

FOUNDATION TRUTH

Number 24
Spring 2010



"Loose him, and let him go!" -Page 5

Dear Reader

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Mal. 4:5-6

“And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Luke 1:16-17

The prophecy and the fulfillment of the mission of John the Baptist speak of an effect on hearts—*“he shall turn the heart of the fathers to...and the heart of the children to...”*; *“shall he turn to the Lord...to turn the hearts of the fathers to...and the disobedient to...”* All of this speaks of hearts being turned to a different direction than they have naturally been used to going. The most remarkable, perhaps, is the turning of the hearts of the disobedient. None of this would be possible except that the power of God was working through him to do this. All this was to *“make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”* A softened heart, a response to the wooing of the Holy Spirit toward the right, toward God, is always the necessary preparation before someone can receive the Lord in their hearts and have a real heart change. This soft heart toward the Lord and His ways is essential to any movement toward the Lord, whether it is getting saved, sanctified, or getting any real help from Him in our battles.

I’ll tell a story on myself to illustrate the point. Just recently, a Monday morning started out disjointed and flustering for me. I found that I felt unable to manage my own household well, that feelings of frustration and discouragement were coming upon me, and I went to the Lord in prayer. Now I had in mind certain places that it seemed to me that others in the household were “missing the

point” of their roles, and I was minded to examine the scriptures about this, but as I sought the Lord, I found that He wanted me to refresh myself from the scriptures on my role as husband, father, parent first. I found my heart being softened, and at this point I was minded to take off somewhere to pray alone for a long time, but after a little while, the Lord made it clear to me that it was time to call the family together (He had already performed a small miracle to make it possible to gather the family together that morning) and talk about the vision the Lord had for our functioning as a pastor’s household. We prayed first, and I found the Lord had given me a soft enough heart to both speak and listen, and it proved an encouraging and profitable time together.

My point is this: being a child of God with access to God is only the potential for victory. When the battle comes, we must “turn our hearts” toward Him (whatever it takes to do that) to apply for the help, and to present ourselves for Him to work in and through.

The different articles here are on a variety of topics and one may speak to your burdens or needs or another might, but the help will actually come only as we turn our hearts toward the Lord, and present ourselves for Him to work in and through us. It may involve suffering, it may involve humbling ourselves, it may involve letting go of something, or some thing else yet, but it will involve spiritual “action” on our part.

Just another pilgrim on the highway of holiness,

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*.

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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 quarterly 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.

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edited by Rick Erickson and others

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"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Psa 1:1-3

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

Looking to Man or God

There is a truth that does not seem to be accepted generally and it seems to be the cause of a lot of problems for me in person: "Holding Jesus as the only Head"—"Lord, King, Boss of the Church." I am not sure if this is:

- (a) my failing or it is a matter of individual consecration
- (b) a cultural weakness

Reply:

They can't see. It is a fleshly failing, common to all mankind until inwardly changed. Even saved folks can't see or only see dimly until their eyes are anointed with God's eyesalve. In the scripture quoted above from Isaiah 56:10-12, the Bible tells us, "*They are shepherds that cannot understand.*" Almost all people cannot see Jesus as the Head to either accept or to reject; they don't see because they can't. "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"^{John 3:3} They can't even see the entire kingdom, much less its King. Since they can't see the invisible, they focus on what they can see, and that is the fleshly nature of those who do trust in God. "*For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God... But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*"^{1 Cor. 2:11,14} They speak of what they know (John 3:11), and what they know

is twofold: (1) of the flesh as a natural human being, and (2) of the spirit as taught by whatever abides in their soul, generally a spirit of error, but occasionally some light from the true Spirit of God mixed with darkness.

It is flat out impossible to trust God for spiritual government in a meaningful and practical way without the following blessing in the life: "*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*"^{Matt. 5:8} This blessing is not just a good idea, just preferable; it is essential. Without it, one is utterly blind, a spiritual idiot. One is thinking, reasoning, and reacting from a frame of reference that is completely unconnected to spiritual realities.

It is not a matter of what we allow. If people do not have this blessing that produces the inner vision from a pure heart, they just cannot think any otherwise than they do. They just can't. Teaching doesn't bring the blessing. Lip service to the truth doesn't bring the blessing. The only thing that changes things is a pure heart.

The saints here do not look to the ministry in the way that they would if they did not have pure hearts. Those who have not found this experience of inward purity still look to the other people without seeing God as they should and as is their privilege. We hold the experience of a pure heart before them. They blindly trust that we are following God. This is

not good enough. You say to me, "It appears like people do not want to see and acknowledge the Kingship of Jesus, even though this has been taught for a number of years." Beyond any doubt, they do not see or acknowledge the Kingship of Jesus; their hearts are not pure; the fruit from their lives proves the point. Teaching is not enough; insistence is not enough; only a pure heart will bring about the needed holding of the Head in appropriate reverence.

We need to abhor becoming a focal point personally to people just as Jesus did. When they would make Him king, he disappeared into the mountain to pray. When Barnabas and Paul were regarded as gods, they reacted as is recorded in Acts 14:14-15, "*Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.*" Our abhorrence is part of our testimony. God forbid that we enter into that frame of mind that would attempt to use the fleshly exalted outlook in some way to "help" the people! As Brother Paul told the Corinthians brethren, "*And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.*"^{1 Cor. 4:6} Notice that the brother says, "**that ye**

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might learn in us." A whole lot of people think "above that which is written" of their ministers and other influential people. They hold people's persons in admiration because of advantage. An unwise brother stated publicly to a ministerial couple, "I just want to give a [verbal] bouquet to the A——s." The brother replied publicly, "We don't need it." We want to constantly project the simple truth, which is that we are just common men. The only

difference between us and others is the grace of God working unhindered in us. If they will let it work in them, God can use them, too.

This inward feeling of staying humbly in our lowly estate is more than just what pertains to the ministry. One of the things that bothers me about much of the Methodist ministry in the 1800's and early 1900's is the place given to a human feeling of great importance. I value their love

for God and their light on being entirely sanctified and consecrated, but a certain trait keeps popping up. "Now, if you do these things, you will be a **great** Christian." Whoa! Stop right there! A good Christian. An obedient Christian. But a **great** Christian? "*So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*" Luke 17:10 ➤

"Loose Him, and Let Him Go!"

—John 11:44

Are you bound hand and foot with grave clothes that God never meant for you to wear? When the miracle happened in Bethany and the dead man stood before them, the people saw a power that reversed all their expectations. Lazarus was alive! Yes, and "bound hand and foot" with a napkin over his face. How unsuitable now were the grave clothes that they had so carefully wrapped about him! "*Loose him, and let him go!*" Jesus commanded. How obvious. But how many resurrected souls stand today just as immobilized as the risen Lazarus in the doorway of his tomb?

Jesus has called us to walk in newness of life, but how often we find ourselves encumbered by the best of our own efforts. Our treasured ideals take many forms. Perhaps we are like Naaman, the Syrian captain. We have high expectations of God's power—and high expectations for ourselves. There will be no muddy Jordan for us! Blinded by fury, bound by our pride, we are ready to forsake our own deliverance. O soul, will you not just do "this small thing" and see God's unleashed power for you? It is only when we cast off our grave clothes that we find that even the dirt in a prophet's yard is more valuable than all the honors of this earth.

The hospitable Martha thought that her "much preparation," her carefulness, her concern for justice would please the Master best. And did He not care that she was fretting over the meal alone? Much more than she knew. Enough to show



her that He never intended for her to be bound by fret and trouble. In all her stress over perfection, He laid His finger on the one thing that was needful. Perfect trust, perfect rest.

And what about Mary? Didn't the "spiritual one" have her priorities straight? Certainly her insights were far reaching. Was it at Jesus' feet she grasped the reality that death was in His near future? Was not her ardor unselfish and pure as she spent her fortune in anticipation? But the Mary who thought that her greatest honor would be to anoint His dead body, ended up pouring the hoarded spikenard in abandonment on His feet. At the tomb of her brother she had found the Lord of Life, and what was her resources to His, after all? As wraps for the dead, only fit to be cast off and abandoned. All *our* highest ideals in serving the Lord must be cast off if we will walk in the power of His life.

Hobbled by fretting and doubt. Hindered indeed from seeing your Lord as He is, from experiencing the life He so desires to lead you in. Is this your experience? Consider Him who wept in Bethany. Does He not care that you are bound? When Jesus called you to "Come forth!" did He not also intend for you to be freed? Freed indeed from *your own* thoughts, *your* best efforts, your vain trying to be what only God can accomplish by your abandonment to Him. Oh, troubled soul, do you hear the Master's command for you? "*Loose him, and let him go!*"—from a message ➤

A Great Light

“The People that Walked in Darkness Have Seen a Great Light: They that Dwell in the Land of the Shadow of Death, upon Them hath the Light Shined.”—Isaiah 9:2

Perfect Light— Complete Understanding

There is a place where perfect understanding abounds. Of this place and of the Perfect Being who abides in that place, we read, “*The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting.*” ¹ Tim 6:15-16 This has direct reference to the Lord Jesus Christ in all His resurrected glory. It is in the sense of His resurrection that He alone has immortality, being the firstfruits of them that sleep (1 Cor. 15:20). We who are yet alive in the flesh and those who have already died have yet to obtain the immortality that comes with the general resurrection, whereas our Lord has already obtained it. He dwells now (and has before) in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see. No man has entered into heaven, yet. All the dead have entered into Hades, the world of departed spirits. This world consists of two parts, separated by a great gulf. Those two parts are Paradise and Torment. All departed spirits of men are in one place or the other. The Lord Jesus abode there as His earthly body lay in the tomb, but when He was resurrected on Easter morning, His soul left Paradise and was reunited with His glorified, resurrected body. After some days of being here on earth as the first fruit of the coming general resurrection, He ascended into heaven to that light which no man can approach unto (yet) and which no man can see and hath seen (yet). He went to prepare a place for us that love Him and His light and truth. We have foretastes of that wonderful place down here, but the glory and magnitude of that place far

excels anything we experience down here where we see through a glass, darkly; **but then, face to face.** That place is filled with the glory of God experienced by Moses in the sacred mount, and although he was somewhat shielded from the full effect of being near God’s glory, even that foretaste was so glorious that other humans could not look upon the face of Moses unveiled when he returned from the presence of God.

“*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*” ¹ Pet 2:9 The most advanced understanding, the highest wisdom that

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man has been able to obtain, cannot hold a candle to the matchless, marvelous light of the Creator in heaven. All of this perfection is dimly reflected to men in the way in which God has made the earth and designed the boundaries of man. Isaiah caught a glimpse of the glory and majesty of the Most High when he was allowed to see the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. There he saw the seraphims and heard them cry, “*Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*” ^{Isa} 6:3 This was shortly after king Uzziah’s trespass and consequent judgment, a time of consternation and trouble, but Brother Isaiah was given light from heaven to guide him, to comfort him, and to assure him of the truth (Isa. 6:1-3). How much we need the same in the time in

which we live! May it be with each of us, dear reader, that the God of heaven would help us, as He helped Daniel, the angel saying, “*O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.*” ^{Dan} 9:22-23

In 1 John 1:6, we read, “*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*” **No man can serve the Lord in an acceptable way if he has not light and walks not in the light, but walks in darkness.** If you are walking in darkness and professing to serve God, you lie. And then we read, “*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*” ^{vs} 7 This scripture speaks with great authority. Without the least hesitation, we can say that no one will get to heaven who does not walk in the light of Jesus. All

wishful thinking, all hopeful thinking, that is not solidly founded on **walking in God’s light** will prove to be an illusion, a fantasy, a pretending, a delusion. It is climbing up another way (John 10:1), and it is doomed.

“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”

“On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand.
All other ground is sinking sand.”

There are two very important points to this walking in the light. The first is a matter of personal integrity. The second is a matter of the validity of the light that a

person has. Even if a man has no valid light from heaven, his responsibility is fixed by what he does have. If he trifles with the light he has, he damages something in his soul. As one brother put it, "If a man does not live up to the light he possesses, then what chance does he have?" And again, "*Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*" Rom. 14:22 Beware of that cynicism and the results from it that say, "I can't be sure of anything. So what does it matter how conscientious I am?"

But the second point is equally important. The text says, "as He is in the light." It is not just any old light (understanding); it is the same light from heaven in which our Lord both walked and does walk. If I carefully live up to the wrong thing, I do not get the benefit of walking in the right thing; I am not blessed or delivered by my conscientiousness with the benefits of light from heaven. The person that really believes in sacrificing their child to an idol certainly receives no true spiritual benefit for their integrity to their belief. The nature of the light is all important.

It is light from heaven, the marvelous mercy of God that reveals the blood of Christ offered as a sacrifice for us, and it is light from heaven that strives with our hearts to bring us to godly sorrow and repentance not to be repented of. It is light from the glory world that teaches us restitution and an abhorrence of our sinful selves, that brings us to the fountain opened in the House of God for sin and all uncleanness. Yea, the Holy Ghost comes and reproves the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:8) He casts light on our darkened minds and hearts of the nature of our condemnation, and of the nature of what God requires of us, until we cry, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" Acts 2:37 And then He gives answer, the only answer, that leads to forgiveness, life, and peace.

Without Light From Heaven, Man is a Spiritual Idiot

When Brother Paul was writing to the congregation in Corinth, he emphasized this truth to them in 1 Cor. 2:9-10, "*But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*" And in verse 12, he said, "*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*" Many people there were carnal (1 Cor. 3:1), and their carnality manifested itself in leaning to their own understanding, instead of being enlightened by the Spirit of God. They knew things, **but they did not know them as they should have known them** (1 Cor. 8:2). They were not enlightened with light from God. When God enlightens us, He gives us more than just a certain amount of knowledge; He gives us the whole package that comes with the knowledge. This includes a great deal of charity and grace. All that comes with the enlightenment is part of the whole. To know things without that which must come with it is to receive something that is dangerous. It can puff you up; it can leave you resentful or prejudiced.

There are a lot of people who know something about spiritual things, but they do not know them as God would have them know them. God looks at the whole picture, and He sees the inadequacy there. Of such people were the folks at Laodicea. Their lukewarmness had brought them to a fearful state of complacency. "*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and*

naked..." Rev. 3:17 Many essentials of light from heaven were missing in their lives. What they had was marred by what they didn't have. Many people are saying that they are rich—and they are, but they are not **rich enough**. It takes a lot of grace to live up to a spiritual heritage. Many people are in the position of living in a huge castle, which is their heritage, so to speak, but they cannot afford what they have. If you live in a castle, you need a castle's income to properly keep up the place. If you have a heritage of true spiritual living, revealed by God to those before you, then you need a lot of grace (like they had) to live up to those things. It is a terrible thing to say, "Well, we have the truth," and only have **the outline of truth**. "*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*" 2 Tim. 3:5

To be illuminated as you must needs be illuminated to live acceptably to God, you must be willing to completely humble yourself before the Almighty, confessing your need that you are able to see and praying the prayer of David, "*Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*" Psa. 19:12-14 It is **appropriate** and **altogether fitting** for us to pray this prayer and have this attitude. Only He who dwelleth in the perfect light is able to establish us in His light.

"The word *idiot*es is frequently used by the Holy Ghost to describe those who are uninitiated into the mysteries of godliness. You will find this word in 1 Corinthians 14:16,23,24, etc., and frequently elsewhere. In the King James version, it is generally translated *unlearned*, a soul untaught these mysteries by the Holy Ghost. Did you know that all religion is called mystery in the Bible? These mysteries are the

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work of the Holy Ghost in the internal transformation of the soul which takes place in regeneration, by which the life of God lost in the fall is restored to your soul. And sanctification, by which the sin-principle—Adam the first—is utterly exterminated and taken away. These are the works of God wrought in our souls by the Holy Ghost. **The man who has not received them, the Holy Ghost calls an idiot.** You see, the Greek word for *idiotes* is not translated, because it has been transferred to our language. So you have now ascertained that our word *idiot* is a pure Greek word. So you see that God calls every person an idiot with reference to regeneration, who has not received it. God only reveals His mysteries to those who receive them. Could you see the countless hosts of poor, guilty humanity this day following the devil's idiots and plunging into hell, your blood would run chill. Remember; we don't mean an intellectual idiot. You may be an intellectual Solomon, and at the same time, **a spiritual idiot.** The Bible is not an intellectual book. Hence, you never can know it by your intellect. It is a spiritual book. The spirit of the unregenerate is dead (Eph. 2:1). Hence, he knows no more about the mysteries of salvation, namely, regeneration and sanctification, than the corpse lying in his grave. I have often listened to powerful preachers, swaying the multitude by their learned eloquence, laying under contribution all their powers of mind and body, to prove to the people that there was no such a thing as Holy Ghost religion.... What an awful sight! A house crowded with idiots, and an idiot in the pulpit poking upon the poor, idiotic people.... Holy Ghost religion is the only remedy for these foolish heresies. How long, O, God, shall false prophets, idiots as to the plan of salvation, lead the guilty millions through the churches to hell? **The man unregenerated by the Holy Ghost** is pronounced by the Almighty **an utter idiot** as to God's salvation. Great God, deliver us from unregenerated idiots, who by their intellect, learning and eloquence, lead great audiences of idiots through their churches to the bottomless pit."

—adapted with changes to grammar and punctuation from *Holiness or Hell*, by William Godbey

If we are willing to become a teachable idiot, there is hope for us. For unlike the poor feeble-minded individual who is **unable** to learn, we are able to receive the

ways of God if we will humble our heart in turning away from everything else (especially including our own understanding, Prov. 3:5-7), that "*we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*" ^{1 Cor. 2:12}

Everyone Receives Some Light From God

"In him [God] was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.... That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." ^{John 1:4-5,9}

These are solemn words indeed. God has taken upon Himself to **light every man that cometh into the world.** Again, we read, "**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.**" ^{Rom. 1:18-20} Consider, O reader, the weighty import of these words. God has shown things to man; God has **revealed** things to man, and He has done it in such a way that it is **clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made. And this is done in such a way that all mankind, including you and me, **are without excuse.** If it were not for God's revealing and showing, we would be in darkness and comprehend not the light, but God is faithful and deals with everyone sufficiently to fix responsibility.

Light from God lays each of us under serious obligation. Just as children pretend they don't hear what they don't want to hear, men react to the light of God with pretended incomprehension, but He who shows is also He who knows. Deep in the heart of each man is a place where suffi-

cient comprehension is brought about that the Bible describes it as **clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made.

A refusal to think about something fixes responsibility. A brother, who was so impressed by truth that he had heard, said to a co-worker on the job, "I wish you could have heard what I heard last night—it would have made you think!" His co-worker replied, "I don't want to think."

This man did not want further obligation, but his lack of interest will do him no good in the final judgment, for his turning away from thinking leaves him with no excuse. God caused him to hear what the saved man said. God exposed him to that much light...

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." John 15:22

It is not a question of **whether** we have light, or even sufficient light. The question is, **what are we doing with the light we have?** How have you acknowledged (confessed) what you know is right and what you know is wrong?

God's Purpose in Revealing Light

We read a wonderful story of how God intended for things to work between Him and His creation in Genesis 2:18-25. First we see that God **knew perfectly** what Adam (His first created human being) **needed.** God was not experimenting with Adam. Nor was He simply imposing what Adam needed upon him. God wanted a partnership, a covenant, with man. God wanted man to **voluntarily** respond to Himself. The need at hand was Adam's need for a help meet, i. e., a suitable and appropriate companion for him. God **knew** he needed a companion. God **knew** that it was not good for the man to be alone. This knowledge is perfect light, but God was not satisfied to keep it to Himself. **God wanted to reveal this wonderful understanding to Adam.**

The question is, what are we doing with the light we have? How have you acknowledged (confessed) what you know is right and what you know is wrong?

God wanted to cast light on Adam's pathway. So how did God go about it? *"And out of the ground, the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them."*^{vs 19} We next read how Adam named each of these creatures, *"but for Adam, there was not found an help meet for him."* We see that God has designed a relationship with man and God to be participatory; we are workers together with God. After God's revealing to Adam that there was nothing in creation (so far) that was satisfactory to the need, then God proceeded to show Adam that God could and would **make exactly what he needed**. And thus we see that God designed a lesson in faith in Himself for Adam's (and our) benefit.

This little-by-little, step-by-step, line-upon-line, precept-upon-precept way of revealing His perfect light, is how God made us. There is that in man, especially since the curse of inherited sin came into Adam and Eve and was passed on to us all except our Lord, that wants to be independent of our Creator and find his own light, so to speak, but God originally created us to **voluntarily seek and humbly accept** divine assistance. And, of course, for us to have the privilege of voluntarily loving and walking with God, there must, of necessity, be the very real possibility that we would choose not to do so, with all attendant results. Therefore we read, *"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."*^{Jer. 10:23} This confession was wrung from the lips of a man of God who was called to weep over and to warn a nation of the awful consequences of turning away from God and doing as seemed best to themselves. *"I know that the way of man is not in himself."* No, it is not. We were meant to walk in the light of God, step by step, as He revealed it to us. God meant for Himself and every human being to form a wonderful partnership. God, in all His perfection, would lead and teach, provide and make possible, while man would rejoice and continue to voluntarily

choose to serve Him and obey Him. This ideal is prophesied in Isaiah 30:21, *"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."*

Partial Light

But the decision to receive light from God is not as simple as just **yes** or **no**. The same thing that prompts man to turn completely away from God can also prompt him to **partially turn away** and **partially follow**. In other words, it is possible to pick and choose what you will hear and receive of what God reveals, and the results will be just what you would expect—some blessings and some judgments, a confusing and unacceptable (to God) outcome. This would be the result of a deliberate and willful choice to partial light from heaven. There are also failures to follow all the light because of things that thwart or hide light from the soul. This would amount to following Jesus afar off (Matt. 26:58), instead of up close and nigh. There are those who **refuse to see**, and there are those who are **hindered in seeing**. But whether a man digs in his

It is utterly necessary to have and possess all that inward experience that God has made available for the human soul, in order to properly understand and to utilize our privileges in Christ Jesus.

heels and gets obstinate and stubborn, or whether he honestly does not "get it," the benefit and blessing of light is lost if it is not received and followed, and the man walks in darkness. There are degrees of darkness, ranging from gross darkness to almost light.

*"By Thy Word we stand or fall,
By Thy Word we live or die,
If in part and not by all,
Then we make His Word a lie."*

We would now consider what it means to be **partly** genuinely right spiritually, while being also **partly** in error. We observe

at once that pure religion and undefiled (James 1:27) would be to have **undiluted, completely right religion**, both in belief and in experience. The other end of the spectrum would be to be completely given over to error and evil. The right condition would consist of being as hot as it is possible to be, while the extreme of error and evil would be to be as cold as ice. In between would be various degrees of lukewarmness (Rev. 3:15-16). If we consider the subject from the standpoint of health, then there would be perfect health, i.e., as good a state of health as it is possible to have; while the loss of perfect health would proceed down to complete debilitation, even to death.

A brother once preached that the New Testament is **geared** to a completely sanctified experience. That is, it is utterly necessary to have and possess **all** that inward experience that God has made available for the human soul, in order to properly understand and to fully utilize our privileges in Christ Jesus. The full New Testament privileges are designed for spiritual adulthood, not babyhood, and God has designed the gospel *"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and*

cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."^{Eph. 4:12-14} This is the normal development of a child of God.

"For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."^{Heb. 5:13-14; 6:1}

Whenever there is not a going on unto perfection, then spiritual development is hindered or completely stopped, and *"the measure of the stature of the fulness*

of Christ” is not reached. There are many attendant results. All about us are cases of arrested spiritual development. “Many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” ¹ Cor. 11:30 It does not have to be this way, but it is this way.

The Potential That Is In Divine Light

Just as a little sin (rebellion) contains the potential for the most horrible, vicious sin imaginable, just a small amount of light from God contains **an unimaginable potential for the perfect fulness of Divine perfection.** Light from God is heavenly seed, and we read in Matt. 13:31-32, “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.” The smallest bit of genuine light, when grown, becomes a great tree of light.

Man experiments, reasons, and concludes, but God **knows**, and **knows perfectly.** God never has to reverse Himself. He never needs to retrace His steps. He gets it right from the very beginning. When a human being is directed and instructed by light from heaven, as that light was in Jesus Christ, that light builds on itself, and shines **brighter and brighter**, until it comes to the **perfect day.** “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” ^{Prov. 4:18}

If a man walks in that wonderful light, so different from fleshly human reasoning and thinking, and **walks in that light alone and unmixed with anything else**, he would make no mistakes; he would never have crooked paths, and he would have no regrets. God can and will change the human heart so that it loves perfectly and has a consistent inward motive to walk in all the light that God shines on the pathway, but there is something else to consider besides just motive. As long as we are in the body, we are subject to other voices and our own reasoning. Many an individual has received genuine under-

standing and comprehension from God, and unwittingly added to the heavenly vision with some reasoning or thinking that was not part of what God sent. That added part did not and could not prove out. Indeed, in many cases, the light from God actually contradicts and discredits what we assume to be correct, but this only becomes apparent with the passage of time and a determined, sustained effort to obey truth and walk in the light.

A good example of this is found in the New Testament. Jesus came bringing the kingdom of heaven—a completely new experience of **regeneration**, that had never been seen in the world before. Ever since the creation of man, there had never been a human heart that was regenerated (born again) and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Nicodemus could not imagine it. (John 3:1-10) “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” ¹ Cor. 2:9 One might get the impression that this scripture is speaking of things that belong to the glory world alone, for this light has not “entered in the heart of man,” but it is plain from the next verse that these things have been revealed. Evidently, this light has not entered into the heart of man by his own efforts, and this

It is human to want God to stay within the boundaries of our comprehension. When Peter was being given a vision from God in Acts 10:10-17, we are told that “doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean.”

interpretation is sustained in John 1:13, “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

All of the thoughts of man about God, all of the experiences of man with God, since the fall of man, were built on our relationship to a pure and holy God while we had hearts which could be forgiven,

but not purified. And all this mass of impressions, convictions, and experiences produced certain expectations of what the Messiah would be like and what He would do. Our outlook of the future, of what is even possible, is so affected by our light, that, in a sense, we are prisoners of the amount of light that we have, and the possibilities that are in God are hidden from us. Such knowledge is too high for us; we cannot obtain it, until God reveals more. All we can do is trust, absolutely and completely, that God knows what He is doing, and that “the Lord will make a way, **somehow.**” Therefore, “*The just shall live by faith.*” ^{Heb. 10:38}

God understands our ability to receive and our inability to comprehend. “*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*” ^{Psa. 103:13-14} He constantly deals with us perfectly appropriately and also **doesn’t** deal with us just right, too. What happened after the fall of man in the Garden of Eden had such a profound effect of our minds and hearts, that God delayed for centuries the first coming of His Son; otherwise, we would not have had a fair chance of receiving Him and believing. Therefore, we read, “**When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his**

Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” ^{Gal. 4:4-5} God wanted to send His Son right away, for such was our awful need of Him, but the Loving Almighty patiently laid a foundation for our faith in the intervening time until **the fulness of the time was come.** Behind each divine revelation to men overall and to individuals is this patient, loving wisdom. This should cause us to realize now the importance and

timeliness of any divine revelation to us. It should help us value it and consecrate to it.

If our faith falters and we began to doubt the validity of light from heaven given to us, our path begins to go in a different direction than the path that God is revealing. In such a case, we are giving place to some other influence and guid-

ance than God, and time will eventually reveal (perhaps only when our life is over) that all other ground is indeed

sinking sand, and that only the light that God gives will prove out.

It is human to want God to stay within the boundaries of our comprehension. When Peter was being given a vision from God in Acts 10:10-17, we are told that he *"doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean."* Who could blame him for that? What was really involved was **radically different** for him and all with him. *"Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean."* If God had left Peter with nothing but the vision only, Peter would never have gotten a hold of what God had for him. (The vision was given **three times**—a very significant matter for Peter.) This vision eventually involved the laying aside of circumcision. It involved a more advanced understanding of why God gave the Old Testament, and on and on....

There is danger here, too, in the step-by-step process. If what I accept is not genuine light, then it can take me (even ever so subtly) away from light that I already have. And yet...light from heaven **will not fit** in the thinking and comprehension I already have that is not taught of God. It is plain that a consecration must be made and affirmed over and over. "Lord, I am open to everything that is of you, and I am closed to everything that is not."

It would not be fair to say that God does not accept imperfect service. We might say that God does not accept **willfully imperfect** service. There have been many people who have loved the Lord just as far as they understood to love Him, and *"it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not,"* ^{2 Cor. 8:12} but there was and is a lack in this kind of attempt to please God that dwarfs the soul and limits the grasp of faith (an example would be children of God attempting to please Him under Catholicism). God has something for us

One of the results of free will choice is that how we conduct our lives either makes it easier for others to live right, or it makes it harder. What we do or do not do leaves a legacy that effects the current generation and even the generations following.

that will change that. *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."* ^{Matt. 5:8} To find the blessing that comes with purity of heart is to find the **heart condition** that opens the spiritual eyes to see God and His wonderful ways. At that point, a wonderful process begins to work in the heart of an entirely sanctified person; a growth **in** grace is begun. And if the child of God will stay pure in heart and true to God by His assistance, then his ground will bring forth a harvest, *"some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold."* ^{Matt. 13:8} Why do not all bring forth an hundredfold? Because **there is more to walking in the light than meeting the beginning of conditions: a pure heart.** There is the matter of how much prior conditioning and current circumstances hinder the effect of light.

In 2 Timothy 1:5, we read, *"I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."* Notice the cumulative effect of light in Brother Timothy. It is not intellectual indoctrination; it is **unfeigned faith.** It dwelt in a member of two generations back from Brother Timothy, and it left him with a godly heritage that gave him the potential of an hundredfold.

One of the results of free will choice is that how we conduct our lives either makes it easier for others to live right, or it makes it harder. What we do or do not do leaves a legacy that effects the current generation and even the generations following. The world we live in now is the result of billions of choices by the many lives lived before us. The conflict between right and wrong sways back and forth in the generations of mankind. When men receive the gospel, sin and evil are weakened in their effect on mankind, and when they reject or neglect the gospel, sin and evil are strengthened in their effect. Left to itself, sin constantly grows worse, but

the actual history of the world is a story of repented sin, of reformations and revivals, of repeated failures, of apostasies, and descents. Nor is this just the thrust and parry of a certain generation. The scale of things is enormous and spans many, many generations.

When Jesus came to the men and women of Judea, He found that they already had a lot of ideas about what He was and what He should do. They expected a literal kingdom. They expected the defeat of the Romans. They expected that they would be the most favored of all people, exonerated and exalted. But Jesus was not about to attempt to graft the truth unto their thinking, and if He had, it would not have worked. *"No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better."* ^{Luke 5:36-39}

Divine truth is complete in itself. It does not need and cannot agree with other influences, for it is all sufficient in itself. Certain idolatrous religions teach precepts that sound almost Christian, but they are not Christian. The outward harmony notwithstanding, the slant is different, and the outcome is different, too. God's truth will pop the old bottle understanding every time; the new will not agree with the old. With each advancement of truth, there must be a rejection of old error. They cannot be reconciled.

When E. E. Shelhamer, an apparently humble, careful holiness minister of the late 1800's, encountered carefully-prepared, timely divine light on the church question, he rejected it. Here are his reasons for rejecting it in his own words.

But how did I escape? Others fell into error, while it seemed God had a special care over me. Only two weeks after I left home for College certain preachers came into that community and began preaching a strange doctrine. At first they taught the essentials, but reserved the “strong meat” until the people could digest it. Then they became harsh and denunciatory toward those who did not readily receive it. The chief members of the church accepted it and the result was a “division” and “schism,” the very thing they were denouncing.

They sent me their literature and later my own cousin came all the way west to “convert Elzie.” I listened attentively, but **the new doctrine did not appeal to me**—to “come out of all sects” and at the same time form a more sectarian sect. Their members did not feel free to attend other services, except to “let their light shine.” They could argue Scripture for hours, but took little interest in helping at the altar, unless it meant a new proselyte. It seemed to me that God’s method was to take the narrow, sectarian spirit out of us, and make us lovable toward all of His saints, rather than take us out of a Holiness organization to form another, with a few tenants added. God in mercy did not let me return home until I could meet their arguments. When I did, a great revival broke out, but I had no cooperation from my former friends. They wept over me, they denounced me, and finally declared that I had rejected the “evening light” and had sinned against the Holy Ghost. They warned the people not to hear me, that I would have no more revivals; but after these many years, all their prophecies have failed.

The thing that God hates **in your church or mine**, is sin and bigotry. The same accursed thing manifested itself in the disciples when they said, “Master, we

saw one casting out devils in Thy name and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.” Friend, you may be saved up to the point that you do not openly oppose those who are not of **your little crowd**, but you must go farther and bid him God’s speed, if he is getting men genuinely converted. **I fear few are saved to this extent.**

—*How We Escaped*, “A Strange Doctrine”

It is plain from Mr. Shelhamer’s words that he believed in the inevitability of sects. This is not to say that he **valued** them or **desired** them. He simply thought they could not be avoided. He did not believe that God was doing a work to remove all factional love out of men’s hearts; and although he firmly believed in perfect love, entire sanctification, and deliverance from inward carnality, he did not identify this inward work and blessing with deliverance from **all** “the little crowds,” but instead, with a desire to work with and bid God’s speed to all saved in all those places. **He did not see God’s church, built by Him, governed by Him, separate from all the little pens in which God’s children found themselves.** Most of all, he had no light on the Come-Out Message: “*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.*” ^{Rev. 18:4} Therefore, the attempts of those around him to respond to this message “did not appeal to him,” and he concluded that they were simply forming a new sect—could not help doing so. He rejected light from heaven on this point—without rejecting it on living a life of deliverance from carnality. He saw the light partially...and remained without light partially. His experience remained a “*dark and cloudy day*”; his light was not

“*clear or dark*” (Eze. 34:12; Zech. 14:6-7). Those around him ended up condemning him and predicting doom and gloom for him. He seems to have ended up as he started—partly blessed and partly missing out. Only God knows just how to handle his final judgment, and this, of course, is true of any of us.

The light that Mr. Shelhamer received (on entire sanctification) was limited by his darkness on the church question. He is profitable to read and study about deliverance from carnality **as far as it went**, but he has little to contribute beyond his light. There are many other writings that fit into this category: clear and dark.

Consider this: Mr. Shelhamer has run his course and finished his fight. He has met his Creator. We hope that all went well with him, and he is in Paradise right now, awaiting the general judgment. Now here is the point: **Now he sees.** Now he sees the evil of sectism in a way that he did not seem to see it when he was here. Now he sees the effect of his ministry; now he sees the full potential that was in the light that he did receive. The veil is now removed, and it is face to face. No earthly reign of a thousand years in the future. No removal of sect barriers in such an imagined golden age. Now his wood and stubble are consumed, and he realizes that they could have been consumed down here.

The apostasy that eclipsed the light of Christianity after the successful overthrow of the many beliefs of paganism had a profound effect on the history of mankind. What kind of world would we have had if there had been no Catholic Church, no dark ages, no Protestant Reformation? But all of these broad outlines of religious history (with many others) were shaped by men rejecting light from God and attempting to recover from those rejections. The scale is so large, so beyond the normal range of a man’s life span, that it would not be grasped without the prophecies of Revelation. This light is given to help us acquire perspective for our times. ➤

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A PRESSURE COOKER FOR JESUS

ONE of our favorite kitchen tools is our trusty little pressure cooker. In a pinch it is a handy soup pot, but it really shines when the rubber-sealed lid is locked into place and the pressure rises. What would take several hours in any ordinary pot can be cooked in a matter of minutes—with better taste and texture.

This morning I was praying over the needs of the day as I prepared breakfast. As usual, the pressure cooker was busy. This time cooking up our millet cereal. The gentle hiss of escaping steam reminded me to keep an eye on the pressure gage. As it rose to the second ring, I noted the bulge of the gray-blue seal through a slot on the lid. *What a faithful little cooker, I thought, standing up to all that pressure for us!*

My fingers deftly turned down the heat, but as I knelt to pray the image of the pressure cooker remained in my mind. *Lord, let me be a useful tool in Your hands today. You know how much heat to apply to perform Your work in my life. You know the pressure needed to get the job done.* A pressure cooker for Jesus? Yes, it is His purposes I live to fulfill. I knew He was ever aware of my slightest call, just as I was listening to the hissing of steam from the pressure gage. When tensions rose, didn't He listen to my cries for help, ready to turn down the heat if it was too much?

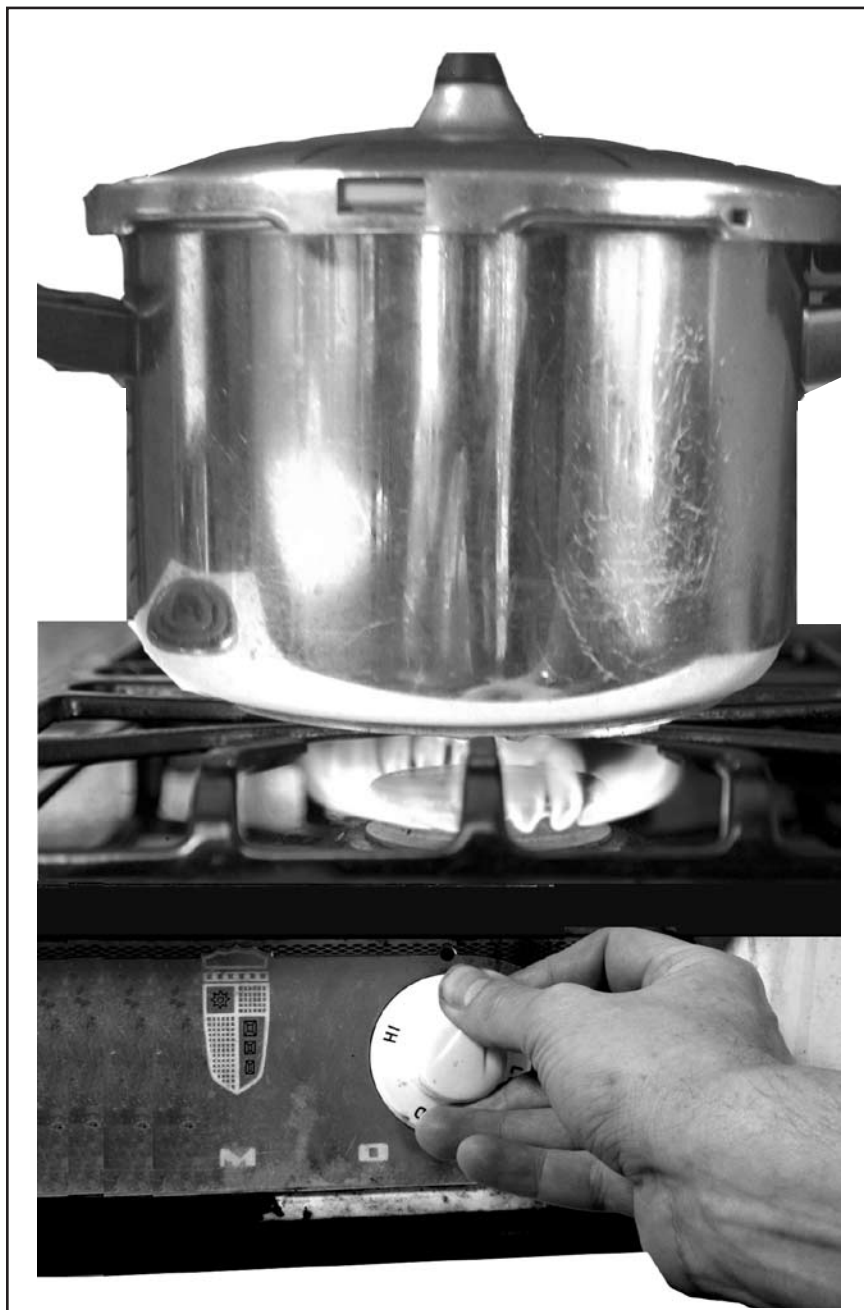
Hisssssssss. A slight change in tone reminded me to check the pressure. The temperature needed to be raised slightly. As I touched the heating dial I thought of my Master. Weren't His fingers controlling the trials and pressures I would face today? If He knew I needed more heat, then that would be best. I smiled, glad that I could trust Him.

It had not always been so. I had often rebelled at the trials God had sent my way. Like our little cooker without its seal, I could not endure much heat without spitting and sputtering. *I was more trouble than not, I remembered. The Lord couldn't use me very much because I kept my "vent holes" open for escape in times of trial.* Sure, I had wanted to serve God with my life, but I thought I had my limits. Too much pressure was too much! O foolish little vessel, not to trust the Master Cook! Who was I to say when and how much?

Faithfully God had showed me that I must be purged from "my limits" to fulfill His will. I had to receive the seal of His Spirit to become "*a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work.*"² *Tim. 2:21* Yes, that was it! The pressure

cooker illustrated the lesson so well. With my life sanctified for His use, He had full control and could use me as He wished. Often with some pressure. After all, that was needed to bring out the best taste and texture, wasn't it? I smiled at the thought of a new day with Jesus to do the cooking in my life. The results were sure to be good!

Ring-a-ring! The telephone broke through my meditation. At this early hour it must be another call for subbing in the local school district. *How should I respond to this request on an already busy day? Lord Jesus, You know what pressures I can handle.* I picked up the phone with new confidence. I was His vessel ready for His purposes, after all.



Glorious Freedom

Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Rom. 6:22
For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 8:2

1. Once I was bound by sin's gall-ing fet - ters, Chained like a slave, I strug-gled in vain;
2. Free - dom from all the car - nal af - fec - tions, Free - dom from en - vy, ha - tred and strife;
3. Free - dom from pride and all sin - ful fol - lies, Free - dom from love and glit - ter of gold;
4. Free - dom from fear with all of its tor - ments, Free - dom from care with all of its pain;

But I re - ceived a glo - ri - ous free - dom, When Je - sus broke my fet - ters in twain.
Free - dom from vain and world - ly am - bi - tions, Free - dom from all that sad - dened my life.
Free - dom from e - vil, tem - per, and an - ger, Glo - ri - ous free - dom, rap - ture un - told.
Free - dom in Christ, my bless - ed Re - deem - er, He who has rent my fet - ters in twain.

Refrain

Glo - ri - ous free - dom, won - der - ful free - dom, No more in chains of sin I re - pine!

Je - sus the glo - ri - ous E - man - ci - pa - tor, Now and for - ev - er He shall be mine.

The Son Has Risen

A young man... saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here....
After the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. Mk. 16:5-6,19

Pensively

1. Be - hold the wom - en walk - ing to the tomb, Bear - ing for Je - sus' bod - y sweet per - fume;
2. Mar - y is weep - ing, for her Lord is gone, O - ver her un - der - stand - ing mist is drawn;
3. Thom - as the bless - ed news can - not be - lieve Un - til the Wound - ed One he can per - ceive;

They won - der who will roll a - way the stone— And still to us the fu - ture is un - known.
But Je - sus, ris - en, first to Mar - y came— Mys - t'ry de - parts when Je - sus speaks my name.
By faith keep trust - ing through the long - est night— Bless - ed we'll be when faith is turned to sight.

Refrain joyously

The Son has ris - en on the Res - ur - rec - tion Day, The light of heav - en now is driv - ing night a - way;

Christ Je - sus reigns, He broke sin's bind - ing chains, The vic - to - ry He won for you and me;

The emp - ty tomb Has ban - ished gloom, I'll ev - er sing, For Christ is King,

And heav - en's spring shall stay.
the Son has ris - en on the Res - ur - rec - tion Day.

The Ministry of Intercession

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." ¹ John 5:16

If we read the next verse of this scripture, we find that all unrighteousness is sin; that is, there are things in which people come short, realize secret faults, and have needs which have not yet been adjusted, and these trespasses are not unto death because they do not involve rebellion and willful transgression. *"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."* ^{Matt 6:12} *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* ^{Eph 4:32}

There are sins that involve willful transgression and rebellion. These are unto death and beyond the reach of this kind of intercession on the part of another.

There is a ministry of life for them that sin not unto death. In other words, God appoints a place for other children of God to enter into the needs of another in such a way that a child of God with this ministry of life is able to nurture a child of God who is failing and coming short, but who is not dead spiritually. *"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees."* ^{Heb 12:12} *"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."* ¹ Cor 11:29-30 Such children of God as these need nursing care to recover, to get well, to grow strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Every godly pastor is given some of this gift as part of their calling. Here is the exercise of it in the apostle's words, *"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."* ¹ Thess 2:7-8 The context of this

scripture tells us that he could have conducted himself differently, but so deeply did he enter into the burden of their need, that he forbore to act with more firmness and authority. When a certain minister was proceeding to deal with a troublemaker in the congregation who constantly gossiped and "edited" the weekly messages to the detriment of many in the congregation, the Spirit of God spoke to him as he drove to visit her and deal with her with Bible steps. "You do have a right to take Bible steps [Matt. 18:15-17] in going to her," the Spirit of God told him, "but if you do, it will destroy her!" He said he pulled off the road. He sat there a while and meditated on the matter. Then he made a u-turn and went back home. She continued to act as before.

It is impossible to be an effective nurturer for God unless the Spirit of God opens to you enough of the particular burden of that needy one for you to understand their need. Generalities are not good enough here. You need to understand the particular nature of their need, just as a nurse needs to understand the peculiar affliction of the patient. General things do apply, but more pinpoint knowledge is needed.

In every life, there is a unique balance between the flesh (the natural flesh) and the spirit, and this balance in each one absolutely must be gained and maintained for good spiritual health. All of God's children are required to live holy lives without sin, but the degree of plainness in their dress, the nature of their fleshly recreation (in the sense of mental and physical relaxation and rest), and the degree of their involvement with the affairs of this life (what is entangling to one is not necessarily spiritually entangling to another) differs from each other. For this reason, we are advised not to compare ourselves

with each other. (2 Cor. 10:12). The right balance in our lives is not found by such comparisons. *"But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden."* ^{Gal 6:4-5}

Now the Spirit of God works always with a given individual in terms of the priorities that He sets in his life. The Spirit of God is coordinating a great number of things in setting a given child of God in the body as it pleases Him, and this has a bearing on the priorities that He sets. It is not up to us to set the priorities in what should be dealt with in a child of God. We do not know what we are doing, anyway, (even if we think we do), and to do so **usurps the place of the Holy Ghost**. Read Eccl. 5:1-2. Be quiet. Keep your foot; that is, watch what you do. Be sure that God has opened the matter to you sufficiently that you are a worker together with Him. Be sober-minded and pay attention. It is possible for you to put a stumbling block in your brother's pathway. It is possible for you to discourage a child of God from responding to the Spirit of God's chastisement, and you are not too big to be spanked, too. A lot of people are meddling in things too big for them. A lot of people take too much upon themselves in the name of God. They get too big for their britches, so to speak. They forget that they, too, are a child among the other children and start trying to act like a parent. We stay children, however, and the Bible tells us to forgive other men their trespasses even (in the same way) as we want God to forgive us ours. Sometimes God uses spankable children to deal with other spankable children, but we sure had better be careful to stay right within the guidelines that God gives us. "Lord, deal with me just as I deal with others." God delegates a certain limited authority for a child of His to deal with another child of His. This authority is most definitely lim-

It is not up to us to set the priorities in what should be dealt with in a child of God. We do not know what we are doing, anyway, and to do so **usurps the place of the Holy Ghost**.

ited, and it is vital that I stay right in the guidelines. It is also vital that I not neglect to do what I am delegated by God to do.

This insight from God into the real needs of others along with a great consciousness that I only stay balanced by the help of that same Holy Ghost, goes a long way toward helping me to work the works of God with someone else, rather than my works (my best efforts). And this is the essence of the nurturing burden.

Love is absolutely necessary, but even a moment's pause will show that love is not enough. There are many parents that hopelessly, longingly love their children, but have no or few clues as to how to nurture them. They want to nurture; they see the desperate need for nurture; perhaps they would pay any price to be able to nurture. Still they cannot find how to do it. Again, only the Spirit of God knows the exact balance point, the exact need, in each individual's life. And He is capable, so capable, of imparting enough of that perfect understanding to you and me that we can be workers together with God.

Our Lord, in the days of His flesh, said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." ^{John 5:17} This way of dealing with the problems and awful conditions of the Jews came zinging in right on target. It was just right. It was tough love mingled with mercy in just the right proportions. It warned of impending judgment faithfully. It didn't give undue room for fudging and evading. It came as a marvelous uplift to those who had ears to hear and an incredibly damning rebuke to those who held the truth in unrighteousness. Oh, what a work! What a work of God! Glory be to Him who thus deals with mankind! What a kiss! (Psalms 85:10)

We observe the same work of God wherever men are used of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost reproves, and He reproves just right with respect to the particular need. The Word does not go forth void. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing

whereto I sent it." ^{Isa 55:10-11} There is laser-like accuracy with God; He never misses.

Now we see a child of God struggling. We need discernment. We do not need to lean to our own understanding of God's ways and truth to help him. That could only accidentally help him, and what are the chances of that happening? We need something timely and accurate from the Holy Ghost, timely and accurate in the needy one's experience. We must wait on God's revealing to get it. He knows. He wants to help. He wants us to wait and be humbled in waiting until He reveals what we need to see. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." ^{Hab 2:1-3} Habakkuk says, "I need an answer." Then he says, "I'm going to stand on my watch to see what He will say unto me." Sure enough, God answered him. If you read the verses above, you see the pinpoint accuracy of God's vision, supplied for Habakkuk's use in the work of God.

Every soul has a vision for them. Every soul has an answer from God, a vision that can be made plain upon tables (that is, communicated) "that he may run that readeth it." Praise God! Something that works!!!! Oh, how the vision of God for each of us works! Glory! God knows just what we each need.

It is a characteristic of the works of men to understand in generalities, in policies, in creeds. It is characteristic of them to experiment, to formulate, to craft from experience. It is characteristic of the work of God to be led by absolute, right-on-target pinpoint knowledge. We serve Him who knows all things. There is not a single problem, no matter how perplexing, that He cannot resolve, that He does not

completely understand. Therefore, "we are perplexed, but not in despair." ^{2 Cor 4:8} God knows the secret of good spiritual health of every child of God. He knows how to direct the nurturing.

Brother C. E. Orr states in *The Rule of a Sainly Life*:

Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me." You are to hear more than the preacher's voice, but there are those who are hearing no more. You are to listen for the voice of Jesus in the voice of the preacher, and if you can not hear it, do not follow. You have heaven to gain for yourself. You have your own life to live. Do not look around and compare yourself with some one else. Look to heaven and live to please God. He will tell you how to

"Seek the God of heaven to teach your heart how to live. You can live the life God wants you to live, but you can not live the life of another. There are some variations in every life. It is the law of heaven. Get your eyes off of others."

live. His Spirit will write it in your heart. No two lambs bleat just alike. Jesus knows each sheep by its own particular bleat. No life will ever be just like yours because there never was any one just like you. It takes your own individual life to complete the all glorious temple of God. Seek the God of heaven to teach your heart how to live. You can live the life God wants you to live, but you can not live the life of another. There are some variations in every life. It is the law of heaven. Get your eyes off of others.

God has created mankind (and continues to create mankind) so they are very diverse. He designed this diversity on purpose, and it is to be respected. Unity is not uniformity. As a little tract states, "Others May, You Cannot." A mother or father who attempts to treat every child in the family exactly alike will be unjust with some, even as they attempt to avoid injustice. Some children need more spankings than others. Some need to be dealt with in their fragility. Others need severity. And everything in between. If a stubborn, strongly self-willed child is dealt with as a fragile, gentle child, it will not be good.

The opposite is true, also. Not only is this generally true overall, but a given child may be fragile one day, and in need of strong, firm dealing the next day. The diversity and changing face of diversity in us is one reason we are so out of our depth in dealing with each other at the heart level. The skills to deal with people together in business or in other group settings are not skills at the heart level. We catch a sense of this in Jeremiah 17:9, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: Who can know it?”* And the answer to this profound question is in the next verse: *“I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”* vs. 10 God is our only hope to effectively deal with each other.

A certain minister preached a message at the end of his ministry to two congregations that contained a shocking statement. “If I had realized the hardness of men’s hearts when I started preaching as a young man, I would have conducted my ministry differently over the years.” Now this statement is worthy of our attention. It is a confession. It is an indictment of natural thinking and understanding, even in a man saved and sanctified. And it is very honest. This brother was inclined by natural temperament to be gentle, reasonable, and conciliatory. He did not care for confrontations, yet he was faithful to God and obedient. He was meek and humble. He nurtured well with a combination of his own natural nature and the dealings of the Holy Ghost, and as long as he dealt with certain kinds of people who responded well to that kind of dealing, the work of God was accomplished. But the overall characteristic of men’s hearts is not gentleness and a hunger to do right. As this brother saw at the close of his course, men’s hearts are hard. They need more than just meek dealings—yet at times, they need just what was in this brother. He was confessing an imbalance in his life—an imbalance that came from too much of him in this certain way. We can easily see that the imbalance can go the other way, too. There can be too little meekness and too much combativeness. We also see that God was still balancing His minister up—hence the

confession. At this point, we are strongly reminded of the Lord’s description of human ministry, the foolishness of preaching. *“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”* 1 Cor. 1:21 It has pleased God to call some to this way of dealings with others. When the work of the Lord is done right, there is no room for the flesh to glory.

So here I am, dealing with a precious, eternity-bound soul. What is the burden (God’s burden) of Brother — or Sister —? To do this right, I need the mind of

“If I had realized the hardness of men’s hearts when I started preaching as a young man, I would have conducted my ministry differently over the years.”

Christ. I need to know how he regards the matter, and I need to be a worker with God. The more I am able to sink down before Him and get His thoughts and grace to regard the matter as He regards it, the better able I will be to be a worker with Him. Can I make a mistake in this? Of course. Just as I can mistake the leading of the Lord in other matters, I can get it wrong here. I need to get still; yea, *“Be still, and know that I am God.”* Psa 46:10 An enormous amount of grace and guidance is in this verse.

In a tract on child-raising by Brother Fred Pruitt, we read:

According to the Apostle Paul, one of the qualifications of an elder is, that *“he ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.”* 1 Tim. 3:4 Now this gravity is not a gravity through fear of being flogged, but is a gravity through love. There is nothing that draws more than divine love, as it will bear the fruits of gentleness, tenderness, kindness, longsuffering, patience, meekness, and faith. We do not mean by this that one should never whip the child, for some children will become naughty under the best treatment. Yes, many of them will do so because the enemy is always working against righteousness and will spoil a happy Christian home if possible; and sometimes it is only manifesting love to the child to give them a good whipping with a strap or keen switch to awaken them to the fact that you feel the responsibility of their welfare, and also to let

them know that you expect obedience, even if it is necessary to whip. Of course, always do this with calmness, instruction, and prayer; letting the child know that you are sorry that you have to whip them, but you have to do it as he or she will not obey without it. Generally they will weep and beg not to be whipped and will promise that they will not disobey any more; but if they have repeated the offense, it is best to whip them, then they will remember and be thoughtful of your wishes.

A child should never be grabbed and beaten without mercy, for it does not become a saint to do this, neither is it an example of godliness to the child nor to others and shows a disrespect to God and clear leadings from Him. Neither should we be hasty to accuse a child of doing a wrong deed, without being sure the accusation is correct, for fear of causing the child to lose confidence in us as having true judgment.

We wish to relate an instance that happened to us: One of our boys, when eight or nine years of age, began to slip money. Wife would lay some change on the cupboard shelf, and would sometimes miss a nickel or a dime. We suspected this boy of taking it, but refrained from accusing him of it. We prayed about it, asking God to clearly uncover the matter in some way. One day while I was working in the office, wife came in and told me that our oldest boy had missed a quarter from his money and that he was accusing the other boy of taking it. He was stirring around about it considerably and said that he saw him eating candy and felt sure that he had bought it with his money. This news made us feel bad, for we felt it would be a serious thing to charge the boy of stealing, should he not be guilty. With heavy hearts, we fell on our faces before God and asked Him to give us wisdom in the matter so the boy could be corrected and taught a lesson that he would not forget. After the day’s work was done, we went to the house and called the boy to us. We told him that we were feeling bad and very much grieved, for we had always taught him to do right. As we continued to speak, he burst into tears and confessed taking the money. We talked

to him of the wrong of this and what it would lead to, and told him that it was needful for us to whip him for this, as it was too great a thing to let go, and that we wanted him to remember not to do that way any more. Also, he was to pay back the money just as fast as he got it, so his wrongs would all be made right. We have never had reason since that time to think that he ever took any more money. In this time of need we simply looked to God for wisdom and all came out well, and so it will in all things that perplex and puzzle us. As we look to God, He will untangle and show us how, when, and what to do.

Praise God! How the Lord wants to “show us how, when, and what to do!”

“The Savior can solve every problem.
The tangles of life can undo.
There is nothing too hard for Jesus.
There is nothing that He cannot do.”

It is a terrible thing when the children attempt to pass judgment on how well they are nurtured, for they are not qualified to do this. They suffer if they are not nurtured, and they may even be aware that things are not as they should be, yet this understanding does not qualify them to ascertain how well they are being dealt with. In an article in *The Gospel Trumpet* in 1900, Sister Jennie Rutty writes:

When those who have received and advocated wrong doctrine were reproved, they have resisted the reproof because they deemed it improperly given; thus they fall under the accusing spirit against God's children. The effects of this spirit is to make what the church does appear dark and repulsive, and unworthy of attention; or else censure falls upon a few individuals or upon certain methods of reproof or correction and all the workers who use them.

—*Fellowship Is of the Spirit*

To parent children successfully, the parents must have a very clear vision of just what is essential to good character and good family citizenship. This is different than just imposing their preferences and desires on the child. In exact like manner, a child of God with the ministry of intercession from God for others, must grasp what is absolutely essential for saintly living

for all children of God and for a particular child of God.

We might say that a bird might teach that all other birds must need build nests, and that it is not optional whether to have a nest or not. We may use certain materials to construct the nest or other materials, but the nest must be built in such a way as to safely retain eggs, with all the activities that go with turning eggs, protecting them, etc. Furthermore, it is necessary to build them an certain heights to protect the contents from predators, etc. All of this would be a description of the wisdom of nest building.

In the same way, we might insist that every child of God must walk in the light that the Spirit of God shines on his pathway, and that light fixes responsibility. Then we must advise any given child of God of how the Lord deals with him on a particular matter, of how that dealing goes beyond his reasoning; that once God has dealt with him on a given matter, he no longer has an option except whether to please the Lord or not to please Him. For example, God deals with a brother about listening to talk shows on the radio. He begins to feel uncomfortable with how things go with him when he listens. He reasons that he is not listening to anything that he knows is wrong, yet the uncomfortable realization that it brings leanness to his soul continues to bother him. Another child of God with the ministry of intercession perceives that

A child of God with the ministry of intercession from God for others, must grasp what is absolutely essential for saintly living for all children of God and for a particular child of God.

God is dealing with his heart. He perceives that the one in need does not have a firm hold of the principle of not pleasing himself, of not doing all to the glory of God. This is the problem behind the problem, so to speak, and this is where the Spirit of God is going with the convictions about

the radio listening. The radio indulgence is but a symptom. Here is where the minister (servant) of the other may be of help by reinforcing the Spirit's dealing. Here is where we can be workers together with God in the experience of another.

To insist on a policy of no-one-listening-to-a-radio-program will not bring about a resolving of the problem behind the problem. Not everyone who listens to the radio is affected as the child of God with the lack of consecration. The standard for all is a consecration to be the Lord's entirely. All children of God should bid death to all the mind and heart's longing to know just whatever it wants to know. The curiosity of the mind and heart must be held subject to the mind of Christ. This standard affects a great deal more than just this one symptom, and it should be presented with great power and blessing. It should be illustrated in the life of the one who is ministering to the other. They must be first partaker of the fruit.

This distinguishment between life and the fruit that the life naturally produces when the life is inspired and guided by the Holy Ghost is one of the necessary things to understand to make sense of God's dealings. There is more to it than just thirty, sixty, one-hundred fold; these terms refer to maximum capacity, i.e., the most that God knows is reasonably expected. Our thirty, sixty, one-hundred fold standard is set by what our ancestors have done in their lives before us. How they lived has an effect on us. “*For I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.*” ^{Exo 20:5} One of the solemn truths that we must face is that we are indeed the offspring of our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. We are not islands; we are affected by what was before. Their choices affect our internal composition. These things are part of what the Spirit of God takes into account in His shaping and working of us, in His appointment of our trials. In some individuals, so great are the handicaps inflicted by the previous generations, that it will take a lifetime of adjustment with an absolute consecration to live up to thirty-fold.

It is not our part to try and determine

where ourselves or anyone else is. We could not possibly do so completely accurately, anyhow. We must be led, step by step, by Him who knows all things. He knows what He is doing, and He will bring it out right, if we will let Him.

In Acts 15:28, we read, *“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.”* Notice that this is a partnership between the Holy Ghost and people filled with Him. The situation was amazingly profound. The difference between gentile and Jew was mind-boggling. What should be required of the gentile brother or sister? What would go too far—*“no greater burden”*? What was necessary? These brethren were in a time of transition between the Old Testament and the New. They were learning the way, step by step, from the Holy Ghost. What were the necessary things? And what were the unnecessary? What should be taught? The mature understanding of these differences is our inheritance from those battles and conflicts of so many years ago. The mature understanding of the needs of our times is being revealed, step by step, by that same Holy Ghost, today. Oh, who will be workers together with God?

There are things that belong to holy living that are absolutely necessary for all. Without these necessary things, there is a departure from holy living. Scripturally, this is the measure of one reed. *“And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall show thee; for to the intent that I might show them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel. And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man’s hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth.”* ^{Eze 40:4-5} Now by its very nature, a measuring device, such as this reed, is an absolute. It cannot possibly be variable and fulfil the function of its use. Now the application of the measuring reed:

“So he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed. Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and

measured the threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad; and the other threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad. And every little chamber was one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the little chambers were five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate within was one reed. He measured also the porch of the

There are things that belong to holy living that are absolutely necessary for all. Without these necessary things, there is a departure from holy living.

gate within, one reed.” ^{Eze 40:5-8} We notice a physical impossibility. Everything had the dimension of this measuring reed. The entire building was one reed in height and breadth. The threshold of the gate was one reed broad, and every little chamber was one reed long and one reed broad. All of this comes together in this text, *“Be ye holy; for I am holy.”* ^{1 Pet 1:16} *“This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.”* ^{Eze 43:12} Just before this last scripture quoted, the prophet is directed to *“show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern.”* ^{vs 10} To preach and teach the gospel as God would have us, we must be thoroughly familiar with this pattern. The familiarity is acquired by first living it ourselves (2 Tim 2:6), then *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.”* ^{2 Tim 4:2} The Word of God is far more detailed and comprehensive than many realize, and when it is used of the Holy Ghost in a human vessel, it is capable of bringing all saints to this: *“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* ^{2 Tim 3:17} The individual’s light on what is taught fixes his responsibility before God. That is, some may have sufficient inner light from God to live up to what is Holy Ghost preached to the one-hundred standard, while others only realize sufficiently to grasp the sixty-fold, and so forth. If we examine the breadth and height of this God-appointed way of saving them that believe by the

foolishness of preaching, we realize:

1) the ministers may not be faithful in preaching all the Word of God. Their rendition of the truth may not be as complete and full-bodied, as juicy, as accurate, as it should be. This gets perilously close to the line of having men’s blood upon our hands.

2) There is a disposition among men to go farther than the necessary things—a zeal that would substitute the self-righteousness obtained by self’s reasoning for the righteousness and assurance that comes from humbly following God. *“No greater burden.”*

This zeal arises at the individual level and the ministerial level. It is not inspired of God, and it does not yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. James tells us that this wisdom from above is *“first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.”* ^{Jas 3:17} It is accurate and right, too, but *first....* God is getting us to where we need to be in the easiest way possible, but this zeal that cometh not from above would send us charging out of Egypt into the land of Philistines, contrary to the guidance of the Lord.

We see different ones under the accusing, zealous spirit who heap upon themselves great burdens (and upon others, too), and we discern that something is telling them, *“Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law,”* so to speak, and we cry out against this unholy zeal in the name of Him who loves us and will get us to heaven in the right way, if we will let Him, *“to whom we gave no such commandment.”* ^{Acts 15:24} These things trouble people (instead of bringing a blessing), and they subvert the soul.

If a wife gets into her mind an artificial standard of pleasing her husband, and begins to live up to that “ideal,” instead of developing and maintaining communication with her companion, the marriage will suffer. She might think she is laboring hard to make a success of things, but she has *“a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,”* ^{Rom 10:2} so to speak. There is a great need to meet all this kind of manifestation with sober-minded truth. *“God is not like that.”* *“God does not want that kind of sacrifice.”* *“God does not take pleasure in your straining.”* Such fruits from

such zeal are not peaceable. Such zeal betrays that it is not easy to be entreated. Not just individuals, but whole movements and congregations are subverted by such zeal. The word *subvert* means to undermine, to corrupt. How powerfully the words of the apostle apply! *“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”* ^{2 Cor. 11:3-4}

We fear that many do not preach a timeless gospel. Instead, they preach a gospel of changing expediencies. It adds up to a crooked path for the feet. *“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.”* ^{Ecc. 3:14} We see right away that timelessness is a characteristic of God, whereas timelessness is not a characteristic of the works of men. The Bible is timeless truth. What is written and shown by example to be modest dress and conduct in the Bible, even though penned in times that are past, is just as relevant and sound today, as ever. The same is true of other lines of truth.

We come now to the Bible standard of sound doctrine. Let us notice some of the scriptures on this point.

“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” ^{Tit 2:1} *“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”* ^{Tit 1:9} *“...if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;*

According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” ^{1 Tim 1:10-11} *“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”* ^{2 Tim 1:13-14} We might think of soundness as that which will prove out, that which endures even to eternity.

We have in our possession a little tract

of correspondence around 1914 between Jenny Rutty and R. L. Berry. Mr. Berry was advocating and allowing the wearing of the necktie, contrary to prior teaching of about twenty-years duration, and Jenny Rutty was holding the position that the Spirit of God had taught them the laying aside of the necktie. Mr. Berry took the position that the necktie was not specifically condemned in the Bible. His position appeared to enjoy the majority of support among the people of that day. Some ninety-five years later, the fruits of each stand are plain to see. The relevance of Sister Rutty's objections are most definitely borne out by subsequent events.

We might say the same about circumcision in the early years of the gospel.

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings.”

^{1 Tim 6:3-4} What does this word *doting* mean? It means to show excessive love or fondness for. These are symptoms of pride. The doting about questions and strifes of words produces an evil harvest. It stirs up the flesh. It brings out envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings. There is a time to ignore argument and certain questions, because they are distractions to the real need of the hour. Perhaps some questions can be answered when the pride is gone, but until then, there is nothing to do but

We fear that many do not preach a timeless gospel. Instead, they preach a gospel of changing expediencies.

look the real problem in the face and carry a burden for deliverance.

If you are getting the impression that discernment from God is an essential part of gospel work, then you are getting the right impression. Let us notice the Bible's teaching on this point.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom

and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” ^{Isa 11:1-4}

We understand that the margin gives us a slightly different translation of the “*quick understanding*.” It reads, “*quick scent*.” This refers to the ability to detect different odors. *“And shall make him of quick scent.”* Our Lord, untainted by the perverted nature of Adam, and constantly in touch with the purity of heaven through prayer and holy meditation, was able to sense accurately the various odors of the spiritual condition of the various human beings around Him. To one, He said, *“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”* ^{John 1:47} So great was the spiritual nose of the Lord Jesus, that *“He knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man.”* ^{John 2:24-25}

We see then that there is such a thing as having *“their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”* ^{Heb 5:14} Speaking of the gospel day, Ezekiel said, *“And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.”* ^{Eze 44:23} *“Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.”* ^{Jer 15:19}

“And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed . . .” ^{Acts 14:8-9}

We fear again that many are blind or badly afflicted in the eyes and in need of the King's eyesalve, and they attempt to do the work of the Lord without perception from above. Others substitute human perception and general knowledge of the

ways of men's thinking for the discernment given by the Holy Ghost. Such technique leads to a hodge-podge of confusion. God has made the diversity of men such that it defies human ingenuity, and He made it in such a way for a reason. Here again, we are meant to be guided and led by the Holy Ghost.

"Without Me," our Master said, "ye can do nothing." ^{John 15:5} You cannot properly nurture spiritually without God's help. "But," someone says, "I know so-and-so, and they are just wonderful at nurturing their children!" Yes. There are excellent marriages without people living for God. There are excellent parents without people living for God. There are wise business leaders, etc. But none of these work the work of God. God has allowed us considerable ability in the flesh to work the works of men. But the work of God can only be done rightly by His help.

We want to speak of the need of suffering in nurturing. True nurturing is sacrificial. The true parents literally give their lives for their children. They pour in their energy, their livelihood. The child lives off of their lives. This is the nature of nurturing, and there is definite suffering involved.

The greater the need for nurturing, the more suffering will be expended. When people have done great wrong and departed far from God, there must be great suffering on the part of those who labor with them to recover the ground that has been lost.

There is a beautiful picture in the Bible of a donkey that God used as an intercessor with Balaam, the prophet who was going down under covetousness. How did the donkey become an effective intercessor? God opened the donkey's eyes. "And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way." ^{Num 22:23} Children of God who are

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being nurtured while under some unhealthy influence do not understand what is going on and what is at stake. If they did, they would not need to be nurtured. They could walk on their own two feet and nurture others.

God is saddling people with other's burdens. He is showing them things—true things—about the one who rides upon them, and when God's donkeys react to the real danger, the one being borne reacts just as Balaam did. When the burden and situation reaches a certain point that God determines, He opens the mouth of the burden-bearer. "And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" ^{vs 28} Balaam did not even seem to think it bizarre to be talking with his donkey, and he actually started arguing with his donkey until God opened his eyes. This is the point with any nurturer of spiritual things. It is to serve to bring the nurtured one to Almighty God. It is to point to Him who alone has sufficiency for us all in all things. And to get to that point, we must suffer and be consecrated to suffer.

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." ^{2 Tim 2:24-26}

Here is the saddled donkey patience of God's nurturer. Gentle unto all men.

Apt to teach. Patient. An understanding that the needy one is often opposed to their own best interest. Like a baby who desperately needs to rest, but to rest is the last thing that it wants to do. To meekly instruct such ones over and over, until they finally come to terms with

God and His way in their need and with their nature. It is to deal with many who do not make it, and some who do. Reader, are you ready to be ridden?

Spiritual agriculture. "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." ^{Jas 5:7}

"Give us, Lord, much grace and wisdom
With the countless seeds we sow.
Though we scatter some at random,
They may germinate and grow.
Some may fall in crowded places
On the dry unyielding plain,
But if watered by Thy graces,
Not a seed is sown in vain."

Oh, the potential of the gospel seed in the life of a human being! It is worth the whole world. "For the redemption of their soul is precious." ^{Psa 49:8}

"Our God, to save from sin's control,
Gave His Son a sacrifice.
His grace, abounding in the soul,
Makes the earth a paradise."

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." ^{Isa 53:10-11}


It is our privilege to enter into the intercession of Jesus for mankind in a very small, limited way. Let us take His yoke upon us and learn of Him. ➡

Here is the saddled donkey patience of God's nurturer.... Reader, are you ready to be ridden?

Only a Servant

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”

DAVID'S STORY

 In front of his house, under the spreading nut tree, sat the old Jew, David, and with thin fingers crumbled bread for his tame chickens. The moon shone on the uncovered head of the lonely man—a man who, in the whole wide world, did not have any relatives.

It is true he had his little house, a small orchard beside it; also this nut tree and the bench beside it was his, but this was not his homeland. He was a stranger among strangers, with whom he could never speak in his native language. He grew old in this village but did not get accustomed here. There was nothing to bind him. The people got used to him and he got used to the people, but the acquaintance never brought any bonds of love.

In the winter when he was sick, the neighbors knew that he was ill but did not go to see him. Who would be going to a Jew? Only one went; only one, and he was going faithfully, and took care of him. He did not shun him.

The aged man had to think of this one continually; he was thinking of him now. To this aged man, near the grave, something unexpected happened. His heart, which he considered buried long ago, began to be warmed up in love to this strange young fellow, and that young fellow was a Christian.

In the beginning, the aged man looked with the suspicion of a real Jew, who had suffered snubs among the (so-called) Christians, at the uncommon behavior of the stranger, who appeared as a sunbeam that suddenly shines out. None of the neighbors had yet noticed a difference between himself and the servant of Ondrasik, but the Jew saw it long ago. He saw it from the moment the strange young man brought him water from the well the first time, and sat down in the miserable kitchen and chatted so kindly, as if he loved old David—him, whom nobody loved, and

whom even the nearest ones forsook. Suspiciously, the old man watched the young fellow to see if he would not disclose some weakness and live in those sins in which the “Christians” usually lived. But in vain, up to this day he saw no spot in his straightforward actions. He did not drink, he did not curse, he knew God’s commands given to the Jews on Mount Sinai and fulfilled them day by day. The Jew noticed that this young Christian loved God, and that he really loved people.

He inquired about him secretly. Well, in the whole surrounding country there was not a neighbor—neighbor to him in house or field—whom Method had not helped somehow. The old night watchman told him that while he was carrying a bundle of wood in the wintertime, he was overtaken by the Ondrasik’s servant with a load of dried leaves. Method stopped at once, relieved the old man of his bundle of brush, laid it on the wagon and offered him his own seat, walked beside the wagon the whole distance, till they came to his hut.

In the spring again, as they were digging a ditch around the field of Ondrasik, he also spaded the adjacent field of the old unfriendly widow, Hlinarka. Everybody, till that very day, was afraid of the old woman. She was very free with many nasty words; nobody gave her a good turn, but this young stranger.

It was nothing great which he did for the people, nor could he, since he was only a servant, but one thing is sure: whatever he saw that somebody lacked, if it was in his power, he helped him out of pure love. Yes, he did it as if he could not help but do it.

The aged Jew watched to see what kind of servant the young fellow would be, if he would not be spoiled after a while. It was more than a year since he came, and it was noticeable that nobody could take as good care of the property of Ondrasik as his servant. Whatever he could, he improved, whether in the

house or on the farm, giving the master advice in everything. Not even Eleazar could have been more faithful to Abraham than Method was to this ignorant farmer.

The Jew considered Ondrasik ignorant; often he noticed that instead of prospering, the farm was going to ruin, but no, he would not give him advice. Why should he, to that heathen? He despised him, just as the farmer despised the Jew. The Jew noticed that Method was wiser than his master, but he never heard the young man speak otherwise, than with great respect and love for him.

Everything in that young man’s life was clean. He was young and the Ondrasik’s had a daughter and Petrash’s two. The village well was in front of the Jew’s windows. The Jew watched to see if he would not notice something similar to what other young fellows did. The people jokingly called it, “the weakness of youth.” Often the old man saw all three girls at the well and how Method drew water for them and talked with them in a friendly way. They smiled to him and he to them, just as if he were a brother to all three.

The Jew could not help but to compare him with Joseph in Egypt. Though Petrash’s girls were quite naughty, they were always decent in behavior towards him; they even seemed, since he was visiting their brother Sammy, somewhat more restrained.

Last week the Jew rejoiced when Method called on him; he felt that he was his debtor and for a long time desired to repay his service of love somehow, and now the young man came to ask him for some service.

He spoke about the lame Sammy, how his future could be improved if he, David, would take interest in him and not only teach him to figure, but also advise him how to start a business.

Perhaps for nobody in the world would David do that favor, but when

Method asked, he agreed readily and said, "Why do you care about that neighbor? Is he not altogether a stranger to you? Why don't you let him alone? He has parents and family, let them take care of him." At the same time, the aged man watched whether Method would make some evil remark about the Petrash family.

"Do you know, neighbor," said the young man, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God out of a whole heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. If I were lame, it would suit me very well if someone would take care of me in this way. The parents love Sammy, but up to this date they have not planned anything for him. It behooves me to do it, because God gave me that thought and I believe it will be very agreeable to them."

Ah, for all this, the aged Jew had to admire and love the young Christian, but for one thing he almost hated him, because he did not give him any peace about that Christ of his. He was continually finding references concerning Christ. In almost every chapter in the Old Testament he found something about Him, and every discussion ended with: "He loves you."

Old David would not have been thinking about those discussions if he could have forgotten them. Even now he would have put them out of his mind, but he could not. His teaching was very, very good, also. It was the teaching of love, and stole into the heart of the aged man, tormented by injustices, healing it as oil heals the wounds.

Up to this very day, if he had known the teachings of Christ, David would have just smiled coldly; of all those who lived around him and called themselves Christians, according to the teaching of Christ, not a single one lived by those teachings. They cursed, they bore false witness, they fought, and did not forgive each other.

In the village were two churches, two confessions: Catholic and Evangelical. They hated each other; spoke contemptuously about the faith and

teaching of the other, and at the same time pretended to believe and worship Him who commanded love and mercy. If any one of them would have come to him with an offer of this teaching of Christ, it would have raised only an ugly laugh in the heart of the aged Jew. He would have compelled the offerer to compare his life with the teaching he was presenting. However, this good, strange young man lived, really lived, as Christ commanded. He loved and

He had mortified his heart so long that it seemed to him that he had cast out of it all human feelings, that it was now only a rock. However, now it was proven that it was not so, that it had only lain dormant. The ice melted when the sun shone upon it.

obeyed his Christ. Yes, he could do that. But since he could, why could not the others? Why was there such a difference between them?

The old man ceased his thoughts; there was no one to answer his questions.

"Good evening," sounded from nearby. Facing him stood the very one of whom he had to think so much that day and whom he was impatiently awaiting.

"I almost despaired of being able to come to see you.

"I, too, had given up hope that you were coming."

Over the withered face of the aged man passed a gleam of joy. When one has had nobody for a long time, and then begins to love somebody, there is usually a deep, strong feeling.

"Sit down!" Readily the man moved over, making room for him on the bench. "I am waiting to hear what message you are bringing; how did you manage at Petrash's?"

Methodius sat down and told him all about it.

"I am not sure, I am not sure," the Jew shook his head doubtfully, "whether he will not finally change his mind."

"I am hoping for the best. Just now I

prayed that this matter may be successfully carried out, and I believe that my prayer will be granted."

Thus they counseled awhile, and even the aged man made plans to show how the Petrash's could get started. The heart of the old businessman warmed up.

"Neighbor," suddenly said Method, "when you knew how favorable this place is, why have you not started a business yourself? Why did you bother with these old rags?" The young man grasped

the aged man's hands in his own, and with a friendly smile looked into that face, which suddenly was covered with a shadow of a deep sorrow.

"Of what benefit would the business have been to me? Who would have taken care of the other things? I am all alone in the world, like a post in the wilderness. I had to do something. I had to make a

living somehow, because without work I would have died in sorrow and loneliness; thus I did what I could. But why do you remind me of this?"

Almost roughly the old man pulled his hands away, covered his face with them, and rested his elbows on his knees.

For a while he sat there, crumpled up, wholly overcome with the pain of his recollections. The young man looked at him with noticeable interest and heartfelt sympathy. Then suddenly he put his arms around the aged man and drew that wrinkled gray head to his young breast. It had been a long time since the aged man had been embraced by anyone. Long ago he had felt the joy of being hugged. Long ago, when he was still young, he also knew, oh, he knew the bliss of such an expression of love. Later, when it all passed and passed forever, when he passionately but vainly opened his arms to the emptiness, when his heart almost died with longing, in vain he had mortified his heart so long that it seemed to him that he had cast out of it all human feelings, that it was now only a rock. However, now it was proven that it was not so, that it had only lain dormant. The ice melted when the sun shone upon it.

The aged man trembled in the arms of the young fellow, as when the wind shakes an old tree. Wild sobbing burst from his bosom—the first time in years, tears ran over the wrinkled face.

The youth did not try to stop the crying of the aged man, he leaned his young head against the old gray one, his eyes moist with tears, and because the dropped hands covered the face of the crying one no more, he wiped the tears from his eyes and cheeks.

“Let me alone,” with broken sobs uttered the aged one. “Why do you bother with an old Jew? Everybody shuns me, why don’t you leave me alone?”

“Because I love you, my dear neighbor.”

“Why should you love me?” with new sobs cried the Jew. “It is a long time since anyone loved me—once it was my mother, then I thought that she—but it was deceit!”

“What was deceit?”

“Let me go,” the man struggled to get away. “Do not ask me.”

The young man let him go.

“Believe me, neighbor, it would be much easier for you if you would confide in someone what is oppressing you these years. I am a stranger here and have nobody to whom I could betray you. If you have confidence in me, tell me. I love you and will feel with you.”

“Well, I don’t care.” The Jew straightened up. New light sparkled in his eyes. “You have done me very much good, even now, because you did not shun this old man. You are good and the world is evil; perhaps I may be able to warn you of some misfortune, so that you may be more careful than I and save yourself from harm.

“If you just look at me, my bent over form, the wrinkled old face, and the half-blind eyes, perhaps you would not be able to believe that I have been, once upon a time, young and comely, like a tree in the grove, as you are today,” began the aged one. He rested his emaciated form against the tree but held the hand of the young fellow in his feeble one.

“I inherited a good business from my parents, though I was not rich, but I

believed that if the God of my fathers would bless me I would prosper. Nevertheless, I was a very rich man; I had a wife like a flower on Mount Lebanon, and a child, oh, a child! Even Moses could not have been more beautiful when the daughter of Pharaoh took pity on his loveliness. When I think of that happiness, the bliss of long ago, I know, I know that even Adam in Paradise could not have been happier. And that all passed away.

“How am I to tell you all? I used to be much away from home. That unfortunate business kept taking me away, and I did not know that somebody else had eyes also.

“Once I was coming home, full of joy and hope. I came; the house was empty.”

The old man drew his hand through his hair. “Another came and took the treasure of my eyes and the joy of my heart. If it had been an unbeliever—but it was one of our own—our own!

“I despaired; I ran like a crazy man; went to the courts; did everything, but in vain. I had to give her a bill of divorce, and the law gave her the child also.

“He was in a higher position than I—a government official. They pushed me, the poor Jew, away everywhere. Nowhere could I find justice, not even with God. They fared just as they pleased themselves, until they left. Afterwards

**“Why don’t you leave me alone?”
“Because I love you, my dear neighbor.” “Why should you love me?” cried the Jew. “It is a long time since anyone loved me—once it was my mother, then I thought that she—but it was deceit!”**

they disappeared from this country and I never heard from them any more, nor where my child is and what has become of it.

“Oh, Method, oh, Method, when I think of it, I would ask, like Job, ‘Where is God, that I may go till I stand before

Him and there present my charge?’ He only knows what became of my daughter, Esther; what has become of her and my wife. She left me, and betrayed me; but I just cannot believe that she was guilty. She was very, very young when we married. He was a good-looking fellow, a great lord; he misled her. If she would have come back, I would have forgiven all, would have received her—oh, how gladly! But they did not let me see her, and perhaps they told her that I would be cruel and hard. She was afraid and believed them, and so all was lost, all lost.

“I fled from that town and buried myself and my sorrow in this country, and just waited, hoping that in winter, death would come and deliver me from this suffering, and that I would take my sorrow with me to the grave. Then you came and compelled me to tell you, and all has been brought back to me—the loss, the yearning, the sorrow—everything. Now what have you gained by it?”

Very much, dear one! Now I know better what to pray about; and some time the moment will come when you will not be sorry that you gave me your confidence.”

The young man arose; also the Jew, involuntarily. They entered the hut.

There, when the elder one had made a light, the youth noticed the empty vessels. He took them and brought fresh water. Thereupon, he arranged the man’s poor couch, just as he used to do during his sickness. Then he sat beside him on the table, opened the big, old book, and began to read.

The Jew covered his gray head with a cap, and Method also put his hat on his young head, so as not to insult him, since the Jews consider it disrespectful toward the Word of God when a man reads with an uncovered head.

Today, though, they read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and the young man, during the reading, explained about whom it was talking. The aged Jew did not contradict, and they parted in grave silence. ➤

—A Message to Adolescents

Awakening to Righteousness

I received a letter from a mother troubled by her daughter's stated intention to sleep with her boyfriend, in spite of the teaching and example of her parents of purity. I also had conversation recently with a woman troubled by her husband's unconcerned attitude toward his immoral behaviour prior to their marriage. In considering and responding to these, the Lord has been bringing out to me the need of our souls being awakened to God, and His righteousness.

I am particularly burdened for those of you who may be adolescents or young adults, not because I think that "my generation" knows better, but because it is generally a long, painful process (and many never get it) to understand how much of how we think and do is shaped by the cultural environment in which we first "awakened."

We have a natural tendency to dwell in the temporal; that is, the things obvious to our physical senses—seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting. In our adolescent years in particular, we are coming alive in so many ways both mentally and physically, and we are particularly prone to place our focus on those things that have to do with our thoughts, our reasonings, our senses and our feelings, and the very exercising of our reasonings and feelings puts our focus on them, as though they were the primary reality. And so, although God's Word is more reliable by far than our thoughts, feelings or perceptions, many who name the name of Jesus are really living primarily by their own thoughts and feelings and senses, and that which

"sounds right" or "feels right" to them is really their standard of behavior rather than the truths in the Bible.

In the Old Testament, because it was not yet possible to have God dwelling in men's hearts, God focused on a great many things that had to do primarily with the physical senses to get people's attention focused on truth and living right. So He had a tabernacle built with certain objects and designs and forms,

The only way to live a life pleasing to God is in having something stronger working within us. And we must voluntarily seek Him for it.

and He had worship instituted with many sounds and smells and sights (incense, burnt offerings, priests in special clothing, musical instruments playing, etc., etc.). He dealt with people in a very physical way, with His people forming a nation and winning wars over other nations (when His "nation" was being true to Him). Many sins were punished by physical death. Physical prosperity was often the reward of living right. But always God had a higher, better standard in mind, and was interested always in the motives of the heart.

In the New Testament, God accomplished His purpose of making it possible to live with hearts changed, and filled with His Spirit. The focus is on the inward motivations and the heart, but it results in outward actions meeting God's standard of righteousness ("If you love me, obey me," and at the end of the fifth chapter of Galatians, the works of the flesh and the fruit of the

spirit). But the fact remains that we are still people naturally focused on those things that we encounter in our feelings and senses. The only way to live a life pleasing to God is in having something stronger working within us. And we must voluntarily seek Him for it.

Psalm 68:18-19, prophesying what Jesus would do, says, "*Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou has received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.*" And I mean no offense by what I say now, but please consider the truths needed here. We need, not our best thinking or reasoning, our best feelings and senses, but gifts from Jesus to both understand and do in such a way that God can dwell with us. We are rebels unless and until we make peace with God by repenting and being changed by the Lord, and even after getting right with God are full of ways of thinking and doing that seem sound and right to us, but are really just part of the particular spirit of the age we live in.

Jesus says, "*if ye love me, keep my commandments.*" ^{John 14:15} When I was an adolescent and young adult, I went through the experience of recognizing that my parents (and adults in general) were fallible, didn't always think as clearly as I supposed I did, and whose advise and counsel didn't always seem to prove out. I didn't realize how deeply this worked into me, and even after getting saved and living for the Lord, I found it completely natural and apparently right to lean on my own understanding to figure out how I should live and what to believe was right or wrong rather than humbly asking the Lord to teach me. I read the scriptures that tell us to "*lean not unto thine own understanding*" ^{Prov. 3:5} many times, but it is SO natural to do it.

Our age is so absorbed in setting “doable” goals for ourselves that we automatically seem to doubt or reject any standard if it seems too hard at the present to follow. I see over and over again people who made vows to stay with their spouse “for better or for worse,” but now they find that “worse” seems really too hard to bear in their current circumstances. So many young people who as children accepted their parents’ standards of behavior (including chastity before marriage), come to a point where they don’t find in their own thinking any good reason to resist the passions and feelings that seem to them so good, and they commit fornication. The contests of values (“pro-life” vs. “pro-abortion,” “straight” vs. “homosexuals,” and on and on), are argued and debated over so much on the basis of what people can bear or over what their supposed “rights” are (the unborn have a “right” to life, the mother has a “right” to choose abortion; our children have a “right” to being led and taught by straight people instead of homosexuals, the “gays” have a right to fulfillment in their ways because it is unreasonably hard for them to be “celibate,” etc., etc.). Yes, the standard of truth in the Bible is appealed to sometimes, but so many decide (either for or against) upon a basis of what seems to be a reasonable standard to their thinking.

But rebellion against God isn’t just about rejecting parents’ or society’s current standards—so often it is manifested in establishing one’s own standard of righteousness, apart from Him. Many who profess the name of Christ are not receiving the gifts from

Jesus to be able to live with God—the change of heart that enables us to value spiritual things above physical, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, the victory that enables even the adolescent in full “bloom,” so-to-speak, to “see” and live a morally pure live in spite of all that surrounds him or her. We read in Colossians 3, “*If ye then be risen with*

Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify [deaden, deprive of power] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.” vs. 1-7

To speak to the particular sin of fornication that was referred to in the examples at the beginning of this article—we know the great power of the physical and sexual attraction between a man and a woman, how loudly it speaks, how much joy and goodness it promises, and how hard it is to deny its claims when it is actively at work, particularly when we are young and we have not yet reaped the bitter fruit of it being done other than God’s way. We must know the greater power of God, to work in us “*both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*” Phil 2:13

We cannot know this power if we are not willing to call good, good and evil, evil. If we will not agree with God’s thinking about things, we will

Our age is so absorbing in setting "doable" goals for ourselves that we automatically seem to doubt or reject any standard if it seems too hard at the present to follow.

simply have a man-made religion, one we are setting up, not one revealed to us from God.

In the book *Light from Heaven*, by Christmas Carol Kauffman, there is a passage that illustrates God’s power “*both to will and to do.*” It is dealing with hatred rather than fornication, but the principals are the same:

As he sat pondering in his own room, it seemed every mean thing his father had ever said or done loomed up before him like a hideous monster with horns and claws. It would kill him and send him to eternal doom. Then suddenly he heard once more his mother’s gentle voice telling him the story she had so often told him in his childhood. “And the pit was deep and dark, and it was lonely down there too; but God loved Joseph all the time, and Grandfather Stokes used to tell us that he liked to think that when everyone else had gone away, God sent a light from Heaven to shine down on him.”

Joseph sat with his face in his hands and thought and thought. The clock below struck one. Finally he opened his Bible and read Psalm 77, then Psalm 40. Still he wasn’t satisfied. Turning to Deuteronomy 32 he read part of that. The clock struck one-thirty. He fell on his knees beside his bed, but he could not pray. Then he read Genesis 49, and before he closed his Bible that terrible feeling toward his father was growing less. He could not pray with it there. He had tried to, but the words only clung to the ceiling. “Dear Lord,” he cried in anguish,

“whatever it is that I need, please give it to me. Of myself I can’t overcome this feeling toward Father; but give me that same spirit Mother has. I give myself up to You. It’s all I know to do.”

—*Light from Heaven*, pg. 337

Until “all I know to do” is give myself up to the Lord, then all we are awakened to is our own abilities and thinkings and reasonings and feelings. But God wants to awaken us to His righteousness—not just good morals and good behavior, but morals and behavior drawn from Heaven. ➤

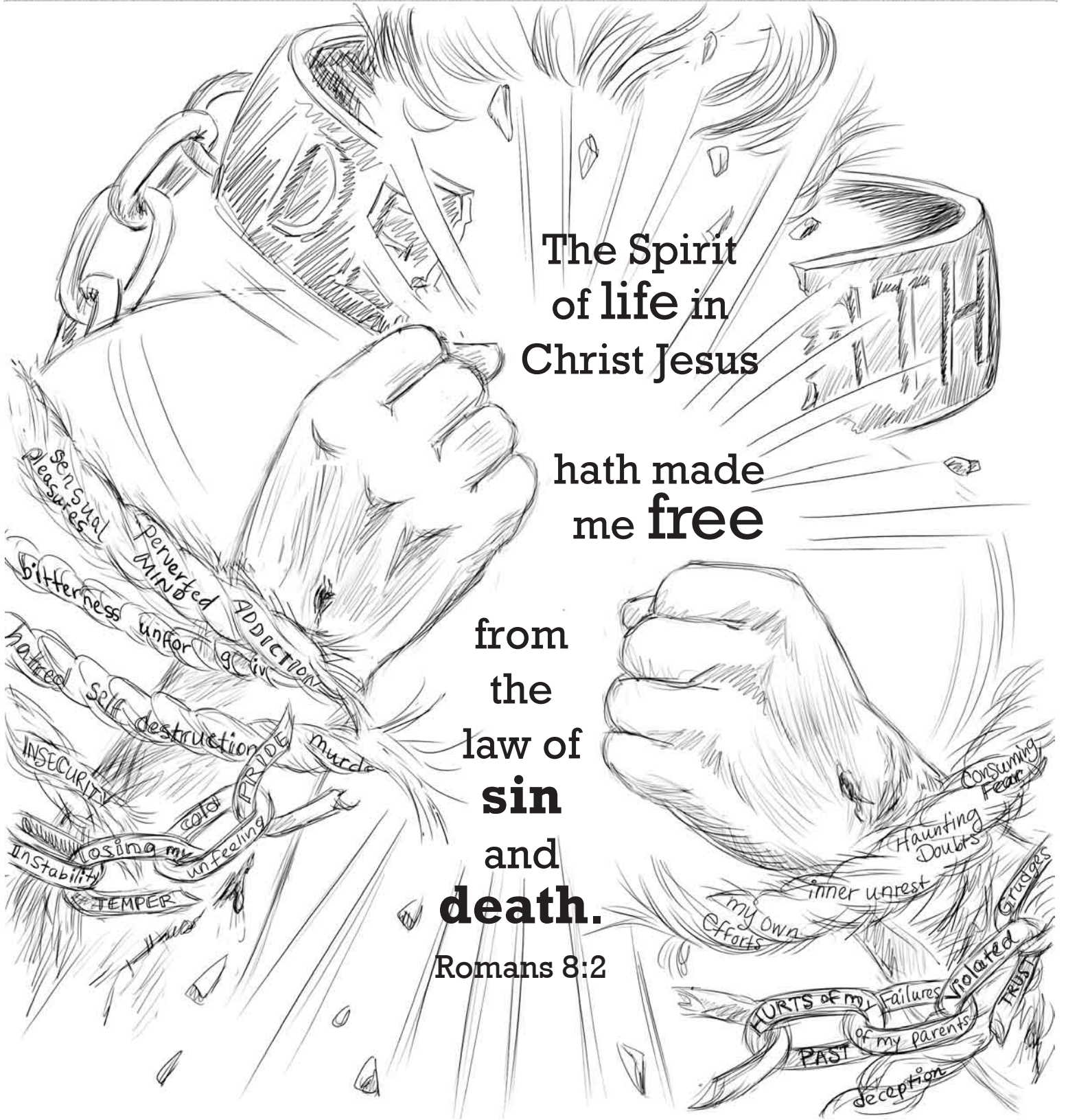
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sin
and
death.

Romans 8:2