

FOUNDATION TRUTH

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Dear Reader

“For God’s [holy] wrath and indignation are revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who in their wickedness repress and hinder the truth and make it inoperative. For that which is known about God is evident to them and made plain in their inner consciousness, because God [Himself] has shown it to them. For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity, have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made (His handiworks). So [men] are without excuse [altogether without any defense or justification], Because when they knew and recognized Him as God, they did not honor and glorify Him as God or give Him thanks. But instead they became futile and godless in their thinking [with vain imaginings, foolish reasoning, and stupid speculations] and their senseless minds were darkened.”

Rom 1:18-21 (Amplified Bible)

“With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.” Psa 18:25-26

In the “Word of Truth” section, we have continued from the last issue some discussion of God’s judgments. Recently I have had experiences among some who charge God with unfairness—either directly, by their words, or indirectly, by the way they justify their course in life. This is true even among those who profess to be followers of Jesus. It has been common in our recent generations to evaluate people’s actions in a significant measure by their background, conditioning, the advantages or disadvantages which were theirs in growing up, etc. This has been a reaction, in part, to the tendency, in earlier generations, to not make any allowances for environment and conditioning in evaluating people’s actions. The earlier generations were excessive in one direction, and ours is excessive in another. But all through time, in every generation, the Lord has made precisely the correct amount of allowance for these things in the life of every individual or group of people, and has judged completely fairly.

The very ability of people to find God “froward” (willfully contrary, not easily managed) when they are froward makes it possible for people to choose for themselves whether they will turn to God or not. If it were impossible to make any choices without a constant, clear revelation to our hearts of what is right and true, our ability to voluntarily choose the right would be severely restricted. If it were immediately and completely apparent that every choice were either right and led to happiness or wrong and led to sorrow, without any effort or desire on our part to find out whether it is right or wrong, then serving God would be completely in our self-interest, and not involve a real moral choice for us.

But consider the room God gives to us to choose our direction—to the people of Ninevah (Jonah 3), God only said that he would destroy them within 40 days. It is said of them that they “believed God.” vs. 5 But their “believing” involved a decision greater than accepting the truth of the preacher’s statement. They decided to pursue a relationship of peace with a (justifiably) angry God. They sought to turn their direction to living right, seeking mercy and help from God. To anyone who really repents in their spirit, who really wants to stop doing wrong and doing right, the possibility of acceptance with God is revealed to their hearts, as they of Ninevah testified: “Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?” vs. 9 They neither took the attitude that God had to change His mind, because they were repenting, nor the attitude that it was hopeless to try to change. In the language of the scripture in Romans, they did “honor and glorify Him as God.”

Let’s honor and glorify God as 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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edited by Rick Erickson and others

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When the day that dawned so sweetly with such buoyant beams of hope
Has been shattered so completely that it seems I cannot cope;
When the fog keeps getting thicker, and depression lurks about;
When the sick keep getting sicker, and I meet with Giant Doubt;
When the gathering clouds above me threaten things that shake the soul;
When the thought comes, "Does God love me? Is He really in control?"—

Then I flee alone to Jesus to secure me in the storm,
For it's He alone who sees us through the wildest winds of harm:
Though the sunlight may have vanished, and the waves are what I feared,
At His word the waves are banished, at His word the clouds are cleared;
So I'll trust His word completely, leaving no more room for doubt,
And be resting in Him sweetly while His will is brought about.

For the winds must do His bidding, and the plow is in His hands,
And so many things are fitting, sight unseen, into His plans...
May I then see every trial as a servant sent to me:
May I maximize that mile—or however long it be—
Till the tilling is concluded, and the harrowing is done—
When the weeds have been uprooted, heaven's seeds will see the sun.

Ah, the Father is not willing to afflict us all in vain,
Though the lesson He's instilling must be hammered home in pain;
But the blows that seemed the sorest were but those that shaped the stone,
And the strokes that felled the forest cleared the site to set His throne.
So I've come to treasure dearly every blessing from the rod,
And my trials are, quite clearly, but the stepping stones to God.

Stepping
Stones to God

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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

Editor's Note: In the previous issue of Foundation Truth (#27), an article in "The Word of Truth" section addressed the judgments of God. After the issue was printed and mailed, some discussion occurred about the particular interpretation of the parable of the wheat and tares (Mt. 13) which was given prominence in the article. We have recorded here some of the discussion that followed, as a fuller treatment seems needful to rightly handle the Word of Truth.

The Judgments of God

Brother "A":

An article in the "Word of Truth" column addressed the judgments of God, particularly noting the operation of His judgments that are preliminary to the final judgment of all men. A quotation was made from *Bible Readings for Bible Students* (compiled by S. L. Speck and H. M. Riggle), which interpreted the parable of the tares among the wheat. The interpretation applied the meaning of the parable both to return of Christ, and also to the judgment of sectism occurring in the reformation of church government and unity back to Scriptural purity.

I am concerned that the position taken gives undue prominence to the judgment of sectism, when the primary burden of the parable involves the forbearance and longsuffering embodied by Jesus' statement in Luke 9:56: "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Surely God has great depths of wisdom and understanding stored in His Word, and His preliminary judgments cannot be denied, but we open ourselves to dangerous imbalance if His Word is not rightly divided in us. The parable in question applies most completely to the final judgment, and it only lends partial weight to any preliminary judgment. Therefore to endeavor to apply

it most forcefully to a specific preliminary judgment raises a red flag.

To give some context, *Bible Readings* was published in 1902, scarcely 20 years after light on the church of God was once again being revealed in a prominent way. Many brethren felt that the return of Christ was imminent, even within their lifetimes, and that God would be no longer working in sectism, hence the statement in the book: "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" (emphasis added). In all fairness, they were probably so consumed with a desire to reveal the error of sectism and the truth of the pure church that they "found" support in the Bible wherever they looked. It is characteristic of us as humans to find patterns and extract meaning that fits our frame of mind.

It is still possible for an honest heart to receive blessing from workmanship which was faulty in dividing the Word, as long as the fruit is in harmony with "all the counsel of God." ACTS 20:27 The blessing comes, not because God plays linguistic games with His Word, but because His Spirit works beyond the limitations of human language and will if need be bypass the mind to reach the heart.

So why bring up this issue? Most particularly because of the fruit manifested in the lives of the authors of *Bible Readings*. They and many other brethren succumbed to compromising holiness, while being convinced that they were rightly dividing the Word. And why not we as well? Only through a constant renewal of humbly acknowledging our human limitations and utterly depending on the Spirit of Truth to teach us. For He alone can keep us in balance when we drift to the right or left.

Brother "B":

All of the judgments of God, both preliminary and final, follow the same pattern. There is something wrong that calls for judgment, and much patience and longsuffering have been manifested by the Almighty to give opportunity for the parties involved to consider, to repent and forsake. But the sin has not been forsaken, and divine justice knows (and knows perfectly) when the time has come for judgment.

"The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Psa 19:9-11

Some of these judgments of God are subtle and very likely not to be perceived by men, while others are astonishing and sensational. When King Saul was brought into judgment by God for his usurping the place of one of God's high priests by offering the sacrifice because Samuel had not come (1 Sam. 13:1-14), the immediate effect was not apparent. Here is the judgment: "Now thy kingdom shall not continue." But it proved to be a long time before the judgment entirely came true.

John Bunyan, in *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, speaking of Mr. Badman when he was a youth, relates:

WISEMAN. Why then, I will tell you, that he [Mr. Badman] had not been with his master much above a year and a half, but he came acquainted with three young villains, who here shall be nameless, that taught him to add to his sin much of like kind, and he as aptly received their instructions. One of them was chiefly given to uncleanness, another to drunkenness, and the third to purloining, or stealing from his master.

ATTENTIVE. Alas! poor wretch, he was bad enough before, but these, I suppose, made him much worse.

WISE. That they made him worse you may be sure of, for they taught him to be an arch, a chief one in all their ways.

ATTEN. It was an ill hap that he ever came acquainted with them.

WISE. You must rather word it thus—it was the judgment of God that he did, that is, he came acquainted with them through the anger of God. He had a good master, and before him a good father, by these he had good counsel given him for months and years together, but his heart was set upon mischief, he loved wickedness more than to do good, even until his iniquity came to be hateful, therefore, from the anger of God it was that these companions of his and he did at last acquaint together. Says Paul, *“They did not like to retain God in their knowledge”*; and what follows? wherefore *“God gave them over,”* or up to their own hearts’ lusts (Rom. 1: 28). And again, *“As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.”* Psa 125:5 This therefore was God’s hand upon him, that he might be destroyed, be damned, *“because he received not the love of the truth that he might be saved.”* 2 Th 2:10 He chose his delusions and deluders for him, even the company of base men, of fools, that he might be destroyed (Pro. 12:20).

ATTEN. I cannot but think indeed that it is a great judgment of God for a man to be given up to the company of vile men; for what are such but the devil’s decoys, even those by whom he draws the simple into his net? A whoremaster, a drunkard, a thief, what are they but the devil’s baits by which he catcheth others?

WISE. You say right; but this young Badman was no simple one, if by simple you mean one uninstructed; for he had often good counsel given him; but, if by simple you mean him that is a fool as to the true knowledge of, and faith in Christ, then he was a simple one indeed; for he chose death rather than life, and to live in continual opposition to God, rather than to be reconciled unto him; according to that saying of the wise man, *“The fools hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.”* Pro 1:29

And what judgment more dreadful can a fool be given up to, than to be delivered into the hands of such men, that have skill to do nothing but to ripen sin, and hasten its finishing unto damnation?

And, therefore, men should be afraid of offending God, because he can in this manner punish them for their sins. I knew a man that once was, as I thought, hopefully awakened about his condition; yea, I knew two that were so awakened, but in time they began to draw back, and to incline again to their lusts; wherefore, God gave them up to the company of three or four men, that in less than three years’ time, brought them roundly to the gallows, where they were hanged like dogs, because they refused to live like honest men.

ATTEN. But such men do not believe that thus to be given up of God is in judgment and anger; they rather take it to be their liberty, and do count it their happiness; they are glad that their cord is loosed, and that the reins are on their neck; they are glad that they may sin without control, and that they may choose such company as can make them more expert in an evil way.

*One of His judgments
is when He leaves a
person or a people to
their own devices.*

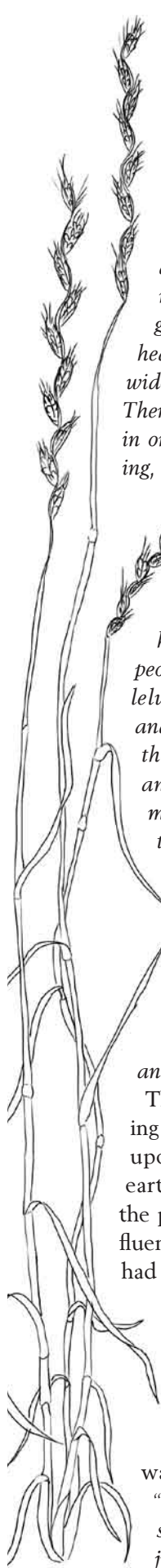
WISE. Their judgment is, therefore, so much the greater, because thereto is added blindness of mind, and hardness of heart in a wicked way. They are turned up to the way of death, but must not see to what place they are going. They must go as the ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strike through his liver, not knowing *“that it is for his life.”* Pro 7:22-23 This, I say, makes their judgments double; they are given up of God for a while, to sport themselves with that which will assuredly make them *“mourn at the last, when their flesh and their body are consumed.”* Pro 5:11 These are those that Peter speaks, that shall utterly perish in their own corruptions; these, I say, who *“count it pleasure to riot in the day-time,”* and that sport *“themselves with their own deceivings,”* are *“as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed.”* 2 Pet. 2:12-13

The judgments of God occur even though people perceive them not. One of His judgments is when He leaves a person or a people to their own devices. *“They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from*

them... I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.” Hos 5:6,15 *“Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”* Jer 32:19 A great deal that happens among men are the judgments of God, yet it is not perceived as judgment, or even regarded with the fear of God and respect for the Almighty that would be appropriate.

These things are just as true of the judgments of God against sectism as they are of any other of His judgments. According to the Bible, *“Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD’S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.”* Jer 51:7 This scripture refers directly to literal Babylon, that empire first headed by Nebuchadnezzar, which was used of God to work His judgments upon other nation—even to the point of enslaving the people of God and taking them captive. The same passage and many others also refer to the New Testament captivity of God’s people in the organizations of men—known as spiritual Babylon. God allowed Israel after the flesh to be captured by literal Babylon because of their idolatry, and He allowed Israel after the spirit to be captured by spiritual Babylon because of their idolatry. Yet He also decreed judgment upon literal Babylon (see Jer. 52:9) and He also decreed judgment upon spiritual Babylon.

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have



reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.” Rev 18:1-8

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.” Rev 19:1-3

The smoke of the discrediting of Babylon is still rising upon the battlefield of this earth. To examine carefully the position of respect and influence that false Christianity had in the world before the Reformation of 1880 and to compare it with the current state of things is to study the judgment of God against Babylon. She is but a shell of what she was formerly. She has been “utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.”

The saints of that time of human history were very conscious of their role in the then-current judgment of false religion. Their red-hot convictions are necessary to assault the fortresses of our day. They saw that the time of mingling of the tares and wheat, the growing together, had come to the time of separation. The poet put the words of the Bible in this way:

“Long with a scornful wonder
Men saw her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed.
Yet saints their watch were keeping
To hail a brighter day,
When God should stop their weeping,
Take their reproach away.

“The evening sun is shining,
The cloudy day is past;
The time of their repining
Is at an end at last.
The voice of God is calling
To unity again;
Division walls are falling,
With all the creeds of men.”

And it is true that many of the saints of that day thought that the blessing and glory of that day would proceed on forever to the end of time. To put this in context with Matthew 13, they thought that the preliminary judgment of separating the wheat and tares would be the final judgment, and that wheat and tares would never grow together again. But just as in the expectations of the saints who lived back when the New Testament scriptures were written, so it has proven of the evening light saints: “The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.” Isa 63:18 With Gideon of old, with his thinking about the previous glory of God upon Israel, as he threshed a little wheat to hide it from the oppressor, we are compelled to say of the miracles and glory of the past days of God’s church, “Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the

LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” Jdg 6:13 Oh, let us listen to the angel: “The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.” vs 12 Yea, “Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?” vs 14

It is true that the tares and the wheat were separated, the wheat gathered into Father’s barn, and the tares burned in the sight of God. This happened even while those who rejected the “come out of her, My people” message of the Bible continued to advocate attempting to be all the Lord’s while still submitting to the sectarian yoke. And then that generation which briefly rediscovered the glory of God’s church largely passed away, and most of those who followed were tempted and succumbed to the siren song of building a “new” idol. In short order, wheat and tares began to grow together again, and the Almighty has judgment on the agenda, just as surely as He did before. For while the battle between right and wrong surges back and forth over the field of the earth until confusion envelopes the minds of men, right is still right, and wrong is still wrong.

Many, attempting to make sense of the picture by looking upon the human beings involved and not keeping their eyes upon God, suffer the same effects in their vision and understanding as men have always experienced in all the ages of time. For if we look upon Israel from the promises to all of Abraham’s offspring from a human standpoint, the entire thing seems to disintegrate into pitifulness—from Saul down to Ahab and beyond. The divided kingdom. The captivity. The silent years after Malachi. The reception of Him who

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But since the church is not man's invention in any sense, and he cannot keep the door, it cannot be affirmed truthfully that there is a single unregenerate person in it.

came unto His own, but they received Him not. The establishing of the canon of the scriptures, both Old Testament and New. The blasphemy of the long, long Catholic dominance. The looking at the work of God from a human standpoint will make you long for a literal kingdom of God upon earth—for something that satisfies the human desire to see something other than “*the things which are not seen.*” ^{2 Cor. 4:18}

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” ^{Heb 10:38-39}

Yes, as you have said, “It is characteristic of us as humans to find patterns and extract meaning that fits our frame of mind.” But God has something better than that for us. He is higher than us, and His thoughts are higher than ours. What a blessing—what a consolation! To look at the things which are unseen by the natural eye.

“Onward moves the great Eternal
In the order of His plan;
Louder, nearer rolls the thunder
Of His awful word to man.

“Yet the world is wrapped in slumber,
Louder raise the trumpet's blast;
Oh, in mercy let it thunder
Ere the day of mercy's past.

“In the cages of deception
Souls are pining to be free;
Quickly sound the proclamation
Of the glorious jubilee.

“Louder, louder, hallelujah!
See the glorious fountain flow;
From the midst of heav'n proclaim it;
Oh, it makes me white as snow.”

Editor's Note: we have included another exposition of the Parable of the Tares below, which we find helps to clarify the distinction between the true Church of God and sectism, and gives a clearer context of the previous discussion.

Parable of the Tares

Matthew 13:24-30, 39-43

This beautiful parable has been the foundation of many discourses upon the spiritual nature and organic function of the church. The stress, however, is

usually put upon the following prohibitory words: “*Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But He said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.*” ^{vs 28-30}

Early in the apostasy of the church, the Donatists, as they were called, separated from what had once been the true Christian Church and from what is now the Roman Catholic Church. Between these and Augustine arose a controversy upon the words quoted above, and some others.

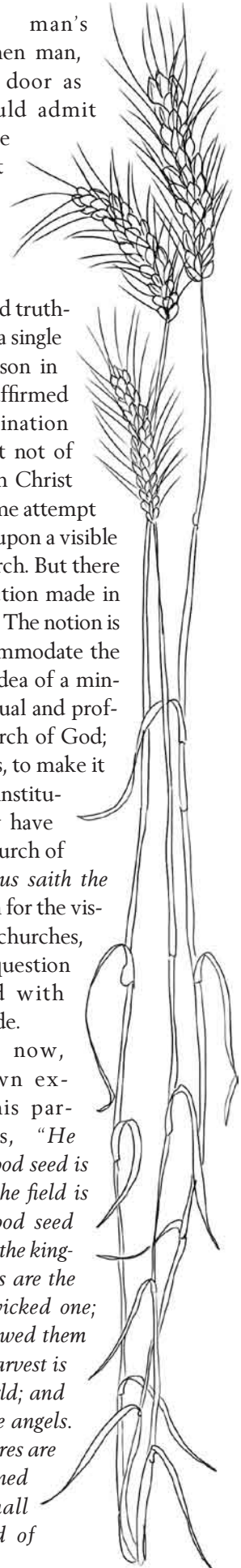
The Donatists contended for the purity of the church over against the encroachments of the unsaved and profligate; that in it, in fact, there were none but real Christians. Augustine affirmed that those who have outward marks of belonging to it are in it, but not of it. He assumed that there were certain outward conditions to be met in order to belong to the church, and yet not everyone who met these conditions were of it although they were in it—an argument singular enough, and yet the doctrine of which has been perpetuated from then till now. In Catholicism we see it gone to seed, and in Protestantism we see it about as nearly so.

Hence upon this parable it is assumed that in the church there are both real Christians and the deceived, hypocritical, and profligate; that these must remain together in the church through all time, and that any attempt to separate the evil would destroy the good.

This view might be true if the

church were man's invention, for then man, standing at the door as its keeper, would admit all sorts. But since the church is not man's invention in any sense, and he cannot keep the door, it cannot be affirmed truthfully that there is a single unregenerate person in it. This may be affirmed of every denomination in the world, but not of the church which Christ built. It is true some attempt to turn the point upon a visible and invisible church. But there is no such distinction made in the Word of God. The notion is invented to accommodate the denominational idea of a mingling of the spiritual and profligate in the Church of God; or, in other words, to make it appear that the institutions which they have set up are the Church of God. Let the “*thus saith the Lord*” be set down for the visible and invisible churches, and the whole question will be yielded with grace and gratitude.

Let us take now, the Savior's own explanation of this parable. He says, “*He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.*” ^{vs 37-40}



As these vanish the one only visible, organized church remains, with sufficient power to free itself of all would-be intruders, and as a granite rock of eternal truth. Upon "this rock" Jesus built it and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

To understand this explanation, a few words therein must be attended to. The first word of these is the word *kingdom*. It is from the word *basileia*—that which is directed by a king; in this case, that which God rules. It consists of a king to direct principles upon which direction is to proceed, and an intelligent being to be directed: God the King, the elements of righteousness and true holiness the principles, and a human being or an angel the subject. The kingdom of God is just as complete if there is but one subject, as if there were a million. “*The kingdom of God is within you,*” Lk 17:21 and the whole of it at that. In whom? In each individual subject. And here may be properly marked one clearly defined distinction between the “Kingdom of God” and the “Church of God.” The kingdom is first, the church is second—the latter depends upon the former, and grows out of it, and not the former out of the latter. The word *church* is from *ecclesia*—an assembly. The kingdom may encompass but one, the church implies more than one.

From this comes an inevitable conclusion. If the church is second, depends upon and grows out of the kingdom, then it is composed of those, and those only, in whom the kingdom is set up. This is equivalent to saying that there is not an unregenerate person in the church. So we can determine the spiritual status of the church by the subjects of the kingdom. This, we are not left to guess at, for Jesus said in this parable, “*The good seed are the children [subjects] of the kingdom; but the tares [bad seed] are the children of the wicked one,*” neither subjects of the kingdom nor members of the church.

Now we are prepared to understand the meaning of that important phrase in the Savior’s explanation, “*the field is*

the world.” The sense is involved in the word *world*, and upon it turns the central idea of the whole parable. But viewing the kingdom and church as human inventions has involved the word in much confusion. Hence many have interpreted the parable upon the assumption that the word *world* means the church. But let us see: the word here is *kosmos*—arrangement, beautiful system, world. It is the stage upon which the sense is enacted; it is not the church, but a field. In this field (the world, the earth), there are two forces in action, in conflict—the good and the bad, the children of the wicked one and the children of the kingdom, the tares and the wheat. Here these two elements grow (exist) together, not in *ecclesia* (church) but in *kosmos* (world). If the phrase should read, “the field is the church,” then the Holy Ghost made a mistake in the use of His words, for no sort nor any number of arguments can ever make *kosmos* (world) mean *ecclesia* (church).

Now the question does not arise whether or not we shall root out of the church the children of the wicked one, for there are none such in it, but whether or not we shall root them out of the world. Consequently, this rooting out does not involve the commonplace, unscriptural absurdity of turning persons out of the church, but the final and absolute destruction or annihilation of the devil’s children from the face of the earth. The disciples had some crude notions in those days; some of them asked if they should call fire down from heaven to consume their enemies, but Jesus forbade and reproved them (Lk. 9:54-56). Likewise, He says in this parable, Nay. But that the gathering up in this place means destruction, and not expulsion from the church, is evident from the Savior’s own

words: “*As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [age].*” Again: “*And shall cast them into a furnace of fire.*” vs 40, 42

Hence the Savior said and still says, Nay, for many obvious reasons. We are not to use violence of any sort, nor to execute. God will repay, and His angels, not we, shall execute His judgments.

But it may be asked then, how the angels “*shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity,*” if the good and the bad are not mixed together in the church? The answer is at hand and comprehensive: the “*enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat.*” vs 25 Not in the church among the wheat, but among the wheat in the world, for “*the field is the world.*” Out of, here, does not mean from within, but from side by side. Hence, “*two women shall be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken and the other left.*” Mt 24:41

The wheat and tares grow together in the field side by side and the tares are taken from among the wheat. So it is said in Matt. 13:49, in the parable of the net, “*the angels shall come forth, and shall sever the wicked from among the just.*” In both cases the same word (*ek*, “from”) is used. The unworthy may be as parasites endeavoring to adhere the kingdom, but never able to enter it; hence, never taken from within it, but from among those who are in it.

Now, in this scriptural exposition of the parable there is a literal and total annihilation of many notions concerning the organic functions of the Church of God. By it, what becomes of the various contending factions organized by men, which they call the church? Of (the notion of) corruption existing in or being purged out of the church? Of (the notion of) taking in and putting out members? Of the common prevailing ecclesiastical laws and sect appliances? As these vanish the one only visible, organized church remains, with sufficient power to free itself of all would-be intruders, and as a granite rock of eternal truth. Upon “*this rock*” Jesus built it, and “*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” Mt 16:18

—A. M. Kiergan; published in *The Gospel Trumpet*, July 1, 1885 [selected from *The Good Way*] ➡

TELL WHAT HE'S DONE FOR YOU

God's Hand of Love

Before a recent trip we took as a family, I'd had fears about getting sick, with Daddy being sick already, and it just seemed that I would get sick and have a miserable plane ride, with my ears having pain in them going up and down. But the Lord helped me to be able to grasp hold of His promise, the Sunday before we left.

I had been battling the fears, but the Lord sent me help to go on His power. The scripture, "*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,*"^{2 Tim 3:5} was a challenge to me not to be that way, but to have God's power, believe in His power, and in this case, believe that God was in control of all these sicknesses. I was able to rest in God. I thank the Lord for helping me to do so. The thought also came that God is able to work "*all things together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.*"^{Rom 8:28} That was a real encouragement to me, too. Just as I shared that, and stated those promises, it was like a door opened up to me of encouragement, and cheer flooded my heart about the trip, that I could trust Him. It was very sweet to me.

The Lord helped on the trip. He saw fit to keep me well on the way there, the Lord helped with my ears, and I wasn't afraid. It was so blessed to not be afraid. We got there and spent several days with different folks, and I had strength to help out.

One morning, I had gone on a walk around in the cold morning air, and had gone through a sprinkler, thinking I would dry off really quick. Instead, I started feeling chilled, and came down sick the worst I'd been for a long time, losing almost all my appetite. The first night I noticed myself getting sick, I'd started having a cough, and phlegm building up deep in my throat. As it went on throughout the night, I could sense it was getting worse,

and my breathing was getting harder, and I just wasn't able to sleep. I didn't want to not cough it up, because then it settles in my lungs and gets harder to breathe, so I was trying to keep it coughed up, but as the night went on, it seemed that I was disturbing the sleep of the entire household, and I began to have a battle with fear. It seemed like that after all, here, far away from home, I was getting sick like I had been years before, where I would have to be carted around everywhere. It seemed so BIG.

At that point, somehow, the Lord helped me as I cried out to him, to remember that "*all things work together for good to them that love God,*" and also, "*For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*"^{2 Cor 4:16-17}

I felt like the Lord was saying that He had something precious for me out of this. I was able to thank the Lord for the trial, and for being able to work this together for my good. There were different scriptures that the Lord blessed to my heart—He drew very close and gave them to me—different ones that I had been recently memorizing. I think one of them was: "*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"^{Mt 5:14-16} The Lord used them to really comfort my heart that night. I realized that the Lord could take care of it if all the others couldn't sleep, too.

The benefits weren't just thankfulness for the help the Lord gave directly. (I had only that one night of really hard breathing. The next day I asked for special prayer to be able to lean on Him, and the Lord really answered prayer, giving me a good sleep that night. The next night I was kept awake by the cough again, but not by breathing problems any more.) The Lord also measured things out, taking care of other problems I could have had at the same time. There were just a lot of things where I could see God's hand of love for me. Looking back, it isn't so much that I was sick far from home and God lifted me up, but what stands out to me is God's love for me. He made the fears depart, that were too big for me! The Lord took care of them! He succored me. It's just one of the priceless things that God gave me out of this, and I wouldn't have got them if I hadn't gone through that.

I believe God has more for me, to find His power back here at home. "*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*"^{1 Tim 6:6} It's a big word, but God has power to show that in my life, too. I want to get the victory—so that when Jesus comes, seeking fruit, He'll be able to find it—that I would be ready. I don't want to be just cumbering the ground (Lk. 13:7). I pray this would be a blessing to some of you—I want to glorify God for what He's done. ➡



He Can Take a Small Desire...

Two years ago I was struggling with love for the world and a lot of things of the world. I kept asking the Lord to take it out of my heart, but part of me still wanted it, so I was having this battle between the flesh that desired it, and the spirit that longed to follow the Lord more closely and have more of His spirit. I couldn't reconcile the two—they don't work very well together.

One day, when my husband and I were talking about one aspect of the love of the world that was in me, I just started crying: "I want it, I want it...

but I want the Lord." So then I started really seeking the Lord to take it from me, even though I still wanted it. It was a weird battle, because I kept saying, "Lord, take it"; but then I'd think, "I don't want Him to take it." I kept praying, "Please make me want You to take it"; "Please make me want You more"; "Give me a hatred for this thing of the world, even though I love it"—because I still wanted the Lord most of all.

Finally, one night, He just broke through, and poured His Spirit out on me in a way I've never experienced

before or after. He broke my love of it, and filled my heart with His love, and showed me how much better it was. I just couldn't get off my face, He was so holy and so full of love, so much more than anything I would ever cling to in this world—so much more wonderful, and so much more to cling to. All my dust that I was clinging to was so little, and I saw it through His eyes.

I am so grateful that He can do that in us, even if we don't want Him to fully—He can take a small desire in us, and He can fill it. ➡

Others May, You Cannot ~ a Tract by George D. Watson

If God has called you to be really like Jesus, He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility. God's call will put such demands of obedience on you that you will not be able to follow other people, or measure yourself by other Christians. At times, He will let other people do things which He will not let you do.

Other Christians who seem very religious will push themselves, pull wires, and work schemes to carry out their plans. You cannot, and if you attempt it, you will meet with failure and rebuke from the Lord.

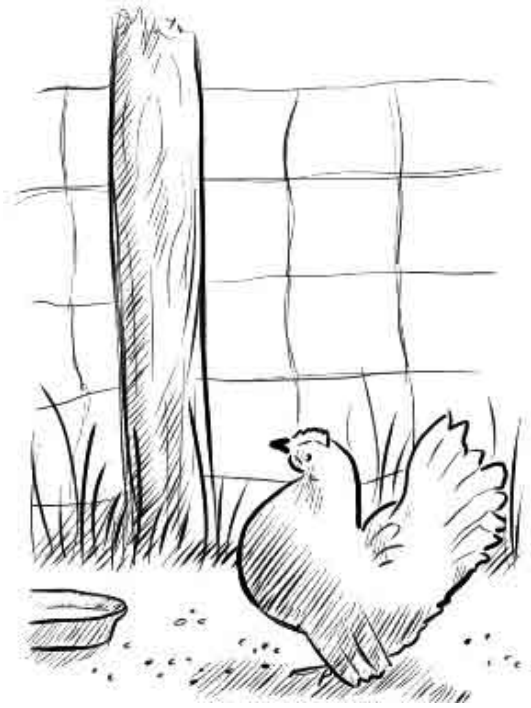
Others may boast of themselves, of their work, of their successes, but the Holy Spirit will not allow you to do any such thing; and if you begin it, He will lead you to despise yourself and all your good works.

Others may be allowed to succeed in making money, or may have a legacy left to them, but it is likely God will keep you poor. God wants you to have something far better than gold—namely, a helpless dependence upon Him, that He may demonstrate His faithful love for you in supplying your needs day by day.

God may let others be honored and put forward, and keep you hidden in obscurity in order to produce some fragrant fruit for His coming glory which can only be produced in the shade. He may let others be great, but keep you small. He may let others do a work for Him and get the credit for it now. The reward for your work is held in the hands of Jesus and you will not see it until He comes.

The Holy Spirit will put a strict watch over you with a jealous love. He will rebuke you for the little words and feelings or for wasting your time. So make up your mind that God is an infinite Sovereign, and has a right to do as He pleases with His own. He does not owe you an explanation of these mysteries. But if you give yourself to be His child, He will wrap you up in a jealous love, and give you the precious blessings for those who belong, heart and soul, to Him.

Settle it forever, then, that you are to deal directly with the Holy Spirit. It is His option to tie your tongue, or chain your hand, or close your eyes in ways that He does not seem to use with others. And when you are so possessed by the living God that your heart delights over this peculiar, personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of the Holy Spirit over your life, you will have found the vestibule of Heaven. ➡



The Age of Knowledge

Part 3

“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.” Psa 119:133

“Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.” Psa 27:11-12

What are the guiding principles of Christian education? Of all the great wealth of knowledge before us, how should we evaluate what there is to learn about the things of this world, then what parts should we pursue, in the fear of God?

We are directed in 2 Timothy 2:15-17, *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker.”* The basic educational characteristic in this verse is *reading*. You cannot *study* unless you can *read*. But there is much more than just basic, fundamental reading; there is the ability to *“rightly divide,”* i.e., properly understand.

I was once told by a brother to anoint my face with olive oil when I fasted. He and others in that congregation were careful to do that. If you saw them with shiny foreheads, then you could fairly safely conclude that they were fasting. Here is the scripture that he used as direction for that method: *“But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face.”* Mt 6:17 To him, this was simple direction. When you fast, anoint your head. But I said, “Back then, everyone (among the Jews) anointed their face every day, just as each washed his face. The scripture is teaching us to **do as we normally do everyday, ‘That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.’**” vs¹⁸ Furthermore, I said, “I can tell when you are fasting because you anoint your face, but Jesus wants you to *not*

anoint your face now (in this age and time), so I cannot tell if you are fasting or not.” The brother stared at me. “But the Bible says,” he said slowly, with great emphasis, “when—thou—fastest—anoint—thine—head.” He stopped. No words or reasonings were of any avail, whatsoever. To him, it was a question of obedience; to me, it was a matter of **rightly dividing** (interpreting correctly, according to the mind and intent of God).

Now, reading is more than pronouncing the words and somewhat comprehending the words. Reading gets into what we call literary skills. It gets into human communication, which involves vocal communication (talking and listening), as well as written communication.

Human communication is extraordinarily difficult. We each live in our own little world, and we do not understand each other perfectly. Even when we think we do, we are each actually coming from a set of perceptions and values that differ a little. That is, we each have our “own take” on things. It is almost as though we each speak a little different dialect of a common language (when we even speak a common language). Sooner or later we come to, “Just *what* do you mean by that?” There is more to it than just shoveling words at each other. There is more than just the attempt to communicate knowledge. Behind facts and figures lies the profound concept of **understanding**. Look at the word. It is literally the under standing—that which stands *under* the thing expressed.

The dictionary defines this most important *understanding* as: “insight, discernment, perception, comprehension; the faculty by which one understands; intelligence.”

Now teaching people to read, even considering the ordinary challenge of phonics to the extraordinary challenge of the afflic-

tion of dyslexia, pales with *teaching people to comprehend*. Yet, of all basic academic educational skills, this one easily is the most important. Even the ability to teach the technical skills of good communication (such as spelling, grammar, pronunciation, penmanship or typing, vocabulary) are of far lesser importance than the ability to understand. Without understanding, history and science are meaningless. Only math stands apart as a parallel skill to reading, and even math “story” problems require comprehending reading. No wonder that the wise man said, *“Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”* Pro 4:5-7 Solomon was greatly concerned with the skillful application of knowledge, based on understanding (wisdom). He wrote with the emphasis on wisdom, but behind and under (literally) was the importance of *understanding*. You can hardly manifest wisdom without having understanding.

It is in the understanding that we find the fundamental difference between the wisdom *from above* and the wisdom *from below*. Brother Paul speaks of it in this way: *“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, **having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance***

Human communication is extraordinarily difficult. We each live in our own little world, and we do not understand each other perfectly.

that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” Eph 4:17-19 This is a picture of an unsaved person—a picture of the understanding of an unsaved person. It is *“darkened.”* Brother James speaks of it in these terms: *“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.”* Jas 3:14-15 In the seventeenth verse,

he describes the wisdom from above; its first characteristic is “*pure*.” We might well say *heart-enlightened from above*. In other words, the moral (spiritual) condition of the individual has a lot to do with how they learn and what they can comprehend. Jesus tells us, “*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”^{Jn 3:3} Note those words: “*he cannot see.*”

The insight imparted by this truth is profound and far-reaching. With respect to the schooling of our children, we see at once that **it is not possible to be really educated properly unless the student is regenerated—born again**. The unsaved boy or girl (man or woman) has an *unsaved slant* on everything. No amount of skill on the part of the teacher can make up for this.

The vast majority of educational materials is prepared by unsaved people, both public education and homeschool materials. I wish I could recommend a curriculum written by fully saved people (people *filled* with the Holy Ghost, led and taught by that same Comforter) for grade school students, but I do not know of such a curriculum. But it would not matter if just such a curriculum did exist, from the standpoint of the pupil. The unsaved student would still see it from an unsaved standpoint.

“Well, it is hopeless,” you might say, at this point. Yes, in a sense, life itself is hopeless without the work of God wrought in the heart that makes a man a new creature in Christ Jesus. But the young are growing up; in most of them, it does not appear yet whether they will give their hearts to God. Are there some curriculums better than others? More healthy? Prompting and provoking (in a good sense) to the young, fresh mind of the adolescent? Yes. Very much so. These educational materials are written by those who have the fear of God upon them. In the hands of parents or other teachers with the fear of God upon them, much can be done in a formative way *that assists the Holy Ghost in His striving with the heart*. It is in this area—as workers together with God (2 Cor. 6:1)—that much is needed, not only in teaching the basics of how to communicate (reading, writing, and the skills connected with these basics), how to understand true history and true science,

and in how to measure and compare; but in carrying a burden—the burden of the child, their spiritual burden—as a yokefellow with the Holy Ghost. When a teacher carries such a burden for each pupil that he or she teaches, then the method of success is: “*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*”^{Jn 5:17} This is the high standard that our Lord set by example before us for all spiritual work. While Jesus was in the body on earth, God the Father worked, so Jesus worked. When God the Father refrained from dealing, Jesus refrained from dealing. Such a standard of “workers together with God” gives the child the best chance possible in life. It lays the foundation for spiritual living, whether the child chooses to live spiritually or not. (And surely it is better for a child to be prepared for spiritual living than not to be.) Preparation for spiritual living and spiritual understanding will go far toward making a person a good citizen and a responsible, moral person of character, although all these good things fall short of spiritual living. In the end, however, the only thing that will avail is a new creature in Christ Jesus.

The question is one of stewardship. “*Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.*”^{Gal 4:1-2} Brother Paul is discussing the relationship of the Old

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Testament to the New, and the effect of that on the spiritual heirs. In mentioning this, he presents the general responsibility of the stewardship of the father and the delegated responsibility of the tutors and governors to the child, the heir. And from this, we can see that the position of Mother or Father, or others who have the responsibility of care and development of children, is the position of a steward. Brother Titus tells us, “*For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God.*”^{Tit 1:7} He is discussing the stewardship of an overseer (bishop) toward the children of God. We have also the account of a steward from the standpoint of a steward from

Eliezer, the chief servant of Abraham. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, we read how this God-fearing man was entrusted with the selection of a wife for Isaac, the son of Abraham. He called upon God to help him, to guide him and give him wisdom. In the third chapter of 1 Kings, we read of how Solomon begged God for wisdom to be a steward over Israel. God was pleased with his approach to the responsibility, and granted his request.

The stewardship question before us now is the question of how we should teach the young and prepare them for life *in the age of knowledge*.

I am thinking of a parent who undertook the education of her son with an intense desire to raise him right and launch him on the right pathway. She carefully indoctrinated in Bible doctrine (and she had considerable light on doctrine) and she rigorously disciplined him in all academic areas. He responded avidly to her attention and efforts, and by the time he reached his teens, he was arguing holiness doctrine with other homeschooled students in the neighborhood. His mother and father looked upon his efforts as the natural and desirable outcome of how he was raised. He professed salvation, but he did not know what it meant to actually walk with God. His heart had never been humbled by grace as it should have been. Eventually, this

caught up with him. He got into serious questions with a neighbor girl. She had been raised to believe that one could not live free from sin, and *she was living to her creed*, whereas this young man *was not living to his creed*. He was expertly acquainted with the “proof texts”

and expounded them articulately, but they began to sound hollow to his own ears. At this point, he had to deal with the effects of sin in his own family, for they, too, were not living up to the truth that they believed. It was too much for him, and he grew bitter, rebelled, and began to hunt for something that he could feel was truly solid.

It is more important to *live up to the truth* than to be able to express it. And this is the first and foundational principle with which we must face the age of knowledge. **Truth is not a mental concept; truth is a heart concept.** “*What is truth?*” (The question of Pontius Pilate). *Truth is to know God.*

This is not *knowing about* God, which is a mental knowledge of God. This is knowing God at the heart level—what the brethren used to call *experimental knowledge* (hands on). It is experience which “*passeth knowledge*.”^{Eph 3:19} “*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.*”^{Job 42:5} “*Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.*”^{Jer 9:24}

But the education of a child typically starts long before he or she comes to the point of seeking God for salvation. How should the child be taught in their unregenerated state of heart?

The Old Testament was given to teach the entire human race about God, and it was given before they could know Him at the heart level in the way that He wanted them to do so (see Hebrews 8:10-11). So what is the manner of instruction of the Old Testament? How does it approach the unregenerated heart?

First, the Old Testament is unrelentingly honest in describing truth and man's relation to that truth. It does not pretend to be more than it is; it does not profess to confer more than it actually can deliver. Secondly, it is progressive. It was adapted to the darkened state of the hearts of men, and shone brighter and brighter, pointing the way to the Better Testament to come. It started with the physical deliverance of an oppressed nation from the superpower of that time and portrayed in shadow and type the spiritual deliverance of men from sin. It was begun with a system of rules to demonstrate that rules were inadequate, that something more was needed, that men's best efforts to serve God acceptably fell short of what God actually required, and that God could and would provide something better when a foundation for faith was fully complete. When in the fulness of time the Messiah came, it was revealed that the Old Testament was full of types and shadows—“hooks” of understanding. Those who followed the precepts of the Old Testament are described in Hebrews 11:39-40: “*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made*

perfect.” “*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*”^{vs 13} From this, we understand that although those Old Testament brethren did not receive the promises and saw them from afar off, yet

The effect of such an education is to persuade the soul of the validity of profound respect for Him with whom we have to do.

the preparation of the Old Testament was invaluable when, in the Better Testament, it was possible to receive the promises and actually experience them. At that point, the Old was instructive and reassuring. “*Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*”^{Mt 13:52} A saved person who has been *prepared well for being saved* will find their education of similar value. That education is not a substitute for New Testament salvation, but it is definitely an asset. As Brother Paul put it, “*What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*”^{Rom 3:1-2}

A good preparatory-for-salvation education will include such things as true history and true science, with emphasis on God's dealings with mankind and what is revealed to us about how He created the universe. A good education will also introduce and prepare the pupil to both receive communication and to utilize it to communicate with others. It will prepare the student for natural life. The role of math as a tool in measuring and comparing, with emphasis on human attempts to be fair and just with each other in the transactions of life. Such an approach will firmly and emphatically reveal the importance of character. For instance, the history of the great depression in the 1930's would be approached from 1 Timothy 6:10, “*For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*” It would be

stressed that greed brought man to this, and that a breakdown of trust, the essential ingredient for entire societies to function, was badly damaged. In other words, history and economics from a character standpoint. The effects of not fearing God. The effects of rebellion against moral standard, etc. The prelude of the “roaring twenties.” The good that came from the suffering of the 1930's. The mercy of God that was thus proffered to us. Parallels could be found in God's dealings with nations in the Old Testament records. And finally and most important, God's dealings in the life of the student—pointing the way to a life reconciled to God.


The effect of such an education is to persuade the soul of the validity of profound respect for Him with whom we have to do. It restrains sin and rebukes it. It recommends a serious and purposeful approach to our existence here and its eternal meaning.

The effect of such an education, *combined with living examples of teachers who are living a holy life from the fully saved heart*, is powerful indeed. It is truly “*a light that shineth in a dark place.*”^{2 Pet 1:19} Such an education is a schoolmaster, to lead men to the conclusion that they need a Christ, and then points the way to Christ, Himself.

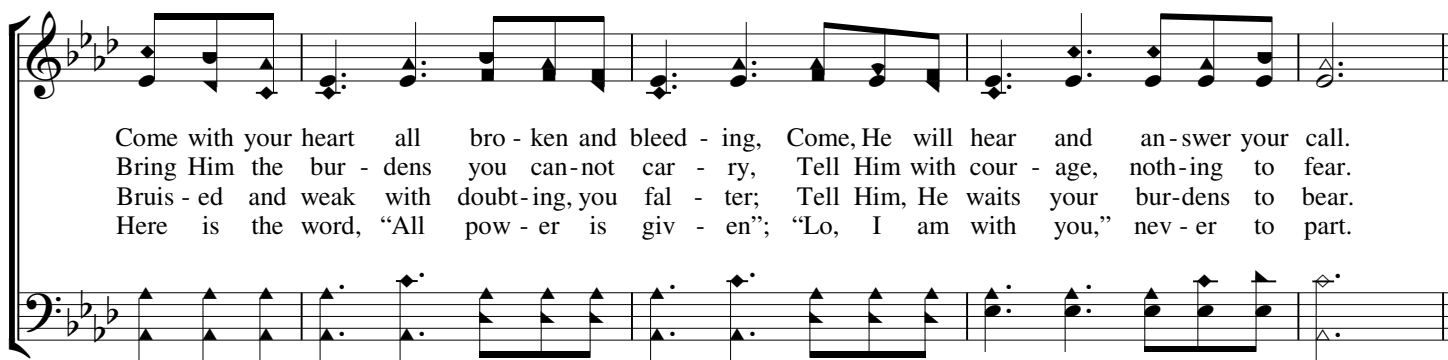
A pair of boys, products of fiery machismo, were predictably enthused about the history of war. They did not like to hear what their teacher, a saved man, said about human conflict. “No one wins,” the teacher stated. Their faces reflected their outrage. The conclusion seemed unpatriotic and cowardly to them. It diminished their heroes. It meddled with their ideal. But the truth was put before them anyway, even as they chafed and resented it. (Rejected it, too, most vocally and emphatically, before the rest of the class.) But then, weeks later, the oldest of the two came and questioned the teacher in a thoughtful, serious way. “If you had lived back in the Civil War (1860-1865), which side would you have been on?” he asked the teacher privately. “God's side,” the teacher replied. “You would not have been for the North or the South?” “No,” was the reply. “I would have borne the suffering and sacrifice that came from being a soldier of Him who taught that His kingdom was not

Hurry and Tell Him

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Mt. 7:7

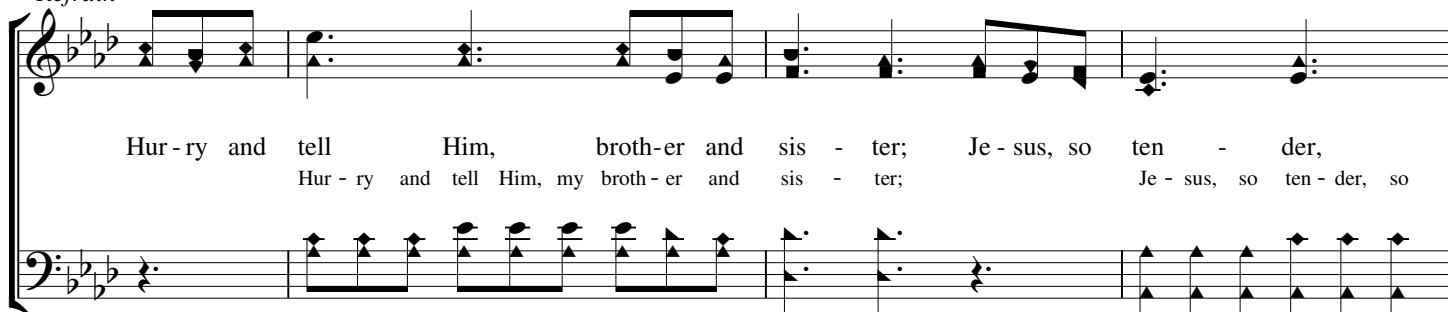


1. "Ask, and it shall be giv - en you," broth - er, He is the Lord, who car-eth for all;
2. Hur - ry and tell Him, why do you tar - ry? O - pen your heart while Je - sus is near;
3. Hur - ry and tell what tongue can-not ut - ter, Groan-ing and sigh - ing, load-ed with care;
4. Hur - ry and tell Him eve - ry af - flic - tion, Tell Him each pain and sor-row of heart;

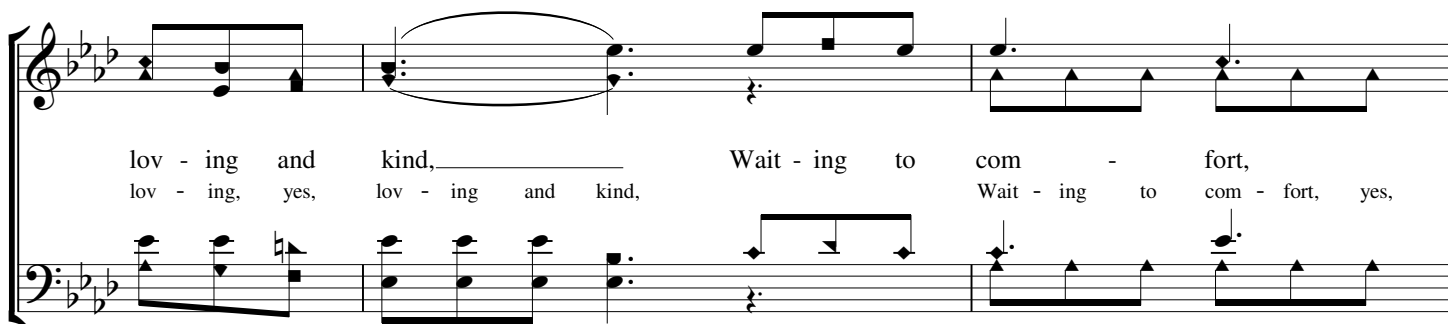


Come with your heart all bro - ken and bleed - ing, Come, He will hear and an - swer your call.
Bring Him the bur - dens you can-not car - ry, Tell Him with cour - age, noth - ing to fear.
Bruis - ed and weak with doubt - ing, you fal - ter; Tell Him, He waits your bur-dens to bear.
Here is the word, "All pow - er is giv - en"; "Lo, I am with you," nev - er to part.

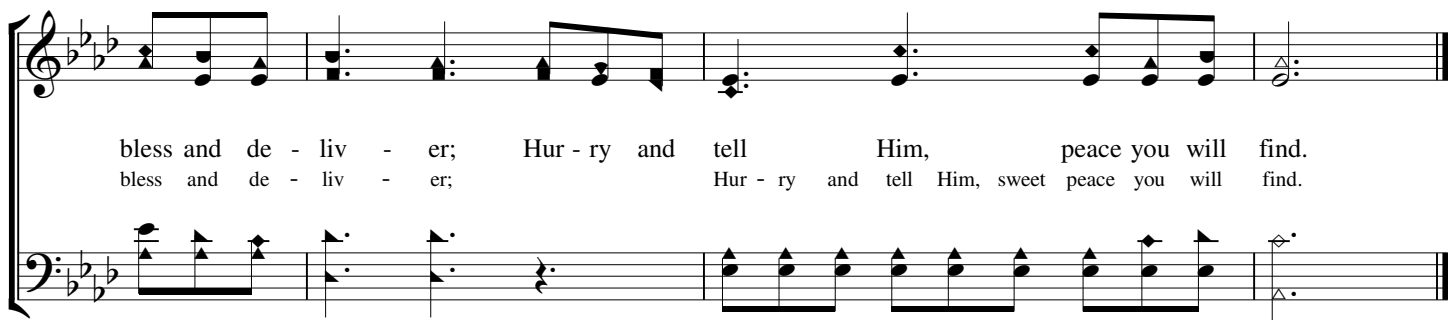
Refrain



Hur - ry and tell Him, broth - er and sis - ter; Je - sus, so ten - der,
Hur - ry and tell Him, my broth - er and sis - ter; Je - sus, so ten - der, so



lov - ing and kind, Wait - ing to com - fort,
lov - ing, yes, lov - ing and kind, Wait - ing to com - fort, yes,



bless and de - liv - er; Hur - ry and tell Him, peace you will find.
bless and de - liv - er; Hur - ry and tell Him, sweet peace you will find.

The Blood of Jesus

*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,
and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 Jn. 1:7*

1. Must I in sin - ful bond - age be, De - prived of peace and li - ber - ty,
2. Must I be doubt - ing, full of fear, And gloom ob - scure my path - way here,
3. Must I be un - der guilt and sin, And have its blight - ing force with - in,
4. Must I sup - pose I'm right to - day, To - mor - row think I've gone a - stray,
5. Must I by Sa - tan be ac - cused, And with his gall - ing yoke a - bused,

When in the prom - ise I can see The blood of Je - sus cleans - eth?
Be up and down in life's ca - reer? The blood of Je - sus cleans - eth.
Be - set by wrong, no vic - t'ry win? The blood of Je - sus cleans - eth.
Let de - mons hold me in dis - may? The blood of Je - sus cleans - eth.
Un - til at length from heav'n re - fused? The blood of Je - sus cleans - eth.

Refrain

The blood, the blood, The pre - cious blood of Je - sus;
The blood, the blood,

The blood will work a per - fect cure, Will cleanse the heart and keep it pure;

The blood, the blood, The pre - cious blood of Je - sus.
The blood, the blood,

The Age of Knowledge,
continued from page 13

of this world—else would his servants fight (physically).” This time, the student did not reject the truth, but went away thoughtful and considering.

There are areas of study that are profitable somewhat for the disciplines and concentrations that are necessary to master them. Their value is not so much the subject material as the discipline and concentration it takes to master the subject. The world has

so taken such things as athletic ability and musical ability, and turned them into situations of emulation (rivalry) and pride. When taught to students with carnality in their hearts, they naturally aspire to be the best, to exceed others; and they are easily filled with the spirit of competition and strife. (It is not confined to these two examples, of course.) It seems foreign to them to be taught to be thankful for what God-given abilities they realize, and to dedicate those to be utilized as God would have them to be. Instead of thinking of their talents as a trust from God and instead of thinking of themselves as accountable stewards for all that their Creator has put in their hands, they are proud and feel superior to others, and they want their talents to be acknowledged and applauded.

Any skill is capable of development and is only the promise of competence without careful discipline and hard work, but the unregenerated heart labors for a *different motive* than the transformed heart. It is quite a task to teach a level of craftsmanship that is the result of hard practice and diligent effort while trying to avoid stimulating the pride of life in the unsaved. Why should they respond to exacting teaching while also adopting an humble attitude? *“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.”* Pro 22:15 This foolishness will manifest itself in sloth and a refusal to apply one’s self, but it will also manifest itself in a deadly spirit of emulation and pride—both fruits of the flesh. To be patient in such circumstances, to hold a standard of

If the teacher is completely delivered from pride and ambition, their life will be a constant rod of correction to the carnality in the heart of the student.

holiness in word, thought, and deed *from the hidden, inward motives of the heart*, before the carnal student: this is the calling of the godly teacher. If the teacher is completely delivered from pride and ambition, their life will be a constant rod of correction to the carnality in the heart of the student.

Enough has been said at this point to fully state the important point: *it is more important what we are than what we say*. In other words, we teach subconsciously much more than we teach intentionally. Your attitude toward the superabundance of knowledge all

about us in our age declares loudly and unmistakably what your inward motives are, what values you have treasured in your heart. This is a case of “what you are doing is speaking so loudly that I cannot hear what you are

saying.” If you are covetous, and your covetousness is revealed in your home, your car, your job, your clothes, etc.; then you will talk in vain about plain, sacrificial living, humility in dress, lack of ambition in a career (a job being only a means to an end), being like Jesus, etc. If you love to debate or argue, that love of strife carries a message. If everything has to be “just so,” if you love a polished, impressive appearance, then that speaks loudly and clearly, too. You are one of those who *“desire to make a fair show in the flesh.”* Gal 6:12 God help us to provide things honest in the sight of all men. *“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”* 1 Tim 4:12

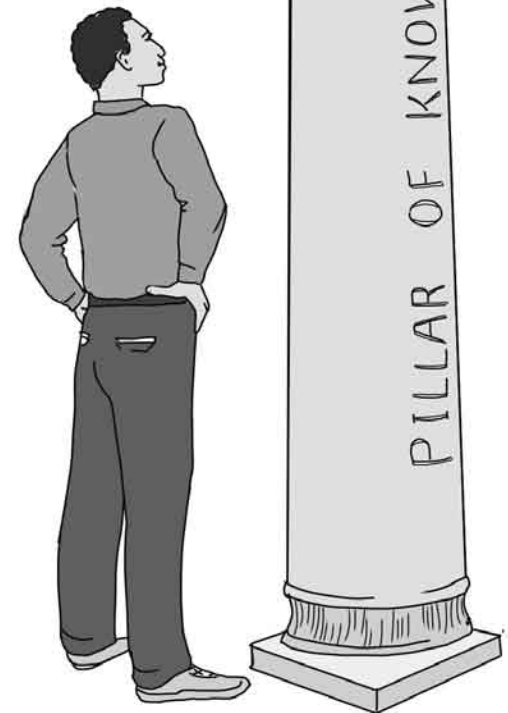
To be a tutor, a mentor, to those who are just beginning to learn about life in the age of increased knowledge, this is a fearsome responsibility. When Job was praying for his daughters and sons, he was praying for the children of a rich man. They had the peculiar temptations and assaults of the devil that accompany being the children of a rich man. The point is driven home by the failure of Job’s wife. She didn’t get what he got from God (Job 2:9-10). She could have gotten the spiritual victory that he had gotten; she could have sought God to help her to not set her heart on the riches in their hands, but she didn’t. You will notice that she didn’t suffer

from the boils. Satan had no need to smite her; he already had her. This should make us tremble.

The Simplistic Approach

There are those who try to escape the superabundance of knowledge in our world by staying as ignorant as they can. They abhor worldly sophistication, believe that all knowledge *“puffeth up,”* and genuinely believe that we are safer to be ignorant than knowledgeable. Just enough ability to read the Bible and understand elementary arithmetic, maybe a little exposure to the wonders of nature and a simplistic view of human history, with a great deal of prejudice and suspicion of human authority and government.

We agree that people at this level of understanding can live saved and please God. We do not have to know a whole lot about the Bible to please God and to make heaven our home. *“And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”* Isa 35:8



Living saved is all about loving the Lord with all our heart, not in mentally mastering the doctrines that pertain to salvation. However, I am going to present another side Biblically to this approach to human education, which will demonstrate the weakness and vulnerability of this approach. It is not as safe as many imagine who follow it.

“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?” Pro 1:22

“And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.” Isa 33:6

All of us, simply-minded or profoundly-minded, are faced with *perplexities* and *hard questions* as we live our lives in this world (2 Cor. 4:8; 1 Ki. 10:1). God has not created everything so that it is simple to understand, nor does the arch enemy of mankind confine himself to simple attacks. Here is an example. Among a certain group of people, for many generations, there has been a desire to live plainly, simply, practically, and humbly. This is good and pleasing to God. These people dress their children modestly and appropriately and avoid many worldly amusements and entanglements which spare them many vanities. If salvation came out of simple, unadorned living, they would have it. But, on the whole, they do know not what a regenerated heart means. Most of them are simply conditioned to live to things that have accompanied salvation, and they do so more or less “automatically,” without the inward motivations that move holy people. And just as people who live to an outward standard of holy merit because of an inward holiness of heart, they face questions. What is worldly? Should one receive the same electricity as the worldly people about us? Should they drive an automobile? Should menfolks wear beards? Must they wear hats? Should the womenfolks wear an additional headcovering over the hair? Nor do the questions stop at this point. Should the beard be trimmed? How wide should the brim of the hat be? Should the cloth headcovering be white or black? Should it have lace? How big should it be? Should I use a tractor, although I keep a horse and carriage for going to town? These questions get into *profound roots*. They get into such matters as scriptural liberty of conscience, as compared to fleshly license. They touch on important principles, such as,



“What is worldliness?”

“What does it really mean to God to be separate from the world?” “What is plainness?” “What is God really like? What is He really pleased/displeased with?”

Now this is just one example of one kind of perplexities. There are many others. Should a Christian take a job in a firm that builds military weapons? Military gear (not weapons) used by soldiers? Should I be a travel agent and book a trip with a questionable couple? (Such as: two single people, man and woman; a man with a woman who is not his wife or vice-versa, a double-marriage couple, a Mormon group of one husband and a multiplicity of wives, a homosexual couple, etc.) Much more is needed in these matters than dry doctrine and dry policy. Just how are forbearing and longsuffering rightly involved? Where do I withdraw, regardless of the consequences, and completely abhor what is before me?

“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.” 1 Tim 4:6-7 The phrase, “whereunto thou hast attained,” comes from a word in the original that literally means *which thou hast thoroughly understood*. This is a clear fulfillment of the scripture that “*wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times.*” (The same word occurs in Luke 1:3—Adam Clarke translates that word with paraphrasing as, “Having ac-

curately traced up—entered into the very spirit of the work, and examined every thing to the bottom; in consequence of which investigation, I am completely convinced of the truth of the whole.”) This is the only way to really deal with the religious myths (old wives' fables) that arise from fleshly reasoning and reaction. Or to deal with the outward customs and traditions with which we are conditioned to think and follow, without really examining the roots of our own motivations in keeping these outward things. All of this must be *brought out into the light of the gospel* and faced. They must be accurately identified and called by their correct names. For example: does my inclination to dress a certain way arise from holy consideration of others and real humility of heart, or do I have a secret pride in a certain uniformity?

“The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.” Pro 16:1 *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”* Jn 16:13 We are going to be guided by something, and if we are not guided by the Spirit of God and instead adopt a simplistic view of things that are not really simple, we will be guided by folklore, legends, and old wives' tales that have a show of wisdom to the fleshly mind.

Since education cannot save us, how should we regard it? As any other earthly skill or ability.

Over the centuries, almost every variation of human education has been tried. At one point, religious authorities despaired of avoiding divisions by debates and strife, so they reasoned that control of who was educated was a good thing. Under these auspices, the general population became illiterate and were forbidden to read the Bible. The result was cathedrals with their awesome heights and enormous works of art (to instruct the unlearned), a small group of educated people (church leaders, priests, etc.), and enormous superstitions/old wives' fables. Hellish deceptions find lots of room to work with little or no education, and they are able to deceive and fool the worldly wise, as well. If high-mindedness offers no defense against the corruptions of hell, ignorance and simplicity cause the devil no significant resistance, either.

Since education cannot save us, how should we regard it? As any other earthly skill or ability. We are handicapped in earthly life without proper preparation, and we are handicapped *by excessive preparation*. Someone needs to have the understanding and skill to prepare balanced, nutritious meals, yet the purpose is lost when meal preparation becomes a gourmet experience. And this is true of every aspect of earthly existence. When the balance (as defined by the Holy Ghost) between spiritual living and fleshly existence is lost, then that which was a means to an end becomes an end in itself.

The ability to communicate by reading, writing, or speaking is one of the necessities of earthly existence. Its importance can *overstated* or *understated*. It can be pursued too much or too little.

Well, how much is too much? And how much is too little? That depends on your *calling, your place*, in life. That depends on whether or not you find the will of God for you, for each human being is unique and special to God, Who created the soul of each of us. Each of us finds the real meaning of our existence and the greatest fulfillment and contentment in following the path that God knows is best for us.

Each of us needs a basic diet that is sound and healthy, but some of us need certain elements in that diet that others do not need. Our bodies require it. We suffer if that need is not recognized. Some of us cannot eat the same things that everybody else eats. Perhaps we are allergic to certain foods, or perhaps certain things simply do not digest well with us. This is beyond our tastes and preferences; these are our needs. Perhaps we *need* certain things we do not really like.

The same thing is true of the education of the mind and heart. Dear parent or teacher, you may be educating a boy or girl who will be led to live as Daniel, as Job, as Peter, or as Amos. Can you not see that there should be more to what you and your pupils study than just personal preference or the mental rut of habit and familiarization? Do you see the importance of being a worker together with God? There are basics that all should know. There are things that will be crucial at some point up the line. There is a certain exposure of teaching that should be passed

from generation to generation. And there is the burden of our time, as well as an awareness and appreciation for the burdens of other times. Above all, there is a crying need for an accurate awareness of the forces of spiritual warfare all about us.

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

One of the features of a well-founded education (in the fear of God) is the ability to “see through” the wishful thinking, the commonly-accepted fallacies of mankind in general.

Since God reveals the path of His choosing for us step by step, we need to pray that we will grasp the unfolding of what is studied, hour by hour. In the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel (as young men), only God knew the positions of responsibility in government and the fiery furnace and the den of lions that lay ahead. How were they educated? “*Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.*”^{Dan 1:4} A secular direction was imposed on their lives, including their education, but “*Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*”^{vs 8} Because of this *holy purpose* to follow God and do His will, even under very unpromising circumstances, God made a way for these young men to avoid corruption. And with this avoidance of defilement, the Spirit of God opened the eyes of their understanding, utilizing what the king of Babylon intended for the advancement of his agenda, rather for the advancement of God’s agenda. “*As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.*”^{vs 17}

We see that God is not limited by the shortcomings of the teachers, nor the lack of exposure to other children of God. Truly He shows Himself strong in the behalf of all who earnestly and sincerely want Him (2 Chr. 16:9). The king of Babylon was surprised (I daresay shocked) when he found them better-educated—**ten times better**—than everyone else who had been through his carefully-prepared education experience (Dan. 1:20). **The same material in the hands of worldly instructors can be turned in a different direction by the Spirit of God.** It is possible to be educated by believers in evolution and come out more convinced than ever that “a million monkeys banging on the keys of a million typewriters for a million years cannot produce the Gettysburg Address.”

“Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.”^{Psa 119:98-100}

One of the features of a well-founded education (in the fear of God) is the ability to “see through” the wishful thinking, the commonly-accepted fallacies of mankind in general. The effect of the Spirit of God inspiring and blessing our attempts to learn and be prepared for life is the exposure of the basic traits of fleshly wisdom and their effects. Here is one: “*But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*”^{1 Sam 16:7} Now Samuel was hardly a shallow thinker. He was a man of like passions as we are. But he had drawn a conclusion based on outward appearance, was reproved for the same, and we are just as vulnerable. A well-reasoned argument. An effective presentation, touching all the right motivation “buttons” in us. An appeal to family pride, church pride, school pride, race pride, national pride, etc., that strikes home with us and resonates. Yet TRUTH, real truth, is beyond all this. “*The LORD looketh on the heart.*” The humility that comes with the conviction that we cannot see into the human heart without divine

assistance and that, most of the time, He does not unfold to us *all* that is in the hearts of others. The understanding of life that is revealed by what is not revealed. This is deep. We began to experience a slight taste of “*Him with whom we have to do.*”^{Heb 4:13} Behold, all things are truly open and naked in His sight! But wait, you may say. What does this have to do with education? Well, we have “a slice” of Samuel’s education before us. We are privileged to read a record of his schooling. I ask you to consider how Samuel thought about what impressed him outwardly, after that experience with God. In the glory world now, he and a host of others commonly speak of things that happened on their pilgrimage in terms of how God saw and sees things. O Lord, **open our eyes!** Help us to see!

A seeing man, if presented with the movies... the coliseum... the theater... a worldly book... a fleshly philosophy—*he sees*; he sees *more* than is presented. He sees beneath the surface. He perceives the presence of the tempter behind the facade. That which engages the unseeing man, thrills and entralls him, is *foolishness* with the man whose *spiritual eyes have been opened by power divine*. He listens to the excuses—the *ingenious* excuses—the *professional voice of highly intelligent sophistication*, even the witch doctors of the modern human race, inspired by Diabolus himself, and *the truth is revealed*. He is able to walk circumspectly (looking all around) because his eyes have been opened. He is able *to watch* and pray. Oh, the blessing of being able to perceive deception as deception! Error as error! “*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know...*”^{Eph 1:18}

“Thrice blest is he to whom is giv’n
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field when He
Is most invisible.

“Blest, too, is he who can divine
Where real true right doth lie,
And dares to take the side that seems
Wrong to man’s blinded eye.

“For right is right since God is God,
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.”

Now no mental education can bring about this eyesight, but God can open our eyes to

distinguish truth from error in our studies. Therefore, academic education is an important field for learning to separate the pure from the vile. We want to learn the lessons of history. We want to perceive the nature of the errors of “*science falsely so called.*”^{1 Tim 6:20} We want to detect the unwashed, unregenerated imagination of the human mind in the finest, noblest literature of human thought, as distinguished from the literature that is inspired by the wisdom from above, “*first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*”^{Jas 3:17} The appeal of secular education, uninspired of God, is a *fleshly appeal*, and even as men learn the nature of counterfeit money by comparing it with genuine currency in minute detail, so we become sharpened in our awareness of right and wrong, of the fundamental difference between truth and error, by the practical exercise of our faculties “*to discern both good and evil.*”^{Heb 5:14} This was the nature of the education that Daniel and his friends received that advanced them far beyond their fellow students.

The vastness of the great ocean of human knowledge that has been allowed to increase in our age is a source of great pride and relentless hubris to humans today. Nearly all (with some exceptions) believe in the created idol of Progress and worship at his altar. Most think (even desperately insist) that the world is basically getting better and human life is improving. This idea is based on inventions and new insights of learning, which continue to flood the world. The hope of salvation from our problems and enemies is based on *apparently-successful human effort*, and even the professed Christian religious bodies of today mostly buy into at least part of the concept.

But the child of God, whose eyes have been opened to an awareness of God, sees much more than all this. He sees that God’s knowledge so far exceeds the utmost boundary of both what man has learned and will be allowed to learn, that there is really no comparison. It is greater than the entire universe to a grain of sand—an atom. He sees that our “*long home*”—eternity—supersedes present reality just as completely. This great flood of human knowledge, great as it is, is

really less than a molecule of water to all the moisture in the universe, when compared to God’s understanding. “*There is no searching of His understanding.*”^{Isa 40:28} “*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*”^{1 Cor 1:19-20} “*Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.... All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?*”^{Isa 40:13-18}

Now it is one thing to say these things as an article of faith, and still another to say them with infinite, detailed conviction as a matter of divine-assisted education. But this education will endure. It will work as a practical usefulness in the needs of earthly life, and it will still prove true when this world and all the wisdom of this world is completely destroyed.

And, so I beg of you: *build for eternity*. Do not pursue an agenda down here for a comfortable lifestyle—“the American dream,” so to speak, the deadly vision presented so

And, so I beg of you:
build for eternity.

alluringly in the media of our day—the imagination of your fleshly mind, “If I only had these things, I would be happy.” Will you

study at the bidding of the voices of houses, of lands, of human applause? Or do you want to obtain and to point to an education that is not of this world? Do you want to follow in the footsteps of Him who lived and was educated (by the Holy Ghost) to a perfectly-balanced life, who dedicated Himself to the will of God for His earthly existence?

“Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!

Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.”



Bring to Your Remembrance

- excerpt from a message

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth."² Pet 1:4-12

Consider what is this that Peter is so concerned that they remember. It says, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, [even] though you know them." It's important; I need to bring it right back to the front of your mind. To stir you up by putting you in remembrance (vs. 3). Furthermore, I'm going to try and do this so thoroughly, that when I'm not around to stir you up anymore, it will stick (vs. 13-15).

What was this that was so important? Well, I see that what it brought was being fruitful—"neither barren nor unfruitful"—being secure in our walk with the Lord, and prospering. There was something we need to remember about God and there is something we need to remember to do ourselves. We need to remember about God's great promises, His ability. It was Him who called us out of darkness. It was Him who, by His great power and His promises, brought us to life. And then there was something that was real important for us to remember: "Giving all diligence"—and then there was this list. Add to your faith virtue, knowledge (of God), temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity.

I want to look at this thought, "Giving all diligence." I thought of diligence in terms of applying



Don't forget the power of God. If we don't promptly come to God when we need help to live right, we are forgetting that this was the key to our ever getting help in the first place—we came to God.

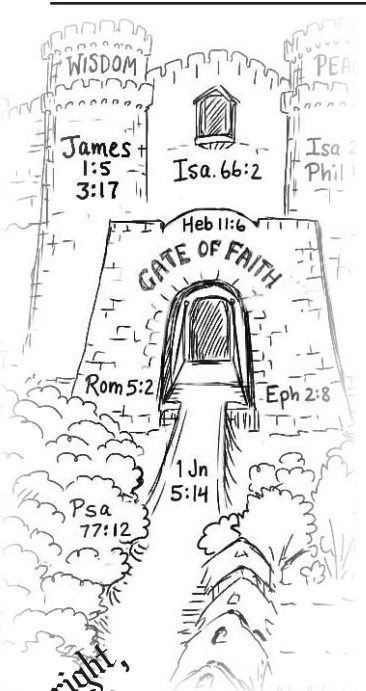
yourself steadily at something, but when I looked it up, at its heart it really means, "with all speed." Do it right now! Promptly! Get it taken care of! "With all diligence adding to your faith virtue." That is to say, I need to seek the Lord's help to live a virtuous life right now, when the test of my virtue is on me.

Here's a situation: I promised someone something and I'm not really able to carry through, and I'm tempted to just hope they don't notice. That's the time to call on God: "Lord, I need to be faithful. I need to tell them just why I'm not going to be able to do this. I need to communicate even if it costs me. I've got to live right. I need help right now to overcome this desire to avoid the difficulty, and take care of it."

"Lord, I'm tempted to not carry out this responsibility; it's awfully hard—I need help right now to be

a virtuous person, to do this thing—to do it to the best of my ability. And if I'm simply not able, to communicate what I need to communicate, to take responsibility, to be someone who can be considered faithful." How am I going to do that? Maybe I have a lot of trouble being faithful—my memory is short, or whatever cause there might be, "I need Your help, Lord—You have power to make me virtuous!"

"Lord, I'm really wanting to just splurge on this right now. Lord, I just feel like doing this, and I know that I've got these other things to do." Or maybe, "We're short on money and can't really afford this right now, but I just feel like doing this, and I need Your help now to be temperate, to have self-control—help me right now!" Not, "I feel like sometime later I want to develop some self-control,"



but, "Help me right now, Lord!" "Lord, this person is so trying to me. I know becoming patient is a good long-term goal... No—I need Your grace right now. Help me right now to be patient in this situation." "Lord, I don't really care about this person very much; they aren't very lovable. Lord, help me right now—pour Your love into my heart. Give me grace—right now, with speed. I'm coming to You quick; help me!" You can see, if we "with all diligence," "with all speed," draw near to God and claim His promises, that's about the best we can do, isn't it, and the rest depends upon God.

Brother Peter wants for us the best we can do. Maybe I'm the least patient of people I know. But God can give me grace to become more patient. Maybe I've been self-centered in my life and am not a very virtuous person; God can help me to be more virtuous. "I'm not trying to be as virtuous as so-and-so, I just need to be more virtuous. I need to be virtuous in this situation, by Your grace, Lord."

"I never had much of a natural kindness toward people. I know so-and-so is just a kind person... Lord, I see that in this situation, I need to be kind. It doesn't come to me naturally; help me!"

See, draw near to God, quick! Right now. Because those who don't do such things have forgotten that he was purged from his old sins—what does that mean? **Don't forget the power of God.** If we don't promptly come to God when we need help to live right, we are forgetting that this was the key to our ever getting help in the first place—we came to God.

It wasn't because for many years I resisted God's dealing with me, and then finally God helped—it was because I stopped resisting God and turned myself over to Him and got help from Him who had the power I needed. I don't want to forget that. I don't want to forget and get distracted by the devil saying to me, "You're not a very good person about being very loving to other people"; or, "You're not a very patient person"; "You haven't done very well in this area." "Never mind, it's true—I haven't done well in this area. But, Lord, You brought me from death to life; that's something I couldn't do. You can help me do this, Lord, by Your power." ➡

In the previous issue, we were examining how the work of God is imitated by those who, either individually or as a group, do not hold the living Christ as their actual Head. The analogy was given of cunning imitations performed in the realm of physical life.

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?

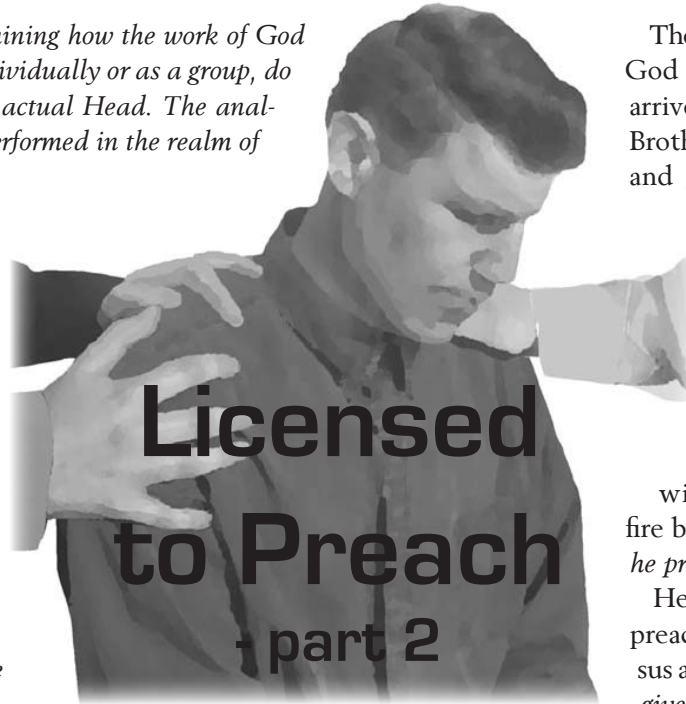
First, we will discuss the Bible picture we have of the calling and ordination of New Testament ministers, and then we will discuss the imitation of that calling and ordination.

The Ordination of Brother Paul

“And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.” Acts 9:10-12

It is very instructive that God did not send Peter, James, John, or any other of the original twelve disciples to Damascus to lay hands on this man, who had only three days before been a persecutor and an enemy of the truth. We only read of Ananias at this point in the Bible—God saw fit to give us just a little slice of this brother's labors in the gospel.

From the very first of the account, we observe the willingness to follow God completely and absolutely—the consecration of this Brother Ananias—and we note with joy and great approval of how he had “all on the altar of sacrifice laid,” and was entirely at the Lord's disposal in all ways and at all times. At first, Ananias wanted to be sure that God was leading him to take this step; but just as soon as this was verified, off this brother went to lay hands on the former blasphemer and enemy of truth.



“And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.” Acts 9:17

The mighty healing power of God came on Saul; he had been praying, humbling himself, dying out to self in all its previous horrible manifestations. As he later testified, *“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”* Acts 26:9 It took him three days of supplication before God to come to the point where God would fill him with the Holy Ghost. He

He was not given authority to do this preaching to them by the disciples of Jesus among whom he labored. He was not given permission to preach by those who seemed to be pillars of the church at Jerusalem.

was divinely assisted in this seeking by the removal of his ability to see physically. When he was ready, God had given him a vision of Brother Ananias (an entirely sanctified man) coming to him and laying hands upon him for the receiving of his sight and the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The vision came true; the very man that God had shown to the blind supplicant arrived, and the power of God fell upon Brother Saul, purifying his heart by faith and giving him his Pentecost. At this point, he immediately began to exercise himself in his place in the body of Christ, wherein the Spirit of God had placed him. *“And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”* Acts 9:20

This is how the Spirit of God within him moved him to do. The fire burned within him, and *“straightway he preached Christ.”*

He was not given authority to do this preaching to them by the disciples of Jesus among whom he labored. He was not given permission to preach by those *“who seemed to be pillars”* of the church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9), nor did they expect him to look to them for approval. In those days—those blessed days—the Lord's people were not cursed with a tendency to look to man. The Spirit of God had purified their hearts so that they could see God instead of man, and they had the marvelous, amazing blessing of being led, both individually and collectively by the Holy Ghost. It was therefore possible for a man who had done what Paul had done to be saved, sanctified, and used of God to preach the gospel in such a way that it blended and harmonized perfectly with the workings of the Spirit of God in them. In short, the gift of God in the newly-created brother made room among others

of the same Spirit. Yea, *“A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.”* Pro 18:16

Nor was this simply an assumption or wishful thinking. It actually happened and was happening. The fruit of it had been produced, was being produced, and was

verifiable and confirmable at any point by any honest inquirer. That was all that was necessary *in the absence of manrule*, for the thing to work as it should and to keep working as it should.

The brother himself recognized the invisible hand that brought visible results

among men redeemed and led of the Holy Ghost. He said, *“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. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.”* Gal 1:15-19 Take note of those words: *“immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”* Among people who are not actually led by the Holy Ghost as these brethren were, these words are a recipe for disaster and confusion—**people who are not actually led by the Holy Ghost must confer with each other often.** If they do not confer with each other, they cannot work together; they will begin to drift apart and evolve in different directions, as the natural diversity of humanity asserts itself. People that are led by the Holy Ghost must commune with the Holy Ghost constantly to (1) stay with God, and (2) stay with each other by staying with God. If they simply profess the first point and render it lip service only, they will not stay together without a lot of fleshly wisdom and effort—and even then, their staying together will be quite different from a people united by God.

What Does Conferral Really Mean?

We want to carefully examine this word *conferred* in the original language of the New Testament. In the King James translation, it occurs three times: Acts 4:15; 25:12; and Galatians 1:16 (quoted above). Each of the usages is a different word, although each is translated *confer(-ed)* in our common translation. The word in Acts 4:15 means “to throw or strike together, to dispute together, to discourse together, to consult together.” The word in Acts 25:12 means “to speak or talk with or together (referring only and merely to the general idea of talking, without reference to the sentiment or subject matter).” The word in Galatians 1:16 puts a different slant on the word. It means

“lay anything additional on one; impart.” That is, the idea of passing authority in the imparting or communicating is spoken of here as *laying anything additional*. So the

Here is the all-important question. Are you **“allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel”?**

apostle says, *“I conferred not with flesh or blood,”* i.e., I did not pass authority in talking with others nor did I receive it. This is in perfect harmony with the context, where he says, *“For they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me.”* And the whole thought agrees perfectly with the brother’s statement, *“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* Gal 1:11-12 In other words, Paul was *licensed to preach the gospel by the Author of the gospel*, and he received no additional authority or permission to preach from man—even from other men of God. *“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”* Gal 1:10

Licensed by God

Now the word *license* means “official or legal permission to do or own a specified thing.” When it is used in Acts 25:16 and 27:3 (where it is translated *liberty*), it involves men giving permission or authorization to men. In 1 Thess. 2:4 we read, *“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”* Here is the official, legal permission, given by Him who owns the copyright to the gospel. Here is the all-important question. Are you **“allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel”?** Do you speak as one who answers to God, not as pleasing men? And does your answering to God plainly and visibly commend the truth to others by the fruit of your life as your heart is tried? *“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God.”* Col 1:25

The *“dispensation”* is the administration of a household, the household of God in this context. It is God’s arrangement of things, His scheme. Brother Paul was made a servant (a minister) *according to God’s dispensation*. In other words, he was called to be a servant to carry out the will of God as the Master would have him do—*“to fulfil the word of God.”* How perfectly this agrees with Song of Solomon 2:7, *“I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.”* The inspired writer thought this so important and crucial that he wrote it three times. If we honor God in His house as the Master of the house, our thoughts are always focused on how He wants it. *“Till He please.”* Have Thine own way; let all be done as Thou wilt. My license is granted to _____. I have no right or desire to proceed beyond what God has authorized or given permission to do or say. Hallelujah!

Recognition by Other Children of God: Why Should Men Ordain Other Men?

If Holy-Ghost-used-men are recognized by the rest of the body as the Holy Ghost uses them, then why should there be a formal ordination at all? Why not just let God do and work without formal recognition?

As we have said, the *established, the settled, the grounded* do not need a formal ordination, but not all in the body are in this condition. *“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.”* Heb 12:12 *“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.”* 1 Th 5:14 *“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”* 1 Cor 11:30 *“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.”* Rom 14:1 This corporate act of the ministry (when things are under the control of the Holy Ghost) steadies those who do not see things well, who are yet carnal and need the purifying fire of the Holy Ghost. But the ordination of a minister by the other ministry was never intended to substitute for the need to be spiritual enough to see God and discern

the Lord's body by the power of the Holy Ghost working within.

When it comes down to it, the ordination of a Holy Ghost minister by other Holy Ghost ministers is just part of the blessing of *seeing God*, instead of just *seeing men*, and it is **impossible to ordain others in the Bible way without a pure heart**. Only the Holy Ghost bring us to Matthew 5:8; only the Holy Ghost can keep within the blessing zone, both individually and as a group.

Recognition of a Spiritual Gift

In one sense, God's minister is ordained over and over as he exercises his calling, both before and after formal recognition. It is an ongoing process. If a formal ordination is a conferral of authority, then there will need to be a process to formally remove that authority if the minister goes astray. But the nature of an ordination of recognition simply marks a formal recognition of where a given ministry is at one point, whereas the ongoing recognition naturally adjusts to the reality of the brother or sister's prosperity in the exercise of their gift.

Now the next question that follows the question of whether you are authorized of God to preach His gospel, would be: How can everyone else *know* that God has called you, that His hand is upon you? There are many people who claim that God is using them, but "*I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.*"^{Jer 23:21} So how do we know whether a person is actually licensed of God to preach His gospel? The answer is in the following verse in Jeremiah: "*But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they*

should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings."^{vs 22} The fruit of a ministry actually commissioned of God and used of Him will always involve **real deliverance** from sin. As Brother John puts it in 1 John 4:2-3, "*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every*

spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." The language sounds a little complicated to our ears today, but the meaning is very blunt and plain. Your life tells a story—it makes a confession. If that story is that Jesus has moved into your flesh, your body, and therefore you are a new creature in Christ Jesus—being, living, and doing as Jesus would do—then anyone can tell that the Spirit of God has done this, for *only the Spirit of God* can change an unholy man to a holy man and enable a genuine holy life to be lived while in the flesh. Other spirits than the Holy Spirit can dramatically change a man, but the change is not a holy change—somehow it will fall short of the life that Jesus lived while He was in the body. Such a short-of-the-glory-of-God life will make another kind of confession, and that kind of confession is *not of God*. In all the variety and diversity of those different kinds of spirits, there is one common characteristic: they are all antichrist, i.e., *against Christ*.

This crucial distinguishment between *of Christ* and *antichrist* applies to more than preaching, but it is also a distinguishing fruit between a true minister of God and one who is not. Like begets like. The Spirit of Christ in a ministry will continually seek to bring others to that standard, while another spirit will continually seek to bring others to a less-

"But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." - Jer. 23:22

than-Christ standard—another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel (2 Cor. 11:4). It is not what is *professed* that matters; it is actually what results—what follows the exercise of that ministry. A minister that manifests the fear of man, love of an organization, and love of a system of human order and government will produce true to its kind, while a minister that fears

God above men, loves His works and sees them, and reveres Holy Ghost order and government will insist upon hearers having the Holy Ghost, seeing God by means of that same Holy Spirit, and being actually led by the hand of God.

The Ordination of New Testament Church Ministers

The word *ordain(ed)* in the New Testament has been translated from at least ten different words in the original. The most common meaning of at least four of these words is "to set, to put, to place, to lay [Jn. 15:16; 1 Tim. 2:7]; to set down, constitute [Tit. 1:5; Heb. 5:1 ('*begotten*'); 8:3]; to arrange, put in order of ranks [Acts 13:48; Rom. 13:1]; to arrange throughout, dispose fully in order [1 Cor. 7:17; Eph. 2:10]." One of these words occurs twice, and it means "to stretch out the hand, to hold up the hand as in voting [Acts 14:23; 2 Cor. 8:19 ('*chosen*')]". Some of these refer to the ordination of men by men; some refer to the ordination of certain teaching; and a great number refer to the ordination of men by God to certain offices and to the ordination by God of certain truths and teaching.

"*And he [Jesus] ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.*"^{Mk 3:14-15} (See also Jn. 15:16.)

"*Whereunto [by the man Christ Jesus, vs 5] I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*"^{1 Tim 2:7}

"*But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*"^{1 Cor 12:18}

"*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the*

flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."^{Acts 20:28}

These are all scriptures which speak of how men are *ordained of God* to preach His truth. We will now quote scriptures that pertain to *the ordination of men by men*.

“And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.” Acts 14:23

“And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.” Acts 16:4

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” 1 Tim 4:14

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.” 2 Tim 1:6

“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.” 1 Tim 5:22

Conferral or Recognition

Men can regard their ordaining of other men as *a conferral of authority*, or they can regard it as *a recognition of authority already divinely conferred*. If the only scriptures we had on record were the records in Acts 14:23, 16:4, 1 Tim. 4:14, and 2 Tim. 1:6, we might believe that men with the gift from God were able to bestow that gift on others, but Acts 20:28 helps us to properly understand what we are reading. Brother Paul was addressing the elders at Ephesus (vs. 17). He plainly tells them that he received his ministry directly from Jesus (vs. 24), and he tells them that **they received their ministry directly from the Holy Ghost—“to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.”** This directly harmonizes with what he told the Corinthians—**“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.”** 1 Cor 12:18 And we see that this is true, not of certain members only, such as the apostles, but God has set **every one** of the members in the body. Then it is plain that Paul and the other brethren were involved in **recognition of what God was doing**. Men recognizing what God had done. Men recognizing what God had bestowed, what God had conferred. The power and authority lay with God *firsthand*, and was given to whomever in the body God had selected. It was not passed secondhand through a minister or group of ministers; it was given by God to the recipient *firsthand*. Accordingly, we read, *“Lay hands*

suddenly on no man.” Why not lay hands on a man suddenly, hastily, for ordination? Because God may not actually have bestowed ministerial power and authority on that man; he may not be as it appears, and if he is on his own—preaching without a license from God, so to speak, then it is very important that ministers who are authorized of God not take part in this false ministry—*“Neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.”* 1 Tim 5:22 We see that the common sect practice of ordaining and thus empowering a ministry to work among them can actually make a participant a *“partaker of other men’s sins,”* as can incautiously laying hands on a minister who is not what he or she seems to be at the point of ordination. Give it time; watch the fruits carefully; wait on God; don’t be in a hurry; don’t rush recognition; let what God has done (if it really is God at work) thoroughly prove itself. Let the brother or sister who *may* be used of God, give *“full proof”* of their ministry (2 Tim. 4:5).

Now if a man is sympathetic toward the concept of men giving authority to other men in the name of Christ—rather than Christ directly enduing men, and other men of God recognizing the gift of God—then the language of Brother Paul toward Brother Timothy might seem to support their prejudice. I will quote again the two scriptures in Paul’s epistles to Timothy. *“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”* 1 Tim 4:14 *“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.”* 2 Tim 1:6 The phrases, *“with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,”* and *“which is in thee by the putting on of my hands,”* would seem to indicate that Paul gave something to Timothy, rather than just recognizing that Timothy already had something from God. But a closer look at the two texts gives a different slant to Brother Timothy’s ordination, at which Brother Paul was present, and wherein he laid hands on Brother Timothy. Paul refers to Timothy’s gift as *“the gift of God”*—i.e., *God’s gift*—and this gift was predicted by

prophecy (from God, who alone knows and knew the future). In a general sense, both the gift from God, with its corresponding authority and anointing, *and* the recognition of others with the same gift from God are all part of what God has endowed for the preaching of the gospel.

A parallel is found in water baptism, which is administered by men as *“the answer of a good conscience,”* and in this sense, water baptism saves us (that is, it is part of our overall salvation). But Peter is careful to record that water baptism is *“not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.”* 1 Pet 3:21 It does not actually deliver the soul, but symbolically, in an outward testimony, shows *what has already actually happened in the soul*—hence *“the answer of a good conscience”* (the result of deliverance). In other words, men

Human ordination does not confer power and authority, but simply recognizes that God has already done the conferring.

recognize what God has already done. *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.”* 1 Cor 12:13 This baptism cannot be water baptism, for it is accomplished by the Spirit of God, instead of a man. It is baptism in the blood of Jesus. It is echoed and witnessed to by the outward rite of water baptism, symbolically portraying a death, a burial, and a resurrection.

If we had no other scripture about water baptism than Acts 22:16, *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord,”* then we might well conclude that actual *“filthiness of the flesh”* (sin) is washed away by water in water baptism; but we understand from Brother Peter that the washing is a *“like figure,”* not the *actual* washing away of sin by the blood of the Lamb. In a sense, too, the inward work and the outward work are all part of our salvation, for the outward testimony is an important part of the new life.

In the same way, ordination (recognition) of a minister by other ministers is a

reflection of what God has already done or is doing at the moment. Human ordination does not confer power and authority, but simply recognizes that God has already done the conferring.

The attitudes toward conferral or toward recognition are subtle among people who practice less formality in their church activities. What is the outlook of the people toward the newly-ordained minister? Is there an instant giving of respect and recognition *as a result of the ordination*? Was there a conferral of authority in the eyes of the adherents *because the minister was ordained by others*? In a recognition-only attitude, each child of God who is established, settled, and grounded in the truth has been “ordaining” the minister from the beginning of his public ministry by recognizing and appreciating the hand of God upon the brother or sister. There is a clear and growing recognition that there is more to the ministry than just the brother or sister’s efforts—God is using one of His vessels in the body as it pleases Him. When this fact is formally recognized (whether early or later in this person’s ministry), there is an agreement among the others that the hand of God has truly and rightly been acknowledged. When things began to slip, and men are ordained for reasons other than a clear recognition of Divine gifting, human politics take the ascendancy, and the various and changing ways of men’s wisdom are substituted for the leadership of the Holy Ghost.

Results of a God-Licensed Child of God

Here is an example of a Holy Ghost man in action: “*And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*” ¹ Cor 2:1-5 The brother was aware that faith could stand in the wis-

dom of men, but he eschewed that and labored instead, that those who listened and followed would stand *in the power of God*. “*But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*” ¹ Jn 3:21

There are many good imitations of Holy Ghost work, but there is only one genuine kind. All imitations fall short of the real thing in some vital way; all are short of holy living before God in such a way that a soul will be *unacceptable before the judgment bar of Christ*. “*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*” ¹ Jn 4:1

A great number of licensed-by-something-else preachers appear to be used of God and have a broad spectrum of appeal that appears wholesome and sound, but there is always something missing or something added that is less or more than what God requires. There is something short of holiness. It may be a lack of exclusive faith in God, or it may be a lack of humility, or the almost-but-not-quite-gospel may be short of real, genuine love for others, especially those who do us wrong. It may substitute love of a group of people (idolatry) for loving-the-Lord-with-all-our-heart-soul-mind-and-strength. The true gospel includes all things that pertain to life and godliness—nothing is left out; all things that pertain are included. It will do to live by, and it will do to die by. It will work when we give account of our lives to God. It will make it possible for you to make heaven. **It is worth the cost.** Praise God! “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.*” ^{Rom 1:16-19}

We who are licensed by heaven to preach the gospel know that it is the **only**

thing that works. Yea, “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*” ^{Acts 4:12}

We look with horror and great grief at the less-than-complete-gospels or the something-added-gospels, noting the unacceptable results in the lives of precious souls. If you do not want to end up as the people portrayed in Matt. 25:44-46, be *sure... be very sure* that you are really clear with God and following the true gospel preached unto you by the truly authorized of God.

Men’s Imitation of God’s Licensing

We live on a constantly changing battlefield between the forces of right and wrong. No sooner does some device of the enemy become generally discredited and exposed, than a new version appears. As soon as the evils of a formal church government were revealed, our adversary sought to replace the formal with the informal. In other words, formal church membership was replaced with informal church membership. Instead of a written list of who was in, revealing who was not a member, an informal method evolved. “If you don’t attend the national campmeeting, then something must be wrong with you.” The scripture, “*know them which labor among you,*” ¹ Th 5:12 is wrested to provide a standard of acceptance or non-acceptance. “I don’t know you, so I don’t accept you—I have *a right* not to accept you unless I know you and approve of you.” In other words, each new minister is on probation before the people until an informal acceptance is either given or withheld, whether God called them or not. The new laborer is licensed to preach by public opinion, informally, based on attendance and consensus. Because the church ways of men tend to follow their fleshly conditioning in their secular government, the “vote mentality” of our day prompts the average person (who walks not in the Spirit, but walks as a natural man) to feel comfortable with informal voting—expressed by either giving or withholding approval of whoever steps into a leadership role. The effect is to make the diplomatic minister more political,

It is not necessary to have a written creed to be Babylonish; an unwritten creed, understood by the adherents, will do just as well. And it is not necessary to formally license ministers; there are informal ways that will serve the purpose just as efficiently.

sensitive to the rise and fall of public opinion among the “church.” The effect is to penalize the politically less sensitive, even to the point of bringing the fear of man upon them.

It is not necessary to have a written creed to be Babylonish; an unwritten creed, understood by the adherents, will do just as well. And it is not necessary to formally license ministers; there are informal ways that will serve the purpose just as efficiently. Add an effective grapevine of talk and tale-bearing, and people will be able to govern the group just as effectively as a formal human government can do so. It will be more clannish and composed of more family/kinfolk ties than a formal organization tends to be, but it will work just as well, for the most part. Where the informal doesn't work as well as a formal approach, a formal approach will develop; the informal will be “patched” with a formal patch. This is what happens to the concept of *ordination* in an informal setting.

People, who try to imitate the Holy Ghost in allowing the freedoms and liberties of the pulpit natural to congregations actually led by the Holy Ghost, are setting themselves up for trials and nightmares of such intensity that they have driven many a minister to a nervous breakdown. These attempts may start out as a tentative attempt to manipulate, to deal with a problem on hand. “Let's confine this troublesome minister to certain localities—safe localities.” “Let him preach before a committee—(Uhh, that's one of the taboo words)—I mean, before a group of brethren who are really established and ‘pillars.’” After watching said minister for a while, there still is not unity about whether to

receive him, especially if the minister really is one of God's ministers. (God has a way of calling ministers who do not fit well into the works of men; see 1 Cor. 1:26-29.) Some want to extend him liberty, while others are not so sure that he “fits in,” so they want him on probation a while longer.

All the while, he is bombarded with testimonies about how in unity they all are and exhortations to “feel his liberty” and “to go slow,” until he is confused and uncertain.

Unhindered vs. Hindered Faith in God

Where did all this confusion and conflicting counsel come from? Well, back when things were spiritual, the brethren all waited on God and really *trusted Him* to keep the city. When things went wrong, they went on trusting—they refused to take matters into their own hands. They had all the sheep consecrated, too. And all else that happened, they had on the altar before God, too. One heard frequent remarks, such as this: “Well, it's not our work—the work is God's. It's up to Him to allow or not allow as He sees fit.” They meant it, too. They just wouldn't grasp hold of the ark, but they kept praying when things began to go wrong. They prayed for protection for the little ones; they prayed for conviction of the spiritually needy; they prayed that the work of God would be accomplished in even the efforts of the adversary; and **they prayed not in vain**. God was indeed their God and He came to their aid and that right early. Praise His name! All of this is a fulfillment of Psalms 127:1-2, and I want to testify *that it is a great privilege to fully trust God to be God and to consecrate to take the consequences if He chooses not to intervene*. As the brethren before the king testified, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning

fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” Dan 3:16-18 Here is a full answer indeed! We will trust Thee, O God, whether Thou deliver us or not in this life. It is all on the altar. All the results are in the hands of Him who knows all things, Who always works after the counsel of His own (perfect) will, Who loves us and will never fail us, no matter what we face. Hallelujah!

Now I would like to say that this consecration and this trust take out the fear **utterly**. Glory! If Sennacherib sends his servant, Rabshakeh, to blaspheme before the ears of the laity of the city in the language of the Jews, we are not afraid with any great amazement, for our trust is in the Lord God who ruleth heaven and earth. Yea, “*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.*” Psa 121:1-5 He is able to shield the tender lambs; yea, He is able to make them grow and prosper in the face of all that the adversary can contrive. Yea, “*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.*” Psa 23:5 If we had not such a Protector and Keeper, we would be afraid, we would be consumed with fears. But our trust is in Him. When we have obeyed Him and restrained ourselves from laying hands upon *His* ark, it inspires a mighty faith, an unquenchable faith, a faith that mounts up to the skies, in our God—and He is more than adequate to the need. Praise His name!

When we have obeyed Him and restrained ourselves from laying hands upon His ark, it inspires a mighty faith, an unquenchable faith, a faith that mounts up to the skies, in our God

“We are kept by the power of God!
We are kept by the power of God!
By trusting, obeying,
By watching, and praying,
We are kept by the power of God!”

But, O Beloved, when we venture into where it displeases God for us to go, when we try to accomplish the work of God in our own strength through conceit and misplaced zeal, then this confidence in God is gone, and we are plagued with fears. Fears of what can happen. Fears of what will happen. Fears of each other. Fears of ourselves. Out from under the assured umbrella of Omnipotence, we are starkly naked and an open prey. If nothing bad *seems* to be happening while we are thus exposed, it is just because it is working silently, deceptively, and shock and horror are just around the corner. Just as surely as one who cools off in his consecration and begins to take his experience into his hands is in trouble,

If you don't have it all committed to God, you will be nervous—and you will have good reason to be nervous.

whether it appear yet or no, so is a body of Christians who have turned away from the government on His shoulder to one upon their own—even if the main cause of the substitution was to “help” the Lord, so to speak. He doesn't need our help. He doesn't need us to inform Him of developments—He already knows, and knows all the details, too.

“So-and-so has been such a help to me!” The exalting of a vessel begins with thoughts like this. Without God using Him, So-and-so could not have even helped himself, much less you. Listen: “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” ^{Jn 5:44} One of the things which a real death to self inside ourselves will teach us, is that a real death to self is the only thing that God can really freely work through. If all hindrances in us—especially self—are brought down and repudiated, then God is pleased to anoint; He will work without hindrance. But when honor is received *one of another* and the *honor that cometh from God only* is not supreme in our lives, then we cannot

believe. And God has made believing the condition for receiving.

If I cannot believe in God as I should, *I will believe in something*. That may mean believing in myself (a dead end, for sure). Or it may mean believing in a group of selves. But I will believe in something. Maybe I give myself to the teaching of certain doctrines. Maybe I believe in certain ways of teaching, in certain kinds of influence, and I am willing to labor and sacrifice there. But all of this is different from just flat out trusting God absolutely—just confiding *everything* in the hands of the Almighty.

If you don't have it all committed to God, you will be nervous—and you will have good reason to be nervous.

People put other people through all kinds of probations, interrogations, requirements, and investigations because they are nervous. Spirit-led people have their faith in God, but without

this, due diligence assumes all kinds of fantastic shapes and forms, because the adversary is so wily and deception is so subtle. Fair and impartial watching becomes impossible. Who should be trusted? How far should they be trusted? Who watches the watchers? And so on.

There are disasters. There are injustices. Truly it is not in men to direct their steps, even when soaked in Bible doctrine, tradition, and teaching. And worse of all, holding the truth (in unrighteousness) in this way yields a harvest full of regret and woe. And ahead lies the Chief Shepherd, who said, “*But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*” ^{Mt 18:6} Jesus remembers everything. He is coming again to call every one of us to account. He knows every stumbling block that the sect machinery has put before every child of His. His eyes are upon you, and His eyes are upon me. Let us take heed. Let us take warning. In the end, the works of men are swallowed by the judgments of God. ➤

NOT BOSS ANYMORE



“I'm not boss anymore,” my little friend told me. We were sitting in the strawberry field and the conversation had recently turned to ages and relationships. I had just explained that being the oldest in my family meant that I needed to be a helper. From all the wisdom of his four years, he agreed. After all, he was the oldest in his family, too. “And I'm not boss anymore,” he said.

“Who is boss in your family?” I asked, curious to know his perspective.

“My Dad is.”

“And who was boss before?”

A hint of a chuckle crept into his voice when he replied. “I guess it was me.”

“So why aren't you boss anymore?” I asked. His observations were fascinating me.

“Because I'm bigger now.”

It was a profound thought. He had pinpointed the true mark of maturity alright: when we are “big” enough to know that someone else is boss, that we need to be taught and led. ➤

FOUNDATION TRUTH

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