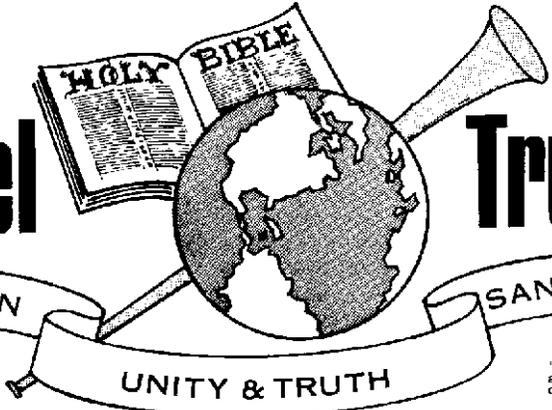


**The Gospel**  **Trumpeter**

JUSTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

SANCTIFICATION

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:33

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." Rev. 10:7 Mal. 2:13

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 40 October 2010 No. 10



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?"

# Fall 2010 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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Vol. 40 October 2010 No. 10

Psalm 133:1 reads, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Another beautiful camp meeting season has come and gone, but the blessings and the good accomplished will linger for a long while. Certainly we enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship with the saints from both far and near. It was truly a time of feasting on the good things in God's Word. A spirit of love, unity, and freedom flowed from heart to heart, making the fellowship of the saints so rich. Some saints remarked about how abundant the love of God prevailed over the campground.

The first service of the camp meeting began Sunday morning, August 1, 2010, as Pastor Roger L. Decker opened with prayer and welcomed everyone to the camp meeting here at God's Acres. For the next eight days the saints of God enjoyed hearing the Word of God as various ministers brought forth many challenging messages. The Word of God certainly dug deep around each of us, bringing enlightenment to every heart. It was often stated, "This is the best meeting we have had yet." Some wonder why this is always said after every meeting. First of all, because it is true! Then we also realize this is the way God desires it to be.

The things of God are supposed to get better and better as time continues. It is His presence that causes things to become richer and more fulfilling. The Apostle Paul told young Timothy that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3:13). As the world turns more and more toward the downward way, the church is climbing to higher heights. Therefore, the things of God are becoming greater, and they are growing sweeter.

They are getting more precious as we approach the end of time. This is all part of progressive salvation.

As we were privileged to sit in heavenly places, our hearts were encouraged to see the Lord moving so miraculously in our midst. Souls who were so overwhelmed with the galling yoke of sin humbled themselves before God and soon experienced the weight and the burden of their sin lifted. It is always such a delight to see the needy rise from despair to the heights of peace, happiness, and joy. What a glorious sight it is to see men and women translated from the power of darkness into the glorious kingdom of God's dear Son!

The singing by the choir was a great inspiration. It often set the tone for the services. When the congregation sang the old Church of God hymns, it created a sweet atmosphere with much rejoicing among the saints. There were also many individual specials that blessed and encouraged our hearts. We were once again acquainted with brothers and sisters whom we have not seen for several years. Their fellowship and singing brought such an uplift to the meeting. There is just no greater place on earth to be than that where the presence of God is free to have His right-of-way.

The success of every camp meeting is attributed to the presence of God's Holy Spirit being in the midst. Also, the fasting and the prayers of the saints made to God prior to the meeting was surely regarded by the Lord. We know that without His leadership in the services, there would have been no blessing or good accomplished for the kingdom of God. We truly thank God

[continued on page 9]

# The Sin Question



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **Is It Possible to Live a Sinless Life?**

The Church of God teaches that a man or a woman who gets saved is delivered from sin, and from that moment on, that person can live a sinless life and give glory to Jesus Christ. The majority of religions teach that when men and women get saved, they continue to live in sin. They teach that no one can live a sinless life. The best place to look to understand the truth concerning this subject is the Word of God. You cannot listen to just any preacher on this subject, because many will lead you astray. Many preachers teach their own theology or what they learned in a seminary or a Bible college.

Let us begin this study by asking the question, "Has anyone ever lived a sinless life?" The answer to that question is yes. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life. Hebrews 4:14-16 states: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,

let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

First John 3:1-5 says this: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

The argument that we hear is that Jesus was the Son of God, and

we are humans and are subject to temptations. However, Jesus was also tempted. Why would He have been tempted if He could not have sinned? That would not make sense. Temptation comes to lure you away from the Truth and to cause you to sin. You may think that your temptation is unique, but the Scripture says Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are."

Did Jesus have thoughts similar to what you have? Yes, He did. His temptations were like ours. Temptation in itself is not sin. James 1:12-15 states: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. 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 [or run its course], bringeth forth death."

## What Is Sin?

The Scripture says that the Lord does not tempt anyone. What about Abraham in Genesis 22:1, which says, "God did tempt Abraham"? The word *tempt* in this verse simply means that He tested Abraham, and that was when He told him to sacrifice Isaac. You already read in 1 John 3:4 that "sin is the transgression of the law." A person must have knowledge and a desire, or a willingness, in order to commit sin.

Romans 5:12-13 reads: "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: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." The word *imputed* as it is used here means "to charge to one's account; to lay to one's charge."

Let us get an example from the Word of God. We read in Romans 7:7-8: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead." In other words, he was saying that without knowledge sin was dead.

I want you to read these Scriptures from another translation. It does not change the meaning, but it will bring it out a little clearer. It says: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Far be the thought. But I had not known sin, unless by the law: for I had not had conscience also of lust, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust. But sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, wrought in me every lust. For without the law sin was dead." Again, there has to be a knowledge. If you commit sin, you know that you have committed sin.

James 4:17 tells us, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Genesis 2:15-17, speaking of the man that

God had formed out of the dust of the ground and created in him a living soul, reads: "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying [now here is the command, or the law, for Adam], 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."

In those few verses of Scripture you read that God put the man in the garden to dress it and to keep it. Horticulture, or gardening, was the first occupation on record in which man was engaged while in a state of perfection and innocence. God gave Adam a work to do, and his employment contributed to his happiness for the structure of his body as well as for his mind.

## Walking in the Light

God never intended the man to live an inactive life. He never intended the man to sit around the house while the wife works. That is hard on some in society today; nevertheless, in the beginning the man was to dress and to keep the garden. He was to work even before sin had entered the picture. Our world has this turned around. Some women complain because they do not make the same wages as men, but the woman was intended to be a helpmeet and a keeper at home. That is what the Bible says.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10: "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work,

neither should he eat."

First Timothy 5:8 reads, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." What is sinful to one person may not be sinful to another. What is wrong for one brother might not be wrong for another brother. The same is true with sisters. What is wrong for some might not be wrong for others. There are degrees of knowledge, or understanding. Some people have been serving God longer. Some individuals have sat under more Truth than others and have gained greater knowledge.

Fellowship comes when we agree, not always with one another, but when we both agree with Christ. It is not that others have to line up with your knowledge, but they have to line up with Jesus Christ. That is where fellowship comes in. Amos 3:3 says, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Both need to agree with Jesus Christ. First John 1:5-7 reads: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, 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."

What is the basis of fellowship? It is walking in all the light and understanding that you have. Too many people try to put their understanding on others. You need to walk in the light that you have received. Two people can be in good fellowship as long as they both walk in the light. As long as two who are in Christ walk in all the understanding they have, they can have fellowship.

Unity starts when we are saved. You are automatically brought into the unity. You are united with all others who are blood washed. On the Day of Pentecost three thousand

souls were added to the church. Acts 2:42 says, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." They were in fellowship one with another through the blood of Jesus Christ. How are we in fellowship with one another? It is through the blood of Jesus Christ. Fellowship with the saints comes automatically when one repents. You do not pick and choose fellowship. You do not get up from an altar of prayer saved and say, "I will fellowship this one, but I will not fellowship that one." No, you are in fellowship with every blood-washed one.

We do not start unity, but we must endeavor to keep the unity; in other words, we must work at it. Sometimes it takes work to keep unity. You need to be careful, dear one, that you do not get caught up in a clique. If you do, the next thing you know, you are going to be severed from others who are blood washed.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:1-3: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

God's people endeavor to stay in unity, and they endeavor to do it peacefully. We cannot force unity. We cannot make people come into the unity of the Spirit with us, but we endeavor to keep the unity. We reach out to every blood-washed one. Those who are blood washed are God's children. If you are saved, you are God's child, and you are in fellowship with every blood-washed one. Child of God, do not get offended every time you hear that someone does not like you or if you hear that someone said something about you. What about all the things that Jesus Christ suffered? He was called a blasphemer, Beelzebub, and other names. Today some people get offended over the slightest little thing.

## Having No Fear of God

Let us look at some Scriptures that false religion uses to prop up the theory that Christians live in sin. Romans 3:10-18 reads (and I want you to notice the first four words): "As it is written, [You need to keep in mind that the new covenant had not been written yet. The phrase 'As it is written' refers back to the old covenant.] There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Again, you want to keep two things in mind in these Scriptures. First, the new covenant had not been written yet, so the writer was quoting from the Old Testament. From where was he getting it? We know that he was not talking about the child of God. Psalm 14:1-3: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

The second thought you need to keep in mind is that the fool said "There is no God." The writer was not talking about God's people, because God's people do that which is good. Whether under the old covenant or the new, God's people are not fools. We live with eternity in mind. We do not live for the present day. Dear one, if you are living for the present day, you need to start

living with the thought of eternity in mind.

Jesus spoke a parable in Luke 12:16-17, which reads: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" In the conversation in this parable, this rich man was living from day to day. His mind was not on eternity. His mind was on his present wealth.

In verses 18-21 Jesus continued: "And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

The most important thing that you could do for your family is convince them to serve God. Education is needful and work is needful, but the number one priority should be that they know God and that they live for Him. That is what God had in mind in the old covenant, for one generation after another. The generation coming forth was to teach their children and the following generation was to teach their children, right on down through, so that they all might know God and hear of His wondrous works. The greatest thing you can do for your children is teach them the things of God. It is necessary.

We see in this parable the rich man's thoughts. There was nothing wrong with having a high-yielding crop or with building bigger barns. However, he told his soul to take its ease, to eat, to drink, and to be merry. You must take care of your soul. If you do not, you are completely out of line. It takes God to keep your soul.

## Living a Holy, Sinless Life

We read in 1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." What was John really saying in this Scripture? He could not have been saying that all are sinners, because in 1 John 2:1 he said, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." So what was John really saying? He was saying that all have sinned, so all must feel the guilt of their sin, which leads us to the next verse that says to "confess our sins." If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The truth is not in you if you say that you do not need a Savior, or an advocate.

Let us go to 1 John, Chapter 3, and then talk about some basic things concerning sin. Verses 3-8 read: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: [This Scripture is clear. I do not believe that you need to get out the Greek Diaglott or the Amplified Bible to understand what these verses mean.] whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

We are to live holy, sinless lives when we are saved. The Word saves us, and the Spirit of God fills us. God directs and guides us. We are not our own; we have been bought with a price.

Once I heard a man preach quite a message on holiness, but when he got down to the end, he threw the message away by saying that the Apostle Paul also had problems with sin. Then he quoted Romans 7:15, which reads, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

Verse 19 states, "For the good that I would I do not." How would you like to have a preacher get up in the pulpit Sunday morning and tell you, "I want to do good, but I can't do it, and the evil which I try to refrain from, that is what I do"? Dear one, Paul was not talking about what took place after his conversion. He was talking to those who knew the Law. In verse 1 Paul said, "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?"

### Paul's Elite Heritage

In Philippians, Chapter 3, the Apostle Paul was dealing with when he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, an Israelite, circumcised the eighth day. Verses 4-7 read: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee [the Pharisees held to the Law tighter than any others]; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and a Pharisee. As far as the righteousness of the Law was concerned, he was blameless. Let us look at some of his attainments. He had been circumcised when he was eight days old, and we know that was a commandment of God to Abraham.

Genesis 17:12 says, "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you." You can read in Leviticus 12:3 that commandment had been repeated as a permanent law of Israel: "And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."

Paul made it clear that he was an Israelite, not a proselyte. He stressed the fact that he had been born into the Jewish faith and had known its privileges and observed the ceremonies since his birth. When the Jews wished to stress their special relationship to God in the most unique sense, they used the term *Israelite*. One did not say that he was from Israel; he said, "I am an Israelite." This was supposed to get that individual special attention. By calling himself an Israelite, Paul stressed the absolute purity of his descent.

Paul was also of the tribe of Benjamin. That is to say, he was not only an Israelite but also the elite of Israel. Benjamin was one of the elite tribes. Paul stated his attainments. He was a loyal Jew, and he said that he never lost the Hebrew speech. He was a member of the strictest, most self-disciplined sect, the Pharisees. He also had in his heart a burning zeal for what he thought was the cause of God. He had a record in Judaism in which no man could mark a fault. He was blameless as touching the righteousness of the Law. Despite all of this, the Apostle Paul lacked something within.

As so many people today, you may think that you have it all. You might have a good job and a fine family, and everything may be going really well for you; yet you lack something. The Apostle Paul had tremendous zeal and a wonderful heritage, yet he lacked something down inside.

Paul said in Romans 7:15, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." Sin is stronger than your will. In verse 19 he went on to say, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not,

that I do." Sin is stronger than your desires, and it is stronger than your constraint. Oh, you may grit your teeth and withstand temptations for a while, but sin is stronger than the natural man. At some point, you will give in to sin.

### Religion Without Salvation

In Romans, Chapter 7, we have a picture of religion without salvation. That is what Paul was dealing with there. He was speaking of a man who had one of the strictest religions, but he did not have the new birth. He did not have real salvation, and that is what a lot of religious people lack today. They have religion, but they do not have salvation. Again, Paul stated in verse 15, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." That is not the testimony of a child of God; that is the testimony of a sinner.

Paul strictly followed righteousness according to the Law. According to the Law, they did not have to kneel down every night to confess their sins. They had atonement at least once a year with the high priest. Sin is strong. Romans, Chapter 7, gives a picture of a person doing the best he could; however, the best a person can do is not good enough. How does religion without salvation leave an individual? Paul said in verse 24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" That is how religion without salvation leaves you.

Many people can quote Scriptures, and they know all about having the right conduct, but those things alone will not save you. You must have your own personal experience with Jesus Christ. The Law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. We read in Galatians 3:24, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

How do we know that Romans, Chapter 7, describes when the Apostle Paul was under the Law? Again,

he said in verse 24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Paul said that he was a wretched man. What is a "wretched man"? The word *wretched* means "distressed, miserable."

Where else is the word *wretched* used in the Word of God? Revelation 3:17 tells us, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." What were they counseled to do? They were commanded to repent. Romans, Chapter 7, does not describe Paul's experience under the new covenant; it describes his experience as a Pharisee. When he was a Pharisee, he did not have real salvation.

### Free From Condemnation

Now let us look at this same Apostle in Romans, Chapter 8. Verses 1-3 read: "There is therefore now no condemnation [What brings condemnation? Sin.] to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

You may ask, "What about Romans 7:25?" It reads, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Paul knew quite clearly what was wrong, but he was unable to do what was right. He was like a doctor who could accurately diagnose a disease but was powerless to prescribe a cure. Jesus is the one person who knows what is wrong and can make the wrong right. The Apostle Paul let us know that with his mind he wanted to serve the law of God, but without Jesus Christ the flesh overpowered

him.

Paul said in Romans 7:21, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." He said in verse 23, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." When you have a desire to serve God and the flesh is overtaking you, what does that make you? Verse 24 says, "O wretched man that I am!"

The problems that we have in the world today and in some congregations are caused by sin. Oh, people label them different things, such as a mistake, because they do not want to admit that they have committed sin. In the newspaper you do not read about people committing adultery. They say they had an affair. Sin is the problem. There is sin in our government in the high places.

Sin in a congregation can cause lots of problems. Sin breeds more sin, and it can only be conquered through the power of Jesus Christ. Romans, Chapter 7, gives a bleak outlook concerning religion, and this is exactly what that chapter deals with. On the other hand, Romans, Chapter 8, gives hope that you can conquer sin. It admonishes you to take faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. He can take the vilest sinner and cleanse him on the inside and the outside. He can change his lifestyle, his mannerisms, and his personality. He can change all things about him that need to be changed.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:9, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" First of all, you need to understand who he was talking to. He was talking to the Corinthians, who lived in a paganistic, idolatrous, adulterous city. He was writing to a congregation made up of pagans and Gentiles, mixed with proselytes and Jews. It was a large congregation. He had to write to them about many things, including fornication, eating things offered to idols, worship, charity, carnality, and so on.

## Uncontrolled Drinking and Lust

I want you to read what the Apostle Paul wrote to them in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

In this chapter the Apostle Paul mentioned a terrible catalog of sins to show the atmosphere that surrounded the Corinthian church, and also he revealed the condition some of them were in before conversion. Paul said there were fornicators and adulterers. Sexual leniency was part of the background of the heathen life, and the virtue of chastity was well nigh unknown. The devil wants the sin of lustfulness to work on the people of God.

Today many people feel no shame in having sexual relations before marriage. If you have sexual relations before marriage, you are a sinner. If you profess to be saved and you have relations before you are married, you are a fornicator. The sins that he listed are unpleasant to speak of; nevertheless, Paul thought it needful. Dear one, you must always keep in mind that you will not be judged by what others do. You will be judged by what *you* do.

Sometimes people get too familiar in their touching, in their talking, and in their associations. You need to keep in mind that you are not made of stone. You are flesh and blood. You have not entered the next phase of God's plan called eternity. You have human desires, human thoughts, and human feelings, and you dwell among humans.

The greatest building in Corinth was the temple of Aphrodite, who

was the goddess of love, where idolatry and immorality flourished side by side. Corinth was a very promiscuous city. Paul raised up that congregation as a wise masterbuilder. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:10, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." God gave Paul the wisdom to know how to build that congregation.

Many other sins were on Paul's list. He talked about idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, revilers, extortioners, and drunkards. The word used for drunkards comes from a word **methos**, which signifies "uncontrolled drinking." In luxury-loving Corinth uncontrolled drunkenness abounded.

Many have gotten trapped in the devil's snare of uncontrolled drinking. They may take a little drink at first. The beer tastes bitter, and the whiskey burns going down the throat, so they say, "I am never going to touch that stuff again." Under peer pressure (you have to be careful with whom you keep company), the devil will use others to keep after you. After you drink so much beer, the taste does not seem to matter. After you drink whiskey, it seems that you can take it without worrying about burning your throat, but then you can get trapped and caught up in uncontrolled drinking. Alcohol has caused many accidents, and many people have gone into eternity at an early age because of it.

### The Proof of Christianity Lies in Its Power

After the terrible catalog of vices that Paul mentioned, some natural and some unnatural, he wrote words of triumph when he said: "And such were some of you." What was he saying? He was saying that the proof of Christianity lies in its power. God can take the vilest of

men, the scum of humanity, and enable them to become real, godly men. God can take men who have been lost to shame and make them sons of God. Today all over the world, men are living proof of the recreating power of Jesus Christ. The power of Christ is still the same.

No man can change himself. Many people have tried to quit this and that before they were saved. Maybe they were successful for a while, but the Bible lets you know in Jeremiah 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Friend, you know that you cannot arbitrarily start doing that which is good in your own strength. Sin has a power that is much stronger than the fleshly, carnal mind. Paul said in Romans 7:18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." The Apostle Paul did not have to work up a will. It was present with him, yet he could not perform it. This is where the Spirit of God comes in and helps us to perform His will. Sin may look like a big mountain that you feel you cannot get victory over, but through Jesus Christ you can say to this mountain, "Be removed."

We read in Mark 11:20-26: "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when

ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

All that Jesus asks is that you believe Him, trust Him, and follow Him. If you will, you will not be sorry. The only regret the Christian ever has is that he or she did not get

started in Christianity much sooner. God's people *can* live holy lives, but that does not mean that you are not subject to falling. You could fall, but if you should commit sin, 1 John 2:1 says that "we have an advocate with the Father." The same One who saved you to begin with can forgive you the second time, if you will turn to Him. Thanks to God, we do not have to sin. God is greater than any sin that you could bring up.

If you are in trouble with the Lord, you do not have to stay in that condition. You need to deal with the condition quickly, before it gets a tighter grip on you or before it spreads to something else. You need to deal with sin in the budding stage, and God will help you.

*(Compact Disc TR-610E)*

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[Fall Camp Meeting Report—contin. from p. 2] for His visitation and direction in the services and ascribe the honor, the praise, and the glory to Him.

The Fall Camp Meeting is now history. May God help each of us to take diligent heed to the things that we have heard and apply them to our daily lives. In so doing, we will be better Christians and more

effective witnesses for Christ. It is so essential for us to have these times of refreshing and to be able to sit together to learn more of Christ's ways. The Word of God is sent to help us to grow and mature in our Christian lives. Let us put into practice those things that we have learned.

As a last thought or suggestion,

it would be good for you to order a copy of the messages and songs. Each service is available on CD's and can be obtained by contacting the Tape Ministry here at God's Acres. May God bless each of you, and we hope to see you in the Winter Camp Meeting, which will be held December 26-29.

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## One Man's Influence

I lost my Christian mother when I was a youth, but not before the instruction I had received from her beloved lips had made a deep impression upon my mind, an impression which I carried with me into a college, where there was not then one pious student. There I often reflected, when surrounded by young men who scoffed at religion, upon the instruction of my mother, and my conscience was frequently sore distressed. I had no Bible, and dreaded getting one, lest it should be found in my possession.

At last I could stand it no longer, and requested a particular friend, a youth whose parents lived near, and who often went home, to ask his excellent mother to send me some religious books. She sent me "Alleine's Alarm," an old black book, which looked as if it might have been handled by successive generations for a hundred years.

When I received it, I locked my door and sat down to read it, when a student knocked at the door. I gave him no answer, dreading to be found reading

such a book, but he continued to knock and beat the door until I had to open it. He came in, and seeing the book lying on the bed, seized it, and examined its title. Then he said, "Why, Hill, do you read such books?"

I hesitated, but God enabled me to be decided and to tell him boldly, but with much emotion, "Yes, I do."

The young man replied with much agitation: "Oh, Hill, you may obtain religion, but I never can! I came here a professor of religion, but through fear I dissembled it and have been carried along with the wicked, until I fear there is no hope for me."

He told me that there were two others who he believed were somewhat serious. We agreed to take up the subject of religion in earnest, and seek it together. We invited the other two and held a prayer meeting in my room on the next Saturday afternoon. And, oh, what a prayer meeting! We knew not how to pray, but tried to do it. We sang in a suppressed manner, because we feared the other students, but they found us out. They gathered round the door and made such a noise that the

officers had to disperse them.

So serious was the disturbance that the president, the late Dr. John B. Smith, investigated the matter at prayers that evening in the chapel hall. When he demanded the reason of the riot, a ringleader in wickedness rose up and stated that it was occasioned by three or four of the boys holding a prayer meeting, and they were determined to have no such doings there. The good president heard the statement with deep emotion, and looking at the youths charged with the sin of praying, said, with tears in his eyes, "O is there such a state of things in this college? Then God had come near to us. My dear young friends, you shall hold your next prayer meeting in my home." We did hold our next meeting in his home, and half the college was there. There began a glorious revival, which pervaded the college and spread into the country around. Many of those students became ministers of the Gospel.

Selected

Luke 12:16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be

merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

# How Death Blasts the Hopes, the Dreams, and the Plans of the Sinner



*Brother Larry Dishman*

## Unprepared for Eternity

So often, death blasts the hopes, the dreams, and the plans of the sinner. My Scripture text introduces us to a farmhouse in which the occupant has been wonderfully successful. As far as we can tell by the Bible, he was an honest, industrious, enterprising man, but there was a matter of great perplexity. After he had gone to the trouble of raising crops, he needed a place to store his harvest.

In my mind's eye I can see him calculating by the light of the torch how much room was needed: "I have so many loads of corn, and so many loads of wheat. When I build this new building, I will have everything I need. Then there will be nothing for me to do but to sit back

and relax and enjoy life." In anticipation of the barns being enlarged, he folded his arms and said, "If anyone in this world is a prosperous man, I am that man." While he was thinking, his ears were stunned with these words: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." He never got to build greater barns. In fact, before the remaining sheaves had been gathered, he also had been reaped.

As I thought about that, I thought of how quickly the death summons comes. This is the way it has happened so many times. As I thought about that, I could not help but think of how close eternity really is.

The rich man did not realize that morning when he got up out of bed that he was only a few heartbeats

from eternity. That is the way it has been with many people even to this day. Many individuals got up this morning having no idea that, as they awoke, they were only a few heartbeats from eternity. Certainly, the clock of life is wound only one time, and no man has the power to say when that hand will stop, at an early or late hour. Sometimes people live sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, and in some cases, one hundred years. In many cases people leave this world without any advanced warning. They are ushered quickly into eternity. I do not know what could be working in my body right now, and you do not know what might be working in yours.

We do not want to make the mistake that the man made in our Scripture lesson. He failed to make

preparation for eternity. God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

This man had spent all his time and all his talents accumulating wealth. He probably did not have even one thought about God or about eternity. Finally, he reached the summit of his worldly ambitions, and he had all the earthly goods that his heart could wish for, and he thought to himself: "I have labored hard throughout my life. Now I am going to say to my soul, 'Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years. Now you can eat, drink, and be merry.'" What a wretched portion for an immortal soul! He failed to realize, as many do today, that he was living on the borders of the grave, or on the margins of eternity. God said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee."

### **The Suddenness of Death**

Death is the officer of God. It acts under His immediate authority and control. Death is an officer that no money can bribe, no skill can evade, and no power can resist. As I imagine that man's barn, I see "Thou fool" over the door of the barn. As I think about his house, over the door casing I see the words, "Thou fool." As I think about his tombstone, in my mind's eye I can see "Thou fool" written on the tombstone.

In thinking about this individual, I thought about a life of plenty, yet he suffered a pauper's death, spiritually speaking. His surroundings were as bright as they could be, but we know more about his barns than about his house. I would judge the style of his house by his barns. Men do not take better care of their horses and cows than they do of themselves. No doubt, his house was full of the comforts and the luxuries of life. No doubt, when his table was spread, there was everything on it to administer to his appetite.

When I think of this man, I cannot help but go back to the mes-

sage found in Matthew 16:26, which states, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" His fields were producing abundantly and his money pouch was bulging, but he was not rich toward God. I do not believe there is anything wrong with having money as long as money does not have you.

Verse 20 of our Scripture text says, ". . . then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Job 1:21 reads, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." The Apostle Paul agreed with Job when he wrote in 1 Timothy 6:7, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." Death makes an arrest without explanation. There was no explanation for this man. The only news that he received was, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

The rich man might have thought: "Wait until I get my barns fixed!" or "Let me settle some things with the men who have been working for me" or "Let me get my will straightened out. Wait until I get prepared." Death said no to all these requests. For this individual, death came suddenly. Sinner friend, if you are without God, you need to understand this: death can come upon you so quickly that you do not have time to pray. You may not have time to call the pastor or to call your mother, your father, or someone that you have confidence in and say: "Come over here. I'm afraid that I'm leaving this world, and I'm unprepared." Death can come suddenly. The man in my Scripture text made a sudden exit. Oh, how many leave this world just like that! It can happen so quickly.

One time when we were traveling, right in front of us there was a car accident. A pickup truck hit a car head on. The two men in the truck had been drinking. The dust was

still settling when I ran up to that car. The man in the car did not take another breath; he was gone. A lady on the back floor board did not move a muscle; she was gone. A little boy in the front seat who was strapped in lived maybe fifteen minutes. A little boy in the back seat lived about one hour. So quickly, those four people went into eternity. Oh, how death blasts the hopes, the dreams, and the plans of a sinner!

Many people plan to finish high school and college and say: "I'm going to do this. I have to get this and that done." Oh, how we make plans for what we are going to do; but friend, you must not leave God out of your plans. You need to let God be the center of your life.

### **Are You Failing in Your Obligation to God?**

The only warning that the rich man in the Scripture text got was on that last night. He did not gradually waste away. His departure came as a shock, and it was over quickly. How startling it must have been to his neighbors in the community! How they must have been startled when they heard of the death of this wealthy individual! No doubt, they said: "I just saw him yesterday. He seemed to be feeling fine. I cannot believe that he is dead." I wonder what all his workers thought about him. They did not know of any problems that he might have had physically. Undoubtedly, they were surprised, but I believe the most surprised individual was the rich man himself. He had his heart set on building new barns.

Many people go out of this life without physical pain. They are whisked away and go out into eternity. The mistake that the rich man made was that he failed to prepare for eternity. He made ample preparations in this life. I am not saying that is wrong. I believe we need to make preparations in this life. However, most important is making plans for eternity. There is life beyond this life, and we must prepare

for it. Amos 4:12 tells us, "Prepare to meet thy God." You must make preparation for eternity.

You may ask, "What do I have to do to make preparation for eternity?" You must repent of your sins with godly sorrow, turn from your sins, and place your faith in the Son of God. You must count the cost and pay the price. That is what the rich man failed to do.

It was not a lack of intelligence that kept him in unpreparedness. Any individual who could make money as fast as he could was not lacking in mental sharpness. He knew what to plant, and he knew how to cultivate what he had planted. He was making progress in this life. At one time his barns were large enough, but soon those barns were too small to hold his crops. *Many people are wise for time and foolish for eternity.* Many people know how to sell things and get what those items are worth. They can make money on what they sell, yet they barter away their souls for nothing.

Many folks have everything insured except their souls. They are careful to make sure all their titles are good except their title for Heaven. They are prompt in their business with their banks and their stockbrokers, but they fail in their obligations to God. They pull down their barns and build greater barns for the increase of their goods, but they have no shelter for their souls.

In the Scripture text the rich man did not have any shelter for his soul. Some people will not let anyone cheat them out of one dollar, but they are allowing the devil to swindle them out of their souls. How foolish it is to allow the devil to swindle you out of your soul!

### Man's Never-Dying Soul

I want you to understand something. The rich man was not a fool because he was wealthy or because he worked hard. He was a fool because he made no preparations for eternity. The only prepara-

tions that he made were for the present. He gave no thought for his never-dying soul. His only thought was for his body. Not making preparation to face God in eternity is foolish.

I have been by the bedsides of several individuals when the death summons was on its way. It is especially sad to be at the bedside of an individual who is dying without God. What comfort can you give to someone who is dying without God? What can you say to the family when someone is leaving this world unprepared to meet God? It is sad to see the family weeping and to watch the cold dew make its way down the feverish brow or to be standing there when the death rattle begins.

You can tell that all the faces in the room are fading away from that person's vision as all earthly sounds are dying away. How sad it is for the sinner when the impending gloom of eternity's night begins to settle in and that individual is lying there hopelessly and loses the power of utterance. Suddenly a strange sensation creeps over the meager frame and the dart of death flies through the heart as the soul takes its flight to the great beyond.

Sometimes death comes so quickly that an individual does not have time to pray. Some individuals say they do not have time to go to church, but they do find time to die.

The Scripture text tells us that very same night the rich man gave up his soul to appear before God, to be a resident in the eternal world. He sank into the blackest shade of eternal night. Before they could carry him out of the bedroom, his soul had already reached its eternal destination. Every soul is immortal and can never be annihilated. The soul of man is never going to enter a state of nonexistence. Within each human being resides an eternal, imperishable, immortal spirit—a never-dying soul, a treasure of incalculable value.

As the evening shadows gather, the whole scene begins to change. Death's grim monster enters the

palace, seizes his mortal frame, and he is gone. Do you know what I believe he found? Just as it is with all sinners, he found Death an unexpected, unwelcome guest. Death came upon him as an intruder, and he was unprepared. Now I want you to think about this: It has been almost two thousand years since this catastrophe. The body of this rich man has so thoroughly gone to the dust that no one suspects where his body is, yet his soul lives on. In many ways this man was wise. If he sowed corn, he reaped corn. If he sowed wheat, he reaped wheat. Whatever he sowed, he reaped. This law was the same when it came to his spiritual life. Likewise, it is the same when it comes to your spiritual life.

### Count the Cost

We read in Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." This rich man is still reaping for living in sin, and he will do so throughout the ceaseless age of eternity. I want you to think about this rich man. He was a farmer, but even though it has been two thousand years, he is still gathering the harvest of everlasting wretchedness.

Sinner friend, backslider, what are you sowing? One song says, "*What you are sowing surely is growing.*" Do not be deceived. What you are sowing *is* growing, and you must reap what you sow.

I ask you, friend, if the same sudden announcement should be made to you, what would be the state of your soul? If the announcement "This night thy soul shall be required of you" were to come to you, into what scene would you be introduced? The rich man of the Scripture text is right where he was two thousand years ago.

Thousands and thousands of

Gospel calls have been given since that time, but this man has not heard one of them. God called him a fool in his last hour on this earth, and he died a fool. Sinner friend, while you are planning for the future, do not forget to project a plan for eternity. You must not wait until you get sick, because you may not die that way. You may experience sudden tragedy. Do not wait until you get more time, because you may never get more time. Do not wait until you get old, because you may never get old. Do not wait for the Spirit of God to strive more powerfully with you, because He may never strive with you again. Do not wait until tomorrow, because this night your soul may be required of you.

I often think about death, and I think about what the Scriptures have to say about the subject. Job said in Job 14:1, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." We are here for only a few days. James let us know that our lives are as a vapor, and you know how long a vapor lasts. That is the way life is. We are not here very long when we compare our lives to eternity. In the light of eternity, it will not be long until the undertaker prepares my body for the funeral. A quartet will sing, and a preacher will say a few words to friends and loved ones. If Jesus tarries, it is going to happen to you too. We are not here long, and then we go on to meet our great reward.

Friend, if you are unsaved, you ought to tremble at the thought of dying without God. When death comes, eternal doom comes to the sinner, and every sinner who dies without God awakes in hell. Sinner friend, your mind cannot fathom what a horrible, fearful awakening is awaiting you on the other side of death. Your mind cannot take it in. This earth is temporary. Every step that you take is borrowed, and every breath that you breathe could be your last. My friend, you need to stop a moment and count the cost. Look and behold your fearful end!

Why not surrender to the One who suffered and died on the Cross to save your soul? This is serious, and you need to think soberly about it.

### Are You Prepared?

Have you ever thought of what it would be like to interview people in hell? Luke, Chapter 16, talks about Abraham. Suppose we could tell Abraham, "We want to see what it is like on the other side." We board an elevator, and down we go until we reach that place called hell. Suppose we could interview this man in our Scripture text, the one to whom God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." I believe this man would say: *"I never intended to come here! I had arranged matters otherwise in my mind. I thought my scheme good. I intended to take effectual care, but death came upon me unexpectedly. I did not look for it at that time or in that manner. It came upon me as a thief in the night. Death outwitted me! God's wrath was too quick for me. Oh, my cursed foolishness! I was flattering and pleasing myself with vain dreams about what I would do, but sudden destruction came upon me."*

As we travel through hell, we stop to interview another soul who says: *"I was almost persuaded! I was almost persuaded! I was almost persuaded!"*

We say, "Abraham, who is this individual?"

He says: "Oh, that is King Agrippa. He heard the message that Paul gave, and he was almost persuaded to be saved, but he let that opportunity pass by. Now that is what he is saying throughout the ceaseless age of eternity."

Next, we take another step and a man is saying: *"Oh, if I could only find a convenient season! If I could only find a convenient season!"*

We inquire, "Abraham, who is this individual that is looking for a convenient season?"

"Oh, that is Felix. He heard Paul and trembled, and he said, 'When I have a convenient season, I will call

for you.'"

As we go a little further, we hear a man saying: *"Just have Lazarus dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue. I am tormented in this flame."*

We ask Abraham, "Who is this?"

He replies, "He is the rich man that you read about in Luke, Chapter 16, the man who fared sumptuously every day. In hell he lifts up his eyes in torments."

As we go from place to place, we hear the screams, the wailing, and the gnashing of teeth. How sad for those who are in hell! They all have one thing in common: not one of them planned to go there. They meant to escape hell. They planned to get right with God someday. This lets us know that the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

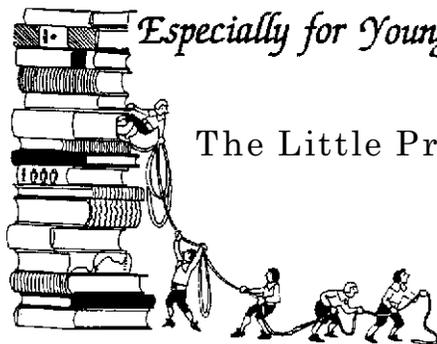
What kind of plans do you have for the future? What if death comes upon you before you can get right with God? What if death comes like an unwelcome guest, as it did for the rich man in Luke, Chapter 12? What are you going to do when death comes and you are unprepared?

Some people say, "I just cannot live the Christian life." Friend, there is no power in sin that the power of God cannot break. Nothing has you so bound that God cannot set you free. God can set you free. All you have to do is look around to see people who were once bound with drugs but now they are free. They tried everything but could not quit. They have entered hospitals to get off drugs, but the power of God set them free. Many people were bound with alcohol and could not quit, but Jesus came and the tempter's power was broken.

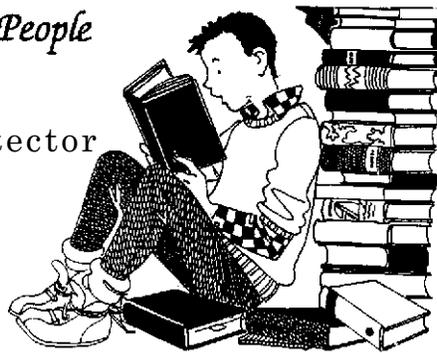
Many people have been bound with the tobacco habit and said, "I would get saved, but I cannot quit," but God gave them the power to put the tobacco habit down. What God has done for all those people, He will do for you. God is no respecter of persons. Do you want to be a Christian? Do you want to die in the position that you are in now?

(Compact Disc TR-312E)

*Especially for Young People*



## The Little Protector



He was such a little fellow, but he was desperately in earnest when he marched into the store that snowy morning. Straight up to the first clerk he went. "I want to see the 'prietor," he said.

The clerk wanted to smile, but the little face before her was so grave that she answered solemnly. "He is sitting at his desk."

The little fellow walked up to the man at the desk. Mr. Martin, the proprietor, turned around. "Good morning, little man. Did you want to see me?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. I want a wrap for my mama. I can make fires and pay for it."

"What is your name, my boy?"

"Paul May."

"Is your father living?"

"No, sir. He died when we lived in Louisville."

"How long have you lived here?"

"We haven't been here long. Mama was sick in Louisville, and the doctor told her to go away and she would get well."

"Is she better?"

"Yes, sir. Last Sunday she wanted to go to church, but she didn't have any wrap, and she cried. She didn't think I saw her, but I did. She says I'm her little p'tector since Papa died. I can make fires and pay for a wrap."

"But, little man, the store is steam heated. I wonder if you could clean the snow off the walk."

"Yes, sir," Paul answered quickly.

"Very well. I will write your mama a note and explain our bargain."

When the note was written, Mr. Martin arose.

"Come, Paul, I will get the wrap," he said. At the counter he paused. "How large is your mother, Paul?" he asked.

Paul glanced about him. "About as large as her," he said, pointing toward a lady clerk.

"Miss Smith, please see if this fits you," requested Mr. Martin. Paul's eyes were shining.

Miss Smith put on the wrap and turned about for Paul to see it. "Do you like it?" she asked him.

"Yes, I do," he said very emphatically.

The wrap was marked twelve dollars, but kindhearted Mr. Martin said, "You may have it for five dollars, Paul. Take it to Pauline and have her take the price tag off," he added to Miss Smith. When she brought the bundle back to him, he put it in Paul's arms. "Take it to your mama, Paul. When the snow stops falling, come and sweep off the walk. I will pay you a dollar each time you clean it. We shall soon have enough to pay for the wrap."

"Yes, sir," answered Paul gravely. He took the bundle and trudged out into the snow.

When he reached home, his mother looked in surprise at his bundle. "Where have you been, dear?"

"I went to town, Mama," Paul answered. He put the note in her hand. She opened it and read:

*Mrs. May,*

*This little man has bought a wrap for you. He says he is your protector. For his sake, keep the wrap and let him work to pay for it. It will be a great pleasure to him. He has the making of a fine man in him.*

WILLIAM MARTIN

Paul was astonished to see tears in his mother's eyes. He thought she would be happy, and she was crying. She put her arm about him and kissed him. Then she put on the wrap and told him how pretty she thought it.

When the snow stopped falling, Paul went down to the store and cleaned the snow from the front walk. He did not

know that Mr. Martin's hired man swept it again, for the little arms were not strong enough to sweep it quite clean.

The days passed, and one morning Paul had a very sore throat. "You mustn't get up today, dear," his mother said. When she brought his breakfast, she found him crying. "What is making you cry? Is your throat hurting much?"

"No, Mama. Don't you see it is snowing, and I can't go and clean the walk?" cried Paul.

"Shall I write a note to Mr. Martin and explain why you are not there?"

"Yes, please, Mama. Who will take it?"

"I'll ask Bennie to leave it as he goes to school."

The note was written, and Bennie, a neighbor boy, promised to deliver it.

While Paul was eating his dinner, there was a knock at the door. Mrs. May answered it and ushered in Mr. Martin.

"How is the sick boy?" he asked. He crossed the room and sat by Paul. He patted the boy's cheek, and then turned to the mother. "Mrs. May," he said, "my wife's mother is very old but will not give up her home and live with us. She says she wants a home for her children to visit. She has recently lost a good housekeeper and needs another. Since I met Paul the other day, I have been wondering if you would take the housekeeper's place. Mother would be glad to have you and Paul with her and would make things easy for you and pay you liberally."

"I shall be very glad to accept your offer, Mr. Martin. I am sorely in need of work. I taught in the public school in Louisville until my health failed. Since then I have had a hard struggle to get along," answered Mrs. May.

"I will give you Mother's address. You can go out and arrange matters. Make haste and get well, little protector," said Mr. Martin, as he rose to go.

When he was gone, the mother put her arms about her boy. "You are my protector," she said. "You brought me a wrap, and now you have helped me to get work to do."

Selected

*Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*

*2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

*3 And there appeared another won-*

*der in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*

*Revelation 22:18 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:*

*19 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.*



# THE BATTLE AGAINST THE INDESTRUCTIBLE WORD OF GOD

*Brother E. David Stegmeier*

## **God's Eternal Word**

The Word of God cannot be destroyed. It is forever settled in Heaven. As long as the world stands, the Word of God will be here. The enemy is working to destroy the Word of God and its effectiveness. He is out to destroy the Church of God because of her beauty. We highly esteem and revere the Word of God. The Bible tells us the Word is one of the two witnesses, and the Church of God

allows the Word to have its rightful place. You can find everything the Church of God stands for within the pages of God's Eternal Word.

Since the dawn of human existence, the devil has always fought against what God says. In the very beginning of man's existence in the garden, the serpent did his very best to annul the commandment of God. We read 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 [God condemns some things; therefore, we need to leave them alone]; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

What God says will come to pass. The Apostle Paul said in Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that [not something different] shall he also reap." If you mock the preacher, you are mocking God.

My desire is to build a very

wholesome Church of God congregation. In order to do this, we must have all the "vitamins" and all the "nutrients," and that means having the entire Word of God. Many congregations are very, very weak, spiritually speaking, and some of them have died and do not even know it. They might as well put the name "Ichabod" (which means "God has departed") over the church door. If someone is not going to work to build a wholesome Church of God congregation, he would be better off going fishing. I love the Church of God, and I am not ashamed of any of her doctrines. They are reasonable, and they are in the Word of God.

I was taught these Bible truths when I was just a boy, and I still believe they are true. After more than sixty years of studying the Bible and watching things come to pass, I am still convinced that the Church of God has the Truth. God's commands are meant for our good. Sad to say, there will always be someone somewhere who will try to annul the commands of God, just as the devil came along and convinced Adam and Eve "Ye shall not surely die." Adam and Eve disobeyed, and as a result, they died spiritually.

### **The Absolute Necessity of Obeying God's Word**

Ezekiel 18:20-21 says: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."

The Word of God fits together so beautifully. It does not contradict itself. It is a miraculous Book. There are numerous books of the Bible, yet they all fit together so beautifully. Verses 22-24 continue: "All his trans-

gressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. [God wants you to live and enjoy life. Jesus said in John 10:10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' I am convinced that Church of God people enjoy life to the fullest.]

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die."

Dear one, you can only have eternal security if you continue to obey the Word of God. You can only stay in grace as you draw upon the grace of God. The Bible says you can fail of the grace of God. Therefore, it takes prayer, Bible reading, and attending the house of God. If possible, the enemy would like for you to completely ignore the Word of God or relegate it to the people who do not know very much, but the Church of God has always highly revered the Word of God.

One time a man came to our congregation from a school of the Bible who said: "I've never seen people like you. I have heard you preach many months, and I have been attending Sunday school, and I have noticed that everything you read in the Bible, you just take it. You never argue or debate it." Friend, God's people love to obey His Word. There is joy in obedience. If the devil cannot get you to completely ignore the Word of God, he will try to get you to pervert it, corrupt it, or change it. The Church of God does not pervert it, corrupt it, or change it.

Paul was dealing with those who changed the Word of God in

his letter to the Galatians. In Galatians 1:6 he said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel [of Christ]." There are no other Gospels. The Church of God has the good news that you can be saved *from* sin, not in sin. False religion tells you "You are saved *in* sin," but the Bible says that you are saved *from* sin. There is a difference. For example, when a building is burning, I would rather be saved *from* it than *in* it.

### **The Word of God Is the Final Authority**

The angel said to Joseph in Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." You must not pervert or change the Word of God. In that which ones call the Lord's prayer, they say, "Thy will be done *on* earth." However, the Scripture actually says "*in* earth," meaning in our earthen temples. God wants His will to be done in each of us.

Paul continued in Galatians 1:7, "But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert [or change] the gospel of Christ." Some people add to the Gospel, and by doing so, they take away from its sacred context. The unique characteristic of the Church of God is that we accept the whole Book. We "eat" it all, and it tastes so good, but sometimes the repercussions can be bitter (see Revelation 10:10).

Changing or perverting the Gospel has been a principle condemned throughout the Word of God. The very first writer of the Bible, Moses, said 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." This is a biblical principle that will stay with the church to the very end.

We read 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."

The Bible is the only Book inspired of God, and we *must* obey it. We have no choice if we want to make Heaven our home. God does not want His Word altered or tampered with. The word *tamper* means "to interfere so as to weaken or to change for the worse." We are not to tamper with the Word of God. Isaiah 8:20 says, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Friend, we must obey everything in the Word of God. It is the final authority.

### "The Evening Shall Be Light"

As Church of God people, we need to appreciate our hymns. Our hymns are the most beautiful hymns as far as I am concerned. Some churches are going to modern, contemporary choruses. I have heard many old-timers say, "I wish they would get back to the old hymns." The Church of God has a legacy of the best hymns in the world. The sixth-seal brethren wrote hundreds of hymns. We sing and enjoy them yet today! One song that we sing is entitled "Back to the Blessed Old Bible." It was the heart cry of the reformers of the early church. One of the main desires of the reformers of the Reformation was, "Let's get the Bible and put it in the vernacular of the people so that they can understand what the church should be like." Babylon keeps her people in darkness, but Church of God people are in the ultimate light.

In our *Evening Light Hymnal*, we sing a hymn entitled "The Evening

Light." It reads: "*Brighter days are sweetly dawning* [church, things are getting better for us], *Oh, the glory looms in sight! For the cloudy day is waning, And the evening shall be light. Oh, what golden glory streaming! Purer light is coming fast; Now in Christ we've found a freedom, Which eternally shall last.*" I thank God that we are in the light!

Martin Luther once said that next to the preaching of the Word of God, nothing has blessed the souls of men and women more than the singing of the hymns of the church. All the people of the reformation loved music. Music was and is an important part of the church. We can learn so much of the church's doctrines in our songs. They are not merely little love songs or little ditties, but they are powerful songs filled with meat.

As a child, I was taught that the Church of God was pure, holy, and clean, without any form of sin, and I accepted it. I was taught that we were saved and became members of the church through the new birth. I accepted that, and it sounded good. Acts 2:47 tells us, ". . . [God] added to the church daily such as should be saved."

I remember going to God's Acres many, many years ago around 1972 for the fall camp meeting. I was sitting in the old barn, and Brother Emerson Wilson began to preach on the subject, "When Does Sin Appear?" I began to shake like a leaf over a hot open fire. When the service was over, I commenced to rise from my bench and my legs seemed as though they would not support me, but they did. As I often look back at that experience, I thank God that now I know what people go through when they come to the Church of God and hear truths that they have never heard before.

Friend, as long as you are in this world, you have to be pliable. None of us is a finished product. God is still working on each of us. I told my wife after hearing that message, "Let's pray about it. We will study, and we will see." We got all the

tapes from then on, prayed, and the song "The Evening Light" became a real blessing to me. The chorus says, "Oh, what golden glory streaming! Purer light [or purer understanding] is coming fast." That light, or teaching, came during the dark day when Roman Catholicism had closed the Book. When you close the Book, you had better get ready for darkness. A few years ago I heard some people say they were going to a church where the minister said: "I will teach the Bible to you. You do not have to read the Bible." That sounded an alarm in my soul! Church of God people are taught to take their Bibles to church and to study the Bible. I tell my congregation, "You need to put the Word on me. If I, in any way, get off the Word, let me know."

### "In Christ We've Found a Freedom"

Years ago we had a young man in our congregation who had previously been a Roman Catholic. He had gotten saved, and he wanted so much for his wife to be saved. She got after him continually, asking him to go to a Roman Catholic seminary. I said, "Go ahead, and I'll give you some Scriptures. Also, you take the Word with you." He took the Bible with him and went with her. In the course of events, those theologians got extremely angry with him. This young man was Hungarian, and he had quite an accent. They actually said to him: "You are a dumb foreigner. What right do you have coming and trying to teach us?" They would not accept him.

His wife kept after him about going to the local priest, so he did, and the local priest got angry. Through these events, she was convinced that they were the ones who did not know, and she came to the Church of God and was saved. Roman Catholicism does not want its people to study the Word of God. In a real Church of God congregation, the Book must be opened in its entirety. I do not shy away from

teaching anything in the Book. We have to cover it all.

The last line of the chorus says, "Now in Christ we've found a freedom, Which eternally shall last." When I heard Brother Emerson Wilson preach that message, I said: "Whoa! That is freedom!" It brought freedom from questions, freedom from doubt, and freedom from guilty feelings. When I was a boy, we were taught that if you got a flat tire, you should say, "Praise the Lord, I got a flat tire." If we were washing the clothes and the clothesline fell down in the mud, we were taught to say, "Thank the Lord." I had trouble doing that. When I got a flat tire, I usually said, "Oh, my!" I did not kick the car, but I was not happy. Thank God, we found a freedom when we heard the truth concerning this.

Sanctification is a process that will accompany us all our lives as we learn the Truth. We are sanctified through the Truth. D. S. Warner wrote a song that reads, "Oh, precious Bible! burning words from heaven, We'll ever cherish thee in our heart." Why do you suppose those brethren wrote so much about the Bible? It was because back in those days men had closed it. John Wycliff opened it a little in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Martin Luther and other reformers opened it a little more. Those brethren opened it a little more because they saw the need of getting back to the Bible. God's people highly respect the Word of God. It means everything to us.

D. S. Warner wrote another song entitled "Obedience." The first verse reads, "By thy blessed word obeying, Lord, we prove our love sincere; For we hear Thee gently saying, 'Love will do as well as hear.'" One verse says, "Feigned hearts thy name professing, Thy commandments cast aside; But we feel Thy great salvation, And in all Thy truth abide." The next verse says, "Ev'ry word thy mouth hath spoken, Is essential to our life; All Thy mandates love betoken, To oppose them is but

strife." I like the word *essential*. That is the kind of attitude we need to have toward the Bible; it is *all* essential. You do not hear Church of God preachers saying that certain things are nonessential.

I can remember very well when I was teaching school, walking into the library one morning, and hearing the news that the Challenger had blown up. A few little details were ignored by NASA, but those details were essential to the success of the mission. By the same token, we are trying to get to Heaven. Therefore, we need to be careful of calling anything in God's Word nonessential. I never use the word *nonessential* when speaking of the Bible. D. S. Warner said, "Ev'ry word thy mouth has spoken, Is essential to our life."

The last verse states, "Each commandment Thou hast given Is a waymark on the road; Leading up from earth to heaven, To the blessed throne of God."

In every era of time, the Church of God has had battles. Even the early morning church had some battles. We have to go through some battles. In the forty years since I began pastoring in Oregon, we have gone through some very severe battles. Nevertheless, the congregation is growing and getting more spiritual all the time.

### Being Clothed in God's Word

Our Scripture reading speaks of this battle that was being waged in the early morning church. Revelation 12:1-3 says: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven [an ecclesiastical heaven]; a woman [the church] clothed with the sun [the greatest light in the world is the sun, symbolizing Jesus Christ], and the moon under her feet [the Old Testament], and upon her head a crown of twelve stars [the twelve Apostles]: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having

seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads."

The battle has been waged since the dawn of history against the indestructible Word of God. Friend, the Word of God cannot be destroyed, even though the devil works to try. Paul said in Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh." The early morning church did not have the Bible as we have it, but they were living the Bible. They were clothed in the Word of God. The best clothes that you can wear, spiritually speaking, is to wear Jesus Christ.

Another song entitled "Light Breaks at Last" is a very beautiful song. I refer to songs so often because the songs of the Church of God go right along with the Word of God. It reads, "In the morning of grace, when the Sun [the capital 'S', refers to Jesus] first arose, And the gospel divine put to flight all its foes [we need the Gospel in its entirety to put to flight all the foes of the church], The nations rejoiced, but forsook it so soon. [This speaks of apostasy, where the mountain went into the sea (Revelation 8:8). The culmination of the apostasy was the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church came from a backslidden Church of God. I am not speaking against people. I love people, but that system is evil, and God is jerking the covers off her. She wears the clothes of darkness.] For the Sun in his strength was darkened at noon." This was a dark day when the Word of God was closed.

Sad to say, in some places the so-called Church of God is flirting with Roman Catholicism. This is an ecumenical spirit. A few years ago, most of the ministers in our community signed a letter and published it in the newspaper expressing their sympathy to the Roman Catholic priest because of all the negative media reports. One man told me that people hated me in my community because I would not go over to other churches. Dear one, the Church of God has a distinct and

separate people.

The chorus says, "*Light breaks at last! Hallelujah to God! Darkness is past, let us shout it aloud: From the mountains and hills let us gather the few, Who will stand for the right and dare to be true.*" These "mountains and hills" are religious organizations. God has some people in these religious organizations, and they need to come out. I believe that when Jesus comes, they will be out.

### "The Evening's Fair Light"

The voice (the Word of God) is the voice of the Bridegroom, and the Bridegroom will no longer be heard in false religion. It is a rare thing to find honest hearts in false religion, but we do find some. We are in a gleaning time, and we should not be so concerned about who is standing where, but that we are standing where the Truth is. That is your only hope for your family. You may say "Well, I am going to hold back because my husband is not coming" or "I am going to hold back because of my wife." Dear one, if you do that, you may lose your soul and hers too. I know this to be true.

Someone asked me one time if they could go someplace that opposes the Church of God. I said, "Not on your life!" You are not going to win anyone by compromising with the Truth. My parents were in a cult for seven years. They begged and begged me to come and see what was going on for myself. I said, "No, thanks!" After seven years, they made their exodus. My father said it was a living hell. Had I joined myself with them, I know my parents would have been lost. We must stand for what is right! In the book entitled *Pilgrim's Progress*, Pilgrim stood firmly regardless of what his wife and his children did.

Verse 2 of the song continues: "*Long years have we dwelt in confusion and strife, [The church is not in confusion, and there is no strife in the church. If there is strife, then someone is imbibing a wrong spirit.] And groped where contention and error were*

*rife; [Groping indicates that one is confused, not knowing for sure where he is going. I know where I have been, I know where I am, and I know where I am going.] But now we have found what we sought for so long, That the people of God unite in one throng.*"

Verse 3 says: "*Behold, now we see by the evening's fair light, [What brings light? The opening of the Word of God.] As it gleams from mount Zion in radiance bright, That the mist of confusion is passing away, As darkness recedes at breaking of day.*"

Church, we have something wonderful to spread! The Mormons send their people out for two years to spread their false doctrines. Church of God, we are so blessed to know the Truth! We need to tell what the church stands for wherever we go.

Verse 4 reads: "*We have found it at last, the one holy flock, 'Tis the church of the Lord, and it stands on the rock; Spread the news far and wide, till it reaches each shore, That the sun in his strength shall shine evermore.*" The Word and Christ are synonymous.

In John, Chapter 1, the emphasis is on the light and the life. Jesus is the light. John wrote in verses 6-8: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light." John did not perform any miracles, but there was something about him that testified to his divine call. Church of God, you may not perform any miracles, but you ought to live such a life that people will know that you are different. The Word of God brings forth the fire in Zion.

### Rejecting the Commandments of God for the Traditions of Men

Malachi 4:1-2 tells us: "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh

shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun [this is definitely speaking of Jesus Christ] of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." John 1:4 reads, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." We cannot emphasize the authority of the Word of God enough, and this is unique to the Church of God.

Years ago as we were purchasing our church building from the Methodists, in some of their meetings to work it out, several times they mentioned a "Book of Discipline." I had never heard of that before. The Church of God's "Book of Discipline" is the Bible, the Word of God.

Before we had full possession of the building, near the Christmas holiday, we asked them if we could use the building at a certain time to have a feet washing service. One of them said, "What?"

I said, "We would like to use it to have a feet washing service."

"What?"

I said, "You know, Jesus washed His disciples' feet, and He said 'ye also ought to wash one another's feet'" (John 13:14).

"That is an antiquated practice," he said.

The Church of God obeys the Bible. Jesus said in John 13:17, "Happy are ye if ye do them." I want to be happy.

Soon afterward, Christmastime came, and they were to have the "hanging of the green." In Mark 7:9 Jesus said that "ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." The "hanging of the green" is a perfect example of this. I thank God for the Truth! Jesus is the light. False religion today may not destroy the Word of God as they did back in the Dark Ages, but they undermine its authenticity. The Church of God is genuine. There are no flaws in the Word of God.

False religion undermines and mitigates the church's authority by

ridiculing her and belittling her message. The message is serious to me. I feel that when someone laughs at the Word of God, that is almost blasphemy. Man feels that he has progressed beyond the wisdom and the knowledge of God, that he has learned better things since biblical times. Through this knowledge they will now solve their problems with reasoning, compassion, and understanding. Psalm 111:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."

Humanistic thinking existed way back in the Old Testament when the tower of Babel was built. The people said, "Let us build . . ." (Genesis 11:4). Humanism is when man exalts his thoughts above God's. People reason: "Well, I really don't have to do that. It is not really necessary. We are living in a different time. He didn't really mean what He said." The tower of Babel symbolizes man's sinful pride and rebellion. That tower was built to satisfy their vanity. Today we have what is called Babylon. It is a place of confusion, where the Word of God is closed. The religious world is nothing but a confused mess. We need the Word of God opened in its entirety.

### **Beware of Seducing Spirits and Doctrines of Devils**

Zechariah 14:6-7 says: "And it shall come to pass in that day [this three-word phrase 'in that day' is speaking of the Gospel Day, the day of Jesus Christ], that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." We are living in the evening time, a time of great light and understanding. When Roman Catholicism came into being, they closed the Book and began to teach customs and traditions rather than the Word of God.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter

times some shall depart from the faith [the Word of God], giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." The devilish doctrines and the devilish practices of Roman Catholicism are being exposed. Keeping men and women from being married is a devilish doctrine, and it breeds evil. Having a wife is good for a man. I thank God for my wonderful wife!

Paul went on to say in verse 3, "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." Jesus said in Matthew 23:9, "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Jesus was referring to religious leaders. Why would men of a society of bachelors want to be called "Father"?

When Roman Catholicism closed the Book and began to teach their own teachings, the world went into great darkness. We call it the Dark Ages, when learning practically came to a halt because of Roman Catholicism. Countries ruled by Roman Catholicism quite often are referred to as third-world countries. You may not agree with me, but Roman Catholicism is a curse to the world.

A few years ago a Roman Catholic priest in our area who had molested many little boys died. When he died, one lawyer who was handling the case said, "I'm glad that he is dead. The world is rid of the worst, hideous, ungodly creature that we have ever known." The lawyer said that of a Roman Catholic leader. I thought, "My, he was supposed to be a religious leader."

Ezekiel 34:11-12 states: "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; 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." That means all religious organizations in all places. The Church of God is composed of people from all different places.

When I was a child, we were members of the Reformed Church of America, but we came out of that. God has brought people out of almost every religious organization. He is getting His people out. The Word of God will very clearly delineate what the Bible church really is. It is a church that takes its name from God, its spirit is of God, and its doctrines are of God. Its nature is of God, and it has a holy nature. Everything about it is of God, and it is going to God.

The last two chapters of the Book of Revelation tell us the church came down from God and is going back to God. Earthly, ungodly religion came out of the sea of Roman Catholicism. All other religions came out of the earth, or from the minds of men. Men have invented all these religions out here. God's church came down from Heaven, and it is going back to Heaven. The battle is against the Word of God. In Revelation 12:17 we read, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Dear one, the Church of God is that remnant.

I have been asked, "Why isn't the Church of God bigger?" God has a remnant of honest people. Jesus said in Matthew 7:14, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." So if you are looking to find the Truth among the masses, you will probably not find it. You will find Truth where God has a faithful few.

In the Dark Ages the Bible was closed and darkness came upon the earth. Slowly, the Word has been opened to the place where today the Church of God is carrying an open Book. I thank God for the Light of its Word.

*(Cassette C-5084E)*

*Ephesians 5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,  
16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

*17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

*18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

*19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

*20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*

## Why the Christian Should Not Consume Alcohol



*Brother Allen Polston*

### Satan's Devices

We are living in a time when the use of alcohol is becoming more common and more accepted in society. You can hardly go to a restaurant, a grocery store, a gas station, or a convenience store where alcohol is not sold, advertised, and promoted. It is even accepted in most religious groups in the world. Most of them approve of alcohol consumption, at least a little. God's Word has something definite to say concerning this subject. God wants us to be acquainted with what He has to say, and He wants us to share with others the reason that we stand against this dangerous substance.

First Peter 3:15 says, "Be ready

always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." We ought to tell people the reason that we stand against consuming alcohol. The principles of God make it very clear that consuming even a little alcohol is not acceptable with God, and it is dangerous to the Christian.

Romans 12:1 talks about our reasonable service. God has a reason for us to live the way we live and to do the things we do, and He has a reason for the messages that He sends. As we consider this subject, I pray that God will help you to take a fresh look at the dangers of drinking alcohol.

The Apostle Paul wrote to

Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Many people are wrongly dividing the Word of Truth. I am glad that we do not have to be ashamed that we stand for holiness, that we dress modestly, that we refrain from going certain places, and that we stand against drinking alcoholic beverages. We can study and show ourselves approved to God, and we can know what God would have us to do.

The Bible lets us know that Satan has many devices. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 2:11, "We are not ignorant of his [Satan's] devices." Today Satan is trying to

make people feel less resistant to alcohol and more accepting of it, even if they never drink it. He is pushing it, and we see it everywhere we go. The enemy of souls would like to vex us with it. In the Old Testament you can read that Lot was vexed by ungodliness. Lot was a r i g h t e o u s m a n , b u t 2 Peter 2:8 says that in seeing and hearing the unlawful deeds down in Sodom, it vexed his righteous soul.

I will be really honest with you. I have a little more hatred toward this substance than some people do because I was once bound by it. I thank God for deliverance! I thank God that on April 21, 1993, God set me free from alcohol, and for more than seventeen years, I have not put it to my lips. I praise God for that! I am glad that I can say that I have been delivered from that evil stuff! I know that God can set you free from it too.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that something was working to try to divide the people at Corinth. Satan is always trying to work division. The devil would like to use his devices to divide us, to isolate us, and to get us to feel hurt and become bitter. Division is one of his devices. He will try to get someone to become influential in your life, and then if you are not careful that person will influence you in a negative way. Sometimes a companion can influence you negatively. Therefore, you need to beware of Satan's devices.

### **Setting Forth the Difference Between Right and Wrong**

The enemy of your soul is trying to get you to feel as though a little social drinking is not so bad, but God disapproves of it. It is dangerous and deadly, and you need to stand against it. One time when I was driving, I saw a beer truck in front of me that read "Drink Responsibly." You may ask, "What about people who do not get drunk when they drink?" The devil knows that if everybody who used alcohol were to become an alcoholic, people would resist it in a greater way. Therefore, he lets some

people drink in moderation. He does that because he wants to use the same substance to destroy the lives of many other people, and that is exactly what alcohol does. You may use it very moderately once in a while. Other people who look on you and see you using it mildly may think they can also, but when they take that first drink, they may never be able to control it. This is the reason that I say the devil lets some people be moderate drinkers. He wants to use the same substance to destroy many others.

First Peter 4:17 says, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." There are some places where we have to draw a line and say no. When it comes to consuming alcohol, such a line must be drawn. You must stay away from it. You should not purchase it for yourself or for anyone else. You should not allow it to be in your presence or go where it is. You must stand against it.

The devil has many devices. Paul said in Romans 7:13b, "But sin, that it might appear sin, . . . that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." I want people to know that it is exceedingly sinful to consume alcohol. Christians should not consume anything intoxicating. Our Scripture text commands in verse 18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit."

When Peter said that "the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God," he was trying to help people to understand that the determination and the declaration of what is right and what is wrong has a starting place. It does not come from the government, but it comes from God's house. The determination and the declaration to the world and to the saints of what is right and what is wrong has to start with the people of God who are in tune with God, who hear the Word at His mouth, and who have the mind of Christ. Those are the people who are eligible to set forth the difference between right and wrong. Just be-

cause something is legal in the society in which you live does not make it acceptable to God.

Some states in our nation are trying to pass legislation to legalize marijuana. If they legalize it and it becomes commonplace, that would not make it acceptable in the eyes of God. Certain forms of pornography are legal. Unfortunately, it is a multi-billion dollar business. Nevertheless, just because it is legal and just because there are places where you can purchase it does not make it right before God.

What about gambling and wasting money on lottery tickets? Just because it is legal does not make it right in the eyes of God. According to the laws of our country, consuming alcohol is legal when a person becomes twenty-one years of age, but just because it is legal does not make it acceptable with God.

### **God Made Man Upright**

I believe that every Christian should have a desire to be all that he or she can be for God. Every person who loves God should want to be great in the sight of the Lord. Judges 13:7 states, "Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death." The writer was talking about Samson. God gave Samson great strength, and He used him in a great way. I want to be used of God, do you? That does not mean we all will do everything exactly the same, but we want God to use each of us in the capacity that He desires. Wherever God places me, I want to be used by Him. I want to be strengthened and led by God.

The commandment was that Samson was not to touch wine or strong drink. Even his mother was forbidden to partake of such. God did not want this powerful vessel that He was going to use to be associated with strong drink.

We can read of John the Baptist

and how he was an example of a true man of God. Luke 1:13-16 reads: "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. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 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. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God."

Part of the orders for John the Baptist were that he should drink neither wine nor strong drink. He was to be great in the sight of the Lord. All of the strongest men, the wisest men, and the closest men to God were instructed not to drink alcohol in any form. That alone should speak volumes to us.

Someone may say, "I do not see one of the Ten Commandments that says, 'Thou shalt not drink alcohol.'" If one of the Ten Commandments spelled this out in black and white, there would be no reason to present any additional Scriptures on this subject. Do you know what men would do? They would change the name of it. If a commandment said, "Thou shalt not drink alcohol," men would call it another name. God made man upright, but man has sought out many ungodly inventions. The Bible does not name every sin in detail. However, God has given principles to govern our lives and to enable us to be the kind of people who can reflect His image and His will to the world.

### **Spiritual Principles**

God opposes drinking, smoking, using drugs, and taking things that alter a person's ability to think soberly and to reason things out sensibly in life. The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD." A person cannot have much reasoning ability when the mind is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Things

that would normally make sense no longer make sense, and the person may engage in senseless acts. If God were to name every sinful habit and vice in black and white, the Bible would be so big that you could not carry it, let alone read it through.

Many things plaguing our world today were not even defined years ago. People in the early morning church would have been reading all kinds of things that did not make sense. Rather than putting all the specifics in the Bible, God has given scriptural principles that provide understanding and instruction. If you do not have a love for the Truth, you cannot understand. If you fail to love the Truth, you can become deceived.

God gives principles, and if you love God's Truth, those principles will show you how to live a godly life. Many things are not spelled out in the Bible. You cannot read in the Bible that robbing a bank is sinful, but you had better not do it. You may be running a little low on your finances, but robbing a bank is not the answer. Many things are not mentioned in the Bible, but that does not make them acceptable. Using your cell phone to send bad messages or bad pictures back and forth is not mentioned in the Bible, but you had better not get involved in it. It is unacceptable with God and you may even be breaking the law. A young man in Indiana was arrested for sending an indecent picture on his cell phone. He was eighteen years of age and still in high school, but he was arrested for it. The newspaper said he was going to have to be on the sex offender's list for the rest of his life.

You cannot use the excuse that something is not spelled out in the Bible. You have to take the principles of God's Word and bring them together. You must let God's Spirit interpret those principles so that you can know how God wants you to live your life.

God has given clear principles in His Word such as the verses in Leviticus 10:8-10, which read: "And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying,

Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean."

Here we find that Aaron and the priests in that day were forbidden to consume alcohol when they went into the tabernacle, or into the immediate presence of God. The tabernacle was where the presence of God was and where the priests performed their duties and their responsibilities. God did not want His people even slightly affected by alcohol when they entered that place.

The spirit of alcohol is contrary to God, and that was the reason it was forbidden. The spirit of alcohol will not lead and direct you in the same manner as the Spirit of God. It will lead you in the opposite direction. Alcohol will motivate people to speak and act in ways that will gratify the flesh. God's Spirit will prompt you to glorify God, to elevate Jesus Christ, and to crucify the flesh and the affections thereof.

The flesh must remain crucified, because once you start giving in to the flesh, there is no stopping point. It is a bottomless pit. This is the reason there must be guidelines. This is the reason we preach a standard of modesty. We have to draw a line concerning some things. The flesh must be crucified.

### **"The Unrighteous Shall Not Inherit the Kingdom of Heaven"**

First Corinthians 3:16-17 reads: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." God dwells in our hearts, and we, as God's people, make up the house of God, or the tabernacle of God. Therefore, if God forbade the priests in Leviticus, Chapter 10, from drinking wine or strong drink when they were

going to perform their duties and responsibilities, we must also refrain from doing so, because we are the temple of God. I am glad that God clarified this so that we would know that it covers all ages of time. We must refuse and refrain from all alcohol and intoxicating agents so that we can show forth a difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the unholy. Wine and strong drink are labeled as unholy and unclean. God said we have not been called to uncleanness, but we have been called to holiness.

Second Corinthians 7:1 states, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." I want to verify that alcohol consumption is exceedingly sinful. We must have strong resistance to that vice and let the world know that we stand against it.

The Bible lets us know there will be no drunkards in Heaven. Most people will admit that they want to go to Heaven. No one in his right mind would tell you that he wants to go to hell. People who say that do not really understand what they are saying. Hell is more awful than words can describe. Drunkards end up lost if they leave this world without being saved.

First Corinthians 6:9-10 says: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

No drunkards will be in Heaven, and no drunkards are in God's church. The Word of God says "know ye not" because many people do not know these things. Many people have never heard them denounced. Preachers in false religion are not preaching against these things. The reason could be that some of them are engaged in that. They keep it in their refrigerators and in their cabi-

nets. We must stand against it and preach against it. Many people in religious organizations consume alcohol on a regular basis, but that does not make it right. Just because many religious people accept it, that does not make it right. Just because it is legal, that does not make it right. Just because some people consume it in moderation, that does not make it right.

### **"Do All to the Glory of God"**

I told my precious mother one or two nights before I wrecked a truck, "Mom, I have it under control; it's not a problem," when speaking of my drinking. Others say they are not drunkards; they just drink. The world thinks that you have to get drunk daily or stay in that condition to be a drunkard. In the state of Indiana the law used to be that you could drink and drive until your blood alcohol level was 0.10. The state legislature became a little wiser because so many people at that legal limit were having automobile accidents and other problems, so they lowered it to 0.08.

You may ask, "How intoxicated does a person have to be before God considers him to be a drunkard?" Well, how many times does a person have to commit adultery before he is an adulterer? If you commit adultery one time, you are an adulterer. If a person gets drunk once a week or occasionally, he is a drunkard, and no drunkards will be in Heaven.

God does not adjust His principles to go along with man's laws. God wants Christians to stand against the consumption of alcohol. A person may say, "I am not a drunkard because I get up and go to work and pay my bills." Well, what about a whore? What if she, after she has been with her customers, goes to work and pays her bills? Does that lessen the definition of her classification? The world has things all mixed up, trying to confuse people. God is not the author of confusion, but the devil would like to confuse people to the place where even professing

Christians say they do not really know whether a little alcohol would hurt. Well, I am going to tell you, consuming a little alcohol often leads to consuming much more. God wants us to stand against it. As a Christian, you should not consume it, you should not support the consumption of it, and you should not purchase it for anyone.

If I know that people are going to be drinking some place where I have been invited, my family will not be there. Someone may say, "I could go and it would not effect me." Maybe you can, but what about your children? How will it affect them when they see your friends or relatives drinking and laughing and having a good time, feeling loose and making it look glamorous? How will it impact their minds? They may say they looked like they were having fun. Then when they go to church and see some individuals sit there inattentively, they may get the idea that drinking looks more inviting. This is the reason you should stay away from it. I know you can hardly eat in a restaurant any more where alcohol is not served. I understand that, but I try to determine whether alcohol is the major attraction. If it is, I do not go there.

God is against the use of alcohol. First Thessalonians 5:22 says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Alcohol and the places where it is consumed usually have an appearance of evil. Usually the lights are dimmed and the environment is not wholesome. It does not edify or encourage you to serve God. In fact, the devil will use it to try to undermine your determination to live for God.

First Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Drinking alcohol certainly does not glorify God. It is sowing to the flesh. It promotes an attitude of "do not worry about the future" and "do not worry about the consequences of your actions. Just live it up and engage in pleasure." That is the spirit that works with

consuming alcohol.

Sometimes I wonder how many crimes are committed that could be partially or entirely attributed to the contents of what is in a bottle, a pill, or a joint. There is no place for even a passive feeling about alcohol in the Church of God. We must stand firmly against it. Even though it is lawful, it is not acceptable with God.

### **"Watch and Be Sober"**

You cannot find any Scripture that proves that Jesus ever drank alcohol or approved of it. However, you can find many verses that tell us to be sober. For example, Romans 12:3 says to "think soberly." First Thessalonians 5:6 says to "watch and be sober." First Peter 1:13 says to "be sober."

Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding at Cana, but not to support an intoxicated state. If you read that whole story in John 2:1-11 you will find that He did this to manifest His glory. The governor said they saved the best for last. Usually people serve the best first and then the lesser, but they served the best last. In this miracle Jesus was simply manifesting the glory of God. Serving God gets better and better. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. God is saving the best for last. He has better things for us as time goes on. Jesus was in no way supporting or advocating intoxication.

Sometimes people say, "I need

alcohol. I need a little drink to help me to relax and unwind." Paul wrote to the Ephesians in Ephesians 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The fruit of the Spirit gives much more of a blessing than alcohol could ever produce. We do not need alcohol to unwind or to relax. That is just a trick of the devil. What people really need is to stay filled with God's Spirit and live as Titus 2:11-12 says: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

The Word of God teaches that Christians are to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world. I realize that people can get intoxicated on many things. It does not necessarily have to be alcohol. You should not get carried away with worldly things. It is easy to do. If you are not careful, your career, your entertainment, and many other things can draw you away from God.

Although God wants His people to take a bold stand against alcohol, we should not treat people wrong who are bound by it. I know what it is to be bound by alcohol to the degree that I thought that I really needed it every day. It became something that I relied on. On the other hand, I also know that God has the power to set people free from it because He did it for me as well as many others.

The Bible warns of not only alcohol but it also of the wine of false religion. We must be cautious even about this and not allow it to have the same kind of intoxicating effect on your spirit that literal alcohol has on the physical body. You must not allow that to happen to you spiritually. Babylon wants you to sip her cup. You do not have to attend Babylonian congregations to get a drink of it anymore. The Scripture tells us that unclean spirits have come out from her, and they are working among the church. People are trying to get us to take a little "drink" of what they have. You must be very careful. You need to be careful about some Christian radio broadcasts. You might be getting a sip of Babylon's wine. You might be getting under its intoxicating effects.

I repeat, God wants you to be sober. When people start getting intoxicated, things start changing spiritually. You may begin to yield to what you once stood against. God's one true church and the beautiful institution that she is will fade if you start getting under the intoxicating effects of Babylon's wine, and you can start to lose your vision. It is happening. Proverbs 20:1 states, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging." You must stand against it. God will help you.

*(Compact Disc TR-475M)*

**There is no reaching  
Heaven except by traveling  
the road that leads there.**

# Fall 2010 Camp Meeting Recording List

Recrd. No.	Date	Message Title	Minister
TR-656	8-01-10	"Ask, and Ye Shall Receive"	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-657		Three Events That Are Sure	Bro. Roger L. Decker
TR-658	8-02-10	Landmarks	Bro. Daniel Webster
TR-659		The Great Tribulation	Bro. Roger L. Decker
TR-660		Cast Thy Burdens Upon the Lord	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-661	8-03-10	What Is Good?	Bro. Paul Prinkey
TR-662		The Old Jewish Sabbath	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-663		The Inspiration and the Order of the Bible	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-664	8-04-10	Never Underestimate What God Can Do	Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-665		The Christian Sabbath	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-666		What Is Your Life?	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-667	8-05-10	Wrath	Bro. David Watson
TR-668		The Mark of the Beast	Bro. Earl R. Borders
TR-669		True Wisdom and How to Get It	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-670	8-06-10	Is Any Man Willing to Serve God and Follow Him?	Bro. Jerry Miller
TR-671		The One Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand	Bro. Earl R. Borders
TR-672		A Glimpse Beyond the Grave	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-673	8-07-10	The Father's Business	Bro. Richard Talbot
TR-674		Excuses for Not Getting Saved	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-675	8-08-10	Who, Then, Can Be Saved?	Bro. Richard Talbot
TR-676		The Harvest Is Past	Bro. Larry Dishman
TM-231	2010	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-232	2010	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #2	
TM-233	2010	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #3	
TM-234	2010	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #4	
TM-235	2010	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #5	
TM-236	2010	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #6	
	2010	Fall Camp Meeting Choir Songs # 1 (1 CD)	
	2010	Fall Camp Meeting Choir Songs # 2 (1 CD)	
	2010	All the Morning Fall Camp Meeting Messages in MP3 Format (1 CD)	
	2010	All the Evening Fall Camp Meeting Messages in MP3 Format (1 CD)	
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