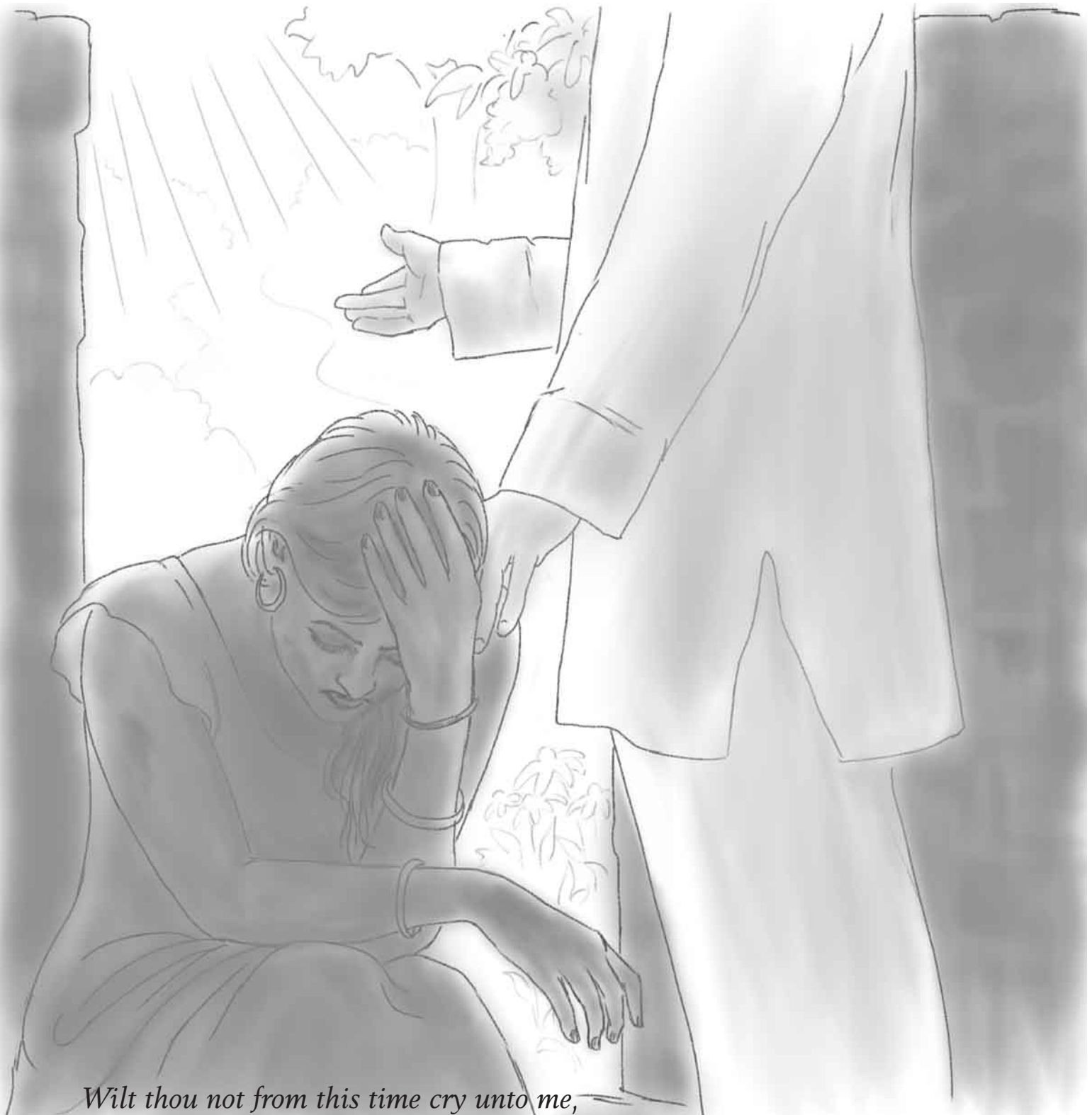


FOUNDATION TRUTH

Number 31
Winter 2013



*Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me,
My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Jer 3:3-4 (page 10)*

Dear Reader

I had purchased a new car stereo, because the one I had couldn't play MP3 CDs, and I was unable to listen to sermons, songs, and devotional materials on the way to and from work. I had read and heard that installing your own stereo, instead of having professionals do it, would be a considerable savings in money and was not difficult to do. I decided that it was time for me to learn how to do this.

I asked the Lord for courage and help, and began studying "how-to" guides online, and in my car maintenance manual. I got my tools together, and set to work: disconnect negative battery terminal, remove ashtray, remove screws behind ashtray, etc., etc. As I began to pry the plastic trim panel out to remove it, I ran into perplexities. I kept praying and studying and plugging away at it, and eventually found the screws I needed to remove and got it worked loose without breaking anything. Then I removed the screws that held the old car stereo in place, and began to pull it out. There was an antenna cable to remove from the back, and that came out easily. But then I got stuck on the wiring harness—I couldn't figure out what "clip" there was to press down on, to pull it loose.

I prayed. I researched online. I read the manual. I experimented. I pulled harder. I took breaks and tried again. I even got counsel from a couple of friends over the phone—but all to no avail. I began to conclude that I would have to attempt to put it back in as it was and take it to the professionals after all.

Then, as I was mentioning this to another friend, he offered to come help me. I knew he had had a busy day and had other responsibilities, but I accepted the kind offer. He took a look at the wiring harness, noticed a certain part of the connection that he identified as a tab, pressed hard on it, pulled, and—success! What a relief! What thankfulness it wrought in my heart!

"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts. To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice." Pro 21:2-3

I had been "sacrificing" plenty—I had put a lot of time and effort into trying to get that stereo out. I put a **lot more effort** into it than my friend did, without success. But he knew what to look for, and what needed to be done; he knew what was "*acceptable*" to accomplish the task.

Is there something that has looked right to you for a long time, but hasn't been prospering? Is there an area of your life in your walk with God where you have applied a great deal of effort, but somehow it doesn't "go," or prosper? Have you submitted yourself entirely into the hands of God to learn what is "*justice and judgment*" in the matter, and stopped measuring by "*sacrifice*"? Has the Lord been talking to you about letting go of something and letting Him work, or withdrawing from something into which you have invested a great deal of your energy?

I could have chosen to resist or reject the help of my friend, or looked at the "egg on my face" instead of the mercy the Lord was showing me through this friend. I chose to stop reasoning my own reasons, defending my own efforts, and yielded to the "*justice and judgment*" of another.

God gives me plenty of opportunity to exercise this choice, to stop looking with my own eyes, and to commit myself and my way into the hands of Him who "*pondereth the hearts*," and to learn "*justice and judgment*" from Him. I do not regret yielding to Him!

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, though individual articles may be of particular interest to different members of the family. We look to the Lord for direction on what to include, and the structure may vary from issue to issue.

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

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

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

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

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edited by Rick Erickson and others

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A Remedy for Dry Stems

Are your spirits drooping? Is your joy and courage lagging? Look at the bouquet of flowers on my kitchen counter. They were all fresh and bright when we first set them there. But the next day one bloom had wilted. The cause was apparent - its stem had not been able to reach the receding water. So we set its dry stem in fresh water and expected to see its vigor and beauty renewed by morning. But the poor thing had another lesson to teach us. Dry stems can't receive water, no matter how fresh and abundant it may be. They must be cut first.

How about you and I? Do we think that immersion in good things will restore us when we are dry? Perhaps you have attempted such a remedy and failed to see results. It is time to go deeper. The dry conditions have closed your receiving lines, dear soul, and it is necessary to open them once more. The cutting edge of godly sorrow and humility must touch your heart before the life-giving flow of Divine grace can enter. The renewing power is just waiting to flow up with refreshing strength, if you will but open the channels to the Living Water.



THE WORD OF TRUTH

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

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Ac 13:46

Was Paul expressing frustration with his brethren, or recognizing God’s call to a change of focus in his ministry? Does the Lord sometimes call us to stop working with people, because they aren’t responding well?

Reply: We have to be in tune with God. The only way to do that is by having our hearts purified and His Spirit dwelling inside, and then walking by that Spirit. When James and John observed how the Samaritans didn’t receive Jesus’ ministry, they tried to apply what they could see in the Bible to the situation:

“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.” Lk 9:51-56

The disciples’ knowledge of scripture was not able to help them be in tune with God because they had a different spirit at work in them in that situation. But after they were purified in their hearts, and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they were able to perceive the difference between their thoughts and the Lord’s and yield to

God’s way, as in the example of Peter being instructed to go to the Gentile Cornelius’ house.

“Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour... he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven... While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them... And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?” Ac 10:9-29

Peter still had his own thoughts, but the Spirit of God was able to guide him out of the maze of his own thoughts and inclinations because he was able to recognize God’s voice and yield freely to Him: “therefore came I unto you without gainsaying,” or as the Phillips translation puts it, “without raising any objection.”

Let us now return to the situation with Paul and Barnabas that originally prompted the question. They had been sent out by the Spirit on this trip (Acts 13:1-4), and had already been working among non-Jewish believers for some time (Acts 11:19-26). They actually did not stop ministering to

the Jews (continuing to go to synagogues in the next cities they went to), but were being “refocused” by the Lord and were being used by God to pronounce judgment against those who were rejecting the Lord. If you follow their trip in Acts 14, you find that “measuring the opposition” was not their guide as to whether to continue ministering to some people or in some place: “But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord.”^{v 2-3} Sometimes the Lord informed them of persecution and led them to flee to another place (v.5-6); and other times He permitted them to stay until they were severely abused for the Lord’s sake (v.19-20). They later returned to the same places where they had been persecuted (v.21).

With our Lord Himself, we see a pattern of being led independent of apparent wisdom and prudence (notice that it is not *against*, but *independent of* wisdom and prudence). A profitable ministry develops in Capernaum, and just as it seems to be at a critical point of growth (“all men seek for thee”^{Mk 1:37}), He discerns from spending time in communion with the Father that it is time to move on (v.38).

Everywhere in the New Testament where we see the Lord and His saints being led in tune with God, we see that they still exercise wisdom and prudence as the Spirit permits, but wisdom and prudence is not their guide—the Spirit of God is their guide.

The natural mind will either use zeal and fanaticism or wisdom and sober-mindedness as the final word on how we work in the Lord’s vineyard. But the only way to remain in tune with God is to seek the Lord until we obtain a purified heart and infilling of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4-5,8; 15:8-9) and then remain submitted wholly to the Lord by abiding in Him (Rom. 12:1-2; Jn. 15:4; Heb. 4:10-11). ➤

The Responsibility

of My Soul



“My soul is continually

in my hand.” Psa 119:109 The most serious responsibility ever entrusted to a human being is the possession of his soul.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mt 16:26 This was said by Him “who gave himself a ransom for all.” 1 Ti 2:6

A human being, possessing an immortal soul, is a more enticing target to the devil, than a small child carrying The Star of the Season—the most valuable diamond in the world, last sold for sixteen and one-half million dollars—would be to a professional jewelry thief.

The value of a human soul is incalculable. It cannot be reckoned. There are billions upon billions of human souls, all created by God, but each and every one is worth more than everything else in the world. Again the question: What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? The answer is simply that **there is nothing so valuable as one's soul**. Nothing at all. It is beyond the price of exchange.

Most human beings do not value their soul as they should, but are instead incredibly careless. This neglect of the soul is beyond irresponsible, beyond criminal, beyond comprehension. It defies credulity. And so the souls of men become easy pickings for the enemy of mankind. And Satan's appetite for human souls is insatiable. “Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure.” Isa 5:14

Once the human soul is created, it exists forever (Psa. 22:26). The human body waxes old and comes down to the grave, but the soul is not subject to aging. It is one of the things which is eternal. If

the human soul is sinful, it cannot enter heaven, for it would defile that holy place (Rev. 21:27). There is only one other place—hell. There “their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Mk 9:44

This place is to be avoided at all costs—even the cost of a hand, a foot, or an eye.

Yet many make light of such a place, without realizing what they are saying or doing.

But it is not merely the careless souls that Satan seeks; he wants them all. He revels in the challenge of ensnaring the wary, the conscientious. He is not daunted by men or women who have long walked with God; he tempted the Son of God Himself when Jesus walked the earth in fashion as a man. Satan fashions the most ingenious snares for the human soul; he offers the most enticing baits.

One of the most subtle of these traps is a feeling of helpless inadequacy. This disposition is commonly referred to in our day as an inferiority complex. The dictionary definition of this phrase is *a persistent sense of inadequacy or a tendency to self-diminishment*. At first glance, this appears as humility, a lack of pride, and it seems virtuous. But behind the apparent virtue is a desire to avoid the heavy and weighty responsibility of the soul's welfare by transferring that welfare to someone else. It is this **voluntary humility** that is so dangerous and deceitful. We have been warned: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” Col 2:18-19

God knows that a given human being is indeed inadequate to the keeping of his soul. He knows that “**it is not in man...**

to direct his steps.” Jer 10:23 He designed the inner man to have a constant Companion, a Guide, a Comforter, which should abide with us forever (Jn. 14:16). Only in partnership with the Holy Ghost can the soul of man can be kept safely. “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” Isa 30:21 Yea, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Rom 8:14

There is something about this inferiority complex—this false humility—that keeps us from “*holding the Head*” as we should. That fatal characteristic cuts us off from the great benefit which flows from the Head, so that we do not receive the spiritual “*nourishment ministered*,” and are not “*knit together*” with other saints of God's choosing. We are hindered to the extent that we do not grow and increase, but instead must battle hard to keep what we may have obtained, and generally will stagnate, decrease, and decline. In short, we are not blessed if we are not walking by living, active faith in God. We feel inadequate to believe and trust, and this inferiority complex fulfils itself. We struggle on our own, whereas we were meant to thrive by laboring together with God.

Men attempt to fill this great need of companionship and guidance by turning to other men who seem to be doing better. That which God only can fill they attempt to satisfy by riding on the coattails of the spiritual, or at least those whom they think are spiritual. Truly spiritual people perceive the situation at once, for they became truly spiritual by doing business with God themselves. They know by experience that no soul is safe, nor does an experience of salvation actually work, except by a human soul being hidden in Christ in God.

This whole situation is outlined in the parable of the ten virgins, as related in Matt. 25:1-13. Five took no oil, but the other five saw to it that they bought and had the oil they would need. When the crisis came and the five foolish realized they did not have what they would need, they said to the wise, “Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.” Mt 25:8 This is what commonly occurs today. Many realize they are not prepared, that they need help; but instead of applying to those that sell, and buy for themselves, **they try to get from man what they need.**

But the truth is still the truth: “My soul is continually in my hand.”

A group of people, who regularly discipline and control their people as seems good to them, like to recite the excuse Cain gave to God, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”^{Gen 4:9} Their reasoning is that this murderer tried to excuse himself from the responsibility of keeping his brother, so it is righteous and proper for us to “keep” each other, therefore, “I am my brother’s keeper.” Under this false reasoning, they devised endless rules for all—all for the supposed purpose of spiritually keeping each other. One who escaped this false standard observed that we were not adequate to keep each other. As the Word says, “Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper.”^{Psa 121:4-5}

Men have no salvation to give to men. Each born-again human being has a personal salvation, given of God, that no other human being can bestow or take away. The salvation of a given human soul is an intensively personal relationship between God and that soul. “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”^{Jn 6:44-45}

In the end of all things, no other man or group of men will give account of a given soul’s standing before God. “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} Notice how intensely personal this is. God draws a soul to Him. God personally fulfils His Word in washing and cleansing this same soul that comes to Him. God personally inserts this soul in the Vine. The soul personally bears fruit unto God. And in the end, each of us bows to God and confesses to God. “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

God puts each of us in different places in His church when He saves us, “But all these worketh that one and

the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”^{1 Cor 12:11} Each of us are given gifts according to our Savior’s will, that we may be “meet for the Master’s use,”^{2 Ti 2:21} “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”^{3:17} But each of us is equal in God’s sight by virtue of the fact that each is personally, individually saved by God Himself. This equality is very important. **No branch in the Vine is more important or less important than any other branch.** “But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you.”^{Mt 20:25-26} The reason that children of God do not exercise dominion over others or exercise authority upon other children of God is because of the common salvation—it puts them on an equal footing before God. And, other than the authority that comes from living holy lives (Jn. 12:48; 1 Cor. 6:2), they do not exercise authority or dominion over unsaved people, either. The only advantage the saved have over the unsaved is that they have received the grace of God which is freely given. All are offered the same grace, and all have the privilege of doing business with God and receiving what others have received. As Brother Peter said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.”^{Ac 10:34}

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”^{Heb 13:17} This does not mean that they give account for your soul; it means they give account for their own soul. The scope of the watchman’s

responsibility is shown in Eze. 33:1-9. The watchman is to receive the Word of God at the mouth of God and to warn the people. If he does not do this, he bears a responsibility for what happens to the people. “If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”^{Eze 33:8} But once he warns the people of what God says, his responsibility, the rulership of his watchman office, is concluded. Then the responsibility is upon the hearer. “Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”^{v.9} Notice that the watchman is not to go beyond the role of him who watches and warns. He cannot and should not attempt to *make* the people do right; he cannot save them—they have their own responsibility. The watchman has an important function, but if the people look to the watchman and trust him to be responsible for them, he has gone beyond the God-appointed role and taken too much upon himself. In that case, he will end up usurping the place of the Holy Ghost in each person’s life and will be held accountable by God for that trespass.

If this were not enough on this point, we read in Eze. 18:20, “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” A father is charged with certain responsibilities of his son, and he is accountable to God for those responsibilities. But it is equally plain that there is a place between God and the son into which the father cannot enter—that is between the son’s soul and his Maker. The son might say to the father, “You are older and wiser than I, and God has chosen you to be my parent—you answer to God for me,” but God will not accept the substitution. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”^{1 Ti 2:5} **Just one—the man Christ Jesus.**

It is blasphemous and profane for other men to enter into this position of mediation



between a soul and God. It is a grievous sin, and God views it in that way when watchman take too much upon them and attempt to midwife the salvation of a soul by stepping (even cautiously) into that exclusive place between that soul and God. To twist Heb. 13:17 into that kind of relationship is to distort it from the true watchman's authorized scope.

We observe another example of the watchman's role in Acts 8:18-24. Here Peter deals with Simon, a professor of God's salvation, who was baptized and attended services with others in Samaria who were saved. Peter tells him the truth of his condition and warns him solemnly. This is the watchman's function; this is what God required Peter to do. But does the man of God go beyond this? No. We see no barring of Simon from the services of the saved. Even though the poor unsaved man is told, "*Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*" ^{Ac 8:21} Even though he is told, "*For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*" ^{v.23} So what is the poor unsaved professor of salvation advised to do? "Submit yourself to our discipleship until we can pray and get you right with God"? No! "**Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and [you] pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.**" ^{v.22}

In John 10:1-5, Jesus speaks of the uniquely personal relationship of each of His sheep and Himself. He says, "*They know his [the Shepherd's] voice.*" And, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.*" ^{Rev 2:17} Have you gotten the white stone that Jesus has for you—a stone in which your new name is written, a stone "**which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it**"? Not Brother Peter, nor Brother John, nor Brother James, nor Brother Paul—**no man** knows except he that receives it!

A man stands by faith in God, in God's provisions, in God's Mediator. He obtains standing grace by that same faith—believing faith, even to the salvation of his soul. Beware of the substitute. Beware of the well-meaning attempts to substitute. Be-

ware of the fear of man—it brings a snare to your soul.

Beware of those who would claim a monopoly over the way of salvation. "Every man on earth can come directly to the Author of salvation through Jesus Christ, and be saved independent of all men or angels." If God has agents on earth who can control who gets saved and who doesn't, then a basis for inequality is already laid before an individual even gets saved. But listen to the words of Peter: "*Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*" ^{1Pet 5:3} Then he stresses the point all the more, saying, "*Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*" ^{1Pet 5:5} Notice again the equality between the apostle and "*all of you.*" He was to be subject to them (or rather, to the Lord in them), and they were to be subject to him (that is, the Lord in him). Now the basis for this kind of relationship in the saved is laid in how God saves souls. He saves them so that there are **no big I's and little you's**. All the truly saved understand that no one else saved them, but God. No one else keeps them saved, but God. "*None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.*" ^{Psa 49:7} No matter how useful or helpful someone else is to a given soul, they cannot save that soul or keep him saved. Paul, a spiritual father to others, said, "*Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.*" ^{2Cor 1:24} Again, this wonderfully-gifted man said, "*That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*" ^{1Cor 2:5}

Another brother spoke of this, saying, "Now listen: If you are doing right things because some man teaches these right things, you will likely do wrong things if this same teacher teaches wrong things. You are not to do right things because man teaches these things, but because God has written these right things in your heart. If you are not doing them from a righteous principle in your heart, you are not living saintly." It is this *righteous principle* in your heart that is the **gift of God**. Only God can give this. You cannot get it by yourself; you must get it from Him only who gives it. Others cannot give it to you. It only comes from God.

Those who dominate others to guide them are deceived. They do not understand God's process of salvation as they should. Nor do they have a salvation to give you that is worth having. If you follow their instruction and accept the domination of their yoke, you will end up with something other than the inward principle of righteousness that God puts in believers who are connected to the life that is the Vine. You will end up with *another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel*. And yet you will still have to answer without this other Jesus, spirit, and gospel to Him who created your soul. Just you and God, before the judgment bar. No one else can answer for you in that day. Just you and God, your history together: His dealings with you and your response to those dealings.

Many try to duck the responsibility of their own soul by committing that responsibility to others, but in the end, "*every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*" What a solemn thought. How utterly impossible to evade! How inexcusable! How unavoidable! "*What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

It is your privilege, at this time of your probation, to reason all of this away—to bend and warp the responsibilities of pastors, teachers, etc., to somehow attempt to lessen your solemn responsibility before God for the welfare and eternal destination of your soul. You may choose not to believe the truth expressed here; you may choose to put your faith in the efforts of others to save your soul. That is one of the ways you may choose to take at this time. You now have the privilege of being a man-pleaser, instead of "**doing the will of God from the heart.**" ^{Eph 6:6} But there is a reaping ahead. You will answer for this choice, for you cannot evade the responsibility of your own soul.

As one who has obtained mercy to be faithful, I plead with you to come to God in God's way. Nothing else will do. All other ground is sinking sand. Cannot God help you to find the promises He has for you? Cannot He change you and help you to stay changed? Is not His grace sufficient for your need? What He has done for others, **He will do for you.**

There is only one response that will do, but the choice is yours. ➤



TELL WHAT HE'S DONE FOR YOU

Blessed with Help to Get Home

The Lord is greatly to be praised! The writer of Psalm 107 says this four times: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"^{v 8,15,21,31} We do so thank and praise the Lord for getting us home after traveling around the country.

One experience I especially want to tell about happened in Kingman, AZ. The evening we arrived in town, the motor seemed nearly choking as we made turns in town to get to a RV park. Thankfully, the Lord helped us to get the RV settled in a good place for the night. We had already had it tuned in Albuquerque, NM. But obviously we still had problems and needed a mechanic.

The next morning Husband rode our bike to Walmart a couple of miles away to get a timing light to test it himself. Near the end of the time he was gone, someone knocked on the RV door. It was an older gentleman whose name was Thomas. He had seen the scripture signs on the outside and was excited to find someone who would talk about the Lord. He said no one wanted to talk about the Lord, so he had quit trying. Then he had questions about whether he was really saved or not. I encouraged him to keep seeking until he was satisfied he was God's child. Then he said he felt he had gotten saved in 1998. He had been a drunkard and the desire for drink had been taken away. I told him that it sounded like God had done something very special for him. I spoke to him about how justification cleanses us from our committed sins and sanctification is when God takes out the inherited sins and the depraved nature. He said, "This is encouraging."

Husband had left the RV hood up, and Thomas also asked if we were having car trouble. When I told him where my husband had gone, he then took off to find him. Very soon they both were back. Thomas also was doing car repairs on his own vehicle; He was in the RV park borrowing a friend's car to get parts. He and my husband began testing different things under the hood and felt that the fuel filter needed to be replaced, so Husband went and bought one. Thomas came back too and helped replace it. We knew the Lord had arranged our meeting. He was hungry for the truth we had to share, and he also helped us in our need. We went away blessed.

But our trials with the motor were not over; something still wasn't right. We had crept up the mountain ranges of the Rockies with the motor not having the power it had previously, and now the Lord miraculously helped us across the Siskiyou in Northern California.

At one point we begin to smell something that was getting too hot. We stopped and checked the hot water tank in the coach. It had seemed unusually hot when washing breakfast dishes that morning. Perhaps the thermostat was malfunctioning. We starting driving again, but the smell grew worse. What could be wrong? It smelled like it could burst into flames! I pocketed my keys and phone in case we had to make an emergency stop in trying to escape a burning vehicle.

Husband took another exit to check again. But the engine wasn't smoking; we just couldn't imagine what was wrong. *Lord, help us to know what is wrong.* It definitely seemed to be coming from the coach area. We checked

the hot water heater again. This time Mark dismantled the electrical hookup for the hot water tank. The air was getting a little chokey, almost like smoke.

Then I happened to look down, and there at the tip of my feet was a discolored spot on the throw rug. The rug was pulled back to find a 4-inch charred black spot on the vinyl flooring as well as the rubber on the back of rug! Thank the Lord for helping us to find the problem before it burst into flames.

But now what? Husband crawled underneath to see what was going on. He found that the muffler shield was gone. The muffler had been extra hot because of the strain on the motor. At this exit there was only one lone station, but he looked around and found a pile of junk, whereupon lay a piece of metal siding. The station clerk gave permission to use it for our need. He only had electrical wire to tie it on, but it did the job as we drove six miles to a store for better wire. After he had that fixed, he asked the Lord if there was anything he could do that would help this engine. Upon opening the hood, his eyes fell upon a spark plug that was not connected!

How good the Lord is to us in our trials! He truly helps us in them. Even though there were still other problems, it certainly did help. It was miraculous that we got over two mountain ranges with all these problems. Husband's comments: "Within this trial were very many precious mercies and experiences which were worth the pain. For these, we thank the Lord."

We were very thankful for the Lord's care over us, and so thankful to be home again.

Hasty Obedience

This week our vacuum cleaner went out. We bought this vacuum cleaner when we first got married, and I had never truly liked it—I don't like canister-style vacuums very much. But my husband liked it, and we bought it new. I was sorry for the inconvenience of it breaking, but I saw an opportunity for change. I told the children, "This time we are going to get an upright vacuum."

Then, the Lord began talking to me about vacuums and our budget and my attitude. He talked to me about how a vacuum is supposed to clean our floor, and we are supposed to be content with what He gives us.

So I decided to look on craigslist [an internet site that lists classified ads], because we didn't have much money for one. Now, I was pretty skeptical about using craigslist, thinking that people wouldn't be getting rid of a vacuum that was any good. But I was praying, and the

Lord had softened my heart so that I was sorry I had said to the children that "this time" I was going to get one of a different kind that I liked. It isn't that God doesn't allow us to have preferences, but my heart wasn't in the right place, and He wanted it to be changed "hastily" to be desiring His way.

So I looked on craigslist, and there was a vacuum exactly like ours—the same brand and the same features, just a different color. The owners were selling it because they liked upright models better, and they were only asking \$20. I knew how much these kind cost, because we had bought ours new. I talked to the lady about it and how much it had been used, and I ended up buying it. When I did that, the Lord just filled my whole heart with His grace and glory for being willing to have what He had for me.

You know, obeying "hastily" is really just being willing. My husband and I have

taken in quite a few foster children, and a lot of people will tell me, "I can never deal with difficult children. I don't know how you do it." Many times the Lord gives me this reply: "You just have to be willing to do whatever the Lord has for you to do."

I know this was just a vacuum, but the Lord filled me all up inside. After we bought the vacuum, I told the children, "We have to thank the Lord for this, because He provided something that we can afford." It doesn't matter to me at all now that it is not an upright vacuum.

I'm so thankful that the Lord knows that hastily obeying is the best way. We don't want our children to drag their feet, and not really listen—we want them to be hasty to obey because that is the best thing for them—to be hasty and happy.

I'm thankful that the Lord chastened me and didn't allow my attitude to progress to getting what I wanted.

Thank You, Lord—Thoughts of My Mother

I had a wonderful mother. While the tears came at her funeral, my heart said, "Thank You, Lord for all Your blessings!" *Thank You that she had given her heart to You before her marriage, and lived an example of a godly life before us.*

When I was a young child she had diabetes; her hair was falling out, and she was getting weak and pale. At a camp meeting she was anointed and prayed for and the Lord restored her health. How different my life would have been if the Lord had not touched her. When I was 13 she gave birth to twin boys. At her prenatal visits there was never any mention of excessive sugar in her system. The Lord had done a complete healing. How different our lives would have been if the Lord had taken her at an early age, leaving my sister and I without a mother. Instead, I had a mother who taught us to garden, cook, sew, and to love homemaking. My parents were faithful in having devotions and reading us Bible stories and other

profitable books before bedtime in the evenings. How blessed we were!

Lord, thank You for the godly counsel You inspired my parents to give.

I remember standing for the hem to be measured on a new dress. I was getting older and Mother thought it should be longer. I didn't want it to be any longer. Finally Mother said, "Alright, it will be between you and the Lord." Oh, now that put a new complexion on the decision! I immediately was willing to have the dress longer.

There was the time I had been reading the farm magazine ads about a correspondence course in interior decorating. I sent for the information and pored over it a good while, reading examples of what could be done with difficult areas of one's home. It was all very fascinating to me, and I was really thinking this would be a good thing to learn. Then I approached my mother about it. She said, "Well, I have noticed that women who are always thinking

about how they can redecorate their homes are not very spiritual women." *Lord, I thank You for the wise counsel You gave through my mother. Surely, I have been spared temptations that would have been mine otherwise.*

There was the time of a hard decision of finding God's will in marriage. I know both Mother and Daddy were praying for me. This time it was Daddy whom the Lord used to give counsel. He said, "This is supposed to be a happy time." *No one but You, Lord, will know the freedom that simple statement gave me!* It gave me freedom to exercise what I felt was the will of God, clearing away some confusion and uncertainty.

* * *

As Mother neared the end, it was hard for me to be so many miles away from her. The Lord brought to mind that I could call and sing to her every day or so. At this point, strokes had affected her speech and she could no longer say anything. My sister would hold the


cont. ►

phone to Mother's ear. Once my sister asked me, "What were you saying to get such a reaction?" Mother had been nodding her head up and down. I had been singing, "Precious Home of Rest." She is now in her desired haven of rest. Even though we miss her, I would not wish her back to this land of care and weariness. Rather, focus our lives on living so we can someday join her.

The Saturday night after Mother's funeral, sleep did not come the whole night. I had a small pain that came just often enough to keep me from falling asleep, and I also had a lot on my mind in seeing everyone. I also kept thinking of the scripture in Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." I thought about that word *precious*. What does *precious* mean? The definitions "valuable or rare" came to us in the night. I later looked in the dictionary and found: "of great price; costly, of great desirability; held in high esteem, beloved, dear." My meditations in the night continued—why does the Lord use this most endearing term in speaking of His children? These children are the ones who have surrendered all to His control. They have striven to be soft, pliable, yielded to the will of their Lord. They prayed daily that their lives would measure to the words of God. They were called to go through trials or perform tasks that only God's strength could help them through. Yes, that is why He calls their death precious. These were souls with whom He could have His own sweet will and way.

These thoughts were a challenge to me and I trust will be to you, also. That I might come to my end and have God say of me, "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*" ➤

From This Time



"Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Jer 3:3-4

The Lord is reviewing current conditions and the past behavior of the people of Judah. He explains the pattern of their behavior in terms that are not only awful, but they also convey a set pattern. The "forehead" indicated the determined setting of the will, the way someone was making choices, choosing to interpret or receive whatever happened to them in a certain, fixed way. It can be used positively as well as negatively. "*Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.*" Eze 3:8-9 A similar idea is brought out concerning Jesus: "*And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.*" Lk 9:51

If therefore, they had "*a whore's forehead,*" they were setting their course determinedly to be unfaithful to the Lord, and refusing to be ashamed of it. A whore, unless she refuses to be ashamed,

finds it difficult to continue in her course. Here, the people of Judah as a whole were characterized by a wholesale rejection of God's dealings with them, an insistence on interpreting everything in favor of their own ways, and embracing other gods than the living God. But then, we have this remarkable appeal: "*Wilt not thou from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?*" It is a call to remember soberly and truly the past, to change course now, to cry out as unto a merciful father. This is the wonderful call and promise of the true God, a God of mercy, a God who is able to forgive, rescue, and uphold.

God makes this gracious call to abandon the past, a call to a course "*from this time.*" To frail humanity, whose past so strongly shapes our thoughts of the possibilities before us, He offers to set us free to choose.

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Song 2:10-13

The call goes out to the child of God as well, to choose anew to go forward with the Lord. Never mind whether you have followed Him closely or been negligent before—now is the call to "*Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.*" God is interested in a forward-going relationship, a drawing closer, a rising higher, an abiding yet closer. A little while ago, I was bemoaning in myself a lack of sufficient self-control in spending some time in some useless activities. I asked the Lord for help, and He let me know that He had activities He would show me that I could fill in those little "bits" of time between other tasks. He had a plan for going forward! "*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.*"

There is more in this thought of "*from this time.*" Consider this scripture: "*The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.*" Psa 115:17-18

The praising of the Lord that belongs to our time of probation is **now**. It does no good to keep putting off blessing the Lord by praising and living for Him until we are dead, either from discouragement about the past or due to lack of determination in the present—the time to “*bless the Lord*” is “*from this time forth*,” which will take us into “*for evermore*.”

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” Rom 3:23-25

God is in the business of forgiving and remitting “*sins that are past*”—He isn’t interested in us continuing in our former state, where we “*all have sinned*,” but to go forward with Him in righteousness.

The Lord expresses this purpose again in 1 Peter 4:1-3, “*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.*” Christ suffered for us, not only to purchase our redemption, but to gain for us a spiritual weapon, a frame of mind, in which the past is sufficient for wrong, and “*the rest of the time in the flesh*” is for doing “*the will of God*.” This is made possible by God’s grace to such a degree that it is meant to be spiritual armor!

In this present age, because of Jesus, all the possibilities have changed. “*Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*” 1 Jn 2:8 From this time, the true light shines, and the darkness is past! “*We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the*

accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)” 2 Cor 6:1-2 God presents us with **now**. From this time, choose Him. From this time, repent and believe the gospel. From this time, receive the grace of God in substance, not just in form. God wants to change the course of people’s lives, so that something like this can be said of each of us: “*I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me.*” Phm 1:10-11 No longer an unprofitable life to God and others. From this time to be profitable to Him and to others also.

After God has rescued us, His direction is an ongoing “*from this time*” and forward: “*If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 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. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*” Php 3:11-16

The Lord wants us to have an incorruptible attainment; that is, to reach eternity having “*attained*” the resurrection of the dead, to meet our judge in peace. In the meantime, we continue this pattern, of “*forgetting what lies behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.*” We never rest on our laurels (which are all to God’s credit, anyway) nor are to be discouraged by sin or any sort of poor performance in the past, but reach forward to and with the Lord. And in the perfection that is attainable in this life, it is our blessed privilege to walk with what we have attained until the Lord shows us whatever needs to be adjusted or corrected, and then move forward into that light with the Lord.

Praise the Lord, “*from this time forth, and for evermore.*” ➤

“Follow Thou Me”

**Follow—not go ahead
at thine own pleasure,
Nor turn aside
at thine own wayward will,
Nor stray afar
in search of other treasure,
But close at hand,
where I can aid thee still;
Across the sea
and through the desert places,
Onward and upward
by the one sure way,
Till thou shalt sit
with Me in heavenly places
Amid the splendors
of eternal day.**

**And—follow thou;
for thee My call is sounded;
All that I suffered—
was it not for thee?
For thee My soul was bruised,
My body wounded,
I died, from sin and death
to set thee free;
No other hand
could write thine own life-story,
No other make
thy choice of gain or loss,
No other win and wear
thy crown of glory,
No other lift and bear
thy destined cross.**

**Follow thou Me—
though stranger voices hail thee,
I am the way
and there is none beside;
There is no other staff
that shall not fail thee,
There is no other eye
than Mine to guide;
There is no other shepherd
who can fold thee
By such still waters,
in such pastures fair;
There is no other arm
can safely hold thee
In doubt and danger,
darkness and despair.**

**Trust Me to lead thee
home to God and heaven;
What others do or say
is naught to thee;
No other light,
no other truth, is given;
Follow—follow thou—follow Me.**



Editor's Note: Here we continue the subject of human limitations resulting in errors taught by leading brethren in the Evening Light reformation.

From the booklet *Marriage and Divorce*, by D. S. Warner, we quote:

Must All Unscriptural Marriages Be Dissolved?

Thus far we have plain positive commands and Bible teaching, and therefore may speak with authority. But if we turn to the Word for directions what to say to those who have more than one living companion, we find no clear command given as to what they shall do.

To the contrary, the Word does give us clear instruction, which we will soon see. But let us examine the teaching further:

But does not the perfect law of the Lord give us some general principle, or some ruling on similar cases from which we can infer the mind of God in this matter? Let us see. We know that where men have done contrary to the word of God ignorantly, after learning the fact, they are required to undo, and make right in all cases where it is possible to do so, when they come to a knowledge of the truth. But can men and women entirely undo the act of marriage? Can they cast off that bond of natural conjugal affection that has united their hearts?

We think not, except it be by some unkind, and unjust conduct by which that love might be killed. And surely God would not require that. Again, if they have brought forth offspring, their union is still more irrevocable. We know that the practice of any sin cannot find pardon without its discontinuance. But knowing that God locates sin in the motives of the heart and will, it is very doubtful that God holds a

person as living in actual adultery when married to a second living companion, if that relation was entered into in all good conscience, sincerely supposing he or she had a perfect right to do so.

This last statement directly contradicts the Word of God. "So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." Rom 7:3 This emphatic statement from the Word of God **has nothing to do with motive**. It describes a reality and labels it. Adultery is the state of being *unlawfully* married to another companion while the husband (or wife) is living. Adultery is adultery, regardless of intent or motive.

The question is not whether men and women can entirely undo the act of marriage. The question is whether men and women can abide in an unscriptural and unlawful relationship with God's approval and acceptance.

"For John had said unto Herod, **It is not lawful** for thee to have thy brother's wife." Mk 6:18 It is not lawful, regardless of motive. It is not lawful—period. Ignorance does not make it lawful. Ignorance will only enable one to escape having the sin imputed to them **until light comes**. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every

one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Jn 3:19-21 "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." Jn 15:22

The question is not whether a man and a woman can entirely undo the act of marriage. The question is whether a man and a woman can abide in an unscriptural and unlawful relationship with God's approval and acceptance. Brother Warner admits, "We know that the practice of any sin cannot find pardon without its discontinuance." Amen. **It must be discontinued.** "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psa 66:18 "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isa 55:7-9

I have before me some discussion about the issue of divorce and remarriage in the Evening Light Reformation of 1880:

Below is a short review and link to a booklet published by D. S. Warner (1842-1895) on *Marriage and Divorce* and a letter by the Church of God Gospel Trumpet (est. 1881) ministers that was issued during a ministers assemble at the General Camp Meeting at Moundsville, WV, June 1901.

These two documents show the position of the Church of God Gospel Trumpet (which became what is known as the Church of God Anderson) on the issue of whether a person needs to leave a marriage

which the Bible deems as adultery if they got into that marriage not knowing it was adultery...

"Must They Separate?"—This letter from the ministers assembled in General Camp Meeting at Moundsville, WV, June 1901 concerning the issue of divorce and remarriage that was published in the *Gospel Trumpet* (est. 1880).

The letter shows a change in position by the ministers of the Church of God Gospel

Trumpet from what D. S. Warner taught. In this letter they not only were allowing couples to stay in adulterous marriage but they were forbidding them to leave them and holding that leaving an adulterous marriage was unscriptural. This was a step further than D. S. Warner's position in his booklet "Marriage and Divorce" where he left it up to the couple whether they stayed together or separated....

"Marriage and Divorce"—In this booklet D. S. Warner taught that there is no Bible command to separate two people who are married when either of the couple had a living spouse from a previous lawful marriage. This was only in the cases where the couple had got into the second marriage, not knowing the Bible taught that second marriages were adultery when you had a living spouse from a previous lawful marriage.

Warner held the position that it was up to the couple to decide if they should stay together and that no one had any Bible basics to require them to separate.

This makes the Church of God Gospel Trumpet an adultery group (a church group that allows members in good standing to marry into or stay in an adulterous marriage) from its beginning of 1880. This raises serious questions about the Church of God Restoration and their claim to be the one true visible church and their attempts to date the restoring of God's church back to 1880 through the work of D. S. Warner when the group they are claiming was the start of the restoring of the church was an adultery group.

A brother once stated, "We carry within us the seeds of our destruction." This is very true, and it was just as true of early, primitive Christianity as it is true of recent events and right now. Without constant correction from the Holy Ghost, any of us go astray.

We read in the Bible, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."¹ 1 Cor 3:13-15

This is just as true of what we are writing as it as ever been of anyone else. God has so ordained that **the fire will try** the soundness of what we teach and believe. **The fire will reveal** whether the teaching is gold, silver, or precious stones. It will also reveal whether the teaching is wood, hay, or stubble. It means a great deal for what we believe and teach to be revealed by the fire as really true and worthy of human lives being built thereupon. And if the opposite is true, we may still receive mercy and be able to recover from the effects of error—we may still be saved, "yet so as by fire."

"We carry within us the seeds of our destruction." This is very true, and it was just as true of early, primitive Christianity as it is true of recent events and right now. Without constant correction from the Holy Ghost, any of us go astray.

It seems that God permits this testing, this sifting, to refine and purify His people. We tend to think He should go about this more straightforwardly, as we would do. But there is something about free will and the nature of our probation that causes God to hide Himself to a great extent and to mask truth in such a way that it separates the wheat from the tares. This is not done just to make things difficult for us. It is a test of our desire to do right that goes far beyond emotion and intellect.

Therefore we have admonition after admonition to watch, to wait, to pray. As one brother in the New Testament writings put it, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves."² 2 Cor 1:9 "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."³ Php 3:3 "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."⁴ Pro 3:5 As the poet said,

"Had I the choosing of my pathway,
In blindness I should go astray,
And wander far away in darkness,
Nor reach that land of endless day."

All men, even the most spiritual, even the brethren of the New Testament, do not know how to direct their steps and must

listen and wait upon the Spirit of God to avoid errors that look perfectly plausible and right to them. Our Lord Himself, "who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."⁵ Heb 5:7 Such was the handicap of the flesh, that He did not rely on His divinity or the purity of His heart, but "Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God."^{9:14} In this, our Lord left us an example,

a perfect example, of how to lean upon that same Spirit to help us through. Jesus Christ was enabled of the Father by the Spirit to offer a perfect atonement for us, and we can be enabled by Him to fulfil our vastly

lesser vocation unto Him. And part of this is that we are allowed of God to make mistakes and to leave apparent openings, that those who will not fully allow God to have His way "wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."² 2 Pet 3:16 Those who do humbly follow God are enabled to avoid these openings, and with the avoidance comes a peculiar conviction of humility—a great fear of God.

One brother was reading of the doings of brethren back in the 1880 Evening Light Reformation, and his study brought him to despair. "Lord," he prayed, "if these brethren, with all their light and power with God, came to grief and went astray, what chance is there for me?" He testified that God answered him. "I dealt with every one of those brethren," was the reply.

Brother Warner was deeply impressed with this thought: If God does not require (indeed, forbids) marriages to be abandoned in which one of the spouses is a believer and the other is not, then why should a marriage which is entered into in good faith, especially one manifesting some evidence of divine blessing, be dissolved. And how can we require such a thing?

In this thought, the brother missed the distinction between **lawful** and **unlawful**

Press On

*Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Php. 3:13-14*

1. Press on, my broth - er, sis - ter, And face the dead - ly foe;
2. Press on, and let thy fail - ings A bless - ing to thee prove;
3. Press on, though rag - ing tem - pests And fier - y bil - lows roll;
4. Press on, 'mid strong temp - ta - tion, Tell Sa - tan he must flee;
5. Press on, for - ev - er trust - ing, In faith be - liev - ing, too;
6. Press on, to what's be - fore us, For - get - ting all the past;

Through Je - sus Christ we'll con - quer, While trav - 'ling here be - low.
No wave of care or sor - row Thy trust - ing soul shall move.
While cross - ing life's rough rap - ids, He'll safe - ly guide thy soul.
In Je - sus' name re - sist him, And vic - t'ry thine shall be.
In spite of doubt or feel - ing, God's word will take you through.
The light of heav'n so glo - rious E - ter - nal - ly shall last.

Refrain

Press on, press on, Says Christ, our lov - ing Friend;
Press on, press on, press on, press on;

Press on, press on, "I'm with thee to the end."
Press on, press on, press on,

We Must Be Holy

*He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Eph. 1:4*

1. Je - sus has ta - ken my load of sin, Such love no tongue can tell;
2. Can I be - hold the dear Sav - ior's death, And yet with - hold a part;
3. Rea - son and jus - tice, my debt of love, De - mand that I should be:
4. We must be ho - ly as He is pure, For this the Sav - ior died;

Then should I not re - sign to Him My life and all my will?
Oh, can I draw one self - ish breath, And not give all my heart?
Bod - y and spir - it and all I have De - vot - ed, Lord, to Thee.
Tal - ents and time and all earth - ly store To God be sanc - ti - fied.

Refrain

Ho - ly, dear breth - ren, we must be ho - ly, Liv - ing be - fore the throne;

Self and pos - ses - sions, all must be tru - ly Giv - en to God a - lone.

that applies, **regardless of intent**, and God allowed him to make that mistake and to publish it. If there is any question remaining in your mind, dear reader, about whether God means what He says and expects us to take it with the utmost seriousness, we would direct you to the story of the son of Moses in Exodus 4:24-26. God had directed Moses to circumcise his children, and Moses had not done so. As Moses and his family traveled to Egypt to deal with Pharaoh, God met this uncircumcised son of Moses in an inn. God "sought to kill him," and Moses knew that the only hope that God would not kill the boy lay in immediately circumcising him. So he had his wife circumcise the boy with "a sharp stone" at that point, although this was highly offensive to her. However, the act of obedience of Moses to God saved the boy's life.

Reader, if God regards marriage to a second companion while the first is yet alive as adultery, you may be sure that He means what He says, and that He most assuredly brings the penalty for adultery on all who knowingly violate His command (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

It is manifestly human to ask "Why?" "Why, O Lord?"

And with this, we find the same question appearing when we read what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery

of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."^{2 Th 2:1-7}

The natural, human reaction to such a revelation as "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" is to get stirred to say, "Over my dead body!" "No way!" "What we have means too much to let such a thing happen!" And to follow up that reaction with great energy and zeal to stamp out, expose, purge out any such tendencies in the camp, so to speak. This is what motivated Peter in Matthew 16:22, and Jesus exposed the roots of his zeal, "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."^{v.23}

If we reverence the ways of God above our own ways, then we are brought face to face with "only He who now letteth will let." God actually allowed the seeds of that awful monstrosity, that terrible imposter, the organization of men headed by the man of sin, to work in the midst of His work—"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work." And yes, it was working. It was producing something abominable among all who would give it place. It was producing apostasy and compromise, corruption and error, even as Christianity was triumphing over Paganism, even as the martyrs were giving their lives and sealing their testimony with their blood (Rev. 12:11).

It is possible (and there are many who do) to smear Christianity with the excesses of the great whore, confusing one with the other. This is not so far-fetched as may be imagined. A little reading of the church fathers of the first and second centuries is sad indeed. "The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while."^{Isa 63:18}

It is not fair to imagine that everyone in the Evening Light Reformation held the views that Brother Warner published in this booklet, *Marriage and Divorce*. It is accurate to believe that others did hold those views, and it is a historical fact that others went farther than he did. A meeting of fifty ministers in 1901 was by no means the end of it. Look at it today.

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But to state that the entire movement of people back then was "an adultery group (a church group that allows members in good standing to marry into or stay in an adulterous marriage) from its beginning of 1880" is not fair. It is not fair to say that, anymore than it is fair to say that the entire early Morning church was in the condition of the Catholic Church from shortly after the apostles were martyred. It would be inaccurate to state that the apostles of the New Testament were a circumcision body and required all Gentile converts to be circumcised. It would also be inaccurate to state that this same body of people required that no one eat meat that had been offered to idols.

The very fact that fifty ministers met together on the subject speaks in itself. And fifty was a small number of the active ministry at the time. But we do not have to estimate percentages and prevailing trends and all that. No matter how many or how few hold to truth in any given age of time, the Word of God is an unbending rod of iron that remains the same. Whether men leave it or fail to get a hold of it, the truth continues, led by Jesus, inspired by the Holy Ghost, and anchored securely in heaven.

If you are inclined to look to men, you will find your faith injured and your vision dimmed by what "He who letteth" is letting. All such looking is sinking sand. If you had lived in the time of the writing of the New Testament, you would have been caught by many of the same errors and mistakes that plagued humanity then, and you would have been sidetracked from what cannot be shaken.

Truly, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."^{1 Cor 13:12} God is not pleased with men following men. He said of the New Covenant—the New Testament: "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."^{Heb 8:11} "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye

Whether men leave it or fail to get ahold of it, the truth continues, led by Jesus, inspired by the Holy Ghost, and anchored securely in heaven.

shall abide in him." ^{1 Jn 2:26-27} God knew that man was much prone to hero worship, so He took special care to put in the Bible that "*Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are.*" ^{Jas 5:17} It is not that we have no place in helping each other; rather it is that we must not abide in each other—that is, we must live from God, rather than live from each other.

It is a fact that human nature exalts others, "*having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.*" ^{Jude 16} Anyone that God uses prominently becomes a focal point of other men's carnality, both at the time of the man's pilgrimage and especially later, after the man is gone from earth. The entire story of the brother or sister so used becomes blurred—legendary and fabled—in the eyes of those who so exalt him. This mythical version of the man is used as guidance by those who are led by this, rather than being led by the Holy Ghost. In mercy to us, God causes the fallibility of brethren—genuine, solid brethren—to be manifested to give us pause and to rebuke and correct us in thinking of each other "*above that which is written.*" ^{1 Cor 4:6} This is what happened with Peter (who is actually exalted to be the first "pope" in the minds of many). God allows us to see him through Galatians 2:11-14. It is a humbling thing to see a man of God, clearly and powerfully used of God, *allowed of God* to make such a mistake publicly and to be reproved publicly by another man of God who had a history of having persecuted and made havoc of the church of God before he was saved.

About two generations ago, a minister was asked in a young people's meeting whether two who were engaged to be married should ever kiss before the wedding vows were taken. She wanted to give as comprehensive an answer as possible and to allow all permissible room that was consistent with holy living and spiritually safe. She hesitated and said, "Well, maybe if they were going to be parted for a long time." She had in a mind a very chaste kiss under such circumstances. But other brethren knew how human nature would take and bend that liberty to the ex-

tent that great mischief would result. They had her publicly reverse what she said.

"If we cannot trust Brother Warner, who can we trust?" Such a question should not even be asked. It should be so plain to each of us that we should trust and abide in God only. Let us take to heart what Brother Paul said of the ministry in 1 Corinthians 4:6. Please note that it is possible to think of each other *above* that which is written. "Well, then, how should we regard each other?"

In mercy to us, God causes the fallibility of brethren - genuine, solid brethren - to be manifested to give us pause and to rebuke and correct us in thinking of each other "above that which is written" (1 Cor 4:6).

Let us look for God in each other and follow Him, and Him alone. As one said it, "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*" ^{1 Cor 11:1} That is, only to the extent that I follow Christ. In other words, watch for Christ in me and follow Him as He is revealed. Christ is safe wherever He is found—**follow Him** however He is manifested.

If you are doing right things because some man teaches these right things, you will likely do wrong things if this same teacher teaches wrong things. You are not to do right things because man teaches these things, but because God has written these right things in your heart. If you are not doing them from a righteous principle in your heart, you are not living saintly. Can you not understand this?...

Too many are trying to live what someone else teaches instead of getting the truth in the heart. Did you not know that you can get nothing from heaven except there be a heart conviction by the spirit for the thing desired? You want to be saved because you do not want to go to hell; you want to be healed because you don't want to be sick; you want your daily bread because you don't want to go hungry—but there

is no heart conviction for the things you are desiring. You pray with your lips, but there is no mighty pleading of the Holy Spirit in you, and you get nothing from heaven to your life. You may think that I am severe. I am telling you truth because I love you.

Jesus says, "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*" ^{Jn 10:27} You are to hear more than the preacher's voice, but there are those who are hearing no more. You are to listen for the voice of Jesus in the voice of the preacher, and if you cannot hear it, do not follow. You have heaven to gain for yourself. You have your own life to live. Do not look around and compare yourself with someone else. Look to heaven and live to please God. He will tell you how to live. His Spirit will write it in your heart.

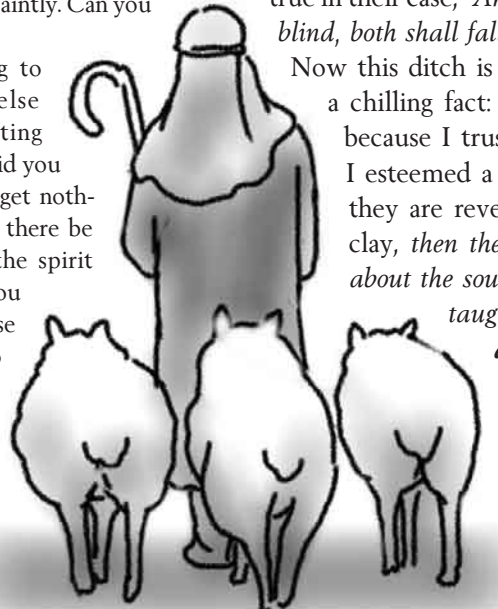
No two lambs bleat just alike. Jesus knows each sheep by its own particular bleat. No life will ever be just like yours, because there never was anyone just like you. It takes your own individual life to complete the all-glorious temple of God. Seek the God of heaven to teach your heart how to live. You can live the life God wants you to live, but you cannot live the life of another. There are some variations in every life. It is the law of heaven. Get your eyes off of others. Jesus says, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." ^{Jn 21:22}

—C. E. Orr, *The Rule of a Saintly Life*

When people follow other people instead of God, it does not end well. Many follow blindly, and the words of our Lord come true in their case, "*And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*" ^{Mt 15:14}

Now this ditch is a terrible affair. It is a chilling fact: when I doubt truth because I trusted someone whom I esteemed a safe guide, and then they are revealed to have feet of clay, *then the same doubts I have about the soundness of what I was taught will apply to all*

aspects of truth. In other words, if I doubt the validity of the 1880 Evening Light Reformation because Brother Warner is revealed to be a fallible



human being, then what will I say to the canonization (what is authorized and what is not authorized) of the scriptures? God has a sifting, establishing process to prove out all truth that is manifested to man, and part of this process is to shake off all who do not get a hold of it as they should. The same process settles, strengthens, and establishes those who learn to keep their eyes on God. God is **BIGGER** than the earthen vessels He uses. God is bigger than the human beings involved. He is bigger than the opposition, too, and knows how to use the enemies of the truth to establish the truth—indeed, some of true Christianity's greatest testimonies are those given by her foes. Behold! *"Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a **tried stone** a precious corner stone, a **sure foundation**: he that believeth shall not make haste."* Isa 28:16

Once faith begins to unravel, there is no stopping place in the process. To get established again, there must be a thorough going to the bottom—a thorough dealing with all foundational issues—a thorough putting of things completely right. And this takes a consecration to pay the price, to adjust everything and bring into conformity every thought to the obedience of Christ. A single doubt has vast potential for damage—catastrophic and disastrous results that will result in the soul's eternal undoing. We must get to solid ground. We must get to Christ and His way of thinking and doing. All other is sinking sand. Therefore, it does not matter *who* writes or speaks. What does matter? **Is it according to the Word of God?** How does it stand the fire that proves? Will it do to live by and die by? Will it do at the final judgment bar of Christ?

But now we want to go a little farther into this matter, and ask the question: *Why*

does God deal with us in this way? Why does the Almighty allow mistakes of this magnitude to take place? What has God shown us about His way of working that will help us in confronting and making sense of the questions—even the *hard* questions—that are raised by such statements and publications?

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." ^{1 Cor 1:25} *"For my thoughts are*

The Spirit of God (the Comforter) is given to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). If we are guided by something else, even the very finest of man at his best state, then we will end up with something less than all truth.

not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." ^{Isa 55:8-9}

God has designed a presentation of truth that defies the orderly, methodical logic of men. The doctrines of truth cannot be reduced to a catechism, a creed, or a body of rules that can be taught and received by those who are not born from above. Any attempt to do so somehow changes the essential nature of truth in people. Somehow that is the result of reversing *"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."* ^{Jn 7:17} **One of the abiding evils in the professed Christian world is the indoctrination of people who have not a heart to do His will.** The doing of His will (from a regenerated heart) is the necessary requirement to *know* of the doctrine, and when it is learned any other way, the understanding is slanted incorrectly and inaccurately. The Spirit of God (the Comforter) is given to guide us into all truth

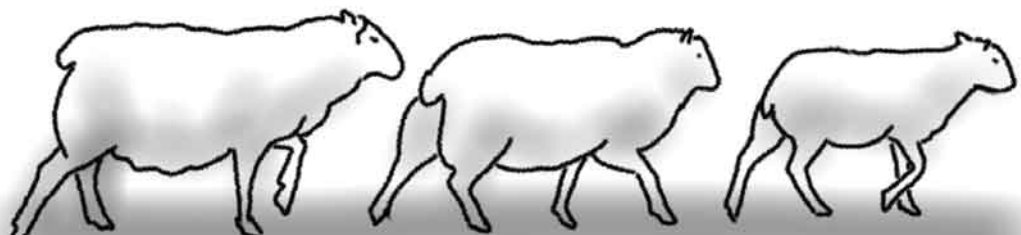
(Jn. 16:13). If we are guided by something else, even the very finest of man at his best state, then we will end up with something less than all truth.

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.... That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. That no flesh should glory in his presence." ^{1 Cor 1:27-29, 31}

In the subject which Brother Warner was addressing, what he wrote makes perfect sense *from the standpoint of motive.*

No consideration is given to that standard of truth which is beyond motive. God could have checked him. He could have given the brother misgivings to the extent that we would never have seen it published. We have no reason to believe that the brother's motive was impure in any way. What if an ex-thief had asked him, "I did not know it was wrong to steal, and I have spent a lifetime of theft. Do I need to make restitution and confess my misdeeds to the law, possibly resulting in imprisonment, etc., especially since I did not know it was wrong?" We feel certain that Brother Warner would have held before such a person the standard of truth that lies beyond motive. We must obey the standard of truth revealed by God regardless of our motive at the outset; we must walk in the light of God as that light is revealed to us.

There is more than Brother Warner involved in this. There are other ministers that would and did make more of this unscriptural liberty than the brother who wrote those words. In due time, the matter would prove out. It would prove what was really right and what was not to **those who really trembled at the Word of God.** Listen. *"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness."* ^{1 Cor 3:19} *"But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little;*



that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.”^{Isa 28:13} Note that the Word of the Lord itself was their undoing—it snared them, broke them, and took them. What is simply a weakness in outlook in one brother becomes something more serious in another who has a little different heart. And God allows these conditions to exist. “He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.” What happens when the wise are taken in this way? What is the outcome? “They shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.”^{2 Tim 3:9} Yea, “but wisdom is justified of her children.”^{Mt 11:19} These things leave a trail; they have long-term results; the results of what we believe and the actions we base upon what we believe have offspring and tell a story that becomes clearer through successive generations.

I want to emphasize again that God has designed the involvement of human beings in His work. We have the sublime honor of being used of God as *crude earthen vessels*. Here is the Word of God on this thought: “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”^{2 Cor 4:7} Notice the infinitesimal size of our importance. How great is the importance of the excellency of the power of God which is “not of us”! That is, whatever God does, whatever God says, is everything; and we are right and worthy only as it fits and harmonizes with whatever God wills to do. Our humanity is misleading; it can easily slant our understanding until we are unbalanced, although our motive may be clear and right. Therefore, “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 Tim 3:16-17} This is just as true of Brother Warner’s thoughts about divorce, adultery, restitution for the broken vows that have resulted in adultery, and recovery from adultery as it is true of everything else. None of us are exempt from the Word of God. The written testimony of the Word of God is given to perfect us and *thoroughly furnish us unto all good works* in this area, as in all others. All scripture is given for this reason. We needed something to steady us. We need the reproof and the correction. In the end, the question is and

will always be: **Is it according to the Word of God, or is it not?**

But is it possible to live so close to God that we make no mistakes? To answer in the affirmative is the same as saying that one can live so close to God as to no longer need correction and reproof. “For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and **reproofs of instruction are the way of life.**”^{Pro 6:23} In Hebrews 12:8, we read about chastisement, of which “**all are partakers.**” Is it possible to live so close to God that we never need any chastisement? The scripture says, “No.” It is noteworthy that God delays His correction in some cases. He does not always correct immediately. Our heart may be set to do right. With David, we may say, “Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.... Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”^{Psa 19:12,14} God sees this motive and He sees the error, the secret fault. It is worth considering that Brother Warner wrote that booklet about marriage and divorce shortly before his death. It is fair to say that he may have reconsidered some of what he said if he had lived longer.

God allowed Matthew to insert the clause, “except it be for fornication,” in Matthew 19:9. What a great deal of justification for divorce has been built upon this clause! Yet when rightly divided, the omission of the clause in Mark 10:11 sheds much light on this clause. Matthew was addressing a Jewish audience, whereas Mark was writing to largely non-Jewish recipients. The Jewish audience understood the word *fornication* as applying to the formal betrothal period *preceding* marriage (such as with Joseph and Mary), and that such a contract could lawfully be dissolved *before marriage*. Whereas the non-Jewish audience had no such custom, therefore Mark did not mention it. Thus the infinite wisdom that inspired the scriptures is manifested. Everything is covered, not because

the brethren thus used were not human, but because God did not allow mistakes in the preserved record *and this is observable and proved over centuries of time in the lives of countless children of God*. Thus the infallibility of the inspired scriptures has been established. They are safe to follow. They will do to live by and to die by. But in all other writings, God has allowed men to make mistakes, and these mistakes are also proven by the aftermath.

At this point, the words of Brother Titus, also moved by the Holy Ghost, stand before us with awesome weight and authority. “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine... in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”^{Tit 2:7-8} People have seized on the *status quo* of slavery in the New Testament to justify slavery, yet the brethren of the New Testament scriptures did not uphold it, justify it, or commend it. Nor does the New Testament agitate for its abolishment, nor was its abolition a priority for the Spirit

of God at that time in human history. God gave grace for slaves and slave owners to dwell together in humility and unity, yet the entire nature of salvation and the standard of holiness of the New Testament completely undermines and subverts the idea of one man owning another. Yet statements of the New Testament can

We needed something to steady us. We need the reproof and the correction. In the end, the question is and will always be: is it according to the Word of God, or is it not?

be seized upon as justification of slavery, while other statements can be seized upon as radical condemnation—not to be tolerated. We feel greatly burdened to repeat to you the warning of the Bible: “He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.” If you are attempting to wade through these matters without the guidance and comfort of the Holy Ghost, you will find that God has made it a snare unto you. “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”^{1 Tim 4:16} ➤



Perspective

Rejection of the 1880 Reformation

(Part 3)

Editor's Note: In the previous issue, we addressed the teaching of Elmer E. Shelhamer, who defended the entire concept of sectarianism. This article continues and concludes the discussion.

Do Men Ordain and Command Others?

This is what is wrong with that good man, E. E. Shelhamer. His faith stands in the wisdom of men, rather than in the power of God. This characteristic colors his prejudice against those who teach coming out of the churches of men, especially in the details that he finds offensive about their teaching. Here is one of them:

It is asserted by no-sectites that man has no part in the ordination of men for the offices of bishop (elder), or deacon—that the Holy Ghost only does this work. One plain statement of Scripture is sufficient to show the falseness of this theory: “*And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed.*” ^{Ac 24:23} If the Holy Ghost is to appoint men to this office exclusive of men, why did Paul instruct Timothy so particularly as to the qualifications necessary in bishops and deacons (1 Tim. 3:2-13). And why did Paul instruct Titus to “*set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city?*” ^{Tit 1:5} Here it is plain that Titus was under Paul’s command; and Paul had even appointed him to a circuit or pastorate at Crete, and gave him authority to appoint elders in every city. Mark you, Paul does not say that the Holy Ghost had appointed Titus at Crete, but that he had. The word does not say the Holy Ghost shall ordain elders in every city, but that *Titus should*. Yet, with this word in their hand, we hear certain men saying, “No man shall say to me, go here, or go there.”

—E. E. Shelhamer; *False Doctrines and Fanaticism Exposed*

If the idol had not been in Mr. Shelhamer’s heart, he could have read such texts as Acts 20:28, “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,*” and realized that **Paul did not regard those brethren as being under his own command, with their authority proceeding from him.** The full, rightly-divided meaning of the authority of New Testament ministers, the God-given boundaries and limitations of that authority, is observable in the Bible by the completeness of the scriptural record, but it is easy to overlook the weight of different passages, if one is under another influence than the Author of the Book. Such scriptures as 1 Pet. 5:5 contradict the hierarchical vision of Mr. Shelhamer and other sectarians. Such scriptures as Acts 16:6-7 reveal a source of guidance that is independent of men—“*But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*” ^{1 Cor 12:11} Scriptures, such as Matt. 20:25-26 contradict the very concept of sectarian hierarchy: “*But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you.*” And this scriptural

Holy Ghost does not suddenly go through Peter or James or John or any other man of prominence. Instead He chooses a vessel, Ananias, unknown in the sacred record before and unknown afterward. The Holy Ghost uses this man to pray for the newly-regenerated persecutor; he recognizes that the Holy Ghost has ordained the newly-saved brother to be a minister in the church of God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And the newly-added member of the body of Christ goes right to work, doing what God has saved him to do. Brother Paul says of this, “*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.*” ^{Gal 1:15-19}

At first look, there are scriptures that seem to teach a hierarchy of ministers in the New Testament church of God. These scriptures, such as Heb. 13:17 and Tit. 2:15, seem to teach that there are those ruling and those ruled: “*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.*” And other texts appear to contradict the thought, such as Matt. 20:25-27: “*But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him*

be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” The

And this scriptural viewpoint of absolute equality before the Holy Ghost is revealed in the way that the ministry operated in Acts.

viewpoint of absolute equality before the Holy Ghost is revealed in the way that the ministry operated in Acts. When Paul got saved, needed healing, and needed to be filled with the Holy Ghost, that same

apparent clash in these texts is manifested in 1 Pet. 5:5, “*Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility.*” This last text teaches an absolute equality between all members of God’s church:

young, old, male, female, slaves, slave-owners, Jews, Gentiles.

So, how can they that rule and they that are ruled **all** be subject one to another? Only in the church that Jesus built. Certainly not in the churches of men. All the authority of men ruling men would collapse in the all-of-you-be-subject-one-to-another way. Consider the effect in the human, secular governments. The policemen would exercise authority on the law-breakers *and* the criminals would exercise authority on the police!

But how does such a thing work in the church that Jesus built? By the simple fact that every human member of that church is **walking in the light as Jesus Christ is in the light.** *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*^{1 Jn 1:7} Notice that this is not just any old light. It is a certain light—light from heaven, light from God. This is a steady, unceasing impartation from the Head of the church to each member; or, to use another Bible illustration, a steady, unceasing impartation from the Vine to each branch in the Vine. The government of this unique people is not from men or by men; it is from above. Therefore, every member in the body can be used of God as a vessel to impart light and truth at any juncture. Therefore, the submission of each member in the body is to God in each other, as God in each other is manifest. Thus the saved *“walk in the light, as He is in the light.”* The effect is that we have fellowship one with another and *“with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”*^{v. 3}

But what if someone gets out of order—fails to walk in the light as He is in the light? The divine Head has His ways of dealing with all who walk not in the light. *“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered.”*^{Jn 15:6} How do the other branches know what is happening? They simply keep their eyes on the Lord; they abide in the Vine; they walk in the light. God takes care of those who abide not. What happens to them? Why, they find the natural home of those who walk

not in the light: *“Men gather them.”*^{Jn 15:6} Here is where Mr. Shelhamer has his attention focused: the many ways of men gathering them, even the divisions and churches of the devising of men. But then what happens to these withered branches? They *“cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”* This is the end of not walking in the light.

But then what do the scriptures mean by people ordaining elders, submitting to those who rule, etc.? God works through different children of His as pastors (bish-

The ordaining by men of other men is but a ratifying of what God has already done. The ordaining of Titus of elders did not endue them with authority; his ordaining merely recognized what God had already done.

ops), teachers, evangelists, apostles to feed His children and assist them. The boundaries of their “ruling” are limited by how God uses them—again a matter of revealed light from heaven. To go beyond these things and claim dominion over the children of God is to become a lord over God’s heritage (1 Pet. 5:3; 2 Cor. 1:24). The sense of ruling for a godly pastor is exactly the same as Rev. 2:26-27, *“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”* See also 1 Cor. 6:2. The light and truth that is established in any child of God by the Holy Ghost is a standard that condemns all else, breaking in pieces all the vessels of an earthen potter (men’s efforts on their own), so to speak.

The ordaining by men of other men is but a ratifying of what God has already done. The ordaining of Titus of elders did not *endue* them with authority; his ordaining merely recognized what God had already done. That this is the case is plain from what Paul said to the elders whom he or some other brother had ordained in

Ephesus. *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”*^{Ac 20:28} If this were not enough, after reading of how the Spirit of God gives spiritual gifts to different ones as He chooses, we read, *“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”*^{1 Cor 12:11} And again, *“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”*^{v. 18} This

all comes together in 1 Cor. 7:17, *“But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.”* God distributes; God calls; and Paul follows in recognition of what God has done, by ordaining. **Paul did not regard those brethren as being under his own command, with their authority proceeding from him.**

Mr. Shelhamer has it backwards. He would have us believe that men choose as seems best to them and set the members in the body as it pleases *them*, i.e., God ratifying the work of men. But behold, men are to recognize what God does. God endues; spiritual men acknowledge what God has done. We have liberty to acknowledge what God does and to do as He would have us do. We avoid putting men in God’s place, and look always for God in what is being done, turning away and rejecting the efforts of men on their own.

Human Intervention in Holy Spirit Government vs. Human Involvement

We enquire further: was the Apostolic or early Christian church without a visible government? Was it administered solely by the Holy Ghost without human intervention?

—E. E. Shelhamer; *ibid.*

Where is the visible government in Acts 16:6-7? *“Now when they had gone through-out Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.”* We are not

told of just how the Spirit of God made it plain to them what they were not to do, but that it is made plain is beyond dispute. The next part of this scripture tells of how Brother Paul had a vision in the night. This vision persuaded the brethren to go to Macedonia. Here are the words of the scripture: “*And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*” ^{Ac 16:10} These are the words of response to the invisible guidance. God goes before; men of God follow.

Now Mr. Shelhamer asks, “Was it administered solely by the Holy Ghost without human intervention?” Yes. They did not intervene. Now had he asked, “without human involvement,” the answer would be no. The crucial question is: **What is the nature of human involvement in church government?** What are its liberties and what are its limits?

Without question, we reject Mr. Shelhamer’s ideas of church government. He says, “It is plainly declared that some are to rule, and, as a natural sequence, some are to be ruled by others. It is not here said that the Holy Ghost is to rule, but some one of their number, and how can one rule another without it being a visible government?” I certainly do not want to be among a people where the Holy Ghost is not ruling, where someone or something has usurped His place. We want to be among and a part of a people where the Holy Ghost is ruling in and through each member of the body and dealing with each person who is not a member. And we want to detect and submit to the Holy Ghost in each person, in whatever capacity the Holy Ghost sees fit to work in those who have Him indwelling.

In many ways, the way that the Holy Ghost directs and rules through and over a group of people is exactly the same way that He guides and works through a given individual—with this exception: He uses each member of the body of Christ as it pleases Him for the benefit of the others.

The way that the Holy Ghost deals and works with a given congregation is a model of how He deals with all congregations of God’s children who are under His control. A complete description is found in 1 Cor. 12. The Holy Ghost does not control men like puppets are controlled by people. He does not control men against their will. In verse 3, Brother Paul tells us that only people who are filled with the Holy Ghost can comprehend what he is about to say. If you are living in such a

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manner and have such a heart that your life calls Jesus accursed and you cannot say that Jesus is Lord—that is, absolutely supreme in you—then there is no way that you are going to see and comprehend the way that the Holy Ghost governs the people of God. Jesus told Nicodemus that a man who is not born again cannot even see the kingdom of God, and He also told us that the pure in heart are blessed because they see God—which includes seeing Him at work (Jn. 3:3; Mt. 5:8). You must have the miracle of the Holy Ghost filling you and being in you before you can see the Holy Ghost guiding, directing, reproofing, and correcting the body of Christ corporate.

Once you have the Holy Ghost yourself, and you are all upon the altar laid, loving God with **all** of your heart, soul, mind, and strength, then you begin to realize that the Holy Ghost works with men through gifts (1 Cor. 12:1). The Spirit works as He sees best with each saved and sanctified brother/sister, and “*there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh ALL in ALL.*” ^{v 4-6}

What is the human part of all this Holy Ghost gift-giving? It is recognition; it is submission to God in each other; it is taking it as from the Lord, and not from man. The gift makes room for itself among spiritually-minded people (people filled with the Holy Ghost); the gift commends itself. “*A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.*” ^{Pro 17:8} “*A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.*” ^{16:18}

These scriptures are general descriptions of gifts, both natural and spiritual. We apply them here to those gifts which the Holy Ghost gives to members of the body of Christ.

This is why there is no need for pulpit committees, preacher licensing, letters of commendation, etc. The spiritual do not need such things; they simply look for the same Holy Ghost that has purified their hearts and esteem Him in where and in whom He works. Neither Peter, James, John, nor the others of the original ministry formally ordained Brother Paul to have a place among the saints or other ministers. They simply recognized what God had done—and what God kept on doing. If Brother Paul had failed to walk in the light after many years of being true, the spiritual would have *no longer seen the Holy Ghost in him* and recognized that Brother Paul had lost what God had given him. If they were mistaken about that, they relied on the Holy Ghost to make it plain. If they were coming under an influence personally to Brother Paul *outside of what the Holy Ghost would have*, then there would be a need for the Holy Spirit to reprove and correct, and He would do so. (This actually was happening in Corinth to those who said they were “*of Paul.*”)

When Mr. Shelhamer says that because governments are given by the Holy Ghost to the church, men have a right to set up and operate governments as seem best to them, he does greatly err. **The Holy Ghost sets up no governments independent of Him.** “*For without me ye can do nothing.*” ^{Jn 15:5} Not, ye can do a little; but, “*ye can do nothing.*”

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But when God does something, we must do something, too—we *must stay with God*. This is our reactive part. If God has rejected something, we must reject it, too. If God will not touch something unclean, we must not touch it, either. If we do, we will find that whatever we didn't follow God in, wherever we failed to walk in His light, will come between us and God. We must withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly; we must put away from among ourselves that wicked person (2 Th. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:13). We no longer recognize them as spiritual; we began to pray for them that they can get delivered, that they will once again walk in the light of God.

Order in the Church without Formal Human Structure?

But Mr. Shelhamer thinks we are in an impossible situation. He says:

But just how to go about putting “a brother” (a member) away from among them *without some rule or regulation* as to what constitutes “a brother,” is a query [question].”

—*Ibid.*; emphasis added

To him, there is no workable order without *formal* admission and *formal* rejection. And Mr. Shelhamer continues to press his point, presenting the following supposedly impossible examples:

But since every one has a perfect right to construe the Bible as he understands it, your backslidden brother might argue, that he took a little wine for the stomach's sake. How can you exclude him without some understanding, as a body of people, how much wine he shall take? Another brother professes holiness, but is living in adultery, having a plurality of wives. How can you exclude the brother, when he pleads that in ancient times they had a plurality of wives, and God is just the same yesterday, today, and forever?

—*Ibid.*

To each of these objections, we can clearly reply, that if the brother in error is walking in the light to all he sees and knows, he will still blend in spirit with the

others with more light. What he is teaching is not safe or sound, and *it is the Spirit of God who watches over us that will deal with the situation*. How? He may stir a minister to put forth the truth on the point in question. He may put the offending brother through trials and battles that will bring him to the point of acknowledgment and confession of the error.

Mr. Shelhamer would have us believe that it is necessary to formally declare a creed and set up a government to hold the truth, but it is not. **The Spirit of God knows all the truth**—more than even the most taught and informed of us have ever known. The Holy Ghost knew the truth about circumcision, even when no human being comprehended the full meaning of the New Testament dispensation on this God-ordained practice. He knew how to bring it out. A lot of people *who did not have their eyes on the Holy Ghost*, failed to walk in the light, and got into disastrous spiritual trouble. To advocate, as Mr. Shelhamer does, that *we must do something, as though the Holy Ghost was not up to the job*, is to *denigrate and belittle* the capability of the Holy Ghost. *We* are the ones not up to the job; let us honor and esteem our Comforter above all human ability.

“The divisions of the Christian church, as they now exist, are a prominent cause of the low state of piety among believers; the greatest single obstacle which now exists to the spread and triumph of our religion in the world.”

Are Divisions Part of God's Order?

“But now hath God set the members in the body as it hath pleased him.” ^{1 Cor 12:18} NO-sectites say this Scripture teaches that as God organized the tree and plants in their perfection, in the same manner He hath organized His church without the help of man. But the true meaning is that as God hath set the members in the physical body in such perfection, that there is no division, and no strife among the members, even so hath he set the members of his church.

—*Ibid.*

Mr. Shelhamer's interpretation of this scripture is another attempt to say that division is not division. This man would have us believe that all of God's truly saved children dwell together in peace with no strife and no division, no matter how separated by rival sectarian walls. In answer to this idea, we will quote from one Brother Starr (“a conscientious Presbyterian minister”):

It would seem as if no man could read these words of the great apostle [1 Cor. 1: 10-13] without vividly seeing that party divisions among the people of Christ were, in his view, a most astounding evil. “*Is Christ divided,*” ^{1 Cor 1:13} he says, that ye who are all His, and who have been baptized “*by one Spirit*” ^{12:13} should be sundered one from the other by party names?

And he adjures them in the most solemn manner, he beseeches them by an appeal the most sacred that words could utter, even by the name of Christ, as it were for His sake, and for His bleeding cause, to forsake these pernicious ways, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind...

The divisions of the Christian church, as they now exist, are a prominent cause of the low state of piety among believers; the greatest single obstacle which now exists to the spread and triumph of our religion in the world...

The moment you separate the church of Christ into distinct divisions, you set up the idol of party. Success or adversity will no longer affect the mind simply as they touch the cause of Christ, but they will be felt, also, as affecting “our side,” or “our church.” It is not Christ and His cause to which their whole thoughts and desires are now turned; the idol of party has now been set up, and it claims, and receives, part of their regard. The man, I think, is almost more than human that can wholly avoid this influence, at least after he has been long identified with any branch of the church. It is an influence which is all the time at work. The idol has been set up to divide the heart from the blessed Savior and His holy service; and its influence is as ceaseless as the existence of the cause. And this party feeling is, as we have seen, the essence of all sin, so that sinful desire is blended continually in the heart with its

love to Christ, and pollutes the worship which it offers Him....

It casts a millstone round the neck of those who are struggling upwards to the image of their Redeemer. It mingles poison with the streams of salvation that flow to the soul through the church, and casts a blight upon its budding fruit.

—W. H. Starr; *Discourses on Sectarianism*; as quoted by A. L. Byers in *Birth of a Reformation*

Fairness in Evaluating the Fruits

We come now to Mr. Shelhamer's prejudices against the Come-out Movement. We would remind you that he bundles all efforts that claimed the come-out message together. *Everything* that made a claim to leaving the formally-organized sects of the day is regarded as representative by Mr. Shelhamer. We cannot find a single attempt to discriminate by the man, such as, "This one appeared more spiritual than the others"; "This one had more integrity than others"; etc. Piling everything claiming to be right together, is, of course, unfair. Worse, it is misleading. Satan tried the same thing

with the first coming of the Son of God. False Christs abounded. We read in Acts 5: 36-37 of Theudas and Judas of Galilee, both false deliverers. There were many such; the devil stirred them up to hide and obscure all who would be

diverted from the true Messiah. So it was in the Evening Light Reformation. The restoration of truth on the church of the New Testament was obscured and hidden by a multitude of different groups, all preaching "Come out of her, my people," who differed widely in many ways.

Quoting from a journal of that time:

There were in attendance, as was usual in the meetings everywhere, people who gloried in hearing the sects spoken against. Such people, of course, while adding force in the start, were no substantial credit to the movement, as they were not genuine representatives.

—A. L. Byers; *Birth of a Reformation*

And again from Shelhamer:

These deluded people as a rule profess a much higher standard of piety than anyone in the churches. They have come out of "Babylon," and claim a type of freedom that no "church member" knows anything about. Consequently it is only fair that we should look for corresponding fruit. If they enjoy more than any of the churches, then they ought to be more successful than any organization. "By their fruits ye shall know them." ^{MT 7:20} But what do we find? We venture to assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that more abusive, slanderous language can be found in the no-sect papers than in any church paper in the land. More confusion and downright anarchy exists among them than among any other people known to us. We see numerous cases of backsliding among them, but where, oh, where, do you see any "revivals of pure and undefiled religion" among them in which sinners become converted and believers entirely sanctified? In fact, we do not know a single blessedly saved soul joining these people who retained his Christian experience. Instead of holding

meetings in which sinners are invited to Christ, they prefer to attend the regular services of some church, and by sowing the seeds of error, induce the members to leave that sect and join their sect. Of them it may be said, "they compass

sea and land to make one proselyte, when he is made, ye make him twofold more a child of hell than yourselves." ^{MT 23:15}

—E. E. Shelhamer; *False Doctrines and Fanaticism Exposed*

This is prejudice, indeed! To begin with, everything that teaches a come-out message is included in this barren category. Naturally there were and are errors and problems in many of the imitations of pure religion which Satan uses to hide the truth, which do indeed yield no fruit whatsoever and bring a great reproach upon that which is pure and right. In addition, there were and are many souls who are trying to come clean of humanly-organized religion who

have a rough time surviving spiritually. But to read the comments of Mr. Shelhamer above, and to contrast that by reading the books of brethren such as C. E. Orr,* is to be definitely convinced that Mr. Shelhamer was willfully ignorant of that which he condemned—at least in part.

But we can say the same when examining the New Testament saints. "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." ^{Ac 17:6} "For as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against." ^{28:22} "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." ^{In 16:2-3}

Consider what was said of the Lord Jesus Christ: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?... He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." ^{Is 53:1,3} What then shall they say of His children? "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." ^{2 Tim 3:12}

People act like this, with slander and hatred, because they feel threatened—more accurately because they feel *their idol* is threatened, and therefore they feel threatened. Thus the Jews persecuted the followers of the holy and lowly Savior. Thus do people today resent and criticize the genuine children of God, misrepresent them, wish they didn't exist, refuse to acknowledge any good about them. The more threatened they feel, the stronger the reaction—even to the point of lying and rioting. Let us sample Mr. Shelhamer a little more:

No-sectites as a rule come from one or more of the following classes of people: 1, Sore-heads; 2, Grumblers; 3, Religious Fenians [revolutionaries]; 4, Those who are unwilling to be governed; 5, Men and women of disappointed ambition; and 6,

*A man who embraced the "come-out" message, and wrote such books as *The Hidden Life*, *Heavenly Life for Earthly Living*, *Helps to Holy Living*, *The More Abundant Life*, and *How to Live a Holy Life*—to name just some of the devotional writings available for evaluation.

Fanatics. Seldom if ever will you see a truly humble, gentle, meek and melting spirit among these deluded people. Many of them have been delivered from formalism, and others perhaps are sincere and conscientious, but, alas, have drifted into the opposite extreme of fanaticism and following blind impressions. Persons under the influence of this spirit are usually not only unteachable, but unreasonable. Under cover of being led by the Lord they do many ridiculous and fanatical things. It is almost impossible to convince such persons they are mistaken, for *they* are right. *They* have light from God.

—*Ibid.*

When such weapons are employed to condemn others, we find that they are invariably *two-edged*. As one brother preached, he pointed to all sides of the congregation, saying, "This Word applies to you," and then he pointed back to himself, continuing to say, "This Word applies to *you*." This is very true. What is true for others is just as true for me as for everyone else. **All of us are subject to the Word of God.** In the end, all will be judged by that same Word, and be found either justified or condemned. None are exempt.

Anyone who says that those who follow the Bible standard of truth in coming out of what is not of God, belongs to at least one of six reproachful categories; such a one himself has no truly humble, gentle, meek, and melting spirit, and is unteachable and unreasonable, and has made a ridiculous and fanatical conclusion in itself. *The very process that God has designed for people to follow truth all the way brings a man down and humbles him, refines out the dross in him, and melts him to God and His truth* in such a way that leaves him open to the Spirit of God to mold him and remake him as God knows is best for him. Now sectarian leaders love to get control of someone who has been humbled, gentled, melted, and purified by the Spirit of God if they can persuade the child of God that God meant for them to be this sheep's leaders and guides. They would use what

God meant as needful to flow *up* to Mount Zion (Isa. 2:2-3) for the purposes of causing these sheep of the Lord to adapt to the sect machinery, which these sectarian leaders operate. As the Word warns the children of God, "*they with feigned words make merchandise of you.*"^{2Pet 2:3} God does not save sinners and sanctify believers to make sectarian members of them, but sectarian leaders will persuade you that He does, if they can. Then

These men and others not only justified division among God's children, but felt that... any attempt to recover was doomed to fail. The Bible answer to this deplorable conclusion is that Jesus has bought and paid for a church without spot or wrinkle, that is what He is coming back for, and that is the only kind of church He is going to have.

they would display what God has done as representative of how they are constituted, with expressions such as, "Thank God I am a member of the _____ Church."

Mr. Shelhamer himself is unreasonable and unteachable on this point. While conceding that the God of heaven designed a church and governs the same, he would contend that somehow we have a right to make a "visible" organization, which would operate "for" God—as if what God made and designed is somehow inadequate. Mr. Shelhamer will meet his own judgment: "It is almost impossible to convince such persons [as Mr. Shelhamer] they are mistaken, for *they* are right. *They* have light from God." Mr. Shelhamer has indeed exposed some false doctrines and fanaticism, for he has exposed himself and what he is a part of.

In conclusion, we would say that this chapter of Mr. Shelhamer's writing is more than just his conclusions and ideas. At the bottom of the chapter, he acknowledges other writers of the same spirit and belief.

Extracts from T. H. Nelson, G. W. Saunders and A. Sims on "Primitive Church Polity"; "Come-outers and No-sectism."
—*Ibid.*

This was the general, accepted sectarian standard of Mr. Shelhamer's day among those of where he stood. These men and others not only justified division among God's children, but felt that division, though unfortunate, was inevitable and irreparable; that any attempt to recover was doomed to fail. The Bible answer to this deplorable conclusion is that Jesus has bought and paid for a church without spot or wrinkle, that is what He is coming back for, and that is the only kind of church He is going to have. "*Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not*

having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."^{Eph 5:25-27}

We note the stubbornness, the entrenched quality of E. E. Shelhamer's resistance to the Word of God about divisions. He *reverenced* the professed Christian world. He had a high regard for the strenuous and arduous attempts of men over the centuries to "preserve the truth," to grapple with the problems, and he undoubtedly felt that the attempt to abandon all that was a lack of respect and futile. If the sacrifices of the past by godly men and women meant anything, he thought, then we needed to respect what they had been able to accomplish. He highly respected the efforts of the past and felt that he was not better than his fathers, so to speak. But in settling on this position, he, as well as his predecessors, ignored plain Bible teaching on the unacceptability of divisions between God's children. And worse, they ignored God's provisions for dealing the root causes of divisions between God's children, and so their uncompromising stand *enshrined division*, even while decrying it. Their philosophy is captured in the sectarian verse:

"We must agree to disagree;

We cannot hope to see
The Word of God just all the same,
Until we reach a higher plane."

This unbiblical condition is the consistent result of *allowing an idol in the heart*. When anyone does this, their ability to see is continually filtered through the idolatrous affection. The Word of God is a different book when viewed by idolatrous eyes. It seems to teach things, that when rightly divided by a Holy-Ghost-led workman not under the influence of the idol influence, it really does not teach at all.

It is plain that there is *an invisible leadership* to the New Testament Church. There must be an ability to look at the things that are unseen (2 Cor. 4:18), to see God at work—both independent of flesh and blood, but also working through earthen vessels. To do this, one must have a pure heart (Mt. 5:8) and have one's eyes opened and God's eye salve applied (2 Kgs. 6:17; Rev. 3:18). It is quite possible to come to the heart purification, cease from one's own works, and yet fail to go on with the Lord to the complete implications of what God is doing. As long as we live in time and place, the Holy Ghost will guide the entirely sanctified into all truth. He will re-interpret all of our former thinking and conditioning to us, and we will find

it necessary to continually adjust and obey as light is shed upon our pathway. To cease to do the works of God will necessarily lead to a resumption of doing our own works—in such a case, no longer will my *all* be upon the altar laid, and it cannot be truthfully said of me that I am *all* the Lord's. I will be a mixture of love for God and a certain love for something else.

Conclusions

What then is the conclusion of all *human efforts in human ways* to bring about the unity of which the Bible speaks? It doesn't

work. It hasn't worked. It will never work. It is unacceptable to God. And so, not having realized and experienced the fullness specifically detailed in the Bible, both in prophecy in the Old Testament and in happy fulfillment in the New, sectarians believe that it is for the future and not for now. The incorrigible diversity of mankind has defeated them *because they went about it in ways other than God's way*, consequently they doubt the Biblical standard of unity is really possible. They doubt it is possible to reach "a higher plane" now, regarding that higher plane as a hopelessly idealistic goal—noble, but beyond practical reach, and they feel exonerated in their incredulity when things fall apart.

And so, dear reader, how do you think that professed Christianity regards the disintegration of the come-out movement since the Evening Light Reformation of 1880? Men such as E. E. Shelhamer, while yet here in time and place, would and do feel that events simply have proven the futility of anything other than "we *must* agree to disagree."

But I say *in time and place*, for we are all steadily journeying to the end of our existence in this world. Soon, dear reader, you and I will leave time and place, too, and we will be in eternity. Much will be seen starkly and completely that is only partly seen at present, and we will be

dealt with utterly fairly and rightly. There in eternity, we will see things in the past as they really were seen by the all-knowing eyes of God. There, whether in paradise or torment, the plan of God—His ways and His dealings—will all be perfectly clear, and saved and unsaved alike will acknowledge that God had a perfect, practical, workable, wonderful plan that did just what He said it would do, and has done just what He promised all along. Then will the righteous rejoice and praise God for helping them to find it and benefit from it, and then will the unacceptable

bewail and bemoan their failure to walk in the light of the Lord. Oh, dear reader, let us pray that God will help us to see in this day—the day of salvation—what God has for us! Let us earnestly lay hold on the scripture text, "*But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*" Mt 13:16-17 Yea, "*Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.*" Lk 1:45 There is a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord for every promise that God has given—including the promises of unity. "*Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.*" Isa 52:8

I wonder how great the regrets of E. E. Shelhamer are in eternity about his chapter we are discussing. I hope he made it. I hope he was accepted. But I have little doubt about the fate of his doctrine. Surely the fire awaits the wood, the hay, the stubble!

We will conclude with a quotation from *Birth of a Reformation*.

The truth is, the holiness movement was a movement prophetically due at this time [1880] as the introduction to the great reformation (restoration) that now succeeds it, in which God's people are not only embracing holiness, but are taking their stand free and complete in Christ, distinct from all humanly organized bodies called churches. The reader of church history will observe that the progress of [recovering] Christianity has not been by gradual, steady increase of light and truth, but by reformation after reformation in which some special truth is emphasized and men's hearts are stirred.

Among the early leaders of the movement in this country [the United States] were Dr. W. C. and Phoebe Palmer, of New York. Mrs. Palmer, especially, was prominent in this respect. She wrote a number of books on holiness and with her husband held meetings in various openings in the East and was otherwise very active in the cause. William Macdonald, John S. Inskip, Daniel Steele, and J. A. Wood were others who, both by preaching and the

*There must be an
ability to look at the
things that are unseen,
to see God at work
-both independent of
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earthen vessels.*

press, gave prominence to the doctrine of entire sanctification as a second, distinct work of grace. Holiness societies sprung up, books were written on the subject, periodicals were started, and holiness bands began to canvass the country. Well does the writer remember of seeing when a boy these holiness bands travel about the country in covered wagons. They carried a spiritual fire that caught in the hearts of the more fervent ones who, on the barren plains of sect religion, were seeking for a higher and better Christian experience. The activity on this line was not on the part of the various denominations, as such, but on the part of earnest Christians within the denominations.

Holiness, it must be remembered, is Scriptural, a part of God's will to His children, and the movement must not be regarded as being something new, but as a revival of truth intended for man. Since the attainment of this distinct higher experience requires a perfect consecration, an entire abandonment, to God, it was but natural that the doctrine should be opposed by the pleasure-loving church members, those who were Christians only in name and did not care for any advancement or improvement of their spiritual status. These, of course, were greatly in the majority. The holiness advocates were at once opposed and often persecuted; but silently and surely, as leaven works in the meal, the holiness agitation increased and spread throughout the country. It was a very unwelcome and disturbing element among the cold professors. They said that sinlessness was not to be attained in this life; that we could not be sanctified till death; etc. But when shown by the Scriptures that it is indeed God's will for Christians in this life, they would declare that it is attained by growth, or perhaps would say they had received it in conversion. They were opposed to having any further spiritual obligation placed upon them.

But it was not alone the advocacy of an advanced Christian attainment that might well make the holiness movement distasteful to sect devotees. Holiness is unifying. It makes Christians one, in accordance

with our Savior's prayer: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." ^{Jn 17:21} True holiness is destructive of divisional elements. That is why the advocates of holiness in the different denominations lost to a great extent their sectarian bigotry and could join together in holiness associations independent of their denominations. As a general thing

Holiness is unifying. It makes Christians one, in accordance with our Savior's prayer: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." True holiness is destructive of divisional elements.



the holiness editors and teachers spoke against sectarian divisions.

This brings us to the critical point. Would those espousing holiness dissolve their sect relations? Here is where many in the holiness movement compromised and would not follow in the onward march of truth out of all denominational confusion and into complete oneness in Christ. Instead, holiness associations urged and even required their members to maintain also a sect membership. They seemed to believe sects were a necessary evil and they opposed the idea of coming out of sects. This is as far as the majority in the holiness movement would go. They deplored sects, but seemed to think that to be outside of all sects would be to have no church relation at all. Had they walked in the light they would have comprehended the true body of Christ and been led out of sectarian entanglements; but failing to follow the true leading of God, they receded, and their holiness degenerated into what was mere sect holiness. To this day they have their holiness associations and their conventions, but fellowshiping as they do the sects and factions of almost every description, they are left to grope in their own darkness and confusion, still making an effort but accomplishing nothing toward Christian unity....

The writer [A. L. Byers] had an interview not long since with one of the holiness leaders who used to know D. S. Warner, and who still labors to bring about the unity of Christians through a holiness that respects sectarian divisions. This man was asked about the prospects for unity after so many years of effort. His reply, in which he complained of the bigotry existing among the denominations, was anything but encouraging. He seemed to

have no knowledge of a way out of the trouble, and regarded the present true church movement as only a sect, or faction, saying that "a sect is any body of Christians joined together in the same belief," etc.

"But suppose a number of persons come out from and leave the sects with which they have been connected, and stand only on the

Bible, independent of sects—suppose they assemble together in a body; would they be a sect?" he was asked.

"Yes," was his reply.

"Then what about the body of Christ itself, the whole, of which sects are regarded as cut-off factions—is that a sect?"

"Yes," was his answer. And then, as if he could know nothing but sects, he referred to Paul as calling the Christians in his day a sect, and assumed to quote him thus: "For as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against." ^{Ac 28:22}

He was told that these words were not spoken by Paul, but by his opposers.

"Well," said he, "I will look that up."

Thus his conception of the subject makes the true church impossible. When men have been forty years in the ministry and in the holiness movement, and are just as far from discerning the church as when they started, and even suppose that Paul called the Christians a sect, how blinding and confusing must be the darkness in which they grope! Having failed to follow in God's way when came the call, "Come out of her, my people," ^{Rev 18:4} they have been building with wood, hay, and stubble a structure that only awaits the consumption at the last day.

—A. L. Byers; *Birth of a Reformation*

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There's a Road That Runs to Glory

*There's a road that runs to glory that was made for you and me,
But there's rough and rugged stretches, as the runners all agree;
For the fleetest feet among them find they need Another's grit,
And the strongest need assistance to go on instead of quit.*

*When the rigors of the road arise and knock you to your knees,
When you've "hit the wall"... and silence seems the answer to your pleas,
Then remember that your Coach remains undaunted by distress,
And He knows just what you need that is the secret to success.*

*He's the Man who ran before you, showing how to run this race:
For defeat is "not an option," and there is no second place.
Now take note that failure only comes from failing to receive—
So just think what such a Coach will help each runner to achieve!*

*All your yesterdays are over, and tomorrow is too late,
But today there's power promised those who drop all extra weight.
Cast discouragement and pride aside, and one day you'll have won:
What a wondrous world awaits you! Now take action—rise and run!*