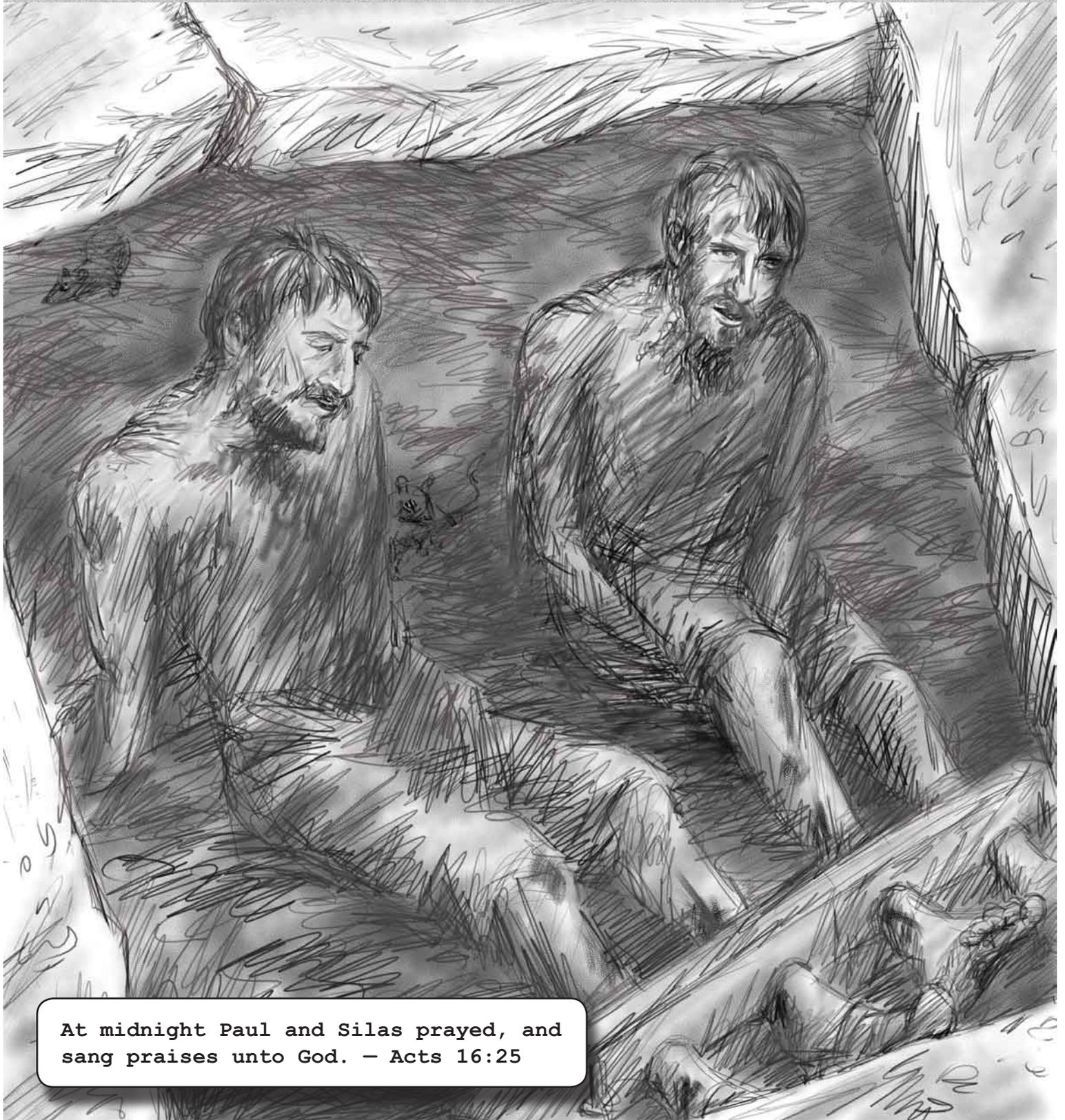


FOUNDATION TRUTH

Number 22
Winter 2009



At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God. — Acts 16:25

Dear Reader

I recently was having a battle to find God's direction in some financial matter. It seemed to me that all that would come to my mind was incomplete direction, not showing me clearly everything that I needed to do—I seemed trapped in endless analysis of the problems of any step I might take in the matter. Then the Lord brought before me the scriptures that speak of cutting off one foot or plucking out one eye in an unusual way, conveying to me that I needed to move forward on what guidance I had and not waiting until everything was clear. As I received this direction, I was blessed in my heart and the Lord brought to my mind one of the songs that is in this issue: "Step by Step." It came with such blessing that it seemed important to include it in this issue, with the prayer that others may find help from it as well. I will add that the Lord used the same inspiration to help us in another matter as well, the same day.

The thorough reader will find what may seem to be an oddity in this issue: two lengthy articles on almost identical subjects. We found a blessing in both articles, and trust God to apply to each reader's heart what they need.

I want to share another lesson from the firing line. I was speaking with a young brother, who was reporting that he had just gotten a real blessing and help in a trial from a message he had just finished hearing. At this point, he began to describe the trial (presumably in order to give some background), but as he was describing the trial, the devil ambushed him in such a way that the trial came on him again with force; and when he finished relating it, he could no longer remember what it was that the Lord had given him!

Now spiritual warfare resembles physical warfare in this respect, that ground gained must not just be won, but also secured against counterattack. The devil often launches strong counterattacks just when we are "relaxing" after a victory. The Lord well understands this, and knows how to help us secure our victories and expand them as well. We can see this as we note the careful instructions the Lord

often gave to those He helped. To one who would naturally have liked to have had the comfort of His physical closeness, He instructed to "go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." ^{Mk. 5:19} To another, He said, "see thou say nothing to any man," ^{Mk. 1:44} and then gave him specific instructions to follow. With some, He even put them into situations where they would encounter immediate trials and opposition—read in John 9 about the man born blind. By taking those trials right, the man gained still more light and understanding.

If I am having difficulty retaining a lesson or some victory the Lord has given me, it is my privilege to go to the Lord of battles for help and instruction. I cannot count the number of times that I've needed to ask the Lord for help, during the battles of the day, simply to remember what He showed me in my devotions; or how often I've faced severe "counterattacks" of the devil just when I'm "basking" in a victory. The Lord who never slumbers knows how to help us defend the ground we've gained, and even retake ground the enemy grabs back from us.

Pray for me, that I would trust and obey my Heavenly Commander and go on from victory to victory!

Love and prayers,
The Editor



About Us

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

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

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

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In This Issue

edited by Rick Erickson and others

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.

4 The Word of Truth

Questions and answers from the firing line in a series of written exchanges. The current topic is materialism in the church.

8 Tell What He's Done for You

What do you do when God blesses you with... disappointment?

10 Worship in Spirit and Truth

By God's help, we want to examine the nature of worship in the spirit, and contrast it with the previously acceptable worship in the flesh.

14 Songs

Step by Step
The Temple of God

19 It *IS* Possible

With His Father first, every other desire and need kept its proper place.

20 "If Thou Canst Believe"

It is not sense, or sight, or reason, but taking God at His word.

21 Glorious in Death

A prayer for grace to die to self as do the autumn leaves—gloriously.

22 Spiritual Sacrifices

What is the nature of worship that is acceptable to God?

27 Touched by the Maker's Hand

A poem about affliction and healing.

About the Cover—Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises in their affliction, and today also...

THINGS CAN HAPPEN FAST; they can change your life. You can be vibrant and healthy one minute; struggling to exist the next. I knew this, but now it was so real.

I lay in bed, in the dark, thankful that our one-year-old was asleep. I listened to my husband's peaceful breathing. That was good. But my leg—it was not good. At all.

It had all begun one morning a week ago. I had hopped out of bed like usual to scurry madly to get breakfast and my husband's lunch packed before he left for work. My leg felt sore where it joined my body. Funny. It was my back that usually told me I had lost sleep. Thought dismissed, I raced the clock. The soreness did not leave. While eating lunch with my mother-in-law, I thought naptime would cure it. But it awoke as I did—refreshed.

Mom and I were sewing the baby a dress, and by quitting time I could hardly walk. I tried to make supper, but couldn't and had to call my mom for help. While I sat telling her what needed what and where, constant pain racked my sprained leg. And a few hours later I fell because I couldn't even stand. I, a healthy young mom, became

bedfast. The maintenance of our home, in which I had learned to take increasing delight, now practically dissolved before my eyes. My husband had to take off work to care for me; I couldn't even turn over by myself. Family had to take turns caring for the baby and preparing food.

I began to pray very earnestly. What was the Lord wanting from me? From us? What about our baby's behavior? Her bewilderment, the angry little fits, all the training to obey? I could not even hold her, dress her, comb her hair! "How long, O Lord? How long will this go on?" In the dark, it seemed forever. A *loooooonng* time. And it seemed very dark indeed.

Now the leg was really hurting; I should turn over. I shook his arm; "Sweetie, can you turn me over? Please?" We must have done this a hundred times now. He sleepily turned me, but I was no better. Then bathroom break. Okay. Now let's move you—"No, no!" My muscle was seizing.

I lay crumpled on the mattress, exhausted. And feeling utterly helpless. *Helpless... helpless... you're completely helpless. You can't even take care of yourself. Or your*

baby. Helpless. Yes, I was helpless. And just where the Lord wanted me. Long hours dragged, each minute hoping sleep would come swiftly. We wrestled in prayer, pleading with God to keep us sweet to one another, to teach us what He wanted, that patience could really work in our hearts, and that we would not blame God for how hard it was to bear right then.

At three or four a.m., we called Joel's family for prayer. His sister, the one who doesn't sleep well, answered. I inwardly moaned. "Why, Lord? Why didn't Dad answer? Now her sleep is interrupted." After praying awhile, she suggested that we sing a song. David was always singing a song in his troubles. The devil whispered in a tiny voice, *The baby's going to wake up.* So focused had I become on climbing above my circumstances that the excuse sounded feeble. I remembered, "David was a man after God's own heart." Plus, in her sleep the baby had heard us praying! So, we lifted up our voices, weary and tremulous, and not quite even in harmony:

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THE WORD OF TRUTH

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

Materialism

To what extent should a Christian provide for the physical welfare of the needy?

The Church-of-Godism here, where I am now stationed, is pervaded with the spirit of materialism. People will not come to worship God with you unless you have a good building, salaries for preachers, relief programs for the needy (orphans, widows, aged, etc.), plans for help in times of burials, weddings, hospital bills, higher education fees, etc., etc. In the evangelical endeavors, we come face to face with such questions as—“Do you do this?” “Do you offer this?” “Do you help this way?”

This affinity for material benefits has almost become the ruling force in the lives of the majority here, and tends to be a dividing line between those seeking to truly serve God and those who are after materialism. How much should the true Christian get involved in such plans and provisions for the human needs where there are no social schemes to cater for some of them? (Please, do not treat this lightly. It is a real troubling issue to me at this very time. The majority of the people in our country are very poor. To deal with them spiritually has become so complicated by the exposure to so many “better” things that the quest for “the better physical life” seems to be the major objective in their living).

Reply:

If you think it is bad to be up against the spirit of materialism in that area of the vineyard wherein God has set you to labor, you should see it here. I have heard it said, and now I say it myself, “Our prosperity is killing us.” We are, as a people, a long way down the path to Sodom, for they were idle and full of bread (Eze. 16:49). Every-

where about us, the mirage of worldly security and entertainment has swallowed the people. And from this great covetous cesspool which we call the United States, the craving for temporal things has been advertised and broadcast across the entire world by modern communications. I have thought that the movies and television are more used of the spirit of covetousness than even the spirit of immorality. The Have-Not’s long for the what the perceived Have’s obtain, and ignore the piercings and many sorrows that come with it (1 Tim. 6:6-11). The scripture immediately following this passage reads, *“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God... That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* ¹ Tim. 6:12-14 We observe from this that Christianity is locked in a fight-to-the-death struggle against the spirit of covetousness, and that they that lay hold on eternal life must release their grasp on this world and the things of this world.

I remember sitting in a camp meeting with Brother H—— preaching to the congregation. He was relating some war stories about this battle in his congregation in F——. “Throw away those catalogs,” he said to the saints. “Don’t look at them! If you look at them, you know what happens. You get enticed, don’t you? You buy things you don’t really need and can’t afford.” This was a lively and invigorating picture of a man of God in a hard fight.

I had never heard the like before. My parents’ home was full of catalogs. No preachers around my home congregation when I was a boy preached such things. If you needed something, you bought what you needed. It looked pretty normal to me. The idea that one must do away with the catalogs seemed strange to me.

Another brother was talking about what a certain job was paying per hour (I think it was in carpentry), and he said, “That’s too much.” I was shocked. I had been raised to “be all that you can be.” Make all the money you can, etc. Rise as high as you can. I was in the process of “being made low” (Jas. 1:10), and the Spirit of God was dealing across the board in me to help me to escape the complacent, comfortable, fullness-of-bread mentality that had shaped me and conditioned me. Scarcely a handful of the population has escaped the materialistic high expectations. There are some, and they are not all saved people, either, but the vast majority has been swallowed up.

I perceive that the same thing is happening all over the world. Man desires to raise himself from ever feeling helpless. He would like to do away with sickness, too. He aims to be happy without God. He would like to deal with God after having successfully directed his own steps. This is not going to happen, but man desires it and labors fervently to bring it to pass. It is all exactly the opposite of utter dependence on God, of acceptance with joy. It runs completely contrary to the Sermon on the Mount (see Mt. 6:24-34).

This sermon teaches a deliverance from earthly cares. This truth will set a man free to live for God with perfect trust in Him, to live so as to put first things first, just

Christianity is locked in a fight-to-the-death struggle against the spirit of covetousness.

as Jesus did. This is the standard of spiritual living. In the following quotations, we find Brother Orr contending for this faith once delivered to the saints:

What would you think of a man who contemplated engaging in some business, but said he did not have much time to devote to it? You would advise him not to engage in the business at all. It takes time to make advancement in the Christian life. One brother said, "But we must attend to our temporal duties." My reply was, "Shall we not attend to our spiritual duties?" When people talk of having to attend to temporal duties, it appears that they are going to do this if they have to neglect spiritual duties. Unless we have a better enlightenment than this, we shall never make progress in the Christian life.
—*How to Live a Holy Life*

"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." Mt. 5:5 The earth is the Lord's and its fullness. The meek and lowly have God for their Father; consequently they are heirs to this world—to all they daily need of it. This is one blessing belonging to the humble. They inherit the earth. By this is meant that God who owns the earth and all in it will supply every need, or give to the truly humble every temporal blessing needed. Those who become a little anxious and somewhat disturbed because every temporal blessing is not in sight are not as humble as they should be; consequently faith in God is hindered.
—*The Hidden Life*

Those who cumber themselves with the cares of this life and give themselves much concern about the temporal things have certainly neglected that good part. To have much concern about the temporal things is very destructive to spirituality. Saints need to be watchful, or they will have too much concern about the temporal things. It might be for your good if you would make a test to see where your mind is most. Tomorrow begin to set down in one column all the thoughts and all the words you have about the temporal things of life. In another column set down all the words and all the thoughts you have about spiritual things. In the evening foot up both columns and see how they balance. You may be somewhat surprised. When your crop or your business is failing, do you lean restfully on the arm of Jesus, or have you anxieties?

—*The Hidden Life*

This is the standard for a walk with God. Now you have asked me, "How much should the true Christian get involved in such plans and provisions for the human needs where there are no social schemes to cater for some of them?" To answer this question, we must look at the burden of Brother Stephen and the other men who labored with him. It is plain from a reading of Acts 6:1-6 that the apostles were not called to the work of God in taking care of the widows, and they were careful to stay in the scope of their calling. So we see that this is a certain ministry, a certain calling in the church of God, and if you are not called to it—"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called."¹ Cor. 7:20 As any spiritual calling, it has its peculiar challenges and pressures, and the possessor of any given calling will need specific help from God to successfully discharge their stewardship. Brother Stephen's battles can be surmised from the beginning account of the need, "*There*

arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

We realize that we are dealing with something

outside the evident physical needs; we are dealing with spiritual needs. There is a certain amount of revenue supplied to help these widows (no social programs, etc.), but you can be sure that the need was always greater than the amount of hand. How do we know that? That is God's way. He encourages us to faith in God. We can also be certain that the brethren taking on this responsibility understood that more and more as they went. They were filled with the Holy Ghost and knew it was more important to be filled and live in the fulness than to eat well, be clothed well, or have congenial shelter. Furthermore, they were dealing with people of two cultures with two general ideas of wisdom in expectations, and out of this material, they were to hold before them a non-covetous standard.

Brother H—— had a lot of what we call "welfare mothers" in his congregation. In this country, there is a variety of programs available to single mothers with children, and there are many single-parent families (mostly headed by the mother) who live mostly or completely on the welfare check(s). Brother H—— understood that this situation produced a divided loyalty, even an unhealthy dependence on the arm of flesh, in those who endeavored to live saved, and he and others in the congregation encouraged these mothers to "get off welfare." This was an **enormous** step for these mothers to take. It was launching out in God. **It was right.**

I will quote from your letter again: "This affinity for material benefits has almost become the ruling force in the lives of the majority here and tends to be a dividing line between those seeking to truly serve God and those who are after materialism."

There is great danger that the church would simply replace the government in the lives of the needy, and this would not be good for the church or the needy.

I observe that Brother H—— drew the same conclusion and **took a stand** against the affinity for material benefits.

Years ago, a brother advocated that the church develop its own welfare program for the needy, so that saints would be freed from this fostered dependence on the government. (After a while, a single mother is almost "married" to the government, at least in terms of financial support. The government becomes her "head" in a certain way—more than money—rules, etc.) That discussion was before my time, but I am aware that the brethren overall were not persuaded to start a church welfare plan, and I believe I perceive why. There is great danger that the church would simply replace the government in the lives of the needy, and this would not be good for the church or the needy. It is the same

argument as salaries for ministers—man to man, instead of man to God and God to man. God wants to be in the middle, and free-will offerings are the way He has devised and commanded us. It is hard on our flesh, but good for us spiritually. It means living close to God; it allows little room for fleshly confidence. To the fleshly mind, it appears makeshift and unreliable; to the spiritual, it is just right and greatly spiritually profitable. Consequently, any method or procedure that God sets up to take care of needs among us is always based on this free will plan of giving, and the method or procedure will change or appear to operate erratically so as to stir us spiritually constantly.

Looking in the scriptures, we catch a glimpse of how this operated in the taking care of widows, etc.

“Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

“Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man. Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

“But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman

that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.” ^{1 Tim. 5:2-16}

You will notice, I trust, the guidelines that Brother Stephen and other brethren had been taught of the Holy Ghost. Brother Paul had also gotten ahold of them and was passing them on to Brother Timothy.

There is such a thing as “widows indeed,” as contrasted with just widows. Furthermore, there was a carefulness about young widows, even an age standard. Holy Ghost wisdom had taught these brethren something about human nature. The young widows would learn to be idle and gossipy. (Would it not be well if the welfare authorities in our country were led of the Holy Ghost and observed and were careful about the same things?) Furthermore, it was not just older widows (sixty years of age and up); the standard of who was eligible is stated in verse 10.

My dear brother, we plainly see that God has answered and has the answer to the question, “How much should the true Christian get involved?” or, “How much should the church get involved?” Now, this passage of scripture is not talking about temporary help, etc., but about being “taken into the number.” Furthermore, there was a clear burden and an unwillingness to interfere with family responsibilities on the part of the children or nephews. Note especially verse 8 on this point. The whole scope comes down to a certain effort on the part of the church to administer to a real need with real limitations, and an emphasis on spirituality and what could go wrong with faith and extended family responsibilities. All of this says a great deal about the spirituality of the saints back then, and the vigor and life that was at work in the church of God. In such an atmosphere, spirituality was nurtured. Those who were minded to take the ways of fleshly complacency found that the efforts of the saints did little to give them room in their chosen, less spiritual way of life; rather it rebuked them continually. Praise God, dear brother!

“Without spot and blameless, my brother,
She lives 'neath the all-cleansing blood;
In heaven and earth is no other,
Her builder and maker is God.”

God knows how to deal with His church on earth so as to iron out every wrinkle and remove every spot. Part of the hot, spiritual iron that He uses is deprivation (as He sees best) of things necessary for physical life, so that we can measure to the sermon on the mount.

I will quote from *Highways and Hedges*, an account of Sister Faith Stewart's work in Cuba:

It was about this time that a new phase of the mission work began. They started publishing tracts and papers in Spanish. They carefully planned a real campaign in the city of Havana, with its great population of over one million souls. As a result of this venture, new people began to attend the services in some of the missions. One illustration of this is well worth telling here.

At one of the evening services in the chapel at Almendares, there came a husband and wife, a Spanish couple. They had heard the message over the radio, and because there was and had been for some time an unrest in their hearts and a dissatisfaction in their own religion, they began to seek for something better. What they heard in these messages stirred their interest to seek for something better. They were people of the world and dressed in the apparel and personal adornment that the world finds so necessary. But something in the messages they heard attracted their attention, and they began to attend regularly.

Little by little they began to remove the signs of the world from their apparel and to dress like those who were members of the mission, until they were as modest in appearance as the Christians. But they had not accepted Christ as their Savior. They lived far across the great city of Havana, and had to come a long way to be in the services. Undaunted, they searched until they found an apartment not far from the mission, then moved in and told the Christians that now they would be present every time the doors were open.

Not long after that, they bowed together at an altar of prayer and became Christians. They did not know that the Bible says, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God,” ^{Mt. 6:33} and it took them some time to get ready (by laying off something this week and another thing next week) to finally decide they were ready to take the final step. They had come in the midst and seen the modest attire of the saints, and

also the difference in their manner and appearance, and it caused them to feel that truly God's people are different, obeying the Word of God that plainly teaches, *"Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of the Lord of great price."* ^{1 Pet. 3:3-4}

After the husband really became a Christian, separated from the ways of the world, he could no longer afford to belong to the men's club where his particular friends and associates were members. They were refined people, and the husband was employed in one of the government offices as a bookkeeper. He stopped smoking and also turned down the proffered glass of liquor. Friends at the job began to note a definite change in his habits. When asked why he would not partake, the answer was, "I have become a Christian and do not drink liquor any more."

Not very long after taking his stand for a life of clean living, he was relieved of his position in the office and fully realized the cost of becoming a Christian.

This man and wife have worked faithfully through the years, sacrificing former means and have lived on little to be true to God. They have never wavered in the great task but stood like a rock in the billows. They have been a real pillar of the church of God in Cuba.

"Our Sunday School work has been the hardest part of the work here. It never has been easy to get the children of Catholic or Spiritualist parents to the Sunday School, and from the beginning, we had to labor hard for the children we did get, but the last two years have been our very hardest.

"When they began to realize what we were doing for the children, the Catholic priests and nuns began laboring harder than ever. Then, about two years ago, an order came from their headquarters for them to make every child in Cuba a Catholic, and also every home.

"As they began working on this program, they gave orders for groceries to be given to every poor child that left us and went to

their own schools, which they opened up in order to combat our work. This order of groceries was given weekly and made a temptation which few poor mothers could resist as the pangs of hunger made the offer a real test. They also furnished garments and shoes in many cases, and they gave weekly a little paper to each child who attended their Sunday School. This paper gave each child entrance to a movie in the afternoon. Can you see what this did to our work?"

If such an offer were made in America where high wages are paid to the laboring men and where so much food is wasted regularly, even there the offer of free packages would cause a great exodus from one Sunday School to another. So it is easy to see that, to a mother always just short of supplies, this offer would indeed be a boon.

It is the way of the flesh of mankind to misappropriate the blessings of God, to ask amiss that they may consume it upon their desires. No doubt, men would make a vending machine of God, if He would let them.

Often these poor women wept as they explained the reason their children had been withdrawn from the Church of God and placed in the Catholic Sunday School. She writes:

"We cannot possibly give these things to our children, and have lost numbers. But thank God, those that remain with us will have the blessed truth planted in their little hearts and minds, and this will be an eternal blessing. Thank God, by the power of prayer and hard work, we have maintained a great number, and we feel sure in the near future, we shall see numbers of older boys and girls enjoying the blessings of real salvation."

—Grace G. Henry; *Highways and Hedges*

My heart is very full as I read these words again. For we are laboring among people who are seldom very hungry, much less starving. They are rich by comparison and full of bread, even as Sodom. Yet the gospel calls for them to turn aside from this present world and invest in treasures

over there. There can be no spiritual living without this decision. We see readily that this situation has afflicted the work of God in all times and places for centuries. *"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world...."* ^{2 Tim. 4:10}

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." ^{Jas. 1:27}

In the following chapter of James, we are taught to avoid distinguishing between people on the basis of materialism, and we are taught that it is more important to be rich in faith than rich in this world. *"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"* ^{Jas. 2:5}

The thought keeps standing out in my mind that the spiritual effect on the human mind and heart is more important than the physical need supplied. After Jesus fed the entire crowd from just a little boy's lunch, the effect on these folks was to attempt to make Him king. It was not a spiritual effect at all.

It is the way of the flesh of mankind to **misappropriate** the blessings of God, to ask amiss that they may consume it upon their desires. No doubt, men would make a vending machine of God, if He would let them. (He doesn't.)

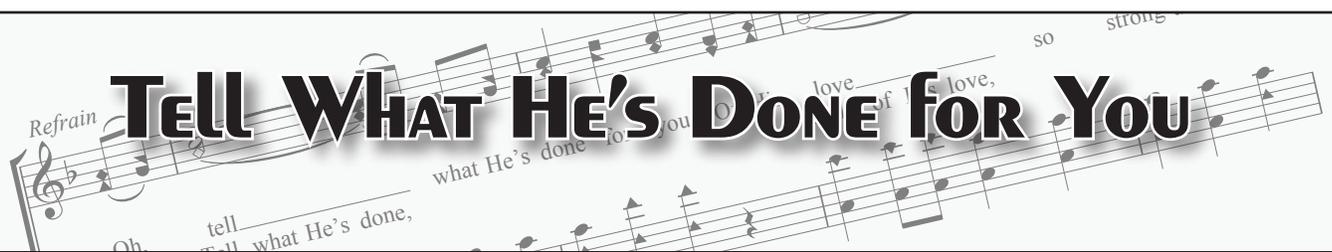
We had better be led by Him who knows all things, else what is sacrificed and given, or even given out of abundance at times, will not only be wasted, but actually be counterproductive. Charity can actually increase a lack of spirituality, if we do not give as God sees we should. And lack of charity can damage us, too. I have often thought, that if God put in my hand the riches of Job, I would have a fearsome responsibility, a most dreadful and weighty stewardship for which to answer. It would be a full-time job indeed, and if I approached it with just my human wisdom, reactions, conditioning, etc., then it would largely be a failure and worse. God has seen fit to place just a little of this world's goods in my hands, and I

am looking to Him to use them rightly. Herein I need prayer.

Ask God to give you such a picture of the spiritual standard against covetousness and for a life of faith and complete dependence on God, that you can live, teach, and insist upon the fullness of the gospel. And pray that I will do the same.

I perceive that the entire globe is desirous to go the way of the fat, bloated, materialistic-besotted United States. All about the planet, people are full of the very thing that almost got King David (Psalm 73), even the spirit of envy. They do not see what havoc it has wreaked upon us; indeed, most of the people in

this country are rich and increased with goods, engrossed in the mad pursuit for more and more of the things which will be burned up. Oh, vanity and vexation of spirit! May their eyes be opened in time to get help to their souls! Better to dwell with Abraham than to pitch one's tent toward Sodom. ➤



God's Disappointments

Recently, a group of us attempted to travel from Jefferson, Oregon, to Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada, for a family gathering. My wife and I were in one car, and our son-in-law, daughter, and their baby daughter were in another. The trip was preceded by winter storms that were unusual for the Interstate-5 corridor, but a short window of relief seemed to be available that Saturday. Our daughter had been afflicted by a pain in one of her legs which made it impossible for her to walk several days before the planned trip, but she was given some relief the day before the trip. We took this to mean that God meant for us to go. She had a rough time sleeping Friday night, and we were late leaving Saturday morning. It was just as well, for the window of opportunity was shorter than we had supposed, and a severe winter storm moved into the area.

At about three in the afternoon, we were traveling with increasing difficulty near Highway 12. Each car was equipped with a cell phone, and at that point we learned that the other car had slid into the center median, thankfully without damage. They began to put on chains. My wife and I pulled over at the next exit and put on chains, too, as we waited for them. At 4:30 pm, we were ready to go, but it was evident that we would be doing well even to make it back home. We had come about a hundred miles, but conditions were worsening so fast

that we could only travel about 25 mph. We started back. At around 6:30 pm, the other car had broken a chain, and the fallen snow was increasing to a depth that it was obvious that we would not make it home that night. We were able to find a motel for both families. The following was written from there.

* * *

"Blessed Savior, draw me nearer,
As I walk the narrow way;
When my soul is sorely tempted,
Thou wilt all my fears allay.

"By Thy help I'll trust Thee ever,
Though the shadows gather round;
Thou my light, and my salvation,
Let Thy grace in me abound."

Man's disappointments are God's appointments.

"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jn. 11:21

Here is real disappointment. "I expected differently from You, Lord." "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Lk. 24:21

It is not good for us to be pleased all the time. We imagine that we would be doing quite well if we were showered with blessings all the time. One has accurately observed, that if it were left up to us, we would never be sick and we would have all the money we could use. Fortunately, it is not left up to us, and God knows it is best for us to be disappointed at times.

Our disappointments are all the more keen when there is a certain feeling in there that God has set us up—has led us on—positioned us—so that things fell apart and our expectation was denied. "O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me." Jer. 7:20 "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day." Lam. 3:1-3

Our disappointments are greatly magnified by our sense of having done our best, of trying our hardest. We search to see if there was some unworthy motive, some hidden sin or uncleanness. "Did I offend the Lord somehow?" Sometimes we may find something that needs adjustment, but at other times, there is nothing—no reason that we can see why God would disappoint us. Temptations to bitterness assail us. We are tempted to doubt the love of God for us and to imagine that He is different from what He is. It is a profound thought to consider that we cannot see God as He really is and get an accurate estimation of His character except through the path of blessing and withheld blessings through which He takes us.

We would that it could be different. This sifting, trying, refining way is not

very compatible with our human nature, and it takes a conscious effort of will to humble ourselves (again) before God when on the receiving end of one of these disappointments.

“Lord, I started out to do this for You!” But God does not seem to be moved by declaration of unselfishness—at least, not moved to the point of reversing the disappointment. Our minds start reasoning, and in short order, will produce a list of reasons why God should change the distasteful outcome to one that we feel is better. “Lord think about the waste of: (1) time, (2) money, (3) health, (4) opportunity!” He thinks about it, all right, but *He doesn't think about it like I think about it.* One has said, “Why God permits people like Mary Slessor, who was probably one of the most courageous of women missionaries, to suffer so long when she would have spent her strength in His service so gladly if physically able, no one knows.” No one knows *but God*, we would add.

We don't know—we are *kept* in ignorance. God does it deliberately. “Lord, why did You *let* me make that mistake?”

A little baby has very little comprehension of the adult world. His or her world is limited by what he is—the baby cannot possibly think as a parent does. And our world is limited by what we are—immortal souls in bodies of clay, seeing at the very best through a glass, darkly, limited even in human wisdom and insight, to say nothing of matters of the spiritual world all around us and beyond us. We are as poorly equipped to second-guess God as the baby is to evaluate if the mother is doing a good job. How do we know what we need? We feel, we hurt, we desire, we are drawn to what appears interesting and worthy, but for the most part, we are not even very wise babies. The most intelligent thing we can do is to acknowledge our inability, and we find that when Jesus came into this world to live in a fleshly body, that is exactly what He did. “*And being found in fash-*

ion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Phil. 2:8 The obedience is not possible without trusting (as you can see with a child *receiving* correction), so we see that the only right attitude is *trust* and *obey*, with the humility of heart necessary to do both.

A child that has *willed itself* to accept Mother's direction will profit from Mother's understanding *without comprehending why* it is all happening. We read of David's attitude in accepting God's disappointments (appointments actually) in Psalm 131:2—“*Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.*”

Is this a lesson that you have learned, reader? Is your soul “*even as a weaned child*”? God's trusting children have their disappointments, too, for God causes things to come out differently than they expected or hoped, at times. But those who take things into their own hands have the same experience with God that a willful baby has with a devoted, loving mother or father, who will not be moved from what they know is best by what the baby thinks is best. No wonder David said, “*LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*” Ps. 131:1 But even when a child of God has not been haughty, nor had lofty eyes, nor exercised himself in great matters that are too high for him, God still can and does pull the rug out from under us, upsetting our fondly arranged apple cart, bringing tears to our eyes and questions to our lips. “*Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*” Jn. 11:21 Why, Lord? I did all the things I knew to do. I sought guidance as sincerely as I knew how. We have prayed as earnestly and fervently as we knew how to pray. If You had been here...

Now if we have taken the bridle in our teeth, so to speak, and insisted that we had the right to have it our way because *He promised*, then there is something else involved than just life

not coming out as we expected. *It is not good for us to have our expectations all the time.* It is even worse if we get it in our mind that we are entitled. There have been many who read John 15:7, “*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you,*” and the only part of the verse that really spoke to their heart was “*ye shall ask what ye will.*”

Babies are selfish by nature, extremely selfish. (We are reminded of a new mother who said of her first-born, “They have no consideration at all.”) They think that everything that is being done for them is because the entire world (theirs, at least) revolves around them; this, of course, is a very false picture of life. How many babies do you know that are *thankful* for the rarity of real parental love and sacrifice? They just take it for granted. The big babies, such as you and I, are able by God's help to not take it for granted, but it takes a desire to look at and a conscious effort of will to accept God's disappointments, as well as His times that elate our hearts. The fact is, God doesn't spoil any of His children.

“Jesus knows how to keep me humble,
And how to make me pray.

“Well, He knows when the clouds
cover my sky,
And when I'm walking through
the valley low,

I'll be down on my knees, calling on Him;
There's no other place to go.”

“Well,” says the sincere, trusting child of God, “I don't understand. How can I *exercise faith*, then?” You can. You can exercise **faith in God**. “*Have faith in God.*” Mk. 11:22 *Not faith in what He can do, but faith in Him.* He will make a way, even if that way seems to deny what we thought we were promised. In effect, He says, “Now stay with Me. Don't doubt Me. **Trust Me.**” Don't set up your best idea of what you think God is doing and trust *in that*, but **have faith in God**. The Lord will make a way, somehow.

When attempting to move a large, unwieldy desk through a doorway some years ago, the group of us attempting the task were having considerable doubt about whether the furniture would fit. A young girl with us was fired with enthusiasm, and she exclaimed over and over, "Where's your faith?!" There was something about the way she said it that hinted she had not been taught that by the Holy Spirit in that problem; it was inspired by something else. It was an effectual goad to us to try our best, and the desk got through the door, but *it was not faith in God*. It was human faith, and inspiring human faith, at that.

We would like to say that *God has something more than that for us*. There is a faith that works by divine love, by a nestling under the great outstretched wings of the Most High that far supersedes the farthest reach of human imagination and fleshly inspiration, is without strain, and is appropriate and healthy for the soul in every direction. When we find this path in trusting God, "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*,"^{Jas. 5:16} and it is easy and natural to confess our faults to each other and pray for each other. This faith *in Him* is what we need when God decides that our expectations must be denied, and it is time for us to undergo the anguish of disappointment.

"*Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*"^{Hab. 3:17-18}

Here is the child of God's answer to disappointment. ➤

Worship in Spirit and Truth

"The Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."^{Lk. 16:14-16}

We are prejudiced against the virtue and merit that was in the religion of the Pharisees because we know from the New Testament record how it all came out: pride, self-righteousness, truth-fighters, even the crucifixion of the Son of God. We are also aware of the admonitions and rebukes of their inconsistencies that Jesus administered to them. There was much moral virtue and merit among them (as well as corruption), but their religion was one of the ways that the flesh of man can turn to religion in the name of God and truth.

Saul was drawn to the strictness and carefulness of the Pharisees for a reason. He wanted to live a virtuous life, a good life, a worthy life. *His flesh was drawn to religion*. There have always been people like that. Many people are *not* drawn in their flesh to religion, but there are a significant number who are. There are many people who know nothing of what it means to worship God *in spirit*, for even many who do worship God in truth (or at least a certain degree of truth) also worship Him in the flesh, instead of *in the spirit*. This worship (in flesh) is highly esteemed **among men** right now in this present gospel dispensation of time, but it is an **abomination** in the **sight of God**. There was a time when God accepted worship after the flesh if it was according to truth, for He knew that was all that men could do, but **God has provided a way to worship Him *in the spirit* now**. "*Since that*

time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." That is the burden of this article. By God's help, we want to examine the nature of worship in the spirit and contrast it with the previously acceptable worship in the flesh. We pray that the Lord will anoint this area of truth to your heart and open the Word of God to you on this subject.

It should be plain to you that God does not accept just any old thing that is devised by the fleshly wisdom of men. If you are not sure of this point, please read the account of Cain and Abel in Gen. 4:2-8. "*And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.*"^{vs. 4-5} Both of these men brought offerings to God, but one's worship was accepted by the Almighty, while the other was not. Here is the question, then: **Does God have respect unto our offering, or does He not?** "*If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?*"^{vs. 7} This is the whole point, isn't it? What does it mean in God's sight *to do well*? What does it mean to worship *in spirit and in truth*?

Acceptable Worship Now Is Different from What

Acceptable Worship Used to Be

We read in John 4:23, "*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*" You will note that there was a time when the true worshipers **did not** worship the Father *in spirit*. Yes, that's right. The *true* worshipers did not worship the Father in spirit because they *could not* worship Him as He desired them to do so. "*But the hour cometh, and now is,*" Jesus said in Samaria to the woman at the well.

The worship of the old dispensation was not *in spirit*. "*The law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in*

them.” Gal. 3:12 It was possible for an unconverted heart to set itself to keep the law. You did not have to be touched personally in your heart by the Spirit of God to worship God acceptably at that time. All you had to do was to keep the law. A man with a sinful nature (and everyone had it, from the most devout to the least) could worship acceptably to God at that time, for there was nothing better to be had. The hour had not come when there was something better.

There were many who desired the hour to come. There were many who sensed how God was not satisfied with the lack of worship in spirit. Of these we read, “*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect [complete].*” Heb. 11:39-40 Again, we see the fulfillment of “*the hour cometh and now is.*” Better worship was possible because a better heart experience, i.e., *in spirit*, is and has been available since John the Baptist.

We come now to the ignorance of men in their fleshly ways concerning the new way of worship provided by God. Since the fall of Adam and Eve, all men had ever known was fleshly wisdom and thinking. The inspiration and abiding presence of the Holy Ghost was a temporary thing throughout the entire period of time previous to the New Testament. The holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but that Presence did not dwell with them in their lives as we read of the New Testament brethren. King David was ignorant of the following condition: “*I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*” Jn. 14:16-17 So also was Daniel, Elijah, Moses, Abraham, Elisha, etc. Jesus said, “*Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*” Mt. 11:11 None of

these Old Testament brethren could worship *in spirit and truth*.

Not only was there the ignorance and inertia, the weight of centuries of fleshly worship in truth among the prior-to-New-Testament people of God, but the flesh itself exerted a blindness to spiritual things, a slowness of heart. It takes a continual quickening and renewal by the Holy Ghost to escape the influence of our own fleshly, natural ways, and this continual “abiding with you forever” was what the brethren of the old dispensation did not have. Sister Hannah Smith describes this purged, filled-with-the-Spirit-of-God life thus:

By rejoicing in Him, however, I do not mean rejoicing in ourselves, although I fear most people think this is really what is meant. *It is their feelings or their revelations or their experiences that constitute the groundwork of their joy, and if none of these are satisfactory, they see no possibility of joy at all.*

But the lesson the Lord is trying to teach us all the time is the lesson of self-effacement. He commands us to look away from self and all self’s experiences, to crucify self and count it dead, to cease to be interested in self, and to know nothing and be interested in nothing but God.

The reason for this is that *God has destined us for a higher life than the self-life.* That just as He has destined the caterpillar to become the butterfly, and therefore has appointed the caterpillar life to die, in order that the butterfly life may take its

There was a time when God accepted worship after the flesh if it was according to truth, but God has provided a way to worship Him in the spirit now.

place, so He has appointed our self-life to die in order that the divine life may become ours instead. The caterpillar effaces itself in its grub form, that it may evolve or develop into its butterfly form. It dies that it may live. And just so must we.

Therefore, the one most essential thing in this stage of our existence must be the death to self and the resurrection to a life only in God. And it is for this reason that **the lesson of joy in the Lord, and not in self,** must be learned. Every advancing soul must come sooner or later to the place where it can trust God, *the bare God*, if I may be allowed the expression, *simply and*

only because of what He is in Himself, and not because of His promises or His gifts. It must learn to have its joy in Him alone, and to rejoice in Him when all else in Heaven and earth shall seem to fail.

—*The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*

The old worship *in flesh and truth* had its ways that appealed to the flesh of Old Testament saints. The incense. The drama of the ritual. The appeal of the music to human sensibility. The impressive architecture of the temple. The sheer magnitude of butchered animals—the finest of the flocks and herds—consumed on the altar of sacrifice. Dimly and as through a glass, the fleshly mind of the Old Testament saints of God began to grasp the truth. “*Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*” Mic. 6:7 The fact was that God had **something better** for mankind, and He was patiently preparing for the hour when men could worship God *in spirit and in truth*.

Why did God accept all this fleshly worship before and not accept it now? The short answer would be, “*God having provided some better thing for us,*” Heb. 11:40 but I submit to your thinking how difficult it was for the human mind to switch over from worship in the flesh to worship in the spirit. Unless the Spirit drew an individual to the *better thing*, the old way of worship looked good enough, even precious and dear. We get a glimpse of one man’s struggles with comprehending *the better thing* that was provided by

God at that hour (and since) by reading of Nicodemus. Jesus is speaking of the invisible birth by the Spirit of God and the effects of that spiritual birth. He says, “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*” Jn. 3:6 But Nicodemus just didn’t get it. Spiritual worship by means of the spiritual birth was a mystery to him. So he replies, “*How can these things be?*” Jn. 3:9 It just didn’t make sense to him. How could a person be so changed inside that they would worship God *in spirit* instead of *in flesh*, as men had always done up to that time?

The new birth, much more the baptism of the Holy Ghost, doesn't make sense to our fleshly reasoning, for it is beyond our fleshly comprehension. And there are many people today who are "a master in Israel" Jn. 3:10 who do not understand what is *worship in spirit*, either.

"But as it is written, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.... Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*" 1 Cor. 2:9-10,12

because he himself was living on a higher plain than in his flesh, and he knew their (unrealized) privileges in the gospel. There are things that belong to our non-worship course of life and things that belong to *worship in spirit and truth*. There are other practices that do not belong to the worship services, but are perfectly permissible to do elsewhere. The Spirit of God within the apostle made it crystal clear what belonged to spiritual worship and what belonged to natural life.

People without this inner guide who are trying to worship God acceptably confuse the privileges of natural life with an idea of license to mix into worship service whatever they think is appropriate. And when some would demur, they can see no difference.

"If I play the piano at home and sing gospel songs, why can I not do the same in

public worship service?" they think. When the reply is given, "God is not worshiped with men's hands" (Acts 17:25), then their fleshly response is, "Why not? If it is wrong to worship with men's hands, then why is it not wrong to play the piano at all?" With this question comes an understanding that advocates that every detail of natural human life (the flesh) should be an act of worship to God. I should eat and drink *as worship* to God. I should make love to my wife *as worship* to God. I should go to the bathroom *as worship* to God. But there are things that belong to natural life that are not intended by God as worship to Him. It is true that all those things are to be dedicated to Him as part of my whole life belonging to Him. I am to break my bread in singleness of heart (Acts 2:46). I am to do all things to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). But they are not acts of worship. They are fleshly activities which I was created to do. They are to be distinguished from acts of worship. Observe the distinction in 1 Cor. 7:5, "*Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*" There

is a place for the natural, the permissible fleshly part of man, but it has nothing to do with fasting and prayer.

Just as each of us is actually two kinds of person, flesh and spirit, there is a mixture of these two in our lives. But there is also distinguishment of the two, just as there is *worship in spirit*, different and distinguishable from worship in flesh. This discernment of the difference is only possible now because of the abiding presence of the Spirit of God in us.

People Who Understand the Form of Worship in Spirit, but Not the Power

And there are people who understand *the form* of worship in spirit because of their spiritual heritage, but they have not the Spirit of God working within them in all His power and glory, as He did in those before them. These people reverence the form and believe in it, but they substitute their reverence for the form for the inward life that true worship in spirit naturally produces. The fleshliness of their worship is revealed in their rules and policies to get and keep the form right. They would reduce the living presence of the Spirit of God in the hearts of true worshipers to doctrine and mental understanding. Their hearts are not taught of God, either, and much of their understanding arises out of their flesh, too.

These people do not want to lose sight of spiritual things, and this is why they cling ardently to the form. They do not realize that they *have already lost it* when they do not possess it in all of its fullness. We have observed many revered teachings and practices that are but empty shells. The brass serpent is still held before the people (Num. 21:9), and much ado is made of how people were healed by looking to that thing ordained of God when they were bitten of serpents, but now it is *Nehushtan*, "a thing of brass," and as did Hezekiah, we should break it in pieces and discredit it in our minds for the empty tradition that it is (2 Kin. 18:4). We should

The man of God was greatly shocked that they did not distinguish between the normal, fleshly process of eating a meal together and the divinely-ordained, worship in spirit of the Lord's supper.

People Who Do Not Understand the Nature of Spiritual Worship

There are and were people who do not understand the nature of spiritual worship, i.e., *worship in spirit*. Their hearts are not taught of God to distinguish between worship in the spirit and pleasure in the natural, fleshly life of man, and much of their understanding arises out of their flesh. Again, we will state the spiritual condition in Sister Hannah Smith's words, "By rejoicing in Him, however, *I do not mean rejoicing in ourselves*, although I fear most people think this is really what is meant." A natural meal of fellowship, where people eat to satisfy hunger, seems a spiritual meal to those who do not know the nature of spiritual worship. Here the words of the apostle apply: "*What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*" 1 Cor. 11:22 The man of God was greatly shocked that they did not distinguish between the normal, fleshly process of eating a meal together and the divinely-ordained, worship in spirit of the Lord's Supper. "*Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?*" He was greatly shocked

We need more than the wires; we need the power flowing through the wires.

seek *the life that is in God according to His pattern*, and reverence God, the Giver of that life with its great power and heavenly sap. Little good it does (and great harm) to keep proclaiming, "See our branch. This is just what God does. He makes a branch just like this. See how perfectly the leaves are formed. See what the sap *has* done." Others looking on will justly observe, "This doesn't seem to be connected to the Vine. It still has *the form* of a branch in the vine, but I do believe that it is withering. I don't think I am interested in a withering vine." Yes, the form defenders are headed for the bundles and the fire. We have heard the grim, tenacious attempts to hold the truth by those stubbornly persisting in *the form* of spiritual worship without demonstrating and holding before the people the inward power so necessary to really live a spiritual standard, and we are appalled by the damage done, the skepticism aroused, in the minds of men about worship in spirit and in truth. Little good it will do to just abstain from the medical profession in the name of trusting God exclusively with our bodies if we are not healed, greatly encouraged, and have all the blessings of God's healing plan. Or worse yet, start doctoring ourselves, instead of trusting God. And little good it will do to carefully avoid entertainment, the showmanship of practiced performances, and the casual give and take of fleshly comradery in our public services if the absence of these things is not filled by a demonstration of the Spirit and power from on high. The *form* just doesn't cut it, folks. Merely a remembrance of former blessings is not enough. It is good to have a godly heritage and that has its place, but we need freshness, current visitations, and right-now renewals from heaven. We need more than the wires; we need the power flowing through the wires. We are certainly not minded to cast away the wires, either, but the wires without the power are no good.

Those Who Worship in Spirit and in Truth

And there are people whose hearts are taught of God. These worship in spirit and in truth, and God greatly blesses them. The form is more than a doctrine to them.

These people distrust their own fleshly reasoning and ways with a perception and insight constantly given by the indwelling Spirit of God. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." ^{Phil. 3:3} "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.... be filled with the Spirit." ^{Eph. 5:17-18}

Now a man cannot disregard his own thinking and fleshly reasoning and feeling **until he finds something better.** As Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." ^{Jn. 3:11} Jesus spoke of what it means for the Spirit of God to change a man and put him in contact with heaven. He spoke of what it means to have the Spirit of God poured upon us. "Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high..." ^{Isa. 32:15} He told the disciples (and us) to tarry at Jerusalem until they were *endued with power from on high*. "That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." ^{1 Cor. 2:12} It is the receiving of the Spirit from on high that spoils us for trusting in the ingenious reasoning of our fleshly minds in all kinds of things, and puts a healthy skepticism toward our own fleshly capabilities in the setting of our heart. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." ^{Jn. 16:13}

Until we are touched and subdued by the Spirit of God in this way, we cannot worship in spirit and truth, no matter what particular formula we follow. If you are not changed by the Spirit of God in your heart, then you *cannot* worship God in spirit, whether you use musical instruments or do not use them, whether you burn incense or do not burn it. You may carefully subdue the tendency of the flesh to practice and perform; you may carefully hem it in with rules and regulations; you may attempt to worship in spirit by many rules in the flesh; but you will fail to worship in spirit *unless you are in spirit*, i.e., assisted by the Spirit of God. And when you are assisted by the Spirit of God, much of what seemed important to your fleshly mind before will appear of little merit. This is why the New Testament saints

left off all the Old Testament practices. They were not taught to do so by doctrine. They were not carefully disciplined by a ministry of profound understanding of the nature of the change in dispensations. They did not need to be. The reality of the superiority of the Holy Ghost within them was an anointing that taught them all they needed to know. And when a congregation of them at Galatia began to be seduced back to the old ways of worshiping God, the ministry of the New Testament was faithful to warn them that they were losing *divine life* and the things that belonged to divine life. They were losing worship in spirit, not just in truth.

It is a wonderful privilege to sit in a Holy-Ghost-controlled meeting. We might say with equal correctness and joy that it is wonderful to be among Holy-Ghost-controlled lives. Verily, it surpasses the *form* of Holy-Ghost-controlled meetings as daylight surpasses darkness. We have seen both. We have seen the traditions continued by those who lost the inspiration in their lives. Without fleshly entertainment of any kind, with only a sense of rightness that comes from "keeping the traditions," it is as dry and dead a services as I have ever experienced. To a soul inspired

The fleshly religious life may imitate the spiritual life in the emotions and reasoning of a human being, but it cannot bring the soul face to face with its Creator.

by the Holy Ghost, there is nothing that communes with the soul, nothing that fires and inspires the inner life, only the husks and outer shells of divine truth. If such a soul steps out of his personal anointing and allows himself to be affected in his flesh, then there will be communion of a different kind than worship in spirit and in truth. Such a soul can receive zeal and enthusiasm to worship in flesh and truth. Such preaching and receiving of such preaching and other elements of such services will produce a corresponding change in the internal approach to God deep down in the soul.

Step by Step

1 PETER 2:21
Lizze DeArmond

S. B. Jackson

1. Step by step, eve - ry day, He will lead us all the way;
2. Step by step, all is right, Though we walk by faith, not sight;
3. Step by step, some glad day, Home-ward we will wend our way;

Noth - ing can our hearts dis - may, While we fol - low, fol - low Je - sus.
E'en the dark - ness turns to light, While we fol - low, fol - low Je - sus.
Nev - er can we go a - stray, While we fol - low, fol - low Je - sus.

Refrain

One step at a time, you see, Is e - nough for you, is e - nough for me;

So we'll fol - low faith - ful - ly, Fol - low, fol - low Je - sus.

The Temple of God

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17
Daniel S. Warner

Barney E. Warren

1. Not in the tem - ples made with hands, Though beau - ti - ful by art,
2. How won - der - ful that He would take This poor a - bode of sin,
3. No more I think of God a - far, But see Thee, Lord, with - in;
4. O Lord, en - shrined with - in my breast, My con - stant joy and peace;

But God in mer - cy con - des - cends To dwell with - in my heart.
And wash me in His pre - cious blood, And now a - bide with - in.
Oh, shine in me, Thou morn - ing star, And keep Thy tem - ple clean.
My soul can now for - ev - er rest, Se - cure in Thy em - brace.

Refrain

Oh, glo - ry to Je - sus so sweet in me,

My bod - y, Thy tem - ple shall for - ev - er be.

But saints thrive on the manifestation of the Spirit of God in the services. Life communes with life. In a thousand ways, the underlying, beneath-the-surface life of the services speaks to the heart of the Spirit-controlled child of God. And the voice that speaks, speaks of God. *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”* Mt. 5:8 The fleshly religious life may imitate the spiritual life in the emotions and reasoning of a human being, but it cannot bring the soul face to face with its Creator. Brother Paul speaks of this in 1 Cor. 14:24-25—*“But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”* Notice the effect of a spiritual meeting. The secrets of an unbeliever’s heart is made manifest, and he sees God. And not just of the preacher or someone who testifies only; he is convinced of all; he is judged (discerned) of all. There is more to the service than human agency, and this more-to-it is discernable by the unsaved.

I well remember a service I attended where a spiritual pastor had come to take up the burden of a congregation. There the truth had long been held as a form and tradition without anointing power. A woman in the congregation testified of how God dealt with her in the meeting. Over and over she said, “God spoke with me. He spoke with me.” This is a common experience in a spiritual congregation, but it had not happened to her before. She could scarcely get over it. She was a perfect stranger to worship in spirit and in truth. As to the form, she knew it perfectly and was greatly loyal to it.

The Author’s Personal Testimony

I am a musician who had ambitions at one time to be a professional soloist in classical music on the piano and violin. I thank God that He had mercy on me and helped me to abandon those ambitions. I have taught many students and am well acquainted with the ins and outs of performing high quality musical performances. I was delivered and am still delivered from the state of mind and heart that loves to perform,

move, and inspire others through the powerful emotions aroused by beautiful, exhilarating compositions. I have the ability to play some of the most ingenious, lovely arrangements of gospel music I have ever found, and I find them inspiring in my flesh, very pleasant, soothing, and beneficial. I want to make it plain that as a natural man, I am a musician through and through. I deeply love the sound of melody and harmony. But I want to testify that these natural blessings and natural favorings, valuable and good as they are in their place, *pale into complete insignificance with the inspiration of the Holy Ghost with this poor earthen vessel.*

I also possess a certain ability as a speaker and can organize my thoughts coherently and systematically sufficiently to have made many business presentations over the years. But these natural, fleshly accomplishments, valuable and good as they were in their place, are completely dwarfed (as a grain of sand is dwarfed by the sun) by the power of the Spirit of God when it descends upon me (this unworthy earthen vessel) to preach the unspeakable works of God. There simply is no comparison. I marvel not at the brother who said it thus, *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”* 1 Cor. 2:1-5 There is nothing exaggerated about this testimony of Brother Paul’s. This is the effect of being filled with the Almighty Spirit of God. I would not dream of venturing out on my own to speak the gospel; I would not even remotely imagine that I could attempt to glorify God in public worship with my skill of hands on an instrument. **The ministration of the Spirit is that glorious, that infinitely superior to all other ways.** What an incredible thing

I would not dream of venturing out on my own to speak the gospel; I would not even remotely imagine that I could attempt to glorify God in public worship with my skill of hands on an instrument.

that God would come down to a soul, clothed in flesh, and speak through that clay! *“I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.”* All fleshly confidence evaporates before the glory of the Spirit and of power. Human skill and practice, preparation, mean precisely **nothing**. Therefore we read, *“But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.”* Mk. 13:11 *“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit.”* 1 Cor. 12:11 How infinitely valuable the working of the Holy Ghost, that one and selfsame Spirit! Behold, *“man at his best state is altogether vanity”!* Ps. 39:5

Now this, too, as many other things, can be wrested by those who are not filled with the Spirit and who lean too much to their flesh. They will say, “But don’t you think beforehand about what you will say before you preach?” I will answer you. Usually there is a topic and some scriptures upon my heart and certain pressing burdens, but I certainly do not practice speaking before mirrors or spend any time premeditating the effect of what might be said upon the hearers. I am more interested in getting the burden right from God and pleasing Him. I leave everything to Him, trusting Him to manage my thoughts, my feelings, my ignorance, etc., to His glory. In other words, checking the “pipes” to be sure that there is nothing clogging or hindering the free flow of the Spirit of God that the Word of God might have free course.

Now this way (the way of worship in the spirit) has a profound effect on both the speaker and they who hear him. There is little to no rapport in the flesh between speaker and audience. Men and women filled with the Holy Ghost do not tell jokes to “break the ice.” They do not

adopt a casual, “good old boy” relationship with the audience. Secular public speakers do these kinds of things and many other fleshly techniques all the time, but the Spirit of God will put something in you and in the spiritual in the audience that will cause the same reaction as there was to Jesus. “*Never man spake like this man.*” ^{Jn. 7:46} “Well,” you may say, “that was Jesus.” Yes, and that is what Jesus wants to do through you, child of God. He would give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist (Luke 21:15).

In addition to this, there is a great humbling process that occurs when God uses a human being to speak forth the mighty gospel to other human beings.

I have sat in congregations where musical instruments were employed in worship service, and I have earnestly prayed that I would understand the nature of what was happening. Nor have I prayed in vain. The eyes of my understanding have been opened wider than before. This is not the first time that this subject has come up in the centuries since Jesus first founded His church. I have not and I do not despise the earnest, sincere souls who I observed singing spiritual songs with instrumental accompaniment. Some of them were overcome with the profound meaning of what they were singing to the extent that they were unable to continue to sing, at times. I have talked with different ones of them, questioning and inquiring into the practice, listening to what they said, considering and pondering. I would not sit in the seat of the scorner with any, nor am I insensitive to the possibility of laying a rock of stumbling in the path of any of God's little children. I want them to get to heaven, and I want to go, too. If they have received a different influence than the one taught by the Holy Ghost, it has and will do them harm, and I want to be their friend and please my Master who loves all, by humbly holding to the truth.

I have also been among the form-defenders, who are bent on holding “the

standard” whether they are taught of God or not. Not only on the particular aspect of worship (musical instruments) I have just mentioned, but on trusting God for our bodies, dressing modestly, higher education, wives working out of the home, and many other areas of life, I see precious little evidence that the Holy Ghost is teaching their hearts. I am glad for what there is to see. This paucity of the Holy Ghost teaching the hearts, of course, is plain to the group that holds it is all right to worship God with men's hands. They don't see the Holy Ghost teaching the form-defenders, because He isn't; but they also fail to see different signs that they are also being guided more by fleshly reasoning than by the Spirit of God.

I find all this very grievous, and it brings a great fear of God upon my heart. I don't want to miss it, too. I don't want to (1) throw in with either camp that is not taught of God (or anybody else not taught of God, either) and (2) I don't want to *be* one of those human beings *not taught the way of God by the Spirit of God*. God forbid that I should introduce yet another fleshly creed of my own devising into this awful jungle of human thinking before us. O Lord, keep me subdued before Thy Spirit!

“Have No Confidence in the Flesh”

We observe that God has preempted the fleshly argument: “My flesh is more right than yours.” He has nullified flesh-to-flesh comparisons by providing something infinitely superior to your flesh or mine. And when we receive the Holy Ghost, we are deeply convicted of this truth: “*The flesh profiteth nothing.*” ^{Jn. 6:63}

God did this with the contentions of the sinful Israelites and the sinful Gentiles. “*But the scripture hath concluded all under sin.*” ^{Gal. 3:22} “*For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*” ^{Rom. 11:32}

And we find in Joshua 5:13-15 the story of Joshua's encounter near the city of Jericho with an unknown man with a sword

in his hand. Joshua wanted to know whether this man was on his side or on the side of the people of Jericho, but the man said, “*Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come.*” ^{vs. 14} I want to stress this “NAY.” Verily, God is not on one group's side or another. NAY! You see, **God has a side.** He has a way. And there is only **one appropriate** response on our part, and Joshua took it immediately upon hearing the man's reply. “*And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?*” ^{vs. 14} This is the way of escape from our fleshly reasoning and affections. It is the way of humility to God and opening our heart to complete obedience. And the first commandment of the angel of God to the humbled, worshiping Joshua was, “*Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.*” ^{vs. 15}

We need to get rid of our shoes at the angel's direction. Our feet are tender, compared to the possible hazards of walking about, and we all recognize the need and desirability of protective footwear. We develop our ways of proceeding in life in the best wisdom that we have, and if we are sincere, we carefully use the best skill we can muster to do what seems right to us. Most of God's children are a determined people, kind of hard-headed and not easily changed. They would never have started out on a pilgrimage to go to heaven and please God if they were wishy-washy and pulled about by every wind of doctrine. But whether our “shoes” are well-made or poorly constructed, when we stand before the angel of God, “***Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.***” God does not mean for you to go bare-footed all the time, so to speak, but there is a time to bare your soul and say as Joshua, “*What saith my lord unto his servant?*”

There are too many people arguing about what is right *with their shoes on*. And all too few who are on holy ground with their shoes off and their flesh subdued.

We talk and think differently when we

There are too many people arguing about what is right with their shoes on.
And all too few who are on holy ground with their shoes off and their flesh subdued.

stand on holy ground before the angel with our shoes off. Joshua needed that experience, and we need it, too. Joshua tackled Jericho, that great walled-up city, differently than he would have otherwise. As he stood there with his shoes off and his flesh subdued, the angel told him to go about the destruction of the city in a way that made no sense militarily. This is perfectly ordinary with God. He is always doing things that make no sense to our natural thinking, until they are over, and we see that He is God indeed and is dealing with every aspect of things, *including our flesh*.

The great burden of the hour among the remnants of the great holiness reformation of 1880 is the need to take our shoes off and stand before the angel on holy ground. As a people overall, we are a disgrace and a reproach. We teach a thousand variations

Nothing is going to change until you become afflicted and mourn and weep.

of doctrine; we exclude and include with our unwritten creeds; we labor endlessly and futilely to “get them to come over here” (Lk. 17:20-21). Hardly anyone is getting the same depth of experience as we read about in the New Testament. All groups are full of “good” ministers, well-respected within the framework of that particular group, who have certain results against which there is no law. But much of this activity and these results take place within a fleshly framework that is greatly lacking in depth and power. There is altogether too much of people doing things for God in His name, and too little of God present in great power, doing things through believers. This will not be remedied by arguing about who is the most spiritual (i.e., the greatest) and the most right. Can you not see the great necessity of finding the place that Joshua found? Do you not feel the great necessity of it in your life, your congregation, your general meetings?

Nothing is going to change until you become afflicted and mourn and weep. *“Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he*

shall lift you up.” ^{Jas. 4:9-10} Daniel repented for the children of Judah in Daniel 9:2-20, although he was not personally guilty of many of the things which he confessed to God. His “removing of his shoes” as he lay on his face before God brought favor from God. *“Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.”* ^{Dan. 9:21-23}

Out of this *touch* from God came a blessing that proved to be part of the foundational understanding that led to the restoration of Jerusalem and the renewal of God-blessed, God-inspired Old Testament worship. Ezra and Nehemiah entered into Daniel’s labors, and they got back (paying the usual cost of buying the truth) to the blessing zone that God had provided for His people in that dispensation.

The Testimony of Others

When the Holy Spirit takes a soul down into the death of Jesus, and there that soul dies in the death of Christ, there will be a resurrection to a life of power that will stir the country for ten miles around. It did it at Pentecost and it will do it today. We see what are called conversions and sanctifications today, and they are so cold, tame, lifeless, that they create but little or no joy in the heart of the saints. There are those today who can look back to the time of their conversion or sanctification when they felt more like a creature of heaven than of earth. They lived in a heavenly realm. They walked in a spirit of prayer. They lived in constant communion with God. The word of God was a fire in their bones. Diseases were driven back, and sinners awed by their presence.

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

Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the

other shadows of the law. The papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to Him.
—a reformer of the 1530 Protestant Reformation

Praise the Lord with the harp. Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days when Jesus gives us spiritual food, one can make melody without strings and pipes. *We do not need them* [musical instruments]. *They would hinder rather than help our praise.* Sing unto Him. This is the sweetest and best music. There is no instrument like the human voice. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it.

—C. Spurgeon; *Comments on Psalm 42:4*

We include these testimonies to highlight *the lack of confidence in the flesh* that is a direct effect of being filled with the reality of the Holy Ghost. This powerful infilling is altogether too rare today. It is because of the scarcity of this depth of experience that we have these grievous lacks in all that we have encountered among these two groups of people. This situation will only be resolved rightly by individual after individual getting this experience that produces such confidence in God *and* such a lack of confidence in everything that is not of God.

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

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



Editor’s Note: There is more on this subject available on the Timeless Truths website (timelesstruths.org) in the article “Musical Instruments and Worship” by Archie Souders. Also see the article in this issue, “Spiritual Sacrifices, Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

You don't have to continually fail where you know you should do better.

You don't have to be a victim of your circumstances.

IT IS POSSIBLE

DO YOU FEEL like you're stuck in a rut? Are you tired of dealing with the same old problems in the same old way? We can't alter our circumstances, but we can control how we respond to them. You've heard that before. But what about living it? Yes, today. Right now.

You see, victory is the birthright of every child of God. What does that mean? It means that you don't have to be angry at the crazy drivers or your selfish relatives. You don't have to let your busy schedule cause you stress. Or the Wall Street news. You don't have to be afraid of losing your job. You don't have to face life with a bleak outlook or hide behind a pretend smile. You don't have to live by your feelings or continually fail where you know you should do better. You don't have to give up hope. You don't have to read this and turn away and continue on without it making a difference. You don't have to be a victim of your circumstances.

Sounds impossible? It is, humanly speaking. We are beset by many foes that are too strong for us. But I'm not talking about super-human effort. I'm talking about the overcoming life that is ours through Christ. It IS possible to live higher than our feelings and circumstances. It is possible to "*know the joyful sound*" and walk each day "*in the light of Thy countenance.*" ^{Ps. 89:15} To know God is pleased with you, no matter what happens. And it starts with your present trial, today.

Perhaps it is the children, the neighbors, or the news on the radio. Maybe you are worn down with your work load, stressed and impatient, having left that "*perfect peace*" back in the pages of your Bible. I know the feeling. It is easy to think you are a failure—or that all this talk of "higher living" is pure idealism. But when the same problems have set you off again, ask yourself seriously: "Do I want to change—to live better than this?" And if the answer is truly "yes," then read on.

So you want to be a genuine example of

the overcoming life? To live more contented? Have true peace of mind instead of constant frets and fears? Then here is a truth to consider: "*As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" ^{Pr. 23:7} In other words, our reactions in life are simply a reflection of our values. Let's see. So-and-so didn't approve of your hard work today, so all your efforts were a "complete waste." (So-and-so is obviously the key ingredient to your success, right?) And your computer—or blender—worked just fine until that "new feature" came in the catalog and you realized what you were missing out on. (By the way, was the catalog entitled "Authorized Contentment" or "Covetous Spirit?") You justify your anger when someone side-swipes your brand-new car, or when Jenny "so carelessly" broke grandma's irreplaceable china. (Would you think differently if you could see your little darling's broken heart?) So it must be that to change our feelings and actions in life, we must change our perspective and inner priorities.

It is truly that simple—and that deeply rooted. Personally, I am the "take control and make something happen" type. When the Lord delivered me from sin, I had a new perspective all right. I was thankful to be freed from guilt and wanted to keep my conscience clear. So I tried to please God in my own efforts—and clashed ceaselessly with the people and circumstances around me. There wasn't much inner peace and fruitfulness in my life, and one day I had to face it down. What was the key problem? My perspective on life! Living for Jesus was a struggle and I didn't know how to change it, because the problems were part of me. But He did.

How does God work in our little self-driven human lives? By bringing us to see the mess we are in, and then offering us the power—through Himself—to get out. Facing the inner problem of our own twisted values (that puts things before people, and my present happiness before eternal gain) is the first step to change. The second is to

see that there is an answer—a better way to live. And that it is possible for me, today.

What does this "better life" look like? It is the life Jesus lived. Never personally threatened or defensive, He was always thinking of others and caring for their eternal good. In the midst of care and distress, He was calm and sure. He met and overcame every inner struggle that faces us. And He made it possible for us to live like Him—to have "*the mind of Christ.*" ^{1 Cor. 2:16} So what is His mind like? "*I come to do Thy will, O God,*" ^{Heb. 10:9} was the inner priority of Jesus' life. With His Father first, every other desire and need kept its proper place.

We are individuals. We don't like to surrender our wills and completely trust another. But that is the secret of the overcoming life. And that's what the Lord faithfully showed me, when I came seeking for the key to my inner struggle. The surrender of all my energies and ideals to God's full control wasn't easy, but it was the gateway to a new experience in life for me. A life where He leads, and I can follow safely, surely, closely—and with everything in proper perspective. God as my loving Father and faithful Shepherd. I as the little, beloved Dependent of His care. What a safe and happy place to be!

This vision has been refined through many a fiery trial. You see, it is the real troubles of life that prove another's ability to us. No matter how I feel or how things look, God continually shows me that He does know what He is doing. That reality is combated by my senses and feelings day by day. No, I'm not floating on a cloud of idealism. It is a continual choice to keep God first and trust Him above all that I feel and think. But when I feel the pressures rising and the surge of inward irritation seeks to steal my peace, I have a High Tower to run into. And daily, by God's help, I am able to prove that **it is possible to live as an overcomer in this life.**

Dear one, do you want to live this experience, too? It IS possible. And it is not

dependent on your personality or the problems in your life. It is solely linked to your willingness to put yourself in God's hands and let Him have His way with you. *How?* You may ask. By feeling the necessity enough to not settle for *anything less!* God will not let down the soul completely abandoned to His care. If no true parent or ardent lover would cast off the one who is the delight of their heart, will He? You see, God created us *for Himself* and how much He wants "to have and to hold" us, and rejoice in His love! Will you refuse Him the right to your heart?

In Christ, this life is possible. It isn't based on feelings, but on

an inner confidence of His presence. Through Him, you have the world—and every trouble and care—under your feet. Not because you feel so sure or strong, but because you know *He is*. But if you don't surrender to this heavenly perspective, people will continue to anger you, every changing circumstance will threaten your peace and safety, and you will continue to be pressured, stressed, and despairing. Face it. Life is too big and complicated to handle on your own. It is God that makes it possible to live like you always wished that you could. Seek Him—and keep Him—first, and you'll enjoy a better day! ➡

Testimony of praise in affliction,
continued from page 3

"God wants to hear *you* sing
When the waves are
crashing 'round you,
When the fiery darts surround you,
When despair is all you see.
God wants to hear *your* voice,
When the wisest man has spoken
And says your circumstances are
as hopeless as can be.
That's when God wants
to hear *you* sing."

And God smiled. Far above us, and yet so near, God was pleased with our offering of praise. "*It is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.*" Ex. 29:18 "*And the LORD smelled a sweet savour...*" Gen. 8:21 "*Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.*" Ps. 147:1

The baby slept on, and the presence of God flooded the room. We sang more songs. And in a little while we became confident that the Lord was going to help me go to sleep, so we got off the phone. One of my most precious memories is holding our newborn baby tightly as I

went to sleep a few hours after she was born. And I truthfully tell you that now, as I went to sleep, I held even more tightly the blessing God had showered upon us.

Afterward—This was probably the worst night we went through. However, the trial did not end here at all. We have had many adjustments to make and many more prayers have gone up, as well as songs. We have needed patience. Respect for others—who cannot do my work as I do it. We are thankful to have my abilities that were taken away now given back almost in full. It did not happen with a big splash healing. I am thankful that God has allowed me to do our own cooking, cleaning, and baby care again; and I am thankful for the inside things I discovered about myself while sick to be healed. In short, I am content. God does things well, and I am very glad to His child.

—Coquette Erickson ➡

**“If thou canst believe,
all things are possible
to him that believeth.”**

—Mark 9:23—

What should be the attitude of a Christian when placed in a difficult and trying situation—a place of severe testing? There can be but one attitude! A simple and unwavering trust in God! A refusal to look at the difficult circumstance, but above it. The only sure way to do this is to live very close to God. As the turbo-supercharger enables an airplane to maintain full power at an altitude of thirty thousand feet, where an ordinary plane has lost four-fifths of its power, so the Christian who walks with his God, listening and obeying, keeps strong at the toughest heights of life. The fact is that God is stronger than any temptation and danger; and the person who has God in his heart is unconquerable.

It is true that God often seems to place His children in positions of profound difficulty, leading them into a tight corner—from which there is no way of escape—contriving a situation which no human judgment would have permitted.

During such periods, the words of Jesus quoted above take on added significance. It should be clearly understood that this kind of faith in God is the most practical approach to the problems and testings of life—it is not sense, or sight, or reason, but taking God at His word. Experience reveals that such a faith will not make the sun rise sooner, but it will make the night seem shorter.

A story is told by Francis Browne of a little pilgrim band sitting by the seashore recounting their losses, while one tells of a ship that went down with all his household, and another, the sweet memories of a lost youth, and others of vanished gold, of proud honors gone, and of faithless friends: "a stranger seeming from all sorrow free," said:

"Sad losses have ye met,
But mine is heavier yet.

For a believing heart hath gone from me.'

"'Alas!' said the pilgrims: 'Thine, stranger, is life's last and heaviest loss.'"

Life's greatest loss is the loss of faith. "Christ's anxiety to retain Peter's faith," says one writer, "can only be explained one way. He did not interfere between him and failure, but He did interfere between him and the loss of faith. A man is lost when honor, truth, and character are gone; but when faith has gone, he has suffered the greatest loss." ➡

by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman
Streams in the Desert Vol. 2, June 9

Glorious in Death

*Lord, give me grace to die,
As autumn leaves, aflame—
Filled with joy that comes from Thee,
In honor to Thy name!*

*Glorious in death are they,
The leaves arrayed in gold—
Forgetful of self and their own loss:
What triumph we behold!*

*Lord, help me die so gloriously,
And drop away my plans
As nothing but a chance to give
And trust more in Thy hands.*

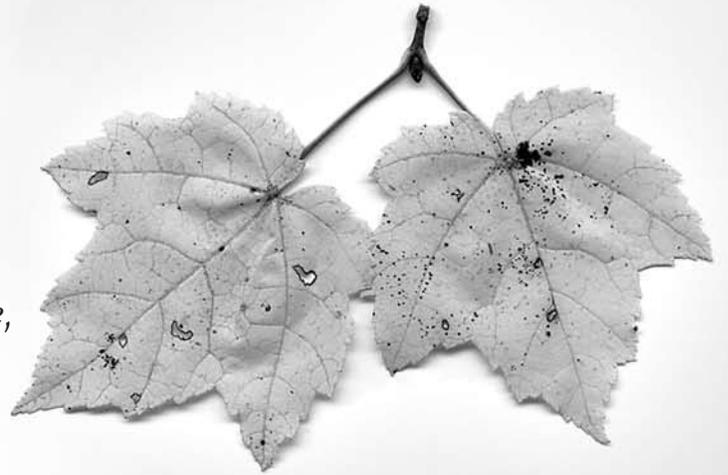
*I'll brighten up the clouded day
For others locked in gloom;
What joy to give and lose myself
In making new life bloom!*

*When I must fall yet lower still
Than I would choose to go,
Lord, help me rest in Thee alone,
And die that fruit may grow.*

*Tossed and torn and trodden down,
This is the old, sweet story:
Thy love that gave up all for me
Is the love in which I glory!*

*This is the death that glorified
My suffering Lord and King,
Who gave His life that I might go
Where heavenly arches ring!*

—John 12:23-28



Spiritual Sacrifices

ACCEPTABLE TO GOD BY JESUS CHRIST

A POPULAR OPINION of our time is that it does not matter how we worship God just as long as our hearts are in what we do as worship. However, the scriptures reveal that since the beginning of time, and in every age, God has been very particular about what He has accepted as worship. Worship in all ages of time, since man's fall from his original state of purity in Eden, has involved some kind of offerings or sacrifices.

In Gen. 4:3-5, we read, "*And in the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*"

This is the first record we have in the Bible of man worshiping God after the fall, and we see from this account that one sacrifice was "acceptable" and the other "unacceptable." Throughout the Old Testament there is much said concerning acceptable and unacceptable sacrifices. Only certain kinds of sacrifices were accepted, and, in many instances, those sacrifices could only be burned on a special kind of altar and by a special kind of fire. After the Levitical priesthood was set up and ordained by God, an offering of incense burned by a *fire kindled by the worshiper himself* was not acceptable. It had to be

burned by "holy fire" and the offering had to be made upon a holy altar. It was a very serious thing to offer "*strange fire*" before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-7). Those particulars pertaining to the literal sacrifices of the Old Testament were types and shadows of the particulars pertaining to the spiritual sacrifices of the New Testament.

Colossians 2:23 speaks of "*will worship*." Will worship involves the will, the desires, the personal likings, or the whims of the worshiper. The offerings of Nadab and Abihu, as recorded in Lev. 10:1, were a form of will worship. Cain's sacrifice was also a form of will worship. He offered it according to his own personal liking, and it involved that which meant the most to him—the product of his own toil and the work of his own hands. Will worship can never produce a sacrifice that is acceptable to God.

The apostle Peter, speaking of the worship of God by the New Testament church said in 1 Pet. 2:5, "*Ye... as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up **spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.***"

This scripture gives us much insight into what kind of worship is acceptable to God in this dispensation of time. To be acceptable, it must be (1) a "*spiritual sacrifice*" and (2) offered in the divine element of His Son, "*Jesus Christ.*" I believe that one reason Cain's offering was not accepted by God in the beginning was because it did

not reflect a faith in the future atonement of Christ, the divine.

the life of an innocent animal, reflected his faith in the future atonement of Christ, the divine.

It is quite obvious that all worship, in whatever dispensation of time, has had to be carried out according to God's provision for that particular dispensation in order to be accepted by Him. Let us examine a few scriptures. In Hebrews we read that "*Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things **according to the pattern** shewed to thee in the mount.*"^{Heb. 8:5} "*Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.... Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*"^{Heb. 9:1,9-10}

By these scriptures we see that even in Old Testament times God had a prescribed system of acceptable worship. It had to be "*according to the pattern,*" even though it did not make the worshipers perfect as pertaining to the conscience, or inner man. That system of worship was but a type and shadow of something better that was yet to come. God had a better plan in mind, which would reach the need of the inner man. This plan would completely remove sin from the heart and thereby perfect the conscience and put man back into spiritual communion with his Creator. This, God knew, would produce the kind of worship He really desired.

In John 4 we have an interesting account of Jesus conversing with a Samaritan woman who met Him at Jacob's well. In verses 19 through 24 we read, "*The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem*

Cain's sacrifice, the fruit of his own labors, reflected a faith in his own works, the human element, while Abel's sacrifice, the life of an innocent animal, reflected his faith in the future atonement of Christ, the divine.

not reflect a faith in the future atonement of the promised Messiah. Abel's did, therefore it was accepted. Cain's sacrifice, the fruit of his own labors, reflected a faith in his own works, the human element, while Abel's sacrifice,

is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. **God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.**"

These scriptures reveal the true element in which God must be worshiped in New Testament times. Adam Clarke says, "A man worships God in spirit, when *under the influence of the Holy Spirit*, he brings all his affections, appetites, and desires, to the throne of God; and he worships in truth, when every purpose and passion of his heart and *every act* of his religious worship is **guided and regulated by the Word of God.**" *"Thy Word is truth."* Jn. 17:17

This kind of worship was fully made possible when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost. It was in the divine element of the Holy Spirit that God set up His eternal kingdom in Christ, and it is only in the element of His living Spirit working in connection with His written Word that all true worship now takes place. Any worship outside these parameters is now unacceptable to God.

We cited 1 Pet. 2:5 awhile ago as revealing that worship in the present dispensation must involve "*spiritual sacrifices*" offered in the element of Jesus Christ. Let us expound further on what we mean by "in the element of Jesus Christ." There was a time when the Word (Christ) was made flesh and dwelt among men, and men beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). But though He was manifested in the flesh, He was "*justified in the Spirit*" and "*received up into glory,*" 1 Tim. 3:16 "*declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*" Rom. 1:4 And "*though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.*" 2 Cor. 5:16 Christ, "*the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*" 1 Cor. 15:45 Yes, He is still the same in "person," but He has transformed from "flesh" into the "spiritual" element, a trans-

formation that we too shall experience at His second coming (1 Cor. 15:35-55). "*We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.*" 1 Jn. 3:2; Phil. 3:21 But in the meantime He has sent the Holy Spirit to connect us in our present state with Him in His present state. And it is through this medium that He now comes to us and sups with us, and we with Him (Jn. 14:15-26; 15:26; 16:13-15; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 3:20, etc.).

New Testament worship involves an interaction and communication between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. Without this it is impossible to be a "true worshiper" in this dispensation. The primary interaction between man's spirit and God's Spirit comes through the work of regeneration (Tit. 3:5), or the spiritual rebirth (Jn. 3:3-8). It is only by being "*born of the Spirit*" that man's spirit connects to the element of Jesus Christ and enters into the kingdom of God, the realm of divine worship. It is this interaction that introduces the spirit of man to "*the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.*" 2 Cor. 13:14 And remember, that which begins "*in the Spirit*" can never be "*made perfect [or consummated] by the flesh.*" Gal. 3:3

All New Testament worship is in some sense a "spiritual sacrifice" offered to God in the element of Jesus Christ through the Spirit. There are three basic parts of divine worship in the New Testament. They are (1) prayer, (2) praise, and (3) prophesying. Let us consider each one of these.

(1) **Prayer.** In prayer we speak directly to God, "*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.*" Eph. 6:18 "*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God.*" Jd. 20-21

(2) **Praise.** In praise we may speak directly to God in thanksgiving, "*giving thanks for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" Eph. 5:20 or we may extol Him by speaking of His wondrous works to or before others. "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth*

me." Ps. 50:23 "*By him [Christ] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*" Heb. 13:15

(3) **Prophesying.** In prophesying we "*speak unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort,*" which "*edifieth the church.*" 1 Cor. 14:3-4 Prophesying can, and does, include the predicting of future events by divine inspiration and insight; however, in its broader and more general sense from the Hebrew and from the Greek it means "to speak or sing by inspiration" (Hebrew, *naba*) and to "speak under inspiration" (Greek, *propheteuo*). On the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted from Joel 2:28, saying, "*But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.*" Acts 2:16-17

New Testament worship involves an interaction and communication between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God.

Prophesying is a very important part of New Testament worship. "*If all prophesy,*" says the apostle Paul, "*and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*" 1 Cor. 14:24-25

According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, "Prophecy comprehends three things: prediction; singing by the dictate of the Spirit; and explaining the mysterious, hidden sense of Scripture by an immediate illumination and motion of the Spirit" (pg. 535). Besides Holy Spirit inspired preaching, prophesying may include singing, testifying, teaching, or exhorting "by motion, or inspiration of the Spirit." All these, when done under the inspiration and anointing of the Holy Spirit, comfort and edify the church, and are an integral part of New Testament worship.

Singing may be either prophesying or praise, as through singing we may speak

either to men or to God or to both. **“Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”** Col. 3:16 **“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”** Eph. 5:19

Prayers, praises, and prophesyings that pour forth from hearts that are tuned with and inspired by the Holy Spirit rise up before God as sweet incense. These are **“spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by**

Any self-motivated style of worship wherein the worshipper seeks fulfillment of certain emotional, sensational, or intellectual cravings is will worship.

Jesus Christ,” and He regards these sacrifices as **“worship.”** Rev. 8:3-4 speaks of the **“prayers of the saints”** ascending as incense before the throne of God. Also, Mal. 3:16 says, **“they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.”** This shows the regard God has for prophesying, or **“speaking unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”**¹ 1 Cor. 14:3 **“What is it then: I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”**^{vs. 15}

It is obvious then, that all prayer, praising, and prophesying (worship) must be done **in the Spirit**. Outside of that our worship becomes merely a product of the human element and is, in reality, **“will worship.”** There are many different forms of will worship. Any self-motivated style of worship wherein the worshiper seeks fulfillment of certain emotional, sensational, or intellectual cravings is will worship. Will worship can manifest itself in different ways, depending upon the temperament of the worshiper. Our temperament is our **“inclination or mode of emotional response—disposition.”** In will worship it is often the temperament that regulates

the will and the will becomes the regulating factor of one's worship. Will worship can take place when the temperament of a person is such as to cause him, or her, to crave the achievement of certain sensations of ecstasy or to experience certain intellectual delights. These sensations and delights can be achieved by listening to, producing or participating in certain styles of music, hearing a demonstrative, piquant orator, etc. In Acts 12:21-22 we read of Herod giving an oration that so inspired the people that they **“gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.”** These kinds of motivations, however, come from the human element rather than the divine. **God cannot be worshiped on the basis of any kind of human temperament.** Human temperament may, and

does, become involved in worship when touched by the Spirit of God, but the essence of all true worship lays within the element of God's own Spirit and His truth. Humanity cannot worship God aright without the moderation of His Spirit and the light of His truth. We must worship within the element of **who God is, not who we are.** Nothing but God Himself and the very essence of His own person can truly sate the cravings of the human heart.

Since God is a spirit and can only be truly worshiped **in spirit** (His own element), is it possible to worship Him through any means outside that element, such as by any human invention or **mechanical device?** Since prayer, praise, and prophesying must all be **in the Spirit** to be acceptable, can any part of divine worship, therefore, be mechanically produced? **The answer is NO!** Let us look at a scriptural principle regarding this fact.

In Acts 17 we have the account of the apostle Paul during his visit to Mars' hill in Athens, Greece. He said, **“For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with**

hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”^{vs. 23-25}

Man's ability to worship God lies completely in his endowment from God by creation and in nothing that his hands are able to produce. God formed a **spirit within man** (Zec. 12:1) and it is through this avenue that man is able to worship God and God is able to communicate with man. **“There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”**^{Job 32:8} This inspired understanding produces the intelligent communication and interaction between man's spirit and God's Spirit, which God accepts as **“worship.”** It is **by Him** whose fullness dwells in Christ that we, **by the Spirit** who maketh intercession for us, **offer up the holy incense of prayer** that is received before the throne of God according to His will (Rom. 8:26-27; Rev. 8:3-4). It is **by Him** that we **“offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”**^{Heb. 13:15} And it is **by Him** that we **prophesy**, that is, **“speak under inspiration”** in preaching, teaching, exhorting, testifying, and singing **“by the dictate of the Spirit.”** None of these things can be accomplished through any kind of mechanical means. All these things relate to a creation possessing spiritual endowment and involved in a spiritual interaction. These are all **“spiritual sacrifices,”** and they are made **“acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,”**^{Eph. 5:2} our supreme sacrifice.

We may safely conclude, therefore, that every aspect of New Testament offerings and sacrifices, as pertaining to our worship to God, must lie within the same spiritual element as Christ's sacrifice. It could not be otherwise. Now in what element did Christ offer His sacrifice? In Heb. 9:14 we find the answer: **“Christ... through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.”** It is, therefore, within the element of that same eternal Spirit that we must offer all our sacrifices of worship to God.

Jesus stated the above truth like this: **“For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.”**^{Mk. 9:49} Every New Testament worshiper, as well as what he offers to God as worship, must be salted with **“fire”** and

“salt.” Now I want to ask a question. Is it possible to salt a piano, organ, guitar, or any other instrument or mechanical invention created by man with the kind of fire and salt Jesus spoke of here? If not, then *it is impossible* to offer an acceptable sacrifice to God by any such means. Fire and salt are figures of speech relative to the Holy Spirit. Only those sacrifices that are offered with the warm and seasoned inspiration of the Holy Spirit are accepted by God today as worship. And again, all such sacrifices *must necessarily be of a spiritual essence and must involve a spiritual interaction*. There is nothing spiritually interactive between a mechanical instrument and the Spirit of God. This is an all-important truth and worthy of your utmost consideration!

There are, of course, sacrifices of service to the Lord, such as alms giving, ministering to the poor, sick, or needy, and distributing to temporal needs relative to the promotion of God’s cause and kingdom here on earth. “*But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*”^{Heb. 13:16} These sacrifices however, fall into a somewhat different category than worship itself, although they are related to our worship and the laying up of treasures in heaven. There are also three ceremonial ordinances of the New Testament that may be considered acts of worship. They are water baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and feet washing. But even in the observance of these the spirit within us must be in tune with the meaning behind them, otherwise the acts are of no value to the soul.

God has made man a very complex creature. He is capable of a vast realm of experience physically, mentally, and spiritually. God made us capable of enjoying the taste of good food. He made us capable of smelling the sweet scent of flowers. He made us capable of seeing His beautiful handiwork and enjoying it. He made us capable of hearing the sweet sounds of birds singing in the trees. He made us capable of feeling the gentle breezes blow upon our bodies. *These are all physical pleasures*. He made us capable of unlimited imaginations, marvelous inventions, and with an appreciation for,

and ability to produce, fine arts. *In these we find intellectual pleasures*. And, by forming a spirit within us, He made us capable of inwardly enjoying Himself. *In this we find spiritual pleasure*. It is very important that we understand the differences in these experiences. It is possible to mistake our physical and intellectual delights for spiritual experiences when actually our spiritual being has received no divine inspiration at all.

A woman told me one time that a man who attended church services where she did brought his handsaw to service with him and demonstrated a very special skill that he had developed. By certain movements of the handsaw he was able to play the tune of the old familiar hymn, “What a Friend.” The woman said, “I got such a blessing from that!” I believe that what this woman actually experienced was “intellectual pleasure.” The artistic sensibilities of her intellect were touched and stimulated by the demonstration of the player’s skill and expertise, thus producing a sensation of delight and a pleasurable mood. She interpreted this stimulation as “a blessing.” There is nothing morally wrong with this kind of stimulation—but do the artistic skills and works produced by men’s hands really have any relationship to the “*spiritual blessings*” of New Testament worship? I would here like to quote from the late C. E. Orr:

It is possible to mistake our intellectual delights for spiritual experiences when actually our spiritual being has received no divine inspiration at all.

God has made us physical beings and gives us physical pleasures. He has made us mental beings and gives us intellectual delights. He has made us moral beings and gives us happiness in doing good, *but all this is not worship to God*. You can have physical pleasures, intellectual delights, and moral happiness, and yet not worship God in the Spirit. In the realms of our intellectual tastes, and our finer artistic sensibilities we delight in beholding the beauty of sunset or the loveliness of flow-

ers, but *when we get in the Spirit and are given a vision of the wondrous perfections of God we do not want any bouquet of flowers to intercept our view*.

It is only human hearts that can pour music into the ears of God. The Holy Spirit never pours incense on the tones of the organ and wafts them up to the nostrils of the Almighty. Heavenly incense is poured on nothing but the altar fires of God in the human soul. Our singing may be out of time and out of tune, but if there is melody in the heart to God, it rolls in sweet symphonies throughout the corridors of heaven and angels listen. My dear holy brethren, let me whisper a secret to you. *Artistic music only touches the finer tastes and higher sentimentality of our intellectual and moral being and never touches the spirit being of man. God is a Spirit and it is only the Spirit of God that can touch and delight the spirit of man and it is only the spirit of man that can touch and delight the heart of God. Spirit beings have no ear to hear sounds made by material things*.

The question has been asked, “What is the difference in playing musical instruments in your home and in playing them in a church service?” Let us answer this question by considering another question. “What would be the difference in serving cookies and milk as an after-supper dessert in your home and in serving cookies and milk when observing the Lord’s Supper?” There is nothing morally wrong with cookies and milk, is there? But yet Jesus never authorized such to be served as emblems in His sacred memorial service. To do so would be to step outside the plan He ordained and miss the real purpose and blessing of the Lord’s Supper. Likewise, there is nothing morally wrong with musical instruments or with developing our skills with musical instruments,

so long as they are not used in a way that displeases God. But when it comes to worship, neither instruments nor our skills were ever ordained or authorized by God to have any part in the New Testament arrangement of things. That arrangement is *a spiritual arrangement*. Why bring any thing into a worship service that His arrangement has not provided for? Inasmuch as we deviate from the New Testament design we miss the blessing and purpose of

The tones of a musical instrument can never accomplish what “singing with the spirit and with the understanding” was meant to do.

what New Testament worship was meant to be. Anything we try to add to the spiritual arrangement of the New Testament system actually hinders rather than helps it. It is complete and perfect just as Christ and the Father set it up *in the Spirit*. Nothing of man’s provision can add anything to it. *Praying, praising, and prophesying in the Holy Ghost provide everything* for the soul of man that God meant New Testament worship to provide. The tones of a musical instrument can never accomplish what “singing with the spirit and with the understanding” was meant to do.

Other questions that are sometimes asked are, “Does God condemn those who use instrumental music in their worship?” or “Does God consider the use of musical instruments in worship a sin?” Consider this: did God condemn Cain for bringing an offering of the fruit of the ground, or did He count Cain’s offering a sin? The scripture simply says, “*But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect.*” It seems that God did not condemn Cain on the basis of his offering in itself, nor did He count it a sin. He just simply did not regard the sacrifice acceptable. Why? Cain brought an offering that befitted his own temperament. It reflected a faith in his own work and skill as a “*tiller of the ground,*” and a desire to be accepted on his own merit. But Abel offered his sacrifice in a faith that extended to an invisible substance outside himself, apart from any skill or work of his own. His sacrifice reflected his faith in the future atonement of Jesus Christ. Therefore, “*the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.*” ^{Gen. 4:4} God could not accept Cain’s offering because it was offered in the human element rather than the divine. When Cain saw that God did not respect or accept his offering, what he

should have done was to have inquired of God what was wrong with the offering and how to go about offering a sacrifice that could be accepted and bring God’s respect and favor. God said, “*If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?*” ^{Gen. 4:7} Cain

had the privilege of offering an acceptable sacrifice to God had he sought out that which was indeed acceptable. But sadly, he chose to take another course.

If we find ourselves below the New Testament standard of worship, or having deviated from it to some degree, we have the privilege of allowing God to teach us the deep truth of what it means to offer “acceptable sacrifices” within the divine element of His Son. He longs to “*bless us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,*” ^{Eph. 1:3} by the Spirit (Eph. 2:18). He wants us to know the “spiritual pleasure” that can only come from offering “spiritual sacrifices” salted with “fire.” But we must humble our hearts before Him and fully resign our wills to His will, realizing that we know not even how to pray as we ought, except the Spirit helps our infirmities. Neither can we worship acceptably unless the Spirit makes intercession for us according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26-27). As we tune our hearts to the mind of the Spirit and receive understanding from Him of how to remove those things from our worship services that He cannot salt with His holy fire (those elements that are foreign to the realm of His operation), He is then ready and anxious to fill the vacuum. As He fills it, we can then begin experiencing, to a degree unknown before, the blessings and benefits of true worship—praying, praising, and prophesying by the illumination, motion, and dictation of the Spirit. This is what “Holy Spirit leadership” means, relative to worship services. This is the kind of worship that searches and manifests the secrets of men’s hearts (1 Cor. 14:24-25), and this is how it was experienced by the primitive church on the day of Pentecost and in the years following, before the great

apostasy introduced other elements into worship.

If we have not yet attained to the same “*breadth, and length, and depth, and height*” ^{Eph. 3:18} in Christ that some of our forefathers did, we may find ourselves having difficulty understanding their views regarding such issues as we here discuss. Nevertheless, it is wise to respect their views and prayerfully seek to be guided by the same Word and Spirit that guided them in their understanding and perception of divine things. Even in this modern age of “human reasoning” these two faithful Guides are jointly able to lead us to His thoughts that are higher than our thoughts and His ways that are higher than our ways (Is. 55:8-9). Also, we should keep in mind that not every child of God arrives at the same degree of knowledge and understanding of God’s thoughts and ways at the same time. Therefore we should always endeavor “*to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” with every truly born again soul, “*till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*” ^{Eph. 4:3,13} **The ultimate goal of every Christian should be to attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**

When we arrive at a clear understanding of what New Testament worship really is, we are struck by the realization that the issue of musical instruments in worship is not so much an issue of right or wrong, as it is an issue of possible or impossible! It is **simply impossible** to bring that which has no connection with the Holy Spirit into the realm of New Testament worship. Only “*spiritual sacrifices*” are now accepted by God as worship, and they must all be offered within the element of His own dear Son, in the Spirit. Nothing outside that realm has had any place in true worship since the day of Pentecost.

May the Lord bless each reader as you consider, search, and weigh these thoughts in the fear of God.

—a brother in the Lord ➤

We are struck by the realization that the issue of musical instruments in worship is not so much an issue of right or wrong, as it is an issue of possible or impossible!

Touched by the Maker's Hand

In the garden grew the tree of life eternal,
This the Hand of our Creator gave to man:
There we feasted on those blessings rich and vernal,
While we reveled in the fullness of His plan.
See how sin has forfeited so great a favor,
And the soul is taught by lessons lined with pain;
But by priceless payment of our bleeding Savior,
Now the Maker's Hand is touching us again.

Do not think that God is pleased to see us suffer,
But afflicting us may be the only way
That will bring the soul in safety to her Lover,
And an able tool in teaching us to pray.
Let us bare our hearts to be made more like Jesus,
Let the great Designer mold the mortal clay,
While we learn to leave the things that merely please us,
That the Maker's Hand may touch us all today.

Flee from all the doubtful pictures of the devil,
Shun the promise of the strongest arm of man—
What you look upon will lead you to its level—
Let the Father teach you His redemption plan.
Come, enroll today and pay the sweet tuition
Of unwav'ring trust that's settled in the soul;
When the prayer of faith has reached its full fruition,
Then the Maker's Hand will touch and make you whole.

Time has told us tales of God's great healing river,
But a stopped-up spring becomes a stagnant pool;
Prayer has moved the Hand that only can deliver,
And a fuller flow has brought another jewel.
Come and listen while I tell to all the story:
I am healed where scourge of sickness once had been;
Unto God be all the thanks and praise and glory,
For the Maker's Hand has touched me once again.

FOUNDATION TRUTH

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By rejoicing in Him, however, I do not mean rejoicing in ourselves. — page 11