

FOUNDATION TRUTH

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“And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.”

—2 Samuel 6:6-7

“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.”

—Psalm 131:1

“and the government shall be upon His shoulder”

—Isaiah 9:6



Colossians 1:18

Numbers 4:15

Isaiah 55:8-9

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.”

—Hebrews 12:28-29

Dear Reader

“Who through faith subdued kingdoms.”
Heb 11:33

The opposition that is in the way of your obeying God isn't merely a significant collection of forces or things in opposition; it is an organized, “ruled over” body of opposition. There is intelligence behind it, and coordination of effort. The enemy of our soul has a unified kingdom at his command, by which he opposes us (Mt. 12:25-26).

Consider, just as an example, this situation: The Spirit of God communicates to one of God's children that they need to draw closer to God, to love and appreciate Him more. The child of God has an “amen” in their heart to this, and begins to endeavor to do their part—perhaps there was something the Lord pointed out that needed to be laid aside, or a setting of the will to spend time alone with God, or an effort to apply themselves to give thanks more. Whatever the real key to a successful response to the Spirit of God is, the devil's kingdom is aware of it and organizes an attack. Perhaps a reasoning spirit comes in to dispute the necessity of laying aside the thoughts or activities or attitudes that were identified. Another group of spirits stir up various distractions at critical moments. If there is some “success” in hindering, some more spirits begin their assault, emphasizing the difficulties or accusing the person of not really wanting to please God enough, or bringing on a spirit of self-pity. Or, if the person's initial efforts are successful (because of their asking the Lord for help and leaning on Him), another group of spirits are called in, perhaps flattering, perhaps bringing a sense of complacency or pride.

I neither need nor want to go further on this line, because it is not my purpose to testify on the devil's behalf. *“Who through faith subdued kingdoms.”* Praise God! We can place our faith in Jesus and His great kingdom, and subdue, not just a spirit or two that is opposing us, but an entire kingdom of opposition! The *“stronger than he”* Lk 11:21-22 who delivered me in the first place remains willing and able, nay, is fully purposed to subdue the enemy

kingdom (1 Jn. 3:8). Shall I not place my faith in Him, *“to will and to do of His good pleasure”*? P^{hp} 2:13

The Lord has help for my will, for any distractions, for any discouragements, for any attitude adjustments I need, for my willingness to suffer for His sake. There is an **entire Kingdom** prepared to help me, if I will only place my trust in Him.

We need—and thank God, we *have*—a Savior who is in the business of subduing kingdoms. Let us have faith in Him to do so.

Pray for me.

Love and prayers,
The Editor



About Us

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Will you not cry also?

*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;
the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it
upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.*

*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand
in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure
heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God
of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him,
that seek thy face, O Jacob.*

Selah.

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting
doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this
King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.*

Selah.

— Psalm 24 —



TELL WHAT HE'S DONE FOR YOU

“Evangeline Joy”

We would like to share the story behind the name of our third child...

I suppose that all the tempest described below could be traced back to a simple but earnest prayer I prayed soon after my second appointment with our midwife, whom I'll call Maria. In our first visit, I had told her about how God healed my leg joint and caused it to quit popping out, as it had done ever since I strained my leg in month four of my previous pregnancy with Judith (our second child). A year and a half later, Judith had just turned one when the Lord abruptly ended the problem and I could walk, climb stairs, and run. I could even play Capture the Flag on the beach with the others—my husband and I won for our team! Hearing the story of the healing, our midwife Maria rejoiced with me. But by the next visit she had forgotten all about it. I was dejected. Why were people so hard? And the ones that seemed to really rejoice soon forgot as daily cares choked it out. I prayed, “Lord, would You help that somehow Maria will really believe in Your power? Can't You do *something* that she won't forget? Even if You have to use me, it would be worth it.” I knew He heard me, and so left it there and focused on other things.

I was unaware that I had low blood sugar, and at the beginning of Evangeline's pregnancy I struggled with a sleepiness I could not shake, no matter how many extra hours I got. I would nearly faint while combing my hair each morning, and I had to force myself to eat. Finding my blood pressure low, Maria advised eating salty foods and drinking tons of water. My blood was not circulating fast enough, and that

was the cause of the lightheadedness. Following this advice, after a month or so I could brush my hair without fainting. But I still struggled to make breakfast, which rarely tasted good. Long after normal morning sickness should have passed, I would feel like throwing up the eggs. I felt drugged all the time, and dragged through the duties of the day.

It was hard to be sweet to the children, and I began to implore the Lord to give me something to overcome how I felt and be able to love them and enjoy life with them. In my difficult postpartum with Judith, I had learned how to not complain about how badly I felt, and to give thanks for very little things. Again I used this tool until it clave to my hand. Yet I still lacked something—I knew not what.

One morning I sat in the children's Sunday School class listening to them sing. I felt like a worn-out wash rag, dried stiff in the sun. My attention suddenly riveted on the words, “My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory...” Once I had seen a picture of King Jesus and His treasure chest of supplies; a beggar girl stood in front with her hands outstretched. Yes, I was the beggar girl. And God said, “I can supply *your* need.” “Yes, Lord,” I said in my heart, “I want it.”

So I went home. And every time I ran out of strength, energy, or wisdom how to handle my weakness, my children, and my duties, I would bring out my ticket for divine supplies. “Lord, You said You would supply *all* my needs—I need help with this one.” And He would help me, divinely. Not the same every time. Sometimes He would give abundant energy for

an hour or two. Sometimes He would calm someone down, and sometimes it was a flood of love to deal with a difficult child wisely. Several weeks passed before I woke up to the fact that that scripture really worked! It was a jaw-dropper. God could supply any need I had. Completely! Totally. His treasure chest was in mint condition. Nothing was stolen or missing! I didn't have to wait in line while someone else used it. Dimly, I recalled that this was the God that had *spoken* the earth into being; He had needed nothing to get started creating it. So of course, even if His chest of supply was “missing something,” He just needed to speak to create it and meet my need. This was *exceedingly comforting* to me. And it filled my heart with praise. I was so limited by afflictions, but God really cared, down to the tiniest detail of my day. Over and over He could step in as soon as I asked (sweetly) and would adjust me, or my children, or my strength. Soon after, I found this song:

“I have found His grace is all complete,
He supplieth every need;
While I sit and learn at Jesus' feet,
I am free, yes, free indeed.

“It is joy unspeakable and full of glory,
Full of glory, full of glory;
It is joy unspeakable and full of glory,
Oh, the half has never yet been told.”

I taught it to the children, and we sang it lustily with the piano, and any other chance we felt like it, which was often. So much blessing came down in our home, that a lot of the children's behavior issues melted away, for Joy

had flooded the home and Jesus had made Himself at home in our house. Several more weeks went by, and one Sunday someone picked that song. Though my oldest seldom sings in public, both she and her little sister sang it at the top of their lungs, much to everyone's amusement. Afterward, I was asked, "Do you sing that a lot at home?" I smiled and said a little shyly, "Yes." For it was our victory song; my secret and very powerful weapon against despair and anger toward impossibilities. But with God's weapon He gives you, *all things are possible*.

We decided that if Baby was a girl, her middle name would be Joy. Little did we know what trials would bring forth the rest of her name. It is good that we cannot see ahead very far. It is better to hold God's hand instead, and walk trustingly like our little ones do. I surely couldn't have borne to see the suffering I would go through before her birth.

Unknown to me, I was collecting fluid in the womb. I was measuring larger than usual, but there was some confusion about when the pregnancy started, and I personally thought that maybe I was a month ahead. And because there are twins on both sides of the family, during the last two months all of us began to wonder if it *were* twins. My midwife hung back on the fact that she could only find one rate for heartbeats instead of two.

I learned to work about an hour (serving breakfast), then rest. I went through the whole day like this. One day my mother said to me, "Pretty soon you'll be getting that nesting instinct, I guess." I said, "I have it, Mama. I just can't do anything about it." My parents soon left on a trip, and only a few days later, I noticed I could work more. Because I had outgrown some of my other maternity dresses, and the seamstress I knew was filled up with orders, I began to sew them myself. And I got two done. Very amazing! I obtained a new perspective, almost as though I had finished one pregnancy and started

a new one. So armed with these victories, I worked on the house. And very gratefully, too. When I joyfully told my mom about my new energy, she said, "I was praying you would be able to start working." Wasn't God so good to answer her prayers?

The last two and three weeks, I was so huge, and I began to hurt really badly when I would get up or down. Pain would rake up my belly no matter how carefully I tried to move. And I was so bulky it was hard to move with grace to spare the lurch that would send the rush of pain. When I could hardly bear to get out of bed, I began to beg the Lord for mercy to end this pregnancy. I thought of the motto I had taken up a few months back:

It is by no means enough to set out cheerfully with your God on any venture of faith. Tear into smallest pieces any itinerary [plans] for the journey which your imagination may have drawn up.

Nothing will fall out as you expect.

Your guide will keep to no beaten path. He will lead you by a way such as you never dreamed your eyes would look upon. He knows no fear, and He expects you to fear nothing while He is with you.

—*Streams in the Desert Vol. 1*

Certainly nothing was falling out as I expected. And my pain was so great that I began to mentally grasp

straws—maybe I *was* carrying twins. Maybe that was why the baby was so active! Both my grandmothers had had twins in their third pregnancy. That would explain why I was so huge. Two babies would surely make it worth it all.

My midwife also became excited at the possibilities of twins, though the heartbeat was a real puzzle. She advised an ultrasound. After much discussion and prayer, we decided to do it. But then I went into labor, the night that Maria was out delivering a baby, beyond cell range. I deliver really fast, and I really started praying and quoting the last line of the motto to Him: "Lord, You know no fear, You expect me to fear nothing while I am with You. You know Joel and I can't deliver twins by ourselves. And I don't want to go the hospital and have to have a c-section because some unknown doctor doesn't know how to deliver twins either." And toward the middle of the night, instead of intensifying after having a shower like my contractions always have done, they abruptly stopped. God just stopped them. I was so grateful.

A few days later they started again, then stopped. My feet began to swell; something that never happened to me before. I also began to have vomiting in the night. I always managed to keep it down, but I would wake up to it filling my mouth and nose. I began to feel real jittery. Was I going to fall apart before



this baby/babies came? Protein started showing up in my urine samples, and Maria explained that a lack thereof could cause vomiting, and certainly was the cause of my feet swelling. She thought then I really must be carrying twins and advised me to eat protein every two hours around the clock until we got my symptoms under control. That worked. Though I sat still when she gave me the good news about my protein, my heart danced all around the room!

And then (two weeks later) we went to have the ultrasound. It wasn't very enjoyable; my skin reacted to the gel and the longer they scanned the more itchy my skin felt; then it began to hurt until it was hard to lay still. "There is just one baby in here," the doctor, a nice man, informed us. "What?!" I thought. "Then I must have a tumor in there with the baby," and held my breath for the bad news. But he only exclaimed, shaking his head, "You must have a quart of fluid in there!" After getting some measurements, it was finally over, and he took my hands and helped me sit up. I gasped at the consuming wave of pain that rushed over me. Fire like I have never felt, except for when my first baby's head crowned, engulfed me. Had that stranger, the doctor, not been there I would have screamed and screamed, holding myself off the seat with my hands. It was probably only a minute or two, but it went on and on and on and on. Joel came near and tried to help and comfort me, and him standing close to me was a comfort in the fire. When it subsided, I felt like weeping. Controlling myself with a great effort, I managed to say thank you, and got out to the car, where I could weep "alone." I cried most of the way home, an hour's drive. I had been to my hoped-for-twin baby's funeral, and yet I still had to deliver a girl baby. Grief over my loss and resentment for the trouble this girl baby was causing strove in my heart for mastery. Tears, then anger, round and round, till anger finally dried my

tears. At home over the phone my sister helped me work on the resentment until I felt like I could accept another girl into my heart.

As soon as Maria heard about the fluid, she put me on a strict diet of protein and vegetables, and non-gluten grain. No sugars whatsoever. And within two days I could roll out of bed without anguish and really no pain at all, just discomfort. This was an enormous relief to me!

Two days later, we gave birth. When my water broke in the middle of the night, I called Maria right away, as she had carefully instructed me. She was concerned that the extra water would wash the cord between the baby's head and the cervix or even out into the birth canal. She lives only fifteen minutes away and so she got here soon after. The baby's heartbeat was fine.

While we waited, Maria was treated to an exciting and stirring account of a miracle only a few hours old. You see, the previous morning my sister had woken up to find her young son drinking eucalyptus oil from the diffuser she used for allergies. But when taken internally, even small quantities can be deadly. My sister took him to the emergency room within an hour, but he was as limp as a rag doll. No one offered any hope, and after awhile they advised her to call someone to pick up the other children, so they wouldn't witness his death. While my parents started out to get them, my nephew fell into a deep sleep, most likely a coma from which he would never awake.

I knew nothing of all this, but all the previous night I had been heavily burdened for them. Before bedtime, I had even called my sister, and throughout the night I had woken often, always thinking and praying for them. I thought, "Surely I will have prayed through by morning." But it did not leave me, and got stronger the longer the morning progressed. Shortly after noon, my mother-in-law came over and said, "Did you hear about the

Danielsens?" My head jerked up, my heart thudding with dread. The Danielsens? What happened? Are they okay? She told me all about it—and that my nephew had awakened from sleep perfectly okay. Perfectly okay?! God is good indeed! They hadn't called me earlier for fear I would go into labor. According to what the hospital staff told my sister, there are eight cases recorded in the United States of children consuming eucalyptus oil and none of them survived. [General medical literature states that "quantities in excess of 3.5 mL (0.7 t) can be fatal."] It was a miracle indeed. A prelude to my own.

So I lay on the couch, happy thoughts streaming through my consciousness, and Joel went back to bed. Maria lay on the hassock two feet away. My contractions weren't hard, but I couldn't really sleep, though I tried. They were fifteen or so minutes apart. I was so full of thanksgiving and admiration of God's love, that I wasn't really thinking about how I was feeling until three really hard contractions came, still far apart. I reached for Maria's hand, because I felt so lonely. After another three or four of the same, I forgot about my nephew and remembered that I wanted a water birth and that the pool wasn't aired up. So patiently Maria padded back to the bedroom to ask Joel to air it up. Just as she rounded the corner of the hall and disappeared, I had a contraction and felt the tingly, tickly feeling of my baby descending. My baby! It would be here within an hour! And then—wham! A really hard one. Wow! I had forgotten how hard those last ones were. I moaned, and just at that moment, Maria rounded the corner with Joel behind her. She looked at me. And I saw her eyes drop the plan for the pool. She grabbed some stuff to protect the couch as best she could and started coaching Joel.

Evangeline's birth happened so fast, even faster than Judith's birth had been. I never had a more peaceful birth—or one in which things felt (and were)

so out of *my* control and **God was so in control.** I never had experienced trusting God like that. From the bottom of my heart I believed that God loved me, and He had all my concerns and fears and feelings in His hands and that the plan He had laid out for me was really best. I loved Him from the bottom of my heart, and though I was working with all the strength I had, my heart was bursting with praise and confidence. Praise that I could do this. Confidence that He would take care of all the concerns for our baby.

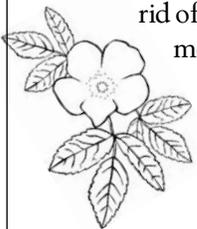
Joel and our midwife saw the baby arrive with the cord wrapped three times very tightly around her little neck. Our midwife told us about the Wharton's jelly protecting the cord, which is God's way of getting nutrients through the cord when there is a knot in it. When Maria got the cord off the baby's neck, and put her up on my stomach, the baby wouldn't breathe. She wasn't blue, just wouldn't breathe. It took longer than we wished, but after some baby spans on the bottom and back, Maria suctioned out her mouth and we heard the indignant baby wail. What relief! What joy!

Maria says that if God hadn't sent such fast labor, Evangeline would not be here alive. Smiling. Cooing. Finding her hands. Sucking on her fingers. Laughing at her sisters' jumps and tricks. The second miracle in twenty-four hours.

Joel writes a poem for each child. This is Evangeline's:

I Have the Joy, Joy, Joy...

Lately I have had to battle allergies. One evening when I was feeling pretty irritated at the way my nose was itching and my eyes were watering, I went to my mother and asked her how to get rid of them. She answered in her motherly way, "Niki, you just have to find a blessing in everything, including allergies." So I thanked her for the advice and began



I could have touched those angel wings
That bore you safely to our arms,
And at the thought my spirit sings
The love that lifted all alarms—
I praise the Heart of Love divine
That favored me and made you mine,
Evangeline.

O messenger so lately sent
From realms surpassing far the sun,
How many meanings may be blent
And bundled wondrously in one?
Such wisdom I cannot divine,
But good is all God's grand design,
Evangeline.

I find affliction, threaded through,
Has been reborn in God's employ,
And sorrow must enhance each hue
When fashioned by the Source of Joy;
I praise His skill to intertwine
This glorious tapestry divine,
Evangeline.

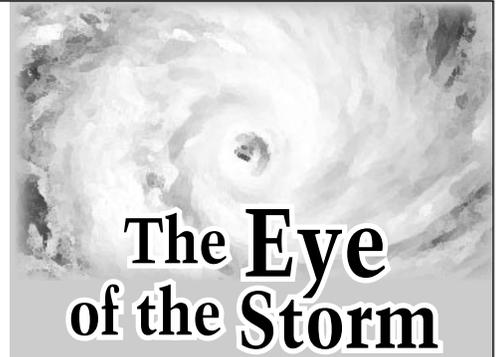
This handiwork of Heav'nly fame,
In which what lavish thought
was spent—
No angel artist e'er could claim
Quite half the picture you present;
And think that He should then consign
His masterpiece to me and mine,
Evangeline.

Evangeline means "messenger of good news." This baby was our little messenger that God has joy available for us even in great suffering and limitation. Thus we named her Evangeline Joy. Precious baby, we love you! You are a miracle like no other.

—Coquette Erickson ➤

to "count my blessings." First of all I thought of the people I know that have allergies and that I am not alone in the "battle." Second, that my allergies don't last forever and also, that God is able to help me in this trial and give me joy. I then asked our heavenly Father to help and give me His overcoming joyfulness. I still have allergies, but instead of irritation I have joy. Praise the Lord!

—Niklanna Kornoff ➤



The Eye of the Storm

*Fear not that the whirlwind shall carry thee hence,
Nor wait for its onslaught in breathless suspense,
Nor shrink from the whips of the terrible hail,
But pass through the edge to the heart of the gale,
For there is a shelter, sunlighted and warm,
And Faith sees her God through the eye of the storm.*

*The passionate tempest with rush and wild roar
And threatenings of evil may beat on the shore,
The waves may be mountains, the fields battle plains,
And the earth be immersed in a deluge of rains,
Yet, the soul, stayed on God, may sing bravely its psalm,
For the heart of the storm is the center of calm.*

*Let hope be not quenched in the blackness of night,
Though the cyclone awhile may have blotted the light,
For behind the great darkness the stars ever shine,
And the light of God's heavens, His love shall make thine,
Let no gloom dim thine eyes, but uplift them on high
To the face of thy God and the blue of His sky.*

*The storm is thy shelter from danger and sin,
And God Himself takes thee for safety within;
The tempest with Him passeth into deep calm,
And the roar of the winds is the sound of a psalm.
Be glad and serene when the tempest clouds form;
God smiles on His child in the eye of the storm.*

—Author Unknown

Question:

Should we, as saints, acknowledge and value the work of doctors and medical nurses? Is it right to claim that God uses them and their medicines?

Reply: Part Two

Sister Hannah Smith writes:

A Christian who was in a great deal of trouble was recounting to another Christian the various efforts he had made to find deliverance, and concluded by saying, "But it has all been in vain, and there is literally nothing left for me to do now but to trust the Lord."

"Alas!" exclaimed his friend in a tone of the deepest commiseration, as though no greater risk were possible—"Alas! has it come to *that*?"

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

Oh, what a reproach is fleshly wisdom to the ways of the Lord! "*But wisdom is justified of her children.*" Mt 11:19

The ways of the wisdom that cometh from above are capable of being imitated outwardly without the inward inspiration of faith from above. Therefore it is possible to lay aside medicine and going to the doctor without getting what God has for us in our afflictions. It is possible to become so focused on deliverance from the affliction that we lose sight of all that God is trying to do in allowing the affliction. A great deal of activity in the spiritually dull of hearing

I want to walk before the Lord unto all pleasing; I want to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called.

consists of the avoidance or the minimization of all trials, as much as possible. As a result, their entire vision of Christian living is skewed. The writer of Hebrews had a real burden to speak of how the Lord Jesus went about His earthly existence, yet had to tell such folks that these things were "*hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.*" Heb 5:11 But we see also the Bible prayer that "*the God of all grace... after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*" 1 Pet 5:10

There are people who will not go to the doctor for any reason, but they do not grow spiritually in their afflictions. The trial works them, rather than they being able to work the trial. But those who receive this precious wisdom that comes from above have a different experience than this. All things work together for their good. All things are theirs. They find treasure in the affliction. They are uplifted; they are inspired. They can sing with the poet:

"Welcome the storms, my hope is abounding;

Let the waves come, my anchor is sure;
Fixed in the Rock on which I am standing,
How can I fall when all is secure?

Wonderful peace in Thee I'm possessing,
Vict'ry through Christ I ever shall sing;
Let the rain fall in showers of blessing,
Homage and praise to Thee I would bring."

But let us note that all of this is possible because of **complete abandonment to the will of God**. When and if I mix with my affliction my own attempts to manage, fix, or adjust the trial without direct and clear sanction from the Lord—just to the extent that I am in charge and directing things, then to that extent my blessing is lessened, and to that extent I fail to get all that God has for me. It may be necessary for me to be like the people spoken of in Heb. 11:35, "*not accepting deliverance,*" to get what God has for me and others in the trial. This seems completely unreasonable and outrageous to those who are attuned to the wisdom from below. They

are excruciatingly slowly convinced, if convinced at all, that God actually takes His children down such a path. But the spiritually-minded are not so. The Spirit of God within them, the divinely-planted charity within in all of its completeness and fullness (which seeketh not its own), and the continual offering of body and soul upon the altar before God, all combine to prove what is the perfect will of God in their trials. "*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which*

is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor 6:19-20

Brother Paul speaks here of fornication, but we can easily see that this applies to trusting God in afflictions, too.

I do not belong to myself. I have given myself away. I need permission; I need direction. I am a steward and must be instructed as how to proceed. I am learning as I go. I am trusting in the wisdom from above to do it acceptably and correctly. I am not formulating policy. I am not devising a personal creed. "*The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*" Psa 37:23 I want to walk before the Lord unto all pleasing; I want to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called. I am trusting Him to show me the way, step by step. He is doing so, and I am blessed.

If I go to the doctor, I find that there is something there that will assume direction, and that something is foreign to how the Spirit of God would direct me. There is another wisdom at work, and it does not come from above. If I carefully consult with the doctor and avoid getting under his/her direction, yet I am consulting with wisdom that is not from above. Maybe I get some basic maintenance-of-good-health advice; perhaps the doctor is respectful of my conscience, and I can avoid damaging my faith (and the inspiration of my faith) by being exceedingly careful, but I hope that it is plain to you that I am in a perilous, risky, slippery place. The same situation exists in consulting a lawyer about a legal matter. Now here is the Word of God on this point: "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.*" Psa 1:1 I want that blessing; I want it in its fulness. And I want to avoid the impairment of real spirituality, too. I do not want to do anything destructive to the rules of spiritual life—in short, whatever the Spirit of God would not have me do. Well, if I am not to walk in the counsel

of the ungodly, what am I to do? *“But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”* ^{v:2-3} WOW! Did you get that?

1. I'll be by the rivers of water. Always supplied, even in time of drought.

2. I'll bring forth my fruit in its season. Every time. Always.

3. My leaf shall not wither. Consider what happens to me, how my very life is threatened, if my leaves wither.

4. **Whatsoever I do shall prosper.** *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”* ^{Jos 1:8-9}

But wait. There is more. *“The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the*



Just to the extent that I am in charge and directing things, then to that extent my blessing is lessened.

LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” ^{Psa 1:4-6}

This is just as serious and weighty as the promised blessings to the one whose delight is in the law of the Lord, who meditates in that law day and night. Is there any other way that really works that is less than all the way with the Lord? Is there any real merit to less than *all*? *“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”* ^{Rev 3:15-16}

Most professed Christians cannot afford to trust the Lord completely. They have other considerations than wholly following God. How about the career? They have plans; they have goals. If they are diverted from these things, if affliction intervenes and interferes, they want to “get back on track” as soon as possible. They cannot sing from the heart:

“O sweet will of God!
thou hast girded me 'round,
Like the deep, moving currents
that girdle the sea;
With omnipotent love
is my poor nature bound,
And this bondage to love
sets me perfectly free.”

But with them, self is in charge, not God. Human reasoning and wisdom direct the life, not the wisdom from above. Nor do they have this testimony:

“And now I have flung myself recklessly out,
Like a chip on the stream of the Infinite Will;
I pass the rough rocks with a smile and a shout,
And I just let my God His dear purpose fulfill.”

Now, I wish to certify to you, dear brother, that this is not just poetic fancy or flight of imagination, but this is real, and it is where I am living. **“I just let my God His dear purpose fulfill.”** Praise His name! *“What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it.”* ^{Isa 38:15}

I was with a brother who was holding a meeting in an old farmhouse in Pennsylvania. We were sleeping in a room that was heated by a duct vent in the floor; the coal furnace was in the basement below. After sleeping there a night or two, I began to cough, but neither of us knew why. I had never had such an attack before. It grew worse. It kept both of us awake. As the

other brother was lying there, praying, the thought came to him to cover the duct with a white shirt. He did so, and it gave relief. The shirt was blackened from coal dust. It was in the air and was irritating my lungs.

God, at times, uses natural means to assist or even to completely deal with some afflictions. So we will all find it a continual temptation in the body, in our place of probation, to be guided by, and to lean upon, wisdom which is not from above. But if we do, then our entire vision becomes more and more temporal, earth-bound. Yet the temporal cannot be wholly ignored, for we *are* in the body. To live up to 2 Cor. 4:18, to see the things which are not seen, to place the appropriate focus on things that belong to this life, to get and keep the right perspective toward the spiritual and toward the flesh,

Most professed Christians cannot afford to trust the Lord completely. They have other considerations than wholly following God.

to use this world without abusing it, we need the Spirit of God. *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”* ^{Rom 8:26-27}

Yet most people are *not* guided by the Holy Ghost; they are guided by something else. These “something elses” crystallize into philosophies, customs, traditions, etc., which are used as sources of guidance by those who know not the Spirit of God, and by many who *think* they know the voice of the Spirit, but are actually guided by something else. We are warned, *“Beware lest any man spoil you [‘See that no one shall be carrying you away as spoil’ ^{YLT}] through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”* ^{Col 2:8} We would emphatically repeat this warning to all: BEWARE! MANY ARE SPOILED THROUGH THESE PHILOSOPHIES

AND VAIN DECEITS. Notice that these things are “*after the tradition of men*” and “*after the rudiments of the world.*” We are also informed that they are “*not after Christ.*” We warn all that the general spirit and attitude of the medical profession is *not after Christ.* It is after the tradition of men and after the rudiments of the world. Be careful how you deal with the institutions of men, medical and otherwise.

It is plain that the entire nature and motive of the medical profession would be radically different if God had inspired it for His trusting, confiding children to use.

There is something that robs and spoils: it deprives; it devastates; it devours; it loots; it plunders; it wastes. Furthermore, in this scripture “the ‘you’ is emphatic, and the verb in the future implies present danger more than mere possibility” (*Bullinger’s Critical Lexicon*).

Each person in the medical profession is affected by the overall spirit of the thing. Each person partakes, more or less, of the general direction and philosophy of the whole. Each person is an individual case, but the overall spirit and attitude of the thing is quite identifiable. One may say that God created this aspect of men’s thinking, but the fruit of its doings says otherwise. One might as well argue that God created the legal systems of men or the political systems. He allows them. He commands His children not to be rebellious against them. If they did not exist, then the people who know not God would have nothing to give them relief, order, or collective direction. But, “*as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*”² Rom 8:14

Some have concluded that participation in the political systems of men is not a good thing. There is a lot of truth in that. “*No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*”² Tim 2:4 It is easy to be entangled, and it is plain that this entangling can be detrimental to the spiritual life. One, who started out well in this area, wrote, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but*

fools despise wisdom and instruction.”¹ Pro 1:7 Solomon started out with the fear of God and appropriate humility. “*And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?*”¹ 1 Kgs 3:7-9 It is plain that a man or woman who starts out with the fear of God and humility upon them in this way is protected from the slippery place of ruling over men *as long as they keep the fear of God and the humility.*

Is it possible for a doctor or a nurse to go about their vocation in the fear of God with a lot of humility? Yes. How about with *a little* of the fear of God and *a little* humility? Yes, but the spiritual results will be in proportion—both positive and negative results. How about someone who is devoid of humility and the fear of God (Lk. 18:2)? Yes, again, in proportion. How does a doctor who is spiritually-minded, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, fit into the medical profession of today? He/she doesn’t fit. How about with only a little of both attributes? Now they fit. How about with no fear of God and humility towards Him? They fit very well indeed; it seems tailor-made for them.

Health for money? “*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*”¹ Mt 10:8

Doctors on their knees? “Lord, You know what is wrong in this patient’s life...” “Yes, sir. I have come to the conclusion that God doesn’t want us to know what is wrong with you physically. I am convinced that this mysterious ailment is upon you because God is dealing with your heart.”

It is plain that the entire nature and motive of the medical profession would be radically different if God had inspired it for His trusting, confiding children to use. Also, the stigma of the cross would be upon them. The world would persecute them as it persecutes Jesus.

We find that all of those who undertook positions of mastery in the world (Jas. 3:1) find “thorns in the flesh” to help them with the peculiar temptations that go with the responsibilities. Daniel ended up in the lion’s den, but was brought forth to the glory of God. King David went through all kinds of trials to keep him from losing his spiritual footing. All brethren who were called of God to these weighty places of mastery were given suffering and trials to help them do the job right. Sainly men of money are few and far between. And those who have wealth will also have great trials to keep their hearts from uncertain riches—witness the sufferings of Job.

Matthew, a formerly rich publican, forsook all and followed Jesus. Luke, known as the beloved physician, has no record whatsoever of practicing his physician arts while he was a Christian.

We have had people quote us the scripture, “*They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*”¹ Mt 9:12 “See,” they say, “the Bible says that sick people need a physician,” thus implying that we have a right to rely on human physicians. But this is a careless interpretation of the text. The Pharisees had asked, “*Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?*”¹ Jesus was telling them that He ate with these publicans and sinners because *He* was a physician *of the soul*, and they needed a soul physician, being spiritually sick. (Of course, if one does not believe they are sick spiritually, they do not admit of needing a spiritual Physician.) In an even larger sense, Jesus is the best Physician for people in every way. But to think that the Bible advises us here to go to the physicians of men when we are sick is a ridiculous idea. Where did the sick go in the Bible? To Jesus, who is able to save both soul and body!

In considering the well-meaning, but misguided people in the medical profession who imagine that God works through their knowledge to heal their patients (as though He needed such things), I regard it in exactly the same way as many professing believers in different churches of men, who imagine that God works through them (thinking even that He *must* work through them) to save the souls of men. But this quote is worth pondering:

Let it be distinctly understood that God has so arranged the plan of redemption that no man or set of men can monopolize, control, or get a patent upon it. God has offered a free salvation to all the world, and it is impossible for the most crafty to convert it into a means of speculation. It is true there are money-run religions many, and hirelings many. But the “hireling [is] not the shepherd”; not sent of God: and the money-making religions are frauds. Salvation is “without money and without price”; therefore, whosoever would set a price upon it, proves he is not in possession of the article himself, and has but a counterfeit to offer. Every man on earth can come directly to the Author of salvation through Jesus Christ, and be saved independent of all men or angels.

—D. S. Warner; *Salvation: Present, Perfect, Now or Never*

This is absolutely true of the salvation of the soul. All works of men which mimic or attempt to duplicate the work of God in salvation are not the same as the divine work, nor does God authorize them in the hands of anyone but Himself. “I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.” ^{Isa 43:11}

The healing power of the medical world falls far short of the work of divine healing, which is more accurately described in the context of divine trust. The scope of man’s healing ability is very narrow. It only touches the body. The work of God is comprehensive, reaching the spiritual need of the one healed and administering a social benefit between those bearing the burden and trusting the Lord. The scope of God’s healing plan is described in Jas. 5:13-16: “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” We mark the collective spirituality described here, the individual responsibility to pray and rejoice, the anointing, the inspired prayer of faith, and the spiritual benefit to the af-

flicted one, as well as others sharing in the burden. We see this necessity for healing: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another.” To get God’s healing and all its benefits (Psa. 103:2-4), we must do it God’s way—not just generally, but also as we are specifically directed by the Spirit of God in the given affliction.

Now contrast this with the way of men. I must have the money or someone else must donate the means for the resources for my benefit. I am served by human wisdom, hopefully as good as it gets, but this makes no pretense of reaching the need of my soul. (See Jer. 17:9—who, besides God, can know the heart and its needs?) Then there are the side effects, the trade-offs, of medicine and surgery. I am in the hands of fallible human beings, no matter how trained and skillful. And when I get through with all this, I have not the blessing that comes from trusting God *with all my heart and leaning not to my own understanding*. What weak and beggarly elements! How much people miss who do not serve the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength!

“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.” ^{Psa 118:8-9} There we find freedom from fear. “In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.” ^{56:11}

I am not relying on man; I am relying on God. I am not putting myself under the surgeon’s scalpel or the physician’s poisons. I am bought with a price and wish to glorify God in my body and in my spirit, which are God’s. The Lord will make no mistake. His diagnosis is completely accurate; He has no need to experiment.

If my faith in God is mixed with faith in man, and God allows the earthly physician’s work to be a “success,” then the glory of my healing is shared between God and man. (Note this can also happen even if medical professionals are not involved.) Yet the great Physician states, “I will not give my glory unto another.” ^{Isa 48:11}

“LORD, make me to know mine end, and

the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.” ^{Psa 39:4-7} In the end, all that can be concluded of the works of man—even at his best—is that it falls short. When we take some other way than what God has for us, we walk “in a vain show.” When we encounter the troubles that come upon us as we try anything less than what God has laid out for us (exclusive trust in Him), we are “disquieted”; we are troubled; we are beset by fears and misgivings. It is better to wait on the Lord. “LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.” ^{Psa 131:1-2} As faithful brethren through the years have found: “The Lord will do to trust.”

“Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O

When we encounter the troubles that come upon us as we try anything less than exclusive trust in God, we are “disquieted”; we are troubled; we are beset by fears and misgivings. It is better to wait on the Lord.

that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.” ^{Isa 48:17-18}

How should I regard the people of the medical profession? With the sober-mindedness that comes from following the Spirit of God.

I walked through the workshop of a man who had spent his life among a group of “plain people.” There was not a single electric motor on all the power tools in that large workshop, equipped with lathes, saws, drill presses, etc. Even a

fan was controlled by a hydraulic motor. Years ago, this change in power for each tool cost him about twice as much as standard electric motors that used standard power from the electric power grid. The church he attended had insisted on all this

“For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”¹ Th 5:7-8 There are those who

sakes.... For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”² Cor 4:15-18 Notice that

God's ways and man's ways simply do not mix; His are greater than ours, and if we want to be His children and do things His way, then we must totally yield to Him and be taught of Him how to live, move, and have our being in the time of our probation.

are asleep to the healing plan of God—they are oblivious to the meaning, spiritually and physically, of the stripes upon the back of the Healer in Zion. And there are those who are drunken on the ever-learning-never-able-to-come-to-the-knowledge-of-the-truth philosophy of man's wisdom, knowledge, and skill towards the needs of the body. Both of

“all things” are for your sakes. This is not at all the attitude of the medical spirit. They regard disease as the enemy and will stop at nothing to destroy it. But God uses our diseases and infirmities. God does not look at fleshly suffering as fleshly wisdom does. He is focused on the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”—a focus that is not found in the medical world. God's ways and man's ways simply do not mix; His are greater than ours, and if we want to be His children and do things His way, then we must totally yield to Him and be taught of Him how to live, move, and have our being in the time of our probation. It is foolish and unrealistic to believe that God's ways are the ways of men—in this aspect of the needs of the body, as well as in many other ways. Yes, God interferes and meddles in the patients and doctors of the medical world, even as He involves Himself in the judicial system, the political system, in business, in the sports world, and even human conflict, etc. He even involves Himself in the false worship of men to Him. This certainly does not indicate that He approves of what He is interfering and meddling in, but it is a clear indication of His great mercy to mankind. If God did not reveal Himself at all in any of these areas of mankind, many would have no

and much more as “a separation from the world.” Even his deep well pump ran on compressed air. All the motive hydraulics and compressed air ran on an automotive motor. Some things ran on batteries charged by the motor. I looked all this over. The breadth and scope of all this was staggering to observe. I asked the brother: “How did things get to this point? How did they go so far?” He hesitated a moment, gathering his thoughts, and I will never forget the exact tone of his voice: “They were deceived.” He waited a moment, then replied again in the same peculiar nuance: “They are deceived.” I thought about what it had cost him to discover that.

these are “in the night,” but we “are of the day” and must “be sober.” This is a serious and weighty word, and it means to unflinching examine and evaluate everything around us as we walk circumspectly as pilgrims and strangers through this world to the world beyond. It is extremely important that a Christian be realistic, that we think and speak the words of truth and soberness. So we conclude that we must “acknowledge and value the work of doctors and medical nurses” as it really is, as it appears in the eyes of Him who knows all things. Immediately we are confronted with a great difference in the children of night and the children of the day. The Spirit of God teaches us, “we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen”; “all things are for your

I am thinking about all the earnest, sincere people who have entered the medical profession to help others. I daresay that you have never met and will never meet someone of these who once habitually experienced God's healing plan in themselves and others, who has willfully embraced something so inferior. They are deceived. They attempt to blend God's plan with the plans of men, but it doesn't really mix.

Did God originate this system—this thing that we call the medical system? How should we regard the people in it who are sincere, who believe in this way of trying to help people in their diseases and infirmities? I will repeat your questions: “Should we, as saints, acknowledge and value the work of doctors and medical nurses? Is it right to claim that God uses them and their medicines?”



chance at all. Therefore we read, “*That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*”^{Jn 1:9} Again, “*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.*”^{2Chr 16:9} And then we read, “*Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*”^{Isa 53:1} And again, “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*”^{Jn 6:44} Therefore the story of every man, in the medical profession or not, is the story of what God has revealed to him (his light) and how he has responded to it.

So, “Is it right to claim that God uses them and their medicines” as His will for healing? No. Sober-minded thinking quickly reveals that God works in spite of them. Well then, how shall I evaluate an individual’s doings as a nurse, doctor, lawyer, soldier, etc.?

1. Have they been saved? Have they come to the point in having light from above and accepting that light to the extent that they have experienced godly sorrow, repented fully from the heart, and experienced an enormous and revolutionary change that can accurately be described as being “born from above”?

2. Have they been true to all the light from above that has been revealed to them? If so, we “*of the day*” have found another that is “*of the day*,” howbeit one in whom perhaps there is need that they learn the way of the Lord more perfectly (Ac. 18:26). The Spirit of God leads unerringly to a complete surrender to God, an enduing of His presence and inward abiding (Lk. 24:49). When an individual finds this “upper-room” experience, he becomes more and more aware of the corporate working of that same Spirit—He is given a vision of the gathering of the called of God—His church, its divine organization and administration, which is separate and distinct from the churches of men.

3. Are they under the influence of false teaching and unsound doctrine, or are they delivered from these things?

Such a vision helps us to separate the pure from the vile. We are enabled to see God, and we are also enabled to see where He is not, notwithstanding claims that He uses and even authorizes the various works

of men. It is plain in the Old Testament that God used Cyrus, king of Persia, even calling this man His anointed (Isa. 45:1); yet it is equally plain that Cyrus was not one of God’s people in heart, nor did he glorify God by obedience and submission to Him. How was he God’s anointed, then? Only in the sense that this man fulfilled God’s purpose in sending the Jewish captives back to Jerusalem.

So the doctor may be used of God in some specific purpose, such as a man’s life continuing for a time, yet it would be a serious mistake to consider that the system is of God, or that God’s hand is on the doctor as one of His children. It is a serious mistake to disregard the nature of an non-exclusive trust into which an individual enters when he puts himself under the doctor as though God called that doctor, instructed him, and made him a guide. It may well be that

God will prove to you, as He has to others, that He did not call this man, yet he ran (Jer. 23:21). It may well be that spiritual damage and destruction will follow your trust of another man, even as the Bible states (Jer. 17:5). You and your body and spirit may prove the fallacy of divided trust; you may make full proof of the depth, the breadth, and the height of your deception. You may be permitted to continue with your physical life for a while, apparently without penalty, and you may fully subscribe to the idea that God uses the doctor, even calls the doctor and qualifies him, but I submit to you that something is focused on this life and the things of this life in a way that God never intended for you. There are good people who have been fooled by these results. There are children of God who have repented of their involvement with the medical spirit, who have had to forsake the insidious, undermining consequences of mixed faith. I do not wish to hinder my faith in God; I do not want to have less of the wisdom that comes from above in living my life before Him—indeed, I want more of the wisdom from above. I know that the doctor possesses knowledge of the body that can be useful, just as I know that

the attorney possesses knowledge of the laws of men that can be useful, but there is great need of caution. “*In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.*”^{Pro 3:6-7} “*Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*”^{Rom 3:4}

So, how thankful to Cyrus should I be, that he has allowed us to return to Jerusalem? How much should I honor him and esteem him? Answer: “*As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*”^{Psa 103:15-16} Did Cyrus grasp the vision of truth of the great Eternal, moving on in the order of His plan? No. Should I *rely* on the good will and favor-

I do not wish to hinder my faith in God; I do not want to have less of the wisdom that comes from above in living my life before Him—indeed, I want more of the wisdom from above.

able actions of Cyrus? It would be a terrible mistake. Should I be courteous, pay him due homage in his position as king? Yes, but I should ask God to help me to be extremely careful to do in this only as I ought. (Brother George Fox of the Quakers and others refused to even take off their hats to the king and other officials, in the fear of God.) Finally, should I trust Cyrus? Absolutely not. If Cyrus proposed a working relationship to me, should I enter into such an arrangement? Absolutely not (Am. 3:3).

I believe that these are the words of truth and soberness on this subject, and I believe that this manifestation of the truth will commend itself to the conscience of every child of God. It is not legalistic, nor is it liberal. It may appear to give room to the flesh in its liberty, yet to give room to the Spirit of God in this matter of complete trust. May God help you, dear honest soul, to find the path of complete trust and the blessings that attend it. ►

One Thing I Can Do

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. 1 Pet. 5:7

1. I thank Thee, Lord, that I can cast My bur - dens all on Thee;
2. Though tried and pressed, yet I will trust, This one thing I can do;
3. Though rag - ing storms a - bout me sweep, And fier - y bil - lows roll,

Though I be tempt - ed, Thou has died To bear them all for me.
I'll lean up - on Thy lov - ing breast, Thou'lt guide me safe - ly through.
To Thee, dear Lord, I hum - bly trust The keep - ing of my soul.

Refrain

O Je - sus, I will cling to Thee, I'll love Thee more and more;

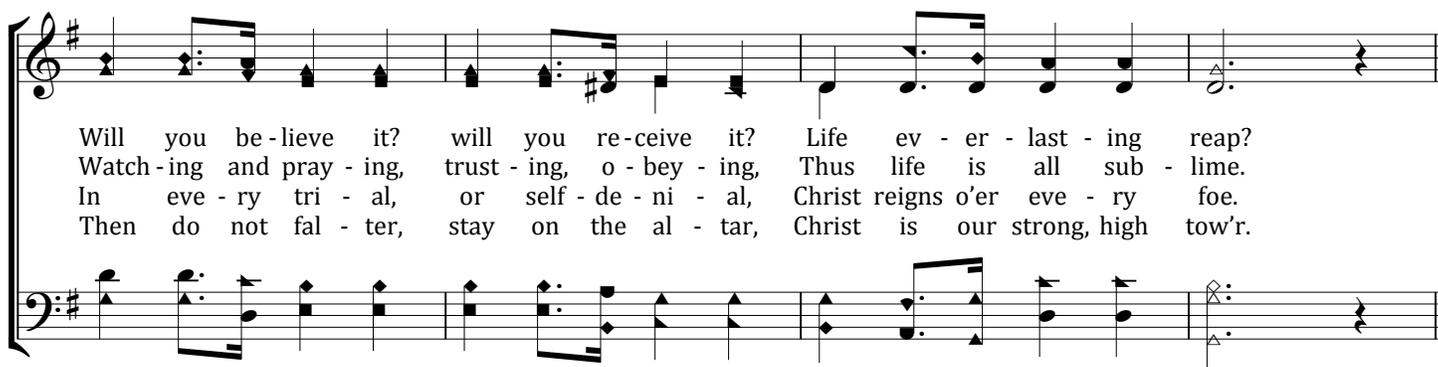
I'll place my trem - bling hand in Thine Un - til the bat - tle's o'er.

Mighty to Save and Keep

Who is this... travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Isa. 63:1; Zep. 3:17
Unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless... be glory and majesty. Jude 1:24-25

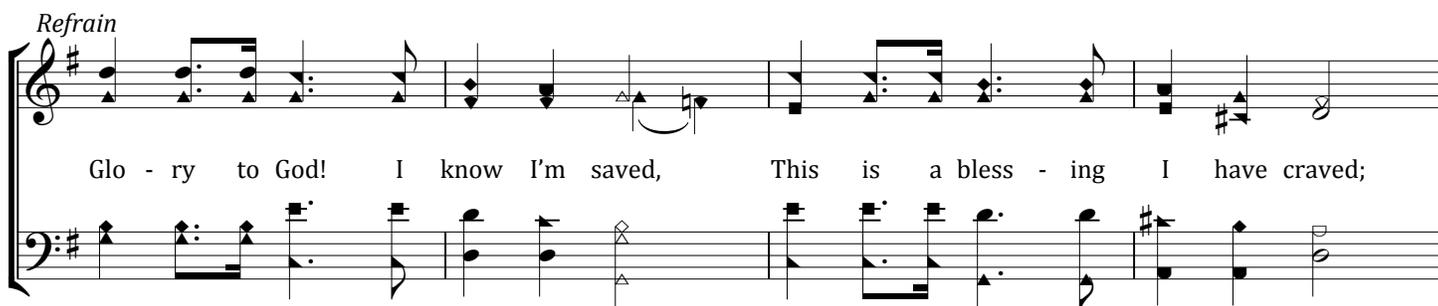


1. Might - y to save, and might - y to keep, Grace like the o - cean, bound-less and deep;
2. Might - y to save by pow - er di - vine, Might - y to keep in this e - vil time;
3. Might - y to save from sin here be - low, Might - y to con - quer Sa - tan we know;
4. Might - y to keep in life's dark - est hour, Might - y to shield us from Sa - tan's pow'r;



Will you be - lieve it? will you re - ceive it? Life ev - er - last - ing reap?
Watch - ing and pray - ing, trust - ing, o - bey - ing, Thus life is all sub - lime.
In eve - ry tri - al, or self - de - ni - al, Christ reigns o'er eve - ry foe.
Then do not fal - ter, stay on the al - tar, Christ is our strong, high tow'r.

Refrain

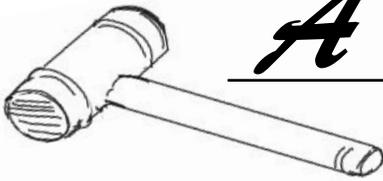


Glo - ry to God! I know I'm saved, This is a bless - ing I have craved;



Now I am hap - py, joy - ful in glo - ry, Reign - ing o'er the world by sin de - praved.

A New Beginning



"Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." ^{1 Sam 9:1-2}

It is part of the spiritual landscape about us—new beginnings. But why not continue in the old way of doing things? Why a new beginning?

"Is there not a cause?" ^{17:29}

And so there was in this new beginning of a king in Israel. It had been God's preferred way of dealing with His people by raising up judges, and it is plain that the people could have been blessed under the leadership of judges for the entire history of Israel, had two things been true. First, if the nation had been true to God. Secondly, if the judges had been true to God and uncorrupted by their position in any way, then the people could have retained their confidence in this way of God's dealing with them. But neither of these two things were followed as they should have been, and there were consequences. There always are. The law of sowing and reaping always proves out in the end. If the people had been true to God, the judges would have done better. If the judges had been absolutely true to God, even as the people failed, then the judges would have been a faithful reflection of the trueness and rightness of God to the people. A faithful ministry is a source of faithful guidance and faithful reproof to an unstable people. The failures of the people become reflected in the ministry, if the ministry steps away from absolute faithfulness to God; and the failures in the ministry have a bad effect on the weaknesses in the people, too.

Eli's administration as a judge of Israel was a disaster. He restrained not his sons, and they caused men to abhor the sacrifice of God (1 Sam. 2:17). Judgment from God

came down on Eli and his sons. The ark of God was captured by the Philistines. The successor of Eli, the then young child Samuel, was the last of the judges. He started out well, but the same sin that had ruined Eli marred Samuel's administration, too. *"And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.... And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment."* ^{8:1,3}

Here is where a great humbling down before God would have helped a great deal. If

Even though God had instituted the administration of judges, yet God kept working with them in their uninspired desire to have a king over them.

the people and their leaders had prostrated themselves before God and acknowledged in the words of another:

We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and

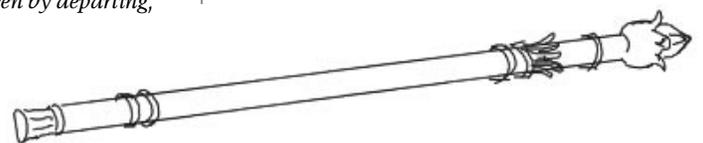
the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

—Dan. 9:5-11

Such a confession and acknowledgment as this, if **prayed by all the people**, laity and ministry alike, will not result in a new beginning, but in a solid and enduring return to unshakeable values on the solid Rock. But alas! It is rare even for an individual to seek God in this way, much less a whole group of people.

Now we note, that even though God had instituted the administration of judges, and even though Samuel comprehended immediately that the people's turning away from the way of judges was a turning away from God Himself, yet **God kept working with them in their uninspired desire to have a king over them.** Here was their reasoning:

"Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." ^{1 Sam 8:5} We see in this failure to do things the right way, the only way, God's way, that the great mercy of God and His compassion to us is not taken away entirely when men turn from Him. The voice of the Bridegroom will be heard for some time, yet we will say that it is not heard as clearly as it should be (Heb. 5:11-12). We also must here assert that this kind of living will result in less and less of God among a given people, until the saying is brought to pass, *"The sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee."* ^{Rev 18:22-23} Note the awful finality of that phrase, **"no more at all in thee."** There are places where this process is just starting; there are places where the dimming of light and the fading of the voice of God is well under way; and there are places



where God does not even smell in their assemblies (Am. 5:21).

If we do not love the truth as we should, we will surely lose it. Loving the truth is more than loving the doctrine and attempting to hold it as a mental understanding.

The New Beginning of the Kings

God is not limited to working with one form of a government or another. He can deal with a nation through judges or through kings, yet certain types of government lend themselves to human vanity and are susceptible to the flesh in compromising or fanatical form that are exceedingly dangerous to us. And in thinking of the matter in this way, we see immediately that a king was in a particularly slippery place.

Now a judge had tremendous discretion in his authority and power, and a king did, too. In our conditioned thinking of today, shaped as we are by “democracy ideals” and the supposed power of the vote, most of us would be rather horrified at being under either dictatorship. But no way of man is safe in itself; each way has favorable and unfavorable aspects. The people of Israel were disillusioned with *the method* by which God allowed them to be governed (the judges), when they should have been disillusioned by their own sinful natures. And they failed to acknowledge that they would not do any better under a king than under a judge. We should be thinking that without possessing full salvation in our hearts, we will not do well under democracy or any other form of government. Without real salvation working and controlling our lives, we will not do well, period. No method will make up for a lack of really loving God and His ways. This anything-but-facing-the-real-roots-of-what-is-wrong leads to putting trust in methods and formulas

which seem to have some merit to the fleshly mind. For example, some fixate on codes of dress and conduct; others think the ministry is not educated enough to communicate effectually; still others believe the ministry is too educated. As the people of Israel looked around at other nations while they contended with Samuel’s sons with the remembrance of Eli’s sons still in their minds, they concluded (on their own) that other nation’s kings were serving the interest

of their people better than their system of judges was serving them, so they desired a king for themselves.

So God let them have one, and He gave them “*a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he.*”^{1 Sam 9:2} As we read of his humility (10:22,27; 15:17) and his faithfulness in the search for his father’s missing livestock, we grasp the scope of the character at the beginning of this choice, goodly young man. However, being in the position of a king brought him to disaster. That position is exceedingly dangerous to any man’s soul; consider how few survived spiritually.

But the beginning looked so good. In the account of Saul and the Israelites’ first victory during his administration (ch. 11), we read of the king’s mercifulness to those who previously opposed him. At the conclusion of the account, “*Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.... there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.*”^{v.14-15}

How often has it been thus! A group humble themselves before God to an extent. He blesses them. They get some victories. God does some things for them. There is great rejoicing. God encourages them in the right way. But they do not go far enough. They do not dig deeply enough. There is a long way to go. There is much needed beyond that first victory. It will take more humbling down than one is aware to even exist. David had no idea of all that would be required of him to follow the

No method will make up for a lack of really loving God and His ways.

Lord all the way in his day and time, nor did Saul. We do not know either. We learn as we go; it is unfolded to us, fold by fold. The temptation to take things into our own hands is always before us. Satan would make it easier for us if we would only give him a little place, secretly.

No Christian movement has escaped this gauntlet of temptation. We read of the start of movement after movement. We read of the testimonies of men and women of God,

new in their beginnings; how God blessed them; the place and authority that God granted them with Himself; the depth of their love and sacrifice for God—blessed of Him and indisputably acknowledged of Him. What happened? **Something happened—over and over.** What can we learn from this?

The Friends

Quakerism, the Religious Society of Friends, began in northern England in 1647 through the labors of George Fox. At its beginning, it was not an “ism.” This group of people originated from an exhaustive and relentless search for truth, clearly illustrated in Brother George Fox. He was raised a Puritan, but he was “wearied... by the rigid, unsatisfying, external religion of Puritan ‘professors.’”^{*} Such legalism brought no real satisfaction to the soul. They ignored the work of the Holy Ghost, emphasizing the Word only. Nor was he drawn “by the lofty pretensions of the High Church clergy”^{*}—the Church of England (Episcopal). These two Protestant sects (as distinguished from the Roman Catholic Church) represented the two poles of professed Christianity in the time in which George Fox lived—the Puritans fanatical and grim, the Church of England almost as compromised and corrupt as the Catholics.

Almost all genuine new beginnings are attempted because there becomes a growing conviction that something is wrong. And all attempts to satisfy the seeker of truth with the status quo do not touch the need of the soul. One of the remarkable messages we have on record for Brother George Fox is the message he preached at a Puritan congregation where Margaret Fell and her family attended. He used the text, “*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*”^{Rom 2:28-29} On the basis of this light, he condemned a religion that, instead of emphasizing the great need of a changed heart, was leaning strongly to legalism. The Puritans stressed outward

^{*}John S. Rowntree; *Quakerism, Past and Present*

conformity to the Bible to reach the heart, rather than a revolutionary inward change that bore fruit on the external. Fox warned the people of the consequences. Margaret Fell, a devout Puritan, was deeply moved and repented of her devotion to the religion of the Pharisees (Puritans), saying to God, "We are all thieves! We are all thieves!" This is a very perceptive summary of where she and the entire Puritan group were. It is in accord with John 10:1. We note that Sister Fell did not try to defend her religion with an accounting of all the good that was in the Puritan movement (and there was good—Brother John Bunyan, for an example), but she recognized that she was part of a religious idol that appropriated the truth of God to its own purposes. Her statement and the stand that she took cost her dearly the rest of her life. She spent many years in prison for taking this bold stand for truth.

The Quakers believed in holiness of heart and life. They believed in deliverance from sin, from an inside deliverance to an outside. They believed in treating all men the same, for our Father in heaven is no respecter of persons. They believed the Bible taught to "swear not,"^{Mt 5:34} and they refused to do so, suffering fines and imprisonment as a result. They refused to take up arms against their fellow man. (The Puritans had defeated the Royalists on the field of battle.) The Friends began in that period of English history when Oliver Cromwell was the Protector of England. The monarchy that had existed for centuries before had been abolished at that time and the last king executed. During the first few decades of the Quaker movement's existence, the monarchy was restored. There was enormous confusion, fear, and turmoil in the country, and the Friends were caught between the two sides:

Puritan and Royalist. Oaths were required of all men to the existing ruler, whether king or protector. Those who refused to take the oaths were cast into prison. Usually their properties and goods were confiscated. Many died. The Quakers were forbidden to meet in worship assemblies, as it was maintained that these were treasonous.

The movement grew in spite of all opposition. Quaker history tells us of the sixty-

six ministers, those who first responded to the truth discovered by Brother George Fox, who went everywhere in England and even beyond, preaching the truth. Of these was one James Nayler, a particularly blessed minister, of whom we shall have more to say.

What was characteristic of the meetings of these remarkable people? How did they go about church government? Can we perceive and describe the "seeds of their destruction," which we all have within us in one form or another?

The Quaker perspective of truth is built around the idea of "the inner light." It is the embodiment of 1 John 2:27, "*But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*" Therefore their meetings started out with a conscious effort to exalt no person above another. They rejected all hierarchy, all systems of some people ruling over the others. Instead, there was a quiet waiting on the inner light to prompt someone to speak unto edification in their meetings. If someone spoke without the anointing, then the others, quietly, would simply not receive the unenlightened speech.

This awesome amount of liberty and quiet reliance on God was a reaction to the

God blessed these people in their humility and submission to Him. A man or woman who sincerely and honestly wanted to live for God with all the heart would and did prosper in such a spiritual environment.

controlling hierarchies of the Puritans, the Episcopalians, and the Catholics. And it is of great interest to us. The underlying foundation of the Quaker approach was that all of us are equal before God, and we find that teaching is solid doctrine. "*But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among*

you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."^{Mt 20:25-28}

God blessed these people in their humility and submission to Him. A man or woman who sincerely and honestly wanted to live for God with all the heart, would and did prosper in such a spiritual environment. Such an individual would benefit from the removal of hindrances caused by the rule of men (the image of the beast—Rev. 14:9-12). But no formula is safe in itself. The Quaker church model was probably the closest to the New Testament church model of anything that had existed among people for centuries before the seventeenth century.

In the early church of the New Testament, we can easily visualize Brother Peter, Brother John, Brother James, and Brother Paul sitting in a congregational setting. There are no big I's or little you's. There is room for Brother Ananias (the brother who was sent to Paul after his conversion) to speak as the Spirit of God impresses him, or Sister Priscilla to exhort as she was moved of God. The Spirit of God within each believer assists them to be edified by what is said or done. The same Spirit brings conviction; He reproves; he enlightens. The focus is on the inner light, available to all. "*The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*"^{1 Cor 12:7} "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*"^{Gal 3:28} All of this was the same in the beginning of the Friends, as it had been in the church as revealed in Acts and the rest of the New Testament.

As to exactly how much light and understanding the Quakers had on the New Testament standard of Holy Ghost government, we will quote from a writing first published in 1859, approximately two hundred years after the their beginning.

It does not however, appear that any of the early Reformers carried their Protestantism so far as was afterwards done by George Fox, in advocating the entire abolition of a human priesthood in the Church of Christ, and the recognition of the Lord Jesus as

its one holy Head and great High Priest. The idea of the continued presence of the Saviour with His followers had been so obscured by the Romish apostasy, that it was but slowly men awoke to the consciousness of its reality, and hence throughout the entire period from 1500 to 1650, religion was too often treated as a sort of State engine painfully indicating the forgetfulness of the apostolic truth, that the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

—John Stephenson Rowntree;
Quakerism, Past and Present

The Quakers had no membership rolls; they did not practice mandatory tithing, either within their ranks or without (the government imposed tithing as a kind of tax to support the government-sponsored form of Christianity); they believed in “an inner light” (the light of conviction) that guided the individual; and they had a profound respect for the various scruples and “convincements” that attended these individual convictions. They believed that God could use men or women as vessels to speak to them (Gal. 3:28). They were determined not to set up a ruling body of ministers, but trusted God to govern them directly by both waiting upon Him in their individual lives and waiting upon Him as a corporate body in worship services. In church services, this took the form of a careful refraining from directing the proceedings. They wanted God to order and direct the service, and their part was to be there and to wait upon God to move whoever He wanted to speak, pray, or sing. This quiet waiting became the most common feature of their meetings, and in the first fifty years or so of these services, God greatly blessed them.

So, how is such a stand contested by our adversary? What are the ins and outs of valid Holy Ghost spiritual government? What does God allow Satan to do? What is the equivalent of the church of God being tested as Job was tested? How should we behave? What should we do and when, and what should we never do? If a group of people should lose the spiritual vitality that they had found, how would things develop after the loss?

I certainly do not know all the answers to these questions, save to generally observe

that we should never take things into our own hands. “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart*

*If we can abide in this church that
Jesus built, of which He is the Head,
then we can share in its invincibility.*

from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.” Pro 3:5-8 And it is plain that if we formulate policy, we lean to our own understanding. If we go about things in a democratic fashion, by the popular vote, we are trusting in the vote; we are trusting in the judgment of a membership to which we have added or subtracted. The original conception of the Quaker people was not a group formed by human hands. They actually possessed the prophetic standard: “*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*” Dan 2:44

Some might think that “*other people*” must refer to people other than the ones to whom it was *supposedly left to govern* this kingdom, but it is said of Christ that “*the government shall be upon his shoulder... Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.*” Isa 9:6-7 Reader, the Almighty has set up a kingdom on earth which will never be corrupted, not now in time nor in eternity. He does not permit man to run it or govern it; He has never relinquished control. The gates of hell have never prevailed against the church because God governs it, and the gates of hell have not, are not, and will not ever prevail against God Himself. If we can abide in this church that Jesus built, of which He is the Head, then we can share in its invincibility. No Christian can be overthrown if he will abide in Christ. No corporate body of Christians can be overthrown if *they* will abide in Christ. How to do so amid favorableness or adversity is of great interest to us.

Considering how rare it is for a group of people to find the blessing of abiding con-

tentedly under the divine government, we are greatly interested in how they found it, how they kept it, and (alas!) how they lost it. And the aftermath; how can they be accurately described now?

The High Water Mark of the Reproaches of Excess

In October 1656, a strange procession made its way towards Bristol. It was the newly-released [James] Nayler and a band of eight Quakers. They were all mad.

Nayler rode upon a horse, his hatted head bowed, his hands folded in prayer. Surrounding him, in various stages of undress, were seven men and women on foot, slogging through the muddy cartways and puddle-filled roads. At the head of the procession, leading the horse by the bridle, were Hannah Stranger and Martha Simonds. Occasionally they would let go of the bridle and fling down their garments or bunches of wildflowers in the mud before the horse so it might step on them instead of the water. All the while, the strange, mad company—with the exception of the praying Nayler—sang “Hosannah! Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.”

If anyone along the way jeered or asked questions, they were answered with songs, wild songs of praise and hallelujahs. Without hesitating, the odd processional kept up through the rain and the mud towards the town of Bristol.

It was an insane parody of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, for those crazed followers had convinced both themselves and Nayler that he was the Son of God. Hannah Stranger's husband had even written to Nayler that “Thy name shall be no more James Nayler but Jesus,” a letter which was, for some insane reason, tucked in Nayler's pocket as he made his Triumphant Entry into Bristol on October 24, 1656.

The company started to make their way towards St. Mary Redcliffe Church. At the High Cross, they were met by the sheriff's men and dragged away to prison, to the jeering of an enormous crowd.

* * *

He alone was brought before Parliament and convicted of blasphemy, not only because of the mad procession, but also on the strong evidence of the stranger letter which was found in his pocket. Nayler missed the death sentence by a small vote: 82-96. But it might have been preferred to the sentence he did receive. It was one

of the most brutal and bloody ever passed down by the British House of Commons. It was not only unconstitutional, it was also against Cromwell's wishes. And all for what was essentially a mad man's bit of rococo role-playing.

On December 16, James Nayler heard his sentence. He was to be pilloried for two hours, half-naked in the icy cold. Then he was to be roped to a cart and dragged through the streets of Bristol while the executioner hit him more than 300 times with a knotted whip. A week after the whipping, he was pilloried again, and one of his not-so-helpful followers placed a sign above his head which read "This is the King of the Jews." The letter B, for blasphemer, was branded on his forehead with a red-hot iron, and a hole pierced through his tongue with a red-hot wire. Finally, he was committed to solitary confinement and hard labor for as long as Parliament wished. They wished it for three years.

The "fall" of James Nayler, as it is called today, almost dealt a mortal blow to the infant Quaker movement. It had two immediate bad effects: public opinion was entirely against the Quakers, with whom Nayler was intimately associated, and the Quakers themselves were frightfully shamed.

But in the end it was a bad cause that had a good effect, for Fox was forced to be more explicit about what was meant by the Inner Light of Christ being present in every person. He was forced to see how easily an unbalanced mind could jump from the notion of the divine light within to that of its own divinity.

Fox was an idealist, but a practical one. He knew that he would have to discipline the men and women in his growing movement. So he began to make them aware that there can be a higher thing than individual inspiration—the check and balance of collective inspiration. "Feel the power of God

in one another," wrote Fox. And "know one another in this love that changeth not."

This was the beginning of the shift in Quakerism to group mysticism, a change from simple *communion* to *community*.

If Satan cannot cause you to come short of the Bible standard, he will try to push you to excess.

From now on, Fox would write and preach much about unity in prayer, unity with one another, unity with God. This new emphasis saved Quakerism from disappearing into anarchy. Friends all sought to follow the same inward light, and in this way come to unity. Fox said it best when he wrote: "The Light is but one; and all being guided by it, all are subject to one, and are one in the unity of the Spirit."

—Jane Yolen; *Friend: the Story of George Fox and the Quakers* (emphasis added)

If Satan cannot cause you come to short of the Bible standard, he will try to push you to excess. And recovering from excess is no small matter, as Brother George Fox discovered by experience. It seemed best to him to set up a **system of community, and the setting up of this system gave our adversary an advantage over these people that utterly ruined the spirituality of the group.** Brother Fox certainly didn't mean for that to happen, nor did he foresee it. He was reacting to a disaster caused by the toleration of excess. This toleration existed because of an excessive reverence for the liberty of every man to walk in the light or reject it. This liberty had been focused upon because of the surrounding lack of individual liberty in professed Christianity all around them; it was a reaction—and it went too far and

became unbalanced. The loss of step-by-step Holy Ghost leadings in dealing with excess put Brother Fox and the others at extreme disadvantage in dealing with the aftermath of this huge, disastrous excess of James Nayler.

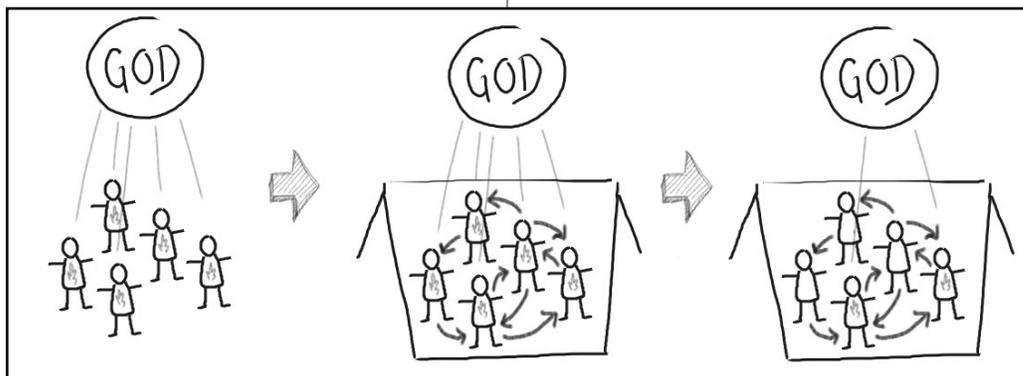
Now if you lose the balance in the little things, you are not likely to get it back in the big things. There are a lot of things that need to be dealt with as God would have them dealt with, little by little. If this is not done, it simply is not possible to easily regain the right path. It is rather like driving an automobile on a slick road surface. If little adjustments are made as needed, then one can keep on the road in spite of treacherous conditions. But if one tries to fix everything while in the middle of violent and excessive sliding or fishtailing, then it is far more likely that you will end up off the road. Or consider: if you neglect careful, early training and correction with your children while they are young, you need not expect to recover things in their teenage years that will make up for the early lack.

If the past steps are neglected to which one should have given diligent heed, there is nothing to do but humble down. Way down. Way, way down. How far? There must be an acknowledgment of the early errors. Here is the Bible standard: "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." ^{2 Cor 7:11} Notice the depths of this. A sorrow, a depth of sorrow that leads to a complete repentance.

- What carefulness.
- What clearing.
- What indignation.
- What fear.
- What vehement desire.
- What zeal.
- What revenge.

Now this is really something, isn't it? Any person who goes about forsaking sin to such a depth, *can be recovered*. Can be fixed. Can be healed. And on the contrary, anything less than this depth *is not enough*.

Now what is true of the individual in this, is again true of a group of individuals, too.



But it is even rarer for a group of individuals to fully repent and be recovered than one person. Yet this is what is necessary.

We observe that Brother Paul was dealing with sectarian party spirits early in their manifestations at Corinth. And also observe that the reproof of the man of God was received and effective.

The System Devised and Imposed to Correct Excess

Brother Fox's entire focus was on this question: "How can we keep this from happening again?" Not, "How did we miss the leading of the Lord that would have not allowed things to develop to such a point?" And so the brother devised a way to keep "Nayler 2" from occurring, and the method adopted was a way of *human control* with the power and authority invested in monthly, quarterly, and annual meetings that allowed or did not allow. This did prevent Nayler 2, but this change of focus also produced an enormous deadening effect. It was really a turning away from the Holy Ghost, of restricting Him to work within a certain framework. As other brethren have

said, who valued God above men, "**You can't put God in a box.**" People try to do so over and over—using different boxes, trying to learn from the failures of certain boxes.

It won't work. God won't cooperate. He is not experimenting. He already knows. We need to know. We need to trust completely. We are either led or we must experiment (try something) or we must do nothing. We had better be led. "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*" ^{Rom 8:14}

But how did Satan take advantage of these dear people, who had suffered so much for the gospel, who had gained so much in drawing close to God? What happened?

We will quote from *Quakerism, Past and Present: Being an Inquiry into the Causes of its Decline in Great Britain and Ireland*, published in 1859:

Connected with this branch of our subject is the working of the Quaker system of "Discipline," or church government. George Fox commenced its definite organization in

1667, and devoted much time and labour to its elaboration during the remainder of his life...

"The whole community of Friends is modeled somewhat on the Presbyterian system. Three gradations of meetings or synods—monthly, quarterly, and yearly—administer the affairs of the Society, including in their supervision matters both of spiritual discipline and secular policy. The monthly meetings, composed of all the congregations within a definite circuit, judge of the fitness of new candidates for membership, supply certificates to such as move to other districts, choose fit persons to be elders, to watch over the ministry, attempt the reformation or pronounce the expulsion of all such as walk disorderly, and generally seek to stimulate the members to religious duty. They also make provision for the poor of the Society, and secure the education of their children. Overseers are also appointed to assist in the promotion of these objects. At monthly meetings also marriages are sanctioned previous to their solemnization at a meeting for worship. Several monthly meetings compose a quarterly meeting, to which they forward general reports of their condition, and at

Brother Fox's entire focus was on this question: "How can we keep this from happening again?" Not, "How did we miss the leading of the Lord that could have not allowed things to develop to such a point?"

which appeals are heard from their decisions. The yearly meeting holds the same relative position to the quarterly meetings that the latter do to the monthly meetings, and has the general superintendence of the Society in a particular country." [*Report of Religious Census, 1851.*]

George Fox says that his object in the organization of this system of church government was "the promotion of piety and virtue." These are general terms; and there can be no doubt that he foresaw several important ends that might be attained by these frequent meetings for other purposes than religious worship, as the efficient relief of the poor, the succouring of the persecuted and down-trodden, as well as the several matters mentioned in the preceding extract, and others which we shall hereafter consider; but perhaps more powerful than any other consideration that influenced his

mind, was **the perception he had of the necessity that existed for putting a restraint on the proceedings of some injudicious but ardent followers.** This may be inferred from his own writings, and the strenuous opposition offered to the establishment of "Meetings for Discipline" by a number of the more enthusiastic spirits in the Society is strong corroborative testimony.

—John S. Rowntree (emphasis added)

This perception of Brother George Fox of the need of the discipline of men by men and the imposition of a system of man rulership upon a group of people, who had been gathered and endued by the Spirit of God, completely changed the character of the Quakers eventually. One of the chief characteristics of the Friends was a profound and far-reaching respect for individual leading, for the solemn necessity of each person to walk in the light as they realized and were convinced of the light, and it was this precise characteristic that had left room for the toleration of excess, such as James Nayler and others, who followed such dubious practices as stripping naked before the public to show that everyone's souls were

naked before God, etc. Like the saints at Thyatira, the Quakers tolerated what should have not been tolerated (Rev. 2:20). Would not the Spirit of God have inspired a stand against the immodesty of pre-

sending oneself naked, to say nothing of being exalted and receiving the praise of men, which led in turn to blasphemy? "*Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*" ^{Pro 6:10-11} Like other things that are wrong, excess grows and becomes more excessive.

Now in all fairness to Brother Fox, it must be said that the system that he devised (in the fear of God) prevented more James Nayler reproaches, as well as other reproaches. However, **the cure was worse than the disease**, although that unhappy result did not appear for quite a while. At the time, the disease was in their face, in all of its hellish reproach, and it nearly destroyed them. Would to God they had got it right

and applied His remedy for the need of the hour! We quote further:

The first effect the "Discipline" had on the body at large, was (if we may use so mechanical a simile) not unlike that occasioned by the addition of a fly-wheel to a powerful but irregularly acting machine—there was some loss of power, but more than an equivalent gain in the greater regularity of action induced. A check was put on the proceedings of parties whose zeal outran their knowledge. At the period of which we now write, "membership," in the modern sense of the term, was unknown in the Society. Fox's views were far more extensive than the mere founding of a sect: as before remarked, he aimed at nothing less than the reformation of the entire Church: thus, in his Epistles he hardly appears to address the Friends as a sectional body of Christians, they are "the children of light, in scorn by the world called Quakers," "the church of God," &c. Thus wishing to include *all* within its pale, it would have been contrary to the genius of primitive Quakerism to have made a definite statement as to who were "members" and who were not: the habitual attendance at the religious meetings was the only popular test which indicated, who were to be regarded as "Friends;" and persons so attending, of every shade of religious experience and of all degrees of earnestness, were blended together, though the incessant persecution which attended the Society in nearly all parts of the country, for the first forty years of its history, generally prevented the long-continued adhesion of the lukewarm and indifferent. Widely differing from the promiscuous gatherings for divine worship were the first "Meetings for Discipline:" they were not popular assemblies; children and young people did not sit in them, as they do now; but "two or three true and faithful Friends" from each particular meeting constituted the monthly meetings; and George Fox is still more precise in defining fit constituents for the quarterly meetings, which, says he, are to be made up "of weighty, seasoned, and substantial Friends, that understand the business of the church; for no unruly or unseasoned person should come there, nor indeed to the monthly meeting, but those who are single-hearted, seasoned, and honest." [Fox's *Epistles*.] To these meetings ministers (if personally unknown in the parts they wished to visit) must apply for certificates, "to prevent any bad spirits that may scandalize honest men." In examining into the actual business transacted in these

church meetings, as we may style them, it is remarkable how large a part of it was connected with the relief of the persecuted—of those in prison, or their destitute families. The early Friends merit a passing tribute of high praise, for their affectionate care of one another in those dark days of grinding persecution.

—Ibid.

The spirituality of those who had it did not nosedive when the false step was taken, for it was taken in innocence, without rebellious motive. Furthermore the structure that was erected was used for a pressing and precious burden—the financial relief of those relentlessly persecuted. How could this not seem necessary and meritable? There was not much perceptible diminishment of God's blessing upon them. How typical is this of many false steps of far-reaching import! If we step only a little ways from God's path for us, then His blessings are only a little diminished. If we step far away, especially if we are stubborn and headstrong, skirting the areas of outright rebellion, then the loss of divine favor is equally swift and radical. This is how God responds to the exercise of our free will: "*With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.*" Psa 18:25-26 It should be plain to all of us that only a very humble and sensitive attitude on our part will catch "the checks" and the guidance of the Spirit of God that will keep us on the King's Highway. A little hubris on our part, an overly-excited, zealous enthusiasm will lead to us running ahead of God and getting into trouble. Then, when trouble comes (and it always does), we take things into our own hands, even if we do not realize we are doing so, and God lets us. He warns us; He is faithful to correct and reprove, but if we are not listening as we should be, we do not get it. Think about this; consider the state of the people in this scripture text: "*Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.*" Heb 5:11 Are you dull of hearing, dear reader?

If you had lived in Brother Fox's day, would the Spirit of God have used you to see and to bring out truth about what was conspiring? Suppose you were an Ananias

of Damascus (Acts 9:10-18), and God spoke to you to address what Brother Fox was doing. If you were not sold out to God, dead to reputation and what the people thought, would it have not have had an intimidating effect on you, to oppose the equivalent of, say, Brother Peter? I would remind you that Brother Paul, that ex-persecutor of the church, who had at one time made havoc of it, *was* put in that precise place and *was faithful* to God and to the light given from heaven (Gal. 2:11-14). What did the saints think of the former persecutor confronting and reproofing publicly one of the pillars of Christianity? We are not told directly, but we read, "*For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*" Gal 1:10

It is no small matter for God to get our eyes off each other and to keep them off each other and on Him instead, and I am satisfied that certain of our appointed trials and tests are exactly for that purpose. The system that Brother Fox set up had the inherent weakness of focusing the attention of men on men, rather than only and exclusively, focusing men on God. For a while this weakness was masked by the spirituality and carefulness of the men who used it, but the system was man-made, not God-made, a way of dealing with excess that was of men, not God, and it had side-effects and unforeseen consequences that exerted themselves in due season.

We ignore this example to our hurt, to our destruction. It is better to have God's judges than God's kings, so to speak. It is better to have God's preferences than our own. If we choose to have a king, God will warn us and continue to work with us all that He can, but the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the path that we have chosen will manifest themselves. How much God wants to give us His best! How much does the Creator of man desire that His free-will creation voluntarily choose God's way, rather than what seems best to their eyes! The vessel turns in the Potter's hands; He patiently remakes it (Isa. 18:1-6).

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

—to be continued ➤

The Work of God

Man's Way or God's Way?

"Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel." ^{2 Sam 5:1-3}

Before this time of acceptance of David's calling as king of Israel, his pathway had been opposed. He was accused of treason, accused of an intention to murder the rightful king, accused of ambition, accused of a desire to "take over," etc. He had been pursued as a fugitive, exhaustively, and had only escaped death by the mercy of God. The death of King Saul, his tormentor, was followed by a horrible civil war in Israel. In all this, David had chosen to follow the path that God had traced for him to follow.

But now we read of a complete removal of all internal opposition—a complete acceptance of the man and his mission. It is worth noting here that this acceptance did not come from a depth of conviction before God on the part of the elders of Israel and the majority of Israelites. They were not living in such a way as to bring depths of conviction before God; they were largely affected by events. Abner roused support for David, but both he and Ishbosheth, the son of Saul who reigned in his stead, were slain by treachery. The house of Saul was utterly removed from the throne, and the people saw little alternative to David.

When everything seems to go one's way—this is a better measure of a man's

character than adversity. What was in King David's heart? What was revealed as he began the task for which he had been so long prepared?

"And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake." ^{v.12}

David didn't conclude that he had simply outlasted the opposition, or that he was simply stronger or more skillful. David realized that God had done the establishing; God had opened the door for him to take up the work for which he had been anointed. This was a true perception, and it is vital to have and to keep foremost at all times. *Can I do as I please in what I think is right?* Do I take the work of the Lord into my own hands in His name? Or is the fear of God upon me? Do I hold my position and influence as a sacred trust, given unto my stewardship by the hand of Him who knows all things? *"And David perceived that the LORD had established... that [the LORD] had exalted [David's] kingdom for [the LORD's] people Israel's sake."*

The work is not mine, even though it is in my hands. I am entrusted with the gospel. *"As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."* ^{1 Th 2:4}

The way in which King David went about the work of God as king of Israel is in strong contrast to the way that King Saul did. These scriptures are given us by divine wisdom for our profit and comfort, and there is much here for meditation and food for thought. The difference in these two administrations is revealed to our eyes. If we had lived at the time of these two kings, before the complete story was manifested, it would have been much

more difficult to discern the differences, but we are privileged to know the rest of the story. Were not both kings appointed of God for certain duties and responsibilities? Yes. David's entire position toward the removal of King Saul from office was, "If God put him in, then God must remove him." David was strongly tried on his stand for this truth, but he took his stand and God helped him to stay with the right. *"The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed."* ^{1 Sam 26:11} There was more to this than just refraining from doing violence to King Saul. We might accurately characterize this as David's stand against human politics. He stayed clear of the artful maneuvering of the politician. Here is the contrast with the administration of King Saul: *"Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?"* ^{1 Sam 22:7} The man (David) who refused to take things into his own hands was enabled to go about the business of ministering to Israel in an entirely different way than his predecessor. A different ideal was in his heart and mind. (See 2 Samuel 23:3-4.)

We have met so many ministers who feel they have a right to take their ideas of how things should go, and tack them on to what God says. "This is my ministry, my congregation. I have a right to run it as I see fit. As long as I do not contradict what God says, then it is mine." Do you not think that God has a way that He wants things conducted that is not spelled out completely in written form, but is left to Holy Ghost guidance? Of course, true Holy Ghost guidance never contradicts

When everything seems to go one's way—this is a better measure of a man's character than adversity.

The Bible can make a man of God perfect because the Bible is perfect.

the written scriptures in any way, but harmonizes completely with the Word's direction and underlying meaning. But nowhere do we find in the Bible that we can do as we please, binding out personal convictions as disciplines and creeds upon others. Our best enlightened vision is not established as a substitute for the Word of God and the Spirit of God, and I have no right to discipline others in His church to line up with my ideas, thus putting my ideas on a level with the Word and the Spirit. None of us are exempt from the Word of God; none of us have the right to do as we please. As to what God thinks of me adding things to what He binds upon us all, we read in Revelations 22:18-19, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Note how specific is this warning: "If any man shall add unto these things...."

You see, if God allows men to add to what He has given, then what He has given is not quite adequate. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."² Tim 3:16-17 The Bible can make a man of God perfect because the Bible is perfect. It is perfect for everything that is needed. Its obscurities are necessarily obscure; its hard-to-be-understood things (2 Pet. 3:16) are there for reasons known unto God. It will do and does do just what the Author intended, neither more or less.

We're reminded of the man who had a dream in which God handed him the Bible, saying, "George, here is the Bible. Just make it over to suit you." And in the dream, the man handed the Bible back to God, saying, "Lord, the Bible is all right, just like it is. Please make me over to fit the Book."

Now I am sure that there are sincere ministers who venture out unto this sinking sand with the best of intentions. They read such scriptures as Heb. 13:17—"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you"—and conclude that their responsibility is to carefully and judiciously lay out rules for their flock to follow. However, this scripture does not justify the creation of rules by them that have the rule over others, but it emphasizes the divine calling of certain members of the body to hold before all, including themselves, the rules that God has already made and revealed. It is in this sense that the ministry "rules" over the laity. God enlightens His Word, expounds upon the meanings, and gives utterance to His chosen vessels in a way that is authoritative and binding for time and eternity to all who want to please Him and be acceptable to Him.



You may say, "What about things given 'by permission'?"¹ Cor 7:6 You will note that the rest of the verse reads, "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." It was necessary to distinguish between counsel/advice and commandment. Things that God allows you to speak by permission are not God's commands. Brother Paul was advising others to consider not marrying, even as he was not married, for greater consecration to the will of God, but this was not a commandment (1 Tim. 4:3; 5:14).

We talked once with a dear soul who had certain rules bound upon her by a well-meaning ministry. They required her to do and not to do certain things in trusting the Lord with health. She promised. And she felt that this promise had been a help to her when she was tested. She felt it steadied her and kept her within certain bounds. No doubt, the ministers who bound this upon her felt justified by her reaction, but I could not. I knew that God values the motives of what we do even more than whatever it is that we do. If this sister kept to the outward boundaries of trust in God *because she wanted to keep the rules and thus keep in favor with a certain body of people, was that motive pure and acceptable before the throne of God?* God requires a trust in Him that goes further than this.

We have groups of people who all more or less dress modestly and plainly, for they are under a set of rules that is bound upon them, but God is looking at the individual motives of their hearts. Some of them please God by having a modest and humble heart as well as a modest and unadorned exterior, but a large number, I am sorry to say, know little to nothing about the motives in these things that are imparted by the Holy Ghost. They have a name to live, but are dead. They look like they are saved people; but in heart, many do not know God and are simply following rules. God works from the inside out, but man works from the outside in, and man doesn't usually get very far in, either—certainly not to the depth that God requires of every one of us.

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.” ¹ Isa 29:13

“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 2:4-5

“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” ¹ Rom 2:10

This last text was spoken by Brother Paul about the Jews, and it also describes in general the administration of King Saul. This man—rejected of God for disobedience and stubbornness—chose to hold on to the position that God had given him. He held on to his destruction and the great hurt of Israel. He chose to try to accomplish his idea of the work of God on his own in the name of the Lord. He chose to be susceptible to the fear of man. And God permitted him to do so as a object lesson to all the generations of people following, including us. Leaving aside for a minute all the wicked things that he did, let us consider what he did that seemed right. *“And the woman [a witch] said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?”* ¹ Sam 28:9 *“Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. ... (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)”* ² Sam 21:1-2 We learn of this zeal against the Gibeonites because King David had to clean up after it. We might also remember that King Saul

fought against the Philistines and suffered no idolatry in Israel.

What then was the difference between the administration of David and the administration of Saul? They both fought the Philistines. They both stood against idolatry. But God was with David, whereas God was not with Saul. True, but how did this manifest itself? How can we know the difference?

“When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold. The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.” ² Sam 5:17-18

This was the same problem that King Saul had faced—over and over. God allowed His people to be opposed by these militant, aggressive enemies. In God’s appointment of these recurring crises, He had lessons for His people *if those emergencies were met each and every one as God intended*. In other words, it is not just in going through the battles, surviving and beating the foe, that God has in mind, but there are certain things to be gained in trusting God and walking with Him ***each and every time***. Are we getting out of our trials what God has for us? Are we just interested in maintaining a certain line of conduct, or is there more than that to be gained in each conflict?

“And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.” ² Sam 5:19

It is not just another battle with the Philistines. Or another battle of sickness. Or another battle of misbehavior on the part of someone. It is not just routine—a matter I can handle with human wisdom, using precedent as a guide. If I am going to obey Proverbs 3:5—*“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding”*—especially avoiding the leaning to my own understanding, I must do as David did: inquire of the Lord.

“Lord, how do You want to handle this.” And the man of God got an answer from the Lord. (Do you get *answers from God* in your battles?) And the man of God did just as God directed him.

Now this did not happen just once. *“And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.”* ² Sam 5:22-24 This is very plain. ***God does not go about every battle exactly the same***. Victory over standing-for-the-truth-in-our-own-way is just as important as victory over the Philistines. Victory over me is critical; victory over my “I think” spirit.

It is necessary for me to win the victory in God’s appointed way, for there is more than just the obvious enemy to conquer. Put another way, our humanity needs to be outwitted and humbled under the mighty hand of God. *We need this*. It is not just a preferred outcome, it is essential; it is a matter of spiritual life and death; it is heaven or hell. Only in this way can we not give some place to our adversary that will give him the advantage over us. True religion of this caliber is beyond the ability of man on his own; *“it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”* ^{Jer 10:23}

Now if I live this way, with this freshness of God-appointed victories, there is an accompanying upswelling of praise to God, of giving all the glory to Him, that floods the soul. It crucifies self; it humbles the flesh; it leads to an esteem, a value, and a magnification of the presence of God that will make you seek out the Ark of God (wherein He dwells between the two cherubims, even His Word and His Spirit). Glory to God! Just as a mother’s milk imparts all kinds of benefits to the baby, so winning victories in God’s appointments

It is necessary for me to win the victory in God’s appointed way, for there is more than just the obvious enemy to conquer.

with trials, in His way of going through each of those trials, yields benefits beyond calculation. Hallelujah!

“When our hearts are full of gladness,
Which we joyfully proclaim,
How it cheers the sad and lonely,
How it magnifies His name!”

“Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Psa 103:1-5

We pause in our rejoicing over the presence of the Lord of hosts to express sorrow and pity for what King Saul missed. He missed so much. Grimly fighting off the

enemies of Israel. Trying to hold a certain standard for the Lord without the blessing of doing it God’s way. Oh, how terrible to miss the blessing! To have a name to live while dead! Yet the majority of “Christian” legalists are in the same condition, more or less. How many neglect the Ark, while attempting to fight the battles of the Lord!

“Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.” 2 Sam 6:1-2

Listen, O reader! Do you catch the note of triumph, of rejoicing toward God, as this army of victors went “to bring up from thence **the ark of God**”? God has given us the victory, and we want to exalt His name. How sad that the ark *needed* to be brought up! How grievous that it had not been kept in prominence, honored and exalted of all! Such was the fruit of the administration of the rejected-by-God king and the people. But now there was a different note indeed in the administration of King David.

But in all this rejoicing, revealed to our wondering eyes, was a solemn reminder to those brethren of a different dispensation, so long ago, of **the absolute need of doing the work of God as He wants it done**. How little, how very little, human excitement, zeal, and enthusiasm really amount to! The brethren back then made a mistake—an innocent mistake. They certainly didn’t mean to. They forgot to consult the

Word of God as to how to move the Ark. They didn’t mean to forget. This was all so new to them, this wonderful blessing of being in His order with His abiding presence, after it had not been experienced for so long, that they inadvertently neglected to transport the Ark as God had instructed so long ago.

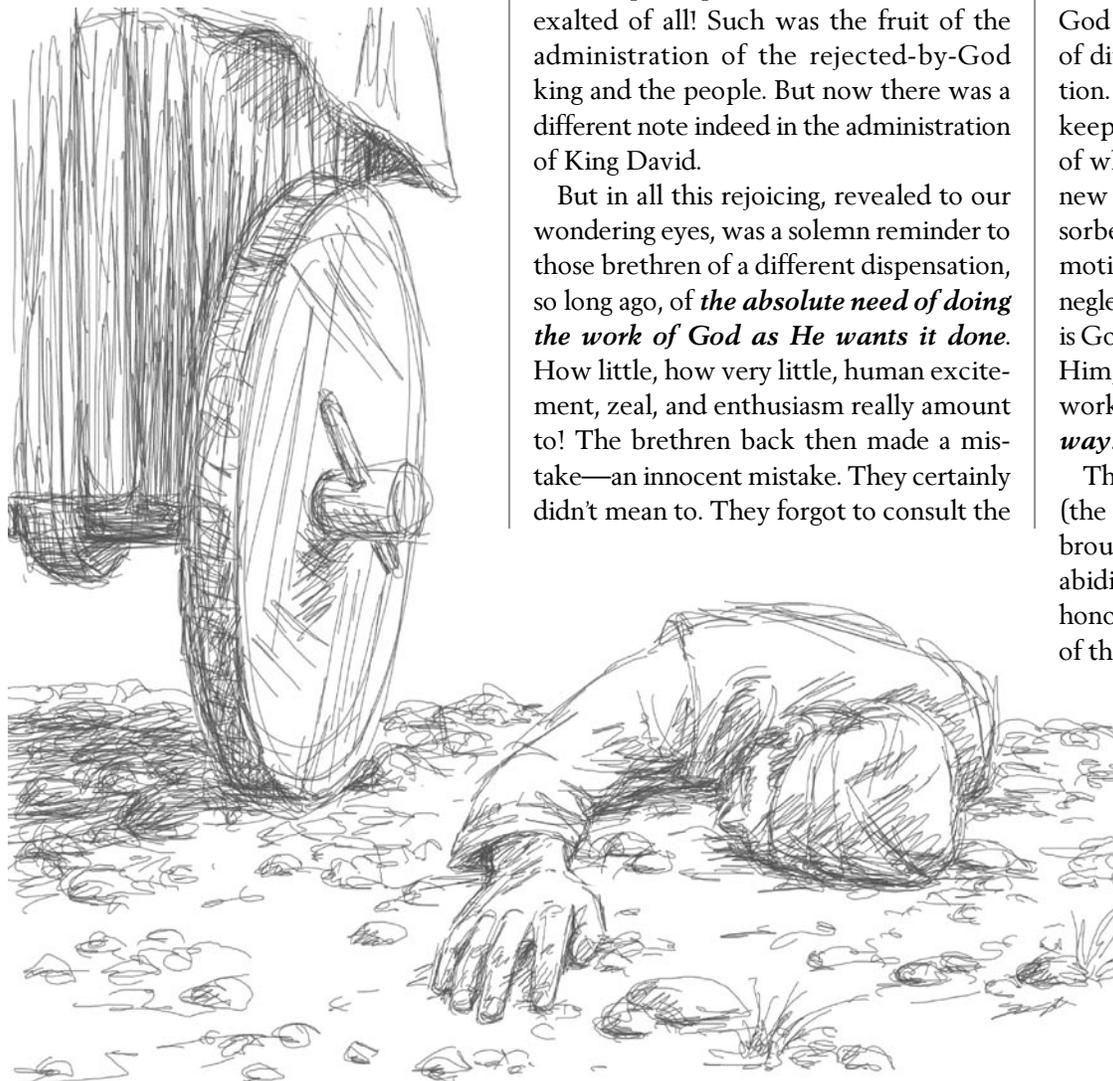
God knew this, of course. God loved them. God understood them. God knew what would happen when He manifested His displeasure. But, O my brethren, let us get the lesson! It is so important that we do things just as God would have it done, that it is worth the shock of Uzzah’s death, the consternation of King David, his displeasure with God (2 Samuel 6:8), his being frightened of God—scared of God. I say again, *it was worth the shock*. Surely the Lord does not think as we do (Isa. 58:8-9).

Divine wisdom informs anyone who will listen that the Ark was not to be moved on a cart, even a new one. I would to God that the authors of the proliferation of different fellowships would pay attention. They keep building their carts. They keep engineering their “improvements,” of which Solomon said there was nothing new under the sun. They design shock absorbers and different kinds of tie-downs, motive power, driver training, etc., while neglecting to realize that there is a way that is God-ordained, prepared for all who love Him, that works, has worked, will always work. Oh, brethren, **let us do it God’s way**. Nothing else is worth considering.

There is a happy sequel to *Perez-uzzah* (the breach of Uzzah). *They got it right*, brought that precious residence of God’s abiding to a proper place of esteem and honor among them, ignored the scoffing of the skeptics (such as King Saul’s daughter), and continued to follow the Lord. May we do the same.

“Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!” Deu 33:29

“Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.” Psa 144:15



*“This poor man cried,
and the Lord
heard him,
and saved him
out of all his
troubles.”*

—Psalm 34:6

This poor man cried.

The scripture is personal, for me, for you. It is not just “a poor man cried,” or “that poor man cried.” It is not just to be an encouraging testimony to hear from someone else, or an example of God helping someone in the Bible, but it is for us to have this testimony: I cried out to the Lord; I felt my need; I turned to the Living God for help.

This poor man cried. Yes, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” ^{MT 5:3} I am crying because I am lacking. I am aware of my lack. I am not just trying to “tough it out.” Though I am called to “*endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,*” ^{2 Tim 2:3} I recognize that I am unable to do this unless the Lord helps me. I am insufficient for the problems confronting me. I am coming, not to bargain, but to plead.

This poor man cried. I am a man—created by God, given dominion over this earth, having as a race sinned and utterly failed at the job. But I am also one of those Jesus died to redeem, to wash me in His own blood and to make me a king and priest (Rev 1:5-6). God designed for me to reign triumphant with Christ in this life. I am one of those to whom God has extended great and precious promises just so that this can happen (2 Pet 1:4).

This poor man cried. This is crucial. This is not a time to stand upon some poise or dignity. Whether I am crying out loud or simply in my soul, I am pressing my need before the Lord as the baby cries to make known its need. I am acknowledging that my need is serious, that I am in trouble, that I need help. I may be just as unable to express my need clearly as the child, but the Spirit of God will help me (Rom 8:26).



And the Lord heard him. Not just a good man in a position to help me, not someone with human limitations of power and wisdom, but **the Most High God**. This is He who spoke the worlds into existence with a word. He who knows the end from the beginning, and discerns the motives of the human heart. He who dwells in a high and holy place, yet seeks to revive the humble. My prayer is to the Holy and Loving **King of the Universe**.

And the Lord heard him. There was nothing blocking my prayer getting through to God, or if there was, I did whatever was needed (repenting, humbling myself, making things right, forgiving somebody, etc.) to remove any hindrances. God took note—and when God takes note, things began to happen. It got through, and it became an action item on God’s current agenda (I speak in human terms—God is not bound in time, but He enters into my time and space to meet my need). He has taken my case into His hands!

And the Lord heard him. Now I’m in the third person. God is the center of the matter now. What He’s doing or going to do is central, and all the glory is going and will go to **the Lord**, not to “*this poor man*.”

And saved him out of all his troubles. I’m still in the third person, but God has wonderfully helped. He saved, He gave the help that was needed, He is the Savior, the hero, **the Knight in Shining Armor**.

And saved him out of all his troubles. I was in, but because of God, I’m out. God didn’t just blow bugles and say that He was coming, but, praise God, He acted! This is the finished testimony of the past help, and for my current and future troubles, the promise on which I rely.

And saved him out of all his troubles. Not just the trouble or troubles I cried about—He addressed the related troubles, the underlying troubles, He went after what I didn’t even realize was there, and what I didn’t even think to mention.

And save him out of all his troubles. The Lord knows what the troubles are, whether I called it correctly or not. When Abraham begged God all the way down to 10 righteous men being enough to save the city of Sodom from destruction (Gen 18), God went after the burden that was the real trouble for Abraham, and spared Lot, even while destroying the city. God knows the real needs of our soul, and cares. Praise God!

Brethren, let this scripture be ours! ➡

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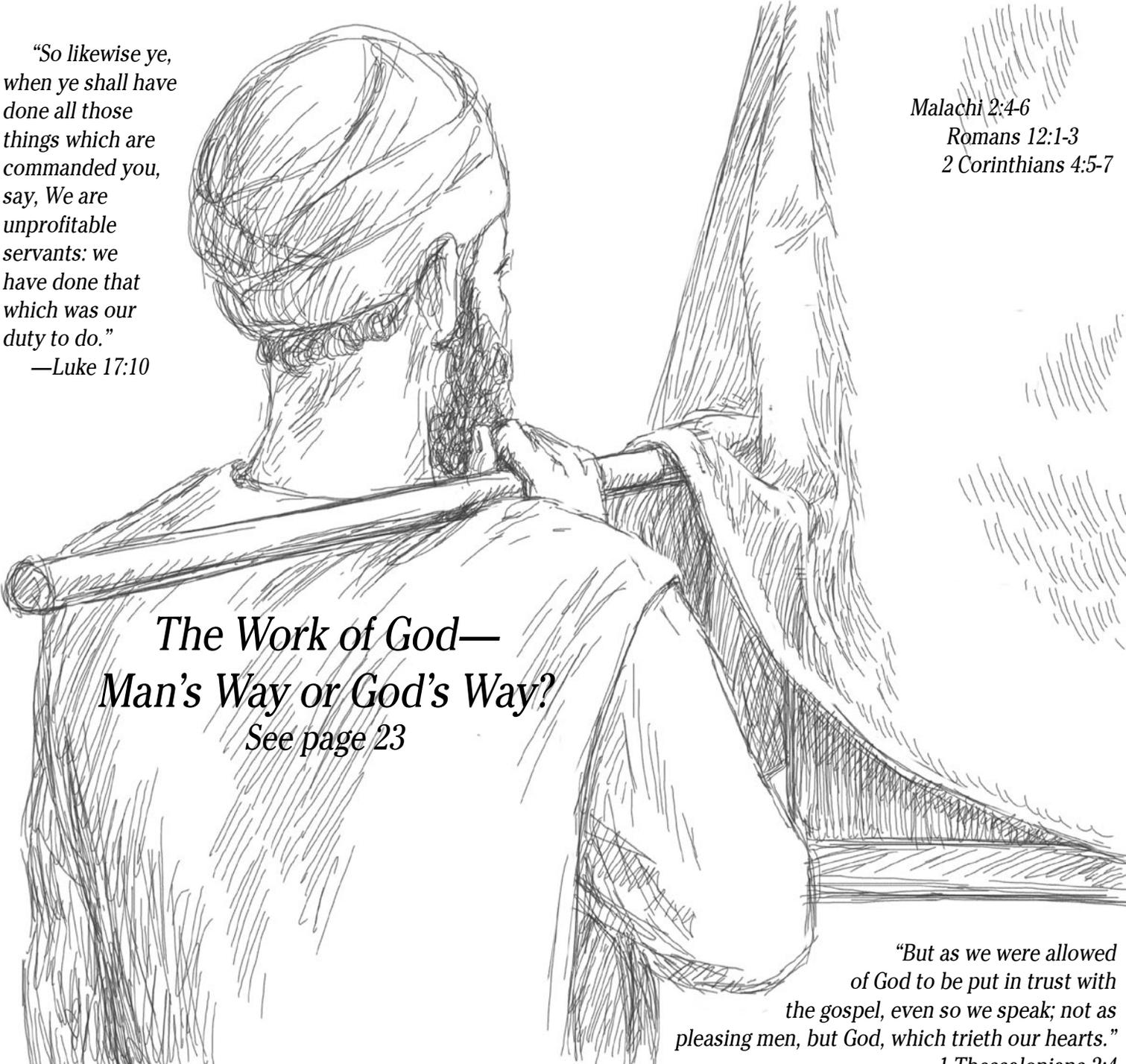
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“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”
—1 Corinthians 4:1-2

“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”
—Luke 17:10

*Malachi 2:4-6
Romans 12:1-3
2 Corinthians 4:5-7*



***The Work of God—
Man’s Way or God’s Way?***
See page 23

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”
—1 Thessalonians 2:4