

FOUNDATION TRUTH

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Dear Reader

"I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Psa. 16:8

How do we "set" the Lord before us? The Hebrew word can also suggest the idea of adjusting things. In other words, we can adjust ourselves so that the Lord is before us—we can change our attitudes, refocus our thoughts, humble ourselves, or whatever it takes to meet this condition: *"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."* Jas. 4:8

Years ago, in a book of letters written by a father advising his son, who was about to get married, I read the following story.

A young couple received a large vase from one of the wife's relatives. The husband abhorred the vase and said so to his wife. She, on her part, although not particularly fond of the vase herself, insisted on keeping it on their coffee table to honor the relative. Seeing that discussion was becoming just argument, he stopped, and considered awhile.

Now the couple were accustomed to spending time in the evening in the living room, he in his chair reading, and she in her chair reading or working on some handwork. They would pass a pleasant time exchanging experiences of the day, or perhaps he would mention something interesting from his reading and they would discuss it; then they would return to their occupations for a few minutes, and then visit some more.

The next evening, the husband made a point of positioning the vase in a prominent place on the table, particularly blocking their view of each other. He would read for a little while, then crane his neck around to the side to see her while he shared something from his book; and she, likewise, would find herself leaning to the side and craning her neck to see him while she shared something with him. And so it went on that whole evening.

The following evening when the husband got home from work, the vase had disappeared from sight, and never came out again.

Now this was a story about human relationships, but there is something for us

in it concerning our relationship with the Lord. Sometimes we find ourselves having difficulties in setting the Lord before us. It is our privilege to call upon the Lord to bring whatever it is out to the middle of the table, so-to-speak, so that we can easily recognize that *this* is what is hindering our keeping the Lord before us. Maybe I'm treasuring something in my life, or cherishing a certain idea about something or somebody, or clinging to certain plans. The Lord is able to make it obvious to me that it is getting in the way of our relationship, and that something besides the Lord is "set before me." It will also prove how much we value our relationship with God. The young wife valued the clear vision between herself and her husband in those evening visits enough to put the vase away.

I recently found myself reflecting over a long Bible discussion in which a variety of spiritual conditions and various amounts of spiritual light were indicated. I was finding myself perplexed how to consider the discussion and the people so that the Lord would be pleased, when He gave me the thought expressed in our scripture, of setting Him before me. I began to ask the Lord to stand between me and the thoughts and people instead of them standing between myself and Him. Soon I found myself asking Him to show me His thoughts about each one, so that I would know how to pray for each one. I found myself blessed and no longer perplexed or "moved" by the situation. Oh, what a blessed privilege to *"set the LORD always before me"*!

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

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

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

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In This Issue

edited by Rick Erickson and others

- 4 The Word of Truth**
Questions and answers from the firing line in a series of written exchanges. Current topic is the use of property in the church.
- 7 Tell What He's Done for You**
God allows troubles and He delivers from troubles..
- 9 God's Promise to the Believer**
Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?
- 11 Stronger Than He**
A poem about our strong Savior
- 12 The Arrogance of Advantage**
God's way of giving us knowledge vs. our way of obtaining it...
- 14 Songs**
Holy Spirit, Be My Guide
His Hand is Guiding Me
- 16 The Abomination of Desolation; or, When Is It Time to Flee?**
As long as He is there among them, there is no way that the enemies of the people of God can triumph over them.
- 19 The Lukewarm Christian**
The delay was only to give a certain opportunity for the fruitless condition to change to fruit-bearing.
- 21 The Governor of the Soul**
The key to the whole thing is to let go and let God.
- 23 Only a Servant: Part III**
Method is tested and unexpected opportunities are opened through tragedy.

About the covers:

In Matthew 6:10, we read: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." God's will is done perfectly in heaven, and everything is happening as it should be there. When we humble ourselves to pray at the foot of the ladder to heaven (using the image from Jacob's dream in Gen. 28:12), we are enabled to see what God's will is and bring it down to earth (in our lives). This is contrasted on the back cover with the common ways man aspires to address our problems and learn about things.



THE WORD OF TRUTH

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

“Houses and Lands”

What should we do as good stewards of property?

There is a project now taking shape in this center whereby the activities to go on in the center will yield income for the ministry as well for the workers' needs. Now, my major problem right now is whether to treat this project as a personal project, or as a church project. I want it to serve as a source of income for the Lord's workers. So if I make it personal, my immediate blood family (sons and daughters) might come in, in the future, and take it over as a family business. If I register it in the name of the church and have it managed as such, there is danger of it turning into a movement's business venture with its accompanying evils.

Reply:

“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” Lk. 16:8

I feel greatly burdened about this subject. I perceive that if the children of light develop greatly in the wisdom of the children of this world, they lose something immensely valuable and irreplaceable. The wisdom from above (Jas. 3:15-17) will teach us a different lesson than the wisdom from below.

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” 1 Tim. 6:6-8

I notice that the apostle said nothing about shelter or property. *“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body*

than raiment?” Mt. 6:25 Houses and lands are mentioned in Mark 10:29-30, *“And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”* Notice the leaving of house or lands, then the receiving of houses and lands, with persecutions.

A picture begins to emerge, and this picture is entirely consistent with the life that Jesus lived while in the flesh. It is a picture of a human being who regards all the fleshly necessary things of life as **a means to an end**. When they no longer meet this end, they are to be discarded, or regarded as a thing of little worth in themselves. According to this thinking, the things of spiritual life are the invaluable contents of a beverage to be consumed and treasured, while the things of the physical life are like a paper cup—just *a means to an end*.

Many saints fail to walk in that blessed fellowship and intimate communion that their souls crave. They long to have Christ more real in their life. They yearn for a greater consciousness of His presence. But they come short of their souls' cravings because they are not baptized fully into Christ's death. They live too much to the flesh. They live too much for earthly things. They have too great an admiration for earthly things, a fine home, fine furniture, fine automobile. Look closely into the life of Christ. Not once did He ever manifest an admiration of the fine things of the world. He admired God in nature, but never admired nature of itself. If He admired the works of man, it was not what man had done, but what God had helped him do. In all His sight-seeing He never lost sight of God. This is a precious secret

in the Christian life.

—C. E. Orr, *Helps to Holy Living*

In Hebrews 11:13, we are told of the Old Testament saints, who *“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.”* Consider the weight of these words: *“strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”*

My wife and I took a long trip by car. We endeavored to live as cheaply as possible, so the rear seat of the car was basically a traveling kitchen. The car was filled with the necessities, including gospel literature and the ability to print it, in such a way that there was just room for the two of us. While on our trip, we observed an inviting rocking chair for sale. We were thousands of miles from home. The chair might have been something to acquire if we were home, but the only way we could have taken it then on the trip, was to tie it to the roof of the car. We were strangers and pilgrims on this trip; we were not at home. It would have been ridiculous to have gone about the country acquiring things for home; it would have been at cross-purposes with the entire point of the trip.

Now this is a spiritual lesson. Many people claim to be going to heaven. They profess to be pilgrims and strangers in this world, but they do not act as pilgrims and strangers. Their lives reflect rocking chairs and many other inappropriate things, all tied on and actually hindering the spiritual life. The wisdom from above will teach you to discard a lot of things; it will strip you for the race.

Not only is the accumulation of earthly things and a retentive attitude toward them destructive to your spiritual life, it is destructive to others, too. The estates, the fine things of this world, become a focal point to others. *“And one of the company*

said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Lk. 12:13-15 Jesus went on to relate the story of the rich man, and concluded by saying, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." vs. 21

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor 4:18 This is a strong teaching for looking at eternal things, but it also teaches **not looking at temporal things**. If I receive food from a tin can, my attention is on the food. One can see right away that something is awry if I value the can equally, above, or anywhere close to how I value the food. The container, while needful at the time, is of small importance in the overall scheme of things, therefore I regard it not or deem it of transitory value.

In a certain locality of this country, a congregation of saints prospered spiritually for years. They acquired a chapel, a dining hall, land, etc., and they used these earthly things as a means to an end. They began to leave this life, one by one, and thus left all the means to an end, too. There were certain people in the community who did not serve the Lord as these others had done, but they highly respected the memory of the children of God, and they continued to pay the taxes on the property for many years. After over twenty years, it became evident that God was not raising up a work there again, and that they were clinging to the husks of the fruit of God. So great was their reverence for what had been among them, that they did not want to personally profit from the sale of the place, so they donated it to the government. It is a war memorial museum today. How do the saints feel about the matter?

"I'll follow all the way, I'll never, never stray,
This world no more can win my love;
I've left it all behind, more lasting joys to find,
My treasures all are stored above."

This is the attitude of a person whose eye is single, who regards all earthly possessions as only a means to an end, who knows that we will most certainly leave all of this behind. In the end, it will be burned up, along with all earthly things.

It is fleshly thinking to try to establish an earthly legacy of earthly things. As the wise man said, "Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: **because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he**

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Down here, nothing lasts.*

have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun." Eccl 2:18-19

Down here, nothing lasts.

"All in this world is dross;
Its pleasures soon decay;
Its honors prove a snare;
Its treasures fly away."

The perishable and slippery nature of earthly things should cause us to dispense with them as we do with perishable food. It can only be preserved so long, and if we are not able to preserve it, it must be given away or go to waste. I know of another chapel in another locality. This chapel was lovingly built by consecrated labor, but the saints who built it and worshiped there are long gone from this earth. The chapel is kept by descendants who have chosen not to live as those who lived before. The chapel deteriorates and rots year by year. It is just a chapel, just a means to an end, and that end appears to have been accomplished.

If the work of God requires a chapel or some other temporal thing, that thing may be needed beyond the lifetime of the one or ones who first acquired it. There is only one way to be sure of whether or not the means-to-an-end should be disposed of at any given point, and that is to ask the Master. That is just what a good steward should do. In Jerusalem, at a certain time, it was the will of God for most all of the saints to dispose of their houses and lands (Acts 4:34-35). At that time, for a while, the apparent use of the proceeds was to benefit the widows, etc. Any thinking person could see that the needs of widows, etc., would far outstrip the ability of those who gave. In other words, there would always be more needs than there would be those who would give all their property. The consumers would outnumber the producers, so to speak. But because the saints had an eye single to the will of God, they just gave and left the results with Him. Behold! The will of God was for most of them to be scattered by persecution and to go everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:1,4). They would have lost those houses and lands, anyhow, as well as the blessing that came from obeying the will of God.

God has a process of bestowing and taking away that will adjust us just right. We read of it in Genesis 26:12-22. Isaac dug once again the wells of his father, Abraham, and found that these wells were taken from him. He moved on and dug out other wells of his father. These, too, were taken from him. He moved on yet again. This time his adversaries did not bother him. It is plain that Isaac had his eyes on God, rather than God's blessings. He trusted that God would make a way for him, and he kept trusting and starting over. In the end, God did make a way for him.

"God's way is best; I will not murmur,
Although the end I may not see;
Where'er He leads, I'll meekly follow,
God's way is best, is best for me."

This sense of detachment from all earthly things, the means-to-an-end mentality, carries over into other things that are of time and place. A brother who was much used of the Lord finished his course and was

taken from this world. Another brother was wondering, "Who will take the place of this brother?" And he was helped to realize that this ministry was *finished*. Another ministry might do some of the same things, but that would be *another ministry*. Elisha carried the mantle of Elijah, and both were prophets of the Lord, but Elisha's ministry was not just a continuation of Elijah's ministry. It was given of God, complete and whole in itself. It was built upon the one who went before in the same way that all truth is interconnected, in the same way that we are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles who went before us. Let us keep our eyes on the Giver, rather than just His gifts.

Now, with respect to our own flesh and blood, the Bible tells us, "*The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.*"² COR 12:14 This should be a matter of prayer for a godly parent. How much should be left (of what God has provided) for the children (perhaps unsaved), and how much should be disposed of right now? The steward is asking the Master what to do with what has been placed in his hand. A certain proportion rightfully belongs to your blood family unless the Lord forbids it. It is a matter of prayer just what I should leave behind of this world's goods to those who are mine after the flesh, starting with my companion. With some of us, God will so strip us for the race, that our only inheritance to leave is godly living.

It is tempting to think that we can make it easier on the future generation of gospel workers by leaving facilities, money, etc., but I believe that we leave more than we know if we attempt to do so. We leave a lack of struggle. We bypass God's process with the ones following, unless we leave it

at God's direction. Our God is so able that He can easily raise whatever is necessary for His children to do His will in any generation. God is not dependent on legacies. If we unwittingly doubt this by our actions, we give place to the devil, and the earthly things thus passed on become a temptation and a focal point for evil work. It may be, that at some point, the brass serpent should be discarded, although it has been used of God in the past. Only God is able to tell us what to do.

In conclusion, **keep your eyes on God**. Lean not to your own understanding. Acquire and dispose just as the Spirit of God would have you do. Keep everything on the altar. Whether everything is consecrated as it should be is always shown when the Master asks the steward to dispose of something. "*And he said, **take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.***"^{Gen 22:2-3} This was the son for whom Abraham had given up Ishmael, but there was no hesitation in Abraham. He rose up **early in the morning**. His eyes were upon God. When Isaac, in his innocence, asked the piercing question, "*Where is the sacrifice?*" then Abraham replied, "*My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.*"^{vs. 8} We are told that Abraham trusted that God was even able to raise him from the dead (Heb. 11:19).

It would appear that you have one more well to dig out, dear brother. "*Be not weary in well doing.*"² Th. 3:13 ➔

It is tempting to think that we can make it easier on the future generation of gospel workers by leaving facilities, money, etc., but I believe that we leave more than we know if we attempt to do so. We leave a lack of struggle. We bypass God's process with the ones following, unless we leave at God's direction.

The First Psalm

1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

TELL WHAT HE'S DONE FOR YOU

Why God Caused a Ruckus

It was an amazing act of God, and now I can say that I'm really thankful.

I make my living driving a truck with double-trailers. I had stopped near the end of my day to refuel at a large truck stop. Having almost run out of fuel, I was grateful to have made it to the there. I planned to drive a few hours more that night, hoping to make it all the way home.

Once I was done fueling, I pulled the truck forward and parked, facing the truck stop entryway, following the usual procedure before going into the building to get my receipt. I locked the door, leaving the lights on, and went in. After getting my receipt, I was going to do something else, but happened to look back outside. Imagine my horror as I saw the headlights of my truck coming right toward me. I tore outside as quick as I could, and leaped up onto the truck step. Facing the locked door, I frantically fumbled for the key so I could get in and set the brake. It was an awful, awful feeling—here I was, on a truck weighing 101,000 lbs. fully loaded with lumber, heading straight for the entryway of the building!

I did the stupidest thing—attempt to pull the truck back with my own strength—of course, that didn't help anything. The truck bucked over the curb, and then plowed into the aluminum-extruded, glass-fronted entryway... *ka-BOOOOM!* Smashed windows, smashed doors, smashed everything! Everyone in the truck stop froze and looked out.

The truck had stopped, nose buried in the entrance. I frantically got in, turned on the engine, and backed up over the curb again. I was humiliated to no end, embarrassed, completely panicked, and my whole body was shaking. The manager of the truck stop came out and asked me if I was alright and what had happened. I asked her if she minded if I pulled the truck over to the neighboring lot—I knew there were going to be a lot of people around, and I didn't want to do business with the sheriff right there in front of everybody, as the center of attention. She kindly gave permission, and I assured her that I wasn't going to drive off. I pulled the truck over there, called the insurance company, and then called my office and told them what had happened.

I hadn't set my brakes—I always do! For eight years of driving, it's a knee-jerk reaction. There's a button you pull out that sets the brakes. I don't know what I was thinking—I just *didn't* think. The Lord allowed me to forget, and it caused all of this. Actually, the weirdest thing about this whole matter was that when I went into the truck stop, the thought occurred to me, "Did I set the brakes?" and I answered myself, "Of course, I did."

The sheriff was very, very kind to me. He seemed to think that it was a minor incident, since nobody was injured. Nobody was in the entrance or got injured by the shattering glass.

When that was done, I tried to calm down—I called several brothers for prayer, but only succeeded in getting ahold of one of them. Around 10:15 I headed up the road a little bit. I talked to my wife, and she helped me to see that I needed to give it over to the Lord. This was a big thing because I was beating myself up to no end. I felt like there was rest for me to obtain if I would only give this to the Lord.

I reconciled myself to the fact that the Lord had allowed me to forget—that He was in charge, and He'd take care of it all. I was surprised at the rest I found—I had a really good sleep.

In the morning, I called in to the yard and they wanted me to come in so they could look at the damage (which, by the way, was very minor on the truck). As I got closer to the yard, I began to struggle again with the whole situation. I thought that I would probably lose my job over it. I told the Lord that I was ready to go through this if this was His way to move me on to another job, but I was praying that the Lord would grant me favor in the eyes of my boss. As soon as I gave up the matter completely to the Lord, I was at rest about it. When I got to the yard, I parked in the way that I usually do at the end of the day, as though I was finished.

I got out of the truck, and my boss came out with his usual serious expression on his face. He looked at the truck.

"You did a little boo-boo, I see."

"Yeah, I'm really sorry about your truck."

"So, do you think you are going to make this mistake again?"

"No."

"So, aren't you going to fuel up?"

"Well, I figured you wanted to look at the truck first, and then you would want to get rid of me."

"Is that what you want?"

"No."

"Well, go fuel your truck, and carry on."

He wasn't unkind at all, and said, "You know, I had a truck roll on me once. If that situation happens again, jump up on your truck and disconnect that red air hose, and that will cause the trailer brakes to apply."

"Oh, that's a great thing to keep in mind next time."



When you have a particular skill in a particular trade, it is easy to lean on your own experience. But it doesn't matter how good I am at a trade, or what schooling or training or skillfulness I get, my strength and ability is of God. In the end, the Lord can allow you to make a real blunder. I realized that I needed to lean on the Lord a lot more. It really made me humble, and reconciled to that. I accepted the fact that I had made this mistake, and I'm going to ask Him and trust Him to help me not to make more.

It seemed like such a big thing that caused such a stir. That was the only way for me to really see this for my good. I know that I need to be looking to the Lord each day for strength and help to do my job—if I don't, eventually it will catch up with me.

—*from a brother*

Healed of AIDS

As I write this [2009], my mind rests on one woman we found toiling in a little hothouse. She was trying to make food and sell it to the hungry workers who were working in a relief center nearby. She looked up as we sat in the eating room and asked us, "Are you people preachers?" We said, yes, we are preachers, and that we had good news for her. We told her about Jesus and how He was ready to deliver her from sins and disease. She forgot all about her work, knelt down in the little room and prayed her soul into peace. Then she asked us: "Can Jesus heal me of AIDS?" We said, yes, for He is all-powerful and can do anything. We read Luke 1:37 to her: "*For with God nothing shall be impossible*" and left her to believe it and get healed. We found her in church on Sunday, telling us that she had been examined and declared free from AIDS virus. God can do the impossible. Glory to His name! Who is willing to go out and tell the good news to the lost world?

—*from a minister in Kenya*

A Testimony of Conversion and God's Help

I was born into a Muslim family. My dad and mom died when I was four years old; they left me with my grandmother and one uncle. I was brought up in Muslim faith—they don't believe that Jesus is the Son of God, neither do they believe that He is the Lord and Savior of all mankind of this world, but they believe He is just a prophet of God and no salvation can come through Him.

Just imagine, I lived in that cult faith until when pastor A—— was sent by God to reach us with the true gospel of Jesus Christ. It was that time God opened my understanding and revealed to me the secret of salvation as according to gospel of John 1:11-13; and also according to John 3:16-21. When I heard that gospel I opened my heart and gave my life to Jesus Christ as my personal Savior.

From that moment my life was changed. All the fear came out of me, and I went home and testified to my grandmother. My uncle became very bitter with me. They decided to beat me to death, but God was on my side. They didn't kill me, but instead they decided to chase me out of their home.

On the fourth day I remembered the Word in John 15:18-19 and John 14:18, which says, "*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*" This Word enlightened me and I decided to look for my Christian brethren nearby. One Christian family welcomed me to their home. When I testified to them that I was a Muslim converted to Christianity, and testified to them how my family wanted to kill me, they were terrified. They reported the matter to the chief, then the village chief summoned my family to his office. When they came they were asked why they wanted to kill me. They said I broke their faith, so they count me as dead. They also said to the chief that they didn't want

me home, so they refused me before the chief. The chief said that a person belongs to the government and God, so he called pastor A—— and asked whether the church could care for me. The pastor said they have an orphanage ministry in the church so she took me in. That was January 30, 2006, when I was fourteen years old.

I thank God that through persecution and trials the Lord has been good to me, especially that I landed in the hands of a servant of God.

Since then the Lord has been a caring God for my life. I'm now in form three in a boarding school, but during every vacation I stay with my pastor, a spiritual mother and only mother I have in my life.

I can write so many wonderful things which God has done in my life, after many frustrations, which came upon me when I gave my life to Jesus. God is faithful in His word. He will not leave us or forsake us. "*God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble.*"^{Ps. 46:1} So this is what I can tell my fellow children—to put their trust in God. God is in the midst them, God will help them all the time of troubles. Be still and know that God is in control of their lives. The secret is being obedient to God and His servants. Live a holy life and be a doer of word of God.

Finally this is my prayer request: to move with God and to know His will in my life; secondarily, for God to give me knowledge and understanding in my education because I'm approaching my exams; thirdly, that God will provide my school fees, uniform, and my daily needs.

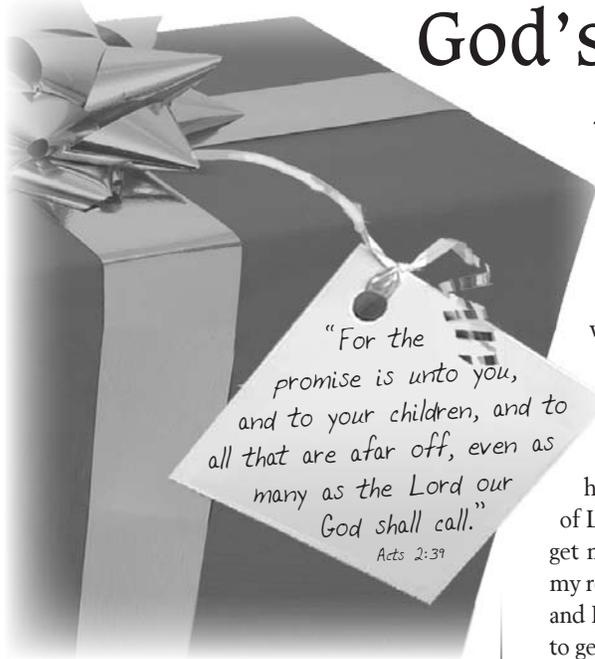
Say hi to my fellow children and brethren; tell them to abide in the Lord and God will abide in them according to John 15:1-5.

God bless you.

Yours trusting in God,

—*A young sister in Kenya* ➤

God's Promise to the Believer



What promise is that?

"This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." vs. 16-17

"Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Lk. 24:49

The Lord said, "Son, **there is a promise for you.** You have done all you can do, and you've got to the end of yourself. *Why don't you take hold of a promise* and swing clear, and trust Me to sanctify you wholly?"

"Oh," I said, "God, I'm afraid to. What if it doesn't happen? What if I go on with these doubts?"

He said, "Son, there's only one step you've got to take, now that you are at the end of yourself. Get your eyes off your consecration, look to Me in faith believing, take My Word in faith believing and I will sanctify you, and let you know that the work is done."

"Oh," I said, "Lord, I'm afraid to do it."

He said, "You'd better do it, son; it's the only way."

And then, Reuben Bridgwater got down to the chorus. And he began to sing, "He makes me clean, He makes me clean. Mine eyes His holiness have seen." I said, "Lord, *I'm going to grab your promise and swing clear.*" And do you know what I did? *I took hold of a promise of God.* I let go of everything in the world, and said, "Lord, I believe You now to cleanse my heart."

Oh! Glory to God! Something happened to me. I'll tell you what happened: I got to

the end of Lyle Potter. You say, "Did you feel an electric shock?" I didn't feel a thing. "Oh," you say, "I thought there was a lot of feeling about this thing."

Listen, friends, I didn't feel a thing. But

I'll tell you one thing, I knew I had prayed to the end. If there was another prayer to pray, I wouldn't know how to form the words.... I got to the end of Lyle Potter, and God had been trying to get me there for sixteen years. I held on to my reputation, and I held on to my position, and I just didn't dare to let go. God wanted to get me to the end. And there in that little junior chapel, on the third afternoon, I got to the end....

I was just as calm that day as ever in my life. I had the assurance in my heart that what I had put off doing for sixteen years, I had finally done—prayed through, and touched the hem of His garment.

There came a Spirit into my life that day that I had never had before. And let me tell you, it is an assurance that has never left me. From that day to this, I've gone through deep valleys. I've walked through the darkness when it was so black that I couldn't see where I was going. I've been down when it seemed that I didn't have a bit of religion at all. But I knew that I had made a consecration. I knew I had committed something into His hands that He was faithfully keeping for me. I have never doubted from that moment to this that God accepted my consecration and my heart was clean.

—Lyle Potter, as related by L. S. Boardman in *Scriptural Death-Route Holiness*

Oh, the reality of this **PROMISE!** Oh, glory! "*Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you!*" Has that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel come to pass *in your life?* Has the Spirit been poured out upon you?

The promise must be claimed. It must be pursued. The believer is commanded to *wait* for the promise to be fulfilled. "*Wait for the promise of the Father.*" Acts 1:4 The disciples had

already been given their commission. "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" Mt. 28:19 Jesus told them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49). There was great need for this tarrying, this fixation on the promise of God. They were full of their own ideas of how the work of God should be done.

"*When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" Acts 1:6 This question of these believers reveals a great lack of comprehension of the nature of the kingdom of God. Compare their vision before they were entirely sanctified with their vision afterwards. "*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*" Heb. 12:28 "*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*" Rom. 14:17 "*For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*" 1 Cor. 4:20

Notice that their conception before was in terms of visible-to-the-natural-eye, in terms of things physically seen and sensed; but after they had received the promise of the Father and were baptized with the Holy Ghost, they were as described in 2 Cor. 4:18, "*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which*

are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." This was exactly as Jesus had foretold. "*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" Jn. 14:26

"*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he*

may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye

There was great need for this tarrying, this fixation on the promise of God. They were full of their own ideas of how the work of God should be done.

know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." *Jn. 14:16-17* It was absolutely necessary for them to be filled with, immersed in, and have poured out upon them the wonderful presence of the Comforter, for them to do the work of God as God would have it done. Else would their natural prejudices and human reasoning be mixed in with the work, diluting it and changing its very focus. But under the guidance and watchfulness of the Holy Ghost, the work of God could be done as God desired for it to be.

Before one can tarry until they are endowed with such a presence and power as this, they must be convinced of the need of it. Most genuine believers (to say nothing of the non-genuine believers), do not have a God-inspired vision of His work, and most of them are perfectly described as "He dwells with you," instead of, "He is in you." It is the Holy Ghost that drew them to God in the first place. It is the Holy Ghost that has baptized them (in the blood of Jesus) into the body of Christ. It is the Holy Ghost who keeps them from returning to sin. But all of these wonderful works of the Holy Ghost in the lives of an unsanctified believer are done by the Holy Ghost *with* them, and the promise of the Father is, "He shall be in you." There is a very great difference in *with* you and *in* you. It is the difference between the apostles before Pentecost and after. It is the difference between Paul on the road to Damascus, broken-hearted and repentant, saying, "What shall I do, Lord?" and Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost several days later after Ananias had laid hands upon him.

"Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" *Acts 19:1-2* It is the most relevant and pertinent question possible to a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Things cannot possibly go right, as God sees it, unless you are all the Lord's and working the works of God with the Holy Ghost filling you through and through.

The promise is in place. It is ready to be fulfilled. The Holy Ghost is waiting for you to wait (and to focus on doing nothing else but waiting for His coming in you). God has something beyond the comprehension of man for each of His trusting children—something vitally necessary to work the works of God. First, *do you see the necessity of being*

filled with the Holy Ghost? Second, are you single-minded pursuing the promise to you?

"Purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." *Jas. 4:8-10*

To promote this deep repentance, consider how many spiritual evils still haunt your breast; look into the inward "chamber of imagery," where assuming self-love, surrounded by a multitude of vain thoughts, keeps her court. Grieve that your heart, which should be all flesh, is yet partly stone; that your soul, which should be only a temple for the Holy Ghost, is yet so frequently turned into a den of thieves, a hole for the cockatrice, a nest for a brood of spiritual vipers, for the remains of envy, jealousy, fretfulness, anger, pride, impatience, peevishness, formality, sloth, prejudice, bigotry, carnal confidence, evil shame, self-righteousness, tormenting fears, uncharitable suspicions, idolatrous love, and I know not how many of the evils which form the retinue of hypocrisy and unbelief.

Through grace detect these evils, by a close attention to what passes in your heart at all times, but especially in an hour of temptation. By frequent and deep confession drag out all these abominations. These sins which would not have Christ to reign alone over you, bring before Him; place them in the light of His countenance and if you do it in faith that light and warmth of His love will kill them, as the light of the sun kills the worms which the plow turns up to the open air in a dry summer day.

—John Fletcher, *The Last Check to Antinomianism*, "Section XIX"

This is a picture of what was happening in the upper room in Jerusalem, prior to the day of Pentecost, when those one hundred twenty believers were filled with the Holy Ghost. The hunger for a pure heart and the Person of the Holy Ghost must be so strong that it refuses to be denied, whatever the cost. As one said, "No man ever got this blessing who felt he could get along without it." "I cannot take another step in Christian service until I know I am baptized with the Holy Ghost!"

I hated pride, ambition, evil tempers, and vain thoughts, but I *had* them, for all that,

and they were a part of me. Not as acts to be repented of and forgiven, but as dispositions lying behind the acts, and promptings thereto, natural to the "Old Man" and inseparable from his presence in my being.

I began to ask God, with a measure of faith, to "cast him out." Along with this desire, there came *a great hunger and thirst to be "filled with all the fullness of God."* *Eph. 3:19* I longed for a clean heart and constant spirit. [—David B. Updegraff]

* * *

"Break off the yoke of inbred sin,
And fully set my spirit free!
I cannot rest till pure within,
Till I am wholly lost in thee."

* * *

"When the conditions are met, God begins to release to the individual the inner heart ability to believe. He does not release to him that ability until the conditions are met." This vital truth is confirmed in Rom. 12:3, "...according as **God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.**"

When we have completely placed ourselves on God's altar for Him to crucify, faith will come responsively and naturally. Sanctification is His will (1 Thess. 4:3), and without delay, He will begin to aid our faith, and will give the answer as we believe.

When all conditions are met, faith comes as naturally as the dawn follows the night, *but not as automatically.* Even with God's aid and encouragement, sometimes the human and carnal may be slow to let go and fully trust. Satan will be right there, trying to stop the seeker from taking the last step of faith.

* * *

Now, God's gifts are given under God's conditions. No more than He would grant saving faith to an unrepentant sinner, would He give sanctifying faith to a seeker who is unwilling to fully consecrate his all and fully die out to his carnal nature. When one is

unwilling to let go of self, God is not going to sanctify his heart by faith. God will never do anything contrary to His nature, His will, or His wisdom. Certainly, He is not going to give the gift of faith to receive His blessing, unless we meet His conditions...

Many find themselves in a position of struggling to believe, but they cannot, because carnal self has not died, and God will not enable their faith to operate.

The hunger for a pure heart and the Person of the Holy Ghost must be so strong that it refuses to be denied

THE god of this world holds the nations in sway,
 The power of death takes dominion today,
 He blinds the high-minded, who walk their own way,
 Whose liberty lives in a lie.
 But stronger than he is the Ancient of Days;
 El Shaddai, the Master of all He surveys,
 Delights to defend all who walk in His ways—
 The humble, who know He is nigh.

We scoff at the story of Eve and the snake,
 And frown upon fools and the myths that they make;
 We know that we're simply too savvy to take,
 And go on our way with disdain.
 Yet serpentine glamour seduces us still,
 We avidly drink of the sweet-scented swill—
 The gamble is lost, and we forfeit our will,
 And find ourselves friend to a chain.

The guest book of hell has been written by those
 That know all too well by the path that they chose
 The devil's a liar who did not disclose
 The catch in the ad they pursued.
 In torment they'll tell how each poison plant grows,
 A dagger concealed till the thorned thistle shows,
 As when the grand emperor wore his new clothes...
 And woke to the fact he was nude.

Men's masks hide the horror that wages within—
 "How wretched am I in the state I am in!
 Oh! who can deliver my soul from its sin?"—
 How ghastly to see Satan smirk.
 But... stronger than he is the King of all kings,
 Who made His own Son to be Heir of all things;
 What Father-love, Brother-love boundless He brings
 To come down and finish His work.

Stronger Than He

Yes, Bethlehem's Baby brought joy to the world;
 At last is salvation's bright banner unfurled,
 And backward the forces of hell have been hurled—
 The kingdom of God is at hand!
 All power and praise to the Lamb that was slain,
 Who heals the poor captive and severs his chain;
 The foe is cast out by the rule of His reign,
 The Lord God of hosts has command!

The soul that repents, dragging pride to the dust,
 Who mourns his transgression and loathes every lust,
 Will find that the One who is faithful and just
 Forgives and delivers him now;
 I sought the dear Savior for pardon and peace,
 And pled at His throne that my sinning might cease—
 Faith, faith in the blood brought my blessed release;
 'Till heaven I cannot tell how.

The devil's dethroned, but think not that he's done;
 He'll try every tactic that's known 'neath the sun;
 Dear soldier, you'll find that the fight's just begun,
 And warfare will last till you die.
 The kingdom of heaven is taken by force,
 And violent conflict is par for the course;
 The armor one wears must be backed by the Source,
 And clear be the line of supply.

Give diligent heed to the things you have heard;
 Eat heavenly manna and drink from the Word;
 Draw nigh unto God, praying lest you be lured,
 And stray to the way that is broad.
 That nature of Adam that vexes you sore
 Delights dear old Satan with self at the core;
 Pray now to be purged, that it plague you no more,
 Restored to the image of God.

The heights held by hell face you now on the field,
 And Satan's whole goal is to cause you to yield;
 How well do you handle your sword and your shield?
 Be vigilant, watching with prayer.
 The battle's begun and the stakes are immense,
 Whole multitudes throng to the course in suspense,
 Yea, sweat red as blood signals combat intense...
 But angels will strengthen you there!

Behold Satan fall from his heavenly place!
 God's soldiers subdue every foe that they face;
 While Jesus is leading us on by His grace,
 The devil must suffer defeat.
 Yes, stronger than he is our Captain and King,
 And while with hosannas His praises they sing
 The armies that follow Him make heaven ring;
 They conquer, and vict'ry is sweet.

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

The ARROGANCE of Advantage

"I've received such great light,
and its beams are so bright
That the past of my life's way seems dim."

"I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." *Ecc. 1:16*

This is a state of mind and heart to be greatly abhorred and avoided at all costs. It is all the more dangerous because it does not seem so dangerous. Indeed, it seems accurate and fitting—simply acknowledgment of the facts—just basic honesty and truthfulness. That is the complacency of *pride*: the smug satisfaction of advantage. "I communed with mine own heart...." This inward disposition does not come from God.

Man is created "a little lower than the angels" and a great deal above many other wonderful created things. Instead of accepting his advantageous state of existence as a sacred trust from God and a fearsome responsibility (even the responsibility of an immortal soul), he is, for the most part, totally taken with "the pride of life," a deadly and wicked disposition, which "is not of the Father, but is of the world." *1 Jn. 2:16* Nor is this self-congratulating, self-important attitude confined to his created advantages, for it accompanies every perceived advantage that he acquires as he lives.

"Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." *1 Cor. 8:1-2*

This scripture ought to bring a quiet humbleness over your soul. It is not the acquiring of knowledge that really advances

us and improves us, *it is the necessary character traits that come with the knowledge.* When we only acquire knowledge, the effect is detrimental. The pride of man denies this. We live in an age when knowledge has greatly, unimaginably increased, and the pride of man is exalted beyond all measure, too. What is unacknowledged and pretty much unknown among the general run of people is that our ability to handle that knowledge aright is practically *non-existent.* We know far too much for our good; we are "too big for our britches," as it were. Puffed up beyond the telling and independent, touchy. "*He knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*" As a race, the race of mankind, we have become Educated Fools.

This is a scathing indictment, yet it is perfectly true. We not only know enough to be dangerous, we have become more dangerous than we dare dream.

All around us is abundant evidence of the truthfulness of these statements. We are beset by bitter little wars, by highly questionable experiments of all kinds—social, biological, philosophical, religious. And in every avenue, we see the Bible proved true over and over. "*Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" *2 Tim 3:7* Talk about "a rat race"! No permanent gains. What appears to be progress is doomed to another fiasco, another unexpected and unwelcome outcome or undesirable side effect. "*Ever learning...*" Always frustrated. Something vital and important has been left out. "*Knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*"

If each succeeding generation could take up where the preceding one left off, go on from there and build on their experiences, the human race would be way on up the line. It does not work out that way. Each generation has to learn its own lessons, by its own experiences, so we just keep covering the same ground over and over.

—Ostis B. Wilson, Jr.; *Courtship and Marriage*

As far as knowledge is concerned, each succeeding generation *does* take up from the preceding one left off. And certain attitudes toward that body of knowledge are passed from generation to generation, as well. We call this culture. What is not passable from person to person is *grace from God.* It is not possible to hold spiritual things by human effort; it takes an infusion of divine grace to know things such as we ought to know them. It is the pride of man, the carnality of man, that interferes with receiving that special help from God and deprives us of real progress.

"*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.*" *Mic. 6:8-9* Note the importance of these words, "*He hath showed thee.*" He has shown us, but that does not leave us capable of holding the right position in the right way without continuous help from Him. Now the meek and quiet spirit of the humble responds to God's work by (1) seeing His name; (2) hearing *the rod* and Who hath appointed it. That is the path of walking humbly with thy God. God has not made all this and our capacity to absorb a little of it so that we can go "hog wild" and feel great about ourselves

As far as knowledge is concerned, each succeeding generation does take up from the preceding one left off. What is not passable from person to person is grace from God.

and what we have acquired. There is a rod. There are appointments of the Almighty for each and every one of us. It all has to do with why the creature (us) is made subject to vanity (Romans 8:20); i.e., the whole purpose of our existence, both temporally and eternally. *“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.”*^{1 Th. 3:3} Here is a manifestation of the rod. If we take it right, it will establish, strengthen, settle us. It has an humbling effect.

God has a way of giving us true knowledge that will shield us from the puffing up. He will season the learning with divine charity and divine humility, in such a way as to cause us to do justly and to love mercy and to keep in step with God. Not lagging behind nor running ahead of Him. Listen to the inspired description of knowledge gained properly: *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”*^{Jas. 3:17} Take note. There is wisdom from below. And there is wisdom from above.

When the work of God is done right, there is no room for the flesh to glory. This is because God supplies something with the insights of understanding that humbles the flesh. *“Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”*^{2 Cor. 12:7} Without the thorn in the flesh, the carnal exaltation is certain to happen. You may will for it not to happen, but unless the thorn is given and you receive the grace to take the thorn rightly, the *“abundance of revelations”* will most certainly damage you.

It is a serious thing to pick up the heritage of the spiritual and attempt to hold it and pass it on without the hand of God being heavy upon us. *“So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me. Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.”*^{Eze. 3:14-15} Ezekiel was sent of God to a people who were in horrible spiritual trouble. A general knowledge of how they had erred was not sufficient to restore

anyone. The hand of God put the prophet face-to-face with the putrid, repulsive reality of their spiritual apostasy until Ezekiel *“remained there astonished among them.”* He sat where they sat. The full weight, the heart-breaking horror of their miserable spiritual condition was etched upon

It is a serious thing to pick up the heritage of the spiritual and attempt to hold it and pass it on without the hand of God being heavy upon us.

his heart by the mighty hand of God. The process was absolutely necessary for the messenger as well as those to whom the message was intended. The burden could not be experienced as it must be or delivered as it must be, unless Ezekiel was put through the process under the strength of the mighty hand of God. There was nothing *“cut and dried”* about it. Nothing routine. Not business as usual. Not *“by the book.”* Not *according to ordinary expectations.*

A young woman is trusted with a Sunday School class of young children. She has been raised to respect and value a certain code of teaching—a form of truth that has a heritage of spiritual living. She is not called of God to the position. God does not anoint her or work through her; she acquires her *“burden”* for the children from human sympathy and psychological insight. Perhaps she is an excellent example of a concerned human being attempting to do good to other little human beings. Her lack of anointing, the fact that God does not use her, is most definitely communicated to the youngsters. They receive things that are spiritual in a way other than spiritual. The process appears good and commendable in many respects. It can be argued that they are far better off than if they received no religious instruction at all. The children end up with a spiritual standard attempted by human effort (at best), rather than, *“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.”*^{2 Cor. 2:14} True religion is God triumphing in us. Many are oblivious to this. ➡

God's Promise to the Believer, *continued from page 10*

Others, also without proper groundwork, may try to *“take it by faith,”* and go away fooled into thinking they have received the blessing of heart holiness. This leads to deep disappointment and chaotic confusion. What they thought was faith, was presumption, because it was out of harmony with the Word of God. It is utterly impossible to become sanctified by presumption.”

—L. S. Boardman; *Scriptural Death-Route Holiness*

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”^{1 Thess. 5:23-24}

All seekers of holiness who fail to *“die out”* to the carnality in their hearts, if they think they receive the blessing of holiness, they are fooled, and come through with a false experience and with their hearts as carnal as before...

A carnally defeated life is an indignity to Christ and an insult to His precious Blood... We are not supposed to sustain a polluted and corrupt heart while we name the Name of Christ, lest we misrepresent Him. [As Brother James tells us, *“Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.”*^{Jas. 3:10}] Christ came to this world and shed His blood to fit us for life and heaven by cleansing us from all such carnal elements as malice, envy, jealousy, and temper...

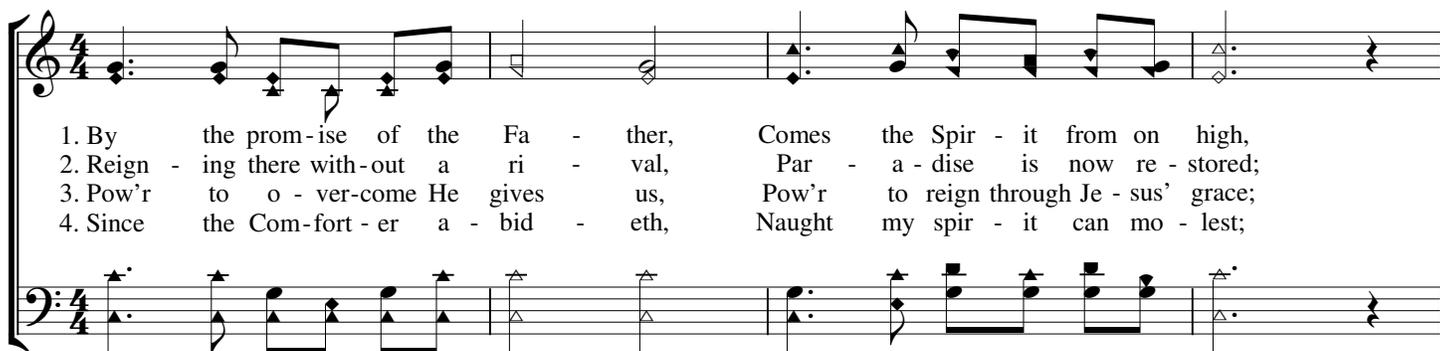
Jesus said of such persons: *“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*^{Mt. 7:23} These deceived people supposed they were about the best Christians on earth because they worked miracles and cast out devils in Christ's Name, until Christ pronounced their doom. The purging of their own hearts of carnality is far more important than casting demons out of someone else...

The Holy Ghost doesn't need to be begged or coerced into entering the heart which is utterly yielded and ready. The seeker will break through as naturally as drawing the next breath, when his faith takes hold and the fire falls. As he becomes conscious of the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, his faith grows stronger and operates freely, without drawing attention to itself.

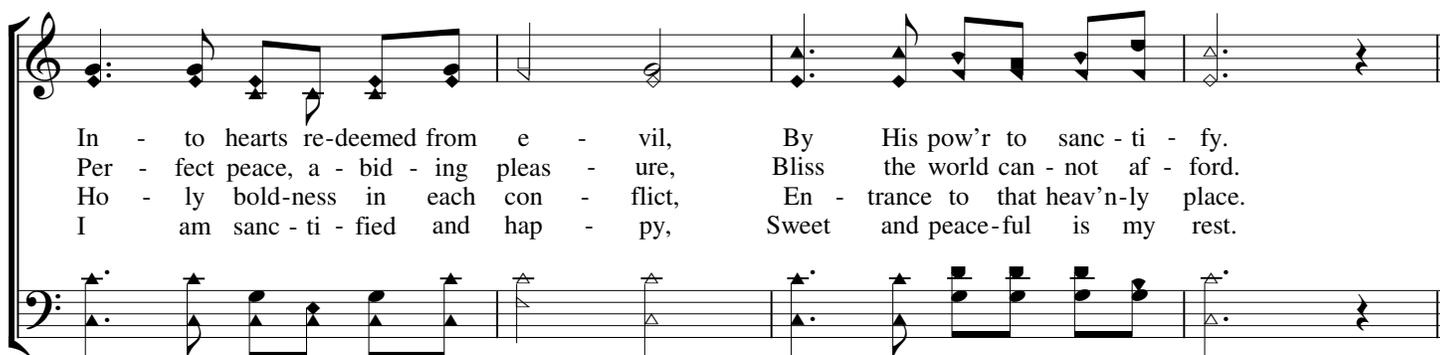
—Ibid.; Chapter 11 ➡

Holy Spirit, Be My Guide

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Jn. 14:26

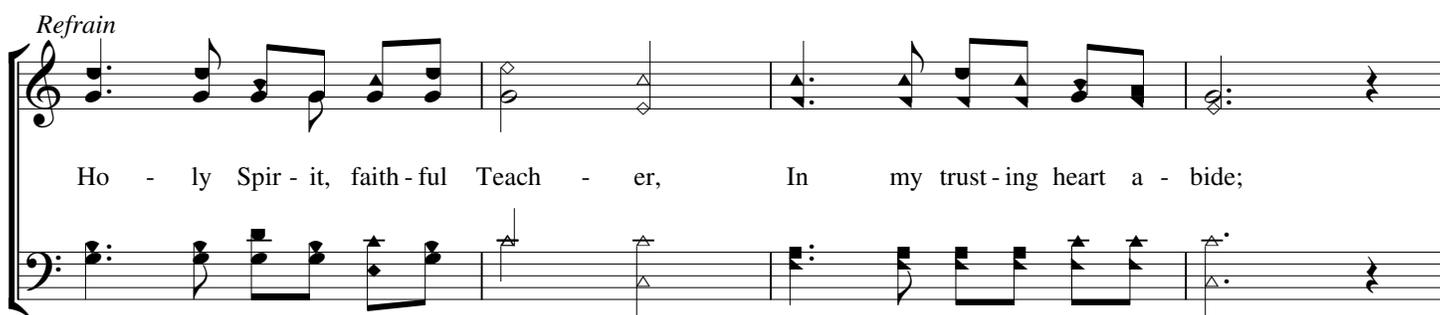


1. By the prom-ise of the Fa - ther, Comes the Spir - it from on high,
2. Reign - ing there with-out a ri - val, Par - a - dise is now re - stored;
3. Pow'r to o - ver-come He gives us, Pow'r to reign through Je - sus' grace;
4. Since the Com-fort - er a - bid - eth, Naught my spir - it can mo - lest;

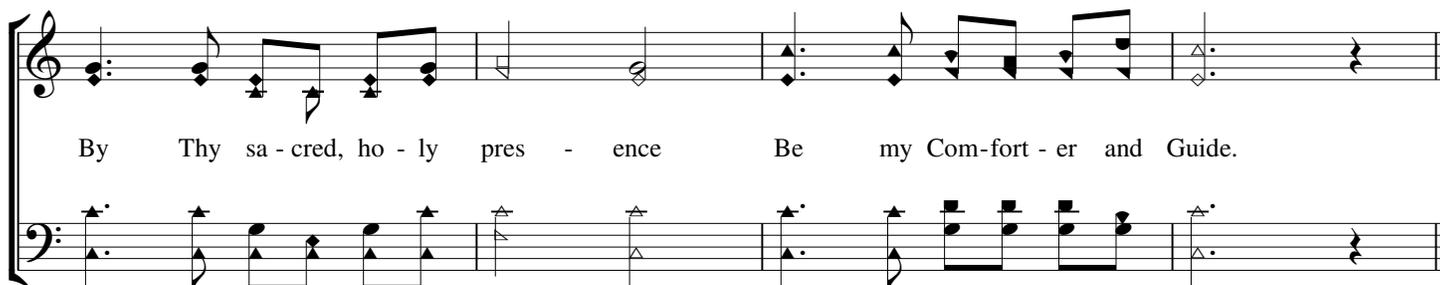


In - to hearts re-deemed from e - vil, By His pow'r to sanc - ti - fy.
Per - fect peace, a - bid - ing pleas - ure, Bliss the world can - not af - ford.
Ho - ly bold-ness in each con - flict, En - trance to that heav'n-ly place.
I am sanc - ti - fied and hap - py, Sweet and peace-ful is my rest.

Refrain



Ho - ly Spir - it, faith - ful Teach - er, In my trust - ing heart a - bide;



By Thy sa - cred, ho - ly pres - ence Be my Com-fort - er and Guide.

His Hand Is Guiding Me

*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Psa. 73:24
He fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands. 78:72*

1. As I trav - el on my way, To that land more fair than day, There are beau-ties all a - long the road to see;
2. If as on the way I go, Things a - rise I do not know, I will wait up - on the Lord that lead - eth me—
3. When in sick-ness, trial, or test, I am called to do my best, I will trust the Lord the more for vic - to - ry;
4. When I near the chill-ing tide, Look-ing on the oth - er side, And my mor - tal bark shall sink in death's cold sea,

Heav-en's rays are shin-ing bright, I've no need for world-ly light, For I know my Sav-ior's hand is guid-ing me.
He will hold me by the hand Till I reach that hap - py land, Yes, I know my Sav-ior's hand is guid-ing me.
I will lean up - on His arm, He will keep me from all harm, For I know my Sav-ior's hand is guid-ing me.
Je - sus then will light the way To that land more fair than day, For I know my Sav-ior's hand is guid-ing me.

Refrain

Oh, I know my Sav-ior's hand is guid-ing me, Oh, I know my Sav-ior's hand is guid-ing me,

From this world of sin and woe, To a land where pleas-ures flow; Yes, I know my Sav-ior's hand is guid-ing me.

The Abomination of Desolation

OR When Is It Time to Flee?

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Psa. 8:4

One of the most amazing themes of truth in the Bible is the deep interest and love of the Creator toward mankind. One who loved God and walked with Him during his earthly existence said, *"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee."* Psa. 139:17-18 Again, we are told, *"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."* Lk. 12:7 This is mind-boggling. It is past comprehension to consider that God is so interested in His creation and so closely observes as to number all the hairs on the heads of everyone. He even sees each sparrow that falls.

All of this would be wonderful indeed if God just observed such detail from afar off, but so great is the love and interest of God in us that He craves to be nigh unto us. We are told that if we will draw nigh unto Him, then He will draw nigh unto us (Jas. 4:8). There is something about the nature of our existence here in the flesh and the nature of free will that requires that God hide Himself from us (Isa. 45:15), but His great love for us causes Him to desire to reveal Himself. Daniel realized that God reveals things and wants to reveal things to us (Dan. 2:22,28).

God loves to be longed for,
He loves to be sought,
For He sought us Himself
with such longing and love:
He died for desire of us,
marvellous thought!
And He yearns for us now
to be with Him above."

We want to consider a certain aspect of God's desire to be as near as possible to man—and what happens to cause Him to withdraw.

In the Old Testament, it was not possible for the heart of man to be regenerated, but the desire of God to be close to His people was manifested in His willingness to move His presence into a structure made of skins, gold, and wood: the earthly tabernacle. This was made to His specifications, (according to God's pattern, Heb. 8:5). He accepted their careful obedience and actually moved His majestic presence into the thick darkness of the Holy of Holies, the innermost chamber of the tabernacle. *"And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD. Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever."* 1 Ki. 8:10-13 What a glorious day that was in Israel after the flesh! The same manifestation of the presence of God filled the tabernacle built by Moses. *"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."* Exo. 40:34-35 The tabernacle is called the tabernacle of the witness, the tabernacle of the testimony. As said the Psalmist, *"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early."* Psa. 46:4-5

It is and was the most amazing condescension of Almighty God to thus humble Himself to dwell among men in this way. *"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those*

things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. 66:1-2 And Solomon said at the dedication of the temple, *"But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!"* 2 Chr. 6:18 Again we read in Revelations, *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."* Rev. 21:3 This is spoken of the final and permanent togetherness of God and His people after the End of Time and the Final Judgment, but it is paralleled by His presence among them now before those events. *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* Mt. 18:20

The presence of God among His people has a definite practical effect. As long as He is there among them, there is no way that the enemies of the people of God can triumph over them. No weapon that is formed against them can prosper. *"And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain."* Isa. 45:6 As long as God is present, we need not be afraid; we can face with great confidence whatever He allows to come upon us. His presence in His tabernacle is indeed *"a shadow in the daytime from the heat... a place of refuge, and... a covert from storm and from rain."* As Brother David said, *"I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."* Psa. 16:8

All of this is true conditionally. If we do things as God wants us to do things, He

will abide with us forever; He will be our God, and we will be His people. This precious promise will be our portion: *“And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”*¹ Isa. 65:24 For *“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”*² Psa. 16:11 Yea, *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.”*³ Psa. 33:12

As long as God was in His temple, God’s people abode with the devouring fire. Unless the high priest came once a year in a certain, prescribed manner to the Holy of Holies, he died—struck down by that august, divine Presence. *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.”*⁴ Lev. 16:2 There follows the careful regulation of how Aaron, the high priest, was to appear before the presence of God in that awesome and dreadful place. At that time, man was allowed to visit God in this intimate way only once a year (Heb. 9:7). We can only imagine the feelings of Aaron as he reverently and very carefully entered behind the veil, sprinkling fresh blood before him. How humbling! How befitting! But note that it only worked as God designed it to work *if His majestic presence was actually present in the sanctuary.*

In 1 Samuel 4, we read of a thing so at odds with the above that it scarce seems credible, yet it is true. *“And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.”*⁵ vs. 3-4 **Now it is obvious that the presence of God was not dwelling in that sacred place when Hophni**

and Phinehas, those sons of Belial, entered into the Holy of Holies and laid hands on the ark of the covenant. **God had moved out on Israel—He wasn’t there.** The calamity wasn’t that the ark was taken; the calamity was that God wasn’t there. What had happened? *“I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face.”*⁶ Hos. 5:15 *“And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies.”*⁷ 2 Ki. 21:14

God just leaves. Quietly. While the people go on assuming that He is still there. Like Samson, *“And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.”*⁸ Jdg. 16:20 This is largely what has happened to the professed Christian

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world. A great deal of assuming is in the minds and hearts of the people. We see in Matt. 7:22-23 that a great number are forecast to continue in this baseless assuming right up to the judgment day. Then the dreadful words will be heard, *“I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”* When the power of God is denied and frustrated from working in the hearts and lives of those professing the gospel, God gives them over to the form of godliness. He leaves them to their devices; leaves them to their empty profession; leaves them to do as seems best to them. They are plagued and afflicted.

Bad things happen to them that do not work together for good. Skeptics look at them and are confirmed in their skepticism. They are a stumblingblock to those who hunger to do what is right.

God is not there. This is what the formality, pomp, and show bring about. Empty rituals replace what we read about in 1 Cor. 14:24-25. False doctrines evolve to explain the mysteries of iniquity. God has returned to His place. As the wife of Phinehas said as the hour of her death came upon her at the birth of their child, *“The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.”*⁹ 1 Sam. 4:21 *“And she named the child I-chabod.”* Ah, dear reader, if thou couldst see as God sees, thou wouldst see ICH-ABOD above nearly all the assemblies of professed Christendom. *“Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”*¹⁰ Pro. 1:28-31 As to how God feels about people carrying on after He has moved out on them, read Jer. 23:31-40.

Whatever it is that causes God to withdraw is **The Abomination That Maketh Desolate.** This is what Ezekiel saw in a vision of how God moved out on apostate Judea. First he saw the glory stand over the threshold of the house (Eze. 10:4-6), but then he saw (with a cry of anguish), *“And the cherubims were lifted up... then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house.”*¹¹ vs. 15:18 *“But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.”*¹² Eze. 11:21

When it is no longer the presence of God that defends and animates a people, when the assembly is kept by human wisdom, human tradition, human politics, human skill and ingenuity—then it is Ichabod, and Satan knows it. The devil can use anything from which God has departed. He will bend and twist their

inheritance; they are as putty in his hands. Here is the true and grievous story of so-called Christian sectism. They were once a gold cup in the hand of God (when His presence was there), but they gave place to an abomination that makes desolate—even the leaning to human understanding and human ways that is at odds with the gentle leading of the Spirit of God. And so we read, *“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.... And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”* ^{Rev. 18:2,4}

“When should I come out?” As soon as you perceive that God has moved out. “When do I know that has happened? Shall I wait until no truth is preached anymore and no one is saved anymore?” By the time that things get to that point, God has been gone a long time. The desolation is far advanced. “Well, when?” When men deliberately disobey what they know is right, God is grieved, and He will begin to withdraw. *“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.”* ^{Mt. 24:15-16} When men refuse to follow the Word of God and the Spirit of God and allow something else (the abomination that makes desolate) to stand in the holy place, **get out of there.** Trust God to make a way of escape; be waiting and watching for God’s way of escape. **Get out of there.** Beware that you be not entangled with something not of God—an abomination. Beware that you take not upon you a false yoke. It is dangerous to think of anything else than the bosom of God as a home for your soul. You will find yourself a part of something that is bringing desolation, even if you decry it and groan and sigh. *You will find yourself a part of the abomination that makes desolate.*

Do not blindly flee. Wait for God. He will have a way of escape. Be consecrating to pay the price of coming clear for God. Tell Him over and over that you love Him and His ways, that you hate

every false way. **Draw nigh unto God.** If you do, you will find that He will draw nigh unto you.

Do not be surprised to see others flee while not led of the Spirit of God, and do not be surprised to see their efforts come to grief. You must go where God goes. You must wait until you see where God goes. You must trust Him completely. You must stay yourself on Him. If you depart on the basis of your reasoning and thinking only, you will just make another mess. You will be another Ichabod. God forbid that you make another sect, another division.

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But, beloved, God has a way. He has had it all the time. He withdraws to *His place* (Hos. 5:15). That is the place to follow. He has a church. He has a people. They are absolutely true to Him. “If we won’t serve God, He will raise up a people who will.” Zion of God is just as true as it has ever been since God built it. You can be part of what God has done and is doing on the earth today.

“Let us sing a sweet song
of the home of the soul,
The glorious place of our rest;
It is not far away in the heavens untold,
But deep in the Infinite breast.

“He that dwelleth in love
ever dwelleth in God,
Sweet home never clouded by fears;
And this heaven of love is our native abode
Through time and eternity’s years.

“We are only at home
in the bosom of God,
On earth or in heaven above;
Everyone who would enter
must pass through the blood,
And reign in the kingdom of love.

“We will enter no door
that is opened by men
Who promise a home for the soul;
For in Christ we abide
in the church that will stand
While ages eternally roll.”

“They shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.” ^{Dan. 11:31-35}

After describing the many sects of professed Christianity, their similitude to the beast and his image, their mark in the forehead or in the hand, the many different numbers of the groups, that all add up to an abomination, their judgment is described in Rev. 14:10-11. Then we have a description of those who have fled the abomination that makes desolate. *“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”* ^{Rev. 14:12}

The conflict between right and wrong is waxing hotter and hotter. More and more threshing of great mountains of chaff and tares is necessary to bring the Lord’s wheat into His barn. Let us take courage. Let us continue to take forth the precious from the vile by clear and faithful obedience to the Word of God. In the end, victory belongs to Him who leads us on the horse of a conqueror.

“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” ^{Rev. 22:7} ➔

"Then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Rev. 3:16

The

Christian

Is there such a thing as a *lukewarm Christian*? A Christian who is neither cold nor hot? *"Then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."* Rev. 3:16

It is easier for a man to profess than it is to bear fruit. It is easier for a man to clothe himself with a fair show in the flesh than to go to the bottom and be a Christian through and through. It is easier to learn to talk the talk, than to walk the walk. It is easier to learn the art of impersonating a Christian than to be a genuine child of God, fruitful and full of sap from the True Vine. The false, barren professor is a slap in the face of the Redeemer of men, for the barren fig tree misrepresents who He is and the nature of His work.

For this reason, Christ said to the professors in the congregation at Laodicea, *"I would thou wert cold or hot."* Either admit to being of the devil, or change so that you are a valid sample of what true Bible religion is all about (1 Tim. 4:12). Better to have pure religion, to be undefiled, or to profess no religion at all, than to be a confusing stumblingblock, a monstrous half-breed of righteousness and sin, who stands in the way of sinners (Psa. 1:1).

If all who profess to be Christians would live soberly, righteously, and godly, they would win the world for Christ in a short time. A heathen said to a missionary, *"We are finding you out. You are not as good as your Book. We like your Book, but you do not live like your Book reads. If you would live like your Book reads, you would conquer India for Jesus in five years."*

—C. E. Orr; *Heavenly Life for Earthly Living*

God strives with you to be hot, and the devil strives with you to be cold. The difference is that God is only satisfied with hotness—with heavenly fruit that is right and sound, while Satan will settle for anything less than hot. The devil is very pleased when you presume on God's longsuffering and mercy. He would have you settle down on the first part of such scriptures as, *"A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench."* There Satan would have you relax, and he would have you ignore the rest of the text: *"Till He send for judgment unto victory."* Mt. 12:20 *"Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness."* Isa. 1:27 Notice how God goes about His work. No judgment, no redemption. God wants you hot. He has supplied the means to make hot every soul... to the utmost. People who become genuinely converted and truly sanctified, pray through instantly, and receive a molten experience by faith immediately, but when they lose out, they lose out gradually.

The thermometers of physical temperature are marked with numbers, but the spiritual thermometer of the soul is calculated with degrees of spiritual temperature. There is the temperature range of a spirit of false profession, which is decidedly colder than the temperature of perfect love. There is the spirit of touchiness (super sensitiveness) which cools into the spirit of retaliation and revenge and the spirit of surmise, suspicion, jealousy, and slander. Then follows the spirit of downright meanness. Then follows the spirit of dryness and apathy, until finally all desire to get back one's lost experience is gone forever. No desire to get straightened out ever comes back. One's appetite for the holy experiences of the past holds no relish. There is nothing left but undisturbed indifference. No sermon will reach the soul now. No light penetrates the darkened mind and soul. There remains nothing *"but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."* Heb. 10:27

"For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people." Heb. 10:30

Many make religion their cloak and Christ their stalking horse, and by that means cover themselves and hide their own wickedness from men, but God sees their hearts, weighs their spirits, and ponders all their goings. In the fullness of time, *"God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."* Eccl. 12:14

No excuse is accepted for a lack of fruit. *"And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."* Lk. 13:9 There was some delay in this judgment for the digging about and the dunging, but the delay was only to give a certain opportunity

The man who attempted to run away from God, who found himself praying in the belly of the great fish, came to a horrible realization. *"They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy."*

for the fruitless condition to change to fruit bearing. This is an insight that should stir us greatly. See **just how serious God is about this fruit-bearing**, this insistence upon **being hot**. “*Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*”^{vs. 7} We see at a glance that God had been monitoring things. He sees the fruitless professor as an encumbrance, an obstacle to the work of the gospel. He is dead serious about the fruit, and He is ready **right now** to “**cut it down.**” Do you realize that your lukewarm condition *is calling to God to cut you down now*, and you are only spared a while longer in a last-ditch effort to stir you to be fruitful?

It will do you no good to repeat your old and discredited arguments excusing your lack of fruitfulness. The man who attempted to run away from God, who found himself praying in the belly of the great fish, came to a horrible realization. “*They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.*”^{Jon. 2:8} Jonah acknowledged that observing *lying vanities* had gotten him into the fix he was in, and he vowed some vows about what he would do if God would deliver him.

You need to acknowledge that a lot of your religious profession is really self-interest and self-love, instead of real love to God. This is why you are so lacking in genuine gospel fruit. You are living your own life, instead of Christ living His life through you, and this has produced a completely different life than He would live in you.

Now you have a choice. You can continue to sustain your spirit of touchiness and shield your roots from the gospel digging and dung by crying, “*Judge not, that ye be not judged,*”^{Mt. 7:1} or you can forsake your lying vanities, thus finding mercy and receiving healing

When the gospel came to Samaria, it found Simon in an important place among the people. He was a politician, a popular celebrity, an expert manipulator, of whom it was said that he “*used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.*”^{Acts 8:9-10} But the gospel delivered the Samaritans from this bewitchment. They received another life from the Lord Jesus Christ and were no longer deceived and manipulated. Praise God for deliverance! And, amazingly enough, *Simon believed also and was baptized*. He would now profess to be a pilgrim and a stranger in this world, a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now it would be a wonderful thing if the aftermath had proved that Simon had really changed, had fallen head over heels in love with Jesus, and had been completely and thoroughly delivered from what he was before. But, alas! This Simon was only a barren professor, although he was planted in

the vineyard of the Lord for a while. The Lord Jesus searched him and knew him. One of the servants of the Lord caught a glimpse of his heart in a certain matter, and the Lord Jesus used that servant to tell this man the truth. “*Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.... For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*”^{Acts 8:21,23} This was a terrible indictment of his lack of gospel fruit, his barren profession. But notice

the *apparent humility* of this professed brother. “*Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.*”^{vs. 24} As though Peter could pray the prayer that Simon needed to pray. As

So many fruitless trees, planted in the vineyard of the Lord, have come to this – the pointless, futile, abortive state. “*And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*”

though the whole point was “*that none of these things... come upon me.*” There was no godly sorrow. There was no heart-felt repentance, nor an abhorrence of one’s self. Oh, what a lack of hot love! What a calculated profession! What a lot of love for self!

So many fruitless trees, planted in the vineyard of the Lord, have come to this—the pointless, futile, abortive state. “*And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*”^{Isa. 4:1} They want the name, but it is love for themselves that motivates them. They want the name, but they care nothing for the honor of the Lord Jesus.

As one brother stated,

To get (professing) holiness people to live holy lives is an exceedingly great task. To live a strictly holy life, just like our blessed Lord, is grand and glorious, but it is difficult to get people to live that way. It can be done, but it is not being done by very many. There are many who desire to live holy, but they fail to put forth the earnest effort and live it right up to what they know they should. They want to live closer to God, but they do not do it. They do not mean to neglect, and yet they do neglect. They know they should pray more, but they do not pray more. Many of these dear people confess that they talk too much and speak impatiently, but we see little or no improvement. They fret and worry and are anxious, and know they should not be, and yet they continue on in the same life.

—C. E. Orr; *Helps to Holy Living*

It will not always continue at this level. God will come and spue you out. He will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend. He will send His Word and His Spirit to stir you, and if you will not be stirred, He will leave you to your devices. Your reproach will become more evident; you will be delivered to Satan for destruction. “*Walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*”^{Ecc. 11:9} ➤

The Governor of the Soul

“My soul is continually in my hand.” Psa. 119:109

When God put an immortal soul in man and gave him the responsibility for the eternal destiny of that soul, God gave man the greatest most weighty responsibility he has ever had.

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mk. 8:36-37

It is plain from this scripture that it is **the responsibility of man** as to how he governs his soul. Yea, *“for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”* Rom. 14:11-12 This is a fearsome responsibility—far too vast an obligation for a human being to bear *alone*.

Yes, every man has a soul, and this soul is going to always exist—somewhere, somehow. To ignore this responsibility is to choose a path of neglect. To become exceedingly concerned about one's soul—to strain and to stretch to try to take care for one's soul—will prove inadequate in the end. To simply do the best that one can do will prove insufficient, as well.

What is to be done? How can we deal wisely and adequately with such a huge responsibility? How can we properly govern our souls?

“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” Phil. 3:15 Here is a wonderful promise. Under a certain condition, God has obligated Himself to monitor the soul and to faithfully *“reveal even this”*—anything less than pressing toward the mark of

the high calling in Christ Jesus—**“unto you.”** You will notice that God has not taken the *responsibility* of your soul from you. That is still in your hand. But He has promised *“as many as be perfect”* that He will take upon Himself the responsibility of watching over the soul and alerting us to any adjustment that is needed. This is a wonderful privilege, but it is conditional. It is promised to the perfect, who are thus minded.

What does it mean to *“be perfect”*? The Bible teaches a certain perfection that is not only obtainable now, but is necessary for holy living. It also teaches a perfection that is to come (Phil. 3:12). Here are some of the scriptures that teach a certain perfection now.

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and

by more than just our own understanding.

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” ¹ 1 Pet. 5:10

“God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.” ¹ 1 Jn. 4:16-17

“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” Jas. 1:4

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.” Heb. 7:19

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” ² 2 Tim. 3:16-17

“The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.” Lk. 6:40 *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”* ¹ 1 Jn. 3:2-3

If we have ceased from our own works to do the works of God, then there will be no resistance in us to what the Word of God reveals. We can then “work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in [us] both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” The key to the whole thing is to let go and let God.

ever.” Heb. 13:20-21 Notice that this **being made perfect** is for the purpose of doing His will, and the time of doing His will is **now**. As Jesus taught us to pray, *“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”* Mt. 6:10 It is done perfectly in heaven, and it can be done the same way on earth if we are guided and taught

All of these scriptures teach a perfection that is obtainable and vital to have in this present world for the purpose of victorious, triumphant Christian living. The same thought is presented in Heb. 4:3,10 as entering into God's rest, *“For we which have believed do enter into rest.... For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from*

his own works, as God did from his." In verses 12 and 13, we are told of the role of the Word of God in this rest, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." If we have the Word of God watching over our soul, then we need not fear that it will miss anything that is less than perfect in our soul. If we have *ceased from our own works* to do the works of God, then there will be no resistance in us to what the Word of God reveals. We can then "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in [us] both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. 2:12-13 The key to the whole thing is to **let go and let God**. I cannot escape the responsibility for my soul, but I can enter into rest and completely trust God with it. I still must act on what God shows me, but I am relieved of the awful and impossible strain of trying to figure out what I should be for God. I just rest in Him and trust Him and let Him show and reveal to me what I should see, exactly as He has promised to do. In the words of the poet,

"I pass the rough rocks
with a smile and a shout,
And I just let my God
His dear purpose fulfill."

My part is to trust and obey. Not obey and then trust, but (1) trust God to reveal "even this" unto me, and (2) as God reveals to me, obey. Those dear conscientious souls who have a heart to carefully obey, but who unknowingly doubt the Lord by trying to govern their souls by their own careful management, have skipped over the *trusting* part. If they trusted, as is their privilege, they would realize the complete inadequacy of the human mind to do what only God can do. As though to say, "Let us therefore, as many as be extremely conscientious, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, we must stretch

and strain until we get it right before God." (This must be from the Book of Imaginations, for it is certainly not in the Bible.) Instead, the Bible says, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10:23 "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep." Psa. 127:1-2 Please note that there is a sleep (rest) for the people of God, and that it is a rest of trust in Him. It is not how hard I try; it is how thoroughly I trust. All else besides trust in God and obedience to what He reveals is just vain—it won't do any good and is counterproductive.

When Satan sees a conscientious soul who will not quit on trying to please God, he tempts them to take the management of their soul *into their own hands*. The adversary knows well that no human being can successfully govern his soul—that only God can "reveal even this unto you." If Satan can break the trust between the soul and God by getting you to take your case into your own hands, he knows that he can wear you out and wear you down. Discouragement and accusation, confusion and lack of clarity are in that direction.

"If thou wilt know the fountain deep,
Of sweet unbroken rest;
The rest of faith thy soul shall keep,
He that believes is ever blest."

The great hunger of the conscientious soul to get it right and to really please God, brings that soul to a place of subtle temptation. The temptation is to *do*—to labor and sacrifice mightily—instead of laboring to *enter into the rest of faith* (Heb. 4:11). The conscientious soul knows that carefulness and earnestness are important and pleasing to God. It is hard to understand why carefulness and earnestness, even extreme carefulness and earnestness, do not bring about the

desired closeness to God. The focus is on human comprehension—careful, earnest acquisition of understanding. Instead, we must labor to **trust**. The focus must be on trusting. To trust completely, *without* sufficient comprehension to enable the soul to stand upon *self*-confidence, but with absolute unqualified confidence, blind, naked confidence in God. "God shall reveal even this unto you." I stake my soul on God's willingness, ability, and power to reveal what I need to know about my soul, and I vow "yes, Father" to everything He reveals.

If I snatch my soul back from the hands of Him to whom I have committed it (2 Tim. 1:12) to *improve* or *correct* it for God (intending to present it to Him as soon as I take care of things that need to be taken care of that I see), *I take things into my own hands*, and I am not up to the job. Furthermore, I have broken the faith link (without meaning to), and it is in my hands, all right. I meant well, perhaps, but I have made a mistake. It is a wise man who can say, "Lord, You gave me the responsibility

If Satan can break the trust between the soul and God by getting you to take your case into your own hands, he knows that he can wear you out and wear you down.

for my soul, but, O Lord! I see it is too big for me. I trust You with it. I will endeavor to hold myself consecrated to obey immediately whatever You say to do. I will wait upon You." Then the great Keeper of the soul can say, "I can keep you from falling. I can keep that which is committed to Me. I will perfect that which concerneth you" (2 Tim. 2:12; Jude 1:24; Psa. 138:8).

"I will reject all doubts and fears,
I will believe and simply trust;
Thou hast said, "Cast on Me thy cares,"
Can I obey? Yes, Lord, I must."

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder." Isa. 9:6 ➤

Only a Servant

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



Sometimes week after week passes, month after month, and one hardly realizes where those days have gone. Thus it seemed to the Ondrasik family. It is true they had much work to do, yet at no previous year had they finished everything as easily as this year.

“Perhaps it may be,” thought Gazdina, “because we begin with the reading of the Word of God and prayer, and that we conclude the day the same way.”

Her health had improved so much that she could cook now: so Dorka did not have to stay away from the work in the fields. It seemed to Mrs. Ondrasik that she never had it so easy in the world.

Her husband had often been of an ugly, hard disposition, but she also had a hard head. When he had been drinking, though he was not a drunkard, he made a fuss around the house, and she scolded. After that they sometimes did not talk together for a whole week.

Their daughters married, the sons-in-law did not want to obey, the farm did not prosper. Today the farmer’s wife felt that there had not been God’s blessing on the whole house. Were they not all evil, completely fallen away from God? How could they expect Him to help them?

The woman realized that the first thing to do was to turn to God, and she turned with her whole heart. She felt that if anyone in the world needed a Savior, it was she. She opened her heart to the Son of God, and He accepted her.

Later in the evening, when she sat alone with her husband, she testified to him and asked his forgiveness, because she had not been as good a wife as she ought to have been. But now, since God had granted her a further lease on life, she wanted to live from now on, according to the will God, and be better towards those of her family.

Ondrasik felt ashamed; tears filled his eyes.

“Well, let us forgive each other,” he said. “You have been a better wife to me than I

was a husband to you; but Method is correct, we cannot go thus till death, because what will be the result? We must begin to live differently.”

“Really, we have lived contrary to God. We had the Word of God, but did not read it the whole year long. We might as well admit that we lived worse than animals. Thus we raised our children. I don’t wonder now that they ran away into the world, since they had such an example at home.”

Thus talked the man with his wife.

It was that same day when Sammy Petrash and Dorka talked with each other in the orchard. She listened to him telling the nice story about how the swallows came home. In telling her this, he confessed that he already was on that way Home, beginning and ending each day with prayer, and that he was careful not to trespass the commandments of God. At the same time he related to her that he was learning from old David to write better and to figure, and that his father would open a store for him. The addition they were building just now was to be his dwelling.

The girl rejoiced sincerely with him. From her childhood she pitied him, and later, often thought about what would become of him. Now he would no longer just uselessly sit in front of the house or in the orchard. Dorka knew long ago, having heard from his sisters, what they were building, but she pretended not to know, in order not to spoil his joy.

Andrew joined them, and they started to discuss with each other what a beautiful and proper thing it would be if they would join together, just like the swallows, and also hold prayer meetings together.

“You know,” said Dorka, “that every day in our lives is just another bit of the way Home, and thus every day should be started that way. Those swallows prayed and sang together always before they flew farther.”

Later in the evening, the whole Ondrasik family came to supper, and when after supper Gazdina told Method to read the

Bible, Dorka looked at Andrew, and he at her. Then she looked at the parents, and in her mind rose the thought, “I suppose that they also want to go with those swallows.”

While the world round about continued to sleep in their sins, the family of Ondrasik and their neighbors began to wake up. The Holy Spirit began to open their eyes also in understanding the Word. They began to seek God and to realize that they themselves were in their sins; but they also came to know Christ and started together with the swallows on their way Home—only, too bad, not all of them.

That fall there was a great harvest of prunes. So many hung on those beautiful trees till the branches were breaking under their weight.

Petrash said one afternoon to his son. “From those prunes we will make liquor. I will ask for a license and you can sell liquor.”

Those words cut the young fellow. He said nothing to his father, but when his father went to the barn, he started out to look for Method. He found him digging on his property. Not far away the Podhajsksy were digging, also.

The comrades shook hands and Sammy began to tell what his father had said.

Method grew sad. Angry, his eyes flashed fire. Sammy had never seen him thus before.

“Look here, that is purely the Devil’s thought. Sammy, what would you say if your father would command you to take this pick and kill yonder neighbor Podhajsksy?”

“But Method! I would never do a thing like that.”

“Oh, you will just open a dram shop; either a public or a secret one. You remember what a terrible drunkard Podhajsksy used to be; how it ruined his body so that he was like an animal. Now the grace of God has changed him, so that he is among those swallows that are on the way Home. You may have noticed, that aside from coming to you and to us,

he does not dare go anywhere, so that he will not be drawn to the dram shop again. He is still very weak against temptation. You know very well that as soon as you begin with that liquor, he will have it before his eyes in the nearest neighborhood, and when the stench fills his nose, do you suppose he will be able to resist? Let's say that he will come to buy flour or salt; that he will have the best intentions not to let himself be tempted to sin. He will come just as the sheep comes to the slaughterhouse, and your father will drink his health, or you yourself will drink his health. From old friendship, he will just taste it, but it will arouse his old habit and awaken the desire in him. He will not be able to resist. First he may drink only one glass, but on the morrow two. But then, as if you had poured fire into him, he must drink again, and he will become a drunkard again, worse than before. He will become a beast. The light of God's grace will die in him, the body will get sick, will be weakened, and he will perish somewhere like an animal. He will be like a swallow on the way home, but did not get there; perished, and whose fault will it be? Yours, Sammy, yours!"

"Stop, Method!" The young fellow clutched at his head. "I don't want to be the cause, not I, not to him nor to anybody else; sooner let me be killed."

Sammy went away. Method, very much saddened, continued his digging.

That day the Petrash home was a real hell. The farmer had it nicely figured out how they would sell liquor, and how his son would be getting ahead. And now the son did not want to hear about it. You could sooner move a mountain than him. He was so pale—like a whitened wall. His father's raging made him tremble all over, but he could not yield a step.

His father called him all the terrible names he could think of. He threw it up at him that he was a beggar; that he would not keep him any longer, such a beggar, and if he did not want to obey, let him be gone quickly.

The words of the enraged father wounded the soul of the son unto death, as only human words can hurt.

The mother was also drawn into this dispute and tried to beg first the one,

then the other. She might have moved her husband, but her son she could neither convince nor persuade; he just sat there like a rock, then she also got very angry at him.

His two sisters entered the room, also the bridegroom of the older one, who had come with his comrade to visit them; they were from the neighboring village. They began to confirm Petrash in his intention and put Sammy to scorn. "Since he does not want to," said the future son-in-law, "You just get everything ready, Father, and I will gladly leave my trade. I will gladly invest a few hundred in it, and the balance of the expense you can cover from the dowry you promised to give Eva. Thus we shall all nicely stay together, and Sammy can go again into the orchard and lie around as before."

By evening the matter was all arranged.

The following day, Petrash went to see Method. He was digging again, the Podhajskys also, and on the remaining grass and bushes, old David pastured his goats.

The anger of Petrash had passed, and now he was sorry he had done evil to his son without a cause, and wanted to take vengeance on the one whom he supposed to be the cause of Sammy's obstinacy. "I could have been spared all of that," he was thinking bitterly, "if it had not been for Ondrasik's servant. But I will tell him a thing or two."

The farmer grew more and more bitter as he went on his way, and when he came to the parcel of ground and beheld the one whom he blamed as being the cause of the hellish disturbance in his home, joyfully digging on the hillock, his anger was fully aroused.

"What did you put into the head of my son?" he began when they had barely exchanged greetings. "You come here and who knows what kind of a tramp you are or where you came from, and you start to make a quarrel and disturbance in the house. Is it any of your business if I want to have a dram shop in my house? Why do you incite my son to be disobedient?"

The Jew heard the yelling, looked around, rose, drew nearer, and watched the young Christian. He was anxious

to see how this one would react when somebody wronged him. Now was his chance.

With amazement the Jew watched the face of the bitterly censured one. He stood calmly, leisurely resting on his spade, looking on the ground as if these words did not concern him at all.

The anger of the old Jew was being aroused. He would like to have jumped on that farmer and given him a good calling down; he would have shown him "where to get off," but it was not his place to speak.

Finally, Petrash started at Method, their eyes met, and the farmer ceased.

"Well, then; have you told me all that the Devil commanded you to?" kindly, almost joyfully, spoke the young man. "He was owing me this in this valley. I already wondered that he had left me in peace so long. I almost feared that I was not serving my Lord Jesus Christ well. But now, all is well again. Now, when you have told me all that the Devil told you to, neighbor Petrash, speak for yourself. What kind of injustice has been done to you, or what evil have I ever done to your son?"

Joyfully the Jew rubbed his hands, and in his soul he blessed the young man. Podhajsky also had dropped his pick and stood nearby, stunned and surprised, not knowing what to think of this man, Petrash.

"Well, then, what do you really have against me?"

The farmer was taken back by the frank, yet kind question; nevertheless he did not want to give up. But the cruel words stuck in his throat and the explanation as to why he had to be angry, was given more mildly.

Finally, turning to the Jew, the farmer ended saying, "Sammy does not want to yield, just because yonder Podhajsky also might be coming to us, and might go back again to his old ways; as if a fellow would have to fill himself right away and could not drink with moderation. But Podhajsky must not come to us, I will not let him!"

The last words the farmer pronounced with a strong disdain. This aroused Podhajsky, who had been standing there as in a daze.

"You do not have to fear, Petrash," he said, stepping nearer, "I shall not enter your

house when you make a Devil's trap out of it, in which you will catch the people, to strip them naked and kill them. You do not need to forbid me to come there; I shall not cross your threshold, even if you beg me. But I shall not forget that your son had so much mercy towards me that he wanted to save me from eternal damnation. I will bless his every step wherever he walks."

The words choked in his throat as he threw himself on the ground, crying bitterly. Petrash stood there looking at the crying one, and he felt as if scalding water had been poured over him.

"Well then, neighbor, is it such a great injustice to you," began Mrs. Podhajsky, "that you have such a good child? And is it an injustice to you that Method instructed him not to look indifferently on a perishing human being? I had only one son; he was a good son to me until he began to go about in the dram shops. You know what trouble I had with him after that. Many times you yourself have hid me and defended me, also his wife. Today, when the good God had mercy and sent us a good man here to save him, you are cursing that man and giving him 'a calling down'? But remember the words of a mother, whose son the dram sellers ruined; remember what the Word of God says, *'Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness.'*^{1Hab. 2:9}

"The curse of God will surely come upon you.

"Don't cry, my son," continued Mrs. Podhajsky, going to him, "God will help you. You are no longer under the displeasure of God. Don't cry: let us go back to our work!"

The son obeyed and rose: they took up their picks and continued digging. Method also dug his spade deep into the ground.

What else could Petrash do, but leave? He knew well that what he had done now was not good, and these people had put him to shame, but he would not admit it.

He went to the mayor's office for the permission to make liquor, but did not get it. "I don't care," he said to himself, "I will arrange it with somebody else, and we will make it together."

He soon found a comrade, and they

started making liquor. Thousands of the beautiful plums, created for good, were put into the boilers to make poison to be the curse of the people.

THE DEVIL'S SOUP

Winter came, and also the carnival. In the home of Petrash there were great preparations in progress for a grand wedding. The mother had her hands full of work; the father, his head full of troubles; Eva, her heart full of joy and hope.

Since autumn, nobody spoke to Sammy, just as if he were not there. They barely responded to his greeting. Only the youngest sister spoke to him once in a while, secretly.

She had her own individual sorrow. The one she cared for asked for her, but her parents were not pleased with him. He had gone and taken another. The girl felt forsaken, so it drew her to her brother who had been kicked aside. She often went to him in his little room where he spent most of his time now.

From Ondrasik he had learned to make wooden implements, and thus he kept busy whittling. What he earned, he gave to his mother to pay for salt and light.

He still continued to go to old David. "Just you keep on learning," he said to him. "You will have a store yet, and then it will of some use to you." Every evening he was at Ondrasik's, and there he was able to forget that he was all alone in the world. It seemed to him like paradise to be in that house.

There they understood the Word of God better and better. Now they appreciated with what joy her heart burned, when Mary sang, *"My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."*^{1Lk. 1:46-47} In their hearts, also, Christ was born.

That winter the wife of Podhajsky came back to him. He had asked her in a letter. She came; yes, she came! He was so glad he hardly knew what to do to please her in everything. She just cried and could hardly grasp it, that such happiness could exist for a wife on this earth.

She found her husband orderly, more so than he had ever been before, because he was already a drunkard when she married him. The mother-in-law was very kind, the

children darling, healthy, the house clean, the pantry filled for the winter.

The Podhajskys had earned their bread. She brought a nice sum of money from her earnings. She gladly paid the few small debts they still owed. She bought some clothing for her mother-in-law, her husband and the children; for herself she had plenty. For the kitchen she bought some utensils. How cozy home was now!

And the main thing was that she came with a hungry heart. If anyone did, it was she who loved to hear the Word of God. She caught up with some and even exceeded others in her zeal to know the Word. Oh, how easy it was for her to believe God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, who brought about such a change in her life. And once she had tasted the grace of God in her heart, she could not keep silent about it. She was concerned about her family, former friends, and cousins. Each Sunday their small room was full, and Method had to read to them. They began to call the young man into other homes also.

"Method, it seems to me that the swallows begin to gather!" said Sammy once. "Yonder in the grove, you said that the whole village should come together for a prayer meeting and that we should begin. I hope it will come to that yet."

"Hardly, Sammy—'*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*'^{1Mt. 7:14} At least we will show people the way; and if none of them will follow the Lord Jesus, we will follow Him, for He said, '*Follow thou me.*'^{1Jn. 21:22}

"Yes, Method, follow Him, Him alone!"

During the winter, the Ondrasik's hauled lumber for the house of Method. They wanted to start on the building in the spring. All that was possible was prepared now, so as to be able to finish it in a short time.

Suddenly, sad news came to the Ondrasik's. Their daughter, Anna, wrote that her husband had sore eyes and the doctor told them he had better return home if he did not want to go blind. Therefore, they would start on the journey as soon as he returned from the hospital. That was sad news. Formerly it would have crushed them: today, they knew how to

pray, and only said, "The will of the Lord be done: we have to bear what He has laid upon us."

Just that week the Petrash's were getting the wedding ready, and for the sake of appearance, they invited Ondrasik's also, but that very week the sick son-in-law returned, and the daughter was so ill from the journey. Thus Dorka was unable to be Eva's bridesmaid; they had plenty of work at home. If it had not been for Method and his help and advice, they could not have managed to get along.

* * *

Again it was Sunday. Old David sat by his warm tile oven, lost in thought. In spite of the closed doors and windows, the music and shouting at neighbor Petrash's could be heard. They celebrated the wedding.

Suddenly, silently, the door was opened and Method entering, sat down beside the Jew.

"Welcome to you," joyfully said the old man. "Are you coming nevertheless? Well how is it at your house?"

"Praise God, it is getting better. The doctor said the young farmer may recover by spring, and his wife has been up since this morning, but she is weak yet."

"Listen, Method, while I have been sitting here without anything to do, I could not but think about what will become of you. Since Ondrasik has his children at home, and they will get well, he will no longer need both a servant and a cow boy."

"That's true, the three of them will be able to do the work," responded the youth. "I shall be there only until the spring. Really they could spare me now; I could leave at once, if it were not for that house that I started and one more thing."

It was as if a knife had been plunged into the old man's heart.

"To go away, where to?" he asked sadly. "What shall we do here without you? Well, the others, but old David! What could he do without you?"

"Do you love me?" The youth drew the old man into his embrace, just the same way as that day when he had related to him about his misfortune.

"Don't ask me. If you were of my own blood, my heart could not love you more!"

Silence reigned in the room.

"Do you remember what I promised you once in the fall?"

"That you would tell me something? Oh, yes, I remember!" nodded the aged man.

"Well, I want to tell you why I love you."

"Me?" exclaimed the Jew surprised. "I thought that you loved me as you love all the people, since Christ commands you to do so."

"Yes, because the Lord Jesus tells me so—He that said, *Salvation is of the Jews.*"^{Jn. 4:22} However, I love you not only as a man, but also as a Jew. Especially as a Jew, because it was a Jew to whom I owe most on this earth."

"What, you don't say!" said the old man amazed. "Well, then, say on!"

"For long years I lived without God, without Christ in the world. I did not know that I had an undying soul, nor where I would go after death. I lived just as you all here do, and it was a Jew who was the first to point the Truth out to me, to show me Christ. He taught me to love the Son of God; He lived on the earth just like Enoch, always walking with God, and today He is not seen any more with the people, because God took Him.

"You say," said the aged man raising his bowed head, "that it was a Jew who taught you to know and love Christ?"

"He lived only to proclaim to his people that the Messiah had come and redeemed His people from their sins, that He lived, died, and rose again, and that He will come again."

"Then he was not a Jew," frowned the old man; "then he was a Christian."

"He was a very happy man; he had only one sorrow, only one desire which he was not able to see fulfilled. It was hard for him to die because of that sorrow, and I was so happy to relieve him of it. I took upon myself a certain message and promised him that what he wanted to do, but was not able, having been stopped by death, I would try to fulfill, even though it would cost me my life. He believed me, and praise the Lord, I have not disappointed him, neither shall I."

"And what kind of a message was it?" the aged man asked with profound interest, looking surprised at his young friend.

Why, he was talking today as he never did before, as if he were not just the servant of Ondrasik, raised among the ignorant farmers and being one of them.

"What kind of a message was it, you ask me? He had someone very dear to him whom he loved very much, though he had never seen him, and to whom he wanted, but could not, bring the message of salvation, because he could not find him."

"And you have found him?"

"Yes, I found him, and—"

At that moment a strange light flashed through the room, and a terrifying sound of a wild cry reached them. Both men jumped up.

"Something happened there," said the Jew, pointing to the other house.

"Yes, it is burning inside; goodbye, I have to hurry."

"Where to—in that fire?"

"Yes, surely they are all drunk. Perhaps they threw over a lamp, and Sammy is there."

"Don't go!" groaned the Jew, but in vain, for the young fellow, having torn his hand from the old man's grasp, disappeared in the darkness.

Something terrible had happened in the house of Petrash. One of the best men, who had been doing all kinds of foolishness, cooked the liquor with sugar, and carried a large bowl full of burning liquor. He wanted to set it before the newlyweds on the table, but his feet slipped. He stumbled and poured out the burning contents over the table, and also over the bridegroom. In a moment the clothing of the unfortunate one burned like a torch and the tablecloth burned all over. The guests jumped about; a terrible cry arose. Some ran to the door; others jumped out of the window. The bridegroom, wild with pain, jumped desperately on the table and down again, rolled over on the ground, hoping to put out the fire enveloping him. The bridesmaids could barely hold back the young bride, who wanted to throw herself upon him and put out the fire with her hands. Some began to pour water on the table to put out the fire, and one of the drunken guests, supposing it was water poured out half a bottle of liquor, and then the fire broke out worse than ever with a real explosion.

It was at that moment that Method broke through the door. In his hand he carried an old wet cloth, which which he threw himself upon the poor burning fellow. He wrapped him up completely and thus put out that terrible fire. By that time flames spread everywhere, causing the people to run, crying. Stifling smoke and stench made breathing difficult. Barely all succeeded in getting away.

Some carried out the bride, who fainted, while Method carried out the groom. Outside he turned him over to the men. He, himself, went once more into the midst of that destruction. He jumped to the windows and closed them, pulled down the curtains and stamping on them, quenched the fire that was shooting up all around him and set him on fire, too. In spite of all, he succeeded in grabbing two large demijohns full of liquor and a third one half full, from the table and jumped out and slammed the door behind him.

Oh, that was a terrible wedding and a horrible time. Hardly a single one of the guests got home free from injury.

Though all that was in the room was either burned or ruined, the house at least was saved. It would not have been saved, all agreed to that, and even the groom would have burned to death, had it not been for the servant of Ondrasik. A long time they had been preparing for that wedding, but it will be remembered still longer.

They had invited the Devil, they had drunken guests; they cooked the Devil's kind of soup, and it was hot.

Oh, through what torment the young groom had to pass. On account of the great pain, he cried day and night. The good that the doctor tried to do was ruined by the advice of the old women.

"I beg of you, 'Gazda,'" said Method to his master the third day, "let me go for a few days. I'll go to take care of him."

"Go, yes, go; you will surely take better care of him. It is a pity to let such a young life perish."

Methodius went. The whole Petrash family was glad when he said why he was coming. The doctor, whom he just found there, rejoiced above all. He realized that here was a sensible and practical young man. He forbade the family to do

anything except what Method Ruzansky would let them do. From that hour on, all went better.

Even the sick one realized that some other hands were touching him now, and not only sought to relieve him, but also succeeded in doing so.

The few days that Method intended to stay at the Petrash home became weeks.

Sammy used to long for the opportunity of having Method at their house in order that they also might begin the day like the swallows, with a united prayer. Now he had that desire fulfilled. Method stayed with them, and they began each day like the swallows—but at what a price!

* * *

The spring had but begun when they started building. Method hired the bricklayers from the village, but he directed the building himself, like an experienced

"I already wondered that he had left me in peace so long. I almost feared that I was not serving my Lord Jesus Christ well. But now, all is well again."

builder. Every bit of the space had to be well used. The timbers for the roof he had cut altogether different from that to which they were accustomed. In this way he made rooms in the attic, and there was plenty of room below. Though the building was erected from sun-dried bricks, it was as firm as if it had been of burnt bricks. Daily the people stopped, looking on, and many a one nodding his head said, "Verily, I will have mine also done that way."

Mr. Petrash did not open a dram shop, nor will he open one, nor a store. For one reason, that terrible wedding cost them too much, then the very long illness of the son-in-law required much, and the front room had to be renewed completely. They were glad to have that money which they intended to use in the dram shop. In the room they had to put in new doors, windows, and floor. Then the neighbors found out that Petrash's had made arrangement with Method to make a store and dwelling in his house for Sammy. This he did, and

for two weeks they had been arranging the store that was to be opened next week.

It was as if old David was rejuvenated. He arranged and advised about everything; even for his own son he could not have done better. The people wondered also, because the Jew was completely changed. Formerly, except for a greeting, a "yes" or "no," one could not get a word out of him, and he was frowning continually. Now he was even willing to enter into conversation, and had such a friendly face, just as if he had grown young, though his head was completely white.

The women attributed much of the change to the fact that now he had a clean shirt and clothing, whereas formerly he went about ragged and dirty. They could not understand how Mrs. Podhajsky would take the trouble to wash for a Jew, and how she did everything for him. A while ago she whitewashed his room and renovated his featherbed. He bought new covers. Now his room was quite nice. Thus the women gossiped and wondered! "Everyone who has aught to do with the servant of Ondrasik is being changed, only he remains his old self. Let us watch and see how he will turn out when he lives in his new house. Perhaps the Ondrasik's will even give him their daughter since they think so much of him."

"Oh, yes, even Petrash would be glad to give him one, but he does not seem to care for any of them."

But young Mrs. Rasha let the cat out of the bag, saying that Method had spoken to Ondrasik on behalf of Sammy Petrash to give him Dorka. "Though he is lame, he is otherwise sound; and when he starts in business, with the help of God he will be able to take care of a wife. They both," said he, "love God and will walk together on the pathway that leads to eternal glory." Thus far spoke Method, Sammy said the balance himself, and with Dorka he surely was already of one mind. Dorka had not dreamt as she was helping to dig on that hillock, that some day she herself would be living there.

"Strange things happen in this world," the woman said, surprised. And truly, thus it really is! ➡

—to be continued—

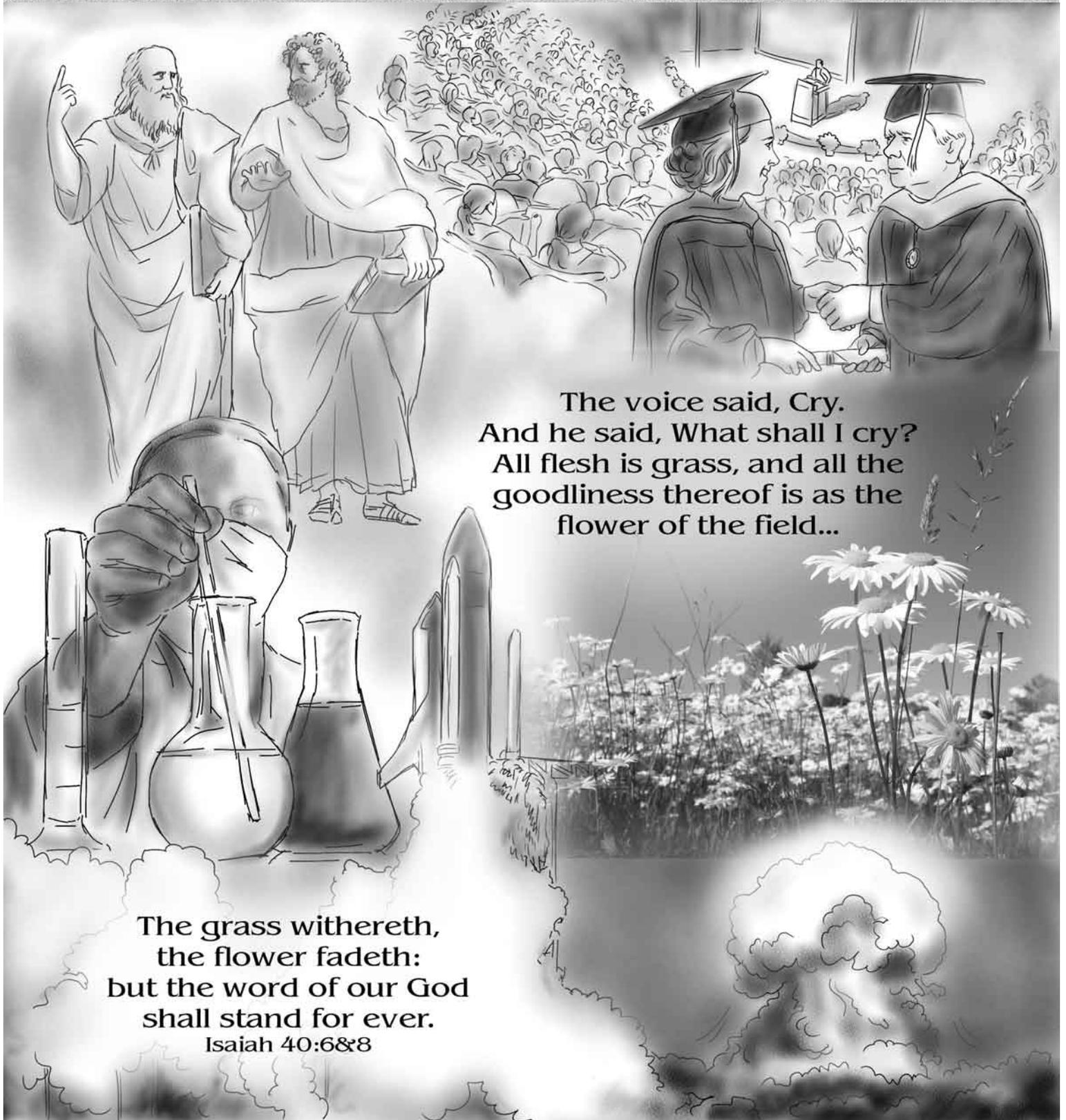
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The voice said, Cry.
And he said, What shall I cry?
All flesh is grass, and all the
goodliness thereof is as the
flower of the field...

The grass withereth,
the flower fadeth:
but the word of our God
shall stand for ever.
Isaiah 40:6&8