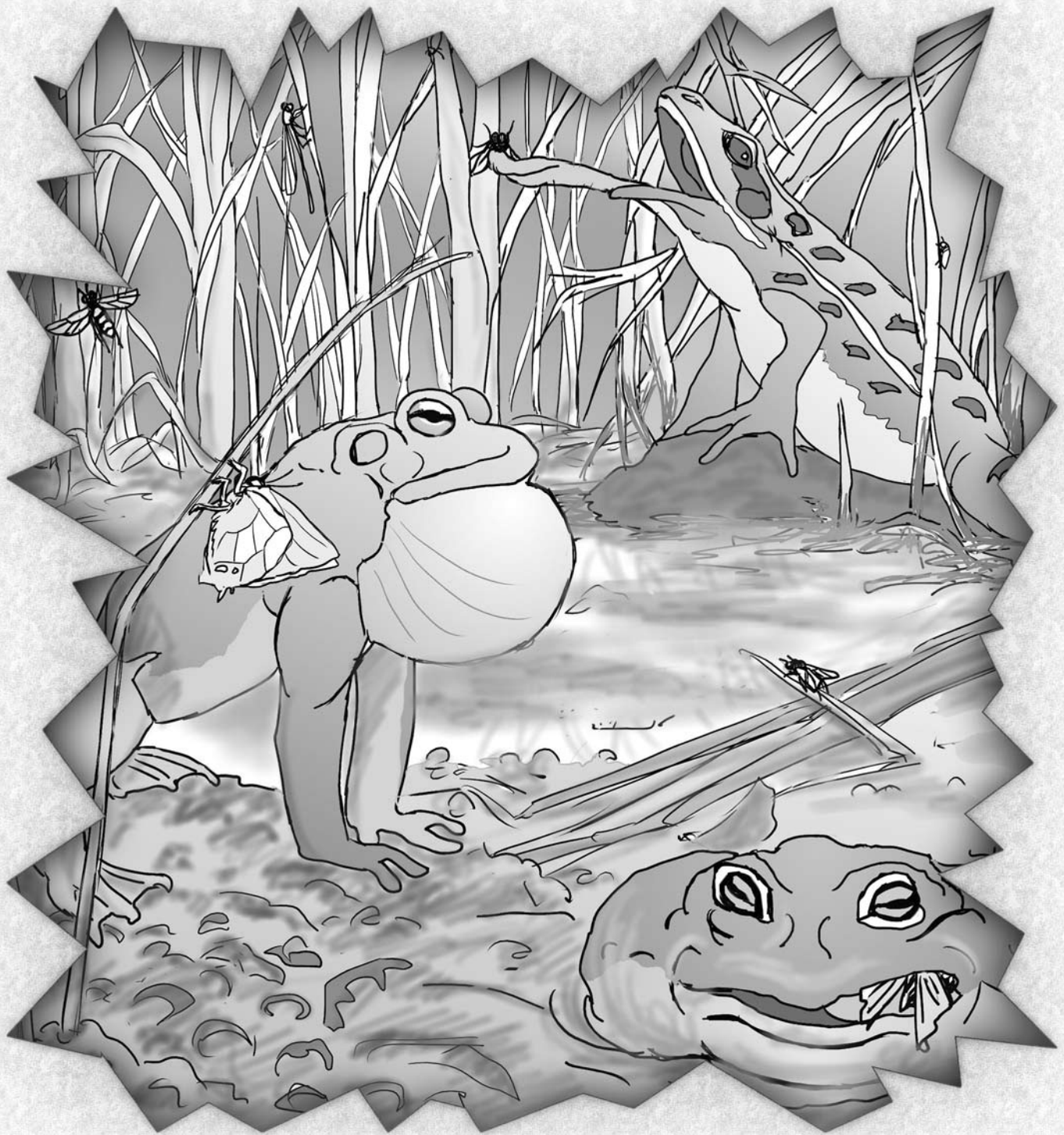


FOUNDATION TRUTH

*Number 19
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“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs.” (Rev. 16:13)

Dear Reader

Recently, for the first time in my life, I was called for jury duty. The procedure where we live involves reporting to a large jury room at the county courthouse on a given morning. While waiting there, we were shown a video about the value of trial by jury and the responsibility of jury members. Shortly after that, a number of us (48, I believe), were called to report for a particular trial (I believe there were two criminal trials scheduled that day). We were carefully organized into a priority sequence (I was about 40th), and then led into a court room, where the first twelve sat in the jury seats, and the rest of us were lined up on benches where spectators normally sit. The judge, the defense and prosecuting attorneys, and the defendant were there. We were told what the case was about, and then we were asked a number of questions that pertained to whether we knew each other, the defendant, either of the attorneys, and then various feelings and opinions we had that might bear on how objective we might be in the case involved. After deliberating in private for a little while, the attorneys and judge returned to the room and the jurors for the case were announced. I was excused, most likely because the needed quota was selected before they got to me.

The Lord had been talking to me before and during this experience, and although I was grateful to the Lord to be excused from being in the position to have to decide the innocence or guilt of the defendant of his alleged crime, I prayed with a burden on my heart through the time I was there and afterwards that the Lord would enable truth to come out, and the correct judgment made. I was mindful that an error either way (found guilty when innocent, or considered innocent when guilty) would greatly hinder both the defendant and their supposed victim in their lives.

As I continued to meditate on the subject of judgment, and of God's righteous judgments, the Lord brought before me the wisdom He gave to King Solomon to render wise and righteous judgment.

In the incident you will find in 1 Kings 3:16-28, the king got to the truth of the matter (who was the real mother of the living child) in such a way as to awaken the highest and best motivations in the mother of the child. This woman (and the other, too) had been living low, immoral lives, but the unselfish mother's love of the true mother of the child was stirred by the process the king used to get to the truth.

We are not told the rest of her story, but it is a precious thought that the Lord not only returned her child to her, but stirred her very best instincts and motives in the process. Did she get stirred enough to seek the Lord's help to live a better life after this? At the very least, we can say that the Lord was giving her the best chance possible to do so. It is also true that the correct judgment stirred the people of Israel favorably. "*They feared the king*"—not in the sense that he was mean and likely to abuse them, but that the same respect and awe that stirs people to live better when we say "the fear of God is upon them," was present in some measure when they considered their earthly judge.

The Lord wants us to exercise judgment in such a way that stirs people to live better, and gives any who hunger to live better a hope, and gives those who are inclined to evil a restraint. It is impossible to do this without submitting our own selves to the righteous judgments of God, and leaning on Him when we must exercise judgment with others.

Love and prayers,
The Editor



About Us

We want to be of assistance to those who desire to live for God and make heaven their home, and we want to work with the Holy Spirit in stirring and awakening all others to the great necessity of doing so.

Foundation Truth is meant to be of general interest, but different articles may be of particular interest to different members of the family (which we attempt to indicate in the table of contents), but we look to the Lord for direction on what to include, and the structure may vary from issue to issue.

We publish *Foundation Truth* by faith, its only support being free-will offerings that God lays on the hearts of His children to keep this ministry supplied. If the Lord lays it on your heart to contribute, please make out any checks or money orders to Richard Erickson—we have difficulty depositing any monies made out to *Foundation Truth*.

Address correspondence to:

Foundation Truth
P.O. Box 1212
Jefferson, Oregon 97352
ft@timelesstruths.org

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TIMELESS TRUTHS PUBLICATIONS was founded with the purpose of spreading the timeless truths revealed in God's Word. We publish literature that encourages folks in walking the straight and narrow road that leads to heaven. Our chief corner-stone is Jesus, and with our focus on Him, we try to avoid putting too much attention on any person or persons. If you are interested in knowing more about us and what we believe, feel free to contact us.

In addition to *Foundation Truth*, we also publish *Treasures of the Kingdom*, "Casting Up a Highway for the Children of This Generation," a quartely magazine for children ages five to ten.

Back issues of our periodicals, including the former *Dear Princess* magazine, are available at our website, timelesstruths.org, as well as a growing collection of hymn sheet music and online books, tracts, articles and sermons.

Timeless Truths Publications
P.O. Box 1212
Jefferson, Oregon 97352
mail@timelesstruths.org

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edited by Rick Erickson and others

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And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

—Revelation 5:1-10

THE WORD OF TRUTH

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. - 2 Tim. 2:15

Life of the Body

How is godliness demonstrated?

“But the people were not examples of the power that God endues.”*

How is this power that God gives to be “demonstrated” (for lack of a better term, please) by a congregation? (Some dance, others sway forwards and backwards, some fall on the ground and foam at the mouth, others clap hands, etc, etc. I do not think this is what you mean.) What should a spiritual man be expecting to see and experience in a real godly congregation?

Reply:

No, physical action is not what I mean. The entire point of the gospel is to live a holy life. A man or woman who is living a holy life is not distinguished by their enthusiasm or zeal, their words, or their actions in public services. It is the life that stands behind their testimony. This is what the scriptures teach.

“That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.” Lk. 1:74-75

“For the grace of God that bringeth sal-

*quoted from previous correspondence

vation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Tit. 2:11-14

When a man with a regenerated heart is around you (in public services or not), he will show that he is changed from his old life by how he talks and what he talks about (or doesn't talk about). He will show it by what he does and what he doesn't do. His purpose in living will be different than it was before he was converted. It will be holy. And there will be in him a carefulness to please God and not do anything that would displease Him in any way. Furthermore, he will treat others differently than he used to do before he was saved, and that difference can be accurately described as holy and a continual attempt to have a conscience void of offense toward God or man. Furthermore, he will grow in understanding of what it means to do right and please God, and that growth will include living up to all additional understanding by the help of God. We call that “walking in the light.”

When people who are living like that come to public services, what they are in heart will manifest itself in how they sing, pray, and speak. There is not a particular technique that demonstrates it, but any investigation (such as, “What did you mean when you

said [prayed, sang] such-and-such”) will begin to uncover the fact that you are in the presence of a man or woman who has been changed by the power of God from an unholy person to a holy person. It is not just any change. It is a change from sin to holiness, and it is wrought by the power of God.

An indoctrinated people who have a head knowledge of what it means to be a changed people will use the same phrases and quote the same scriptures as the truly converted, but something will be missing. As you get to know them, it will become more and more obvious that the head is informed, but the heart believes and practices differently. In the final analysis, a person who is expertly impersonating a child of God just doesn't have what the true child of God has—a real love for truth and right, and victory over sin.

I will quote a little from Bro. C. E. Orr:

If all who profess to be Christians would live soberly, righteously, and godly, they would win the world for Christ in a short time. A heathen said to a missionary, “We are finding you out. You are not as good as your Book. We like your Book, but you do not live like your Book reads. If you would live like your Book reads, you would conquer India for Jesus in five years.” Amid the cares of everyday life, do you live like the Book reads? The Book tells us that we should live godly in this world, or in this life. To live godly is to live like God.
—*Heavenly Life for Earthly Living*

Keeping true spiritual fellowship.

I am really not sure that a congregation that is wholly spiritually dead ever comes back to spiritual life again. Do they really revive back to life? Shouldn't a true saint come out of it (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rev. 18:4) and follow only the Lord with those only in Him?

A man or woman who is living a holy life is not distinguished by their enthusiasm or zeal, their words, or their actions in public services. It is the life that stands behind their testimony.

Replay: Congregations (or movements, for that matter) don't make **collective decisions** to follow God or not to follow Him. Their direction is determined by the many individual decisions, made by each person there. Because of this, it is **unlikely** that a dead congregation can reverse the decisions that got them in that condition **collectively**. They *can* all come to life again if they each make the decision to repent and seek God, but this just usually doesn't happen. We are plainly informed in Ezekiel 37 that God has the power to make a whole bunch of dry, exceedingly dry, bones come to life again. He has the power to resurrect an entire congregation of dead, dry professors at once, too, but the likelihood of them all calling on Him simultaneously is slim.

Now to your second question. Yes, it is plain that God's people are to flee from things that are not of Him. But, what if I don't know where to go? Ask God to show you what to do. But "*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.*"^{Eph. 5:11} Sigh and cry for the abominations about you and withdraw in spirit from them (Eze. 9:4). Ask God to lead you to His Zion. Ask Him to help you take the steps to get clear and keep clear. Do whatever He says to do. If you must stay there for lack of alternative at the current time, then be separate. Stay clear of an affinity with what is wrong. Abhor the wrong. Cleave to that which is good. Pray for deliverance. Many times, it is necessary to prove that we really want what God has for us by tarrying for His answer. Tarry without discouragement, with faith. As soon as you see something that is right, go for it without delay and hold to it as the blind man clung to his testimony that Jesus had given him: "*He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*"^{Jn. 9:25} If you will do this, Jesus will find you and help you. "*Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*"^{Jn. 9:35}

Even then, how would one really know those truly in the Lord—do we apply our personal convictions as the measuring rod? Must people see things our way so that we can be in fellowship?

No, thank God! We do not have to apply our personal convictions as the measuring rod. People do not have to see things our way so that we can be in fellowship, **but they do have to see things God's way**. Well, how is that different from my personal convictions? It all comes down to walking in the light and not looking to

It isn't what either of them thinks that matters; it is what God thinks, and they are wholly devoted to getting His mind. They are not united by where they are in the process of getting God's mind; they are united in the process itself.

each other, but to God. Again, that critical and all-important question: **what is right?** To answer that question correctly is to find the mind of God. Well, what about the fellowship? Here it is in the Bible: "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.*"^{1 Jn. 1:7} Not just any old light. The light as **He is in the light**. So, how does this work? Brother A and Brother B are quite different in their understanding. One would despair of them ever seeing eye to eye, naturally speaking. But Brother A humbles himself to God. He acknowledges his inability to find and walk in the light of God by himself. He cries to God to help him to get lined up with God. The question, "What is right?" becomes all important to him. He learns to wait on God for revelation—not to conclude things without it. Brother B comes to God the same way. They are in fellowship because they are walking in the light. What they differ in, they submit to God. They wait for Him to make **the light of God** plain to each of them. They bear and forbear with each other. It isn't what either of them thinks that matters; it is what God thinks, and they are wholly devoted to getting His mind. They are not

united by **where** they are in the process of getting God's mind; they are united in the process itself.

"Not like waves upon the ocean,
Tossing wildly, rolling high;
Or the tempest's great commotion,
As it sweeps across the sky;
But like twilight, gently stealing
O'er the verdant, shady lea,
So the holy saints in Zion
Rest—from all their sins set free."

The removal of the leaven (carnality) in the children of God makes it possible for them to dwell together with the eye single toward God, His ways, His thoughts, His standard, and be taught of Him. When one rises with leaven in his (her) heart and agitates in one direction or another, the unleavened saints continue to rest in God, trusting Him to help them to meekly

hold the true position, standing firm. The sound of hammers is **not heard** (1 Ki. 6:7), yet there is unity. This is only true of the house of God.

Who is responsible for spiritual health?

Is it the fault of the ministry that the congregation becomes spiritually dead or is it really the fault of the individual members of the congregation?

Replay: It is individual decisions all around. The ministers may each be faithfully holding the truth and doing their best to stir each member of the congregation, but the attendants may not endure sound doctrine, and be editing and bending the teaching to what they want, as best they can. The congregation may want to walk in all the light, but the ministers may have each made the decision to follow some other way than walking in the light. So, when is a congregation dead? If we consider that the people (ministry and all others) are the body, then we realize that the presence of the Lord is the soul, and death occurs when the soul leaves

the body. That is, when some other thing has supplanted the presence of the Lord in the congregation. At that point, the congregation is *Ichabod* ("The Glory Has Departed"), and it has a name that it liveth, but is dead. It is unworthy of the recognition of spiritual people as a pillar of the truth, and needs to be recognized for what it is. If the people continue down that course, Jesus will remove even their candlestick, and eventually they will lose consciousness of what salvation means. They may go on teaching and preaching more or less the same doctrine, but corruption will set in, and there will be little or no deliverance in that place.

What should be done when facing decay?

If a truly spiritual member of a congregation realizes that the congregation he attends is dead or is dying, please, kindly explain what the member should do. Some leave to sects, which proves that they did not have a vision of the church and that they had not been initially connected to the true Vine, unless they had been cut off.

Reply:

The first thing to do is to draw nigh to God. "*The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*" ^{Pr. 18:10} It is so important here to be taught and guided by the Lord. The Bible teaches that a child of God should withdraw from anything that is not of God and come to what God has done, but this is much easier to say than to do. I am persuaded that only God knows all the steps that one of His children will have to take to (1) see what to do, (2) have the right attitude toward all, (3) obey the Word of God in leaving without taking some aspect of what is wrong with them (i.e., leaving Babylon, but remaining Babylonish), (4) discerning where to go, (5) being able to dwell among saints in Holy Spirit liberty and blessing.

While Satan has an advantage over any child of God who is not at home and conscious of the advantages of home, he seeks to implant problems and handicap that child of God, so that escape is either impossible or greatly hindered. Only God

knows all the traps and snares that await a trusting little one who wants to live for God with all his heart. Only God can fully deliver. All about us are the wreckage of souls who have tried, tried so hard, to obey the Word of God and put in for more of God, but they missed the way somehow and made shipwreck. At some point, they did not get what God was trying to do. They ignored some critical instruction. When a child of God does successfully escape, the escape method that God uses proves to be a shaping, preparing thing in that person's life. They come to Zion prepared of the Holy Ghost and ready and hungry for more of the same.

One brother that realized that things were wrong where he was, came to the point that he confessed he wasn't right either. So far, so good. He complained of spiritual dryness, lack of blessing, etc. "If I were only over there with you," he said. That wasn't it. Whatever was hindering the blessing from God would be in him if he attended meeting here. He never did get past that point.

Another brother, who had successfully made the journey, told of an experience he and his wife had. They were traveling through the countryside pulling a trailer with their car. They stopped at a place to eat and were assailed with a horrible smell. "We can't eat here," they said, so they drove on. They stopped at another place, and had the same experience. Again they drove on. Finally they stopped a third time. Same smell. By this time, they were getting suspicious. When they looked at the back of the trailer, they found a little dead animal that had gotten cast up on the bumper. This was the source of the stench. They were carrying it around with them.

Many people do this in their lives. They go to different movements and different congregations and complain of things. Frequently the things that stink are in their own lives, and they are carrying them from place to place.

Now God will show you the truth about yourself. He will take you to the source of the trouble. Then He will tell you where to go, as well. You will fit with others for whom He has done the same.

How should an apostate minister be dealt with?

If a pastor of a congregation apostatizes, what should a spiritual congregation do? Would it be alright for them to ask him to leave if he cannot be recovered? Or should they pray him off? If the apostate minister is recovered, should he sit down in the congregation without preaching any more?

Reply:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." ^{2 Cor. 10:3-5}

When that first sickening certainty comes over the soul that so-in-so is not right, then it is critical to hide in God. "God is our refuge." ^{Ps. 46:1} "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." ^{Ps. 57:1} This last text is the recorded reaction and prayer of David when he fled from Saul in the cave. It is crucial to hide from the sense of injustice, of unfairness, of outraged innocence. It is crucial to find the grace to consecrate to suffer as God sees fit. This stuff is dangerous. Consider what happened to the church at Ephesus. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." ^{Rev. 2:2-4} Trying to love God and stay true to Him got these folks into a condition where they needed to repent from a fallen condition and to do again the first works.

Again I am reminded of the saying, "If you must step out of holiness to defend holiness, you have already lost it." Now you can see, dear brother, that a people

Ah, just a little reshuffling, a little in the way of changes, and I could very well be in his position, and he in mine! Only the grace of God makes the difference. What am I without the Vine? And what is he without the Vine? Oh, this spirit of meekness! How vital it is!

who will keep themselves in the love of God (Jude 1:21), and refuse to get outside of that love, will deal with a fallen brother as Jesus would have them to do so. *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”* Gal. 6:1
 Ah, just a little reshuffling, a little in the way of changes, and I could very well be in his position, and he in mine! Only the grace of God makes the difference. What am I without the Vine? And what is he without the Vine? Oh, this spirit of meekness! How vital it is!

The answer to the last question (“Should he sit among them?”) flows naturally from how he is dealt with. A congregation in which the truth prevails over all in this way will all sit in subjection to the standard of God, both in form and in spirit. Where else should the fallen brother go? What is left for the fallen brother that is of any avail but to sit and be subject to the standard that Jesus has raised before us? “Well,” you might say, “but will he not be remembered in his prior influence and unduly effect others in the congregation?” Not if it is done right. Not if the truth has really triumphed over all. But we do not need to hypothesize, for God has given us an example in the eighth chapter of Acts. Simon was baptized and sat down in the congregation, but at the point Peter and John arrived, he was not right, and God was faithful to him (and everybody else). The truth prevailed in that newly-formed congregation of saints, and as the truth moved forth, conquering and consolidating, the condition of Simon’s heart was exposed to him (and others, including us, even now), and he was urged to repent. He seemed to take this somewhat humbly at first (Acts 8:24), but history informs us that it did not take, and he went on in error and deception.

How should “surface” repentance be dealt with?

Many people want to debate in defense of themselves, claiming that their actions were not wrong when actually they were biblically wrong. When overcome in a discussion (argument? debate?) and their wrongs are exposed beyond doubt, they yield and ask for forgiveness. Many times, the “repentance” is only to win the favor of the congregation, and it is not genuine, as it comes out later.

What should a congregation or a minister do with such people who are habitually doing wrong and asking for forgiveness?—Pray them off? Ask them to leave? Does this have anything to do with what is written in Luke 17:3-4?—*“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”*

Reply:

The cycle of winning the favor of the congregation, rather than the favor of God, is part of what is wrong and should be dealt with accordingly. It is necessary to repent of the false repentance that happened before:

“Now, brother, we have been here before. On —, you asked the congregation to forgive you and professed to ask the Lord to forgive you, too, but it is plain that you didn’t mean it from what has happened since. Do you want deliverance from this way of living, or are you going to go through this again? You don’t have to go through this again to prove your instability and degraded condition; we can just recognize the condition you are in right now. If you want to live better than this, we will call on God now to deliver you. Now you pray and confess this to God and

ask Him to make a different person of you, and we will agree.”

It may be appropriate to ask the person to confess to the congregation and ask forgiveness for trifling with repentance toward them and not toward God, as was proved by what happened afterwards.

Connection through the Spirit.

“She asked how entire sanctification gave us a vision of the church.”*

Please, give a detailed answer to this question.

Reply:

“Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” ¹ Cor. 3:3 *“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.”* ² Cor. 5:16

These scriptures do not make any sense to unsaved people at all, and they are blurred and vague to justified people who are not all the Lord’s. And this all has to do with the clearness of vision and singleness of eye that is the result of being wholly sanctified. *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”* Mt. 5:8 The conventional wisdom is that this scripture refers to seeing God and being accepted of Him when He comes again. It certainly applies there, too, but it applies to seeing Him now in everything: *“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* ² Cor. 4:18 To see God at work is to see His church, and vice-versa. It is to make sense of things from the viewpoint of Him who sees all things, and one of the things which He imparts to His sanctified children is the ability to see everything working together for our good in all that happens to us, and this vision is not as

*quoted from previous correspondence

men normally walk in their carnality. It is to “know... no man after the flesh,” that is, to size up and comprehend people from a non-fleshly viewpoint—the way that God sees things. The same thought is borne out in John 12:28-29. Some people just thought that God’s voice from heaven was thunder—a natural phenomena. They were in such a condition spiritually that that is all they were able to comprehend. Others were a little less fleshly in their thinking, and they realized that there was more to it than thunder. “An angel spake to him,” they said, but they still didn’t really hear (see) it.

in vessels of clay! He is there in the midst of His children. ‘Where two or three are gathered together.’”

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Mt. 5:8

Now, in drawing these distinguishing characteristics, it is necessary to add that the capacity to see God does not mean that we notice everything that God is doing. We are still human, and He is up in heaven, while we are on earth (Ecc. 5:2), and it is important not to get the “big head” and figure that we know more than He actually allows us to see. Still, I am convinced that God wants us to see more than most of us human beings do, and He knows how to enhance our spiritual eyesight and raise us above fleshly thinking until we can say with the apostle, “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh.”

We walk by faith, not sight, but how precious it is when our faith is turned to sight!

The Bible is written to be fully comprehended by the wholly sanctified, and it is frequently misunderstood by others, who wrest its meanings and misunderstand its concepts.

Consider a moment how the gatherings of the people of God in the New Testament would appear to the fleshly mind. “So-and-so got up and talked a long time. Some people seemed to like what he/she said. There were people who talked about being different from how they used to be. It didn’t quite make sense to me. I guess they just wanted to change. They kept talking about seeing Jesus. He died and was buried, but they say He came to life; only He went up into the air, and they don’t see Him; only they say they do...”

Or to the heart that loves the Lord and has seen some of the unseen things—men as trees walking. “Brother So-and-so preached. He is very forceful and influential. He has a good vocabulary. Then another brother spoke. He doesn’t impress me as much. It is obvious that he hasn’t read very much, and his grammar isn’t very good either. Sister So-and-so testified. I like her. She is very sweet and kind.”

Then one of the eye-single, purified-in-heart. “God visited us in services today. He used several vessels. How wonderful to see the incomparable treasures of Jesus

Faith and experience.

“...when it would be healthier to have that faith well clad and the assumption translated to conviction.”*

Please, explain how the faith would be “clad,” and with what. Also explain about the “assumption being translated into conviction.” What makes the conviction necessary and what would be the result?

Reply:

There is such a thing as faith without sight, and there is such a thing as faith with sight. At one time, I *believed* in the unity of God’s people by the Holy Ghost, but I had not ever *seen* such a thing. It was “naked” faith, but it was definite faith—I believed with all my heart that it existed somewhere, somehow. Then the Lord moved me to where such a congregation was, and oh! how I rejoiced to see the reality of what I had believed in all along. My “naked” faith was clad with the testimony of what I had actually experienced. It did something to me and for me. It was as those who said, “The Messiah is coming. I know God is sending Him.” Then, “**We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.**”^{Jn. 1:45} We walk by faith, not sight, but how precious it is when our faith is turned to sight!

How can we identify and stand for truth?

“Yet she was confused by the ignore-the-traditions-be-filled-with-the-Spirit faction as compared with the hold-fast-to-the-traditions crowd.”*

Please, kindly explain the differences between the two groups. In most congregations, there is usually a battle between two (and sometimes more) factions. Many times it is not the good fight of faith, but over some other things. We need to know how to identify the spiritual and firmly stand for the truth at all costs.

Reply:

This sister had seen some who turned in disgust from a heavy emphasis on toeing the line in outward standards. These dear souls had been blessed by the Lord in reaching out to the unsaved **without** teaching the traditions of holy people. Yet she believed in the traditions that went with holy living. These traditions involved certain understandings of how to attire one’s self, etc. And so she was confused. Were the traditions necessary? Blessed? Should they be abandoned? She was trying to make sense out of it all. It did not help that different ones who fervently believed in the traditions were not as spiritual as they should have been, and the flavor of their teaching and loyalty did not harmonize with the Spirit of God in her heart.

The balance point of the whole thing is not in the keeping or not keeping itself, but in **why** we do what we do. In other words, there is little virtue in God’s eyes in doing right things for the wrong reasons. The motive matters more to Him than the thing itself.

To illustrate this, my wife and I use the example of my fondness for biscuits. I enjoy them for breakfast, and she knows this. But what I really enjoy is her delight in fixing them for me as a special treat. It is one of the ways in which she manifests her love for me. She prepares them perhaps about once a week. I could eat them more often, such is my fondness for them. But, if I **required** them of her, everything changes. The motive is different.

*quoted from previous correspondence

So it is between God and the soul. We dress plainly and without outward ornamentation because He delights in the absence of outer adornment and in the reality of inward adornment (1 Pet. 3:3-4). We do this out of love for Him, just as my wife makes biscuits for me out of love for me. God loves our motive. If it becomes a duty only, then the love lessens.

In addition to this, since God does not delight in any motive but real love for Him in what we do, He does not inspire the toe-the-mark, don't-let-brethren-down, don't-break-the-ranks loyalty that has fastened hold on a significant part of the group of people where the sister worships. God didn't teach them to preach it like that. They are not entirely wrong, but they are not entirely right either. They are ignoring a very important aspect of things because their hearts are not taught of God. Therefore they hold the truth in unrighteousness, and are a stumbling block to many of God's little, sincere children. It will be better for them to have had a millstone hung about their necks and to have been cast into the depths of the sea.

Now I am sorry to say that the ignore-the-traditions-be-filled-with-the-Spirit group is in trouble, too. They are zealous to help others and fully appreciate the deadening effect caused by teaching standards without emphasizing motive. But they are not led by the Lord, either. They would throw away the ancient landmarks in their zeal. They would end up without a visible standard at all. They do not realize (being relatively young in the Lord) that pure motives result in the wisdom that cometh from above, and that this wisdom is manifest in visible and explainable standards that imbibe our love for God in a form that He accepts and finds delight in. We might say that external things mean little without the right inward motive, and inward motives are not convincing without concrete, external expression. *"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."* Jas. 2:15-18 ➔

Be Strong!

We are not here to play,
to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do,
and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle—face it;
'tis God's gift.

Be Strong!

Say not the days are evil—
Who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—
O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely,
in God's name.

Be Strong!

It matters not how deep
entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes,
the day how long,
Faint not, fight on! Tomorrow
comes the song.

—Maltbie D. Babcock

A Testimony of God's Leading away from Sectism among the "Church of God" Groups

My struggle is to ensure I am walking directly with God. This is a serious fight, considering that God does not make us robots but He will have us willingly, consciously, deciding to glorify Him in whatever we do through love for Him.

For some years I have been wondering why the Seventh Seal Light (as well as the majority of the Church of God groups) approach to the Gospel has been so much on self-glorification—both individually and as a group. It was as if the Lord could only be found in them and through them, and after that, you had to live by their dictums. Otherwise, you are not a Christian as far as they are concerned. I truly thank and praise the Lord for deliverance from that spirit, Dear Brother. I now look at an individual and ensure I see God in him and in his life. If that is undoubtedly the case, I know for sure I have a brother in the Lord, and whatever else follows in way of fellowship is as the Lord directs. Then there is no “big I” and “little U,” but Christ is all in all. When we have all put on Jesus Christ, there will be no self on display, whether in a group or in the individual. That is my present stand, Dear Brother, and that is as far as I have got to in my spiritual growth so far. I sincerely thank God for the help He has given me both directly and through His faithful ministry so far.

Now, Dear Brother, my struggle is to ensure I am walking directly with God. This is a serious fight, Dear Brother, considering that God does not make us robots, but He will have us willingly, consciously, deciding to glorify Him in whatever we do through love for Him. There are forces against this kind of life—I mean a life for the glory of God. I want a victorious life. This is the biggest battle I am now facing, and I have been seeking help from the Lord for this kind of victory all my life. I do not mean to tell you that I am not sanctified. What I am telling you is that I have greater battles in my sanctified life than I have ever had before. Those giants are not just “grasshoppers” to me. They are real big giants and their armor is solid metal. I have got to be sure that the fire from above does burn through whatever shield they have put on. You, Dear Ones, have been so used of the Lord in this respect that I truly thank and appreciate you and respect you as God's ministers. The beauty about it all is the statement you made some time ago: That you would not try to be “my Holy Ghost.” That was so wonderful and so blessing. Praise the Lord!

Now that brings me to the Revelation as part of the Bible. These days, I look at the book as God's Word. I do not want to look at it from the point of view of this group or that group. I want to go to God's word and if God will “enliven” (my own word please, or “illuminate”) certain scriptures in my heart and wants me to obey, or just know, or use them to edify a soul, or for a message—glory to His name. I do not know what some symbols mean in the book of Revelation or other books of prophesy. So I have to choose whether to take what some man teaches or rely entirely on the Holy Ghost to direct me. I do not know much history to prove some points as depicted in the Revelation or the book of Daniel or elsewhere. Therefore, I leave it all to God. Man could easily mislead me. Take for instance the word *thunder*. There are many ways it has been used by several preachers. I have to rely entirely on the Holy Ghost to get the message in the phrase because I am confused what man to believe. God has to vindicate a messenger for me to believe whatever he is teaching.

That brings me to this, Dear Brother: When I read whatever is written, the Holy Ghost witnesses to me that He approves what is written. If He does approve, He gives me the appetite to go on and enjoy it. When I read a book, God shows me what is good for me and stamps it in my heart in way of approval. I can tell you frankly that there are some things Bro. F. G. Smith wrote that have never been stamped on my heart by God. But I acknowledge and respect Him a true minister of God. The same case applies to any message that is being preached. There are some Church of God preachers who would simply send me to sleep. I thank God I do not interact with so many these days. When I try to read some written material, I just cannot get beyond just a few words because it is so completely “dry” that it simply cannot, spiritually speaking, get into my mouth, let alone to the spiritual system.

That, Dear Brother, might give you some ideas as to where I have got to at this time. In short, I simply will not want to be drawn to a group stand. I want to stand only on what is true—the Truth of God only—and live by every word of God. ➤



FOSTER CHILDREN PART TWO

Keepers at Home

We are getting a little closer to understanding the scriptures in Habakkuk 2:4-5 and Titus 2:5 which speak of “keepers at home.” *There must be something to keep.* It must be more than just two people living in the house. We are greatly afraid that a great number of “homes” are empty shells. They have been robbed by the devil. The essence is gone. The ambition, the covetousness, the pride, the self-indulgence, the alcohol, the drugs, the pleasure-seeking, the unfaithfulness, or the sin of some other kind has all taken it away. *“From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.”* Is. 24:16

Titus 2:5 is frequently quoted to prove that a wife should not work in such a

way as to bring income into the home. “*Keepers at home.*” The people who quote Titus 2 in this way do not quote Proverbs 31:16,18: “*She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.... She perceiveth that her merchandise is good.*” Most of them do not quote Habakkuk 2:4-5 either, which reads, “*Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him.... Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.*” It is plain from these scriptures that the keeping of the home is the responsibility of both father and mother. It is not necessarily wrong to be in business for either the husband or wife, but anything that either one does must not neglect the heavy and urgent responsibilities of *keeping the home*. It is

very plain in Proverbs 31 that neither the virtuous woman or the virtuous man who sitteth in the gates is neglecting the home. It is a lot of responsibility to *keep a home*. We are not referring to the physical maintenance of the physical house (which is no small burden). We are referring to the spiritual upkeep of the home. We are speaking of mothers/wives who neglect the home because they contract their allegiance and time to a paycheck or the running of a business, and we are speaking of fathers/husbands who neglect the home for the same reasons. We will add that competitive paychecks in the home from husband and wife have a destructive and undermining effect on the spiritual upkeep of the home.

I will quote again from *Dare to Discipline*:

How do you feel about working mothers?

Motherhood is a full-time job during the child's first five years [and not then only]. I know some families which just can't seem to pay their bills without a supplement to the father's paycheck, but children need their mother more than they need a newer car or larger house. The issue is not so much, “Should mom work?” as it is “Who will take her place?” Is an eighteen-year-old baby sitter going to apply the principles of good parenthood... Is she going to mold and guide and reinforce those subtle but important attitudes that emerge each day? Is she capable of disciplining and loving in the proper combination? Being a good mother is one of the most complex skills in life, yet this role has fallen into disrepute in recent years. What activity could be more important than shaping human lives during their impressionable and plastic years [as well as the formative years right on through the teens]... The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

—James Dobson, *Dare to Discipline*, p. 54

I firmly believe that all the work done by the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 was with her husband's approval, and that God's approval was upon their approval. It was home-based and did not take away from her responsibilities as a mother and wife, nor did his work take away from his responsibilities as a father and husband.

**A terrible myth has crept into our society....
It is the myth of the standard of living.**



Deadly Financial and Leisure Ambitions

A terrible myth has crept into our society. It has been around before, destroying lives and homes, but now it has grown to epidemic proportions. *“Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?”* Hab. 2:13 It is the myth of the standard of living. If folks were as particular about their spiritual standards as they are about their physical standards, we as a people would be in much better shape. Alas! As a people, we are full of idleness and fullness of bread, the sin of Sodom. We are full of fatness; we have more than heart could wish, when it comes to physical comforts and conveniences, but in spiritual standards, we are so destitute as to make the angels weep. The unending desire to be rich, to be at ease, to be very comfortable, has pierced us through with many sorrows (1 Tim. 6:10).

A huge number allow the television to parent for them. This device frees the parents from the tiring oversight necessary to raise the children as they should be raised, at a terrible price. The TV preaches evil constantly, and shapes the minds and thoughts of the children according to the low values and cynical unbelief of the writers of the programs, the producers, and the actors (Ps. 101:3; Phil. 4:8). TV effectively sells the children on the concept that rebellion and sin are good; that it is all right to do wrong if you are smart enough not to get caught. This is standard fare, day in and day out; but, lest the people get bored with this daily septic tank beverage, Satan has devised to provide video games, movies, concerts, and theater to round out the program. All this very efficiently produces children with little or no morals, no love for their parents, no appreciation or thankfulness, untrustworthiness, and who are irresponsible. *“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, 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.” 2 Tim. 3:2-5

We live in a time when the very concept of parenting has been downgraded and devalued, and as a society, we are paying a very dear and crushing price for not valuing this weighty responsibility. An immense moral earthquake has shaken us as a people, and the shattered remnants of a better time lie all about us. These remnants of better days have been disregarded by a large portion of the population, and it seems that their highest appreciation of the spiritual architecture of parenting is a little shack with a tarp stretched over it, so to speak. This is pitiful. The whole thing is built around what money can do and buy, and their lives consist of an endless procession of shallow entertainments and education. The population dwells and moves about in more and more elaborate shells. They put up with a spiritual destitution and poverty that is incredible.

We want to say that raising a single child to value and want to do right is harder work than establishing an international business.

We want to say that raising a single child to value and want to do right is harder work than establishing an international business. You have a selling job ahead of you to get that child to *“buy the truth, and sell it not.”* Pr. 23:23 You have a fanatical competition, the devil and his demons, that labors night and day to subvert the children and yourself. If God doesn't help you, then you and yours will be devoured. You and your companion had better have bought the truth yourselves and value it above all else. If you don't love the truth, you will surely lose it. You think it is difficult to persuade people to part with their money for your goods/services? Try getting them to dedicate the one life they have to live to doing right and loving what is right, especially if they can rightly observe that you are not living right.

As an unsaved child, I did not want to believe my mother and father when they told me that they would never lie to me. *I did not want to believe them!* If I could

catch them in a lie, there would be an excuse for me, I thought. (I was wrong about that.) *But I could not catch them. They did not lie.* They did not do other things that they required of me not to do. They really were keepers at home.

Mother was there all the time. We had very few unsupervised moments. She watched us closer than any hawk. She was jealous over us with a godly jealousy. She prayed that God would show her things, and He did. *We were kept;* we were not on our own at all.

Dad earned a living, but he was just as dedicated. He knew that mother was on the front line, so to speak, and he backed her up completely. He weighed out matters and consulted with her. About the time we began to figure out how to get around Mother somewhat, we discovered (the hard way) that there were two dedicated adults, working as a team, and *we could hardly get away with anything.* What little we did get away with was held

with great uneasiness on our part, for our governors were always on the job—dedicated to God and the principles of right. Eventually it dawned on us that they held the position they did, not because they were bigger and had the purse strings, but because they, too, were under authority, and members of God's house. Then did the full fruition of all their efforts come home to us, and the Spirit of God strove with our hearts.

When we deal with the children of others in our home, all of the same battles are there and more. It is tough growing up in a well-ordered home. It is hard to learn to surrender, to yield. The foolishness of the raging self-life fights hard against the oversight of the godly home. How much more when the children come from another place, either unrestrained or abused and beaten, enraged at the injustices and loss which has overtaken them! If you thought it was difficult to get children with all the advantages to humble down and buy the truth, consider what it means for a foster child, the fruition of failure, to humble down and buy the truth. And yet, *it is their only hope.*

“One mother only nature gives
To every child of earth;
But others now supply the place
Of her that gave him birth.”
—D. S. Warner, “To the Alien”

After the breakdown and collapse of a family(?) to the extent that the state steps in and removes the children from the home, the devil has prepared a new program of deprivation and cynicism for the unfortunate child. It is literally a case of out of the frying pan into the fire. For many of these children, it would be kinder to just shoot them. That would be murder, nor are they ready to go out of this world, so it is not right, of course; but it would be kinder than what lies ahead in this life. If you think that drugs and crime can produce unkept homes that are horror stories of what happens to the children, consider what a great machine of a bureaucracy can do.

Suppose you meet a foster child of seventeen years old. This child was legally kidnapped, when about five years old, from a home where drugs and “getting high” ruled. They were starving, beaten, filthy, and in constant danger of violence and death. That was twelve years ago. The child has been in, say, thirty homes since then, including several institutions that are more like jails than homes. *No, I am not exaggerating.* (There are a number of factors that influence the constant moving of a foster child. It is only fair to say that the social service agencies involved *do not* want to move the child, but oftentimes they have no choice. Instability is the defining characteristic of the foster child’s situation.) *The child has learned not to form relationships with anyone.* The ones that started to form were broken, and it is too painful to love anyone when you will be snatched away yet again. The child has learned not to trust anyone. The child has a poor self-image—doesn’t believe they will ever amount to anything—is stirred to feel envious and jealous of others constantly, and is seldom free very long from blind, red rage.

Now you propose to take this dear one into your home. You and your companion are touched with compassion, and you want to do what you can do to heal the wounds. You believe that Jesus can do anything (He can). You know that He is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25), so you are not

afraid of the challenge.... You had better be called of God to the task. You are going to need everything He has for you. It is not impossible, just *almost* impossible. The difficulty is not what God can do (for His arm is not shortened), but that the young soul in need will *want* the help that God can give. Before they can want that wonderful help, they must believe in you and in Him, and they must be willing to pay the price of surrender to God.

“Well,” you may say. “Let’s start out earlier, before all the accumulated damage occurs.” All right. Let us say that the child is brought to you straight from the home of his/her parents. Perhaps the child is even glad to get out of there because things have been so bad. Perhaps they even thank you for taking them in. This looks encouraging. As you deal with the child, you will find that *they are definitely someone’s child.* Something made them and shaped them. They are not *untouched* by the first five years of their life. Furthermore, unless you adopt them, you have a great interferer over you and the child. This authority will force you to take the child for visitations with its parent(s) even if the visitations are obviously detrimental and counterproductive. You and the child will be forced to endure constant and regular injections of emotional poison by these visits. If the aggravated behavior of the child reaches a certain degree of out-of-controllableness, then you will find that you have a state-doped child in your home. You will find that strange and weird problems afflict the child. Most of these children have been sexually abused or exposed to knowledge of sexual abuse, and the damage done to a child in this way will shock you beyond words. A very spirit of uncleanness gains an advantage over the child’s spirit, and the spiritual warfare shifts to that plane. Your foster child is not safe for other children to be around, and you began to feel that your home is turning into a preventive jail.

“Well,” you say, “I’ll take a newborn infant, then.” You will still find that you are raising someone else’s child. A child is very flexible in many ways and will adapt to your home, especially if shaped so early in life, but you will find that there are strange and mysterious tempers and dispositions, which have their roots in the actual bio-

logical parents. Many of these abandoned children have special gifts from God to compensate for their disadvantages, but these gifts require great understanding and care on the part of the caretakers of the child. They can be a blessing, or they can be a curse. As we said earlier, the devil acquires an advantage over the child whose parents have failed so fundamentally.

The Deep and Grievous Wound

“For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous.” Jer. 30:12

“There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually.” Nah. 3:19

“For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.” Ps. 109:22

“The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?” Pr. 18:14

“The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” Is. 1:5-6

Why didn’t my mother love me? Why isn’t she here with me? Why can’t I have a daddy? It’s not as if my mother is dead! She could see me if she *wanted* to do so!

“THERE IS NO HEALING OF THY BRUISE!” The outward wound can be healed, thank God, but the underlying bruise is there for life.

The child grows up in spite of the grievous wound. Some are more affected by the trauma than others, but I believe it would be fairly safe to say that none are unaffected. He or she becomes an adult, but the bruise is still there. Their very existence is built around what happened to them, and their adversary has an enormous advantage over them which he utilizes to the full. *The wound will heal to a certain extent, perhaps, but the bruise never fades completely.* The failure of the parents scars the child for life. The person is crippled, and must learn to deal with their handicap.

An individual who is handicapped needs *more courage* than others who do not have the disadvantage. They need more grace (unmerited favor) from God and an extraordinary faith, too. If it takes a trainload

of grace for a non-foster child to discover what it means to be a human being and rise to the challenge, then it takes a world of grace for a foster child. "God is able to make **all grace abound** toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." ² Cor. 9:8

Life is much more about overcoming or being overcome than about idealism. The race is not to the swift, or the battle to the strong, but time and chance happen to all (Ecc. 9:11).

One of the most valuable and most important, practical things that a parent can give a child is a healthy outlook. A healthy outlook is made up of courage, poise, good cheer, with a foundation of faith and confidence. A good example is invaluable here. A demonstrated victorious life. A parent who triumphs over adversity shows the children what is possible. A parent who comes to terms with their personal strengths and weakness, who trusts God effectively in life's battles, leaves a priceless legacy before their children.

A homeschooled boy was being tutored in math by a teacher. He was not understanding the lesson material, and the teacher became frustrated and annoyed at his lack of comprehension. The ten-year-old boy stopped and looked at the teacher. "Mrs. —," he said, "I can't think when you are frustrated with me. If you will be patient with me a little, I will be able to understand this."

The ability to master one's emotion and to patiently look a problem in the face is all too rare. Many adults do not have the poise of spirit and courage to deal with their problems in this way. All of us can readily recognize the advantages of self-control and the ability to take courage (also humility) that this young boy possessed.

There are other lessons, too. Behind the immediate ability to deal with the problem at hand lies a *very positive sense of self-worth*. Someone had trained this young man and managed to instill in him a sense of *believing in himself, that his life meant something, that his existence was meaningful*. And this

is in accordance with the Word of God, for it teaches us, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mt. 16:26 "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Mt. 10:31

This diminished, even destroyed, sense of self-worth is one of the most severe, dangerous blows suffered by the foster child, for the abandonment of the child by its parents speaks most eloquently and persuasively. It speaks so loudly that the child can scarcely hear anything else. "If I mean anything, then why did my mother not want me?" The right answer—that sin destroyed the parent(s) and caused this awful desertion—is not any comfort to the child. "So sin caused me to be worth nothing?" Everything circles back to this one horrible conclusion: I mean nothing; nobody sees anything in me to love.

"Well," you might say, "I can fix that. I

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O Thou in Whose Presence

1 CHRONICLES 16:33

Joseph Swain, *pub.* 1791; v. 4 Unknown

DAVIS

attr. to Freeman Lewis, *pub.* 1813

1. O Thou in whose pres - ence my soul takes de - light, On whom in af - flic - tion I call;
 2. Where dost Thou, dear Shep - herd, re - sort with Thy sheep To feed them in pas - tures of love?
 3. He looks, and ten thou - sand of an - gels re - jice, And myr - iads now wait for His word;
 4. Dear Shep - herd, I hear, and will fol - low Thy call, I know the sweet sound of Thy voice;

My com - fort by day and my song in the night, My hope, my sal - va - tion, my all.
 Say, why in the val - ley of death should I weep, Or a - lone in this wil - der - ness rove?
 He speaks and e - ter - ni - ty, filled with His voice, Re - e - choes the praise of the Lord.
 Pro - tect and de - fend me, for Thou art my all, And in Thee I will ev - er re - jice.

Back to the Blessed Old Bible

ISAIAH 35:10; 51:11
D. O. T., 1901

Daniel O. Teasley, 1901

1. Back to the bless-ed old Bi - ble, Back to the cit - y of God; Back to the one-ness of heav - en,
 2. Back to the bless-ed old Bi - ble, Saints of Je-ho-vah, re-joice; Je - sus is call - ing His peo - ple
 3. Back to the bless-ed old Bi - ble, Leav - ing con fu - sion and strife; Flee - ing from Ba - bel to Zi - on,
 4. Back to the bless-ed old Bi - ble, Back at the Mas - ter's call, Back to the words of our Sav - ior,

Back where the faith-ful have trod. Back from the land of con - fu - sion, Pass - ing the wrecks and the creeds;
 Back to the land of their choice. Of - ten our fath - ers have sought it While we in Ba - bel a - bode,
 Back to the joy of our life. O - ver the moun-tains we wan - dered, Look - ing in vain for the right;
 Lov - ing, o - bey - ing them all. Nev - er in sects to be scat - tered, Nev - er a - gain to do wrong;

Back to the light of the morn - ing, Je - sus our Cap - tain leads.
 Now we have found the fair cit - y— Church of the liv - ing God.
 Now in the eve - ning we've found it: Truth of the gos - pel light. Back to the bless-ed old Bi - ble,
 U - ni - ty, ho - li - ness, heav - en, Ev - er shall be our song.

Refrain

Back to the light of its word; Be on our ban - ners for - ev - er: "Ho - li - ness un - to the Lord."

The testimony given by Joel and Coquetta Erickson at their wedding, October 22, 2005.

Part 3:

TWO YOUNG *Fools* AND THE GRACE OF GOD

Joel About a year and a half ago, when I was seeking sanctification, Coquetta had asked me to write some music to a poem in *Hinds' Feet on High Places*. I decided to read the book, and it helped me even more spiritually than to capture the artistic setting. But I began to work on the "Water Song." I was very slow about it. Last November I decided to really start working on it, and began discussing it with Coquetta over email. In a remarkably short time we began discussing things other than the song. We began opening our hearts to each other, and sharing our thoughts and beliefs and what the Lord had done for us. There was something in Coquetta's letters that drew me. Her love of the Lord inspired me. Her personality attracted me.

Now, I was very naïve and unaware about matters of the heart. But I did want the Lord's blessing on our relationship, and perhaps, just perhaps, it might be His will for Coquetta to someday be my wife. I prayed that He would direct my steps.

God moves in mysterious ways, and it's sometimes because the vessel He is working has been bent in an odd shape. I'm a very slow person; I don't know when I would have gotten married if God hadn't proposed for me.

We had been steadily writing each other for almost three months when the year rolled around to February 14. (In case you don't recognize the date, that's Oregon's birthday.) Coquetta and I had shared our testimonies of salvation, and I felt a desire to write a song. A song about God's great love; about the greatest Valentine ever given. So I wrote "Will You Be Mine?" based on our experiences of salvation. I didn't consciously intend to put anything other than God's love in the song, but I remember thinking as I was writing it, "Perhaps someday I can ask Coquetta that question."

And then I went and sent the song to her on Valentine's Day. And two weeks later I got a reply that threw me for a loop, though I should have seen it coming.

Coquetta When God had said he wanted me to be a homemaker for my lifework, I had asked the perfectly natural question. For whom? I expected Him to say, for someone you don't know yet. I asked that it would be someone I would naturally like. And then left it. When the Lord came to me and said, "For Joel," I thought it was my own imagination. I was sure that Joel did not like me. It was hard to believe what the Lord said was true. It was hard to be quiet for three years. But in those three years I learned to cook, and to kind of like it. I learned to live with my sister in her home. And my walk with Jesus became much more sweet.

It was very special to write over email of different ways the Lord had helped me to grow. All the more special because I was writing them to the one that inspired me always to do better. And the things he wrote back just made me want to try all the more. They reminded me of God's power, and that God could help me with the challenges I faced right then.

So to this valentine, should I say yes?

Yes.

And then I had to wait a week.

Coquetta told me she had accepted. And I didn't know what to say; I couldn't tell her that I had meant it that way, and I couldn't tell her that my heart hadn't meant it. So I told her I needed to pray.

I did pray. And I sought counsel with my parents and with Coquetta's parents, and began to see the Lord's leading in it all. But God made me wait a week before He gave the green light. 33 weeks ago today, God gave His blessing with the scripture, "*Marriage is honourable in all,*" ^{Heb. 13:4} and I could then tell Coquetta. We were engaged on a balmy spring day under a flowering wild plum tree.

It was so very fitting—the beautiful blossoms so white, just like God had made us.

Will You Be Mine?

While broken-hearted, scarred with sin,
While walking wretchedly in shame,
I felt a love that sought to win,
I heard a voice that called my name.
Yes, Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Gave me the greatest valentine:
He promised there to make me whole,
In love He asked, "Will you be Mine?"

He wooed me in such tender ways,
He promised to protect, provide,
His all He pledged with loving gaze,
That I should e'er with Him abide.
He gave me glimpses of His grace,
The splendors that around Him shine;
With ardent, longing, fervent face,
In love He asked, "Will you be Mine?"

Could I His offered love refuse?
Could I His yearning cast aside?
For I was asked, and I must choose:
A blackened soul or spotless bride.
To Him that bled to make me free
I could but say, "I will be Thine";
Yes, Jesus shed His love on me,
Such love that asks, "Will you be Mine?"

Can I such wondrous love repay?
A thousand years can never earn
Such love as this; but this I may:
With all to love Him in return.
'Tis bliss to know I dwell within
The ocean of His love divine—
Such love that sought my heart to win,
Such love that asked, "Will you be Mine?"

Oh, weary one, can you not see?
The Son of God has called your name;
Ye lonely, listen to His plea,
For you, yes, even you He came.
He wants to fill your broken heart,
Your hurt to heal, do not decline;
To you He would His love impart—
In love He asks, "Will you be Mine?"

I have enjoyed our engagement. Of course there have been challenges—with some the water poured in the fragile boat, and we bailed it out, with others we rode over the towering waves. When the sea was calm, how beautiful love is, and when

the sea grew rough, our Father helped us. And then even the storm could be seen as beautiful, too.

When we began making plans for our wedding, we were both sure about one thing: we wanted to share our testimony of what the Lord had done for us.

Partly for practical reasons, and partly because of the Lord's leading, our engagement has been over seven months long. And long it often seemed. But those 230 days provided opportunities to experience more of God's workings in our lives.

We aren't here to tell you we had a perfect engagement; we aren't here to testify that our relationship has been as smooth as silk. We're human, and we've made mistakes; we've had misunderstandings. But we can testify that God helped us through it all. The Lord has really blessed us to be able to communicate with each other. The proverb says that *"a threefold cord is not quickly broken,"* ^{Ecc. 4:12} and it has been our prayer throughout our relationship that God would entwine our hearts together in Him.

Our engagement has been a time of adjustment and growth. There were both temporal and spiritual changes to be made, some of which we foresaw, and some we didn't. We needed a place to live, and I needed a job to earn the money to live there. And God wanted to work a full healing in our hearts from the scars of sin, so that we could enter into married life together as He had designed marriage to be.

The Lord worked with us as He saw best. He knew how to cause us to rely on Him. We were often stretched to what seemed the breaking point. We came together often before the throne of grace to obtain mercy and help in time of need. And the Lord never failed us. Jesus is never too late. *"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all."* ^{Ps. 34:19}

But our engagement wasn't all about anguish of spirit. No, the Lord loves to delight His children. It has been the most wonderful time of our lives, and we're sure there's better yet to come. It has been so marvelous to be in love. I'm sure all those who have experienced the real thing know what I'm talking about. To become captivated by the charms of another is the way God designed

for a man and woman to come together. One can't get married to just anybody, for God made a multitude of personalities, which are attractive to others in varying degrees. The world makes much of this, and has come up with many ideas for matching people up, often ignoring the fact that people are more than mere personalities. As one author said, if the physical body were a jar, the personality would be the contents, and the spirit would be the seal. All are needed, and I can tell you for a fact that Coquette excels in each of those areas. The surest way to real happiness is to let the Lord lead. For *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way."* ^{Ps. 37:23}

The Lord has granted us treasured blessings, little and large. Early in our engagement, I'd given Coquette a little heart prism. Then she couldn't find it, and had been afraid it had gone into the garbage or been vacuumed up. But then one day it fell out of her Bible cover.

And then there was the time we had planned a trip to the coast, to take pictures for our wedding invitation. The forecast had been for a cloudy day, but we prayed, and all the time we were there the sun shone beautifully.

After failing to find a fulltime computer job, I had gone back to construction work. I had hoped a computer opportunity would turn up, but I didn't pursue it much. I was willing to work in construction if that's where the Lord wanted me. But then, just a few weeks ago, I was offered a fulltime job with a local online bookstore; I've felt the Lord's blessing in working there.

Coquette and I have had many ideas of finding a place to live, many of which appeared to be rather expensive. But then the Lord opened up an unexpected possibility: the opportunity to rent a house on my late grandfather's property for at least a few months while we begin to build our own home. The future, as always, is uncertain, but we can truly say, *"Hitherto hath the LORD helped us."* ^{1 Sam. 7:12}

Shortly over a year ago, some of my cousins decided to write things to put in a jar, which we would open up in six years. I decided to participate. I remember writing four things that I hoped would have happened by 2010. I wanted to be fully yielded to the Lord; I wanted to be a song-

writer; I wanted to earn my living by web programming; and I wanted to be married. The Bible says, *"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."* ^{Ps. 37:4} Today the last of those four desires has been answered.

The apostle Paul counsels us that *"It is good for a man not to touch a woman."* ^{1 Cor. 7:1} Early in our relationship we decided to minimize touching each other. We have waited to hold hands, to hug and kiss. Not because it would be a sin, but because we didn't want to be overcome by temptation and cast a reproach. The wait has seemed very long, and we have often had to fight hard to remain pure in heart. But we knew that someday the wait would be over; and that we would be glad we had waited. And we can tell you today that God has now surely brought us to the end of waiting.

And in the same manner as our engagement is now finally completed, so also our lives will be completed, we know not how soon. It won't have seemed all that long when it comes time for each of us to depart, and we find eternity stretching out before us. It will be very worth it indeed to have endured until the end, and to hear the Lord say, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy lord."* ^{Mk. 25:21}

We thank the Lord for the examples that have gone before us. The precious examples of our parents, and all those who have beautiful, Christ-centered marriages. Many people today come from homes broken by sin and selfishness, and we realize we have been privileged above many to have this heritage of love. But knowing the depths of sin we were lifted from, we know God is able to take anyone, however hurt, and bring them into His wonderful embrace. Coquette and I want our marriage to be a lifetime of God's love in and through us. A songwriter captured the thought: "Each for the other, and both for the Lord."

"Oh, make of me what Thou wilt have me to be,
As clay is so I am to Thee;
Just fashion me to Thine own pleasure,
Till Thou shalt Thine own image see."

We want to walk and talk with the Lord, ever closer each day. To live life as God designed it in the Garden of Eden. ➤



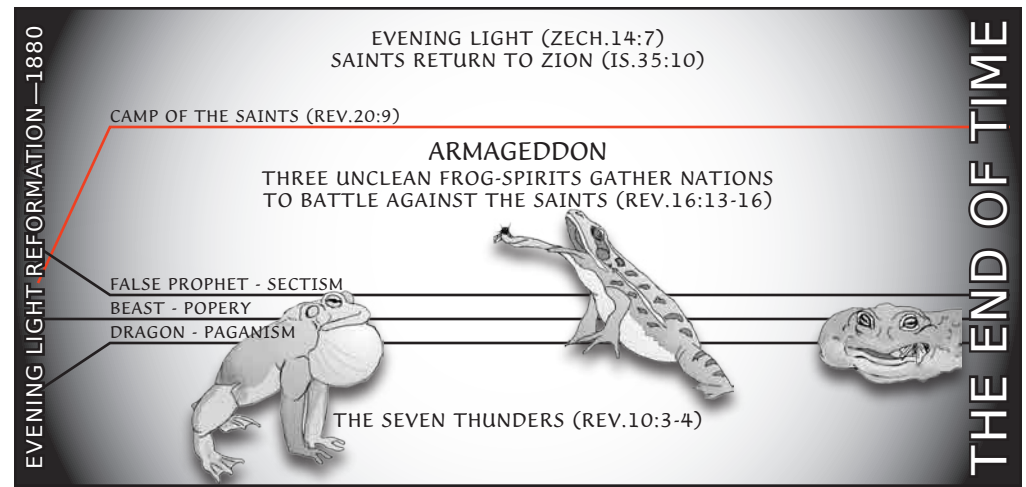
THE VOICE OF PROPHECY

In conversation recently, we were asked where the people of God were, prophetically. "It seems that the 'sixth seal' message was interpreted, and then everything ended." Only it didn't, of course.

The individual who asked also traced the rise of sectarian thinking among the folks she fellowshiped. The group loyalty. The manrule. It was identifiably wrong in this person's mind, yet this dear soul was confused by the ignore-the-traditions-be-filled-with-the-spirit faction as compared with the hold-fast-to-the-traditions crowd.

There is a growing consciousness among the people with whom she meets that something is wrong. Too much is done through the human wisdom and skill of ministers. This does not feed the soul. Because of an uneasiness caused by this lack of feeding, questions are asked, and there is much probing. And one of these questions was, "Why does it seem as if prophecy among us (non-seventh seal interpretation) ended with the sixth seal?"

In the conversation, we talked quite a bit about the way that prophecy worked. If we attempt to use it as guidance, it opens the door for all kinds of imaginations. If we use it for verification in hind sight, it harmonizes beautifully. As an example, I quoted the scripture, "Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." ^{Is. 7:14} The context does nothing at all to correctly interpret the prophecy when viewed be-



fore the fulfillment. It is only afterward the prophecy was fulfilled that we can look back and see how remarkably accurate and interlocking the prophecy was. And this is largely true of all prophecy. Therefore to attempt to interpret Revelations to justify a movement will almost always lead to error. To an unbiased observer of such an effort, it will appear that you can "prove" almost anything you want to prove. It is all premature and consequently quite subject to error.

God intended the voice of prophecy to be a blessing to His trusting children. We read, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." ^{Rev. 1:3} I am sorry to say that almost all of the teaching of Revelation and Daniel that is encountered today is *not a blessing*. Yet God intended the understanding revealed in these writings to comfort and help His people. He did not intend it to be confusing or over your head. I am afraid that most "Revelation preachers" are not teaching in the same Spirit from whom Brother John received his visions.

The 1880 Evening Light Reformation retrieved from obscurity an understanding of Holy Spirit government, as opposed to human government, that had been lost

and buried under the rubbish of human concepts for over 1600 years since the first two and one-half centuries of Christianity (the "morning" light). Following the classic pattern, the light came first, and men began to consecrate out of the denominations of their day in obedience to that light. As we read different accounts of the struggles of these saints, we realize that it has always cost something to live up to light and truth. **It was *not* a mere intellectual realization, a mental adjustment.** It was costly. And I am compelled to say that it is just as costly today. The Bible tells us to "*buy the truth and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.*" ^{Pr. 23:23} It has always taken all that an individual has to purchase the truth; yet, after paying the price, the truth is well worth having. I am satisfied that many people are not blessed because they have not paid the price. Many have settled for the form—the silhouette—of truth. This does not cost very much, and they do not know about the blessing that they are missing.

We will here quote a little from *Birth of a Reformation*:

They went over into the edge of Jay County and began meetings in a United Brethren house called Prospect. Here the preaching created a furor among those who were joined to their sectarian insti-

God intended the voice of prophecy to be a blessing to His trusting children.

tution and felt that it was in danger. It was like a thunderbolt in the community. The singing drew the crowds. The trustees became fearful. One of them went into the woods to pray to know what to do to get rid of these people who seemed to be taking things. The heavenly songs seemed to follow him. He felt he should attend all the meetings to see what occurred. He soon found that these people had something more than the United Brethren had. He was one of two trustees who embraced the truth, and of course desired that the meetings continue. Threats were made. A woman was heard to say, "They ought to be driven out of the country with shot-guns." A Baptist preacher who came into the neighborhood said that they ought to be put in jail, and offered his service as one to help in the matter.

The United Brethren minister had been holding meetings, with but little success. A Mrs. R——, one of their number, had been praying the Lord to send somebody who would preach the truth in such a way that God would get unto Himself a people who would serve Him. She and a Mrs. W—— went to the altar together, with others. Brother Warner asked them whether they would be willing to separate themselves from denominationalism if the Lord should show them that duty. Sister W—— said in her heart, yes. Sister R—— turned over to her and said, "Now, they are trying to tear down the church, so let us just stick." There she turned bitter, and the very thing she had prayed for she was rejecting. She walked up and down the aisle wringing her hands and crying, "My church! my church!" Another woman said, "These people are either awfully good people or else they are desperately wicked." Once during the meeting flying missiles crashed through the windows. Glass flew across the room, striking a woman on the head and drawing blood. Said Brother Warner:

"People have dealt in cheap, shoddy religions so long that they feel like stoning us when we state the cost of that we are commissioned of Christ to offer the people; nevertheless, when men consent to pay the price they are always highly pleased with the results."

Such a display of sectarian idolatry was a good exhibition for some who had come out of Babylon, for they saw what they had been yoked up with. About eight persons made their escape in this meeting.

—Andrew L. Byers

The prophecies were intended for the comfort and edification of those who have paid the price of buying the truth. They cannot be properly understood in all the fullness of their blessing until this step is taken. In this respect, they are like the manna given to the children of God in the wilderness. It would not keep overnight, except on the Sabbath. No one was able to hoard it or use it as a business inventory. It only worked when used as God intended it, but how marvelously it fortified and blessed the people of God, when used in the intended way!

When the majority of the people of the 1880 reformation fell away from the spiritual standard they once possessed, they took the revealed prophecies of Revelations and Daniel and made them a vindication of their existence.

The Prophetic Understanding of the Evening Light Reformation

When the majority of the people of the 1880 reformation fell away from the spiritual standard they once possessed, they took the revealed prophecies of Revelations and Daniel and made them a vindication of their existence. Brother F. G. Smith, a brother who sat under the preaching and ministry of the reformation, was anointed with an understanding of the key of interpretation in Revelation, especially the nature of symbolic language, and had the gift of knowledge and understanding of history that was necessary to tie together events of prophecy in the past up to the then present. Since his time of writing, there has not been as sweeping, definitive, and accurate a writing of prophecy, to my knowledge.

Brother Smith was an intellectual, but the Lord used him in spite of his mental abilities. He wrote two books of interest to us in this discussion of prophecy, *The Revelation Explained* and *Prophetic Lectures on Daniel and the Revelation*, both of which still are in print. The first of these two

books is more scholarly than the second. The second was copyrighted in 1941 by the Gospel Trumpet Company, while the first was written in 1906, according to the author in the preface. The general material of the two books is also summarized in Smith's *What the Bible Teaches*, in the chapters dealing with church history. It is of great importance that he received this understanding before the major apostasy of the Evening Light movement. He continued to teach the same basic doctrine among the apostatized for the rest of his life, holding lecture tours, teaching in a seminary, and accepting the title of Doctor of Divinity as a minister in the apostasy.

It is instructing and edifying to read his writings. He was extremely careful to be consistent in his conclusions and to admit to things that he did not understand.

His writings are the work of a meticulous craftsman, carefully done, and they will bear scrutiny now, a hundred years later. He proves himself to be a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15) on the subject matter he addressed, and there are evidences of the anointing of those earlier times, particularly in the accounts in *What the Bible Teaches*.

The Lord used him in spite of his mental abilities.

A Later Interpretation

In the 1940's, there arose another interpretation of Revelation, which is commonly referred to as "The Seventh Seal Interpretation." One of the early books which presented this interpretation was *The Revelation with Gospel and Prophecy, Past, Present, Future*, by J. F. Lawson, P. D. Turnbow, and D. W. Rogers. These individuals were all in the apostatized group, known then and now as "The First Church

of God,” and they had been in that condition since at least 1915, a period of about thirty years.

J. F. Lawson was not an intellectual like F. G. Smith, at all. Nor was he as careful and consistent. The prophetic vision he presents to us in the book is just as sweeping, but it is radically different than the approach that F. G. Smith utilized. It is built around the number seven.

We will quote a little from *Smith's Bible Dictionary*:

Seven: The frequent recurrence of certain numbers in the sacred literature of the Hebrews is obvious to the most superficial reader; but seven so far surpasses the rest, both in the frequency with which it recurs and in the importance of the objects with which it is associated, that it may fairly be termed the representative symbolic number.

—William Smith

Lawson sees meaning in seven everywhere, and makes a number of breathtaking assumptions to bend everything to fit in the concept of seven. Perhaps one of the more audacious jumps that he takes is with regard to the bow in the hand of the rider of the white horse in Revelations 6:2. I will quote a little from his book:

The bow surely would symbolize the old and new covenants foreshadowed by the bow that was set in the cloud after the flood in the days of Noah. The Lord made a covenant and set his bow as a token of that covenant. They did not have the written covenants then, as we do, but they had only God's word or promise with the bow set as a token of that covenant. Now we have both the old and new covenant in print, of which the bow in the hands of the rider of the white horse is a symbol.

When the bow in the clouds is seen clearly there are seven colors each blending into the other in a harmonious effect, which is a beautiful picture of the seven ages of the Gospel Dispensation, making up the entire period of time.

—*The Revelation with Gospel and Prophecy, Past, Present, Future*

I am a little reminded of what a brother, who sat under the teaching of this interpre-

tation, said to me, “You can teach anything you want out of that.” What connection is there between the (military) bow of the rider of the white horse and the rainbow? Only their shape, and that the three letters, *b-o-w*, are in each! But out of this interpretation, Lawson arrives at his number seven (in the colors of the rainbow), and asserts that these colors represent seven church ages. He also asserts that the seven congregations of Asia represent seven church ages. Likewise, the seventh seals.

The idea that the seven congregations of Asia are seven ages is an old and discredited idea. F. G. Smith addresses it in *Prophetic Lectures*:

We readily see that all human thought, from the simplistic to the most sophisticated of which man is capable, needs to be brought under the power and authority of the Holy Ghost to dwell together in holiness and unity.

There is also a very real lack of agreement between the historical facts and this arbitrary, epochal treatment of the seven churches. In the parallel lines of prophecy shown by the charts [illustrations in the book], as well as in historic fact, we find first the true church in her apostolic beauty and glory. Later, apostasy, and the deepest spiritual darkness in the Middle Ages. Finally, there is a restoration of the true church just before the end of time, in preparation for the coming of the Bridegroom. Compare that general plan with the epochal theory of the churches. The first one, Ephesus, was a backslidden church—where the true church ought to be. The only two good churches in the seven—Smyrna and Philadelphia—fall into the period generally characterized by apostasy and error; while the restored church near the end of time would be represented by Laodicea—“*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*”: “*I will spue thee out of my mouth!*”

Two Interpretations

Without delving further in detail into the differences between the two interpretations, let us address the question, “Why?” The answer to this question lies

in an apostasy which sought to use a doctrine of truth as a unique confirmation that the hand of God was upon them, and the reaction to the manner of that attempt.

The apostasy of 1910-1915 resulted from a desire to “appeal to the better class.” Among other things, it stressed education, business success, and appearance (such as the wearing of ornamentation). We might characterize the overall appeal as turning from humility and spirituality to white-collar intellectualism. A great number of people went along with this who were not academics, not by any stretch of the imagination, and eventually there was a reaction, particularly in the highly intellectual approach to prophecy. In addition, the deadening effects of the apostasy were becoming more and more intrusive, and so there was a blue-collar revolt. A great number of people were (1) ready for a change toward more spirituality, and (2) hungered for a simple inter-

pretation. Most of these people had grown up in the apostasy, and they wanted more than just head knowledge, particularly head knowledge that required thinking at a highly abstract level.

The simplicity of the “seven” approach appealed to them. They ignored some important facts. (1) There had been people who never let down, who had not stayed in the apostasy and paid the price to be separate. These people understood the prophecies of Revelations and Daniel as brethren had taught them both before and after F. G. Smith. (2) The Bible itself teaches much understanding that is not simple to understand at all. Peter (a blue-collar mind, but anointed of the Holy Ghost) spoke of Paul (a white-collar mind, but also anointed of the Holy Ghost) in this way: “*even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*” ² Pet. 3:15-16

We readily see that all human thought,

from the simplistic to the most sophisticated of which man is capable, needs to be brought under the power and authority of the Holy Ghost, so that brethren may dwell together in holiness and unity. How necessary it is to be subdued!

And so was started, with the “seventh seal” interpretation, a very adaptable tool (in the hands of our adversary) that can “teach anything that you want to teach” about prophecy and history, and discredits the light and truth restored in the Evening Light Reformation as mere “sixth-seal light.” Many of the proponents of the much ballyhooed “seventh-seal light” are not living to so-called “sixth-seal light.” To be much more accurate, they are simply not living to Bible light “*as he is in the light.*” ^{1 Jn. 1:7}

Now, all of this, while instructive, does not answer the question presented to us:

“Where Are We, Prophetically?”

We are about a hundred years beyond F. G. Smith’s understanding. We are in the time of the seven thunders, which includes the battle of Armageddon and the time of the three unclean spirits, like frogs, that have come out of the mouth of the dragon, the mouth of the beast, and the mouth of the false prophet.

The prophecy of the seven thunders is found in Rev. 10:1-4: “*And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.*”

I will here quote from *The Revelation Explained*:

When his mighty voice [the voice of the rainbow angel] sounded, “*seven thunders uttered their voices*”; and when about to record what they said, John was

commanded to “*Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.*” The fact that they were not to be recorded shows that they were to constitute no part of this Revelation. John evidently thought [they did] so at first; for they had the appearance of revelation, something clothed with divine authority, but they were not to be delivered to the church. What, then, were they? The most probable supposition is, that they were things that God for some reason did not choose to have revealed. Their sayings may have described events just prior to the end so perfectly as to leave the world in no doubt respecting the nearness of Christ’s second coming; whereas it appears in the Scriptures that God has designed that it should be a matter of considerable uncertainty, especially to the unsaved. However, we can obtain no satisfactory explanation of the things uttered by the seven thunders; for we can not identify positively what John was commanded to “seal up.”

—Frederick G. Smith

These words of Smith were first published in 1906, about eight years before the first world war. During the intervening time since then, we have had another world war. Each has produced tremendous changes in the world that we live in today. The forces of outright unbelief (paganism, in such guise as secular humanism and communism, as well as New Age, the religions of the East, and outright witchcraft) have experienced a great revival. It may be that the rise of Islamic terrorism may eventually prove to be one of the seven thunders mentioned in this prophecy. It is

We must go by other principles to determine how to walk and please God than advance understanding of the meaning of prophecies.

very plain that God did not mean for us to have more exact means of identification of certain events, as here prophesied through the voices of the seven thunders, that are happening in our time or have happened since F. G. Smith penned those words. The words of the seven thunders are sealed.

“*And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.... Blessed is he that waiteth.*” ^{Dan. 12:8-10,12}

So it is with the seven thunders. They were purposely left obscure. Apparently, more detail would have given us more pinpoint understanding than is good for us to have. We must go by other principles to determine how to walk and please God than advanced understanding of the meaning of prophecies. So we are in the position of those who were honestly trying to determine if Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah, the hope of Israel. If I had been one of those brethren, I could not have taken my stand based on the virginity of Mary, the mother of Jesus. She *was* a virgin and fulfilled the scripture exactly, but the wisdom of God has made this prophecy in such a way that “*flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee.*” ^{Mt. 16:17} **It is necessary not to understand fully while we wait for this waiting to have the effect on us that it should.**

The Purpose of the Seven Thunders

Why then was the existence of the seven thunders *even mentioned*? God wanted to give us a certain awareness—a “heads up,” if you would. He did not want us oblivious to what is happening and about to happen; He just doesn’t want us to have too much detailed information.

And there we find a parallel. “*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.*” ^{Rev. 5:1} Here is the plan of salvation, revealed in the New Testament, **which was sealed to the saints of the Old.** “*For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*” ^{Mt. 13:17} They could not see them because **they were sealed**, but they received hints and

prophecies of what was coming *in precisely the same way as the seven thunders and the general teachings of the Word of God create a certain awareness of things in our time.* We are therefore left with a certain vagueness and uncertainty, but also a certain anticipation before the fact and a certain assurance after the fact, that brings the blessing of divine revelation. In due time, *their faith was turned to sight,* and thus it will be with us, also, if we allow Him who knows all things to have His way in us.

In retrospect, therefore, we consider how flashes of insight came to Old Testament saints about the nature of New Testament salvation. We then realize that every principle and feature of the New Covenant and the Messiah was identified by the voice of prophecy long before it became a reality, and it was identified *sufficiently* to steady and sharpen the faith of those who saw it. And this gives us great encouragement to believe that *God has something for us* in the appearance of the seven thunders of Revelations 10, although their words were sealed.

Current Conditions

We find ourselves in a parallel situation to the New Testament saints of the Evening Light Reformation. In their day, they faced the problem of God's children scattered in the many pens of what we call Protestantism. Many were saved in those churches—it was all that they knew. Do we not have the same situation today in church of God Babylon? Is not the main body of those professing to have the light and understanding of the Evening Light Reformation in the same position as the Roman Catholic Church, "*THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH*"? ^{Rev. 17:5} Are not most of the various division and splinters that have come out of her a perfect parallel with the daughters of the Roman Catholic Church, the various Protestant denominations? Is not the voice of God calling, "*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*" ^{Rev. 18:4-5}

The Battle of Armageddon

The ministers and prophets of the Evening Light Reformation foresaw the turmoil and havoc of the battle of Armageddon just before the Final Judgment, and they realized that the reformation was the beginning of an epic clash between truth and error. They and those who followed them realized that the rise of communism after World War I and World War II was part of the dragon (pagan) power being released from the pit to deceive the nations again. I will quote from *Biblical Trace of the Church* (1893):

Gog and Magog united will constitute the devil's army in the last battle of the present ecclesiastical conflict. We are now just fighting the first battle.... This battle is called "*the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*" ^{Rev. 16:14} These words signify that it will be the decisive battle of the war, and will end with the ushering in of the final judgment.

The church will receive no protection from the outside world at that time, for all the kings of the earth, and their armies, will unite with the beast against her (Rev. 16:14; 19:19). It seems that at that time all the powers of earth and hell will united to exterminate the holy seed. But the gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ's church (Mt. 16:18).

—William G. Schell

It would seem that the devil is withholding outright persecution to lull people and cause them to relax and fall into a sleep of deception.

This book was republished by Brother Fred Pruitt, probably in the 1960's, and this editor added a note after the quotation just presented:

In the above chapter, the author has revealed much truth, and perhaps as much as God was giving to the people in the day and time of his writing. The great red dragon who has now appeared under the cloak of Communism was not in evidence at that time [the Bolshevik revolu-

tion that first established communism as a political power occurred in 1917 during World War I], and therefore he failed to mention his part in the winding up of the affairs of this old world.... At present the dragon spirit is gradually deceiving the false prophet and the beast into the upholding of Communism, and at the end, the whole army of the three powers under the dragon (Communism) will be the combined forces that will compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city and fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them.

At the time of this writing (2007), the political system of Communism has largely been discredited and seems to have declined, but the system of unbelief which manifested itself in that way is alive and well. In Brother Pruitt's day, ministers warned that the Communist (political) powers were going to conquer the world, including this country, and then we would know the full horror of the battle of Armageddon—outright persecution, and so forth. What has actually happened is far more dangerous.

Persecution actually stirs people and causes them to count the cost. As long as the saints were persecuted (and the persecution arose and died away repeatedly) in the beginning of Christianity, the ones who consecrated to serve God when the price was so high were purified and refined. The cost of serving God scared away the casual professors. When it was not so costly to profess to be saved, apostasy was the result; eventually the Catholic Church with the "*man of sin*"; eventually the Protestant Reformation with the imitators of much of the church government of men. As long as there is a high price to be paid for being a child of God, only those who want it with all their hearts will pay that price.

The Frogs of the Devil

It would seem that the devil is withholding outright persecution, generally speaking, to lull people and cause them to relax and fall into a sleep of deception. And so he has sent forth unclean spirits, like frogs (Rev. 16:13), from three of his systems: the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, i.e., unbelief, Catholicism, and all

other false Christianity. He has not sent a frog from Islam, although its continuation after its emergence from the bottomless pit is indicated in Revelations 9.

The ancient Egyptians worshiped the Nile River and revered the frog as an emblem of the sacred river. The Nile River was regarded as their great benefactor with its yearly floods that replenished the land and furnished the fertilization that made life possible for the Egyptians. To their minds, only the Nile kept their country from starvation. Without the Nile, Egypt would be a desert.

This precisely mirrors the attitude of mankind toward human inspiration. In general, man believes that the answers to his problems lie in himself (contrary to what the Bible teaches us [Jer. 10:23]), and history is regarded by much of mankind as a long succession of floods and droughts of human inspiration.

God turned this Egyptian reverence for the Nile River upside down and inside out in dealing with them. The first plague upon Egypt was the turning of the waters of their sacred river to blood so that all the fish in the river died, and the river stunk. Even the water that was not in the river was turned to blood; their vessels, their ponds, their pools of water. After this disaster, God smote Egypt with frogs—a horde of frogs that invaded everything. He just touched the reproductive ability of those frogs who lived in the river all the time, and they multiplied beyond the imagining. That which was sacred to the Egyptians became an unbearable curse. *“The frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.”* Ex. 8:6

God has a way of dealing with mankind by allowing the perverse choices of men to become a curse to them. The same God that sent an abundance of quail to the complaining Israelites to the extent that it came out of their nostrils, tells us, *“Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee.”* Jer. 2:19 Therefore God has allowed a great plague of frog-thoughts and frog-philosophies, all born and bred in the great Nile River of men’s thoughts and reasoning, to flood us with a little knowledge

and a lot of (mostly sinful) imagination in this age in which we live. Knowledge has increased. In fact, it has mushroomed. We are flooded with new discoveries of what God has known all along and a great deal of imagining and speculation. The Nile is at its greatest flood in human history, so to speak, and the communication channels of our world are full of the croaking. It is as though mankind would complain to God on the final day of judgment that

It is time to apply the same Biblical principles of the reformers to the errors and abominations of our day.

He has held them down in ignorance, and therefore that is the reason they have not prospered, so God has loosed the reins of knowledge, so to speak, to let the results of our knowing reprove us. Sure enough, this plague of knowledge still does not heal us or deliver us from our woes. Surely *“it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”* Jer. 10:23

The frog is an amphibious animal, originating in the water and equally at home on land. He is a fitting symbol of ideas and philosophies that originate in the fleshly reasoning of man and presume to satisfy the spiritual needs of the soul. The strengths of the philosophies of paganism, Catholicism, and modern Christianity arise from the flesh. These things are croaking all around us; throughout the western world, we are as plagued as Pharaoh and the citizens of Egypt. For instance, equal importance is attached to taking care of “mother earth,” the environment, as to genocide. Another ugly and persistent croak advocates the “right” to have an abortion. Another frog contends we have the “right” to marry another human being of the same gender as yourself. In the minds of many, the secular human (pagan) frog has largely rewritten (in the minds of the people) what is right and wrong, making darkness light and light darkness. The very atmosphere is full of psychobabble, all “genetically” traceable to the frog line of Freud, the father of modern psychology. The influence is everywhere in paganism, Catholicism, and the majority

of the Protestant sects. Frog and tadpole ideas have always been with us, but we can easily see a great difference in the general mindset of the people of, say, 1910, as compared to now. The spirit of unbelief is very strong.

The frog is a deadly predator. When all seems safe and still, the little insect moves. The deadly tongue shoots out, faster than the eye can follow, and the prey is gone. So is the spiritual climate of today. A deadly philosophy is embraced, and *ZAP!* Just as quickly as that, a soul is snapped up. Something about it ruins them, almost beyond recovery. They are just swallowed. People used to resist God, and He strove with them.

There was more opportunity, with all the blessings and hazards of that time. But now, souls are snapped up so quickly! *“My spirit shall not always strive with man.”* Gen. 6:3 Truly we live in perilous times.

Perhaps the apostasy in [the Evening Light Reformation] movement has been the most rapid of any before it. This should cause us to stop and take notice, because this certainly indicates *a general condition existing in the world and in the hearts of men* which makes it easier for the people to accept these things and for the devil to push them in upon the people. No reformation before this one has ever fallen so far in such a short time.

—Ostis B. Wilson, Jr.; *Remove Not the Ancient Landmarks*

“Church of God” Babylon

Babylon—the Babylon portion that our forefathers fled—has fallen. A great earthquake has destroyed a large portion of the city that once held captive the people of God who have returned. It is the habitation of devils and unclean spirits. The voice of the Bridegroom is heard there no more, nor the sound of millstones. But what of those who fled that great city (now divided into three parts through the devastation of the great earthquake) and the cities of the nations, but now hold only the form of that doctrine delivered to them?

The rejection of the evening light by the entire western world has had a devastating

effect, just as the rejection of the morning light had an equally terrible effect on the western world of that day. But in this aftermath, what has happened to those who appeared to receive this truth for a time, but have proven untrue?

We have come full circle, it seems. We are down to the separation of the last three hundred men (Jdg. 7:1-8). What was a golden cup in the hand of the Lord has become an abomination (Jer. 51:7). The brass serpent that once brought healing by divine appointment has been changed by the attitude of men into an idol, and Israel does burn incense to it (Num. 21:9; 2 Ki. 18:4).

It is time to apply the same Biblical principles of the reformers to the errors and abominations of our day. It is time, yes, past time, to dig the earth out of our fathers' wells until the same living waters of which they partook flow out of our own bellies. We, too, need to melt under the fire of the Holy Spirit so that we can flow upward to the heights of God's Zion.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills [even the Church-of-God hills]; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD." Is. 22:5

God is calling His people out of Church-of-God Babylon today. He is delivering them from the Pharisees and Sadducees of church of God doctrine. He is freeing them from the curse of church idolatry, the shameful labor of building yet another image to the beast, the abominable engraving of yet another number in the foreheads and hands of the adherents of yet another group.



STICK WITH YOUR HORSE

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

"Oh, blessed truth that broke our bands!
In it we now rejoice,
While in the holy church of God
we hear our Savior's voice;
And gladly to His blessed will
submissive we shall be,
And from the yokes of Babel's lords
from henceforth we are free."

In Ephesians 5:25-27, we read, "*Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*" Now, beloved, this is the kind of church that Jesus bought and paid for, and that is the kind of church He is going to have. God's laundry business is going full tilt. In these last days, He is continuing to get out every spot and wrinkle from His saints. The question is: Where are you? Are you washed and ironed? Is your heart right with God? Have you been purified from group love to an "eye single" toward God and His truth? Are your eyes upon Him who doeth all things well?

"All the pure His angels gather;
The defiled become a prey."

Like a good number of people, I've been fascinated with horses and riding. My own experiences consisted of five or six years learning to ride a smart old Arabian that my parents gave me when I was eleven. She knew a lot of tricks, and one of her favorites was tearing across the pasture and coming to a sudden stop with a few sharp bucks. She was telling me that riding was over for the day. Half the time I ended up agreeing, though I did learn to brace myself and keep from flying face-first into the mud most of the time. Yes, sticking with the horse was a skill you learned, or you didn't stay on top for long. Though my horseback riding has since given place to more serious occupations, the stories of other horse riders never fail to get my attention. It was several months back that the Lord used one of these accounts to teach me how to stay on top in the job I was "riding." This new horse's tricks were spilling me at every turn...

It's very frustrating to not be able to count on them, I complained to myself as I drove home one evening. I'm not going to calculate it, but I'm sure they were four hours late. After telling me all about the importance of a good routine, now this! I feel abused. They don't care, do they? No, they're never...

Ralph Moody, writing about his boyhood experiences on a cattle ranch in Colorado, brought to life the era when knowing your horse was the skill of manhood. At twelve, he was the youngest cowhand on the place, and had unwittingly

tingly chosen several tough characters on his horse string. Ralph had prided himself on being able to handle spirited animals. Hadn't he learned to break and handle his own horse at age ten? Ralph had won trick-riding contests and match races, but this time he realized he had bit off a bit more than he could chew. It was the ranch manager's prize cutting horse, Clay, that really showed up his inexperience.

As Ralph related:

With bucking horses, I'd learned to watch their heads, and to set myself to go whichever way the head turned. With Clay there was nothing to go by. His head swung back and forth to face the cow [that was being cut from the herd], and I could never guess which way the saddle would slip out from under me. All I could do was hang onto the horn for dear life, and hope I wouldn't fall off...

It was Mr. Bendt, the ranch manager, that pointed out his trouble.

"...You're workin' at it too hard," he said. "Just leave yourself foller along easy—the way your best girl does when she's dancin' with you."

"I haven't got a best girl," I told him, "and I don't know how to dance. Maybe that's the trouble."

" 'Tain't the girl that counts, and 'tain't the dancin'. It's more the keeping time with the fiddler. Lose track of it and your a gonner; stay with it and you can't go wrong—leastwise, not less'n you go to watching your own feet."

—Ralph Moody; *The Home Ranch*

As the scene flashed back into memory, I saw the relationship of the smart old cutting horse to my present trial. Suddenly the whole situation was shown in a new light. The Lord was saying, "You may be used to trusting another person's sense of timing, but I've given you a horse to ride where you need to drop those skills and rely on new ones. You need to respect this flexibility with time and let go." It was just the allegory I needed, and the frustration of a few minutes before gave way to a new wave of admiration and trust in my Manager. And greater respect for the differences of operations that He has seen fit to use. ➤

Foster Children, *cont. from page 14*

will devote myself to the child; I will lavish love on the dear, unfortunate one. They will never be able to doubt their worth again. I will prove by how I do that the child has intrinsic worth of great value."

I would to God that it were that easy. But this grievous wound is not so easily healed. We are not so easily transplanted. *We are where we have come from.* We cannot deny our roots so readily by denying that we *have roots*. In other words, to acknowledge our rootlessness is to define ourselves as rootless individuals. To actually *face* and to *acknowledge* inwardly the full depths of our repudiation by our folks takes the very strength that we are trying to acquire. *If I were strong enough to deal with my weakness, then I would not be weak.... I need strength to heal, so I can be stronger.* And so the child desperately clings to the illusion that my *real* mother and daddy are not as bad as it seems they are. There is a very real, painful contradiction in this, of course, and it brings an overpowering frustration and outbursts of blind rage.

Trying to fit life to what we want it to be, rather than facing and dealing with reality, is enough to raise anyone's blood pressure.

To actually face and to acknowledge inwardly the full depths of our repudiation by our folks takes the very strength that we are trying to acquire.

The Bible refers to facing reality (what is today called "a reality check") as sober thinking. This is worth a whole Bible study in itself. I will list some of the scriptures that commend sober thinking: Rom. 12:3; 1 Th. 5:6,8; 1 Tim. 3:2,11; Tit. 1:8; 2:2,4,6,12; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8.

The paradox in the foster child's life is this: just what he needs to do to heal (face reality and come to terms with it) is precisely what is wrong. He needs the strength, but it takes strength to get the strength. Until he gets the strength, he will *never* heal, even as an adult, even an elderly adult. The awful tragedy is that help is available, within reach, but *it does nothing to benefit the child until the child finds it*, if indeed the child ever does find it. That help is pictured

in this scripture, "*When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.*" Ps. 27:10

I had a problem with my pickup truck that kept the hot water from the engine from flowing through the heater radiator in the cab. One cold winter day, I dressed as warmly as I could with "long handles"—heavy woolen socks, gloves, ear muff cap, and several coats—and drove to town. The cold gradually penetrated everything as I drove, and I felt thoroughly frozen, even to the very marrow of my bones. Just on the other side of the thin metal wall that separated the cab from the engine was all the hot, hot water that I needed to be comfortable—perhaps a foot or two away from where I shivered. It was all there, circulating, wonderfully hot, and just perfectly suited for my need, but it might as well have been on another continent, for all the good it did me.

This is the situation of the foster child. The reality of God is very close to him or her all the time. *Everything* that the child needs is there, but they know it not. Listen to these words, "*That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.*" Acts 17:27 As Jacob said, "*Surely the LORD*

is in this place; and I knew it not." Gen. 28:16

Now these thoughts are as true of all children as they are of the foster child, and many a parent has agonized over their son or daughter, knowing that help was so readily at hand, though the reality of it was hidden from the eyes of the needy one. Perhaps it is because the need of the foster child is so stark, so compelling, so lacking in human comfort and connection, that it seems particularly tragic. The grievous wound is so deep.

We realize that the position of being a parent (foster parent or biological, even a spiritual father or mother in Israel) is the position of being an intercessor. "*And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap*

before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.” *Eze. 22:30* We catch a glimpse of the value of an intercessor in the supplication of Abraham for Lot in Genesis 18:22-32. In the overall scheme of things that God has created, He has left a place for the intercessor. God is calling for those who will dedicate themselves to the cause of the wounded and bruised. “*And I sought for a man.*” Who will stand in the gap and contend with the enemies of the child? Who will make up the hedge? Who will be a “great heart” and defend the children? Yea, who will offer soul and body on the altar of our God?

“*His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness.*” *Job 33:21-23*

Many years ago, our Lord, as a boy, before He disputed with the doctors in the temple, read these burning words in Ezekiel 22:30 and responded with all the fervor of His pure, sinless heart. He dedicated Himself to our cause; He gave His life to make us free; He offered Himself as a ransom for us. “*Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*” *Is. 53:12* Yea, “*he ever liveth to make intercession for [us].*” *Heb. 7:25*

Jesus has left an example for us, that we should follow in His steps, and part of that discipleship is working together with Him in an intercessory capacity. “*Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*” *Jas. 5:20* In writing these words, we are obeying the Word of God; we are “letting you know” of the noble and honorable calling of the one who intercedes. Let us follow the example of our Lord and devote ourselves to the uplifting, the care and nurture of those who need it the most.

Infections of the Wound

Then there are the complications of the original wound—the infections. For

instance, consider the human ability to envy.

Envy: to have feeling of uneasiness or mortification in regard to anyone, arising from the sight of another's excellence or good fortune and a longing to possess it.

This is one of the deadly infections that greatly increase the danger of the grievous wound. It is a common mantra with an older foster child to explain all shortcomings and failures in terms of what has happened to them. “*You came from an intact family. You don't have the problems that I have.*” But, of course, *it is not what happens to you in life that matters; it is how you take it.*

The awful end result is that most foster children become a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure. The infections from the wound are fatal. They go and do to others what was done to them. There is only one way to escape the victim syndrome, and that is to make peace with God and find what He has for you to escape the cycle. “*The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound... to comfort all that mourn... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.*” *Is. 61:1-4* “*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*” *Lk. 19:10*

In a certain sense, the thorough deliverance of the foster child depends on his (her) ability to not only genuinely repent of the sins that they have personally done, but to repent of the sins of their parents, even their grandparents. I do not mean by this that those sins of others are forgiven by such repentance; I simply am stating that there must be a complete forsaking of all of the ways of their parents which are sinful, and a complete turning to God. This would be in the sense that Daniel repented of the sins of Judah (Dan. 9:1-20). Then will this promise be fulfilled: “*O thou*

afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.” *Is. 54:11-14* Such a victory is not accomplished in a day or a week or a year, yet it is possible in God, for He will make a way of escape that can be followed step by step with super-abounding grace sufficient for the need of every day.

There is only one way to escape the victim syndrome, and that is to make peace with God and find what He has for you to escape the cycle.

It is the privilege of every foster child to be adopted. Indeed, from the standpoint of the adoption of which we speak, we are all foster children until we are adopted by heavenly love. “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Rom. 8:15-17

We all are of the corrupted bloodline of Adam, cursed with depravity from the moment of our conception, doomed with that inherited sin to become eternally dead souls with acquired wilful transgressions from the moment we comprehend the difference between right and wrong. “*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened [brought to life] us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*” *Eph. 2:4-6*

"Oh, how sublime is the life of the Christian,
Filled with the glory of Jesus divine;
Deep in His bosom, he's joyfully conscious
That he is born of a heavenly line."

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."¹ Jn. 3:1-2

"I don't fit," is the inward cry of the foster child. "Where are my people? Where did I come from?" And this need is there in spite of all that others can do. *But in God, there is a complete adoption that far surpasses the best that humans can do for humans.* Human adoption goes as far as it is possible for it to go, but God can do things that men cannot do. **For God can actually change our bloodlines, spiritually speaking, and recreate us in the image of Christ.** And this incredible change, the regeneration of the human heart, is accomplished **now.** "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God.*"

There is a predestination taught in the Bible that has nothing to do with the idea of whether some can be saved and others cannot. That predestination is the predestination of the spiritual gene pool, the spiritual DNA of our Lord Jesus Christ—as compared to the corrupted, defiled spiritual bloodline of Adam, the head of the race of mankind. We look at a human couple and realize that the offspring of man and wife is predestined to be like them in physical form. When the children are born, we look at them, searching their countenance. Can you see daddy in the child? Mother? Sure enough, it is there. Sometimes subtly, sometimes blatantly, but it is there. Furthermore, it can be truthfully said that the moral image of Adam is there, too. Then we look at the moral image of the fully saved soul. Behold! We see the image of Jesus, the new Adam! "*We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him.*"¹ Jn. 3:2 "*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.*"^{Gal. 4:19} As a brother once remarked, "Each Christian is just like Christ continuing to live in this old world." Yes, we are converted to the same bloodline;

we are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

Now this new spiritual life starts with spiritual conception and spiritual birth, as Nicodemus was informed by our Lord. "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.... so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"^{Jn. 3:6-8} "*And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest Himself shall establish her.*"^{Ps. 87:5} "*But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.*"^{Heb. 12:22-23}

Here is the full and complete meaning of what the scripture tells us in Psalm 27: "*When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.*"^{vs. 10} Now this is a "taking up," indeed!

"Raised from sin to royal honor,
Even reigning, Lord, with Thee."

Taken into the royal family! Made an heir unto God! "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*"^{Rom. 8:16-17}

"God is my Father, and Jesus my brother,
Since I'm adopted by heavenly love;
I am an heir in the kingdom of glory,
And have a crown that is waiting above."

He has gone to prepare a place for me and will return for me some day, and not only me, but also all who love His appearing. I belong! I am loved! I am provided for! I have a place!

"Once I was lost and a child of confusion.
Over the mountains of folly I roamed,
But at the cross I have entered the kingdom.
Glory to Jesus! His love is enthroned!"

I find that this heavenly family into which I have been born is the **noblest, finest, most upright** that there is! There is every incentive to live up to the highest and most illustrious aspirations. It is a family of overcomers, led by a mighty Overcomer, utterly dedicated to purity and holiness,

justice and mercy. A royal family, a family of kings and priests. And this royal blood flows in my veins, spiritually speaking. Now, I, too, am of the heavenly lineage, by virtue of the new birth.

"Oh, what grace and high promotion!
That in Jesus, I should be,
Raised from sin to royal honor,
Even reigning, Lord, with Thee."

"Be an overcomer! Only cowards yield
When the foe they meet on the battle field.
We are blood-bought princes of the royal host,
And must falter not, nor desert our post."

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."¹ Jn. 4:4

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations."^{Rev. 2:26}

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."^{Rev. 3:5}

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."^{Rev. 2:7}

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and **he shall go no more out:** and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."^{Rev. 3:12}

All of these scriptures (and others) speak of the overcoming grace that is in God to triumph over our past. They do not only apply to the needs of foster children; they apply to *all the needs* of mankind.

"He [Jesus] is able also to **save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.**"^{Heb. 7:25}

There is no limitation whatsoever to what God can do for you, dear reader, or for others of your acquaintance. "*For there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.*"¹ Sam. 14:6

"But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."^{Mt. 19:26}

"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."^{Is. 59:1} ➤

FOUNDATION TRUTH

P.O. Box 1212

Jefferson, OR 97352

e-mail: ft@timelesstruths.org

website: ft.timelesstruths.org

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Diagram Explaining Many of the Ecclesiastical Events Prophetically Treated in Chapters 11-21 of The Revelation

