one, the last grains of sand in life's hourglass were fast running out, with the question unsettled, "What must I do to be saved?"

The nurse was scarcely less agitated than the dying man. Then, a Spirit-given thought surely came to her as she said, "If it will be any comfort to you, I will sit up and read the Bible to you."

Andrew caught at the suggestion as a drowning man might catch at a rope thrown out to him. "Do, do!" he eagerly said.

She turned up the light above his bed enough to enable her to read and picked up a Bible that was lying near. She hardly knew where to begin, but the Bible fell open at the Gospel of Saint John. In a low, clear voice she read of one who came to Jesus by night. She read of that man's need and God's love. She read slowly, distinctly, and he listened

eagerly, trying to grasp something to answer the absorbing anxiety of his soul.

Pausing a moment, she continued to read of the woman who had her thirst quenched and her heart satisfied. Still there was no word from the suffering man, and his eyes besought her to go on. Finally, she came to John 5:24, which says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." She looked up as she finished reading this and saw a change in his face. The haggard look of agony was disappearing, and he said, "Stop there; light is coming in. I see—I see. Leave me alone, but come back soon. Thank you. Oh! thank you!"

Alone with God, he remained for half an hour. When she returned, his face was radiant. "I have heard His Word," he said. "I believe the Lord Jesus Christ bore my sins when He was lifted up, and He has received me—all guilty as I was. It is not death for me now; it is everlasting life. He has forgiven me."

After a minute's rest he spoke again: "Will you meet me in Heaven? You can never say again you don't know the way."

"It isn't clear to me. I can't grasp it as you have," she answered.

"He knew I had no time left, so He let the light in quickly," the dying man said, "but He will make it clear to you. Tell my mother that Christ saved me at the eleventh hour. Peace! Peace!"

These were his last conscious words. The grey look deepened on his face, and very soon, as the surgeon had said, he had a slight convulsion, and then sank into profound unconsciousness, only to awaken with the Good Shepherd who had sought and found His lost sheep.

What of the nurse, do you ask? The enemy plied her with doubts and difficulties of all kinds. She wondered how Andrew had gotten assurance and could meet death so calmly, without a doubt that his sins were forgiven, while she was tossed with doubts and fears. She did not recognize that he had looked to the Lord Jesus Christ and had gotten a sight of His dying upon the Cross for his sins; that had changed everything for him in a moment. She was looking at herself and found nothing there but sin and misery.

In this condition four years rolled away—four dreary years; a ray of hope coming in sometimes, but quickly followed by darkness and despair. Then she became acquainted with a visitor to the hospital, to whom she opened her heart. This friend invited her to meet a

servant of God and to hear him preach—one who was much used in showing the way of peace to troubled souls.

The preaching was good, but it did not meet her case. They had some conversation, but nothing seemed to touch her. Finally, the preacher turned to John 5:24 and read, "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Suddenly, the light broke in. Like Andrew, she, too, said, "I see!" and peace entered her soul. The same words that had met the dying man four years before now calmed every doubt and fear in her heart, and she could thank God that for her also all was settled.

Young reader, is it settled with you? John 5:24 is also a message for you.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

"Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Hebrews 2:3 states, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

Selected

[Guest Editorial—continued on page 2]
conscience. Dear reader, this kind of end could never bring a conclusion to the matter of sin in the heart. It would only enhance the situation and make matters worse.

There is a sure cure for the condition you are in. You simply need to come to "The Light." Come to Jesus Christ, the Savior of men's souls. Open your heart and mind to the Spirit of God, and confess your sin to Him. Uncover those secret things that are buried deep within your life, those things that only you and God know about. He will take them all away and will lift the

heavy burden of sin and condemnation from you.

When God takes away the sin, He removes it far from you. He will not bring it up again to trouble you. The Psalmist said in Psalm 103:12, "As far as east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." What a blessing it is to be able to go to bed and pillow your head, knowing that the past has all been forgiven! The terrible condemnation that once tormented you is now gone. It is all under the blood of Christ.

Dear one, there is no reason for you to go on living under the hand of con-

demnation. Jesus Christ is offering you full pardon from the past. There may be restitution that you will have to take care of, or possibly a debt to society will need to be paid. The assurance of knowing your soul is clear with God and man will bring a settled peace to your heart and mind like nothing else can bring.

Will you come to the light and allow your deeds to be made manifest? Will you put away the evil of your doings? Doing so would be the best move you could ever make in your life.

Selected

Luke 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

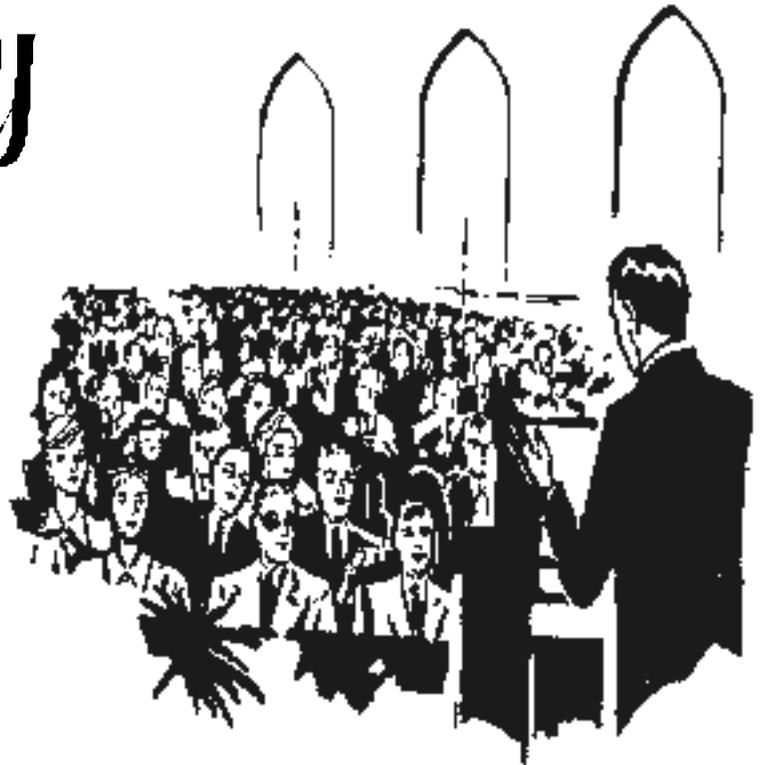
14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Make Ready a People Prepared for the Lord



Brother Ula Bland

God's Provision for Mankind

Before the foundation of the world, God had in mind that He would have a holy people. Though Adam failed, God had Jesus Christ ready, before the foundation of the world, to come down to earth to redeem us from our sins. Do you see the provision that God has made for mankind? God loves man, and His affection goes out to him. Even after man failed, God gave him another chance. God has given everyone who has been born into this world a

chance to have eternal life.

The Bible says in Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Seven hundred years before Christ came on the scene, Isaiah announced that a virgin would conceive and bring forth a son. She was to call His name Emmanuel, which means "God with us." Isn't God good?

Child of God, aren't you glad that God saved you from your sins? God saved you from *all* your sins and gave you the power to live free from

sin. In Romans 6:18 Paul said, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." You cannot become a servant of righteousness unless you are free from sin. God does not have sinning Christians. True Christians do not continue in sin. Paul wrote in Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." Thank the Lord! Our powerful God can keep us from sinning.

If you are on cocaine, it would not be a strain for God to get you off

cocaine. No matter how long you have been in sin or how long you have been on cocaine, Jesus Christ can save you to the uttermost. Acts 4:12 states, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Sinner friend, salvation is only through Jesus Christ the righteous, and He wants to save you. I thank God that Jesus came down from Heaven to save a wretch like me. One songwriter wrote, *"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see."*

Be Prepared to Meet God

The lesson that we are considering is about what the angel told Zacharias. He told Zacharias that he was going to have a son, and he told him what that son was going to do. The child was to be born holy from his mother's womb, and he was to help get people ready for Christ's first advent. Jesus Christ wants us to be ready when He returns. He does not want us to be *getting* ready. He has made it possible that we can be ready when He comes. We do not know the day or the hour, but we can be ready when He comes. He is coming back after a church that is without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing.

The most important thing in life is being prepared to meet your God. Stocks and bonds and money are all right, but the most important thing is to be ready to meet God. God's preachers desire to prepare people to meet God. Sometimes a man of God gets talked about and scorned, but He is telling people to get ready to meet God, because Jesus Christ is coming.

There is no time for foolishness, and nothing on this earth is worth losing your soul over. No matter how good something looks or how valuable it seems, it is not worth losing your soul over. That is the reason Jesus Christ felt compelled to ask this

question in Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" God wanted man saved so much that He was willing to give His only begotten Son. John 3:16 reads, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Also, Jesus wanted us saved so much that He was willing to give His life for us. Yet some people have the audacity to say, "I am not ready to get saved." Sinner friend, who are you to reject the love of Jesus Christ and say, "I am not ready"? If He were to take away your breath and call your soul into eternity, your flesh would not be anything but a big hunk of meat lying dead.

Dear one, you need to be ready. Jesus came to get you ready for that glad day. Therefore, you should be glad to do as the Apostle Paul admonished in Hebrews 12:1, which reads, "Wherefore [the word *wherefore* refers to what Paul said in Chapter 11] seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside [never to pick it up again] every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." All the devils in hell cannot stop you from getting saved if you want to be saved. God will save you from all your sins.

In All Your Ways Acknowledge Him

Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." There are a lot of misunderstandings going on. The reason for the misunderstandings is that people are leaning to their own understanding. From God's mouth come wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. No matter how well you can read, if God does not give you the understanding of some things, you will never get it. It takes God to give you understanding. Misunderstanding situations and

listening to false reports about people is splitting the church in many places, and it ought not to be. When Christ splits the clouds, He must find us loving one another. You are not prepared to go back with Him if you do not love your brothers and sisters in Christ. Furthermore, you cannot go back with Jesus Christ if you do not. John wrote in 1 John 3:14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

The Proverb writer said in Proverbs 3:6 that if you acknowledge the Lord in all your ways, He will direct your paths. That is a promise, and what God has promised, He will fulfill. It is impossible for God to lie. When He could not swear by any greater, He swore by Himself; He is the greatest.

Today people want to take the words "under God" out of the Pledge of Allegiance, yet our congress opens its sessions with prayer; they call on God, but many of them do not want His name mentioned. That is a trick of the devil. Church of God, we have a great work to do. We must stand for what is right, regardless of the circumstances. Take the issue of same-sex marriages. According to God's Word, two people of the same sex cannot get married. Someone needs to have the courage to tell people that homosexuality, lesbianism, and same-sex marriage are against righteous principles. When God instituted marriage, he instituted it between a man and a woman, not between two people of the same sex.

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." You can tell people the Truth in love, but you must tell them what the Bible says. It was God who instituted marriage; it is God who puts a man and a woman together.

Jesus said in Matthew 19:5, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?" Today people are trying to

change the plan of God. I thank God for His Word! It will keep you straight if you will obey it. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Walk Not After the Flesh

Paul said in Romans 8:1-4: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

God wants to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. He did not prepare your body for fornication. He did not prepare your body for same-sex relationships. Your body belongs to the Lord. You are not your own; you are bought with a price, and you belong to the great Creator of Heaven and earth. First Corinthians 6:19-20 declares: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Jeremiah 3:15 says, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." That is what God's men feed you. If you have a pastor who is feeding you with Truth and knowledge and understanding, you should not let anyone draw you away from that pastor and fill your ears with gossip about that man.

When Paul called the elders together at Ephesus, he said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the

Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Not everyone can eat Church of God food, and those who can have to start on the milk first. It takes holy men of God to feed the flock, and it takes Church of God people to eat this food. Verse 29 reads, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

Verse 31 continues, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

Christ is coming back for a people prepared for God. Many people may not believe that, but what if some do not believe? Does that make the Word of God of none effect? No! He is coming back for His church, one without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing. Before He returns, I hope and pray that people see themselves as they ought to and stop the division and come back together as one Church of God. That is my prayer, to see God's people come together where they can be a blessing to one another. We need one another; we need one another's help and encouragement. We should never entertain the thought that we do not need one another.

Are You Pure in Heart?

I love the blessed old Church of God. We do not have to march for our freedom. God has set us free. He was taken out of one blood and made all nations, and He has given everyone on this earth the opportunity to inherit eternal life. He is a just God. He does not consider whether one is pretty or ugly or white or black. He is looking on souls. Ezekiel 18:20 says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." There is no place for prejudices

in God's church. He wants us to love one another the Bible way.

You cannot be ready for God if you have an unforgiving spirit. If someone has done something to you and you have not forgiven that person for it, you need to ask God to give you grace to forgive him or her. When Christ splits the clouds, if you have an unforgiving spirit, you cannot go where He is, no matter how well you can sing or preach. If you are holding something against someone, remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6:14-15: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." It does not make any difference what a person has done to you, you ought to forgive that one. As Christ was hanging on the Cross, He was able to say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

You cannot have envy, jealousy, or strife in your heart when Jesus returns if you want to go to Heaven. Jesus said in Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Friend, God can make your heart pure. When God made man, He made him pure and holy. God did not make men to carry on as they are today.

Friend, God is giving you another chance. He has set before you life and death. Now you have to make a choice. The life is in Christ Jesus. If you do not want Christ Jesus, then you do not want life. You can have eternal life, but it must be through Christ Jesus our Lord. Thank the Lord, you have a chance to live forever. Praise the Lord! I thank God for His goodness and for the provision He has made for mankind. No one has to go to hell, no matter how poor you are or how illiterate you are. You can choose eternal death or eternal life. If you choose Christ Jesus, you are choosing life.

(Cassette C-5231M)

Are You Reigning With Christ?



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Living a Victorious Life

It is not popular to live holy, but thank God, we can through Christ. Praise the Lord! The word *reigning* according to Webster's dictionary, means "the power to possess or exercise sovereign or ruling power, to govern, or to control, to exercise authority." As a child of God, you can reign in this world. God does not want you to be defeated. He wants you to be victorious. Spiritually speaking, you have to fight for what you have, but you have to fight in the right way. This is not a carnal battle. You must fight according to the principles in God's Word.

We read in Romans 5:17, ". . . they which receive abundance of grace. . . ." You can receive all the grace from God that you need. You need grace in your home. Obedience to the Gospel makes you very wholesome—a wholesome husband or wife, a wholesome father or mother.

God's people are a wholesome people. In God's storehouse He has all the grace you need to reign. Romans 5:17 continues, ". . . they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

In 2 Timothy 2:12 the Apostle Paul, writing to the young man of God, said, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." You will have to do some suffering. You will have to suffer some persecution. Many times you will have to suffer things that you do not think you deserve. Nevertheless, if you suffer in the right way, you can reign with Christ.

John wrote in Revelation 1:5-6: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and

dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Child of God, did you know that you are a king? You have royal blood flowing through your veins. God's people are the finest. God has made us kings and priests, and it is through Christ that we reign in this life.

Before I was saved, I used to think, "Oh, if I could only have the victory over that." As a young boy, I thought, "If I could just live at the church like Samuel, I could live a victorious life." Friend, God wants to give you the grace to live a victorious life that shows the world that you have something they do not have.

Revelation 5:9 reads, "And they [the antecedent of 'they' is the word *saints*] sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Reigning Over Sin

In my life as a Christian, the false doctrine that I have met most often (and I think it is the most prevalent in the world), is the doctrine of "sin you must, sin you can't help it." God intends for all mankind to live holy. Today men want to change that, but it is up to date. It is the best thing for mankind.

If you are going to be a Christian, you can expect the devil to work on you. Some people have commented, "I never had so many battles until I became a Christian." The devil works on Christians. Because we are living in a day when the doctrine of "sin you must" is so prevalent everywhere, I have asked people, "Where did you get that idea?" Often they reply, "From Romans, Chapter 7." I ask them, "Have you ever read Chapter 6? You see, it is like a letter. When you receive a letter, you read the whole thing, don't you? You don't read just the third or fourth paragraph." Some time ago, an individual was talking about a book, and he was giving a whole different slant on the book. He took one statement from a certain chapter and used it out of context. I said, "Brother, you need to read the whole book." So it is with the doctrine of "sin you must." You need to read the entire Book.

In Romans 6:1-2 Paul stated: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." In other words, Paul was saying, "God forbid such a thought that we would continue in sin," yet it is prevalent today. Paul wrote in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now [right now, in your heart as a Christian] no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Friend, you can reign over sin today. You need to read the whole Book.

Too many people are under the control and the rule and the influence of the devil, but you do not have to be. You can tell the devil where he ought to go. There is a place pre-

pared for him. He does not have to have an influence over you. You can rule over him.

Having Triumphant Faith

You can have triumphant faith. Church of God, did you know that we are members of a triumphant church? We are reigning. Jesus said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." I thank God for this abundant life! Friend, God wants you to reign with Jesus right here in this world and then eternally in the other world.

Martin Luther said, "Next to the Bible, nothing has blessed the hearts of mankind more than the songs of God." In our hymnal entitled "Evening Light Songs," we have a song that we sing called "The Church Triumphant." It reads:

*Men speak of a "church triumphant"
As something on earth unknown,
They think us beneath the tyrant
[the old devil, but we can
tread on him]
Until we shall reach our home.*

*O cannot the great Redeemer
Prevail over Satan here? [Yes!]
Or must we remain yet under
Confusion, pressed down in fear?
[No! God is not the author of
confusion. God's people are
not living in confusion; we
are walking in the light.]*

*He built on a sure foundation,
[Christ is that sure foundation]
And said that the gates of hell
Against her divine munition
Can never indeed prevail. [Praise
God! The church is going on.]*

*'Tis not in the church of Jesus
That people yet live in sin;
But in the dark creeds they're joining,
And vainly are trusting in.*

*God's church is alone triumphant,
In holiness all complete;
And all the dark pow'rs of Satan
She tramples beneath her feet.*

*Thank God for a church triumphant,
All pure in this world below!
For the kingdom that Jesus founded
Does triumph o'er every foe.*

I praise God for a way out of sin! I hate sin. I think of the story of the little boy who went to church one day. He went home and his father said, "How was it?"

He said, "It was good."

His father said, "What did the preacher preach on?"

He said, "Well, he spoke a lot about sin."

"Well," the father said, "what did he say about sin?"

The little boy thought for a moment, and then he said, "I don't know, but I can tell you that he sure didn't like it." God hates sin, and His people hate sin.

God's people are a reigning people. I thank God that we can reign. I am reigning; I am a king. How about you? The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek [or Gentile]." The power of God can enable you to reign in this life. Are you reigning? Thank God, you can reign.

A reigning people was seen in the prophesies of the Old Testament prophets. The Song of Solomon 6:10 says, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" God has a conquering, victorious, ruling people.

"Whosoever Abideth in Him Sinneth Not"

I want to enumerate some things that we can rule over. First of all, we can rule over the devil. Jesus said in Luke 10:19, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." The devil can only work for your good. We have power over the devil. As saints of God, we

are kings, and we can reign over the devil and his forces. Praise God!

You may ask, "Can I reign over sin?" Absolutely! In John 8:36 Jesus was dealing with the topic of sin. He said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." God's people are free indeed, and we reign over sin. Dear one, you do not have to sin. Those who fight sinless living quite often refer to 1 John 1:8 where it says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." That is what it says, but do not stop there. They also refer to verses 9-10: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

There were no chapter breaks in the original Word. Let us continue. In 1 John 2:1-2 John declared: "My little children, these things write I unto you [this rule], that ye sin not. [This is the rule. Is there an exception? Yes, and it reads as follows.] And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

John did not stop there. It would be good for you to read all of Chapter 3. Verse 5 says, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." This is such a wonderful way to live!

God keeps husbands and wives clean and holy. When there is no sin, that cements a marriage; that keeps a marriage together. Obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ keeps a marriage together. I thank God for the teaching of holiness!

John continued in verses 6-10: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil [that is very strong language]; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this

purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed [or his nature] remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this [In what? In not sinning and in sinning] the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

Reigning Over Self and Temptation

We can reign over the devil, we can reign over sin, and we can reign over self. The greatest battle that people have today is reigning over self. The more you reign over self, the more you give of yourself to God, the greater service He will put you to. God will use you according to how much you give yourself to Him.

D. L. Moody said, "It remains to be seen what God can do with a man who truly gives himself completely to Him." I want to be like that, don't you? Are you reigning over self? In Galatians 2:20 Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: [Crucifixion is a painful death. Sometimes people suffer quite a lot of pain in putting self to death.] nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

One song that we sing says, "Ready to go, ready to stay, ready to do thy will." As we live holy lives, the more we give ourselves completely to Him, the more He will use us; but His will must be done in our lives. I want His will to be done in my life, don't you? If Christ lives in you, your life is clean, holy, and pure. Christ lives in you so that you can reign over self.

What else can we reign over? We can reign over temptation. We meet with temptation every day. We cannot reign over temptation in the sense that it will never bother us. We will always be tempted, but we can reign over the power of temptation.

First Corinthians 10:13 says,

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man [the only way you can reign over temptation is through the grace of God, and you can]; but God is faithful, [Sometimes people say, 'The devil made me do it.' No, you allowed the devil. You can reign because God is faithful.] who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Thank God! Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2:14, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." Are you reigning? If not, you can.

Reigning Over Tribulation

Next, we can reign over tribulation. What is tribulation? All kinds of things make up tribulation, such as affliction and stressful problems that we encounter in life day by day. We are going through much tribulation today, but we can reign over it. We do not have to live under it; we can reign over it. You may ask, "Does it hurt you? Does it bother you?" Oh, yes. I am still human, but I still have the joy of God in my heart. I still enjoy living, and I have a hope. The church is a conquering church. I see a great future for the church. I am encouraged.

Jesus said in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." Thank God, we can have peace. I am enjoying wonderful peace and a clear conscience. When I lay down, my sleep is sweet. As Christians, our consciences are clear. We experience tribulation all around us, yet within we can have perfect peace. The Bible says in Isaiah 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed in thee."

Jesus said in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." No matter what comes,

we can be of good cheer. God's people are happy, contented, cheerful, and peaceful.

In Romans 8:35-39 the Apostle Paul wrote: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. [What did Paul mean? We gain by the things that we encounter in life, and we come out stronger. Those things do not diminish our strength, but we gain experience. We are stronger after encountering some of the things that Paul mentioned. We are more than conquerors.]

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, [The Word of God is all inclusive. No one can hinder us, and no one can keep us from the love of God.] shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God has a triumphant church, made of triumphant individuals. Christian friend, you can conquer every day. Sometimes you can conquer by keeping your mouth shut. There is a time to speak and a time to be quiet. Jesus was a conquering Savior in Pilate's judgment hall when He said nothing.

Reigning Over Every Foe

Too many are suffering continual defeat, but they do not have to. Friend, you do not have to be defeated in the battles of life. You can reign now, if you will. My question is, Are you reigning? D. S. Warner began the song "Reigning in This Life" with a question. The first verse reads, "*Do you triumph, O my brother, Over all this world of sin? In each storm of tribulation, Does your Jesus reign within?*"

Do you triumph in your home? Husband, wife, do you talk to each other as you should? Do you love each other? Do you show that love in your expressions, your speech, and your actions? Wherever you are employed, do you show that you are a conquering Christian? When you are under pressure, are you reigning? We should reign over every situation. If you are not reigning over every situation, then you should feel condemned. Do you triumph over every temptation?

You only reign when you burn all the bridges behind you. Are you reigning over sin? Have you destroyed all the foes in your former life? Does your Jesus reign within? We are in a battle today, a terrific battle. As God's people, we must follow divine, righteous principles. I want the connection that I have with God to be clear. I do not want one thing between me and God.

The second verse of D. S. Warner's song reads, "*One we hail as King immortal, He did earth and hell subdue; And bequeathing [giving or granting] us his glory, We are kings anointed too.*" [Isn't that wonderful? What a privilege we have as God's people!]

The third and fourth verses read: "*Shall we, then, by sin be humbled? Must we yield to any foe? No, by heaven's gift we're reigning 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.*" There is no

higher calling than the calling to be a child of God. Paul said in Ephesians 4:1, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

The fifth verse says, "*All this life is blissful sunshine, Earth is subject at our feet; Heaven pours its richest blessings Round our throne of love complete.*" Isn't it wonderful when you go through a battle or a great tribulation and God gives you the grace to say nothing or to speak the right words at the right time? When you go through it in a saintly manner, joy and the peace of God flood your soul.

The last verse and the chorus read: "*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.*" Thank the Lord, we can reign in this life.

Dear one, Are you reigning in this life? If you are not reigning, God wants you to reign. God wants you to have the power to say no to the devil, to temptation, and to self. He wants you to reign over every foe in your life. Are you? God has greater victory than for you to succumb to the enemies that you meet. God wants you to reign over every enemy that I have enumerated in this message. Are you reigning?

(Cassette C-4223E)

Hardening of the heart ages
people more
quickly than hardening
of the arteries.

What Is Your Word Worth?



Everything is measured by some standard of value. Material things are measured by length, breadth, weight, density, usefulness, or intrinsic value. Character also has its standard of measurement. Some people are valued more highly than others, whether in the community, in the church, or in the nation. People are valued, not for their physical size or weight, but for their abilities, and more especially for their characters. In a Christian the special thing of value, and the only special thing, is his character. If one's character is not of a higher and better quality than that of people in general, one has no right to the name Christian.

The quality of one's character is indicated in various ways. One's words are generally a clear index to one's character. A person is judged by them, and his value is reckoned by the reliance that may be placed upon his word. We know some on whose word we fully rely. If they tell us anything, we believe them. If they make us a promise, we do not expect it to be broken. We rely upon them because they have shown by their conduct that they themselves place a high value upon their own word. Of such persons it is often said, "If he says it is so, it is true" or "If he makes a promise, he will fulfill it." Such men wield a strong influence in a community. People can easily believe and trust in their character. It is

a sad fact that such individuals are the exception rather than the rule, even among professed Christians. How many times promises are made only to be broken or forgotten! This is a grave matter and marks a serious defect in Christian character. We should never make a promise unless we fully expect to fulfill it, and we ought to feel under deep obligation to keep our promise. If we are careless and neglectful of this, it is sure to lower us in men's esteem, and we shall be cheapened and discredited.

Hasty Promises

Many times promises are made hastily. The person does not stop to consider what he is really promising; he does not weigh its meaning. He says, "Yes, yes, I will"; but later when he thinks the matter over, it looks different to him. He is sorry that he made the promise and begins to look for some way out so that he will not have to fulfill it.

These hasty promises are just as binding as any others. If we ignore them and do not make our word good, the persons to whom we have made them will have just reason to condemn us. It is easier to make promises than it is to fulfill them. Beware of making haste to promise. Think about the fulfillment. Think whether you really want to do, or really will do, what you promised.

Consider your promises binding! You should have the fear of God before you in this matter just as much as in other things. If you wish people to value your word, you must show that you value it yourself. If you do not value it enough to keep it, do not expect others to value it. If you value your word, it will make you careful about your promises—careful in making them, careful in keeping them.

Do not make rash promises. Consider what you are promising. Is it something that you can perform? Consider your ability and what things may hinder. Have you any just reason to suppose that you can fulfill it? Would it be wise for you to do it? Would it be best? Have you made other promises that will conflict with it? Remember that when you once promise, if you do not keep your word, your failure leaves a shadow upon your character in the mind of the one you promised unless there is some good and sufficient reason to excuse you in his sight.

Do not make careless promises. The Bible tells us that in our planning we should say, "If the Lord will"; that is, we should take into consideration that the unexpected may happen. We do not know the future; therefore, we ought not to make our promises too positive. We ought to qualify them so as to allow for hindrances.

We ought to be honest in making our promises. Many promises are made when there is no intention of carrying them out. Many people, rather than to say no, will promise and then refuse to perform, thereby making themselves liars. They have not manhood enough to refuse and honestly tell why, so they make a promise and break it. That is the coward's way out. It is the dishonest way out.

Some people say, "If the Lord wills, I will do so," when they do not consider the Lord in the matter at all, but simply mean, "If I don't change my mind." Do not throw the odium on the Lord. If you think you may change your mind, do not commit yourself definitely. If you are not fully decided, do not be afraid to say that you do not know what you will do. Be honest enough to let the other know the state of your mind. Be honest in making promises; be honest in fulfilling them.

Fidelity to Promises

Do not make too many promises. He who is too free to promise, places little value upon his promises. He forgets them readily or lets some trifle hinder the performance of them. He always has a ready excuse to ease his conscience and to release himself from the obligation. This indicates a want of character and a lack of real sincerity.

When you make a promise, do not forget it and do not break it.

Never disappoint people when you can help it. They feel disappointment as keenly as you do. There is an old saying that "promises are like pie crust—made to be broken." Are your promises of the pie crust variety?

Possibly you have heard the story of the old deacon. A man came to him one day to endeavor to get him to fulfil a promise that he had made. The deacon refused. The other urged and entreated him, but still he refused, and finally said, "The Bible says that we should let our words be yea, yea and nay, nay; and my words are so." "Yes," quickly retorted the other, "when you are asked to make a promise, they are yea, yea; but when you are asked to fulfil it, they are nay, nay." This is one brand of yea-and-nay Christians, but not the kind in whom God delights or man trusts.

When you make promises, keep them. They are a test of your character. I do not mean that you should be under bondage to your promises. Sometimes we fully believe we can and will perform them, but later find that it is impossible. In such a case, we should explain matters and so relieve the mind of the one to whom the promise was made and show him that the failure to make good our word is not due to neglect or unwillingness. Keep your business promises. Many persons get into debt and promise to pay and then just let things drift along. This is wrong. Pay your debts when you agree to, or give a reason for not doing so, and

let it be a reason, not an excuse. If you promise to do work for someone, do it. Keep your promise if you must sacrifice to do so.

Many parents are very careless and inconsiderate regarding their promises to their children. Children will "tease" for things if allowed. Too many times parents make promises that they do not expect ever to fulfil, just to be rid of the children's asking. Children soon learn the value of such promises, and they learn the value of your character. Do not lie to your children; do not make promises to them unless you mean them. If you make promises to them and then are unable to keep them, value your word and their respect enough to explain to them the reason.

Reader, what is your word worth? What value do others place on it? What value does God place on it? God wants you to "speak the truth, and lie not." Your standing, your influence, and your usefulness all depend upon your faithfulness. If you are faithful, you will be faithful to your promises. Think seriously over these things. If you are at fault, set about to amend. Such a fault will be a blight upon your life and upon your character until it is corrected. When the psalmist pictures a righteous man, he says that he "swareth [promiseth] to his own hurt, and changeth not." Are you that sort of righteous person?

Selected

*Take care of your
character and your reputation will take
care of itself.*

Prayer Is the Key

(But Faith Unlocks the Door)

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."



Prayer is one of God's greatest gifts to man, and one of man's greatest privileges. Prayer is more than a form of words; it has an inner heart and a life itself. It is a living communication to God and often seems no more than a heart-to-heart talk with Him, yet how many times problems have been solved by such a talk and we rejoice of the benefits.

The spirit of fellowship grows and the supply of needs are met through prayer. What an avenue to travel!

Prayer brings an answer always greater than the thing asked for, and it refreshes the soul in God. It lifts us above our difficulties. It opens new opportunities for service and brightens the mind to clearer thinking.

Prayer must be considered as a means, not an end. The help we crave and need and the help we receive is only a small part—a suspended realm—and God and the things of God are made real.

The great fixed gulf of sin and trouble is crossed by faith and prayer, and Christ and His Truth is the bridge over which we pass.

Prayer may be as mild and warm as a May day or as fierce as

a winter's blast, depending upon the heart from which it flows. It is said on the field of prayer, through the power of the precious blood of Christ, that Satan, sin, and the world meet their Waterloo.

Real prayer is an inspiration that lifts and brightens. New power comes into the life to make things go. It carries at its girdle the heavenly keys of spiritual knowledge and of all divine mysteries.

Prayer without faith is only a husk, or a shell, but with faith it contains the seed-corn of a million harvests.

Proper prayer is a mighty engine of war (spiritual war). It is the voice heard around the world. It is the most serious conversation that man utters. It can touch the highest heaven and shake the lowest hell.

The prayer of faith is more powerful than dynamite, and more lasting than Gibraltar's rock. It shoots straighter than a missile and much higher, for the Spirit of God sets the range finder.

Prayer is as Jacob's ladder, with the angels of God ascending

and descending, taking up the petitions and bringing back the answers.

Prayer may be as simple as a baby's cry, as eloquent as a tear, as secret as a heart pang, as swift as the lightning, as mighty as the tornadic winds, as sweet as the blossoms of spring, as deep as the bottomless pit, as high as the heavens, as strong as love, and as divine as Christ Himself.

Prayer is the key: it fits the door of faith and unlocks the entrance to God's presence. A great and new world will open up to you through its doors.

Those who never add fasting to prayer have never learned actually how nourishing it is to feast with God.

It is said, "He who cannot keep awake praying will be asleep when the answer comes."

Remember, "If ye shall ask . . . I will do." That is a divine promise. No matter how great our petition, His promise is always "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Selected



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