

FOUNDATION TRUTH

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*“I have no man...
to put me into the pool.”*
—John 5:7

Dear Reader

“O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!” Hab. 1:2

“How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?” Ps. 13:1

One of the greatest tests of trusting another is to rest in their timing, instead of our own. The child that constantly asks, “When will we get there?” on a long trip, has not yet gotten to the place of trust of the child who finds some quiet occupation while waiting. In warfare, the soldier or military unit that flees when the going gets tough does not have the level of trust in their leadership of those that hang on against tremendous odds when a promise is given that relief is on the way. The level of trust has a lot to do with how much we will accept the timing of another, not under our control, with our own timing. If you add to that the difficulties that come with a lack of the development of patience in our characters, you see such results as the acquiring of huge loads of debt in our society, instead of waiting until (partly under our control, and partly not) we are able to afford something we feel we need or want.

The Lord, whose ways and thoughts are higher than ours (Is. 55:9), knows how much we need to learn to trust Him. We tend so naturally to trust our own reasoning, our own sense of timing, that it takes a great deal of God’s grace to “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.” Pr. 3:5

So many of the failures in spiritual life or the turning aside to false doctrines stem from the desire to be able to choose our own limits, to have our own say in “how long.” I want to get an encouraging response to the gospel seed, and so I’m tempted with those temptations referred to in “The Spirit of Influence” (pg. 10). Many who have started out trusting in the Lord for the healing of their bodies have tired of waiting for the Lord’s purposes to be fulfilled in their sickness, and turn to the arm of man for help. In my work, if things aren’t going well, or aren’t very fulfilling

for me, I am more naturally inclined to want an escape (another job, or to have the assignments that aren’t going well removed from me), than to seek the grace to triumph in my present trial as long as it lasts. It takes more effort and time and pain to get a hold of what the Lord wants to teach us in any trial than to find our own way out.

I’ve shared about my failed business venture (FT #9, #11), but it seems appropriate to repeat it here. For over two years, I tried to establish my own business out of my home. I had found the blessing of the Lord in making the attempt, and when I grew discouraged at the lack of success, I was inclined to quit, but I would ask the Lord to show me if He wanted me to continue. Several times when I wanted to hear the “okay” on quitting, the Lord showed me He wanted me to continue. In the midst of the continuing failure the Lord provided part-time work to continue providing for my family, but still He would have me continue this attempt. Finally, He told me to quit and gave me another task to do in its place. The lessons He taught me during those years of frequent frustration were absolutely necessary to my success in the new task He gave me, and have been needful many times since.

Let us trust the Lord, and though our trials may press out of our hearts the cry to God, “How long?” let us apply for the help we need to wait on God, to trust Him.

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” Heb. 10:36

Love and prayers,
The Editor



About Us

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

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

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

Address correspondence to:

Foundation Truth
P.O. Box 1212
Jefferson, Oregon 97352
ft@timelesstruths.org

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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 quartely magazine for children ages five to ten.

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

Timeless Truths Publications
P.O. Box 1212
Jefferson, Oregon 97352
mail@timelesstruths.org

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edited by Rick Erickson and others

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"I decided what I shall do about it," said Joe. Walking to the little stand table in the other room, he picked up the Bible and, holding it up before his wife, said, "I mean to take this as *the man of my counsel*, and go to it to find out what the Lord would have me to do. It taught me the way to God, and I am sure, if I take it as my counselor, it will teach me the way to live a life that will please my God."

"But what if they will not accept us as we are in the church? Then what shall we do about it?" eagerly inquired Susie.

"I do not know just what I shall do yet, or what steps I shall take," said Joe, "but this one thing I have decided to do, and that is from now on I shall make this Book my counselor and shall go to it, and I am sure if I walk as it says I shall please God, and that is what I want more than anything else."

—Effie M. Williams, *The Man of His Counsel*

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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

Fellowship

What does Jesus' cleansing cover? "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." ^{1 Jn. 1:7}

Please, explain what the phrase "cleanseth us from all sin" means. What sin is this referred to here—imputed sin? Depravity? Or what?

Replay: When the scripture says "all sin," it means **all sin**. The objective of salvation is to restore a man to Adamic purity—no sin—acquired or inherited. This scripture teaches that "if we walk in the light as He is in the light," it will bring us to a state of cleanliness through the blood of Jesus. The first work of purification takes away one kind of sin. This is the result of walking in the light of repentance, restitution, and faith in the saving blood of Jesus. The second work of purification takes away the other kind of sin. This is the result of walking in the light of death to self, absolute consecration to God, and faith in the blood of Jesus for complete sanctification. Thus the objective of cleansing from all sin in a given human being is accomplished.

How is spiritual fellowship attained? "...we have fellowship one with another..."

Please, explain what it takes for the true saints to have fellowship. It does not appear like spiritual fellowship results from our socially coming together in services and human acceptance, or even in formulated doctrinal agreement. It has to come from a deeper spiritual relationship than that. I cannot explain clearly what that deeper relationship involves, for us to be able to fellowship freely and joyously, as happens when we sit to laugh and joke as ordinary human beings. As ordinary men and women, we laugh and joke a lot about the entertaining things of our common life. Shouldn't this be the case when we are in the same Holy Ghost elevation? When I am in company of real spiritual men, I find it very enjoyable to talk about the biblical experiences, and we even have a lot of joyous time which even includes holy laughter. Kindly clear this for me, please.

Replay: Yes, spiritual fellowship goes deeper than *trying* to have fellowship. Spiritual fellowship arises from what we *are*, as contrasted with what we *try to be*. There is something deeper than intellectual agreement and a decision to agree to agree. Here the words of the apostle apply: "*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*" ^{1 Jn. 2:19} These words have been used to explain why nearly anyone left anyone else, but they contain a deeper message than just disagreement in thought. They imply disagreement at a deeper level.

There are many fellowships, and there are many degrees of fellowship within each kind of fellowship. We look into the eyes of an animal, and we experience a distinct lack of

human fellowship. There is something in the very nature of the beast that is alien to our nature, yet we experience a certain fellowship with the animal. When we see that the snake or rat or dog feels pain, we can feel his pain. This would be the fellowship of living things, as contrasted with your relationship with a rock.

Within the human fellowship experience, there is a distinct difference in the adult's relationship to the child—but it is a difference in degree, not in kind. The basic human nature is the same. And there is a difference between the adult and a teenager, as contrasted with an eight-year-old child, but again, it is in degree. Between a grandfather and a given child, as contrasted with a young father and the child. Between the two genders. Between nationalities. Between races. Between the slave owner and the slave. When the nature is the same (human nature, in these cases), then there may be differences in agreement, empathy, or thought that change the scope of fellowship, but the basic fellowship of human being to human being remains. There are things that can affect this basic relationship, too, as when a human being becomes insane or hardened through sin to the point that the individual becomes less and less human.

The word *fellowship* and its synonyms are very expressive. It is defined as "the condition of sharing similar interests, ideals, or experiences, as by reason of profession, religion, or nationality." A second meaning is "the companionship of individuals in a congenial atmosphere and on equal terms." My dictionaries and thesauruses give the following list of synonyms: amity, association, brotherhood, camaraderie, companionship, comradeship, fraternity, amicability, friendliness, friendship, intimacy, society, togetherness. The Bible tells us that there was an

Spiritual fellowship arises from what we are, as contrasted with what we try to be.

affinity between Ahab and Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 18:1). This affinity/fellowship was of sufficient depth to send them out to war together, yet there was a lack of affinity/fellowship between the two with respect to truth and the prophet of truth (Micahiah). We read of the fellowship of Jonathan and his armor-bearer. *“And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart.”* ^{1 Sam. 14:7} It is quite evident that the fellowship of Jonathan and his armor-bearer was of quite a different merit than the unholy affinity between Ahab and Jehoshaphat.

When we look further into the scriptures, we find a fellowship described between God and man. *“Truly our fellowship is with the Father.”* ^{1 Jn. 1:3} This is a marvelous thing. God created man to have fellowship with Him, and at first, Adam and Eve enjoyed a wonderful, unbroken fellowship with God. *“They heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.”* ^{Gen. 3:8} Although this scripture describes things after fellowship was broken between God and man, we are distinctly left with the impression that God walked in the garden and communed with Adam and Eve regularly before this, to the great joy and happiness of all three. There was a holy affinity between them. God and man were at peace. We catch a glimpse of how the relationship worked, *“And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.”* ^{Gen. 2:19} This scripture describes things before Eve was created from Adam's rib, but we see that there was an involvement, an interrelationship, between God and man that is beautiful to behold. God and man were living together in harmony. It was as it was created to be. Ah, the power of the gospel! It restores man to the proper fellowship between himself and his Creator. *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* ^{Rom. 5:1} *“He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”* ^{Ps. 23:3}

This fellowship had (and has now) deep roots. **It originated in the moral nature of the Almighty and the then unblemished moral nature of the created man and woman.** *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”* ^{Gen. 1:27} *“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”* ^{Gen. 1:31} There was a likeness, a spiritual fellowship, far beyond words, that was involved in this fellowship between God and man. It was not in power, for man was and is weak. It was not in intellect, for God's ways are high above our ways, and His thoughts above our thoughts. It was not in flesh, for God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. **It was in perfect moral fellowship,** because God and man were in complete

As can be seen, there are many kinds of fellowship and many degrees of fellowship within a certain kind.

agreement, morally speaking. Man's inner nature was in complete harmony with the nature of God. Man was not a puppet. He was created to think for himself, did so, and broke spiritual fellowship with God by thinking and doing for himself in disobedience to moral law. When he chose to do so, he defiled his moral nature and incurred a curse that passed on his defiled nature to all his offspring. Thus we read that Adam begat a son *“after his image,”* ^{Gen. 5:3} instead of after the image of God; and it is a terrible thing to realize that Adam's image at that point was a sinful image, and that Seth's image was sinful, too. Then we find the conclusion of the Bible on this whole subject, *“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.”* ^{Rom. 5:14} Thus we realize that even the newly-created, whom God sends continually into the world, are defiled by the curse of depravity. God makes the soul, and it is

holy, but it is defiled at conception, when body and soul come together. *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”* ^{Ps. 51:5-6} **This defiled nature hinders fellowship with God.** Although the young child is not conscious of acts of rebellion (whether of commission or omission) toward God, and therefore feels a certain affinity toward their Creator, yet there is something that does not fit and hinders fellowship. When a person gets saved and is at peace again with God, there is still something down deep, as we say, that is not in agreement with the holy and pure nature of God, and it hinders fellowship. There is fellowship, for there is a real love for God and a strong desire to never displease Him again, but the root cause of rebellion (in the nature of wrath) is still present and needs to be purified.

As can be seen, there are many kinds of fellowship and many degrees of fellowship within a certain kind. Mutual fear of the one true God brings a certain fellowship. A cleansing that takes away guilt and brings peace between a man and God will also bring a sweet fellowship between all who have received like faith. And yet that is not perfect. Only a fellowship of moral nature is the same as was at the beginning. And only a fellowship of moral nature reaches to the depths of what wholly-sanctified Brother John was telling us in 1 John 1:7. The fellowship that comes from being cleansed from all sin lays the foundation for a degree of affinity and closeness that is just like that between Jesus and God. It matches the fellowship of all the inhabitants of glory.

Fellowship leads to trust. It develops confidence in the fellowshipped person or persons. Complete and perfect fellowship brings about complete and perfect trust. Partial fellowship, partial trust. No fellowship, no trust.

*“The bond that circles heaven's pure—
Oh, wondrous, wondrous story!—
Has dropped around the holy here,
And fills us all with glory.”*

“Oh, mystery of heaven’s peace!

Oh, bond of heaven’s union!

Our souls in fellowship embrace,
And live in sweet communion.

“Oh, brethren, how this perfect love

Unites us all in Jesus!

One heart, and soul, and mind we prove

The union heaven gave us.”

I have spiritual fellowship with a young, unsanctified brother. That fellowship is founded on a love for God and a trueness to God that is very real in his life and in mine. It is distinctly different from our friendship before he got saved. Then we only had a natural fellowship, as two human beings living in the natural world. Both of us had to eat and sleep. We had different human emotional needs in common, etc. When he got saved, there was a new spiritual relationship. When I spoke of living right, resisting temptation, etc., he was not merely hearing about it—those desires and life within him were strongly in agreement. When he spoke of it, I felt agreement, rapport, and concord with his spirit and life. We were in unity on these important things. But when I speak of death to self, of being all the Lord’s, of living all on the altar, we are not the same. He respects what I am, and he desires it. But he is not there. He can talk the talk a little, but it does not come from deep in the heart, for he is not walking this particular victory over self. He has increased his consecration, but it is not salted with fire. His heart, while truly in love with Jesus, is not glowing with perfect love. Therefore, our fellowship is not that of the wholly sanctified. It is good fellowship, and certainly far different from how it was when he was dead in trespasses and sins, but is short of the songwriter’s words quoted above. When heavy trials come his way, I am more afraid for him than I am for the wholly sanctified. The fear arises from a perception of this weakness in his experience. If he continues to walk in the light, he will find God’s mighty transforming power to purify the soul and fill him with the Holy Ghost. Then we will both talk and walk the language of those who have entered into rest. It is very plain to me that inward carnality, even imperfectly or completely

hidden to the view of the possessor, hinders perfect fellowship.

In the young brother’s case, the burden for his sanctification rests strongly upon me, and I am closely involved with him. I am thinking of another brother who lives quite a distance away. I have not seen him now or heard from him for several years. There is fellowship between us. There is no doubt in my mind that he loves the Lord and is living a holy life. I feel confident of brotherhood in Christ with this man. There is also something that blocks the complete fellowship of the wholly sanctified. It surfaces in small things, that, on closer examination, are not so small. After all, they are big enough to block perfect fellowship. Both of us respect each other very much, and we love each other and bear each other’s burdens when we become aware of tribulations in each of our lives. Yet we had to say to him that we were teaching two different standards, and we could not make him feel free to preach to us because of the contradictions in the standards that we both held. There is a certain fellowship, but I think it would be safe to say that it is hindered from being all that God would have it to be. God knows the reasons why.

I honestly do not think that he sees the things that hinder fellowship between us as important enough to have convictions about. To him, we just seem a little strained, I think. He respects our right to have convictions, but doesn’t feel that the principles and things involved are any more than just two different human ways of doing things, and he has not dug deep enough to be convicted that there is more to it. To us, it seems plain that the lack of depth here is costing him and his greatly, but I do not believe that he sees that at all.

So, where is he spiritually? I leave that in God’s hands. It takes something from God to trust Him with our bodies, and, beyond any doubt, this brother has gotten that grace in his battles. So, why doesn’t that give room for him to work among us freely? If we give him that room, his lack of conviction on other things will affect us. As a shepherd and overseer, I am answerable to God for what I receive, either overtly or tacitly. As a watchman on the

wall, I can have the blood of others on my hands if I am not faithful to the light and faithful to warn others of the light that God has shown on my pathway. It fills me with grief to not receive this brother in this capacity as a minister, and I gladly receive him as a brother just as far as I can, while also recognizing that the fellowship is flawed and incomplete. I have a message of truth and deliverance from heaven to teach and hold before them, nor can I back away from it. If they just view those convictions as my personal idiosyncrasies, then they cannot receive me on that basis and have rightful spiritual fellowship. We hunger for the testimony of Brother Paul to the congregation at Thessalonica, “*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*”^{1 Th. 2:13} Until our convictions and the reading that we have put before them are able to appear as other than the word of men, then things will probably continue on as they are: flawed fellowship. I believe that they wish for better, even as we do.

This state of things is different from those who reject and rebel against truth or are unwilling to pay the price of truth. In those cases, something in the heart is revealed that is not willing to go through for God. If I were in their position and they in mine, I would feel obligated to dig and determine for time and eternity what is the mind of God about those things that block complete fellowship. I cannot let it rest without getting down to foundation stones of truth. I am not certain just why they do not pursue this matter this intensely and persistently. I will not judge it before the time (1 Cor. 4:5). When God reveals what stands behind the beliefs, then I will know the judgment of the matter.

I must not pretend or “gloss over” this lack in fellowship with these dear ones. I am commanded to think soberly (realistically) in Romans 12:3. The grace of God teaches me to live soberly (Titus 2:12). I must face the situation, regardless of my feelings or hopes, and love, pray, bear, and forbear on that basis.

I have identified the general pattern of all limited, flawed fellowships with God's genuine little children who are in something less than full light and under other influences than the Spirit of God. This would include people who sit under the influence of full and complete gospel teaching, but who have responded to that teaching with the head only, instead of the heart.

I recognize, my brother, that in closely examining this situation, I have identified **the general pattern of all limited, flawed fellowships** with God's genuine little children who are in **something less than full light** and **under other influences** than the Spirit of God. This would include people who sit under the influence of full and complete gospel teaching, but who have responded to that teaching with the head only, instead of the heart. There is a certain fellowship, and there is *not* a certain fellowship. It differs completely from that described in the Bible: "*Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*"¹ Jn. 1:3 "*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.*"² Jn. 17:22

"To unity glorious, rich and complete." The poet says: (1) glorious, (2) rich, (3) complete. This greatly stirs my heart to walk in all the light that Jesus shines on my pathway. If I fit in perfect fellowship with Him, I will be in perfect fellowship with every other child of God who does the same, including that great body of saints in glory. Praise God!

In family devotions several nights ago, my wife and I were reading a tract by Charles Finney. The author's name seemed vaguely familiar—I think I actually had this name confused with Fletcher in my mind at the time of the reading. I have quoted the first part of the tract:

To the honour of God alone I will tell a little of my experience in this matter. I was powerfully converted on the morning of the 12th of October. In the evening at the same day and on the morning of the following day, I received an overwhelming baptism of the Holy Ghost that went through me, as it seemed to me, body and

soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high, that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion.

My words seemed to fasten like barbed arrows in the souls of men. They cut like a sword. They broke the heart like a hammer. Multitudes can attest to this. Oftentimes, a word dropped without my remembering it, would fasten conviction, and often result in almost immediate conversion.

But sometimes I would find myself in a great measure empty of this power. I would go out and visit, and find that I made no saving impression. I would then set apart a day for private fasting and prayer, fearing that this power had departed from me, and would enquire anxiously after the reason of this apparent emptiness. After humbling myself and crying for help, the power would return upon me with all its freshness. This has been the experience of my life.

The reading of this tract had a stunning effect on my wife and myself. It was an amazing story. Further along in the reading, there is a story of how an entire mill of scoffing, skeptical young women, along with others, were all affected by the presence of this man. According to the account, all got converted. The owner actually stopped the mill's production, stating that it was more important that souls be saved than that this mill should run. Reportedly, he got saved, too.

At the end of this reading, my wife and I looked at each other. We had never heard or witnessed anything like it. When we had prayer, I prayed that God would show anything we needed to see about being used of Him. I asked the Lord to teach me how He wanted me to be. If I had missed

anything in boldness and aggression that He wanted me to have, then I requested that He open the matter to me.

I felt confident that God had heard my prayer. There was a sweet peace that lay upon my heart, and I committed all perplexities to God. I trusted Him, as always, to teach me what I needed to know. I knew He would be faithful to instruct, reprove, and guide in the matter.

A little research the next morning revealed a glaring inconsistency. This man, Finney, did not believe in the reality of an inherited nature of depravity. Another fact came to light. It is a matter of historical record that his converts filled the ranks of formal, professed Christianity in sectism. This "baptism of the Holy Ghost" was a different "ghost" than the One that had sanctified me. It yielded a different fruit—a fruit that seemed more obsessed with sensational change than the nature and endurance of that change. Then I began to realize significant differences between this ministry (Finney) and the ministry of Brother D. S. Warner. The latter wrote:

I began to fast on Friday. Ate but little yesterday and nothing this forenoon. The Lord came very near to me. Oh, how He let me down to nothingness! I saw and felt ashamed of the trouble the Lord has had with me. I sank down into the dust before Him, and instead of wondering why God did not give the greater measure of power that the Spirit impressed me I should have, I was led to wonder that He had entrusted me as much as He had.

There was nothing of the irresistible, all-compelling power that Mr. Finney experienced, that makes people turn to God **in spite of themselves**. Upon further reflection, I realized that Jesus **did not**

have this effect on the world around Him. This was conclusive. The gospel is open to all, but those who respond are those who *decide* to have ears to hear. God is after the intelligent choice, the act of the will. Nor is it a scriptural pattern for the power of God to wax and wane, to fade away on its own volition. **The language of Mr. Finney is different from that of the New Testament.** It is a counterfeit, mimicking in many ways the outward words of the valid infilling, but it is focused differently and yields a different result. At this point, an overwhelming sense of thankfulness came over me, and I thanked God for how

*Jesus did not have this effect
on the world around Him.*

He had led me and shown me the way. The scripture in Rev. 13:14 gave me much food for thought: "*And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*" Ah, miracles (genuine miracles) that produce experiences in men that engender the making of an image to the beast! Power to produce these impressive, sensational miracles! "*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*"^{Pr. 16:25}

So, here is the question. Did I experience a sense of fellowship with Mr. Finney when I first read his tract? If you had asked me at that point before all the subsequent light came to my soul, I would still have to reply, "no." There was something in his testimony that did not fit with how God had led me, yet I would have been hard pressed to articulate just what it was at that point. There seemed to be a lot of self—more so than the Spirit of God had ever allowed me to feel. That was my initial impression. But did I *reject* fellowship on that basis? No. It was possible for Mr. Finney to be walking in all the light that had shown on his pathway and simply need some more help from God. Did I reject fellowship after getting more light on what Mr. Finney was and where he

was? Yes. What he had and what I have are contrary to each other. I would feel compelled to approach a manifestation of God's power in dealing with others from a very "hidden self" standpoint (we must be hidden behind the cross), and I would stress the validity of the work by mentioning how well (or not) the "converts" had done since the beginning of their change. "*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*"^{Mt. 7:16} "*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*"^{Mt. 7:20}

In *The More Abundant Life*, Brother C. E. Orr states, "It is a mistake to seek after power. It exposes the soul to deception. Seek after life."

An old brother was asked whether a young man had "gotten anything," after the young man had wept and repented at the mourners' bench. "Time will tell," he replied. It did not matter how much conviction he had, how hard he wept, how sincere he seemed. "Time will tell."

We operate in the dark about each other to a great extent. Sometimes God tells us things, as He did to Ananias about Saul. That was good enough for Brother Ananias. Before God opened the matter to him, it was, "*Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.*"^{Acts 9:13} But after God revealed the condition of Brother Saul's heart to Brother Ananias, it was, "*Brother Saul...*"^{vs. 17} He just committed it to God and went to do what God had told him to do. He left the degree of confidence, etc., in God's hands. This is the thing to do. We do not know how much light an individual has. We do not know how well the individual is living up to the light that he has. We do not know how he has done recently with what he knows. "*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.*"^{2 Tim. 2:19} We can safely trust God with each other.

It is not the degree of light that has been revealed to any of us that seems to matter in this business of fellowship. It is what has been done with what has been revealed. I know a number of people who largely believe as I believe in almost all doctrinal

matters, who conduct themselves fairly much the same in almost all the outward things of religion. It is difficult to explain to any observer just what is different between them and us, but there are profound differences. They can be summed up as the differences between those whose hearts are taught of God and those whose hearts are not taught of God. "*It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*"^{Jn. 6:45} "*But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*"^{1 Th. 4:9}

I have noticed that many whose hearts are not taught of God, yet who hold the same doctrines (even fervently), simply do not understand why the same doctrines do not produce Bible fellowship. "You teach that all the saved should love one another, and we teach the same. What is the difference?" they say. And when we reply that there is something that goes beyond the teaching, beyond the setting of the human will to be affectionate, beyond the ability of man to manifest divine charity, they don't get it. I was discussing the story of the blind man's healing and consequent effect on many (John 9), including his parents, and I stated that the effect on the man's parents was disastrous. They manifested a dishonesty that drove them further into the deceptions of Judaism and completely broke fellowship between them and their son. The person I was talking with had a broad and deep intellectual knowledge of the truth, but was not taught of God about very much of it. He said that he just couldn't see how the blind man's parents were wrong. Said it several times. "I just can't see it..." I believed him. He *couldn't* see it. It all seemed reasonable to him that they were being cautious, wise, prudent, politically astute, etc. He was like that himself. He had not been **taught of God** to ignore all that (as the blind man did) and venture all and risk all on clinging to truth.

"*Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel; Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto*

them, *Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.*" ^{Ezra 4:1-3}

In this matter of Jewish history as given us in the scriptures, **the people claimed that they were the same and demanded fellowship on the basis of their claim, but those who were actually doing the work of God saw through the claim and denied it.** "Ye have **nothing** to do with us to build an house unto our God." They denied even partial spiritual fellowship. The subsequent verses manifest beyond any doubt that this was the right stand to take, for these fellowship claimers began to oppose and fight the real work of God. "Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose." ^{vs. 4-5} Then they sent letters of accusation against the people of God and manifested the reality of what they were unmistakably. The saints of that time **did not** experiment with these who claimed fellowship, for God helped them to **discern** them before becoming fatally entangled. This is **very important**. We cannot afford the high price of finding out what is wrong by getting involved and then withdrawing. The price is too high. We need God to fight our battles and to protect us. He knows how far to let the devil go before He reveals the truth. At the right point, *He will protect us*. Sometimes it comes to an Ananias and Sapphira. Sometimes it comes to, "they went out from us, but they were not of us." ^{1 Jn. 2:19} But the end result is the same: A people who are taught of God will wait on Him with faith and trust, and He will be their God and deliver them. They will each wait on God individually, and it will be a natural extension of their personal waiting on God with faith and trust to wait and trust as a body. In other words, individual fellowship between each child of God and God Himself

produces a group of children who have a heavenly affinity with each other **through Him**. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." ^{Rom. 12:5}

We related a situation earlier in this writing about a brother whom we could not receive *as a leader*. We recognize a heart fellowship to a considerable extent, but we also recognize the presence of something else: something contrary to the working of the Spirit of God. And we do not know if this manifestation is conscious and knowing on the part of the brother, or if he is innocent and needs to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly. Whether he is innocent or not, he cannot be received as a leader in his current condition. At best, he remains a novice or under a foreign influence.

In *The Gospel Trumpet* paper of May 10, 1900, Sister Jennie Ruty published an article entitled, "The Fellowship of the Spirit." We quote:

A great many, having received the outward doctrine of Christ, conclude they have the Spirit of truth, when in reality they have only an intellectual understanding without an actual experience in the soul. They put on some of the fruits of the Spirit and are often received as the children of God by those who do not discern between the fellowship of the doctrine and that of the spirit.

When a company of people believe about the same things, there is an agreement, union, and fellowship that has resemblance to the true fellowship which is of God through the Spirit. *Each denomination has its denominational fellowship*, and there is great danger of God's people in the local churches drifting into the same error—*receiving those who sanction or assent to the truth, but have not humbled themselves to obtain a precious soul-experience of saving grace*; and these with their spiritual lack exert a depressing, unwholesome influence that hinders the work of God.

In this time of great deception, God's children are so rejoiced over those who do acknowledge truth that they may overlook *the great necessity of spiritual life and "truth in the inward parts."* ^{Ps. 51:6} If we do this, we are consenting to the same thing as the denominations—doctrinal fellowship—with this difference: the doctrine of Christ instead of men. ➡

The people claimed that they were the same and demanded fellowship on the basis of their claim, but those who were actually doing the work of God saw through the claim and denied it.

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with suspicion and reserve. "They have problems," it is said. Even as the man-made church points with a certain pride to the spirituality of so-and-so, this very quality of spirituality makes them seem a little less than reliable *to the man-made church*. And so the unspiritual are wary of the spirituality of the merchandise they exhibit (2 Pet. 2:3).

It is not that the spirit of sectism does not value love for God. It just values love for itself more. You can love God all you want, just as long as the church is first. How fitting the words of the Bible! "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." ^{Ex. 20:3} "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." ^{1 Jn 5:21} The whole point of a man-made church is to create a rival to God and divide the loyalty of a part of God's children. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." ^{Mt. 6:24} ➡

the Spirit of INFLUENCE

This deceiving spirit of influence leads you on step by step. You follow on, never suspecting in your zeal and delight in winning souls, how far, far away you have gotten from the Bible method and the Bible highway.

The spirit of influence is one of the most wily, yet most destructive, spirits by which the devil is deceiving souls in these last days. It comes so beautifully clothed, having the appearance of just what every saint wants—the power to win souls—and its awful Spirit-quenching power is so completely hidden that thousands of souls have been deceived by it, have embraced it, and are being bound for eternal night.

This influential spirit brings up his arguments so logically, shrewdly, and scripturally (the devil knows the scriptures) that the unsuspecting but zealous soul is completely captivated. He begins his reasonings about this way....

“You know the true way is so far different from what most people know that you must be very careful in giving them the truth. Don’t give them too much at once; feed them on milk; lead them gradually.” This is very good. Next he says, “Use much tact and wisdom, for he that winneth souls is wise. Be careful not to say anything that will offend. Pad well the hard hailstones of truth. Teach first on the truths that don’t touch their pride and worldliness, and get them to admiring these truths; then when you must come to things that will touch and hurt them, be sure they are in the right mood to receive it. Be very certain that it is the right time and occasion and pray for much wisdom and tact to present it in the right way. Be careful to lead up to it in an easy way from step to step, and if you find they are resenting it, stop; for there is no use to offend unnecessarily. If they become offended, it is sure you never can win them,” reminds this influential spirit.

This spirit also gets you to using much human influence in your effort to win souls more rapidly. “Pat them on the back,” says he. “Make them feel quite at home; show them how pleased you are to have their presence; talk very nice to them; avoid anything unpleasant or personal. Also, let them have a little part in the meeting; it will please them, and it can’t do any harm. If they testify, say amen boldly, even though you know they are not saved. If they are sectarian ministers, let them take the service now and then and lead in prayer.

“Then, when you are in their company, don’t be in a strait-jacket about your talking, for there are plenty of good things to talk about besides salvation. If they are witty and inclined to jest, you can laugh with them and put in a little now and then yourself, so they won’t feel peculiar and uncomfortable in your presence. Should they invite you to go any place that might be questionable to the old-fogey saints, go, asking no questions for conscience’s sake. Then, when there, don’t be a spectacle and make the company uncomfortable by your peculiarity or manner of dress. You never can win people if you don’t ease up on some of those cranky, fanatical notions of former days,” continues this influence spirit.

“Then you must not dress so peculiar; you must seek to be unnoticeable in your dress. So you must narrow (and shorten) your skirt considerably. Don’t be worldly—oh, no, never—but don’t wear any out-of-date hat, and make your clothes neat and plain, but try to get that smart, band-box air about all your apparel, and then its lack of trimmings won’t be noticed so much. In fact, there is no use in being so cranky. The Bible says modest, and it is modest and plain to have a little lace or embroidery around the neck and sleeves and such necessary places.

“Then you know, those people who are getting somewhat interested are of the better class, and many of the saints are of the common class, so you must be very careful how you speak to and associate with them in public places where this better class might see, for if you make yourself so friendly with the common people, the better class will have nothing to do with you and you never can win them.”

Thus this deceiving spirit of influence leads you on step by step. You follow on, never suspecting in your zeal and delight in winning souls, how far, far away you have gotten from the Bible method and the Bible highway. When questioned, you vehemently declare that you are not compromising, that it is an awful thing to be fanatical, and that these methods are perfectly lawful. The Bible says nothing against them, and they are a mighty power in winning souls, “For see how many souls are getting saved since we began to use common sense, wisdom, and tact in winning them.”

*Ah, dear deluded soul, entrapped and being dragged down to hell while trying to win souls, **know you not that souls can never be won to Christ but by lifting up Christ?** Do you not know that doing evil that good may abound will never bring souls to Christ? Do you not know that using the devil’s methods to do Christ’s work will not be accepted of Him? (2 Cor. 6:14-15). Doing things for Christ that are contrary to Christ will never win souls. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” Jn. 12:32 If you really want to win souls for Christ, shun not the offense of the cross (Gal. 5:11). Lift Him—in all His humility and world-hated virtues—up to the gaze of sinful men. “No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.” Jn. 6:44 It is the Father, not some great human influence, who draws souls to Christ. All who are drawn by the influence are drawn, not to Christ, but to men.*

The fruits of this spirit of influencing people to accept the gospel are many:

1. Respect of persons; “*But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin.*” Jas. 2:9
2. Pride, which slips in along with respect of person, as you exercise extreme carefulness in your attitude toward the different classes.

3. Worldliness, as you put on this little extra in your apparel.

4. Deceit, hypocrisy, and dishonesty in your putting on false appearances, in flattery, in pretending to live and behave in certain ways in accordance to the opinions of the one you wish to win.

5. Idle words and foolish talking, but for *“every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”* Mt. 12:36 (See Eph. 5:4.)

6. Fear of men. God says, *“Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.”* Is. 51:7 *“Be not ye the servants of men.”* 1 Cor. 7:23

7. Quenching the Holy Spirit. This is done by substituting human wisdom and worldly influence for the divine wisdom and leadings of the Holy Spirit. God’s ways are not man’s ways; neither are his thoughts, our thoughts (Is. 55:8).

8. Withholding God’s truth when He said, *“Preach the word; reprove, rebuke, exhort.”* 2 Tim. 4:2

May God help all who would really be His servants to *“renounce the hidden things of dishonesty,”* 2 Cor. 4:2 to rebuke and resist the spirit of influence in their lives, and to live and work for God in God’s way.

The spirit of influence is a compromising spirit whose face is toward the world, and who steadily lowers the gospel standard so that people can get on easier without having to forsake so much—not to die so completely to self. Instead of seeking God for more of His power and for His confirmation of the Word through signs and wonders, as did the apostles, this worldly spirit goes down to Egypt for help and depends on the arm of flesh, on the wisdom and influence of men, for its power to win souls. *“Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt, your confusion.”* Is. 30:3

It is absolutely useless, yea, terribly dangerous, to lower the standard to get people on it, and then try to lift it up to where it ought to be. The people will get on, all right, when the standard is lowered, but when the lifting begins, notice what happens. The raising of the standard is resented, rebuked, fought against, and either you must yield and let it back down and repent for having tried to lift it up, or else you must get off and get back yourself to where you belong. But if you persist in trying to lift it up with all those people on it, you will find, as it is raised, that they were tied to the world and to self by cords of pride, covetousness, love of adornment, amusement, preeminence, etc., and they will be pulled off of the standard and hurled back into the world. This you cannot endure unless you are consecrated to do a work for God, even if there are only two or three who measure to God’s holy standard. ➡

—Charles E. Orr

Reaching the Multitudes

We see the need everywhere around us. Our heart is stirred. *Where are the miracles of old that can reach the multitudes?* we ask. *Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes by the shores of Galilee, so why not today? I believe in His power to change lives to feed the spiritually hungry! I will dedicate myself to this great work, for why can He not use me as He has other mighty gospel workers before?*

Why not? O aspiring soul, you know the miracles indeed, but have you learned *the secret of how* those multitudes were fed? It wasn’t the disciples that launched the plan, but the Master. Look upon the scene with me, as His compassion reaches out to the needy folks that have followed them to this desert place. As desperate as ever, they are indeed *“sheep having no shepherd.”* Mt. 9:36 Evening approaches and the disciples are concerned. How often we, too, begin to share in our Master’s concern for souls—in our limiting human view. Oh, we can see the need alright. We can see that this multitude is unprepared, without food in this barren place. They need more understanding... to face up to their problems... to feel secure.... Yes, we think we have the answers. *“Send them to the villages where they can buy victuals,”* we say.

Then the Savior turns to us. *“Give them bread.”* Me? This can’t be our chance—we aren’t prepared! How little indeed we see of our *“great opportunities”* at the time. Instead we cry, *With a few loaves and fish, what can I do for a multitude? This is not impressive. This is not even reasonable.* And the Master, the One we have left all to follow, the One that we have seen do many miracles before, says *“Bring them to Me.”* The bread and fish? It is simple, common food. It is all I have to offer. I put it in the Master’s hands. What will He do with it?

It is time to sit down. It is time to trust. Am I getting the point? Miracles are not accomplished with lots of fanfare and worked up emotion. Miracles do not proceed from my high ambition to do great work for Jesus. He took the little they had to offer and blessed it and broke it. Blessed and broken. How simple and humble are God’s ways of working! And how easily overlooked by the pride and prestige of our flesh.

The disciples were handed back their loaves and fishes—in pieces. *A fragment of bread, a piece of fish? Here is a little something that the Master wanted me to give you.* They were reduced in Jesus’ hands, were they not? Yes, it will look foolish... poor... despised. There was no room to glory in the flesh. No display of tables and fine foods. How simple indeed are the feasts the Lord spreads! I trust the hungry did not refuse it. Where was the miracle? It was in the results. A multitude fed, with more left over besides.

May we consider well the miracle of the loaves, that our hearts be not hardened. Our calling for this great work is to be *put into the Master’s hands.* Else our glorying will be in our own efforts, and not in God! ➡



vs.



There is an enormous difference between the vision of God's wholly sanctified children and His children who possess only the first cleansing. There are differences in the motivations of the heart, too, but I feel burdened to dig into the profound practical results of the two experiences.

We get an idea of these differences in the account of how God touched the blind man twice. "And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly."^{Mk. 8:22-25} The stages of vision are very plainly shown in this scripture.

At first, the man was utterly blind—he could not see, no matter how hard he might try. And so were we when in a state of transgression against God. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."^{Eph. 4:18} (See also Jn. 12:40; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Jn. 2:11.) In such a condition, we could not receive the Spirit of truth because we could not see Him (Jn. 14:17).

"How dark my prison house of sin,
Entombed in misery!"

But then the Master touched each of us who are His children. "And Jesus said, For

judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see."^{Jn. 9:39} "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."^{Lk. 4:18-19} And the nature of that touch was, "I see men as trees, walking."

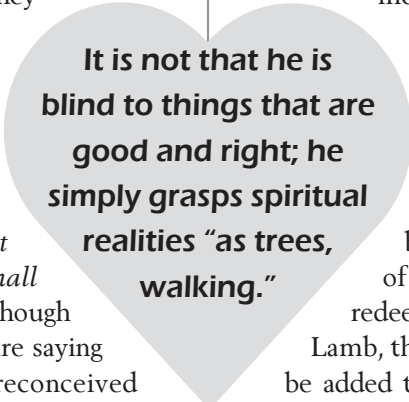
I note that Jesus asked him "if he saw ought." It was needful that he acknowledge and confess his condition. I am not blind anymore, but I do not see yet as is needful. I have much to be thankful for, but I need much more. I am not a sinner anymore and I really love God and want to please Him, but I lack something. "I see men as trees."

A child of God who is not filled with the Holy Ghost sees imperfectly. He knows men after the flesh, just as the disciples once knew Christ before they were wholly sanctified. Please note the words of the apostle, "though we have known Christ after the flesh..."^{2Cor. 5:16} "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."^{Mt. 16:22} As though to say, "Lord, what You are saying does not fit with my preconceived notions of how things ought to go, and I feel so strongly about it that I am willing

to try and straighten You out!" We gasp at the audacity of the unsanctified heart. A young man looks over all the young sisters and selects the one who seems appropriate to him to pursue as a companion for life. He sees after the flesh, that is, the natural man. He is led by his own reasoning and conditioning instead of the Spirit of God. He has his choice, instead of God's choice for him. It is not that he is blind to things that are good and right; he simply grasps spiritual realities "as trees, walking."

It is this partially right, partially wrong, vision that has contributed significantly to the building of the pens of The False Prophet—even mystic Babylon, the religious tower of Babel with its babble of different religious languages and attendant confusion and contradiction. If there was nothing right at all in the warrens of this institution, then their barrenness would offer little in the way of enticement to God's children; but behold! they appropriate the merchandise of God's church

(2 Pet. 2:3) to their own use. "Brother so-and-so is one of us. Dear Sister — attends meeting here." If indeed the claim is so, and the brother and sister are really of the household of faith and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, then they were not saved to be added to a door opened by men (Acts 2:47). They were born into the family of God (Psa.87:5; Heb.12:23), and God



has provided everything necessary for life and godliness for His children. They need not the foster care of human institutions. God has not called them to an unholy affinity of the saved and unsaved. “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*” ² Cor. 6:14 But to see this situation in its true light, one must see things *as they are in reality*, not as trees walking.

We encounter this half-right/half-wrong vision all the time among God’s children. They simply do not see straight. They see some things (imperfectly), and *they walk in all the light they can see*, but there is more to see. How the Spirit of God yearns to lead us in all the light that heaven has for us!

We have people leaning on people when they should be leaning on God. In some cases of really-saved-children-of-God, you can scarcely see 1 John 2:27 in them, at all. Many are ensnared by the fear of man. Others will very honestly and sincerely confess that things are not clear at all where they worship, but they do not know what to do about it and do not know where to go. As Alfred said to Joe in *The Man of His Counsel*: “But what do you mean to do?” inquired Alfred. “You cannot go around all alone, can you? I should like to see you get settled somewhere where you can get in the harness just right and feel satisfied.” This is what it looks like when you see men as trees walking. To step out for God as a member of His church without joining up with something else *appears* as “going around all alone.” By contrast, to see things *soberly* (realistically) is to pray as Brother Paul, “*I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.*” ^{Eph. 3:14-15} To the glorious clear vision of Brother Paul, he was never alone. From that day on the road to Damascus, where Jesus spoke to him as he lay in the dust, he was never alone again, nor is he alone now. Praise God! Even when all forsook him at different places because of his stand for truth, God did not forsake him. “*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to*

their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever.” ² Tim. 4:16-18 Yea, one *with God* is a majority. How blessed to look at the things that are unseen!

I sat in a memorial service for a brother who had once communicated a clear and definite vision of truth from God. Before he died, he had taken steps to commit himself to an organization that was falling away, and that he knew was falling away. In doing that, he went against the vision he had held for a large part of his life. Ministers of that organization were at his funeral, and their testimony of him can be accurately summed up in this statement: “He knew how to commit to a cause.” Not **The Cause**, but a cause. Not “*the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth,*” ¹ Tim. 3:15 but a church. Oh, we would tell you in the fear of God: God has something better for us than that!

Now the wholly sanctified have the privilege of looking at things that are *not seen* (2 Cor. 4:18). This may appear as a contradiction (How can I *see* things that are *not seen*?), but, no. It is the normal viewpoint of the child of God filled with the Holy Ghost. His eyes have been opened (2 Ki. 6:17), and he/she sees a great number of things clearly which were unclear before, and not seen at all before the unclear state. These things are the awesome and wonderful works of God. “*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*” ^{Mt. 5:8} To have a pure vision, you must be pure in heart. Partially clear in heart will bring about a partial appreciation of God. And to be defiled by sin and transgression will blind you to God and what He is doing. Many are lacking the blessing that is the birthright of the pure in heart. They struggle on without it.

“I’ve received such great light,
and its beams are so bright,
That the past of my life’s way seems dim;
I will walk in this light by day and by night,
Still closer I’ll cling unto Him.

“Some think I’ve done wrong
by leaving the throng,
Who abide in sectarian strife;
But I’ve only come back
where God’s people belong,
From Babel I fled for my life.”

But what brings about this remarkable change in vision? What is the *essential difference*? Is it simply consecration?

Justified people live consecrated lives. “*Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.*” ^{Lk. 18:28} Peter was not filled with the Holy Ghost at the point he said this, and the Lord accepted his statement without contradiction. It would be fair

to say that he had left all *as far as he knew*. That is, he was walking in all the light he had. Indeed, without this, how can a man stay saved, if he does not walk in all the light he possesses?

And so we come to what *we honestly think is reasonable service*, and what **God knows is reasonable service** for us.

His thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are far above ours (Is. 55:8-9). And He wants to lift us up—way, way up—so that we partake of His thoughts and can be armed with His mind. And He knows how to do this. “*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*” ¹ Th. 5:23-24 We don’t know how to do *better than our best*, but God knows how to *raise our best* to His standard. He is able and willing to “*sanctify you wholly.*”

All we know is ourselves (and imperfectly, at that). “*For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?*” ¹ Cor. 2:11 When we were guilty of rebellion and acts of knowing

He is completely unaware of many underlying infirmities in his very moral nature, that are hindering him from proving in his life “what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

disobedience, we knew ourselves as guilty selves. When the Spirit of God strove with our hearts in that condition, we became increasingly convicted of the magnitude of our transgression. How wretched we were! How undeserving of any mercy! How just the penalty of our sin! Oh, our undeservedness of the mercy and love of God!

“’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved!
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!”

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”^{2 Cor. 5:17} He speaks a new language; he is dead unto sin and alive to righteousness; old things are passed away and all things are become new. In his heart is implanted a new divine nature, and there is a great thankfulness to God for forgiveness and a great hunger to never displease the Lord again. Whereas before he desired to sin and did so, now he desires to live holy and without blame before God. He is completely unaware of many underlying infirmities in his thinking and conditioning, his natural self, and his very moral nature, that are hindering and will continue to hinder him from proving in his life “*what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*”^{Rom. 12:2} How can he be aware? The change is so great, so glorious, in the heart and mind, that it takes some time to comprehend that more is needed. And then to become deeply convicted that God has something for the need, to the extent that faith is inspired and the promise of God is grasped firmly by that inspired faith.

There are a few that seem to cross the wilderness in a short time to the banks of Jordan, but most of us are fools and slow of heart (Lk. 24:25). We just learn slowly and haltingly. And the adversary hinders as greatly as he can, for there is nothing other than regeneration itself that the devil hates worse than a genuine baptism of the Holy Ghost.

But what does it mean to see clearly instead of distorted? What actually happens? What is the actual result? What is the same, the common strand, in every sanctified experience? What does it mean to be dead to self? How does a sanctified man feel when he is tried or tempted?

If a man professes to be born again, but he continues to commit actual sin, then what should have happened in him has not happened. “*Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.... Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.... In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God.*”^{1 Jn. 3:6,8,10} If a man fails of the grace of God, he can be forgiven and restored (1 Jn. 2:1; Gal. 6:1). The very fact that a restoring is possible shows that the normal standard of a Christian life is living above sin. We might compare the experience to flying. If a pilot continually bounced off the ground, soared a little way, then bounced off the ground again, and so forth, we would not believe his account that he was “flying,” for we know better. When we fly, by definition, we stay above the ground. Even if we stay one inch above the ground, it could be called flying—howbeit, flying too low. Anyone can see that flying too low runs a real risk of not flying, i.e., back to earth.

Likewise, we readily realize that obtaining orbit around the earth is different than just flying. And it is no exaggeration to say that God has a orbiting experience for each child of God. God wants to get you above a day-to-day struggle with staying clear of sin. He has spiritual altitude for you. He wants to move the internal, beyond-words focus of your experience to guarding your altar of sacrifice (Gen. 15:9-11). This is not an altar of sacrifice of our own devising. This is the altar of sacrifice for each of us that the Holy Ghost dictates. It is *your altar* that the Holy Ghost inspires between you and your Lord.

Before you can guard your altar, it must be built in your life and everything you have and everything you are must be laid upon it and bound there securely (Ps. 118:27). You cannot do this of your own volition alone, any more than you could of yourself repent of all your sins. The plainest explanation of this is that we naturally want to serve the Lord *as we see fit*, when we are saved before we are sanctified, and we want to serve the Lord *as He sees fit*, after we are fully conquered and subdued. After this complete subjection is accomplished in us, the Comforter moves in with all of His wonderful luggage of power and glory, and we are enabled to orbit at a wonderfully elevated altitude of clear faith and perfect love. As long as we meet the conditions of His abiding, He abideth forever, and we find that His yoke is indeed easy and His burden light, especially as compared to our own efforts, by our own thinking, to serve God before the arrival and leadership of Him who leads us into all truth.

The marvelous and incredible part of this is that we are just as weak and needy as we were before the Sanctifier moved in (2 Cor. 12:10). He has not made us superhuman; He has simply brought us to a point of complete submission, and a consecration to be always submitted on and on forever. There is the removal of a warped sense of self, slanted and biased toward self-interest, that is purged when the Holy Ghost enters the heart, but that still does not make of us anything more than a purged earthen vessel, now fit for the Master’s use. With great joy and deep conviction, the wholly sanctified can sing:

“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.”

I cannot find words to express how **all-consuming** this conviction (“Had I the choosing of my pathway”) is to the Holy Ghost baptized. This involves a sentence of death, a permanent, unwavering rejection of my own natural prowess in any area on which my Master sees fit to lay His finger. **I have surrendered the right to choose, voluntarily and gladly.** It is my last will and testament, forever and ever.

This is not an altar of sacrifice of our own devising. This is the altar of sacrifice for each of us that the Holy Ghost dictates. It is your altar that the Holy Ghost inspires between you and your Lord.

"I am Thine dear, blessed Jesus, all Thine,
All of self now to the death I consign;
Gladly, gladly all I have I resign,
That salvation in its fullness be mine."

Now this "death" is a living death, a daily sacrifice, reaffirmed and perpetually presented to my Lord 24/7 without reserve in any way. For I am dead, yet I am still alive, choosing always to turn away from my thinking, my choice, to follow His thinking, His choice.

"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.

"Forever I choose the good will of my God,
Its holy, deep riches to love and to know;
The serfdom of love to so sweeten the rod,
That its touch maketh rivers of honey to flow."

To fall below this standard is to come out of orbit. *For to live to self does not necessarily involve rebellion.* But it does involve giving more liberty (Gal. 5:13) to my natural flesh than is good or wise. And the effect is to bring me closer to crashing (sin), and having to repent and do the first works.

In our original text in Mark 8:22-25, we did not quote the scriptural account preceding it. I would like to examine that now.

"Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?" Mk. 8:14-21

This is a description of a trial that Jesus had with the twelve disciples. It is a fair and accurate representation of the trials

that the wholly sanctified have with the saved-but-unsanctified at any given time. Prior to the scripture text quoted above, Jesus had been talking with the Pharisees (vs. 11). Their hearts were not right, and they were seeking a sign. This was a grief to Jesus, and He mentioned the matter to the disciples, saying, *"Beware the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod."* At this point, something classic happened: *The disciples misunderstood.* They were true children of God, but they were on their own too much, reasoning without divine oversight and guidance. Among other things, it made them too sensitive of criticism. They were not hid away in the pavilion that God has for us (Ps. 31:20), and it hindered their spiritual vision. This was a trial to Jesus. *"How is it that you do not understand?"* Why should Jesus be tried at their forgetfulness to bring bread? Why would they think that Jesus was tried about this? Had they not just been through an experience that showed God could supply their needs without relying on human ability? But, when reminded of how God had supplied the needs of them and the five thousand, something still didn't connect in their hearts. You see, they were flying too low. They had not obtained orbit. After the Holy Ghost came upon them, it was different, was it not?

Now the poet put it like this,

"Oh, we never can know
What the Lord will bestow
Of the blessings for which we have prayed,
Till our body and soul
He doth fully control,
And our all on the altar is laid."

It is just plain dangerous to stay in an unsanctified state of heart. It has the capacity to get us out of synch with the Holy Ghost. As a minister put it,

When Jesus hasn't the first place in our affections, we will lose interest in the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification, and we look on it as a kind

of a luxury that we can accept or reject according to our own will or wish, and we become blind to the fact that sanctification is not a mere dessert that can be taken or let alone, after your meals, but it is the dinner itself.

It occurs to me that if we do not "*prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God,*" (Rom.12:2) then we are going to prove *something else.* Surely, if we are not led by the Spirit of God, we will be led by *something.*

Now Satan is perfectly satisfied to see you make a formal profession of entire sanctification, with a formal consecration, while you receive no revolutionary touch from God that puts an end to trusting yourself and leaning to your understanding (Pr. 3:5-6). He knows perfectly well at what spiritual altitude you are flying, and he is dedicated to bringing you down. He is really afraid of the Spirit of God and knows he can't fool Him at all, but he isn't the least bit worried over his ability to get you into trouble when you are not perfectly yielded to God's control, body and soul.

Oh, thank God for victory over the devil and all his deceptive works! God knows how to get us to heaven, and He will get us there if we will let Him. And He knows how to bring us to the point that we gladly let Him have His way. Praise His name!

"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.

"Roll on, checkered seasons,
bring smiles or bring tears,
My soul sweetly sails on an infinite tide;
I shall soon touch the shores
of eternity's years,
And near the white throne
of my Savior abide."



"Oh, we never can know
What the Lord will bestow
Of the blessings for
which we have prayed,
Till our body and soul,
He doth fully control,
And our all on the
altar is laid."

Looking for Me

MATTHEW 18:12
Anna C. Storey

William J. Kirkpatrick

1. I was a cap - tive, but mer - cy re - leased me, I was in dark - ness, but now I can see;
2. Weep - ing, I longed for the rap - ture of par - don, Longed from my bur - den of sin to be free;
3. Filled with the full - ness of per - fect sal - va - tion, Washed in the blood that was shed on the tree;
4. Oh, for the harp of a ser - aph to praise Him! Oh, for the tongue of an an - gel to sing;

O - ver the moun - tain, where lone - ly I wan - dered, Je - sus, my Sav - ior, came look - ing for me.
Then as I lift - ed my ear - nest pe - ti - tion, Je - sus, my Sav - ior, came look - ing for me.
This my re - joic - ing through ag - es e - ter - nal: Je - sus, my Sav - ior, came look - ing for me.
Glo - ry to Je - sus, my bless - ed Re - deem - er, I am a - dopt - ed, the child of a King.

Refrain

Won - der - ful Sav - ior, won - der - ful Sav - ior! Now and for - ev - er my boast - ing shall be;

O - ver the moun - tain, where lone - ly I wan - dered, Je - sus, my Sav - ior, came look - ing for me.

Is Not This the Land of Beulah?

ISAIAH 62:4
William Hunter, *bef.* 1884

DAWNING (BRADBURY/DADMAN)
William B. Bradbury; *arr. attr. to* John W. Dadman

1. I am dwell - ing on the moun - tain, Where the gold - en sun - light gleams
2. I can see far down the moun - tain, Where I wan - dered wear - y years,
3. I am drink - ing at the foun - tain, Where I ev - er would a - bide;
4. Tell me not of heav - y cross - es, Nor of bur - dens hard to bear,
5. Oh, the cross has won - drous glo - ry! Oft I've proved this to be true;

O'er a land whose won - drous beau - ty Far ex - ceeds my fond - est dreams;
Of - ten hin - dered in my jour - ney By the ghosts of doubts and fears;
For I've tast - ed life's pure riv - er, And my soul is sat - is - fied;
For I've found this great sal - va - tion Makes each bur - den light ap - pear;
When I'm in the way so nar - row, I can see a path - way through;

Where the air is pure, e - the - real, Lad - en with the breath of flow'rs,
Bro - ken vows and dis - ap - point - ments, Thick - ly sprin - kled all the way,
There's no thirst - ing for life's pleas - ures, Nor a - dorn - ing, rich and gay,
And I love to fol - low Je - sus, Glad - ly count - ing all but dross,
And how sweet - ly Je - sus whis - pers: "Take the cross, thou need'st not fear,
Refrain—*Is not this the land of Beu - lah?* *Bless - ed, bless - ed land of light,*

D.S. Refrain

They are bloom - ing by the foun - tain, 'Neath the am - a - ran - thine bow'rs.
But the Spir - it led, un - er - ring, To the land I hold to - day.
For I've found a rich - er treas - ure, One that fad - eth not a - way.
World - ly hon - ors all for - sak - ing For the glo - ry of the cross.
For I've tried the way be - fore thee," And the glo - ry lin - gers near.
Where the flow - ers bloom for - ev - er, *And the sun is al - ways bright!*

AN ADVENTURE IN

TRUST

It was a perfect day for blackberry picking. A friend of mine with three of her foster children and I were picking berries in the little ditch just over the railroad tracks. It was the ideal playpen, with prickly blackberry vines forming a wall on each side of us and cool water gurgling at our feet.

"Look how many berries I have," said Phyllis. "My bucket almost has the bottom covered!"

"Good job. Keep picking," I replied.

"Loot at mine, Mih A-man-a." Lucy held up her bucket for me to see. Two lonely berries sat at the bottom of the little tin pail.

"I think you can pick a lot more berries," I encouraged her. "You have small hands for reaching into the prickly bushes." Four-year-old Lucy was always good at intricate work when she set her mind to it.

"Come on, Miss Amanda," her older sister, Lisa, called to me from the next clump of bushes. "Let's go down farther."

Soon I was leading an exploration party of three down the ditch. From prior experience with the girls I had come to think of Phyllis as more of the "girly girl" out of the bunch. At almost six, she tended to be more timid than outgoing, nine-year-old Lisa and mischievous little Lucy. But today's experiences would surprise me.

"Let's see who can fill up their pail first!" I said, stopping where some clusters hung within easy reach. For a moment all hands went to picking.

"I can't find any berries," Lisa soon said.

"Look at all the ones you have missed." I showed her some berries hiding beneath the leaves. Most of the berries were too high to reach, though, so we headed on.

"If you can pick some more berries yourself, then I will pick a few to put in your pails," I offered the girls. We continued wading down the knee-deep stream, picking as we went. But in spite of their efforts, more berries seemed to bounce out of their pails than were put in. And the remaining fruit was periodically treated to a drenching of ditch-water. They were having fun, though, and it was an experience that only happens once a year.

"I see the end of the ditch!" called Lisa. I turned to

see where she was pointing. A dense overhang of grass blocked the way up ahead. I realized that, at Lisa's height, she couldn't see over the top or through it.

"Oh, no," I told her. "That's just some grass hanging over the water. I can see more of the stream over the top of it. Come on!" As we neared the overhang, the children hesitated.

"You can go ahead," said Phyllis.

"Let's go in order of age. I'll be first," said Lisa, trying to be brave.

"It's really not all that bad, girls," I said. "It's just some grass that we have to get through. That means that we are real explorers! I don't think anyone has been down this far this year. Besides, it doesn't even have pricklies," I pointed out. "It's just grass. Just push it back with your arms."

I set the example, with Lisa, Phyllis and Lucy just behind. As we broke through to the other side, I almost bumped into some brambles that were hanging in the stream. Holding onto the vines between the thorns, I showed the girls how to lift them out of the way so we could get underneath.

We were a short distance from the grass barrier when I noticed an open spot on the left bank. I knew there was a large pasture on the other side where we could possibly spot some cows. "Let's climb up here on this grassy spot," I called.

Phyllis scrambled up the bank like a monkey. Lisa was next. "I can't get up," she complained.

"Just hold onto the grass near the roots and pull yourself up." I knew it really wasn't that hard, but after trying a little, she still insisted that she couldn't do it. Patiently I gave her a hand, and then helped Lucy scramble up the bank. One at a time, I lifted the girls so they could see the cows.

"Let's go on," I said, and slid down the grassy bank into the water with a splash! Phyllis was at my heels. But Lisa and Lucy both wanted help to get down. It amazed me how Phyllis seemed so adventurous while the other two were more wary.

A few minutes later Phyllis tugged at my arm. "I want to go back to Mommy," she said.

“That’s fine. Can you do it yourself?” I asked.

She nodded. I watched her as she splashed up stream. When she came to the brambles, she moved them carefully aside just as I had shown her. Bravely she started to plow through the thatch of grass. In the middle she stopped, unsure of whether to go forward or turn back.

“You’re almost through,” I called to her. “Keep going!” With renewed vigor she pushed at the grass and disappeared as it swished into place behind her.



Lucy, Lisa, and I continued down the ditch. After a while I heard Phyllis shouting from behind us, “Wait for me!” We waited until she came splashing up beside us.

It wasn’t long before Lucy began struggling back upstream. “Where are you going, Lucy?” I called.

“To Mommy,” she called back.

From where we were, I could still see the overhang and brambles upstream. “I’m going to watch to make sure she can get back through that big clump of grass,” I said to the others. Lucy picked her way through the brambles and began to push at the grass. When she found herself in the middle, she began to panic and turned around.

Again I called, “You’re almost through. Keep going!” But my advice fell on deaf ears.

“I can’t!” she sobbed.

“I will go and show her how,” offered little Phyllis.

After seeing Lucy safely through, we continued on our exploration. We found an opening up the high bank on our right. “Let’s get out here and walk back along the tracks,” I suggested. Phyllis and Lisa followed me up the bank and onto the gravel railroad grade.

Soon we met up with the rest of the pickers.

As we picked blackberries I kept a sharp ear for a train whistle. Finally I heard it. I looked around for the children. Lucy was with some other adults, but I was in charge of Lisa and Phyllis. My older sister had already lifted Phyllis over some blackberry bushes into a small clearing farther from the tracks. I, too, was able to jump over the blackberry bushes, but Lisa couldn’t reach that far and I couldn’t lift her. I knew she would be fine, since she was only a few feet from Phyllis and I.

“Don’t be scared. We are safe,” I told them. “It will just be noisy, but the train can’t hurt us where we are. This is going to be fun!” I held Lisa’s hand over the brambles and smiled at her.

We were quite a way from the tracks, but still close enough to feel the rush of air from the train and hear its loud whistle. Lisa began to cry. I tried to talk to her but my voice was whipped away with the wind. I stood quietly and slowly rubbed her little arm, but she continued to cry. I glanced over to see how Phyllis was doing. She was standing just behind me and was grinning with her hands firmly over her ears.

With a whoosh and rumble, the last train car rushed by. Lisa dried her tears. “That was fun, wasn’t it?” I said, cheerfully. “It wasn’t really that scary, since we were safe.” Phyllis agreed, but Lisa wasn’t convinced.

As we returned to the house with our berries, I thought back over the adventures of the morning. What had made Phyllis a brave conqueror, and the others rather fearful followers? Phyllis trusted that what I said was true. She trusted that there was a way through the grassy overhang, even though she couldn’t see it. She trusted that it was safe to climb up the bank, even though she couldn’t see to the top, and that she was safe, although the train howled and blew and seemed scary. She even had enough trust to share, to help someone else. Lisa and Lucy only trusted me as long as it looked safe in their eyes, too—as long as they could see a way.

And I had to think, do I have real trust in God, like Phyllis had in me? Do I trust Him when I can’t see the end and He says “You’re almost through, keep going”? Can I trust Him with a smile when life seems scary? Or does my trust last just as far as I can see? ➡

“You’re almost through,” I called to her. “Keep going!” With renewed vigor she pushed at the grass and disappeared as it swished into place behind her.

The Voice of the False Prophet

Appreciating Good Wherever It Is Found

“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.” Phil. 1:15-18

This scripture passage brings us face to face with an unpleasant reality: *some preach Christ of envy, strife, and contention, not sincerely.* How we wish that this were not so! We would that all men would preach Christ of love and good will. We would that there was no such thing as the unadulterated message. No poison in the pot (2 Ki. 4:40). That all representation of the gospel was without blemish or perversion. That all who professed the name of Christ spoke as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11). That all worship of God was in Spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:23-24).

We must face the reality. As Brother Paul said, we must *“speak forth the words of truth and soberness.”* Acts 26:25 We are commanded to think soberly (1 Pet. 5:8; 4:7).

“What then?” What attitude should we take toward the voice of that which is partly true and partly false?

To be filled with perfect love for God and truth is to have the attitude: “I am closed to everything that is not of God, and I am open to everything that is of God.” For charity (perfect love) *“rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”* 1 Cor. 13:6

This is a hard saying for the scornful. Those who despise others focus on what is wrong. To them, the presence of error completely negates the presence of good. And they hold that to rejoice in the good in spite of the evil is to compromise—to give place to the devil. Very few things among men are entirely free from error or evil, so the scornful finds very little in

which to rejoice. The scripture quoted above (Phil. 1:15-18) sounds suspicious to the man in the seat of the scorner.

But charity *“rejoiceth in the truth.”* What a dark world this would be indeed without the presence of good! Yes, there are many people who hold the truth in unrighteousness. There are many who do not live up to what they say or understand. But how much worse off all would be if they did not say or understand any goodness at all! We should rejoice that the thoughts of hearts of men are **not** all evil continually, even while we deplore and abhor the evil that is there.

On the other hand, many heartily agree that we should look for the good in everyone and *ignore* the evil. “There’s some bad in the best of us and some good in the worst of us,” they say. But this attitude is not the characteristic of perfect love, either. Perfect love abhorreth that which is evil (Rom. 12:9). This is the manner of its “rejoicing not” in evil—perfect love abhors

to conclude that all who preached Christ did so out of good will, but he couldn’t. A rock-bottom, blunt honesty in him held the facts before him. He had to tell the truth, even when the truth was bad. He had to tell the truth when the truth was good. And the same honesty that caused him to acknowledge the facts of the matter also governed his conclusions. He saw that the envious and strife-filled preaching of Christ produced contradictory results. It did both good and evil. He rejoiced in the good. *“What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”* Phil. 1:18 He also abhorred the reproach and the harm that came from the impure motives.

The Power and Influence of Truth Under All Circumstances

We need to acknowledge that there is in good a power that lies beyond the influence of the vessel. We might well say that the truth is above us; that is, it will stand on its own merits, regardless of how well we measure up to it. We cannot destroy it (2 Cor. 13:8),

although we can bring a great deal of reproach on it, as David did (2 Sam. 12:14) and frustrate it in its work among men (Eccl. 9:18). A great deal of unscrupulous effort is done in the name of upholding the truth (the standard), but the fact is that the truth does not need to be propped up by human effort. We may get away from the truth, but the truth does not change because we fall away. It is right where it has always been since God first revealed it to mankind. It will still be there on the judgment day. We see people desperately striving to uphold the truth as though it would change if they were not successful, but they are worried in vain as far as the truth changing is concerned. It won’t change—it **will never change** (Mal. 3:6; Mt. 5:18). Men change, but the truth does not. We should be concerned about getting away from the truth, but there is no

“I am closed to everything that is not of God, and open to everything that is of God.”

evil. To have a perfect love for truth and a perfect hatred for evil is to esteem and value right wherever it is found and to abhor and detest evil wherever it is found. It is sober (realistic) thinking.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Rom. 12:3 This is unprejudiced, unslanted thinking. It is after the facts. It just wants to know the reality of things. Men can only think like this when God does a work of grace in them. *“Through the grace given unto me.”*

This sober love for truth and abhorrence of all else is evident in Brother Paul’s statements in Philippians. *“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife.”* He didn’t like that. He would rather have been able

need to be concerned about the truth changing. It is right all by itself.

This is why perfect love rejoiceth in the truth—even when preached of envy and strife. There is no rejoicing in the envy and strife, for that is not right, but the truth has great power. It is able to go far beyond the dishonorable advocate who portrays envy and strife. It has that potential.

In 2 Kings 13:21, we read, *“And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.”* This is a wonderful thing. The dry, dead bones of the prophet brought to life a man that was being buried. *“He revived and stood up on his feet.”* This illustrates the power of truth. It has the power to revive and bring to life regardless of the condition of the men who are burying.

The adversary is well aware of this. In his masterpiece of evil, the Roman Catholic Church, he took pains to keep the Word of God away from the minds and hearts of the vast majority of people. The devil knew what the Word of Truth would do if there was too much exposure to it. At a later time in human history, by substituting loyalty to the creeds of men instead of the Word of God, he effectively insulates the Protestant church adherent from the raw power of the Bible. Any attempt of a nominal Christian to really read the Bible with an open and totally honest heart will lead to questions. And these questions can only be resolved one of three ways. The seeker will draw closer to his church and its creed and farther away from God, or the seeker will draw closer to God and His Word, or the seeker will throw down everything and depart into unbelief and skepticism.

We catch a glimpse of the awful power of truth revealed in Revelations 11:11: *“And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.”* Prophetically, this is after the Protestant era. These same witnesses (the Word and the Spirit) had been slain (in the sense that their influence

The truth will stand on its own merits, regardless of how well we measure up to it.

was totally destroyed and replaced by the creeds of men), yet their dead bodies were not suffered to be buried (lip service was paid to them). But a mighty and wonderful thing happened. The spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet.

It is a wonderful thing to see the Word and the Spirit on their feet, beholding their enemies. Occasionally, a shallow discussion of some Bible truth will suddenly reveal a glimpse of the true depths involved in the Word of God. This possibility, this potential, is an occasion for rejoicing.

It was a great blessing for Brother Paul to be delivered from sourness and scorn. As long as he stayed with truth, he was on the winning side. Truth is not degraded because someone who has not obeyed it starts to flourish it. There is more to it than the flourisher realizes. It is possible to abhor his condition even while rejoicing in the truth. One need not enter into sectarian rivalry and strife to contend for what is right. We do not have to “get it in” for people or become partisan. Thank the Lord!

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” ² Tim. 2:24-25

As long as he stayed with truth, he was on the winning side.

God's Attitude Towards a Lack of Purity in Truth

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” ^{Ec. 12:14}

“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}

“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.” ^{Rev. 22:18-19}

The Voice of the False Prophet

Having acknowledged the unassailable power and influence of truth wherever it is found, no matter how it is hindered, we now turn our attention to the the voice of the false prophet.

Let us realize that all truth and light come down from God (Jas. 1:17). Those who possess part of the truth have it because God allowed them to realize it. God, in great mercy to all in the world, reveals truth even in nature and in many other places. (See Ps. 19:1-4 and Rom. 10:18). We might say that the seeds of truth are sown far and wide by the mercy of God to mankind. All have a fair opportunity of responding to the truth around them.

Perhaps you are aware of some of the awful snares of Satan around you—some tare-infested fields, some pernicious den of iniquity that defies all good influence. You doubt the access to fair opportunity. It does not look like many have a chance at all. Their doom seems certain.

The Bible answers you in this matter. Speaking of Jesus, Brother John wrote, *“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”* ^{Jn. 1:9}

I call your attention to that wonderful phrase: *“which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”* We see that God obligates Himself to *light* everyone. Even in the most awful places of diabolical influence, God deals fairly with each soul. *God has made a way of escape for everyone who is willing to take it.* He knows how to help every human being escape from our enemy. Jesus has tasted death for *every man* (Heb. 2:9). It is fair and just for each human being to face the Day of Judgment, for God has faithfully dealt with each human being.

He who declares *“the end from the beginning”* ^{Is. 46:10} understands the history and

degree of response to truth in any given individual and in groups of individuals. God knew and knows the exact, precise history of the Israeli nation to His truth, in all the complexity of that history. He understands the history of spiritual Babylon in absolute detail. He knows when and to what extent she was a golden cup in His hand (Jer. 51:7), and when she ceased to be a golden cup.

the sinning of Adam and Eve, so He knows the exact point where an individual or a group of individuals receive something else other than heavenly light and truth.

How I would to God that all loved Him with a perfect love and detested anything that was not of Him! How pure the rays of truth that shine in such a heart! How clean the ways of the sons of God that are led by the Holy Ghost! How faithful that same Comforter is to reprove, to check, to instruct,

and to guide! *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”* Jn. 14:26 *“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”* Is. 30:21

It is because men listen to other voices than the voice of the Holy Ghost that they become partly right and partly wrong. The voice of the false prophet is a voice of mixture. It is not entirely wrong, and it is not right, either. *“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.”* Mt. 23:1-3

You will notice a peculiar note to this passage of scripture. *It does not command to withdraw from the scribes and Pharisees.* Not yet. It does lay an obligation on those who loved God that could only be followed with help from God. It was necessary to discern and separate between the practices of the scribes and the Pharisees and the truth that they spoke. Open to everything that

loved God with all their heart and those who loved Him less than that. Eventually, no one who loved God with a pure heart could stay among these people. Because of their rejection of truth, tests of fellowship evolved that pretty much eliminated and continued to eliminate anybody who did not subscribe to their false doctrines, tacked unto what truth they tried to retain.

This is an accurate picture of the Church-of-God Babylon we see around us today. Most of them have varying degrees of truth in doctrine and various levels of spirituality in holding that truth. The Spirit of God works among them as best He can, faithfully dealing and striving to turn them from other spirits back to the Living God. The conditions of these various splinters is very much like the conditions of the seven congregations portrayed in the second and third chapters of Revelations. Some have considerable spirituality and life; others are dead. Pretty much everything in between is represented, too. False doctrine has crept into some; abominable practices are found in some. Some have had their candlesticks removed; others are in the process of losing theirs; while still others admit a smoky and flickering light, stronger at times than others.

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.” Mt. 23:2-3

Men naturally follow the ways of the flesh when they step aside from following the Spirit of God. They naturally gravitate to holding together a group of people instead of absolute trueness to God. When they encounter the reality of the human condition, they either give it room and thereby compromise, or they fight and suppress it with fanaticism. Neither of these two methods bring deliverance.

“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

He understands her afflictions and need of healing (vs. 9), and He knows the appropriate and fair judgment of those who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Every nation has been fairly dealt with by God throughout its history. We catch a glimpse of God’s forbearance and longsuffering, as well as the inevitability of judgment in Genesis 15:16: *“But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”* Note the words: *“not yet full.”* Ponder for a moment on the wonderful fairness and the reality of God’s monitoring and dealing with this people, the Amorites. When a religious movement does not follow Him with all the heart, God knows when the iniquity of it is full—when it is time for judgment and how to bring about that judgment. He sees us before we are even created; He knows us when we are yet in loins of our forefathers. It is very much past our comprehension, and yet it is so.

Reader, God has been fair with thee! He knows thee, thy downittings and thy uprisings. He understandeth thy thoughts afar off. All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom you have to do (Heb. 4:13). *“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”* Ec. 12:14 *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”* 2 Cor. 5:10

God knows just where men back up on Him. He knows where a little leaven comes in. Just as surely as He knew that something had happened in the Garden of Eden after

is of God, closed to everything that is not. Avoiding both the seat of the scorner and the seat of the apostate. The judgment of the Jewish nation was not yet complete. A little further along, their complete and thorough rejection of Jesus and truth sealed their fate. In all that time, a distance was steadily growing between those who

The voice of the false prophet is a voice of mixture.

The Lack of Consecration to God’s Ways and Purposes
“This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” Jn. 6:60

It is absolutely useless, yea, terribly dangerous, to lower the standard to get people on it, and then try to lift it up to where it ought to be. The people will get

on, all right, when the standard is lowered, but when the lifting begins, notice what happens. The raising of the standard is resented, rebuked, fought against, and either you must yield and let it back down and repent for having tried to lift it up, or else you must get off and get back yourself to where you belong. But if you persist in trying to lift it up with all those people on it, you will find, as it is raised, that they were tied to the world and to self by cords of pride, covetousness, love of adornment, amusement, preeminence, etc., and they will be pulled off of the standard and hurled back into the world. **This you cannot endure unless you are consecrated to do a work for God,** even if there are only two or three who measure to God's holy standard.
—C. E. Orr; "The Spirit of Influence"

To follow God is to have this consecration established by the Holy Ghost in you, and to put no confidence in the flesh. "*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*" Phil 3:3 It is to accept the fact that the numbers who want to really serve God are few. It is to consecrate against a sensational show in the flesh (2 Cor. 5:12).

In a biography of James Blaine Chapman (*Spirit Filled*), D. Shelby Corlett quotes Mr. Chapman as saying:

The group in which I was saved were heroic in their method of taking care of young children in the faith. I never heard them recite their creed on the subject, but I think the creed, in substance, was: If they are really saved and sanctified, they will make it without your help, and if you must help them, that proves they are not what they claim to be.

It was expected in our group that every one, young and old, who claimed to be saved and sanctified, would pray and testify at every opportunity and would undertake any possible Christian service without being urged. In fact, we did not lay much stress on leaders. We thought all of God's people were prophets; as such they should know what to do and should instantly volunteer to do it. I would not say that we who came through the process of training young Christians, in the group in which I was brought up in, made great men, but I would say that those that did not fall out by the way certainly did

prove that they meant business.

I cannot help mourning over the ones who did not make it. The statisticians reported forty-two professions in the meeting in which I was saved. At the end of the year all we could really account for were my sister, two other young women, and myself. A wiser plan of training new converts surely would have shown better results than this.

"If they are really saved and sanctified, they will make it without your help, and if you must help them, that proves they are not what they claim to be."

Mr. Chapman believed that "*a wiser plan of training new converts* surely would have shown better results." Instead of simply realizing that he had survived the high attrition rate of new converts because he and the other survivors passed the tests that God had allowed them, he proceeded to devise such a wiser(?) plan. Again, from *Spirit Filled*:

There is a growing interest in holiness churches among our people everywhere. Holiness churches are no longer an experiment but they are now an existing reality.... The day has come when the holiness people must organize or the work will suffer. Scattered among all denominations the usefulness of the holy people is greatly hindered, when out of all organizations they are branded as "Come-outers," thus shutting many doors of usefulness in their faces. **The bands, which are substitutes for churches, have seen their day and proved a failure....** In a disorganized state, we are prey to great impositions. Many people are beginning to see and confess these things and are finding a solution in the organization of local holiness churches.

Earlier, the author of this book testifies to the nature of those holiness bands, which Mr. Chapman later stated were failures:

The people among whom this boy preacher was converted and sanctified placed little emphasis upon church organization and membership, hence it is not surprising that he preached for one year without joining any sort of Christian organization.

Now I must confess that I do not see any *wiser plan* than the one administered by the Author of our salvation, who stated that, "*Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*" Mt. 7:14 And of the few who profess to get it, there is only a small minority that proves out. "*And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.*" Zec. 13:9 God is much more interested in quality than quantity. Read the

scriptures in the Bible concerning the remnant, or meditate on Gideon's experience with God in reducing the number of men with him to three hundred in the face of the host of the enemy. "*And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.*" Jdg. 7:4

The following is from a quotation in *Birth of a Reformation* about the formation of the Free Methodist sect:

B. T. Roberts in his discipline says the Free Methodist organization was a necessity. Was it? Let the hundreds testify who were wonderfully and lovingly united together in the Holy Ghost. **The truth is this: God's heritage and work were spoiled by the laying on of man's hands.**

While enjoying this spiritual fellowship all was peace and harmony and the work of conversion went on, the saints rejoiced, and the sectarian devil was mad, sinners in Zion were afraid and trembled as they saw the weakest saint upon his knees.

B. T. Roberts started out with a trap in hand, making a new test of fellowship. He visited far and wide among the live pilgrims, preaching sect fellowship as the one thing needful, and that they could go no further without it.

In most cases it took them by surprise. They examined themselves and reasoned thus: We are already in fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in

holy spiritual fellowship with the saints, and God has given us the victory again and again while fighting against the unholy sects. What can the sect yoke do for us? We are now free to go everywhere preaching and teaching in the name of Jesus. Thus many stood out for a while. Oh, what robbery, what treachery, to pervert and use this work of God, which began so gloriously, to the building up of a carnal and selfish organism! At every gathering, large or small, the sect yoke was presented and held forth as “the cross.”

My husband was satisfied with God's way of ordering the battle; yea, more than satisfied, he rejoiced and was exceeding glad to see the prosperity of Zion in our midst. While B. T. R. said in action by the formation of his sect, “I have suffered enough reproach and shame; I will number Israel and become as other nations,” then the work of building up “our church” commenced. How the enemy triumphed! At all the gatherings the spirit of sectarian zeal was worked up to the highest pitch, and so fulfilling the scripture which saith, “*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.*” Rom. 1:25

...And today he (B. T. R.) has no more influence than any other sect bishop, whereas he was once a terror to evildoers and a praise to them who did well. From this time the battle of the Lord ceased and the enemies rejoiced. Some who remember the former days of liberty and power ask B. T. R. why the same power is not manifested now as formerly. He answers on this wise: God then gave the people a special blessing for a special work. Very good; but why not continue under these special blessings and in this special work? What an absurdity, what inconsistency to build another sect in order to go through the same variations and evolutions of its predecessors! Was it pleasing in the sight of God to manufacture another class of backsliders? Was it a necessity? Wherever I go I find the burden of Free Methodist preaching is to backslidden membership, whereas before its formation—while they remained in God's order, where He placed them—every man, woman, and child was able to do a full day's work. In visiting many places I find them (the F. M.'s) nearly, if not quite, extinct. In missionary fields the work takes well for a season, but when they begin proselyting and making it a “necessity” to gather them

into their peck measure, then the Lord leaves them to themselves. As I am passing through the land I often meet with those with whom I was acquainted during the war of the Lord, and immediately they refer to the former days of power and salvation and say, “We don't have such meetings nowadays; I would go a long distance to enjoy such privilege.”

—Sidney M'Creery, *History of the Origin of Free Methodism*

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.” Is. 55:8

I once listened to a brother who had possessed considerable light on how God deals with His people. He had fallen away from that light and come under the influence of fleshly reasoning. In his enlightened time, he was insistent that every Sunday school teacher be anointed of the Holy Spirit and feared any other standard, but he had changed. He was preaching about an old man, who was possibly not even saved, who just wanted to help out. “Why not let him help?” the fallen brother said. His tone of voice was full of sympathy. It was suggested that perhaps *he* would be helped by helping, so to speak.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.”

I thought of a brother who went to pray for a man who appeared to be on his death bed. This man was a pillar in the local congregation, taught Sunday school, and had done so for many years. The prayers for healing weren't getting anywhere. The brother took to the woods to get alone with God and pray the matter out. The Lord gave him a vision. He saw the words “HELL FIRE” in letters of flame in the sky. Back he went to the man. He told him what he had seen. The man confessed, “I'm not saved.” He admitted that he never had been saved. He was just there and wanted to help out. God, in great mercy, had permitted his condition to come out in this way.

The people we attempt to help are exposed to more from us than we realize. They are exposed to what we are, instead

of just what we say. If you are unsaved, you will pass an unsaved influence; if you are not filled with the Holy Ghost, you will communicate an unsanctified influence. It does not matter how orthodox is your doctrine; *what you really are in heart* will exert itself upon the listeners. Evil communications do corrupt good manners (1 Cor. 15:33). If you have regard to the praise of men and human political skills in general, it will manifest itself and work corruption. How necessary that the children of God be purged so that they may offer an acceptable offering to the Lord in righteousness! (Mal. 3:3).

It seems reasonable to one under the influence of the sectarian spirit to keep Joab in a position of leadership in the kingdom. A man such as Joab causes discomfort at times, for he is hard and devious and does not forgive, but he is effective and gets results. At times, he even exerts a spiritual influence, as when he resisted the king's desire to number Israel. He was very loyal all his life to David. He was not really in fellowship with David all the time that they worked together, but, on the whole, Joab respected David, and this was deemed sufficient. All of this came to a head when David was about to die. It became painfully obvious that Joab followed a man (David), not God. Whom would he follow after David died?

The spirit of sectism does not weigh out people from the standpoint of how loyal people are to God. It values or devalues according to *how loyal people are to something else*, i.e., the church or the leadership of a given group. If you consider Joab from the standpoint of his love for God and his obedience and love for truth, Joab doesn't look so good. If you consider him from his love and loyalty to David, he was a great leader of the army, an asset to Israel, and a good man in a pinch. The same is true of many a member in a man-made church. From the standpoint of Bible standards, there are many questions about the members-in-good-standing, but they are highly regarded in many things and tolerated in others. It is common in sectarian churches for really spiritually-minded children of God to be regarded

continued on page 9

James dragged his tired feet up the dusty path. His back ached from picking rocks out of the field all day. "It's no fun here, without Ben," he muttered to himself. "No one cares how I feel."

"Hard work keeps a man from fretting," Uncle Simon had told him that morning. But each clinkity-clank down the ravine had only reminded James of how lonely he felt since the cousins had left. Ben and Andy had been his best friends.

"If it was safer to go up to Galilee, why didn't they take me along?" James wondered, as he watched Uncle unyoke the oxen beside the old stone house. Since Papa and other believers had been put in prison a year ago, many families had been leaving Jerusalem. Now Aunt Martha and the cousins had gone to stay with her husband's family in Cana. Why did James have to be the one to stay behind with old Uncle Simon?

James kicked open the door and stepped into the dark house. It seemed empty without motherly Aunt Martha. Was it only last summer that she had brought them all out to the village to live with Uncle? James looked at the cold hearth and suddenly felt very hungry. He wouldn't have minded Joanna's bossing now. At least she was a good cook.

Uncle removed the shade cloth from his gray head and began to build up a fire. "Better get us some water, boy," he said.

James frowned. Hauling water was girls' work! But he picked up the water jug without a word. Uncle didn't tolerate complaining. "Be glad you have muscle to do it," he would say. He was too old to care how James felt to be the only boy at the village well. "I wish Joanna were still here!" James kicked a pebble and sent a flock of pigeons fluttering to the roof. Their mournful cooing matched the self-pity in his heart.



The summer night was closing in around them as the old man and the boy climbed to the roof that evening. James spread his sleeping mat in the corner that he had shared with Ben and Andy. "Mind if I join you on this side?" Uncle asked. "It's kind of lonely with the just the two of us, isn't it?" James didn't answer, but he swung his legs over to make room.

The old man stretched out with a long sigh. "Funny how good it feels to lie down when you've been working hard," he said. A whispery laugh came from his throat. "After thirty-eight years on a bed, I'd never have thought so."

James turned over and shut his eyes. He had heard how Uncle was healed by Jesus many times. Tonight he wanted to be left alone. Or did he? Thoughts of the cousins, his old life in the city, of Papa preaching in the market filled his mind. A sob caught in his throat. Why did they have to take Papa away? James didn't know he was crying until he felt Uncle's hand on his shoulder.

"Something bothering you, son?" Uncle's strong arm pulled him close and James felt his rough beard against his wet cheek. He remembered sitting on Papa's knee when he was small. Good, kind Papa!

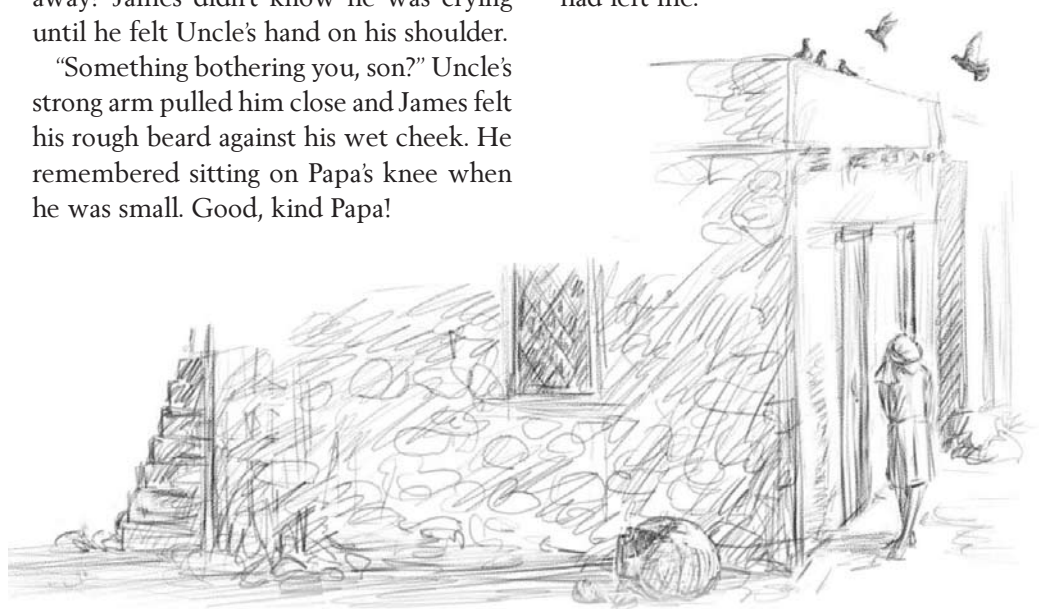
"Could you tell me a story, Uncle?" James whispered. "Papa always told me stories before bed."

"Feeling lonely, eh?" Uncle was silent for a moment. "I know how it is to be left behind. You think no one cares. I will remember the day when my neighbors brought me to the pool..."

* * *

"This is your best chance, Simon," they said. "If you believe in miracles, they say that an angel sometimes comes to stir the water and the first one in the pool gets cured." With well-wishes they left me behind.

Since my accident I had often been left behind. As a boy I had been the village ringleader in any mischief done, to the despair of my parents. One night I got into a drunken fight with the merchant's son over a bracelet I had stolen. I woke up in the street, unable to move. Everyone had left me.



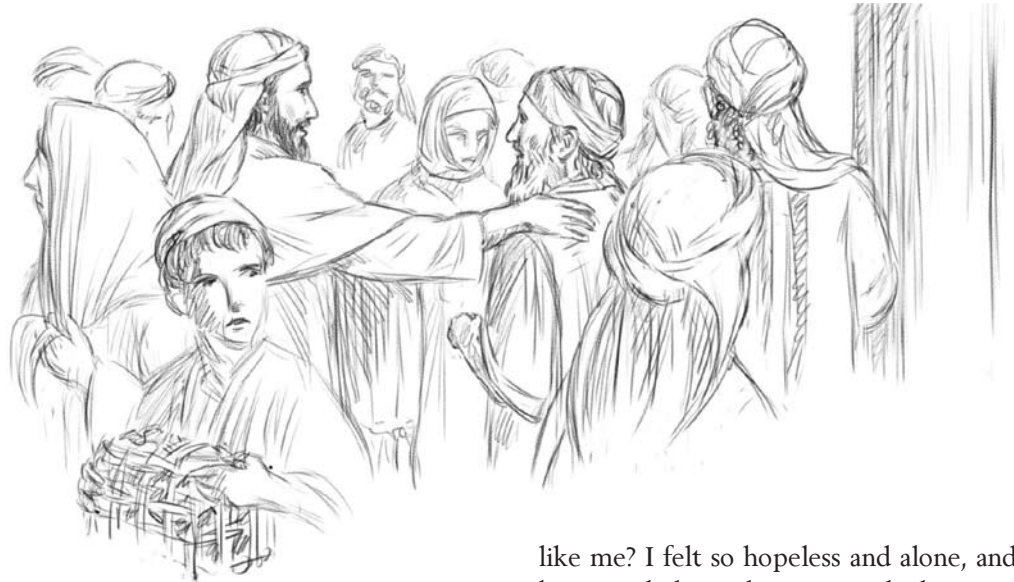
When the merchant found that I was crippled, he took pity on me and hauled me home. Poor Mother! She tried to make me comfortable, but I only complained and cursed. My father and older brother would hardly speak to me. It seemed they were all glad to see me punished for my evil deeds. Even my old chums abandoned me.

Lying on a mat, day after day, I watched my muscles and hopes of a normal life shrivel up before my eyes. But there was nothing that could be done. The weeks passed into months and years. No one cares what has become of me, I thought bitterly. They all go on with their lives, while I must lie here in pain.

It wasn't until my father's death that I began to realize that I was wasting my life. "Son, you have suffered much for your sins," Father told me before he died. "But remember, God is just." I had never thought much about God. Instead of confessing my own bad attitude, I had blamed others. But it had only made me miserable. Did the Lord God notice me? Had He crippled me as punishment for my rebellion?

Mother often sang Psalms of God's glory and power, and now I began to listen. My hard heart softened as I realized how unfair I had been. It was my bitterness and self-pity that had separated me from all that was good. I began to pray that God would be merciful and give me another chance.

It was about that time that we heard about the pool of Bethesda. "You must go there, Simon. I believe God will heal you," Mother said. My older brother (your grandfather) arranged for me to be moved to the pool and provided for. With high hopes I told Mother, "It will not be long before I



come walking home!" I did not know that I would never see her again.

Life at the pool wasn't all I dreamed it would be. I soon was longing for my mother's gentle touch and kind words. Funny, isn't it, how we don't really appreciate the good things in life until we have to go without them? Instead of sweet songs, the air was filled with moans, complaints, and nasty smells. Those who brought us food never cared to stick around. When would the day of my healing come? I wondered.

I was dozing behind a pillar when I heard the cry, "The angel is here!" In the mad scramble I was kicked and stepped on. No one cared about a paralyzed man like me. "I am healed!" I heard someone shout. The terrible news sunk in. I wouldn't be going home.

And so the years passed while my hopes withered up like dry grass. Once Ananias, a young man with a twisted leg, befriended me. "Cheer up, old uncle," he would say. "When the water is stirred next, we'll be the first ones in!" I began to believe that I would have a chance after all. But Ananias was no where to be seen the day that the angel came next. He didn't appear after the excitement settled down either, and someone told me that they had seen him leave the pool with his friends. Again I was left friendless and forsaken.

Those were dark days for me. I was sure that no one really cared if I lived or died. The Psalms my mother had sung were my only comfort. "Be merciful unto me, O Lord," I often prayed. But would God Almighty listen to a worthless cripple

like me? I felt so hopeless and alone, and began to believe that my sins had cut me off forever. But that was before I met the Master.

It was the feast of the Passover and, as usual, Jerusalem was crowded. I didn't pay much attention when a group of men passed along my porch one morning, except to hope that they wouldn't step on me. So I was grateful to see one of them stop beside my bed and look down kindly. "How long have you been in this condition?" he asked.

"It has been thirty-eight years now," I replied, dully.

"Do you want to be made whole?" he asked.

Beneath the weary pain and despair, the old longing flickered up like a spark in the darkness. A normal life? That was why I had come to this miserable place so many years ago. But it had been of no use. "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred," I explained. "But while I am coming, another gets in before me."

It was the sad tale of my life. Always left behind, with no one to care. But he didn't shake his head or turn away. For a long moment the man looked at me, and I saw a love and power that I had never known.

"Rise, take up your bed, and walk around," he said, and it seemed that the very words lifted me off my feet like a strong arm.

In a daze I looked down at my bed by the side of the pool. Was I dreaming? My hands reached down and rolled up the old mat. I found myself walking away from the



porches crowded with suffering bodies, up the steps and onto the city street. Walking. I was well!

I was standing in the sunlight blinking when I heard a shout. A purple-robed scribe came up to me with an angry look on his face. "It is the sabbath day," he said sternly. "It is against the law for you to carry your bed."

My bed? Suddenly I realized that it was tucked under my arm. "The man that-that made me whole," I said, stuttering in my excitement, "that man was the one who told me to take up my bed and walk."

In a moment I was pressed with questions. "Who? Where is this man?" I didn't know. He was no longer beside the pool, and in the milling crowds I could see no familiar face. The scribe left me with a parting warning, "Beware of that madman, for he breaks the law!"

My mind was spinning. After so many years of bitter loneliness and pain, here I was standing, whole and strong! Could it be possible that I had been healed by a madman? I set down my bed and sat on it. I hadn't meant to break any laws. Was the Lord angry with me for obeying the man at the pool?

Suddenly I saw your papa coming through the crowd with a basket off food for my dinner. He was turning down the path toward the pool when I called to him. He stared at me in amazement. "Uncle, is that you? How did you get up here on the street?"

With a broad smile I stood up. "My nephew, I am well! You need not go to the pool any longer." My heart was filled with joy as I realized that the Lord had indeed given me another chance. "Will you go up to the temple with me?" I asked him. "I want to give an offering of thanksgiving to God!"

It was in the treasury that I felt a hand on my arm. I looked up to see the strong, kind face of my healer. "Behold, you are made whole," he said with a smile. The warm grip on my shoulder sent a tingle through me. Then his eyes grew tender and serious. "Sin no more," he told me, "lest something worse happen to you."

I didn't know what to say. Why had this stranger taken such interest in me, a worthless old man? Why did he care?

"Jesus, Master!" someone called out, and I watched as he was surrounded by the milling crowd.

"Who is this Jesus?" I wondered as I turned away. "Is he a madman, or the Master as this person has said?" When I found the scribes' corner a few minutes later, they were loud in their opinion against him. But many others had good things to say. Your papa was eager to tell me what he knew of Jesus' teachings and power.

"He goes about everywhere doing good," he told me. "He teaches us that God is our Father and that we must love others and forgive those that hurt us."

My heart was stirred the more I listened. Love and forgiveness? Surely that is what I had been longing for. And here was someone who had cared when no one else did. Someone who saw beneath the surface to the hurt inside. If God had given this Jesus power to heal me, shouldn't I trust and obey him?

I thought much about what he had told me in the treasury. "Sin no more, lest something worse happen to you." I had been set free from a life of lonely helplessness. What could be worse than that? But there was something darker and more bitter than being a cripple, I realized. It is the bitterness of sin inside us. Jesus had seen the guilt and darkness that bound my soul, and He had come to set me free.

Yes, my boy, that is how great God's love is. He cared about me when I thought I was forsaken. Cared enough to send His Son to come looking for me!

Jesus is now my Master and Friend, James. I can never think of troubles when I remember how good He's been to me. Jesus was the one that gave these old muscles their strength, so the rest of my days I'm using them to please Him.

* * *

The chirping of crickets filled the night air as Uncle finished speaking.

"Papa said that Jesus held me on his lap when I was a baby," James said, sleepily.

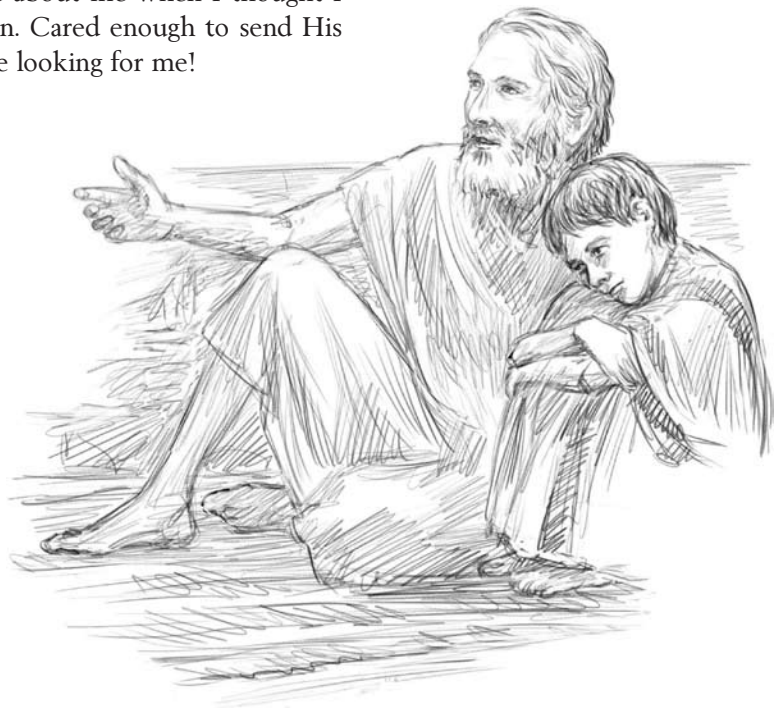
"Yes, your Papa wanted Jesus to bless you," Uncle agreed. "The Master was always glad to take time for the children."

James thought of big, kind Papa carrying him to Jesus. "Was Jesus strong?" James asked.

"Yes, the Lord Jesus is strong," Uncle said with a laugh. "Even death could not hold Him! When He returned to the Father in heaven, He said that all power on earth and heaven was given to Him, and He promised to be with us always."

James thought for a moment. "Can He be with Papa in prison and us here, too?"

"Yes," Uncle said, as he tucked James' cloak around him. "Jesus is the power of God to all of us who believe, wherever we are." James snuggled down on his mat, but in the sleepy darkness he thought he heard Uncle's voice murmur, "Yes, I believe it is the lonely and forsaken that the Master wants to save most of all." ➤



FOUNDATION TRUTH

P.O. Box 1212
Jefferson, OR 97352
e-mail: ft@timelesstruths.org
website: ft.timelesstruths.org

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