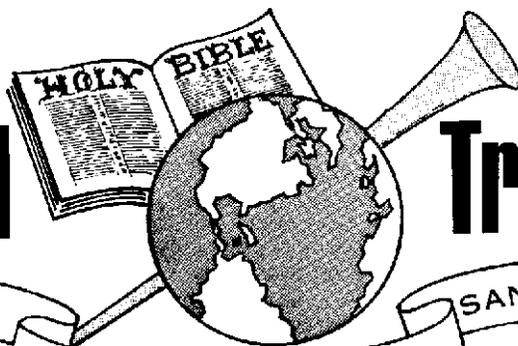


The Gospel



Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

"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 Mal. 2:13

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 38 February 2008 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 2007 Camp Meeting Report

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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)

We reserve the right to edit and/or decline any material
for any reason. Not responsible for unsolicited articles or
items.

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Vol. 38 February 2008 No. 2

Short But Sweet

Thursday, December 27, 2007,
at 10:00 a.m. the Winter Camp
Meeting began with prayer as
Pastor Roger Decker welcomed
everyone to God's Acres. The
camp meeting certainly was short,
lasting only four days, but it was
a very sweet time of fellowship
with the saints. It seemed as
though it had just begun and then
it was over before one realized
what had happened. We affirm
that the meeting was power
packed as the Lord moved in the
midst and accomplished His will
and purpose. Each service was
well attended by God's people
from both far and near. The
weather always presents a con-
cern for travel in the winter
months, but this time it proved to
be very cooperative, for which we
are truly grateful.

Wednesday evening before the
camp meeting started, a timely
message was delivered on "The
Power of Prayer." The messenger
pointed out how vitally important
and necessary prayer is to the
success of any spiritual meeting.
Prayer is the essential ingredient
for the salvation of souls. Impor-
tuning prayer is the key to turn-
ing the hearts and minds of men
and women to God. The Lord lis-
tens for His people to groan under
a heavy burden and to cry out to
Him. God desires the saints to
seek His face for the deliverance
of souls who are under the bond-
age of sin. Persistent prayer is
often the crucial element for the
healing of those who are bound
under the hand of affliction.
Prayer, old-fashioned prayer, is
the prerequisite to all man's
needs. Pondering on the many
great, spiritual meetings of the
past, you will find that it first
began with fervent prayer. We

attribute the success of this
meeting to the Lord and the pres-
ence of the way He moved in an-
swer to earnest prayer.

It is always an encouragement
and a blessing to see a large num-
ber of ministers sitting on the
pulpit backing each preacher as
he delivers the message. The
anointed preaching that God laid
on their hearts was powerful and
brought enlightenment to the
hearers. It is a beautiful sight to
see men and women who are in
need of salvation move to accept
the Lord Jesus Christ into their
hearts. There were many who
received help. It grieves the heart
of God and the saints to witness
conviction working on the un-
saved and then see those souls
turn away from God's pleading.
Many needs were met, but sad to
say, some refused God's offered
grace and pardon.

One service during the camp
meeting was devoted to preaching
the message of divine healing.
God's plan and provision was laid
out clearly and revealed that
God's desire for His saints is to
enjoy physical health as well as
spiritual enrichment. The Apostle
John recorded these words of en-
couragement in 3 John, verse 2,
for those who suffer mental or
physical affliction: "Beloved, I
wish above all things that thou
mayest prosper and be in health,
even as thy soul prospereth." God
is interested not only in the sav-
ing of man's soul but also in heal-
ing the physical ailments of his
mind and body.

Time and space will not
permit the description of each
wonderful message that went
forth during the meeting. Each of
the ministers who preached was

[continued on page 25]

Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of

the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

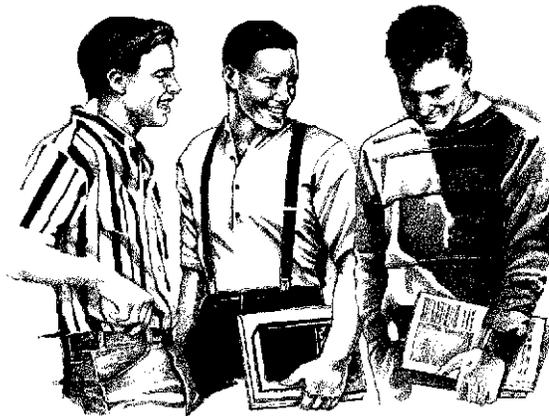
11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Sinning Presumptuously



Brother Roger L. Decker

Knowledge and Privilege Bring Responsibility

This Psalm is power packed with Scriptures that ought to enlighten you, but I want to focus on verse 13, which reads, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." This verse brings seriousness of thought when it comes to living for God. The Psalmist was not talking about one

committing sin through weakness. He was talking about sinning against light, or knowledge, or sinning against your conscience. Sinning presumptuously is sinning deliberately. It is sin that is committed with forethought and purpose, or premeditated.

We know that God hates all sin. If you should become weak and fall into temptation and yield to sin, God hates that sin. However, I am dealing with sinning presumptuously. God especially hates sin that is premeditated, the sin of pride,

being over confident, and relying on one's own strength. Presumptuous sin is the offspring of purpose and deliberation.

In verse 13 of our Scripture text, speaking of presumptuous sins, the Psalmist said, ". . . let them not have dominion over me." In other words, he was saying: "Let me never be brought into the habit of sinning. Do not let sin gain control over me and cause me to sin daily. Keep me from sinning presumptuously." When one sins through habit, he loses the feeling of conviction that accompanies

sin.

There are Scriptures that stand against presumptuous sin. In John 15:22 Jesus said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak [or covering] for their sin." What was Jesus saying? He was saying that knowledge and privilege bring responsibility. Until Jesus came, men never had the opportunity to really know God. They had never really heard His voice. They had never seen the kind of life that He wished for them to live perfectly demonstrated.

There was a time in our lives when we did not know how to live, and we were without strength to live right. In Romans 5:6-8 Paul wrote: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Christ died for us, and that is the final proof of God's love.

Paul went a step further and said that through Jesus our status with God was changed. Though we were once sinners, we were put into right relationship with God, but that was not enough. Our status had to be changed, and also our state needed to be changed. The sinner cannot go on being a sinner; he must become good. Christ's death changed our status, and His risen life changed our state. Thank God, Christ is not dead; He is alive! He is always with us to help and guide us and to fill us with His strength so that we can overcome temptation and be clothed with righteousness.

God's Love Toward Man

Jesus began by putting sinners into a right relationship with God, and by His grace He enables them to quit sinning and to live a righteous life. In Ephesians 4:11-12 the Apostle Paul wrote: "And he gave some,

apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [or the upbuilding] of the body of Christ." Notice that he did not say, "For the perfecting of the world" or "For the perfecting of Babylon," but rather "For the perfecting of the saints." What does that tell you? When you are saved, you are made perfect. You need to be perfected. God will bring you to a place where you can hear the Truth. That is the reason He gave "some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." We need to be made more perfect.

The change of our status is justification, and that is where the whole process begins. The change of our state is sanctification; that is where the saving process takes place, and it will never end until we see Him face to face in eternity. It would be difficult enough to get a man to die for a just man, and it might be possible for a man to be persuaded to die for some great and noble principle; but the wonder of Jesus Christ is that He died for us when we were yet sinners and while we were in a state of hostility toward God. Love can go no further than that. Christ did not die to save good men, but he died for sinners. Think of that! He died for bad men, men who were against God.

When we were sinners, we were not God's friends, yet Jesus died for us. What was He expressing? God's love toward man. God sent Heaven's best to die for lowly sinners who were no good, who were at odds with Him, and who did not want to serve Him. God loved us so much that He told His Son, "You must go to earth and take on a mortal body and be tried and tempted in all points, just as the people are, but I will keep You." God can keep you today. We are tempted in all points, yet we can live without sin.

We allow children to get by with some things that would be unacceptable in adults. Why is that?

Children do not know any better, so we overlook some things. Also, we make allowances for some who have not had proper upbringings and who have not had the benefits of growing up in a Christian home. No one expects the same kind of conduct from a savage man as one would expect from a civilized man. The more knowledge a man has, the greater his responsibility, and the more privileges he enjoys.

Jesus did two things: First, He exposed sin and told men what grieved God and how He wanted them to walk. He set the true way before all men. Second, He provided the remedy for sin. He did that in a double sense: He opened the way to forgiveness for past sin, and He provided the power to enable a man to do right thereafter. When you are saved, you are saved and forgiven from past sins, not from sins you might commit in the future.

When you go to an altar of prayer and repent, you are saved from all sins that you committed up to that moment. That is the reason you need the Spirit of God. The two witnesses are the Word and the Spirit. You need the Spirit of God to keep you from future sins. Babylon does not understand this. That is the reason Babylon says, "Sin you will, sin you must, and sin you cannot help it." They do not see the need of the Holy Spirit.

The Redemption That Is in Christ

Let us digress for just a moment. Romans 3:23-25 states: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance [or patience] of God."

When you go to an altar of prayer and repent, God saves you from all your past sins up to that very moment. From that moment on, the Holy Spirit moves into your

temple that has been cleaned up, and He will be your guide and your comforter, and He will teach you how you ought to walk.

Some people like to bring up the Apostles before Pentecost, but before Pentecost the Apostles were under the Law. Why? Jesus had not yet died on the Cross. They were under the Old Testament. A will is of no effect while the testator is alive. You can make out a will for your children, but it is of no effect while you are alive. It does not take effect until you die. The same was true with Jesus Christ. People were not under the new covenant until Jesus Christ died. When Jesus Christ died, He became the propitiation for our sins, or in other words, He became a covering for sin, and sin could be taken away; then He could give the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God will not enter an unclean vessel.

God used Prophets and others under the Law who were not free from sin, but you have to consider the dispensation. There was a transition period between the Law and the day of grace. The Apostles were in a transition period, but they were still under the Law. Study the lives of the Apostles before Pentecost and then after Pentecost. One requirement to see the Kingdom of God is that one must be born again. What did the disciples ask Jesus before Pentecost? They inquired, "Are You going to set up the kingdom now?" They did not ask that question after the Spirit of God came. On the Day of Pentecost Peter said in Acts 2:16, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." After the Holy Spirit came and filled the disciples' hearts and taught them, Peter understood the kingdom, and he understood prophecy. He took the things of Jesus and taught them.

Overstepping the Warnings

The change of our state is sanctification. God provided a remedy for sin. Suppose you saw a sign on a road that read "Bridge Out Ahead

Use Detour," and as you traveled farther, you saw signs across the road reading "Bridge Out Use Detour" and "Road Closed." If you were to ignore those signs and drive through, the responsibility would lie upon you as the traveler. Now, it is possible for you to do the same thing when it comes to spiritual matters and your eternal welfare.

Too many ignore the warnings that God brings through His Word. They disregard His Word and act as if Jesus never came. God warns us repeatedly throughout His Word that certain things defile, deceive, and harden the hearts of mankind. The Bible is full of examples of those who sinned presumptuously, who deliberately sinned against light and knowledge, and who sinned through being over confident. What is sinning presumptuously? You presume that God will forgive you, and you presume that God will understand, so you go ahead and sin. One who sins presumptuously thinks: "If I mess up, God will forgive me. I will just ask God to forgive me, and I will go on as before."

Now, it is possible for a person to yield to temptation through weakness, but I am not talking about that. I am talking about sinning deliberately and thinking, "No one needs to know; it is between God and myself, and God will forgive me." Although it is true that no one needs to know your sin in most cases, there are times when others are involved, and the thing needs to be straightened out in a right way.

You will harden your heart if you sin presumptuously. Young person, do not think that you can overstep decency in your dating and that God will turn His head. It is wrong to think, "Oh, I know we went too far again, but God will forgive us and help us."

If you are not careful, you will pray an old, formal prayer and continue to have a form of religion, but you will no longer have victory in your soul. If you commit sin, you must have godly sorrow that leads you to repentance. Do not believe

people who say they have gotten saved and yet they do not make any wrongs right. When people get saved, they must straighten out whatever they can in their past. True repentance will cause a person to straighten out some things. If you have cheated, lied, or messed around in any way that was wrong, you must straighten that out to the best of your ability and as God directs you.

Where Does Sin Begin?

If you have overstepped godly principles and committed adultery, then there are some things you need to straighten up. Too many times the sin of adultery is just held to the act, but let us look at the words of Jesus. In Matthew, Chapter 15, a discussion was taking place concerning the tradition of the elders, revealing how the Jewish people held to their traditions above the commandments of God. Jesus said in verses 17-20: "Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

Notice in this chapter that, again, Jesus was faced with the never-ending accusations of the scribes and Pharisees. They held the tradition of the elders as a top priority, equal with the commandments of God. To the Jew, the Law had two parts: the written Law, which was contained in Scriptures given by God, and the oral law, which consisted of rules such as hand washing, which the scribes and the experts had worked out through the generations. All those developments were the traditions of the elders, and they were regarded as highly, if not more so, than the

written Law.

Going back to the beginning of that chapter, we read in verses 1-3: "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" Again, Jesus was speaking of the tradition of the elders. To the orthodox Jew, all of this ritual ceremony was religion. They believed that was what God had demanded. For example, they believed that God demanded that they wash their hands before they ate. They made that oral law equal with the commandments of God. They believed that in doing so they would please God and that if they did not, they were not good disciples. All things of tradition were regarded as important and as binding as the Ten Commandments themselves.

Jesus, in His patience and long-suffering, laid out before His accusers that the defilement does not begin outwardly, but rather it proceeds from the heart. He was letting them know that true religion does not merely consist of external regulations and observances. If that were all religion consisted of, that would be too easy, just to do some outward rituals. For example, it is much easier to wash your hands than to love your enemy. It is much easier to use some soap and water than to love one who despises you. It is much easier to wash your hands than to control your tongue and not speak evil against someone.

Outward observances cannot atone for a heart that has the seed of sin within. Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed. . . ." Jesus began to categorize a long list of sins. He mentioned adultery, fornication, and thefts, just to mention a few. Where do these sins have their start? They begin in the heart. He said those things that come out of the heart defile a man. That is the rea-

son you receive a new heart in real salvation. He was not talking about the physical heart that pumps blood through the body. He was speaking of your affections being changed. When the heart of an individual is changed, his affections are changed. They are changed from having a love for sin to having a love for God. False religion does not believe in holiness. Why? The reason is that in false religion the heart has not been changed.

In that list of sins in Matthew, Chapter 15, Jesus mentioned adultery and fornication. Just because two persons have not gone all the way and committed the act is no sign that fornication or adultery has not been committed in the heart. Where did Jesus say it comes from? He said those things proceed from the heart. There has to be a consent given in your will before the act is actually carried out. You can consent to that act in the heart, and then all you need is the opportunity, and the act will be carried out. However, as far as God is concerned, it has already been committed in the heart.

There is too much presumptuous sinning: "God will forgive me if I mess up." When you have such thoughts in your mind, you will end up overstepping. You are going to presume on the mercy of God, thinking, "If I mess up, God will be right there, and He will forgive me." It would be better if you thought about what would happen if you were to go into eternity while you were committing sin. What would happen if your heart were to stop suddenly while you were in the very act of committing sin? I am talking about deliberately overriding your conscience and knowledge.

The Terrible Cost of Sinning Against Light

In Daniel, Chapter 5, you can read how Belshazzar overstepped knowledge. He drank wine before the people at a big feast, which

many kings had in those days during the Old Testament times. The Scripture says that Belshazzar commanded his servants to bring the gold and silver vessels that his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple, which was in Jerusalem. Then the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.

Daniel 5:4-5 states: "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood [those gods could not do a thing about their condition, yet they praised them], and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."

What happened? The party ended. Verse 6 tells us, "Then the king's countenance was changed, [He did not feel like partying and drinking anymore. He did not feel like praising the gods of wood and silver and gold and brass and iron. He felt sick.] and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."

What did King Belshazzar do? He did what many of those kings did in those days whenever a crisis happened. He sent for his astrologers and soothsayers to inquire of them concerning what was going on. He offered a reward to whoever could interpret the mysterious handwriting on the wall. They could not interpret the handwriting or comfort him or quiet him down. What had happened? Belshazzar had overstepped the knowledge and the understanding that he had. Even though he was a heathen, he knew better than to do what he did. In his partying and feasting, he disregarded the sacredness of the vessels that had been set aside for God. He had knowledge of the judgment that came upon his grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar, but he disregarded that understanding. Why? He was caught up in partying

and in having a good time. (Young person, when you are out having a good time, do not be surprised if God stops the party, especially when you have the knowledge and the understanding to do better.)

Next, the queen came in and told Belshazzar of Daniel, so the king called for Daniel to be brought in. What did Daniel do? He read Belshazzar's doom. The king had not taken the warnings concerning the judgments that came upon Nebuchadnezzar, yet he knew of them. What had King Belshazzar actually done? He had insulted God. He let lowly concubines and Babylonian princes drink from those sacred vessels, and he let his wives, who worshiped false gods, drink from them; therefore, God had had enough. God did not reach down and strike him dead right at that moment. He could have done that. God could have wiped out all of them, but He did not do that. Instead He sent a message straight to the leader himself, and He let that leader know that he was weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Daniel told Belshazzar in Daniel 5:22-23: "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified."

What happened to King Belshazzar? Verse 30 tells us, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." He sinned presumptuously. After death is the Judgment. Hebrews 9:27 states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Belshazzar knew the judgment that fell upon his grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar, but he failed

to let it restrain him in his sin. Sinning presumptuously cost him his physical life, his throne, and his soul; it cost him all that he had. He paid a terrible price for sinning against light. He was lifted up in pride and in a drunken stupor, but God sobered him up in a moment of time.

Having Godly Sorrow

If you sin against light, you are sinning presumptuously. You must always remember that time is on God's side. God is not bound with hours and minutes, days and weeks; God is eternal. God will visit sin as He pleases and when He pleases. It is God who puts men up and sets them down.

Let us read the prayer that Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prayed. First Samuel 2:3-9 reads: "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail."

What a prayer and what truth Hannah set forth! Dear one, sinning presumptuously will harden your heart. The next thing you know, you will be asking God for forgiveness with no godly sorrow: "Oh, forgive

me, Lord," and then you will go on with no true conviction or thought of changing. You will lose the tenderness of heart that you once had when you failed God. It will cause you to be in personal confession every day, merely saying words without godly sorrow.

David said in verse 13 of our Scripture text, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion [or rule] over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." What did David mean when he mentioned "the great transgression"? Was he talking about one certain sin? No, he was speaking of the many sins that he would commit if God did not check him and stop him from sinning presumptuously. If one continues to sin presumptuously, he will go deeper into sin, and he will get to the point where his heart becomes hardened; then he could leave this world without repentance. It takes godly sorrow to truly repent, and godly sorrow is foreign to the hardened heart.

David finished Psalm 19 with the words, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." If you are having trouble getting victory over sin, then you need to get help from God and get it settled. God can keep you from presumptuous sin, or sinning deliberately, if you will humble your heart. Do not get caught up in that or you will end up a great sinner, caught up in all kinds of wickedness. You could end up in great depths of sin that you would not have to if you would have allowed God to keep you back from deliberate sins. If you have a need, won't you listen to the Lord? God is not against you; He wants to help you, if you will let Him. Will you mind the Lord?

Psalm 42:1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

4 When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8 Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and

my prayer unto the God of my life.

9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.



Water for the Thirsting Soul

Brother E. David Stegmeier

Thirsting for the Living God

As I was meditating on this message and enjoying being with the Lord tremendously, the song entitled "Satisfied" came to my mind, which reads:

*All my life I had a longing,
For a drink from some clear spring,
That I hoped would quench the
burning
Of the thirst I felt within.*

*Feeding on the husks around me,
Till strength was almost gone.
Longed my soul for something better,
Only still to hunger on.*

*Poor I was, and sought for riches,
Something that would satisfy,
But the dust I gathered round me
Only mocked my soul's sad cry.*

*Well of water, ever springing,
Bread of life so rich and free,
Untold wealth that never faileth,
My Redeemer is to me.*

*Hallelujah! I have found Him
Whom my soul so long has craved!
Jesus satisfies my longings,
Through His blood I now am saved.*

In our text of Scripture I believe the Psalmist was expressing a longing that every man and woman has,

a desire for something that satisfies. In desperation he cried out in verses 1-2: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Psalm 84:2 could have been written by the same writer, who penned these words (speaking of the desire for the inner satisfaction of the soul): "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." I believe he was crying out for a real experience with God.

I can remember as a little boy that is what I wanted more than anything in life. Some children long

to be great basketball players or a state governor. I can remember as a little boy that I sat in church longing in my heart to have a real experience with God. I had seen people with "window-shade" religion. When the weather was fair, the window shade was up; when the weather turned bad, they pulled down the window shade and they were gone. I did not want that kind of religion. I wanted something that would truly satisfy my life, and I found it in Jesus Christ.

Within every man, woman, boy, and girl is a deep longing for something, but most people do not know what it is. We had a young man in our congregation who told us that he went from bar to bar, looking for something that he was not sure of, but he found it in Jesus Christ. He attended camp meeting at God's Acres just a few weeks before he died with victory in his soul.

God Is in Control

The Apostle Paul spoke of the Thessalonian converts having this experience in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, which reads, ". . . ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." To the Church of God at Corinth, Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:16, ". . . ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

We are serving the living God. Why do you suppose the Word says "the living God"? It means that God is living. God is not dead; He is alive, and Christ is alive. God is concerned about you, and He is working out details every day in your life. I think it is extremely exciting to look back once in a while to see how God has led us all the way. God's Spirit always leads unerringly. I am not wise enough to plan the course of my life. Life is too complex.

We need divine guidance and divine wisdom. Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 10:23, "It is not in man that

walketh to direct his steps." We need One to help us, and I lean heavily upon His guidance. He is working out His plan in each of our lives.

God is all powerful; He is omnipotent. He is all mighty, and His authority is unlimited. God is in control. Many people speak about past experiences, or the old days. I think life is mighty exciting today. We are serving a God who is alive, and I want some excitement today. When I was a boy, some older pioneers had wonderful stories to tell, but I believe God is alive! He is working today, and exciting things are happening now. I want to be where the excitement is. We are serving a living God.

It is marvelous how God works out details in our lives and how He can plan our schedules. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:16-17: "For by him [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

All things are fixed and permanent because God is still on His throne. God is the reason the universe continues as it has for thousands of years. I was reading something recently as I was substitute teaching for a Social Studies teacher. There is a new teaching that scientists want to get into the schools, and it is called the theory of I. D., or Intelligent Design. The article concluded that there has to be a God behind this universe.

Leading scientists are now contending that the theory of evolution is a farce, and it is! It theorizes that things developed in stages. That is ludicrous! For example, scientists are now saying that the eye had to be created as an entire eye. It was not developed in stages (i.e. the pupil, and then the iris). God designed it, and it had to function as a unit. That article was an awesome opportunity for discussion in the

class.

God is behind it all. Hurray for those who see what is true! God created all these things, and He is behind all of Creation. He is upholding this world. Colossians 1:18 states, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

The two witnesses (the Word and the Spirit) should not lay dead in the streets around the Church of God. We must let them have their authority and their rightful place. You cannot have a thriving, spiritual Church of God congregation unless the two witnesses are standing on their feet and testifying. You must let them have their way. When I was a boy, we sang a song that says: "*Let Him have His way with you, He wants to work with you, He wants to work in you, through you. Let Him have His way.*"

God Is Everywhere

Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient king of Babylon, learned through a very severe trial that God was in control. In Daniel 4:32 we read, "And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

People are so concerned about how they stand in the eyes of men. I am concerned about where I stand in God's eyes. I often pray, "God, please help me to live so that You are proud of me and so that we can have a wonderful relationship." Then I know I will be standing abreast with all those who are pleasing God. Too many people are measuring themselves by themselves. We must measure ourselves by Jesus Christ and be like Him.

Verses 33-35 read: "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven

from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

God's way is best. You should not murmur, but submit. Young person, God has the right companion for you. He has someone tailor-made for you. Only my wife could live with me, and we get along really well. God is omnipotent and omniscient. He knows all about us. He is all knowing; He knows everything about everything.

Psalm 139:4-6 says: "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." God has perfect understanding of you. He knows your thoughts before they are formulated in your mind.

You cannot go anywhere but what God will be there. Jeremiah 23:24 says, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD." A man out west committed some terrible crimes, and he ran from the law, but he could not run from God. The crimes that he had committed bothered him. He could not go away far enough to get away from his gnawing conscience, so finally he returned to the area and came to church one night with a brother and got saved. He said: "I have been running. I am wanted by the law, but before I give myself up,

I want to find God." So he got saved, and then he turned himself in. That dear precious man was really repentant, so I went with him when he had to appear before the judge.

God is everywhere. I think that is so good to know that anywhere you go, God is available. Psalm 139:8-10 says: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." No matter where we go, God is present. The Scripture text says that our hearts thirst for the living God. God is a reality. Though His greatness is vast and beyond human understanding, He is a personal God.

How Big Is God?

When I was a child I used to lie in bed at night and try to get my mind to think that God had to have a beginning. It was hard for me to comprehend that He did not have a beginning. Our minds are finite, but God is infinite; yet He can be a personal God. Isn't that wonderful? You can travel and say, "God, I am so glad that You are with me today. Let's visit."

One songwriter wrote a song entitled "How big is God?" One part of the song says, "He's big enough to rule His mighty universe, yet small enough to live within my heart." God can be your helper and your protector. God will forgive your past and never bring it up again. He will deliver you from all ungodliness. He invites you into very sweet communion and fellowship. He will be your all.

Psalm 8:3-4 says: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" When I consider all that God has done, I think it is awesome. God condescends to walk with us, to

visit with us, and to care for us.

In John 7:37-39 we read: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

Some people celebrate what they call the "Feast of the Tabernacles." When the Jews held the Feast of the Tabernacles, they poured water in the temple as a symbol of the water that Moses gave to the people. The pouring of water is symbolic of a deep need that needs to be satisfied. Water is a necessary requirement. It is something you must have to live. Souls in the world are thirsty, and they can quench their thirst only by coming to Jesus Christ. People go on and on looking for something to satisfy their souls, and we have found it in Jesus Christ. Isn't that beautiful?

The Work of Salvation

In Isaiah, Chapter 35, the Prophet Isaiah told in prophetic language what happens to an individual when he partakes of this Living Water. Verses 1-2 read: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them [those living waters]; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing." The Prophet Isaiah was saying that those in sin, living and dwelling in a dead, barren, dry wasteland, will rejoice. They are looking for something that will satisfy, something that will cause their lives to blossom and bloom.

Verses 6-7 read: ". . . for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." Of whom was this speaking? Verses 9-10 tell us: ". . . the re-

deemed shall walk there: [That is where the redeemed live, where there is an abundance and where things are productive, growing, blooming, and prospering. Your life will prosper when you are serving the Lord.] And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." God was speaking through Isaiah concerning the work of salvation that will be wrought in the souls of those who are thirsty and who find the Living Water. The souls of the redeemed will begin to produce.

In Isaiah 11:6-7,9 we read: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and fating together . . . And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain. . . ." I have enjoyed this Scripture all my life. In the church there is no hurting, destroying, or devouring.

The Bible shows us that when people are not what they ought to be, they bite and devour one another. We have to forgive one another. We need grace. The beastly nature of people will not be there. What will be there? People having the nature of lambs. Someone told me that if you inflict pain on a sheep, it will never retaliate. Some animals retaliate, and some people retaliate. As God's people, we are to be like sheep. The beastly, destructive, and devouring natures are gone.

Isaiah 12:3 says, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." We ought to have some water in our wells so that when others who are thirsty pass by, we can hand them a drink of this water. Second Peter 2:17 speaks of "wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest." I believe he was speaking of false religious teachers.

How Is Your Well?

Peter said there are false, religious teachers who are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest. In other words, they are tossed with all kinds of falsity. I believe the Word of God is represented as the water of life. False religious leaders deceive the masses by spreading false doctrines and teachings that are empty and fruitless. They do not produce anything. What are some of these false teachings? One false teaching is that everyone sins more or less every day, and they usually sin more rather than less. Other false doctrines include eternal security, a millennial reign, no hell, and other doctrinal teachings that will not produce good fruit. May God help us. The Bible says they may speak great swelling words, but they are flat.

As God's people, we have a purpose in living. We have a purpose for our lives, and it is serving God and furthering His cause. Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). We are to bring glory to Christ and to further His cause. In John, Chapter 4, you can read that Jesus spoke to a woman of questionable character. (God's people should not think they are too good to speak to any individual about his or her need of this Living Water.) Jesus stopped at Jacob's well, sat down, weary and tired, and along came a woman. No doubt, she was sad, depressed, unproductive, and looking for something, but she did not know what it was. We read in John 4:10-15: "If thou knewest [I believe that as God looks at the world, He is saying to people who are going after alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, and other vices, 'If you only knew . . .'] the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our

father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; [He makes our lives so rich and gives us contentment that the world knows nothing about.] but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

Dear one, if that is what you want, God has it for you. This life in Christ is so satisfying. You can live for God, and you can walk and talk with Him every day. He will put you in contact with the finest people in the world. What a beautiful life! Physically, Jesus was weary when He sat down at the well, but He knew that a woman who had a need would soon be there.

I believe that He broke down the wall of prejudice. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, but Jesus broke down that wall. He saw a woman with a deep need, one who lacked peace and contentment. She had had five husbands, and the one with whom she was living was not even her husband. She wanted something. She was defeated, sad, lonely, and burdened down with sin. Jesus supplied her need. He said, "If you only knew. . . ." That was what she wanted and asked for, and God gave it to her. The Bible lets us know that she went into the city a different woman, and through her testimony, many people came.

Water From the Rock

We have a brother in our congregation who was probably the worst man in the state of Oregon. He was involved in so many evil things that he ended up in the Oregon State Penitentiary. He loves to tell everyone about the Church of God. "There is only one church," he tells people.

One day he went into a local bank in town and walked up to a teller, who has worked there for as long as he can remember. She remembered when he was the man who ran a nightclub down next to the river; it was an evil place. As he started to testify to her, all the tellers came over to hear his story. They began to cry, and he was crying. All the bank employees said, "Tell us more." He came to church that night excited that all the bank employees wanted to know of his conversion. He said, "Well, come to the Church of God; that is where this Living Water is." The pleasures of sin are only seasonal. You can enjoy them for a season, but they are short lived, and then your life ends in death.

Do you long for this Living

Water? Our choir sings a very touching song that I would like to quote in closing. The name of the song is "Water From the Rock." Friend, could this be you? It reads:

*Wandering aimlessly, thirsting
endlessly.*

*All I found was bitter water from
an earthly stream.*

*How my soul did cry,
How I feared to die.*

Everlasting life was just a dream.

*In this wilderness, earth's dark
wilderness,*

*He was smitten with the rod from
His Father's hand.*

*All my sins He bore as He suffered
More than this human mind could
understand.*

*If you are looking for life with
something more,
There is refreshing water now from
Calvary.*

*Leave your past behind,
Climb God's hill and claim
Heaven's answer to your soul's
deep need.*

*Water from the Rock was what
I needed,
Water from which no one is denied,
And when I came to Christ for
my salvation,
I found Jesus was the Rock that
satisfies.*

If your life is not fully satisfied, come to Jesus. You will be satisfied completely. Is there a deep longing in your heart for something more? If there is, won't you heed His call?

(Cassette C-5367E)

***"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:8
"When he came . . . he found nothing but leaves." Mark 11:13***

*Out of this world I shall never take the things of gold and silver I make.
All that I cherish and hoard away, after I leave, on this earth must stay.
Though I have toiled for a painting rare to hang on the wall, I must leave it there;
Though I call it mine, and boast its worth, I must give it up when I leave this earth.
All that I gather and all that I keep I must leave behind when I fall asleep;
And I often wonder what I shall own in that other life when I pass alone.
Shall the great Judge find when my task is through that my spirit has gathered
some riches too?
Or shall at last be it mine to find that all I worked for I left behind?*

*Ah, who shall thus the Master meet,
And bring but withered leaves?
Ah, who shall at the Savior's feet,
When found at His own judgment seat,
Lay down for golden sheaves—Nothing but leaves?*

A Great Man

I would like to call your attention to the fact that one of our great presidents, Abraham Lincoln, was a great lover of children. He was often known to talk to them and speak words of encouragement to them. In fact, two children especially were of great interest to him. These were his sons Willie and Thomas, who was often called Tad. To bring out the thought a little better, I am going to quote to you an excerpt from, "The Life of Lincoln" by Tarbell. Notice this description here of his love for children:

"The protecting sympathy and tenderness the President extended to all children became a passionate affection for his own. Willie and Tad had always been privileged beings at the White House, and their pranks and companionship undoubtedly did much to relieve the tremendous strain the President was suffering. Many visitors who saw him with the lads at this period have recorded their impressions—how keenly he enjoyed the children and how indulgent and affectionate he was with them. Again and again, he related their sayings, sometimes even to grave delegations."

You see how the President enjoyed these children? It is almost typical of the way Christ took the children up in His arms and blessed them. Sometimes God uses children to point out even to great men their need for Him, and this is exactly what happened in the life of President Abraham Lincoln.

"When both the children fell ill, when he saw them suffering, and when it became evident, as it finally did, that Willie, the elder of the two, would die, the President's anguish was intense. He would slip away from visitors and Cabinet at every opportunity to go to the sick room, and during the last four or five days of Willie's life, when the child was suffering terribly and lay in an un-

broken delirium, President Lincoln shared with the nurse the nightly vigils at the bedside. When Willie finally died, on February 20, the President was so prostrated that he succumbed entirely to his grief.

"There is ample evidence that in this crushing grief, the President sought earnestly to find what consolation the Christian religion might have for him. It was the first experience of his life, so far as we know, which drove him to look outside of his own mind and heart for help to endure a personal grief. It was the first time in his life when he had not been sufficient for his own experience."

As you may recall in some of the earlier experiences of Abraham Lincoln, he had somewhat lost interest in the spiritual things of modern religion of that day because he recognized some of them as not being exactly as they should be. Even so in our day, there are just reasons for us to feel that things are not conducted in the way which God would have, especially in many of the so-called churches of today; however, this does not alter the fact that true religion is based upon the Bible and is not cornered up in some special part of the earth, but it is free and open for all to receive its truths when they accept the Word of God and become one of God's children.

Abraham Lincoln realized his need of a personal God perhaps even greater than before at this time of grief, and as the strain of national emergencies pressed in upon him. In August of 1861 he issued a proclamation for a national fast day, which is most impressive for its reverential spirit.

"Whereas it is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the supreme government of God, to bow in humble submission to His chastisements, to confess and deplore their sins and

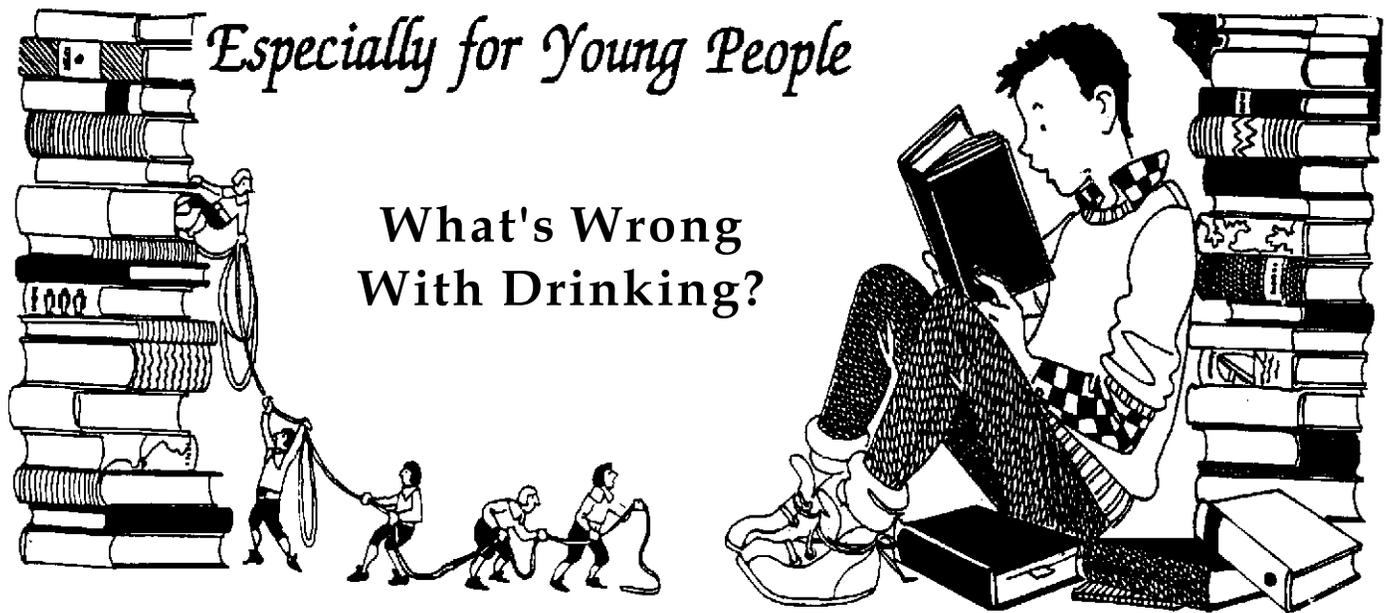
transgressions in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to pray with all fervency and contrition for the pardon of their past offenses, and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action.

"And whereas when our own beloved country, once, by the blessing of God, united, prosperous, and happy, is now afflicted with faction and civil war, it is peculiarly fit for us to recognize the hand of God in this terrible visitation, and in sorrowful remembrance of our own faults and crimes as a nation, and as individuals, to humble ourselves before Him and to pray for His mercy—to pray that we may be spared further punishment, though most justly deserved."

Think of it, friend, a proclamation by the President of the United States for a national fast day. Now, just as this was the case in Lincoln's day, even more so are our troubles pressing us on every hand. We must accept the Gospel as a little child and believe the Word of God if we would be saved from national disaster and from personal tragedy which is so prevalent in the land today.

"But it is not until after the death of his son that we begin to find evidence that President Lincoln was making a personal test of Christianity. Broken by his anxiety for the country, wounded nigh to death by his loss, he felt that he must have a support outside of himself, that from some source he must draw new courage. Could he find the help he needed in the Christian faith? From this time on, he was seen often with the Bible in his hand, and he is known to have prayed frequently. His personal relation to God occupied his mind much. He was deeply concerned to know, as he told a visiting delegation once, not whether the Lord was on his side, but whether he was on the Lord's side. Henceforth one of the most real influences in Abraham Lincoln's life and conduct was his dependence upon a personal God."

Selected



From the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean highways and byways, the way is lined with roadhouses and taverns. They are the rendezvous for millions of young people. Nearly every drug store and grocery store sells liquor and beer, and it is hard to find a restaurant where beer is not served. The young people have been made booze conscious. Newspapers advertise it, magazines display it as well as billboards along the highways, and the radio brings the advertisements into the home.

In the old saloon days women were ashamed to go into a bar and would occasionally go through the back door, but today girls and women boldly stand alongside the bar with men, drinking. Legalized booze is debauching the youth of our land. While Belshazzar drank before the thousands, judgment hung over the nation. Through Noah's drunkenness the curse came upon the race of Ham. Lot's drunkenness made him the father of his daughters' children.

A large percentage of all the automobile accidents can be traced to booze. It fills the hospitals and crowds the psychiatric wards. It enlarges penitentiaries, breaks up thousands of homes, and robs many innocent children of food and clothing. It is the cause of many murders and diseases. Truly "wine is a mock-

er, strong drink is raging; and who-soever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).

The reason there is not much preaching today against the movie theaters, dancing, and the barrooms is that some church officials are financially interested in this soul traffic.

There is only one remedy for sin and drunkenness, and that is not reformation, eradication, or suppression, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His shed blood.

Casey Jeltema was brought up in a good home, and as a child went to Sunday school and church. However, he did not know the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, and when he was just a boy, he had his first taste of liquor. Perhaps they said to him, "Be a sport." That was the beginning of Casey's downfall. He began to drink and said to himself, "I can take it or leave it alone," but he found out before very long that booze had such a hold upon him that he could not leave it alone, and he became a hopeless drunkard.

Time after time, Casey was locked up in the local jail. The jailer got disgusted with him at last and said to the judge, "What's the use of releasing him? Why not lock him in his cell and throw the key in the river?" The reason was that after being released, it would not be

twenty-four hours before Casey would be carried back into his cell, drunk again.

Casey made many resolutions. One time, after signing a pledge that he would never touch another drop of liquor, the first saloon that he came to he entered. He could not resist the smell of liquor that came through the door, and that very same night he was back of the bars, dead drunk. He tried every way to break himself of this habit, but went from bad to worse.

One day when he was released from jail he wandered into a Gospel meeting, where a revival meeting was being held. Friendless and in rags, he listened attentively to the sweet story of Jesus, Who could set the prisoner free. That night Casey surrendered to the Lord Jesus, and the booze habit was taken away.

Today Casey is a Christian worker, married, and the father of two fine children. A few weeks after his conversion, in another meeting, Casey stood to his feet and said, "I was a drunkard, but tonight I'm sober," and then he sat down. The preacher pointed his finger at him and said, "That's the greatest testimony I have ever heard," because in a few words he had told what God had done for him.

Selected

It's All in the Blood!



A man in the prime of life lay on his couch. Suddenly laid aside by sickness from an active business life and from a place of prominence in the church of which he was an esteemed member and office bearer, he had leisure time given to him to think. Never before, in the days of health and religious effort, had he considered his own personal condition in the sight of God, or where he would go when earthly life was past.

On the afternoon of the Lord's day, a friend called to see him, and in the course of conversation, he said to the sick merchant, "I have more than once been at the very gate of death, and I cannot describe what peace I enjoyed at the prospect of meeting God, simply trusting in the precious blood of Jesus Christ as my only plea, my only title."

The sick man raised himself on his elbow and said, "I have been thinking about the same matter a good deal of late. I feel I have not been sufficiently zealous in religion to enable me to say I can look into the future as you do. I would give all that I possess if I could."

"Religion is not a title to Heaven, dear sir," replied the Christian visitor. "Religion never gave anyone peace with God or a title to His presence. The blood of Jesus Christ alone can do that."

The sick man seemed bewildered. He had been accustomed to thinking that religion was the best thing in the world, and that when people spoke of "conversion," "salvation," and "cleansing in the blood of Christ," they simply expressed in that way and according to their own peculiar creed, the same thing he called "religion."

His friend saw his perplexity, and in order to take full advantage of it, to bring before him the Gospel of God's salvation, he said, "May I read you a short portion of the Bible?" to which he received a glad assent. The portion chosen was Exodus, Chapter 12, in which an account of the Passover, the sprinkling of the blood, and the safety of the firstborn are given.

Commenting briefly on the verses, he said, "It was the blood shed and sprinkled, the blood trusted, and it alone that gave safety to all within the house that night. All under the shelter of the blood were safe, and all outside it, no matter what their character, were doomed to judgment." There was a solemn silence that the visitor felt unwilling to break, as it seemed to him that God was working deep conviction by His Spirit through the Word in the soul of him who lay at his side.

Sitting up, the sick man

stretched forth his hand, and grasping the hand of the visitor, slowly and with great emotion, said, "It's all in the blood. I see it now, as I never did before. I have been trusting to my religion and my own righteousness, but now I see clearly that my only title to salvation is in the blood of Christ."

After the sick man prayed through, the Christian bowed his head in silent thanksgiving to God, and at the request of the sick merchant, now filled with peace and joy, he bowed his knees and gave thanks to God for his deliverance and conversion. God raised him to testify to others of the precious blood of Christ, the sinner's only plea and title to Heaven.

How many think that religion is a savior? How many are trusting to their own righteousness and good works to take them, or to help them, into Heaven, whereas God declares that the precious blood of Christ, trusted in by the sinner, is the only shelter from coming wrath.

Selected

Don't treat God as a lawyer, never calling Him until you are in trouble.

Acts 19:11 *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:*

12 *So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*

13 *Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.*

14 *And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.*

15 *And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?*

16 *And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*

17 *And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at*

Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 *And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.*

19 *Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.*

20 *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*

So Mightily Grew the Word of God and Prevailed



Brother Calvin Foster

The Word of God Will Prevail

Every child of God ought to want to see the Word of God grow and prevail. In order for it to grow, it has to be planted in the right way. We need more men of God who will not add to or take away from the Word, but who will preach the pure, unadulterated Word. It is planted by

people who receive it and who truly yield their lives to it. As an individual, I must yield to the Word of God in order for it to grow and prevail in my own life. You need to do likewise; then you can touch the lives of others, and the Word of God can continue to grow. It is different from men's ideas and opinions. You should not try to change God's

Word by adding to it or by taking away from it.

In our Scripture text we read of a glorious victory for the church. You need to realize and understand that spiritual growth has always and will always cause opposition. Whenever and wherever the Word of God grows, opposition will also grow. When the Word begins to grow in

your life and you obey it, opposition against the Word will come, so you might as well get ready for it. Opposition has always come against the church, and it always will, because the world and the devil hate the Word of God. Even so, Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." I thank God for that!

If you are a new convert, you need to realize that the more you obey God, the more you will stir up opposition. Opposition may come against you from your unsaved family or your unsaved friends. Why? You are obeying the Word of God, and the opposition is against the Word. You should not take it personally. The devil wants to cause you to leave Christ. Before you were saved, perhaps you did not have any problems with your relatives, your friends, or your schoolmates. Now since you are saved, opposition is coming against the Word of God that is in your heart. The devil wants to take the Word from you. Dear one, you need to hold on to the Word of God tightly; it is a great treasure.

No football coach wants to see the team's star player running with the football and clowning around in front of the crowd. He wants that player to tuck the football in his arm tightly and carry it over the goal line. So it is with the Word of God. Saint, you need to treasure the Word of God and cling to it. The Word of God is valuable. Your salvation depends on your obedience to it. None of us can float into Heaven on a flowery bed of ease. You must put on the whole armor of God and get ready for a fight if you are going to keep the Word of God in your life.

You should never allow the devil to make you feel that you can put forth the Gospel without stirring him up. Whenever you put forth the true Gospel, you will stir up the devil. Today many people's preaching does not even stir the devil. That is not the true Gospel. The devil is laughing at them. He says, "Go ahead and preach that. Put them to

sleep." The devil does not care about their preaching a watered-down gospel. Paul called it "another gospel."

Opposition Against the Gospel

I want to prove to you by the Bible that opposition is coming to you if you are saved. In 2 Timothy 3:12 the Apostle Paul stated, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Did he say half the congregation would suffer persecution? No, he said that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. People are going to harass you and mistreat you, so you might as well get ready for it. Why? Because you are living for Christ Jesus. When you are living a godly life for Christ Jesus, you are going to suffer persecution. You might as well get your feelings off your sleeve and get some backbone and live for God. You must stand up for Jesus, because persecution is coming.

We are living in a world where sometimes people just look at you and do not like you. As soon as you tell them that you love Jesus and you are living for God, you might as well get ready for persecution, because it is coming. It may come from close family members.

When bold, Spirit-filled preaching goes forth, people will react in one of two ways: they will either believe the Gospel and accept it or harden their hearts and oppose it. I thank God for everyone who accepts the Gospel. God sends the Gospel to a community to bless it. Friend, God sent the Gospel to you to bless your life. However, the enemy of souls does not want your life to be blessed, and he does not want the community to be blessed. The mayor, the politicians, the school teachers, and everyone who cares about the community ought to want to see the Word of God prosper and prevail. It is going to take the Word of God to straighten out man and all his problems. If people will accept the Word of God, He will help them

with all their problems.

My friend, you must believe the Gospel and accept it. You should not harden your heart against it. God wants to bless your life. A watered-down or perverted gospel that does not offend anyone will not bless anyone. A watered-down gospel tells people, "As long as you go to church, you are all right." Meanwhile, it allows church members to live any way they please. Why would you waste your time and waste your gasoline to hear the Gospel and then not live it?

God does not want you to sit under preachers who are going to preach you into hell on flowery beds of ease. You should want to know what is wrong in your life so that you can get right with God. You are heading for the Judgment. So, dear one, you should not oppose the Gospel. This is serious. We are dealing with Almighty God. After I preach the Gospel, I must live what I preach. I am held responsible for what I preach. So, dear one, you should not oppose the Gospel.

The True Gospel

True Gospel preaching will offend false religion. False preachers tell people that no one can live free from sin and that they should just do the best they can, join a church, and shake a preacher's hand. The true Gospel will offend false religion. They do not like to call in a Church of God preacher to preach to people who do not want to live right and who do not want to hear the Truth.

Preaching the true Gospel will offend homosexuals. The Gospel speaks against that lifestyle. It does not matter if mayors, judges, or school teachers believe it is all right; God is against it. God never put it in a man to lust after another man. The true Gospel is against that ungodliness. The true Gospel teaches against fornication. Too many people have the attitude, "I am an adult, so I can have sexual intercourse whenever I want to." If you are not married, that is sin before God. If you keep doing

it, you will end up in hell one day. The true Gospel speaks against common law marriage. What are you doing shacking up with someone without being married to him or her? I am warning you from God that if you are in such a relationship, you will end up in hell if you do not get out of it and repent. Even if it is a civil law on the books, it is still sin before God. Man, if you love a woman that much, then you ought to marry her!

When you consider those relationships, the woman always gets the short end of the deal. An old saying is, "Why buy a cow if you can get free milk?" After a while, the old playboy will go down the highway and leave "Sally Sue" sitting there with tears in her eyes. Young woman, you should not get in any relationship like that. Remember, it is a sin against God. It does not make any difference if your sister or your brother or your mother or your father does it. It is wrong in the eyes of God.

The true Gospel will offend people. That is the kind of preaching that many people do not want to hear, because they do not want to be offended. However, the kind of gospel that will not offend them will not bless them. Many preachers let couples be church members when they are living together outside of wedlock. The preacher will not preach against it; he will not even talk to the couple about it. May God have mercy!

Church of God, how blessed we are to have true men of God who preach the Truth! There is more in the Bible than just the message of love. I thank God for the love of God, but there is more to the Gospel. A preacher does not truly love people if he will not tell them the Truth. If you truly love your friend who is a homosexual or the one who is committing fornication or the one who is living in a common law marriage, you will tell him or her the truth when God gives you the opportunity. I am not in any way telling you to go out and point your

finger at people and tell them that they are going to hell. You must follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. You may buy him a cola or a meal, but most importantly, you must wait for the Holy Spirit's leading.

Counterfeits

Again, verses 13-16 of our Scripture text read: "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

These verses tell about some religious men whom I call "counterfeiters." They said, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." They were trying to cast out the devil, just as Jesus did. It is dangerous to play around with the devil and evil spirits. The evil spirit said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Everything real usually has a counterfeit. Recently our government printed new money, and almost immediately some people used computers to counterfeit the new money. The devil always has counterfeiters, or hypocrites. If you are a hypocrite, there are two who really know you: God knows you, and the devil knows you. You might have other Christians fooled, but you do not have God fooled, and you do not have the devil fooled.

As God's people, we want to see the Word of God grow and prevail. We want to see the Word grow in people's lives and grow in our communities and prevail. Friend, if you do not want to see that, you are an enemy of God. If you are a hypocrite, you are God's enemy and the

church's enemy. If you are saying one thing and doing another, you are an enemy of God. You should want to see the Word of God prevail.

Our Scripture text tells of a glorious victory for the church. Those people confessed their sins and burned their books in submission to God before all men. They confessed their sins and, in essence, said, "Let's burn this stuff and get everything out of our lives that is not right." I don't want to hold on to anything that is not right. We read that they burned those books. Saint, when God shows you something in your life that is a hindrance to your spirituality, you had better get it out of your life. You will not grow in Christ if you do not get it out.

Counting the Cost

When those people burned their books in submission to God before all men, they did not care who heard about it. When you get saved, you will get rid of some things in your life, no matter how much value the world might place on those things. When the early church counted the cost of those books, their value was fifty thousand pieces of silver. That was a lot of money. To serve God, dear one, you need to sit down and count the cost. One song says:

*When first I started to seek the Lord,
I'm glad I counted the cost;
I fully measured to Jesus' Word,
I'm glad I counted the cost.*

*'Twill not be long till the Lord shall
come,
I'm glad I counted the cost;
And bear my soul to that heav'nly
home,
I'm glad I counted the cost.*

*I've paid the price and obtained the
prize,
He saved my soul that was lost;
And now my treasures are in the skies;
I'm glad I counted the cost.*

I am glad that I counted the cost!
It pays to serve the Lord. My life was

never as blessed as it has been since I have been serving Jesus. There is a bright future for the saints of God. Heaven will be sweet! The devil is coming against the Word of God. The devil hates to see God's people together. We are standing on the Word of God. The devil hates that because he does not want us to go to Heaven, and he does not want our experiences in this life to be sweet. The more we love one another as children of God and the more we work together to further God's cause and purpose, the happier we will be while living in this old world.

Speaking of God's people, the devil says: "I am going to figure out a way to divide them and to make them angry with one another. I am going to break up their unity." We have to say no to the devil. The Word of God must prevail and prosper. Saint, you must keep the Word of God in your heart and life. God will not fail you.

True Self-Denial

Jesus said that a man must deny himself. You must count the cost and deny yourself. Self-denial means to say no to self. Self may want to do this or that, but you have to say, "No, I am not going to do that." A man's self-denial does not consist of the strong words he speaks from his mouth. A person can say anything. Too many people give God lip service, but their hearts are not in serving Him.

In Matthew 15:8 Jesus said, "This people . . . honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." True self-denial is how much a man or a woman is willing to give up for Christ. It is not giving up bubble gum or a cup of coffee for a season. It is much more than that. True self-denial is what you are truly willing to give up for Christ to be what God wants you to be.

In Luke 9:23 Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." You must say no to yourself, say no to instincts,

and say no to fleshly desires that want you to touch, taste, and handle things that are wrong. Things that are wrong will eventually drag you down. The devil wants to take your salvation away from you. In Philippians 2:12 the Apostle Paul said to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." You must not measure yourself by anyone else. You must do what God has told you to do. Other people may not see what He has shown you.

You need to follow the Lord as He reveals Himself to you. You are responsible for your own spirituality. What does the Bible say to do if others drag their feet and are unconcerned and lean in their souls? Second Timothy 3:5 reads, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." You have to deny yourself: touch not, taste not, and handle not that which is wrong.

Paul was an educated man who spoke many languages. He had much going for him. In Philippians 3:4-8 Paul said: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

The Pharisees were one of the strictest religious sects of Paul's time. He was excited about his religion. He said he had zeal, and he persecuted the Church of God. Again, he said in verse 6, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." No one could point a finger at him. He said he

was blameless. Although Paul was a very educated man, he said in verse 7, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." In essence, Paul was saying, "I gave up all so that I could have Christ in my life."

In verse 8 Paul said, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Paul counted all his prosperity in the world as dirt and filth so that he might win Christ. If you are not careful, the devil will trick you and cause you to lose your soul. You need to get serious about your soul. The things of God are very important.

Paul continued in verses 9-10: "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Most people do not want to go through anything difficult for Jesus today. They want to know about His suffering and all that He went through, but when it comes down to the personal life, Paul said, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." You must be willing to go through something if you are going to make it to Heaven. You must be a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ. You need to quit wearing your feelings on your sleeve, so to speak. Let us work hard for God and work together. Let us get personalities and feelings out of the way and get busy about the Father's business.

Sin Will Turn on You

Hebrews 11:24-25, speaking of Moses, reads: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction

with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." The enjoyment of a sinful life is a quickly passing season. If you are not saved, perhaps you are holding on to something that you do not want to lay aside for God. It could be a boyfriend or a girlfriend, your own selfish ways, or a pleasurable thing.

We read that Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Had he accepted that title, he could have been an important man in Egypt and lifted up in the eyes of the people. He could have had power, money, and authority; yet Moses refused it all because he knew he was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Instead he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. By Moses' actions, he was saying, "I would rather be a child of God in this world and turn away from all the pleasures and the sin of this world so that I can enjoy eternity with God forever." Now, you tell me if that was a good investment.

Again, Hebrews 11:25 tells us, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Yes, there are pleasures in sin, but they only last for a season. Sin will turn on you. If you stay with sin, you will live to see it crush you and destroy you; it is ruinous. If you are content to live in sin, the devil has your mind deceived, and sin is going to take you down. One day you are going to be so sorry that you have lived in sin.

In John 8:21 Jesus said, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." Our Scripture text says, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." Jesus is leaving the decision to you. I hope you will make the right choice. If you die in your sins, Jesus' words are going to come to pass: "Whither I go, ye cannot come."

The beauty of the Gospel is that you do not have to die in your sins. You can be saved today. Then if God

should call you into eternity, you can be in Paradise with Jesus. Oh, how serious it is! You do not know when death will come. You need to walk uprightly before God every day. Hebrews 9:27 states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." You should not take any chances with life because you do not know when death will overtake you. Friend, will you get saved today? If you do not accept God's plan of salvation, you will be very sorry at the end of your life.

God wants to see the Word of God grow in your life. You might

not have much understanding about the Word of God. You might not even know how to study the Bible, but there is always a beginning. Let the Word of God come into your heart and life and begin to grow. Watch and see if you do not grow into a beautiful person. You can grow and become more and more like Christ, and the Word will prevail. Whatever persecution you might go through, God can give you a strong backbone for it. Won't you pray and be saved?

(Cassette C-5191E)

The Seven Wonders of the Bible

There are the seven wonders of the world, but here are seven wonders of the Word.

1. The wonder of its formation, i.e., the mysterious method of its formation. The way in which the Bible grew is one of the mysteries of time.
2. The wonder of its unification. It is a library of sixty-six books, yet one Book.
3. The wonder of its age. It is the most ancient of all books.
4. The wonder of its sale. It is the best seller of any book.
5. The wonder of its interest. The only book in the world read by all classes.
6. The wonder of its language. Although written largely by uneducated men, it is the best from a literary standpoint.
7. The wonder of its preservation. It has been the most hated book of all books. Time and again, efforts have been made to annihilate it, yet it still exists.

"The Word of our God shall stand for ever."

(Isaiah

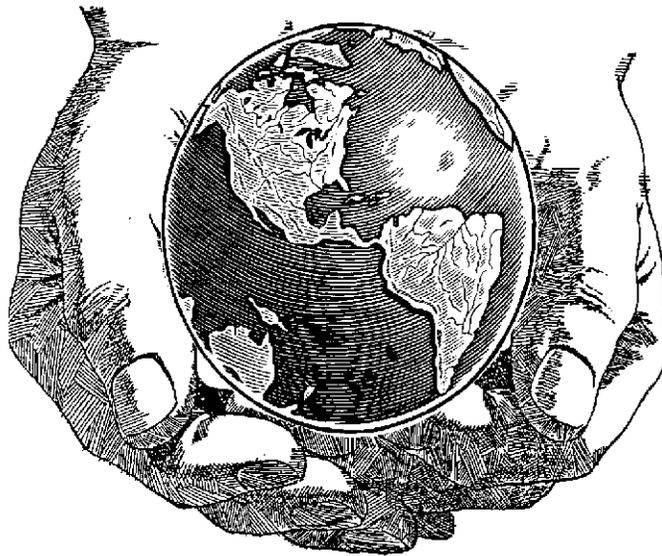
Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Ye Are the Light of the World



Brother Aurelius Raines

The Christian's Daily Living

Jesus let His disciples know in no uncertain terms that He did not merely want them to desire to be the light of the world. He spoke a basic reality to them, declaring, "Ye are the light of the world." Many have associated this light with having material possessions. Often people think God is with them because they have abundant finances, fine homes, and drive new cars. Since I have been saved, I have been blessed materially. We even tell sinners that

if they get saved, God will bless them, and we are speaking of spiritual and material blessings. However, when Jesus made the declaration, "Ye are the light of the world," He did not have material blessings in mind. Also, what makes God's people the light of the world is not the doctrine.

I am not trying to belittle doctrine, because having the right doctrine is very important. The Apostle Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:3, "For this cause left I thee in Crete and Ephesus that ye might

charge some that they teach no other doctrine." Although doctrine has a prominent place in helping us to be the light of the world, what truly makes us the light of the world is the life of holiness that we live as a direct result of being in Christ Jesus. This is the light that the world needs to see.

When Jesus said in verse 14 of our Scripture text, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid," He was letting people know that it is the Christian life that reflects to the whole world

what the Church of God is and what the Church of God is not. I asked God to give me a vision of this and to help me to see what this is really all about.

Testimonies are good, but people want to see the Christian live the testimony; in other words, they want to see the testimony in the Christian's daily living. Many times when people do not see the testimony as they ought to see it, they become discouraged. Often we associate being discouraged with not reading the Bible or not going to church. These are things that people ought to do, and when they do not do them, they will become discouraged. However, discouragement can go a little deeper than that. A person can get discouraged when he looks around and does not see things as he thinks they ought to be.

I like the song, "The Church Triumphant." Whether you see the church or not, God has a people standing in the midst of the tests and trials of life. The church is showing forth light to this lost and dying world. I am not talking about having a "flashlight" spirit: it flashes on and then it flashes off. I am talking about a steady, burning light. This is the light that Jesus taught of having. It does not matter whether there are good times or bad times when you are the light of the world; you are a steady light.

Joy in the Midst of Trials

The world is not looking for people who are part-time saints or those who are very encouraged when things are going well, but the minute situations get a little tough and they do not understand what is going on around them, they say, "Where is God?" The light that Jesus was talking about is light that will not go out. In fact, the darker the night, the brighter the light. Darkness should show off God's people more.

When everything is going well, it is easy to be the light of the world. However, God wants to bring you to

a place where, even when the battle starts to get hot, you will still believe that God is God. I tell my wife from time to time that the trials we go through are just God's way of establishing His testimony. Just because circumstances are not as we want them to be, that does not change God and that should not take away our joy.

The tests and trials of life might weigh on you heavily for a little while, but joy will come in the morning. My wife gave that testimony. A doctor told her that she was going to need several surgeries and that she was not going to have a long life. Do you know why we were able to keep our joy? Because he is a man, and he has his own breath in his nostrils. He did not know what God was going to do. He was not the final authority. My Bible lets me know there is a joy that a stranger cannot meddle with.

If the only time you have joy is in the midst of a joyous occasion, you need to ask God to help you. This joy will take you through severe trials. Again, verse 14 of our Scripture text states, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." This verse carries the thought that there is not a situation or a circumstance that can put out that light. I will go so far as to say there is not a situation or a circumstance that can even dim the light. I do not preach this to condemn anyone, but only to encourage you. If your experience does not match up to what God said in His Word, the good news is that you can ask God to give you help. He can give you the experience that you need.

Sometimes folks pray, "O Lord, I want You to make me a pillar in the Church of God and establish my feet on the Solid Rock." So God says, "Okay. No problem," and then He sends tribulation to accomplish that. Then they wonder: "Why am I having so much trouble? Why do I keep going through all of this? I just want to be a pillar in the church, and I want to have a strong testi-

mony. I want to preach the Gospel." Next, God sends greater tribulation.

The Real Test of Faith

The light is a direct result of having the life of Jesus Christ. John 1:4 says, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." There is a close association between being a light and living holy. There can be no light without holiness. If there is holiness, there is light, and sinners are going to know the difference between those who merely testify about being saved and those who are truly saved.

Verse 9 says, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John was talking about Christ. Since Christ is the true Light, and when I got saved I accepted Christ into my life and have kept Him in my heart by faith and obedience, do you not think that Christ's light will shine out through me? Jesus said that a city set on a hill cannot be hid. People are going to see a lot of power and strength in the Church of God when we trust in God and determine that no matter what, we are going to be the light of the world.

When you really want this life, God will show you that to get this life, you must die out to the flesh. The only way to kill the flesh is to attack it. Do you know who people really think people of faith are? Often they think it is the man who walks on water, the man who lays hands on the sick and the sick jump up healed and praising the Lord. They call those people men and women of faith, but do you know what the real test of faith is? Every morning when you get up, you believe God and believe that He will keep you, no matter what the test is. You trust God to keep you saved.

In too many cases, people have reduced living by faith so much that, although they see good, godly people living without sin in their lives, having victory over the flesh, and manifesting the life of Christ, the only thing they say about them

is that they are good people. Well, they are more than good people. They are living by faith, pleasing God one day at a time, and having victory over the devil. The devil does not like that, so he gets on their case and will not let up until God calls him off. As a child of God, once you understand that, you will not have a problem understanding why people are always getting on your last nerve, so to speak. God wants to exercise His church spiritually so that she can be a light to a lost and dying world. Without Christ in an individual's life it is impossible for him or her to live a holy life. Many people can rattle off the doctrines that the Church of God believes in and can tell you the attributes of the church, yet they do not have any victory.

Where it is good to have the doctrine, it is better to have the life. You could spend all day explaining justification to somebody and he still might walk away scratching his head, wondering what you were talking about. On the other hand, when you live a life of victory over sin and he is scratching his head, wondering how you can do that, you can tell him that it is all Jesus. Being a new creature in Christ Jesus is what makes the difference!

The Grace of God at Work in People's Lives

Jesus was not trying to put a burden on His disciples when He told them, "Ye are the light of the world." He was just stating a fact. He knew that when He got hold of the heart of a man or a woman or a child that one would never be the same. When Christ moves into the heart, that person cannot help but produce a life consistent with the life of holiness, which is consistent with the life that God would like him to live. That is what the grace of God is all about.

It grieves my heart to hear people arguing over whether grace is one work or two works. If you do not have the grace of God, what else

is going to teach you that you must live holy, righteously, and godly in this present world? My Bible tells me that grace does that, yet the devil has people arguing over it. That is sad. I am learning more and more that I do not want to know anything about people, but only Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

If I see the life of Christ working in people's lives, even if they are down in the darkest part of Babylon, I know there is hope for them. Many folks have been misdirected. You can see by their spirit and by the way they are living that they have the fear of God. God said in Revelation 18:4, "Come out of her, my people." If we sound the trumpet loud and clear, they are going to come out of Babylon. God places the members in the body as it pleases Him. He does not need anyone's permission, and He is not going to ask anyone's permission. I would rather have the right spirit, which can give me understanding of the right doctrine, than to have the right doctrine and be confused because I do not have the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes people have things so set in their minds about how things have to work in order for God to be in something. The Book of Habakkuk in the Old Testament is not like the other Old Testament books. The Prophet Habakkuk was looking around and seeing things he did not understand. He started thinking about it and, in essence, said, "Well, God has to see it because He showed it to me, yet He is not doing anything about it." Habakkuk thought that because things did not happen in the way he thought they ought to happen that God must not have been in it. Therefore, Habakkuk said he was going to go to the tower and stay before God until He gave him an answer.

In so many words, God told him: "Habakkuk, if I had told you in advance what I was doing, you would not have believed it anyway. You are accusing Me of not seeing what is going on, but I am working. It is just not the way you thought I

would work." He told Habakkuk that He was going to give him a vision. Also, He told Habakkuk that He was working through what those Chaldeans, those wicked people, were doing. That was probably hard for that Jewish man to understand, but God was saying, "I am in this."

After the Lord showed Habakkuk the vision, He told him, "I want you to write it plainly so that everyone who reads it will start running." You know what the vision is: the just shall live by faith. God is in charge of the Church of God, and He is working through her. He is telling the church, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid." If God does not work in that little box that people put Him in, then they say it is not God.

Manifesting the Truth

Paul had a vision one night, and God told him to go to a certain place. Paul and Silas went on to a place called Philippi. For many days they walked around the city looking for a congregation, and a demon-filled woman followed behind them, saying, "These men are servants of the most High God." That was the devil trying to stir up trouble. Paul and Silas put up with that for many days; then Paul turned around and rebuked that spirit, and it came out of her.

That woman had made her masters rich through her divination, but when that spirit came out of her, she no longer had the spirit of divination. Her masters got angry because of that, and they had Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into a dungeon and put in stocks. Around midnight they started to have a prayer service. The reason God allowed Paul to be in that situation was that He knew He could depend on Paul. He knew that Paul would be a light no matter what happened to him.

When Paul and Silas were thrown into the dungeon and placed in stocks, they did not murmur or complain. At midnight when most

people were asleep, they began to sing and pray, and then they had the real "jailhouse rock." The jailer assumed that all the prisoners had escaped and was ready to kill himself, but Paul spoke up and said, "Do yourself no harm." Next, the jailer said, "What must I do to be saved?" When the jailer was ready to kill himself, Paul saw an opportunity. I believe that jailer heard all their singing, praying, and praising God, and he probably said to himself, "Those men ought to be sad, angry, and fighting with each other, but instead they are still praising God! They must have what they are singing and testifying about." No doubt, the Holy Spirit began to convict his heart. Paul and Silas were the light of the world when the opportunity presented itself. I believe with all my heart that as the saints let their lives testify for them, more and more people will cry out, "What must I do to be saved?"

Paul, writing to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 4:1, wrote, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." The Apostle Paul went through many things to preach the Gospel.

In verse 2 he said, "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty [those things that would cause people to say 'they are not what they say they are'], not walking in craftiness [today people call them 'cons' or 'slicksters' because they try to pull one over on you, but that is not what the saints do], nor handling the word of God deceitfully [in other words, we do not use the Word of God to try to get what we want or use it in a deceitful manner or use it in a way that does not produce the fruits of righteousness and holiness]; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Paul was talking about his role as a minister. His ministry is an example to us today. He said we are living to every man's conscience.

Sometimes no matter how you live or what you do, you cannot

convince some people, at least for a time. God used an experience at work to teach me a lesson. My superiors put a fellow to work with me as a temporary assignment for him. Since he had to work with me, I started to tell him what God had done for me and how God had saved me, but he cut me off and said, "I don't want to hear that." He was rejecting the Gospel, so I thought to myself, "Time is on my side, if God spares us, because he has to work with me every day."

I often feel happy in the Lord and start singing. Also, I have Scriptures written out on paper on the desk in front of me so that as I work, I can memorize them. I could not share with him, so I just had a good time all by myself. One day he said, "How did you get into that?" I am convinced that a holy life will get through the hardest core if we will be patient and believe God and trust Him. It does not bother me when a person acts mean and hard and acts as if he hates others. I am going to live in such a way that I can get to his conscience.

I remember a lady that I talked to about holiness and the Bible standard, and she did not particularly care for some things that I said, and she became angry with me. We parted and went our separate ways, and twenty-five years later, our paths crossed again. The first thing she asked me was how I was doing, and the next thing she asked me was if I was still saved. For twenty-five years, God had been dealing with her heart. You see, people do not always get it the day you first speak to them. We just need to be the light today and plant the Gospel seed.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:3, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." Saint, God saved you from sin, and He wants you to show others the way to Jesus Christ. If you fail to be a light so that others can see holiness and good works, how are they going to get saved? If they do not see the light, how are they ever going to come out of Babylon? If sinners do not see the

light, what is going to make them think about their eternity-bound souls? Our light is only hid to them that are lost.

Paul went on to say in verse 4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." This verse lets you know in no uncertain terms that if you fail to be a light, the devil is using you. You are letting him put out the light. I want to show you the seriousness of Jesus' declaration, "Ye are the light of the world."

Proclaiming the Word of Reconciliation

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 we find these words written by the Apostle Paul: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Being a light to the world will establish the fact that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus. The things that you used to enjoy in the flesh have all passed away. The things that you used to do that were contrary to holiness have passed away. Now people see an individual under new management.

Paul continued in verses 18-19: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. [Our purpose for being lights in the world is to exercise every opportunity to minister reconciliation. How does this reconciliation work?] To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

We become lights to the world, thereby enabling us to proclaim the word of reconciliation, showing others how they can be reconciled to God. Much of the problem today is that people want others to be reconciled to them, but they are not

God. If folks are not reconciled to them, they do not have much to do with them. The message is "be ye reconciled to God."

I believe that if God helps me, there is not a sinner anywhere that I cannot get through to. You may ask, "Do you mean that everyone you meet gets saved?" No. I am saying that with the Gospel I can reach any sinner who stays in my presence long enough. Let me explain. God is going to give every sinner an opportunity, at some point in life, either to accept the Gospel or to reject it. People cannot reject what they do not understand.

Paul wrote in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should

live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." I believe that sometimes this grace is working through God's people. That grace teaches sinners that they cannot live the way they are living and still go to Heaven. When they think that no one can live that way, God sends a light. This light is so powerful that it can cut through anybody's darkness. When it comes to natural light, does all the darkness leave? The light exposes the darkness, and the darkness is gone.

The same is true of the light in the life of Christ. That light makes itself known to folks who are sitting in darkness. Matthew 4:16 states, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." That light

was Jesus Christ. I have Christ in me, and as long as I yield to Christ, others are going to see the light shining in me, and then that will open the door for me to explain how they can be reconciled to God.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Light affords us many opportunities to show off Jesus Christ and to proclaim to a lost and dying world the word of reconciliation. Again, Jesus declared in Matthew 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Are you being the light that God would have you to be?

(Compact Disc TR-133E)

[Camp Meeting Report—contin. from p. 2] certainly inspired by the Lord as they spoke. Positive, pointed, Holy Ghost anointed preaching is what men and women need to hear in these days of uncertainty and unbelief. We would like to briefly share a couple of messages that were delivered. One message taught of how to have a strong, successful marriage. It outlined the different steps it takes for one to be a good husband or a good wife, such as the importance of caring deeply for one another, and of keeping good communication between the husband and the wife. The message stressed being conscious of the needs and concerns for each other and

not thinking only of one's self.

Another message described how wonderful and great the God of Heaven truly is. The main emphasis and title of the message was "There Ain't Nobody Like Him." Our Almighty God is all in all to everyone and in everything. One afternoon a special service was devoted to missions. Slides were presented, which showed the progress being made in Kenya, East Africa. That work has now grown to fifty-two active congregations.

Many wonderful things were accomplished during this winter camp meeting. Time after time, our hearts were made to rejoice as the singing and

preaching went forth. The visitation of the Lord brought joy, praise, and happiness to the saints. His presence was uplifting to each soul, providing encouragement to press on and fight the good fight of faith. We can truly recommend ordering the recorded messages that were preached and the beautiful songs that were sung by the choir and the special singers.

It will not be long until it will be time for the Spring Camp Meeting again here at God's Acres. We hope that you will begin to make preparations to attend this meeting as well as the August Camp Meeting.

**The world doesn't need a
definition of Christianity as much as
it needs a demonstration.**

Winter 2007 Camp Meeting Recordings

CD No.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER
TR-188E	12-26-07	There Is Wonderful Power in Prayer	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-189M TR-190E	12-27-07	The Judgment of God God's Great Concern for Women	Bro. Ervin Cultice Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-191M TR-192E	12-28-07	Let Not Iniquity Have Dominion Over Me Marriage Is Honorable	Bro. Garrett Haylock Bro. Allen Polston
TR-193M TR-194E	12-29-07	If Ye Have Faith Are You Ready?	Bro. E. David Stegmeier Bro. Reggie Stegmeier
TR-195M TR-196E	12-30-07	Four Great Tragedies Awaiting the Sinner Ain't Nobody Like Him	Bro. Larry Dishman Bro. Larry Dishman
TM-069		Winter Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-070		Winter Camp Meeting Songs #2	
TM-071		Winter Camp Meeting Songs #3	

All messages and songs are available on CD's only. CD's are \$3 each, plus postage. If you have a CD player that can play the MP3 format, you can buy your CD's in that format. This will save you considerable money. MP3 CD's are \$10 each, plus postage.

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And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop—
At late or early hour.
NOW is the only time you own;
Live, love, toil with a will—
Place no faith in TOMORROW for
The clock may then be still.

2008 Camp Meeting Dates

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December 28-31

*We hope you will plan your
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