

"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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Fall 2005 Camp Meeting Report

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

Isaiah 2:3

A Wonderful Time

The Fall Camp Meeting ended with great victory and blessing. Many of the saints spent much time in prayer and fasting prior to the meeting. It was a time of gathering together with the people of God, enjoying fellowship, and hearing the Word of God. What a benefit and joy it is to sit with the saints in heavenly places and enjoy the blessings of the Spirit of God. It is no wonder David said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1).

One reason for David's gladness was that he was able to commune with his brethren. More important though, was the fact that he knew it was at God's house that the Law came forth to bring help and instruction for the soul. Being taught the way of God is so vital to all God's people throughout the world. Without the sounding forth of the Gospel all would err and fall into sinful ways. The law comes out of Zion, the church, the place designed by God where we hear sound preaching and teaching from the Holy Bible. We must do as Paul instructed in Hebrews 10:25, where he said, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

It would be rather difficult

to express in words all that our eyes have seen, our ears have heard, and our hearts have felt in this camp meeting. We could try to sum it up in just one word – wonderful, but we would only find that to be inadequate. The highlight of any meeting is to see lost souls humble themselves before God and find salvation. Thank God, we were able to see ones who have been away from the Lord for a long time come back and repent. The Spirit of conviction seized their hearts and down the aisle they went and bowed before Christ in old-time repentance. What a wonderful scene to look upon men and women weeping their way through to the throne of grace! That amply repays all the effort put forth to have a successful meeting.

Time after time, our hearts were blessed and our cups were made to overflow as the Lord poured out His blessings upon us. Some jumped for joy, some shouted amen, and others just cried. What an encouragement and uplift it is to the soul to be present when God's Spirit fills the house with His presence and glory. As we ponder how the Spirit of God manifested Himself in such a sweet way, our mind goes to the words of the Prophet Joel, who said, "I will pour out my

[continued on page 15]

Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? [In other words, to whom is the power of the Lord revealed? That is very simple. It is revealed to and whomever believes the report.]

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our

faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Divine Healing



Brother Roger L. Decker

God Made Provision for the Whole Man

I want you to focus your attention on verses 4-5. Divine healing is the healing of sickness in the physical body by the power of God alone, without any outside help. If you are a child of God, divine healing is for you.

Our Scripture text says that "with His stripes we are healed." I am not against doctors or hospitals. I visit those who are sick in the hospitals and pray for them. What

you do is between you and the Lord; but divine healing is still for God's people, and it still needs to be preached. Most congregations do not even preach it anymore. Why do they not preach it? They do not believe it. Divine healing is the children's bread. It is a privilege to trust God.

Luke 18:8b says, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" To me, that is a most sobering question. It is one that I take personally. Why? The just shall live by faith. If you cannot

live by faith, you are not saved. You are saved by faith, you are kept by faith, and you are healed by faith. One is not teaching a full Gospel if what he preaches does not include help for the whole man — healing for the body as well as salvation for the soul. God made provisions for the whole man: the soul, the spirit, and the body.

The subject of divine healing is not popular, but it is a much needed message. We have a world that is not only lost and steeped in sin but also sick. There is sickness wherever

you look. The hospitals are full. Many people make appointments to go to the hospital and have to wait until a bed is available for them. Some people in the hospitals are on beds in the halls because the rooms are full. Rest homes and long-term care facilities are full, and many are confined to their homes.

The Church of God still has the message that there is healing for the body as well as salvation for the soul. The Church of God has never lost its message. The same God who saves you will heal your body. Was it God's will to heal in the days of the Old Testament? Has it been God's will to heal His people since the first call came to Abraham all the way up through to our day? Yes, it has always been God's will to heal His people.

We read in Deuteronomy 7:12-15: "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee."

Psalm 103:1-3 states: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Deuteronomy 32:39 reads, "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my

hand." No one can deliver out of God's hand. It is God who puts people up and brings them down.

Old Testament Examples of Divine Healing

Let us look at some examples in the Word of God. Psalm 105:36-37 tells us: "He smote also all the firstborn in their land [speaking of when the children of Israel were in Egypt], the chief of all their strength. He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes." What was the Psalmist talking about? The children's cry came up before the Lord down in Egypt. When He brought them out of Egypt, even though they had been abused and mistreated, there was not one feeble person among them.

In 2 Kings, Chapter 5, you can read about Naaman, a leper. He was healed of leprosy. Someone may ask, "How did he get healed of leprosy?" He obeyed the Word of God. The Syrians had captured a young Hebrew girl, and she was a servant in Naaman's house. She said she would to God that Naaman was over in Samaria where the Prophet Elijah lived. Naaman went to the Prophet, and the Prophet did not even go out to talk to him. He sent his servant out to talk to him. What did he tell him to do? Elijah, through his servant, instructed Naaman to go and dip seven times in the Jordan River, and then he would be clean.

Naaman went away angrily. He wanted the Prophet to come out and wave his hand over him and heal him, but Naaman had to do something. Why was it that he had to dip seven times in the Jordan River? Pride was working on him. God knew his heart, and He knew that Naaman was a proud man. God knows exactly how to take care of pride. There were two rivers in Syria called Abana and Pharpar that were much cleaner than the Jordan River. Well, Naaman finally did as he was instructed to do, and he was healed of the leprosy.

Genesis 20:17-18, speaking of Abraham, states: "So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife." In 1 Kings, Chapter 17, God, working through Elijah, resurrected and healed the widow's son.

Is healing in the atonement? Isaiah 53:4-5 says: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . and with his stripes we are healed."

A Compassionate Christ

Matthew 8:14-17 reads: "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." When Jesus touched her hand, the fever left.

Mark, Chapter 1, tells the same story. Verses 21-30 read: "And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

"And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they

were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

"And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her." Jesus had just come from the synagogue where He had been teaching. The demands were very high on Jesus wherever He went. Verse 28 says that His fame spread abroad throughout all the region round Galilee.

No doubt, Jesus was tired when He went into Simon Peter's house. The demands had been so great upon Him. He could have gone there for rest. No sooner had He entered, and there was another demand for help. There was no crowd looking on and no admiration or astonishment, but a woman with a fever, yet Jesus took the time to put forth His power. Jesus was never too tired or too busy to help. He was always sensitive to the needs of others. Human needs were not a nuisance to Him.

Jesus was not at His best in public and at His worst in private; He was the same at all times. It made no difference if there were multitudes following Him or if He had just entered a house where there was one woman, He took the time to help whomever was in need. He was very sensitive to the needs of others. No situation was too humble for Him to help. He did not need an admiring audience to be at His best. In a crowd or in a cottage, His love and His power were at the disposal of those in need.

Blessings Call for Duty

Peter's mother-in-law was no sooner healed than she busied

herself with attending to the needs of Jesus and the others. She was healed to serve. Her one desire was to use her newfound health to be of use in service to Him and others. How do you use the mercy of God? As soon as that woman was healed, she got up and served others. There is a lesson in this. Some people take in the mercy of God, but they do it for self. I have prayed with ones in the hospital upon whom God had mercy and wonderfully restored their health, but where are they today? What are they doing with their health? They are using it to serve the devil.

Some people take advantage of Christ. They want His blessings, but they do not want the duty that goes with it. Today some individuals can be likened to a blind man whom Christ heals, but he then spends his time looking upon things that are wrong instead of looking into the Word of God. Others can be likened to a deaf person whom Jesus heals, but then he spends his time listening to things he should not listen to. God's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, but many people take advantage of the mercy of God.

I have been in the hospitals and had prayer for ones, and I saw God wonderfully move. I saw their faith take hold, and God restored them to health. Some have said, "I'll come to the house of God just as soon as I can get out of here." Well, they got out of the hospital, but they went back into the bondage of sin. Why? They used the mercy of God for their own selfish reasons.

When Peter's mother-in-law was raised up, she was so thankful to God that immediately she served Jesus and others. The woman used her health to serve. John 6:38 says, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Jesus went about doing the Father's will. It is the Father's will that you be healed of your sickness.

You may ask, "What about those who were prayed for and died?" Well, they got healed entirely. They

no longer have to bear the sickness, and they no longer have to bear temptations.

Jesus went about doing the Father's will. Matthew 8:16 tells us, "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick." There are people yet today who are devil possessed. There are people who have wrong spirits.

A person cannot mess around with Truth and lay it aside any time he feels like it without picking up some kind of spirit. Today there are people who have all kinds of spirits. Some people have a spirit of bitterness, and they cannot shake it off. Every once in a while that spirit overcomes them. What needs to be done? They need to have hands laid on them to cast out that spirit.

The Source of Power

Look at the source of power that Jesus used. He used His Word. Again, Matthew 8:16 reads, "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word. . . ." Psalm 138:2 states, "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." We read in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." God's Word is true. He cannot lie. What He said will come to pass.

There is power in the Word of God. In Matthew, Chapter 13, Jesus set forth the parable of the sower. You can study it. He illustrated the hearts of all mankind by four different types of ground: the wayside ground, the stony ground, the thorny ground, and the good ground. Each of those hearts was in the condition it was in because of how it received and cherished the Word of God. The seed that is sown represents the Word of God. Friend,

you are in your present condition as a result of your attitude toward the Word of God.

In 1 Peter 1:23 Peter said, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The Word is the seed. The Word of God is true. You can stand on it. God will not fail you or let you down. He has magnified His Word even above His name. God esteems His Word. How did Jesus heal? He healed people by His Word. How did He cast out devils? He used His Word. How did He stand against the devil? He used the Word of God. The power lies in the Word.

Christian friend, how did you get delivered from sin? It was by the Word of God. When you took faith in the Word, the bonds were broken and the fetters were gone. There is great power in the Word of God. Do not be surprised when the devil fights you every time you try to study the Word. Do not think that is a strange thing. He will work you over something fierce when you try to study the Word of God. Why? He knows that when you get in the Word of God, if you truly believe it, power will come into your life, and you will have victory in your life. God has magnified His Word above His name.

In Luke, Chapter 4, you can read that Jesus was thrust out of the synagogue in the city. He went into Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught the people on the Sabbath day. Verse 32 says, "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power." There is power in the Word of God to change those who believe it, just as the Word says it will.

Why the Word Does Not Profit Some

Now I want you to consider a couple of points concerning the Word of God. You cannot call on God unless you believe in Him and believe His Word. The Word will not profit you unless it is mixed

with faith. It is one thing to hear the Word of God, but it is another thing to believe it. The Gospel not mixed with faith will not do you any good. Many people in this world have heard the Gospel, but not everyone who has heard it is saved. Why are they not saved? It was not mixed with faith.

Hebrews 4:2 says, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Hebrews 11:6 states, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

It is impossible to get anything from God, whether it is salvation, counsel, or divine healing, if you do not have faith. Why? The power is in His Word. When the Word is not mixed with faith, it will not profit you. Romans 4:20, speaking of Abraham, reads, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Unbelief is a hindrance to receiving anything from God.

Even when Jesus was here in a corporal body, not all people received help and not everyone accepted Him. Why? A terrible sin gets hold of people. What is it called? Unbelief. You would have thought that when Jesus was here, everyone would have believed Him. Someone may say, "Only if Jesus were here now I would believe." No, you would not. Not everyone believed back then when Jesus walked the shores of Galilee. How many did Jesus truly get to follow Him? You would have thought that multitudes would have followed Him, but that was not the case. Why was that? Not everyone believed Him. Many people were engulfed in unbelief.

Matthew 13:53-58 tells us: "And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into

his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, could not do many mighty works in His own country because of their unbelief. Right there among them was the Savior of the whole world, the wisdom of God, and the power of God all wrapped up in His corporal body; but unbelief had hold of them so much that He could not help them. Even Jesus could not do mighty works against unbelief. He will not work over the top of unbelief.

Give the More Earnest Heed

When Jesus taught in the synagogues, they were astonished by His wisdom and mighty works. Human reasoning blotted out the Word. They likened Him to the carpenter's son. They mentioned His sisters, His mother, and His brothers, who were living right among them, and He did not many mighty works because of their unbelief.

Unbelief is still the greatest hindrance to one receiving anything from God. It will rob you of God's richest blessings. If you get anything at all from God, you need to believe His Word.

Mark 6:5-6 gives us a parallel Scripture, which says: "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled [He was actually amazed] because of their unbelief [He was so

shocked by their unbelief that He could hardly believe it Himself]. And he went round about the villages, teaching."

Hebrews 3:12 warns, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." You need to believe in God and His Word. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and building up your faith comes by hearing the Word of God. You cannot get it any other way. This is one reason that you cannot afford to stay out of services. You need to hear the Word of God. Many people do not even feel they need to attend Wednesday evening services. If that is how you feel about it, you are wrong. You need to get into every service you can. You need to hear the Word of God.

When people get careless and stay out of the services when they could attend, their faith gets weak. That is the first sign of spiritual weakness in an individual. They cannot trust God for the things they used to trust Him for. There is a need to reverence the Word of God in a greater way. It says to assemble ourselves together, and that is exactly what it means.

In Hebrews 2:1 Paul said, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." Divine healing is slipping away. Unless you do something about it, all you will be able to do is look back at the past and read about it.

Reasons for Not Being Healed

Now, there are other hindrances to divine healing, and we need to look at some more reasons that people are not getting healed. God will not heal over the top of certain things. He knows the hearts of all men. He knows what is inside the heart of every man and woman. He knows if your heart is pure or defiled.

One hindrance to divine healing is a condemning heart. John wrote in

1 John 3:21, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." You cannot have confidence toward God with a condemning heart. Why is that? Every time you try to put confidence in God, your heart will condemn you. John said if our heart condemns us not, then we have confidence toward God.

Unforgiving spirits hinder divine healing. Mark 11:25 states, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." God will not even hear your prayer if you have ought against anyone. Next, an unwillingness to give up sin will hinder divine healing. God has healed sinners, but you do not see too many healed who refuse to walk in the light of God's Word. I am speaking of those who know better and yet go their own way. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart [or if I esteem it], the Lord will not hear me." If you have light and understanding in your life that you know you ought to be walking in, but you are not doing it, you esteem that iniquity more than you esteem God. Therefore, you are wasting your time trying to pray for divine physical healing.

Selfishness will hinder divine healing. James 4:3 reads, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." If God heals you, it will not be for self-glory. If God heals you, it must be for the glory of God.

Wavering faith is a hindrance to divine healing. James 1:6 states, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." Wavering faith is a hindrance to receiving anything from God. What is wavering faith? One minute you trust God, and the next you do not. One day you trust Him, and the next He is far from your thoughts. To waver in faith is to be tossed back and forth, and it is a hindrance.

What is another hindrance to divine physical healing? Doubts are a hindrance. Matthew 14:31, speaking of when Peter walked on the water and then began to sink, reads, "And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Faith Mixed With Works

Mark 5:25-34 reads: "And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

"And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

That woman had an issue of blood for twelve years. The Scripture says she had suffered many things of many physicians, and she had spent all she had. Instead of getting relief, she grew worse. They could not help her. She gradually grew worse for twelve years. She did some things that brought healing to her body. One is, when she heard of Jesus, she believed. Then she came and

pressed her way to Christ and touched Him. Faith calls for works. Faith puts out a call, and works back up that faith. She had works mixed with her faith. The woman pressed through the crowd to put works to her faith.

You may ask, "Is divine healing for us today?" Yes! Hebrews 13:8 tells us, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." We are serving the same Christ today that they served in the morning-time church.

The message of divine healing has diminished in many congregations. In too many cases, the preacher himself does not believe in divine healing. Many of them have laid it aside, and some even mock it and call it foolishness. Others no longer use the anointing oil. The morning-time church believed in divine healing, and it was still a strong gift of the Spirit all the way up through the Dark Ages and beyond. Divine healing is still a gift in the true Church of God.

Have Faith in God

James 5:13-16 reads: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The

effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

The early church cared for its sick. For many centuries the church consistently used anointing oil as a means of healing the sick. Under the old Jewish Law, the morning-time church, coming right up through the centuries, when somebody was sick, the elders anointed them with oil. In the church one gift is the gift of healing. Third John, verse 2 reads, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." God's desire is that you are well in your soul and in your body.

You may say, "I don't have great faith." You can use what faith you do have. If you have a little faith, if you use it, God will bless you in it. God's desire for you is that you be well in body and soul. Our Scripture text asks the question in verse 1, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" The arm, or the power, of the Lord is revealed to whosoever believes the report.

Someone may say, "I don't know if it is the will of God to heal." The Word of God *is* the will of God. Jesus went about doing the Father's will. What did He do? He cast out devils and healed the sick. Every one of us, I am sure, could stretch out more and believe God in a greater way. I do my best, by the grace of God, to trust God. Someone may ask, "Are you saying that you will never go in a hospital?" No, I would never say that.

Certainly, some individuals have trusted God and passed from this life, but when they left this

world, they left trusting God. There comes an appointed time when each of us must leave this world. How else are you going to get to Heaven? The only motive behind the message is to stretch your faith a little and help you to reach higher heights and greater depths. Divine healing is in our midst. We can see the gifts of divine healing working, but too many times divine healing cannot work. Why? Because people have hindrances in their lives.

I pray that God will help you in a special way. If God has shown you any hindrances to your faith, you should thank the Lord for that. I trust that you will get this much from the message: there is power when you believe the Word of God. There is power in the Word, not just in the fact that you have read the Word, but that you believe the Word. Jesus exercised His power to those who believed. Those who believed had access to His power.

If you are saved, how did you get saved? You heard the Word of God, and faith mixed with that hearing when you believed it. What happened? The tempter's power was broken and you were saved.

Divine healing works by faith. God will not let you down. Many who go to the hospitals have been let down. In no way am I discrediting doctors, but they can only do so much. I thank God for them. I thank God for the hospitals and for every avenue man has opened up to make a way for those who need help. Nevertheless, divine healing is still a Bible doctrine. I repeat, it is the children's bread.

(Cassette C-924E)

Upcoming Meeting

SUMMERSVILLE, WV
November 20-27

REVIVAL: The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651
Preaching nightly from the Book of Revelation
Service times: Mon. -Fri. 7:00 p.m., Sat. 6:00 p.m., and Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders
Telephone: 304-872-4047

Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of

men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.



Are You Astray Today?

Brother Esau Brooks

Coming to Know the Lord

There is great joy in knowing the Lord and great pleasure in obeying His Word. Serving God is not a waste of time or a throwing away of your life. It is the best investment you can make in life. Many people look at it from the point of view that you cannot do this and that, but Christianity is nothing like that. The reason we do not do certain things is that we do not want to do them. That is what makes serving God so worthwhile. As I look around and see so many people who are bound by various sinful habits, I think, "If it were not for the grace of God, that

could be me."

The reason I do not smoke is not that it is against my religion, but I do not want to smoke. I am so glad that the Lord spared me from the smoking habit, and I have no temptation to smoke marijuana. I do not have to chew tobacco or use drugs to feel good, and I do not have to go downtown and look for a barroom to have fun. I am having all the fun I can stand serving God. I have not missed a thing in sin, and I do not covet anything that sinners have. I do not know anything about gambling, and I am glad that it does not have control over me. I am glad that I do not have to go along with the

crowd. Serving God is wonderful!

If you are merely a church member, you have been misled. Some people say that you must sin more or less every day, but when the Lord saves you and cleanses you, you do not look at sin from the standpoint of receiving pleasure from it. Instead you thank God that you have been saved from its consequences. You see, sin does have consequences. People do not just sin and walk away free from it. Sin has a power that will bind you, ensnare you, and ruin your life. Young person, you do not have to follow the wild crowd. If you get the Lord in your heart, He will satisfy your soul.

Dear one, there is something to the Christian life. I pray that you will get the courage to try it. It was not easy for me to get started. To begin with, a sinner invited me to go to church, not a Christian. When we arrived, we sat in the back. Soon the brethren began to sing and shout and rejoice. I thought it was funny, because I did not know then that one could get enjoyment from singing. I thought you had to have a band and dance to feel good, but after I went forward to an altar of prayer, I found out why those people were rejoicing. I had been making fun of their rejoicing. You see, they were rejoicing without music, and no one was smoking or chewing tobacco. However, when someone said, "Let us pray," and one sister got down on her knees and started to pray, every bit of the laughing and the mocking that we were doing died out.

A Decision I Have Never Regretted

I found myself in a very peculiar position. Tears were flowing down my face. I thought I was a big man, but there I was—crying in public. Back in those times, we thought a man was a sissy if he did that. (If you really wanted a fight, all you had to do was call someone a sissy. Today it is quite different among some people. Some want to fight you to call them a sissy, and they demand their "gay rights." That is what homosexuals do.)

As the tears began to flow, I hid my face, because I did not want my buddy to see me crying. Then the thought came to me, "Why don't you look and see what shape he is in." When I opened my fingers and looked through them, I saw that he was in the same shape. Tears were flowing down his face also. So I turned around, took my handkerchief, and wiped my face; then he did the same. Then he looked at me, and I looked at him. After awhile the preacher said, "Let us sing a song," and it was a song of invitation. From

the moment the congregation started to sing the first verse, I knew he meant it for us, so I said to my buddy, "Let's go," meaning to go to the altar. I thought we could go forward and just get it over with, but he said, "You go." When I tried to get up from that pew, I felt as if I were stuck to it, and that if I would have fought to get up, I would have brought up the whole pew. So I looked over at him and said, "You go." He must have experienced the same feelings, because for a while, there we were going back and forth, polishing the seat of that pew.

The church saw what was happening, and someone walked back to where we were sitting. All I heard the brother say was, "Young man, would you yield?" and I made a move. I was prepared to bring the bench and the flooring, if necessary, but I wanted to get to the altar. While I was walking as fast as I could go, I remembered my buddy. He got me into it, you see. As I looked back to see how he was faring, I saw that he was coming faster than I was, so I stepped aside. He hit the altar first, and I hit it behind him.

I have been saved ever since, for more than fifty years, and I am still enjoying salvation. I have grandchildren now, and I want them all to find me serving God. They know Grandpa and Grandma go to church. You see, I am getting ready for Heaven. I would not change this way of living for any other way. Sometimes the way gets dark and storms break loose, but in those fifty years I have never regretted living for the Lord. I would do it again.

Blessings From Above

I like to tell this because I want people to know there is something more to life than sin, something that will afford you a good tasting pleasure. When you serve God, it leaves no bad taste in your mouth as sin does. I am counting on making Heaven my home. I am looking forward to that. Often I think, as the

songwriter penned, "What a day that will be when my Savior I shall see."

Sometimes I imagine sitting down with Abraham, Enoch, Joshua, and others and letting them tell me about their experiences with the Lord, and then I will tell them of mine. Thank God, I have something I can talk to them about. When they look at me and see some of the scars I am carrying, they will inquire, "Where did you get those?" I will gladly reply, "I got them through serving God." I would not want to miss Heaven for all the wealth in this world. If you are a Christian, you are greatly blessed.

Thank God, I am blessed. I do not mean that I am blessed with money or houses or land. I am blessed because I have Jesus in my soul. I want to convince you of how much you need Him too. Do not look at serving God as just attending church, but look at it as an opportunity to get Jesus in your soul.

After God saved me, at first it was kind of hard to stop going to my church to attend the Church of God, because at that time I was a Methodist; that is all the religion I knew. After God saved me and opened my understanding, I got a vision of the Church of God. I will never forget that day.

One time when I was holding an all-day meeting in a given place, the building was not large enough. A Methodist preacher thought he would do me a favor, so he said, "Brother Brooks, how would you like to have your meeting tonight at our church?"

I said, "Fine. I'll be glad to."

He knew that I was opposed to going to Babylon, but he must have thought he was going to get something on me. When we all arrived, he got up to open the service. He said, "Now, I'll tell you how we are going to work this, Brother Brooks. We are going to take the first part, and then you can come on after we are through."

The congregation started to sing, "The Blameless Church." The song

begins, "Without spot and blameless, O Savior, What a glorious church thou has built!" I looked at the clock, and it was around eight o'clock, which was the time they usually dismissed. So I said to the preacher, "Are you going to start?" He said, "No, you go ahead," and I did. Next, we sang, "The Church Triumphant," and then I preached. After I preached, I asked him, "Do you want to take over the altar service?"

He said, "No, you go ahead," so I went ahead. When I left, about three quarters of the congregation came out of there and took a stand for the Truth.

Man Living Without Christ

Many times people in the denominational world speak as if nothing is wrong with man spiritually. They think that all one has to do to be saved is to shake the preacher's hand and join the church of their choice, and then everything will be all right. However, verse 6 of the Scripture text states, "All we like sheep have gone astray." Man living without Christ in his heart is astray, no matter what church he has joined. Friend, without Christ you are astray. You might have joined a Catholic church, a Baptist church, or a Pentecostal church; nevertheless, you are astray.

Church joining does not bring salvation. Also, going to church will not make you a Christian anymore than walking into a garage will convert you into a car. To be saved, you must be born again. Why must you be born again? Isaiah 53:6 tells you, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him [Christ] the iniquity of us all." No matter how good a life you have lived, you have iniquity, or sin. No matter who you are, where you come from, or where you plan to go, without Christ you are astray. You have iniquity, and the Lord God has laid your iniquity upon Christ.

God wants you to focus your attention on your spiritual condi-

tion. Man without Christ is not only lost but also astray. He is wandering and going the wrong way. In case you do not understand what it means to be astray, God, through the Prophet Isaiah, explained that you have turned away from what you were made to be. You are not living the kind of life that God intended you to live.

Let us go back to verse 1 of our Scripture lesson, where Isaiah asked, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" The only person who can believe this report is the person to whom the arm of the Lord has been revealed. You cannot see your true condition without God helping you to see it. You might have a theory about your spiritual condition, but to actually know and understand it requires a revelation from the Lord. That is what is wrong with false religion. Everyone is looking at himself as being right and doing what is right in his own eyes. God is saying, "You have to watch that! You are astray."

You might have been a church member all your life, but unless you have truly repented of your sins, you are still astray. Joining a church and shaking a preacher's hand is not going to help your condition. If anything, that will make you worse because you will think you are right when you are still wrong. Only God can reveal your true condition to you.

Man's Only Hope of Deliverance

In the beginning of the world, God, speaking to the Holy Ghost and to Jesus Christ, said, "Let us make man . . ." (Genesis 1:26). I know science is attempting to produce life, but only God can do this. God created man. You did not evolve from a monkey, no matter how hard you try to act the same way a monkey acts. Because God made you, He knows your true condition. The devil may fool you, and false religion may deceive you; but until you turn to God, you will

never see your true condition. If you have not been born again and delivered from sin by the powerful, Almighty God, you are astray.

Being astray means that you have turned from seeking God and His way to doing things your own way. Jesus came down to earth and proclaimed in a certain tone, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved . . ." (John 10:9). You must come by the way of Jesus to get straightened out. This is not merely a theory or a belief; it is an absolute fact. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." This is not just the doctrine of a particular group of people; it is the absolute Word of God. If any man come to the Father, he must come through Christ. He is the only way. You are not saved until you have met Him and done what He says.

You may take catechism classes and go through various religious rites, but Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." There is no salvation without Christ. Christ is not just a historical character; He is the Son of God. He came down to earth to show us the way of salvation. He came for the purpose of redeeming us from our sins. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. That is the reason we have hope of eternal life. Your case is hopeless unless Jesus Christ intervenes on your behalf. To be a Christian, you must acknowledge that you have turned; therefore, you need to return. You must forsake your way and return to the Lord and His way. There is no profit in fighting God, because your only hope of deliverance lies in doing what He says.

Following Your Own Way

When Isaiah wrote, "Who hath believed our report?" he was talking about God's report regarding one's condition, which the Christ of God wants to reveal to you. I can remember the first time I heard the truth about repentance. The Methodist

Church that I had attended did not put any emphasis on repentance, because they do not know anything about it. When I heard Truth and a sister in church started to pray, I knew that I needed something that I did not have, and I had something that I did not need. I wanted to go to the altar at the first word of the invitational song, but the devil had me hooked into following him. I could not budge from my seat. My buddy and I were sitting there, knowing that the altar service was for us because, as far as I knew, we were the only two sinners in there.

When that brother came to where we were sitting and asked, "Why don't you surrender?" I jumped up and made the move, and I am glad I did! The devil has nothing to satisfy me anymore. I am satisfied with Jesus. I do not have to meet with every drunk around and visit every bar in town. I do not have to seek a drug pusher to satisfy a bad habit. I am satisfied!

Many people today do not realize their sinful condition. Also, they are too stubborn to accept what will bring them deliverance. Young person, you cannot imagine how much better your life could be if you would give your heart to God while you are young. Only God can teach you how to live right. Without Christ you are only existing. You need salvation to really live. It does not give you a superficial or a make-believe joy. It gives you wonderful joy to have Jesus dwelling in your heart!

Perhaps you have heard people say, "That preacher burns me up." Unless you repent, you will experience being burned up when you open your eyes in hell and begin to feel the flames of hell engulf you. Psalm 9:17 reads, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Sinner friend, without Christ in your heart, hell will be your final destination. Following your own way will lead you astray. As long as you refuse to believe and accept the report of the Word of God, you are astray.

"Beware of False Prophets"

Dear one, be careful of where you attend church services. Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Today's world is full of them. Who are they and what are they? They are false ministers dressed in "sheep's clothing" to hide their true identity and to appear harmless.

Religion has become commercialized. People have gone to college to learn how to preach, but in reality only God can make one a preacher. All the seminaries can do is give a person head knowledge. I am not against education, but I am against the practice that people have given themselves over to. A preacher who has attended a seminary will preach the doctrine that he was taught. He is not going to tell you what your condition is.

Mankind, as a whole, is on the wrong road. It is only through being born again that God can redeem your soul. The report that Isaiah talked about has to do with the great price it cost Jesus to redeem man from his lost condition. The sacrifice was so great and hard to understand that man is totally unable to grasp it. You can go to every school in the world and still end up ignorant about the experience of salvation that God gives. It is not taught in the universities, the seminaries, or any other learning institutions. They can prepare you to get a job and make a living, but to get life eternal, you must learn from God. Anyone who believes that a person is unable to preach unless he goes to college is missing the boat by far. It is good to get an education to help you choose a career in life. You need that to survive, but when the Judgment comes and you are summoned to stand before God, you will need more than an education. You need to be sure that you have been born again.

John 3:4 tells about Nicodemus. He was a learned man, a ruler of the

Jews, who came to see Jesus. He asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" In verse 9 he asked, "How can these things be?" In verse 10 Jesus answered him, "Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things?" There are still people in religious circles who know nothing about being born again. Man cannot grasp this thing on a physical level. It is too great for human reasoning.

What Is Most Important in Life?

The question is, "Who will believe the report?" The Prophet went on to portray that which Jesus needed to suffer to bring mankind into a relationship with God.

Baby baptism does not save the soul. Oh, some may tell you it does, but it does not. Babies do not understand anything about baptism. You need to wait until they are capable of repenting of their sins. In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. . . ." First, you must believe it, then you must act on it, through repentance, and then you will be saved.

Going along with the crowd and failing to stand for Christ will destroy your soul. Without Christ you are astray. A sheep is a defenseless creature. It will suffer if it should go astray. Man is a helpless creature when he comes into the world. A calf, within two days after its birth, knows exactly where to get its food, but humans are about three months old before they know where to look for their food. God did not just make us and leave us out in this world to ourselves to do what we think is right. No! Thank God, He sent Christ to be our example, to teach us the only way that can restore us to the position God intended us to attain.

Church is more than a social gathering. God intended it to be His way of communicating with your

heart to enlighten your soul and to bring you to your knees at an altar of prayer. Some may say, "I don't believe in going to an altar." Well, you had better believe in it, because without doing it you may never find God to get deliverance from the snare of the devil. All have gone astray and need to repent through Jesus Christ. Every human individual must come God's way to make it to Heaven.

The most important thing in life is for you to know God and for me to know Him. I am glad for the day that He came my way and stooped to talk to my heart. He sent His Holy Spirit to enlighten me and to give me a will to obey His Word, which says to repent and to be baptized. Baptism is not a form of initiation by the which you become a Christian. Baptism is an outward sign of the inward work of salvation that is wrought in one's soul. It is a testimony that one has discovered the way of gladness and found a better way to live. Baptism lets others know that a person is finished with the worldly crowd.

Many people join a church and do not even know why they are joining. That will never take them to Heaven. I am not saying that to be mean, but it is an absolute fact that joining church can never take you to Heaven. If I knew for certain that joining church would take me to Heaven, I would join every one of them for fear that I would miss the right one.

The New Birth

Dear one, all have gone astray, and it is serious. This is a self-willed condition. Everyone has turned to his own way. Just look around. Everyone has his own way of doing things, of understanding things, and of looking at things, even when it comes to the Gospel. You often hear people say, "Well, I don't see it that way." Jesus told Nicodemus straightforwardly in John 3:7, "Ye must be born again." You must deal with the matter of serving God.

Your first step is the new birth. Before you do anything else, you must be born again.

The Bible tells us in Acts 17:30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Repentance is what brings salvation. Second Corinthians 7:10 states, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." False religion is misleading multitudes of people by failing to teach repentance.

Let us consider this one more time. Man is not only sinful but also astray, and he needs to be found. He needs to be brought home to God, and his eyes need to be enlightened. Paul used words such as these in Ephesians 2:1 when he said, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." The word "quicken" lets you know that man is out of his rightful place.

If you are astray from the right way, you are in error. You are lost, and you need to find the right way. Many people say, "I'm going to join a church" or "I'm going to get religion." Friend, you need more than that. Religion can deceive you, but if you get born again, you will receive enlightenment. You do not have to join a church to get saved.

Some people say, "The first thing you need to do is join a church of your choice." That is going to make your condition worse. How can it make your condition worse? You would still be astray. If you are being taught that joining a church will put you in fellowship with God, you are not only astray but also deceived, and you are twice as far off as you were before. Man needs to be rescued; he needs to be delivered.

On the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost fell upon those brethren and they began to preach the Gospel, the people cried out, in Acts 2:37, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In verse 38 Peter told them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and

ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." He did not say that the Holy Ghost would automatically fall on you, but you must repent to put yourself in the place where you can receive Him.

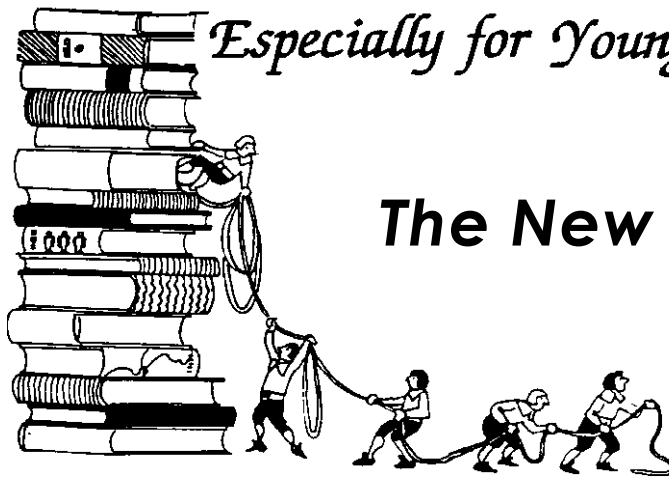
There is much more to salvation than just believing that you are saved. A positive work needs to be wrought in your heart and life. People who are born again live different from those who are not born again. They walk differently. You should try it. In a split second God will reveal it to you, and you will want to tell everyone you meet that you have found the Messiah. Thank God, I am saved!

In Luke, Chapter 19, you can read of a man named Zacchaeus, who climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus. Verse 5 reads, "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house." In verse 9 Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house." I believe Zacchaeus was so surprised when Jesus spoke to him that he did not even take time to climb down. When Jesus spoke to him, I believe he just let go of the limb, and the moment he hit the ground, he was ready to confess.

He said in verse 8, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Between the branch of that sycamore tree and the ground, Zacchaeus got saved. I would have liked to have seen Zacchaeus the next morning going from house to house to give back to the people what he had robbed from them. He was a tax collector, and he had been overcharging the people, so he had to make amends to have peace and joy. Dear one, salvation still works that way. Have you been born again? If not, do not waste another minute. The Lord is ready to save you. God bless you.

(Cassette C-5234E)

Especially for Young People



The New Life



"The light of the sun does us no good unless we are living in it! Yes, that is just what the minister said," mused Tim, as he tossed his Sunday school paper upon the table and gave himself up to the flow of his own thoughts. "Yes, he said just that, and more too. He said that the life of Christ will do us little good unless we are living it; that is, unless we are Christians, it makes little difference to us whether Christ gave His life for us or not."

"What is on your mind now?" It was Tim's sister Ada who asked this question as she came running into the room upon her return from school. She had stopped on her way to gather violets, and that, you see, is why she had not reached home as soon as Tim.

"Oh, I was just thinking about what the minister said last Sunday, that is all," replied the lad in a low voice.

"Oh, yes, what he said about people being 'born again' if they would live the Christ life, and that reminds me that I must write his text down in my text book. Let's see, it was last year, wasn't it, when Mrs. Martin gave us those little books and told us to write in them the text of every sermon we heard preached; and I am glad to say that I have not missed many Sundays since then."

"Neither have I," said Tim. "And do you know, I have been wondering whether Mrs. Martin will give her class any prizes this year."

"Oh, I don't know. I should think a teacher did her duty by teaching a

Sunday school class fifty-two times in a year, without spending her money on us, even if we are but four. I think it would be more appropriate for us to be giving her something than for us to be expecting something from her."

"And let's get up one for her," proposed Tim.

"And that means we will," laughed Ada. "When you say, 'let's' in that tone, something is always sure to happen."

"But we don't want to have the whole say about the present ourselves," observed the boy, evidently pleased at his sister's compliment. "Mark and Nettie haven't come by from school yet. When they do, we will call them in and see what can be done."

"All right, and let's watch for them."

The windows facing the road were immediately taken possession of, and it was not long before Ada and Tim were both rapping on the panes of glass.

"What is it?" shouted Mark from the road.

"Come and see," replied Ada.

Mark and Nettie, a rosy-cheeked brother and sister, were soon in the little sitting room, and Ada and Tim were laying before them their plans for surprising their Sunday school teacher.

"It is just like this," said Ada, "I found Tim daydreaming, and I just suggested that we give Mrs. Martin a present this year. Now what do you think of it?"

"That would be just the thing," said Nettie.

"But what do you think she would want?" queried Mark.

"We can't tell, unless we ask her," replied Ada. "But have any of us ever heard her say what she wanted?"

"I have," said Tim. "I have heard her say that what she wanted the most of anything was to have her scholars come to Christ."

"But I mean something that we could give her."

"But if we should make up our minds to be Christians, it would make her pleased," said Tim, "and perhaps she'd rather be pleased in this way than to have a present."

"I know that she would," said Nettie, "and I say, let's settle the question once for all."

The others looked in amazement. They could scarcely understand what she meant. Her face was flushed, and she was trembling with emotion, but one thing was certain, and that was that Nettie was in earnest—also Tim, and whatever Tim wanted the others to do, they generally did.

"You may as well tell us what you do mean," said Mark.

"Why, just what I said," replied Tim. "I think it is about time that we began to think some of being Christians—that is, if what the minister says is true, and I suppose that it is, for everybody believes everything else that he says, when he has anything to say in our house and in the store."

"I should say as much," said

Nettie.

"But what can be done about it?" queried Mark, in perplexity.

"We might all sign a paper, telling her what we intend to do, and give it to her," proposed Tim.

"So we can," said Mark, "and let's do it at once."

So Tim went to the desk and spent a few minutes writing something upon a piece of paper. When he had finished, he turned around and asked, "Do you want to hear it?"

"Of course," said Nettie.

So he read: "We four scholars of your class have made up our minds to be Christians, and we give you this information as a present in remembrance from us."

"Just the thing," said Ada.

"And I suppose we all must sign it," suggested Nettie.

"Of course," answered Tim.

"But is this all we must do to be Christians?" queried Mark.

"I should say not," answered Tim, "but if Mrs. Martin knows that we are in earnest, she will tell us what to do."

So the paper was signed by the four, after which Mark and Nettie

continued on their way homeward.

On Sunday after the class had gathered and were waiting for Sunday school to begin in the little church on the hill, Tim passed to Mrs. Martin an envelope bearing her name. When she opened it and read the note that was within, her eyes filled with tears of joy.

"Oh, my precious class! My precious class!" This was all she could say, as she looked from one to another with faces shining like angel's.

"We thought that you would tell us just what to do," began Ada. "We felt that we needed help from you."

"And you shall have it this very hour. We will let the lesson go today and just have a little meeting all to ourselves."

"That will be just beautiful!" exclaimed Nettie.

While other classes in the church were discussing the lesson for the day, Mrs. Martin's class in the pew in the rear were settling the great question of their lives.

Mrs. Martin began by telling them the story of the Christ—how

Christ left His heavenly home and came to earth to die for all men, since all are sinners; and how all may be saved from sin by being sorry for their wrongdoing, deciding to lead a right life, and taking Him as their personal Savior. "Is this what you all believe?"

"It is," replied the class softly.

Then all closed their eyes, and Mrs. Martin prayed softly for them, after which each prayed for pardon, and by the time Sunday school was dismissed, all felt that Christ had accepted them as His very own.

"Oh, how I shall prize this little note," said Mrs. Martin. "You could not have given me a remembrance that would have meant more to me. And I am sure that I am not the only one you have remembered this day—you have given yourselves to Christ, who died and arose from the grave for you, and He will treasure the gift you have given Him more than I can the one you have given me."

Selected

[Camp Meeting Report contin. from pg. 2]
spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28). His Spirit was poured out with blessings, with instruction, with enlightenment, and with conviction. When the Spirit of God moves in, it is like the wind that blows. You cannot see it with the natural eye, but you can surely see and feel the effects of His drawing power. He supplied every need to all who sought His face. Any needy soul in the midst who refused to yield to Him surely must have found it difficult to resist.

One can truly say that the Lord prepared a wonderful table for us. His table always provides plenty of good things for the soul of man to feast upon. He provides spiritual milk for the newborn babe and honey to sweeten the bitter trials that we go through from time to time. There is always an ample supply of spiritual meat to bring strength and health to the Christian's

life. Our great God provides these things through the preaching of the Gospel. His ministry sounds forth the Truth so we can grow and mature in faith and in spirituality. We thank God for a faithful ministry who cares for our souls and protects us from the enemy's attacks.

The close of camp meeting always brings sadness to the heart. One reason it brings sadness is knowing that some have walked away without having their needs met. Hopefully, God's mercy will continue to follow after them and they will find a secret place to pray. Another cause of sadness is that of having to part with those whom we love so dearly. Many miles will separate us until we can once again come together to worship.

The good fellowship with God's people causes us to want to stay together and never have to part. These times of refreshing bring strength,

encouragement, and nourishment to us. However, it is necessary for us to go back to our different stations of life. May God help each one to be a light for Christ in this sin-darkened world that needs Him so desperately. Many souls are lost in sin that long for this pearl that we possess and enjoy. You may be the only one who can reach that hungering soul for Christ. Be faithful, and stand firmly at your post of duty. Your labor of love and sacrifice will not be in vain.

Eventually there will come a time when we will never have to part again, a day when all the saints will be gathered around God's throne and will there receive our reward. It certainly behooves each of us to stay true to Him at all cost. The trials, the disappointments, and the heartaches of this life will seem as nothing when we get a glimpse of His dear face.

Revelation 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Losing Faith



Brother C. H. Dickerson

Nothing in the Church Is Unclean

Two chapters in the Bible are grossly mistaught: one is Isaiah, Chapter 14, and the other is Revelation, Chapter 21. Many in false religion teach that these Scriptures refer to Heaven, but that is not true. Revelation, Chapter 21, refers to the Church of God. Down through those verses, John wrote about the Lamb's wife, the church.

First Corinthians 15:24 lets us know that when the end comes, the church, or the kingdom, will be delivered up to the Father. To be in the kingdom, you must meet God's requirements. If you do not, you will have nothing more than a religious profession.

In our Scripture text John said, "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth. . . ." Absolutely nothing can enter the church that will defile it. Nothing in

the church is unclean or impure. No one in the church is hypocritical or dishonest.

John also said that nothing that "worketh abomination" can enter in. The word *abomination* means hatred or loathing. When a man of God preaches God's eternal Truth and people refuse to obey it, they are not in the church. God has called the ministry, and He also gives them the message; then the Spirit of God bears witness that the message is true. Friend, when a man of God preaches the Gospel, you had better accept it. You should not turn it down by failing to heed it. Many people have their own ideas about what they believe and what they want. Often they do not want to change, so they set themselves against God's man. They may sit in the congregation, but they have not been born into the Church of the Living God.

The Scripture also says that whatsoever "maketh a lie" cannot enter in. Those who do so do not portray the true picture of the church. Revelation 21:11 lets you know that the true church has the glory of God. My friend, God has not changed His mind; the church is still filled with His glory. If you do not have the glory of God, you are not in the church.

Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life are in the church. The Scripture lets you know that God Himself writes down a man's or a woman's name when he or she is born again. When a man of God preaches the Gospel under the anointing of God's Spirit, you need to measure to it. If you do not, then you are not walking in the light.

The devil has one purpose and that is to deceive people. Many people have refused to give up and

stop serving God. They guard against becoming careless in their Christian experience, but the trend today is toward losing faith. This is what I want to deal with in this message. We are living in a day when most people are relying on man rather than God.

Without Faith It Is Impossible to Please God

Christian friend, the devil is determined to destroy your faith. He uses every device that is available. At one time people prayed when they did not have food, when they became ill, or when they encountered problems or disasters. However, today we are blessed with provisions on every side to take care of these things. As a result, faith has dwindled. Nevertheless, the Word of God plainly states that without faith it is impossible to please God.

One day as I looked out the window, I saw two preschool children. One child had a toy that the other child wanted, and they both had their arms locked around it. They tugged the toy back and forth and hollered and cried. Finally, one child got the toy and the other one gave up. Both of them were determined to have it, but one lost out. As I watched them, I realized that is the same picture that we are seeing today, spiritually speaking. The devil is doing his best to destroy faith. As a result, we are in a tug of war. As long as we are determined to have faith and the devil is determined to destroy it, there will be a tug of war. We will either hang onto our faith or lose it. I say again, without faith you cannot please God.

We read in Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We must believe what God has told us and stand on that. This verse of Scripture says He is a rewarder of those who seek Him diligently, and certainly, He will

reward us. I repeat, the devil is working hard to take away our faith and rob us of our blessing. We are in a great battle today. The world is looking for the battle of Armageddon to happen in the future; but we, as Christians, have been in it since we were saved, and it is getting more heated every day that we live for God.

Is Your Faith in Working Order?

There is not enough praise to God for what He does for us. Romans, Chapter 1, speaks of people becoming unthankful. My friend if you are not careful, you will take for granted all the blessings that God has so marvelously given and fail to thank Him. God has given you the food that you have on your table, the heat in your house, the clothes on your back, the vehicle you drive, and the house you live in. God has blessed you with all these things. Therefore, you need to praise Him from the depths of your heart!

Church of God, above all the material things, God has given you the Truth. Multitudes living in sin are professing religion. There are all kinds of religions and beliefs today. People are in gross darkness, spiritually speaking, but God has given us the Truth. He has called ministers to preach the Truth, and you ought to praise God with all your heart for them. The Bible says they are worthy of double honor. You ought to tell the world and praise God for all of this. Every time someone preaches the Truth, the amens should ring out, but what has happened? Too many have lost their thankfulness and take these blessings for granted.

Friend, we are in a heated battle. You must be determined to keep the faith. The devil is determined that you are not going to keep it, so a spiritual tug of war goes on. When you are in good health and things are going well, no doubt, you feel that you have the faith to overcome any problem that should come your way. When you are not going

through a test or a trial, you probably believe that you have faith to handle any situation that comes along. However, when a trial comes, you may find that you do not have as much faith as you thought you had.

In most public buildings it is compulsory to have smoke alarms and fire alarms. Once in a while the property owners are required to test those devices to make sure they are still working properly. Several years ago we were required to install a commercial septic system for our church building. A green post sticks up from the ground, and mounted on that post is a box containing a test switch. Every month or so, we are supposed to press that test button to make sure the system is working properly. One time I went out to check it, and it looked exactly as it always had, but when I pressed the test button, it was not working. Had I not checked it, soon the sewage would have backed up inside the building. Therefore, it is necessary to test the system regularly.

The same is true of your faith. You may think you have plenty of faith when everything is going fine, but the Master allows you to be tested so you can know whether or not your faith is in working order. The day is coming, not too far in the future, when you will need faith, and unless it is working, you are going to stand in vast need of help. All we have is from God, and it is received through faith, whether it is salvation, sanctification, healing, or whatever it might be. Every person who is saved was saved by faith. You cannot get your prayers through to God unless you have faith.

Your Faith Will Be Tested

Hebrews 11:1 states, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." You need faith, and unless your faith is tested, you will not realize your true condition. If you are not praying as you should, you cannot have the

victory that God wants you to have. When the victory is not there, you do not have the praise for God that you ought to have.

Often people pray that God will keep them from going through trials instead of asking Him for faith and grace to go through them. My friend, unless you go through some battles, you will never have victory; then, if you do not have victory, you will never have any praise.

The one who has much praise for God has gone through a battle and has come out victoriously. Without victory you will become dried up, just as many people are in Babylon today. Saint, you ought to praise God for the Truth and lift your voice when the Truth is going forth. Let the world know that you are on the winning side! God's people desire to know that their faith is in working order.

First Chronicles 29:16-18 reads: "O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.

"O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee." King David said he knew that God tried their hearts. They were glad that God tried their hearts, because they wanted to make sure of their faith. At one time David was the apple of God's eye, but he fell into sin. After David repented, God restored him, but he had to reap for the wrongs he had done.

Ask God to Examine Your Heart

David saw how frivolous the old flesh can be. He also realized that examining himself was not enough.

You see, you could examine yourself and overlook many things. David came to the place where he asked God to check his heart. He said in Psalm 26:2, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." This is what the true saint of God wants.

My friend, you are on your way to either Heaven or hell. I firmly believe from the depths of my heart that the end of time is coming soon. If there was ever a time when you needed to get down to business in your prayer life and open your heart to God, it is now. You need to ask God to look into your heart. He will show you what you need to get straightened out before you stand at the judgment bar of God. You are going to stand before God, and either you are going to be clear before Him or you are going to stand guilty before Him. Like David, you need to say, "Lord, examine me, and put me through some tests to prove me. Try my spirit, and see if there is any wickedness in my heart."

Sometimes one appears to be doing well outwardly and wears a big smile, but his or her spirit is not right. Sometimes an individual manifests a bad spirit. A person may pretend that all is well and put on a big front, and even be willing to do anything to help others, and yet have a bad spirit that will damn his or her soul. This is the reason you should ask God to try your spirit, to be sure that you have a right spirit. If there was ever a time when you needed to have your heart examined, it is in the day and age in which we are living.

In 2 Corinthians 7:1 the Apostle Paul said to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." My friend, you need to have God test you to make sure your spirit is right. Many people do good works, but not in the right spirit. If you are not in the church, you are not going to make Heaven your home.

At the end of time, Christ is going to deliver the Kingdom of God to the Father. The only ones in the Kingdom of God are those who

have met God's qualifications. None who are defiled or who work an abomination or make a lie can enter the kingdom. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

In John 10:9 Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. . . ." The pastor is not the door to the church, but Christ is. When one goes to an altar of prayer, God knows whether that person is going to come clean or if he is just putting on a front. If you are sincere with God, He will write your name down. If you hold back anything, your name will not be written down. You may even hold up your hand and testify, yet your name is not in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Are You Living a Godly Life?

Salvation is obtained strictly by the grace of God. Ephesians 2:8 tells us, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Through His grace you can deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. The Apostle Paul stated in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

When Paul said that the grace of God has appeared to all men, he meant everyone, including women. The grace of God appears to all of us, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Some form of ungodliness and worldly lust appears to all of us daily, but the grace of God teaches us that we ought to deny these things. When ungodliness and worldly lusts appear through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, we are to deny them and turn away from them. As a child of God, you are duty bound to live soberly and righteously in this present world, right in the midst of all the sin around us. School teachers teach children arithmetic by repetition;

they drill it into their minds. Likewise, this is what the Spirit of God teaches us.

False prophets will arise and try to do away with the Bible standard, but when God has taught us what the standard is, we are to do what the Word of God says, regardless of what people say. There have been good saints who knew the Truth and even preached it, but today they are back in Babylon. Now they do not even know what the Truth is; they have lost it all.

God's grace provides us the ability to help ourselves and enables us to help others. He does not lay the mantle of the ministry upon men for their own benefit, but to help others. God has called ministers to help us. We all can receive help if we listen to the messages. As each message of Truth goes forth, there will be something in it for you. You are heading for eternity, and you cannot have any filthiness in your heart if you intend to make Heaven your home.

When we were living in sin, our hearts and minds were filled with all kinds of filth, but one day God saved us and cleansed our hearts and our spirits. He gave us brand-new hearts. Then He started to teach us how we ought to live. Thank God, what we have learned comes up before us all the time. When we see ungodliness, we know it is not right, so we do not participate in it. Why? We are living godly right here in this present world.

Friend, you cannot live godly and have sin in your life. Paul wrote in Titus 2:12 that "we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." You are not heading for Heaven unless you are pure and living righteously. You must have the right spirit.

When you are living a godly life, God will give you the grace and the ability to minister to others. We read in 1 Peter 4:10-11: "As every man hath received the gift [the gift of salvation], even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any

man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

God is the greatest teacher of all. You may be a professor and know many things, but there will never be a teacher like God. Man can teach head knowledge, but God can get into the heart. If you are going to do any teaching, you must be sure that it agrees with the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Ministers may not agree on everything, but the Word and the Spirit agree perfectly.

Whenever you receive a gift from God, whatever that gift might be, you are to minister to others. I thank God for the gifts that God gives, such as playing instruments, singing, and the ministry. When you have received a gift from God, you are to minister what you have received to others. You are not to add anything to it or take anything away from it. It is not what you think or believe that is important, but it is what the Word of God says.

Endure the Tests

The trying of your faith brings praises of victory. Winning the battle brings shouts of victory. I was in several battles during the war, and when we were in those battles, it seemed as if they were never going to come to an end. We saw people killed and all kinds of terrible things, and sometimes we became disheartened. Often we wondered, "What is the use?" Then, all at once the victory came, and, oh, the shouting that went forth! Spiritually, it is the same.

Christian friend, God will take you through some battles, whether you want to go through them or not. When some people go through tests and trials, they complain and try to argue with God. They say, "God, You know I go to church all the time. I tithe and teach Sunday school, so why is this happening to

me?" Friend, if you will quit questioning God, He will bring you through with victory and praise to God. Why? You will be stronger, and He will make you better.

Consider Job, who lost everything he had. He lost his livestock, his children, his health, and other material possessions; yet, in essence, he said, "God, though You slay me, I will still trust You." Job fully trusted God, and he came through that trial with victory. I do not know how long he was in that trial. It might have lasted six months or six years, but he remained faithful, and God blessed him and gave him double of everything he formerly had. Oh, how wonderful the blessings were!

Today in many places the praises are drying up because people are unwilling to go through the tests and the trials. They try to avoid them, and they question God, "Why is this happening to me?"

My friend, you need to endure the tests that God gives you; it will not last forever. If you will hold on, you will have praise for God. When you hear God's eternal Truth, it will cause you to praise God for what He has done for you.

Every saint of God wants victory. Dear one, you are not going to have it unless you go through a battle. If you will go through it as patiently as you can, God will help you through. I am not going to say that you will be cheerful all the time. When you become ill, the pain is real. When you are going through a trial, it may seem as if everything is against you, and at times it is disheartening. Nevertheless, you need to realize that you are a child of God, and God said that He would never let you go through more than you can bear. If you will stand on that promise and take one day at a time, you will soon see some sunshine. The pain will start to decrease, and the trial will gradually fade away.

One day you will look back and praise God. Why? Because the trial made you stronger, and He brought

you through it. As a result, you will have praise for God. When you go to the house of God, you will want to tell others about it. During the singing, you will raise your hand in praise to God and shout the praise for what He has done for you.

The Trial of Your Faith

My friend, if you are not careful, you will not have any praise for God. He wants to be praised. He is a jealous God. Often people do not mind giving others praise, but God wants praise for what He does also. If you fail to give God praise, He will cause you to be really quiet, and you will lose your joy.

I attended a certain church once, and during the sermon, the minister happened to say something that was the truth, and I said, "Amen." The people looked around to see what was going on, because it seemed so strange to them. At one time, those people used to shout the praises, but today they are dried up spiritually. Could it be that they did not want to go through the trials?

Tests are not a pleasant experience to go through, but you need to make sure that your faith is working. You cannot get into Heaven unless your faith is working. You had better let the Master test you once in a while to make sure you still have faith. Without faith you cannot please God. Sometimes you may wake up to find that your faith is weak. You may get sick and have to rely on the faith you had yesterday. You need to make sure that you have faith.

You must have some progress in your spirituality. Everything must grow, and if it is not growing, it will die. Consider the crops in the field. Sometimes you will see a wet season and the soybeans do really well, but when it dries up, those plants will stop growing and will not produce.

If you do not grow in your Christian experience, you are not going to bear fruit for God. Then it will only be a short time until you will be out in sin again. If you grow

in the things of God, you will produce the fruit of the spirit. You will produce love, joy, peace, and praise. This comes about by being tried.

First Peter 1:3-7 reads: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold [or many] temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Though your faith is tried by fire, after the trial is over, you will have praise, and you will glorify God for what He has done for you.

In verses 8-9 Peter went on to say: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

The Need of Trials and Tests

Paul wrote in Hebrews 12:1-2: "Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight [every hindrance, or everything that will weigh you down], and the sin [the sin of unbelief] which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross."

There was no joy in hanging on the Cross, but there was joy when Jesus looked beyond the Cross and

saw the multitude of souls that would be saved. When souls are plucked out of sin, out of the clutches of the devil, and their lives and spirits have changed, that brings joy. God is trying to get you to go through temptations and trials with joy, because someone is watching your life. It can be a stepping stone to help others get saved.

The world is miserable and in need of help. People cannot help themselves. Many have turned to drugs, alcohol, and even suicide. People need help, so God sets the church as a city on a hill so that others can see the saints of God go through trials with joy and thankfulness. It will have an effect on people's lives and lead them to Christ. That is the purpose of the church. Would you like to see what Heaven is like? Would you like to hear that your example has won others to God? On the other hand, it would be terrible not to make it through because in the test you showed such a wrong attitude. Perhaps it would sicken one who was close to the kingdom and cause him to refuse salvation and go to hell. May God help.

I want you to see the need of trials and tests of faith. You may not like the tests, and you may not see the good in them at the time. If you are not careful, you will pray that God will not take you through the test because you feel that you have been through enough. Instead, you should say, "God, You know what the day holds. Please, give me the grace I need for this day." You need grace when someone tells you off or threatens you. You can just say, "I will pray for you." The Scripture tells me that will heap coals of fire on his head.

Jesus saw beyond the Cross. He was just as human as you and I are before He went through that. He said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). He did not pray that God would take it away from Him. He said, "If it be possible. . . ."

God let Him know it was not possible. Jesus said to His disciples, "Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me" (verse 46).

The Way to Victory

Dear one, God is asking the same submission of you. When tests are facing you, you should not pray, "My God, do not make me go through this." Christ was determined to go through all the suffering of the Cross by the grace of God. When you do that, the glory of God will shine forth. Whenever people go through the tests as God would have them, they will come through victoriously, and they will praise God because He brought them through. One of these days the last battle will come, and the final victory will be won. Trials and tests will not last forever.

I have had many trials, and I will have some more, but I have never been to the place where I wanted to quit serving God. One time when I had some problems with my heart, as I was sitting up on the pulpit, God said to me, "You go down and the brethren will lay hands on you and pray, and I will heal you." I sat there for a little while, and finally someone picked up a chair and set it down in the middle of the aisle, and away I went. The brethren laid hands on me, and God healed me.

Two or three weeks afterward, I had the same test. I said to the devil, "Old Boy, you get out of here. God has healed me." We need to have tests to try our faith. I still have them. I hate that devil with a passion. God healed me, saved my soul, set me free, turned my life around, and gave me a new spirit and new desires. I praise Him with all my heart for what He has done for me!

The Apostle Paul let us know that we are in a spiritual warfare. In Ephesians 6:12 he said, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against

powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We have principalities and powers to battle today. We are fighting against the wickedness of this old world. As you serve God, evil forces will try to destroy your faith. If you take a stand for divine healing, the devil will work every way he can to defeat you.

Fighting principalities and keeping the victory is a battle. It is a battle to keep your body under. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." The Amplified Bible reads, "But [like a boxer] I buffet my body—handle it roughly, I discipline it by hardships—and subdue it." It is a battle to bring the flesh into subjection.

After one gets saved, he will have the same feelings. The natural thing to do is to give in to the flesh; so to keep from doing that, it is a warfare. Whenever a person has a problem, the first thing the flesh wants to do is rise up, but the Christian has to keep his body under by the grace and power of God.

Faith Must Be Cultivated

A persevering spirit is a product of faith. Consider Abraham's faith. He had no sons to carry on the great work that he was doing. Although Abraham and Sarah were old, God promised them a son. The years went by, but they had no son. Twenty years went by, and still they had no son. Most people would have given up by that time. Twenty-five years passed before their son Isaac was born.

Abraham believed God. A persevering spirit taught him to believe God. Today when people pray for something, they do not want to wait even twenty-five hours for an answer, so they take the matter into their own hands, and they lose faith. God wants you to cultivate and nourish your faith.

How can you develop your faith? Faith grows just as a child

grows. When little children are born, it is not long until they start moving their arms and legs, and they begin to grow. They grow by exercising. How does the brain develop? It develops by using it. Through using your brain, you learn things. Likewise, the only way you are ever going to develop your faith is by using it.

Is Your Faith Genuine?

John the Baptist was put in prison, and it seemed that everything was against him. He had faith, and he believed in God, yet he was beheaded. My friend, things are not always going to go well. Life is not always going to go smoothly. Sometimes circumstances look dismal. The disciples lost all hope when the Roman soldiers led Jesus away. They decided to go back to fishing.

God wants you to trust Him. Just as you read earlier in Hebrews 11:6, you must believe that He is. There is a rewarding crown for all who believe. Jesus told the people in the Smyranean age, in Revelation 2:10, "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried. . . ." The disciples went through severe tests.

The Apostle Paul, speaking of the trials that had befallen him, stated in Acts 20:24, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." Revelation 2:10 continues, ". . . and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

God allows you to be tested because He wants to know that your faith is genuine. Paul stated in 1 Timothy 1:5, "Now the end of the commandments is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Paul's faith was unfeigned. Is your faith genuine? Do you really believe God?

Again, Hebrews 11:1 reads, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not

seen." It is easy to see things and accept them, but sometimes it is hard to keep the faith when you ask God for something and He does not answer right away. Your faith may start to dwindle.

Here is an example of faith. You may place an order for an item from a catalog, write out a check for it, and send it in. It may take a few days or even a few weeks, but one day you will go out to the mailbox, and there it will be. Now, you did not doubt that you would receive it, because you knew you bought it. You need the same kind of faith in God. That mail order could have gotten lost or someone could have stolen it from your mailbox. Friend, the request you make to God cannot be intercepted or stolen. God has promised to answer every prayer. However, if you do not get an answer quickly, you should not allow your faith to dwindle.

Some people's faith is only temporary. In the parable of the sower, we are told about the seed that fell on the stony places, which after hearing the Word, they received it with joy, but it had no root. Such a person believes for a while, but in the time of persecution, that individual falls away.

Partakers of Christ's Sufferings

Tests and trials are an appointed means of revealing the stability of your faith. I want you to read 1 Peter 1:7 once more: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise [God will try your faith by fire so that you will be filled with praise] and honor and glory. . . ."

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 8:1-2: "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

It should not surprise you when

the people for whom you labor appear unappreciative. Many times people become disheartened because they work and work, yet it seems as though people do not appreciate their efforts. Have you ever heard anyone say there is no use to do something because people do not appreciate it? You need to remember that you are working for God. Christ's faith and labor incurred indignation and opposition. When your effort incurs opposition, you are really suffering for Christ. Trials and pain more fully equip you for the glory that is to come.

In 1 Peter 4:12-13 we read: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings. . . ." Too many times when trials come, people think that some strange thing is happening to them, and they lose their joy. However, Peter said not to think it strange, but to rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer for Christ.

It was no joy for Christ to hang on the Cross. It was not pleasant to have the crown of thorns placed upon His head or to have spikes driven into His hands and feet. That was torture, but He looked beyond that. You need to look beyond the suffering and look at the outcome, or the impact you can have.

My friend, we are living in a day when the joy is slowly drifting out of the camp of the saints. When I was just a little fellow, I remember seeing people run up and down the aisles praising God. They were not Pentecostal, but they were truly happy in their souls. I remember when the man of God could hardly preach for all the saints shouting and praising God. On the Day of Pentecost, when the Truth went forth, the people thought the saints were drunk, but Peter said that was not so, because it was only the ninth hour. He told them it was that

which Joel had prophesied about.

Are You Losing Your Joy?

Truth is still the same. It ought to thrill the hearts of God's people. When Truth goes forth, it ought to cause such rejoicing that you cannot contain it.

Not everyone acts the same way. When some people rejoice, they get out their handkerchief and wave it around. Others wipe their eyes, others shout, others run the aisles, some hold up their hand, and some stand up. It affects each one in a different way. I ask you, are you losing your joy? Do you still appreciate the Truth that set you free from a life of sin? Before I got saved, I was bound deep in sin. Years ago when I was overseas in the army, we met the enemy face to face. I would drink liquor to get enough nerve to go out and face the enemy.

When I came home to America, God saved my soul and delivered me from the liquor and other habits of life. He set my feet on the Solid Rock. What did it? It was the Truth that I heard. I appreciate the Truth! It encourages faith, and it causes my heart to say amen. It is so great and so precious, and it is getting even more precious in the day and age in which we are living, because not much Truth is being taught anymore.

Do you appreciate the Truth? If not, why do you not ask God to give you enjoyment for the Truth? Paul talked about the signs of the times in 2 Timothy 3:2-3, when he said: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection. . . ." Friend, do you thank God for the Truth? Do you still appreciate brethren who will stand and preach the Truth? Do you still hold the man of God up in prayer? If not, you ought to ask God to help you.

(Cassette C-3727M)

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Drunkenness



Brother Calvin Foster

Woe to Them That Follow Strong Drink

I want to call your attention to verse 21 of our Scripture text, which mentions that one of the works of the flesh is drunkenness. As a teenage boy growing up in Chicago, approximately thirteen to sixteen years of age, I knew two young men who drank themselves to death. One young man was my cousin, and the other was my brother. My brother mixed medication with alcohol, and I saw him shaking all over. Not long after that, he went into eternity. God had given each of those young men a chance to get saved. During that time, I was not saved, but my mother and one of my older brothers were saved, and they constantly

studied the Bible. My mother continually preached to those young men, but they would not listen.

Drunkenness is one of the leading causes of death in the world today. Drunkenness is to be overcome by alcohol or liquor to the point of losing control over one's faculties. People often use slang terms in the English language to express various degrees of drunkenness, or being intoxicated. One term is *tipsy*, indicating that one is just slightly intoxicated. Another term is *tight*, which is used to indicate that one is moderately drunk, but without much loss of muscular coordination. Another term is *blotto*, which indicates that one is to the point of unconsciousness.

Often during the Christmas

holiday and the New Year's celebration, many people go out and get drunk. Those of us who drive soberly need to watch out for the other guy, because he might be drunk. It is sad to see people get into what they call "the Christmas spirit." I have worked with people who got into "the Christmas spirit" during the holiday, but they were mean to people the rest of the year. When they got alcohol in them, all of a sudden they became sociable. Had God told the world to celebrate the birthday of His Son Jesus Christ and instructed people to give gifts to one another, they would not do it. How could the world participate in something that the church is in? As the church, we have to be very careful.

The Bible teaches that this

drunkenness leads people away from God forever. Isaiah 5:11-14 reads: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands. Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it."

Sometimes I think about the days when my brother and my cousin were living. Again, the Scripture says, "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!" I saw them get up early in the morning to look for a drink. Sometimes they stood and waited for the liquor store to open, and then they drank until night, till wine inflamed them. Today many people are under that same influence, where "the harp, and the viol, and the tabret" are there. This is simply saying that music is playing. You hardly ever see any place where people are drinking that they do not have loud music playing. They are trying to drown out their problems. The Scripture says, "They regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands."

I can remember when I was in the streets and someone got killed. We would go get a drink and say, "Let's pour some out for Joe so we don't forget him. Wait! Don't pour out too much!"

Under the Influence of Alcohol

What does the world care about you? The best friends I have are the saints of God. Sinner friend, you will

find out who your friends are if you end up in jail. You will find out who your friends are when you are ill. Those who can pray for you are your best friends.

Again, Isaiah 5:14 reads, "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it." Their dignified splendor is what their pomp is. You may keep company with big politicians and play golf with them. If they drink strong drink, they are going to end up in hell, unless they repent. They are the dignified drinkers.

Drunkenness brings sorrow and woe. Proverbs 23:29-30 says: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause [many people wake up with knots on their heads and cuts and do not even know how they got them; they are wounds without cause]? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine."

Wine will take people straight to hell. Friend, if you play with fire, you will get burnt. Verse 31 says, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright." The devil can make it look good. The advertisers try to make it look good to young people. They can make it look so cool and refreshing.

Verses 32-33 read: "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things." One man who once had a drinking problem was offered champagne at a company party, but he had enough sense to know that he could not drink any alcoholic beverages because of his former problem of alcoholism. You had better not mess around with alcohol. You had better not look upon it while it looks refreshing; it will bite you like a serpent. It is nothing to play with.

Young man, young woman, do not become a fool. Alcohol has taken down better men than you or me.

Proverbs 23:33 tells us how alcohol leads to lust. To lust is to disregard accepted rules and standards, to be morally unrestrained, especially in sexual activity. Many girls and women have been raped while they were with men who were under the influence of alcohol. There is even what they call a "date drug." Sometimes a man will put it in a young woman's drink so she does not know what is going on.

"Buy the Truth, and Sell It Not"

The Gospel is to help people make it through life successfully and to help them make it to Heaven. The things of this old world will draw you away from God. Those who indulge in strong drink are unwise. Proverbs 20:1 says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Wine is a mocker.

Young man, you start out strong. I can remember my cousin well. He was such a big, strong man. He was known to put a refrigerator on his back and walk up steps with it on his back, but when he died, he was frail and as skinny as a rail.

A young man can start out strong and vigorous, but alcohol will weaken him. Friend, you may think you are quite strong, until it gets you. The Bible says "strong drink is raging." That means it is forceful, violent, and uncontrolled. It does not care anything about you. It will crush and destroy your life. God put these Scriptures in His Word for us to learn from them. Perhaps you know of some men or women who were brought down by alcohol.

Proverbs 21:16-17 states: "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead. He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich." Oh, how people love pleasure! The devil fires them up with

pleasure. I want to remind you that pleasure in sin lasts only for a season; then the reaping season comes, and it leads to poverty.

We are in the most pleasure-seeking time in history. Men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. I love fellowship with family and friends. I thank God for the times when I can see my loved ones, but when the time comes to go to church, I go to church. Many people who have relatives visit from out of town miss the church services. Well, if you were to visit them when they had something to do, they would most likely go and do it.

Proverbs 23:20-23 states: "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Harken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."

Drowsiness will clothe a man with rags. Would you want to work around electricity with someone who could hardly stand up? Many people have lost their jobs for oversleeping, for being unfaithful, for not working hard, and for drunkenness. Drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.

The Proverb writer said, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Thank God, you can buy the Truth, or accept the Truth. You can buy the Truth with your life and your dedication. You should not sell it, or leave it. You need to stand for the Truth; stay with it.

How to Avoid Drunkenness

To avoid drunkenness and to avoid the temptation, the Bible tells us not to be among winebibbers or among riotous eaters of the flesh. In other words, do not be among wine heads and drinkers. Many drunkards do not have much money to buy food and other necessities; instead they buy alcohol. The liquor

stores are making big money these days. As the church, we need to cry out against such. We need to pray for our loved ones and our friends. Perhaps you will get an opportunity to talk to them. Drunkenness is self-destructive behavior. Do not be among such, and do not tempt God.

In 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 we read: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

God said if any man who is called a brother is a drunkard, he is a wicked person. False religion is causing many people to go to hell. In many cases it is more dangerous to be in false religion than to be sitting in a bar. God can deal with a person if he is sitting in a bar, but if one is sitting where a preacher is tea toasting in the back room of a church and giving an excuse to be drunk, it is much harder for God to reach that person. You may say, "Oh, I do not get drunk; I just get a little tipsy." No, you are drunk. "I do not get drunk; I just get a little tight." No, you are drunk. If you think you are going to come around the Church of God and be a drunkard, you are in the wrong place, because we are going to cry out against it.

First Corinthians 6:9-11 reads: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall in-

herit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Young person, you cannot fool the saints. It is only a matter of time before God will expose you. Young man, you may go home and think your father does not know you have been doing something, but your father can see that your eyes are all glassy and that you are trying to stand up straight. You do not usually do that. He knows you have been doing something that you have no business doing. My wife and I always tell our children, "No matter what you do, God is not going to let you get away with it." Sometimes children will do something and try to hide it, but God will pull the covers off and show the parents exactly what has been going on.

Living Water

We do not look down on people who are involved in these things because such were some of us. God pulled many of us out of deep sin. Do not forget where God brought you from, saint. Where would you be if it were not for God? The Scripture says, "And such were some of you." When I visit the jails and preach, I tell the men, "You are not trash." The average man walking the street today would be in jail if it were not for God. The difference is, he did not get caught. Many people sitting in jail did many things that some of us did, but they got caught. I like to tell them, "Brother, I am just one of you whom Jesus saved. I would be right in there with you if it were not for God."

John 4:7-14 states: "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samari-

tans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

"The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

God took the old worldly thirst away, and now I am drinking of the Living Water. I do not want to have anything to do with that old liquor anymore. I have a well of water springing up within me into everlasting life. Thank God, He can still save and heal. He can take the taste of tobacco off your tongue, and He can take the taste of liquor off your tongue. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

We must tell the world about this! They are going along as the woman with the issue of blood. They are going to all kinds of doctors and programs and still not getting help. All they have to do is take a drink of Living Water from Jesus Christ. We must not let this message fall to the ground. Thank God, we have that Living Water in us, and it is springing up.

A Well That Never Runs Dry

In Acts 2:12-13, breaking in at Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, we read: "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine."

The saints who came out of the Upper Room made some noise. It was the third hour of the day, or

nine o'clock in the morning. A Jew's day began at six in the morning, so the third hour was nine o'clock. People were asking, "What kind of wine did they have?" It was not wine; God touched their hearts. When God touches your heart, you cannot help but rejoice. Those men were full of new wine. Verses 14-18 read: "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."

The Spirit of God is real. You may not jump and shout as others do, but you can wave your handkerchief or cry, "Oh, thank you, Jesus!" The main thing is, when you have the Spirit of God, you know it. You do not have to pump and pull to get into the Spirit. You should be in the Spirit on the Lord's day. You should not have to sing five or six songs to get in the Spirit.

I read an article in the newspaper about some people who were doing what they called a sober study of alcohol and the brain. Often when people experiment to study something, they use rats. They have learned much about people by using rats. The experiment was part of the research on the brains of rats that become dependent on alcohol in an attempt to understand how brains repair themselves after chronic drinking. Researchers hope to find ways to help recovering alcoholics gain full mental capacity. Researchers study rats to find out how to get them straightened out. In our world

today many people get drunk and destroy their brain cells and become messed up. Thank God, God straightened out many of us. You would be surprised at what alcohol causes men to do. Some people think they would never eat out of a garbage can, but because of liquor, many eat from garbage cans. Sometimes when people get saved after they have dealt with drugs and alcohol, it takes a while for the mind to get straightened out. I have seen brethren who have gotten saved, and when they got up to testify and tell of God's goodness, all of a sudden they forgot what they were going to say next. Over time it gets better, and God blessed them and healed them. You do not want to mess around with alcohol and drugs.

Isaiah 55:1-2 says: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

Dear one, you can drink of God's Spirit. The greatest drink in the world is the drink of God's Spirit. It is a well that never runs dry; the supply is always there, and you can delight yourself in fatness. You can get as fat in God as you want to get. The reason you do not have much of God is that you do not want more. The more of God you want, the more God will give you.

One may ask, "What is wrong with a man taking a friendly drink occasionally? Didn't Jesus turn water into wine?" Some people try to justify drinking that way, but that is where drunkenness starts. One little drink may take you further than you want to go and keep you longer than you want to stay.

Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake

and thine often infirmities." If you were to study that, you would find that Timothy was drinking the alkaline water of Asia. He drank that water until he had ruined his digestive system. Paul was giving Timothy a remedy for his physical affliction. If you try to use this Scripture to prove that you can drink and justify it, you are going to go down to the curse of alcoholism.

Many people want to twist the Scriptures. A dishonest man can twist the Bible to say anything he wants it to say. The common wine of that country was a very sour acid substance, more closely resembling our modern vinegar than the sweet wines of today. A little of that wine put into the alkaline water would correct the bad effects. People do not study and see what Paul was saying.

God is trying to help you and save your soul. As the world celebrates the various holidays as they do, we know the truth. The Bible tells us to buy the Truth and sell it not. May God be with you is my prayer.

(Cassette C-5330E)

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