

The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:39

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

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 48 August 2018 No. 8



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

***"I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord."
Psalm 122:1***

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

SPRING 2018 CAMP MEETING REPORT

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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The Spring 2018 Camp Meeting convened on Father's Day, June 17, 2018. Pastor Roger Decker called the God's Acres meeting to order and welcomed all those who came in from near and from far. We are happy to report that this year's camp meeting was well attended by those who came to worship the Lord and to gain a deeper relationship with Christ. It is always our primary desire to have the Spirit of God in our midst.

Every morning after breakfast, many saints gathered together for an hour in the prayer room. As they gathered in, prayer was earnestly made to the Lord for His help and guidance throughout the meeting. It was time well spent, and it proved to be a real benefit to the success of the services. As the saints poured out their petitions before the Lord, He heard and answered prayer each day.

Brother David Stegmeier delivered the first message of the camp meeting entitled "Known by Their Love." His sermon centered on the thought of letting the world see God's love shine out through our lives. He reminded us that the world knows that we were Christ's disciples by the love we manifest to one another. Several ministers delivered timely messages for the church in our day. God knows the troublesome times in which we live, and He is inspiring His ministers with thoughts that

will help us all. You will find a list of the messages preached and the afternoon teaching lessons on page 26 of this issue of *The Gospel Trumpeter*.

It is always a pleasure to see the ministerial brethren attend the meeting. They come in from various places throughout the United States and outside the country. It was a delight to have Brother and Sister Harvey Kelly attend the meeting again with several new sisters from Honduras. In addition to the Kellys, some sisters came from Grand Cayman. These saints from the West Indies possess a joyful way of presenting praise to God through singing and clapping their hands. We also met new saints for the first time at the meeting. They were Brother Rick Morris from Chesapeake, Virginia, Brother Abraham Burton from St. Louis, Missouri, and Brother and Sister Tim Williams from Peoria, Illinois. With Brother Williams were three sisters who blessed our hearts as they sang.

It was good to see Brother Stanley Rexroth and his son attend this year's meeting. On the last night of the camp meeting, several sisters from Teen Challenge came to the service. These sisters sang the old hymn "Amazing Grace," and it was beautiful. Sister Melissa of Teen Challenge gave her testimony of how she was bound by drug addition and deep sin before God delivered her.

[continued on page 8]

Luke 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their

God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Are You Prepared?



Brother Roger L. Decker

The Way of Holiness

I want to talk to you about being prepared. Our Scripture text says in verse 17, ". . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." We have before us in these Scriptures the announcement concerning the birth of John the Baptist. He was to be great in the sight of the Lord and filled with the Holy Ghost. He was to make ready a people prepared for the

Lord. What if Jesus were to come today? Do you ever think of that? Where would you end up?

John the Baptist was sent as a forerunner before Christ, but let us define his role. First of all, he was mentioned in prophesy. Isaiah 40:3-8 reads: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every

mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

"The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the

flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

Here we see that John the Baptist was defined in prophesy, and he is also in the Gospels. We read in Luke 3:4-6: "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias [he was quoting Old Testament Scripture] the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

What is this prophetic language saying? It is saying there would be a highway where all can get on. That highway is straight, and it puts people on one level. The mountains and the hills shall be made low, the valleys shall be exalted, the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places shall be made smooth. When I think of that Scripture, I think of when you go to a lumber company to buy two-by-fours. What would you do if you were buying two-by-fours? You would pick up each one and sight it to see whether or not it is straight, and then you would look to see if there are knot holes that would weaken it. You would not buy those that are crooked or knotty.

What were the Prophet Isaiah and Luke saying? The way has been opened up, the way of holiness, and all who pass by will come only one way, and that is by lining up with the Word of God. Those who are exalted will be brought down, and those who are low will be lifted up. What does that tell you? Everyone is on one level. Everyone is going to travel the same highway, and

they are going to travel it in the same condition, and that is holy. One who will not line up with the Word of God cannot be a Christian. If you are not lined up with the Word of God, you might as well take the banner down, because you are not a Christian.

The Prophet Isaiah talked about this highway and the way. Everyone who travels upon it shall be holy. Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 35:8, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfar- ing men, though fools, shall not err therein."

Preparing for Eternity

All of this was done in preparation for the Lord. Repentance and bringing forth fruit was a requirement before the Spirit of God would come in. When one goes to an altar of prayer, through the blood of Jesus Christ, all sin must go. There has to be the fruit of repentance before God's Holy Spirit enters into an individual. Preparations have to be made in every- day life. Every season, every year, every month, every week, and even every day readiness is needed. People prepare for parties, weddings, meetings, travel, vacation, retirement, building, buying, shopping, and so on.

Our Scripture text says that John the Baptist came to make a way for the Lord and to make His paths straight. As applied to John, the passage means that he was sent to remove obstruc- tions and to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. John the Baptist was like a hero going before an army to make preparations for its coming. We are constantly preparing for something.

We prepare for the threat of bad weather. When I was grow- ing up in Upstate New York, I

remember that every winter my father would bank the house around the foundation. Also, he always took his car and changed to knobby snow tires. He used to put them on the front and the back. We were getting ready for winter, so great preparations were made. In the spring we pre- pare for tornadoes. We turn on the radio and listen for tornado warnings and get prepared as best we can. We do not want to get caught unprepared. John the Baptist was sent to prepare peo- ple for the coming Messiah. Like- wise, God has sent help our way to help us to prepare for eternity.

Dear one, you do not have to be lost. You can whine around and complain about the preacher, the message, or whatever, but you will have no excuse if you die lost. You do not have to be lost. God has sent you help. If you heed it, you will find your- self on the highway of holiness, and that highway will take you safely into eternity.

God has sent the message of repentance so that you can get your soul cleaned up completely. You must repent to reach eternity safely. That just does not mean going to an altar and saying, "Lord, I'm sorry." Repentance takes in a complete change in your life. It is not merely a change of mind, but it is a change of spirit, a change in your soul, and a change in your actions. God has made it easy for you to repent. What does He do? He sends you the message. He con- victs you in your conscience. He troubles you through the Holy Ghost and makes you feel uneasy when you commit sin. He did all of this so you could prepare for eternity. It is in eternity, dear one, that you are going to face the Judgment. After death comes the Judgment.

Many people seem to be judg- ment hardened today. The thought of the Judgment does not really move too many people, but

it makes me shudder to think about it. Even though I am saved, or born again, I want to make sure there is nothing wrong in my life when I stand before God. Amos, a minor prophet, said in Amos 4:12, "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare [get ready] to meet thy God, O Israel."

Preparation takes effort, but it works well in all things, whether they are temporal things or spiritual things. It is good to be prepared. Let us look at some more things the Lord has provided for us to prepare for eternity. The Lord does not want to take us by surprise. When Paul stood before Agrippa, he let him know this thing was not done in a corner, or in secret; it was done right in the open.

Again, God does not want to take you by surprise. He could do that if He wanted to, but it would be against His nature. God wants everyone to be prepared so that individuals can be ready when that day arrives, whether it is a day for you individually to go into eternity or the day when Jesus comes and takes everyone.

Heed the Warnings

I want you to read the plea in the Word of God. The Prophet Ezekiel penned in Ezekiel 18:30-31: "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. [What is his plea?] Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity [or lawlessness] shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

Ezekiel 33:11 states, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the

wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" What else did God give to help people to prepare? He gave pastors, evangelists, and teachers, but you have to give heed to the message.

Second, in order to receive help, you have to believe the message. If you will line up with the message and believe it, God will help you. If you refuse, dear one, the same message that is sent to help you to prepare will send you to a lost eternity, depending on whether or not you believe it. Jesus said in Mark 16:15-16: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned [the same Gospel]." There is not one Gospel for those who are lost and another Gospel for those who are saved; it is the same Gospel. The only difference is whether or not you believe it.

Are you prepared? Have you heeded the warnings that are in God's Word? Being a church member is not good enough. Being baptized in water is not good enough. Attending a congregation where the Truth is preached is not good enough. Have you taken advantage of all the helps that God has given you along the way? You need to stop and think about your life, even if you are a young person. Look at the different ways that God has tried to help you to be saved or to become more spiritual. God helps you in so many ways. He does it because He has mercy and He loves you.

God does not want you to be lost throughout eternity. He wants you to enjoy being with Him here and then being with Him throughout the ceaseless age of eternity. God uses other people who are saved to witness to you about how He has changed their lives. That is how I came to

the Lord. Witnessing is one of the greatest powers there is. A testimony of what Jesus has done for you will help others.

The First Christian Martyr

The Apostle Paul witnessed to others many times in the Scriptures. Acts 6:8-15 reads: "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God [many times people give false witness to bring down the righteous]."

"And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

There before the council was a man named Stephen who was filled with the Holy Ghost. Stephen was the first Christian martyr, but look at his character. He was full of faith. He had power to work miracles and wonders, and God gave him extreme boldness to face a council of hypocrites. These influential men stood up against a man of God. Before this persecution, most of them had been confined to threats and imprisonments,

grabbing the Christians and throwing them in jail. Persecution had traveled far in advance since the birth of the church. Before this time, it was just threats and casting the saints in prison, but this anger burst forth with rage and madness and could only be satisfied with the spilling of blood.

Again, verse 9 reads, "Then there arose certain of the synagogue [they stood up against him]. . . ." All those different factions joined together (the synagogue of the Libertines, the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians, those of Cilicia, and of Asia) disputing and questioning him about the Messiah. With all these groups ganging up on this man of God, the Scripture says they were not able to resist or to answer his questions. No doubt, he had been given wisdom in the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit anointed him. This council went as far as to perjure men to stir up the people. There were three things that the people saw that day: first, they heard his wisdom; second, they saw his anointing; and third, they saw his face as the face of an angel. Instead of his testimony and preaching leading them to God, they resisted. What happened? They resorted to killing him.

Dear one, no matter how full of sin, envy, jealousy, strife, hatred, or anger you are, God has a witness for you to see. Somehow you are going to know the truth. Somewhere you are going to come face-to-face with Truth. You may raise up and refuse to serve God, and you have that right. You can go out and do almost anything you want to do. You can come against the church and blaspheme the church, but always keep one thing in mind: coming down the highway is something that you cannot handle. It is going to be something large enough that you are going to regret that you were not pre-

pared to serve the Lord.

Acts 7:58 tells us, "And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." While that council was blaspheming and stoning and killing, the clothes were laid down at the feet of one who turned out to be the greatest Apostle in the Bible. You see, you can do nothing against the Truth, only for it. When Saul saw Stephen, he could not shake off what he witnessed. He saw one who was bold and fearless looking up to Heaven for his strength. Saul's heart was being prepared for the road to Damascus.

Reminders That Eternity Awaits Us All

If you are not saved or where you ought to be spiritually, how many individuals have witnessed to you, yet you have not prepared your heart for eternity? The witness of Stephen was something that Saul never forgot. Someone may say, "No one has ever witnessed to me." Have you ever had a close call? I have. One time I accidentally pulled out in front of someone, and I thought, "Oh, mercy!" Then I said, "Thank You, Lord!" Thank the Lord that guy knew how to use his brakes. I have had close calls, and every one of us have at one time or another. What happens? Your heart races, your mind starts thinking, "What if . . ." If that should happen to you, would you be ready to go?

God uses close calls and everyday living to stir hearts and to trouble those who are not right with Him. They are reminders that someday we all are going to leave this world. The car that almost hit you or the accident that you witnessed helps to prepare your heart to receive Jesus Christ and to prepare you for eternity.

Sometimes I think back in my life of accidents that I have been in. I was not the driver in any of those accidents. As a young man, I was riding in a car with my cousin, and we had been out to the after hours places. I remember coming down the highway as we were heading for home. Suddenly he lost control, went up an embankment, hit a telephone pole, and flipped over the car. I can still remember that accident as though it was yesterday. Another time I was riding in a convertible with someone. We went around a corner and hit something head on and had to be cut out of the car. When I think of those things now, I think of how God spared me. I could have easily been in eternity.

Then I had another one, and I have even woke up in the night over this one. When I was younger, I used to love to go swimming quite often. One time I went down to a man-made lake, and there was a dock with boats locked up underneath. I would go down there because I wanted to get in to see those boats. There was only one way I could get in there. I had to dive down in the water under a door, dig out, turn myself over, and crawl underneath the door to make it. It was so stupid, because I could not take the boats out. I got up on the other side and all I saw was regular boats with maybe ten-horse engines on them.

One time I was inside there, and I thought, "Well, there is only one way out, and that is the same way I came in." I had to squeeze underneath that door. If I had gotten caught there, no one would have been there to bring me out. I have often thought of what might have happened, and I have even dreamed about it. Oh, how God spares us! God uses things such as that to cause us to think, and it prepares the way for Jesus Christ. Maybe you have had an accident. I have

heard different ones testify of how they have had near misses, or maybe had an accident, and how God spared them. What does it do? It causes thankfulness to swell up within their hearts. Those things are reminders to us. Sometimes a tragic end comes to someone you knew whose life did not portray the life of a Christian.

When my mother passed away in Upstate New York, I rode to the funeral home with a retired state trooper. As we were having a conversation, I asked him, "How are you enjoying your retirement?"

He said, "I am enjoying it very much, but I hope I live long enough to really enjoy it."

I said, "What are you talking about?"

He said, "Well, statistics say we [state troopers] have the shortest life span in retirement."

I inquired: "Why would that be? Why would being a state trooper cause statistics like that?"

He replied, "It is due to the stress of the job."

I thought to myself, "What stress?" Then he told me that one time he got a call to direct traffic in a place. The city police were handling the accident. Then he learned that he knew the people who were in the accident, and the whole family was killed. He said: "It was awful to look on that scene. When I went home that night, I could not lie down. I saw the faces of all those dear ones." Then he told me about another incident. He said: "One time I was going down the highway and along came a speeder. I turned the lights on, turned around, went after him, and pulled him over. What am I pulling over? Am I pulling over a serial killer, a kidnapper, or a car thief? When I walked up alongside that car, I didn't know what I was going to face when I got to that driver." We never know what we are going to face, do

we? However, we do know that we need to prepare our hearts to meet the Lord.

The Uncertainty of Life

How about the funeral that you might attend? Maybe a loved one passed away, but people soon forget. Often they come out of those funerals and make promises about all they are going to do, but you do not see them again. God attempts to prepare them for eternity. What did the wise man say about mourning? Solomon stated in Ecclesiastes 7:2, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart." He was not saying that you would rather go there. I would much rather go to a wedding than a funeral.

Verses 3-4 read: "Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." At a wedding or a social event, no one is talking about eternity, but at the house of mourning, that is all you think about. Who would bring up dying at a wedding or a social event? If you did, you would be looked upon unfavorably.

God uses the house of mourning to prepare hearts. The house of mourning is divine. Why is that? God deals with souls there. He lets you know when you see that body, that is the end of all men physically, and you are going the same route if Jesus tarries. The house of feasting is of the human, and there is very little, if anything, for your soul.

Sometimes God deals with people through natural disasters. It really stirs me when I read of earthquakes or plane crashes. When something happens, it makes you think: "What if I lived

there? What if I were in that country or state that is frequented with earthquakes, tornadoes, and or some other disaster?"

God is working to prepare hearts. God wants you to be prepared. In order to be prepared, there has to be effort on your part; it is necessary. You must have a desire and reach out before God can do the work He wants to do. Job 11:11-20 reads: "For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it? For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt. If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

"For then shall thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear: Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away: And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning. And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee. But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost."

If God had His way (and oh, how He wants it), everyone would be prepared, but He lets people have their own way. He desires so much for you to be ready. That is the reason He gave His Son Jesus Christ. Are you prepared?

There is a Bible way to be ready for whatever takes place in your life. You should not rely on church joining, your wealth, your good works, or family religion. What should you rely on? You must rely on the Word of God.

You have to be ready in accordance to God's Word. In other words, your readiness must be done the way the Bible says. We read in Proverbs 28:13, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." God is rich in mercy.

You cannot cover your sins by joining a church, by being baptized, by being raised in religion, or by good works. You must confess and forsake all sin. You must ask God to forgive you, and at the same time, be willing to quit the wrong and start doing what is right. Romans 6:4 tells us, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that

like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Are you prepared for eternity? If not, you can be. You may say, "I don't know all that I have done in my life." It makes no difference whether you know it or not. God knows it, and He is the One who can handle it. Someone may say, "I plan to get saved just before I die." When is that? Do you have it already marked on your calendar? The truth is, you do not know when that will occur.

Why not make sure that you are where God wants you to be now? If you are not where God

wants you to be, why not get prepared now? Life is too uncertain to linger in sin. Life is too fragile to tarry and to ponder salvation. Jesus said in Luke 21:34, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

Why not bring your burden to Jesus? Why not get prepared and ready for whatever comes down the highway? Believe me, you want to be ready.

(Compact Disc TR-1881)

[Camp Meeting Report—contin. from p. 2]

What truly lifts the spirit and rejoices the heart is the presence of God's Holy Spirit. Because of His visitation, our hearts were enlightened and encouraged to continue pressing the battle on. His presence also brought great conviction on those who were lost or backslidden. Saturday night the young men's quartet sang the song, "Sometimes It Takes a Mountain." God's presence moved in and touched the hearts of those needing salvation. The altars began filling with souls weeping their way to God. What a beautiful sight it was to see people set free from Satan and sin's bondage. We humbly give God thanks and praise for His great blessings to us. Much more could be said about the meeting, but space does not permit us from going into great detail.

However, we would be remiss if we failed to thank Him for the inspirational singing by the congregation and the various solos and groups. Singing and praising God in song is a great part of true worship. It surely helps to set the tone for the preaching of God's Word. We appreciate the precious fellowship that we enjoyed with God's people. Another delight was the children's contribution on Saturday morning. These young hearts sang and quoted Scripture verses.

The Spring Camp Meeting climaxed on Sunday evening. The service was crowned as other souls bowed at an altar of prayer seeking salvation. Brother Larry Dishman preached a soul-searching message entitled "The Bright and the Dark Side of Eternity." He described what is to be expected for those who are truly

redeemed from sin and those who are lost. His sobering thoughts caused people to think seriously about their eternal destiny. The lost considered what lay ahead of them that reject Christ's pardoning love. As conviction gripped their hearts, many humbled themselves to seek forgiveness.

Then Brother Dishman encouraged the saints to continue to fight the good fight of faith, to press the battle on, and to overcome the many obstacles that Satan uses to hinder them from reaching the goal. We each are given a choice; therefore, it is up to us to choose whether or not we will take God's way.

Finally, if you would like a copy of the CD's, MP3's, or DVD's of the camp meeting, please see page 26 to order them from the CD Ministry. You will find ordering information there.

**In the strait and narrow way,
the traffic is always one way.**

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden,

God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 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.

6 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.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

THE AWFUL TRAGEDY OF MAN'S FIRST SIN



Brother Garret Haylock

Disobedience Brought Man Down

As I thought along the lines of man's first sin, I remembered the words of President Harry S. Truman when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. It is said that the course of the world was changed that day. Although estimates vary, approximately 70,000 to 80,000 people died immediately, and an additional 100,000 perished from burns and radiation sickness in the months and years that followed. President Truman

was quoted as saying, "How tragic!" It was the first time that particular bomb was dropped, and it killed so many. It was considered a great tragedy because of the amount of lives it took. When that atomic bomb was dropped, they say it burst out in a one mile radius and flattened everything within that mile. It moved out from the center at the speed of sound, so no one could have outrun that particular event within that one mile radius. The people were killed instantly. As it spread, it killed thousands of people.

If we could just have one little peek into hell and see the millions of people who are there because of sin, it would be a much greater tragedy. *Webster's Dictionary* says that tragedy is having a disastrous conclusion. That describes sin perfectly. It is destructive and merciless, and once a person gives in to it, it takes full control.

Millions of people are in hell because of sin. The Bible tells us in Romans 5:12, "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." Sin is to blame for every tear you shed because a loved one in your family died without God. Sin is to blame for all sorrow. Today we can easily see how tragic sin really is.

The first sin was committed because the first woman listened to the devil, which spoke through the serpent. She ate of the forbidden fruit, and she also gave it to her husband to eat. If anything changed the course of the world, it was the awful tragedy of man's first sin, because that changed the order of things. You see, God had a plan way back in the beginning, but man foiled God's plan by disobedience. The Bible says in 1 Samuel 15:22b, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Disobedience got the world started off in a sinful, downward spiral, and today it is still spinning out of control, ever going down.

Man's first sin is what really changed the course of the world. God did not intend for man to die in his sins. God made man. The wise man said, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Man sinned. The Scripture says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Another thing that brings so much sorrow is people wanting their own way. God is holding them responsible.

The Alluring Power of Sin

When I really think about life, I think about all that sin has done and is still doing in people's lives. Sin changed the order of God's plan. God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden, but apparently in close proximity to the

tree of life. Man's disobedience caused sin to enter into the world, and death came through sin. Everyone outside the fold of God is guilty of disobedience. The Scripture says in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Before I was saved, I did not want much to do with God, although I knew better. I felt that I had been overly restricted by a stern mother living in a Christian home. When I came of age, I decided that I was going to find out what sin is all about, and I learned that sin is very destructive. There were certain things that I said I would not do, but I found myself doing those very things. Sin messes up lives. We were not made for sin; we were made to bring pleasure to God.

Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and died spiritually, and they were separated from God. I am glad that we have access to a forgiving God. He sent a Savior so that we could be forgiven for all our sins. God's hand reached further down than we could reach up. I believe that everyone who is saved can relate to that.

Sin took us down, but God raised us up. You might be in despair and feel that you are beyond help. I have known people who felt that way, and God reached down in mercy. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I am grateful that we have a second chance at that tree of life in Jesus Christ. Sin foiled the first attempt of God, but Jesus stayed the course. The Bible says, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

No matter how messed up sin has made you, God, through Jesus Christ, can straighten

things out if you will only believe and come to Him. Jesus is the best friend that anyone in this world could have. If you are outside the fold of God, do not let sin's deceptions take you further than you really want to go. It has the potential to do that.

Sin got started when the devil was able to convince Eve to disobey God's command. The Bible says in Genesis 3:6 that the woman saw that the tree was good for food. I thought about what the wise man said in Proverbs 1:10. It reads, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

At times some people may convince you to do things that your better judgment tells you not to do. It is the way of sin; yet you want to fit in and be like others, so you forget all the godly training, and even the convictions of not doing certain things, and you are lured by sin. The Bible tells us, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15).

The devil convinced Eve that what she was doing was good. Before the devil came tempting, she was told not to eat of the forbidden fruit. She should have turned away from it, but she entered into temptation by looking on the forbidden fruit with pleasure, and then she took it and ate it. It was her own act and deed that got her into trouble. The devil did not take it and put it into her mouth. Satan may tempt a person, but he cannot force one to sin. In other words, he may try to persuade a person to cast himself down, but Satan cannot cast him down.

The Way of Sin Is Downhill

When you are saved and look at things out in the world, they look bad. However, as you hang around sin, those things no

longer look as bad as they once did. The next thing you know, you will start to indulge in things that you know you should not get involved with, and soon you will be bound by that awful sin. Perhaps Eve did not intend to partake of the forbidden fruit when she first looked upon it, but that was the result of her disobedience. A man cannot stop himself when he wills. Many times people want to stop sinning, but they cannot do it on their own. Many times when I was out in sin, I wanted to stop certain sinful things, but I just could not do it. Thank God, one night I heard of His amazing, saving grace and how He came to save sinners. I knew He would do that, because I was raised in a home where it was demonstrated and lived out in my presence. However, as sin started to take its toll on me, I found myself spiraling out of control, as many other sinners do.

When you engage in sin, it is going to take you further than you plan to go. Sin will make a mockery of you and destroy you. You have to be very careful because of the awfulness of sin. I cannot think of anything that can come close to the tragedy of man's first sin.

It is said that the depth of sin is unknown. The dictionary says that depth is the distance downward. You never measure upward to measure depth. Some people have gone so far and thought they had hit the bottom. You might be one who has gone way down, beyond distances that people know exist. In some places in the world the waters are so deep that they still do not have an accurate measurement of how deep those areas really are. That is the way sin is. The depth of sin is unknown. If you are living in sin, you should shudder, lest you go deeper and deeper into sin, to the place where you are completely out of control.

One time a brother who was in the diving business told me he went to rescue a tourist who got caught in the currents. He caught the woman and started coming back to the boat, but the waves were very strong. He said he remembered holding on to the woman and saying to God, "This is my last." He could not fight the waves anymore and felt himself going down, but just before his nose went under the water, his foot hit a rock.

There is a solid Rock known as Christ Jesus. No matter how deep in sin you are, that Rock, Christ Jesus, will stop you from going down any further. He will pull you up and out of the angry waves if you will only give Him an opportunity. God is still in the saving business.

The Deceitfulness of Sin

Going back to our Scripture text, the day that first sin took place was something to behold. The Scripture text tells us in verse 7, "And the eyes of them both were opened." To what were their eyes opened? The eyes of their consciences were opened to sin. Their hearts smote them for what they had done. They saw the happiness that they had fallen from and the misery they had fallen into. How dishonorable and disquieting sin is! My friend, sin will deceive you. How will it deceive? It promises much, but it gives very little, according to the Scriptures. The pleasures of sin are only for a season. Someone once said that the only time there is pleasure in sin is during the sowing time, because a reaping time is coming. Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Although sin may start out like fun, friend, you are going to reap a bitter harvest unless you turn and ask God to break the

power of sin in your life. God allows the sin, but He is angry with the wicked every day. Adam and Eve's eyes were opened, and they saw what they had fallen into. What a dishonor! The serpent told Eve her eyes would be opened, and so they were. Now they understood exactly what he meant. Their eyes were opened to their shame and grief.

Judas betrayed Jesus, and the pressures were great upon him. He received thirty pieces of silver, but after he fully realized what he had done, he threw it down and went out and hanged himself because he had betrayed the Son of God. After Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, repentance should have taken place over that, but I do not read that they really repented over it.

These events in the Bible were written down to give a warning because sin is still out to destroy. It has destroyed many others in the past, and it will destroy you if you get into it. In Romans 5:12 the Bible says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." With the power of God in your heart and life, you can live in this world free from sin. Many religious people say that is not possible, but it is possible, friend.

In the islands where I live, we are surrounded by salt water, and I have seen some people catch fish that weigh three hundred pounds. I do not know how many years those fish have lived in that salt water. They breathe through their gills in salt water, yet in order for a fish to taste good when you eat it, you have to put salt on it. Brother Esau Brooks used to say, "If God can keep a fish fresh in a salty sea, then he can keep you saved and free from sin in a sinful world." The sin is in the world, but it does not have to be in you. Thank God, Jesus is the cure for sin.

Mary was told that she was going to have a son. Matthew 1:21 reads, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from [not in] their sins." If Jesus has dealt with your sins, He has cleansed you from all unrighteousness.

The Far-Reaching Consequences of Sin

The Bible tells us just how Adam and Eve got into sin. James 1:13-15 allows us to understand how man gets into sin. It says: "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." My friend, when sin is finished with you, it will kill you, spiritually speaking, and cast you into hell and still continue to pursue others. You cannot kill sin. Only God can kill sin through Jesus Christ living in our lives. Sin will be in this world until the close of time, but it does not have to be in you. I am grateful for full and free salvation!

Sin is so very disruptive and destructive. The Bible lets us know that it began through lust. Eve saw the forbidden fruit in the garden, desired it, and ate it. Sin carries far-reaching consequences. David committed adultery with Bathsheba. He saw a beautiful woman bathing and sent for her. The Bible tells us of the far-reaching consequences that sin has. The Prophet Nathan came to him and said, in essence: "This deed has given the enemies of God much room to blaspheme. Therefore, the sword will never depart from your house." David was the man who wrote the Twenty-third Psalm and many

other psalms, which have blessed our hearts many times. David ended up having rape, murder, and rebellion in his family, and his own son drove him off the throne, all because of his sinful deeds.

Friend, sin has far-reaching consequences. David might have thought that committing adultery with Bathsheba was just a one night fling, but what a person sows, he is going to reap. Sometimes people sow so much that they do not have enough life to reap it all. However, they have children and grandchildren coming behind them. Jesus can stop that downward spiral, but those individuals have to bring it to Him. If they will confess, God will forgive. God is faithful and just.

In Luke 13:3 you can read that Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He cannot repent for you; you have to do it. If you repent, He will forgive you. Jesus said in John 6:37, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." These are promises. Sin may start small, but it does not stay small or get smaller. Unless God totally eradicates sin from your life, it will blossom and grow larger.

Romans 15:4 reads, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." So many times people quickly read over the Scriptures, but they were written for our learning. We can see what sin has done to others, and that should be sufficient for us. We should not have to experience it for ourselves.

The Bible lets us know in Joshua 7:19-26 how Achan saw, coveted, and took. You may say, "Well, that doesn't seem to be such a big problem." As the Israelites were going into the battle of Jericho, it was laid out plainly before them by Joshua, their com-

mander. God passed it to him, and he passed it on to the people. He told them that everything in the city was off limits. Everything was supposed to be utterly destroyed. The silver and the gold was so beautiful to Achan that he could not pass it up. No doubt, the garment looked very appealing, and possibly he envisioned himself in it. Many times people are lured into sin because sin has that effect. Sin can make a person feel that he could do things that other people cannot get away with. Achan probably felt that way.

When you start dabbling in sin, you have already stepped off the edge, and you are going down. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, Peter said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee." Jesus said, "Come." Peter stepped out of the boat and started to walk on the water, but he took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink. The Scripture says he cried out, "Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:25-31). From the time you step out to meddle in sin, you may look up to Heaven and say, "Lord, save me before this thing takes me down." God is a merciful God, and He will forgive, but one has to see himself in a lost and helpless condition and cry out to Him for mercy.

The Cords of Sin

The Bible lets us know in Proverbs 5:21-22 that as a sinner, one is held by the cords of his sins. You may say, "Well, I didn't know that sin has cords." Friend, sin has cords, and they will hold you longer than you want to stay. I believe addictions are part of those cords of sin. The cords of sin are so vague that they cannot be seen until they are too strong to be broken. That is how sin is. It gives you the impression that you are in control, but you are not really in control, friend. You

will think, "I can give this up when I want to." No, friend, you cannot give it up on your own. When you get to the place where you can see that something is really detrimental to you, often even rehabilitation centers are unsuccessful with most people. The statistics show that 90 percent of all people who go into rehabilitation centers relapse within one year. Only approximately 10 percent of those people have a full recovery. I believe most of that is if they have people really praying for them. God is the only remedy for sin.

The Bible says in Proverbs 14:9, "Fools make a mock at sin." One time in our youth group we tried an experiment with a guy who weighed approximately two hundred pounds. He was about seventeen years of age and as strong as an ox, so to speak. We had seen this demonstration in a book. It said that you could tie up a large person with a ball of thread. When I told them that, this guy cracked up laughing and said it could never happen.

We wrapped the thread around him with his hands at his sides. We went around him about twelve times and told him to snap it like Samson, and he snapped it. Next, I told another guy to go around him until the ball of thread was gone. The big guy was a very fair-skinned person, and he got red trying to break that thread. We had to end up taking the scissors and cutting the threads from around him. He could not believe how those threads bound him.

You see, when those threads dropped down on his arms, it became significantly stronger, so that he could not break free. Friend, that is how deceptive sin is. You may think you are in control, but soon it is totally out of your control. You may be six feet tall but a slave to a three-inch cigarette. I have heard people say they have thrown the cigarettes

away. They felt convicted listening to Gospel songs, so on the way to work, they threw them away, but on the way home they ran over to the fence where they were and picked them back up. Friend, you are no match for sin. You need God to help you out of sin.

The Bible lets us know in Psalm 119:133, "Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." Without Jesus sin will have dominion over you. Sin will make you a servant of sin instead of a servant to the Master, whether you have a college degree or not. Jesus said in John 8:34, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

God has the power through Jesus Christ to set you free. He can cut the cords of sin that are holding you captive. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Sin puts you in danger of hellfire. In Revelation 20:11-15 John wrote: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the

sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

I do not know whether or not you believe in hell, but if your name is not found in the Book of Life, you will be cast into the lake of fire. There is a song that says, "Please search the book again." Many people hide behind religion, but except a man is born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. If you cannot enter the kingdom down here, you definitely cannot inherit it over on the other side. You will have to give an account of the deeds done in this life, whether they have been good or evil. The awful tragedy of man's first sin has really taken man down a spiral that he has struggled with for years. Only when you meet Jesus can you be set free.

If you are outside the fold of God, my prayer is that you will seek Jesus with all your heart. First Chronicles 28:9 tell us, "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." May God help you. If you are outside the fold of God, you need to seek Him wholeheartedly, before it is eternally too late.

(Compact Disc TR-1863)

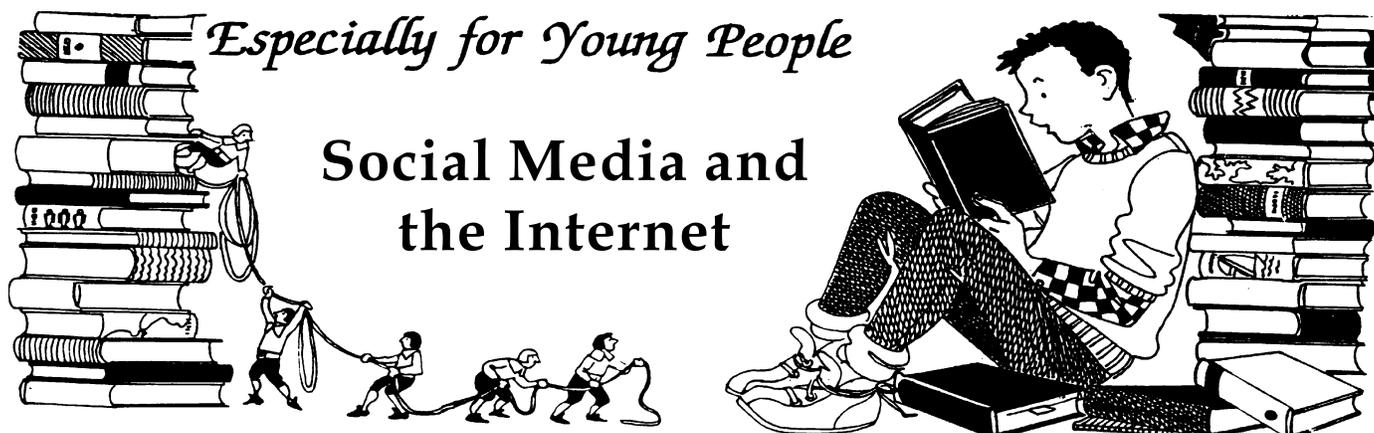
Two Questions

A skeptic once derided a Christian by asking him, "Say, George, what would you say if, when you died, you found there wasn't such a place as Heaven after all?"

With a smile the believer replied, "I should say—well, 'I've had a fine time getting here anyway!'"

Then the Christian sent the skeptic a boomerang not quite so easy to answer.

"I say, Fred," he asked, "what would you say if, when you died, you found there was such a place as hell after all?"



Recently as I was meditating on how social media and the Internet has affected my family, I was feeling a bit frustrated and remorseful. As I was meditating, God brought many thoughts to me, and I will endeavor to share them with you.

Several years ago, when my husband and I first got married, we made the choice not to have a television in our home. The television has been taught against in the Church of God for many years, as well as other religious affiliations. Both of us were raised without a television being a part of our lives. Our parents were raised in an era of time when many looked upon the television as evil and were taught that they should not set anything evil before their eyes. This teaching was based on Psalm 101:3, which reads, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me." My husband and I determined that we would embrace the truth of our upbringing.

The second reason that we chose not to have a television as a part of our lives was the amount of time that one could consume watching it. We wanted our family to be active, to be available to enjoy interacting with one another, and to be a present part of society. We did not want our time to be consumed in that manner, and we wanted to be avail-

able to help others around us.

Today within the church it is not so much the television that is in question. Plenty of big screen televisions are at the heart of many secular homes; however, the computer, the Internet, and social media have become a part of many homes. There is nothing wrong with having a computer; it is an awesome tool in our day. It conveys a powerhouse of information at our fingertips. Even though social media brings a bit more of an alert to my heart, I can see that it can be used for good.

My husband and I have endeavored to set up strict rules and guidelines within our home concerning these technologies, yet within our home I feel a pull. There is a drawing to be in the know. We are able to stop at any point and ask our computers or our smart phones anything we want to know (the learning is endless). Also, through social media, we can see what is going on in other people's lives around us. It can be addicting and time consuming.

This brings me to another thought that God brought to my mind, and one that I feel is a little deeper. I once heard a minister relate how he came to the Truth. He stated that as a young boy, his parents took him from church to church, from denomination to denomination. He said that he would study God's Word, search-

ing for the truth. A statement that he made in his message made a profound impact upon my soul. He said that when he came to the Church of God, he felt the same spirit coming from their teachings that he felt coming from within the pages of God's Word.

I brought this thought into what I am writing because I feel it is something that we truly need to consider. I believe it needs to bring a caution to us concerning our use of the computer, the Internet, and social media. We need to stop and consider the spirit that we, through these technologies, can bring into our living rooms. If I understood the minister correctly, he felt a peace, he felt an anchor, and most importantly, he felt what his soul cried out for when he came to the Church of God.

Personally, in most instances, I do not walk away from surfing the Internet or from being on social media with a feeling of peace or of being more anchored. Many times it does not resonate with the Spirit of God within my soul. I walk away feeling foggy or pressed down. I am not talking about going to websites that a Christian should not go to. As I said, we have set strict rules in our home concerning these things. I am talking about seemingly harmless websites.

[continued on page 20]

Is Your Mind a Workshop for God or a Playground for the Devil?



Brother Larry Dishman

Your Thought Life

The battle for the Christian is in the mind. It is not so much on the job, at school, at home, or at church. Many people believe that victory is possible, but only at some future time, possibly in Heaven. I want you to know that you can have victory now, and you should have victory in overcoming the world, whether in thought, in word, or in deed. Jesus came, died upon the Cross, and rose again to break the

power of sin once and for all. However, the grace to overcome must first be applied to your mind if victory is to be spread to your actions. Many people deal with outward things, but they fail to deal with the mind.

One song asks the question, "Is thy heart right with God?" Distressed Christians from every walk of life are asking questions and seeking help. How can you control the thoughts that torment you? Evil thoughts can be a big problem. We live in a nervous,

restless age. Many people are living under extreme pressure. They rush to and fro and seldom stand still. The existing conditions of these modern times make it easier for the devil to speak to minds. I have observed that people are more disturbed over evil thoughts than any other temptation of the flesh.

I want to share some truths with you that might help you as a Christian. The Bible says in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

The lack of knowledge can destroy you. A few people have become so distressed over the way the devil works on their minds and have even seriously considered suicide.

The first thought that I would like to share with you is that God knows your thoughts. He knows exactly what you think upon. The Bible says in 1 Chronicles 28:9, "The LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." Nothing is truly done in secret. That ought to be a sobering thought and should convince you that what you think about and what you dwell on can be either a source of joy to God or a source of grief to God.

What kind of response are your thoughts producing in the heart of God? As a child of God, you should not want to do anything that would displease God, so let us find out from the Word of God how to please Him in this area of life. God can read your mind, according to Psalm 94:11. It reads, "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity."

We read in Matthew 9:4, "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" God knows if you are thinking evil in your heart. The latter part of Psalm 139:2 reads, "Thou understandest my thought afar off." The mind is where your real battle takes place.

Galatians 5:17 states, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." I want to encourage you, young person. You really ought to get saved while you are young, before you get involved with the things of this world. Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years

draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." If you are not a Christian, what you enjoy thinking about now will not be enjoyable once you get saved. However, when you least expect it, some of those thoughts will come rushing in. Memories can be a chain of terrifying thoughts. Some would give anything if they had never gotten involved in pornography and other things that are now giving them a serious problem.

The Development of Godly Character

God gives you a brand-new Spirit when you get saved, but this does not mean that when you are saved, you will become instantly mature in the Lord. The Spirit of God in you will go to work developing the character of Christ within you. This development of godly character begins a process that will continue for the rest of your life. No man can have peace of mind until he is at peace with his Creator and is doing what God has called him to do.

The Christian certainly is one who wants to do what is right. He does not want to think evil thoughts. Intelligence bids him that he cannot afford to hate. Hatred begins in the mind. A person starts thinking about certain people and what they did, and that can rob an individual of peace. The Christian cannot afford to hold jealousy, envy, ill will, or a grudge against anybody. These things are robbers of the mind and the soul so that one does not have the blessed peace that God ordained that the Christian is to have.

Peace of mind is possible, so do not let the devil tell you that you cannot have it. It begins with God and continues as you make peace with men. You must not allow bitterness, hatred, jealousy, and such killing enemies to in-

vade your mind and your spirit. The Bible says the peace of God gives you peace that passes all understanding. From this stems peace of mind and a good conscience. Friend, peace of mind is that eternal, perpetual sabbath of the soul. Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established." This is where you begin.

Proverbs 21:5 reads, "The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want." Romans 12:2 says, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." God's Word gives no excuse for not developing a renewed mind.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:16, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:3, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Paul was concerned that their minds would be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. He wrote in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." God wants you to have a sound mind and to be in control.

The mind was the problem back in Noah's day. Genesis 6:5 reads, "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." In Noah's day the people did not have all the technology that we have today, so how much more can this be said of the people of the world today, that their thoughts are on evil continually.

The Carnal Mind

Proverbs 15:26 states, "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words." This is a serious message, because it is a serious thing to allow the devil to be in control of your mind. The proverb writer said the thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord. Jeremiah 4:14 tells us, "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" God does not want vain thoughts to lodge within the child of God.

Romans 8:6 says, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Are you carnally minded or spiritually minded? Verse 7 tells us, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Titus said this about the mind in Titus 1:15, "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

What can you do about the mind? Proverbs 23:7 reads, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." This proverb is sobering because it cuts through the icing of the cake, so to speak, the icing of outward actions, by implying that the way you think is the way you are. The best way you can examine yourself is when you are alone at night in bed with the lights out, when there is no noise around. What do you think about then? Where do your fantasies take you in the stillness of the night?

Do you engage in sensual and self-gratifying daydreams? While you lie there, are you criticizing your neighbor? Are you plotting revenge against someone? Are you desiring positions and possessions that God has not re-

leased to you? If so, you are programming yourself for defeat. If you have thoughts of unforgiveness toward someone or have bitter thoughts, you are programming yourself for defeat. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

Romans 12:3 says, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Before one becomes proud, he first entertains proud thoughts.

Someone was in the restroom at a certain place and a young boy came in and thought he was alone in there. He was looking in the mirror and said, "Man, you are cute!" He was thinking too much of himself. That is not good when someone goes in the bathroom and looks in the mirror and starts bragging on himself to himself. On the other hand, God does not want you to underestimate what you are in Christ.

Behind every wicked deed is a process of evil thinking. A person who thinks wrong most of the time will act wrong. If you allow your mind to dwell in the gutter, your life will soon be in the gutter. The person who will not come to the place where he controls his mind is not going to be able to control his life. An evil idea starts in the head, goes to the heart, and moves to the hand. What you put in your mind is more important than what you put in your body.

Make No Provision for the Flesh

What can you do to gain victory in this battle for your mind? Friend, there are a number of commands given in God's Word that spell out things that you should do in order to discipline your mind. Romans 13:14 states, "But put ye on the Lord

Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Most people who have gotten in trouble have made provisions for the flesh. They began to think a certain way, thereby making provisions for the flesh. In order to gain victory in this battle, you must not feed those thoughts; you must starve them to death. When a wrong thought comes into your mind, you have a choice: either you can feed the thought or starve it.

You should never feed evil thoughts. When evil thoughts come to your mind, you can fight against them. What can you do to starve wrong thoughts? You could sing a song aloud or in your mind or quote Scripture. You do not have to let the devil control your mind. Isaiah 48:18 states, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." If you will hearken to God's commandments, then your peace can be as a river and your righteousness as the waves of the sea.

The Prophet Isaiah did not say it would be as a pond, but he said it would be as a river. A river keeps flowing, and the waves of the sea keep coming in wave after wave. That is the way your peace can be if you will hearken to the commandments found in the Word of God. If the devil is bringing bad thoughts into your mind, you can start quoting verses of Scripture that you have memorized. I encourage the people of God, especially while they are young, to memorize Scriptures. You need to get familiar with the Scriptures and good Gospel songs. James 4:7b admonishes, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

You can turn to Jesus for help. With an intelligent approach to the throne of grace, thank God, you can ask God to come to your rescue. In Hebrews

4:16 God's Word invites you to come boldly to the throne of grace, so that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need. When the devil is bringing thoughts to your mind, you need grace and help; that is a time of need. As a Christian, God said you can come boldly to get the help you need at that particular time.

Thoughts are only evil to you when you cherish them. If you fight against them, they are not evil to you. You have done no wrong because an evil thought has come to your mind. That is the way you are tempted, and temptation is not sin. When an evil thought lodges within you, that is when it becomes sin; therefore, you must reject it at its first approach. At any rate, you can exclude wrong thoughts by prayer and faith before they become deeply entrenched.

Stay Close to God and Keep Good Company

Someone may say, "I am a young Christian, and I am really having a tough battle in my thought life. Another thing you can do to help control your thoughts is to mingle with pure-minded, spiritual people. It is necessary to keep good company. Your thoughts can be governed, to some degree, by the company you keep. If your close friends have a heart for God, it is much easier for you to have a heart for God. By the same token, friend, it is very easy for a friend's cold heart to be contagious and to cause your love for God to wax cold. You can see this principle stressed constantly in the Bible.

In Psalm 119:63 we read, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." Second Timothy 2:22 instructs, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure

heart." Young person, your closest friends should be those who have pure hearts. Only when your companions are like that can you really flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. If you want victory in this area, you must keep full of Christ's Spirit by staying close to God.

To aid you even more on this subject, Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." From this verse you learn that Satan has a kingdom, and his kingdom consists of principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and wicked spirits in high places.

Jesus, the author and the finisher of your faith, will never leave you to fight your battles alone against the unseen spirit world. Verse 13 tells you what you have to do: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." This is where many Christians get bogged down. They believe God's Word; they believe what this verse says, but they ask, "How do I put on the whole armor of God?"

Verse 14 states, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." You must gird up the loins of your mind with Truth, which means attending Sunday school, being faithful to the church services, paying attention to the Word of God, studying your Bible, and becoming familiar with the Word of God.

First Peter 1:13 states, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The word "gird" carries the idea of prepara-

tion. A person involved in warfare does not casually or passively wander into a battle. He does whatever is necessary to prepare himself, ensuring the very best chances for victory. Girding up your mind means being serious minded in your determination to persevere.

Think on Pure Things

Second Corinthians 10:3-5 lines up with what Ephesians, Chapter 6, says: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

You have to cast down the imaginations that the devil brings to your mind. God has given you the power to do that. Do you know what that means? You have to slam those thoughts down and bring them into the obedience of Christ. Spiritual weapons have been made available for us in this battle; however, these weapons are powerless if you do not use them.

How can you get victory over your thought life? Isaiah 26:3 tells us, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Most of the time, when people get into trouble, it is because they feel their minds wander. You can only remain in perfect peace if you keep your mind stayed on Him. This is done when you feed the mind and the soul with thoughts from the Word of God. When you think on spiritual things and fill your mind with the Word of God, there is no room for evil thoughts.

Too many times what people

listen to, hear, and watch is pulling them down spiritually. People wonder why they struggle so much with wrong thoughts when it is due to what they put in their minds. This is where the battle begins. Listening to or watching the wrong things will have a negative effect on you.

Philippians 4:7-8 tells us: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

You may be wondering, "How can one think on pure things when the mind is beset with evil thoughts?" You must put on the whole armor of God to arrive at a Bible cure for evil thoughts, but first you must come to an emphatic decision. As a Christian, you must realize that the thoughts that torment you are not your own, but they are put in your mind by the devil.

Memorize Scriptures

Now, I cannot just make my mind go blank. I have never been able to do that. I have to replace that bad picture with a good picture. I have to replace an evil thought with a good thought. I can do this only by the help of God. Friend, you do not have to dwell on evil things; you can dwell on good things. These verses sum up God's standard for the thought life by giving an eightfold thought gauge.

God designed the mind to grow and to flourish as it is fed the right things. If you saturate your thoughts with things that do not meet God's glorious standard, then the mind reacts in

adverse ways. God did not make your mind to handle garbage. I believe the primary way to discipline the mind is to learn to focus your thoughts on God, His ways, and His character. The more you focus upon Him, the more you will be drawn to Him.

As you find your heart drawn away from yourself and toward Christ, you will have a growing dissatisfaction with anything that distracts you from seeing Jesus only. I urge you to memorize Scriptures. Do you want peace of mind and victory in this area? Then you should prove it by practicing what God says to practice. God's Word never fails. If you need to correct your thoughts, then reject the impure thoughts, the dishonest thoughts, and the untrue, unproven thoughts. You need to think about things that are true.

Ephesians 4:17 states, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." The vanity of the mind means it is empty as a result. If a Christian goes around with an empty mind, it is much easier for the devil to fill it. You need to be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

Psalms 19:14 reads, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." If you want victory, you must read the Word of God, think upon the marvelous Truth, and claim its promises. This is the way to fend off the fiery darts of the wicked one.

In Psalm 119:11 the psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." This still works. The Christian should memorize verses of Scripture and store them in his mind so he can be more like Jesus. When the devil comes along and tempts you, you can put the Word of God on him.

If you will get familiar with the Word of God, no matter what the devil throws at you, you will be able to quote a Scripture. Thank God, you can have victory in Jesus Christ along these lines.

We are told that the mind is a wonderful recording device. Everything you see, hear, and read makes an imprint upon the brain. The more you think, speak, or hear a particular fact, the deeper the impression that fact makes upon your mind.

If you will get a good hold on the Scriptures, you can stand on a firm foundation to fight the devil. I thank God that when I was a young Christian, I got into the Word of God and started memorizing Scriptures. I was not a preacher then, and I had no intentions of being one. I do not think I would be one today if I had not started memorizing Scriptures and reading the Word of God and studying it.

How is it in your heart and life? How is this battle going? Victory for the child of God lies in calling upon Jesus to remove the evil thoughts and to give you the power to overcome temptations. You do not have to be defeated; you can have victory.

There is a battle going on in all of our minds, and we cannot be passive spectators, assuming that God is going to take care of it all. God is already doing His part to convict, expose, and bring healing. He has committed Himself to bringing you victory, but there is an "if." You have to be willing to follow His instructions. If you are unwilling to follow His instructions, you cannot have this kind of victory. Victory can be accomplished *if* you will simply give yourself to God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God. God is more able to overcome the enemy's tactics against you than you can imagine.

Will you respond to God's provision by picking up your weapons and resolving to do

battle until victory is won? I am not speaking of something that I read about in a book. I know what God has done for me, and I know that He can do the same for you. If you are struggling along this line, you must seek purification through the blood of Christ. If you need your mind cleansed, the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse you from all sin, even

sinful thoughts that you have cherished. If you try to control your thoughts with your own strength, you will fall flat on your face.

In closing, Is your thought life still in the same old rut of sinful thinking? There is healing for the body, healing for the soul, and healing for the mind. You should not settle for only partial victory.

You can have real victory along these lines. What kind of response do your thoughts produce in the mind of God? You must put on the whole armor of God. It is not a disgrace to need help along these lines. Won't you seek the help that you stand in need of?

(Compact Disc TR-1679)

[Espec. for Young People—contin. From p. 14]

Social media often portrays how well others are doing, and this can be a tool of the enemy to make one feel discontented. God's Word tells us that godliness with contentment is great gain. Yet, at times some go away from their time on media feeling that they need more of this world's goods. Could this be the origin of feeling pressed down that I mentioned or is it the insight into other people's homes or activities? Your mind may begin to question, Do I really have to hold these standards? Church, this is real, and we must be careful. This could be a tool of the enemy, a tool to get us to compare ourselves among ourselves. God's Word says in 2 Corinthians 10:12, "They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."

Do you remember the

minister's thoughts on feeling the kindred spirit between his personal studies with God and the truths he learned from the teachings of the Church of God? I do not believe that the oppression and the fogginess of mind that I feel when I walk away from periods of time at my computer are kindred with God's Spirit. I believe the enemy has very subtly and slyly rerouted his tactics from the television to these other forms of technology. While I am not advocating removing such awesome tools from our lives, I am endeavoring to sound an alarm of great caution.

Where is this technological world leading you, young person? As I mentioned previously, these things can be addicting and time consuming. They have a way of fogging the mind and robbing us of time together, time with God, and time for kindling that kindred spirit with God's truths and His way.

As the family of God, I do not want us to suffer great remorse. If you heard any other alarm, such as a fire alarm, would you choose to ignore it? Our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren may depend on it. We must earnestly contend for the faith. We must press on for the Truth and for the right.

In writing this article, I could have written more, including the apparent dangers of certain information at our fingertips, but I could not get away from God's prompting to leave it as He had given it to me. Musing upon why He might not want me to write more, it came to me that many times it is not the apparent but the "little foxes" that we need to be made aware of.

Selected

Useful Only When Applied

A soap manufacturer, not a Christian, was walking with a minister. Said the soap maker, "The Gospel you preach hasn't done much good, for there's still a lot of wickedness and wicked people." The preacher made no immediate reply, but they soon passed a child making mud pies. He was exceedingly dirty. It was then the preacher's turn, and so he said, "Soap hasn't done much good in the world, I see, for there's still much dirt and dirty people."

"Oh, well," answered the manufacturer, "soap is useful only when it's applied."

"Exactly," was the minister's reply, "so it is with the Gospel we proclaim."

2 Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;

but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

6 For I am now ready to be

offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Spiritual Fellowship Built on Sound Doctrine



Brother E. David Stegmeier

The Best Way to Preach the Word

In the first verse of our Scripture text, Paul said, "I charge thee therefore before God." This is a very serious charge and responsibility. As far as I am concerned, there is no greater charge or responsibility than to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The eyes of God and of Christ are upon the man of God, and he will answer to Him on the Day of Judgment.

Verse 2 says, "Preach the word." In Colossians 2:8 Paul wrote, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments

of the world, and not after Christ." Another translation states, "Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of the world, rather than from Christ." The International Children's Bible reads, "Be sure that no one leads you away with false ideas and words that mean nothing. Those ideas come from men. They are worthless ideas of this world. They are not from Christ."

We should look at what Isaiah stated in Isaiah 8:20. He wrote, "To the law and to the testimony: if they [any teacher] speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in

them." In other words, there is no truth in them. The Bible says to preach God's Word, not men's thoughts, men's notions, or men's ideas. Much of what comes across the pulpits in our land today originates in the minds of men, and its source is the devil. Again, Paul said, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." No matter where we are, we ought to be preaching the Word. You may say, "Well, I cannot say anything at school" or "I cannot say anything at work," but you can live it.

The best way to preach the Word is to live it. No matter where you are or when it is, if you have an opportunity, you need to preach the Word. Some-

times it may be convenient, appropriate, or fitting, but other times it may seem inappropriate to you or others; nevertheless, God's Word will not return void. Isaiah 55:11 reads, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." God's Word will do its work. Again, the best way to preach the Word is to live the Word. God wants a holy people every day of the week, every hour of the day, and every minute of the hour.

Adorning the Doctrine

Brother E. A. Wilson used to say that the reason Church of God people know the doctrines so well in the church is that they sing them. The Gospel and our songs in the Church of God go hand in hand. We have heard marvelous songs! I have listened to the words of marvelous songs that touch many truths and doctrines.

We sing a beautiful Church of God song entitled "Are You Adorning the Doctrine?" written by Charles W. Naylor. The word *adorn* means "to beautify, to give dignity to, or to make it attractive." C. W. Naylor wrote:

*Are you adorning the doctrine,
The glorious doctrine of God,
Walking so holy before Him,
Following where He hath trod;
So when the world looks upon you
Nothing but Christ is in view?
So when the world looks upon you,
Nothing but Christ is in view?*

*Are you adorning the doctrine,
And making attractive the way,
Honoring Christ by your actions
And by the words that you say?
Are you, my brother and sister,
Proving the Bible is true?
Are you, my brother and sister,
Proving the Bible is true?*

*Are you adorning the doctrine,
By meekness, and love, and goodwill,
Gentleness, patience, and trueness,
Liberty's law to fulfill?
Jesus will shine if within you
Showing these graces divine.
Jesus will shine if within you
Showing these graces divine.*

*If you're adorning the doctrine,
Its beauties your soul will array;
Showers of grace will be given –
Strength from the Lord as your day;
Light from on high will be streaming
Over the pathway you tread.
Light from on high will be streaming
Over the pathway you tread.*

One time my oldest daughter and her little girl were taking lessons from an art teacher, and when they walked into the art room, there was a man that they did not know very well. That man said, "I can tell that you ladies love Jesus very much."

"How do you know that?"

"There is a difference in how the world dresses and how the church dresses."

Honest hearts will be attracted to modesty and the holy way of living. Some people may disappoint you when it comes to appropriately representing the Gospel. Sometimes it tears your heart out when people do not live what the Bible teaches. Have you ever read the book entitled "Pilgrim's Progress"? Christian traveled all alone, but after his demise, his family awakened and said: "Where did father go? Where did grandfather go?" Then they followed in his footsteps.

Living in a Day of Compromise

Our Scripture text in verse 3 says, "For the time will come [that is a future tense verb phrase, but the time has already come] when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts [their own desires] shall they heap to themselves

teachers, having itching ears." Another translation reads, "The time is coming when people won't listen to good teaching. Instead, they will look for teachers who will please them." That is just the way it is today. People look for teachers who will please them. They gather around them a great number of teachers who say what their itching ears want to hear. Without a doubt we are living in a time when people refuse to listen to good, sound, wholesome teachings from God's Eternal Word, but you must if you plan to make Heaven your eternal home.

We are living in a day of compromise. I have not compromised. I want my ministry to be a success, and I believe that if it is a success, I must be obedient to everything in the Book. The psalmist said that unless God builds the house, they who labor will labor in vain. There must be spiritual growth in the Christian's life, and he *must* conform to God's Eternal Word.

Without a doubt we are living in a time when people refuse to listen to wholesome teachings from God's Eternal Word. Instead, they are gravitating to teachers who are out to please them, who make them feel comfortable, and who tickle their ears. The majority of people today will not put up with sound, reliable, sensible, wise, trustworthy, valid, Bible-based teachings. I want to know what the Bible teaches, whether it hurts me or not. Jeremiah 5:31 says, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; [In other words, they rule by their own authority, but they were never called of God. We need God's authority.] and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

The Bible is the only Book that instructs us as to how we can make Heaven our home. You

must not circumvent the principles, the teachings, and the doctrines contained in it. All the instructions that we need to live a holy, rewarding life are found in the Word of God. Nothing should be added, and nothing should be deleted. Anything less than the entire Bible is too little. Anything more than the Bible is too much. The Bible is sufficient and adequate for everyone universally. You can say what you want, but the Bible is absolute. There is one God, one Son of God, one Word of God, and one Church of God. The things of God are absolute; they will not be changed. The Bible says that God rules His people with a rod of iron, which is the Word of God.

Curses are pronounced against those who attempt to add additional information or instructions to that which has already been written. Moses wrote in the beginning of the Word, in Deuteronomy 4:2, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." Deuteronomy 12:32 reads, "What thing soever I command you [God's Word is the supreme authority], observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."

Abide by the Bible

John the Revelator penned these words in Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Worldly denominations write their own books of discipline. They each have their own peculiar creeds and doctrines and teachings of their own making and liking. I was brought up in the Church of God, and we have no book of discipline. We abide by the Bible. God's people accept only the written Word of God. In the history of Christianity, saints of God have been judged, condemned, and even executed for not adhering to a human creed that was not the Bible.

At the beginning of the New Testament church, they used the law of Christ as their discipline and their creed. It was given orally to the Apostles by Christ, and they were to write it down, which they did. Today the Church of God uses only the Word of God as its book of discipline. The Bible cannot be put on par with any religious creed or book of discipline or any other writing of man. The Word of God is superior and absolute; it is the absolute will of God for mankind, and universally there is no other. In 2 Peter 1:21 Peter wrote, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

I read that when Sir Walter Scott was in the last stages of his illness before he died, he asked his son-in-law, "Will you bring me the Book?"

His son-in-law asked, "Which book?"

Sir Walter Scott replied, "There is but one Book, the Bible."

In my more than forty-eight years of pastoring, I have seen many people down to the end of life want to turn to God. I think that is unfair. Later is better than never, but your youth is the best time to turn to God.

Second Timothy 3:16-17 says this: "All scripture [There are no nonessentials in the Bible. Many modern preachers say, 'Oh, that is not important.' I believe every-

thing written in God's Holy Word is important. Undoubtedly, you know the history of the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster. The engineers struggled with whether or not they should launch it. Even when the majority of the engineers decided to go ahead and launch it, some of them would not sign the release. They did not believe that it was safe to do so. Christa McAuliffe, the first teacher in space, along with nine crew members, was gone. We all are heading to eternity. We must check out everything in our lives, lest we be dissipated, and then our souls would be lost in hell. I do not want to take any chances.] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect [in God's eyes we can be perfect, although people may pick you apart], thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

In those verses of Scripture, the discipline of the church is spelled out and very beautifully enumerated. They deal with doctrine and reproof. It is hard to reprove someone today. One brother said many years ago, "You cannot reprove people in this day."

While I was growing up, songs were very important in my life, and even now in my ministry. In Daniel Warner's song entitled "Obedience," he wrote:

*By Thy blessed Word obeying,
Lord, we prove our love sincere,
For we hear Thee gently saying,
"Love will do as well as hear."*

*Feigned hearts Thy name professing,
Thy commands cast aside;
But we feel Thy great salvation,
And in all Thy truth abide.*

*Ev'ry word Thy mouth hath spoken
Is essential to our life;
All Thy mandates love betoken,*

To oppose them is but strife.

*In Thy wisdom, Lord, confiding,
We will follow in Thy way;
With Thy love in us abiding,
'Tis delightful to obey.*

*Each commandment Thou hast given
Is a waymark on the road,
Leading up from earth to Heaven,
To the blessed throne of God.*

*Dear Redeemer, we would hallow,
All Thy Word, so firm and true,
In Thy footsteps meekly follow,
Thy commands we love to do.*

Again, I refer to one of our hymnal songs. C. W. Naylor wrote a song entitled "The Church's Jubilee." Verses two and three read:

*The Bible is our rule of faith
and Christ alone is Lord,
All we are equal in His sight
when we obey His word;
No earthly master do we know,
to man-rule will not bow.
But to each other and to God
eternal trueness vow.*

*The day of sects and creeds for us
forevermore is past,
Our brotherhood are all the Saints
upon the world so vast;
We reach our hands in fellowship
to every blood-washed one,
While love entwines about each heart
in which God's will is done.*

The Doctrines of Christ

We hear the expression often that we are in a battle. We are in the battle of Armageddon. It is a spiritual battle, and it rages against the authority of the Word of God. I believe every word in the Book.

One time a young man came to our congregation and said, "You are the strangest people."

I said, "Why do you say that?"

He said, "Because you read the Word of God, and you believe it just like it says. You do

not question it, and you do not refute it."

Dear one, you should not question the Word of God, and you should not question God. You need to be careful.

Revelation 4:6 and Revelation 15:2 let us know that the saints are standing on the sea of glass. D. S. Warner said in his song entitled "The Sea of Glass": "We stand upon the sea of glass, That's mingled with Jehovah's fire; Our robes are white, our feet as brass, We stand upon the foe's empire."

The battle against the Word of God started way back in the beginning in the Garden of Eden. Moses wrote in Genesis 2:16-17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 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." When the serpent met Eve, he lied and said, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). The devil is a liar, and he is the father of lies. He is still lying to people.

The doctrines of Christ came from God, not man. John 7:16 says, "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." Good, pure, sound doctrine makes us more like Christ. As ministers, we are to gather the people of God and draw them closer to Him. Sound doctrine will produce a pure, godly people, people who have a good spirit and a wholesome, godly attitude, and it is good.

In 1 Corinthians 14:26 Paul spoke to the Church of God in Corinth. They were having problems with division, so he said, "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying [the church]." not for building up yourself.

The teaching of doctrine is a part of worship. When Jesus spoke, He brought doctrine. To build the Church of God, people must have doctrine. Matthew 7:28 says, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine."

People come to the Church of God, and many times they are astonished. A prisoner that I worked with for thirty-five years died some time back. He came to the Church of God through *The Gospel Trumpeter* that was sent to the prison where he was incarcerated. While in prison, he got saved, and one day he turned himself in to authorities because he had murdered some men and had not been tried for those murders. The reason I am saying this is, *The Gospel Trumpeter* was being circulated around the prison, and people and inmates were saying, "Whoa, this is strange stuff." This prisoner said, "Give me that magazine." When he read it, he said, "This is not strange; this is the way it should be!" He saw the Truth. He saw the truth on the cleansings, and he saw the beautiful Church of God. Luke tells us to dig deep and to build our lives on the Word of God. That is the way to have a clear vision of Truth. In Mark 1:27 when an unclean spirit came out of a man, the people said, "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this?" I am not giving you a new doctrine. I have heard this all my life, since I came to church way back in the mid-forties. These are not new doctrines.

On the Day of Judgment, we will be judged by the Word of God, not by a creed or a book of discipline. John 12:48 says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." As a Christian, you are duty bound to live by the words of Christ, by every word.

You must not lay aside anything. You are duty bound to live by the words of Christ since you will be judged by them.

Words of Caution

In closing, God's people need to be wary of those who teach doctrines different from what the Bible teaches. You need to be careful, be aware, be concerned, and be watchful. False doctrines foster discord and division. Division is brought when people refuse to walk in the light. People refuse through stubbornness, prejudice, tradition, and wrong attitudes. The chorus of one of D. S. Warner's songs entitled "The Evening Light" says this: "Oh, what golden glory streaming! Purer light is coming fast; Now in Christ we've found a freedom which eternally shall last."

What did he mean when he said "purer light"? Children are not born sinners. When you get saved and you become grafted into the vine, you become a member of the Church of God. You are clean. You do not have inbred sin. Is that not purer light?

I repeat, false doctrines foster discord and division. No group or minister can formulate a book of discipline or a creed to which all Christians the world over should subscribe. The Bible is the all-inclusive creed, or book of discipline. Do you know why the Church of God has such beautiful fellowship? How can we have godly fellowship? It is because we all have embraced sound doctrine.

Paul said in Romans 16:17, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Second John 1:9-10 says: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the

Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

Walking in the Light

All instructions and requirements for godly living, solid families, and qualified church leaders are addressed in the Word of God; it is all sufficient. The preaching of the Word of God produces a rich, godly fellowship, such as we have. We sing a song that says, "What a fellowship!" The church is a fellowship of believers universally. First John 1:7 reads, "But if [there is a contingency] we walk in the light, [This is a doctrine. If we walk in the light, we enjoy this rich fellowship, which is built on sound doctrine. I agree with Martin Luther, who said, 'Peace if possible, truth at all cost.' God makes people wholesome, God-fearing, loving, and kind. They fit in with all of God's people universally.] as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

No one can force people to live the Bible standard that they should live. I try to help them, but one cannot force people. Second Peter 1:21 says, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Paul said in Acts 20:27, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." All the doctrines are clearly spelled out in the Word of God. Because of this, Paul could testify that he was ready to depart and be with the Lord. He had successfully finished his course, he had faithfully kept the faith, and now he could look forward to a crown of righteousness.

Church of God, here is our watchword. The song entitled

"Back to the Blessed Old Bible," written by D. O. Teasley, reads:

*Back to the blessed old Bible,
Back to the city of God,
Back to the oneness of Heaven,
Back where the faithful have trod.
Back from the land of confusion,
Passing the wrecks and the creeds;
Back to the light of the morning,
Jesus our Captain leads.*

*Back to the blessed old Bible,
Saints of Jehovah, rejoice;
Jesus is calling His people
Back to the land of their choice.
Often our fathers have sought it
While we in Babel abode,
Now we have found the fair city –
Church of the living God.*

*Back to the blessed old Bible,
Back at the Master's call,
Back to the words of our Savior,
Loving, obeying them all,
Never in sects to be scattered,
Never again to do wrong:
Unity, holiness, Heaven,
Ever shall be our song.*

*Back to the blessed old Bible,
Back to the light of its word:
Be on our banners forever,
"Holiness unto the Lord."*

(Compact Disc TR-1980)

LIFE IS TOO SHORT . . .

To remember slights and insults.

To cherish grudges that rob you of happiness.

To waste time in doing things that are of no value.

To give your youth to the devil and hope to give your old age to God.

SPRING 2018 CAMP MEETING RECORDINGS

Recrd. No.	Date	Message Title	Minister
TR-2093 TR-2094	6-17-2018	Known by Their Love Hindrances to Prayer	Bro. David Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-2095 TR-2096	6-18-2018	Giant Killers Bible Paradoxes: Whosoever Will Save His Life Shall Lose It	Bro. Tim Wilson Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-2097		Rescue the Perishing	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-2098 TR-2099 TR-2100	6-19-2018	Building the Walls in Troublesome Times Be All You Can Be for God Have Salt in Yourself	Bro. Rick Morris Bro. David Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-2101 TR-2102 TR-2103	6-20-2018	Are You Willing to Step Out of the Boat? Listening to Jesus Why Does God Allow Trials and Tribulations?	Bro. Earl R. Borders Bro. David Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-2104 TR-2105	6-21-2018	Divine Healing <i>(No recording available due to technical difficulties.)</i> Sin Will Take You Further Than You Want to Go	Bro. Calvin Foster Bro. David Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-2106 TR-2107	6-22-2018	The Danger of Complacency The Devices of the Devil	Bro. Abraham Burton Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-2108 TR-2109 TR-2110	6-23-2018	Can You Substitute a Gift for a Commandment? Controlling Your Thought Life You Can Bounce Back	Bro. Allen Polston Bro. David Stegmeier Larry Dishman
TR-2111 TR-2112	6-24-2018	Remembering Who We Are The Bright and the Dark Side of Eternity	Bro. Richard Talbot Bro. Larry Dishman
TM-402 TM-403 TM-404 TM-405 TM-406 TM-407	2018	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #1 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #2 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #3 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #4 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #5 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #6	
	2018	Spring Camp Meeting Choir Songs # 1 Spring Camp Meeting Choir Songs # 2 Morning Messages in MP3 Format Afternoon Teaching Services & Evening Messages in MP3 Format All Songs in MP3 Format	

All messages and music recordings are available only on regular CD's or MP3 format. The suggested donation for regular CD's is \$3.00 each and for DVD's is \$5.00 each. (DVD's are not available for the afternoon teaching services.) The suggested donation for MP3's is \$10.00 each. The postage is \$3.00 for one CD or MP3 and \$0.35 for each additional one. Recordings may be ordered by writing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, CD Ministry, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, Ohio 43055, or by calling (740) 345-1312, the Print Shop. Please make check or money order in U.S. funds, payable to *The Gospel Trumpeter*.

Meeting Announcements

NEWARK, OH

July 29-August 5

Camp Meeting: Church of God, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, OH 43055

Three services daily: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. Prayer services. Children's services, Youth services. Meals reasonably priced in air-conditioned dining hall.

For lodging/camper reservations, please contact Bro. or Sis. Bush at 740-345-1213.

For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker. Telephone: 740-344-2543

MINERVA, OH

September 5-9

Revival: Mt. Zion Church of God, 13353 Lincoln St. SE, Minerva, Ohio 44657

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi

Service times: Wednesday-Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m., & Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

(No Sunday school during the revival.)

For further information contact: Pastor Leamon Whitehead. Telephone: 330-868-1016

KALAMAZOO, MI

September 10-15

Revival: Comstock Church of God, 555 Alger St., Kalamazoo, MI 49041

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi

Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m. & Saturday 10:00 a.m. After the Saturday morning service, a meal will be provided by the local congregation.

For further information contact: Pastor Jerry Miller. Telephone: 269-998-3194

CHICAGO, IL

September 16-21

Revival: Harding Street Church of God, 3924 W. 14th St., Chicago, IL 60623

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi

For further information contact: Pastor Aurelius Reedy Raines

Telephone: 708-7511534

SUMMERSVILLE, WV

September 16-23

Revelation Meeting: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651

Preaching from the Book of Revelation each service. The series begins Sunday evening.

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

Website: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com

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

New Publications

A Quick Trip Through the Psalms by Joyce Corder

(suggested donation \$2.50)

Bible Study Series Volume 2 – Frequently Asked Questions

(suggested donation \$2.50)

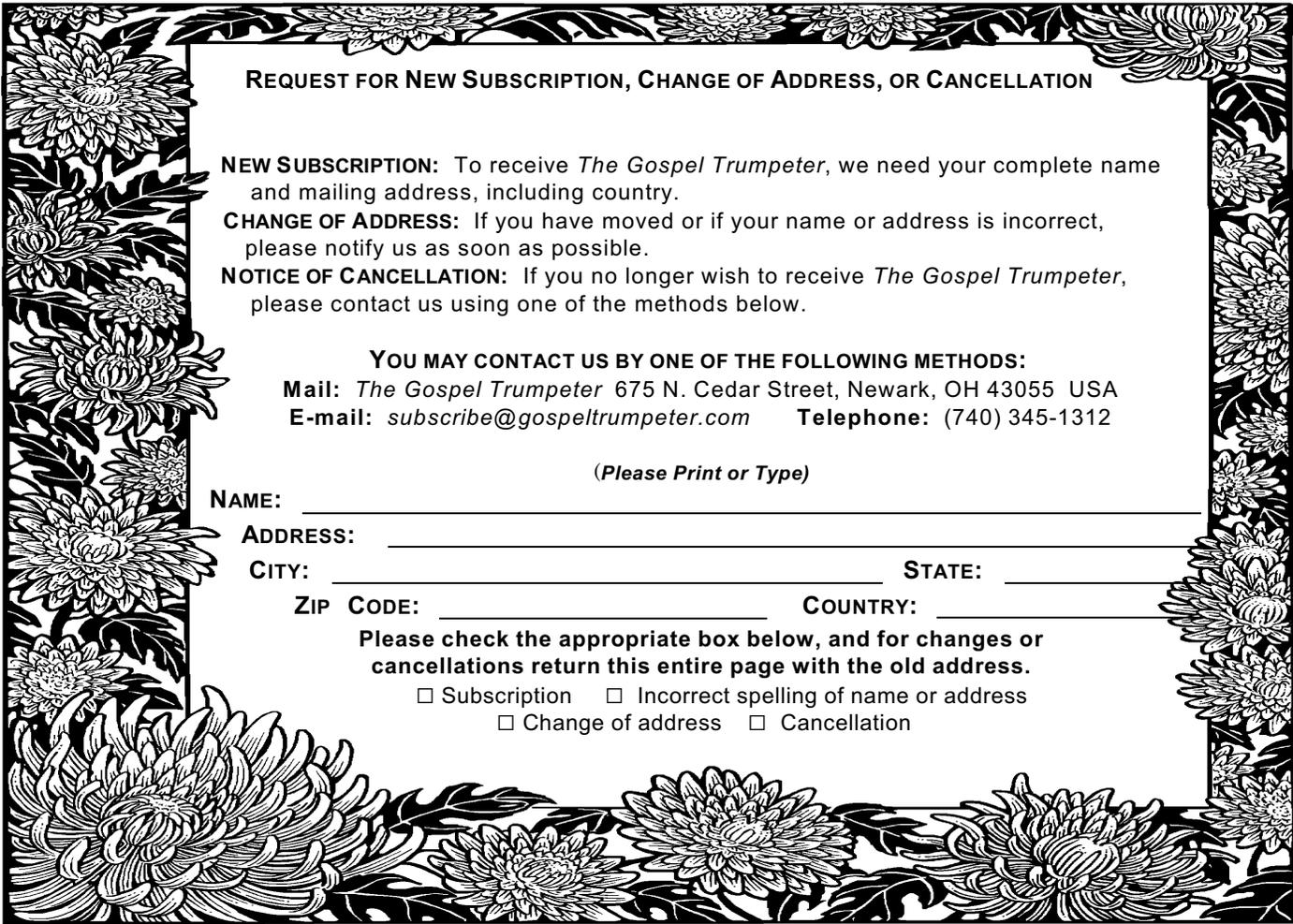
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