The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION — SANCTIFICATION — UNITY & TRUTH

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

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

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 43 June 2013 No. 6

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?"

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PRAYER: If you need prayer, please phone or write:

Roger Decker, Pastor
83 Decrow Ave.
Newark, OH 43055

Email: pastor@godsacres.us
Phone: 740-344-2543 or 1-888-730-0461
Fax: 740-344-4737
Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312

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

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

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Vol. 43 June 2013 No. 6

Guest Editorial

"Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth."

Psalm 26:8

Spring Camp Meeting Time

Another year has rolled around and it is time again for the saints to gather in for camp meeting. This is always a delightful time when the people of God come to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Pastor Roger Decker extends a warm welcome to each of you to join us for eight days of feasting on the Word of God. This time of fellowship begins Sunday, June 16, 2013, at God's Acres. With anticipation we look forward to another time of refreshing. As the world becomes more wicked each day, we need these spiritually uplifting times of encouragement. It is a great blessing to sit in an atmosphere that is not polluted with ungodliness, a place where God's Holy Spirit can move about freely. Great things are in store for us all in just a couple of weeks.

All the preparations have been made for your visit. Brothers and sisters have been busy scrubbing and cleaning the tabernacle, the dining hall, and the dormitories. Others have been actively engaged in mowing, pruning the shrubs, and planting flowers. Much work is being put forth to have things ready for you, but we desire that your stay will be memorable.

The external appearance of the buildings and the grounds is important, but the most vital part of the meeting is having God's presence in our midst. Hearing the unadulterated Word of God preached is of the utmost necessity. It is through the sounding forth of the Gospel that souls in sin can be redeemed from bondage. As the Truth is proclaimed, saints are challenged and built up in the most holy faith.

Various ministers will be coming in and bringing us the wonderful Word of Life that will benefit our souls and enrich our lives. If the Holy Ghost has His way, every need will be supplied, whether it is for salvation of the soul, encouragement to the heart, or the healing of the physical body. God is interested in the whole man, and He is ready to send help to each individual who will turn to Him in surrender and faith.

We are looking forward to experiencing another wonderful time in the Lord. The Lord will always have many good things in store for those who will put forth the effort to be at the camp meeting. Being together with the saints and being blessed by other testimonies of victories is always uplifting. You can be assured that the meeting will not be a disappointment to you.

Finally, if you have not already done so, now would be a good time to begin praying for the meeting. God knows about each of us, and He knows just what we stand in need of. God desires that we be in the meeting so that He can talk to us and instruct us in greater ways for us to mature spiritually.

We are living in perilous times, and God's people need to be taught how to stand firm victoriously. As the national

[continued on page 15]

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)
3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

What a Good Father Is

Brother Roger L. Decker

Fatherly Attributes

I read a story that is very interesting. It says: "In a meeting in Illinois, a man by the name of Gipsy Smith (Rodney 'Gipsy' Smith) was going to be the guest speaker. All of those who were present in that meeting were men. When the moment arrived, he lifted his well-worn Bible and asked the question, 'How many of you men can recall a saintly mother and father who loved this Book, who read it, who lived it, and who instilled it into your hearts?' Most of the men there had moist eyes and raised their hands. Then Gipsy asked this question: 'With all that influence, how many of you are so living that your children will remember you for your faithfulness to the same Book?' Not one hand was raised."

Today many people have drifted away from God's Word. You may recall a saintly grandfather, grandmother, father, or mother. Perhaps you can picture your loved one in your mind sitting in a rocker or sitting at a table reading God's Word. As the next generation, now we have moved into those positions. Will your children remember the same thing about you, that you loved God's Word? Have you allowed God's Word to influence you? Is God's Word the apex of your life?

In the month of June a day has been set aside by the world to honor fathers, and we would also like to pay tribute to them. The world has an opinion of what a good father is, but God has His opinion of what a good father is. We only need to take one of these opinions seriously, and that is God's. We must accept God's opinion of what a good father is. The reason is that the world's opinion will vary, but God's opinion is true for all generations.

One person said this: "The definition of a father is this: it is a man who carries photographs where his money used to be." Another man who expressed his opinion of what an ideal father is told this little story: "A father of five purchased a toy for his children, and then he called all the children together and asked, 'Which one of you should have this toy?' Then he asked: 'Who is the most obedient among you? Who never talks back to his mother? Who does everything she says?' All at once, he heard five small voices answer in unison, 'You play with it, Daddy.'"

The world feels that if a father does certain things, he is classified

as a really good father. One is, providing for his family, and that is Bible. A husband should do that. Another is, having a good job and providing lots of material goods for his family. Also, the world says a father should be a member of a church, should take his children to Sunday school, should be involved in social and religious activities, and should make sure his children get opportunities to be involved in sports. The trouble is, the world does not go far enough. Though some of these attributes are good, there is one that the world does not mention that is head and shoulders above all the other attributes: all fathers need to be saved, or born again.

As a father, you might do all the things that the world would praise a father for, but if you are not saved, there is really nothing your family has for a foundation or for a future generation. Not every father pleases God. For quite a few years, before I was saved, I was a father, but I was not a father who pleased God.

The word *father* in the Greek means, "a nourisher, a protector, and an upholder." If you study the Word of God, you will find that a Hebrew father was known for respect, reverence, and affection. Also, he was considered to be the head of his home.

A godly father loves his family, and he loves God even more. God is the apex of his life. He loves God supremely, and he shows his love for God through obedience to Him. Moreover, he is concerned that his family obeys the same God that he obeys. He takes the family to Sunday school. Some people may not think Sunday school is important, but it is a function of the church. Many parents *tell* their children to go to Sunday school, but I believe that God wants parents to *take* their children to Sunday school.

You may say, "My children can take it or leave it when it comes to attending Sunday school." Is that what you do with your children regarding school attendance? Is that the attitude you have in all areas of their lives? No, you emphasize some things. You demand your children to do some things.

When we were raising our five children, they did not have a choice about whether or not they wanted to go to church or Sunday school. God expects a father to rule his own home. Being a father takes more than just being there and being a provider. Being a father means that you have to instruct and carry out discipline in the home. He shows his children how to worship their Heavenly Father. He also leads worship in the home. If you are a father, have your children ever seen you pray or do you just tell them to pray? Can your children say that you really love God? Can your children say, "God is first in my father's life"?

Old Testament Examples

Let us look into God's Word to see what the Bible says about fathers. First, we will consider Abraham. He is a good example. We read in Genesis, Chapter 18, that three angels appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre. They presented to Abraham and Sarah the news of having a child in their old age. Verse 16 says, "And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way."

The judgment that awaited Sodom then came into the picture. Verse 17 reads, "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do." This verse lets us know that the Lord had confidence in Abraham, and He revealed the destiny of Sodom and Gomorrah to him. There was a reason for His doing so, and that was Abraham's obedience. Abraham believed God and obeyed Him. He willingly forsook all and obeyed the commands and the promises of the Lord. Abraham loved God supremely, and he proved that in the land of Moriah when he offered up his son as a sacrifice in obedience to God.

We read in Genesis 18:19, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment." Can God say the same about you as He did Abraham, that you will command your children and your household to keep the way of the Lord and to do justice and judgment?

Awful judgments came upon Sodom and the antediluvian world. These examples are warnings to the entire human race. What is the warning? God sees all, and at times even God's patience reaches a limit. God can be provoked to the place where, once judgment is pronounced, there is no changing His mind.

Numbers 14:22-23 states: "Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it."

Psalm 78:43-55 says this: "How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan: And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink. He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.

"He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them. He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham: But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. And he led

them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.

"He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents." We read how God placed judgment on the enemies of Israel. You need to be careful of speaking against a child of God. Those verses show how God brought judgment on His enemies.

Next, God got angry and turned the judgment on His own people because they were unfaithful. Verses 56-60 read: "Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies: But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men." Provoking God's wrath is very dangerous.

A Husband's Rightful Place in the Home

A true father loves God supremely. God is first in his life. A godly father knows that if he amounts to anything at all, it is due to God's grace and power. A father is the head of his household. A man named Gregory Slayton wrote a best-selling book, and he was a former United States diplomat. He said this about fathers: "Children who grow up without fathers are two or three times more likely to become high school dropouts, abuse drugs, fail to gain long-term employment, commit suicide, and have children out of wedlock."

God has established a form of government in the home, and if it is followed the way God wants it to be, there will be harmony and contentment in the home. That is not to say that a husband and a wife will not have disagreements. Someone once said, "Once you disagree, the making up is so much better."

The husband and the wife can be very different in their personalities. One might be an introvert and the other one an extravert. One might be outspoken and the other may not be, but God can hold them together through salvation, through His Holy Spirit.

A lesbian relationship (two women together) is sinful, degrading, lustful, and perverted. The same is true of two men in a homosexual relationship. There needs to be both a man and a woman in the home. God ordained marriage to be this way from the beginning. Gays and lesbians act as if they know more about raising a family than God does, but they are willfully ignorant. What if the parents of gays and lesbians felt the same way?

First Corinthians 11:3 says, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." This does not mean that the man is just the head of his wife. It says the man is the head of the woman. As long as a woman is in a man's home, she is under his authority; he is still the head over that woman. That goes for teenage daughters who might even be engaged. She is not married yet, and as long as she is still in the home, the head of that home is her head. Now, that may be very difficult for you to swallow, especially in a feminist world, but God never ordained feminism. It came out of the minds of worldly people.

Ephesians 5:23 says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." Let us go back to creation. We read in Genesis 3:16, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." I read a story of a young man whose wife was in delivery, and he was pacing the floor. He was perspiring and fretting over his wife. Soon the nurse came out and said, "It's a girl!" He said, "Thank God, she won't have to go through what I just went through!"

A wife needs a husband to take his rightful place as the head of the home, a man who will make the hard decisions in the home, a man who loves his wife. She needs a man who makes a good living, who supplies all their earthly needs, and who takes his place spiritually. If he sees anyone in his family starting to get lean spiritually, he should speak up, encourage, nourish, and assist. He ought to keep his spirituality illuminated in the home. That is a real man!

Godly Leadership in the Home

The world's idea of a successful man is one who has a high-paying job and who can give his family anything they want, but God's opinion of a successful man is one who takes leadership in the home, not only physically but also spiritually. Father's have a great responsibility.

The Bible says that a man is to be the provider of his own house. First Timothy 5:8 states: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." That is very strong. Some fathers are not living up to the role in which God has placed them. Sad to say, some fathers do not want to live for God. Oh, they like the fact that their family does, but they themselves do not want to.

Some fathers are more interested in their children receiving scholarships for their athletic abilities and their academic achievements. They are not interested in wanting their children to excel spiritually. Some fathers set the wrong example before their children by being caught up in the habits of life. They do not

want their children to smoke or drink alcohol, but they do. They want their children to go to Sunday school and church, but they will not go. God wants fathers to be good examples to their children.

God said He knew that Abraham would command his children and his household and that he would raise his children the right way. A father has many things to teach his children. He can teach his sons how to fix things, how to build things, and how to do many useful things for young men as they grow older and enter society; but he must also teach them spiritual things. He should teach his children how to pray and how to read and study the Word of God. How does a father teach them? He teaches his children by reading and studying the Bible himself, by praying himself, and by being a good role model in the home.

Proverbs 6:16-19 lists some terrible sins that have overtaken the lives of many people. Verse 20 warns, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother." The greatest teaching against these horrible sins is what children learn growing up with godly parents in the home. When they grow up and go out on their own, they should have learned some things in the home. They should have learned how to handle themselves out in the sinful world. They should have learned that without God they are not going to make it.

Children should be taught against pride, lying, running to evil, and causing trouble with their brothers. Also, children should be taught how to tithe, by giving 10 percent to God. Why? It will help them in the future, and God will bless their lives. Fathers have a great influence in the home.

The Apostle Paul tells of some things that a husband should and should not do. Colossians 3:19 says, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." A husband is to delight in his wife and cherish her as Christ does the church, provide support and comfort for her, and protect her as the weaker vessel. Young lady, do you want to get a husband? Then you need to act like the weaker vessel.

A husband should not smack the wife around, abuse her with bitter words, sour looks, and harsh actions. He should not treat her as though she is a slave and not a companion. The husband should seek her spiritual good, because she is an heir with him of the grace of God. The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.

Colossians 3:21 reads, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." A father should not abuse his authority over his children by exercising too much severity in words or in deeds. Some parents spoil their children by being too lenient, while others discourage them with unwise severities. Some parents use bitter words, unreasonable commands, and immoderate correction. Parents are to behave lovingly to their children, and at the same time, maintain their just authority over them, "lest they be discouraged," or lose heart. If their spirit is broken, they become depressed, brooding, and careless.

God was impressed with Abraham. He knew that Abraham would be faithful in commanding his household. As a father, does God know that you will be faithful, as Abraham was, in commanding your household? Can God depend on you? Can God count on you to be faithful and obedient to the Truth? Can He depend on you to instruct your family and show them the way they need to go to be successful for Him in this life?

Are you a father who has been born again? Are you a father who is walking in all the light that God has revealed to you? Only you can answer these questions. Are you one on whom God can count to command your children? Are you one on whom God can count to raise your family to be the most spiritual family they can possibly be? Can God count on you? If not, He wants you to be that kind of father. God really wants to help you.

The world has quite a program, and you can get caught up in the world's program and lay God aside. God wants to bring you back to the place where He has confidence in you so that you will do what you are suppose to do in your journey here on this earth. As a husband and father, God wants you to love your wife, raise your family to know Him, encourage your family, provide for them, be there for them, and be just what God expects you to be. When you do those things, you will have harmony and contentment in the home.

(Compact Disc TR-998M)

Prayer and a family altar in the home will keep more kids off the streets at night than the strictest curfew.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Brother E. David Stegmeier

God Is in Control

We are living in a day of uncertainty. It is a time when people do not really know what is going to happen from one moment to the next. We need to realize that God is in control. His hand of providence and protection is over His people. God is true. Not one person can say that God has failed him or her. God cannot and will not fail.

I want you to read a few Scriptures that give us such beautiful assurance and comfort in knowing that God is in control. In Psalm 34:7 David wrote, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." What a beautiful promise! In Psalm 56:9-11 the Psalmist wrote: "When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me. [What wonderful information and knowledge to have! If God is for us, who can be against us? If we please anyone, it ought to be God.] In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word. In God have I put my trust: [In whom are you trusting, in yourself or in God? You are safe in putting your trust in Him.] I will not be afraid what man can do unto me." Isaiah 54:17 is another beautiful Scripture of consolation: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."

Our lesson is taken from the Book of Esther. I want to give you a brief synopsis of what the Book of Esther is about. I think most Bible students understand the drama that we find in this book. First of all, the king of Persia gave a great feast to display his royalty. He invited his queen to that great feast. He was proud of Queen Vashti, and he wanted her to come in to show his princes her beauty. However, she was insolent and refused to attend. This concerned not only the king but also others, because they were very concerned that their wives might follow her example and become insolent and disobey their husbands' commands rather than obey them.

We see some of that today. Several years ago a young lady said: "I'd like to have you perform our marriage ceremony, but I want to ask you a question first. In the marriage vows that you use, does it say that I am to love, honor, and *obey* my

husband?"

I said, "Yes, it does."

She said, "Well, then I'm going to find somebody else to perform the ceremony."

I said: "I want to tell you what God requires of your husband." So I talked to her about the husband's responsibilities, how he is to love, honor, cherish, and take care of his wife as he would care for his own flesh. If the husband is what he ought to be, the wife will have no problem submitting to him. There are two parts to the marriage agreement.

"Well," she said, "I'll reconsider."

Queen Vashti decided she was not going to appear, so the king decided to have a beauty pageant to find someone to replace her as queen. Through that beauty pageant, the king chose Esther, a Jewish woman. She was very beautiful. Her cousin Mordecai counseled her not to reveal her identity as a Jew, so she honored his request. She was chosen to be the succeeding queen. Those days were rather difficult for the Jews. We are living in a difficult time also. A perilous time is upon us, and we need to do our very best for God. The central thread that is woven throughout the Book of Esther is that God is in control. His Word will stand forever. It is a losing cause to try to thwart the plans of God or the progress of His work. To do so would be to fight a losing battle.

Praying and Leaving the Results to God

Esther accepted her position as queen, but it was not long until a wicked man by the name of Haman was promoted to be the head of the princes. Mordecai chose not to bow down to Haman, that wicked, demon-possessed man. That infuriated Haman, so he thought, "I'm going to get even with Mordecai and take revenge." He concocted a plan whereby he would annihilate all the Jews. The king signed a decree that on a certain date people were to destroy all the Jews. However, God was still on His throne. He never sleeps. He is always awake, and He is cognizant of what is going on every moment of every day. I find great comfort and consolation in that, do you?

Haman thought he had his plan all sealed up. Through the advice of his evil wife, he built a seventy-five-foot scaffold on which he planned to hang Mordecai. Haman's wife stirred him up, and she helped with the plan. In essence, she said, "Build that scaffold seventy-five feet high and put Mordecai on display. We'll hang him." Her plan backfired in the end, and Haman was hung on the scaffold that he had built for Mordecai.

Esther played a vital part in this drama. Mordecai said, in so many words, "Do not think that you are going to escape this evil just because you are in the palace. You are not going to be protected. Remember, you are also a Jew." Mordecai knew that God was able to send help from somewhere. The theme of the entire Book of Esther, found in Esther 4:14, is this: Mordecai said to Esther, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Every one of us needs to be our best for God. If there was ever a time when we should be awake and alert, it is today.

Esther said they needed to have a time of prayer and fasting. Prayer is necessary to get God's direction and His help. Fasting is also a discipline that we can add to prayer. In essence, Esther said, "I cannot go in to the king without being called or I could be put to death. I cannot do this on my own. We must fast and pray and get help from God." To paraphrase it, she said to Mordecai: "You fast and pray, and I shall also, and then I will go to the king. If he holds out his royal scepter to me, I will know that he has accepted me." So they fasted and prayed, and Esther did as she said she would do. Oh, the immortal words that she uttered before she went in to the king. She said: "If I perish, I perish." In other words, she was prepared to leave the results to God. We must do God's will and leave the results to Him. God will work out things for good. He has a place for each of us in the Kingdom of God.

Taking a Stand for What Is Right

Esther 4:1-14 reads: "When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.

"Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was. So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate. And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to show it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people. And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

"Again Esther spake unto Ha-

tach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai; All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. And they told to Mordecai Esther's words. Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

I believe God wants us to speak up and take a stand for what is right. We need to use our voices for God in such a time as this. I am convinced that the Church of God is the most beautiful institution in the world, and I find no fault with her teachings whatsoever; they are beautiful. We need to live the teachings of the Word of God. People need more depth in their Christian experience. There is too much shallowness in religion today. God is looking for people who will exemplify the power of godliness in their daily lives.

There is power in the blood of Jesus Christ to deliver every man, woman, boy, and girl in the world from every sin. Some people say they were born alcoholics or they were born homosexuals, but that is not true. God made them perfect specimens. God's Word is perfect, and His power can make you what you ought to be for God. Every one of us should rise to the challenge that God has raised us up for such a time as this. What kind of time is this? This is a very perilous age, not only physically but also spiritually. We need to be our very best for God.

Consecration and Determination

Esther 4:15-16 reads: "Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." This reminds me of the words of the three Hebrew children before King Nebuchadnezzar put them in the fiery furnace. They said, in so many words, "The God we serve can deliver us, but if He chooses not to, we are still not going to bow down to your golden image." This is the kind of consecration and determination that God's people need today.

I believe God uses ordinary people like you and me. The Church of God is made up of ordinary people. Esther was one of these ordinary individuals. God is not looking for someone who has great intellect or great power. He is looking for an ordinary man or woman who will completely and totally consecrate his or her life to Him. He is looking for ordinary men or women to be triumphant over extraordinary circumstances. I like what Esther said: "If I perish, I perish." She was resolved to pay whatever the cost might be, even though it might cost her life. She was willing to act in behalf of her people. Esther appealed to God. He will never let His people down. Without Him our efforts would be futile.

Psalm 127:1 reads, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Jesus said in the latter part of John 15:5, "Without me ye can do nothing."

Esther knew that she needed prayer and that she needed others to join with her, and to that she enjoined fasting. She was resigned to leave the outcome to God. Young person, there is no better cause for which you can give your life than to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. God has always raised up chosen vessels and put them in strategic positions to accomplish His will. God can raise up a man or a woman for just a time as this. I think every one of us needs to be aware of the hand of God. God plans our lives. I like to be cognizant of even the smallest details of my life, so that God plans the people whom I meet and the places where I go. I believe that God can direct each of us. Above everything else, we need to see the Kingdom of God furthered. A congregation is not what it ought to be if it is not a soul-saving station. The reason the church is here is to see souls saved and to see the Kingdom of God furthered.

God Directs the Affairs of His People

I thought of other great men and women in the Bible. Joseph was in a strategic position in Egypt for the good of his people. Many times what keeps us close to God and close to one another is our children, our parents, and our loved ones. You need to remain true to God for the sake of your own soul. Many of us have children, grandchildren, relatives, and acquaintances, and we must remain true for their sakes. God has put you where you are. You need to recognize the hand of God. He is still directing the affairs of the church. He is not sleeping. He is very much aware of the times.

Joseph was put where he was in Egypt because of the divine providence of God. Godly pastors are placed where they are because of divine intervention. We need to be spiritual and recognize this. The church is unique. Our services are different from sectarianism and false religion. We must be very keen to the voice of the Spirit of God. He might choose to change the order of worship, and we need to be ready for that change whenever God sees the need.

Joseph, speaking to his brothers,

said in Genesis 50:20, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." When people work against us, they think evil, but God is working good. God is the same, and Truth remains the same. I like to see people stay the same when they are godly. We need to be true to God.

The hand of God was truly in the life of Moses. Beginning with his infancy, God spared him. In Egypt God's hand was in his upbringing and in his leadership of God's people. David's position in history was truly the same. God used David mightily as well as Daniel and other Old Testament characters.

I also thought about Paul. In Acts 9:15 God spoke to Ananias in a vision and told him to go and see Saul at the time of his conversion. God told Ananias that Saul was a chosen vessel to Him. Each of us is needed in the Kingdom of God. Godly people want to see others live for God. I tell my congregation, "I need you all. I can't coerce you or bind you, but I can certainly appeal to you and reason with you that it is best to remain with the church."

I have lived long enough to know without exception that those who stay with a thriving Church of God congregation are blessed. When people leave a good congregation of the Church of God, eventually they will experience disaster. I listen to everything men of God say. No matter what difficulties you experience in serving God, you need to stay with the church.

Second Timothy 3:12 says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." You should never entertain the thought of leaving a godly congregation. You need to stay with God's people. Do not listen to the voices of those who become rebellious, disobedient, or stubborn. You need to listen to the voice of God. He will not lead you astray. God is no respecter of persons. God does not hate people, but He hates sin. Sinner friend, God loves you, but He hates the sin that has you bound because it will destroy you.

God said to Ananias about Saul (who was renamed Paul) in Acts 9:15, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." God used Paul for such a time as that. We are living in an exciting day. The church is marching on.

Martin Luther, the great German reformer who lived in the sixteenth century, came into the kingdom for such a time as that. The watchword of his ministry was, "The just shall live by faith." We still hold that to be true. God put Martin Luther in a strategic position.

Abraham Lincoln is one of my heroes. He came from very ordinary circumstances. He was raised in poverty, but God raised him up to be the President of the United States for such a time as that. His watchword was, "A house divided against itself shall not stand." Jesus said that in Matthew 12:25. Abraham Lincoln had some godly principles concerning life. Saint of God, we must live by the godly principles that we have been taught.

I thought of how God used Daniel Sydney Warner. When he was a child, he had some rough times, but God used him. I believe the watchword of his ministry was, "The church is one body." The church is not divided with a foot over here, a hand over there, an ear over here, and an eye over there. The body is connected.

Living in Perilous Times

We are living in a critical time in history. I believe it is the most critical time that the world has ever known. Uncertainty, violence, rebellion, and sin are running rampant; and while this is going on, many in the church are lukewarm, indifferent, apathetic, and showing a no-care attitude. We ought to care. God has raised us up for such a time as this, so let us be our best for God. One man said, "Attempt great things for God and expect great things from God." We need to live by Biblical principles. We are living in a day when many people have little or no respect for human life. When people have no respect for God, they have little respect for the children of God.

Second Timothy 3:1 states, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." I believe that means dangerous times spiritually. We are living in a very, very serious time, spiritually speaking. We have perils from without the church, but far greater than that are the perils that come to us from within. These perils are far more insidious. When people care only for themselves, times become terrible.

When you make decisions, you need to consider what the outcome of that decision will do to the body of Christ. How is it going to affect the man of God? How is it going to affect his family? Before you make any decisions or moves, you need to consider the outcome. You must consider how far-reaching the consequences might be.

Verses 2-5 read: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, [This is going on today. When a woman can give partial birth to a baby and allow a doctor to poke that little baby's head and suck out his brains, that is barbarous! I cannot conceive the thought of a doctor, a man who is supposed to protect life, doing such a horrendous crime. Does he not take an oath that he will protect life? How could a mother give consent for that? This is going on in such a time as this. We must not be silent!] trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Every child of God should feel the magnitude of this hour. We are

living in a time when the principles of Christianity are fading into obliteration and being completely destroyed. In many places, if God were to be summoned to testify today, would He recognize that which calls itself the church? I doubt it. There was a time when people were called out of sectism. Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and others came in droves to the beautiful Church of God.

I thank God for the Church of God. God's church is beautiful. In this day of great opportunity, where do you stand? I am excited about living for God. You need to ask yourself this question: Have I come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Each of us has a task to fulfill in the Kingdom of God. The church is made up of ordinary people whom God wants to use to accomplish extraordinary tasks. I thought of a song that was written by D. S. Warner entitled "Who Will Suffer With the Savior." Verse 3 says, "*Oh, for consecrated service.*" You may say, "If I choose to serve the Lord, what about my husband or wife, my children, and my in-laws?" What about the immortal words of Esther, who said, "If I perish, I perish"? God will honor your stand for Him.

Putting God First

Whenever I think along these lines, I think of John Bunyan and his wonderful book entitled *Pilgrim's Progress*. People have criticized John Bunyan for the actions of Pilgrim because he left his family in the city of Destruction. They say: "If Pilgrim were a real Christian, he would have stayed with his family. He would not have left." People criticize that book, but they miss the essence of the Gospel: you must put God first. My wife and I have done our very best to do that, and God has honored us for it.

John Bunyan wrote in his book that Christian did not see the salvation of his wife and his family. He died and went to the Celestial City. However, his wife came to herself and realized that she needed to follow suit, so she left the city of Destruction with her little ones and asked, "Which way did my husband go?" She followed Christian as he had followed God. By faith Pilgrim forsook his family and the city of Destruction, and God honored his faith.

Again, Esther said, "If I perish, I perish." God honored Esther's consecration. Jesus said in Luke 14:26 that you must hate your own life. How consecrated are you to doing the will of God? We cannot get to Heaven any other way but by the way of the Cross, the way of Jesus, and by the concepts, the precepts, and the principles contained in the Bible. Everyone who goes to Heaven has to put God first in his life. Where are you standing? Do you ever consider your soul? Do you ever think about eternity? Does the place called hell ever cross your mind?

You may say, "Thinking about eternity and a place called hell is too uncomfortable for me to retain it in my memory, so I dismiss it." When are you going to come to grips with these eternal truths? Now is the best time. In 2 Corinthians 6:2 Paul said, "Behold, now is the day of salvation." You need to perk up your ears and hear. Many people have regretted that they did not start to live for God sooner. God can pick up the broken pieces of your life and make it something beautiful. God is able to save from the uttermost. He is not a respecter of persons, and we should not be either. We should not look at what a person is, but what he could be if God had His way in his life.

Won't you give your heart to God? Jesus is the answer to every problem that you have in your life. God has set the stage for you to come to Him. He wants you to serve Him so that you can be a part of what He is doing in such a time as this.

(Cassette C-5143M)

A Little Fellow Follows Me

A careful man I ought to be
A little fellow follows me
I do not dare to go astray
For fear he'll go the self-same way.
Not once can I escape His eyes;
What e'er he sees me do he tries.
Like me he says he's going to be,
That little chap who follows me.
He thinks that I am good and fine,
Believes in every word of mine.
The base in me he must not see—
That little chap who follows me.
I must remember as on I go
Through summer sun and winter snow;
I am building for the years to be
That little chap who follows me.

Author Unknown

Being Totally Focused on the Things of the Lord

Brother Irwin Sesher

What Are You Focused Upon?

The word *focus* means "a central point of activity or attraction; to concentrate." Sad to say, many people are focusing on the wrong things. In the age in which we are living, many things occur in people's lives that cause them to get their eyes off Jesus. The media, occupations, prestige, materialism, and so many other things cause people to take their eyes away from that focal point. If you are to advance in your Christian walk, you must be totally focused on the things of God.

You might have heard of Satchel Paige, the great baseball pitcher. He once said: "Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you." First Corinthians 9:24 reads, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." Faith is more than just agreeing with what God has to say; it is putting it into practice in your life in spite of what it might cost you.

It will cost you to serve Jesus Christ. You must give up all to follow His will. We do not like to pay out of our pockets for home repairs, automotive repairs, medical expenses, and so on; however, if we do not, it could catch up with us down the road. People of faith keep their eyes on Jesus. Jesus has a way of calling us out of our comfort zones so that we can learn to trust Him in new and challenging ways. Do you want to be challenged more by Jesus Christ? We all should want to be challenged more and do a greater work for God.

We were not saved just to sit back and do nothing, but the Lord gives us tools to help us to grow. Someone once penned these words: "Most people fail to realize that money is a test and a trust from the Lord." When you start talking about money, some people do not want to listen. God uses finances to teach us to trust Him, and for some people, money is the greatest test of all. God watches how we use our money to see how trustworthy we are.

Luke 16:10-11 says: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Many things in your walk on this earth are directed by your Heavenly Father. He puts you through tests because He wants to challenge you. Are you going to accept the challenge?

As you were growing up, perhaps you were challenged to see how far you could throw a baseball or to see how fast you could run through a line to carry a football. However, you are challenged every day with Jesus Christ. He wants to challenge you to be a better child of God. In order to face the challenge, you have some things that you must do.

You need to praise and thank God for all the things He has done for you. Saint of God, you never

want to get to a point where you accept things as they are. You need to be thankful and praise God more. You ought to thank Him for how He protects you and gives you exactly what you need to grow. I am thankful that we still have places to go to hear the Word of God and to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Lots of places do not have the Truth preached, and they wish they could have it. Are you going to accept the challenge? How is your focus?

Facing Tests and Trials

In Matthew, Chapter 14, you can read of three events that took place: John the Baptist was beheaded, Jesus fed the five thousand, and Peter walked on the water. First, I want you to consider the feeding of the five thousand. This was a miracle that only the Lord could do. The Lord has brought miracles in our individual lives. When we thought there was no way that He could work things out, He worked them out. You might have thought your back was against the wall and there was no way out, but God worked it out; that is a miracle. If Jesus could feed the five thousand, He can take care of your problems.

After Jesus fed the five thousand, He instructed His disciples to get into a boat and sail to the other side of the sea. Then Jesus sent the crowd away and went up into a mountain to pray. He was flesh and bones, just as you and I are, and He needed to pray. Since Jesus needed to pray, how much more do we need to pray? He needed to get away and talk to His Heavenly Father. There is power in prayer, but in order for Jesus to get alone with God, He had to send the crowd away.

The Lord was directing the events there. As Christians, the Holy Spirit is directing our lives, so we need to take our hands off. If you fail to let the Holy Spirit direct you, you will lose your focus. Some people want power with God and want the Lord to move in their situations and circumstances, but they will not allow Him to direct their lives. When Jesus told the disciples to get into the boat, He was directing them. A lot of people fail to become focused in their spiritual walk with the Lord. God wants what is best for each of us.

We are to serve and to help others. It is not so much what we want but what God wants. The Lord knows the future. He knows what is going to happen and what will affect the future. Often people live for the moment, but the Lord sees the big picture. They see what is going on around them at the moment and react to it.

As Jesus was praying, the disciples were in the boat trying to cross the water. There was a reason that Jesus directed this, and there are some important facts regarding why Jesus did what He did. As the disciples were going across the water, the wind became fierce and they had a very difficult time. As a child of God, you will struggle with things that happen in your life, and those things can hinder your walk with God. Nevertheless, that is not the time to lose your focus and give up on God. If you are a Christian and you are not facing opposition, you need to check your experience. As a child of God, you will go through some opposition, but it is worth it all to be His child, no matter what we have to go through. It will be worth it all one of these days.

The devil will say, "If you were really a child of God, you would not have to go through this." Where was Jesus when the disciples were in the boat and being tossed with the waves of the sea? He was praying. No doubt, the disciples were thinking: "Where is Jesus when we need Him? Does He not know that we are in dire straits? Does He not know what we are facing?" You can be sure that Jesus knew their situation. They were probably saying: "We need Jesus now! Why has God allowed this to happen? We should have waited to cross the sea. It is dark and windy, and we are tired. We cannot face this." Who directed them in the first place? It was a testing time for the disciples.

Jesus will allow you to go through tests to see how you come through. You may think, "I'm the only one who has to face this." Others have been put through tests, but Jesus wants to see how you do in the test. He wants to see your reaction. I want you to keep in mind that it was Jesus who directed the disciples. The Lord is not going to send you into a situation unless He knows that you can handle it. The important thing is, you must keep your eyes focused on Jesus.

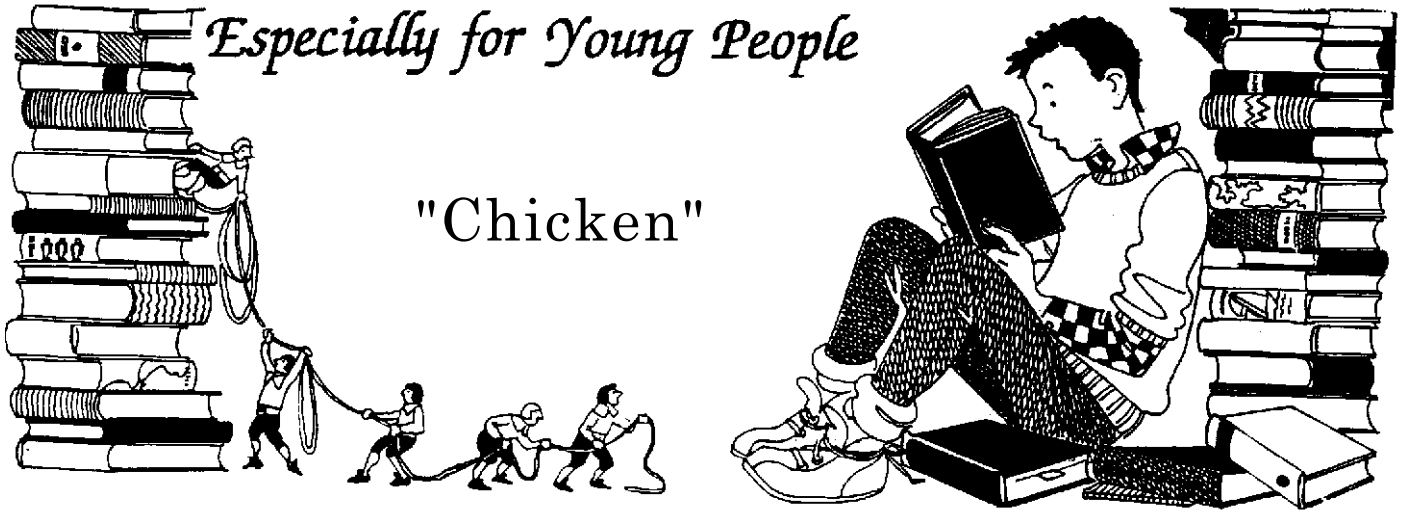
Training Phases

We all have been in situations where we were not sure what was going to happen. You may struggle with the questions: Why did the Lord let this happen to me? How is He going to get me out of this situation? When you battle thoughts about how you are going to get out of your situation, that can start to drag you down. Have you experienced this? You are human. You may question why the Lord brought you to that place and think that He has deserted you. You work and struggle, yet you seem to go nowhere; then the moment you stop struggling, everything seems to fall apart. The Lord puts you through trials to make you stronger. You might feel weak as you are going through that trial. You do not know what trial you might face further down the road, and He could be preparing you, just as Jesus was preparing the disciples.

Jesus knew what was going on with the disciples, and I am sure that He was praying for them. Jesus does not forget His own. Friend, He created you, and He is not going to forget you. However, if you are not careful, you can forget God.

To face problems, children of God must go through training phases, just as the military has to go through training phases. Have you

[continued on page 16]



"Chicken"

"You're just plain chicken!" Has anyone ever yelled that at you? The nickname "Chicken" is one of the most used slang expressions. In plain talk, chicken means coward. To teenagers, a chicken is a person who is fearful. He is afraid to die, afraid to go this way or that way, or afraid to follow the herd. Your peers may call you "chicken" if you refuse to smoke. They may call you "chicken" if you will not drink alcohol or use drugs or go to a barroom. They may call you "chicken" if you cannot brag about indulgence in shameful sex.

Prisons and reformatories are overflowing with young people who have been indicted for murder, assault and battery, drug addiction, and other immoralities. Many of these young people boast, "At least I'm not chicken." All across America, shocked and heartbroken parents are asking their unwed pregnant daughters, "Why did you do it?" The foolish answer: "I didn't want to say no."

Young people are being lured and seduced into sin and corruption by other teenagers who have sold out to the devil. Some cool operator or slick chick will lead an innocent teenager into a trap and then jeer, "Come on! What's the matter? Are you chicken?" A lot of young people are doing things now that they refused to do but for one thing—they want to be like the gang! Many young people are throwing their morals to the wind just so they will be accepted by sinners leading the herd to hell.

A real "chicken" is one who breaks down under pressure. One of these days, God is going to put on the pressure. He is going to see how big and brave and smart some young people will act then. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Every young person will stand before Almighty God on the Judgment Day. This will be real pressure. A lot of fellows and young ladies who were not "chicken" on earth will really be chicken when they stand before God!

Every person will stand before God and will be judged for every wicked word that came out of his mouth and every sinful deed he did. When God puts on the pressure, "every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:11). Every eye will behold Him on that great day. Every young person who had no time for God will fall on his face and weep and cry and scream for mercy!

It will take you just a few minutes to finish reading this little article, but the next few minutes will be the most important minutes in your life! God is going to speak to your heart. He is talking to you through the Holy Spirit right now. You may be making a choice for all eternity!

The end of time is almost here. Many people are talking about it. Everybody feels something world-shattering is about to happen. It is going to be worse than a nuclear war. It will be worse than floods, earthquakes, famines, or other calamities. God is warning people everywhere that the end of time is near. Some communist leaders are getting ready to push the launching buttons that will fill the skies with missiles. China is getting ready to march with its millions. North Korea is rumbling like a panther. Crime, delinquency, drug addiction, sex, hate, and fear are spreading around the world like cancer. Jesus said in Luke 21:28, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Jesus is coming soon!

At the very brink of eternity, the music is getting more vile, the curses stronger, the joking dirtier and cheaper, the smoking and the drinking heavier. Immorality is breaking out in high school halls and in the hearts of many young people. Gangs have spread across America.

You can try to laugh off these things, but it will do you no good. You have heard the truth, and you will never be able to shake off what you have just read. Conviction has gripped your soul, and you are beginning to feel different. You know that you have been putting on a big

front. You know the end is coming, and you know that you are not ready to meet God. Young person, you have to admit to yourself that down deep in your heart, you are wondering what is going to happen when the end comes. Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God? You must, because your soul is at stake.

Every person who refuses to surrender his life to Jesus and serve God will wish that he could run and hide when that day comes. The Bible predicts you will scream and cry for the rocks and mountains to fall on you and hide you from His face, but there will be no place to hide. You can keep on sinning if you choose to do so. You can keep on listening to ungodly music. You can continue to smoke, drink alcohol, swear, play with sex, act big and brave, and act as though you do not need Jesus. You can act as if everything is going to be all right, but do not ever forget that one day soon you will have to look into the face of Jesus! One day your fun will turn into terror!

Remember, a "chicken" is one who breaks down under pressure. A "chicken" is afraid to die. The Bible says in Ezekiel 18:4, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." God is putting pressure on you right now, young person. You need to forget what others think of you and do the right thing. They cannot stand before God for you and do you any good, so why pay attention to them now?

One of these days soon, the last trumpet sound will blow, the last message will be preached, and then suddenly Jesus will come. The Bible says that when you least expect it, then Jesus will come. Are you going to get ready to meet Jesus now or are you going to put it off until it is too late?

You did not get this message by accident. You are one of many getting this message all over the world. There is only one way to be ready to face the dark future: you must give your life to Jesus Christ and receive Him as your Savior. Then you will have a bright future. Will you accept Him into your life as Lord? If so, you must confess your sins to the Lord Jesus with your mouth, repent and be sorry for all your sins, and forsake your wicked way of living. If you will call on Jesus and ask Him to come and live in your heart, you will never be sorry that you did. This is the Bible way to be saved. The first move is up to you. God will meet you halfway.

Selected

[Guest Editorial—continued from p. 2]

and the world picture grows bleaker, we earnestly ask that you pray for the meeting. We need His divine direction for the services. The local congregation has again set aside time for prayer and fasting to seek His leadership. We know that He is ready to supply every need, but He wants us to call upon Him for guidance so the services will please Him. We want the Lord to be the overseer of everything that goes on.

If you need room accommodations, please contact Brother or Sister Bush at (740) 345-1213. They will need to know the number in your family that will be attending the meeting and the days that you plan to attend.

Three Minutes to Go

The brainwashing had been going on for weeks, up to fourteen hours a day—forty-eight hours straight on one occasion. Yet the man held his ground; he would not yield.

The place: a Communist prison camp. The man: a radiant Chinese Christian.

Finally, after repeated grilling, mockery, and torture, the Christian man told his oppressors: "You are wasting your time, sirs. My faith is rooted deeper than any torture you might inflict upon me. It is rooted eternally in God's Son, Jesus Christ."

Furious, the Communist indoctrinator slapped him across the face and screamed, "Drop to your knees and pray! Because in three minutes, we are going to put a bullet through your head!"

While the indoctrinator, an armed guard, and fifty more of the man's fellow prisoners looked on, he did as he was told.

"Lord," the man began to pray, "I thank Thee for the peace that is within my heart. I thank Thee for the faith which makes it possible for me to believe that, in spite of my oppressors, my Heavenly Father sits upon His throne, able at any moment to silence forever the lips of these who blaspheme His name. Lord, at this moment, Thou art able to prove Thy power to these two men. Thou art able to show Thyself to be God. In a moment, Thy power could strike these men dead and—"

He did not get to finish his prayer, for gasping with pain, the two Communists—the indoctrinator and the guard—fell simultaneously to the floor. In a few hours both of them were dead.

The Christian was set free and, at last report some years ago, continued to live unmolested in his home with his wife and children. No Communist dared to go near his door.

You, too, reader may one day be required to stand before Communists or other godless men to confess your faith in Christ at the threat of your life. You may lose your life for your stand as have thousands of other heroic Christians. However, you can be sure of this: God has not been taken by surprise. Eternal joy in the presence of the Savior awaits each believer, no matter what earthly life holds in store for him. Today may seem to belong to the powers of darkness, but tomorrow always belongs to God!

(The above incident was personally witnessed by a missionary in China during his own imprisonment by the Communists.)

[Being Totally Focused— contin. from p. 13]
ever heard of the Army Rangers? They are a very elite group of men, and they have to go through very difficult training. They are required to do forty-nine push-ups, fifty-nine sit-ups, and an individual five-mile release run event, which must be finished in forty minutes or less, and then they conclude the test with six chin-ups.

Another phase of the training to become an Army Ranger is a combat water survival assessment. They also have what they call a Darby Mile Run event, a five-mile run with an obstacle course, terrain runs, a twelve-mile foot march, and night and day land navigation tests. To be competitive in physical tests, the future Ranger students must not strive for the minimum standards, but they must maximize their personal physical effort and strive to succeed on even more tests. Once they have completed the above tests successfully, they have to go even further. They are required to do eighty to one hundred push-ups, eighty to one hundred sit-ups, fifteen to twenty chin-ups, and a two-mile run in less than thirteen minutes. However, the most important pre-training exercise prior to Ranger school is walking fast in their boots with fifty pounds of weight on their backs, and they must continue to do this every day that they are at the Ranger school. They must run at least five miles three to four times a week. Swimming in uniform two to three times a week is recommended as well. Some gain five to ten pounds of body weight prior to attending this training so they will have a little weight to lose when they are consuming fewer calories each day. These are requirements for being a Ranger in the Army. The point is, in order to become an Army Ranger, young men have rigorous training requirements.

As a child of God, you need to train in several areas. You have to train your affections toward the things of God. In order to be successful in living for God, you must train yourself to be what God expects of you in your prayer life. Also, you must be faithful when it comes to Bible study. You need to allow the Lord to direct you in the reading of the Word. Training is important in order for you to get over spiritual obstacles in your life. Being an Army Ranger takes much physical and mental endurance, but it takes much more to be a child of God.

"Be of Good Cheer"

Now, I have not forgotten about the disciples being in the storm. When Jesus finished praying, He started across the sea to meet the disciples. Jesus knew what was going on, and it was His intention to help them. The disciples' focus was on their immediate struggle, not on looking toward Jesus. Is that how you are? Do you look at your immediate danger without looking to the One who can help you?

When the disciples did see Jesus, their thoughts were not turned to Him for the help they needed. They were so terrified that they thought they were seeing a ghost. You would have thought that by their having been with Jesus, by listening to Him pray, by seeing Him heal the sick, and by seeing Him feed the five thousand that they would have known what Jesus looked like rather than thinking He was a ghost. Is that how you are at times? Do you forget what the Lord has blessed you with? Have you forgotten about what Jesus has done for you spiritually and how He has helped you financially?

As a child of God, you ought to know who Jesus is because He has helped you before. He will not leave you or forsake you. He will not leave you stranded without help. Sometimes individuals look at their situation and think that Jesus is not helping them. They forget that He has provided them with food, clothing, and a good job. They forget that He has taken them through various hardships and provided healing for their bodies. Sometimes they lose their focal point and forget what God has already done for them. You do not want to get to that point. You need to keep your mind fresh with the things that God has done for you. I thank God for the Truth and for salvation. I am puzzled concerning why some people cannot give God praise for what He has done for them. Do you ever say, "Jesus, thank You for saving my soul"? You should consider all the things He has done for you. He is such a good God!

When Jesus walked over to the disciples, He could have been very upset with them. When the disciples saw Him walking across the water, they said, "It is a spirit," and they cried out in fear, but Jesus did not chastise them. He said in Matthew 14:27, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Have you ever had the Lord speak such words to you? Perhaps He comforted you with words such as: "Do not be upset. I am in control of the situation. You need to take your hands off the situation and let Me direct you. Be of good cheer; do not be afraid." Jesus did not leave you or forsake you. He came to your rescue.

Sometimes God will send a little wind into your daily life. When He does, do you lose focus on what He has done for you in the past? At times, you are going to go through tests. Jesus did not send the disciples out in the boat to capsize. Similarly, He does not want you to be in various situations to fail. You are there for a reason. It could be that you are in your situation to be a witness for the Lord and to gain strength in the Lord. Dear one, throughout the days ahead, you are going to need more strength. You are going to face things this year that you did not face last year. God is preparing you for those trials. He wants you to depend upon Him even more. He does not want you to be in the trials to fail but to learn a lesson of faith.

Peter was faithful. After he stepped out of the boat, even though

he began to sink, he knew where his help came from. Friend, you need to lift your head above your circumstances and see where your help comes from. If you are going through a difficult time, that is not a time to go around with your head down; it is a time to lift up your head. As a Christian, the world is looking on you. If you are walking around with your head down and with a frown on your face, that will not inspire anyone. You need to lift your head above the circumstance. You will suffer times when you do not feel well. Sometimes you may not have enough money. Nevertheless, you are still a saved individual, a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Uncertainties Test Your Faith

Peter made his move carefully. He did not just jump out of the boat. Even though he was a man of faith, sometimes faith has room for the possibility of doubt. Peter said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water" (Matthew 14:28). What a lesson! In your heart you might question whether or not something is God's will, but if the Lord has led you and has given you a definite answer, it is from the Lord. It is not a time to ask others what they think. If you know beyond a shadow of doubt that God has instructed you to do something, then you need to be obedient to Him. When you know it is the Lord, you ought to follow what the Lord has instructed you to do.

Too many people want to throw out roadblocks. They try to convince themselves that the Lord is not telling them to do something. Why is that? They want their own way. They want to see how it will benefit themselves. Peter saw his situation. He was in a boat that was being tossed about with the waves. He recognized that Jesus could solve his problem. Friend, the only way you are going to get help is to let Jesus take control of your life and realize, "I have done all that I can do, Lord; I am leaving it up to You." You need to move toward Jesus when you have a need.

Peter still had a small amount of doubt when he began to walk on the water. Dear one, it is time for you to refocus your spiritual walk with the Lord. So many things can happen around you that you fail to focus your attention on the commands of Jesus. If you do that, you might end up being tossed about like the disciples on the sea. Lots of things can test your faith, such as the cares of this old world, everyday living, and the demands of your job. Today many jobs are being downsized and cut back, yet they want to get more out of you for less pay. That will test your faith. Uncertainty about the economy can also test your faith. Family problems or friendships may shake you at times, and if you focus too much on the present, you will take your eyes off the One who has guided you thus far.

If you give up your walk with the Lord, to whom could you turn? Where could you go? If you cannot go with Jesus, you cannot go anywhere. You might as well stick with Jesus and allow Him to direct your life. The world is not going to help you. The world cannot take the place of Jesus. You must realize that life is full of struggles. We all face them. Jesus will not remove all your struggles. He wants you to rise above them. The challenge is in focusing upon Him.

As humans, we have a tendency to want to focus on the cares of this world. John 15:19 says very plainly, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." If you are going to follow Jesus Christ, the world is going to hate you. You cannot run with the world and walk with God, because it will not work. As a Christian, you cannot be like the world. You must forsake the world. You cannot dress as the world does and run where the world runs and still be spiritual. Moreover, if you are a true child of God, you do not want to.

When I got saved, I was finished with the world. I was sick of the world. I did not want to go to worldly places anymore, and I still feel the same way today. When you become sick of sin, you will receive help. Often the reason people do not seem to get the help they need is that they are not sick enough of sin. Like a yo-yo, they go back and forth. They need to sell out to Jesus Christ and get their focus where it ought to be. Friend, if you get your focal point on Jesus Christ, you will not have to face a lot of things. You will be able to avoid some hard places in your life if you will give up to Him.

When Peter was about to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me." This serves as a reminder that we can do nothing without Jesus. Jesus reached out and saved Peter, and at the same time He calmed the sea. Christian friend, when you were living in sin and you came to Jesus, He calmed you, and He calmed the storms in your life.

Jesus wants to calm the troubled waters of your soul. When you are living in sin, you are sailing on troubled seas. If you are without Jesus Christ, you are troubled. You need to be honest, sinner friend. When you pillow your head at night, some nights you have trouble sleeping because you are thinking, "What will happen to me if I do not awaken?" As a Christian, it is wonderful to know that you are clear with God. When you pillow your head at night, if you should die, you would wake up in eternity with God. I thank the Lord for saving my soul! I do not want to turn my back on the Lord. I thank the Lord for showing me the things that I needed to get rid of in my life and for showing me that I could still be bound with all those sinful things and be lost. I repeat, He will calm the troubled waters of your soul, and He will bring a settled experience in your life.

Do you know why some people are so upset and so weary? They are trying to run the wheels off their

lives. They go here and go there. They go to this party and that party, and they always want to see some action. Sin will cost you. In the age in which we live, it costs financially as well as in other ways. Some people cannot drive a car because they cannot afford the fuel. They spend all their money on cigarettes and alcohol. Sin costs, but thank God you can get rid of those habits. You do not have to be bound by those things anymore. If you are saved, Jesus Christ is looking out for you, and that is the reason you do not want to lose Him as your focal point.

The Lord places each of us in various situations. The storm might be raging in your life, but you have to understand that He is the master of the storm. Sometimes He will calm the storm, and sometimes He will calm you. Are you truly satisfied with your life as it is or is there a deep desire down in your heart to get rid of all sinful desires? There is help for you, friend. Jesus Christ wants to calm the storms in your life. Won't you let the Lord take control of your heart? He desires to do that, but you must make the first move, just as Peter had to make the move toward Jesus.

Someone wrote these words: "When you work on a puzzle, you already have all the pieces. The task is for you to put them together." I want you to think about that. Jesus Christ will help you to put your life back together. If your life is a mess, Jesus Christ will help you to know how to put it together through Him. Farmers work the land, not to get more land, but to develop what they already have. The land is already there; they just have to work it to have an increase.

Someone once wrote: "Jesus gives us new life, but we are responsible for developing it with fear and trembling." That means we need to take our spiritual walk with Him very seriously. What is your focal point? Have you allowed sinful things to come into your life? Are things with the Lord as clear as they used to be? It is time to see exactly where you are and where you are going. Do you have a need? Jesus Christ is ready to meet your every need.

(Compact Disc TR-934E)

Same as Father

"What will you have?" said the clerk to a man who had just entered a café with a little son.

"A glass of beer," replied the man.

"And what can I get for the little boy?"

"Same as Father," quickly replied the lad.

"Wait," said the father, "I will not take the beer."

There are little eyes upon you, and they're watching night and day;
There are little ears that quickly take in every word you say;
There are little hands all eager to do everything you do.
And a little boy who's dreaming of the day he'll be like you.

You're the little fellows idol, you're the wisest of the wise
In his little mind about you no suspicions ever rise;
He believes in you devotedly, holds that all you say and do,
He will say and do in your way when he's grown up just like you.

There's a wide-eyed little fellow who believes you're always right,
And his ears are always open, and he watches day and night.
You are setting an example every day in all you do
For the little boy who's waiting to grow up to be like you.

As a father, you are responsible to God for your children. You must someday stand before God and give an account of the things that you have taught your children and the examples that you have set before them.

Will the examples that you have set before your children lead them upward or down that broad way to eternal destruction? Do you pray for them and teach them about God or do you focus on "social advancement"?

When I see a little boy or a little girl, the thought comes to me, "Will they ever reach Heaven?" Then I look to see what kind of father and mother they have, and that usually decides it.

The Bible says in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

One evidence of the value of the Bible is the character of those who oppose it.

Angels

Brother Calvin Foster

Biblical Accounts of Angels Appearing to Men

We are living in a time when false religion and false doctrines are becoming very strong. As we get closer to the end of time, people are turning away from traditional Christianity and turning to other beliefs. I want you to take a look at what the Bible says about angels. The word *angel* in both the Hebrew and the Greek means "messenger."

Some people call an angel a "spirit guide," and they say that angels have a lot to tell us about God and about life. They say we should look to angels to tell us about themselves, about Heaven, and about how we should live. However, according to the Bible, angels do not regularly communicate with human beings. Nowhere in the Bible do we read that people ever tried to contact angels. In the Bible when an angel appeared to an individual, it was a surprise. When an angel appeared to a human, the most common words used by the angel were "Fear not" or "Be not afraid."

In the Book of Genesis when Abraham dismissed Hagar, the bond woman, and her son, he gave her some water and sent her away. Genesis 21:17 reads, "And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is."

Another Scripture that speaks of an angel appearing to people was when Mary Magdalene and another Mary went to the tomb of Jesus, which you can read about in Matthew 28:2-5: "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified."

I am sure that if any one of us saw an angel, we would be afraid

too. Zacharias was afraid when he saw an angel as he ministered in the temple. Luke 1:11-13 says: "And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." The angel told Zacharias, "Fear not."

An angel spoke to Mary, the mother of Jesus, in Luke 1:28-30: "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God."

An angel announced Christ's birth to some shepherds in Luke 2:8-11: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." We do not know exactly when Christ was born, but we do know that He was not born in the wintertime. The angel told the shepherds to "fear not." He was bringing them good tidings which would be to all people. That is the message of the Gospel today. We bring good tidings as we preach the Gospel. It represents great joy, and it is to all people. Praise God! He did not leave out anyone.

Test All Teachings by the Scriptures

When people speak of having communication with angels, it can open the door to demonic influence. The Scriptures are God's way of bringing Truth to His people. We do not need to speak to angels. When people start getting messages from voices and spirits, that can be deceptive. Many times voices are not what they claim to be. Some people open the door to demonic spirits. I want to be as it says in the Book of Jude. I want to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (verse 3). The truth of God's Word is what is going to save people.

God has always forbidden man from trying to get hidden information by communicating with spirits. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 reads: "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

Although God has always forbidden people to have communication with spirits, today people are engaging in this practice more and more. In this day of New Age religion, if you do not know your Bible, this thing could creep into your life. You should test all teachings by the Scriptures. Matthew 22:29-30 states: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." You have to put the Word on things.

Acts 17:10-11 reads: "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Young men and women need to read the Bible and search the Scriptures. Too many people are getting away from the Scriptures these days. Some people do not want to read the Bible. It is as though the Scriptures do not mean anything to them. You may say, "The Spirit will lead me in what to do." The Spirit never leads anyone to where he cannot be pastored. You need to search the Scriptures; that is our foundation. Second Timothy 3:16-17 states: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." You must measure yourself by the Scriptures.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Paul was telling the Galatians that if an angel came down and preached another gospel, he would be accursed. There is only one Gospel. Even if God should have an angel speak to a human today, that angel would not contradict the Bible. Those spirits that contradict the Word of God and influence people are *not* of God.

The Bible tells us that an angel is a spirit. We read in Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Verses 6-7 tell us: "And again, when

he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."

The Truth Regarding Angels

Throughout the Bible, we can read of angels taking on a bodily form, and in some instances, eating human food. Genesis 18:1-8 reads: "And the LORD appeared unto him [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

"And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."

A little later, two of these angels went on to meet Lot, and he fed them. Genesis 19:3 reads, "And he [Lot] pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat."

Some people say that angels are people who have died and have gone to Heaven. Whenever I hear somebody say something like that, I always like to ask them to quote the Book, chapter, and verse. That is fair. There is a Mormon doctrine that falsely teaches that angels are resurrected people with a body of flesh and bones. They say their prophet Moroni had been transformed into an angel after his death and that he appeared to Joseph Smith. Today the Mormon temple has a golden statue of their angel Moroni.

The truth is, the resurrected saints will not be angels. Jesus said in Luke 20:34-36: "And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." No human being dies and becomes an angel, according to Scriptures. Angels are not resurrected human beings; angels are a different kind of being. The Bible tells us that angels minister to the saints, and I thank God for that!

Psalm 34:6-8 reads: "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. [How many times has the Lord delivered you?] O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

Psalm 91:9-11 reads: "Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." The devil tried to use that Scripture on Jesus in Matthew, Chapter 4, when he tempted Jesus.

An angel helped Peter escape from prison. Acts 12:8-9 states: "And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision." Angels are real.

Study the Scriptures

Someone may ask, "Should we expect a visit from an angel?" Today some people say that angels are appearing all the time. According to the Scriptures, the appearance of angels was important, but their appearance was uncommon. Angels have appeared to people to announce miraculous births, such as the birth of Isaac, the birth of John the Baptist, and the birth of Jesus. Also, angels appeared to call prophets, to call leaders, to call someone to the ministry, and to bring divine revelations. The Bible does not tell us that we should expect a visit from an angel for a common reason. There is no example in the Bible of anyone seeking an angel or praying for a visit from an angel. God has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us.

Hebrews 13:1-2 states: "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." You must be careful of how you deal with strangers. Some people teach that the day of miracles is over, but I do not believe that. You never know who might turn out to be an angel, but you should not place your hopes or your dreams in meeting an angel or in hearing from an angel. Your focus should be on the One who made the angels. You should get your mind and your affection on Christ, on reading God's Word, and on getting close to God.

First Peter 1:9-12 reads: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or

what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:9, "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." The world is looking at the Christian. The Bible teaches that the devil is a seducing spirit, deceiving many people with false teachings and false ideas to get people to depart from the faith. I want to stand for the Truth, live for God, preach the Truth, and contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Many ministers in our day and time once held the Bible standard and preached the Word of God, but they have sacrificed Truth for numbers and for money. I believe God's Word still works. God's way is the best way.

First Timothy 4:1-3 reads: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." False teachings and all kinds of unbiblical ideas are being taught. God wants people to study the Scriptures and to know the Word of Truth.

Perverting the Gospel

I am still standing for the old-fashioned Truth concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. I am still standing for being saved and for baptism. You cannot join the Church of God. You must be born into the church. Some people want to replace these fundamental tested and tried teachings of Christianity. Islam teaches that God revealed Himself to Mohammad by sending an angel with a message to recite what God prompted him to say. After his death, these speeches were put in a book called the "Holy Koran." I have good news for you, there is something stronger than the Koran (also spelled Quran), and it has been tried and tested. It is not a book that an angel recorded. It is the Book of what Jesus and God said.

Saint of God, people have sacrificed and died to enable us to enjoy this Truth, and God forbid that we should take it lightly. We cannot take the Truth for granted, and we ministers are responsible for preaching it to precious souls in the sight of God. Every person is very valuable to God. God's love is very strong for every individual. Therefore, we preachers need to be careful of how we deal with each soul.

The Mormons say that an angel named Moroni led Joseph Smith to the golden plates, which they say is the source material for the *Book of Mormon*. In 1830 Joseph Smith organized what is now known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Angels do not start churches. There is only one church, and I am happy to say that Jesus Christ built it, and Jesus Christ rules it. He did *not* say, "Upon this rock I will build my church*es*." In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Saint of God, we are on the winning side. We are the church that the gates of hell cannot prevail against.

We are in a battle, and though some soldiers might defect, the church is still marching on. The church is like the white horse going forth to conquer, spoken of in Revelation 6:2. You may not accept it, but the Church of God will be around when others are gone. God will always have a people. I am going to stay saved and stay with the Lord. You need to stay with the Lord, young person. The Church of God is going to march on. Dear one, do not let the school principal, a school bully, or anyone else take Jesus from you.

God took me through high school, and in my eleventh year of high school, I got saved. The principal of the high school saw the change in me. He said, "Calvin, on graduation day I want you to lead the group downtown." There is a big convention building downtown, and I was to lead the group with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. That might not seem like much to you, but to me it was a great honor to put my hand on my chest and lead them all in the pledge. When people get saved, a change takes place.

We must always compare new teachings with the teachings of the Bible and the Apostles in the New Testament. Again, Paul said in Galatians 1:6-7: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Some people want to mix the Gospel with people's ideas and opinions. They pervert the Gospel so they can draw in crowds, be accepted in the community, and have a good reputation. However, Paul said in verse 8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Paul wanted to make this point strong, so in verse 9 he repeated, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." People are having many deceptive spiritual experiences these days. Lying spirits are a reality in our world. People are having spiritual, lying experiences, but these experiences do not line up

with the Word of God. Some people speak in unknown tongues, fall on the floor, and foam at the mouth, but the Bible does not back up any of these behaviors.

"Let No Man Beguile You"

Paul said in Colossians 2:16-18: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."

Some people say, "I am so humble that I voluntarily bow down before God's angel and worship the angel." We are not supposed to worship angels. Jesus Christ is God's final, ultimate revelation. God is speaking to this world through Jesus Christ. Do not look for a superior revelation other than Jesus Christ. Do not look for any better religion than that of Jesus Christ. Do not look for a greater person than Christ to come along.

The Apostle Paul stated in Ephesians 1:21-23: "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come [His name is above every name]: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." We are the church, the body of Christ, and Christ is looking out for His body.

First John 4:1-3 reads: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world [we need to have the right attitude toward God's Truth]. 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." False religion preaches that an antichrist is going to come in the future, but John wrote that the spirit of antichrist had already come and was in the world in that day.

The Scriptures let us know that angels have been known to have awesome power. Second Samuel 24:15-16 reads: "So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite." When God tells the angels to do something, they do it.

God's Messengers

As we look at angels in the Book of Revelation in the symbolic sense, we find that angels are likened to messengers, or ministers of God. Revelation, Chapter 5, talks about strong angels; Revelation, Chapter 10, talks about mighty angels; and Revelation, Chapter 18, talks about another mighty angel, or minister. I like the fact that God has strong angels in His ministry throughout the world, and He places great responsibility upon their shoulders. Angels have been known to have some awesome power and influence.

We read in Acts 10:23-27: "Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together."

No true man of God will ever allow anyone to worship him. Peter did not allow it. In essence, Peter said: "I am a man just as you are. Do not worship me; worship God." We give honor to whom honor is due. We respect a man of God and respect the authority that he has, but we do not worship him. Many people are missing the respect that they ought to have for authority. They do not respect the school teachers, the judge in a court of law, the policeman, or the pastor. Many children need some old-fashioned home training. Daddy and Mommy used to use the rod of correction to instill respect when needed. I am not talking about child abuse, but God's way is the best way.

In some religions people idolize, or worship, the Virgin Mary; that is a teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. Catholicism teaches that Mary is omnipotent. First of all, that teaching ought to cause you to be alarmed, because to be omnipotent is to have the same power that God has, which is absolute power and authority. Roman Catholics teach that Mary is omnipotent in power and in mercy and that she is to be adored as the queen of Heaven and of angels. The Catholics say that Mary is called Mother of God, refuge of sinners, Gate of Heaven, Mother of mercy, and Spouse of the Holy Ghost. They pray to Mary. The truth is that Mary was as helpless as any other woman without the grace of God. God highly favored her and blessed her to bring forth Christ, but she was no more than the average woman. People are praying to dead saints, which implies that those dead saints have power equal to God.

Does the Bible teach that departed saints can hear prayer? The answer is no. Ecclesiastes 9:4-6

tells us: "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun."

If you want to know what someone thinks about something, you had better ask him while he is living. If you want to know what a person wants done when he is gone, you had better ask him while he is living, because after he is gone, he will not have anything else to do with this world. I am glad that God fixed it that way. I would not want anyone to bother me after I die.

Is there more than one mediator between man and God? The Bible tells us in 1 Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." John 14:6 states, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." You do not need to pray to Mary. You do not need to pray to anybody but Jesus Christ or God. When the disciples saw Jesus ascend up to Heaven, two men stood by them in white apparel and said to them in Acts 1:11, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The same Jesus that went up into Heaven is coming back for His saints. You need to think about that.

Jesus is coming back, but He is not coming back to be your Savior; He is coming back to be your judge. Second Thessalonians 1:8 says, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It does not matter who you are or what position you might have in a congregation—preacher, choir member, song leader—He is coming back to take vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the Word of God. You had better be sure that you are obeying God. If you are disobedient, you will be punished with everlasting destruction and removed from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

(Compact Disc TR-541M)

CAN YOU SEE JESUS?

Can you see Jesus in His love,
The One who came down from above,
Born into this world one dark night
To lead you and me into light?

Can you see Jesus in His sweetness?
Born as a man. He knew our weakness;
Came to this world from His heavenly
home,
Leaving His Father upon the throne.

Can you see Jesus in His power,
Filled with the Spirit every hour,
Treading this earth among sinful man,
Doing miracles on sea and on land?

Can you see Jesus as the light,
Healing the sick with power and might,
Causing the lame to walk, the blind to see,
And paving the way for you and me?

Can you see Jesus in His glory?
He gave to us this sweet story:
How He gave His life a ransom for all
Who will repent and on His dear name call.

Can you see Jesus in His beauty?
To live for Him is only our duty;
Seeking for souls we may help win
And save them from a life of sin.

Can you see Jesus in reality,
The One who died upon a tree,
Took on Himself our sin and shame
To save our soul, oh, praise His name?

Selected

Old-Fashioned Camp Meeting

Canby, Oregon

July 8-14

FIRST SERVICE MONDAY AT 7:00 P.M.

Two Services Daily
10:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

We Welcome Everyone

We extend a cordial invitation for you to come and worship the Lord with us!

For reservations contact:
Pastor E. David Stegmeier
103 Main St., Canby, OR 97013
Telephone (503) 266-9297

(Please make reservations in advance, if possible)

Why Go to Church?

God said in Deuteronomy 31:12, "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law."

There are many excuses one may give for not attending church and accepting Christ, but God has given in His Word the real reason. Isaiah 59:1-2 reads: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Your sin is the thing that keeps you from having fellowship with God and keeps you out of His church.

"Why do I have to go to church?" questioned a man to D. L. Moody. "Can't I be a Christian alone in my heart?" Without uttering a word Mr. Moody pulled a coal from an open grate in front of them, separated it from the rest of the coals, and as they sat there watching, the coal died. The man received the silent lesson. We are made for fellowship. Separated from the fellowship of contagious faith and fellow Christians, we will wither and die.

Don't Stay Away from Church

Because you are poor: there is no admission charge.
Because you are rich: we can help you cure that.
Because it rains: you go to work in the rain.
Because it is hot: so is the golf course.
Because it is cold: it's warm and friendly inside.
Because no one invited you: people go to the movies without being asked.
Because you have little children: What if you didn't any longer have them?
Because you don't like the preacher: he's human like you.
Because your job makes you tired: you may lose your job.
Because you have company: they will admire your loyalty if you bring them along or tell them to wait until you get back.

Because you need a little weekend vacation occasionally: if your soul takes a vacation from God, it's not good.
Because your clothes are not expensive: the church isn't supposed to be a fashion show anyway.
Because our church standard is too high: take a look at the Bible standard.
Because you have plenty of time ahead of you to get saved: are you sure?

Selected

GOD'S WORD SAYS

"*Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is . . . and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching*" *(Hebrews 10:25).*

"*For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness*" *(Psalm 84:10).*

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

Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Ye must be born again" (John 3:3, 7).

Belief on Christ, forsaking your sins, and receiving Him will save you.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).

Please, Daddy, Let's Go!

A little girl with shining eyes,
Her little face aglow,
Said: "Daddy, it is almost time
For Sunday school. Let's go!
They teach us there of Jesus' love,
Of how He died for all
Upon the cruel Cross to save
Those who on Him will call."

"Oh, no!" said Daddy, "not today.
I've worked hard all this week,
And I must have one day of rest.
I'm going to the creek,
For there I can relax and rest,
And fishing's fine they say.
So run along, don't bother me.
We'll go to church some day."

Months and years passed away,
But Daddy hears that plea no more:
"Let's go to Sunday school."
These childhood days are o'er.
And now that Daddy's growing old,
When life is almost through,
He finds the time to go to church,
But what does daughter do?

She says, "Oh, Daddy, not today,
I stayed up most all night,
And I've just got to have some sleep.
Besides, I look a fright."
Then daddy lifts a trembling hand
To brush away his tears.
Again, he hears the pleading voice
Distinctly through the years.

He sees a small girl's shining face
Upturned, with eyes aglow,
As she says, "It's time for Sunday school.
Please, Daddy, won't you go?"
He remembers how he told her no,
He had not time, you know,
Now she follows in his steps,
Her eyes no longer glow.

Selected

Children need strength to lean on and an example to learn from.

Spring Camp Meeting
June 16-23

We welcome you to attend our old-fashioned camp meeting at God's Acres, Newark, Ohio

Three Services Daily: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
(The afternoon service will be a teaching service.)

We have special services for the children, youth services, morning prayer services, inspirational singing, Holy Ghost preaching, divine healing, and fellowship with the saints.

The saints of God prepare hot, delicious meals and freshly baked desserts in a large, air-conditioned dining hall. Meals are reasonably priced. Snack stand will be open after the evening services. Rooms, dormitories, book store, and so much more.

We invite you to bring your Bible and come to hear anointed men of God preach the Truth.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith."

For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker
740-344-2543 or 1-888-730-0461

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