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

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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CONTENTS

The Danger That Lies in Being a	
Habitual Complainer	3
Radio Log	7
A More Excellent Way	8
Elijah's God Still Lives	13
Especially for Young People	14
Have You Been Reconciled to God?	16
God Makes a Way	21
Fall 2004 Camp Meeting Tape List	27

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Fall 2004 Camp Meeting Report

In Joel 3:16 the Prophet proclaimed, "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion." In Obadiah's prophetic writings we are told what that roaring, or the sounding forth of the Word, will accomplish. Obadiah 1:17 declared, "But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." These words of the inspired penman well describe the divine work that was wrought in the recent Fall Camp Meeting here at God's Acres. The Lord did indeed roar throughout the course of the meeting. The Truth was heralded forth in a most beautiful and clear manner. As a result of that, we are thankful to report that precious souls found deliverance from the power of sin and gained real experiences of salvation. The standards of holiness were laid forth in a way for all honest hearts to grasp. Certainly, those who were present were told how they may possess the land. The glorious message on the church, the bride of Christ, was set forth with wondrous clarity.

The camp meeting began with a message from the host pastor, Brother Roger L. Decker, concerning "Forgiveness." Brother Ula Bland from Chicago, Illinois, preached Sunday night on "Doing Things God's Way."

Monday and Friday Brother C. H. Dickerson of Medina, Ohio, brought rousing messages entitled "Backsliding" and "A Lesson at the Potter's House." Pastor Decker felt the burden to begin the meeting as the evening evangelist. He dealt with some very vital prophetic subjects. Monday evening he dealt with "The Nation of Israel," and Tuesday evening he taught "The Truth Concerning the Antichrist." This message was sobering and revealing and much needed. Wednesday evening gave us a glorious view of "The City That John Saw." This was a beautiful message concerning the church and was so clear that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8).

During the morning services, various brethren brought forth sound doctrine from God's Eternal Word. Among these were Brother Allen Polston from Mechanicsburg, Indiana, Brother Burton Cheney of Niles, Michigan, Brother Charles Ferguson from Phoenix, Arizona, Brother C. H. Dickerson from Medina, Ohio, and Brother David Stegmeier from Canby, Oregon.

Thursday evening the Lord moved in the song service in a glorious manner. The Lord brought such a spirit of conviction that some wept in their seats under conviction. Thank God, many responded to the call of the Gospel and gained genuine experiences of salvation. On the remaining evenings Brother Decker had different brethren take the pulpit for the services: Brother Calvin Foster from Arkansas, Brother Adam Wolf from Pennsylvania, and Brother David Stegmeier from Oregon. The Lord divinely anointed and directed each one to bring forth messages of truth that were fitting for the hour.

We thank God that during the meeting souls were gloriously saved. One young lady who was deaf came to the meeting, and when a sister conveyed the message of truth to her in sign language, she moved to an altar of prayer and yielded her life to the Lord.

Attendance for the meeting was good, and new people were in the midst. They are already making plans to come back to the Winter Camp Meeting. There was a sweet spirit of unity and harmony among the saints, and particularly the ministerial brethren as they labored together throughout the meeting.

If you were unable to attend the meeting, we certainly recommend that you secure the tapes of the services. In December we will be hosting our Winter meeting. We encourage you to make plans to travel and be in this upcoming meeting, when once again, "The Lord . . . shall roar out of Zion."

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly

exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

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.

The Danger That Lies in Being a Habitual Complainer



Brother Roger L. Decker

"Do All Things Without Murmurings and Disputings"

The word *murmuring* means "grumbling and grudging." The word *disputing* means "to debate and to have a doubtful imagination." Nothing can destroy the witness of an individual any quicker than being a complainer.

The Apostle Paul went on to say in verse 15, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation." He

meant "one who is harmless to others; his conduct is holy, and no charge or transgression can be laid justly at his feet." He said you are to live blameless in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation; in other words, you are to live blameless right before your enemies and persecutors. When you do that, Paul said you will shine as lights in the world. The darker it is, the more your light will shine.

Habitual complainers are always negative and have very little good to say about anything. Even

when good comes their way, they are used to complaining so much that they do not even recognize the good. They feel that everything that comes their direction is against them, because they are in the habit of complaining. They are always complaining that they never have enough. They feel that others have more money and better jobs than they do. To them, it looks as if everything is going great for others: they have better houses and better cars, and they can really take it easy. When that happens, it sparks

complaints in the lives of those who are habitual complainers.

Dear one, there is a great danger in being a habitual complainer. To those individuals, nothing is ever right. They are negative even when God moves. Being a habitual complainer truly stirs the wrath of God. Numbers 11:1-10 reads: "And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

"And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: [Those things did not come to their remembrance until they gave in to the spirit of complaining. If you become negative and begin to complain, the next thing you know, the former things will come to your remembrance.] But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes. And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.

"And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it. Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased."

In these verses you find that the people were habitually complaining. What caused it? Commentators

say it was due to the length of their journey, but the truth of the matter was, they had no cause to complain, because God was in their midst and He was continually working miracles in their behalf.

The Consequences of Murmuring and Complaining

In verse 1 we find that at least three things were going on. It states, "And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp." The Lord was displeased, He was angry, and He heard everything that was going on.

These three things brought out in this verse show us what God thinks about it when anyone complains and murmurs. It displeases God. He hates it, especially when it comes from one who professes to be saved. When you are serving God, you have God in your midst. What do you have to complain about?

God had been so good to the Hebrew people. He was in their midst, and He supplied their every need. The Scripture says a fire was sent among them in the uttermost parts of the camp, or in the outskirts of the camp. No doubt, those around the edges of the camp were murmurers and complainers, and they were consumed by fire. The murmurers and complainers always dwell around the borderline today, and that is where the fire always comes down, because God is displeased with complaining and murmuring.

We find in verse 2 that Moses interceded in their behalf. It says, "And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched." Verse 4 tells us, "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?" The mixed multitude wanted flesh to eat. Who was this

mixed multitude? They were those who left Egypt with the Israelites, but they did not leave for the same reason that the Israelites left. No doubt, they were slaves also, and they saw an opportunity to get out of Egypt and share in the inheritance of the Israelites. Another word for "mixed multitude" is *riffraff*. The Scripture could read, "The riffraff fell a lusting."

Exodus 12:38 states, "And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle." Again, Numbers 11:4 says they "fell a lusting." Read the complaints that were stated. Often when people start complaining, they really exaggerate, and many times they tell lies. Look at what the people said in Numbers, Chapter 11. They mentioned all the things they remembered eating of freely in Egypt, and then they said their souls had dried away.

The Truth About Sin

You would have thought that the people had it made when they were in Egypt. Well, if they had it so good, what did they cry out to God about when they lived there? When they were down in Egypt, they cried out to God about how rough they had it. Yet, in Numbers 11:5-6, they said, "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." Upon reading their complaints, you would think that the food in Egypt was free and in abundance and that they did not have to labor for it.

With the manna that God sent down, they had to do very little, but let us check to see if that was the case when they were down in Egypt. Exodus 2:23-25 reads: "And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by rea-

son of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them [or He was concerned about them]." What were they groaning about if they could freely eat and things were so good in Egypt?

Exodus 1:13-14 tells us the truth. This is what they were groaning about: "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour [or severity]: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour."

That is the truth about sin. You cannot do things as freely as you want to while you are living in sin. You cannot freely pick up a pack of cigarettes and smoke a few and lay them down. You cannot partake of drugs such as cocaine and marijuana and then lay them down freely. No, there is hard bondage in sin, and you are going to serve in sin with rigor, or severity. There is no freedom to anyone who is living in sin.

Freedom comes when you obey the Gospel and the commandments of God. Let us go right back to the beginning. Genesis 2:16 states, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." That was before sin came into the garden. You can eat freely when you obey the commandments of God. There is no sense in people trying to tell what a good time they are having in sin; they are deceived. Freedom and sin are not partners.

The Plagues of Sin

Whenever you feel that you had it better in sin than that which God has provided, you are in serious trouble. In essence, you are saying that God is punishing you for being a Christian because He will not let you do all the bad things you want

to do. Isn't that terrible? When you were in sin, you could do all those bad things. If you thought you had it made in sin, why did you go to God in the first place? The truth of the matter is, sin is not what the devil makes it seem to be. Sin is deceiving. It wrecks lives, homes, families, congregations, nations, states, and governments.

In Numbers, Chapter 11, the Israelites got really strong in their complaint. No wonder God's anger was kindled greatly. They said in verse 6, "But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." Look how they overexaggerated their cause. God had a great distaste for the complaining, murmuring, and grumbling that was going on.

The people wanted flesh to eat, so God heard them. In verse 31 you can read what God did about it: "And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth." Two cubits is approximately thirty-six inches high.

The people wanted flesh, so they got it. The Lord gave them flesh all around the camp a day's journey in one direction and a day's journey in the other direction. While they gathered it and began to eat it, God sent a plague among those who lusted. The Bible lets us know that the least amount gathered was ten homers of quail. Ten homers was fifty-five bushels.

Verses 32-33 read: "And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great

plague."

Friend, if you want flesh, God will give it to you, and He will give it to you in abundance. If you want to play around with fleshly things, God will give them to you. If you want to hang around the borders of the congregation, God will help you have all the flesh you want. If you want to fool around with lustful things, if you want to use your mind for the filth and the lusts of this world, you will be consumed by them, and you will also receive the plagues that follow that type of living. If you fool around with fornication and adultery, you will be consumed with them, and you might even receive a lasting disease that will take you to the grave quickly. Sin is a deceiver.

"Walking After Their Own Lusts"

Complainers, murmurers, beware. You are treading on thin ice, and the Scriptures will turn up the heat. Verses 14-16 of Jude state: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."

Complainers and murmurers are men and women whom neither God nor man can please. God could not please those people that you read about in the Book of Numbers. Moses could not please them. Some people are always negative. If they get a raise in pay, it is not enough. If they received a dollar per hour raise, they feel they should have gotten two, and they complain about it. They become envious and jealous over other people's attainments. Instead of being behind oth-

ers with their prayers when God's hand moves upon them, they run them down. Dear one, you need to beware of the dangers of being a complainer and a murmurer.

Jude said, "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts." Their rule of conduct is their own impure passions and desires. Look how Jude described complainers. He said in verse 16, "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." Another translation says, "These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage."

Jude, verse 19, reads, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." In other words, these are ones who cause division; they are worldly minded and devoid of the Spirit.

Judas Iscariot was a complainer. John 12:1-6 states: "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." Judas Iscariot was overtaken by a spirit of covetousness, never having enough, and he complained and murmured.

Some complain about the church and about the finances of the church, and it displeases God. Noth-

ing ever suits them. Some complain and murmur because they feel they ought to be used more than they are. One might have more talent along certain lines than others, but if that person's spirit is wrong, God cannot use him or her. You see, the vessels of the Lord must be clean. Those who complain and murmur should not be used at all.

"Think Soberly"

Romans 12:3 says, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." You can only work in the measure of faith that God has given you. You cannot step out of it. Romans 12:3 in another translation says, "As God's messenger, I give each of you this warning: be honest in your estimate of yourself, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you." Complaining and murmuring can spread through an entire family, and it can be passed down from generation to generation: the parents complain and the children complain. Some become jealous of others and try to outdo them in worldly possessions. They get jealous when others get things they do not have. Just as with the mixed multitude in Moses' day, God has not changed His mind about it. That is the reason He inspired the Apostle Paul to write about it.

Some complain about the Bible standard. They say the standard is too high. However, it is not the standard that is too high; it is their skirts that are too high. The mixed multitude on the outskirts of congregations grumble and complain, and they never do anything for God. They cannot get into the work of God and go forward for God and become spiritual because they are always complaining and grumbling and murmuring.

Some young people complain because their parents are too strict.

Young person, God gave you parents for a reason. A parent has jurisdiction over a child while he or she lives in the home. The world's idea is that when a child becomes eighteen years of age, he can do as he pleases, but that is not in the Word of God. God did not say in His Word that it is up to the child to choose. No, parents ought to step up to their children. Parent, you should not be afraid to tell your child no. When a child tells off his mother or his father, that is a shame. The mother or the father should not sit there spinelessly, embarrassed that the little child got out of sorts. The child got out of sorts because he is used to Mom and Dad allowing him to have his own way.

Sometimes it is good if children do not have quite as much. Today we live in a land of plenty, and it seems that the more you give a child, the less he appreciates it. He plays with a toy for a while and then throws it down. He might have that brand-new toy that you spent thirty dollars on for about an hour and then smash it, crash it, or throw it aside. When I was a child, I used to make bows and arrows out of sumac and twine and play by myself. Today it seems that children have to be entertained constantly. Complaining and murmuring starts when children are little; then when they grow up, they become big complainers.

Complainers and murmurers can wreck a congregation. You can become so negative that no one wants to keep company with you. You never have a good outlook on life. God has something good for you, but if you get in that complaining mode, you cannot see any good at all. God keeps sending goodness to you every day, but you are too negative to see it. David said in Psalm 23:6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

Again, Paul wrote in Philippians 2:14 for our admonition: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." You can see in

Numbers, Chapter 11, how murmuring stirred the wrath of God. While they were eating the quail, God sent a plague upon them, right while the flesh was in their teeth. If you complain and murmur, you will affect others. In Numbers, Chapter 11, that is what stirred the wrath of God, because it affected that whole congregation. When your complaining and murmuring affect another individual to the place where that person starts doing

the same, that really stirs the anger of God.

Our Scripture text says in verse 14, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Parent, you should not give up trying to raise your children. Do not throw your hands up and say, "What's the use?" There is a lot of use. You should not turn them over to the devil. You need to do what is right. You may do your best and yet they may go astray; but at least you can get

down on your knees and tell God, "I have done my best. Show me what I have done wrong." God will help you. If you are struggling with murmuring and complaining, you need to do something about it. You need to ask Jesus Christ to help you. God is not going to cast you away. He sent the message to get your attention and to help you.

(Cassette C-4697E)

Some people complain because God puts thorns on roses, while others praise God for putting roses among the thorns.

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	KAAV-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!

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that

miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do

all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.

A More Excellent Way



Brother E. David Stegmeier

"Covet Earnestly the Best Gifts"

The Apostle Paul said in verses 27-28 of our Scripture text, "Now ye are the body of Christ [since Christ is holy, as the body of Christ we must be holy], and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church. . . ." It is not for me to tell you where you need to operate, necessarily. God sets the members in the body as it pleases Him. God calls and qualifies. Many men who are out there preaching have never been divinely called by God. God

does not call men to work division or to work against a fellow brother. No! No matter where we are on the face of this old world, we are to work together to further the cause of God. Those who are called of God work very closely together. We are called to gather, not to scatter.

Paul stated in verses 28-31: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, [All these gifts are in operation today. Some believe these gifts have

ceased to exist, but that is not what the Bible says.] helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? [we know that answer is no] are all prophets? [no] are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts. . . ."

The best gifts are those that are most useful in furthering the cause of God. Gifts are not given for our own betterment or edification, but they are given to edify the entire

body of Christ.

I remember as a boy when God really chastised me. When I began to serve the Lord, another young person wanted to sing with me. He had a song on his heart, and I let him know that I did not have time. The Lord chastised me very severely. He did not know how to play the piano, so he asked me to help him. Sometimes God will severely correct you, and it is good for you. He may severely correct you through the pastor. If you take it, that tells Him and others that you are a child of God. If you do not take it, then you are not a child of God. A pastor does not enjoy correcting people, but sometimes it is inevitable.

I want to focus on verse 31 of our Scripture text, where Paul said, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." A more excellent way is the very best way to build the Kingdom of God; it is the most wonderful way to further God's cause. The Living New Testament says to "try your best to have the more important of these gifts." If you want them for self-exaltation, God will never give them to you. If you want to be helpful and useful in the Kingdom of God, then you must, with the right motive, try your best to have the more important of these gifts. First, however, let me tell you about something else that is better than any of them.

"Be Perfectly Joined Together"

In our Scripture reading, Paul was speaking about the church. All of us who are saved make up the body of Christ. This entire letter of 1 Corinthians is dealing with doctrinal and ethical problems. Do we have ethical problems existing today? Yes, we have many of them. What are ethical problems? They are problems brought about by ignoring the principles of right and wrong. These problems existed in the Church of God at Corinth. There was factional strife of all kinds; in

other words, they had groups, parties, splits, and divisions.

Years ago I attended a ministers' meeting, and in that meeting it was discussed that we should never have someone preach in our pulpits unless all the ministers agreed. I said, "That is absolutely ludicrous and foolishness." The true Church of God is governed by God through the auspices of the Holy Spirit.

I do not like parties, splits, or divisions. The church at Corinth was struggling with all kinds of divisions, and their effectiveness was hindered. The house of Cloe was so very good to tell Paul about these factional differences. People in religious realms need to read this. I wonder sometimes if people ever read these Scriptures.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [In other words, we should be concerned about Christ and how He is looked upon in the world. How does the world look at the church and what is going on? We ought to have a concern about the influence of Christ, and then we all need to speak the same thing.] that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

We need to be united in the things of God. There may be some minor differences. You may see something a little differently than another brother, but you should treat him with love. We need to study and search the Scriptures and pray and keep an open mind and a good spirit until we all can see alike. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:13, "Is Christ divided?" No! If there is division, someone is imbibing a wrong spirit, because Christ is not divided. The wise man said in Proverbs 13:10, "Only by pride cometh contention." If there is contention in the home, in a classroom, in a Sunday school room, or wherever, there is pride somewhere.

The division that existed in the

Church of God at Corinth consisted of differences in opinion over ministers. Paul told them in so many words, "No ministers were crucified for you. Not one of them atoned for your sins. Were you baptized in the name of any of them? No!"

No minister should ever be put in the place of Jesus Christ. Some places are becoming little sects with a leader. Christ alone is the Head of the Church of God, the body of Christ. The devil is behind all division and strife. If there is contention, strife, or divisive spirits, the devil is working. Paul was thankful that he had not baptized any more of the people because they might have been tempted to follow him.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians in Ephesians 4:1-6: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, [Oh, that is important, saint of God! God wants quality people. I believe Church of God people who are walking in the light are the finest people. They have good manners and good ethics. They are very careful how they present themselves in the community. A good name is important.] With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; [I am talking about a more excellent way; it is the way of love. If we have to sacrifice and forfeit something, let us forfeit the gift and let us keep the love of God. You may say, 'Oh, we lost the finest singer in the congregation.' Forget the gift; let us keep the love of God. It is far more important to keep the love of God in a congregation than to have a gifted congregation. I believe you can have both, but if we have to forfeit something, let it be the gift.] Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

The Scripture says to forbear one another. According to the Word

of God, there is absolutely no justifiable reason for division among the true people of God. If there is division, then someone is entertaining a wrong spirit, and they will just go downward.

"Have Love One to Another"

Going back to our original Scripture reading, Paul had been enumerating the various gifts in the body of Christ: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, the working of miracles, prophesy, discernment of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and others listed in various places in the Bible. A person might have one or several of these gifts. The gifts of God are given for service, and all praise needs to go to God. This more excellent way will suppress envy. We all have different gifts, but we should not be envious of one another. Pastors have the greatest gift, and they go through the greatest battles. The greater the gift, the more trials one will experience with it. The church at Corinth was a very gifted congregation. First Corinthians 1:7 says, "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." They were not inferior in gifts to any Church of God congregation. One translation says, "Now you have every grace and blessing; every spiritual gift and power for doing His will are yours during this time of waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ." However, in one area they were lacking. I would say this is where the lack is in most sectarian churches. They were so concerned about the gifts that the love of God and the love for humanity was lacking.

Jesus said in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." We show that we love one another by what we do for one another. If you work against me, you do not love me. If you talk about me, you do not love me. It is just that simple.

The congregation at Corinth needed more love. Paul admonished them to covet the gifts that were most useful in the body. Nevertheless, the work of God, no matter what gifts we have, cannot be done without love. The way of love is the more excellent way. Love consists of good will, kindness, concern, and care for one another. No matter how gifted a congregation is, it will not progress without these qualities. If love is present and manifested, there will not be strife and division. Love is far more important than any of the gifts. I believe the need of this day is more brotherly love. Hebrews 13:1 says, "Let brotherly love continue." When the Apostle John was up in years, he wrote much about love, because iniquity was abounding and love was waxing cold. Tradition tells us that when John was very old (I believe he was the only Apostle who died a natural death), he was too weak to walk into the assembly of the saints, so they carried him in. He would say, "Children, love one another."

As the father of a large family, it hurts me if I know my children are having a problem between them; it really grieves me. I say, "You all are a part of this family. I don't want you to talk about one another. We are one family." How do you think the heart of God feels today? We need more brotherly love. If this quality of love that the Apostle Paul described were present in the ranks of all the professing people of God, there would be no divisions and no strife. Contentions among those who profess to be the people of God hinder the cause of God.

The Qualities of Love

In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13, Paul began to enumerate the qualities of love. Verses 1-3 read: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, [No matter how gifted or charismatic you are, if your motive is not that you love people and that you want to help them, you need to

keep still. Many leaders have a lot of charisma; they know how to impress people with their words and their mannerisms, but it is all for self.] I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

If someone loves me, I will see it by their actions. They will not talk about me or work against me, otherwise it is just as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. I was trained to be a music teacher, and I taught band for many years. When a cymbal falls, your nerves just go wild. You say, "Who did that? Hold that cymbal, and don't drop it!" It is annoying. By the same token, it is just as annoying when one says "I love you" and then works against you. You are being two-faced when you are different with me than you are in my absence. The people of God are not two-faced.

No gift is worth anything without a love for the souls of men and for the work of God. Gifts of prophesy and faith are of no value without love. You might give everything you have to the work of God—your money, your time, and your efforts; but if you do not really love people, if your concern is not to see souls saved and God's work furthered, it is of no value. A true man of God is not endeavoring to build up himself or to build up his bank account. A man of God is concerned about people and the furtherance of God's cause.

The Apostle Paul enumerated the different qualities of this love so that we can measure our love by them. He continued in verses 4-8: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; [No matter how long you have been a Christian, if you are unkind, something is wrong. If you are not

kind to everyone you meet, you are not a Christian.] charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth [when people rejoice in what is right, love is working]; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

"Be Kindly Affectioned One to Another"

When a person has the love of God in his heart, he will not have retaliation working in his spirit. A person with this kind of love is courteous. He is not looking for an opportunity to get even. Peter said in 1 Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." Would you like to have what you are doing done to you and your family? Have you ever consider that? I was always taught that when you dish out something, it will return to you. If you are cantankerous or if you are divisive as a pastor, you will reap it.

As saints, we should have good manners and be polite in the way we talk to one another. When a person has this kind of charity, he keeps envy suppressed. Undoubtedly, sometime in your life, you have felt envy or a little jealousy. Envy or jealousy may come knocking on your heart's door, but you need to say, "No, I don't want it." As a real Christian, you must war against those things. That is the battle of Armageddon warring against you. As a Christian, you will find that your greatest battle is with yourself. You have to keep yourself clear.

A man or a woman with this kind of love keeps envy suppressed. A man of God with this kind of

love, one who is living a more excellent way, rejoices in other members' gifts and standing. If this kind of love is working in your life, you will not hurt the effectiveness of another individual or another man of God. As a child of God, you need to really look at these Scriptures, take them apart, and apply them to everything you say and do.

If you have the love of God, pride and glory in self will be suppressed. The Bible says if we have this kind of love, we will do as Paul said in Romans 12:10. We will "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Philippians 2:3 states, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." That is a strong Scripture: "Let each esteem other better than themselves."

Love does not behave itself in a distasteful manner. We should know how to act wherever we are. We will not act like a bull in a china closet, so to speak, in the house of worship. Some people who claim to be Christians sometimes act in a very distasteful manner. They do not respect people as they should.

If you have this quality of love working in your heart, you will honor those who have different positions, such as your pastor and those who are in authority. If you hold a position, you will condescend to those who are beneath you with courtesy and concern. It works both ways. If this love is working within you, you will treat those who are above you with great respect.

"Let Brotherly Love Continue"

An individual with this love does not seek his own glory and praise and does not contend for his own way. He is careful not to hurt or to destroy the influence of others. He is concerned about the influence of others if this love is working as it ought to in his life. This love prefers others before its own good.

There are positive, constructive attributes of this kind of love. Another translation of verse 4 says, "Love is patient, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, and never haughty, never arrogant, selfish or rude." These are beautiful qualities.

Someone once said this: "There are two phrases that should be eliminated in the vocabulary of every child of God, and they are: "we heard" and "they said," because no one knows who *they* are. Love ought to bridle your tongue and strengthen the brethren. No minister should come to my congregation and preach to make it more difficult for me to pastor. By the grace of God, I will never make it harder for any other minister. I think pastoring is the most difficult job there is today. We are to help one another.

Love will stop harsh words. Love will forgive those who have injured us, and it will help us to ask forgiveness of those whom we might have injured. Love works both ways. Do you realize that the Bible lets you know that if there is any hatred or animosity in your heart, you are not saved? John wrote in 1 John 3:15, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Your Christianity is contingent upon your love toward your brothers and sisters in Christ. In measuring your love, you need to put it up against the love of Jesus. The Bible says He laid down His life for us. Therefore, John wrote in 1 John 3:16, "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Again, Hebrews 13:1 says, "Let brotherly love continue." I believe that love is truly the need of the hour. One act of charity may be what is needed to help a brother or a sister get over the hump. Love is greatly needed. A true child of God should never have a part in working against someone. No, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. The weapons of our warfare are prayer, love, and understanding.

Love in Deed and in Truth

John wrote in 1 John 3:16-18: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

I read a story of a missionary in a city who was handing out tracts, and along came a derelict. In fact, the man had been in prison. As he was walking down the street, the missionary handed him a tract. The derelict said, "You know, sir, I don't need that tract. What I need is your coat. It is very cold, and I am freezing to death." The missionary said, "Here, brother." Through that act of kindness, that man was saved and opened a rescue mission in that city for the lost and dying. One act of kindness won that man to Christ. If you are God's child and you truly have God's love in your heart, you will show it by deeds of kindness and deeds of charity.

In too many cases, love is waxing cold. I have often used the example of Abraham. I believe the principles in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. All these principles are emulated by a genuine child of God. If you are saved, you will put these into practice. We read in Genesis 13:7-8: "And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren."

Countless thousands of communities are without this beautiful truth that we have. First Peter 3:15 says to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in

you with meekness and fear." I believe we should be like Abraham and let there be no strife. We sing a song in the *Evening Light Songs* entitled "We Need Each Other, Brethren!" It reads:

In a world filled with violence and

hatred,

Everywhere, wars and turmoil we see;

God's people face daily this struggle;

Only love will keep us free.

Oh, how sad to see some of our

brethren,

As they strive for earth's pleasure and

gold [or for positions, popularity,

and attention];

Become selfish and strive with each

other;

Love and kindness has quickly grown

cold.

Lord, give us true warmth and

affection;

When one fails help us to rescue his

soul;

"He's not heavy, for he is my

brother,"

Let us cry as we carry his load. [Is

there much of that done to-

day? There should be.]

Dear Saints, let us vow to each other:

"I will help, I will comfort and pray;

I will stand by your side and defend

you

In this battle you're facing today.

We need each other, brethren!

For only love will carry us through;

Let us stand by each other brethren;

Take courage, be faithful and true.

"Grieve Not the Holy Spirit"

Christian, friend, you need to stand as an individual. You should not let someone else do your thinking for you. Each of us is responsible for his own stand. The Bible says in Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason. . . ." We need each other. We should not allow contention and strife to work. We ought to help one another. We are dependent on one another, and we are depend-

ent on God. If you are a child of God, you should be a real example of giving yourself and sacrificing for the cause of God.

Another song I would like for you to read is entitled "Love Each Other."

Let us ever love each other

With a heart that's warm and true,

Ever doing to our brother

As to us we'd have him do.

When the heart is sad and lonely,

And the eyes with tears o'erflow,

Gentle words and deeds of kindness

Fall like sunbeams on the snow.

Let us help our fallen brother,

Lift him gently by the hand,

Speaking words of cheer and comfort,

Point him to a better land.

In this world of toil and sorrow

Many hearts are full of care;

Let us live to serve our Master,

And each other's burdens bear.

Kind and loving to each other,

Gentle words to all we meet—

Thus we follow Christ our Savior,

Proving all his service sweet.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:29-32: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God [divisive spirits and wrong attitudes grieve the Spirit of God], whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." If you have a need in your heart, won't you seek the Lord earnestly?

(Cassette C-4300M)

Elijah's God Still Lives

*and we have the assurance that
"Jesus Christ [Elijah's God] the same
yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8).*

I feel constrained for the glory of God, and for the encouragement of His saints to write a testimony of a very definite answer to prayer that we recently had.

For several years we had suffered a great shortage of water at the Children's Homes, in Los Pinos, Havana, Cuba. Much of the time the municipality had to send large tanks of water, containing several hundred gallons, and have it poured into our well, to keep the supply going. Last year another well was drilled, but still the same conditions continued.

All last winter and spring we had practically no rainfall in Cuba, a great drought settled down over much of Cuba, and the reports of water shortages came from all parts of the island. Here in the city of Havana, where the water supply had never failed, the conditions became so grave that in many parts of the city the water was turned on for only a few hours daily, and some days not at all. In Los Pinos where we have the homes located, we get our water from wells, and these wells all over that suburb went dry. The condition was tragic.

Our well also went dry, and we had to hunt from one little farm to another for a few buckets of water. At last folks who had let us have a little water had to tell us we could get no more as their wells were also going dry. We reported to the city authorities, and different groups of government men came out to study the situation to see what could be done to solve this awful problem for the institution. A private family could buy water in bottles and, using great care, could get through; but how could we take care of a situation like this in an institution with over one hundred twenty living there? Nothing could be kept clean, no cooking could be done for many days, no bathing of the children,

and no water for laundry work.

One commission came and said we would have to put in a larger electric motor to pump the water. The next group, after much study, said that would do no good, but that the well must be drilled much deeper. This sounded more reasonable. But in a few days another commission came to study the situation, and then with sad hearts told us the case was hopeless—that there was no water in the earth. They said they had tested it to a great depth and that there was no sign of water and nothing could be done. The last few weeks before this, what little water we had been able to get of a morning was so muddy it could not be used, and at last red clay came up with only a little water in a bucket.

Never have we passed through a deeper problem. No water for cooking, no water for bathing or cleaning, nothing to drink—a tragic situation and growing graver daily. When the last group of government men said nothing could be done, we turned into the home almost speechless. We had been praying earnestly, but we had not yet prayed through. But at this hour (2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 10), a group of the workers of the homes fell on our faces before God, and we cried out of the depth of our hearts for water.

We forgot everything else, and we prayed for water. We had to have water, and at that time God alone could give the water. We did not know how it would come, as the government engineers who had tested the ground had definitely said there was *no* water in the earth; but we, like Elijah of old, cried out of the depths of our souls for water. About 3:00 p.m. (one hour later) we heard a loud, happy cry ring out over the place.

"Water, water, come and see! *Oh, there is water—clean, pure water—lots*

of it!" We all rushed out to see, and there sure enough, running from all the water pipes, was water—clean, pure water in abundance. Yes, Elijah's God—*our* God—had answered prayer. *He is the very same today.*

From that day to this, we have had an abundance of water day and night. In just a few moments, neighbors, having heard the cry, came running with buckets to take water to clean or cook. Praise God forever and forever! The postman heard the news and came hurrying to see if it was true. Others heard of this miracle and came to see. We had a wonderful opportunity to magnify our God before the people. Thank the dear Lord, the people of this community (mostly Catholics) have had a wonderful opportunity to hear of the mighty power of God as manifested toward those who love and serve Him.

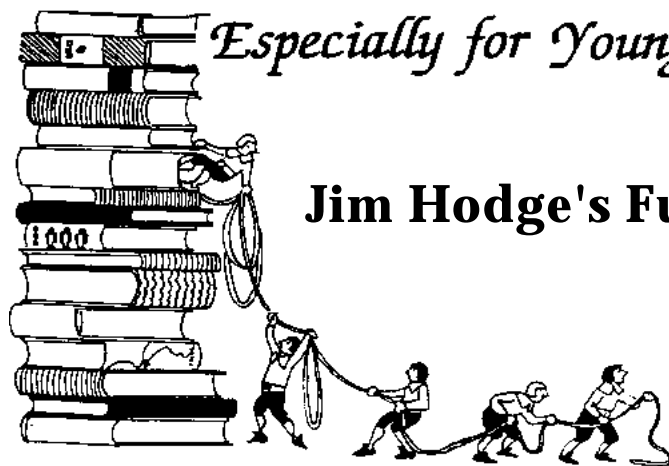
May God use this testimony for the good of souls. Brethren, we do not trust Him enough, and even when He does answer prayer for us, too many times we fail to give Him the glory. Let us exalt His name together so that the unbelievers may know. And let us live in such vital touch with our Lord that at any time of need, we may just call upon *our Father* and receive the answer full and definite.

"My God shall supply *all* your need according to his riches in glory" (Philippians 4:19).

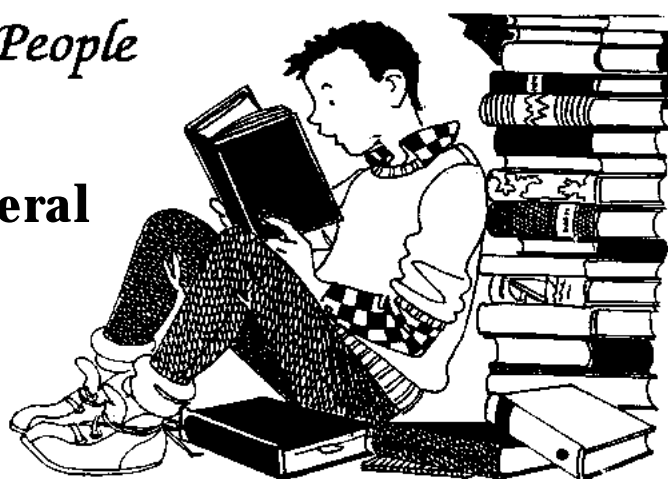
I have already told you of the wonderful way in which God heard and answered prayer in supplying an abundance of water in our dry well. I am happy to tell you that up to this date, there has been an abundance of water for every part of the work in the large institution, and for all the neighbors, since the hour God touched the dry well and sent water. The heavy drought

[continued on page 26]

Especially for Young People



Jim Hodge's Funeral



Everybody knew Jim Hodge. He grew up in our town, and not a Saturday passed after he had gotten out of short pants, that the loafers down at the grocery store did not have some new tales to tell concerning his deviltry. Well, he was not exactly a bad boy, just sort of irresponsible and inclined to run about too much. That was before he started to make a hog out of himself drinking liquor. Of course, we tried to get him converted at the yearly protracted meeting.

When Jim was in his teens, he even came as far as the altar once, but it did not seem to take. His father worried about his wayward son, and at times asked the congregation to pray for him. Whenever this would happen, Mr. So-and-So would say to himself, "The old goat had better be looking after the boy himself rather than trying to put the responsibility on the Lord and the congregation." Then one night Jim was out with a bunch of tough fellows, and Jim was killed. One big fellow started to pick a fight, and soon they were all tangled up in it. When the police got there, the rest were all gone, and there Jim lay with a bullet in his head.

Arrangements were made for the funeral, the pastor being asked to conduct it. He was just out of school and had a lot of newfangled notions. Yes, he could preach longer than anyone in his class without saying an intelligent word, but it seemed that everybody liked him, even if

they could not figure out what he was talking about. They all figured he would settle down after a spell and make a right good preacher. They just could not get to calling him Reverend. So, they just said, "Hi Bill," as if he were one of the boys, and he liked it fine.

I saw Bill that morning. "I heard you are going to preach Jim's funeral?"

I said. "Yes, I am," he answered, "and I surely dread it. I don't like funerals anyway, and this one is terrible for me. I liked Jim, and I believe I could have helped him had I known how."

The funeral was the next afternoon. The folks came early. By 2:00 p.m. the church was filled. The undertaker had a hard time getting the hearse up close to the front steps because the crowd outside was so thick. Most of them came, not because they loved Jim, but to hear what the preacher would say about him.

When the singing was over, the pastor stood up. Everybody was tense and nearly dying in suspense. You could feel that something was going to happen. The pastor walked down from the pulpit and looked down upon the pale face of the dead man lying there. He paused for a moment, and then he began to talk just as though Jim was there beside him, quietly, and sort of soft and sad.

"Jim," he said, "we're here this afternoon to say goodbye to you.

Lots of us did not pay any attention to you when you were alive, but now that you are dead, it seems that everybody is anxious to see you. You have become a famous character, Jim. You might like that, but I doubt it. I think you're wanting to say something to us now that we will never forget. Well, if you want me to, I'll tell them what you want to say.

"I remember that when I first came here, three years ago, you were a fine young chap. Oh yes, you got into lots of mischief, but that was to be expected of a boy whose mother was dead and his father was too busy to bother with him. You did a lot of things you ought not to have done, but none of us tried to help you. Of course, we talked about you, and you heard about it, and it made you feel that everybody was against you.

"The people called you a drunkard, Jim, and I suppose you were, but they forget what made you one. They did not say anything about the fact that your father drank like a fish, and your brother did the same.

"You're dead now, Jim, and we are the ones that killed you. We made it possible for you to become so miserable that you took to drinking. You seemed to think this was the only way out. Just what did we do to help you, Jim? Not a thing. Oh, yes, at times we prayed in general for everybody; you might say you were included then. Yet, even then

as we prayed, we did not really mean it. If we had, we would have done something about it. We would not have let you keep going until you drank yourself to death. We'd have stopped putting temptation in your way by cleaning up the town, so it would have been hard for boys to get liquor. We might have stopped having such terrible places as the one where you met your death.

"Jim, today we are admitting that we are guilty of your death, yes, even your eternal destiny. I, as the preacher, did not do my duty, the church did not do theirs, and poor Jim's father did not do his."

Just then there was a shout from the front seat where Jim's father sat. The old man stood up with tears streaming down his cheeks. He held onto the seat in front of him, as if he was afraid it was going to get away from him. His voice was cracked and broken, but we managed to understand what he said.

The old man called out, "Hold on, Pastor, you said enough. Let me talk now. I guess I ought to be mad at you. I guess we ought to feel like running you out of town, for certainly nobody ever heard such a sermon as this. But, you are right, Pastor, you are right. We are to blame for Jim's death. We citizens of this town have let him kill himself before our very eyes and have done nothing about it. I, as the father, deserve most of the blame. I didn't understand what I was doing."

Just then Jim's father went up to the altar by the side of Jim's coffin. When I looked up again, there were Jim's brother and a large number of the congregation. Many more were trying to come up, but the aisle was filled. I never saw such a funeral in my life, but it was the start of a real spiritual awakening in that community that later swept the country. Somehow we forgot that Jim's body was there. We just remembered our sins and asked God in mercy to forgive us.

That very night a crowd of men went down to the place where Jim got his whiskey and told the man to close up. However, he had already heard about the funeral and had started to board up the windows when they arrived. From that day to this, we have never forgotten Jim's funeral.

So ends the tragic story of Jim Hodge's life and death. Just what are we doing today to make it hard for our sons and daughters to go the way of the transgressor? First, we must seek to lead them into a living experience with our Lord and Savior, and then, as Christian citizens, do all within our power to eliminate such places from our communities.

Genesis 4:9-11 tells us: "And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth. . . ."

Through legalized vices, the voices of a multitude of criminal boys and girls, men and women, are reaching God's ear, in condemnation of fathers and mothers and kin and friends and citizens who permitted taverns, vile movies, dances, gambling, and licentious literature

to flourish in their communities. While the church is seeking to promote the Kingdom of God through great programs and building projects, multitudes are going to hell because of the stark indifference and inaction concerning social conditions that defile men's bodies and souls and multiply empty pews. All our works are abominable if we neglect the most needful things.

Young person, are you truly saved? Do you love Jesus? Are you living a holy life, apart from the ways of the world? Galatians 5:24 tells us, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." We read in Ephesians 5:11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Philippians 4:8-9 tells us: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

Selected

If Jesus Came to Your House

*If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two,
If He should show up unannounced, I wonder what you'd do?
Would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in,
Or hide some books and put a Bible where they'd been?
Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends,
Or would you hope they stay away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on,
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do,
If Jesus came in person to spend some time with you.*

Author Unknown

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the minis-

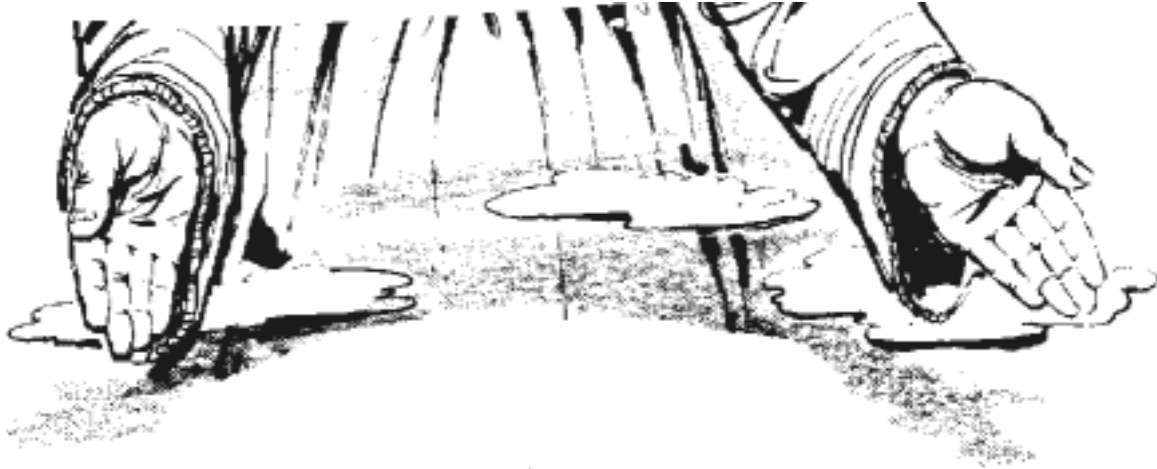
try of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors

for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.



Have You Been Reconciled to God?

Brother Esau Brooks

Ambassadors for Christ

Many times I marvel at the revelation and the knowledge that God gave the great Apostle Paul concerning the great things of God. It is so regrettable today that so many who claim to be Christians seem satisfied with just living on the surface. I believe there are depths that we can yet explore and experience in the things of God that few have fully discovered. Many times as I look upon the world and church people and see how casually they regard things, I wish I could give them the vision that God has given me.

In the Scripture text before you,

one thought stands out. Notice that Paul used the words *reconciled*, *reconciliation*, and *reconciling*. In this message I want to draw your attention to the first part of verse 20 of our Scripture text: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." In our country an ambassador is expected to fully represent his country. We regard an ambassador as a symbol of the country that he represents.

Child of God, that is the way it ought to be with you. You have been raised to the level of an ambassador. Paul did not say that we are "hoping to be" or "expecting to be," but he said, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you

in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Whether you believe it or not, that is where the hang up is. So many people are still in disagreement with God and His way. Oftentimes people say, "This is the way we see it" or "We don't see it like that," as if they had anything to do with it. None of us has anything to do with it. It is as it is whether we agree or disagree, and the quicker people can reconcile themselves to what God says, the better it will be.

I believe we would be surprised if we could discover the many different ideas that people have regarding God's great plan. In these last days, everyone seems to view and regard salvation differently.

"If Any Man Be in Christ"

Look at what Paul was saying to the church at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 5:16: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." God would have us to know this thing is spiritual and spiritually discerned. That is the reason Paul said in verse 17, "Therefore [notice that he did not say 'If every man is in Christ'] if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or creation]."

God's people are different from all other people. Church members are not like the children of God. Today everyone has his own idea about what a child of God is; nevertheless, Paul said, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." He is not a man, he is a *super* man. When I was growing up, "Superman" was quite a thing in those days. Well, every child of God is super: he lives differently from everyone else, walks differently, dresses differently, thinks differently, and talks differently.

Some may say, "Well, that is the way they see it over there," but this is the way we all need to see it. There is nothing wrong with Christianity and serving God, but so many people are hung up on what it really means to serve Him. There is such a battle on every hand: fighting, disputings, and disagreements concerning being a child of God. That is the reason sinners find it so hard to decide what they really want to do with their lives.

Some people's idea about being a child of God is to sin more or less every day. As far as they are concerned, no one can live a holy life, which is the same as saying that no one can live as God wants them to live. Therefore, people think they have to try their best and hope that things will work out right. Now, that might be some people's ideology, but that is not what God's Word teaches. God's Word states, "Therefore if any man be in Christ,

he is a new creature." You need to be reconciled to that. Not many people have reconciled themselves to it.

In verse 18 of our Scripture text, the Apostle Paul spoke about the ministry of reconciliation. God's ministry is a ministry of reconciliation. Nowadays you would think that God has changed His thinking about that, because instead of reconciling there is dispersing and dividing. The ministry wants this one to have nothing to do with that one. That is not God's ministry! Anytime anyone tells me that I cannot fellowship what God fellowships, I am out of there.

If you are in Christ, you are a new breed. You do not do as all the rest do. You do not even live as the rest think you ought to live. You are a new creature, and you live a new life. You see things differently from the general run of the public. Many people think that because I go to church and you go to church, we are one. Friend, that does not make us one. Christ is what makes us one. Paul told the Galatians in Galatians 3:28, ". . . ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Sanctified in Christ Jesus

The ministry needs to get back to reconciliation rather than splitting asunder and dividing. That is not part of God's work. This thing of battling and fighting one another is not of God. You may ask, "Do you believe that every Christian must be alike?" No, I believe that every Christian *is* alike. If you are in touch with God, you are going to see things God's way. Moreover, in whatever area you do not see things God's way, you are concerned about coming to that place.

We do not come together in camp meetings just to mingle socially. We come together to edify the body of Christ, and the church is the body of Christ. I do not know about your physical body, but the members of my physical body get along with one another. Anytime

my tongue accidentally gets in the way of my teeth, I suffer pain. If your teeth bite your tongue, does your hand rejoice? My hands sympathize; it feels awkward and painful. When I stumble and bump one of my toes, my whole body feels the effects of it. I have to watch that I do not sit the whole body down to nourish that one toe. That is what happens in a normal body.

If the rest of the members of the body rejoice against the one member that is suffering, something is wrong. I am right-handed, so anytime I write a letter, my left hand helps, if no more than to hold the paper. I have never had any trouble with my left hand saying to the right hand, "I am not going to help you. Hold the paper yourself." If you have that kind of body, I would like to see a demonstration of that. Yet all over the country, people who claim to be Christians do not want to get along with others; they are not even interested.

The great Apostle Paul was writing to those people at Corinth about the state of their affair with God. When he addressed the first letter, he sent it to the Church of God at Corinth. By the way, did you know that is the only church mentioned in the Bible? Not one epistle is addressed to any other church. First Corinthians 1:1-2 reads: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Unto the church [he could have stopped right there, and I suppose they would have known which church he was talking about, but he went on to say] of God which is at Corinth. . . ." You may inquire, "Don't they all belong to God?" They must not. Why was Paul singling this one out by saying, "Unto the church of God"?

When Paul addressed "the church of God which is at Corinth," to whom was he speaking? He was speaking to those who were sanctified, or set apart from the general crowd, in Christ. Church of God people are in Christ. When you put

this alongside 2 Corinthians 5:16, you will understand verse 17 concerning being a new creature.

First Corinthians 1:2 continues, ". . . to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, [In other words, to those who are called to act like saints, to live like saints, and to be saints. The world is losing all of this today. They hardly use the word *saint* anymore. Paul said the Church of God is called to be saints.] with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Now, that is something! Could that be the problem today, that we do not have the same Lord?

Paul said, ". . . with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Saint of God, we are under one government, one control. Where did people get all of these different governors and lords? You have the Baptist lord, the archbishop, and the "right reverend."

A State of Conflict

The Church of God at Corinth was a very outstanding, blessed congregation. It was the only congregation at the time that had the nine gifts of the Spirit operating in their midst. However, somewhere down the line, some got sidetracked, and things began to develop, so much so that in the third chapter of that first letter, Paul said that he could not speak to them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal because they had envying and strife and division among them, and Paul condemned it.

I cannot help who admires division and exalts it, it is still wrong unless it is wrong against right and right against wrong. Someone may say, "They say it is wrong." Well, just take the Word of God and you will find out.

The Church of God at Corinth began to drift, so Paul wrote to them to get the matter straightened out. In 2 Corinthians, Chapter 5, he was dealing with the state of con-

flict that had begun to exist between the church at Corinth and God. Is there a state of conflict in you against some things that God said? Sometimes you hear people say, "Well, this one says that, and I don't agree, and it is all right to disagree." You may disagree with me; do not feel bad about that. However, we are not going to break fellowship. Why? Because we did not make it in the first place. If we did not make it, I cannot see how we are going to break it. You can only break what you make.

What caused the state of conflict that began to work among the church at Corinth and God? It began because many were disputing God's right to control their lives. Are you disputing God's right to control your life? You know, back home when I preach a baptismal service, I tell those who are getting baptized, "You are stepping out of the world now. You are giving up the world; you are renouncing the world. You are telling the world by your baptism that you are taking sides with God and that you now belong to Him."

Did you know that a Christian belongs to God? God's people belong to God. I do not mean in a general way; I mean in a very particular way. It is He who tells you how to dress. You may say, "Oh, no. No one is going to tell me what I can put on and what I can't put on." If you truly get saved, you will find that you must obey God's Word or you cannot be God's child.

I will never forget a time in my experience when I was teaching the adult class in Sunday school and a young sister from the congregation appeared at the door dressed immodestly. When the class was over, I went to her and said, "Excuse me, did God have anything to say to you about that dress before you put it on?" She did not speak. I said, "Come on, tell me. Didn't something tell you that the dress did not become you?" Again, she did not speak. I said, "Come on, I want to know. Didn't you, at some time, lay

it aside and then go back and try it on and stand before the mirror and try to make yourself feel good about it?"

She said, "Yes, sir."

I said, "Well, why didn't you do what God said?"

I then said, "I will answer the question for you. You came to prove whether I am going to stand by what I am preaching. Well, I am. Go home and change it."

If people would obey God's voice, there are many things that ministers would not have to preach. Preachers have to preach many things because people will not give ear to what God is telling them. Suppose you walk into a store and see a suit and try it on. As you stand before the mirror, the saleslady says, "Now, that really suits you." Yet something down inside says, "That does not become you." So you take it off and put it back. Then you walk around for a while and go back and pick it up, pay for it, and walk out.

Your first time to church in it, you are curious. You watch everyone you meet to see if they are going to look. Then when you meet the pastor, you watch his eyes. Even after you turn and begin to walk away, you feel like looking back to see if he is looking. What is bothering you? God told you that was not what He wanted you to have, but you would not listen. Now you are afraid someone is going to say something.

Old Things Must Pass Away

Again, 2 Corinthians 5:17 reads, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is [today, in this world] a new creature: old things are passed away [or passed out of his life]; behold, all things are become new." Now, that is what God's Word says. A state of conflict started between the church at Corinth and God, just as there is a state of conflict going on between you and God. Maybe it is over how you live, how you walk, or how you dress, but there is a

state of conflict. There is no perfect harmony. If the preacher gets up and follows the good Word of God too closely, all of a sudden you begin to feel as if you are sitting on a hot stove, so you leave.

Man has ever disputed God's right to control his life. If you are a child of God, He has a right to control your life and to tell you how to live. He alone knows what is best for you. He alone knows the consequences of following the wrong way. Therefore, He is justly displeased about your disputing His control over you. Many people have gotten into trouble, and they are still getting into trouble, by not obeying God. Whenever you obey what God says, you are going to end up right.

God is calling and demanding reconciliation. Verse 20 of our Scripture text says, ". . . be ye reconciled to God," not God to you. What does it mean to be reconciled to God? You must get to the place where there is perfect agreement and perfect harmony between you and God. When that exists, you will not have any trouble with the preacher or the saints. Everyone will be at peace.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:25-26: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, . . . and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." Since you do not have anything to pay the first farthing with, there is no hope of your getting out of hell. To go to hell is to be lost forever.

Man must come to God's terms. Have you ever sat down and tried to picture what Heaven must be like? I read in the Book of Revelation how all the elders cast down their crowns, without one dissenting voice, not one bit of disagreement. In Matthew 6:10b Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." The state of hostility that exists between you and God concerning your life must

end. Sinner, you need to be saved. As long as you are in sin, you are in a state of hostility against God. That is the reason every Christian forsakes the world, because the love of the world makes you an enemy of God. There is no in between.

You must accept what God says and what God is offering to become a child of God. When it comes to Heaven and when it comes to God, there is no such thing as everyone doing what he likes best. The thing I like about it is, He gives you an experience that makes you *want* to do what He says. You do not stop drinking liquor because the church says you have to. You stop drinking liquor because you do not want to drink liquor. You stop smoking, not just because it is bad for your lungs and the church preaches against it. You stop smoking because you do not want to smoke.

Being Reconciled to God's Way

Salvation is a state of being reconciled to God's way. When I say *reconciled*, I am talking about accepting God's way about things. You see, God has already done what He was going to do to end this disagreement between you and Him. He sent His Son, and His Son gave His life. His Son died on the Cross, was resurrected, and went back to Glory; then God sent down the Holy Spirit and the Gospel. They are for the one purpose of opening your eyes so that you can see that it is best to let the Lord have His way with you.

Paul let us know that a change must come. If any man is going to be in Christ, he must become brand new; he has to be changed, not covered over. Salvation changes you. It takes the "do wrong" out and puts the "do right" in. You do things, not because the preacher says so, but because you want to do right. You do not have to have someone breathing down your neck all the time to get you to live right. You live right whether or not anyone else is around.

God gave His Son to effect this change. Paul said in verse 18 of our Scripture lesson, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." Next, Paul spoke about the Word. The Word of God is the word of reconciliation between us and God and between us and one another. No matter what dispute or disagreement comes up between us, the Word is what settles it. The Word says to let there be no division.

In the early stage of the morning church, Barnabas wanted to go one place with John Mark, but Paul had a deeper vision and said, "No, John Mark will not stick to it; he will not make it." So a contention arose between them, but not strong enough to cause Paul go down the road and build his church or for Barnabas to go up the road to build his. How could they have preached the word of reconciliation and manifested the ministry of reconciliation if they would not be reconciled.

People need to be awakened to all this sham that is going on today. Preachers get up and tell the people that the church is one, but when some disagreement arises, they pick up their toys and run off and talk about building another church. Only God can build a church. People can build religion, but they cannot build a church. That is what I wanted to tell a lady sometime ago when she said to me, "Mr. Brooks, do you know how many churches we have? We have about five hundred churches in this place." I wanted so much to say, "Not churches, ma'am, *religions*."

Whenever any disagreement arises, there is a place where we can become reconciled. The only thing that stands in the way of fellowship with one another is man's stubborn will; he will not let go. Some people believe that God cannot take care of His church, so they think they have to help Him out.

God is issuing a call and making a demand; note the message: "be

ye reconciled to God." It is urgent, and it requires your immediate attention. Going on in your hostilities against God will cause you to lose your soul. The Bible says the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Therefore, you must lose that state of mind in order to be reconciled to God. God said it, and that ought to settle it. It is the only way to settle your dispute. God has given us the Word, and the Word points to reconciliation.

It is urgent that you attend to this matter. Do you know how many people are lost through dis-

agreements, through the state of hostility? You need to attend to this matter and get it out of the way. You ought to do what God wants you to do. Jesus said in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Notice that He did not say, "If ye have love for one another." I can have love for you, but I may not give it to you or show it to you. On the other hand, if I have love *to* you, you are going to know it, because I am going to show you and express it to you. Paul wrote in Romans 12:20, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst,

give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

Sinner, you need to be saved. If you are going to get your eyes on individuals today, you probably will never get saved. I want you to know that this way of disagreement and hostility is not God's way. You need to turn your life over to God and offer Him your service so that He can use you to help bring to pass the things that are lacking. Won't you be reconciled to God? God bless you.

(Cassette C-5055E)

When Does a Church Need a Revival ?

When it is easier to stay at home from church than to go.
When it is easier to go to your place of work than to the house of God.

When it is easier to be critical than kind.

When it is easier to be late to church than on time.

When it is easier to read fiction than the Bible.

When it is easier to shirk God-given opportunity than to do it.

When it is easier to support the club, sports, etc., than the church.

When it is easier to sleep in church than to stay awake.

When it is easier to grumble than to praise.

When it is easier to gossip than to witness.

When it is easier to condemn souls than to pray for their salvation.

When it is easier to hold grudges than to forgive.

When it is easier to be worldly than to be holy.

When it is easier to stay home to watch television than to go to prayer meeting.

When it is easier to withhold tithes and offerings than to give them to the church.

When it is easier to obey men than to obey the Word of God.

Selected

1 Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken

you but such as is common to man: but 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.

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

God Makes A Way



Brother Wayne Hafley

The Faithfulness of God

I am glad that God knows all our ways. In Job 23:8-10 Job said: "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Verse 13 of our Scripture text lets us know that no temptation is uncommon to man. When you realize that others have gone through the same trials that you face and that they were victorious, that is an inspiration. No doubt, many have gone through

more than you and I are going through, and their fruits and labors live on.

A lady once said, "I'm a pilgrim passing through, but this journey is not all smooth." It is a sweet journey when God walks with you, because He can make a way when the road gets dark and lonely. He is the light at the end of the tunnel, and He will take you through all your trials and tests. No problem is too hard for God to solve. There is not a mountain that He cannot tunnel through or a river that He cannot dry up. He is still God.

God will make a way for you, friend. If some would get out of the way, God could make a way for them. I do not want to hinder God if

He is working with me and giving me what I need for each trial and test. I want to listen to God and obey Him. If you will obey God and not allow other spirits to get hold of you, you can be more than a conqueror. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory in every situation! He will take care of His own if His own will let Him.

I appreciate God. He has helped me in so many ways, and I know He will help me again when I call upon Him. Saint, God understands your every mistake, and He understands every trial you are going through. He also understands your feelings and desires. God is faithful, and He is a present help in the time of trouble.

You can read in the Bible of God's faithfulness to the Prophets and the Apostles. He brought them through many trials and persecutions, and He will do the same for you. Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." At times Paul had to stand alone. In 2 Timothy 4:14 he said, "Alexander . . . did me much evil." In verse 17 Paul said, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." If the Lord is for you, who can be against you? Paul said the Lord stood with him. The Lord encourages His people. The devil will bring discouragement whenever possible. You may go through times of discouragement, but do not lose heart. The devil likes to put people in a discouraging state. Unbelief and doubting God can cause you to turn to the world and other things, but you do not have to do that. God can bring you through.

The Victory Is in Being Obedient

After the death of Moses, Joshua was chosen to lead the children of Israel, and God encouraged Joshua. In Joshua 1:5 He said, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee. . . ." Christian friend, you need to be encouraged. You might have a rough road ahead of you, but it will not be too hard for you if the Lord is with you. Joshua knew that the Lord would be with him and that He would take him through.

When the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into the Canaan land, they came to the city of Jericho. God said He would give the city to them. The walls of Jericho were no trouble to God. He told Israel to march around the walls of the city once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. When they obeyed Him, He brought down the walls. Romans 8:37 states that "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." The walls were a big obstacle for Israel in conquering

Jericho.

Dear one, you will not get victory without a battle. You will have to fight Satan all the way. You may come up against some high walls, but God will make a way for you. He gave Israel the order to march around the city and to keep silent. That was a difficult order, but they obeyed it. That might have seemed foolish to them, but God saw that it was necessary for them to obtain victory. The victory is in being obedient to the One who made the plan.

As Israel marched around the walls of Jericho the seventh day, they were commanded to sound the trumpet. The sound of the trumpet was the only thing blasting against the walls. Many people try to battle the enemy with their own hands, but they need to leave it where God ordained the church to have victory. If you will be still and hear what the Spirit says, you can go through any problem or trial victoriously.

Friend, if you are going to make it, you must line up with God's Word. God's church is marching on with the Truth, and I intend to march with it. God's people never lose their thrill for the sounding of the trumpet. If you lose your love for the Truth, you will lose the victory. Sometimes you may not understand when God leads you in a certain way, but God tells the church how to march and how to keep the victory.

God had a purpose when He told Israel to march around the walls and not to speak or make any noise. They could have said, "God, why don't You just let us walk around one time?" In my own experience, sometimes my head has said no, but my heart said amen. When it comes to living the Bible standard, the flesh may not want to submit, but your heart ought to say amen to the will of God and obey. You do not want to lose your submissiveness to the will of God. I believe that God wanted His people to look at the greatness of those walls. They did not allow unbelief to overtake

them.

Friend, when God commands you to do something, it will work. Some things might look impossible to the natural eye, but nothing is impossible with God. You might have some walls in your life, but God can bring them down. If you will obey the Lord, He will be right there with you and see you through. When you come to a Red Sea in your life, just be still, and God will bring deliverance. When things look impossible, you need to remember that with God all things are possible.

God Is Faithful

God was faithful to Abraham. He promised Abraham a son, and that promise was fulfilled in Abraham's old age. God can work beyond the realm of nature and human understanding. With God all things are possible. What a mighty God we serve! Many problems may hinder the work of God, but we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ. Solomon wrote in Song of Solomon that the church is a lily among thorns; that shows the beauty of God's church. Child of God, God is mindful of you and of whatever stands in your way.

Paul had a thorn in the flesh and was buffeted by Satan, so he prayed three times for God to take it away, but instead of taking it away, God gave him the grace to bear it. God wants to take you through difficulties to give you His glory. If you are not careful, you will get to the place where you want life to be too easy. If you are going to be a part of the Church of God, some people are not going to be with you. Nevertheless, God will be with you, and He will take you through. God makes a way through His grace.

God told Paul that He was going to give him the grace to bear the thorn in his flesh. The greatest resource you have in the midst of trouble is God's grace. His grace is sufficient for every need. When you pray and problems do not move, the

devil will try to cause you to doubt God and then become discouraged. However, if you will pray to God, you can claim the victory, and God will exalt you in due season. God will hear your prayers, but He may not bring deliverance right away. If you will keep praying and keep trusting, God will see you through. He will not fail you; He is faithful. Also, the people of God will not let you down when you are distressed or discouraged. A child of God will lift you up and pray for you. Church, we are to bear one another's burdens. If you cannot help someone bear a burden, you are not where you ought to be with God.

When Amelek fought against Israel, Moses stood on top of a hill and held up a rod. As long as Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed, but when his hands came down, the enemy prevailed. So Joshua and Hur stood beside Moses and held up his hands. God would stop the whole universe to win the victory for His people. He can calm the storms in your life.

You will have many battles to go through. Sometimes the battle is in the mind. That is the reason God wants you to set your affection on things above and not on earthly things. We serve a mighty, risen Lord, and He is faithful to the Church of the Living God. God is faithful to His people. Child of God, He will supply your needs, and He will never leave you.

Hindrances to Your Soul

Many people have problems with self. If you are not careful, you will want to quit the battle. When God's army moves, we all must stick together, encourage one another, and uphold one another in prayer. A child of God does not want to sit in the wilderness. He will get the fullness of the power of God and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. The wilderness must be conquered for you to be victorious, child of God.

Joshua and Caleb had another

spirit. Some people have a spirit, but it is not the right spirit. I do not want to be guilty of having a wrong spirit. You should not have a rebellious spirit or a spirit that wants to put others down. You should want to help others. I am not going to sit on the sidelines and become lukewarm or dead.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:7-9: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." You may be cast down, but you will not be forsaken or destroyed. God will deliver you.

The city of Jericho was a hindrance to the children of Israel going into Canaan land. Today the church has its walls of Jericho. The Church of God has had to war against paganism, papalism, and Protestantism. God brings His people out of false religion, and thank God, they come out victoriously. The church has victory over the beast, and she does not bear his mark. Once there was a wall there, but God has brought it down.

False religion works against the Church of God. Your kinfolk who are in false religion may be a hindrance to you. They may try to pull you away from the Church of God. False religion is an enemy to Christ, and it is still an enemy to God's church. Babylon's doctrine is not the doctrine of God. The mark of Babylon is to scatter God's people.

It is bad enough when sectism divides God's people, but it is worse when those who claim to be God's people work division. If you cause division, you are killing the two witnesses, the Word and the Spirit. Romans 16:17 says, "Mark them which cause divisions . . . and avoid them." God broke down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles, and made us one body. Today people are building that wall back up.

Friend, you might have some

walls in your life that you have not conquered yet. You might have a problem with measuring to the Bible standard. You may be self-centered or have a rebellious spirit. If you have a rebellious spirit, you are rebelling against what God wants you to do. You might have some things in your life that you know without a doubt are contrary to walking in the light. Perhaps you walk in the light for a while, but then you begin to back up on what God has revealed to you. That is a wall that needs to come down, because it is a hindrance to your soul. You need to tear down those walls on the inside that are problems to you. You need to put self on the altar and let God move in completely.

A pastor has less trouble with sanctified people than with carnal-minded people. Carnality is an enemy to the Church of God. Child of God, you should not want your own will; you should seek God's will. As a child of God, you must die out to your own will and submit to God's will in your life. Some have come to that place in their experience and have gone back instead of going on.

Take Heed Lest You Fall

When the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho, they had to rule out self-confidence and trust in God. Later, their self-confidence caused them to lose the battle at Ai. Saint, you can be highly favored of God, but you must heed His Word lest you fall. You can become careless or lax in your living. God's Word says to take heed lest you fall. You must heed that warning until the day you die. You need to examine yourself and pray as David did in Psalm 139:23-24 when he said: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me. . . ." God's Word is a resource that you can draw from.

James 1:2-5 reads: "My brethren,

count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James admonished in James 2:13-14: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" God will not tempt you to do evil against a brother or a sister. You should not blame God for that temptation.

Many people become involved in things, and because they feel good about them, they think God does not condemn them. That is a deception from the devil. Living after the flesh can cause you to feel good, but it will destroy your soul. Rock 'n' roll music can cause you to lose your salvation. That is the reason you need to set your mind on things above and quit allowing your mind to be filled with worldly allurements. You need to get it off earthly things. With every temptation God will make a way for you to escape; He will supply the grace. Some people misuse the grace of God by thinking they can live for self for a while and then seek God at a later time. On the contrary, He sets the times and the conditions. You may wait too long and be like Samson, not realizing that the Lord has departed from you.

If you are not true to what God has shown you and you refuse His correction, He will send you a strong delusion and cause you to believe a lie and be damned. To continue to transgress and rebel and not confess your wrong is a dangerous state. Proverbs 28:13 says that he who confesses his sins and forsakes them shall have mercy. That is where the mercy of God is found. Refusing to confess and forsake your sins is where the

trouble is. The devil will use all his power to keep you in bondage, but God will make a way out if you will meet His conditions.

"Wait Upon the Lord"

Sometimes God will not come to your rescue immediately but will test you. During those times, you need to be patient and possess your soul. God uses problems to strengthen you. You need to wait on God in patience. Isaiah 40:31 reads, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." The word *faint* means to be disheartened. Saint, do not get disheartened. Lift up your head and keep pressing on. You may be discouraged or disappointed, but you will never be disappointed in God. Christian friend, you do not have to lose out in a trial and give up. God said with every temptation He would make a way to escape. He will not put more on you than you can bear. He is not unreasonable. His purpose and plan is to build your faith. He wants you to have more confidence and trust in Him, and then you can help others who are going through trials. You can receive wisdom from God. James 1:5 reads, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

When you go through hard places, you may feel that it is unfair. In times such as that, you can ask in wisdom for the promise. The devil likes to work on you to try to put you down. He will try to bring fear upon you, and fear has torment. Proverbs 29:25 states, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." Some people know what they ought to do, but they have a fear of man. The fear of man will bring a snare and put you in bondage. God said not to fear man who can destroy the body but to fear Him who

can destroy both soul and body. You can be more than a conqueror through Christ who strengthens you. If God be for you, who can be against you? You ought to give God glory and praise for what He does. You should not take the resources of God lightly. We get wisdom when we are tried by fire. Friend, persecution has never stopped the progress of the church. Perseverance during persecution will bring out the very best in you.

Psalm 125:1-3 states: "They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity." God is in the midst of His people to take care of them. He is all around spiritual Jerusalem.

When Elijah was in a time of famine, God told him to abide by the brook Cherith and the ravens would bring him food. Elijah did not question God; he was obedient. After a while, the brook dried up, so God sent him to a widow's house. She was gathering sticks for a fire to make a last meal for herself and her son to eat, and then they were going to lay down and die because of the famine. Elijah told the widow woman to bake a cake for him first, and then the Lord would supply meal and oil for them until the famine was over. She honored God and God's man, and God supplied her need.

In the Old Testament you can read of Hannah. She could not bare children. Her husband tried to comfort her, but he could not help her. To be barren was a reproach to a woman in that day. Hannah wanted a child so much that she held on in prayer, but God did not answer immediately. Nevertheless, she kept on praying. Her unanswered prayer did not hinder her hope. She prayed on until the answer came. She was persistent, and her trust was in God.

Finally, God opened her womb, and she promised that child to the Lord. God can work above nature.

A lady in our congregation wanted a child so much. The doctor told her that she could never have any children. She and her husband kept coming to church and were saved. She was zealous, eager to learn the Bible truths, and full of good works. One day she went to the altar and prayed that God would open her womb so that she could have a child. One morning she came to church shouting praises to God and said, "I'm going to have a child!" If you trust and obey God, He will bless you and give you the desires of your heart according to His will. What a mighty God we serve! That little girl has dedicated herself at the altar to be a missionary.

Shun the Appearance of Evil

Sometimes you may be tempted to become self-centered. If you are not careful, you will think of no one but yourself. Being self-centered and not carrying a burden for others is the wrong kind of spirit; it is not the Spirit of God. If you do not get victory over that, it will lead to your having a rebellious spirit. In the Old Testament, King Saul wanted to reserve some things for himself despite what the man of God told him to do. He had a rebellious spirit. The spirit of rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. My friend, being rebellious or self-centered will cause you to let down on the Bible standard. The Bible says to dress modestly. The standard of modesty in this country has gone down, but the people of God still dress modestly.

Young person, you must flee youthful lusts or temptation will overtake you. God will help you through temptations if you ask Him. Pornography will mess up your mind and cause you to become lustful. James 1:15 states, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Da-

vid lusted after Bathsheba and brought much sorrow upon himself. Parent, you ought to watch your children and pay attention to the kinds of clothes they are wearing. You ought to notice what kind of blouses and dresses your daughter wears. You need to uphold the standard of modesty so that ungodly apparel does not begin to creep in.

Other things may try to creep in, such as body piercing, tattoos, and strange hairstyles. Do not tell me those things do not affect the young people. Many of them dye their hair green or some other color or shave part of it off, and sometimes their parents think that is cute. You and your family should be a good Christian witness.

Child of God, the evil forces of the world are all around you. In schools the teachers and ungodly students may mock you and make fun of you. If you are measured to the Bible standard, they would like to see you deny that standard. They want you to be as they are. The Church of God is separate from the world. The Bible says to shun the very appearance of evil. Do you look at pornography on the Internet? Do you have some walls on the inside that need to come down? Peter warned against becoming entangled with the world.

Be Strong in the Lord

Christian friend, you need to learn from things that have caused you problems in the past and quit letting them come back in. Proverbs 26:11 speaks of a dog returning to its own vomit. In other words, it has taken in again what made him sick. You may take a hog out of the mud hole and give it a bubble bath and put perfume all over it, but when you turn it loose, it will go back and wallow in the mud, because its nature has not been changed. When God saves you, He makes you a new creature. Yielding to temptation comes if you fail to stay strong spiritually. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:16, ". . . though our outward

man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

Friend, it pays to be strong in the Lord. Many people have fallen by the wayside because they failed to resist the devil. Again, the Bible says to flee youthful lusts. To stay saved, you need to attend the church services as much as possible, study the Bible, and pray. God's grace is given so that you can be victorious. His grace will not cause you to think of yourself more highly than you think of others. You can lose the grace of God.

Some people think they can lose out with God and go back to God anytime they choose, but they cannot do that. When you come to God in true repentance, you must be ready to make changes in your life. The grace of God is available only when you truly forsake all your sins. God will give you strength to overcome every problem, and the grace of God will be there to help you.

Luke, Chapter 18, tells of two men who went into the temple to pray. One spoke of how righteous he was, and the other, a publican, humbly said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." The publican got the grace of God.

When the prodigal son came to himself and owned his true condition, he went back ready to be a servant. Some people go to the altar just because they have gotten caught, but they do not have godly sorrow. They will not receive the grace of God that way. God hates disobedience, self-righteousness, and pride. He cut off the Jews because they would not accept His way and admit to their wrongs. He left their house desolate. If you do not do better than that, you will be cut off too.

Sinner friend, you must be willing to forsake all your sins to obtain God's grace. If you come to the Lord in true repentance and godly sorrow, He will forgive you and make a way of escape from all your temptations. However, you must come to God with the right attitude and in humility. When you know you have done wrong, you need to be honest and come to God. May God help you.

(Cassette C-5047M)

[Elijah's God Still Lives—continued from p. 13]

continued for some four months *after* we had water, and the sufferings around us were terrible, but we had water all this time. Praise God forever!

I have added this note, because many have been writing to me asking if we still have water in that well. Yes, thank God, when He does a thing, He does it well. At the same time we were suffering for water in the homes, the water condition all over the island was very grave, and here in Havana, the authorities, in trying to save the water, divided the hours of the day and night in different sections of the city. Out in the Buena Vista suburb, where we have the mission house and where the church building is also located (where we always have our convention), the water was turned on a couple hours late in the night.

This made it necessary for someone to remain up in each home, waiting for the water, and then fill vessels to supply water for the family until the following night. Because of these conditions and other problems, the brethren had almost decided that it would not be possible to have our convention this year. But after much prayer, we decided to go on with our plans and arranged for and bought a number of large vessels for water in the mission house. We always feed the brethren who come to this meeting at the mission house, and it would naturally require much water to carry this through.

I went out to the house with others two different times to clean and get ready, but could get no water. At last I went out on a Thursday evening to remain with others to catch water in the night for this work. We got the water in our vessels that night, but never needed it. The next morning when we got up, we were surprised to find running water. This was just two days before the convention was to begin. We asked our neighbors on all sides if they had running water that morning, and they all said no. We were the only ones who had, and none of them could understand, but we did, full well. And the water stayed on for just fifteen days, or until all our visitors had gone back to their homes. The day after all had left, the water was

again on *only* in the night for a while so we could get water if we needed it. This condition lasted until October, when the heavy rains broke, and there was more water for the city.

But all during the convention we had a full supply, not only for the cooking and cleaning, but also many of the brethren from out of the city came to ask the privilege of bathing at our place as they could not get water where they were staying. What a joy to let them come and use of the blessing God had so freely supplied us! How wonderful it is to have a God who really hears and *answers* prayer!

Even as I write this, I know that some who will read this testimony will doubt it in their hearts. But there are scores of brethren in Cuba who could affirm what I am writing. I am writing this because a number of the dear brethren here have asked me if I had given this testimony, and when I said, "No," they asked me why I did not write it for

God's glory. So here it is, clear and straight. The God who withheld rain for Elijah and later sent rain in answer to his prayer is *our* God, and thank the Lord, He has lost none of His power or willingness. Second Timothy 3:5 speaks of those who have a form of godliness but who deny the power of God. How sad that these conditions exist among those who have all their lives had clear demonstrations of God's love and power, and yet do not believe. Naturally such cannot receive from God these marvelous answers to prayer, because He only answers "the prayer of faith," but bless God, those who do really live the standard of His Holy Word and whose lives thus please Him can call upon their Father, and He does answer. May these testimonies strengthen the faith of those who read, and may His great name be lifted up among the people.

Faith Stewart

Give and It Shall Be Given

In one of his journeys, George Whitefield was told of a widow with a large family whose landlord had taken her furniture and was about to sell it unless her rent was paid. George Whitefield's purse was never large, but his sympathy was great. He immediately gave the five guineas that the helpless woman needed. The friend who was traveling with him hinted that the sum was more than he could reasonably afford, to which the reply was given. "When God brings a case of distress before us, it is that we may relieve it."

The two travelers proceeded on their journey, and before long encountered a highwayman who demanded their money, which they gave. Whitefield now turned the tables on his friend and reminded him how much better it was for the poor widow to have the five guineas than the thief who had just robbed them. They had not long resumed travel before the man returned and demanded Whitefield's coat, which was much more respectable than his own. His request was also granted, Whitefield accepting the robber's ragged garment until he could procure a better one.

Presently they perceived the robber again galloping toward them most furiously; and now, fearing that their lives were threatened, they also spurred their horses and fortunately arrived at some cottages before the highwayman could stop them. The thief was balked and, no doubt, was immensely mortified, for when Whitefield took off the man's tattered coat, he found in one of its pockets a carefully wrapped parcel containing one hundred guineas.

Selected

Fall 2004 Camp Meeting Tape List

TAPE NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER	COST
C-5251M C-5252E	8-01-04	Forgiveness Doing Things God's Way	Bro. Roger L. Decker Bro. Ula Bland	2.50 2.50
C-5253M C-5254E	8-02-04	Backsliding The Nation of Israel	Bro. C. H. Dickerson Bro. Roger L. Decker	2.50 2.50
C-5255M C-5256E	8-03-04	The Difference Between True and False Religion The Truth Concerning the Antichrist	Bro. Allen Polston Bro. Roger L. Decker	2.50 2.50
C-5257M C-5258E	8-04-04	Defeating Our Enemy, the Devil The City That John Saw	Bro. Burton Cheney Bro. Roger L. Decker	2.50 2.50
C-5259M	8-05-04	What Is the Religion of the Bible & What Is the Visible Manifestation of That Religion?	Bro. Charles Ferguson	2.50
C-5260M C-5261E	8-06-04	A Lesson at the Potter's House The Day of Jubilee	Bro. C. H. Dickerson Bro. Calvin Foster	2.50 2.50
C-5262M C-5263E	8-07-04	What Does God Really Hate? The Hidden Manna or The Inner Life and Our Witness to the Next Generation	Bro. Allen Polston Bro. Adam Wolf	2.50 2.50
C-5264M C-5265E	8-08-04	He Led Captivity Captive What Will Be Your End	Bro. E. David Stegmeier Bro. E. David Stegmeier	2.50 2.50

Music Recordings . . . Please Specify Cassette or CD

	8-07-04	Children's Barn Service Songs		3.50
MD-185	2004	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #1		3.50
MD-186	2004	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #2		3.50
MD-187	2004	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #3		3.50
MD-188	2004	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #4		3.50
MD-189	2004	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #5		3.50
MD-190	2004	Fall Camp Meeting Choir Songs		3.50

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There is only one thing to do with sin—hate it. Hate it in your own life, and hate it in the lives of others. The following selected illustration should encourage us:

When the emperor of Constantinople arrested Chrysostom and thought of trying to make him recant, the great preacher slowly shook his head. The emperor said to his attendants, "Put him in prison."

"No," said one of them. "He will be glad to go, for he delights in the presence of his God in quiet."

"Well, then, let us execute him," said the emperor.

"He will be glad to die," said an attendant, "for he wants to go to Heaven. I heard him say so the other day."

"What can we do to hurt Chrysostom?" the emperor asked.

One attendant answered, "There is only one thing that can give Chrysostom pain, and that is to make him sin. He said he was afraid of nothing but sin. If you can make him sin, you will make him unhappy."

Oh, that everyone would be more like Chrysostom.