

The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

SANCTIFICATION

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:38

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." Rev. 10:7 Matt. 24:31

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 37 February 2007 No. 2



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

*"I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord."*

Psalm 122:1

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

Winter 2006 Camp Meeting Report

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER

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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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Heaven Came Down

Another glorious camp meeting convened Wednesday, December 27, 2006, here on the old campground in Newark, Ohio. Our pastor, Brother Roger Decker, opened the first service by welcoming everyone to God's Acres and encouraged each one to join in the worship of the Lord. He then prayed for the many needs and burdens, and earnestly asked God for His divine direction and anointing for the five day meeting. God wonderfully heard and answered prayer. It is always difficult to describe in words all that our eyes have seen and our hearts have felt. It was as if Heaven came down and dwelt right here in our midst!

We can truly declare that a sweet spirit of love and unity prevailed throughout the meeting. The fellowship among the saints was rich as it flowed from heart to heart. Many people remarked of how wonderfully the love of God prevailed over this Winter Camp Meeting. There is no greater place on earth to be than where the true spirit of love and unity is displayed.

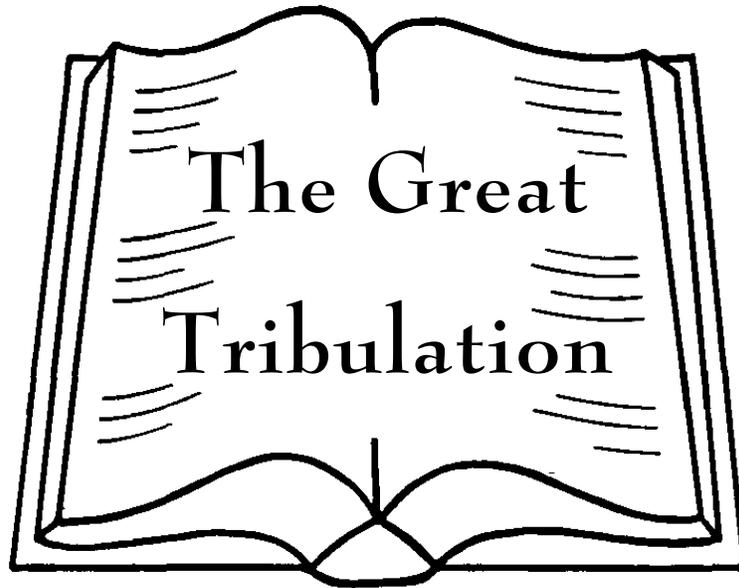
One highlight of the meeting was the visiting of a new congregation of saints from the state of Maryland. Brother Hawkins, the pastor, heard about God's Acres through Brother Evans of the Medina, Ohio, congregation. Hearing about the holiness message of the Church of God, of men and women living sin-free lives, and possessing Holy Ghost power to be witnesses truly appealed to him. It would remind one of the time when Philip told Nathaniel about finding Christ,

the promised Savior. Nathaniel questioned him at first, but Philip said, "Come and see" (John 1:46). Likewise, these dear saints wanted to come and see if what they had heard was so. They decided to rent a tour bus to travel to Newark, Ohio. Pastor Hawkins and forty people from his congregation came to the Winter Camp Meeting. When it was time for them to leave the meeting, Brother Hawkins expressed how much he and his congregation loved what they saw, felt in their hearts, and heard. These dear saints truly enjoyed the love and the hospitality shown to them. Their plans are to return for the Spring Camp Meeting in June, and Brother Hawkins is planning to bring others as well.

The greatest highlight of any meeting is having the sweet Spirit of God come and visit in our services. It is His precious presence that makes our gathering together a success. The local congregation previously sought God earnestly with prayer and fasting for His direction in the camp meeting. God knows what every heart needs, and He knows who will be attending and what is lacking in the life of each person. It is truly wonderful to serve a God who knows how to send what is vitally needed.

Some people came burdened down with sin and ungodly habits. Others were in the midst of trials of some kind, where the enemy of souls was striving to turn them from the way of God. Oftentimes there are saints who are suffering physical afflictions,

[continued on page 12]



Brother Roger L. Decker

False Religious Spirits

False teachings are running rampant in our nation and in other nations. People seem to believe almost anything that comes across the airways and is heralded from pulpits—doctrines such as millenniums, eternal security, prayers for the dead, a thousand-year reign, and other false teachings. These false doctrines seem to get the attention of the masses. False ministers are lining their pockets by putting on false healing campaigns. Divine healing is a Bible doctrine, but it is not to be used for mammon (money).

Daniel 9:27 states, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the

consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." This verse is where much falsity has its beginning, and it is where millennialists bring in the antichrist. They say that He is going to confirm the covenant with the literal Jew in Palestine during Daniel's seventieth week, which they believe is yet in the future.

When rightly dividing the Word of Truth, the seventieth week follows the sixty-ninth week. If the seventieth week had not come yet, then we would not have any atonement. In the midst of the seventieth week Jesus was hung on the Cross, died, and rose from the dead.

In the Old Testament the word *antichrist* was not even used. To insert the word *antichrist* there is to add to the Word of God. However, we know that we are not to add one

word to God's Holy Scriptures. The word *antichrist* is mentioned in only two places in the Bible: it is used in 1 John and 2 John, and John was writing during a time of apostasy, after he returned from the Isle of Patmos, where he received the Revelation.

When John returned, a great falling away was taking place. You will notice in 1 John that John used plainness of speech. In 1 John 2:18-19 he penned: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest [or made known] that they were not all of us." John let us know

that antichrist got its start from some who went out from the saints.

Spirits That Rise Against the Truth

In verse 22 John wrote, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." First John 4:3 states, "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

John wrote in 2 John, verse 7, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

Many people have pointed to Hitler, Mussolini, and others as being antichrist, but that is not what John said. He said they came out from them, but they were not of them. If they had been of them, they would have continued with them. That is about as simply stated as one could say it; understanding it is not difficult.

Antichrist is nothing more than false religious spirits that rise against the Truth. Antichrists do not want to be pastored or told what to do; they are rebellious and stubborn. John said they went out from them to make manifest, or to make it known, that they were not of them. Where did they have their beginning? Those people started in the Church of God. John was Church of God, and "us" in 1 John 2:19 means the Church of God.

The millennialists put the antichrist in the Book of Daniel, when antichrist is not even mentioned there. The word *antichrist* was mentioned only by John when apostasy was settling in. John had been on the Isle of Patmos, but when he wrote 1 John and 2 John he was back in Ephesus. After he arrived there, he had to lay out sin again and let people know who was in and who was out of the church. He

told them that he who commits sin is of the devil, because the devil had sinned, or missed the mark, from the beginning.

Again, Daniel 9:27 reads, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." False millennialists say that "he" in this verse is speaking of the antichrist. On the contrary, "he" is speaking of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The same "he" is mentioned in the rest of the verses. The only One who can confirm the covenant is the One who brought the covenant.

You may ask, "How do you know that it was Christ instead of the antichrist who confirmed the covenant?" Mark 16:19-20 tells us: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." Romans 15:8 states, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." What does the word *confirm* mean? It means "to authorize it; to back it up." When the Gospel is preached, it is authorized by Jesus Christ, and He will back up the Gospel. He is the author of the new covenant.

Living in Tribulation

The word *tribulation* means "suffering, misfortune, pain, and distress." Jesus warned that there would be tribulation. Jesus said in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." In Him you can have peace, and He said to be of good cheer, for He has overcome the world.

The church of the morning time lived in tribulation. Today some people cannot endure much, not even slander, gossip, or false accusations; but the morning-time church

lived in constant tribulation. They expected it. Acts 14:22 says, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Tribulation was part of the message of the morning-time church. They knew that everything would not be a bed of roses, so to speak, when they became followers of Jesus Christ, but He gave them peace in the midst of tribulation.

The morning-time church suffered much tribulation. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 3:4, "For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know." In other words, he was saying, "You know how we have been living in tribulation." At Thessalonica Paul was accused of being harsh, of taking advantage of the church, and of many other things by the people.

Dear one, as saints, we are going to live in tribulation. We must suffer persecution. It was a way of life for the early church. When they went out each morning, they went out in the midst of tribulation and persecution. When they stood up for Jesus Christ, they were excommunicated from the Jewish faith. Also, they knew they could lose their heads very easily. Those spirits are still around today, but they are held in, and sometimes they lie dormant. In many cases, people restrain themselves because of the laws of the land.

What about the great tribulation? The word *great* means "huge, enormous, large, grand, big." This tribulation was going to bring great suffering, or enormous distress. As we look at the subject of tribulation, we need to ask the question, "Will there be a great tribulation in the future?" We need to know the answer to that question as it is taught in the Scriptures.

The phrase "great tribulation" is used three times in the Bible: once in the Book of Matthew and twice in

the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 2:22 we read, "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds." John was writing about Babylon, which seduces people into committing spiritual fornication. We speak against adultery and physical fornication, but God is just as stirred against spiritual fornication.

Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Those who commit spiritual fornication are under the divine judgment of God, and the bed is defiled because they are supposed to be married to Christ. When you are saved, you are married to Christ. The church is the bride of Christ.

Revelation 7:14 reads, "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." What John saw was a picture of a great host of people coming through the great tribulation of the masses of religion and confusion and finding their way back to Mount Zion and the unity of God's people.

God is calling His people out of false religion—out of dead, formal religion. He does not want His people there. He does not want His people to join false religion or to keep company with people in false religion. Jesus said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The Roman Catholic Church does not even teach being born again, and all that those in false Pentecostalism can see when they look in the Bible is speaking in tongues. When you get real salvation, it will help you to live a holy life and to bridle your tongue. Every gift that God gives to His people is given to edify the body of Christ. The gift of tongues was given as a gift of the Spirit, and it was given to

preach the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost, to the Jews first; then at Cornelius' house to the Gentiles; and then in Ephesus to the Samaritans. What was God doing? He poured out the same gift on all where they could speak in languages, and that which they spoke was understandable. He heard them praise God and give glory to Him.

Today most people do not understand what the gift of interpretation is. For example, when one gets up to preach, he has an interpreter, and that interpreter has a gift. He is not just a translator; he has the gift of interpretation. One who has this gift can stand right beside you and interpret, and you hardly have to slow down one iota. He will be right with you word for word and action for action. If you turn around, he will turn around. If you walk down near the altar, he will do likewise. Not everyone who can translate has the gift of interpretation. When does a person need an interpreter? When he gets up and speaks in a foreign language. If one speaks in tongues, or in a foreign language, how can the rest of the people say amen when they do not know what he is saying? How can others be in agreement of prayer when they do not know what someone is praying about?

The Abomination of Desolation

Now we want to look at Matthew, Chapter 24, which is a stronghold for millennialists. They do not know the time that the tribulation was to start, but they will tell you things that they *think* will take place, and that is what you have to watch out for, because they lack understanding.

Matthew 24:15-22 reads: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of

his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

"And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened [the days of the great tribulation], there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

What was Jesus talking about? It seems that Scripture is the main thrust of the millennial teaching. To understand what Jesus was speaking of, first you must look at the time about which Jesus was talking. All of this was to take place, according to Jesus, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet." Jesus mentioned the abomination of desolation. The word *abomination* means "hated thing." There is Scripture to back that up. Proverbs 6:16 tells us, "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him." Here we can see that the word *abomination* means something that is hated.

There were those who failed to heed Jesus' teaching about the literal destruction of Jerusalem. In Luke 21:20-22 Jesus said: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."

Everyone who heeded the voice of Jesus was saved, but many did not heed His words and suffered the days of vengeance. Some people procrastinated, or put off fleeing. Others would not leave because they did not want to leave their gold and silver, and some did not want to

leave their families. They traded their souls for their possessions and went into a lost eternity.

Procrastination

In the Book of Acts you can read about Felix. He had a personal visit with the Apostle Paul. The Scripture says in Acts 24:25, "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Procrastination will cause many people to miss it, but it is so unnecessary. Friend, you do not have to miss Heaven. You do not have to go on unsaved. The devil will tell you that you cannot be delivered from your sins and that it does no good to serve God, but he is a liar and the father of lies. You need to hear the Truth. Jesus Christ is the way, the Truth, and the life, and He can deliver you.

Dear sinner, you should not put off the salvation of your soul. Your soul is the real you, and you do not want to spend all eternity in the region of the lost. Are you a professing Christian who keeps putting off taking care of what the Lord has shown you that you must do? It could be that you need to go to someone and ask for his or her forgiveness. If so, you need to get it done. You should not put it off. It may be that you owe someone money. If you do, then you ought to pay what you owe. If you cannot pay what you owe now, you should go to that person and explain the circumstance and make arrangements to pay it. You should not just ignore the situation. Your soul is at stake. If you run up a bill, you should not run away from it.

Perhaps the Lord has shown you that you need to make restitution and you have failed to do it. Maybe you owe an apology for the way you have acted. You should not put it off; you ought to straighten it out right away. Do not procrastinate. Do not let the byword of that proverb

keep going through your mind. You should not be as the one who says, "Yes, I'll do it one of these days." One of these days might not come around. It might be the day of vengeance. You ought to make your restitution when the Spirit of God prompts you to do it. Do not let time run out on you, because in eternity it will be too late.

I read that one said, speaking about putting off salvation until the last, "With regard to those who put off their great work to the last, it is a thousand to one that they will not have time to do it then. Getting grace is a work of time, and it cannot be done in a hurry. While the poor soul is awakened and dresses himself upon a sick bed, and he is to repent and pray in awful confusion, he scarcely knows where to begin first, what to do first, and what to do next; and presently death overtakes him and the Judgment."

What was the writer saying? One ought to get saved while he has a clear mind, when God is dealing with his heart. You should not wait until you are lying on the deathbed, when your mind goes into confusion and unbelief begins to hover around you and you cannot think straight. Then you may not even know what to do first, and you certainly cannot go on the preacher's prayer at that hour. It must be your prayer. Do not let time run out on you, friend.

The writer went on to say, "This comes to having oil to buy when we should burn it and having grace to get when we should use it." God gives you grace at a certain hour to be saved. You are saved by grace, but it is hard to get hold of grace on the deathbed when unbelief is all around you. There are good times to repent and get hold of God. There might be a time when you have need of God, but you cannot find the grace. You might not have people around praying for you and the Lord pleading with your soul. You might be all alone in a hospital room with nurses coming in and jabbing needles in you to give you sedatives and antibiotics, and your mind

could be in a mass of confusion. The time to get hold of God is when God is dealing with your soul.

Dear one, please do not wait until Satan has scarred and destroyed your life and you have nothing left to offer the Lord. Young person, you ought to serve God while you are in your youth. God could use you in such a special way. Do not wait until Satan has left his marks of rebellion upon you. Do not wait until your life is scarred with heartaches, sad memories, and maybe even physical scars. You ought to come to God while you have the right use of your mind and you are young and vibrant. Won't you come to God and give Him a life of dedicated service? That is what God wants. Do not procrastinate. You may be young now, but you will not always stay that way.

Moses refused the pleasures of this world to suffer with the people of God. Whoever heard of choosing suffering over pleasure? Moses did, and look what happened to him. There was not another man like him in all the earth. Moses was meek, and he had the presence of God in his life continually.

Friend, do not put off your salvation. Do not put off making restitutions or doing whatever God has shown you to do. Do not put off seeking forgiveness. You need to come to God while you can. Do not put it off a moment longer, because one of these days, time will be swallowed up in eternity. From that moment on, you will be an inhabitant of eternity. To put off repentance is dangerous, especially when the next step you take could be into eternity.

(Cassette C-5603M)

**The wages of
sin have never
been reduced.**

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth

not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the

world.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error

Brother Calvin Foster

Understanding Spiritual Things

Our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking to His disciples about the Spirit of Truth, said in John 14:15-17: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

It is clear to see that the Bible teaches that the Spirit of Truth is the Holy Ghost. The Bible also lets you know that the Holy Ghost is given to all who obey God. Acts 5:32 says, "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." God gives His

Spirit to those who obey Him. The Spirit of Truth lives in God's people.

First Corinthians 3:16-17 tells us: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." I do not want to defile the temple of God. He is in me.

It is very important that you understand what the Bible says about man. We are bringing up our families in a fleshly world. In John 3:6 Jesus told Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." When a child is born into this world, all he understands is that which pertains to the flesh. However, as he grows, he must learn that he lives in a spiritual world; there-

fore, he needs to learn to understand spiritual things. That which is of the flesh is flesh, but that which is of the Spirit is spirit.

In this world is the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error. Friend, you are under the influence of one of those spirits. First Corinthians 6:19 says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" Child of God, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost wherein God dwells, and the Spirit of Truth will guide you into Truth.

I want you to read some things that Jesus said so that you can gain understanding about yourself, about God, and about life. We are living in a spirit world; therefore, you need God to give you understanding about spiritual things. Again, John

3:6 states, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." If you learned how to drive an automobile and learned how to write with a pencil, it was because others taught you those things. Those things are of the flesh. On the other hand, it takes God to reveal spiritual things to you. The Spirit of God will guide you into Truth.

It is no accident when you hear the Truth of God's Word proclaimed. You may ask, "How can I know whether it is Truth?" God's Word is Truth. God has ordained that His Word is proclaimed to your soul. You are going to stand responsible to God for what you do with the Truth of His Word. You cannot get away from that. He will guide you into Truth, but you are responsible to take appropriate action.

In John 16:12-14 Jesus said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." The Spirit of Truth will not glorify man, but Christ. Therefore, I want to encourage you to get your eyes on Christ and serve Him. Man does not have a Heaven or a hell to which he can send you. However, God does have a Heaven and a hell, and you are choosing to go to one place or the other. The Spirit of God will speak to you and "guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

Receiving the Way of God More Perfectly

Acts 18:24-28 reads: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to

Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."

I want you to consider this impressive gentleman about whom the Bible speaks. This man was instructed of the Lord, and he "spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." This brother was a man of God. He spoke boldly with a fervent spirit. The man had a good spirit, a right spirit; he had the Spirit of God. However, what he was saying was wrong. Priscilla and Aquila pulled him aside and taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly, and there was no problem.

When a person has the right spirit, there is no problem when someone tells him what is right. When an individual has the Spirit of God, he can be as wrong as wearing two left shoes; but when somebody says, "You have two left shoes on, brother," he will look down and say, "Oh, I will take them off." He will not try to hold onto the wrong and try to make it seem right, not when someone reveals the Truth to him. One who has the Spirit of Truth will receive the Truth. When Aquila and Priscilla pulled Apollos aside and talked to him, he listened and accepted the Truth, and he continued to be a blessing to the saints.

Many people claim to be Christians and claim to be on fire for God, but when someone quotes Scripture and reveals the Truth to

them, they exclaim, "My church does not teach that!" Well, what do they mean when they say their church does not teach that? If their church does not teach the Word of God, they need to get out of that place. The Bible says it takes the Word of God to save our souls. Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." One can show people very plainly what the Word of God says, but they will not receive it because they do not have the Spirit of Truth.

Apollos was a disciple of John the Baptist. He was teaching what he knew, but when other saints showed him the Truth, he embraced it and walked in it gladly. When a person has the Spirit of Truth and someone shows that person the way of God more perfectly, that individual's attitude will be, "Well, thank you, brother. I see that now; you are right." Brother, if you are wrong on some of your teaching, you need to drop it and pick up what is right. Being in error about something does not mean that God is not with you, but when He opens your understanding, you ought to say, "Yes, thank You, Lord," and drop the wrong teaching. The Spirit of God can enable you to do that.

The Divine Teacher

Jesus said in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." The Spirit of Truth is our teacher. John 14:25-26 tells us: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Holy Spirit will teach you all things.

It takes the Holy Spirit in a man to pastor God's people. When God places His hand on a man and teaches him something, He upholds him and makes it look easy. Trades-

men know what I am talking about. They have been doing their trade for so long that they make it look easy. Brick layers and carpenters can look at a job and make it seem easy while they are working. If they were to tell me to do it, I would probably have the wood upside down and the bricks and the mortar in the wrong place. When the Holy Spirit is in a man, God teaches him how to be tender when it is time to be tender and how to be firm when it is time to be firm.

Again, Jesus said in John 14:26, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, and He is our teacher. He is the only teacher that you can take home with you, and that is a wonderful thing.

In 1 John 2:27 John wrote, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: [you need teachers to teach you some things, but there are certain things that only the Spirit can teach you]: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." The Spirit of God will teach you how to live for God, how to protect yourself spiritually, and how to keep yourself from getting in trouble spiritually. He will teach you how to walk, how to talk, how to go in and out among sinners, and how to go in and out among the saints. Also, He will teach you how to witness to souls and how to pray. God wants you to know how to live for Him and how to be faithful to Him.

If you stop listening to the Teacher, you will get yourself into trouble. The Spirit of God knows what your weaknesses are, and so do you. When you know it is dangerous for you to go a certain direction, why are you going that way when you know that is a weak spot in your life? The Spirit of God will warn you and say, "Don't do

that. Don't go there." If you overstep what the Spirit of God is telling you, you are going to get yourself into trouble. You do not need any man to teach you that. The Spirit of God will teach you, and He is a Comforter.

The Spirit of God gives gifts. He puts the gifts in the church. In 1 Corinthians 12:7 the Apostle Paul wrote, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." In a public service the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit all. The Bible tells us here that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit everyone. You cannot stay home with your gift. The gift that God gave you is to profit the body of Christ; it is to profit the church, not just yourself.

In verses 8-11 Paul stated: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

The Spirit of God is the One who gives the "word of wisdom." Many people get themselves into trouble because of the people with whom they keep company and because of the advice they accept. A pastor needs good people around him, people who speak words of wisdom every now and then. He does not need people who sit around him with bad spirits and wrong attitudes in their hearts.

The Spirit of Truth is known by His fruit. In Galatians 5:22-26 Paul wrote: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering [this is the fruit that the Spirit brings into the Christian's life], gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Let us live in the Spirit and encourage one another. We each need to let the fruit of the Spirit flow: let love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness flow.

The Spirit of Antichrist

Now let us consider the spirit of error. The Spirit of Truth is sweet and lovely, but the spirit of error is not. The word *error* means "the state of believing what is untrue, incorrect, or wrong; holding an incorrect opinion." John wrote in 1 John 2:18-19: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

The spirit of error manifests itself in the spirit of antichrist. The prefix *anti* means "opposed to something." The spirit of antichrist is against Christ. If you are going against Christ, you are wrong, no matter how good or how right you think you are. That is the spirit of antichrist. Anything that comes against the Word and the Spirit of God is wrong, and it is antichrist.

You need to understand the difference between things that are Christ's and things that are antichrist. The spirit of error in the world lives in the children of disobedience. In Ephesians 2:1-2 Paul said: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

A sinner is under the influence of the spirit of disobedience, the spirit of error. That is the reason one cannot reason with people who do not have the Spirit of God. If a person has the Spirit of God, you can sit down and discuss the doctrines of the Bible. However, when one has the spirit of error, although you show him Scripture after Scripture, if he has the spirit of error, he will not listen to you. The Spirit of Truth will cause you to live right and listen to the Word of God. You can reason with your brother and your sister and have an open heart and mind to hear the Word of God. The problem with one who has the spirit of error is the spirit that he possesses; it is the spirit of disobedience. When people have the spirit of error, it will lead them away from the Truth.

Paul continued in verses 3-6: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." As saints of God, we sit together in heavenly places, and we are on our way to Heaven. What happened? God took out the spirit of error. He put in His Holy Spirit, and gave us new hearts. Thank God, we do not have the spirit of disobedience anymore.

Turning Away From the Truth

In 2 Timothy 4:1-4 Paul said to young Timothy: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the

time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Those latter verses tell of the spirit of error working in people. Paul said the time would come when people would not endure sound doctrine. I believe we are living in that time. Many people do not want the sound teachings of the Word of God. They do not want anyone to show them what is wrong in their lives so they can get things right. People love darkness rather than light.

Jesus said in John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." One who walks in darkness hates the light.

People do not want anyone to dig in their sand piles, so to speak. The Word of God is as a sharp, two-edged sword. It swings out to the people, and it swings at the preachers too. It will dig into your life and uncover things, just as Jesus did with the woman at the well. He said to her in John 4:18-19: "For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet."

God knows all about you, friend. If you are committing adultery, lying, stealing, or cheating, you are a sinner, and God wants you to know that. You may say, "I don't like any preacher telling me that I can't live with my girlfriend and not be married" or "I don't like any preacher telling me that I can't have a mistress on the side. Preacher So-and-So told me I could." Well, that

preacher is a false prophet, and you had better get away from him.

When Jesus dealt with the woman at the well, He told her what was in her life. In essence, He said, "Woman, if you knew Who was talking to you, you would ask Me to give you a drink, and I would give you a drink of water that would be a well of water within you springing up into everlasting life, and you would never thirst again." I thank God that Jesus gave me that drink. Glory be to God! I have had a drink from the well of water that Jesus gave me. Praise God!

Many people do not want to hear sound doctrine, but they want to heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. They want to shut down the church Sunday evenings and put up a big screen to watch the Super Bowl. "We can't miss the Super Bowl. Let's have blue jean day Sunday where everybody wears blue jeans to church. We can wear our favorite team's shirt that day. Preacher, don't preach long because I've got to get back home to watch the game. I've set the timer."

Turned to Fables

We are in a dangerous time when people do not want to hear the Word of God. There are churches everywhere, yet people do not want to hear God's Word. Instead, they say, "Let's have a singspiration and then give the preacher about thirty minutes to preach. When he has preached for twenty minutes, we will start looking at our watches to let him know that it is about time for him to quit." I thank God that in the Church of God, God gives men of God the wisdom to know when to be stern and when to be gentle in dealing with God's people. People have different levels of understanding and growth.

Again, Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:4, "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." The spirit of error leads people that way. In

Isaiah 30:9 the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD." We do not want young people to grow up not wanting to hear the Word of the Lord. We want them to know what is right and to cleave to what is right. We want the young people to know what the Bible says, because we are living in a world that is going against God's Word.

The Prophet Isaiah went on to say in verse 10, "Which say to the seers [or to the preachers], See not [in other words, 'Don't say anything against what I'm doing wrong, preacher; just accept my offering']; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits." If you are in that condition, you will not find any joy, and you will think that no one is right but you. You will not see any good in anyone but yourself. This is judgment work. We are not playing church. Friend, you ought to live what you say you are. You cannot fool sinners. They know right away if you have the same spirit they have. You can talk about God all day, but if you have the same spirit they have, they will know it.

Dear one, you need to pray and ask God to give you a determination not to let the spirit of error get hold of you and cause you to leave the Truth. Sometimes people fall out over things, and then the spirit of error gets hold of them and causes them to turn away from the precious Truth of God's Word. God sent the Truth to help our souls and to help the souls of our families and those around us.

I will never forget one sinner man who once worked with me. At lunchtime the men always went over by the dock to shoot dice and gamble and play cards every chance they got. I was young in the Lord, and I will never forget what one sinner man told me. He looked me in the face and said, "Stay with it, Calvin. Stay with that; you are doing good." I said, "Thank you, I will." I

will never forget those encouraging words. The older men there tried to hide their wrongdoings whenever I came around. If they had cans of beer in their hands, they tried to hide them by placing a paper bag or something around them. Nowadays the workers do not even try to hide it. They do not show respect any more.

Getting saved is a life-changing experience. Saint, when God changed you, He turned you into a new creature. People are trying all kinds of gimmicks to get people in church. They are getting them in church, but they are not getting them saved. We have to respect people. A sinner may tell you, "I am not ready to get saved; pray for me." That is his or her choice. They are on risky ground, and they are really taking a chance of being lost eternally. I hope they do not die in that condition, but it is their choice, and I must respect that choice.

A Strong Delusion

In 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 Paul said: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Do you love the Truth? Those people did not receive the love of the Truth. The spirit of error influenced them. In verses 11-12 he wrote: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: [We are living in a religious world, but God has sent a strong delusion to many people. They attend church every Sunday, but they do not know they are not right. They have sin in their lives, but they are under a strong delusion.] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

The spirit of error is known by its fruit. In Galatians 5:17-21 Paul said: "For the flesh lusteth against

the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 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." They that do such things cannot go to Heaven.

You may say, "Well, my preacher says it is all right to do those things." Friend, he is lying to you. That is the spirit of error. You cannot go to Heaven if you do those things. If you are going to go to church, then you ought to do right and be right. You should be a true Christian; do not be a hypocrite.

Other fruits of the spirit of error are found in Romans, Chapter 16. Paul said in verses 17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." If the spirit of error gets in, this is what it will do.

The spirit of error could get in among a good congregation of saints and a good ministerial body of brethren. When the spirit of error gets in, it will cause division. We do not want any division. I am not going to do anything that will cause division. We must watch out for the spirit of error.

In 2 Peter 2:1-3 Peter said: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And

many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of [that is what happens when division and strife get in among God's people]. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth

not, and their damnation slumbereth not." Saint, as you live in this world and go through the spiritual world in which you live, you need to make sure that you keep fresh in your heart the Spirit of Truth, which is the Holy Ghost. The spirit of disobedience will cause you to turn away from God, and it will keep you from

surrendering your will to God. That is the spirit that keeps people from reasoning, "It is wise for me to get saved and live my life for God." They listen to the spirit of error. Let us pray for others and keep the Spirit of Truth.

(Cassette C-5542E)

[Camp Meeting Report—continued from p. 2] sicknesses or diseases, and the Holy Ghost knows just what to bring through His ministering servants to help and to deliver those in need. It is amazing how gloriously the Lord will supply every individual soul with the particular portion that is needful.

The Spirit of God certainly saturated the atmosphere with His presence. Time after time, our hearts were made to rejoice as the Lord moved up and down the aisles throughout the services. Our hearts were blessed and our cups overflowed repeatedly as the Lord worked in our midst. Much encouragement was gained by all to press the battle on for the Truth and for the right. Again, we say, "Heaven came down" and gave us a little foretaste of what to expect further on when the faithful and true make it into God's Heaven.

The beautiful singing by the choir was an inspiration and very uplifting to our hearts. The congregational songs just seemed to set the tenor for the services and prepared the hearts for the preaching of the Gospel.

Also, the special singing by many individuals and groups brought great inspiration to our hearts. When the Lord is allowed to set the order of the services, He will send what is needed for each person. There is never any misfiring with Him, for He is always on target.

God used His ministers in a mighty way. Each message was personal and to the point. We thank God for those who are not afraid to sound the trumpet of God's Word. It is through the preaching of sound doctrine that men and women are saved and brought to the knowledge of the Truth. Through the faithfulness of true men of God, God's church is kept clean and pure and made ready for the Judgment Day and eternity.

The ultimate crowning point of any meeting is seeing precious souls find their way to the Lord. Those who once were bound with fetters and heavily laden with the weight of sin soon found sweet release and gained victory when they heeded God's call. It is amazing how a man or a woman can be deep in sin one moment and in a second of time be

forgiven and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The old life of sin comes to an end and a new life begins in Jesus Christ. There is great joy in Heaven when a poor lost sinner repents as Jesus said in Luke 15:7, and there is great joy here as well. This meeting brought precious ones who have been out of the ark of safety for a long while back to Father's house. What a glorious sight to see the lost weep their way to God and regain that which they had lost!

We thoroughly enjoyed this great camp meeting, but it is past and time to go forth for the Lord and live righteously and tell others about the saving love of Jesus. We must strive to win them for Him. If Jesus tarries, it will not be long until we all will have the opportunity to meet again on the old campground for another time of feasting, enjoying the fellowship, and being encouraged and strengthened. The Spring Camp Meeting will be held June 17-24, 2007. We pray that you will begin to make plans to be with us.

*The Psalmist said, "In thy presence is
fulness of joy; at thy right hand
are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11).*



In Loving Memory of Norma Allen



July 23, 1952 – November 5, 2006

Sister Norma Allen was born July 23, 1952, in Perry County, Ohio. She graduated in June 1970, turned eighteen years of age in July 1970, and two days later married her high school sweetheart, Brother Roger Allen. By the time Sister Allen was twenty-four years of age, she had four children.

Brother and Sister Allen attended the Church of God in Lancaster, Ohio, for a short time. In 1986 Brother Allen started attending the Church of God in Newark, Ohio, when Brother E. A. Wilson was pastoring, and Sister Allen soon followed. Along with her husband, she felt the burden to help in the Tape Ministry at God's Acres in Newark, Ohio, in 1987. She had much to learn and did anything that was asked of her. Sister Allen took pride in the things that she did. She made and sent tapes for saints all over the world. She made special tapes for anyone who requested them.

When compact discs came into existence, the tape ministry adapted and started offering CD's in addition to cassette tapes. She never minded doing God's work; in fact, she loved doing it. She was a valuable asset to the Tape Ministry. She put in much time and effort to make sure that the

brothers and sisters who ordered tapes and CD's were getting exactly what they wanted.

While working in the Tape Ministry, God blessed Sister Allen with four more children. She loved all eight of her children and all eight of her grandchildren. She liked nothing better than to have a family get-together so that all the people she loved dearly would be there. Her favorite holiday was Thanksgiving, because that is when all her children planned to be with her for the entire day. There is no doubt that she is in Heaven watching over her family.

Sister Allen will truly be missed, not only by her physical family but also by her church family. She always put her children and husband's needs before her own. She was a wonderful blessing to her family. There is a saying that states, "You never know what you have until it's gone." We can honestly say that we know what that statement means.

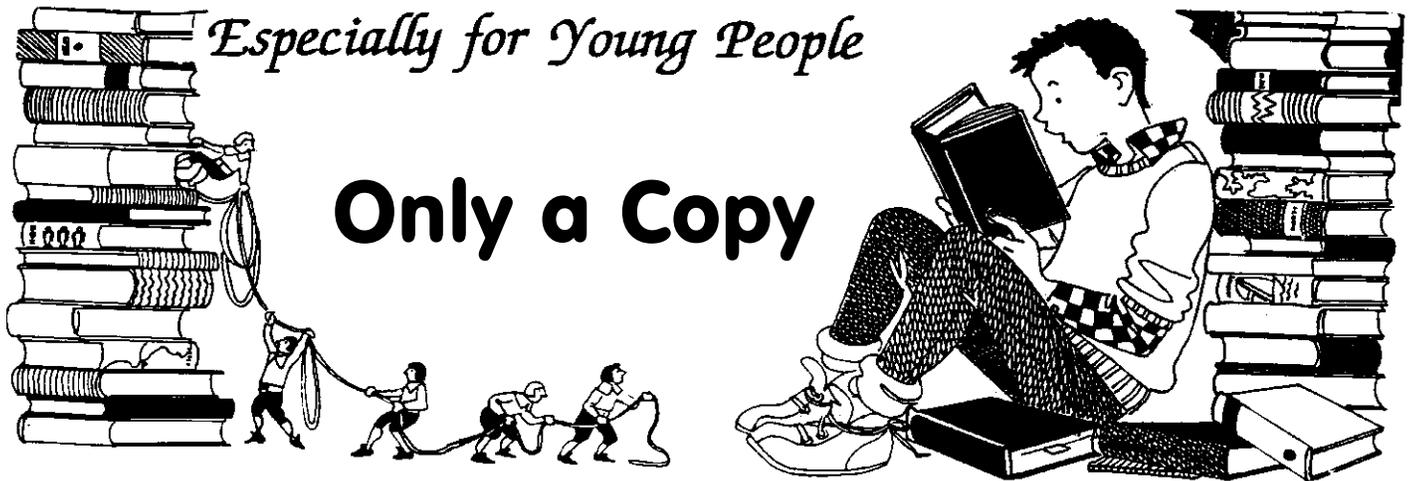
Sister Allen suffered from ovarian cancer for approximately six months, that we know about. She was never one to complain; therefore, we will never know how long she actually had the disease. As she

lay there in pain, she would recite a chorus that Brother and Sister Allen Borders' girls sing:

*God's taking care of me
In ways that I cannot see
He's working it for my good
Just like He said He would
He's taking care of me.*

Sister Allen often said to her family, "There's a reason for this, and God knows what He is doing. Don't worry, for He is taking care of me." Through all her suffering, she was the one to comfort her family.

The Lord called Sister Allen home on November 5, 2006, leaving behind her husband of thirty-six years, Brother Roger Allen; her eight children: Randall (Beth) Allen, Robert (Mindy) Allen, Sandra (Ronald) Ware, Cynthia Allen, Russell Allen, Jennifer Allen, Rodney Allen, and Ross Allen; eight grandchildren: Christopher, Seth, and Ashlee Allen, Caleb and Brandon Allen, and Miranda, Mariah, and Marina Hoskinson; her siblings: Ronald Dyer, Helen (Pargeon) Dyer, Larry Dyer, and Marty Dyer. Preceding her in death were her parents: George and Santa Faye (Goodin) Dyer, and a sister, Mary Ryan.



"Mr. Gerald Mann is home from abroad where he has been studying art for several years. He has brought to our midst a number of splendid copies of master paintings."

The above announcement appeared in the social column of the local newspaper in a prosperous country town.

The Mann homestead, the home of the artist, was on the outskirts of the town. Here lived the young man's father and mother who, though they were rather wealthy, lived simple, unpretentious lives.

"It is certainly fine to be with one's own people," remarked Gerald Mann one evening shortly after his arrival, as the little family was gathered about the cheerful dining room fireplace.

"We were lonely for you, Son," his father told him earnestly. "You can't imagine how good it seems to have you with us again. It seems like old days when you were a little child and mother and I used to sit before the fire and listen as you told of your school adventures. I suppose since you have become famous you will not be able to spend much of your time with us."

"I have with me a number of pictures and sketches on which I have been able to spend very little time. They are as yet very crude and rough and will require a great deal of work. I thought I would stay with you for the winter, at least, and work on them," said the young man.

"I am very pleased!" exclaimed

Mrs. Mann. "It has scarcely seemed as if we had a boy of our own these last few years." Laying her hand on her son's arm affectionately, she continued, "It is right, of course, that you should choose the work in life for which you are best suited. I would be sorry indeed to see a talent like yours wasted behind the plow on the farm, Gerald. Nevertheless, I am very thankful you remember your old father and mother."

"Ah! Mother, did you ever fancy I could forget you?" questioned Gerald.

"No, Son, I was sure you would not," answered the mother.

"By the way," began the artist, suddenly, "I have a real inspiration about the little creek that runs through our back flats. I'm going to make a picture of that place where we used to swim. Those clumps of willows will work in beautifully. I'll give it to you, Mother, for your birthday and call it 'Our Boy's Playground.' Would you like a winter or summer scene better, Mother?"

"Gerald, your work is all beautiful to me, but I always did prefer the whiteness of winter. The white snow always reminds me of the purity of God," was Mrs. Mann's reply.

"Of course you haven't changed your belief, Mother. Your reference just now to God and your mode of life since I have been home prove to me that your faith in a Divine Being is still unshaken. I thought perhaps the letter I wrote to you from Paris

would have led you to take a different view of the subject. You didn't argue the point in your reply, and I was inclined to believe you agreed with me," said Gerald.

"No, Lad, we didn't agree with anything you wrote," returned Mr. Mann. "We didn't discuss the matter in our letters because we saw that you were so thoroughly convinced that your belief was right that we felt it would be useless for us to attempt to convince you differently. Don't think that we have given your arguments no consideration. We have united in prayer every day since that letter arrived and prayed that the God whom we serve and in whom we have our hope of eternal life would not let our precious son remain in the darkness of infidelity."

"I am sorry if I have caused you to worry on account of my apparent unbelief," Gerald said with feeling. "When I went to Europe I was almost sure that God did exist, but after listening to learned men lecture on the subject, I was soon convinced to the contrary. Why should we believe in a Being whom we have never seen and whom no one has seen? Frankly, I would not believe anything I could not see and understand for myself. We have been told of a Creator who made the world, and all life, and everything that has and does exist. This, to me, is nonsense. Evolution is entirely responsible for our being what we are today. Many times have I wished you could have heard those great men

explain those things which have appeared mysteries for ages."

"My son," replied the older man slowly, "great and learned men could never convince me that my God does not live. By my own experience, I know He is real."

"I have too much respect for you and for your life, which is without reproach, to argue the point," Gerald told his father. "Nevertheless, our feelings often play us strange pranks, and we have hallucinations that, to our overwrought nerves, may seem very real. When I was a child, I remember listening to someone telling ghost stories until I was so frightened that I dared not look behind myself. Yet the fact that I fancied ghosts existed and might appear at any time did not cause them to exist or appear."

"I am sure you will change your mind someday, Gerald," said Mrs. Mann as her son ceased speaking.

Gerald worked diligently, and under his skilled brush the rough sketches became things of surprising beauty. His mother never tired of gazing at his work and praising his efforts.

One day late in January he decided it was time to begin the picture for his mother. He would go to the creek the following morning and do some sketching. As he left the house, he stopped amazed. What a change had come over the world during the night! He suddenly remembered that his father had said there had been a heavy ice storm. Gerald beheld with intense wonder the scene before him. Never had he witnessed anything that could rival the beauty of the picture that stretched from either side as far as the eye could see.

It was difficult to walk over the slippery ground, but finally Gerald reached the bank of the glassy creek. The great red sun rising slowly above the eastern horizon cast its long, horizontal rays through the trees. Each ice-covered branch and twig glistened and shone as if bur-nished with crystal while the tall grass and rushes growing by the

creek appeared like shining silver spears. The grandeur of the scene filled the young man's heart, and for a long time he stood, lost in silent admiration as his artist soul drank deeply from the beauty of that transformed wonderland.

Suddenly he started from his profound reverie - "I'll do it! I'll paint, if possible, this glorious scene for mother. It shall be my masterpiece."

Drawing a pad and pencil from his pocket, he drew an outline of the creek and clumps of willows and rushes. Having taken notes on the exact manner in which the sunbeams reached the particular place he intended painting, he hastened homeward. So great was his excitement that he could scarcely eat his food at noon, and his parents noted an eager light in his eyes.

For many days he worked at his new picture. He knew that the work was good, yet he felt that it lacked the sparkle and gleam that had held him spellbound that winter morning.

His mother entered his room one day and was looking at his different pictures. Gerald left his easel and explained, as he had done many times since his home coming, the different places visited in his travels, and respected again the names of the great artists whose works he had copied. The mother listened attentively, though she promptly forgot the names of the great men. Going to the easel on which was the new picture, she asked in a strange voice, "From whom did you copy this, Gerald?"

"Why, Mother!" exclaimed the young man in surprise. "That is my own. It is original."

"I wonder if it is," said Mrs. Mann in the same strange voice as she left the room.

Gerald could not shake off his mother's words, though they seemed absurd. Of course the picture was original. But say, was it? Had he not copied it? Who was the master artist?

These thoughts chased each

other through his mind and then repeated the procedure over again.

The young man paced the floor in manifest confusion. The very universe seemed reeling about him while his strong theories and "certain facts that could not be denied" were slipping away as mist before the sun. With a great effort he attempted to clear his mind, but an overwhelming force seemed to be pounding at his heart's door, and his intellect was yielding to a stronger will than his own.

Gazing upon the picture on the easel, he whispered, "Mother was right. It is only a copy. It is copied from the Master Artist - the Creator of the universe."

He rushed from his room and called his father and mother, who came from a nearby room.

"Did you want us, Son?" questioned the mother.

Gerald told them quickly of his experience and new convictions, and concluded by saying, "Father, I said your feelings were hallucinations. Forgive me, I knew not what I said. I am sure of the existence of a Divine Being, as if I had seen Him standing bodily before me."

"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven," quoted Mr. Mann reverently.

"We have been praying for you all day," said his mother. "Our prayers have reached the throne."

Gerald presented "Our Boy's Playground" to his mother as a birthday present. As he did so, he said, "Mother, you are acquainted with Master Artist. Will you accept a copy of His work?"

Selected

**Evil habits
first draw,
then drag,
and then drive.
BEWARE!**

Malachi 3:7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

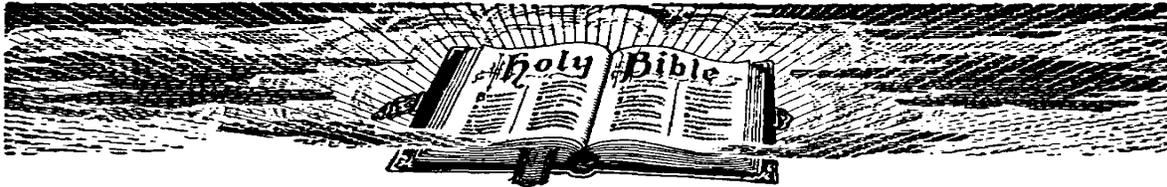
8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts.



The Need to Open the Windows of Heaven

Brother Esau Brooks

Fulfillment of the Promise

I want you to focus your attention on the promise that God was making to these people. First, He challenged them in verse 10 of our Scripture text: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." What a promise! The fulfillment of this promise will fill and satisfy every hungering soul.

When speaking of the need of opening the windows of Heaven, someone may say, "I didn't know Heaven had windows." The ark had one. When God instructed Noah concerning how he was to build the

ark, He told him to make a window. I wonder how Noah felt when he looked up through that window. One songwriter said, "And through the upper window, you'll see Me standing by." In all the unpleasant surrounding to which Noah was exposed, God was assuring him, "You will see Me standing by."

Stephen was stoned due to his testimony for God. When those people rushed upon him and gnashed on him with their teeth, Acts 7:55-56 tells us: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." What inspiration he received!

Child of God, you need to look up and get a vision of the possibili-

ties that this can introduce to your mind. I am aware that some people feel that the Old Testament has no place for us today, but they need to recall that it was the Old Testament that gave us the New. The Old Testament was all that Jesus our Savior and even the Apostle Paul had to preach from. They made, or wrote, the New Testament; they brought it about. It came in fulfillment of the promises that God made in the Old Testament.

Some may say that after the New Testament came, we no longer needed the Old Testament. However, when the Apostle John received the Book of the Revelation, he spoke about the greatness of the condition of the morning-time church. We read in Revelation 12:1, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with

the sun, and [do not lose sight of this] the moon under her feet. . . ."

Jesus represents the sun, and what brought about the reality of the church was the preaching of the Old Testament. The moon under her feet signifies the foundation upon which the church stood and yet stands. We need the Old Testament because it deals with the practical side of this Christian church. If it were not for the Old Testament, we would not have a New Testament; therefore, you cannot throw it away.

The Greatness of Salvation

In the New Testament is described the many good things that Jesus brought within our reach: the greatness of the salvation of God; deliverance from sin; and the power to live a holy, righteous, godly life. It is wonderful! The New Testament confirms it with the cloud of witnesses that was begotten after the church came out in full vision. We can rejoice in the part that is being fulfilled. Through the Old Testament we get the knowledge and the vision of the coming of the Christ of God. In Genesis 49:10 Jacob prophesied, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." In this Old Testament prophecy, we have a promise and a challenge, a promise that I would like to see fulfilled yet today. It was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, and it shook the world.

So many things have happened since the Day of Pentecost, and even to the extent that we read in the Book of Revelation of a silence coming in Heaven. There was a pouring out of this blessing, but many have fallen asleep concerning it. Today, as part of this generation, no doubt many people have given up all hope of ever seeing revival. We have revival meetings, but many come short of true revival. Nevertheless, we need to realize that the possibility of revival still exists. God is saying, "Prove Me. Put Me to the test in this age of scepticism, unbelief, and

disregard for the Word of God and see if I will open the windows of Heaven and pour out such a blessing that you will not have enough room to contain it."

In our Scripture lesson God was presenting a final message to those Old Testament saints: a message of judgment and a message concerning the riches of His grace. Notice that those people were living in the closing days of the Old Testament dispensation. On the Day of Pentecost God poured out His Spirit to such a degree that the church had three thousand converts in one day. We are dealing with a mighty, glorious church! God have mercy on our souls today if we have accepted what now meets our eyes as being all that the church is capable of producing.

We need a reviving of God's work in the hearts and lives of the people today. The reason many young people have turned to drugs is that they think there is more thrill in taking drugs and smoking marijuana than in getting saved. They are making a mistake. I have tasted of this great salvation, and believe me, nothing in drugs can even compare. Serving God is still the greatest thrill in the world.

I repeat, God is saying, "Prove Me now and see if I will pour you out a blessing." Of course, He prefaced that statement with the words, "Bring ye all the tithes. . . ." People have been holding back on God too much, and because of that, they have lost sight of how grand and glorious and powerful the church is. We have glorious meetings, but they can be better. God is saying, "Prove Me and put Me to the test, and you will see." If you are thinking that it is too much for you to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ, you need a fresh vision.

The Manifestation of God's Divine Power

Let us go back to the days in which the words of our Scripture text were being spoken. It was just

prior to the change of dispensations. God ushered in the New Testament with a bang, so to speak. When Jesus was crucified and put in the tomb, on the third day at dawn, when those women came with spices to anoint His body, they found that a miracle had taken place. The stone was rolled away and the Lord was gone, but not before leaving a message for His disciples: "I will meet you in Galilee," and He did meet them. He assembled with His followers for a number of days after that, but the day came when His disciples gathered on the mount and saw Him ascend into Heaven. I suppose there were some who said, "Well, things will probably go back to the way they were," but they did not. Even today they have not.

We read of the two brethren who were traveling to Emmaus when a "Stranger" joined their company. They were stirred because of the news of the day: "Jesus, some say, has risen!" Some doubted, and others wondered. When Jesus joined those brethren, He inquired of them, "What is wrong? Why do you look so sad? What have you been discussing?" They replied, "Haven't you heard? Where have you been? The Galilean has risen." Yes, He had, and He preached to them, beginning in the Book of Psalms and through all the Prophets. Jesus taught them that He was the Christ. There was power in that message!

In Acts, Chapter 8, we can read of the account of when Philip joined the chariot of the eunuch and asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The eunuch said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Philip climbed up into that chariot and preached Christ to Him. We do not find any record of what else he might have preached, but he did not just repeat the term "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." How do we know? When they came to a stream of water, the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and

said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (verses 36-37). The eunuch got out of the chariot with all his silky apparel, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When he left, he went on his way rejoicing. Philip was then taken away and landed in Samaria where he turned that place upside down. Everywhere the church could be traced in that morning time, there was a manifestation and a display of God's divine power.

I know many years have passed, and the passing of those years has affected us so that we have lost the power. I thank God for the few people who yet have it in their souls, and I am glad they are still around today to witness that this thing still works. So let us get the hand from under the chin and lift up the shoulders that hang down. We can have a revival today! I am not talking about merely having revival meetings. Having revival meetings is one thing, but truly being revived is another. The meeting is the advertisement, but the substance is the manifestation of God's divine power.

A Call From God

"Prove me now," is what God is saying. There is a great need of opening the windows of Heaven. When Jesus came, the world was in a mess. When He rose triumphantly from the grave, the disciples were all huddled behind closed doors with the words, "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21). Not long after that, they transferred the same enthusiasm to others, and soon that enthusiasm began to gain momentum and the Pharisees and Sadducees started to shake with fear and dread.

Those first six or seven chapters of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles tell how they arrested those brethren, put them in hold, and prepared to have them killed; but when they went to the prison to take them out, they found the door of the

prison locked, but the brethren were not in the prison. While they were scratching their heads and wondering where this thing was going to go, some men came and said, "Those men that you had in jail."

"Yes, where are they?"

"They are down on the square preaching." They could hardly believe that could even happen, but it did.

We need a vision again as it was in the time of Elisha, when the servant said in 2 Kings 6:15, "Alas, my master, how shall we do?" In other words, he was saying, "Look at how many are against us!" Elisha did not argue with him; he just asked the Lord to open the eyes of his servant so that he might see. When the servant's eyes were opened, he saw there were more with them than against them.

God still means what He says. He wants to pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. This text of Scripture is a call from God to get things in working order. It was a prophetic message. God was telling the people what to look forward to and what to expect. Just bring to God what rightfully belongs to Him and prove Him; put Him to the test. How are you going to do it? You must stop fretting and start acting.

Notice the way God approached the delivery of this message. In Malachi 3:5 we read, "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts."

I see the church today as she was in the morning time. We must either start prevailing or start vanishing. God is calling. When Jesus was about to be born into this world, the condition that prevailed was a religion set on corruption, and they had completely backed away from God and His demands. They were run-

ning away from God and deserting the work of God. Therefore, God pleaded with them to return.

God had to call Israel back to Him many times, and it seems as if there is a serious need of people returning to God today. We are not thinking as God would have us to think, and we are not acting as God would have us to act. I will relate to you my experience when the Lord saved me. I did not go to church to look for salvation. I was a Methodist, and I did not believe in that kind of thing. The only reason I attended the service that particular morning was that my friend said I was going to have fun and pleaded with me to go with him.

I said, "This is Monday morning. I can't go to church. I was in church all day Sunday."

He said, "If you go, you will have fun."

I said, "Okay." To make a long story short, God called me that day, and I gave my heart to Him. Not long after He saved me, He called me to preach the Gospel, and I have been doing so ever since.

Today having fun seems to move people more than anything else. Shame on us to be settling for such when we have this glorious promise from our Lord: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven." That implies that the windows had been locked, but He let them know that He would open them if they would meet His conditions, and He still can. However, people have let down here and there, and because some people have an itch to head something, one little group has split off here and another little group has split off there.

Children are being born every day, but the trouble now is, instead of aiming at raising children for God, people are raising them for education and positions in the political world. We do need good men in the political arena, and we need

more so that we might see the works of God manifested. God does not like what is going on, and we need to be troubled and stirred over it. There is something better, and we can have it.

"Return Unto Me"

Verse 8 of our Scripture text says, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." Every time someone preaches on tithes and offerings, many people think that it only concerns money. No, it can mean more than money. God's people ought to support God's work financially, and they do; but you should not limit the returning to God only in finances. You need to get back to returning to God in your devotion, in your consecration, and also in your shouts and praises to God. Shouting and praising God is not wrong. Praise the Lord!

In verse 7 of our Scripture text God said, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you. . . . But ye said, Wherein shall we return?" There are many ways that you can return to God. Although you might not have noticed, perhaps the light in your temple has begun to go out. There has always been a light in the temple, and there will always be a light in the temple. We need to start raising this young generation to take on more responsibility and devotion to God. I am not finding fault. The point is to get us back to where we can see what the church is all about.

God said in verses 11-12 of our Scripture text: "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts." He can make it so. Verse 15 states, "And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even

delivered."

God said in verses 16-17 that "a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Let us roll up our spiritual sleeves and get to work. Many people have decided to leave the charitable work for the Salvation Army to do. The church was the one that initiated that mission work, and there is still room for you.

Dear one, I want to beg you not to turn a deaf ear to this message, lest it leave you worse than you were before. You need to do what God says and bring what is rightfully His. That is what tithes and offerings actually represent. Tithing is part of the Gospel. Jesus said in Matthew 23:23, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Tithing and giving offerings is right to do, but we are not to make it our only objective. People need to be on fire for God along with these things, because according to the way this reads, God wants those things to be the beginning. Bring the tithes and the offerings; then He will pour you out a blessing and get you out from under the curse of God.

Put God to the Test

The call is to prove God, not merely to return to Him, but to put Him to the test. It is sad to see the stalwart soldiers departing, one after another, going on to their reward, not that they do not deserve their rest. They deserve their rest, but where are the replacements? We need to be more concerned, because at the rate in which they are departing, if we do not get some replace-

ments soon, things are going to become really dark. Here is the secret: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me [put Me to the test] now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (verse 10).

God has something better for you. Sinner friend, you do not have to waste your life going after marijuana. You do not have to go after all the various drugs in the land. All you need to do is get a good drink from the well of salvation. Call upon God, and God said, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed" (Malachi 3:11-12).

Church of God, time is running out. Some have already passed that time in which they can get actively engaged in reaping the harvest. Some can still join the reapers and see what can be done in these last days. Wickedness is widespread, and ungodliness knows no bounds, but thank God, He is still God!

Dear heart, why not just come to the Lord and ask Him to open your eyes so that you can see? If there was ever a time when the church needed a baptism of fire (and I do not mean that from a Pentecostal point of view), it is today. There is still power in salvation and in the service of God. Time is running out, and we certainly need to get moving so that, by God's help, we can see greater blessings descend upon us.

Dear heart, serving God is the best thing you can do with your time. I pray that God will touch your heart as He did Isaiah's when Isaiah saw the Lord and saw his own condition and began to cry out. When the voice of God sounded, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I [Isaiah], Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). We need

to get back to where we will use those same words instead of saying, "Here I am, but send him."

The devil would like to keep you cooled off. Wearing yourself out working for God would be better for you than to rust out. By the grace of

God, you need to open the windows of your heart. That could easily induce God to open the windows of Heaven and pour out His blessings upon you. It is not just the blessing that you should want. You should want the power of God so that souls

can be reached for Him. Let us move to higher heights and deeper depths in the things of God so that, by the grace of God, we will see greater things happen for God today.

(Cassette C-5608E)

If You Criticize Others . . .

In the nineteen-fifties, a boy returning from Korea telephoned his wealthy mother in New York. After a moving exchange of loving words, the boy made one simple request.

"Mother," he asked. "Do you mind if I bring home a buddy who has lost an arm and a leg?"

His mother replied, "Son, we have always tried to make your friends feel welcome in our home. I don't mean to be unkind, but surely you know what it will mean to bring someone who is deformed. You know what our friends will think of us for entertaining such an unsightly guest. Please spare us this embarrassment."

He did.

Two days later, he committed suicide, for *he* was the boy without an arm and a leg.

The record for this case could read, "Murdered by his mother."

She killed him by rubbing caustic criticism into raw wounds of tragedy and discouragement. True, she didn't mean her deadly remarks for her own son. However, deadly remarks kill. What they are meant to kill doesn't remedy the crime of making deadly remarks.

Some will say, "I am only reporting facts about others."

Yes, the facts may be spotlessly true, but facts, like tools, can be handled to accomplish vastly different purposes. A knife can be used to peel potatoes or it can be used to stab a friend in the back.

God is not impressed when you use "disinfected" facts to do a dirty job on the character of another person.

You judge the character of a person every time you pass facts about him. The way you use the facts shows whether you judge him to be good or bad.

Jesus warned, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (Matthew 7:2).

Every judgment you make in life will boomerang and come back into your own lap on the final day of reckoning.

How will you stand if your words . . .

- ruin the character of someone God planned to use in the ministry of the Gospel?
- hurt a Christian and cause that person to be lost?
- drive a wedge between a husband and a wife that ruins their marriage?

At some places in the Alps, guides warn tourists to be extremely quiet. Cars are banned from these places because they might cause the smallest vibration necessary to upset a delicately poised mass of stones on the mountain and send an avalanche crashing to tragedy in the valley below.

Some people carry such a weight of secret burdens and problems that one unkind criticism may upset a delicate balance and destroy them.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1).

You have a right to judge. "But judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Romans 14:13).

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10).

Then we will answer for any unkind words of ours that destroyed others. Now is the time to repent of unjust criticism and learn to "speak the truth in love."

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

The Vision That the World Needs



Brother Allen Polston

Value the Truth Highly

God is not interested in seeing people perish. Many people are perishing, as we find in our Scripture text and in other places in the Scriptures. It means to die in a condition unprepared to meet God. I once read that every minute in the United States four people pass away, and approximately 831 people out of every 100,000 will die this year. Death is a part of life, but I am concerned that people are dying unprepared to meet God. The Bible informs us in Ezekiel 33:11, "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." It is needful that people realize that God loves them very much. He has no desire to see people live their

lives in sin, misery, and destruction, and then leave this time world unprepared to stand at the Judgment.

The latter part of our Scripture text states, ". . . but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." You may wonder how this verse, which refers to the Old Testament Law, can be beneficial to us today. We are not living under the same guidelines as those who lived under the Old Testament; however, the entire Bible is for our benefit. We have been given much more because we are living in a day when Jesus has already paid the sacrifice for our sins. He has made a way for us to attain salvation, and He has built the beautiful Church of God. We have been given the precious Truth, and we need to place great value on it. Enjoying these rich

blessings is wonderful! Many people have no concept of Truth. They do not understand it, and they are unable to rejoice in it. We ought to value the Truth highly. The Proverb writer referred to what the people had been given in that day. People usually keep that which is valuable or of significance to them. Sometimes we have material things that have been passed down from generation to generation that we cherish, but nothing is more valuable than Truth. The things that God has given us ought to be highly cherished.

In a time when many people are letting things go, you need to place more value on your relationship with God, on the Truth, and on the victories that He has granted you. You need to value those things and

keep them in remembrance. Do not allow the devil to take them away from you. John 10:10 says, "The thief [the devil] cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." The devil wants to steal your testimony, your peace, your relationship with God, and the Truth that God has given you. If the devil has his way, he will take it all. You need to keep it. To bring our Scripture text up to date in this dispensation, we could definitely say that happy is the person who keeps everything that God has given him.

James 1:17 reads, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." This means that God gives good gifts. He is not a respecter of persons, and He will give many good things to those who love Him. We need to cherish the good gifts that God gives. You ought to value the Truth and place first priority on the things of God, on the welfare of your soul, and on your relationship with God.

Think It Not Strange Concerning the Fiery Trials

Happy is the man who keeps God's law. The times that He speaks to you, the trials through which He leads you, and the victories and triumphs will bring happiness into your life. You will have an understanding and an awareness of what God has done and realize that nothing is too hard for Him to do. It will inspire your faith and encourage you. You can be assured that, come what may, God will take you through.

The devil will immediately try to erase from your mind the things that God has done for you. When God works something good in your life, the devil will say, "It would have worked out well anyway. God did not do that much for you." He will try to make it seem as though it was really nothing at all.

Every Christian is going to

suffer persecution. James said that we would be tried and tempted. James 1:2 states, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:12, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." This lets you know that as a Christian, you will go through the fiery furnace from time to time. When God brings you through the valley and places you on the mountaintop, do not forget what He has done. You need to keep it fresh in your mind and in your heart.

Sometimes you may go through trials that extend for a long period of time, but God will send times of refreshing. We need to keep what God has done for us fresh in our minds. I do not believe that people shout and praise God and tell others what God has done enough. We should not get slack in our praises to God.

The devil is an old thief, and he will try to make you feel that God has not done anything for you. He will say that God did not cause something to happen, that it would have happened naturally. You need to resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Sometimes we sing the song entitled "Tell What the Lord Has Done for You." We ought to be glad to tell what God has done for us. He has done so much. I believe that the devil gets frustrated and cannot stay around long when we tell what God has done. He would rather have people fighting and gossiping.

God's Miraculous Deliverance

In the Old Testament, when the Israelites fled Egypt, they were faced with many difficult situations as they journeyed to Canaan land. Often they became discouraged; however, God always came to their rescue and brought them through. Sometimes they would pile up rocks for a memorial in remembrance of what God had done for them. Likewise, you should have a way of commemorating what God has done

for you. Why? One of these days your children are going to ask you about those "rocks." You can say, "That is where God came to my rescue."

It is a privilege to raise our children in the Truth. I want my children to know what God can do. We cannot make our children serve the Lord. There comes a day when they have to make their own decision, but we can let them know what God has done. God is still in the delivering business. He can still set you free from sin and deliver you. He can still raise you up and give you power, and He can still heal your body. God can meet all your needs.

The Israelites were to tell their children how God divided the Red Sea to allow them to escape Pharaoh's army. Also, they were to tell their children about God bringing down the walls of Jericho. God came to their rescue when circumstances looked hopeless. Has that happened in your life? God is good to us!

As we consider our text of Scripture, it brings to mind that you cannot have real happiness outside the keeping of God's law. Just look around at the world and you will see evidence that people are desperately trying to find something to satisfy them. They go from one form of entertainment to another, from one sinful activity to another. It is quite clear that people lack true happiness. We are designed to be inhabited by the Lord, and anything less will not suffice. There is a part of us that only God can satisfy. Alcohol, ungodly pleasures, immorality, and drugs cannot do it. Only God can come in and bring real satisfaction and peace to your life.

Understanding why people do not have lasting happiness when they have no vision is easy. The world is seeking ways to make people happy by advertising this and that, but without a vision they will perish. They are heading for eternal destruction. The hope and the anticipation of something better further on is absent from their lives. Trials

and hardships make life a little rough, but thank God, we are not perishing. Situations may become difficult, and they will get very heated at times. There have been trials in my life that literally seemed as if I were in a fiery furnace, but God delivered me and brought me through.

Prevailing Conditions With No Open Vision

Let us read about a time when there was no vision. First Samuel 3:1 reads, "And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision." Without a vision people cannot see the wonderful things of God. Spiritual eyesight is hindered, and the difference between right and wrong is obscured when there is no open vision.

What were the results of this condition in Samuel's day? First Samuel 2:17 says, "Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD." That which belonged to God and that which was to be given to God was corrupted. The young men (Eli's sons) were to offer sacrifices for the people, but they were dishonest and disobedient and did not do the sacrifices properly.

Today people are engaging in the ungodliness of this world. Their bodies were made to be the temple of God, but all around us we see filth, nakedness, and abhorring what should be offered to the Lord. God has given us what we have for a reason. We are to give it back to Him and use it for His service. If people could only realize this. Giving one's life to God will bring true happiness. That is what we are here for, to dedicate ourselves to God. I am afraid that some people are coasting and drifting along. They have not truly dedicated their lives to God and said, "God, I want to give You my life. Take it and use it. Put me to work, God; employ me in

Your service." That is the kind of attitude I want to have. I have enlisted in His service until I die, and then I will receive a promotion. Praise the Lord!

When the difference between right and wrong becomes blurred and people start abhorring that which belongs to God — their hands, their feet, their time, their health, their strength, their breath, their money, and their material goods — then they lose the vision. Eli's sons lost their vision and became very corrupt. First Samuel 2:22-24 says: "Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress."

Guard Against Fleshly Ways

Without an open vision the Lord's people come under attack. Those women who went to the tabernacle were being used and abused. Fleshly desires took control. We must guard against allowing the flesh to be on display. I pray and ask God regularly not to let the flesh be on display. I want to lift up Jesus Christ and build up the Church of God. I do not want to get in the pulpit and be a big jokester or behave improperly to get attention. I want people's attention to be focused on Christ.

First Samuel 3:3 reads, "And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep." Now if that was all there was to it, it would not have been so bad, but there were many negative results when the reaping began.

Verse 13 reads, "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made

themselves vile, and he restrained them not." First Samuel 4:2 states, "Israel was smitten before the Philistines." Because of their sinful behavior, the problem became amplified.

We read in verse 4, "So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God." Those two evil individuals were taking care of the ark of God. Verse 10 tells us, "And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen." What a great price they had to pay! Verse 22 says, "The glory is departed from Israel."

The lack of an open and established vision provides the devil with a greater liberty to do his destructive works. He will move people way off to the left or way off to the right. I believe this is the reason Paul instructed Timothy to preach the Word. Preaching the Word is necessary so people can understand what God wants. We are not to add to it or take away from it. A clear line must be drawn between right and wrong so that people can understand exactly how to live. We cannot leave it just to anyone to preach what he thinks.

In this day it is not unusual for so-called Christians to be found in taverns and night clubs drinking alcohol and dancing; however, that is not true of God's people. The line between right and wrong is being distorted today. It is no wonder that sinners want nothing to do with church. When they look around and see the way many professed Christians live, they think, "Well, we live that good without even going to church."

Friend, perhaps you believe that you can sin more or less every day and still be a Christian. Well, let me

ask you, "Why don't you sin less?" I thank God for His grace that can give us the power to live *free* from sin.

Drawing a Distinct Line Between Right and Wrong

People are perishing because a distinct line is not being drawn between right and wrong, so in time they drift into all kinds of ungodliness. You have to take a firm stand against some things in this life. I thank God for ministers who have taken a firm stand against sin. It has been a blessing to me. I could have been tossed around. Some things have come against the church, and I have seen ministers take a firm stand. At times I wondered why they stood so firmly, but God put some eye salve on my eyes, and I began to understand. When you stand for what is right, you should not be afraid of what others might say or do. Stand firmly for God.

I realize we must take people into consideration, but we are in this for the good of souls; therefore, we cannot pamper people. I have heard some people say that if one has a desire in his heart to live worldly, he will do so eventually. That may be true, but preaching the Word will help it not to materialize. Preaching the Gospel, anointed by the Spirit of God, will help to prevent worldliness from gaining access into people's hearts. Some people will not heed the warning, but our responsibility is to preach the Gospel and stand for what is right so that they can see a godly example.

We are living in a time when people are having trouble knowing what is right and what is wrong. Many people have become liberal. Many things that are now accepted used to be unheard of in Christianity. Sad to say, some people who claim to be Christians live like the devil. This is happening all around us. "Where there is no vision the people perish." Where must this vision start? Peter said that judgment must begin at the house of

God. Through the preaching of the Gospel and through the holy living of the saints, people can see there is a way that leads to Heaven.

The world needs to see what a Christian young person is really supposed to be. With that vision at least they will know where to go when they get tired of sin. I am convinced there are honest people in the world who have come to realize that sin does not really pay what it promises. Sin will take you further than you want to go, it will cost you more than you want to pay, and it will keep you longer than you want to stay.

The world needs a vision of what a true Christian ought to be: serving God, respecting others, and respecting one's own body. It is hard to believe that so much ungodliness is allowed on the radio today. It embarrasses me. Sometimes on my job when I am working outside, people in the area play some of the most ungodly songs on the radio that I have ever heard in my life. Christian people ought to avoid listening to that kind of music. It will not benefit anyone to listen to things that are ungodly.

These days I see so many teenaged boys who cannot even walk unless they hold up their pants. On their way to school, they hold their books in one hand and hold up their pants with the other. If they were to let go of either one, whatever they let go of would drop. According to the Bible, we are to dress modestly. The clothing styles change constantly, but the Christian ought to be obedient to the Bible standard of dressing modestly. The world needs to see Christian young people who are dedicated to the Lord and devoted to their congregation. The young people should make sure they take time to read the Bible and pray.

Proper Courtship and Marriage

The world needs a vision of proper courtship and marriage. When my wife and I were courting,

we did not go somewhere and park in the car. I did not even feel it was appropriate when we were dating to hug. Young people need to be careful of being in close contact of that nature. Proper courtship demands respect for each other. What is wrong with the boy opening the door for the girl? You do not see young men doing that today. I think a man ought to open the door for a woman and then step back and let her go first.

A young man should respect a young lady during courtship and continue the same through marriage. Also, they should go places together where they can be a glory to God, well-lighted places. Church services and church functions are wonderful places to attend together. You can have a wonderful time. My wife and I did not go to movies or dances. We had a wonderful courtship, and it led to a wonderful marriage.

The world needs to see a vision of what a happy marriage ought to be. The honor, the respect, and the love for each other that begins in courtship ought to continue right on through marriage. When you make a commitment to get married, you should no longer look around for other possibilities. They are off limits. I believe that a man ought to work and support the family, and the woman ought to raise the children at home. God has outlined a wonderful plan for the home, and I have found that it works wonderfully when couples adhere to that plan.

Many couples want to have only one or two children so the wife can pursue a career or further her education. However, according to a recent worldly publication, many mothers are now giving up their careers to stay home. They are finding that having a career is not as rewarding as they envisioned it to be. Many of them are realizing that God had it right all along. Child of God, you should not embrace the ways of the world. You need to be an example of the believers, to show others how they can find real happiness and joy

in life. Souls are perishing all around us. They are sinking into deeper depths of sin and ungodliness and dying lost. When you allow God to have control of your home, your marriage, and your family, you can have real happiness.

The world needs a vision of a proper home and a godly family. They need a vision of the family that prays together. Our children do not call our coffee table by the name "coffee table." They call it our "prayer table." We need to set an example for the world of a family that prays together, reads the Bible, and attends church services faithfully, not just sporadically. Proverbs 22:6 exhorts, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Setting a Godly Example

As I said earlier, we cannot force our children to serve the Lord, but we can ingrain in their minds the difference between right and wrong. When you set the proper example before them, they can see that. I am convinced that the same principle applies to the world. When worldly people see others faithfully and consistently setting an example of holiness, godliness, and modesty, it will make an impression on them. Our neighbors and friends may continue to live worldly, but the godly example will be there for them to see. Several of my neighbor boys work for me as they become teenagers. I do not preach to those boys, but I invite them to church and tell them what Jesus can do for them.

The world needs a vision, and God is calling on us to live righteously, to be faithful, and to stand for what is right, because where there is no vision, the people perish. Without a vision they cannot see the way that is right and the way that God blesses. Several older boys in our neighborhood have picked up bad habits, but they will not smoke a cigarette in front of me. I have never said a word to them about

smoking. If they do it on the job, they go somewhere and hide.

Child of God, you can set a godly example before the world so that they can see something better. They can see God working through you; and then when the time comes that they are sick of sin, they will know who to turn to for help. We are living in a time when the world really needs a vision, because many people are perishing. The sale and the use of illegal drugs is so rampant in all parts of the country. Often we read of those who have died of drug overdoses. Recently a young man who once worked for me overdosed on drugs. It was a big shock to me. He was a very talented young man.

He was very strong, healthy, and fine looking. One morning he went into his bathroom and took some drugs before going to work, and someone found him dead.

The world needs a vision. Oh, how they need to see something better than sin! They need to see something more blessed, something greater, something more rewarding. Dear one, God is calling on you to set the right example before others. He wants you to be a lighthouse, to show the world the joy, the peace, and the happiness there is in serving God.

(Cassette C-5425M)

DEEP LIVING

**SOME LOVE TO SPREAD THEIR
BRANCHES;
THE ROOT LIFE THEY NEGLECT.
THEY LIVE TO SHINE IN PUBLIC,
AND HUMAN PRAISE EXPECT;**

**WHILE IN THE INNER CHAMBER,
WHERE CREATURE VOICES CEASE,
WE MAY MEET GOD IN SILENCE,
AND BREATHE IN HEAVEN'S PEACE.**

**THE SECRET OF DEEP LIVING
LIES IN THE SECRET PLACE
WHERE, TIME AND SENSE FORGOTTEN,
WE GO TO SEEK GOD'S FACE;**

**BEYOND MERE FORMS AND SYMBOLS,
BEYOND MERE WORDS AND SIGNS,
WHERE IN THAT HIDDEN TEMPLE
THE LIGHT ETERNAL SHINES.**

Selected

THE "IF" IN YOUR LIFE

After the death of Mary and Martha's brother, Lazarus, Martha fell down at Jesus' feet and said to Him in John 11:21, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus could have been there; He was not far away. He knew all about it. Martha wept; and it is written that the Lord Jesus was "troubled." I think He is "troubled" now in such cases, for He is what He was.

I have come to think there is an "if" in many people's lives. The person may not tell it, but it is there. It is something that God could have made different, had He chosen to do so, because He has all power; and yet He has allowed that "if" to be there.

I do not discount the "if" in your life. No matter what it is — whether it is in your circumstances or in your makeup or in your mental nature. How many say, "If I were not as I am . . ." or "If my circumstances had been different . . ."

You can come to the Lord Jesus with your "if" and let Him say to you what He said to Martha. He met her "if" with His "if." Jesus said to her in verse 40, "Said I not unto thee, that, IF thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" The glory of God is to come out of the "if" in your life. There are terrible "ifs" in some lives.

A woman in California said, "For what I have suffered, one hundred women shall be relived." You see how the stream has turned. Oh, when the books are opened, and we see it all, when it all comes

back — what we cried over when we said, "Oh, anything but that!" — how we shall see it then — the "glory" from the "if" in our lives!

A woman once said to me, "If my family were not as they are — my husband is so against anything that is truly Christian; my children would all make sport of me if I attempted anything in the way of peculiar devotion to God. Oh, if you knew my circumstances!" With an impulse that I was so glad of afterward, I said to her, "Never mind your husband and never mind your children; you need to take God for your circumstances and put Him in between you and your husband; put God in between you and your children." She caught the idea and exclaimed, "I will do it!"

"The next morning" (she afterwards told me) "when I went down to breakfast, there was my husband; and he almost always found fault at breakfast about something. I looked at him and thought, 'It does not make any difference what he says, I have God between him and me.'" That woman lived to be a power in her family, and when I heard last, nearly every child (it was a large family) was converted. Do not be thinking of your "if." Make a power out of your "if" for God.

If I were this, if I were that, if I had talents I would do — If! If! If! Oh, listen to Christ's "if."

Jesus said in Mark 9:23, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believest." If you believe, it is a very wonderful thing. Faith carries a whole life with it.

Do you know how often you say it or think "If . . ."? Will you not take the other way and hear Him say His "If thou canst believe . . ."? Only believe. You need to step out and say, "Out of the 'if' in my life is to come my grandest life's work for God."

It was the dream of Paul's life to preach Christ at Rome, the center of civilization. He dwelt in Rome, chained to an uncongenial companion and shut up in that hired house, yet he wrote letters from Rome! Have you sent any letters from your Rome? Have you sent any letters out from your "if"? Have you said, "Because I lack, there must be very many others who lack along this line, so I will go right along this line, and I must triumph"?

The Apostle stated in Galatians 2:20, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

I shall never forget the morning that I spent reading an old, musty book that I had discovered in my library on the subject, "The Higher Christian Life." As I pored over that little volume, I saw a new light. The Lord Jesus revealed Himself as a living and all-sufficient Presence, and I learned for the first time that Christ had not saved us from future peril and left us to fight the battle of life as best we could; but He who had justified us was waiting to substitute His strength, His holiness, His joy, His love, His faith, and His power for all our helplessness and nothingness.

Selected

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