

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 42 January 2012 No. 1



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?"

Guest Editorial

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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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CONTENTS

What Is Drawing You Away?.....	3
Our High Priest.	8
Have You Been Losing Ground?..	12
Especially for Young People.	15
The I AM.	16
Dwelling in a Holy Habitation....	21
Two Ways of Seeing.	26

Vol. 42 January 2012 No. 1

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

John 15:10

Abiding Love

Over two thousand years ago, God sent His only Son into this world to be the Redeemer of mankind. He saw the terrible condition man was in and the depths of sin to which he had fallen. In no way could a mortal human possibly lift himself from the sin and the bondage that he was in. A miracle from a Higher Power was needed to bring man help. Jesus Christ volunteered to be the sacrifice required. He is the unspotted Lamb who was sacrificed to take away the sins of the world.

Christ not only came to forgive and to save souls, but He also came to completely deliver people from the bondage and the guilt of sin. Under the old Law man was required to offer a sacrifice every year to be forgiven for sins committed. There was no power in the Law to give man the strength to live right. Jesus, being the ultimate sacrifice, put away sin forever, thereby allowing mankind to live free from sin and to be able to please God. Luke 1:74-75 reads: "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies [sin, Satan, and the flesh] might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

Mankind was unworthy of the love, the mercy, and the goodness Jesus demonstrated by giving His life on the Cross. However, through redemption, He made worthy those who would receive Him and believe Him. Our Savior displayed love that is beyond human comprehension. This He did

gladly, so that lost humanity could be made heirs with Him and the Father. In 2 Corinthians 8:9 the Apostle Paul penned these words describing Christ's love and concern for mankind: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye though his poverty might be rich." The Lord wants men and women to be spiritually rich.

God places His love in the heart of a man or a woman when the new birth takes place. This great transforming work creates a fire of love burning toward God within the soul. It then, however, becomes the responsibility of each one to keep that fire burning fervently. Failure to nurture His love by the individual will soon cause the fire to die down and go out completely. Love is not kept alive automatically, but it must be continually nourished. Too often it seems that some people expect God to do it all. In Jude, verse 21, we read, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." In Proverbs 4:23 the wise man instructed, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." The heart is the center of man's affections.

Many things can rob God's love from the heart if a man or a woman permits it. The issues of life can come in many different forms. The spirit of worldliness will ever attempt to sneak into the heart of God's child. Looking for and desiring to possess the latest fads and styles can cause

[continued on page 25]

Luke 10:38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

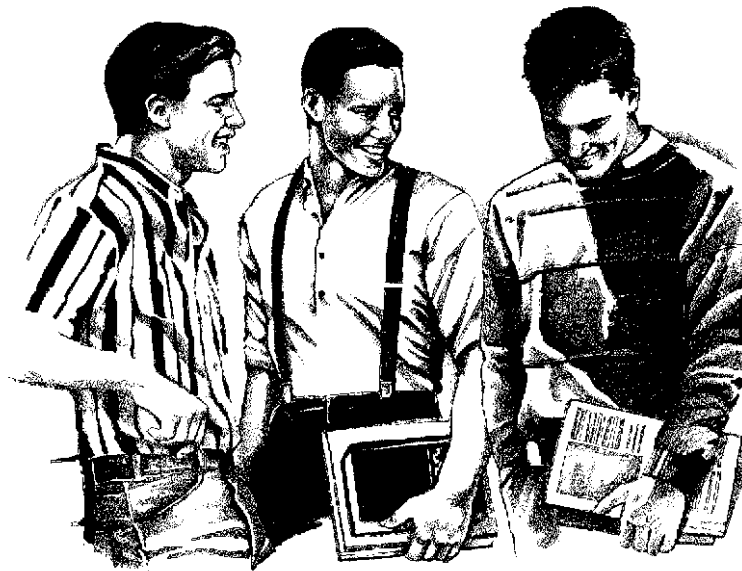
40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art

careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

What Is Drawing You Away?



Brother Roger L. Decker

A Common Salvation

In our Scripture text we have two different types of individuals: one who seemed to be flighty and nervous and one who seemed to be really relaxed and calm. It is always difficult for the one who is active to understand how one can be so naturally quiet. The person who is devoted to quiet times and meditation is apt to look down on the person who is active. Luke spoke of two different personalities, and there is no right or wrong in this. God did not make everyone alike. One person may pray and really get into the prayer while another may sit with folded hands and mind

intense, yet they both are praying and serving God. God needs Marys, and He also needs Marthas. Martha loved action, while Mary was content to sit still. Martha was always the aggressive type that wanted to make things happen immediately.

Let us look at another instance that shows the difference between the two sisters. John 11:11-23 says: "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them

plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

"Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if

thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again."

When Martha met Jesus, she spoke her heart. As soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet Him, but Mary sat in the house. In essence, Martha told Jesus: "Had You come at the time that we sent for You, our brother would not have died. Why did You take so long to come when You were beckoned? When You received our message, why did You not come at once?"

Even though Martha spoke her heart, she still had faith in God. She said in verse 22, "But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." In other words, she was saying, "Though You did not come immediately when we called for You, even now I know that if You speak the word, You can raise him up again." She still had faith in Jesus Christ.

God has diversity in the human race, and many times that causes friction among people. Some think that everybody should act the same way they act. When it comes to prayer, some people think others should pray as long as they pray. They compare others with themselves, but God has diversity. Martha and Mary were sisters in the flesh, and although they were different, both of them loved God.

Salvation is common to all people. Jude said in verse 3 that it was necessary to write to them concerning the common salvation. God wants everyone to be saved and delivered from the power and the bondage of sin. God does not want everybody to be alike, except when it comes to salvation. For example, some people like to read, but others have trouble reading.

Cumbered About

In Luke, Chapter 10, there is more than different personalities.

Jesus was on His way to the Cross. He was going to Jerusalem, and no doubt there was an inner battle going on between His spirit and His flesh. Let us read about the battle that He had. Matthew 26:36-38 reads: "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me."

These verses of Scripture give us a picture of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. The Scripture says He was sorrowful and very heavy. Verse 39 reveals His inner battle: "And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Jesus had feelings just as you and I have. He felt pain and sorrow just as you and I do. A battle was going on between His spirit and His flesh.

Jesus said in verse 41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." The flesh will try to hold out for its own way, and that is where many people get cumbered about. That is the reason the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." The greatest fear of the Apostle Paul was becoming a castaway caused by his own doing. That is what is happening today in many instances. People are undoing their own salvation, not through an outside source, but through the very flesh in which they walk.

In our Scripture text we find that all Jesus wanted was quietness. This is the reason that He chose the home of Mary and Martha. He was a friend of theirs. He did not go there to encounter a lot of commotion or to play games. The Cross was before Him, and with the inner tension He turned aside to Bethany

to find an oasis of calm. He wanted to get away from the demanding crowds, if only for an hour or two. He wanted a place to rest. He did not want them to be exuberant because He had entered the house. He wanted to relax for a while.

In verse 42 of the Scripture text Jesus went on to say that one thing is needful, or necessary. Although eating is necessary, food for the soul cannot be compared to food for the body. The Patriarch Job said in Job 23:12, "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

Jesus did not say what He said to Martha in verses 41-42 of the Scripture text because of her serving, but because of her *much* serving. She was cumbered about. The word *cumbered* means "to distract, to draw away." She was distracted and drawn away when Jesus wanted to spend the time in peace, quiet, and conversation. I can picture in my mind Martha clanging the dishes, moving through the room quickly, dusting this off and that, and making sure the furniture was just right. No doubt, as she was going through, she was complaining. She was probably nervous and felt that she had not done enough.

There is a great lesson in these verses of Scripture. Either you are giving audience to Jesus or you are cumbered about. You are either a Martha or a Mary by your actions. The word *cumbered* also means "over occupied." People have a tendency to become over occupied. What they are doing is not sinful in itself, but it robs their time, and they struggle to have time for Jesus. They get so caught up in activities that their time for Jesus is very limited, if they spend any time with Him at all.

"Take Heed to Yourselves"

Jesus warned in Luke 21:34-36: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunk-

eness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

It has been said that Jesus spent the day amidst the crowds of the temple, but He spent the night beneath the stars with God. Jesus won the strength to meet the crowds through His quiet time alone with God. He could face men because He went from the presence of God to the presence of men. Have you ever spent quiet time alone with God? There is nothing like it. You can get strength in the worship services and in the prayer meetings; but there is greater strength that you can get by spending time alone with Jesus, whether you go about it by praying and crying or by meditating and relaxing. It makes no difference, as long as you spend time with Jesus.

Jesus stressed the need to watch. Oh, how many go out of this life unexpectedly! We must live in the shadow of eternity, in the certainty that we are fitting or unfitting ourselves to appear in the presence of God. There should be nothing as thrilling to us as the Christian life. What is the most thrilling thing in your life? The most thrilling thing in some people's lives is football, but that is going to change. When the football season is over, then they have to contend with basketball. That will have a little thrill to it. Next, the baseball season follows. Sometimes that is thrilling in people's lives. Jesus wants to be the greatest thrill of your life, regardless of the season. You are always in season with Jesus.

Jesus said in Luke 21:34, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." The meaning of this verse is to continually expect these things. You should

not forget them. You should not feel secure and satisfied with this life and the good things that it furnishes. God has been especially good to us and allowed us special favors in life.

Jesus was saying, "Do not allow yourself to be drawn into the fashions of this world and to be conformed to its customs." Becoming engrossed in the revelry of this world will be disastrous for your soul. Jesus saw the need to caution the disciples not to get caught up in the festivities of this life and forget that they were going to die and face the Judgment. Regardless of how young you are, you are going to die, and then you will go to the Judgment.

How many, even among those who bear the Christian name, have forgotten this caution that Jesus gave? They live as if their lives are secure, as if they do not fear death, and as if there were no Heaven and no Judgment. The Christian should feel that he is going to die soon. Somebody may say, "I am just a young person." You need to compare that to eternity.

"Watch Ye Therefore, and Pray Always"

The Christian's portion is not in this life. The Christian should be looking for and hastening to the coming day of the Lord. Jesus went on to say in Luke 21:35, "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Matthew and Mark compared the substance with which this calamity will come to the coming of the Flood in the days of Noah. In this verse Jesus likened it to a snare. A bird may get caught in a snare, or in a net. It may spring on them quickly, when they least expect it.

Jesus said in verse 36, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." What was Jesus saying? Do not get caught up in living so much

that you are not prepared to die.

In funeral after funeral, I have warned people: "Be ready, because what you see going on in front of you is going to happen to you one of these days." Ecclesiastes 7:2 tells us: "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting." Why is that? Men consider their mortality. They know that death is the end of all men, and then comes the judgment. It is not better for the flesh, but it is better for the soul. The flesh does not want what is best for your soul. Naturally, people do not enjoy going to a funeral, because it reminds them that they, too, will face death one day. We each need to be ready to stand before the Son of Man. Do not get so caught up in the cares of this life that when calamity strikes you, you are caught as one in a snare and lose your soul.

Are you over occupied? Are you cumbered about? Are you so taken up with friends that, even in worship services, you do everything but listen to God's Word? Do you text others or look at ball game scores as the Word of God is going forth? What if you had a heart attack while you were doing that? It could happen. You are a fragile human being. What if Jesus were to call for you while your mind is so taken up with other things that you are neglecting your soul? You need to have respect for the house of God. Are you distracted when God is trying to speak to you through His Word? Martha was so caught up in making sure that everything was just right that she missed out on the one thing that was needful. In the house of God, giving your full attention to the Word of God is needful. Wherever Jesus is, that is the needful place.

Some people are cumbered about with so much work that they miss out on personal time with Jesus. You must take time to be with Jesus. You can even do that on your job. When I worked at Rockwell International, I arrived there by six o'clock in the morning and sometimes stayed until six or seven

o'clock in the evening; but I talked to Jesus throughout the day. I did not have to have a prayer meeting in my office. I prayed as I was walking around.

The Cares of Life

Luke, Chapter 12, contains a very familiar parable, but there is a great lesson in it. Verses 16-21 read: "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, 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? 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."

It is very evident in this parable that this individual was an intelligent, worldly businessman. Whatever he did, evidently he did it right. The problem is, he left God out of all those things that he did. He even got to the place where retirement was in his mind. He had much goods laid up for many years, so he planned to take it easy, eat, drink and be merry. There was evidence that he was planning to live off what he had stored up. He had done well and was ready to relax, but he left God out. God told him that he was a fool. Yes, he had obtained much material goods in life, but it would not help him in eternity.

Jesus said in verse 20, "Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided." In other words, Jesus was saying, "You have laid up much goods, but you are not going to enjoy them; your family will take care of that." Many people plan and

plan. They are cumbered about with much going on in their lives, but they leave God out until they are lying on their deathbeds or end up in calamity; then they begin to think about their souls.

In the Scripture lesson, Jesus wants you to take heed to what He said. You need to take advantage of all the admonition, the strength, and the help that comes from the Word of God. Too many people are cumbered about with the cares of life. They are not doing immoral things. They are not involved in the revelry of this world. Many of them are good, moral people, but they hinder themselves from seeking the Lord. Martha was so careful about everything but her soul. Individuals are careful about their houses, their cars, their lawns, their furniture, and their clothes. They are careful about everything but their souls. Everything in this life has to be just right, but when it comes to their souls, they feel that they can be sloppy. They think: "If I miss church, so what? So what if I did not pray today? Do you think the Lord is going to send me to hell for that?" Once you start missing prayer with God, the next time is easier. The next thing you know, you will have no desire to talk to God.

Some people hide behind the fact that they have to work and then they miss church; but they do not miss too many other activities. They are always there for the other activities. I will use myself as an example, but I am not trying to judge everybody according to myself. When I got saved, I worked second shift, the worst shift of all for getting into church. Also, at that particular time, whenever they worked overtime, I had to work. I had no choice if I wanted a job. I had to work seven days a week. When revivals came, I had to be at work. I went to Brother Emerson Wilson and told him, "I just cannot get into the services." My wife and children were there, but I was unable to be there because of my job. He said, "God knows your heart, and your desire is to be

there."

If I could not get into those services, I got into the morning prayer services. On the Sundays that I did not have to work, I was in the services. I desired to be with God's people. I wanted to be in the house of God so much that, whenever possible, I took my vacations during the camp meetings. You have to desire the things of God. It has to be in the heart.

Is Something Hindering You?

Going back to our Scripture text, Mary had a real desire in her heart to hear from Jesus. If you do not pray, you do not desire to pray, and you will feel that you can get along without it. People hinder their own spirituality. Often they hinder their own church attendance. Some do not feel that attending the services on Sunday night is needful. They think that once a week is enough.

One thing is needful, and Mary chose the good part. When you do not spend time with Jesus, other things begin to creep in. The next thing you know, you will get flighty about this and that. Those things need to be taken to the Lord. If you allow something to come into your life that keeps you battling against it, it will hinder you from being a witness for Christ. You cannot really be a witness for Christ when you are continually overhauling your own experience. You will be afraid that the one to whom you are witnessing will ask you about your own life.

Jesus said in Luke 9:62, "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." This is a very simple truth, and it is a perfect illustration. You cannot serve God when you are looking back to the past or looking anywhere else anymore than you can plow a straight furrow when you are looking back over your shoulder.

I know what it is to plow with a walking plow. I had to look straight

ahead or the furrows would have been crooked. That is the same way it is with serving God. You cannot look at others, look back to the past, or look everywhere else except the path where you are walking. The Christian walk is a forward walk. Jesus will not accept any lukewarm service, but He still allows you to make your own decision. God will never force you to serve Him. He would not want a person to serve Him if He had to make him serve

Him. He would like for a person to accept Him early in life, before the heartaches come.

Are the things that you are involved in hindering you, as Martha was hindered, from sitting at the feet of Jesus? You need to be honest with God. Are you over occupied with what you are doing, to the place where you are hindered from sitting at the feet of Jesus? Jesus told Martha, "One thing is needful." You need to take advantage of every

opportunity to commune with Jesus Christ, whether it is through His Word, through prayer, or through the worship services. Soon this life is going to be over, and it seems that the older you get, the faster the time goes. What is drawing you away? What is hindering you from serving God? What has you so tied up that you cannot truly live for God as you ought to?

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A Gracious Invitation

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house [our loved ones]" (Acts 16:31). Ezekiel 33:11 reads, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

A more convenient season than today for coming to Christ will never dawn. "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7-8). Romans 10:13 states, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Jesus said in John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

Jesus gave this invitation in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart;

and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:7-10). You cannot free yourself from the past. It must be done through Jesus Christ. We read in Acts 4:12, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Why not accept the sure remedy?

The Lord does not call sinners in droves. It is a personal matter. Now is the day of salvation. You have heard the call. What is the answer? There are two masters. Which will you serve—Jesus or Satan? Satan offers money, fame, worldly pleasure, gratified appetites, etc. His promises are sugar coated, for no one would follow if told he was to sink lower and lower in sin and shame. Romans 6:23 tells us, "The wages of sin is death." The devil deceives his children, doesn't he? Have you ever noticed what a big offer the devil made Jesus? He offered him control of all the world if He would just worship him (Matthew 4:8-9). You would have taken it quickly and chanced it, wouldn't

you? Notice Christ's answer: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10).

You can have your choice, but you must take one. Which offer would you accept? Jesus died for you. He loves you and offers you pardon and peace. He says, "Come, tired one, and find rest." No one can pluck you out of the Father's hand (John 10:29). He will give you more than you can ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). Do you believe His Word? His Word is infallible. If you make Jesus your choice, you will make no mistake, you will never regret it.

"O sinner, see he lingers still;

Thy restless soul he waits to greet.

Resist no more his holy will;

Come bow at Jesus' feet."

"He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry" (Isaiah 30:19). "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18).

Dear one, are you afraid to step out on the Lord's side? Are you afraid you cannot stand? Do you think the devil is stronger than the God of Heaven, the God who made the earth and all that is therein? Has He not already conquered the world, the flesh, and the devil? Did He not come out victorious over sin,

[continued on page 20]

Hebrews 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.

Our High Priest



Brother Michael Wilks

The Need of a Savior

As I studied for this message, I thought about an English report that I had to do in high school. I had to get up in front of the class to speak. I cannot remember the topic, but I can remember that it was extremely difficult for me to do. The reason was that the topic did not mean much to me; it was just for a grade. However, there is something about the Gospel that resonates in my soul. The Word of God is something that needs to be proclaimed, and I appreciate the opportunity to preach God's Word.

I want you to consider our High Priest, Jesus Christ. There is none like Him. Throughout history men have craved and sought leaders who were extolled. Some people think of athletes in sports who are almost a

god to them. Successful people are followers of former great people, but I want you to consider our Savior. People naturally like to place their confidence in a bonafide leader, and we certainly have that in Jesus. He has been tested and has been proven faithful throughout time.

People call the President of the United States the leader of the free world, but in reality Jesus is the leader of the free world. He reigns as the first begotten of God, and you need to take notice and listen to what He has to say to you. The plan of salvation is the product of our Creator. We read in Ecclesiastes 7:29, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." You need the unseen hand of God to guide you through life, because there are troubles and snares on

every side.

You must get your priorities straight. It is no wonder that our world is in the shape that it is in. Many people fail to extol Jesus, and others fail to search for Him. Think of our political leaders. The position that the president holds should cause him to feel a great need of God. We need help in this uncertain world. We need a higher power to guide us. There are plenty of people out in the world who would be willing to help you along certain lines if you would allow them. Worldly people would gladly supply you with your first beer, your first drag on a cigarette, or your first encounter with drugs. However, you need help from the unseen hand of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Sorry to say, I turned my back on Jesus Christ many times. He was so real to

me, and I knew what I needed to do, yet I refused Him. He had so much to offer me. Now I am thankful for all that He has done for me.

In the Genesis account of Creation, God made everything after its kind. Genesis 1:24 reads, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so." God saw that mankind needed salvation. Down through the portals of history, God could see that; so for lost mankind, He ushered in a new order and provided a priest after His kind. I want you to think about that. God needed a priest after His kind, which is Jesus Christ in the flesh.

"God Was Manifest in the Flesh"

We read in Hebrews 2:16-18: "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." He was exactly as we are.

First Timothy 3:16 reads, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh. . . ." In considering our High Priest, I want you to consider His humanity. Our Lord and Savior was as human as we are, yet He was without sin. Luke 2:7 tells us, "And she brought forth her first-born son. . . ." Jesus was born of a woman right here on the earth in the town of Bethlehem. Our High Priest experienced feelings just as we do. Sometimes the devil likes to pin a person in a corner and cause him to think that nobody else has gone through his situation before. That is one of his favorite tricks, but Jesus experienced everything that we experience, and that is a comfort.

John 4:6 says, "Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being

wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour." Have you ever been tired and felt as though you could not go on anymore? Jesus was weary. He knows how you feel when you are weary, and you can ask Him for help. John 11:35 tells us, "Jesus wept." When Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus, He had emotions just as we do. In Mark 3:5a we read of Jesus, "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand." Jesus was a very passionate man. Jesus said in Matthew 26:38, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." Have you ever been sorrowful or grieved? If so, Jesus knows exactly how you feel.

"An Unchangeable Priesthood"

I want you to consider the power of an endless life. This is a hard thing for mankind to understand. It may seem impossible, but the Holy Spirit can help you. In Egypt the pyramids have been standing for many long years in the desert, seemingly unchanged. However, God has always been. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

We read in Hebrews 7:24-25: "But this man [speaking of Jesus], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Christ is unchangeable. Back in the days of Moses and Aaron, the priests died off one by one, but our High Priest continues forever. The same High Priest over the morning-time church is the same High Priest over the church today. He is the One who has always directed the universal Church of God and He is still in that position today.

Let us consider where Christ dwells. I really want you to think

about this. We read in Hebrews 8:1-2: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." The Lord built the church, not man. False religion has that fact mixed up. If you could write a letter to Jesus, it would be addressed to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in Heaven. Every time you pray to God, Jesus is up there on the right hand of power interceding for you. He is in Heaven, and there is where your prayers must go for you to get right with God.

Not everyone is going to make it in. If you want to make Heaven your home, you certainly need to live righteously to get there. In order to enter God's presence, you must make preparations. In the Old Testament, the priest had to wear bells when he entered the most holy place. The bells continually rang if everything was done properly, but if not, the high priest died in there. According to Jewish tradition, one end of a rope was tied to the high priest's ankle and the other end remained outside. If the bells on his robe quit tinkling while he was in the most holy place, the assumption that he had died could be tested by pulling gently on the rope.

This is serious, dear one. If you are unsaved, it is something that begs for your attention. The only way to be saved is to come to Jesus Christ. Jesus has no need of bells. He has already paid the price, and He is residing in Heaven. You must live according to the Word of God. You need a preacher who will tell you how to make Heaven your home. So many people have backslidden and gone astray. While I was lost, I could have died and gone to hell, but Jesus was interceding on the right hand of God for me. If you are lost, He is doing the same for you, begging the Father for mercy on your behalf.

Hebrews 9:24 declares, "For Christ is not entered into the holy

places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Jesus came to earth "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). You must get saved and become hid in Christ Jesus. Individuals often say, "I'm a good person," but it takes far more than that to make it to Heaven. The world has no idea what God expects of them because false religion will not uphold the Bible standard. Knowing what God demands of people brings a fear that starts to work on them, and they wonder if they are right.

Rest for the Weary Soul

Let us consider the rest that Jesus gives His saints in a world that is in such turmoil as we see today. Hebrews 4:8-11 reads: "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." You must labor to enter that rest. It is not just one time and then you are done. When you get saved, you cannot just go your merry way. Salvation takes work. You must labor to gain this rest.

The word *rest* means "to repose, to have freedom from exertion." You can have rest in your soul in Jesus Christ. Matthew 11:28 states, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Having a good night's rest surely is good, but there is nothing like the Holy Ghost rest that Jesus gives; then you can pillow your head at night and know that everything is all right with your soul.

If you are unsaved, Jesus will bring unrest to you on your pillow. The Holy Ghost will talk to you and work with you. Jesus is a faithful and a merciful High Priest. If you could find real soul rest, you would

never again turn from God. Nevertheless, some people resist His calling and others backslide because they know this rest will cost them everything. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 5:12, "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet." The lost world has no rest when coming face to face with something beyond its control. This is the beauty of knowing Jesus Christ.

In the event of illness, the unsaved can only ask the doctor what to do, but the child of God has another avenue. He can get on the prayer line when death, disease, or financial crisis comes along. People in the world need to see that the church is concerned about them. That is what is going to win them. It is not going to be fancy buildings and flashy preachers that win them to Christ. People like personal attention. It is the personal touch that brings success to business. So many people need help, and each of us can have a part. I am so thankful to have an opportunity to work for God. Saint, you need to take advantage of your time and not squander your opportunities to witness to others.

Standing Before the Judge of All

Romans 8:28 reads, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Our High Priest cares for us and loves us, but He is going to be our Judge one day. He is going to step off the throne of mercy, and He no longer will be that friend. It is hard to fathom Jesus not being a friend, but if you are not right with God at that time, He will come to you as your Judge. Hebrews 12:23 says, "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

If you are not right with God, standing before Him at the Judgment will be a horrible and terrifying experience. Man rarely considers this encounter because it is a very

uncomfortable thought. If something is wrong in your life, you need to get right with God. When you consider your soul's eternal welfare and it troubles you, that is God's way of saying that you need to get right. He is witnessing to your soul that something is not right.

I am sure you can remember doing something when you were a little child that you knew you should not be doing, and your conscience troubled you. The same thing works on you when God endeavors to deal with you. When you have an encounter with God, you need to consider it very seriously.

Daniel 10:5-11 states: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

"Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground [I want you to think about this: he was in the presence of Almighty God]. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling."

Daniel was a man who was greatly beloved of God. Sinner friend, I want you to think of stand-

ing in the presence of God, lost and undone. There is a High Priest who is talking to you so that you can make your choice. He will be your friend throughout eternity if you will serve Him. You need to think about that final Day of Judgment, when the sheep are on the right hand and the goats are on the left.

The world is watching the church. I feel a great responsibility in knowing that people are watching me, and my works are going to follow me forever. No one will get into Heaven because he is a literal Jew or because he was once saved. There is no family plan. You cannot get to Heaven by doing good works.

I want you to consider our High Priest and what He means. Let us be thankful for everything that He has done. One day the saints are going to meet Him in the air. What a journey that will be! We will see Him as He really is. Are you prepared?

(Compact Disc TR-687E)

A Miraculous Healing

One year in November, I wavered on the brink of eternity. That day my wife and I arrived in a certain town to begin a revival meeting. I parked our thirty-five foot camper behind the church. While I was stationing the leveling jacks beneath the trailer front, the central jack slipped off its block and sank full length into the earth. I was pinned beneath a huge beam, which struck me under my right arm. The weight got heavier and tighter. My bones cracked and, like lightning, pain ripped through me. I screamed!

"Why must I bid farewell to all that I hold dear to myself so early in life?" I wondered. I was twenty-seven at the time. It seemed a voice said: "You've lived your life well. What do you fear?" With that, I accepted death and became unconscious.

My wife got help quickly. The pastor and another man brought jacks and boards. Cautiously they raised the side of the trailer and the pastor's wife and my wife dragged me out. In the car my wife sat beside me while he pastor sped toward the hospital forty miles away. As I struggled to regain consciousness, my wife pleaded, "Please, God, don't let him die." The pastor prayed, "Lord, don't let the devil kill him."

Just before we reached the hospital, I became conscious briefly. I was dizzy and smelled and tasted blood, but saw none. Pain cut through me like knives. At the hospital, orderlies lifted me onto a stretcher and whisked me into the

emergency room. My wife, frightfully pale and sobbing, followed. A nurse checked my pulse and blood pressure, popped a couple of shots into my arms, and called the doctors. They arrived shortly.

Still on the stretcher, I was wheeled into the X-ray room. On the cold, hard table, as I blinked and fought for consciousness, I heard bits of conversation: "This fellow's hurt bad. We need these X-rays at once."

"A trailer fell at him! How'd he survive?"

Soon my wife came in and said: "Honey, the doctor says that you have some internal bleeding, a broken shoulder, broken ribs, and possibly a spinal injury. He says he'll have to operate and use pins to put the bones back together. You'll be in the hospital at least three weeks and out of the ministry for three months."

Gloom surrounded me, but though weak and pierced with intense pain, I reminded myself of God's greatness. I said, "Is there anything too difficult for God?" I reminded myself of the times I had prayed for the sick and read to them from James 5:15, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick." God healed others, so why not me? The night was a blurred nightmare of pills, shots, pain, and voices. Finally, morning dawned. My wife sat by me all night. She said, "Do you feel any better?"

"My back is literally killing me," I replied.

Despite the pain, I repeatedly quoted James 5:15. I believed (and still believe) that a man should

practice what he preaches. During the day, some minister friends visited me and prayed for me. By night I had reached a peak of "expectancy" in believing. Still, nothing happened. I wondered why, but I waited on the Lord. The next morning things happened! I turned over for the first time since the accident. I reasoned, "If I can turn over, why not sit up?" With childlike faith I believed and sat up!

My wife walked in, and I thought she would faint. She rushed to me and said, "What are you doing?" Her voice vibrated with excitement.

"I'm sitting up, and I'm going to get up."

She said, "You know you have not had those bones fixed back together yet, and your back is injured, and you're bleeding inside, and . . ."

I pushed the covers back, stepped down, slid my feet into my slippers, put on my robe, and walked! In the hall the nurses stood speechless and gazed. I rejoiced! Later that day, when the doctor dismissed me, he remarked, "Well, I always say you can't keep a good man down."

I preached that night, twice each day the following week, and continued revivals as scheduled. Two years later, when we adopted a son, it was necessary to have chest X-rays. My report read: ". . . the lung fields are clear and the heart is normal in size and shape. The bony structures show no abnormality." Yes, the prayer of faith does save the sick! I am proof!

Selected

Matthew 26:31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and

said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.



Have You Been Losing Ground?

Brother Larry Dishman

Gradually Departing From the Truth

I heard a true story many years ago about a great drought, and many farmers were losing their crops. Also, people's gardens were drying up and they were very concerned. A minister in the community called the people of the community together to meet at a particular farm to have a prayer meeting, to pray that God would send the rain. The word went out, and a large crowd gathered. The pastor

asked the large audience the question, "How many of you came here expecting God to answer prayer and send rain?" They all raised their hands. They said they believed that God was going to work a miracle. Next, the pastor asked, "How many of you brought your umbrellas?" No one had brought their umbrellas. That would take faith, would it not?

In our Scripture text you can see that Peter did not suddenly deny the Lord; he lost some ground first. You can read of other people in the Bible who lost out with God too.

With each of them you can see that they began to lose ground before they lost out completely. In the Old Testament you can read that Balaam was once a man of God, but as messengers of Balak offered more rewards to him, he began to weaken and lose ground. The same was true of Samson. Samson slowly lost ground. King Solomon also ended up in a lost condition, but it did not happen to him overnight. He slowly began to lose ground. The same was true of King Saul.

If you study the Gospels, you

will find that Judas began to lose ground. He did not suddenly deny the Lord and betray Him. He began to lose ground slowly.

When I traveled as an evangelist, going back to the same churches year after year, I thank God that I saw some dear ones who were gaining ground. I could tell that since the last time I had seen them, they had been growing spiritually. Sometimes I noticed that others had lost ground. I believe there are some apparent evidences if a person is losing ground. Most of us can look back over our lives and see where we went through a low place and lost ground. If you are a child of God, I believe that you want to know if you have lost some ground, because you want to be where God would have you to be.

I would like to mention some things that would be evidences of losing ground. When you gradually and imperceptibly depart from the Truth, that is proof that you are losing ground. I am talking about things that once caused your spirit pain but now you tolerate them. Did certain things once cause you spiritual pain, but now those very things are tolerated in your own life? When there is little or no passion for holiness, that is evidence that you are losing ground. Heaven is a holy place, and the road that leads there is the way of holiness. How can you have the Holy Spirit on the inside and claim to travel the highway of holiness and yet dislike holiness and not be holy? If an individual hates holiness, he hates God.

Becoming Insensitive

You are losing ground if you compromise and turn from the light. No wonder the Bible says to walk in light while you have it, lest darkness comes upon you. Too many people have been dying out to clear convictions and spiritual impressions. Today many people are on the road that leads to compromise. You need to guard against the dangerous spirit of compromise.

Some people have gone down the road of shameful immodesty. The church has the responsibility of maintaining its identity. She must not give in to the leaven of compromise. Compromise is always wrong when it means sacrificing principles. Any religious movement that does not major on a life of separation is most assuredly not a movement directed by God.

Do you know what the problem is with many folks? They are trying to see how close they can get to the edge of holiness without falling off. People need to stop trying to see how much they can get away with and still be Christians. That seems to be the attitude of many folks today. They want to live right on the edge and do everything they possibly can do and still call themselves Christians. Friend, you need to go all out for the Kingdom of God and completely abandon the world.

Modesty is a word that you do not hear in many churches today. Proverbs 7:10 reads, "And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart." This woman was wearing the attire of a harlot. What is the attire of a harlot? Sad to say, it is what a lot of professing Christians wear to church on Sunday morning. They wear clothes that are too tight. Many women wear dresses that are too short, necklines that are too low, and sleeves that are too short. Loose moral principles are a sure indication that you are losing ground.

You are losing ground if you have become insensitive to the sins that grieve the Holy Spirit. The Bible says not to grieve the Holy Spirit. If you are unable to forgive an individual who has wronged you, that proves that you are losing ground. If you have bitterness or resentment in your heart, you are losing ground. You cannot gain ground if you hate someone, have bitter feelings toward someone, or have unforgiveness in your heart toward another individual.

Mark 11:25-26 reads: "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." Many times a pastor can tell when people are losing ground, and that grieves the heart of a pastor. Often spiritual people can tell when an individual begins to lose ground. It does the pastor good when he sees people in the congregation measuring up and becoming more spiritual.

Ceasing to Hunger and Thirst After God's Word

When a person begins to lose ground, he takes little or no active part in the services. Also, he loses his testimony. Perhaps he used to give praise to God quite often on testimony night, but now he does not testify as he once did. He just fills a seat. How long has it been since you have testified in a testimony service? I am not talking about getting up in the flesh and getting out of the will of God, but how many months has it been since you told others what God has done for you? Do you know why people do not do that? They are losing ground spiritually.

Perhaps you used to sing specials or sing in the choir but you gave it up. Maybe you used to teach a Sunday school class or preach the Gospel, but now every time the pastor asks you to fill in, you say, "I don't believe I can." Why is that? Could it be that you know that you are losing ground? Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. . . ."

If you show little interest in getting the Truth to others, that is evidence that you are losing ground spiritually. A lack of Bible study is evidence that you are losing ground. Perhaps nothing more conclusively proves that a religious professor is losing ground than when he or she loses interest in the Bible. If you are really saved and

living as you ought to, no other book will be as precious to you as the Word of God. Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." If you quit studying the Bible and it begins to collect dust, you are losing ground. Many times the Scriptures reprove the one who is losing ground, and perhaps you do not want to be reprov'd.

Strong evidence that you are losing ground is when your attendance to the worship services begins to slip. Your willful absence from the assembly is evidence that you are losing ground. It is possible to be dead to hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Matthew 5:6 states, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." When you are where you are supposed to be as a Christian, no one has to beg you to come to church. You want to be in the house of God. First Peter 2:2 states, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

Deep down inside, the Christian hungers and thirsts for fellowship and to be in the house of God. When a person starts to drift and grows cold in his experience, he may not attend the services on Wednesday night. Eventually he will stop attending on Sunday night too. When he does go to church, often he goes in late. His joy is gone. He used to raise his hand and rejoice in the songs of Zion, but he no longer does that. Hebrews 10:25 states, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Some Christians are like automobiles: they start missing before they quit.

Spiritual Apathy

Religious apathy is a sure indication that you are losing

ground. What about you, friend? Have you lost your zeal? Have you lost your earnestness? Have you become lukewarm? God still hates lukewarmness. In Revelation 3:15-16 Jesus said: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot [because you are not gaining ground, because you are just standing still or possibly going back to where you once were, Jesus said], I will spue thee out of my mouth." It is evidence that you are losing ground when the world gains a firmer and fuller hold on you.

One brother at a certain church often got up and testified, and His testimonies were always uplifting, fiery, and inspiring. One time someone said to him, "I'd give the world to have a testimony like yours."

He replied, "That's exactly what it cost me."

As Christians, we are *in* the world but we are not *of* the world. John wrote in 1 John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." What was John talking about when he said, "Love not the world"? Ministers need to get specific about this and let people know what they are *not* supposed to love. John was saying that all that oppose the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ are of the world and not of the Father. He is telling us not to love that which is opposed to or outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. The things that are not of the Father are of the world.

Somebody may ask, "What are these things?" All things within the world that alienate a person from God, whether it is people, things, or wrong influences. It can be many things, such as ungodly people, material things, or wrong influences. It is the sum total of all that opposes God.

Your attraction to the things of the world make obedience to Christ difficult. You need to leave every-

thing alone that makes obedience to Christ difficult. If something makes obedience difficult for you, you need to stay away from it. First, it includes the lust of the flesh—the desire for unlawful indulgences. Second, it includes the lust of the eyes—the desire for all that you see around you. That dishonors Christ. Third, it includes the pride of life—being proud or boastful.

One thing that will determine your love for God and your lack of love for the world is your love for Jesus Christ. The measure of the one will be the measure of the other. If you love Christ with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, you will lose the attraction for worldly things around you that dishonor and displease God. If your love has waxed cold, you are losing ground. When the pull of the world is too strong for you, it is an indication that you have been losing ground.

Many people are in a state of spiritual apathy, suffering from a severe case of spiritual malnutrition. They are in a spiritual stupor, sinking into a coma of depression, dependency, and despair. You may go through a form of religion and attend church services, but if that vital spark is missing, you are missing everything.

Ask God to Search Your Heart

Have you hit a snag in your spiritual progress? You need to be honest. Have you leveled off and become stagnate? Has your Christian life become powerless and mechanical? The good news is that the flame that has almost gone out can be rekindled. However, no change will come to your relationship with the Lord unless you crave that change with all your heart. You cannot coast into Heaven. You must put forth effort and press your way in. Unless you strive to get closer to the Lord, you are going to drift away. The deadness will deepen, and the coldness will become icier. You are going to lose more of the life of Christ and show less of His

likeness and purity.

Many young people are tempted to drink, party, and go along with the crowd. Most people who have been saved for any length of time are not tempted with cigarettes, wine, whiskey, or beer. Maybe there was a time in our lives when that was a temptation, but that is not what is bothering us now. I do not believe that anyone who has been saved for any length of time has a great temptation to go to a dance hall. Maybe at one time that was a temptation, but it is not anymore.

The devil may not be trying to get you to do those things, but do you know what the devil is trying to get you to do? He is trying to get you to lose ground, because that is

where backsliding starts. This is what you need to be concerned about. Backsliding could lead to those sins, but it will begin with following afar off.

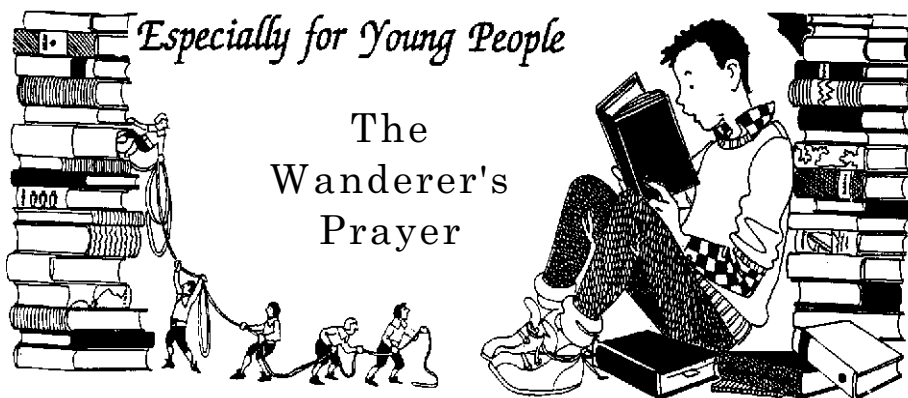
If you have lost ground, the first step you must take is to acknowledge to yourself and to God in all honesty that you have lost ground. Perhaps you are still going to church, singing in the choir, and singing specials; but down deep inside, you know that you are not where you ought to be. If so, you need to find out what caused you to get in the condition you are in and find out what you can do to start gaining ground once again.

The Psalmist said in Psalm 139:23, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know

my thoughts." Friend, you need to pray: "Dear God, search me. Check me and see if I have been losing ground. Maybe I do not even realize it."

Many people have lost out with God and have ended up in the depths of sin. It began by their following Christ afar off, losing ground spiritually. Other people were losing ground, but God sent a message that awakened them. Before they went too far, they acknowledged that they had a problem and got their need met. I trust that is what you will do if God has revealed to you that you have been losing ground spiritually.

(Compact Disc TR-482E)



On a cold, dreary evening in winter, a small boy, poorly clad, yet clean and tidy, with a pack upon his back, knocked at the door of an older gentleman in town, and inquired, "Is Mr. Lanman at home?"

"Yes, he is."

The boy wished to see him, and he was speedily ushered into the host's presence. Mr. Lanman was one of the wealthiest men in the country, and the president of the railroad. The boy had come to see if he could obtain a position on the railroad. He said that he was an orphan. His mother had passed away only two months previously, and he was now a homeless wan-

derer. The lad was too small for the filling of any position within the gentleman's employ, and he was forced to deny him. Still he liked the looks of the boy, and said to him: "You may stop in my house tonight, and tomorrow I will give the names of two or three good men of Philadelphia, to whom you may apply with assurance of kind reception at least. I am sorry that I have no employment for you.

Later in the evening, the man went the rounds of his spacious mansion, lantern in hand, as was his custom, to see that all was safe before retiring for the night. As he passed the door of the little cham-

ber where the poor, wandering orphan had been placed to sleep, he heard a voice. He stopped and listened, and distinguished the tones of a simple, earnest prayer. He bent his ear nearer, and heard these words from the boy's lips: "O Good Father in Heaven, help me to help myself. Watch over me as I watch over my own conduct, and care for me as my deeds merit. Bless the good man in whose house I am sheltered for the night, and spare him long, that he may continue sharing his bounty to the suffering ones. Amen."

Mr. Lanman responded another amen as he moved on; and as he went, he meditated. The boy has a true idea of the duties of life. I verily think that the lad will be a treasure to his employer, he concluded.

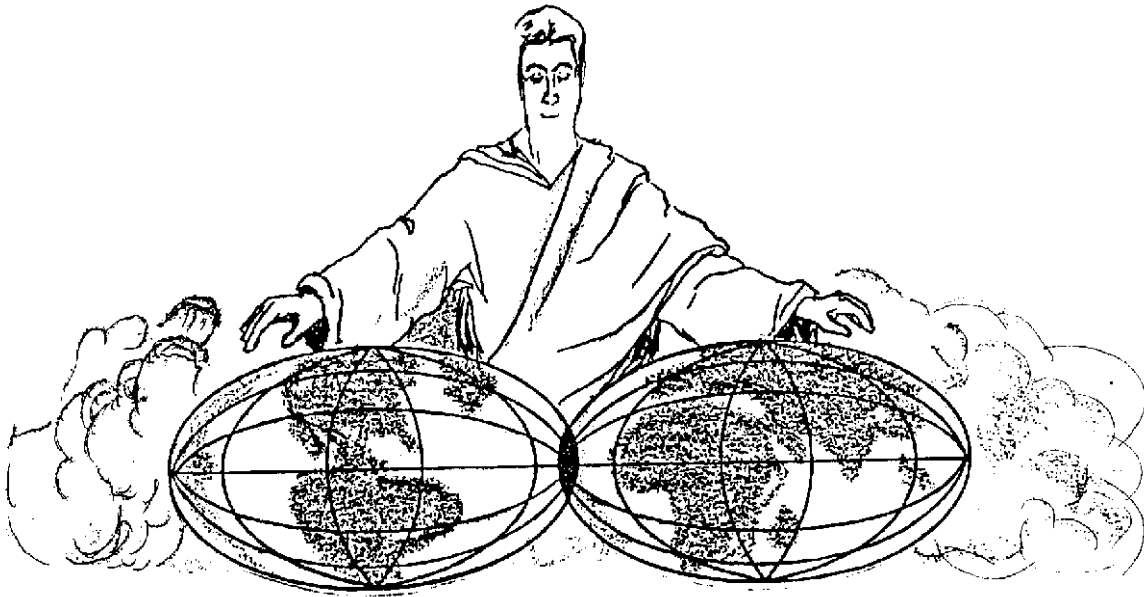
When the morning came, the old gentleman changed his mind concerning his answer to the boy's application.

"Who taught you to pray?" inquired Mr. Lanman.

"My mother, sir," was the soft reply. The rich, brown eyes grew moist.

[continued on page 20]

THE I AM



Brother David Watson

The Eternal One

God sent Moses to deliver the children of Israel from bondage. God remembered what He told Abraham, in Genesis, Chapter 15, when He made a covenant with him. God does not forget the promises that He makes to us. God is eternal; He is from everlasting to everlasting. He is God, and beside Him there is no other. There is no image like God; there is not a god created like God. The only way to understand God is for Him to be revealed to you that He is God. There is no god that can enter the mind of man in the place of the Eternal One. He is God, and He is the I AM. He reveals Himself as I AM, the Eternal One.

When John wrote the Book of Revelation, he was on the Isle of Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. He was suffering persecution and was thrown out as an outcast. The great I AM was there with him, watching over him, taking care of him, and speaking to him that "I AM THAT I AM." Christ said to John in Revelation 1:18, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Jesus said in Revelation 1:11, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and

unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

Before there was an alphabet, there was "I AM THAT I AM." The I AM that spoke to John said that "I am Alpha and Omega." Before time, He was "I AM THAT I AM." The farthest back that we can go is the beginning, in the Book of Genesis, but the I AM was before the beginning. He was with God, and He was God. He was not before or after, but He was totally equal with God. He is the Son of God revealed to us as the I AM.

In essence, God said to John, "While you are here, I must let you know that before there was a place called hell, there was I AM. Before there was death was "I AM THAT I

AM." In essence, Jesus said, "I have the keys to hell and death, I have stood on the sunny banks of deliverance. I will have you to know that I AM THAT I AM. I AM before death, and I AM before hell. I have all power, both in the Heaven and in earth. I AM the Creator of all things, both in Heaven and in earth. I AM THAT I AM."

Are you not glad that you have the intelligence and the understanding that you are serving a real God, the One from eternity to eternity, the One from the beginning to the end? He is the Eternal God! He is the One before hell, the One before death, the One from everlasting to everlasting. I thank God for the hope that He gives us for eternal salvation!

Worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth

In John, Chapter 4, you can read that the I AM spoke to a woman whom He met at the well. This woman of Samaria undoubtedly was so bad that the people would not let her draw water at Samaria, so she made her way to Jacob's well. It was there that she met a man who was a mystery to her. It was surprising to her that He would even speak to her, but she got in a conversation with the Man called Jesus, the great I AM.

John 4:21-26 reads: "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto

thee am he."

The conversation was about the location of worship, but she was speaking to the Eternal One, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As they talked, they spoke about Samaria, and they talked about old Jerusalem; Jesus made that connection. I do not know whether she understood the prophets and their teachings, but she knew that she was speaking to Someone who drew her into a conversation that was much different from what she had ever experienced.

Jesus revealed to her that He was the Messiah. He made the connection that the time would come when they would worship, neither in the mountains of Samaria nor in Jerusalem, but they would worship from the Cross of Calvary. That which was to take place at the Cross of Calvary with the great I AM would fix it for the whole world to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. That is happening in the new Jerusalem, not in the old Jerusalem and not in the mountains of Samaria. The I AM must be worshiped in Spirit and in Truth, not with false gods, not where the roses grow, not in the green trees, not with gods that are images of some sort or of some other religion. The Holy Spirit and Truth identify Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The Son of God identifies with the Father in the Godhead.

Jesus made such a connection with the woman at the well that she ran to town. In John 4:29 she said, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" He is that great I AM, He is the Eternal One, and He must be worshiped in Spirit and in Truth. What He did on the Cross of Calvary, in conquering death and holding the key to hell and giving victory over death through His name, was so that we could be resurrected to new life in Him and worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and He is from everlasting to everlasting.

The Living Bread

Jesus also taught in the Book of John that He is the Bread from Heaven. This was the message that was somewhat different from what the Jews understood. Those with whom He talked seemingly were offended by what He said, but He is the Eternal One. John 6:35-36 states: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not."

Jesus is the bread that is come down from Heaven. In the old tabernacle they had the golden pot and the manna had been placed in it as a remembrance. When they traveled in the wilderness, God gave them manna from heaven, or angels' food, if you please. Have you read in the Old Testament about the table and the shewbread that were in the tabernacle and how David and his men entered the tabernacle when they were hungry and did eat? I want to tell you, there is a new loaf of Bread, and that new loaf of Bread is the Son of God, the great I AM who came all the way from Heaven. The people who ate that bread in the wilderness are dead, but those who eat this Bread will live forever. This Bread has a resurrection in it. He has the power to resurrect you from dead works to serve the Living God, Jesus Christ, who is the great I AM, from everlasting to everlasting; He is the Eternal One.

When God's people were in captivity down in Babylon, God sent a message concerning those who hungered and thirsted and were being scattered and lost from God. God allowed the enemy to carry them into captivity because of their disobedience to Him. In Ezekiel, Chapter 4, the Lord told the Prophet Ezekiel to take human dung and cook a cake and eat it before the people, but Ezekiel begged and said, in so many words: "No, God. Nothing like that has ever touched my lips." Then God told him to take cow

dung and eat it before the children of Israel. Now, there are two lessons in this: whenever you are under a human being, you can eat man's teachings and beastly teachings. However, if you do not want to hunger and thirst, and if you want eternal life, you must eat the great I AM, the Bread from Heaven. You must eat that which has eternal life in it and that which will give you hope when your soul is in despair and raise you to life and give you the blessings of an Eternal God.

Jesus is the great I AM, and He will bless and enrich you. You will not hunger and thirst because the Bread is Living Bread, not dead bread; it is Living Bread, the great I AM, that you partake of daily. The great I AM said that you will not hunger or thirst. He said to eat this Bread that came down from Heaven. It is not an earthly bread fixed in kneading troughs as they did in Egypt. This Bread was prepared on high and sent to a hungry and thirsty world, a dry land where they had no hope in the wilderness.

Christ Is the Way

God schooled and taught mankind that there is only One who was on His way to the Cross of Calvary, and from the Cross, we could have the Bread that will stop the thirst and the hunger. He will take away the tears from your eyes. He will quench your thirst and lift your feet from the sinking sand to the Solid Rock. He will put a song in your soul and give you something worth living for; He will give you something solid to stand on. You will no longer have to hunger and live in a thirsty land, but you will live in a land where there are springs of Living Water. He is the great I AM, the Son of God. He is my I AM. Is He your I AM? He is the Eternal One; He is our Savior; He is our Messiah. Because He lives, you and I can live.

After Jesus washed His disciples' feet, He wanted to comfort their hearts. Something in His

words spoke to the soul of man. John 14:6 reads, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." When His disciples were troubled by His words concerning His going away, Jesus knew their hearts.

Jesus knew there was trouble, and in John 14:1-3 He said to them: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Jesus was not talking about going to Heaven and picking up a hammer and a handsaw and building mansions. He was talking about going to the Cross and preparing a place for us in the Father's house, the great Church of the Living God.

Jesus told them, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Why did Jesus tell the disciples these things beforehand? Jesus told them because there is only one way into the church. Jesus is that way. He is the door into the church. He is the I AM of the church.

In John 10:1 Jesus said, "He that . . . climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." He said, "I am the way." He is the only way into the church, and He is the truth of the church and the identity of the church. He is above all and through all. If you are a Christian, He is in you and you are in Christ, and Christ is in God.

Jesus is the light that came from Heaven. The I AM came to light the soul of mankind. If a soul is lit up, it must be lit up with the great I AM, with the Spirit, and with the light of God. When God lights your light, He will give you light so that you can see what you have never been able to see. He is the great I AM! He is the door. There is no other way to get into the church except through Jesus Christ.

I am keenly aware that we are living in a day when man thinks that water baptism will put you in the church. I am keenly aware that men think that they can open the door of the church and ask for a letter to be made members of the church. I want to tell you that this great I AM was before any letter, He was before any "a" in the alphabet, and He was before men even knew about water baptism. He is the Son of God.

When John baptized Jesus, he did not feel worthy to baptize Him, but it became Him to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus is the great I AM. He is the example by whom you and I have to come into the church. He is the way, the Truth, and the light. I am glad that the way was opened on the Cross of Calvary. I am glad that I found the way and that hope in Jesus Christ.

"The Word Was Made Flesh, and Dwelt Among Us"

Jesus did not come here by the will of man, but He came here by the will of the Father. We read in John 1:4, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." Men had never heard a man speak as Jesus did. He did not quote a rabbi or take up His subject after man; He took up His preaching from Heaven on high. He said that He was of the Father. The Father had sent Him, not to do His own will, but to do the will of God, who had sent Him. Some people said that if He would show them the Father, and it would suffice them; but He said that when they saw Him, they saw the Father. He is the light of mankind. They heard Him say things that they had never heard a man say. They had never heard a man teach as He did.

In Revelation, Chapter 5, John was weeping because there was a Book in the Father's hand, written within, and on the backside it was sealed with seven seals. No man, neither on earth nor in Heaven, was found worthy to take the Book and to loose the seals or to look thereon. One of the elders said to John,

"Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Revelation 5:5). Hebrews 10:7 states, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."

John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Verse 14 reads, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The Holy Ghost spoke to Mary in Matthew, Chapter 1, and said some things to her that she did not understand. However, there was one thing that she knew: He was coming to her, and He was to save His people from their sins.

Jesus is the way, the Truth, and the life, so the seed of the church must come His way to see the light. Jesus Christ is the great Eternal One, the I AM, the Son of the Living God. There is no other way to get into the church. Many people have tried to get in some other way since the Garden of Eden. They have tried it in every age. Men even tried to build a tower to go to Heaven, but they found that the I AM had more power. He confused their language so that they could not understand one another. He is the Eternal Lord God Almighty. The only way into God's kingdom is through Jesus Christ. When you come by Him, you will find life that you have never known before, power that you have never known before, and hope and light that will let you see where you have never seen before. It is all in Him, the Eternal One.

Are you glad that He is the Eternal One, the great I AM? I am glad that He came, I am glad that He spoke to me, I am glad that He gave me the Truth, and I am glad that He saved me and gave me hope in my soul. Are you glad for the hope that you have? Are you glad for the God that you know today?

The great I AM has sent a witness to your soul so that you can know that the only way is by the Spirit of the Son of God. In John 16:13 Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." Who? The great I AM. The Holy Ghost shows you the Truth and gives you an understanding in the Truth of Jesus Christ. What a blessing it is for the Holy Spirit to show you the great I AM.

The Resurrecting Power of Christ

I want to point out to you that in John, Chapter 11, Lazarus had passed away, and Mary and Martha were weeping over his death. Jesus came three days later. In verse 21 Martha said to Jesus, in so many words, "If You had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus told her that Lazarus would live again. She said that she knew he would live again at the last day. Jesus told her in verse 25, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Jesus told His disciples that Lazarus was asleep, and later He said that Lazarus was dead. Jesus knew that even if Lazarus was stinking, He could raise him up. I want you to know that if your sins are stinking, God is able to heal you and resurrect you to a new life in the Son of God. Mary and Martha took Jesus to the tomb, and when He got there, He told people to roll the stone away. He called Lazarus. Had He not called him by name, no doubt others in the grave would have gotten up, so He called Lazarus. Lazarus came hopping out of that tomb with his grave clothes on. In verse 44 Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go."

I want you to know that He is the resurrection; He is the power. When you are scattered, with no hope and no peace in your soul, I

want you to know that Christ's authority will turn you loose and put a hope in your soul and give you life beyond here; and that hope is in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.

In Ezekiel, Chapter 37, you can read that Israel was in a backslidden condition. They were walking around on their feet, but they were dead because they had no hope. They were in despair, disorganized, and scattered everywhere, so God spoke to Ezekiel. Ezekiel 37:1-4 reads: "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD." The Lord told Ezekiel to preach the Word. I want to tell you, if you get hope, you must get it through the Word.

Verse 7 continues, "So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone." Ezekiel went out and preached to that valley of dry bones. Those bones were very dry. They were dead, but when Ezekiel preached, the bones came together. I want you to know that when the I AM resurrects you, you will not get a strange bone; you will get your bones.

Ephesians 5:30 says, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." We are His bones, and He is the One to whom we connect. When the I AM resurrects you, you will not hook up to a strange god. You are going to be connected to the real I AM. You are going to have bone that is connected to His bone.

Ezekiel had a valley of corpses.

Then God told Ezekiel to tell the wind to blow. The wind began to blow, and in verse 10 you can read that they stood up as a mighty army for God. I want you to know that when the Spirit of God hits your soul after the Word of God has put you together, your bone to His bone, He will cover you. He will resurrect you and put His Spirit in you: the Spirit of the Eternal One. He will resurrect you and put a hope in your soul. You will no longer be dry, and you will quit rattling. You can be a part of the migh-

ty army for the Lord. God is able to do this through His Word. Your bone comes to His bone.

Did you know that, if you are saved, you are God's bone? You have been resurrected, and you are clothed with His Word. You have the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the great I AM, living within you.

Have you ever noticed that literally in March, every year, we have a windy month? It moves dead limbs and dead leaves, and it gives the trees a shaking. Last, it brings in the clouds, and the thunder rolls

and the lightning begins to flash, but there are young birds that begin to fly, and there is a hope of new life. I want you to know that it is the same way when the Word of God comes to your soul. The Holy Spirit will bring you together and fix your bone to His bone, and He will set you in your place in the great body of Jesus Christ. He will give you a hope in your soul. He is the great I AM. I thank God for the great I AM.

(Compact Disc TR-500E)

[A Gracious Invitation—contin. from p. 7]

death, hell, and the grave? He is set down at the right hand of God, interceding for His children. He gives His angels charge concerning you. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." He also promised not to let us be tempted more than

we are able to stand, but with every temptation to make a way for escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). Do you believe His Word? He is able to save to the uttermost all who will come to Him. He is just as able to keep you saved; only trust Him, this almighty, all-powerful God, the God that made Heaven and earth and all

that is therein. Oh, what a mighty God we serve! You are needed in the vineyard of the Lord. Will you not take your place and help us? Do not delay. Come while you may.

Selected

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

"And you will not forget your mother's counsels?"

"I cannot, for I know that my success in life is dependent upon them."

"My boy, you may stay here in my house, and very soon I will take you to my office."

Mr. Lanman lived to see the poor boy whom he had adopted rise step by step until he finally assumed the responsible office which the failing guardian could no longer hold. There is no man more honored and respected by his friends, and none more feared by gamblers and speculators in irre-

sponsible stock, than is the once poor wanderer who put God first in his life and who became president of the best managed and most productive railway in the United States.

Selected

The Way to Heaven

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. "

The way to Heaven is a high way, a holy way, a plain way, a safe way, and a happy way!

Zechariah 8:3 Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.

4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for

very age.

5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

6 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts.

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts;

Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country;

8 And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

Dwelling in a Holy Habitation



Brother Ryan O'Neil

Working Together in Unity

What a beautiful picture we see in our Scripture text of the church! There is safety and healing for people in the church, and God has brought all His saved to dwell together in this holy habitation. Acts 2:47 says that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." In the church we are dwelling together.

In Hebrews 12:22-23 we read: "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made

perfect."

Those who are saved are living together in this holy habitation. There should not be any more hatefulness, nastiness, lying, cursing, drinking, or smoking. All the saved live in this new Jerusalem and dwell within these city walls. If you are saved, you are in this new Jerusalem.

Living side by side is not always an easy thing to do. I love my wife dearly, but I do not always agree with her, and she does not always agree with me. Sometimes we have to come to a consensus on matters. When we first got married, we had different ideas about how to pay the bills, and even how to drive the car. When differences come along, we have found that we do not always

see everything exactly alike. However, the prevailing factor is love. I love my wife, so I did not kick her out and send her back home, and she did not kick me out and change the lock. We worked through our differences in love. She is a good wife. Thank the Lord!

In Psalm 133:1-3 David wrote: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

That precious ointment was a mixture of ointments, and it is symbolic of the unity that should be present when the gifts of the Spirit are working. It is pleasant, healing, and a help for those who dwell together in unity. I do not remember how many different types of oils they put together, but it was a holy anointing oil, and it was important that they put that oil together in the way that God showed them. When they had it all together, they anointed the priest with it. In Psalm 133 David said that brethren dwelling together in unity was like that. It is pleasant, and it smells good. All those things working together bring a positive experience.

The priesthood was not allowed to administer their office until they had been anointed with that oil. God does not accept worship when division and hatred and strife are in the heart. You cannot properly administer what God has called you to do if you have hatred, strife, and envy in your heart. God has ordained that we dwell together in unity. Does that mean we are going to see everything exactly alike? No, but we can work together with love in our hearts. We have to be careful that we allow love to be the ruling factor and work together so that we can have that precious anointing.

David likened unity to "the dew of Hermon." He was talking about Mount Hermon in Palestine. In that area the dew is very heavy. It runs down the mountain, taking minerals with it, which goes down into the valleys. It is such a rich, heavy dew that they say it is like rain. They have farms all around the base of that mountain because the rich minerals in the soil nourish the plants and cause them to flourish. Likewise, that is the way it is when brethren dwell together in unity. The heavy blessings come down, filled with richness, and it helps the trees of righteousness to flourish and grow. Brethren dwelling together in unity is refreshing and a life-giving source for all who come in contact with it. Even for the

sinner, it is refreshing.

David said in Psalm 133:3 that "the LORD commanded the blessing." When the brethren do not have envy, strife, hatred, and recognition of men and offices, then they can receive a blessing because the saints are dwelling in love and unity. Thank the Lord!

"The Unity of the Spirit"

The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 4:1-2: "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 long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." Sometimes that is not so easy, but it is necessary.

When I was still immature in my spiritual thinking, sometimes my former pastor would bring certain thoughts and I had to consider them for a while. I had to say, "Lord, You're going to have to help me with this." God showed me that if I would stick it out with love and endeavor to love my pastor as a brother and take what he had for me, then things would work out. God helped me to learn that lesson, and He helped me to grow spiritually.

Paul said that we need to forbear one another in love. He wrote in verse 3, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." There is a lot of talk about unity across the land. Since God has given me this burden, I have been reaching out to others. The Bible talks about "the unity of the Spirit." Ananias and Sapphira had unity, but it was not the unity of the Spirit, and look what happened to them! There is a proper unity and a proper way that God has prescribed for His people, and that is the unity of the Spirit. The unity of the Spirit is what we should be working for. People are working for some unity, but the unity of the Spirit is what we ought to be working for.

What does the Spirit want to

teach you and show you? First John 4:2-3 says: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

The first teaching is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. There is a movement in the world today that says Jesus was just another prophet. They tell people that He was just another man and that God is just in the mind. They say that God is just one of many gods. That is what some teachers teach in the schools.

You need to be careful that you do not accept the teaching that Jesus Christ was just another man and just another prophet. They say that He is no better than Buddha or some other men who have walked the land. Friend, that teaching is of the devil. We must first believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This is very important. If you do not believe that, then you are missing the whole picture of salvation.

Titus 2:11-12 states: "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." We must believe on Jesus, and we must live the life of holiness, righteousness, and godliness right in this present world. God's Word teaches us these things.

"Walk in the Spirit"

When you first got saved, did you know everything? No, you did not. When I got saved, I did not know everything. I had a lot of learning to do, but God was faithful to me. As I go along, the Spirit teaches me more. He said He would guide us into all Truth. As He teaches me more, I must learn to be more humble and to take the teaching that He gives me. He is teaching me how

to live in this present world.

Paul wrote in Galatians 5:16-18: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

I want you to notice what Paul said in the following verses. Verses 19-21 tell you the things that will come in when you do not allow the Spirit to teach, lead, and guide you: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

There is much talk of unity and of being led by the Spirit, but when the works of the flesh are being manifested, God is not leading, because the Spirit will not teach you to manifest the works of the flesh. The Spirit teaches that those things are wrong. If you are committing adultery, if you are taken up with lasciviousness, or if you are taken up with variance, drunkenness, and revellings, you are not being led by the Spirit of God. Your heart needs to be changed.

In Galatians 5:22-23 Paul said: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." When we are working for unity in the right way, these are the things that will be produced. The fruit of the Spirit will produce the unity of the Spirit.

Are you producing unity? What are the results? What are you producing? Husbands and wives need to be in unity in the home. They need to work together in the home.

What is produced when you work together? You can challenge yourself with that. Saints in a local congregation need to be in unity, working together. Are you producing strife, hatred, variance, and division or the unity of the Spirit? You must be careful that you are working for the unity of the Spirit.

Endeavoring to Keep the Unity of the Spirit

The Greek word for *unity* basically means working together as one. Having the unity of the Spirit is important because the world is looking on. If they see something other than the fruit of the Spirit, they will notice. You need to have the fruit of the Spirit working in you. God wants to use you for His glory, but if you are not producing the fruit of the Spirit, He cannot use you. Again, Ephesians 4:3 says, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." That lets you know that sometimes it will take some effort on your part to keep the unity of the Spirit. It is going to take some forbearance and love and working together.

Different cultures do not always come together easily. I will use my wife and me as an example. She was from the city and I was from the country. When we got married, we moved to a small town, and the grain elevator was right across the street from us. That was country living for her, but to me that was living in town. It was quite a culture shock for her. Quite a few things were different for her. We had to learn how to work together with our different upbringings, but God helped us with that. Thank the Lord! We are to strive for unity.

God gave the body gifts. The gifts are for the edification of the body. When God sends His blessings and the unity of the Spirit is working, then all those gifts for the body bless and edify the body of Christ. That is what is important, because there are people who are hurting. There are people who need

God. There are people going through hard trials and hard battles. There are people who do not know what direction to turn. If we can show them the fruit of the Spirit working among us—that love and long-suffering—God can send the healing and the help for those who need it. We must have forbearance and love to be effective for Christ.

You must have the attitude that you are willing to get things worked out with the one across the aisle that you struggle to get along with. In the home, the husband, the wife, and the children ought to be willing to work together and work out problems. The brethren ought to be willing to get things out of the way, such as carrying grudges, having wrong attitudes, and talking about one another. Again, David wrote in Psalm 133:1, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

Ephesians 4:11-12 says: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints [not for the tearing down of the body, but for the perfecting of the saints], for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." This is what the gifts are for. The only way these gifts can work in their fullness is when we all work together in unity and in love. May God help us to keep the right attitude and to have the right disposition to work in the body of Christ. We have a great calling.

Perfecting the Saints

Knowing what we have to do, should we not look at this in a correct way? Every day souls are passing into eternity. Every day souls die lost, and if we do not show the love of God and the fruit of the Spirit to them, we will never be able to win them. We need to look at this in a serious way. If someone on one side of the aisle cannot get along with a person on the other side of the aisle, what message is being sent

to the world? If a husband and a wife cannot get along in the home, what is that telling the children they are raising? If two brethren cannot get along, what does that tell those across the country who might hear about it? That does not leave something behind that is refreshing; it leaves something behind that is hurtful. It does not attract, but it detracts from what God has called the church to do.

Ephesians 4:12-13 reads: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." I would hope that you would have long-suffering and patience with me if I do not understand something, and I would hope that I would have long-suffering and patience with you if you do not understand something. God is my helper, and He has taught me these things.

I worked at a factory, and we had some good bosses and some bad bosses. A good boss will take time to teach, to listen, and to help an employee to understand something. He will be kind. A bad boss will yell and scream and curse at others. I have heard of some bosses who would smack an employee on the back of the head. Who gets the best work out of the people? It is the good boss.

We need to have understanding, patience, kindness, gentleness, and be willing to teach. We ought to be willing to help people to come along in the way that they need to. Parent, you are to raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We live in a society where many homes have been broken. Many children are being raised without any kind of godly instruction, and we are seeing the results of it in our society. Parent, you need to be gentle and patient with your children as you teach them. You should not yell and scream at them, beat them, or kick them around; that is wrong.

You need to teach them gently and patiently.

Paul said in Colossians 3:19 states, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." Verse 18 reads, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." The husband and the wife need to work with each other in the way that God would have them to. We need to keep the unity of the Spirit, beginning in the home and then in the church; then God will help us to see healing and other help among us.

People are going to come in from the world, perhaps even some people who have never darkened the door of a church. Some people have no clue what church is about. Some people do not know how to dress modestly. Others have never opened a Bible. Some people do not know anything about God. Maybe they have attended a funeral or a wedding. We need to have patience and love and long-suffering with people.

"That They May Be One"

God has given the church a work to do. In our society it is going to be hard work to help people to come to the knowledge of the Truth, but we need to have patience and love. God has called us to be a peculiar people. We are different from the world. We are a special people. God has set us aside to work for Him. We must endeavor to keep unity in the body of Christ.

The gifts that God has given are not for your own promotion, but for the edification and the unification of the body of Christ. If God gives you a gift, you should give Him thanks and use it in the way that He would have you to use it. There are lots of talented people that God has blessed, and those talents should be used for God.

Unity and fellowship go hand in hand. Basically, unity is the mental and spiritual working and acknowledging of the same purpose. We should be working for the same

purpose. Fellowship is when unity is physically put into practice, such as worship and working together. I thank the Lord for fellowship and unity!

First John 1:6-7 states: "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." I thank the Lord for salvation that has cleansed me from all sin! I thank the Lord that He has given me a mind to work for the unity of the Spirit. I am thankful for those who have the same desire and the same burden.

Saint, if you do not have a desire and a burden for the unity of the Spirit, your home will not have it, your Sunday school class will not have it, and your congregation will not have it. How are men going to know that we are His disciples? They will know by the love we have for one another. May God help us all to show that love and to put it into practice. Also, we must put forbearance and patience into practice and work with one another.

You can always find an excuse not to work with somebody. It is easier to find an excuse for not putting forth the effort. The devil may say, "Just ignore your wife." Sometimes that would be the easier way to go, but I know it is not the right way to go. Sometimes it would be easier for my wife to ignore me, but love calls her to do something different. Love calls us to be patient and to work with one another. One discussion may not get it taken care of. At times it takes two or three discussions to come to the place where we can work together in a right manner. May God help us as saints to learn that lesson. We need to learn how to work with one another and to have love, long-suffering, and patience with one another. There is a purpose for unity. It is so that the world can be won to Jesus Christ. That is the goal.

Can you imagine how wonder-

ful it would be if half of the United States would turn to Jesus? What a difference that would make! The police forces could probably be reduced to half. Can you imagine the difference it would make in the divorce rate in our country? Can you imagine how empty the prisons would be? Can you imagine how broke the drug dealers and the bartenders would be? Let us keep our focus on the right thing and work for the unity of the Spirit.

We want to see our loved ones, our neighbors, our friends, and our co-workers saved. If all you can do is go to church and fuss and fight with others, something is wrong. What kind of testimony are you leaving to the world?

John 17:21-23 says: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be

one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." May God help you to carry a correct burden, so that you can learn to put yourself aside and work for the unity of the Spirit.

Do you have someone at church across the aisle or in your home that you need to work with for the unity of the Spirit? I challenge you to seriously consider what God would have you to do. Would He direct you to apologize to someone? You may say, "I could never apologize to that person." You need to check with God to see what you should do.

You may say, "You don't know what that person has done to me." Jesus gave us an example of how we should live, of how we should work with one another, and of how we should treat one another. What did He do to those who crucified Him? What did He do to those who spit

on Him, plucked His beard, beat him, and shoved the crown of thorns on His head? He humbled Himself and forgave them.

You may say, "But that person ran me down, destroyed my reputation, and ruined my name in the congregation." You must forgive, and you must carry on in the way that God would have you to. Sometimes God may allow you to go through some things so that you can be a testimony and help people to see the way a Christian should live and act.

Do you have something that needs to be taken care of? Are you working for disunity instead of unity? Are you working for your own way instead of God's way? Are you trying to get people to recognize you instead of recognizing God? If so, you need to be humble and allow God to work through you. May God bless you.

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[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

leanness in one's love for God. Yielding to the temptation of wanting to look like the world in dress or in action can result in love becoming indifferent or turning cold. God wants His people to look and dress clean and modestly but to avoid the worldly ways and fashions.

Materialism is another robber of love from the heart. This condition causes individuals to become discontent with their station in life. It will cause people to seek earthly riches instead of heavenly treasures. Materialism finds people seeking for more worldly possessions and greater financial wealth. It leaves them in a condition of never being satisfied with what God has provided. They feel they need to strive to keep up with the neighbors.

Oftentimes this spirit and attitude finds a person having to

work two jobs to make ends meet. Many mothers leave the home to go out and work just so they can have more material goods. There have been times when individuals have left spiritual congregations, where their souls were fed on sound doctrine, for better paying jobs or promotions. The love that God has once placed in the heart can become indifferent toward the things of God. If this is allowed, love will suffer and one's relationship with God will begin to wane. Every child of God must be careful and continually guard against the various devilish intrusions.

In John 15:10 Jesus said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." The secret to successful Christian living is constantly abiding in Him. Jesus stated in John 8:29, "I do always those things that please him." We

must also do the things that please the Lord by striving earnestly to follow His example in all things. Keeping love fervently burning in the heart is the key to abiding in Christ. Obedience to His Word will keep us close to the Master.

In John 14:15 we read these words from the Savior: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." In 1 John 5:3 we read, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." We prove the love that He so richly gave us is yet working when we continually obey His words.

Selected

If you want an increase of Christ, there must first be a decrease of self.

Two Ways of Seeing

The appearance that things have to us depends, to a great extent, upon the way that we look at them. Sometimes our mental attitude toward them is largely responsible for their appearance. Often two or more persons look at the same thing, and each one sees something quite different from what others see. Persons who see the same thing will often have very different stories to tell about it afterwards and will be very differently affected by what they see. This is not because their eyes differ so much, but because their attitude affects the interpretation of what they see.

A notable example of this is seen in the twelve spies sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan. The Israelites had crossed the Red Sea. Their enemies had been destroyed behind them. They had come at God's command almost to the borders of the Promised Land. Here the people camped while the spies went to see the country. They passed through it and viewed the land and the people, and presently came back with their report. It was a wonderful land, they agreed, a land flowing with milk and honey. The samples of the fruit they brought back were large and fine specimens. Of course, the people were at once very eager to possess such a land, but the question came up, "Are we able to do so?" What kind of people are they over there? Are they good fighters? Are they courageous? Do they have strongly fortified cities? As soon as this question was broached, there was a difference of opinion. Caleb said, "Let us go up at once, and pos-

sess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Number 13:30). The others, however, did not agree with him, except Joshua. They said, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. . . . and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (verses 31-33).

Now, what made the difference in their views? They all saw the same things; they all saw the same people; but when it came to telling of them, they told very different stories. The difference must have lain in the men themselves. When the ten saw those sons of Anak, they felt that they were as grasshoppers in comparison with such giants. "Why, we amount to nothing at all," the ten spies thought. "Those great big fellows could walk right over us." When they recalled their sensations, the land did not seem so fine either, and they said, "It is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof." They did not stop to consider that their own words condemned them. How could a land be such a bad land and yet the people who lived in it be so strong and so great?

Joshua and Caleb, however, were not to be frightened by the stories that the others told. So they said, "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land" (Numbers 14:7). They also held fast their confidence in the ability of Israel to gain the land

saying, "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not" (verses 8-9).

Now, all these men were probably honest. They probably described things just as these appeared to them. What was the difference? The difference was not in their eyes, but in that which was back of their eyes. When the ten went through the land and saw the giants, they forgot all about God. It was themselves against the giants, with God left out; and when we leave God out, things look very different. How big those giants looked! "We poor grasshoppers had better be getting out of here quickly. We do not stand any show at all," they thought. "How could Israel fight with such fellows, anyway?" The ten were full of doubts, and they looked through their doubts, and their doubts magnified the Anakim.

Caleb and Joshua had no doubts. They had faith in God—faith that did not waver. They remembered the Red Sea. They remembered the manna from heaven. They remembered the other things that God had done. They looked at the situation through their faith. Instead of feeling as if they were grasshoppers, they felt themselves more than a match for the giants. The two were not at all frightened. "Why," they said, in effect, when they came back, "they will be only

bread for us, We shall just eat them up. They have heard what God has done among us, and they are too scared to fight. Their defense is departed from them." Then these men of faith began talking about the other side. "The Lord is with us; fear them not. What do those fellows amount to, since God is not with them? What do their fortresses amount to? Let us go up at once," said they. "Why, we can whip them with ease."

The people listened to both sides, and their ears heard; but instead of listening through their faith to Joshua and Caleb, they listened through their doubts to the ten and believe them and became very much frightened. In consequence, they went to murmuring and complaining because Moses had brought them out there to face such a situation. The result was that they were turned back, defeated by their enemies, and had to wander forty years in the wilderness until all the older ones perished.

Now, that is just the difference between faith and doubts. Looking back from the present time, we can easily believe that God would have conquered the land before them. Yes, we can believe that. We can see how foolish it was for them to turn back and to be afraid and to murmur. That all looks very plain to us now. We say, "How foolish and how

full of unbelief they were!" The question is, Are we doing any better than they did? When we look at the obstacles in our way, when we look at the troubles that seem to be coming, when we look at the things that are before us, do we look through faith, like Caleb and Joshua, or do we look through doubts, like the ten? Do your trials and difficulties make you feel like a grasshopper? Does it seem that you would surely be overwhelmed? Does it look as though you could never get through, that you might as well give up? If so, you are looking at things through your doubts, just as the ten did.

The people who are victorious are those who look at things through their faith. They do not compare their troubles and trials and difficulties with themselves; they compare these with God. They behold God's greatness. They behold the things that He has done in the past. They see how He has helped others. They see that they have been helped in the past, that God has stood right by them and helped them through. They get their faith and their eyes working together, and then they can see a way out of their difficulties, just as Caleb did. "They shall be bread for us," faith says. "No use to be afraid. Giants don't count. What is a giant beside God?" Doubts say, "Oh, what shall we do?" Faith takes

a new grip on its sword and says, "Come on, let's go and conquer them."

Your eyes are all right. They will see things all right, but the question is, What is behind your eyes—doubts or faith? This is the thing that really counts. Doubts will magnify your troubles and will make them look great. Doubts will make your power look very small. They will make your ability to fight look as nothing. They will make you feel like running or surrendering. Faith will not work that way. It will fill you with courage. It will put the song of victory in your heart. Get faith behind your eyes. Look out by faith. Remember that God will fight your battles. Be strong and of a good courage, and you will overcome your foes. Doubts will spoil things for you. Doubts will take away what courage you have. Doubts will ruin you if you let them. So get rid of the doubts. Look to God, believe in Him, trust in Him, and the victory will be yours. Take your stand with Caleb and Joshua. Do you remember what became of the spies? The ten doubters died in the wilderness, and their bodies were left there; but the two who had faith went on into the Promised Land and died full of years and of honors.

C. W. Naylor

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