

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 42 September 2012 No. 9



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalms 122:1

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

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.

POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

This periodical carries no subscription price; however, it is partially maintained through the gifts and offerings of its readers, with the balance of the expenses being paid by the local congregation.

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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Guest Editorial

"And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

Mark 10:44-45

"For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth."

Luke 22:27

Ministering to Others

The Lord of glory came into this world to save men and women from sin and death. He gave Himself willingly by taking on the form of a humble servant to mankind. He gave Himself freely to us, serving mankind so gallantly. Likewise, He expects us to give ourselves to Him and serve others in return. The Christian's life is a life of giving and serving God and others. Serving Christ through obedient living, heeding His words, and following His example is very important. In 1 Peter 2:21 we read, "... because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps." Providing a life of service and giving is a Christian's duty.

Unfortunately, we live in a world where many men and women think only of themselves, not considering the needs of others. Their lives are so wrapped up in themselves and what they want that they fail to see the soul that desperately needs help and attention. This is contrary to Jesus' teaching and example. He was not concerned about His own comforts. His life was spent helping and serving the needs of others. The Bible teaches us that the poor and needy will always be around. God planned things that way to give us an opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ. There are great blessings be-

stowed upon those who help and serve those who are unable to help themselves. Sacrificing one's own desires helps to eliminate self-centeredness and covetousness. Sharing and giving builds strong Christian character and reaps deep satisfaction.

In Matthew, Chapter 20, Jesus was confronted with a mother who had two sons whom she wanted to sit beside Jesus. This dear mother did not realize what she was asking. She was thinking of greatness and prestige for her two sons and not of the cost required to be paid for such a position. Jesus told her, "But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28). Many people would like to be great and to be recognized as important, but they are unwilling to follow the guidelines that lead to such a position.

Serving others can often be thankless and go unrecognized by the great majority. However, that which is done in secret and to the glory of God never goes unseen by the Master. There is One who never misses a thing; He sees every act of kindness and every mercy shown. He hears the words

[continued on page 8]

Jeremiah 31:29 In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.

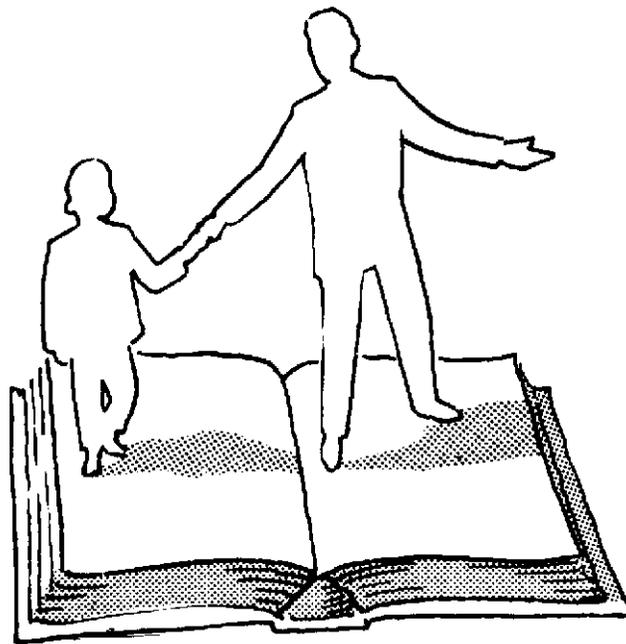
30 But every one shall die for his

own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

Ezekiel 18:2 What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of

Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?

Inherited Sins



Brother Roger L. Decker

Can a Child Inherit the Sins of His Parents?

Our Scripture text says in verse 29, "The fathers have eaten a sour grape." That is merely a proverbial expression, and it means the children suffer for the offences of their parents. Ezekiel 18:3-4 says: "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the

soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Every sinner will die for his own iniquity. No child shall suffer divine punishment for the sins of his father. Only if he acts the same way can he be said to bear the sins of the parent. That is the reason fathers have such great responsibility when teaching their children. Fathers and mothers alike can influence their children to go down the road of sin. One way you can influence your children is by failing to enforce the need of going to the house of worship. That

should be enforced in the home. Somebody may say, "Well, you can't make a child go to the house of worship." You can make him go to school, can't you? You make sure he goes to school, and you make sure he attends other events. What is wrong with making sure that a child goes to the house of God?

As a parent, you need to teach your children by putting God first in your own life and providing them with an environment that is conducive to raising children. Some home

environments are not conducive for raising young children when the parents are bickering, fighting, yelling, slamming doors, and telling each other off. Those things are not conducive to raising children to serve the Lord. Again, Ezekiel 18:2 says, "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?"

In Jeremiah 31:29 we have considered the same meaning as Ezekiel 18:2, but the subject here is presenting greater detail with a variety of circumstances to adapt it to all those cases to which it should apply. Let us consider these questions: How far can the moral evil of the parent be extended to his offspring? Do parents transfer their evil nature? Are their children punished for their parents' offenses? Again, Ezekiel 18:3 reads, "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel."

Is it possible for a child to inherit the sins of his mother or his father? God said in Ezekiel 18:4, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." No one is going to die for someone else's sins, just as no one can be saved by another person's righteousness. Here is a general judgment relative to the righteousness and unrighteousness of men and the influence of one man's state on that of another, particularly in respect to their moral conduct.

What Constitutes Sin?

In our study first we need to know what sin really is. How does God charge a person with sin? The best way to look at sin is to look at it from the beginning, and then we will go from there to the New Testament. Genesis 1:26-28 reads: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the

earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Here God repeats what man would have dominion over. In these first few verses we read that God created man in His image. Again, Genesis 1:26 says, "And God said, Let us make man in our image." Does that not mean that the image of God is in man? God did not put His image in an animal or any other part of creation except man. What part of man is in the image of God? You cannot say it is the outward man. If you say it is the outward man, you are saying God has different looks and different builds, because people do not look the same and are not built the same.

What part of man did God put His image into? God does not have a physical body; He is a Spirit. John 4:24 tells us, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Since God is a Spirit, that is the part that He put into man in His image. God does not have a corporal body, but He has a spiritual body.

When man came into this world, he had no sin. His soul was clean, and he was created upright. In Ecclesiastes 7:29 the wise man wrote, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." The word *inventions* simply means "devices."

Adam and Eve were placed in the garden, and they were given free access to it. They had the best environment and the best conditions. All conditions were perfect, and they had communication with God. They lived in a paradise. Sin had not entered the world yet; it was a heavenly place in Jesus Christ.

Genesis 3:8 implies that Adam and Eve had enjoyed communication and fellowship with God. This verse reads, "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden." Obviously, they had not done that before. Prior to that they had communication with God. It was not the first time they had heard the voice of God. They had heard His voice many times, but this particular time they hid themselves. Their communication and fellowship with God was severed, and it put a blight on their relationship.

Adam had received the instruction that the fruit of every tree in the garden could be freely eaten except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We do not know how many trees were in the garden, but we do know that he could freely eat of every tree but one. God said, in essence, "There is one tree that I do not want you to eat of." Adam had a law; he had received knowledge. Adam also had a will, and those are the same things that you and I have today: intellect and will, or desire.

A Law Was Given

After God had created Adam and the animals and had given him dominion, two things were still lacking. He had not made a woman yet, and the serpent had not come on the scene. God knew that man would get lonely, so He made a woman from the side of Adam, from one of Adam's ribs.

The woman came out of the side of the man. There is a great type that we see here. The first woman came from the side of Adam, and the second woman (the church) came from the side of Jesus Christ. We read in John 19:34, "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." The blood, which is a cleansing for you and me, washes away all sin. Faith in the blood brings a

cleansing for sin. Then there was the water, or the Spirit, which gives us life. Forgiveness and life await each one who repents and turns to Jesus Christ.

The law was in Genesis 2:17, when God said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This was the law, a command from the Lord God. However, man is a creature of choice, and to have a choice there must be at least two ways to go. Man had not been faced with this before, but suddenly the man was faced with a choice: the right way or the wrong way. God told Adam about both ways. He said in Genesis 3:16-17 that he could have freedom to eat of every tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was the right way; that was the good way. In verse 17 He let Adam know that if he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a death would take place that very day; that was the wrong way. Both ways were put before the man.

We have a command, and we have a knowledge of right and wrong, and that right and wrong was explained by the Lord God. There had to be something to tempt the man, so God created Satan. The Scripture says in Genesis 3:1a, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made." He did not go after the man, but rather he went to the weaker vessel, the woman. Why? He knew that he could stir up a conversation with the woman.

Satan presented a question to her. The question implied that God was unfair in forbidding Adam and Eve to eat of every tree but one. Quickly the woman came to the defense of God, and she explained the command as God gave it, but she added a little to the command. She told where the tree was, stating that "the tree is in the midst of the garden." In other words, she had eyed that tree. If you look up the word *midst*, you will find that it

means "in the center" of the garden. She knew where that tree was located, and then she went on to say that she was not allowed to touch it.

Now, God did not say not to touch it; nowhere will you find that in the Scriptures, but He did say not to eat of it. You see, Adam and Eve were put in the garden to dress it. What does that mean? They were to cultivate it and take care of it. You would have to touch the tree to dress it, but she added to the command because the command was grievous, stating that they were not allowed to even touch it.

Satan's Deception

Now that Eve had entered into a conversation with the serpent, he had her attention, so he finally fired the knockout punch, so to speak. He openly defied, or challenged, God's Word, and then he added to the conversation, in essence, saying: "You will be like God. You will be able to distinguish between good and evil." I want you to think about that a minute. These are the same words the devil uses yet today: "How do you know what sin is like if you have not tried it? How do you know what evil is going to be like if you have not tried it? God knows if you try it. You will know both good and evil, as He does."

How many young people have been told that? The devil says: "How do you know what an alcoholic beverage tastes like? How do you know what a joint does to you? You will never know unless you try it, and then you will be able to help someone else, because you will have experienced it." Oh, young person, how the devil likes to enter in a conversation with you, just as he did with Eve. You hear other people testify about the things that God has delivered them from, but you have never been involved in those things. You have never tried alcohol or drugs. Again, the devil will tell you, "You ought to at least try it, and then you will know."

Dear one, you want to stay away

from all those vices! Once you start down that road, you cannot turn from that way anytime you feel like it. The first cigarette I tried made me sick, and it made me cough. It tasted terrible, but the more I tried to smoke, the easier it got. Soon I could take the smoke into my lungs, and it had me. You see, when nicotine gets into your bloodstream, you desire to have it. My breakfast used to consist of a cup of coffee and a cigarette.

The devil will also say, "Just try a sip of beer." Of course, beer tastes really bitter, but after a while people get used to it. After a person drinks enough, he does not care what it tastes like. Then the next thing he knows, he is hooked on it. Oh, young person, you need to stay away from it. Do not enter into conversation with the tempter. The Bible says he is more subtle than any other creature that God made. He is deceptive and sneaky. If you give audience to him, the next thing you know, you are going to give in to his enticements.

Satan got Eve into a conversation, and in so many words, he went on to say: "After all, you will not die. God is going to be right there for you. God will forgive you and take you back anytime." When God made man in his original state, he was perfect. Man was placed in the garden a perfect specimen, and he showed God's creative power. In Deuteronomy 32:4 we read, "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

The Power of Choice

Adam, before he fell, was how God wanted man to be. He made man exactly how He wanted him to be: perfect, clean, without sin, and obedient to His commands. However, for love to be real, man had to have the choice of at least two different paths. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." God put within man the power of choice. Over and over in

the Word of God, you read the word "choose."

I am going to give you four Scriptures where man has a right to choose. Deuteronomy 30:19 reads, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

Joshua 24:15 states, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Psalms 25:12 says, "What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose." We read in Isaiah 66:4, "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."

These are just some Scriptures dealing with man's choice, and you can see that it is scattered through the Word of God that man has a choice. In order to have a choice, there has to be a tempter to present the wrong way versus the right way. An angel did not just happen to fall out of Heaven at the right time to make all of this possible. The serpent entered into a conversation with Eve. The Scripture says he is more subtle (clever, sly, crafty, or shrewd) than any beast that the Lord God had made. The devil never was and never will be in God's Heaven. If he had fallen out of Heaven, what would stop him from getting in there again? The devil is subtle and crafty. He is a candidate for hell, as well as all those who follow him.

I want to digress just for a moment and look at a well-worn text that is used to prop up this theory. Whenever someone wants to prop up the theory about the devil

being cast out of Heaven, they normally go to Isaiah 14:4-16 which reads: "That thou shalt take up this proverb [What is a proverb? It is a short, well-known saying that expresses an obvious truth and offers advice in one of the meanings.] against [who?] the king of Babylon, and say [here is the proverb], How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

"Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. [He is still talking about the proverb, the lamentation, and it is still against the king of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar. Here is the proverb.] How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms."

In verse 4 we found that this proverb was against the king of Babylon. The truth that needed to be expressed is that God still ruled and was able to bring a man from lofty heights down with the beasts of the field. It is God who puts men up and puts them down. Do not let anybody tell you any different. As quickly as He puts them up, He can also bring them down. First Samuel 2:7 says, "The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up."

Nebuchadnezzar's Lesson

Nebuchadnezzar was full of pride. Daniel 4:28-37 says: "All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. [He was speaking of the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had and the interpretation that Daniel gave. All of this came to pass just as Daniel said it would.] At the end of twelve months he walked [Who? King Nebuchadnezzar] in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

"While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. 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. 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?

"At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar [here is a truth that he learned] praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

What is Isaiah, Chapter 14, talking about? It is talking about King Nebuchadnezzar, not an angel that fell from Heaven. It is talking about a king, because you can read in Isaiah 14:16, "Is this the *man* that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?" It is not talking about the devil being kicked out of Heaven because he got exalted and swelled with pride, but rather Isaiah, Chapter 14, is talking about King Nebuchadnezzar, who became swelled with pride; so God brought him down as a beast of the field.

God's Plan From the Beginning

The devil, no matter how disliked and hated he may be, is necessary. I do not know of anybody that likes him. There are songs about him, such as, "*The devil is a sly, old fox; I'd like to catch him and put him in a box.*" Again, he is hated and disliked, but he is necessary.

The devil was not an afterthought, but he was in the plan of God from the foundation of the world. In order for man to have a choice, evil has to be present.

You do not like to be tempted, but you are going to be tempted. You show your love to God when you resist and say no to the temptation to do evil. When Jesus died on the Cross, what did He die for? He died for our transgressions. When sin is charged, it is charged in one of two ways. You are either charged with the sin of omission or the sin of commission.

The sin of omission is found in James 4:17, which reads, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." It is sin to the man who knows to do good and does it not; the sin is charged to him.

Regarding the sin of commission, Jesus said in John 8:34, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." In order for one to commit sin, his will must be exercised. God put a will inside each of us. A person must override his knowledge of God's will and go the direction of his own will to commit sin.

Where did sin come from? Where was it before the fall of Adam and Eve? Where is sin before someone becomes guilty of committing it? Sin is a principle, a power, a possibility, and a potential that can only become an actuality when it is committed. Sin can only become sin when it is actually committed by the sin of omission or the sin of commission. Romans 7:7-9 says: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

Paul was saying that sin had no life until there was a law, or until there was knowledge. Dead sin is the same as no sin. The question arises, how can sin be dead? Paul said he was alive once without the law. When there was no knowledge

of the law, sin was dead. There has to be a knowledge; therefore, he did not die until the law had mentioned sin, such as lust or covetousness. That is when sin came alive. Until that particular time, he had no knowledge and sin was dead.

Confess and Forsake Your Sin

Once an individual told me, "I sin either in thought or in deed every day."

I said, "All right, what sin have you committed today?"

He replied, "I don't know."

What kind of God would spring something on you that you did not know anything about? You must have a knowledge to have sin charged to your account. Paul said he was alive once without the law, or when there was no knowledge of the law. As Christians, we are either alive to God and dead to sin or alive unto sin and dead to God. It is either one way or the other.

Romans 3:19-20 says: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 5:13 states, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."

Romans 4:15 reads, "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." By one man's sin, sin entering into the world. Where did sin enter? It was not into the hearts, but "into the world." In other words, it became a power, or a principle; sin was active. The Scripture does not say that sin entered into the man, but rather into the world. It became a force when Adam committed sin. Paul said, ". . . death by sin;

and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Inheriting someone else's sin is completely prohibited by the Bible. You are responsible for your own sins. Isaiah, Chapter 53 says He was wounded for our transgressions. Can mothers and fathers influence their children? Absolutely, they can. However, sin is not charged to you until you commit it. Each individual is responsible for his own sin. When you get saved, you are to confess and forsake your sin, not somebody else's. If you had to drag in the sins of your father, you could not forsake that. You must confess and forsake your own sin.

Again, Ezekiel 18:2-4 says: "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine. . . ." What kind of soul do you think He put into man? Sin is in the heart, or in the soul of man. The flesh is just an instrument to commit sin. What did God say? "All souls are mine." He is the creator of your soul.

We read in Jeremiah 31:29-30: "In those days they shall say no

more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." The Word of God is very plain along this line. I trust that the Lord has given you some understanding. The only sin that God is going to lay to your account is your own sin. The only sin that you can confess is that which you have committed, and the only sin you can forsake is that which you are charged with.

(Compact Disc TR-768E)

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2] of comfort that you offer to a hurting heart. Dear one, we are to serve and give willingly, but not to receive in return or to be seen of men. Jesus instructed to "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. . . . But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:1,3-4).

There are many ways of ministering to our fellow man. The greatest way to serve and to give is to consistently live the Gospel every day everywhere, speaking words of admonition to the lost and unruly as the Lord directs, sharing God's love and mercy with everyone possible. Serving is using the gifts and

the talents that God has bestowed to our trust. Repairing a brother's vehicle or a sister's appliance can preach the Gospel without ever saying a word. Visiting and taking food into the home of a sick person shows God's love and concern to the needy. An inspired word of comfort to a saddened heart reveals that the Lord is touched with the feelings of man's grief. There is a very great need for giving, ministering, and serving. Are you doing all you can?

Ministering to others is serving Christ. All will be judged according to their attitudes toward others. Some day all mankind will be gathered before the judgment bar of God. Each individual will be judged according to his or her deeds performed in this life. God will place those who pleased Him on His right hand and those who displeased Him on His left hand. The faithful will be rewarded for their service ren-

dered. To those on His right hand He will say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee. . . . And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:34-37,40). Those on His left hand will be condemned for refusing to walk as He commanded and cast from His presence forever.

Selected

*Temptation may come upon you by surprise,
but do not let it dwell with you as a guest.*

Genesis 1:24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God

saw that it was good.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own

image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Christ's Expectation of His People



Brother Irwin Seshier

A Testing Time

Lots of people may say they want to be an airplane pilot; however, not just anybody can get into the cockpit of a plane and fly it. In all aspects of professional life, there are high expectations. Being a child of God is one of the highest expectations to have on this earth. In order to be known as a child of the King and to be a part of His royal kingdom, you have to follow high expectations.

God created man in His own image. God loved man more than

anything. When God said that man was created in His own image, He had high expectations for man to serve Him with all his heart and to be what God wanted him to be.

In the job market today, an employer expects much from his or her employees. The way the economy is right now, you ought to thank the Lord if you are still blessed with a job. When you pick up the newspaper or turn on the radio, you can hardly keep up with the number of jobs lost. There are so many cutbacks in the job market that many people are forced to scale

back their standard of living. While that may be necessary on the material side, it is not a time to scale back our service to God. Some people want to cut back on God, but this is a time when we need to draw even closer to Him.

I believe that we are in a testing time, a time when God is saying, "How are you going to react?" I am thankful for how He has blessed us richly and given us what we stand in need of, but sometimes He is going to put us to the test. This is a time when we need to draw closer to Him. As a country, we have seen

lots of good times economically, but too many people have left the Lord out of the picture, and now things have turned. Friend, you cannot make it without the Lord. You can do without this or that, but do not leave the Lord out of your life. The Lord has something in store for each of us. It is past time to do what the Lord expects of us. He has blessed us with so much. He has supplied our needs, and He has taken care of His people. I feel that the Lord has greater challenges for us out on the horizon. Friend, we have not scratched the surface of what God has in store for us. Therefore, we need to draw closer to Him.

As this world becomes more wicked, I believe that the world is going to look to the child of God to see how we are going to react to situations. If you get caught up in what the world gets caught up in, who is the world going to look to for strength? Who is the world going to look to as its example? Friend, the Lord is in control of the economy, the world market, and the financial side. No matter what man comes up with or what his ideas are, God is still in control. The world is going to get a glimpse to see if you are truly letting the Lord direct your footsteps.

Now is the time for the child of God to shine in the world. Though ungodly things might go on around us, we can say: "I am not going to let those things bother me. I am still going to serve God." God was here before the economy was ever set up, and He will be here long after it is gone. We must be where we ought to be as the people of God.

A child of God will shine forth in the most evil of times. When the world is dark and so corrupt and moving away from the goodness of God, a child of God stands out. A child of God is still a light set upon a hill, and the church will be magnified and built up. Dear one, you need to have a burning desire and a strong commitment to serve God regardless of what people say. What do you do when you are made fun

of? The child of God is a unique person. You need to stand up and let other people know that you are not going the wrong way but the right way.

Time to Follow Christ

In John 12:26 Jesus said, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Saint of God, it is time to get into the work of the Lord. Time is slipping by, and eternity is looming on the horizon. It is time to listen to what the Holy Spirit has to say. Regardless of what people say, it is time to listen to the Spirit of God.

Being able to know and understand the Truth and put it into motion is worth more than ten million worlds. What would you gain if you could gain the whole world or millions of worlds but died lost? You would gain nothing, and your life would have been lived in vain. Theodore Roosevelt once said, "A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education," and that is so true. Having a thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than knowing anything else in the world. Knowing that you are saved from sin and that the Lord has cleaned you up is important.

Your desire should be to do the will of God, to be in the house of God, to do what the Lord has commanded you to do. That is worth more than many worlds. Saints of God ought to bring their Bibles to the house of God. Some people do not even know when they last had it or where they last placed it. It is very important to take your Bible to the Lord's house.

When you were in school, you dared not go to school without your text books. You would have been made fun of and ridiculed by the students, and you would have been afraid to face the teacher. You need to take your Bible to the Lord's house and follow along in the Scriptures. A preacher could preach

something erroneous to you and because you did not follow along in the Word of God, you might believe it.

Sometimes it is difficult to get individuals to pay attention to the preaching of the Word. They fiddle with this and look at that or play with a child. They try to do anything but listen to the Word of God. Friend, the end of time is closer than you may think.

You may possess earthly knowledge, have much wealth, prestige, and notoriety in this old world, but if your heart is not right before God, what have you gained? You will have gained absolutely nothing. What would have been the purpose of living your life? What will a man give in exchange for his own soul? Lots of people are exchanging temporal things for their souls. Some trade worldly habits, drug addiction, gambling, prostitution, glamor, a boyfriend or a girlfriend, or their reputation for their souls. There is a lot of exchanging going on, but those doing the exchanging are getting shortchanged. When you do not have Jesus Christ in your life, you are being shortchanged. If you do not accept Jesus Christ, you are not getting the best end of the deal.

The world is getting everything that they can get their hands on. The flesh is never satisfied. Friend, sin will make you spin around thinking that you are being satisfied with this or that, but you can never be satisfied without Jesus Christ. That is like trying to put out a fire with a can of gasoline. You cannot win that battle.

I repeat, the flesh is never satisfied. You can see that in the way people live. They go here and there, buying this and that, changing this and that. If you are not careful, that type of spirit will affect you too. If you think you can go your way and prosper spiritually without God, you are fighting a losing battle. It will not work. Without God we are nothing. If you try to live the Christian life in your own strength,

you will not be able to do it. If you think you can give up the cigarette habit or the drinking habit on your own without the power of God in your life, you are fighting a losing battle. You must have His power in your life to say no to the devil. That is where the devil will defeat you if you are not careful. He will tell you that you cannot do this or that. Well, with the Lord in your life you can do all things.

Salvation Brings a Change

Sad to say, nominal religion has stepped in and made it very convenient for people to continue to live their lives the same as they have always lived, without any change in the way they are living. The reason I wanted Jesus Christ to begin with was that I wanted a change. I was sick of the way I was living. When you are truly sick of the way you are living, you will want to change. You do not want to gloss over sin. You will want a complete change, from the top of your head to the soles of your feet. In order for that to happen, you must have a change of heart. I thank God that my heart was changed. Salvation still works today! Jesus Christ is still in the saving business. He is still in the business of changing lives, and He wants to change men's and women's hearts.

God does not want to see men and women live the way they are living. He does not want you to go around in circles living a sinful life. He has something better in store for you. Jesus Christ will put a burning desire in your heart to live for Him. You will want to be in the house of God, and you will love it when the pastor schedules a revival or a special meeting. You will want to be there because that is where your heart wants to be. When your heart is there, there is no need to tug or coax or use gimmicks to get you there. You want to be there, not merely out of duty, but because you have the love of God in your heart, and you want to please Him.

I am thankful that I wanted a change in the way that I was living. I am thankful that true salvation brings that change. It brings a change in the places where you want to go now, a change of how you want to dress, and a change in the kind of companions that you want to keep company with. It brings a complete change, and you look at the world through different eyes, because you accept that change. Moreover, you do not ever want that change to be taken away, because every day you live for Jesus Christ it is a new day.

It is a blessed day because you are so happy to be alive, not only physically but spiritually. When Jesus died on the Cross, He hung there for you and me. When you think about that, you will not be so willing to give up your salvation. Friend, salvation is marvelous! I cannot express in words what salvation can do for you. The Gospel will open your eyes to your true condition. If you die in sin, you will split hell wide open.

God's Law of Sowing and Reaping

There is pleasure in sin. If there were no pleasure in sin, it would not hold people in its clutches the way it does. Friend, a reaping time follows the sowing of sin. You cannot sow wild oats and then forget about it. God does not forget about it. Hosea 8:7 reads, "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up." What good is a life if it has been given over to a sinful lifestyle?

Young person, do not think that you will not have to reap any of the wild oats you have sown. Do not think that because you are a member of a congregation that God will excuse you. God is going to hold you more accountable because you have heard the Gospel preached. You might have forgotten what you did at some of those wild parties,

but there is One who never forgets. The Lord's memory of what you did many years ago is as keen as if it happened seconds ago. The Lord remembers the things that you have done, and you will have to answer for these things on the Day of Judgment. Dear one, it is past time to start living for God. I implore you to look very closely at your life. You do not know what tomorrow holds, and you do not even know what today holds. It is well past time to get things settled with God. If you are saved, it is time to get yourself more rooted and grounded in the things of God.

Do you know why many people do not make it further up the spiritual highway? They are too shallow in their Christian experience. Too much of the flesh is being lifted up. Too many people merely go through the motions without a genuine experience of salvation. They think: "Well, it is Sunday. It is time to go to church." So they drag themselves to church. If Jesus is dwelling in your heart, you will be glad when it is time to go to the house of God. Why? The presence of God is there, the people of God are there, and that is where you can meet God. God's people come together as a congregation to worship God. God is not pleased with a shallow experience. He truly hates it, especially when one knows better.

Some people go to church and play games on their cell phones, whisper to their friends during the services, and pass notes; but when they get into trouble, they want the Lord to miraculously work everything out to their liking. Friend, it is not going to work that way. We go to the house of the Lord to worship God. God knows why you are there. You should be there to lift Him up and to magnify Him. People get into trouble, and then they wonder why they are in such a bind. They need to think back and ask, "What did I do to cause this?" Maybe they did something wrong during a service, laid out of Sunday school, or did not get into services as they should

have. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure that out.

The Importance of Answering God's Call

Proverbs 1:24-31 states: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

"Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me [what a terrible position to be in, to really need God and have Him laugh at your calamity]: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

When you go your own way instead of God's way, you are going to end up in trouble. The time will come when you will realize that your way is not working, but God will not hear you. He said He will laugh at your calamity. When you seek God, He will not be there. What a sad state of affairs! You should not allow yourself to be placed in such a position. You do not know when you might need to call upon God. You might be in a car accident upside down in a ditch somewhere. You might be in a semi-conscious condition or in a coma. He said that He would laugh at your calamity. You had a chance to do what you needed to do, but you failed to do it.

If you could uncap hell, no one would have to preach to you. You would repent immediately. If you go to hell, it will be too late for you to get straightened out with God. I am thankful for the Church of God, where I can go to hear the Truth.

The Truth broke the bonds of sin that had me tied up in knots. It is the Truth that will keep you from ever going back to the sinful lifestyle, and it is the Truth that is going to take you to Heaven one of these days. It is not a time to back away from Truth. It is time to stand up for the Truth.

I remember the horrible pit that He plucked me from, and I am thankful that the Truth keeps me from wanting to go back there. I have no desire to go back to that horrible pit. It takes the preaching of the Truth to feed your soul for you to make Heaven your home. You must be careful to guard your soul and your mind. The enemy of souls wants to destroy you and tear down the work of God, the people of God, and the man of God. Those spirits are prevalent today, just as they were prevalent in Jesus' time. Jesus had to fight those same spirits, but He did not give up. Wherever Jesus went, people's lives were changed. If some people did not want to listen to Him, He went to people who did want to listen. If you do not want to listen to the Gospel, there are people who will listen to it who still want to make Heaven their home.

Sin Is a Destroyer

Those spirits back in Jesus' day were carried by people who were religious but lost. Sad to say, ones who possess those types of spirits rarely recover from them. They would rather believe a lie than accept the truth. Nominal religion will take them all in. They say: "Come on over here, and you will not have to change a thing. You are a good person, and you are an upstanding citizen in this community. Lots of people know you, so we will make you a Sunday school teacher." They will take them in without their having a change of heart or without a change of lifestyle. They might notice that you mingle well with the youth, so they may make you a youth leader.

Jesus can clean you up and give

you the desire to stay clean and to live God's way. Wherever Jesus went, something miraculous happened. Someone once wrote a quote that states, "Either the Bible will keep you away from sin or sin will keep you away from the Bible." You must have a burning desire down deep in your heart to want to say no to the enemy and yes to what the Lord wants. No matter how the enemy comes at you, what he promises you, or what he might say he can do for you, he is still the enemy of your soul. He is a liar, and he has been a liar since the beginning. Satan has nothing to offer you compared to what Jesus Christ can offer you.

Jesus Christ can offer you peace, happiness, contentment, and a deep-seated joy that you cannot contain. You will want to let the world know what Jesus has done for you. When you go back to work on the job, others will actually see a difference in you. You will be able to distinguish the difference between what the enemy has to say to you and what Jesus has to say. There will not be any confusion about what Jesus has to say and what the enemy has to say. What Jesus has to say will make you more spiritual and will draw you closer to Him. The enemy will cause you to question what is going on, and that is not the work of the Lord.

It is time to lay aside things that the enemy causes you to think are so important in your life. How do those things stack up to what God wants in your life? Are they *that* important? We are living in a sinful world. Living a sinful life has a rippling effect. Sin not only blinds the eyes but also the heart. Sin has far-reaching and lasting results. When you commit sin, you not only do damage to yourself, but it also affects your family and the people you know. Sin affects your reputation as well as your influence on your job and in your community. Do not think that you can sin and just keep it hid. Sin will expose itself to everyone else. Sin does not care as long as

it gets the job done and it has the time in which to do it. Sin is a destroyer.

James 1:13-15 reads: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." This death is a spiritual death that separates you from God. The most terrible death is to be separated from God forever. You should never think that you know more than God knows. If you are going to serve God, you must be in complete obedience to what God expects of your life.

Serve the Living God

Sinner friend, are you going to allow the enemy to destroy you both physically and spiritually? Did you know that sin will rob you of your finances? I do not know how people can afford to smoke, drink, and drive a car today. That would just about take all your money. Sin has such a hold on people's lives that they feel they must have those vices. Many times if they do not have the finances to get something, they steal it; then their reputations are ruined. It is time for you to stand up for the right. It is not a time for you to let the enemy have the last laugh at your plight.

You can get yourself in very deep trouble when you go your own way. You need to listen to God and let Him direct your pathway. If you fail to let the Holy Spirit lead in your life, you will fail to do what the Lord expects of you.

Let me ask you a very serious question. Are you doing what is expected of you when it comes to the things of God? We each need spiritual strength in the day in which we are living. We are living in the last of the last days. I have never seen a time when the enemy

is attacking people as he is today. He is trying to wear them out both spiritually and physically. Where does the devil work? Most often he works in the mind. He will get you to question things, and then he will get you to think about those things constantly, until it wears you out.

I am thankful that we can serve One who is much stronger than the devil. He will be there for us when we come to the time in life that we think we cannot go any further. We can cry out to God and say: "Lord, I need You in this evil time in which I am living. You see how the old devil is giving me such a difficult time, but I am not going to give in. I am going to lean on You even more today than I did yesterday. Help me through this trial. I claim the victory in Your Name." The devil cannot stay around when he hears a prayer like that. He will flee quickly. The devil likes to beat people down and talk to them to try to discourage them. This is the time that you need to go to God in prayer and nip that in the bud before it even gets a strong hold on your mind.

Jesus loves you, sinner friend. He does not want you to be lost and to end up in a devil's hell. You need to take action now. Hebrews 9:14 asks, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" I am thankful that we serve a living God, a God who cares about us and who wants us to lean more on Him today than ever before. He is still a prayer answering God. He is the same yesterday,

today, and forever. God never changes.

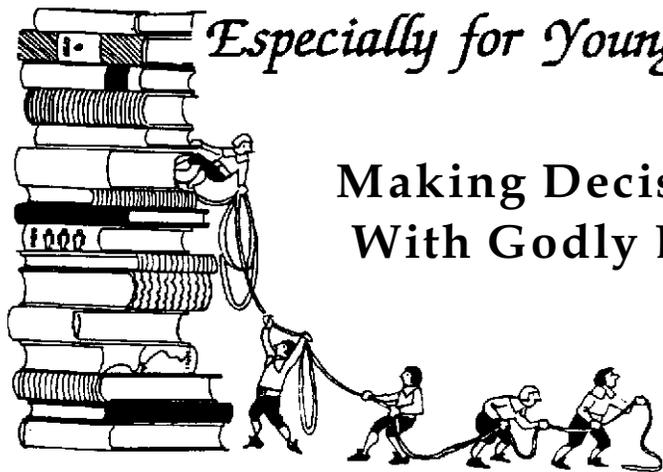
If you are not serving the Lord in a manner that is pleasing to Him, all that you have to offer is dead works. It is time to be alive in Jesus. It is time to serve Him with all your heart. If you are going to serve Him, you must not have any reservations. Your prayer should be: "Lord, I want to give You everything I have—my talents, my time, and my all. You have helped me so much and protected me from so much. I will do whatever I can do to serve You and to promote Your Name."

Young person, it is time for you to give God the best of your years, while you are young, before you go out in this world of sin and suffer its heartaches and despair. You will never regret it. No doubt, you heard the testimonies of those who regret living in sin, saying, "If only I would have given my heart to God at an earlier age!" They see their mistake. They failed to serve God at an earlier age, and then they say, "If I had served God at an earlier age, He would have saved me and protected me from that. I would not have gotten involved with this sin or that sin. Sin took away my health, my finances, and my marriage." Again, it is time to do what the Lord expects of you. If you have a need, now would be a great time to ask the Lord to help you. If you are unsaved, now would be a good time to ask Him to save you. Are you doing *all* that you know to do to promote the Kingdom of God?

(Compact Disc TR-407E)

The Bible may cause you
to wonder, but it will never cause
you to wander.

Especially for Young People



Making Decisions With Godly Eyes



I believe two things in life are challenges that exceed everything else. The first one is finding the Kingdom of God. The latter part of Matthew 7:14 tells us that "few there be that find it." The second thing is the ability to make godly decision. The kind of decisions you make effect your outcome in life. Not all decisions are easy. You may make some decisions without even realizing it. As you get up and go through the same routine every day, often you make choices without really thinking about the fact that you are choosing the direction that you are going. Some decisions in life are not difficult to make, but I believe that the most difficult decisions to make concern what is best for you.

One thing that makes this decision process so difficult is having two different objectives in life. As you go along in your spiritual walk with God, this is something that you have to learn to pay attention to, because it definitely affects your relationship with the Lord. You need to be made aware of the perils in making certain choices when your heart and affections are torn between two opposing ways. You cannot make proper decisions if your eyes are looking in the wrong direction.

Genesis 3:4-7 reads: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good

and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened."

The Scripture says "the eyes of them both were opened." As I meditated on this, I realized that the eyes that were opened for Eve were not the eyes that she would use to see God or to honor God, but to find pleasure. It brought forth a new awareness of a different life, a new perspective on living, and a tragedy took place there.

The fall of man in the garden was a disaster to man's relationship with God. Mankind died a spiritual death, and all the spiritual powers that he possessed, the fellowship and the relationship with God, were lost. They became useless to him. So it was with man's spiritual sight. He became spiritually blind to the things that he once knew. He once knew what God wanted him to do, but after he sinned and turned away from God, he began to focus on a different aspect of life. His understanding became blinded. As his eyes were opened that day, little did he realize that his eyes became opened to his carnal nature, and the visions that he once possessed were lost. Oh, how important it is to have your eyes re-opened and revived.

Romans 1:21 says, "Because that,

when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." This is a description of all mankind that has turned away from God, even though they might have great aspirations in life. They are not following the path God had designed and created for them.

Ephesians 4:17-18 reads: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

Two great powers in life are in constant conflict in our world: one is the power of good and the other is the power of wrong. God is light, and everything that comes from Him is good. Light is the emblem of Truth, and darkness is the symbol of error. Light represents holiness, and darkness is the figure of sin. Light reveals things and represents knowledge, especially that of spiritual things. Darkness is ignorance, and it conceals things.

All the children of men who have not been born of God walk by sight, having no higher principle to consider. They are limited to the use of their natural senses. We all have five senses: we have hearing, smelling, taste, touch, and sight. Three of these senses are very limited in the amount of knowledge gained by

using them, which are taste, smell, and feeling. These things can only give you information if you actually come into contact with something. On the other hand, hearing is a little greater because you can hear something at a distance. For example, if something explodes outside, you can hear it, and you have an awareness of it. Another example is, if you hear the choir singing, you know the choir is singing. You may not be in the choir room, but you can hear them singing.

Though little knowledge is gained by the other senses, sight is by far the greatest that you have to bring you understanding. Through your sight, you can gain knowledge of the visible world. You can look around the surface of the earth and see many things, and you can see the Sun, which is approximately 93 million miles away. You can peer off into space and view the stars that are light-years away. Although they are a great distance away, you can have a limited knowledge of them.

With all the abilities of the eyes and all the technology, if you were to take telescopes and look out into space or use a microscope to look across the earth, you would never be able to find God. God is not apparent to the physical senses. The senses are designed to serve you while you pass your time here on earth. No matter how assured you are of an invisible world, your senses cannot bring you any useful knowledge and understanding of it. There is simply nothing there to work with. Darkness and blindness is the inability to perceive that which is staring you right in the face.

Must mankind remain in ignorance and total darkness concerning the invisible and eternal world? Is there no hope? God has designed a plan for man to gain sight into the invisible, and that is by faith. Faith is the eyes of the inner man. When your five, natural, God-given senses can be of no further use, faith comes to your aid. Faith does what senses cannot do. From this, we can gather that man has two sets of eyes: the

natural eyes and the spiritual eyes. You can use one set to gain light and understanding or the other set to gain information for your own selfish desires. The set of eyes that you use depends on your spiritual state.

Faith is the eyes of the spiritual man. He walks by faith, not by natural sight, but by the sight which is yielded to him by his spiritual eyes, or his faith. It is by faith that he realizes things not visible to the natural eyes. By faith, he realizes things unseen and beholds the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things that the natural eyes cannot discern. Faith to the Christian is an eye both quick and discerning. It is an eye that discerns the Master's will and looks forward to a race to the finish line that awaits those who run. By faith, you can peer across the river of death and behold that which Christ has prepared.

Faith is the eyes of the soul. If there is any discrepancy or inconsistency in your eyes of faith, then this must certainly bring a change in your views. If your faith becomes weak, then your spirit will become gloomy and hazy. He who staggers at the promises through unbelief will stagger in his Christian experience, and his heart will be weak. His hand will be hesitant to reach out and take hold of the promises that God has put before him. His feet will not run, but will shuffle, feeling before he takes each step. He who is afraid of the promise, staggering at its greatness instead of cherishing the greatness of the Giver, he who looks at the blessing and trembles because of his own unworthiness, he who forgets the graciousness of Him who gives the gifts to the undeserving, certainly must be a sad person.

Little faith may be safe, but is rarely happy and full of joy. The lack of faith will cause the whole spirit of man to be weak. If your faith is variable, or changes, if you have days when you have strong faith and days when you struggle, this is somewhat normal, but without a doubt it is difficult sailing with little faith.

I want you to consider one peril of faith that will not only bring weakness to your faith, but will lead to certain death of your faith. It is the lack of having a single eye, or singleness and simplicity of faith. He who has two grounds of trust is doomed already. He is a living child of God whose faith is fixed on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

The light of the body is the eye of faith; therefore, when the eye is single, you only perceive one object. You have only one goal. When you perceive only one goal, you look wholly to Jesus, and your whole body is full of understanding. However, if your eye is evil, then it is not single, because it is divided between two loves. In essence, trusting in other things for your salvation brings Christ down from His throne of grace. It is as if Christ is unable to save you, as if you seek to assist Him in something He has already finished for you.

Matthew 6:22-24 reads: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters."

What is implied by singleness of eye? The word *single* comes from the Greek word **haplos**, which means, "simply, openly, frankly, sincerely." In other words, it is singleness as opposed to duplicity, or singleness as opposed to being divided or separated. The word is talking about having only one focus. It refers to having an undivided, unmistakably clear goal. It speaks of simplicity in that there is no confusion or debate, but an absolute choice.

When there is unity within the heart, as opposed to being divided with different motives of faith, a person can discover the light that God has for him. Singleness of eye is, of course, to be taken figuratively; it represents one's state of mind.

[continued on page 26]

Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

MAINTENANCE AND DILIGENCE



Brother Walter Bergenthun

The Necessity of Maintenance

Profit is a matter of being successful in business. We all like to profit from what we do. While working as a maintenance man for many years, I had certain things that I had to do in order to take care of the buildings. It was a constant job trying to maintain things. Maintenance is the upkeep of buildings or machinery, or keeping things in a state of good repair, to preserve them.

If you were to buy new appliances, a new automobile, or a new house, in order to have many years of good service out of those items, you have to do a little maintenance on them once in a while. If you were to buy a new car but never changed the oil, it would run for a while, but eventually it would not run very well. From time to time, it needs

maintenance.

As Christians, we have a maintenance manual called the Bible. God has instructions in it, and if we follow those instructions, we can be successful in maintaining not only the temporal body but also the spiritual body. God is the One who designed us and made us, and He knows what works.

Many people are diligent in taking care of their buildings. Many businesses have preventative maintenance programs, and periodically they do routine maintenance on equipment so that little problems do not become big problems. Everything in life deteriorates. For instance, as the human body ages, a person's health often deteriorates. As we get older, we wear out. Automobiles wear out. We wish they would last forever, but they do not. The same is true with lots of other

things.

We have appliances and owner's manuals to help us to maintain them so they will work better and last longer. On my job I had to check pressure gauges and work with steam fittings and plumbing. We had to constantly check for little leaks. If we did not discover the little leaks, they would become big leaks. Sometimes a little leak sprang into a big leak in the middle of the night, and there would be a flood of water in the building. We tried to keep such things from happening. The old adage "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is true.

On my job we also had to take care of the roof drains. All the roofs on the buildings were flat. Once in a while leaves would get into the drains and clog them. If we had heavy rains and the drains were

clogged, the roofs looked like swimming pools. A roof can cave in because of the weight of the water. If proper maintenance is done, that will never happen.

We had grease fittings on machinery that ran constantly, and the burners got hot. If we had not greased them, they would have burned up prematurely. Some of the valves were hardly ever used because they were seldom needed, but we had a program to routinely exercise the valves by opening and closing them, otherwise they would freeze up because of neglect. It is like people sometimes when they get in spiritual trouble. They find out the faith is not there when they need it. Sometimes much faith is needed in a crisis, but they do not have it. When they do not use it, they are going to lose it. It is just like your muscles. If you were to tie your arm down and not use it, after a period of time, you would find that when you do try to use it, it would be very weak. Likewise, when it comes to faith, you have to exercise it or you will lose it.

Today we often see houses that have been foreclosed because people could not afford the payments and had to move out. Many times those houses are abandoned, and the grass grows tall. Next, the windows may get broken, and sometimes people move in who do not belong there. Then those once beautiful homes become eyesores all because of neglect.

The Little Things

Some people buy a car and never check the oil. Needless to say, the car will not last long. Again, the old adage says, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Sometimes the little things that people do not pay attention to can be costly. Song of Solomon 2:15 talks about the little foxes spoiling the vine. The little things that people do not pay much attention to make greater problems. In time a little thing can amount to a big thing.

Before the crew left the space station, someone forgot to turn on a toggle switch which has something to do with charging the solar batteries. Because of that failure to turn on one little switch, it cost millions of dollars.

Do you remember the Space Shuttle Challenger? Because of the faulty design of an O-ring seal, the spacecraft broke apart and disintegrated 73 seconds in to its flight. The faulty O-ring allowed hot gas to escape and acted like a blow torch on the external fuel tank, and it exploded. All of this happened because of one O-ring failure.

We need to pay attention to little things, because they are very important. When people get saved, it costs something. You should not play around with God or approach Him in a light and casual manner. When you search for God with your whole heart, 2 Chronicles 15:2 says, "If ye seek him, he will be found of you." God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

If you go to God in a careless, nonchalant way and say, "I guess I want to be saved," but you are not totally convinced that you want to be saved, you will not hit the Rock, so to speak. Some people have a shallow experience with God because they really do not mean business with Him, and God knows that. Friend, God will give you this great and wonderful salvation when you mean business with Him in prayer. Many people end up going back into sin because they are not really sick of sin. If you are sick of sin, you will stay away from it. Sin is nothing to play around with. There is nothing out in the world, yet people still try to find something. It is all vanity and vexation of spirit.

Salvation Requires Daily Maintenance

You must count the cost and be fully persuaded that God will save you, and you must mean business with God. When God gives you this

great salvation, you become a new creature. You will not be the person that you used to be. Your affections and desires change completely. Old things pass away and all things become new. You become a new creature and have different friends and live in a different environment. You develop different habits.

Habits can work either for you or against you. You cultivate good habits when you become a Christian. God works salvation in you, and you must work it out. God gives you the grace to live right. It is not hard to live right when you have God working for you. Without God's grace it is impossible to live His way. It cannot be lived by your own efforts. You must have God's help. You need to learn to lean on God.

You cannot boast that you are something great and that you are able to live free from sin without help from the Lord. Some people may look at you and say: "You seem to be a good person. Were you just raised right? I notice that you don't smoke or drink or do other bad things." It is more than being raised right. God gives you a whole new life. You need to always give praise to God for what He does.

If everybody who gets saved would stay saved, it would be wonderful, but too often people come and go. One reason they lose out is due to neglect. After they get saved, they fail to maintain their salvation. It requires daily maintenance. It is like being on a diet. You have to maintain it or soon the pounds creep back on you. This salvation can slip away if you become careless and indifferent. One thing that people have trouble with is failing to do the things they need to do. God rewards those who are diligent. People want to be rewarded, but they fail to put forth effort. You are not going to accidentally fall into Heaven. It is a prepared place for prepared people, and that requires you to put forth effort to attain it.

God will bless your diligence. I remember reading a story about Thomas Edison. He invented the

incandescent light bulb. It was something new, and it had never been done before. He worked diligently to try to find a way to have a little filament inside the bulb that would last after he applied heat to it through electricity. He tried all kinds of experiments, and he finally came up with something that would work. Today many people take it for granted, but it was not always around. It was not invented until the end of the eighteenth century. Thomas Edison put forth diligence, and God rewarded him for his effort.

A Treasure in Earthen Vessels

We enjoy lots of things today. Someone may say, "We are in the best of times and in the worst of times." We have lots of gadgets today that we did not have before. When I was growing up, no one had ever heard of a computer or a microwave oven. These were invented because somebody put forth a lot of effort. Some have reached the top because of these inventions. It is all vanity to me, but to them it means a lot.

Salvation is an all together different story. It is something far more valuable than earthly, temporal things. We are dealing with eternity, and it should not be taken lightly. I like the song that the children sing that says, "I found a treasure." The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." This is a treasure that we have in real salvation. We do not want to take it for granted. We have to put forth much effort to stay saved and to continue in this Gospel way.

There are a couple of verses of a hymn written by Isaac Watts that I think fit in with this message. It talks about fighting the fight of faith and not being at ease. It reads: "*Must I be carried to the skies On flowery beds of ease? While others fought to win the prize, And sailed through bloody seas.*"

Sure I must fight if I would reign; Increase my courage, Lord. I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, Supported by Thy Word."

People in the past have put forth great effort in serving the Lord. In *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* you can read of many people who went through extreme suffering and even laid down their lives for the Gospel. They believed in the Truth, stood by it, and gave their precious blood for it. The hymn says: "*Increase my courage, Lord. I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, Supported by Thy Word.*"

Some people believe in an eternal security doctrine. They believe that once you are saved, you are always saved, but we know that doctrine is of the devil. You *can* lose out with God. People lose out with God for various reasons. The devil is smart and cunning, and he is always busy. One thing about him, he is not lazy. He is working in lots of places, and he never gives up. He is not a bit discouraged. We are fighting against an adversary that is diligent and dedicated to his cause.

You do not have any problem feeding a person who is really hungry. Likewise, if you hunger and thirst for righteousness, you can have as much of God as you want, but you have to put forth effort to get righteousness. It is not going to be handed to you on a silver platter. You have to work for it. We are living in a day when many people do not want to put forth much effort. You must keep working at what you have in order to grow.

It is natural for a Christian to want to go to church. At one time, I did not particularly enjoy being in church because my heart was not right. When I did go, I was under condemnation. I remember Brother E. A. Wilson saying that it is better to get saved at the beginning of a meeting so that you can enjoy the rest of the meeting rather than getting saved at the end and having to go through all that condemnation the entire meeting.

When God saves you, He gives you a treasure in your earthen ves-

sel. He wants you to take care of it. There are some things you have to do for yourself. You must keep yourself in the love of the Lord. It is done through prayer, not just by saying words, but by pouring out your heart to God and believing when you pray. James said in James 5:16b, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." There is nothing more encouraging than when God hears and answers your prayer.

Spending Time With God

Another thing that you must do is read your Bible. Man does not live by bread alone. We have found that out. We need the entire Word of God. There is something about your soul that cannot survive on the things of this world. It has to have the Word of God. It is food for your soul. The Christian likes to read the Bible. Before I was saved, I tried to read it, but it was boring and uninteresting. When God saved me, He really blessed my heart. Knowing the author of the Book makes it so much better. Before it was like reading the telephone book or the dictionary, but when God saved me, it was altogether different. I became a new creature.

Meditation is almost a lost art today. It is just getting alone with God and thinking deeply on His Word and the things of God. Sometimes you may read something really fast and not get much out of it, but to dwell on it for a while is the way to grow spiritually. The Bible is deeper than you might realize. I have read something and thought I understood it, but somebody came along who had really meditated on it, and he brought things out that I never realized were there. It was like finding gold nuggets. You have to put forth much effort to find gold. If you do not put forth that effort, you are not going to receive much. You can get as much of God as you want, but you have to put forth effort. You cannot coast your way into Heaven. It takes disci-

pline and effort to be a true follower of Christ.

Too many people do not take time to meditate. This is a busy world in which we are living. Life is busy, and some people are working two and three jobs. Some have other obligations, but it is important to take time to be alone with God. The devil is bidding for our time. The Bible says to redeem the time because the days are evil. Sometimes meditation does not come easy.

Another thing you ought to do is witness to others on the job, in the neighborhood, or wherever you may be. I enjoy witnessing. It does me good, and I know others can testify of the same thing. It is a joy to tell others what God has done. You do not have to be a preacher to tell other people what God has done for you. If He saved you, you have something to tell. You do not have to be ashamed. The world will make you feel kind of embarrassed sometimes and put pressure on you, but you do not have to be ashamed. It is the world that needs to be ashamed of ungodly living.

It is good to testify about the Lord. The Bible says to have your conversation seasoned with salt so that you may administer grace to the hearers. Somewhere there are souls who need God. You need to look for an opportunity to talk to people. I remember reading in the Bible in the Book of Acts where Paul talked to Lydia. Paul said God had opened her heart so that she could receive the things that he was saying. So God was working on the other end.

Sometimes when I try to witness to people, they will switch subjects on me, and before I know it, we are talking about something else. Matthew 10:16 says you have to be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. It is hard to talk to some people about the Lord. Sometimes your own family can be hard to talk to. They build a wall, so to speak, and they know where you are coming from. Sometimes all you can do is live a godly life and pray for them.

You should not argue and debate with them. If you will live right before them every day, it will put condemnation on them. They may say, "No one can live free from sin." If you set a godly example, it will prove that you are free from sin. They cannot argue against that.

The Secret of Success

You have to guard against little things that try to creep in. Bad attitudes can hinder you. It is easy to say "I love God," but it is loving your brothers and sisters that sometimes may give you trouble. Sometimes you might get tired and get snappy with another. You have to pray a little extra to control these things, because the enemy is good at causing dissension. Carnality, not spirituality, produces this. You need to be on your guard and watch out for the little things that can creep in. After a while they can become big things if you are not careful.

You have to watch your attitudes and keep yourself in the love of God. Anybody can say, "I love God," but it is quite another thing to demonstrate it each and every day. I believe a person who is lazy has a hard time living for the Lord. You need to read your Bible, take time to pray, and faithfully go to church. You can develop good habits. You might have to get up a little earlier in the morning. The great reformers of the past did. Martin Luther spent three hours in prayer every day before going out. He felt that it was very important to get alone with God. The great people of the past were praying people. They believed that their power did not come from themselves but from God.

We are facing situations that are greater than we are. Think about the unseen power that runs this universe. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities, against rulers of this world, against spirits. We are fighting against ungodly, unclean spirits in the world. You need more than a religious profession to fight

this. The secret of success is getting hold of God.

You need to fight getting lazy. We all get tired and weary, and we have a tendency to drift if we are not careful. That is the reason it is good to go to church. It is good to get alone with God. Jesus Christ, as great as He was, had to take time to get alone with God and pray. Sometimes He prayed all night to get strength from Almighty God. Prayer is needed to protect this treasure that we have of real salvation. It is more precious than anything in this world. You can gain all the wealth that this world has, but it does not compare to the wealth that you can have in your soul.

When you have a vision of how great this salvation really is, you will put forth diligence to maintain it. I remember reading a book by C. W. Naylor, and he said he would much rather be a watering can than a sponge. You are either a sponge or a watering can. You do not want to sit and soak it in. Sometimes you need to testify and tell what God has done for you.

You ought to be busy for the Lord. You need to get involved in working around the church. We all are workers together with the Lord. This helps to maintain your experience with God by showing a willingness to work together. God's hands are your hands, God's mouth is your mouth. You have to put forth effort to dedicate yourself to the upbuilding of His cause and kingdom. There is plenty of work for everyone. The Church of God is the most important institution in the world. It is a soul-saving station.

Saul's Conversion

There are some examples in the Bible of people who were on fire for God and worked hard for Him. One of them is the Apostle Paul. He is one of my heroes. Before he was saved, he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, the strictest order of the Jewish religion and at that time, he was a busy man. He said in 1 Corin-

thians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." He was not lazy or indifferent.

The Christian church was on fire on the Day of Pentecost, and many people were saved. The Jews were disturbed about what was going on when Christianity took hold. The Apostle Paul (he was called Saul at that time) was more than disturbed about it. He went to the high priest and got letters so that he could arrest Christians. He held the coats of those who stoned Stephen, who was the first martyr. You can read about it in the Book of Acts, Chapter 7. He was in full agreement with what the persecutors were doing. Paul was determined that he was going to wipe out the early church by himself, if necessary. He also had a band of soldiers, and he compelled the saints to blaspheme. He made much havoc in the early church. He had many of the saints put in jail. He put action to his feelings.

You can read that from Jerusalem to Damascus was approximately 160 miles in a desert. He had heard about some Christians in Damascus, and he was determined to arrest them. He wanted to wipe out the early church, but on the road to Damascus something happened. He saw a light from Heaven that was brighter than the noonday sun, which is very intense in that part of the world. However, this was beyond the normal light. There he heard a voice from Jesus, and in great fear he asked, "What would You have me to do, Lord?" The Lord told him to go to a street called Straight. After he arrived there, he prayed and fasted for three days. He meant business with God.

God told Ananias, one of the disciples living in Damascus, to go see Saul. In so many words, Ananias said: "Lord, he is a man who has been killing Christians. Do You want me to get killed?" God told

Ananias that Saul was to be a chosen vessel for Him. Saul, who was later named Paul, was diligent in his prayer life, and he was rewarded for his diligence.

After Paul was converted, he labored more abundantly than the others. Wherever he went, he was on fire for the Lord, and he worked constantly. He wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:27, "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." He was in perils of false brethren, in perils of the sea, and he suffered many other perils constantly, but he stayed busy working for the Lord. He preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, despite all his persecutions.

Keeping Up Your Maintenance Program

You need to be diligent in everything you say and do. I had to be diligent at work, otherwise I could not have kept my job. I had to pay attention to details. Sometimes things are going on that you do not realize, but God will work with you and help you to see things before they become major problems. You must maintain your own salvation. God will not make you read the Bible or pray. You have to do it yourself.

There are times that I do not really feel like reading the Bible and praying. It is not always easy, but you have to war against the flesh and the devil. We each have battles that we have to face every day. What you experience, all Christians experience. At times you will become discouraged. Problems of life can almost turn you upside down, but we have a great God, and He cares about each of us. He is the Master of every situation and circumstance. We have brothers and sisters in Christ who support us, but most importantly, we have God. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, and the devil is after our treasure. Sometimes you may underrate what you have. It is precious. The devil

knows what we have. We will not really know how great it is until we get to Heaven. We all would like to go to Heaven; that is our aim. However, that is not the only reason we are living this life. It is the right way to live, and it is the best way to live.

The Bible brings more satisfaction than anything that I have ever gotten hold of. I have read lots of books, but the Bible is the best Book that I have ever read. It does me more good than anything I have ever read. It has not profited lots of people because it was not mixed with faith. You have to believe it. This is where the enemy works, and this is the way the world is. They do not really believe it. To the world, it is just a story. Friend, it is more than a story. It is God's Word. John 1:1 tells us, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." You cannot separate or divorce God's Word from His presence. His Word gives us meaning and purpose and direction for life.

We all can make it to Heaven, but we have to be cautious and put forth effort to maintain this salvation. Most generally, people do not get tripped up on big stuff; it is the little things that we have to watch. They creep in and cause this great salvation to leak out.

Dear one, you have to put forth effort. You cannot take it for granted that you will automatically go to Heaven just because you go to church all the time. It requires personal everyday contact with God.

If you cannot find God or communicate with God, your religion is worthless. The world has lots of different ideas concerning how to find God, but God said the day you seek Him with your whole heart, He will be found of you. You have to put your whole heart into this thing. Sometimes you may not feel so enthusiastic. Sometimes the spirit of lukewarmness will work on you. We live in that kind of age. If you are not careful, it will overtake you.

You must stay on fire for the

Lord, be enthused, and maintain your personal discipline. It is not hard to do when your heart is in it. When your heart is not in it, it is rather difficult. If you are having trouble getting your affections lined up and having trouble with having a desire to read your Bible and pray, you need to get on your knees and ask God to help you. He will help you. God can lift you up like nobody

else can.

Feelings are sometimes up and down, but you have to hang in there. Sometimes you have to go against your feelings. If you know that you have not sinned, then God is still with you. Sometimes you have to wait on the Lord. Sometimes clouds will hang over your head, but the same wind that brought them will take them away. Sooner

or later, you will have a clear blue sky and nice sunshine. You will have good times as well as the bad times. You have to remember that you have an adversary that you have to watch. You have to keep up your maintenance program. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

(Compact Disc TR-762E)

Saved By Reading the Bible

A remarkable story of the power of the Word of God.

One who has now gone to be with the Lord used to tell of his experiences in seeing the Bible at work. Here is the story.

"As a young man lately arrived from England, I was wandering one evening in the bush in Australia, having lost my way, when suddenly I saw a light. Making for it, I found myself at a large farm. I asked permission of the farmer to pass the night under cover, who somewhat surlily said, 'You can go into the barn if you like, but there is someone there already.'

"I thanked him and went into the barn, and by the light of a lantern I saw another man lying in a corner coughing violently. After putting down my gun and shooting bag, my only luggage, I went over and asked him if I could do anything for him.

"Speaking with difficulty, he told me he was an Englishman, and had been at the same university as I, but in early life, having disgraced his family, he had been sent to the colonies and had led a dissolute life for twenty-five years. Now he felt he was about to die. 'Did I know anything about the hereafter?' he asked, as he was anxious to find out what was going to become of him.

"I was totally ignorant of God and His grace at this time; unconverted, a man of the world. I said I thought the Bible was the book he needed. 'Oh,' said he, 'The Bible. Why, my mother put one in my box when I left home. I have never opened it yet. Will you go and get it out and bring it here?'

"I went into another shed and got the Book and brought it to him. 'Now,' he said, 'Where are we to turn?' and we both confessed we did not know. 'Well, clap it together,' he said, 'and see where it opens.' I did so, and the Book opened at Isaiah, Chapter 53.

"I began to read, 'He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,' and

the dying man asked, 'Who is the He?'

"I hazarded the reply, 'Jesus Christ.'

"'Ah,' he said 'go on,' and I read slowly on until I came to the words, 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.'

"'Stop,' he said, 'that's me, that's me; that's just what I have done all my life,' and after a little while he said, 'Go on.'

"'And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'

"'Ah,' he said, 'Jesus Christ.' And then a minute or so after, 'Read it again.'

"'All we like sheep have gone astray . . . and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'

"He lay back on the straw, and I quietly read on. Turning over the pages, I found some passages about Jesus Christ in the Gospels. After some time he asked me to leave him, which I did, and I was soon fast asleep.

"In the morning, the beams of the sun were making their way through the boards of the barn when I awoke. Going over to the place where my poor friend lay, I was struck by the change in him. His face seemed to have caught some of the sunbeams. He looked so happy and peaceful; no cough, quite at rest. I did not understand what had happened, but he said to me, 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all—Jesus Christ is my Savior!' He told me that in the night the Lord had come to him and showed him His hands and His side, and now all was joy and peace.

"I listened, but thought he must be lightheaded, but it was because I saw no beauty in the One he was so occupied with now. The day or two that he lingered he could not hear or talk enough of Him. Shortly before he died (he passed away while I tarried at the farm), he said to me, 'I have a request. I want you to write in the flyleaf of this Bible an account of your meeting with me here and reading to me Isaiah 53:6 and of the 'Him' it speaks about, Jesus Christ, and how the Lord came to me in the night, and how I died believing in Him as my Savior. I want, if I can, to put my name to it, and I want you to put yours, and then pack it up and send it to my father in London,' and he gave me his address.

"I did as he requested, and soon in the rush of a godless life, I forgot the incident. Many years after this,

[continued on page 27]

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you

all.

John 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee,

that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

Perfected in One



Brother Mike Wilks

A Unified Body

Being perfected in one is a doctrine of the Church of God, and it is powerful. It is through unity that men and women can see Jesus Christ. The definition of *one* is "a single unit, an individual, and common to all." We read in the Bible of a common salvation. There are two ways for the church to be perfected in one and to convince the world. First, a man conducts himself well in a congregation and around the brethren. Second, a congregation has unity as the members work together and have fellowship. People are watching, and that is a convincing element.

We know that God knows man. Psalm 33:15 says, "He fashioneth their hearts alike." He started long ago with the calling out of a nation. Genesis 12:2 reads, "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee." History progressed, and Psalm 135:4 states, "For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure." In the midst of the civilized world stood the nation of Israel. There was one nation, and God has always had a unified body. He started from the foundation of the world with one nation. There is something peculiar about there being only one, and this is the thought I want to talk about.

We think of the Grand Canyon,

the Pyramids at Giza, and the Great Barrier Reef. These are just a few sights that continue to draw men. Why? There is only one each of these great wonders. There can be a powerful influence in having only one.

Before Christ, there was no unity, and there was no hope of unity. Since the beginning of the world, men have longed for peace, and they still do. There are nations that constantly fight and war with others, but God's vehicle to bring peace is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:9-10 says: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in

himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." That is a profound Scripture. Here is where it all started. He began gathering, and through Jesus Christ, the barriers began to fall. Division is a stronghold that has held men through time, and it still is, unfortunately.

A Conquering Church

As humans, we all like choices. We like choices when it comes to food, clothes, cars, where we live, etc. Mankind has enjoyed the choice of religion, but that is not God's plan, and that is what we want to consider. Earthly minds tell you to attend the church of your choice. You might find that in the newspaper, but you are not going to find it in the Word of God. God's Word tells you about one church, one unity, and one faith. The early morning church began to conquer and break down barriers. It is said that Paul compared Rome to what Christ did in the church. Rome conquered the then-known world, and though many nations fought for hundreds of years, Rome brought them all under its law and rule, and peace reigned for a period of time. Paul looked at that as Jesus Christ and the church marching on and conquering barriers.

The morning-time church was powerful. Acts 2:41-47 states: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one

accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

The one thing that brought power is, they were perfected in one. As you can read in the letters written by Paul, he corresponded with all the churches. He built many of those churches, and he corresponded through letters to bring them doctrine and reproof. All things are possible through God; that is Scripture. The one barrier that stood out was being a Jew or a Gentile.

Breaking Down Barriers

Now we are going to look at how Christ brought these two together. If it was not for Christ, these two entities could not have been brought together. The Jews had a unique standing with God to carry out His commandments, and the Jews carried contempt for the Gentiles. The Gentiles said the Jews were created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell. Think about that. It would have been impossible to reconcile this relationship through any means other than Christ.

The Amplified Bible reads in Ephesians 2:11-16: "Therefore, remember that at one time you were Gentiles (heathens) in the flesh, called Uncircumcision by those who called themselves Circumcision, [itself a mere mark] in the flesh made by human hands. [Remember] that you were at that time separated (living apart) from Christ [excluded from all part in Him] utterly estranged *and* outlawed from the rights of Israel as a nation, and strangers with no share in the sacred compacts of the [Messianic] promise [with no knowledge of or right in God's agreements, His covenants]. And you who had no hope (no promise); you were in the world without God. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were [so] far

away, through (by, in) the blood of Christ have been brought near.

"For He is [Himself] our peace (our bond of unity and harmony). He has made us both [Jew and Gentile] one [body], and has broken down (destroyed, abolished) the hostile dividing wall between us. By abolishing in His [own crucified] flesh the enmity [caused by] the Law with its decrees and ordinances [which he annulled]; that He from the two might create in Himself one new man [one new quality of humanity out of the two], so making peace. And [He designed] to reconcile God both [Jew and Gentile, united] in a single body by means of His cross, thereby killing the mutual enmity *and* bringing the feud to an end." This is what Christ and His church started out to do. It began in the morning time, and it is still happening now.

Ephesians 2:11-16 in the King James Version reads: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

Just as Christ began breaking down barriers, we must lay some groundwork. It is important to have unity. In John 17:21 Jesus prayed, "... that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The world has a

real problem with believing. The world's unbelief is rampant, and there is a great reason for this—it is due to false religion.

The Power of Godly Influence

Some time ago I asked an individual, "Where do you go to church?" He said: "I don't go to church. I'm an atheist. I've never seen anything out of a Christian that would make me believe there is a God." He went on to say: "My mother was a horrible person. All through the week she was terrible, but she went to church on Sunday and praised God." This man was very bitter because of this, and this is what false religion is doing to the souls of mankind. As I listened to him, it made me sad, because there is a better way.

What is the problem? We are living in a divided society when it comes to Jesus Christ. We are living in a time when light is shining brighter than it ever has; that is Bible. There is a saying, "When the Sun has risen, the lamps cease to be of use." We know that Babylon is fallen, and they cease to be of use. There is no use for it. It is pure confusion, yet it is all around us.

We are so blessed to know Truth, but many around us do not know the Truth. We want to look through their eyes to consider what they see. As they look across the land at the religious landscape, they do not see much unity. It is truly broken down. As the Church of God, we worship God in Spirit and in Truth. This thing is not complicated. It is simply light and darkness, but people do not present it that way. There are all kinds of churches out here, and you can pick up a name of any sort and hide in that, but we know that there is nothing in darkness, and there never will be. The unbeliever may ask about the name of the church. Second Thessalonians 1:4 reads, "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God."

The city of Corinth was a large commercial city, and it was a spar-

klung gem in the Roman Empire. It was a tremendous city. In 1 and 2 Corinthians Paul referred to the church of Corinth. People did not organize in a building to worship as we do until the third century. He addressed them as the church at Corinth, the Church of God. We want to look at the unity of the Church of God which was at Corinth. First Corinthians 1:2 states, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus."

The power of a godly influence on someone can never be underestimated. That is how I was won. This is the way the world is going to be won. It is going to be the personal touch of somebody watching your life, day in and day out, and having confidence in you. It is a personal relationship. Second Corinthians 3:2 reads, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men."

Jesus said in Matthew 4:17, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Getting saved is all about repentance. Salvation is not found in raising your hand and making a choice. Godly sorrow must work in the heart, turn you around, and cause you to regret your sins. If you regret something, you surely do not want to do it again. The Holy Spirit empowers that desire.

God's Transforming Power

An unbeliever may ask, "Why do you dress so modestly?" First Timothy 2:9 says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves [men too] in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." That is what is precious to God. He could not care less about the price of our clothes, as long as we are modest. The inner man must please Him too.

The unbeliever may ask, "Why do you attend church so much?" Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but

exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." When I was unsaved, going to church was not something that interested me. For me, it was like attending a soccer game. I had never been to one and I did not care to attend one because I do not understand the game. However, when you get saved, you have a new heart. As I was thinking about someone who is a soccer enthusiast, that person would never understand why I do not care about soccer. So it is with getting saved. When you are born again, other people do not understand why you are always attending church and why you enjoy it so much.

We do not bring in rock music or bring in the world. We worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Some churches have brought in rock music, but rock music was born of rebellion. It was not in the church and then taken to the world. Some worldly men, such as drug addicts, are the ones who came up with it, and now some are incorporating it into their church music. It does not work. Going to church is where we draw our spiritual strength. There is always something for us. When you go to Sunday school, you should ask God, "What is in this lesson for me?" It might be just one thing. You should never get the attitude of a know-it-all, because we are always learning.

How can you live a holy life in this evil world? This is my favorite thing about the Holy Spirit. He enables and endues us with the power to live holy lives as He transforms us into new creations. Many people do not realize the transforming power of Christ, and it is up to us to be witnesses to the world. God's transforming power enables a child of God to become a new creature. A child of God has a teachable spirit. The Holy Spirit changes a man or a woman into something that is not even recognizable. I used to be a horrible person, but God changed my life completely. That was not in my power; it was God. I am so

thankful for what He has done!

The Holy Spirit is a foretaste or a pledge of what is to come. Sometimes you may get high in the Spirit, and there is nothing like it. That is just a foretaste of what is to come. We do not know what is in God's Heaven, but we do know there will be no flesh and there will be no devil there. Jesus is going to be there, and that is all we need to know. We do not need any more specifics. What is the goal or the purpose of all this? I read about a basketball player who had a horri-

ble problem with drugs. He struggled and struggled with the habit. As I got down to the end of the article, it talked about how he had found a purpose in life. This is what men are looking for, regardless of what they say, regardless of the life they are living. They may look as though they are having a great time, but human nature says "There has to be something greater than this." Many people are troubled, but they do not want to think about it.

The goal of all this is to make Heaven our home. If you think

about the Holy Spirit and what He has done and still you do not want to make Heaven your home, I do not know what else could convince you, because there is no greater power. There are examples of this foundation that has been laid, and it is perfected all in one, and He wants us to remember that. We are perfected, not because of anything we have done, but because the world can see us as we strive and labor together. We are a convincing agent.

(Compact Disc TR-801E)

Coals of Fire

The moment Frank looked into the cave, he burst into tears. There was the beautiful boat his cousin had given him, with its mast broken, its sails all torn to pieces, and a large hole in it.

Frank stood for a moment motionless with grief and surprise. Then in anger he cried, "I know who did it! It was Will Brown, but I'll repay him for his trick."

Hurrying down the road a little way, he fastened a cord across the footpath and hid in the bushes. He expected to see Will Brown, but it was his cousin, Herbert.

"What will you do, Frank?"

"Why, you see, Will carries a basket of eggs to market mornings, and I mean to trip him up with this cord and smash the whole basketful."

Herbert said, "Well, I think Will does deserve punishment, so how would you like to put a few coals of fire on his head?"

Frank said: "That's just the thing. Tell me how to do it, quick!"

"If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

"Try it once. I have known such coals to burn up malice, envy, ill feeling, and other rubbish, and make the cold hearts warm."

Frank drew a long sigh. "Well, tell me a good coal to put on Will's head," he said.

"You know," said Herbert, "that Will is too poor to buy books, although he is very fond of reading; but you have quite a library. Just think

over the matter and find your own coals. But be sure to kindle them with love, for no other fire burns like that."

Before Frank had time to think of what to do, he saw Will Brown coming down the road carrying a basket of eggs and a pail of milk.

Will looked very uneasy when he saw Frank, but Frank smiled pleasantly and said, "Will, have you much time to read nowadays?"

"Sometimes. The trouble is, I have read every book I can get hold of."

"How would you like to read my new book of travels?"

"Oh, may I?" he cried.

"Yes," answered Frank. "I have some others you might like to read. And, Will, I would like to ask you to come with me to sail my new boat this afternoon, but someone has broken the mast and torn the sails, and stove a hole in it. Who do you imagine did it?"

Will's head dropped, and he said, "O Frank, I did it, but I can't tell you how sorry I am."

When the boys met in the afternoon, they found Will trying to mend the boat, and with part of his egg money he had bought a beautiful flag for the mast.

I should be glad to have all of you engage in this branch of the coal business. You will then find it easier to win others to Christ.

Selected

[Esp. for Young People—contin. from p. 15]

Matthew 6:22 states, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." The eye can become disoriented in discovering things, misleading you on life's highway.

What is an evil eye? An evil eye has more than one object before it. In other words, it sees two objects in view at the same time. Notice that Matthew 6:23a reads, "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." Here the word *darkness* means "error and delusion." This infers that the selfish mind is full of error and delusions. This idea applies to the decisions of life and the question of the duty of man before his Creator.

If you are not conscious of a single eye, you cannot safely go forward in anything. If you have already made up your mind on what you are going to do, most likely, you are going to do the wrong thing. If you know that you have not put Christ first, most likely, you will do the wrong thing.

Sometimes I wonder what must go through God's mind as He sees people trying to love Him and trying to love the world? I am sure that it grieves Him very much. The enemy of souls is constantly working to outwit souls trying to slip something in and capture his eye to get him to turn away from the goal.

When guys play football, they have an opponent trying to stop them from reaching the goal. The Christian walk is somewhat like this. The devil is always trying to hold you back to keep you from doing what God wants you to do. He is always trying to turn you aside, block you, hold you up, cause you to stumble, knock you down, and knock you completely out of this race. He does this through various means. One way is through your sight, by trying to get your eyes turned away from that which you should have your eyes on. We have to be careful in watching or paying too much attention to the things of this world, lest you become too

entangled with it.

Proverbs 4:25-27 reads: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil." Every part of your nature needs to be guarded, lest you should fall into sin. Your eyes are windows of light. You need to be careful of what you watch, lest you take into your soul that which would block the light of Christ.

Some people stumble about spiritually as if they are in a deep sleep. They have never seen anything in the Truth. Why? It is faith that sees, and it is faith that they do not have. That which is apart from faith is not visible to the soul, no matter how plain or how clear it may be. An arrow will never reach its intended target if it travels in a zig-zag direction. Likewise, the one whose life has no aim pursues this thing and that thing and then the other thing. He will not achieve anything.

You need to realize the essence of time, because we are on the doorstep of eternity. Time is something that seems to go unnoticed by many. You may look across the horizon of your life and think that the end is so far away; however, you must keep in mind that time is continually taking you there one step at a time.

Friend, if you are aimless and have no purpose or meaning in life, you need to get to know the right way, and in knowing the right way, you need to stick with it with full purpose of heart and concentration. You must look diligently where you are going and go that way with your eyes wide open, purposefully and deliberately marking each step and every decision. You cannot see the end of a crooked way no matter how hard you try. Eventually it will turn and you cannot see any further.

If you could go back in time and gather all the wise men together, such as Solomon who wrote the Proverbs and Enoch who walked

with God and ask them, "What would be the best way to go?" without a doubt, they would tell you that the best way is to follow the plan that God has created for you. If you could ask everyone in hell, "Which would be the best way to go? What way would you choose?" without a doubt they would say the same thing. The best way for you to go is the way God has chosen for you. Certainly, the answer would be the same if you were to go to Heaven and ask everyone there the same question.

According to the divine teaching, the way to eternal life is through Jesus Christ. In John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He that pursues life in a right fashion must look to Jesus, and he must continue looking to Jesus, not only as the beginning of his faith, but at the end of his walk as well.

Again, Proverbs 4:25 states, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." In life some things are going to be troubling. We have not only eyes but also eyelids, which we can shut. I believe this is a tremendous gift that God has given when things are dark and gloomy. You do not have to look at those things, but you can keep your eyes fixed on Christ.

You must always remember to let your eyes look right on. If you begin to look two ways at the same time, you will, most assuredly, miss the mark.

Brother Sam Barrows

**Reckon him a
Christian indeed who
is not ashamed of the
Gospel nor a shame
to it.**

[Saved—continued from page 21]

I was converted. One day, while in London, I was musing over my life in Australia, and I thought of this incident. I wondered whether the Bible ever reached the old father and determined to call on him.

"I made my way to the proper address and was shown into the presence of a very old man sitting in the library alone. After making myself known to him, I inquired if he ever received the Bible. 'Indeed I

did,' he said, and he drew a book from the drawer of his desk. Well, I remember receiving it,' he said. 'I was then a careless man of the world, without God and without hope, but through infinite mercy, on reading where you and my poor son pointed me to in Isaiah 53:6, my eyes were opened to my sinful condition, and soon after to Him, Jesus Christ, my Savior, and from that time to this, I have not ceased to praise Him.'"

Thus, the Spirit of God graciously encircles the globe, overcomes all obstacles, brings to bear the particular verse of Scripture at the particular time, and illuminates the soul as to Christ. May the readers of these lines be led by the same Spirit to know and confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Selected

Announcements

MEDINA, OH

September 3

ALL-DAY MEETING: The Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, Ohio 44256

Service times: 10:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

For further information contact: Pastor James Presley

Telephone: 740-644-9266

NEWTON, KS

September 9-16

REVIVAL: The Church of God, 400 N. Meridian, Newton, Kansas 67114

Evangelist: Brother Irwin Seshier, Heath, OH

Service times: Beginning Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m., Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m. through Sunday morning at 10:45 a.m.

For further information contact: Pastor Sandy Killfoil @ 316-842-5127

SUMMERSVILLE, WV

October 8-14

REVIVAL: The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV

Evangelist: Brother David Stegmeier, Canby Oregon

Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 6:00 p.m. & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders at 304-872-4047

Visit our website: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com

**In this dark world of sin and pain
We only meet to part again;
But when we reach the heavenly shore,
We there shall meet to part no more;
The joy that we shall see that day
Shall chase our present griefs away.**

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