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Holiness Writers

GOD'S MELTING POT

By

Raymond Browning

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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PREFACE

My jewel of a wife, my children, and many friends have urged me for a long time to have some of my sermons published. They may not be so insistent after they have read this one.

However, this is a sermon that I have often preached in revivals and camp meetings and God has used it to encourage the faith of many people who were undergoing fiery trials. More than this, the story I shall tell of the miraculous healing of my only son who was so sorely afflicted with a malady thought to be incurable brings hope and faith to many brokenhearted people. I have tried to write this message in the same direct manner in which I preach it, minus some of the detours and illustrations that often creep into a sermon that an evangelist is accustomed to use frequently.

Now that it is written, I look over the pages and think of Ezekiel viewing the valley of dry bones. But I am praying that the same Holy Spirit who quickened those dry bones into a mighty army may put life and power into this simple message and make it a blessing to many people whom I may never see until we gather to that great Camp Meeting in the Skies.

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(Romans 8:28)

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In the Middle Ages men tried to develop a curious art which was called alchemy. They thought they could discover a stone or a substance which they called the "philosopher's stone." They believed it would have the magical power of transmuting baser metals such as lead, copper, and others into pure gold. They were never able to find it, but I am happy to report that God's children have discovered something far better. It is a divine formula by which all the trials and sorrows and misfortunes of human life can be transmuted into the tried gold of Christian character. This formula is given in Romans 8:28 and I have chosen to call it God's Melting Pot.

For more than a quarter of a century nearly every time I have signed my name I have Written under it "Romans 8:28." Businessmen, bank employees, hotel clerks, and friends everywhere have noticed this unusual signature and have gone to their Bibles to read this wonderful verse of scripture with interest and often with blessing. Later I shall tell just why this particular verse has been associated with my name.

However, before discussing this text let us go back for a few moments and look at two verses that precede it. In Romans 8:26 we read, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as We ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Many times the children of God have had much dryness and difficulty in prayer and Satan has suggested to them that their prayers did not amount to anything, and that in the multitude of prayers that ascend to heaven their petitions were either lost or unnoticed. But God has a repository for the prayers of His children. They are not filed away in some obscure place in heaven. Revelation 5:8 tells how "the four beasts [creatures] and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours [incense], which are the prayers of saints."

One of these days when we arrive in heaven we will remember an hour of trial down here when we prayed and the earth seemed like iron and the heavens brass and the tempter said, "God did not hear you." Then you will go to the angel who is the custodian of those prayers and say, "Angel, could I see that prayer I prayed in the hour of great trial?" When he takes it out of the golden bowl it will be so beautiful that you will say, "Angel, you've made a mistake. This must be a prayer that Jesus prayed or one that Paul prayed." He will say, "No, this is your prayer. Here's your Amen right on it." But you will say, "Angel, I never could have prayed anything so beautiful as that." Then he will smile and say, "Well, it wasn't just like this when you prayed it, but don't you remember that the Spirit made intercession?" To intercede means to go between. "When you prayed, the Holy Spirit went between you and the throne. He took out of your prayer everything that was unworthy, and He put into it everything it needed to beautify and adorn it. By the time it reached heaven it was so beautiful that God told us to put it in the golden bowl where He could enjoy it forever." When I think of this I am encouraged to pray more. Our prayers are more precious than we dream.

Now in the next verse, the twenty-seventh, We see that there is a measure for our prayers. Just as we have weights and measures for various things of this life, God has a measure for our prayers. That measure reads, "According to the will of God." Many things that seem so good and so desirable and many things that are allowed to other people may not be in God's will for you at all. We should be careful not to pray beyond the will of God nor below it; but when we have prayed our best, then remember to use the yardstick and say, "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done."

Here we have come again to our text in verse 28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." What a wonderful jewel is this! Here is a pasture where our souls can feed and lie down and rest, a star of hope that shines brightly above the wilderness of human difficulties, a shield that will stand the shock of ten thousand conflicts, a balm that will heal all the bruises, and a staff that will steady our faltering steps when we come down to the valley of the shadow.

Paul said, "We know"; and, thank God, there are some things that we can most surely know. All the radio broadcasting stations of the world would be useless if there were no receiving sets. God has put into every human breast the receiving set of faith, so that we can tune in on heaven and know the will of our Heavenly Father. Let us see how it operates.

One night on the old Mediterranean Sea a ship was wallowing in a storm. The sails had been blown to pieces. The masts were broken and the rigging lay tangled on the deck. Two hundred and seventy-six people were aboard. Fourteen days and nights the sky had been black with clouds, and now hope was almost abandoned. I can see the master of the vessel descend the ladder into the hold of the vessel where the frightened passengers are crowded. I can hear him say: "Men and women, I'm sorry to tell you, but it looks like we are going down. The sailors have done their best, but we can never ride out this storm."

Over on one side of the room there is a table where a flickering candle burns and casts a light on the white hair of an old man who sits beside it. He looks at the captain and says, "Sir, I have good news for you." "Good news?" asked the captain. "What do you mean?" Then Paul said (for it was the great apostle who was on board), "Be of good courage. This ship is going to make it to land, and every man and woman on board will be saved." The captain said, "Sir, have you ever sailed a ship?" "No." "Do you know our latitude and longitude?" "No." "Do you realize that most of these passengers cannot swim?" "Yes." "And yet you think these people are going to make to shore?" Paul said, "I know they are going to make it." Then the captain said, "Sir, how do you know this?" Paul said, "I've just received a wireless message." Well, he didn't really call it that, but that's what it was. He said, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." And now, if you want to know just what real faith is, just look at the next verse, "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." It does not say that Paul wept or laughed or shouted. It would not have been out of place to do all three, but Paul did say, "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

There is nothing more contagious than holy laughter, nothing sweeter than sympathetic tears, and nothing more encouraging than the shouting of the sanctified. But our faith must rest at last, if it rests

at all, on the unchanging and unchangeable Word of God. God said it; therefore it must be true, and I am going to believe it and live accordingly. This is faith.

Though great trials are ahead
That would fill my soul with dread,
I mean to keep believing just the same.
I know God will take me through,
For His promises are true.
I mean to keep believing just the same.

But to continue the story, you will remember how next day the captain of that vessel sighted land, then tried to ram his ship into the mouth of a certain creek. The ship ran aground and began to break up. Then those who could swim cast themselves into the sea and swam ashore, and the rest on boards and broken pieces of the ship managed to get to land. I can see Paul going around counting them. "Two hundred and seventy-three, two hundred and seventy-four, two hundred and seventy-five, two hundred and seventy-six -- thank the Lord, they are all safe."

It's mighty good insurance to have a good holiness believer on board in times like these. I firmly believe that it is the holiness believers of this earth that are holding back the flood of divine judgment from this wicked land. If it were not for the tears and the prayers of the sanctified, I honestly believe that these United States, flooded with liquor, reeking with tobacco, corrupted by immorality, red with lawlessness, and mocking things divine, would perish like Sodom and Gomorrah in the flames of God's wrath.

We notice that the apostle said that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." He did not say that all things work together for good to everybody. If you think that, you might as well forget it, because it isn't true. God is under no obligation to make anything turn out well for the wicked. If He does do it -- and often He does -- it is because of His amazing mercy. In this life we often see the wicked and the worldly prosper, and good people have to be careful lest they be disturbed by the prosperity of the wicked. Better people than we are have sometimes been troubled at this point. Even King David was disturbed by it and he said, "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." "Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish." "They are not in trouble as other men." Thus David was tempted to doubt the goodness of God, but one day he found the answer. Where do you suppose he found it? He said, "I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." That's a fine place to find the answer to your problems. Go to church and worship there. Listen to what David learned. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction."

The prosperity of the wicked has long since ceased to puzzle me. They are living for just one world. Many people in the earth are just as surely lost as though they were already in hell and the door locked and the key flung into the abyss of eternal night. They have refused the mercy of God and trampled the blood of Jesus beneath their feet and have grieved the Holy Ghost until God has given them up. They have passed the boundary of forgiveness and never will be saved. This world is the only heaven they will ever know, and God is letting them get what pleasure they can out of this

one life, and they are draining it to the bitter dregs. But, thank the Lord, we do not get all our wages on Saturday night nor gather all our crop in the fall. God has some better thing laid up for His children. We have best things of this life, as well as the hope of the life to come.

On the other hand, God does put himself under peculiar obligation to make all things work out well for "them who are the called." This brings us to the thought of our calling. In the opening verses of Romans and First Corinthians we see that we are called to be "saints." We are not called to be angels or archangels or cherubim or seraphim; but we are called to sainthood, which is a most wonderful thing. For instance, when God allowed John to stand on the mountain peak of revelation and view the vast panorama of prophecy, all of a sudden John's attention was attracted to a vast army of people clad in spotless white, marching across the plains of heaven. They were so beautiful that John forgot the walls of jasper, the streets of gold, the music of angelic choirs, and all the rest. He wanted to know who these shining ones were. Did the angel say, "John, these are the ancient inhabitants of heaven who never even heard the whisper of sin, and that is why they are so beautiful and spotless"? He did not. He said: "John, these are men and women who used to live down yonder in that sad earth. Their names were not inscribed among the great. They often had to wear the shabby clothes and eat the homely fare. They were neglected, criticized, misunderstood, elbowed out of the way, and often cruelly mistreated. But they held fast to the faith and trampled temptations beneath their feet and fought on toward the city of God. One day they laid down shields that had borne the shock of ten thousand conflicts, let fall the swords from weary hands, staggered across the gateway of heaven, and fell into the arms of a mighty Saviour. He kissed away their tear stains, clothed them in white robes, and set them in that army." "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Praise the Lord! That's our crowd, and we are to be numbered among the saints.

At this point let me say that I believe with all my heart in regeneration, and I believe with all my heart in entire sanctification. I believe that regeneration is a birth and that sanctification is a baptism. We are first born into the kingdom of God and then we are to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. These two experiences are not simultaneous. Birth must precede baptism. Also I believe that these two experiences of divine grace are instantaneous, at least from the divine side. For instance, suppose I enter a dark room and begin to feel around the wall for the electric light switch. Perhaps my eyes are closed for fear that I might bump into something. I push the switch and instantly the light is on. My eyes are shut, and I do not get the fullness of the light until I open my eyes. The approach to the light was gradual and the realization of it was gradual, but the instant the contact was made the light was on. I have seen sinners tarry and weep around the altar of prayer for long periods of time; but the moment the last sin was confessed and forsaken and faith gripped the promise, God freely forgave. The realization came to some like a flash of light and to others as gradually as daybreak, but God's part of the transaction was instantaneous. Also I have seen people seeking to be sanctified wholly. Sometimes it was a long and arduous struggle; but the moment the last reservation went on the altar and consecration was complete, God answered. "The altar . . . sanctifieth the gift." To some the realization came suddenly and to others it dawned gradually. But, thank God, it came, and all who received it had the same glorious blessing.

Some will ask if there is anything beyond these two experiences of divine grace. There certainly is. Do we believe in a third blessing? No, we believe in two mighty works of divine grace with both

of them still working. After a person has been saved and sanctified, there remains the thing of growth in grace. The person who was sanctified a week ago may have more enthusiasm than someone who was sanctified ten years ago. But, if the one who was sanctified ten years ago has been faithful and walked in the light, he has some things the other person doesn't have and may not have until he has walked with God for ten years. The building of a well-rounded, steadfast, fruitful Christian character is not the work of a moment. This requires time and effort and trial and suffering. For instance, the only way to acquire patience is through suffering. We are told the "trial of your faith worketh patience." It takes time for you to become established in the confidence of the people who have known you in the days when you were not wholly given to God. Sometimes there are faults and mistakes for which we must be chastened. The Bible plainly says, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and also it says, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." It takes a lot of cutting and grinding and polishing for even the purest diamond to give out its lovely prismatic lights.

Here are our great comfort and confidence. After we have been saved and sanctified, and begin to travel on the highway of the will of God then He gives us the promise that not one thing can happen to us but that He will work it out for our good and His glory. Here's where the "all things" begin to work together. Someone will say, "But I make so many mistakes!" Friends, if our God cannot overrule mistakes, you and I might just as well give up and quit. The Psalmist said, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." "He shall bring it to pass." That is the great secret. God takes the responsibility for the committed and trusting heart. This brings to my heart a great joy and a great confidence.

I would not want to presume on the goodness and mercy of God. But, on the other hand, I sincerely believe that if I am in His will and use just ordinary judgment and precaution Satan with all his power cannot hasten me out of this world one moment sooner than the Lord wants me to go. In other words, if we abide in the will of God we are immortal until our work is done. When I get into a car I usually bow my head and ask the Lord to care for me, and then I am not fidgety nor nervous nor imagining that trouble is around every turn of the road. There's a lot of comfort in those words of David's, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."

Some time ago I was returning from a visit to my son, who is a Nazarene missionary in Belize, British Honduras. A gentleman was sitting beside me on the big plane as we were flying over the Gulf of Mexico. He was very talkative and pleasant. All of a sudden he looked out of the window and said, "Look. Look. Do you see that?" I said, "What is it?" He said, "One of those propellers has stopped. Do you suppose they will be able to get it started again?" I said, "Well, really I wouldn't know." Then I took my New Testament out of my pocket and turned to Romans 8:28 and said to the gentleman, "If you believed what I believe, you wouldn't worry about that propeller," and I read the passage to him. I said: "I prayed before I got aboard this plane; and if the Lord wants me to get to New Orleans, We'll make it if we have to go in on three propellers or two or one. If the Lord doesn't want me to get back, then this place is as near to heaven as any place I've ever been and it's all right with me."

Somehow this did not seem to comfort the gentleman at all. He kept watching that propeller. After about two hours we were approaching the Louisiana shore. The sun had set and the lights in the distance were sparkling like fireflies. All of a sudden that propeller started up, and my friend was able to talk again. The children of God find wonderful comfort in those words of the Psalmist, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

We will note a few examples of how "all things work together for good." Moses had led the children of Israel for forty years, and at last they had come to the border of the Promised Land. Then the Lord took Moses up into a mountain and let him view the wonderful panorama west of the Jordan River. Some time before this the Lord had told Moses that he was not going to cross over the Jordan. Apparently Moses had set his heart on going. I can hear him pleading with the Lord and saying: "Lord, please let me cross over. This has been my hope and ambition and my heart's desire for forty years. All these years I have borne with these Israelites as a mother with fretful children, and I have dreamed of the happy hour when I would lead them into the glorious land of promise. Please, Lord, let me lead them over." Sometimes God ends our pleadings with finality. He said to Moses, "Speak no more unto me of this matter." Moses covered his face with his hands and wept. Just remember that these mighty heroes of the past were still human beings. Then I can imagine God saying to the angelic hosts: "There is a tired child down the road. He has had a long journey and is weary, and I am going down to meet him and bring him home." He fanned the face of the weeping prophet with a gentle breeze, and Moses nodded, and God slipped His great, almighty arms underneath him and rocked him to sleep as tenderly as a mother ever rocked her child. Then God laid him to rest.

Eighteen hundred years slipped by and one day Jesus went on a mountaintop to pray; and as He prayed He was transfigured and the mountaintop was illuminated by His presence. All of a sudden in that brightness there appeared two men from heaven. One was Elijah and the other Moses. There stood Moses on shining feet right in the middle of the Promised Land. If we could have spoken to him and said, "Moses, wasn't it pretty hard not to be able to go over Jordan that time?" he would have answered and said, "Well, I thought so then; but I came the best route, and God's way is always the best way."

Again we will observe Daniel, to whom Gabriel once said, "Thou art greatly beloved." All of us are familiar with the story of the trap laid by his enemies. Those wicked men in Babylon persuaded King Darius to sign a decree forbidding any man to make a petition to any god or man except the king, and the penalty for disobedience was to be cast into the den of lions. But Daniel did not cease to pray, nor did he even close his windows so that he might not be seen at his devotions. When Daniel knew that he had been condemned to be cast into the den of lions, doubtless he wept. These Old Testament heroes were, nevertheless, human beings with feelings and emotions like other people. I can imagine Daniel talking to the Lord and saying: "Lord, this is an awful death for Thy servant to have to die. If they were going to hang me on a scaffold or burn me at a stake, it wouldn't be so bad. But to be fed to those mangy lions like a piece of carrion, that's a terrible thing. But, Lord, I've gone too far now to be turning back and quitting the fight, and if this is the next thing on the program just give me courage to face it."

He called his servant and said, "Get my best robe and put it on me." The servant asked, "Master, are you going to stand before the king today?" He replied, "Yes, but not the one you are thinking about." The servant put the robe on Daniel, and then the officers of the law came and took Daniel to the den of lions and opened the big iron gate and pushed him inside. Daniel fell on his knees and began to pray and waited for the shock that never came. A big lion came padding softly up near Daniel and stretched out for a nap. Daniel opened his eyes and stroked the old lion's mane and relaxed and smiled. Just then another big lion came over and nudged the first one and said in his lion language, "What's the matter with you? Go ahead and bite the fellow." Old Leo said, "You bite him. I've got the lockjaw."

One of these days when we reach heaven we will say to Daniel, "Wasn't it pretty hard to have to go to the lions' den?" He will smile and say: "I thought so then, but don't you see how my example put courage into millions of timid and fearful people? I would not have missed the opportunity for anything. God's way is always the best way and the happiest."

We see this not only in the Bible but also in Christian biography. There was John Bunyan, the preacher and also the author of many books, who is chiefly remembered as the author of the immortal *Pilgrim's Progress*. John Bunyan was imprisoned in Bedford jail for preaching this same truth of full salvation that we now preach. His persecutors said: "Now, John, when you learn to read your prayers out of the prayer book, and be safe and sane and cautious like the rest of the ministry, we'll turn you out of jail. But you've got to get some sense into that gourd-head of yours."

Twelve years in prison seemed a strange providence for this humble man of God, but now we can see clearly the hand of the Lord in it all. This was God's method of giving John Bunyan a congregation that would reach down across the intervening years and stretch around the world. Wherever the Bible has gone, soon *Pilgrim's Progress* appears on the scene.

If John Bunyan had lived in this restless day he doubtless would have done many good things, but he would hardly have written *Pilgrim's Progress*. I can imagine him in his study some morning and the first beautiful thought about this allegory has come into his mind. Suddenly there's a knock at the door. His wife calls to him, "O John, someone wishes to see you." "Yes, dear. I'm coming." Half an hour later he is back in his study. "Now what was that beautiful thought I had a while ago? Oh, yes, I remember now." "Ting-a-ling" goes the telephone. "John Bunyan speaking. Yes, sister, yes. No, not Wednesday. The missionary society will meet Thursday. No, not two o'clock. Three o'clock. I announced it Sunday morning. You were not there? Oh, I beg pardon. You were there but just didn't get it. You're welcome. Good-by." He turns to his writing again. "Now what was that idea I had? Let me see." John Bunyan might have done a lot of good things, but I seriously doubt that he ever could have written *Pilgrim's Progress*.

More than this, we have seen things work together for good in the lives of the good people we have known. Many years ago there was a brilliant young Methodist district superintendent named John M. Pike living in Nova Scotia. He heard Rev. John Inskip, the famous blacksmith evangelist, of Wilmington, Delaware, preaching, and got sanctified wholly. Not long after that he developed tuberculosis. Friends said to him, "Brother Pike, if you would go down to the pine woods of South

Carolina you might get well." He and his wife sold out their few belongings and moved to South Carolina. He joined the conference and they appointed him to a church in a small town.

When he arrived, sad to relate, nobody met him at the train and no members greeted them at the parsonage. When he saw that parsonage, it was most depressing. The pigs had rooted up the yard. The pickets were off the fence, and the little bad boys in the neighborhood had broken out most of the windowpanes. He and his wife put up their stove in the kitchen and patched up the broken windows with cardboard and made things as comfortable as possible. They did not have enough money to buy new windowpanes for the bedroom, so they put up their bed and piled all the covers they had on the one bed. That night the sleet and snow fell, and the north wind blew through that bedroom where they were sleeping. Of course John Pike might have said: "This is Southern hospitality. I'm going back to Nova Scotia, where they know how to treat a pastor and his wife." He might have said that, but he didn't. He had the blessing of holiness and believed that his Heavenly Father would somehow work things out for good.

I wasn't there that night, but I believe I know what happened. I haven't fought the devil nearly a half a century for nothing, and I know something of his strategy. I can imagine him going around to the north side of the house and saying: "This fellow, John Pike, caused me a lot of trouble in Nova Scotia. When I knew he was moving to South Carolina, I made the little boys knock out those windowpanes. They thought they were doing it just to hear the glass rattle, but I know why they did it." Friends, you may smile at this, but I sincerely believe that all the wickedness of this whole earth is directed by this master strategist. He said: "Now I've got this holiness crank where I want him, and I'm going to give him pneumonia tonight and let him die, and I'll have another soldier off the battlefield." I can see Satan begin to sprinkle the pneumonia germs in that draft that swept through the window, but there was one difficulty about his plan. That same breeze had to blow across this text, Romans 8:28, and that strained the germs out. Next morning John Pike said to his wife, "Dear, I feel better."

They did not have money for the new windowpanes and kept sleeping in that open room. He continued to improve, and then he discovered that the thing that he needed chiefly was fresh air; and, believe me, he was getting it I do not excuse those church members, and I hope none of them went to hell because of the way they neglected their pastor and his wife. But it showed that God could overrule and make "all things work together." When I knew Brother Pike he was editor of the Way of Faith and superintendent of the Oliver Gospel Mission in Columbia, South Carolina. He had founded a rescue home for wayward girls in that city and had been running it for long years. We walked down the street together and, although he was then past eighty years of age, I had to step lively to keep up with him.

These things I have told you that I might tell you something else. You and I may have seen the easiest days we shall ever see, and as we face the future we need to face it with hope. There may be dark hours and bitter trials ahead for us, but the assurance that "all things work together for good" will be a shield in every conflict; or as we read in Proverbs, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." As we look back over past experiences, we can see some things that we once thought were too grievous to be borne; but when we looked to the Lord, He gave us grace to endure, and now we can see that these very experiences were the things that lifted us.

There is an old Eastern fable that when God first made the birds He made them without wings. They hopped about on the ground and were happy for a while. Then one day an angel flew down and put wings on all the birds and they quit singing. They chirped disconsolately and said, "We used to be so happy, but now we've got to carry these heavy wings all the time." One little fellow tried to shake his wings off and they lifted him, and he flew to the treetop and burst into song. All the others quickly joined him, and the feathered choir filled the forest with their happy melody. What they thought were burdens were just the things that gave them freedom and joy.

I did not get married until I was nearly thirty-three years old, and my first child was a boy. To me he was a wonderful little fellow, and naturally I hoped he would someday become a preacher of the gospel. One day he got out in the street, and a big car roared by and almost struck him. That day I told my wife we were going to move to the country. We managed to get a small farm in the mountains of North Carolina near the town of Hendersonville, and there the children had plenty of room to play without danger of being run over by a car.

My boy seemed well and strong until he was nearly seven years old. One day he developed a sort of twitching of the muscles in one side of his face, but he was soon over it and we thought little about it at the time. Some months later I had to make an evangelistic tour in Texas and Louisiana and was away from home for some time. Just before finishing my last revival meeting in Louisiana I received a letter from my wife, the saddest letter she ever wrote to me. She said: "Ray, there is something I cannot keep from you any longer. We have an afflicted child. After you left home our precious boy suddenly developed strange spells and they have grown steadily worse. I have taken him to the doctor here and to the specialists in Asheville. They have taken X rays and have given him all kinds of tests. Finally they told me that our boy has what is known to medical science as Jacksonian epilepsy, and for this affliction there is no cure. My heart is simply broken, and I don't see how I am going to stand this." The night that followed seemed a hundred years long. I wept and prayed and tossed on the bed and could not sleep.

When I got home a few days later, my boy looked perfectly well and strong. But next morning I was tired and slept rather late. I was awakened by the sound of weeping, and my wife came running into the room carrying the boy in her arms. She laid him beside me on the bed. His eyes were crossed, his teeth clenched, and his body was as rigid as a piece of wood. I ran my fingers over his pulse and couldn't feel the trace of a heartbeat, and I thought he was dead. In that moment it seemed to me I could have buried him easier than to see him live to be hopelessly afflicted.

No one knows just what anxiety we suffered during the months that followed. Every time that boy stirred in his sleep Wife would be out of bed, thinking perhaps he was having another of those spells. The doctors, the osteopaths, the chiropractors, and the dietitians all worked on him; but he grew steadily worse until he was having as many as three attacks a day, and they were getting more violent. One day the little fellow climbed up into my lap and put his arms around my neck and kissed me and said, "Daddy, please don't make me go to school." I said, "Son, your daddy wants his little boy to learn things like other children." He said, "Daddy, can't I stay home and let Mother teach me my lessons? Someday I'll have one of these spells at school and the children will all laugh at me; and, Daddy, I just can't stand that. Please don't make me go to school." My heart ached and I didn't know what to answer.

Some days later the doctor gave me a prescription for him, and I questioned the druggist and found out that it contained a powerful drug that I feared might blunt my boy's mind, and I refused to give it to him. Then Wife broke down and wept and said, "Ray, what are we going to do? We've tried everything, and nothing does my child any good. He's just getting worse all the time." I said, "Dear, we haven't tried everything." She said, "What is it that we haven't tried?" I said, "I know two things. We haven't fasted yet and we haven't had him anointed."

Friends, we cannot say we have done our best until we have followed all the directions the Bible gives concerning any one thing. We appointed a day for fasting and prayer, and I got a few choice friends to agree to fast and pray with us. That is one day I'll never forget. I left home and went over the hill back of our place and threw myself on the leaves underneath a tree and wept and prayed before the Lord. That was one time at least when I really got hold of the horns of the altar. The hours went by, and suddenly my tears ceased to flow and the burden lifted from my heart. I got up and started down the hillside to my house. Wife saw me coming and met me in the back yard and put her arms around me. I said, "Dear, I don't understand it but the burden has lifted." She said, "Ray, after you left I went into my room, lay down on the floor on my face, and prayed, and just a few minutes ago the burden lifted."

Evening came and the friends arrived. We sat around the old open fireplace in the sitting room and I explained to the little fellow what this was all about and asked him if he wished to be anointed and prayed for. He got down out of my lap without a word and pushed his little rocking chair into the middle of the room and knelt down. We knelt around him and put the olive oil on his head and laid hands on him and prayed for him. As the friends were leaving, the preacher who anointed him said, "Brother Browning, you are going to be sorely tried; but hold fast with your faith, and I believe God will heal your boy."

A few days later he had the most hideous attack that ever came to him. Wife said, "Ray, shall I give him some medicine?" I said, "No, we gave him medicine and it never did him any good. We are going to leave him in the hands of God."

The following Sunday I was asked to preach, and I went to the church with a heavy heart. When I stood up to speak I said: "Friends, I have been asked to preach this morning. Since then I have been able to see but one verse in the Bible. I have never preached from it, and I don't know whether I can or not. But I want to say that I believe this verse with every fiber of my faith. If my afflicted son should get well, I'll believe it. But if he should die a maniac in an asylum, I will believe it still, for this is God's Word. This is my text." Then I read Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Within the two weeks that followed, my boy had two light attacks, as though the devil was trying to annoy us and shake our faith. Then the attacks disappeared entirely. More than twenty-seven years have passed by, and there has been no return of this trouble. My son is now one of our Nazarene missionaries in British Honduras. Before he and his wife and little girl left for the field I heard him preach a sermon in which he said: "One of the early recollections of my life is a time when the doctors were going to take X ray pictures of me in the hospital. They were putting sandbags around me, and I lay there on the table too frightened to speak. Then one of them told my mother that I was

an afflicted child and would never be any better, and that broke my heart. But," he continued, "I had a father and mother who believed God and believed in prayer, and they fasted and prayed for me and had me anointed, and that's why I'm well and strong and in the ministry today." Well, glory to God!