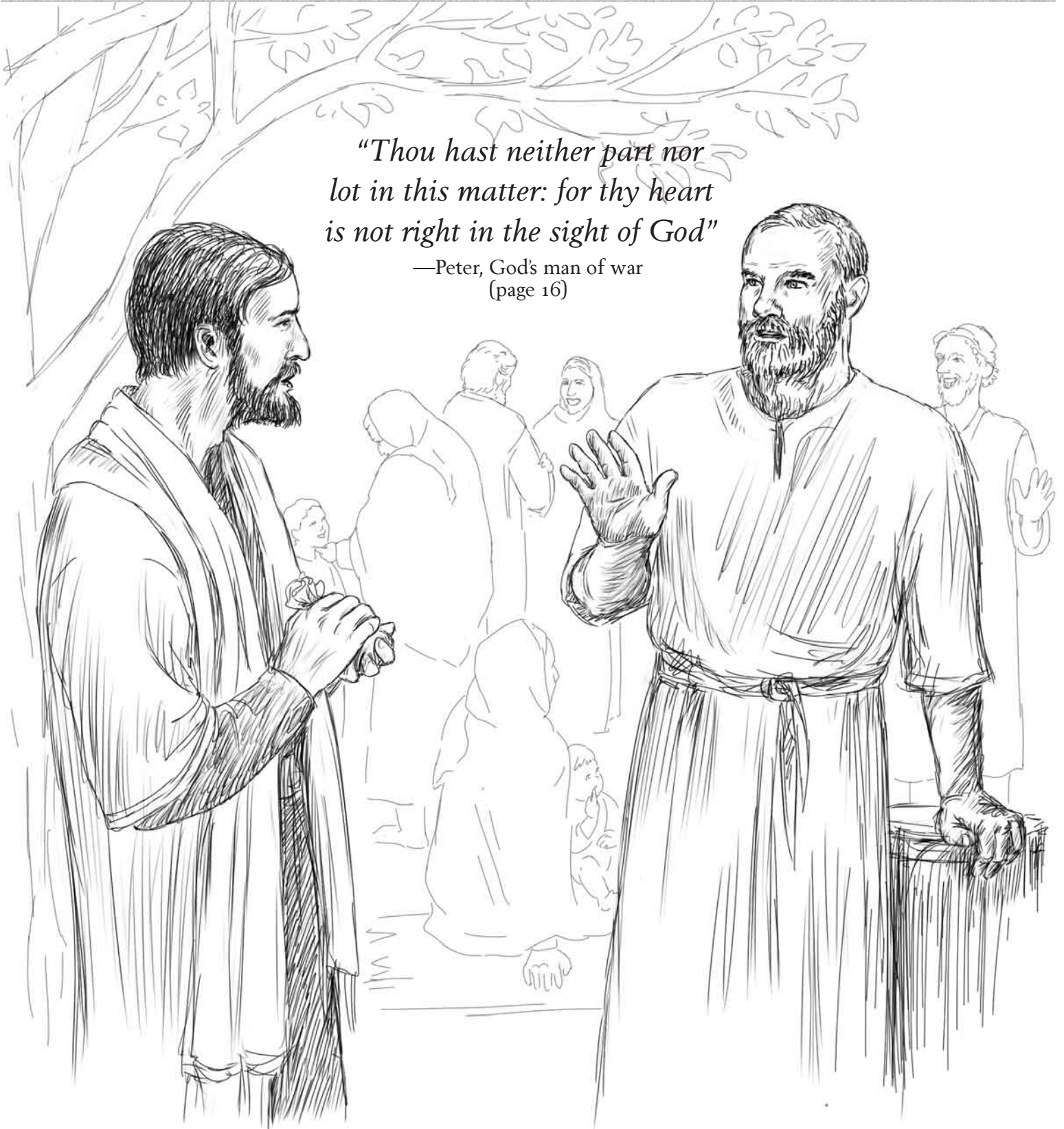


FOUNDATION TRUTH

Number 27
Winter/Spring 2011

*“Thou hast neither part nor
lot in this matter: for thy heart
is not right in the sight of God”*

—Peter, God’s man of war
(page 16)



Dear Reader

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

Do you have a “military” attitude toward thoughts? In temporal warfare, a civilian thinks of enemy soldiers primarily in terms of hoping they stay far away, avoidance and escape, and hoping to avoid having their own lives and property harmed. If enemy soldiers do come and can’t be avoided, there is commonly an attitude of helplessness about conditions they bring on. A soldier, on the other hand, has a much more active role—it’s not just a matter of escaping harm or capture, but of seeking to capture the enemy, if possible. If a civilian were to become a soldier, they would need to be trained in detecting the enemy quickly, and learning to use weapons and tactics in order to do so.

A “civilian” attitude toward thoughts reflects these same principles—hoping to avoid capture or damage from “enemy” thoughts, avoidance as much as possible, and a sense of helplessness when “caught.” But we are called to be spiritual soldiers to the extent of capturing thoughts to obey Christ. If I’m going to get victory over imaginations, ideas and thoughts that oppose “*knowledge of God*,” I’m going to need to apply for the Lord’s training to recognize the nature of thoughts quickly and learn the weapons and methods of bringing them “*into captivity*.” There is a necessary combativeness to develop in our souls, a necessary alertness, and a necessary confidence.

Some time ago I was called into a spiritual battle where someone was feeling “locked” by the devil, unable to love somebody as they needed to, and barely found the will to nod when asked if he wanted me to come over. As the first “military” step, my family and I had prayer before I started over. I found that as I drove over there was already a battle-before-the-battle,

so-to-speak. I had no idea in myself how to approach this, and time was short, so the first thoughts to bring into captivity to obey Christ were my own attitudes toward the battle. I had learned from prior experience as a soldier for the Lord that He has no problem whatever in getting the victory, and our confidence must be placed in Him, not in our strength or weakness. So I told the Lord that I was determined to go with Him to victory, that I knew I was perfectly safe with Him, and that I was set to cooperate with Him for the deliverance of this friend.

It was essential preparation. When I arrived, nothing in the attitude of the person offered encouragement, but I wasn’t looking there for it. God did indeed guide in the battle, and after several rounds of spiritual artillery fire had only slight effect, the Lord began to fasten my attention on the need for an attitude of thankfulness on the part of the person feeling “locked.” It was already apparent (even, a little bit, to the person himself) that the devil’s lock wasn’t as effective as first appearances suggested, because of some steps he was already able to take. I asked him if he was thankful for his wife and a certain good friend of his. He was, but didn’t see how that related to his problem. I found myself impressed to commend to him thanking the Lord for his wife and friend, just because it was a good and right thing to do. It took some time and persistence, but finally he began to pray. Within a few moments, the “lock” was over, and he went on to thank God for the person he hadn’t felt it possible to love on his own initiative, and a whole slew of thoughts were brought into captivity to obey Christ!

Victory! Hallelujah! Hurray for God!

Love and prayers,
The Editor



About Us

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

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

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

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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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In This Issue

edited by Rick Erickson and others

4 The Word of Truth

Questions and answers from the firing line in a series of written exchanges. Current topic is the judgments of God.

6 Tell What He's Done for You

Lessons on trust and a new perspective on God's outreach to us.

9 The Age of Knowledge: Part 2

More counsel on living in the age where "knowledge shall increase."

12 How Does God Regard Ornamentation?

The first and primary enemies of the children of Israel were not the inhabitants of the land of Canaan.

14 Songs

Humility
Victory Through Grace

16 The Men of War

As he passed the first brother, he quietly said, "Round two, coming up."

20 That's Not True!

"But Dad!" he exclaimed, "it's in the Bible!"

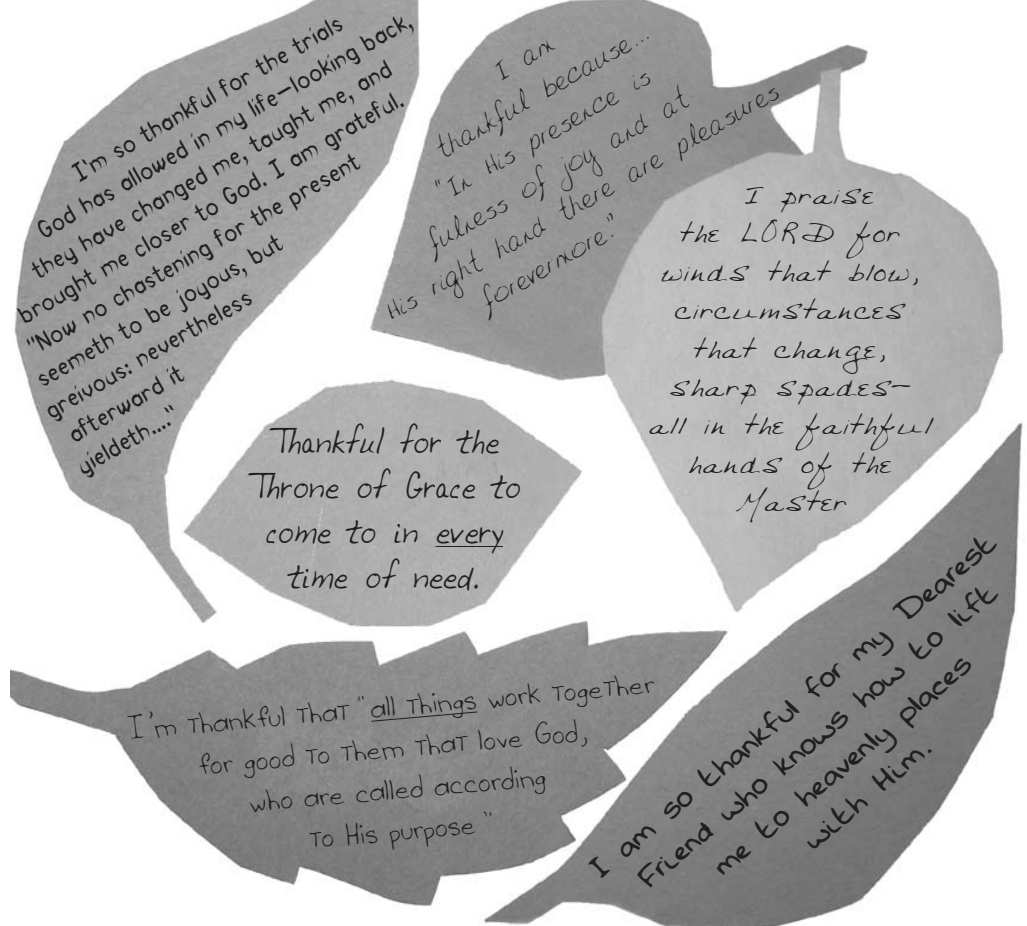
22 Licensed to Preach: Part 1

What does it take to be qualified?

27 Rods that Fail

There are ineffectual ways to stop the reaping of iniquity.

A few leaves from our thanksgiving tree:



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

The Judgments of God

To what time of judgment does Jesus refer in His parables?

“But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.” Mt. 25:9-11

I have been asked to explain whether this refers to the end of the world, but verse 11 does not imply the very end when the elements melt away and we all meet the Lord for judgment. But the phrase “*and the door was shut*” makes this complicated. What does the phrase refer to... the shutting of the door?

“Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” Mt. 13:30

When is this time of the harvest referred to here? Please, explain what the “*bundles*” and the “*barn*” referred to here are. Would “*my barn*” mean the church of God and the “*bundles*” whatever else is not?

Replied: This phrase of the door being shut is used in Luke 13:25 in answer to the question, “*Lord, are there few that be saved?*” Our Lord replied, “*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the*

door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.” Lk. 13:24-28



It is plain that God shuts the door that has been open before (note the open door in Rev. 3:8), and that when He shuts the door, all appeals are in vain. There are visits from the Lord that are followed by more visits, and in each of these, there is the opportunity that is represented by the open door. But there comes a time when “*the Master of the house is risen up*

and hath shut to the door.” This is certainly a true picture of the final judgment, but it is also true of preliminary judgments, too. There is a time that the visitation ends; there is a time when we must leave the valley of decision and take one of the paths of choice before us; there is a time when the Bridegroom returns, and we are either ready or not. If we are not ready when He is ready, then that is our choice. God and His truth go marching on, and we are left behind. O souls, be up and doing! Jezebel was given a space to repent (Rev. 2:20-21), but the space came to an end. If the Master desires figs of us, even out of season, we had better respond (Mk. 11:12-14,21), else we will dry up from the roots. If we fall not upon the Stone in repentance and contrition, then the Stone will fall upon us (Lk. 20:18). The lesson is plain. If we neglect our opportunities and do not prepare properly for them, the time of preparation will end; the door will shut, and we will suffer the judgment that could have been spared us. Better get to “*them who sell,*” and buy while we still can!

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” Lk. 19:41-44 Although these people were God’s own (most of whom received Him not) and had a rich heritage of His dealings, most of them slumbered and slept

spiritually. Great judgment was soon to come upon them; the consequences of their spiritual blindness was coming to fruition. But there were some of them who had oil, whereas others did not. There were some who would have their wood, hay, and stubble burned up, yet they themselves would be saved, as by fire (1 Cor. 3:15). But with others—the foolish—they would find no place of repentance (Heb. 12:17), and indeed, cannot find it even until this very day in their descendants.

The principle is widespread in its application. God promises the gift of His Holy Spirit “to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,” Acts 2:39 but many are sluggish and “slow of heart.” Lk. 24:25 They buy inadequate oil for their pilgrimage. Then they finally awaken to a need of a deeper life, a deeper life long neglected, but a spiritual hurricane is upon them. The time of preparation for that blast is expired; the door of preparation is shut. They will have to go through the trial without the grace; the door is shut. If this is the final judgment, then all cries are in vain. If this is a preliminary judgment, they will suffer loss, but it is possible that they may learn to never be without oil again.

Before us lies the choice of foolish virgin or wise virgin. Which will it be? Are we crisis-driven? Are we taking our pilgrimage as seriously as is appropriate? “A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.” Yea, “By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.” Pr. 22:3-4 “Go... to them that sell, and buy.” Yea, “Buy the truth, and sell it not.” Pr. 23:23 “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” Eph. 5:17

“If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.” Pr. 24:10 The trial after the door is shut will show just where you are. The final judgment will show permanently just where you are. “Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” Mt. 25:11-13

This same thought is in the parable in Matthew 13—“Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” vs. 30 The harvest is when the door is shut.

In Matthew 13:37-43, Jesus explained this parable in terms of the final judgment. It also is true in terms of every preliminary judgment prior to the final one.

When the truth about the one true church of God that Jesus established and built was re-revealed in the 1880 reformation, the brethren applied the principle of this parable to the choice before the children of God in that day and time. We quote from *Bible Readings for Bible Students*, compiled by S. L. Speck and H. M. Riggle:

Before us lies the choice of foolish virgin or wise virgin. Which will it be? Are we crisis-driven? Are we taking our pilgrimage as seriously as is appropriate?

The parable was intended to teach a prophetic history of the church. The interpretation of the parable is as follows: (a) “The field is the world.” Mt. 13:38 (b) Christ sowed “good seed” in this field, and the good seed are “the children of the kingdom”—His church. Mt. 13:37,38; 16:18. (c) While “men slept”—departed from the apostolic faith and drifted from spiritual life and holiness—an enemy (the devil) sowed tares—planted in the earth an apostate church—sectism. Mt. 13:25,39. (d) During the reign of sectism, God’s people have been unequally yoked together with unbelievers, and in a sense, have “grow[n] together.” 2 Cor. 6:14-18. (e) The

harvest or separating of the wheat from the tares was to take place “at the end of the world,” just before Christ’s coming. The angels (from *angellos*) are God’s holy ministers. Mt. 13:39-41; 24:30-34; Joel 3:13-14. (f) The harvest-time is here. God is sending forth His messengers, and with the sickle of truth (Heb. 4:12), the harvest is being reaped. The tares—sectarian institutions and false professors—who are the “children of the wicked one,” are being bound for the eternal burnings; while the pure wheat, God’s people, are being gathered out of sectism into His “barn”—Zion.

1. Tares separated. Jer. 15:19; Mal. 3:17-18; Rev. 18:1-4.

2. Tares bound. Mt. 18:18; Psa. 149:3-9.

3. The wheat gathered. Mt. 13:30; Psa. 147:12-14.

This parable also teaches that the field is the world. In this field, the good and bad will grow together until Christ comes, when an eternal separation will take place. Mt. 25:31-46.

Conclusion. Jn. 4:35-38.

And to this, we would add a quote from *A Great Sacrifice*, a message preached by Brother Fred Pruitt in the 1950’s:

The Holy Spirit is burning; He is cutting this way and that way. He is separating the clean from the vile. He is doing something today. I tell you that the true ministers of God who are sending forth the Word in its purity are filling sectism with converts—souls that won’t measure to the truth. They hear and in their hearts say, “This is a hard saying.” They turn away from the Truth and get into the pens of sectism to be burned in the end. There are some not doing it, but I say there are many doing it. I say we are filling sectism. Someone says, “Why, you are not doing anything, not getting anyone much converted.” We are doing more than some folks think. We are doing a lot of work folks do not know about—filling sectism. God wants His work to go on. Souls are being slaughtered because they won’t measure to the Truth and are filling sectism today, and God is expecting His ministers to be true. Send forth the Word; face the enemy; let the sword cut where it will; let the clean come out of her; let the vile go their way.

TELL WHAT HE'S DONE FOR YOU

Refrain

Oh, tell what He's done,

what He's done to you

love, love,

so

strong and true;

Where Trust Begins

I looked out our French doors into that watery cat eye and shuddered—I have never been one to take my animal's afflictions lightly.

My sister's hand brushed my shoulder as she whispered, "Remember, I'm taking care of him." I knew she was trying her best. We had a little bottle of eye drops from the vet, but this cat was just not the sort that would let you hold him, much less get a drop in his eye. My sister had even tried holding liver over his head to get him to look up. The vet had said that if his eye didn't get better he would likely go blind.

Through the day that eye followed me like a shadow—I just couldn't trust, not my sister... or God.

That evening the cat was at the door again, and the eye was worse, much worse. Even my confident big sis was looking a little worried. I stared into the dilated pupil and inflamed red inner eye lid now covering half his eye.

We couldn't do much more for him and a trip to the vet wasn't an option right now. I knew my only path of victory through this was trusting God, but it just seemed like somehow I couldn't. I brushed away a couple of escaping tears and turned away.

As I crawled into bed my heart felt heavy and God seemed so far away. I knew that worrying wasn't helping me or anybody else, but I couldn't stop, at least not on my own. "God, I know You have given me this opportunity to develop trust," I prayed. "I can't learn to trust unless I have a problem that I can't see my way through, and that is where I'm at... Teach me how to give this problem to You..."

And something in me finally let go and rested in God, believing that He cared and would only permit what was best for me. He filled me with His peace—peace that reached far deeper than feelings and circumstances.

The next morning I looked out

those doors without that shadow of fear... and found that God had already worked! The cat's eye was very much better and continued to get better.

Several times after that his eye began to water again, but I determined to keep my trust in God, and He has never allowed that eye to get any worse.

I look back to that experience and smile a little. It seems small in comparison to many things God has taken me through since then, but I know I wouldn't be where I am now except for the victory won then. God takes us one step at a time.

I doubt many of you struggle with your animal's ailments, but for each of us there is usually something—something we feel like we can't let go of and trust God with. God wants to lift all our burdens so we can find his peace in every problem. He really does care about *you* and everything that concerns you.

Unto the Least of These... and Me

The moment I stepped into the classroom I knew I wasn't prepared. Not really. Yes, I had known that these kids were dysfunctional and needy of one-on-one attention. That had interested me and caused me to accept the position. Filling in for an aide wouldn't be that hard. But the noises and sights that bombarded my senses were unlike anything I was prepared to deal with. Yes, I had seen disabilities like this before. But never gathered together in a classroom.

One instructor was wheeling a handicapped child to the next activity. Another aide smiled at me as she herded

a couple children to their seats. Herding. Those uncomprehending eyes, the squeaks and constant humming did seem to belong more in a barnyard than in a classroom. I was prepared to teach and instruct intelligent humans. What was I doing here?

I joined the circle of chairs, coming to grips with the strangeness and oddity all around. A shriek startled me and I turned to look. There sat a child rubbing his hands across his face like a little chipmunk. The grin that dominated his face was not joyful or comprehending. Inwardly I shivered. Another girl broke off her droning long

enough to smack her head forward onto the table. Her hair was as wild as her actions. An aide tried to cushion her self-affliction with a small pillow. Obviously she couldn't be reasoned with. Just managed. I took a deep breath and tried to relax my nerves.

The teacher carried on with a remarkable attempt at normalcy. I was new, so it was time for introductions. One boy, rocking methodically back and forth, managed a nod. A little girl pulled her tongue in long enough to give me a slobbery smile and blurt out an indistinguishable name. Another child managed speech, but wouldn't

look up. More than half of the children didn't speak at all. I looked about the circle, mentally attaching names to faces. Some were marked by their mental disorders, while others retained the beauty of the little child—innocent and uncomprehending.

Only one boy greeted me in a manner I was accustomed to. A shy smile and eye contact. It was like finding a friend in a foreign country. I scooted up my chair and began engaging in conversation. "How old are you?" He showed me on his fingers and returned the question. I showed him on mine. The tension was broken and we began to color together, smiling and chatting. I might survive this day after all.

And so I did. It was mostly survival at first, since everything was so new. The ones you thought you could expect the most from turned out to be the least predictable. The dark-eyed beauty of the class came up to me and touched my arm. "New lady," she murmured, nodding her head excitedly. "New lady." I didn't understand the assistant's warning until it was too late. In less than five seconds she turned into a little tornado and upset the fish tank.

At recess they gave me charge of the chipmunk child. The teacher had told me he was easy. "He'll touch your hand if he wants something," she said. "He likes the swing," an aide added. And swing he did—for the whole twenty minutes. So what should I do? One of the class came up and pointed to her untied shoes. Finally, an opportunity to connect! "You need help?" She nodded and smiled. I was bending down to help her when I heard an assistant scold, "You don't need help! You know better than to untie your shoes." Aside to me, she added, "She's just trying to get attention." I blinked in surprise. I hadn't guessed they would try manipulation. Obviously I had much to learn.

I was to do a lot more blinking before I would begin to understand these children and their needs. But learn I

slowly did. That first day I watched two faces disappear from sight as they stared out of the bus windows. A deceptively beautiful girl, a mute gazing boy. Something in those lost, forlorn eyes touched my heart. I wondered if I would ever see them again.

Before the month was out, I was back. This time I knew what I was asking for. I also knew it was where God wanted me to be.

* * *

Nine months have passed since I entered their world for the first time. I am no longer surprised by the noises and sights that once bombarded my senses. But familiarity has given me more than steady nerves. It has opened my heart to the real people hiding behind those masks of ignorance. Real people with real needs. And I began to love them.

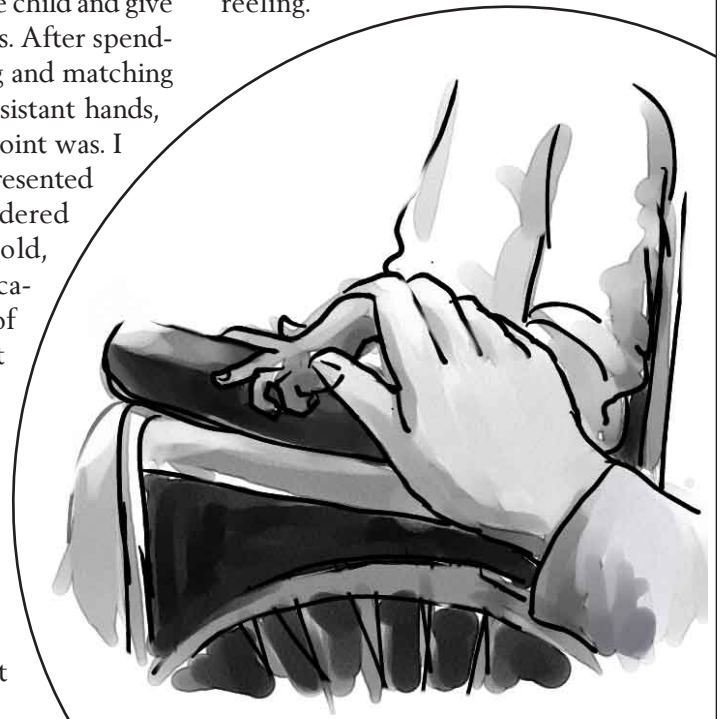
I will readily admit that I was frustrated at first. I had wanted to be useful, to solve problems, to make a difference. But here I was helpless. Couldn't we do more than babysit these children, locked in their toddler minds? But that's all that this classroom seemed to be.

I think my biggest battle was myself. I expected more. I wanted to see progress. It was trying on patience to sit with an unresponsive child and give instructions to deaf ears. After spending a half hour coloring and matching shapes with limp or resistant hands, I wondered what the point was. I was handicapped and resented it. And when I considered a child, at ten years old, whose only communication was the a touch of his hand, I didn't want to sit back and do nothing. Isn't there a way to break through to the person trapped inside, a language you can teach them, something more we can do? The other aides smiled at my frustration. "It

took a long time to get here," they said, and they seemed pleased with the results.

It was a school of humbling for me. But the way down wasn't all giving up. I gained much as well. As I became a regular sub for the classroom, I began to see and hear with more than my physical senses. I began to see that God had a different perspective on these human handicaps that seemed to so distasteful and limiting. Weakness didn't bother Him. He valued dependence and patience. Besides, He hadn't sent me there to change their situation. My job was to love them as they were, as the people they could be. By stacking blocks over and over? By giving smiles and encouragement for the most feeble efforts? He talked to me about how much His love had condescended to me. And the more I listened, the more I realized that this was the reason I was here. To see myself.

It wasn't until I found myself stationed with the class for four weeks that I began to see the method in all the madness. "Let me show you the clipboards," the teacher said. And there it all was. The pages of fine grid-work that marked off an education so exacting that my teaching mind was sent reeling.



“When you have extra time, you can fill these in,” she said. I read the objectives. Behavior. Independence. Interactions. Every aspect of their “daycare” environment had been considered and their individual goals had been laid out. Did they ask for help when they needed it? How many times? Was the instruction given verbally, gestured, modeled, or physically assisted? I suddenly felt ashamed of my attitude and looked around at the staff with new appreciation. They were working for something, and they knew it. I found myself pleased to be identified with them, to have a place in a school full of growing minds with “the least of these.”

With my eyes opened anew I began to delight in their little hints of progress. Now I could join with comprehension in the elaborate praise and clapping afforded a simple effort to follow directions. Now I could understand the firmness of their scolding over untied shoes. After all, they knew what this child could do if they would. To refuse to try was to ask for their own defeat. I, too, found fondness in my heart for the very oddities of behavior that had once shaken me. I was realizing the truth of their lovability and potential. Once I had despaired of finding it here.

* * *

Today I enter that classroom with new comprehension. I find in this motley crew, this daycare of the lost causes of humanity, something much more. It is the painstaking and poured-forth effort to see progress in the seeming impossible. I've added a few of my own marks to those clipboards now. I respect those intricate records of successes and failures, marching so imperceptibly toward the goal. I respect even more the moment-by-moment investment to make that goal possible. What is the goal? Not of good grades or even a return to normalcy. A goal so simplistic as to seem a mockery of intelligence to many. A goal so great as to require the patience and determination unequalled by an Olympic coach. The goal of being their best with who they are. And as I

stand in the midst of the least of these, I find myself—in God's eyes.

Uncomprehending? Certainly that was I. Limited? Yes, and distant from a grace that was so ready to assist me. Truly the picture is an accurate one. How often we think we know, only to find that we really knew nothing at all. How often we are trapped by our own selves, yet unwilling to seek help. But it was to such headstrong ignorance that our God sent His Son. He knew we couldn't comprehend His power and love in the realms of glory. It was a distance our sin-bound souls could not span. So He came down to our level and loved us as we are—in our vain repetitions, our self-destruction, our unlovable ways.

Why such condescension? Because He saw our potential and knew that we could be redeemed. Not because of our own worth, but because of Who He was, He offered us hope. Hope that could only be grasped if we would first believe in Him and receive Him into our hearts. Does our frail understanding take it in? The all-wise Omnipotence, Orchestrator of the universe, offers Himself to a humanity that would just as soon erase His memory from the earth. To give us His life that we might live through Him. Of course, we could not comprehend it. Certainly “*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

He knew what He was asking for. And He was prepared to teach us His ways, faithfully, patiently, over and over, until the light dawned in our eyes at last and we could move on. But His love was tough. It determinedly asked us to go where we could not alone step—outside of ourselves, our inward trap, our self-absorption—and held our hand. We could not do more than allow that love to work in us, or refuse it. But that was all He asked—that we be willing to trust, to respond, to make an effort. And then, what delight, what applause when we chose willingness!

Even if it was simply to ask—to make the connection—which, after all, is the life-line to life.

What of His judgments? Surely He could never tolerate our reversions to self-destruction. With firm disapproval He opposed our stubbornness and self-pity at every turn. But the power of choice He leaves to us yet—making every effort in the meanwhile to show us how worthy the choice for life is. He settles for nothing less than our release, though it be one painstaking baby step at a time. And while our restoration fills all His plans, He waits for us, desires us, loves us... Was there ever a heroic love so obstinately miscomprehended as our God's has been?

Yes, the picture of my ignorance and His patient, persistent investing looms great before me. Do I begin to comprehend? Just enough to reach out my hand. To be willing to be directed. To humble myself to walk with my God. This child whose conversation is a jabber of recorded ideas, who is just as likely to self-destruction as to hurt another, is me. That child who rocks in frustration at the smallest disturbance, whose greatest effort is to get still enough to trust, is me. And he whose language is no more than grunts and gestures, whose feebleness requires the most aid, but in whose hand is the power to will or to reject, is me. How much I need One that will love me at all costs and direct my steps in the way of life everlasting!

The least of these. That is me. That is you. Is it revolting? It is reality. To embrace it is to lay hold of the key of our redemption. Are we headed for eternal insanity, or for the dawning of supernatural light? “*Now we see through a glass, darkly*” is a redeeming acknowledgment if we can accompany it with this greater: “*Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God!*” ¹ *Jn.* 3:1 All I am today is because He loved me and wanted me. And all my hope of the future is because He is able to make me what I ought to be. ➤

The Age of Knowledge

Part 2

There is a parallel between *wealth of knowledge* and *the riches of this world*, such as money, lands, houses, and other temporal possessions.

The possession of great earthly riches has always presented grave danger to the soul. We are warned, *“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”*¹ *Tim. 6:9* We see from this scripture and the context about it that *ambition to be rich* is to be avoided at all costs. The spiritual standard is presented as *“godliness with contentment is great gain.”*^{vs. 6} *“And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.”*^{vs. 8} Note the absence of houses and lands (to say nothing of comfortable retirements) from this short list of necessities. Finally, we are told, *“But thou, O man of God, flee these things.”*^{vs. 11} I beg of you to consider the force and the extreme warning of that word: **flee**. Don't just casually and reluctantly decide that the desire to be rich and the things that come with that desire are probably not the best way to live, but **flee**. Flee urgently. Flee hurriedly. Flee in a headlong rush. Run for your life. The ambition to be rich is deadly; it has slain many. Flee as did Joseph from Potiphar's wife, even sacrificing your garment, so to speak. You cannot afford to give place in your life to something that has ruined many, pierced them through with many sorrows, and will cause you, too, to err from the faith and end up meeting God in that condition. Yea, *“Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.”*^{Pr. 28:6}

It is necessary to consecrate to be poor to live for God. Our Lord met this temptation and surmounted it. *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich [in heaven, before He was begotten in bodily form], yet for your sakes he became*

*poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”*² *Cor. 8:9* *“And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”*^{Mt. 8:20}

When we are willing to be stripped as Jesus told the rich young ruler (Lk. 18:18-25), then we find that God has appointed a great blessing for those who are poor for love to Him. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*^{Mt. 5:3} I would to God I could emblazon this wonderful truth on your heart until your entire life was one exultant cry: ***Blessed are the poor in spirit: for [O glory!] theirs is the kingdom of heaven!*** *“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.”*¹ *Cor. 2:9-10* When we have made the consecration and died to all other ambition but to *know only what God would have us know, no more and no less*, we began to realize that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and we began to perceive the nature of its foolishness, as God reveals it to us by teaching us the wisdom that comes from above.

You cannot name me a single child of God that has prospered in this world *by setting his heart on the things of this life*. There are children of God who have been entrusted with a great abundance of earthly possessions, but a close examination of the record shows that *their heart was not on the things over which they were steward*. In the case of one who was entrusted with much wealth (Job), we are told how careful he was, how frequently and diligently he gave it away in every worthy direction he could find, what a burden he carried for his children (under such circumstances,

especially), and how horribly his wife failed to hold the consecration that he did. We are told of another man who pitched his tents toward Sodom. He was determined to be all he could be. His wife became a pillar of salt; his children were all corrupted and ruined. The psalmist was nearly gone; he said that his steps almost slipped, as he was severely tempted to be envious of the wealthy. Time would fail us to speak of Balaam and Judas and many others. If this is all true of earthly possessions, then just how slippery is the slope of earthly knowledge and understanding? In every case that did not turn out disastrously, the stewardship of great earthly possessions was attended with gigantic trials and temptations, all necessary for the spiritual survival of the child of God. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were entrusted by God with great knowledge and understanding. We are told that they were ten times more skillful in wisdom, more cunning in knowledge, and more understanding of science than the best educated that the then ruler of the known world had in his whole government. The latter three were thrown into a fiery furnace, and Daniel was left in a den of hungry lions overnight. They went into these severe trials uncorrupted by the learn-

Don't just casually and reluctantly decide that the desire to be rich and the things that come with that desire are probably not the best way to live, but FLEE.

ing that God had entrusted them with, and they emerged from those trials to continue to serve God in the way He had appointed for them. Well did one say, *“For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.”*^{Ec. 1:18}

The key to handling knowledge or earthly possessions is not in some formula or creed that says, “You can have this much, and no more.” Or, “You can study this much, and no more.” That is not it. None of this touches on the heart of the matter. What is that? *Lord, I do not want to know more than You want me to know. I want to know just how*

much You want me to know, no more and no less. Or, Lord, I do not want any more possessions than you want me to have. I want to have just how much You want me to have, no more and no less; and I want to use it just as You would have it used, at all times and in all ways. So how do we know if we are doing it right—just as God would have us do? That's easy. The blessing, it makes rich, with no sorrow added. The blessing, in our God-appointed trials and temptations, reveals the grace from God and help from Him that manifests that our works are approved of Him. Whenever you see someone behaving as Job, or Daniel, or Shadrach, or Meshach, or Abednego, under load, in their extremities, then you can pretty well tell by their fruit that God is approving of them and blessing them. And if there is no spiritual fruit... then that fact speaks loudly, deafeningly; and you had better pay attention and conclude accordingly. You will not be able to accurately evaluate the fruit if you have not made the consecration.

A lot of people have gone too far; they have strayed into entanglement (2 Tim. 2:4). Some are entangled in possessions and the labor and care that go with earthly possessions; others are entangled in things of the intellect (secular and religious); some are entangled in both. Maybe they used to be in the blessing zone, but they have gotten near the edge, gone past the edge. Their experience with God is stale and stagnant. Ask God to give you vivid and flavorful tastes of the lives whom the Word of God recommends in these things. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." Ps. 37:37 Ask God to help you to discern between the fat and juicy and those who are wilted and receiving no heavenly sap. Most of all, ask God to make of you what you ought to be. His promise to you is, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Lk. 11:9-10

Now the Bible tells us that men have sought out "many inventions." Ec. 7:29 Not just

a few. Many. In the ages of history before The Age of Knowledge—to us now, people seem so limited. They appear so limited in their transportation, their housing, their vocations, their communications, even their perceptions. The whole picture seems to be a narrow-minded, resistant-to-change, slow-to-improve scene. By comparison now, they seem to have been limited then. The pride of man is greatly inflated by the wealthiness of his temporal knowledge now. It seems that he can go anywhere he chooses to go and become whatever catches his interest and seems important to him. Choices that were open only to the wealthy or to the privileged in previous times are now open to the average person.

But exercising these options is a far cry from the words of Brother David, "LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the LORD

A lot of people have gone too far; they have strayed into entanglement (See 2 Timothy 2:4). Some are entangled in possessions and the labor and care that go with earthly possessions; others are entangled in things of the intellect (both secular and religious intellect); some are entangled in both.

from henceforth and for ever." Ps. 131:1-3 In the face of all this affluence and wealth of options it is more important than ever to be led of God.

Reader, can you say that you dwell in the place where God would have you dwell? Do you have the kind of income that God is pleased for you to have? Is your manner of life, your lifestyle, such that God finds it acceptable? Does it truly glorify Him? How much a part does sacrifice, real sacrifice, find in your life? Is your life a feasting or a fasting? Do you fare "sumptuously every day"? Lk. 16:19

The reality is that the comparatively simple ways of life of former ages were not

so simplistic, after all, any more than the correct path for us is simple and discoverable on our own. There has always been choices that exclude other choices. If one does certain things, then other things are not done and cannot be done. It never was possible for a man to direct his own steps, nor is it possible now, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10:23

Let us suppose that you were informed that your income would now be one billion dollars each month (\$1,000,000,000 every month). Your necessary expenses to live (food, shelter, clothing, transportation, etc.) were, with careful management, about one thousand dollars every month (\$1,000 every month). You realize at once that the possibility of you not having the funds necessary for ordinary living is no longer a concern. You will not have to labor for the bare requirements for human existence. Even if the income stopped, the very first month's revenue would cover over 83 thousand years of subsistence living. You would have a ridiculous amount of money, vastly

more than you would ever need, flooding into your hands. And you would be wise to consider this astounding truth: "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Rom. 14:11-12 This amount of money would be placed in your hands for you to use and give account of the using. The question is, and what a question

it is: What should I do?

This is more than just an imaginary thought; it is in the Bible. "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." Mt. 25:14-15 A talent stood roughly in place (conceptually) of the billion dollars mentioned above. The ordinary laborer earned about a penny a day at the time. I want to call your attention to the phrase, "to every man according to his several ability." This parable is about the possession and de-

velopment of *spiritual riches*, even the personal enduing of the grace of God (which is capable of almost infinite development in the heart of a child of God), and Jesus tells us of two who made a success and one who made a terrible failure. But this story deals with *God giving out* “to every man according to his several ability.” Whereas the account above of the billion-a-month *does not* involve God measuring out the wealth, but the simple reality of it being on hand whether we have the ability to wisely deal with it or not.

We are not told about the beginning of the influx of wealth to Job. The account simply reads, “*His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*”^{Job 1:3} Unless he inherited it, there was a time of increase (abounding), and the outstanding characteristic of the man is that he did not set his heart on what God had put in his hand (Job 2:10). And we are given some detail as to *how* he avoided getting his heart set on his wealth. “*Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.*”^{Job 29:12-17} (See also 30:25; 31:13-23.) “*If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much....*”^{31:24-25}

Enough is said of Job’s life before his enormous trial to reveal to us a dedicated man with the fear of God upon him, who took the responsibility of his wealth very seriously indeed, and labored endlessly to give it away as fast as he responsibly could. His confidence was in God, not in what God gave him or allowed him; and he did not rejoice in the greatness of his wealth or the success of his business efforts. All of

this was revealed *by it being taken away*. Reader, we ask of you in the fear of God, *what would be revealed in your life if you were stripped of material possessions or if your mind was reduced to the utmost simplicity?* As the poet said,

“What will become of
all your fortune and land,
Silver and gold, riches untold?
When you have made it
all your purpose and aim
To gain all this world, then lose your soul.”

How well we are dealing with the wealth of knowledge that has increased so in these last days will be revealed when it is lost.

Job chose to handle all his wealth as God wanted him to handle it. God approved of how the man went about his stewardship. And therein is the secret of how we should approach the enormous wealth of temporal knowledge that is continually around us. To the child of God, this is not given for self-gratification; God has a purpose—a design—in mind. Job found that purpose and settled down to it.

How well we are dealing with the wealth of knowledge that has increased so in these last days will be revealed when it is lost. Some might feel that the benefits of a good education in temporal wisdom is never lost, but it can be. The mind can go and the previously intelligent human being can be reduced to the level of an imbecile. Or things can shift so that recognized degrees of learning and mastery become unrecognized. Many an immigrant from another land has discovered that what was highly regarded in the place of origin is not respected or valued at all in the new place. It is quite possible for sudden developments to render obsolete or no longer relevant certain lines of study, leaving the masters of that material with a great loss. Those who have approached former conditions with the attitude of Job’s wife can see no hope, but all things *work together for good* to them that love God.

“I know God is; I know His Word
Unfailing meets each test.
I calmly face a hostile world
With soul and mind at rest.”

There is One who goes before me and winnows my pathway. He will keep me in the surging billows and deadly rip currents of the age of knowledge, just as He has kept His children all through the years. No matter what happens, He will make a way for me.

Now, beyond any doubt, there are things that you should not be studying in school. Some things should never be studied by anyone; they are not edifying at all. Other things should be studied by some, but it would be better for others if they did not delve into things that God would not have them to study. Some things are a waste of time and resources. God is going to lead you to fields of usefulness and

sacrifice where those things will prove to be of little value. Simply pursuing those things out of curiosity is not edifying, and you will miss the blessing that God has for you. If you pursue them anyway (your Ishmael), then you will find that they exact a penalty, and you will have spiritual damage. These things fall outside the consecration: *Lord, I just want to know what You would have me to know, no more and no less.*

Who is in charge in your life? Who runs things? You say, “My will. God will not usurp my authority to choose.” You are correct in saying that God will not *usurp* your right to choose. He waits for you to voluntarily lay down your will and wait for His direction. He waits for you to say, of your own volition, “*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*”^{Lk. 22:42} God waits for you to relinquish to Him your right to choose, over and over in an ongoing way. He waits to bless you.

But there is one *who is interested in dominating you*. That is your enemy, your adversary, even the great roaring lion who walks about and devours human beings. He is infinitely smarter than you are, smarter even than all mankind together. When we are not under the guidance and protection of the Holy Ghost, we become a prey. Satan misses no opportunity to hinder and corrupt your soul. Most of the inventions that men have sought out so eagerly and avidly are the result of hellish engineering and design, tailored to appeal to you and

others as the bait of the snares of hell. When you turn away from God and figure you are on your own and utilizing your liberty, you play into the hands of him who hates you and labors endlessly for your utter destruction. I beg of you to consider the words of Brother Peter:

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of

whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” ² Pet. 2:19-21

This should make the hairs of your head prickle and goosebumps form on your skin. Satan has entangled many souls who were

once delivered and had escaped from the pollutions of the world. They became “*entangled*” again, and “*the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*” When it is time to pass over into your long home (even eternity), it would have been bet-

ter to have never been saved than to be saved and have lost it. And all this effectual, fervent effort of the devil against

you occurs *while you promise yourself liberty*—while you are engaged in the exhilarating business of “being all that you can be.” If you do not have grace in life to be a overcomer, then it is an absolute certainty that you will be overcome. “*For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.*” Yes, “*Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [slave] of sin.*” ^{Jn. 8:34}

If we are not led by the Holy Ghost, we are certainly going to be led by *something*.

My dear readers, we are between two great forces, one of right and the other

If we are not led by the Holy Ghost, we are certainly going to be led by *something*.

of wrong. The prince of the power of the air, the god of this world, flatters us into believing that there is another choice than choosing God or choosing Satan. The devil would have you believe that you can choose your own way. But, in actuality, in refusing to choose God and His perfect will for you, you choose the only other option and become ensnared.

How much God loves you! How much He wants you to choose Him, that He may lead you down the true path of life, that leads to an eternity of joy and satisfaction. Will you not humble yourself? Will you not confess that you really are not capable of directing yourself? Will you not come to terms with the reality of your existence? Will you not acknowledge that you are in over your head? Will you not surrender yourself, voluntarily, to Him who died on the cross for you?

“I trust in God, no matter come what may,
For life eternal is in His hand.

He holds the key that opens up the way
That will lead me to the promised land.”

—W. Elmo Mercer



How Does God Regard Ornamentation?

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did

put on him his ornaments. For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.” ^{Ex. 33:1-6}

The first and primary enemies of the children of Israel were not the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. The main adversary—the first obstacle that must be addressed—was the thing that made

them *a stiffnecked people*. Why was this the most significant of their enemies? Because God would not help them in their stiff-necked condition, and He was continually angered at them because of their pride and was inclined to leave them to face their enemies alone because of that pride that made their necks stiff and them slow to humble themselves.

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5

The ability to humble oneself *from the heart, genuinely and absolutely*, is the absolute essential of being an overcomer. It makes the difference between overcoming or being overcome. We are satisfied that a vast crowd of precious human beings are going to miss heaven and go to hell *because they cannot humble themselves*. They are too stiffnecked to live for God.

The simple fact of admitting that you are stiffnecked is not enough to enable you to be able to bow. It is a step in the right direction, but there is something else that you must do. **You must strip yourself of your ornaments.** God will go with you and help you if you strip yourself of all your ornaments.

“And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments... And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.” Ex. 33:4,6

To understand the profound significance of what happened there, we must comprehend what it meant to:

- 1) avoid putting on my ornaments (note the plural—more than one ornament)
- 2) strip myself of my ornaments

We will note that both of these processes are the opposite of putting ornaments on.

There was a big pile of ornaments by Mount Horeb, wasn't there? And there were more scattered about that had never been put on that morning, weren't there? And every ornament in that pile or discarded represented a certain feeling, a certain satisfaction of thought, a certain complacency, a certain self-regard that was discarded right along with the physical manifestation of that personal philosophy. People put on jewelry, superfluous apparel, and other things that are regarded as improvements—sometimes regarded as crucial, necessary improvements—to the self-image. They paint their faces and dye their hair for the same reason. They invest money in expensive apparel with a certain cut and look for the same reason. The beauty shop and sometimes even the barber shop exist because of this human trait, don't they? The condition of pride of heart in human beings is so commonplace that it is regarded as entirely natural, even essential. But this pride of life is *“not of the Father.”* It is of the vast majority of humanity who are resisting God and His plan for us. It is of the world (1 Jn. 2:15-16). This pride in the heart exacts *an enormous penalty*. It causes God to *not help us*; and worse yet, this human pride,

expressed in ornamenting oneself and the stiffnecked condition that always accompanies the ornamentation, causes God to *resist us*. We might add that it delights the devil and makes his job of corrupting us and damning our souls, much easier.

“Could you see what every stirring of pride does to your soul, you would beg of everyone you meet to tear the viper from you, though with the loss of a hand or an eye” (Andrew Murray; *Humility*).

We do not want to give you the impression that ornamentation is limited to jewelry, superfluous or expensive apparel, or other external things that you attach to yourself or drape over

yourself in some way. There are ornaments of an intangible nature that need to be stripped off. The proud Pharisee that prayed with himself (not with God, for God was

“Could you see what every stirring of pride does to your soul, you would beg of everyone you meet to tear the viper from you, though with the loss of a hand or an eye”

resisting him) in the temple was absolutely loaded with inner ornaments. He had a lot of attitudes; he was adorned with a lot of attitudes that fairly begged to be trashed if he really got hungry for the blessing that God had for him, instead of his own blessing (Lk. 18:11-12).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Col. 2:8 Surely you recognize the educational system of today in this scripture. It is a perfect house of fleshly ornamentation, loading its adherents up with the ornaments of philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world. It is certainly *“not after Christ.”* But it is not necessary to enroll in college to acquire these philosophies and deceits. You can acquire a working knowledge of the world and its ways by buying a television set and listening to the various philosophers of worldly ideas. You can delve into the internet and acquire and fasten upon yourself all manner of worldly garbage—highly-regarded ways of thinking and sophisticated deceits that will make you seem “cool,” knowledgeable, “with it,” and of the same spirit and attitude as the world. And as you do these things, carefully justifying yourself and drawing your own borders of restraint, God will resist you and not help you, while the deadly enemy of your soul will rejoice and find great satisfaction in your foolishness. You will think you are getting smarter, “making something of yourself,” “being all that you can be,” etc., while Satan prepares your eternal home for you and grows more sure of your imminent arrival there every day.

Will you not listen? Will you not seriously consider the plight of the children of Israel? If the ornaments did not go, then the stiffnecked business would not go, either; and they would be left at the mercy of their enemies. They were hard up for God's help, and so are you. Will you abandon your self-confidence and the things which accompany it for real solid, genuine confidence in your Creator? ➡

Humility

Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 1 Pet. 5:5

By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life. Pr. 22:4

1. Hu - mil - i - ty, thou se - cret vale, Un - known to proud in heart;
2. Hu - mil - i - ty, how pure thy place! Thou seat of ho - li - ness!
3. Hu - mil - i - ty, how calm the breast That knows thy peace sub - lime!
4. Hu - mil - i - ty, thou shore - less sea Of per - fect love so deep!

Where show'rs of bless - ing nev - er fail, And glo - ries ne'er de - part.
Thou door of en - trance in - to grace And ev - er - last - ing bliss!
With - in thy courts our per - fect rest Grows sweet - er all the time.
Thy crys - tal wa - ters cov - er me, My help - less soul to keep.

Refrain

Oh, make thy blest a - bode with me, Thou an - gel of the sky;

If I may ev - er dwell with thee, My soul shall nev - er die.

Victory Through Grace

The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Ecc. 9:11 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. Rev. 6:2; 19:11-16

1. Con - quer - ing now and still to con - quer, rid - eth a King in His might;
2. Con - quer - ing now and still to con - quer, who is this won - der - ful King?
3. Con - quer - ing now and still to con - quer, Je - sus, Thou Rul - er of all,

Lead - ing the host of all the faith - ful in - to the midst of the fight;
Whence are the arm - ies which He lead - eth, while of His glo - ry they sing?
Thrones and their scep - ters all shall per - ish, crowns and their splen - dor shall fall,

See them with cour - age ad - vanc - ing, clad in their bril - liant ar - ray,
He is our Lord and Re - deem - er, Sav - ior and Mon - arch di - vine;
Yet shall the arm - ies Thou lead - est, faith - ful and true to the last,

Shout - ing the Name of their Lead - er, hear them ex - ult - ing - ly say:
They are the stars that for - ev - er bright in His king - dom shall shine.
Find in Thy man - sions e - ter - nal rest, when their war - fare is past.
D.S.—Yet to the true and the faith - ful vic - t'ry is prom - ised through grace.

Refrain D.S. al Fine
Not to the strong is the bat - tle, not to the swift is the race,

The Men of War

“MY BOWELS, MY BOWELS!
I am pained at my very heart;
My heart maketh a noise in me;
I CANNOT HOLD MY PEACE,
because thou hast heard,
O my soul, the sound of the trumpet,
THE ALARM OF WAR.”

“Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.” Jer. 4:19-22

“Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.” Jer. 48:10

“And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth.” Jdg. 8:20

Although David was anointed of God to be His warrior king, he was not judged by the members of his family to be a man of war. To them, he was but a youth, and they employed him in the tasks that belonged to a young, untried stripling. Even the prophet Samuel did not readily identify him as one of God’s warriors; for the stern, unyielding, unmoveable courage that will die upon the battlefield before surrender—“only over my dead body”—was only in evidence to the all-seeing eye of God. The lion and the bear were harbingers of what was to come (1 Sam. 17:34-37), but only God knew the tried and proven character of the young man. Though in embryonic form, here was an emerging man of war—*God’s man of war*. We are privileged to have this insight into the early training and preparation of one of God’s shock troops—those who can and most definitely do “*turn the battle to the gate*.” Yea, “*In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.*” Isa. 28:5-6



There is a great clarity of purpose needed to wage war in this fashion—a hot, burning vision that is crystal clear and unreceptive to any misgivings or doubts. This is far beyond a fuzzy, vague idea of what is right and what should happen. The violence of spiritual warfare, the utmost-sacrifice mentality that is indispensable to a man of war, both demand an implacable sureness—a deadly certainty—that fully justifies absolute spiritual destruction of the enemies of God. “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.” Jer. 48:10 I am obligated before God to call your attention to the **curse**. “*The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; and forgot his works, and his wonders that he had showed them.*” Psa. 78:9-11

This is a day of weak diplomacy—a day when men devote themselves to cunningly-devised begging—a day when the conception of God’s church as an army with banners, striking terror into the hearts of evil doers, is a faint and stigmatized memory.

People think it is the business of the church to stand like a beggar at the door of the devil’s kingdom and politely coax his subjects over; saying much about the duty and advantage of belonging to church and

little about their sin and the duty of repentance, as though God were a dependent, and the devil proprietor of the universe.

—D. S. Warner; *Bible Proofs of a Second Work of Grace*, Chapter 26

Great emphasis is placed upon being polite to the forces of evil, or more accurately, *politically correct*. As though the war between righteousness and wickedness were a chivalric contest, instead of a fight to the finish.

WHERE ARE THE MEN OF WAR?

“Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this is the day whereof I have spoken. And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD.... Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD.” Eze. 39:8-10,20

This is a description of the warriors of God—the type and shadow of those whose warfare is “*not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.*” 2 Cor. 10:4 We have seen them at work. One brother, having delivered himself of the burden which God laid upon his heart at a given meeting, was hotly confronted

by the compromise element in that area. “You brethren have no right to come in like this,” the champion of spiritual letdown cried. The man of God set quietly under the hostile fire. In the next meeting, another man of

God arose and made his way to the pulpit. As he passed the first brother, he quietly said, “Round two, coming up.” Under such preaching, such expounding of the one and only way to be right with God and accepted of Him, all faces (that will not receive the truth) gather blackness. The Bible captures their attitude: “*This is a rebellious people,*

There is a great clarity of purpose needed to wage war in this fashion

lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Isa. 30:9-11 Now this is the hostile fire of those in the kingdom of darkness. "Leave us alone." "Don't judge us." "I don't want to think about that." "I want to do whatever I please." They want their ears tickled; they desire entertainment—especially entertainment of the sort that King Saul had when in one of his moods—I want to feel better about myself. Stop talking about crosses and sacrifices and obedience and all that stuff! And then we see the bombardment of gospel truth exploding among these sinners. "Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit." vs. 12-14

The heavenly fusillade of truth, even the words of truth and soberness, fell upon the man Agrippa until he confessed, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Acts 26:28 That is, almost he surrendered, almost he made peace with God, almost he was translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the dear Son. Oh, what a tragedy is in that almost! The man of war before him was grieved at his almost. As another one of God's soldiers said, "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears." Jer 13:17 Almost was king Agrippa conquered for Jesus. Almost was the sinner made into a new creature in Christ Jesus, even a child of God and one of His saints. Almost was the works of the devil destroyed within him; almost was he spoiled of the deadly fruits of sin by the triumph of mighty grace. How

much of Agrippa's obstinacy was reinforced by the enflaming fire of the sinner, Festus? He attempted to discredit the gospel testimony of the man of God, saying with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." vs. 24

In spite of all hellish opposition, the spiritual battle was turned right to the gate of King Agrippa's heart. Behold the work of God! See the man of war, used of the Holy Ghost, under fire and giving fire. Behold the conflict between right and wrong!

THE WEAPONS OF MEEKNESS AND A WILLINGNESS TO SUFFER

"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imagi-

Those who imagine that they exhibit the love of God by diplomacy, sleight of hand, and cunning craftiness do not seem to realize that the real needs of the people for deliverance and radical heart change by grace are not accomplished by their fair speeches.

nations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:4-5

While Brother Warner was with us in San Diego, California, he gave a series of lessons on the Revelation, and preached hard against the errors of Millennialism. A man who had come amongst us, who was a preacher, and seemed to be accepting the truth very well, but had not received the light on this line, became very much offended at the sermon Brother Warner preached that evening. He seemed to lose his patience altogether, and manifested anger. He came forward to Brother Warner before the congregation had left the hall and in a loud voice and with a face expressing real bitterness said, "The Lord shows me that you are of the devil." He had hardly finished his words when Brother Warner fell on his knees and began to pray, right at the feet of his accuser.

I never before heard such a pitiful prayer, as he poured out his heart to God for this dear man who had brought such a charge

against the servant of the Lord. He prayed that the man might be able to see his wrong, that God would reveal the truth to his understanding, and also bless the people who were standing and looking on at this scene of Christian discourtesy, etc. We were all so shocked at the unusual act that it was hard to know just what to do but stand there, which we did, until the prayer was over. After finishing the outpouring of his soul in prayer, he quietly rose from his knees, and went away.

The accuser was one of the most surprised people I ever saw. During the prayer he stood as though riveted to the floor, his deathly pale face turned down toward Brother Warner. His hands hung by his side, and he had the appearance of one paralyzed. For awhile after Brother Warner had risen from his knees, the man remained fastened to the spot. The congregation began going out, and finally the man also took his hat and left, without one word.

The next night, in the presence of a large audience, this man arose and came forward to Brother Warner, weeping and humbly asking that he might be forgiven for the great offence toward him and the people. He said the Lord had shown him that Brother Warner was right, and he did all that could be expected to right himself with God. From that time he was a strong advocate of the truths of the reformation.

—J. W. Byers; quoted in *Birth of a Reformation*

The weapons of carnality can be employed with great arrogance, with bitterness, with hatred, with malice, or even lightly, casually—and still do carnal execution very effectively. But the weapons that are not carnal are designed in heaven and ingeniously made to touch the hearts of men with the depths of heavenly love. The most powerful weapon of mass destruction (to the devil) is described in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Those who imagine that they exhibit the love of God by diplomacy, sleight of hand, and cunning craftiness do not seem to realize that the real needs of the people for deliverance and radical heart change by grace are not accomplished by their fair speeches. The razing to the ground,

the devastation of conviction that I am lost and undone that is accomplished by “speaking the truth in love” ^{Eph. 4:15} does not seem necessary to the non-combatant mind. It is strongly embedded in human nature that assistance can be achieved without the need of absolute surrender. The civilian cringes in horror from the violence of the soldier or police. It all seems so uncouth—so primitive. Surely... there must be a better way than *forcing* people to do right—a *reasonable* method. In natural life, if the police withdrew, if no one was *made* to do what is right, then chaos would result. The thirteenth chapter of Romans speaks of the civil authority which God has allowed for man to keep order (although oftentimes much abused because of sin), and it states, “But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” ^{vs. 4} This is directly referring to carnal weapons and effort, including the use of deadly force to achieve some resemblance of physical order and restraint. It deals with a man whether he wants to be dealt with or not, and it deals with him physically, for physical results, not spiritual.

But the spiritual weapons of God’s men of war are not carnal. They are intended to bring the soul to where it *voluntarily* surrenders.

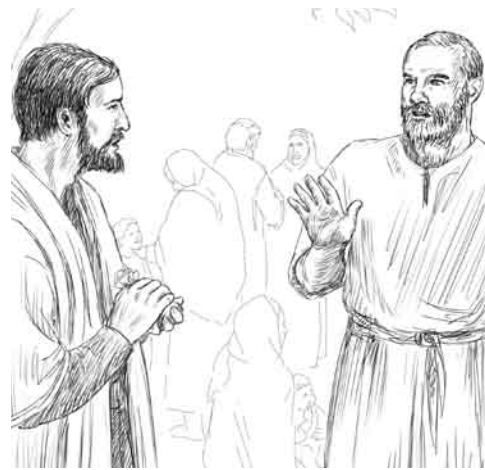
“I know my sins have pierced Thy heart;
O Jesus crucified!
And now thy love is breaking mine;
I bow to Him who died.”

As I write these words, my mind and heart go out to that obstinate opposer of the gospel, that man who kicked *so hard* against the pricks, that one who learned by bitter experience that in the end we can do nothing against the gospel. For this proud man found Jesus when he was struck blind, lying prostrate in the dust on the road to Damascus, his sinful heart full of hatred and prejudice, exceedingly mad against the church of God and the Redeemer Himself. He had purposed to bring more havoc upon God’s little children. He himself was a Philistine to the truth—a skillful and cunning foe of the way of the Redeemer. But there he found himself in hand-to-hand combat with our Lord. And there the gospel prevailed, and he came (trembling and aston-

ished) to “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” ^{Acts 9:6} There the love of God broke him; there he utterly surrendered. There he took the first steps on the path: “For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” ^{vs. 16} Ahead lay the stonings, the journeys, the beatings, the loss of all things but the winning of Christ.

“Just as I am, Thy love unknown
Hath broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

These spiritual weapons are intended to manifest the love of God by suffering and by authority until “the secrets of his heart [are] made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.” ^{1 Cor. 14:25} And to accomplish this objective, these weapons manifest a mixture of suffering and heavenly authority in those who employ them that can break through great barriers and explode great walls of bitterness. The gospel plow can uproot great trees of sin, even masterpieces of iniquity, even towering giants—great hellish redwoods, so to speak—that seem perfectly imperious to all appeals. It can tear up and heal hearts wounded and bruised by the wickedness of parental failure and foster-care laceration. It can subdue a devilish fortification that is carefully braced and prepared with prejudices of superhuman strength against godly assault.



The modern Simons of this day leave no stone unturned to manipulate and control the people. Money is no obstacle—they will pay any price, go to any length to grasp a new method for dealing with the human heart. They have never felt the gospel weapons upon them as they should,

and as the man of war said to Simon of Samaria, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” ^{Acts 8:20-23} You see, this Simon saw that the weapons of the Holy Ghost, employed in the hands of men of war, such as Peter, brought about results in the lives of those who consecrated for and received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Let us not miss the amazement of this Simon—a man whose heart was not right with God. *He saw* the effects of the gospel weapons in the hands of the men of war upon the Samaritan battlefield. This Simon saw the Son of God conquering. *This is what the Simons need to see.* They need to experience it, too. They need to be delivered from an inappropriate envy of God’s ways and a lack of personal familiarity with saving grace. What hot prayers followed this undelivered Simon! With what burning intercession and keen regret did the saints of God see him retire—unsubdued, unconquered, unwashed, yet in his sins—from the battlefield!

Where are the men of war?

THE COURAGE OF THE MEN OF WAR

“You can’t stop a man of God! He just keeps coming,” said one of God’s men of war.

The king of Syria was vexed beyond endurance. Over and over, he invaded the land of Israel, but in vain, for the forces of Israel awaited him at every turn (2 Ki. 6:8-10). Thinking and reasoning in himself, fighting his battles as a carnal man, the king concluded that he had a spy, a traitor, in his midst—but no, he was up against a man of God, one of God’s men of war. This did not intimidate the king of Syria. He decided to capture the man of God. An *army* was sent to take one man. The man of God seemed hopelessly outnumbered. What could one man do against an army? It would be more accurate to ask what one army could do against one of God’s men of war.

We are permitted to see some of the

details; we are greatly privileged. *“And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?”*^{2 Ki. 6:13-15} By human reasoning, the matter looked nigh well hopeless. They would be doing well to escape, and even that looked impossible—the great host compassed the city about. **The servant of the man of war was not a**

man of war himself. He thought as a man; he walked as a man (1 Cor. 3:3). *“Alas, my master! How shall we do?”*

The man of God was not worried. The enemies of the Lord were just where God wanted them. Everything was under control. The enemies were surrounded. If you could not see that, you needed your eyes opened to spiritual realities. *“Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”*^{Psa. 46:2-3} **The matter is of the Lord.** He designed it to be like this. *“Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”*^{Dan. 12:10}

We see the forces of apostasy and compromise. They seem to be sweeping all before them. *“Thus hath the Lord GOD showed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king’s mowings. And it came to pass, that when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.”*^{Amos 7:1-2} Those who truly desire the

truth seem so small; how shall they arise? It is God who designed the test. It is God who allows the storm to break upon His trusting children. Many will be shaken off; many will be carried away. *The battle is the opportunity of the truth; it is designed by God to separate the pure from the vile.* Where will you be? What do you see?

Where are the men of war? Do you want to be one of God’s men of war? Will you embrace the plumbline? Will you be of the three hundred who each carried the earthen pitcher, the flaming torch within, and carried the trumpet of battle?

Who is on the Lord’s side? Who?

It is time now to show ourselves. That man of God,

that warrior of the Lord’s, *“said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.”*^{1 Sam. 14:6} Now hear the reply of the young man of war: *“And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us.”*^{vs. 7-10} Let us leave off political maneuvering, masquerading under the name of wisdom. Let us **discover ourselves unto them.** *“Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.”*^{Isa. 28:17} When they see our discovery of where we stand and what we are, and they *do not come to us*, but instead say, *“Come up to us, and we will show you a thing,”* then it is time to climb up in God, *“for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel.”*^{1 Sam 14:12}

“I’m in this army, this glorious army, And the God of battles will defend me.”

And so climbing in the face of the host of Philistines, Jonathan and his armorbearer attacked uphill, and these two men abandoned themselves to God and attacked the entire Philistine army. What was the result?

“And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.”^{vs. 14} God is a force-multiplier. God is the air force and navy, cruise missiles and nuclear missiles—all responding to the authorized call of one of His men of war. Only twenty men slain out of a host, but there were only two men conquering. I expect by that time they were breathing hard, but, oh, so triumphant! Glory! *“And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.”*^{vs. 15} Praise God **for the trembling!** God knows how to make the devil and all his legions tremble. Let us take courage.

Others were watching—others that were hindered. The deadening hand of Jonathan’s father, Saul, was upon them. He was no longer one of God’s men of war. He had fallen away from that, Israelite though he was. **This falling away did not stop God or His men of war, either!** *“And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another.”*^{vs. 16} You would think that the ex-man-of-war, Saul, would abandon all his own efforts and just join in—but no! He must needs number the people. *“Who’s here? How did this get out from under my control?”* The ex-man-of-war proceeded down the path that seemed best to him, but God was working anyway. God could easily defeat the Philistine host with two men of war.

Where are the men of war? What are you? What are you doing? In what do you trust? Where is your confidence? **How do you fit in with the men of war?**

“For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall. As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.... He teacheth my hands to

war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip.

"I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them. And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet. For thou hast girded me with strength to battle:

them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. They looked, but there was none to save; even unto the LORD, but he answered them not. Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad. Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen: a people

which I knew not shall serve me. Strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me. Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places....

"It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me, and that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man." ^{2 Sam. 22:30-49} ➤

"That's Not True!"

He had reached the age of forty-eight years, and God had blessed him with a wife who loved him, two sons, and a daughter. He had secured a job that paid relatively well for the amount of education he had been able to acquire beyond high school. His oldest boy had been taking more and more interest in religion, and he was glad. He had heard pure religion taught all his life, and he had seen a few who actually lived it and "really had something." However, he had also seen quite a number who did not, and he had experienced painful collisions with some of these.

He was dedicated to his family. He wanted them to have all the advantages he could secure for them, and he felt he would not have lived in vain if they could do better than he had done. Especially spiritually.

His residence was a huge and elaborate home, normally far beyond the means of a man of his station in life; but he had scraped together, taken risks, and custom-designed and custom-built the place.

On that summer morning, he was going down the long hall in the new house, and he met his oldest son. The boy was only fourteen, but he was a good boy and really loved God. God had really changed him nearly six years prior. Before that, he had been a really selfish boy and tormented his younger brother all the time. But a great change had come over him. He had been with his child when the boy went to the public altar bench, crying as if his heart would break; and he had been there, crying too, when forgiveness from the Almighty had touched the boy's heart. The child's face was beaming, and the celestial light had radiated from his face. The difference in his life after that had furnished abundant proof of the profoundness and the reality of the change that had taken place. Within a week, his younger brother had interrupted the church service to request that he would get saved, too.

Now in the hall, the boy's face was beaming just as when he had gotten saved! "What has happened to you?" the fond father inquired.

"Dad!" the beaming young man said. "I've found the most wonderful scripture! It's here in Romans 8:28. 'And we know that **ALL THINGS work together for good** to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' Do you realize what this means, Dad? There is *nothing*—NOTHING—that can come to

us in our lives, but that it will *work together* for our good."

The father looked at his son—his idealistic, sheltered son—with his whole life ahead of him, and a bitter disillusionment spurted in the father's heart. He could not help it. Never would he ever have desired to discourage his boy, but a force stronger than him—stronger than his strongest desires and highest aspirations—a force that is "*not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*" ^{Rom. 8:7}—wrenched the words out of his heart and from his mouth. His countenance fell and wretched unbelief showed in every muscle of his features as he said in the flattest most despairing tone imaginable: "That's not true!" He repeated it—he could not *help* saying it again—"That's not true!"

He was aghast at what had fallen from his lips, but his very heart he *did not believe*, and he was constrained to speak what was in his heart. He had not found Romans 8:28 to be true in his own life.

His son looked at him with an amazement (and a believing confidence in the scripture quoted) that was nearly intolerable to his heart of unbelief. He had heard the full gospel preached, and some of the ministers who had expounded the Word of God to him had truly been used of the Holy Ghost. Fragments of gospel truths tugged at his consciousness and were confronted (as usual—alas!) by his unbelief. His testimony was: "I have heard entire sanctification taught all my life, but I could never get a hold of it!" And with this confession would always appear a desolate hopelessness, a bitter conclusion that this was beyond him; others could have it... perhaps... but he could not....

He had loved this son—his firstborn—oh, how he had loved him! This son was their miracle child. He and his wife had been uncertain that they would ever bear any children. He had longed to have a child. He had prayed God would allow him a child. She had prayed, too. He had prayed that God would give him a blue-eyed, white-haired boy; and... to his awestruck gaze, his firstborn was blue-eyed with hair as white as an aged man. He had told the Lord that he would give him back to God—as did Hannah of old with her firstborn, and he had meant it, too. He wanted better things for his boy than he had found for himself. He wanted him to do well in life. Abraham's son, Isaac, was not any more treasured or cherished than this firstborn son of his. He would lay down his life for this boy. He would die for him.

But now this boy was going where he had never been able to go. He was going out of reach. He was taking this scripture in such a way that would dash him to pieces when the inevitable, the ugly, the malicious, the cruelty of the envious would lacerate his idealism. No! NO! IT WASN'T TRUE! *All things DID NOT work together for good!*

The boy was speaking. "But, Dad!" he exclaimed, "it's in the Bible!" His son was looking at him, and there was real pain and abject astonishment in his eyes. It was unbearably hard for the father to face and deny the wondrous purity and innocence of that belief. But the bitterness of his soul stiffened him, and again he uttered those words, "That's not true!"

Deep within the subconscious of the unbelieving man, the voice of truth-rejecting doubt chanted its mantra: "He'll find out. They will treat him the same way. He, too, will grapple with despair, as you have done. He, too, will doubt this optimistic, utopian outlook—bitter experience will strip the fancifulness from him." And with this hopeless conclusion, a great sorrow laid hold on him—a sorrow that life was like this—a great grief that there was nothing better than this. Oh, *if it were only true!* And he saw that he and his boy would be separated by this desolate idealism. A new bitterness rocked the inward thought of his soul. We love our young. We would do anything to shelter them and protect them. But they are down here in this awful world, just as their parents are. We cannot really shelter them from life.

He moved on down the hall, only dimly aware that the last echo of his words to his boy were: "That's not true." And, yes, without the grace of God working unfrustrated, unhindered in a purified heart—without that: then it is *not* true in such a case. But the boy was cleansed by a work of marvelous grace. In him was a divine work, and the result was, "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*"^{Mt. 5:8} His eyes had been opened, and as he encountered the same things that stirred the unbelief and bitterness in his Dad, *his eyes saw God.* And yes, it was true. All things did work together for good to them that love God, and he *knew* this. Yea, "*For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*"^{1 Cor. 3:21-23}

Has there not come to you, dear reader, a whisper of hope—a pointing to a higher path—a way of life, the way of the consecrated, purified heart—the way of steadfast, unmoving faith in God?

I was attending a prayer meeting held for the promotion of scriptural holiness, when a strange lady rose to speak. I looked at her, wondering who she could be, little thinking she was to bring a message to my soul which would teach me such a grand lesson. She said she had had great difficulty in living the life of faith, on account of the second causes that seemed to her to control nearly everything that concerned her. Her perplexity became so great, that at last she began to ask God to teach her the truth about it, whether He really was in everything or not. After praying this for a few days, she had what she described as a vision. She thought she was in a perfectly dark place, and that there advanced towards her from a distance a

body of light, which gradually surrounded and enveloped her and everything around her. As it approached, a voice seemed to say, "This is the presence of God; this is the presence of God." While surrounded with this presence, all the great and awful things in life seemed to pass before her—fighting armies, wicked men, raging beasts, storms and pestilences, sin and suffering of every kind.

She shrank back at first in terror, but she soon saw that the presence of God so surrounded and enveloped each one of these, that not a lion could reach out its paw, nor a bullet fly through the air, except as His presence moved out of the way to permit it. And she saw that, let there be ever so thin a sheet, as it were, of this glorious presence between herself and the most terrible violence, not a hair of her head could be ruffled, nor anything touch her, unless the presence divided to let the evil through. Then all the small and annoying things of life passed before her, and equally she saw that these all were so enveloped in this presence of God that not a cross look, not a harsh word, nor petty trial of any kind, could reach her unless His presence moved out of the way to let them through.

Her difficulty vanished. Her question was answered forever. God was in everything; and to her henceforth there were no second causes. She saw that her life came to her day by day and hour by hour directly from His hand, let the agencies which should seem to control it be what they might. And never again had she found any difficulty in an abiding consent to His will and an unwavering trust in His care.

If we look at the seen things, we shall not be able to understand the secret of this. But the children of God are called to look, "*not at the things which are seen... for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*" Could we but see with our bodily eyes His unseen forces surrounding us on every side, we

would walk through this world in an impregnable fortress, which nothing could ever overthrow or penetrate, for "*the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.*"

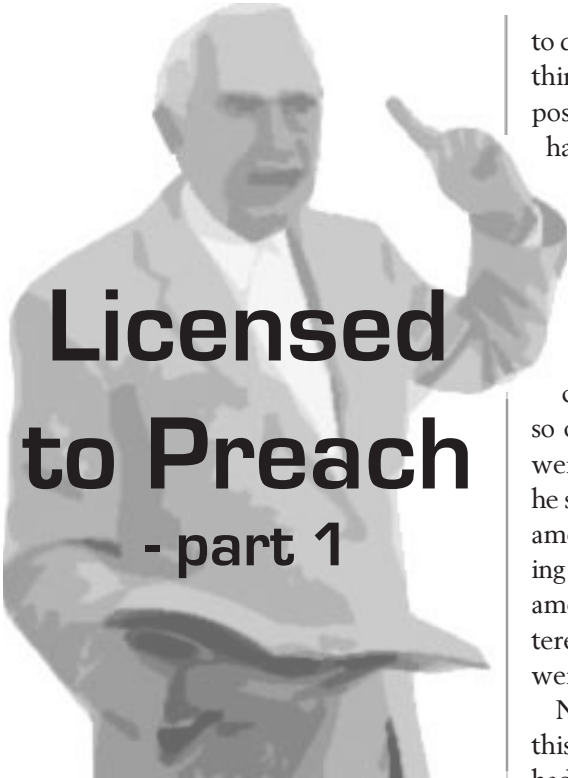
—H. W. Smith; *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*

Has there not come to you, dear reader, a whisper of hope—a pointing to a higher path—a way of life, the way of the consecrated, purified heart—the way of steadfast, unmoving faith in God? Do you not feel the Spirit of God tugging at your defiled heart, encouraging you to the blood for cleansing from a heart of unbelief? Will you not respond to the Comforter's promptings? Will you let Him lead you to and on the path of complete faith in God?

"*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God...*

"*Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest...*

"*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*"^{Heb. 3:12, 4:1-3, 9-11} ➤



Licensed to Preach

- part 1

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” Rev. 15:2-3

A brother remarked in Sunday School class that very few of God's children enjoyed the victory over the image of the beast, or over his mark, or over his name. This is unfortunately true.

A man and his wife had been backslidden, but had gotten back to God. In times past, they had lived and preached among a group of people who had considerable freedom in the Holy Spirit, and who, at the time that these two were reclaimed, still held a long tradition and custom of that liberty. In time, the man and his wife began to exercise themselves among the various congregations and in the various general meetings of these people. They did not need to seek permission from men to do this, as there was no formal recognition structure necessary to be allowed to preach and teach. But they were aware that they were being watched and evaluated by the current leaders of the group of people. In due time, a ministers' meeting was called

to question them, and they were given “the third degree.” All kinds of questions were posed, mostly to examine whether they had done something while they were in sin that would disqualify them from preaching. This was accomplished by sincere human effort; I am afraid that the Holy Ghost did not inspire much if any of it. There was not anything that would utterly block their acceptance, according to their testimony, so one of the “main ones,” of whom they were most apprehensive, finally said that he saw no reason why they could not work among them. At that point, the questioning stopped, and *they were licensed* to work among this people. In this way, they entered into *the unity* of these people and were accepted of them.

Now in all matters of *outward form*, this was exactly the same procedure that had been followed back in more spiritual times. But now the outlook of the ministry was subtly different. The ministry was nowhere near spiritual enough to have been “ordaining them all along,” so to speak. There was not the degree of discernment of how damaged they had been in sin, nor of how well recovered they were from where they had been. In the past, Holy Ghost men and women were enabled of God to deal with such cases, but this was no longer true of this body of ministry. Other things they were doing, other things they had permitted, and other things they had not permitted showed a cloudy and fuzzy grasp of practical, working truth. They were proceeding down the road to an accounting for their lack of spirituality; they had not the spiritual unity of the Bible. In many ways, their lives, ministries, and fruit were portrayed in Rom. 1:18, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*”

It is dangerous to hold the truth in unrighteousness; it is dangerous to try to carefully observe the form of godliness, but to deny the sweeping power of the gospel across the board. God will

not support you if you do. He will let your words fall to the ground; He will allow you to be confounded; He will leave you to your own devising and your own doings. God warns all that presume in this manner: “*Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.*” Isa. 50:11 It is a terrible thing to grieve God so that He largely ignores you and leaves you to yourself.

Was the Apostle Paul afraid that the saints would never accept him because he had persecuted the church of God? No. At first, there was excellent reason to suspect that he was less than sincere, because of his past (which was truly horrible), but he committed all that to God and obeyed God. “*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.*” Gal. 1:15-17 Note the absence of the fear of man. He knew his calling was of God, and he knew that all who were truly of God would receive what God was doing in him, even if they doubted it at first. *This is the correct and rightful attitude of a newly-called brother or sister.* If I am right before God, then He will adjust things between me and others in His church. Yea, “*A man's gift maketh room for him.*” Pro. 18:16 And thus it was with Brother Paul. The gift bestowed upon him by God made room for him among others of the Lord's children, regardless of the now-forgiven past.

But back to the candidates for licensing. They were questioned extensively, even embarrassingly. Probed. Cross-examined. Why? Did not fruit manifest itself? Is not God able to prove His own ministers

There is something about being in the order of God overall that takes a certain urgency out of the picture in this matter.

if we follow the steps He has given us? *“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.”*^{1 Tim. 5:22} There is something about being in the order of God overall that takes a certain urgency out of the picture in this matter. If the work has been built up as the Lord does it, there is a certain elasticity (from the knitting of the Holy Ghost, Col. 2:2,19) and strength in the individual experiences of each saved member of the congregation(s) that is nearly impossible to breach *as long as the Lord defends the sheep* (Psa. 127:1; Mt. 16:18). There is an understanding of how God allows His people to be tried and tested. *“Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”*^{Dan. 12:10} Those who are called

by God to the ministry understand this process, for they came up through it, too, and they know that **“all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose.”**^{Rom. 8:28} **The work is not built up through personal influence and the skill of men.** Therefore the holy can afford the wonderful luxury of trusting the Lord with each new development. They have no personal investment beyond what the Lord has commanded them to do. If the rich, young rulers reject the gospel and go away sorrowful, they let them go (howbeit with sorrow), because *God lets them go*. They understand that God shakes the church so that the things which cannot be shaken will remain (Heb. 12:27). And under these conditions, an ordination is nothing more or less than a ratifying of what God has already done. It is recognition, rather than authorization. In God’s church, His ordaining is simply recognized by the membership. God authorizes and endues; His children recognize and make room.

But if I haven’t done it God’s way, then I get worried—and I have reason to get worried. Now I am in charge. I have to get up early and stay up late. It is vain for me to exert myself in this way, for I am attempting to do God’s part (Psa. 127:1-2), but this is the way it goes if I am not trusting God to keep and build as only He can

do. This way of thinking shows itself as feeling “something *must* be done.” There is too much at stake (of my own doing in the name of God, not His doing) that is at risk if I let someone preach unless they meet my criteria. I cannot “let go and let God,” for I have an agenda of my own, namely, the holding together of a group of people

If living a saved and sanctified life, preaching truth with anointing and power, is not enough for a group of people to recognize and appreciate the living God within you, then why bow to the workings of men?

whether God wants them held together in that way or not. This puts an anxiety in my approach, rather than faith and confidence in God’s ability to manage His own work; and in reality, it is not His work since I have taken it into my own hands.

And this is what happened to the couple mentioned above. They “got their license” to preach among a certain people. If they were exercising themselves among a spiritual people, and they were spiritual people, then their gift from God would have made room. But the people they joined did not and do not have the victory spoken of in Rev. 15:2-4: **“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.”**

“We stand upon the sea of glass
That’s mingled with Jehovah’s fire;
Our robes are white, our feet as brass;
We stand upon the foe’s empire.

“We bow no more to gods of men;
We shout the victory o’er the beast,
Yea, o’er his mark and o’er his name;
We overcome through Jesus Christ.”

To have this victory is to be delivered from the fear of man. The fear of *all* men. It is to operate out of perfect love to God and trueness to Him. It is to have that independence which is most Christlike. Of

which the writer said, “Our dearest friend on earth must not be allowed to cause us to deviate one hair’s breadth from trueness to God.” This is very true, and is proven in the Bible. Paul was playing on his harp on the sea of glass when he reproved Peter publicly for not living up to light by avoiding eating with the uncircumcised brethren.

He could have easily thought, “Peter is much more established than I. He was around when I was persecuting the church, etc. It is not my place to reprove him.” But no! Brother Paul was utterly faithful to God, regardless of what others might think. *Utter faithfulness to God would have taken the fear out of the couple in the ministers’ meeting.* If living a saved and sanctified life, preaching truth with anointing and power, is not enough for a group of people to recognize and appreciate the living God within you, then why bow to the workings of men? Why come under a yoke that is not of God? Why give place to a rival to the love of God? When faced with similar circumstances, the wholly-sanctified, burned-out-for-God brethren said, *“Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”*^{Acts 4:19-20}

It is the contention of groups of those who would control what happens among them (rather than letting God control things), that an individual *must submit to the group*. To do otherwise, they contend, is evidence of an independent spirit. We agree that it is evidence of a spirit of independence *from them*. Only if it is a spirit of independence *from truth*, then it is wrong and should not be accepted.

It takes a high degree of spirituality, involving a great deal of faith and confidence in God, to “let go and let God.” It is much easier to say it than to do it. It is much easier to accept it as a doctrine than to carry it out as a practice. Yet it is the essential difference between Holy Spirit government and a government by much-trusted brethren. The two ways are very different ways. Those who follow Holy Spirit government have a very different attitude from those who follow the many ways of man-in-control.

I am thinking of a ministers' meeting that occurred perhaps seventy-something years ago. The meeting was called because a brother had become corrupted in a doctrine he taught and held. The minister who related the account to me had been a young minister in the gathering. He listened as the brethren reasoned and expounded truth to that brother. They weren't getting anywhere for a long time, then suddenly the brother said, "All right. I see that now." Immediately, all the brethren began making preparations to leave. They accepted what he said, and that was the end of it. But the young minister told me that he wasn't satisfied. He asked his mother, "No tears? No repentance?" And she replied, "Son, for that minister to say that, means more than for most people to weep and cry."

Now I marvel at the depths of spirituality that made it possible for those saints to work with God for the "ironing out of a wrinkle" in His church. The waiting on God, the forbearing in love and longsuffering, the meekly-holding-the-true-position-standing-firm, and the holy outcome all speak of a victory that is all too rare today. Surely the saints were playing the Song of Moses upon the transparent sea, mingled with Jehovah's fire. Nor did the brother who was off come under any other yoke than the yoke of pure love to God and His truth. He could still say *after* the meeting, "No earthly master do we know; to man-rule will not bow."

I am well aware that the proponents of human executive action will not find reproof in this incident. They will take the scriptures, such as Heb. 13:7,13,24, which speak of "*them that have the rule over you,*" and ignore 1 Peter 5:5, which states, "*Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*" These scriptures come together in one mighty truth: *We are all subject to truth. We are all subject to our supreme Ruler, the Holy Ghost.* We can avoid usurping the place of the Holy Spirit with each other by staying in our place in the body where He has assigned us. Then we look to God to do what is needed after we have done just what He commissioned us to do. If the incident quoted above, the brethren

did not back off dealing with the brother about the truth. Nor did they condemn him and set him down, for the Holy Spirit opened to their eyes the fact that he was honest and sincere. When he did see the truth, they left everything in God's capable hands, having done what He commanded them to do, and returned to the different burdens He had given to each. In this way, they trusted God with His work.

This is important enough to spend further time with it. Let us suppose that the brother *had not* been sincere. Let us suppose that he had attempted to accommodate the brethren, so as to "fit" among them. What might have happened then? Herein is manifest the difference between people directed by the Holy Spirit and those who are directed by something else. If the Spirit of God said, "Wait and let it prove out itself some more," then so would those brethren have done. If the Spirit of God said, "Do not receive this," then they would not have received it, and future developments would have proved out that something else was there than a pure love for God and truth.

But in any case, the Bible principle of loyalty to God and truth above anything else would have been borne out. For the tempered mortar that holds the lively stones of the church of God together also holds them apart. God never meant for the members of the body to affirm allegiance to each other with Him not in between them. He meant for the members to each individually love Him perfectly, with each other *perfectly committed to God.* Therefore, the unity of the church of God is *only through God.* It is not member-to-member directly. It is member-to-member through the Head. It is to know no earthly master. It is to know a heavenly Master. It is God in and through each holy brother. It is God, all in all. "*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see GOD.*" Mt. 5:8

The fear of man exposes the thing for what it is: a transaction of men to men. Victory over the fear of man is one of the hallmarks of spiritual government. This snare, the fear of men, is replaced by an extreme carefulness to know and do the will of God.

To enter into an affinity with a group of people is to acquire their number and

their name. Then you are accepted and can buy and sell in that place. But this will not work in the Kingdom of Heaven. It may look the same for a while. It looked as if Simon had really been converted in Acts 8. He was baptized. But then another fruit manifested itself. He was reprov'd, even asked for prayer to escape the consequences of his condition. But among the New Testament saints, there was only the name of Jesus. No number. Just truth. It's either all out for Jesus and truth, or nothing. God has either fixed you so you are in, or you are out. Saints on the sea of glass wait on God to see which it is. They won't get off the clearness, mingled with heavenly fire, to reason with you. They just keep playing those harps. They just keep holding and preaching the truth. They are not afraid.

When a sister who was teaching in a certain congregation thought she had sufficient influence to intimidate the pastor to follow the path of teaching that she wished to pursue, she offered to resign, reasoning that he could not afford to let her resign and risk the disapproval of men. He looked her in the eye and said, "I accept your resignation." Thus he stayed on the sea of glass with the purifying flames of sanctifying love burning in his heart. It didn't matter what it cost in attendance. He committed it all to the Head. It wasn't the preacher's work. It was God's. Hallelujah! "*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*" Mk. 12:30 Yea, "*perfect love casteth out fear.*" 1 Jn. 4:18 How glorious to be delivered from fear! "*So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*" Heb. 13:6

"Let scoffers scoff, let scorners sneer,
My heart is full of peace;
They cannot take the joy I feel,
Nor make my hope to cease.

"They cannot quench the fire of love
That burns within my breast,
Nor break that tender fellowship
That makes my life so blest."

"They cannot bring again the sins
The blood has washed away,
Nor make my heart like stone once more,
Nor turn to night my day."

If a given group doesn't accept me, and I am straight and clear before God, then He will have something else for me to do elsewhere in His vineyard. Oh, the blessedness of being saved, of being really clear before God! It means more than anything. Men did not save me, nor can they. Men have no heaven for me to go to. I have found something that is beyond price, and I have paid all to be in fellowship with God. Hallelujah! One man with God is a majority. I would rather be right with God and in His order than to have the approval of anything else. There is neither number nor name that can tempt me away from Him. Yea, He is one among a thousand. He is the Chief. To Thee, O Lord, be power and dominion, forever and ever. Amen.

The Evolvement of Man-rule

The realities of living in a cold world of iniquity with an active 24/7 adversary who never needs to slumber or sleep is constantly before the children of God. As the poet put it,

"My soul, be on thy guard;
Ten thousand foes arise,
And hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies."

This is not an exaggerated picture. There are indeed ten thousand foes from hell of all types and kinds, to say nothing of the many sinking sands of human nature and the "I think" spirit. Were the godly not kept by Him who never fails to see a single development of the enemy, we would not have any chance at all, but the Lord knows how to keep us and preserve us from the world even while we live in the world. Praise His name! He has made a way through. He has been guiding and shielding saints for centuries along the path of holiness, and He will get us to glory, too, if we will let Him.

There is a way that seems right to a man—even the path of attempting to hold

the truth by the efforts of human discipline, self-will, and human intelligence and watchfulness. This is the path into which many children of God are seduced, particularly those who are strong-minded and strong-willed. Perhaps we could describe it as "doing my best for God," instead of a death-to-self stand of "Without Him, I can do *nothing*." However we attempt to describe it, it will cause us to take the work of God into our own hands in the name of doing our best to please Him. Instead of Christ triumphing *in us*, it becomes us triumphing *for* Christ; and there is

a world of difference in the two ways.

There are many different aspects of living for God that could be discussed profitably from this standpoint of *for* Christ instead of Christ-triumphing-in-me. But we want to talk about *the need of recognition*, or to put it another way: whom do I receive; whom do I hear and accept?

This question is before any child of God (and any group of Christians) all the time. The weight of it is addressed by our Lord when He said, "*Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.*" ^{Lk. 8:18} In the book of Mark, this statement is rendered, "*Take heed what ye hear.*" ^{Mk. 4:24} Since any child of God walks with God on a *voluntary basis* at all times, it is possible for any man or woman of God to choose to change and not walk with God as perhaps they have done hitherto. In addition to this possibility, a child of God may come under an influence that temporarily blinds or hinders them. Under such a disadvantage, they may be as Brother Peter, of whom it was said, "*he wist not what to say.*" ^{Mk. 9:6} **We can trust the Lord within us all the time, but all flesh (including our own) is vanity, and there is only one frame that we can explicitly trust all the time, and that is Jesus.** This way of no-confidence-in-the-flesh and all-

confidence-in-God will prove out all the time, but it is possible to be seduced by thinking of each other more highly than is written (1 Cor. 4:6).

It is a higher-than-written confidence to think that all the ministers together cannot make a mistake, or to think that so-and-so, who has been used of God in the past, is worthy of unquestioning confidence. Our Lord never makes a mistake, has never had to "scratch His head," and never needs to experiment or learn from experience. The government of His church is upon His shoulders for a reason. None of the most devout and pious of the finest of His people is anywhere close to being qualified for that responsibility, nor shall they ever be, in this life or out of it.

But the reverence and respect that should be offered only to God is frequently and commonly offered to a minister or a body of ministers. There is something about offering it or receiving it that is blinding. It seems *deserved*. It seems *meritable*. It seems that it is only recognizing a reality. But it inevitably leads to men looking to men, instead of men looking to God.

It appears that the fear of God is upon them. They pray as if they are looking exclusively to God. But there is a subtle thing planted, and it is at work. "How do the others feel?" "I certainly don't want to develop an independent spirit." And some are regarded as more spiritual than others.

"I don't get it," you say. "Some *do* live closer to God. Some *are* more used of God than others." Perhaps you would contend that the Bible teaches this. You might say that Peter, James, and John were an "inner circle." You might believe that Paul was regarded (properly) as more gifted than others, therefore he should be given more weight, although this is balanced by his past history, etc. And perhaps you might be thinking that if you had lived back then, you would think, "Ah! Brother Paul is speaking." And you would give more weight to his words than, say, to Brother Cephas or some other brother or sister whom the Bible does not even name out for us. *But the Bible record itself does not show that kind of partiality.* The brethren of the New Testament do not display that kind of thinking. Indeed, in 1 Corinthians,

There is a way that seems right to a man - even the path of attempting to hold the truth by the efforts of human discipline, self-will, and human intelligence and watchfulness.

It took then and it takes now a death to self and an absolute abandonment to God, without the slightest compromise in that abandonment, to lay hold on “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 1:3

Paul makes a very clear case that it is the result of carnality. James does the same in his book, calling it double-mindedness. And Peter tells us, “*Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility.*” ^{1 Pet. 5:5}

When we look at the history of Christianity throughout the centuries, particularly the detailed and voluminous records of the holiness Protestant sects, we are absolutely amazed at the human church governments that were erected in the name of the Lord to provide order and structure. The purity, consecration, the blessing from above, and the holy devoutness of many of these brethren is beyond question. To read their writings now is inspirational. They had something from God, beyond question, and it is high arrogance and wicked foolishness to be so prejudiced against them as to glibly assume that they just didn’t have light back then, but we do now. Such an attitude is full of pride and silly assumptions. They had a lot of light—hard-won light—and they lived to it. Just a little research into the lives of such men as John and Charles Wesley, Elmer Shelhammer, Rob French, and Beverly Carradine would serve to uproot and send tumbling such shallow prejudice. A careful reading of Sister Cowman’s books, such as *Streams in the Desert*, volumes 1 and 2, and *Springs in the Valley*, will reveal many quotes from writers all down the centuries of Christianity which are full of Holy Ghost insight. These are precious treasures and very helpful to holy living, although—it must added—there are traces of man-fear, a lack of vision of God’s church in certain respects, and other false doctrines that persistently show themselves in places.

And with all that, the much good and a little of the bad, they found themselves hopelessly divided from each other, and while desiring fervently to all be one in Christ Jesus and acknowledging it was a

reproach that they were not, they were unable to break down the walls of partition between them. Furthermore, some of them were around when division walls began to fall and the full implications of being all the Lord’s began to come to the fore. Shelhammer rejected the light of the Evening Light Reformation of 1880 and did not feel that men could live spiritual enough to all be one in Christ Jesus; he feared that calling people out of all the groups would only form another group.

It took then *and it takes now* a death to self and an absolute abandonment to God, without the slightest compromise in that abandonment, to lay hold on “*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*” ^{Jude 1:3} I want to say again, **it has always been like this, and it is still like this.** And to get less than this is to buy into an illusion—the delusion that comes from not loving God and His truth with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (2 Th. 2:10-12).

But if you are an apologist for the Methodist Church or some other work of men’s hands, you would surely say to me: “But brother, how can such holy men—such consecrated men—miss the will of God by forming a church government which is not scriptural or right?”

And I would reply, “It was not deliberate. It was not rebellion. If it had, then God would not have blessed them the way they were blessed—He would have left them entirely to their own devices.”

“Well, what was it then?”

Answer: God blesses us as much as we let Him bless us. If we take a certain stand toward a certain area in our life that is not sound in the eyes of the Holy Ghost, He will strive with us and deal with us in that still, small voice that must be listened for carefully to hear what is said. But if we override all checks without outright rebellion and ignore inconvenient reproof, He will stop bothering us about our chosen

pathway most of the time, while still blessing us as much as is possible in what we have kept that is holy and sound. Then is brought to pass the saying that is written, “*Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see*

that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.” ^{Jer. 2:19}

God did not stop Abraham from having a baby with Hagar; He did not say, “If you do this, I will no longer bless you,” but in the end, the child of bondage had to be rejected. And thus it is with God. He is too good and merciful to totally withdraw unless we totally withdraw; He blesses each of us all that He can. With the froward, He shows Himself unsavoury, while with the pure, He shows Himself pure (2 Sam. 22:27). Behold the fairness and equitableness of the Almighty!

As it always is with each step taken away from God, there is a lack of peace and a diminishing of the prior blessing that is a warning of God’s disapproval. If we have our eyes firmly fixed on God’s approval or disapproval, if we are listening carefully for the quiet prompting of the Holy Ghost, we will be warned; we will be helped. If we are looking to man too much, whether by inward temperament or under the influence of current events, we will be corrected—the Spirit of God will continue to lead us into all truth. But if we become dull of hearing, this process will not work as it should.

But how can a people who have known great spiritual liberty and freedom lose all that? Will not the doctrine save them? Will they not say, “Something has happened to us. We have not the freedom that we had before. What has happened to our blessing?” Answer: Yes, the doctrine is one of the checks that has the potential to wake people up, *but* if the people have accepted a little looking-to-man and justified that, then any return to the full blessing means denying and forsaking the looking-to-man. In other words, any steps away from God must be retraced to return to God, and that retracing, as Sister Katherine Helm de-

scribes it in *The Lure of Divine Love*, is a *via dolorosa* (way of grief). The path back is hard on the flesh, whereas the path away seems easier and more expedient to the flesh.

People have the ability to take a Bible doctrine itself and claim it as an identifying characteristic of their group, thus wrongly appropriating the doctrine from its proper place in the church of Jesus.

The writer has before him a copy of *Perfect Love*, a book published in 1902 about entire sanctification by J. A. Wood, a member of the Methodist Church. There is much good expounding of the scriptures in the book, but it is so mixed and intermingled with quotations from various Methodist writers and speakers that one can scarcely digest the subject without building one's faith on the writers and speakers, rather than just on the Word of God.

The writer scarcely seems to conceive of the subject outside of the Methodist organization, yet the experience of entire sanctification has been made available by the blood of Jesus (shed to open the second veil, Heb. 10:19-20) to uncounted millions

before the time of Methodism. But the writer is so filled with the spirit of the group that its influence is woven throughout the entire book. Such is a false representation of the subject, for Methodism has no monopoly on the heart experience which Jesus administers as people meet the conditions. Methodism falsely claims the doctrine as its property, but Jesus is the true Author and Finisher.

The Imitators, the Copycats

"Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents." Exo. 7:10-12

When a people take things into their own hands and began to act and do as seems best to them, it is a common thing that they seek to imitate what went before. And sometimes this imitation is remarkable, at other times it is only a crude copy. By any measure of appearance, the efforts of Pharaoh's magicians did something quite remarkable—quite astonishing. *"For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents."*

When men invent ingenious things, a sensation is created, and many wonder at the cunningness, the insight, the persistence, and the incredible convergence of time and place that produced such things. But there is always this possibility: if a man produced it, another man can do something equally amazing, or even exceed the first. Nor is this confined to the things of men, for there are certain possibilities

available to men to imitate the work of God, and nowhere is this more true than within the possibilities in religion.

Men mimic the work of God, but it does not turn out the same. Men mimic vegetation with artificial plants, and the resemblance may be so uncanny that it is

hard to tell the difference from certain perspectives. Men reproduce figures of men, faces of men, with such detail and so skillfully that the artificial may even seem more realistic than the original, especially under certain influences, lighting, etc. And men can replicate a Christian experience with a nearly flawless moral life, right down to dedication and sacrifice... and yet, there is something missing.

But what does this all mean with respect to our topic—the government of God's church and how His ministers are licensed and authorized?

In the next issue, we will discuss the Bible picture we have of the calling and ordination of New Testament ministers, and the imitation of that calling and ordination.

—to be continued ➡

Rods That Fail

"He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity, and the rod of his anger shall fail." Pro. 22:8

When you sow iniquity and you give yourself to things that are wrong, they not only cause trouble, there's also an emptiness in them, a profitlessness, because deep down, we know we were made to do right. But it's not only that you are sowing the direct effects of what you are doing, you are sowing habits. I remember different people when I was young who were somewhat stirred spiritually, but didn't really want to pay the price. They had their ideas of the excitement and the joys and the adventures and the plans they wanted in their lives. They kind of thought in this way: "I have a life ahead—when I get older I'll turn to God. I'll have a good time now; I'll turn to religion later." Well, besides the fact that we don't know when we are going to die, there is something else at work—you sow a habit of procrastinating, of putting off God's dealings with you, and that habit bears fruit. It grows deeper, it grows stronger, and there are few people in old age who turn to God. It's not because God's not willing, it's not because God's mercy is not reaching to the uttermost, it is because few people who have gone that far, putting off the dealings of God, are going to press hard enough to overcome the habit, and really humble down and get right with God.

It says, *"the rod of his anger shall fail."* There are people I know who are reaping their own bitterness and their own wickedness, their own ways of not trusting God. Some of them whom I know and am acquainted with get frustrated and mad. They say and think things like "the world's not treating me right"; "people aren't fair to me"; "people are mean to me." And they have this angry frustration, the "rod of their anger," so to speak. But you know what? All their angry frustration at what they are reaping, won't stop the reaping. The rod of their anger will fail. If you sow iniquity, the only way to stop reaping iniquity is to stop sowing iniquity.

—from a message on sowing and reaping

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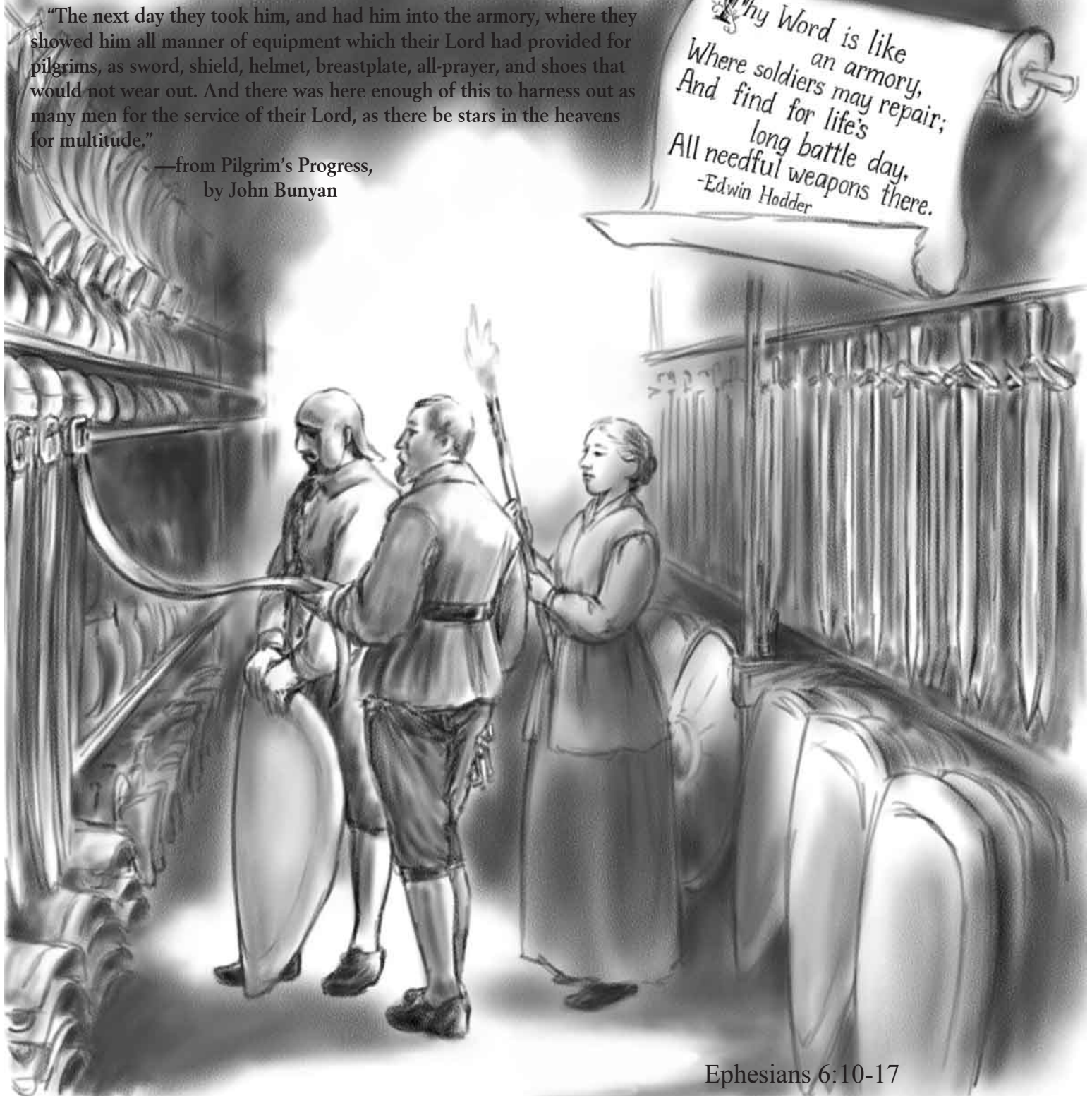
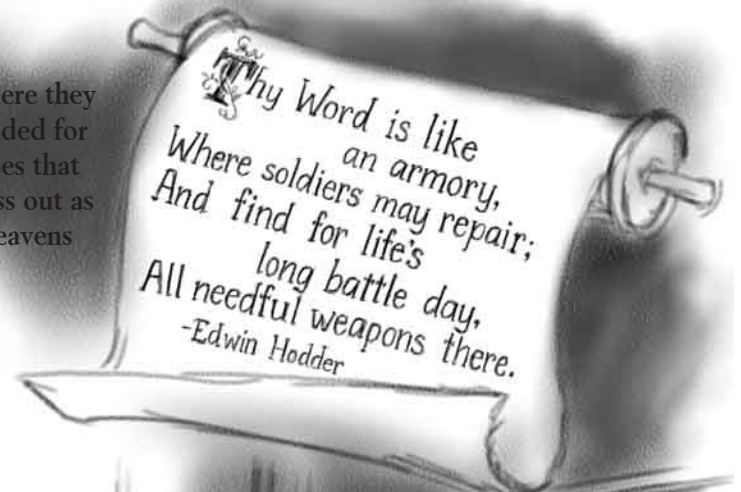
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"The next day they took him, and had him into the armory, where they showed him all manner of equipment which their Lord had provided for pilgrims, as sword, shield, helmet, breastplate, all-prayer, and shoes that would not wear out. And there was here enough of this to harness out as many men for the service of their Lord, as there be stars in the heavens for multitude."

—from *Pilgrim's Progress*,
by John Bunyan



Ephesians 6:10-17