

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.*

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*"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18)*

## SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

### HE NEVER SAID ANYTHING BAD ABOUT ANYONE?

It is sometimes said of our Lord, "He never said anything bad about anyone." This statement is made in support of the favored aphorism, "If you can't say something good about someone, do not say anything at all." It is to be admitted that there is a definite tone of nobility and spirituality in these favored sayings; indeed, a degree of truth is to be discovered in them. Talebearers and gossipers ought to provoke similar assertions in response to their wagging tongues. However, we do not speak of these particular abuses here, but are rather bringing the validity of these sayings into question. Are they representative of the "mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16)? Do they express the truth in a concise fashion?

Firstly, it is simply not true that Jesus "never said anything bad about anyone". He was certainly not a talebearer or "a busybody in other men's affairs" (I Pet. 4:15; Lev. 19:16; Prov. 11:13; 20:19; 18:8; 26:20, 22; II Thess. 3:11; I Tim. 5:13). Often, however, His perception of reality provoked Him to make certain observations which were far from men's perception of "good", and which certainly fell short of being "complimentary." Perhaps the citing of a few instances should serve to refresh our minds on this point.

1. He "upbraided the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not" (Mt. 11:20-21).
2. He "upbraided" His own disciples "with their unbelief" (Mark 16:14).
3. He called the Pharisees "blind leaders of the blind" (Mt. 15:14) . . . "blind guides . . . like unto whited sepulchres . . . hypocrites . . . serpents . . . generation of vipers" (Mt. 22:23-33), and said, "they say and do not" (Mt. 23:3).
4. He called Herod "that fox" (Lk. 13:22).
5. He said, "Beware of the leaven (doctrine) of the Pharisees" (Mt. 16:6).
6. He said to Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Mt. 16:23).

The Apostles also spoke quite frankly to and about certain individuals, as well as to broader and more general categories of men.

1. Peter said to Simon the sorcerer: "I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:23).
2. Paul said, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works; of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words" (II Tim. 4:14-15).

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## The Word of Truth

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### He Never Said Anything Bad About Anyone?

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3. Paul said of Demas; "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (II Tim. 4:10).
4. Of Hymenaeus and Alexander, Paul said; "whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Tim. 1:20).
5. Speaking of two specific individuals, the Apostle wrote; "Their word doth eat as a canker; of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (II Tim. 2:17-18).
6. Of false prophets Jude wrote; "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities . . . these speak evil of things which they know not . . . they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. . . . These are spots in your feasts of charity . . . clouds that are without water . . . raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars . . ." (Jude 8-13).

It is true, though it may not be palatable for many, that there are some personalities in Scripture about which little, if any, good may be said. To name a few; Satan, Cain, Esau, Pharaoh, Herod, Judas, Og, Sihon, Goliath, Pilate, and Sennacherib. The point of Scripture is not that these personalities were totally devoid of any trait that men would count as comely. Cain did till the ground; Esau did hunt and even prepare food for his father Isaac; Pharaoh was a ruler; Herod did have some form of respect for the knowledge of those that knew the Scriptures; Judas was a disciple (even the treasurer of that holy band); Goliath was an adept warrior from his youth; Pilate did have some reservations about delivering up Jesus to be crucified. But all of these men had a **fundamentally** perverse and wicked character—and that is how they are set forth in Scripture. Whatever earthly virtues they may have possessed are not lauded or even, indeed, mentioned! They were essentially corrupt, and were therefore declared as such. For instance, concerning Satan, who **does** report to and obey implicitly God (Job 1 and 2), our Lord Jesus said; "He was a mur-

derer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is **no** truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it" (Jno. 8:44). He did not cite Satan's incessant zeal, consistent recognition of Jesus' Person, or his trembling in the presence of the Living God. **These were not comely traits because they were not essential elements of his character.** Satan is primarily and basically evil, and therefore is known as such—totally evil!

It is likewise with many men. Their presence, influence, and teaching constitute eminent danger and jeopardy to the saints of the Most High. **Pious platitudes about not saying anything bad about anyone must not disarm the saints!** There are men that "overthrow the faith of some". They are **not** our friends; we are **not** kindly disposed towards them! They are our enemies! They are **God's** enemies! They are enemies of the **household of faith!** They must be **denounced** in particular, and believers must be **warned** about their wicked influence. Too, those that so speak are not to be regarded as harping critics that require more grace to be tolerant. They are often watchmen upon Zion's walls calling warnings to those laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. Their message is not always popular, **but it is truth.** The world has its agencies that are designed to warn people of danger; there are medical organizations, political institutions, educational bodies, etc., that spend their time alerting the citizenry of dangerous movements and individuals within their particular sphere of influence. The body of Christ also has its warners! Watchmen that refuse to keep silence! See that you do not discourage them in their work. Many of them have seen things that have broken their hearts, and with a tossed and torn soul they speak their message. It is not pleasant for them to sound forth warnings, denunciations, condemnations even though they are constrained by the Spirit of the Living God!

Perhaps a word should be added here concerning temperance in this matter. A promiscuous critical attitude, of course, is not to be found among us! **We must confine ourselves to reality—**to those matters that are beneficial to the household of faith. **Talebearers are never to be permitted to operate without stern rebuke among the faithful.** "Speak evil of no man" (Tit. 3:2) applies to this malicious and tasteless spirit which Satan is striving to promote. Further, we are not to

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## IN THE FLESH

"So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God"—Romans 8:8

There is a **segment** of our natures—I speak to believers—that has not been renewed. It is not regenerated nor invested with life from above. It is not holy, nor does it aspire to be holy; and it cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Theologically, it is called the "Adamic nature"—that part of our beings which owes its origin to Adam, and in which no constitutional change has taken place. Scripturally, this nature is called "the old man" (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9) or "he flesh" (Gal. 5:24; Jude 23). Some students of the Word have also termed this part of our being our "fallen nature", because it is that portion of our total makeup which remains obstracized from the Living God and **cannot** be reconciled to Him.

It is worthy of our efforts to attempt a clear definition of "the flesh"; not for purposes of mere information, but in order to assist us in the perfection of "holiness in the fear of the Lord" (II Cor. 7:1). It is clear that we cannot casually speak of being "in the flesh", for it is plainly declared that "they that are in the flesh **cannot** please God" (Rom. 8:8)—they **CANNOT!** It is inconceivable that those that "**cannot** please God" will dwell forever with Him, or receive His promises and His benefits. The Spirit of God does not suggest that it is improbable that those "in the flesh" will please God; He declares that they "**CANNOT PLEASE GOD**". There is no possible way for them to come into God's favor; no avenue whereby they may procure His approbation. For this reason, the flesh is appropriately termed "sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3) because **it is basically and intrinsically contrary to the Living God.**

When we speak of "the flesh", we are not limiting ourselves to the body of flesh and blood which houses our spirits. Rather, we speak of an entire order which is composed of mind and spirit as well as a body. Thus do the Scriptures speak of: "filthiness of the flesh" (II Cor. 7:1); "the **WILL** of the flesh" (Jno. 1:13); the "**THINGS** of the flesh" (Rom. 8:5); "the **INFIRMITY** of your flesh" (Rom. 6:19); "the **LUST** of the flesh" (Gal. 5:6); "the **WORKS** of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19); the "**SINS** of the flesh" (Col. 2:11); the "**SATISFYING** of the flesh" (Col. 2:23), and the "**DESIRES** of the flesh" (Eph. 2:3). There is also "**FLESHLY WISDOM**" (II Cor. 1:12), a "**fleshly MIND**" (Col. 2:18), and "**fleshly LUSTS**" (I Pet. 2:11). Paul confessed (as do all illuminated hearts) that "in me, that is, in **MY FLESH**, dwelleth **no** good thing" (Rom. 7:18). There is, then, a very specific sense in which the flesh is "**ME**", while in another sense it is "not I" (Romans 7). Peter taught that "he that hath suffered **IN THE FLESH** hath ceased from sin" (I Pet. 4:1), thereby indicating that there is a certain amount of discomfort experienced **within** by those that refrain themselves from sin—discomfort that is not a curse, but is rather a blessing because it constitutes the withholding of sinful ambitions from our lower natures.

Those that "receive" Christ (Jno. 1:12) have "crucified the **FLESH** together with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24), and are thus "**NOT** in the flesh" at this time (Rom. 8:9). Their former life of vanity and sinful rebellion is epitomized as "when we **WERE** in the flesh" (Rom. 7:5). How-

ever, while we are not "in the flesh", the flesh still "lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). While we are not able to completely subdue the harrassment of the flesh, we are able, through Christ Jesus, to resist its impulses and deny its lusts. It is true that the flesh, like a wild dog, cries for our attention, our will, our affection. But we are not deceived about the matter: "He that soweth to the flesh shall **OF THE FLESH** reap corruption" (Gal. 6:8). There is absolutely nothing good or promising held out to those that live "after the flesh"; no promise of goodness, no anticipation of ultimate deliverance, not the slightest or most remote hint that they shall eventually dwell in a better state. Such are "friends of the world", and thereby are explicitly constituted "**THE** enemies of God" (Js. 4:4). When, therefore, we speak of walking "after the flesh", we are not speaking of an excuseable infraction of God's will which will only exempt one from some earthly benefits and blessings. We are speaking of something that positively alienates one from the Living God and places him in a position cursing and enmity. Hear the words of Scripture: "If ye live after the flesh, **ye shall die**" (Rom. 8:13); "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (II Pet. 2:10). Further, justification is declared to be made known in those that "walk **not** after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1, 4). Let us not be deceived, therefore, by the vain prattlings of religious sophists that would have us believe walking in the flesh is not a matter of condemnation: of final and complete ostracization from the God of heaven. **You may not walk in the flesh and remain exempt from the wrath of God and His "eternal judgement"** (Heb. 6:2).

### What Does It Mean To Walk In Or After The Flesh?

If walking after the flesh means that I cannot please God; if it alienates me from the Lord; if I am assured that such a course will lead to ultimate "corruption"—then I do well to seek to clarify this matter to my own understanding. This is not merely a theological issue; it is an eternal one! Therefore I shall here attempt to delineate somewhat of what it means to walk after the flesh.

1. It is to live without a heavenly perspective; to occupy this world without my affection being "set on things above, and not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1). The spiritual have their values and their assessments formed in view of the heavens. They are motivated from above, not from beneath. To walk in the flesh is the type of life that has **no heavenly perspective**. It is a life that is lived in total ignorance of the unseen world and kingdom of the Spirit.

2. To walk in the flesh is to live in ignorance of the **presence** of the Living God. It is to trod upon the Lord's "footstool and yet be ignorant of Him! It means that one lives from day to day as though there was no God; The Living God has no immediate and perceptible affection on his life. He is

not seeking the Lord nor "feeling" after Him, even though "He be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:24-31).

3. Walking in the flesh is living from day to day without any interest in or consciousness of the good pleasure of the Lord. What the Lord wills is absent from the heart and mind: only self-interest reigns. Not only is the Person of the Lord ignored, but the revealed will of the Lord is treated as an unclean thing. There is no genuine interest in knowing what is "that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

4. The fleshly walk which is met with the certain condemnation of the Lord, involves living as though this present life were the only life. There is a free and uninhibited indulgence in "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (I Jno. 2:15-17). This is the sort of attitude that constrained the rich man to say; "I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all MY fruits and MY goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Lk. 12:18-19). The vision is filled with and absorbed by "this present evil world".

5. To walk in the flesh, or to "live after the flesh" involves living as though we did not have to "stand before the judgement seat of Christ, to give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be bad" (Rom. 14:10-12). **There is a day of accounting coming!** Even the idle words that we have glibly spoken shall be meticulously and particularly accounted for (Matt. 12:36). But once let a person live devoid of that knowledge—in deliberate disregard of the day of judgement, in an impassive and apathetic spirit, and he is at once "in the flesh"; in a state of condemnation! **God has cursed the sphere in which he lives;** the realm in which he is operating. There is no exit from that state to glory; no advancement from that realm to the presence of the Lord.

6. Walking in the flesh is living for the interest of self, and self alone. There is no participation in the purpose of the Lord. Swallowed up, as it were, with the vanity of life, and supposing that the world revolves around the satisfaction of our own persons, the individual walking in the flesh is glad when things go well for him, and sad when things do not apparently work out to his advantage. It is a manner of life that violates this precept; "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (I Cor. 10:24). It is that state described by Paul as "all" seeking "their own" (Phil. 2:20). It is a state wherein men become "lovers of their own selves" (II Tim. 3:2), instead of lovers of God. In express transgression of the first commandment ("Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, with all of thy soul, with all of the mind, and with all of thy strength" (Matt. 22:37), those that walk in the flesh love themselves and treat themselves as God.

7. Living in the flesh is living as a citizen primarily of this world, whereas true believers have their "conversation (citizenship) in heaven . . ." (Phil. 3:20-21). To be at home in this world is

disastrous; it sweeps us into a flood of certain condemnation, for "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (I Jno. 2:17). Those that do not walk in the flesh "confess that they are strangers and pilgrims in the earth" (Heb. 11:13). Again, the spiritual are admonished; "I beseech you as **strangers and pilgrims**, abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11). This world has been polluted by sin; believers have been cleansed from sin—there is no basis for them being at home in the world! **When this blight of time grips our spirits, and we begin to live in view of the temporal, we are walking in the flesh, and have come into an order that has been surely cursed by God.**

8. Walking in the flesh is a way of life that does not deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; it is a course of life that is **not** marked by the instruction of grace; "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, **teaching us** that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should **live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world**" (Tit. 2:11). Someone that walks in the flesh does not live soberly; i.e., with an awareness of reality; they do not live righteously; i.e., in strict comportment with the will and nature of God; they do not live godly; i.e., with a disposition and character that is god-like, being made "partakers of the Divine Nature" (II Pet. 1:4). They do not deny ungodliness; i.e., they do not refuse to acknowledge as valid those inclinations and proclivities that are unlike the Living God. They do not deny worldly lusts; i.e., those unlawful desires which find their ultimate fruition in temporality, and which are not harmonious with the eternal order. Those that walk in the flesh do **not** do these things.

9. Walking in the flesh finds one without a spiritual concept of good and evil. There is no cognizance of what is truly right and wrong. There is no true knowledge "between good and evil" (Duet. 1:39; II Sam. 19:35). In fact, there is an actual love for "evil more than good" (Psa. 52:3). One is brought, because of his fundamental spiritual ignorance to "call evil good and good evil" (Isa. 5:20); thus do they "hate good and love evil" (Micah 3:2), for **it is inevitable that those who are unable to discern right from wrong will cleave to the wrong, love the wrong, and despise the good.** That is the result of unbelief! Ignorance of good and evil thrusts one into a necessary walk after the flesh—**there is no other walk or climate in which spiritual ignorance may be maintained!**

10. When anyone walks in the flesh, they live in ignorance of our adversary who "walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). Blind and foolish living compels one to fall into the snare of the devil (II Tim. 2:26). The Word of God is thus taken from the heart (Matt. 13:19), and spiritual ignorance prevails in the walk of the flesh. Satan then takes people "captive at his will" (II Tim. 2:26). O, that men knew the jeopardy of being so led and influenced by Satan, the archfoe of man and God. There are no depths to which one cannot plummet; no sin of which he is not capable. This matter of living in

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## EMULATIONS

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are . . . emulations. . . ." Gal. 5:19-20

The "works of the flesh" are simply the expressions of the fallen and unredeemed nature of man. They are works that gravitate to condemnation; they are expressions that can incur only the wrath of God; they are totally and completely divorced from the "Divine nature"; they have no part in the Kingdom of God, and no unity with life or with the Author of life. These are expressions which are opposite of that fruit which is wrought by the Holy Spirit; they are works against which the Law of God is set, and which we must repudiate by faith and against which we must fight incessantly. That we all have undeniable proclivities in the direction of these works cannot be denied, but that we are superior to them **in Jesus** is equally the truth. These are the things that are "crucified" by "they that are Christ's" (Gal. 5:24).

Now several of these works are readily known by all to be wrong, lawless, and to be zealously avoided; "adultery, fornication . . . idolatry, witchcraft, hatred . . . murders, drunkenness . . ." (Gal. 5:19-21); there is no question concerning the anarchy and outlawry of these things. While all works of the flesh are truly "manifest", these are more readily manifest, and for those that have been reared in a culture that has experienced heavy affectation by these revelations of God, there is little need to establish the utter impropriety of such things. And yet, there is a category of the "works of the flesh" which is not so readily identifiable; things are therein seen which may easily escape the mind and heart that has not been properly taught by the grace of God. Among these particular things is one work called "emulations". This IS a work of the flesh; it IS sin; it IS manifest; it IS to be crucified; there IS a law against it. It is cataloged with sins that are of the same gender as it is, and is thereby seen as extremely dangerous, though it is not so apparent.

### What Are Emulations?

In the English the word means; "Ambition or endeavor to equal or to excel; rivalry." In the Scriptures it is set along side of such sins as "wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings"; **sins of unlawful competition**. It is basically the spirit of Satan and of the world—the spirit of competition; "I will exalt my throne above the Most High . . ." (Isa. 14:13). It is striving to be something that one is not, thinking of oneself "more highly than he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3). This transgression falls under the broader category of sin called "the pride of life" (I Jno. 2:16). It may also be said to be an expression of discontent with the dispensation of the Lord—"Why hast Thou made me thus" (Rom. 9:20). Synonyms for "emulations" are also found in Scripture: "jealousy" (R.V.), "envyings" (Rom. 13:13), "indignation" (A.V. Acts 5:17). Words such as "covet" and "desire to have" also point out the nature of this transgression.

### The Nature Of The Kingdom Necessitates Diligence Here

The very nature of the Kingdom of God demands that we be alerted concerning this "work of the flesh." In the body of Christ all members **do not** have the "same office" (Rom. 12:4). While grace and faith are given to all believers, they are not given in the same or precise measure; "Having then gifts **DIFFERING** according to the grace that is given us. . . ."; "For I say . . . 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, 6); "Now, there are **DIVERSITIES** of gifts . . . **DIFFERENCES** of administrations . . . **DIVERSITIES** of operations . . ." (I Cor. 12:4-6). The point here is that God has simply not made us all alike; the body is not an eye, or an ear, or a foot, or a hand; it is composed of "many members"—different, yet effectual; distinct, yet united; divers, yet having the "same care one for another." This truth is taught at length in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12.

Now, because of the sinfulness of man, he is prone to have earthly evaluations of even the gifts of God. One gift or grace, or measure of faith (all meaning the same thing) is tended to be "esteemed above that which is written" (I Cor. 4:6). The truth that we are not to esteem men above that which is written is vital at this point. While we **tend** to evaluate the gifts of God improperly, we must **not** be guilty of placing them all on the same level; they are different, and some are greater than others. For instance; "**Greater** is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret" (I Cor. 14:5), and again, "And God hath set some in the church, **FIRST** apostles, **SECONDARILY** prophets, **THIRDLY** teachers . . ." (I Cor. 12:28).

Let this point then be clearly established, that there are gifts that are greater than others, graces that do excel; operations of the Holy Spirit that do occupy higher positions than others. This is not because of the particular vessel in which these gifts and graces are found, but because of **the nature of the administration**. The Apostles, for instance, are first—over and above the other gifts—because of their work of founding and establishment. Theirs is a lofty position in the Kingdom because it was a lofty work. It is their names that are inscribed on the twelve foundation stones of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14).

**The people of God must carefully guard against ungodly jealousies arising because of the Lord's administrations.** It is never proper for a Timothy to be envious of a Paul, or for any member of the body **to demand attention that is not harmonious with its contribution to the faith of God's people.** It is never to be the purpose of the people of God to merely receive, but to give—i.e., to "minister as of the ability which God giveth" (I Pet. 4:11). Emulations cause "schisms" in the body (I Cor. 12:25), **divisions that God has not placed there;** distinctions, if you please, that have not been authored by the Head of the church!

Envy, word closely associated with "emulations", is "as rottenness to the bones" (Prov. 14:30); it tends to deterioration, not upbuilding; it tears down and destroys rather than building up and fortifying. It pits one member of the body against another rather than constraining them to labor together in the vineyard of the Lord. Remember that it was "for envy" that Jesus was "delivered up" (Mt. 27:18), and Joseph of old was sold because of the "envy" of "the patriarchs" (Acts 7:9). In the case of the rulers of Israel, they were jealous of the success of the Lord Jesus, because "the common people heard Him gladly" (Mk. 12:37). In the case of Joseph, his brothers were envious of the attention which their father bestowed upon their younger brother. In both cases, there was a refusal to accept God the Father's will. God had said of Jesus "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17), but the leaders of the people refused that truthful assessment and sought to "break his bands asunder, and cut away his cords" (Psa. 2:3; Acts 4:25-26). In the case of "the patriarchs", they simply refused to accept their father's high and favored assessment of Joseph; they contested their father's prerogative because they wanted the attention. Now, that pictures for us the very nature of emulation. **It abandons the obvious judgement of the Lord in favor of ambitions that have been established in the flesh.** It sets itself against whatever or whoever does not blend in with such purposes as have been motivated by carnal assessments.

#### Some Examples Of Emulation

At the genesis of man, there arose a violent demonstration of emulation; when the two sons of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord. It is written; "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering" (Gen. 4:3-4). Now let it be established that these offerings were actually presented unto the Lord God of heaven and earth. They were OFFERED in anticipation of a response from the Lord. Abel did receive a favored response—the Lord preferred his offering. That was the right of the Lord and should have provoked Cain to introspection and examination of his heart—but it did not. Rather it brought about the sin of emulation; "And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" because the "Lord had not respect" unto his offering, or unto Cain himself (Gen. 4:5). His emulation led him to commit the first murder, thereby evidencing the fierce nature of this sin.

We also have examples of the grip of emulation in Aaron and Miriam, brother and sister to Moses, the servant of God who was "faithful in all of his house" (Heb. 3:2). Demonstrating that a prophet is truly not without honor save among his own household (Mat. 13:57), "Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married. . . ." In their malicious speaking they manifested a spirit of emulation; "And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken

also by us?" (Num. 12:1-2). It is recorded that "The Lord heard it"! We ought to learn from this **not** to speak against the servants of the Lord—the Lord has not ceased to hear such railings! The attention that Moses had received, the singular honor that had been bestowed upon him—this was a source of aggravation to Aaron and Miriam. Rather than graciously accepting the position into which Moses had been Divinely placed, they took upon themselves to speak against him. Emulation does that; **it seeks exaltation of self at the expense** and the derogation of one that is evidential high. Well, the outcome of this episode was a case of leprosy for Miriam—a case which was abrogated by the prayer of the very man she had criticized (v. 9-15). **Emulation ignores the dispensations of the Lord.**

Another case of emulation is to be found in Simon, "which aforetime . . . used sorcery" (Acts 8:9). During the preaching of Philip, "Simon himself also believed; and . . . was baptized" (Acts 8:13). He did "continue with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done". When word reached the church at Jerusalem of the success of the Gospel in Samaria, "They sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost." It is recorded that they "laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-17). Simon, beholding this work of the Lord, **saw it as a man**; he did not see it as a work of God, nor, indeed, as a dispensation of grace. Being provoked to envy, he actually sought to **purchase** the power to bestow the Holy Spirit on others. He "offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:18-19). Emulation, in this instance, constrained one to be completely blind to Divine causes, and to be overtaken with presumption. **Emulation, that wretched spirit of envy which rots the soul, thrusts one into a life of foolish aspirations, foolish expressions, and ultimate alienation from God,** for Peter retorted: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in the matter: for thy heart is not right with God" (Acts 8:21).

One final case of emulation—that of Ananias and Sapphira. During the early days of the church, when clusters of believers remained in Jerusalem creating a need for extraordinary sacrifice, many that were "possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostle's feet" (Acts 4:34-35). Even Barnabas "having land, sold it, and laid it at the apostle's feet" (Acts 4:37). There is no question but that this liberal climate was provocative to many; "provoking," as it were, to "love and to good works". Hearts were affected by the grace of God to forfeit what the world counts most precious in favor of the accumulation of heavenly treasures. However, ignoble actions were also stirred by this selfless spirit. The Word of the Lord declares "BUT a certain man named Ananias, WITH Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price of it" (Acts 5:1-2). Their's was the spirit of emulation; they desired

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## FAITHFULNESS

"Moreover, it is **required** in stewards that a man be found faithful" — I Cor. 4:2

There are a variety of religious interrogations which have been devised to permit the classification of those laboring for the Lord. To name a few of them: "How large is your church?", "How many souls have you won?", "What sort of missionary emphasis do you have?", "How many attend your prayer meeting?", "What sort of education have you had?", etc. Now, we would not say that these questions are altogether irrelevant; depending, of course, on the ultimate objectives of the interrogator. But of this we are sure: they, nor any questions like them, can become the basis for determining the acceptability of an individual's service to the Living God! For instance, "Reverend 'Ike'", a contemporary false prophet, has an active congregation in excess of 15,000, and "Reverend Moon" from Korea deals in membership numerics that dwarf common concepts. Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses boast extremely large numbers of souls "won", and many of Herbert W. Armstrong's followers pack our mid-week services. Hare Kirshna adherents engage in rigorous missionary activity, and Roman Catholic clerics boast educational credentials that are second to none. Yet none of these things of themselves constrain us to say that these groups properly represent the Living God. It is at once obvious, therefore, that the sort of questions which we have enumerated do not at all permit a **proper** diagnosis of the work of the Lord. If they do, then the borders of the Kingdom must be enlarged decidedly to permit the entrance of groups that do not even carry the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ! They do not, in fact, represent a Scriptural concept of success in the Kingdom at all!

In dealing with this pseudo-approach to the assessment of one's labors for the Lord, we shall strive to establish three basic truths: 1. The Scriptural concept of faithfulness. 2. The Scriptural principle of stewardship. 3. The Scriptural principle of judgement. If we are able to establish these truths adequately to the minds of our readers, we shall have accomplished no small task.

### The Scriptural Concept of Faithfulness

Faithfulness, in Scripture, is not immediately connected with evidential results; not plainly joined, as it were, to **apparent** success—rather, it is joined immediately to obedience, and it is in association with obedience that faithfulness is set forth by the men of God. Faithfulness is attached to servanthood—"good and faithful **servant**." Primarily, believers are the **SERVANTS** of the Lord: even our Blessed Lord Jesus was referred to by the Father Himself as "My Servant" (Isa. 42:1; Zech. 3:8). This is, of course, a concept that does not blend with the world's idea of leadership or success. The world is teaching us that leadership and greatness is conceived when divorcement from servitude takes place. However, the word of the Lord holds forth the truth that the fundamental duty of man is to be faithful to the Living God, to carry out His Creator's orders precisely and faithfully. Whatever else may or may not be accomplished, **man shall ultimately be judged according to the faithfulness of his labors.**

How apparently successful a man's labors may appear have no immediate bearing on the acceptability of his service! Daniel may, indeed, be thrown into the lion's den (Dan. 6:7ff); Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednigo may be cast into a furnace of fire (Dan. 3:6ff); Jeremiah may be cast into a deep pit and be caused to sink down into the mire (Jer. 38:6ff); James may be beheaded (Acts 12:2); Stephen may be stoned (Acts 7), and Antipas martyred (Rev. 2:13). Our blessed Lord Jesus, for that matter, may die in ignominy and shame—but **these things cast no reproach whatsoever either upon His vicarious work of atonement, or upon the works of those faithful ones we have also mentioned.** Their work was acceptable with God, even though men did not honor it! John the Baptist was beheaded because of what he said (Matt. 14:10), and Paul was once stoned for what he declared (Acts 14:19). And again, let us not be guilty of forgetting that the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified by the hands of lawless men (Acts 2:23), as Pontius Pilate, Herod, the rulers of the people, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel gathered together against Him (Acts 4:27).

What these several illustrations point out to us is simply this: headed by our Lord Jesus Himself, all of these men would be considered abject failures by the majority of contemporary religion. Their credentials were not recognized by their peers, nor, indeed, by those who have set the religious standards of our day. The Son of God and His followers would appear to be reactionaries, and unworthy of leadership by the vast majority of the church today! However, they were faithful to the God that ordained them and sent them forth. They accomplished the work which they were given to do, and were thus faithful and successful in the highest and most noble sense of the word. The fact that men did not properly assess their labors only condemns **them**; it does not diminish the value of the servant of God, nor of his work.

While it is extremely important to some men that their fellows think well of their labors, and that their efforts fall into an officially approved category, the servant of the Lord thinks on this wise; "but with me, it is a **very small thing** that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgement . . ." (I Cor. 4:3). This reason for this appraisal of things is this: we are **NOT** the servants of men! but of the Living God. Therefore, it is His approval that we seek, not that of man. As it is written: "But be **not** ye the servants of men . . ." (I Cor. 7:23); ". . . **not** as the servants of men" (Eph. 6:6); So emphatically is this point labored by the Holy Ghost that it is written, "for if I yet pleased men, I should **NOT** be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). What would happen were the religious professionals to suddenly abandon their quest for earthly glory, the presidency of their respective conventions, etc., and seek to please the Lord only. There is no doubt in my mind that such a drastic alteration would take place in the church world that one would scarcely be able to recognize it.

The entire thrust of Scripture, so far as accountability is concerned, is **FAITHFULNESS** (Mt. 25:45; 25:21, 23; Lk. 19:17; 16:10-12; Acts 16:15; I Cor. 4:17; 7:25; I Tim. 1:12; II Tim. 2:2; Heb. 3:

2; Rev. 2:10; III Jno. 5, etc.). The little religious clichés that sound so pious, and carry so much weight with sophists, are given no place of prominence in the Scriptures at all! Permit me to illustrate this point by bringing up one of the revered and hallowed questions of “evangelicals”: “How many souls have you won?” Now, that has a spiritual ring to it. It sounds very pious, and designed to humiliate the apparently unsuccessful, and to exonerate the seemingly successful. But when everything has been said in the defence of this interrogation, it simply is not found in the Scripture! Nor, indeed, is there an illusion or implication that would lead us to believe that this is a proper question at all! It is a purely traditional question which has caused untold grief to many, whole fostering unwarranted pride in others.

A question of this sort would be entirely and grossly out of order in some circumstances—it is not a spiritual unit of measurement which can be consistently applied to all believers. For instance, how utterly foolish to ask this of the thief on the cross, or of a body of believers living in the midst of a great persecution, or hidden away, say, in the catacombs of Rome. Whether or not men choose to believe this, **there are times when keeping the faith is infinitely more important than sharing it.** Tell me, you that know the Scriptures, just where does the Word of the Lord place the EMPHASIS? On faithfulness or on evangelism? Answer that!—**you** are under solemn obligation to square your teaching with the Scripture, are you not? And if this is a particular emphasis which you labor, then it **must** be shown to be an emphasis in the Scripture; not something that is mentioned; not even something that is mentioned more than once; but something that is a major emphasis of the Word. Just how does the Spirit testify to the churches? What is the **very evident** emphasis of His message? It is perseverance, stedfastness, spirituality—living so as to be able to give an account to God—which we shall surely do (Rom. 14:12).

Now for those that are in theological consternation because of these words; those that are faithful **will** preach and teach; but only a fool would assert that all who teach or preach are faithful!

#### **The Principle Of Stewardship**

Faithfulness is built upon the postulation of stewardship: “moreover, it is required in STEWARDS that a man be found faithful.” Stewardship speaks of a servant handling the goods of another: “And if ye have not been faithful in that which is **another man’s**, who shall give you that which is your own?” (Lk. 16:12). The Lord places a measure of faith (Rom. 12:3) within each one of His children. That “measure” is designed to accomplish some facet of Kingdom-work. **The proportionment of eternal rewards will be based upon the steward’s faithfulness in handling his particular “measure” or “gift”.** He is, in fact, to be a “good steward of the manifold grace of God” (I Pet. 4:10). We have this principle precisely declared in the parables, for instance, of the talents and of the pounds (Mt. 25:15ff; Luke 19:13ff). It may be seen at once that the faithfulness of the stewards to whom these talents and pounds were distributed was the hinge upon which their destiny turned.

Note such phrases as “well done, good and faithful servant”, “thou wicked and slothful servant”, “thou good servant”, “thou wicked servant.” The terms “good” and “wicked” are directly associated with the servant’s handling of their master’s goods. Those that handled them properly were termed “faithful”, and rewarded accordingly. Those that did not handle them properly were called “wicked” and “slothful”, and their destiny was not at all to be envied—putting it mildly. The point here is that **the servants had no right to neglect their Lord’s goods.** He had graciously condescended to exercise His sovereignty by placing them in charge of His very own treasures. It at once became their obligation to handle them faithfully, and with their master’s interest pre-eminent in their minds and hearts. How big of an impression they may or may not have made upon their society was not even the point. Whether they were accepted or rejected by their peers was totally irrelevant at this point. It was, however, imperative that they be good stewards, never forgetting that what they were handling was **not** their own, but “another man’s”.

Some poignant and valid questions, in view of this principle, that may be asked of our religious contemporaries (as well as of ourselves) are: “Are you preaching the **whole counsel of God?**” (Acts 20:27); “Do you **rightly** divide the word of truth?” (II Tim. 2:15); “Are you a good and a **faithful** servant?”

Let us suppose for a moment that we are addressing preachers. Have you received something from the Lord? Some insight into **the** truth—or even a truth? Some burden of the Lord—something heavy upon your heart that concerns the glory of the Lord? In short, have you been given something that is burning in your heart? (Jer. 20:9)? If not, then what are you doing pretending to be a preacher? If so, then have you been faithful to your calling? There is grace sufficient for you to **meticulously** fulfill your work to the glory of God. Be sure of this one thing: when the Lord comes again, you **will** be judged in direct association with the stewardship that you have received. Whether or not you have become famous or successful by using predetermined techniques will have no relevance at that time. The visible successes of your particular institution will not be the issue! Rather, you will “give an account of thy stewardship” (Lk. 16:2). If you have not been faithful, keeping under your body and bringing it into subjection, it is sure that you yourself will become a castaway, even though you have preached to others (I Cor. 9:27).

#### **The Scriptural Principle of Judgement**

It is true that “we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Cor. 5:10). Now this truth is proclaimed within the context of responsibility toward the Living God and an ultimate accountability for our stewardship. It was in view of an acute awareness that he would give an account to the Lord that Paul said, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men . . .” (verse 11). The love

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## A MODERN PARABLE

By Bro. Richard Ebler

There was a certain man who was a newly-commissioned officer in the army. Although he was a low-ranking officer, he felt it an honor to serve in that capacity and was accordingly conscientious in his duties.

One day he received a command from the highest-ranking officer concerning the pillows that were being used in all the barracks. It seemed that somehow they had become chemically polluted so that the continued use of them would result in a deadly disease. They had to be removed at once. It was urgent.

Since it was the middle of the night and there was no public address system in any of the barracks, the conscientious young officer rushed immediately into the barracks and went from bunkbed to bunkbed jerking the pillows out from under the heads of the sleeping men. He did not miss a single one. Even a relative and close friend were treated the same as everyone else.

The men, of course, woke up grouchy and angry. Some took it as a personal insult and began to beat the young officer until he was very bruised and sore. Nevertheless the highest-ranking officer promised him a promotion to higher pay with less danger after a due waiting period as a reward for his faithfulness. In the meantime his enemies were severely punished.

(Hint: the pillows are symbols of error upon which the mind sleeps.)

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## SOME ESPECIALLY GOOD SAYINGS OF BRO. FRED BLAKELY

It has been my privilege to know Bro. Fred Blakely for over ten years and to have labored with him in some measure in the gospel. He has been an inspiration to me as a model of faith, wisdom, moderation, scholarship, dependability, self-discipline, keen insight into both doctrinal and practical matters, uprightness, and unobtrusive gentlemanly consideration of others.

The following quotations are **not** actually word-for-word, but rather they are his central thoughts as I remember hearing them at the table and at men's meetings over the years:

"If we get bogged down in our theology then we can always look at the physical man, Christ Jesus, and see how the Spirit expressed itself while living in this world. Here we have it in the concrete objective reality. Here was a perfect man. If we want to know how to live . . . simply follow the man Christ Jesus."

"We can deduce a lot about glory just by looking carefully at our present grace (which is merely glory in the bud). For example, we hear a new truth and it seems we knew it all along. We feel perfectly at home with it, even though it is new. So in glory (heaven) we shall feel at home the moment we arrive."

"Those who say they believe in Christ while rejecting his teachings are deceiving themselves. Christ is the sum total of **everything** He taught."

"Those who say they are close to God while neglecting their Bibles are deceiving themselves. We are as close to God as we are to his word."

"Given the essential facts of the kingdom, we would be able to reason and come to the correct conclusions even if the Scriptures were not categorically clear (which they are) on the basic matters. For example, if the whole world lies in wickedness and yet we have been made a partaker of the divine nature, then it is obvious that we are strangers and pilgrims in the earth. It makes sense that we should look for the coming of the Lord and live in anticipation of eternal glory."

"When you put it in writing, you have embalmed the thought."

"Farmers used to get their hogs into the barn by dropping just a little corn under the hog's nose and then a little more a few inches away and so on until the hog had eaten its way into the barn. This is the way that God lures the saints into heaven. He gives them just enough spiritual blessings to keep them coming."

"The degree of strict nonconformity to the spirit of this world will determine our status in the world to come. Included in this would be our labors for the Lord, our degree of conformity to His word, our faithfulness, our contributions, our sacrifices, etc. In short, how closely did we hew to the pattern showed us on the mount?"

"Much of modern churchianity emphasizes a smiling countenance and a glee-club atmosphere in ignorance of most of the basic truths of the Bible. We live presently in a hostile land where there is suffering and testing and fighting the fight of faith, although God does give us a few Elims along the way to refresh us. The joy of the world is not the same as the joy of the Holy Ghost. The latter is not a personality-type joy, oblivious to reality, dependent on wealth and favorable circumstances."

"We must disabuse our minds of tradition and seek to see what God is actually saying in the Scriptures."

"We must divest ourselves of mysticism. He that believes and is baptized is Biblically constituted a child of God. He will never be more so. He simply is."

—Bro. Richard Ebler

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## He Never Said Anything Bad About Anyone?

(From page 2.)

"speak evil of one another" (Js. 4:11). **We must rise above personal and purely selfish interests into the higher realm of the heavenlies in order to properly speak concerning our fellow creatures.** As it is written; "We know no man after the flesh" (II Cor. 5:16). We do not assess men's character according to the flesh, judging after appearance! Some of the most likeable people may be the most dangerous, and may have to be assessed as our enemies; while some of the most unlikeable individuals may be the most beneficial to us and require the assessment of true friends and fellow pilgrims.

May the Lord enable us to speak properly of men—in such a way as will enable and promote **spiritual** attitudes toward them—attitudes that maintain a primary interest in the glory of God and the safety of His people!

## In The Flesh

(From page 4)

the flesh leads us into an area where imagination is incapable of conceiving the enormity of our capacity for sin and iniquity. Men have committed murder, incest, adultery, theft, and even blasphemed the name of God while walking in the flesh—and there is no guarantee to anyone walking after the flesh that he is exempt from such eminent danger!

11. They that live in the flesh live without being motivated by the love of Christ; “The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then are all dead” (II Cor. 5:14). The constraining power of the love of Christ raises us far above the discipline of the Law. “What the law could not do, God sending His own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, **that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**” (Rom. 8:3-4). Perceiving the “love of God” (I Jno. 3:16) demands that we separate from the fleshly walk—and thus walking in the flesh is actually the absence of this insight; that “He loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). What a dreadful way to live; in ignorance of the “unspeakable gift” of God; the expiation of our sins through the Lord Jesus Christ! Yet, those that live in the flesh—who follow the dictates of the unredeemed nature—have no real appetite for this, but choose rather to follow the “broad road that leadeth to destruction” (Matt. 7:15-16).

12. To live in the flesh is to live WITHOUT taking up the cross daily, and following Jesus; “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross DAILY, and follow me” (Lk. 9:23). This involves bearing the reproach that necessarily follows the embracement of Christ Jesus. It is true that there is a certain penalty connected with following the Lord; it brings upon you the reproach of the world—often persecution—and men saying all manner of evil against you **falsely** for His Name sake. It calls for the renunciation of self-interests and the embracement of the Kingdom of God. As it is written; “Seek ye **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). When Peter and the Apostles began to preach, they were threatened, beaten, and even imprisoned. But they took up their cross, continuing to preach and teach in the Name of the Lord Jesus, thinking nothing of the threats of the wicked. To have done otherwise would have been to “walk in the flesh.” Think of the multitudes that do walk in the flesh, in this respect. Myriads of youngsters subdue their faith in school simply because of the reproach that would be otherwise brought upon them. **They** do not take up their cross! What of the astounding number of preachers that fail to preach “the whole counsel of God”—even those things that they know are true—because they anticipate the rejection of their message and the disapproval of the institution! **They** do not take up their cross. What of the husbands, the wives, the children, that do not follow a godly course of domestic life simply because of the criticism which

shall be leveled at them by their peers. **They** do not take up the cross! What of those servants that do not do their work heartily as unto the Lord, because they may be held forth as peculiar and odd workmen? **They** do not take up their cross.

Let this point be clear, that we are not speaking of a walk of life that may be traversed without incurring the wrath of God. Let others minimize sin, if they dare, but let no man of God do it! God is not well pleased with those that walk in the flesh—they cannot please God, and they are not of God. They shall surely die if they continue in such a walk. Let no man occupy our time with some sort of vain speculation about what “die” means—any soul familiar with God knows that infinitely more is involved than mere physical death, or the separation of the soul from the body. Death, in this instance, speaks of being cut off from the living God; elsewhere called “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (II Thess. 1:8-9). Lest any misconstrue this, He is clearly speaking of those that “know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” **No person walking in the flesh truly knows the Lord, and they are certainly not obeying the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.** They are walking—yea living—in a realm that is totally incompatible with God. They cannot, in such a state be joined to the Lord anymore than could Satan, the prince of the power of the air. It is not clear, then, that we may never glibly brush the fact of our indulgence aside by saying, “I was in the flesh”. To say such is to say, “The wrath of God is upon me”, and “I cannot please God”, and “I shall die unless I repent and acknowledge the truth.” May the Lord give grace to us all to realize the absolute seriousness of this matter, and to separate ourselves from those traditions of men which compel us to regard walking in the flesh as a light thing.

## HOW MANY IN THE GODHEAD?

### ONE—OR THREE

There is a strain of religious persuasion which states that there is only One Person in the Godhead. This One Divine Person, it is taught, is declared in Scripture to perform three different functions. The official appellations ascribed to these varied functions are “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” it is asserted. This is said to be like, for example, John the carpenter, John the fisherman, and John the teacher. This particular teaching has been dubbed “Jesus only,” because it declares that presently “Jesus” is the official name and ministry of God.

This doctrine is heresy in the most particular sense of the word! It contradicts several plain and precious teachings of the Word of God—teachings which necessitate the interaction of more than one person. Permit me to enumerate a few of them here.

1. God gave His only begotten Son (Jno. 3:16).
2. The Lord Jesus came to do God the Father's will (Jno. 4:34; 5:30).
3. Jesus Christ sent the Comforter, or the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:49).

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## THE COORDINATION OF EFFORT AND GRACE

There are two philosophical extremities which every believer must zealously avoid: 1. The error of expending mortal effort **without** the Divine support of Grace. 2. The false supposition that Grace will work within the believer without the employment of mortal effort. Effort without grace is nothing more than presumption and vanity, while grace without effort amounts to a grieving and a quenching of the Holy Ghost. **At some point within the experience** (Rom. 5:4; Gen. 30:27) **of the children of God** (I Jno. 3:10; 5:2), **grace and effort must come together**. Our minds must be reconciled to this truth as we actively engage in seeking to please the Father.

### Effort Without Grace

Effort without the support and undergirding of grace may very well accomplish something, but that "something" is destined to fall—it cannot stand! It may start a tower of Babel (Gen. 11), or offer an offering to God, as did Cain (Gen. 3). It may produce a mighty hunter like Nimrod (Gen. 10:9) or an impressive warrior like Goliath of Gath (I Sam. 17). It can bring a Jezebel success in slaying a godly Naboth (I Kgs. 21:7-16), and enable a Herod to behead the apostle James (Acts 12:2). Graceless efforts did accomplish these things! But before the final chapter had been written, the tower of Babel ceased to be built (Gen. 11:8), Cain received a cursed mark (Gen. 4:15), Nimrod was associated with a fallen city (Micah 5:6), Goliath was slain by a lad (I Sam. 17:40ff), Jezebel was eaten by dogs (II Kgs. 9:10, 36), and the worms consumed Herod (Acts 12:23).

We are admittedly slow in learning this, and yet it is imperative that we do so: **"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain"** (Psa. 127:1). "Vanity" is the ultimate epitaph written over every effort that has not been effectually coordinated with Grace. As it is written; "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God **ACCEPTABLY** with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28).

### Grace Without Effort

We have heard the theological term "irresistible grace", and believe we partly understand what that phrase is meant to connote. However it must not be construed so as to discourage effort or placate the slothful.

Grace without effort is grace "received in vain" (II Cor. 6:1). It results in doing "despite to the Spirit of Grace" (Heb. 12:28). It is when grace is "frustrated" (Gal. 2:21) as men either fail to extend effort, or extend it in a contrary direction, such as seeking to be "justified by the law" (Gal. 5:4).

**Grace is an activator!** It teaches us to "DENY ungodliness and worldly lusts, and LIVE soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Tit. 2:11). "DENY—"LIVE": these concepts entail undeniable effort! The very fact that relatively few are successful in this sort of denial is unquestionable evidence of the strenuous effort that must be

expended in response to the instruction of grace.

Grace without effort is evidenced by such Scriptural phrases as: "If they shall fall away" (Heb. 6:6); "lest any man fail of the grace of God" (Heb. 12:15); "some shall depart from the faith" (I Tim. 4:1); and "if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world . . . they are again entangled therein" (II Pet. 2:20). It involves a retrogression back into sin, for **grace cannot and will not sustain the saint without holy effort and endeavor!**

### Grace And Effort United

As the word becomes effectual when it is "mixed with faith" (Heb. 4:2), and as the body with the spirit becomes active and vital (Js. 2:26), so **grace becomes effectual when it is mingled with effort**—or, perhaps, it would be more precisely stated that **effort consummates in success when it is coupled with grace**. Permit me to illustrate this from the Scriptures.

Recall the certain woman with an "issue of blood" (Matt. 9:20). Certainly the power of God's grace and favor was exhibited there! For twelve long years this "daughter" had "suffered many things of many physicians" (Mk. 5:26), and yet she "came in the press behind, and touched His garment" (Mk. 5:27). There is little doubt in my mind that this required an extraordinary amount of effort. Yet without grace, that effort would have been spent in vain; without being met with the glorious result of her healing. It is as though the grace and virtue of our Lord extended to meet her apparently feeble effort. This woman stands amidst a crowd of mortals whose efforts were met with the matchless grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, thus attesting to the coordination of the two. She stands with such notable examples as the lame man at the gate beautiful who arose to his feet and walked for the first time in his entire life, having been "lame from his mother's womb" (Acts 3:1-7). For such an one to rise was illogical and, scientifically speaking, an unreasonable request. **But as his effort reached out, the grace of God reached down**, enabling him to rise up and walk! And, what about the man with the "withered hand", that was commanded to stretch it forth (Matt. 12:13), or the blind man that was commanded to go wash in the pool of Siloam in order to receive his sight (Jno. 9:6-7). These cases exhibit to us the coordination of effort and grace; What they were asked to do was apparently impossible, and made little or no sense in the light of the entire mass of accumulated earthly knowledge. And yet, when the actions were obeyed, results were effectuated that brought glory to God and edification to myriads of believers through the ages that have read the accounts.

Time would fail to mention some of the superlative acts of obedience that are outlined to us in Scripture; acts that **could** not possibly have been accomplished without the Grace of God; and acts which grace **would** not have accomplished without the involvement of mortal effort. Such things as Abraham offering his only son Isaac (Gen. 22:

2ff; Heb. 11:17ff), Moses using a mere rod to part the great Red Sea (Ex. 14:16), David slaying a giant (who was a seasoned veteran of war), with a sling and a stone (I Sam. 17). All of these acts would not have been wrought without the unseen, yet effectual, grace of God; and yet, they would not have been performed without the deliberate effort of men.

### What Can We Learn From These Things?

We must avoid extremes that provoke us to presume upon the Living God by thinking the work required shall be done in us without our own personal effort. We must also avoid that opposite extremity which supposes that our effort alone, independent of the Grace of God, shall accomplish the will of the Lord. **The commandments of God must not be looked upon as mere suggestions, or as goals toward which we must strive.** They are to be viewed as absolute requirements; requirements that can **and will** be accomplished by the coordination of our effort and the grace of God. They are just as surely a requirement as was the construction of the ark which Noah was commanded to build; or the commandment that Lot was to come out of Sodom; or that Israel go through the Red Sea; or that Rahab hang a scarlet thread over the wall of Jericho.

The truth is that in Christ we have become "dead to sin" (Rom. 6:2), having been made "one spirit" with the Lord (I Cor. 6:17). We are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). In such a capacity, **it is folly to suppose that we are unable to do what our Father has commanded us!** We are in league with the Almighty—just as surely as was Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Samson, Peter, Paul. While the things which we are commanded to do may not perfectly parallel what they were commanded, they are just as possible—nay, just as necessary—as were the things given them to do. Too many believers spend too much time explaining **why** they have not performed the will of God; making excuse for their failure to implement the purpose of God in their lives. Either they have been expending effort without grace, or erroneously depending upon the grace of God to get the matter accomplished independent of their efforts. Both attitudes are to be shunned with holy vigor.

We exhort the people of God to fully exploit their relationship to God through Christ Jesus the Lord in this matter of obedience, and fulfilling the work of God by faith. Do not back away from the commandments or the requirements of our Lord. **He has not thrust you into the sea of life without Divine assistance.** The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will meet you in your honest and obedient efforts; yea, "this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Js. 1:25). May the Lord find us more in the category of the lame man that walked, and less in the category of king Saul of old. Amen!

### WE ARE NOT IN GLORY YET

The Kingdom of God is not only characterized by unparalleled liberty and freedom, but by certain restrictions and governing rules. Often, these rules seem to contradict the concept of liberty—at least in the minds of novices—but they do not. The **apparent** contradiction stems from a **misapprehension of the nature of our freedom in Christ Jesus.** Our Lord Jesus declared, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free **INDEED**" (Jno. 8:32, 36). This freedom of which our Lord spoke, however, was not a freedom after the manner of the earth. This world cannot confer **this** freedom—nor, indeed, can it confer **true** freedom at all. **Freedom is not release from restraint** (which is the concept of the world.) Jesus spoke of a freedom that constituted one being "free **indeed**". The "indeed" indicates that all other freedoms are only pseudo-freedoms; they do not constitute liberty at all. **True spiritual freedom consists of a liberation from that which prohibits us from doing the will of the Lord.** It also involves being brought into a realm where we can actually engage in the fulfilling of the will of the Lord. **Freedom does not thrust us into the wilderness of human experience without rule or restriction;** it removes fetters from the soul so that the commandments of God become our delight, and clears all from before us that would stop us from obeying them. In this view, commandments are not to be construed as hindrances or restrictions, but as guidelines and sign-posts to glory.

Perhaps it would be in order to itemize several of the rules of the kingdom which **appear** to be restraints to the sophist. It is not my purpose here to delineate in particular upon each one of them, but to make some rather broad comments concerning the **necessity** of subscribing to these seeming restrictions. But let us get to the matter of naming some of these things:

1. The younger are to submit to the elder (I Pet. 5:5).
2. A novice is not to be an elder (I Tim. 3:6).
3. Servants are to submit to and honor their masters (I Tim. 6:1; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22; Tit. 2:9; I Pet. 2:18).
4. We are to obey every ordinance of man for conscience sake (I Pet. 2:13).
5. We are to honor the king (I Pet. 2:17), without respect to the political system under which the Lord has been disposed to place us.
6. We are to honor all men (I Pet. 2:17).
7. Wives are to submit themselves to their own husbands (Eph. 5:22; Tit. 2:5).
8. Children are to honor and obey their parents (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20).
9. In the assembly of the righteous, all things are to be done decently and in order (sequentially)—(I Cor. 14:20).
10. The woman is not permitted to teach or to usurp authority over the man (I Tim. 2:2). Men are not to pray or prophesy with their head covered or with long hair (I Cor. 11:7-14).
11. Women are to have a visible sign of authority upon their heads when praying or prophesying (I Cor. 11:5-15).
13. Elders called by the sick are to pray for them, anointing them in oil in the Name of the Lord (Js. 5:13ff).

Now some of these commandments may seem trite and unworthy of mention—but **they are in the Word of God**, and they are there for our respect and attention. No one is spiritual enough or advanced enough to be exempt from them. No saint is at liberty to despise these words, or to seek

to offset them with apparently contradictory commandments or provisions.

The sophist might reason on this wise: "In Christ there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, and thus there can be no recognition of such divisions. They have all been abrogated in Christ Jesus, and thus have no validity at all." That does, it is to be admitted, sound like a powerful argument on the surface, but it simply does not set the full scope of reality before our eyes. In fact, it is really a rather feeble effort to establish the pride of man. Firstly, it is true that distinctions between male, female, bond, free, Jew, and Greek, do **not exist in Christ**. That is the plain proclamation of the Word of God (Gal. 3:28). However, all of our person is not "in Christ" at this time. We are actually "one spirit" with Him (I Cor. 6:17), but **our bodies remain severed and dissociated from Him**, though belonging to Him. Our bodies have not been "redeemed"; as it is written; "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:4). In short, **we are not in glory yet**, and restrictions have been placed upon us until we are! In Christ there not only is an absence of sexual distinction, but also of social and national distinction. Yet, all three are recognized as existing in earthly and physical relationships; and they demand our recognition and honor.

These distinctions have no bearing upon ones associated with the Living God, however. They are, rather, distinction which are confined to relationships in the body. For instance, the fact that children are to obey their parents does not mean that the Lord will necessarily hear and fellowship the children to any lesser degree than He may the parents—in fact, it may be that He will fellowship them more. Also, the fact that wives are to obey their husbands does not mean they obtain a lower status before the Lord than do their husbands. In fact, they are **at the least "heirs together of the grace of life" with their husbands** (I Pet. 3:7), and **there are no laws within the kingdom which can prohibit them from walking closer to the Lord than do their husbands and being more spiritual than their husbands**. Servants also are to obey their masters, but "in Christ" that authoritative distinction disappears as they often appear together before the Throne of all grace, the first being last and the last being first.

Our life in Christ should properly constrain us to fulfill obligations (such as we have mentioned), which are necessitated by our presence in the body. Why should there have to be elaborate explanations of what the Lord has clearly commanded? What would compel a servant to rebel against his master, or children to rebel against their parents, or a wife against her husband? Why would any citizen rebel against the king? What would constrain such action? Is this not an attribute of the Devil himself—this matter of rebellion? Why should any professed follower of the Lamb seek to justify his or her ignorance of apostolic instruction concerning the order and demeanor of saints in the assembly? Is not "rebellion as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness as iniquity"? (I Sam. 15:23)

No one ever has the right to **bind** on believers anything that has not been bound on them by the Living God! Too, no one has a right to **remove** any

restriction that God has placed upon His people! nor, indeed, should there be an exhibition of anger when men or women of God insist on following the commandments of the Lord!

If the Lord says that only one should speak or pray at a time in an assembly, any group meeting in the Name of the Lord that has more than one speaking or praying at a time is out of order and wrong (I Cor. 14:27ff). It makes little difference whether they have supposedly been "moved" by the Spirit or not! God has spoken on the matter, let men bow before His Word! If the Lord says that men are to pray with holy hands, and someone having defiled hands (having lived in sin) leads the assembly in prayer, he is, again, out of order before the Lord (I Tim. 2:8). If the Lord does not permit a woman to teach or usurp authority over the man, all of the religious legislation and demonstration in the world will not make it right! (I Tim. 2:12; I Cor. 14:34). If the Lord says that the younger are not to rebuke the elder, and yet that practice is permitted in ignorance of this word, we do greatly err (I Tim. 5:1). If the Lord says that a woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered dishonors her head (husband), then that is precisely the effect of that practice, regardless of the social customs that are about (I Cor. 14:5). If the Lord says that "every man praying or prophesying with his head covered, **dishonoreth his Head**", no amount of reasoning can justify the wearing of a headpiece, or of a skull cap, etc., such as the Romanists and the Orthodox do.

As long as we are in the body—and **only that long**—we are subject to these restrictions. There are some for everyone; no particular segment of the church is imposed upon to the exclusion of others. There are some for male, female, bond, and free! **The Lord is properly honored and glorified as we joyfully submit to these things.**

No member of Christ is to despise another because they are commanded to be submissive. Submission is a common requirement for all believers—the only difference is the object of the submission. Submission or subjection is not a thing of reproach. Our Lord Jesus, you will remember, submitted **Himself** to the Father (Heb. 10); He even girded Himself with a towel and washed His disciples feet (Jno. 13). He also taught us that whosoever would be great among us would be servant of all (Lk. 22:26). So **being under authority is not to be the cause of despite or reproach**. No wife should despise being in subjection to her husband, and no husband should despise his wife for being in that position. She has been placed in that position by the Lord God, and He is to give honor to her as the "weaker vessel." No child should despise or draw back from honoring and obeying their parents, and no parent should think less of their child because of the commandment that they should be obedient. No servant is to recoil from obeying his master, and no master should subject a servant to abuse because he is in a subordinate position. No young believer should think himself exempt from submitting to the elders, and no elder is to lord it over the flock (I Pet. 5).

May proper attitudes be cultivated by all of the faithful in regards to these things.

6. The Spirit searches the deep things of God (I Cor. 2:10).
7. The Lord Jesus intercedes to the Father for saints (Heb. 7:25).
8. God the Father raised Jesus from the dead (I Thess. 1:10).
9. Jesus of Nazareth prayed to the Heavenly Father (Jno. 17).
10. The Father gave Jesus a commandment (Jno. 12:49).
11. The Father gives us His Holy Spirit (I Jno. 3:24).
12. We come to God through the Lord Jesus Christ (Jno. 14:6).
13. There is One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (I Tim. 2:5).
14. Jesus referred to God as "My Father" (Jno. 5:17).
15. Jesus said, "I go to My Father" (Jno. 14:12; 16:10).
16. Jesus said, "I am the Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman" (Jno. 15:1).
17. Jesus declared, "I honor My Father" (Jno. 8:49).
18. God has sent forth "the Spirit of His Son" into our hearts (Gal. 4:6).
19. By the Spirit we have access to the Father (Eph. 2:18).
20. There is "one Lord," "one Spirit," and "one God the Father" (Eph. 4:4-5).

When the "end" comes, the Lord Jesus will deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father . . . then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him . . . that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:24-28).

As followers of the Lamb, we are simply required to believe the Word of God. It is not to be complicated by attempting to interject carnal reasonings. We are asked to believe that the Father sent the Son; that the Son reconciled us to the Father; that the Holy Spirit is sent to us by the Father and the Son; that the Holy Spirit teaches us of the Father and the Son; and that the Lord Jesus intercedes to the Father for us. There is nothing complicated about that; it is gloriously characterized by "godly simplicity." We are not to be cast into a caldron of confusion by the word "one", particularly in such a manner as to negate all of these wonderful teachings upon which our hope is cast.

"One" does not denote singularity of personality, as is clearly indicated by the use of the word in Scripture. We read of believers being "one spirit" with the Lord (I Cor. 6:17), and yet their personality is individual—believers are not the Lord! Husband and wife are said to be "one flesh" (Eph. 5:31), although they retain their individual personality. Let all men everywhere learn to believe the Word and mortify all reasoning that contradicts or confuses its message.

in school curriculum."—Good News, Jan., 1976. (Editor's note: Lord, deliver us from the influence of fools!)

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"The principle of Franklin High School in Rochester, New York wants a nursery built on campus to care for the children of teenage student mothers. 'I've seen students have babies at 13 and 14 years old and get themselves into a cycle they couldn't get out of,' explained principle Pincus Cohen. The school board will consider the request." There is cause for believers to be alarmed that truly foolish people have been given the charge of our children's learning. Not only must instruction be firm within the home, establishing the absolute essentiality of morality and godliness, but fervent prayers and supplications must be made for the overthrow of Satan's princes that are disseminating these falsehoods. Also, believing youngsters need to take their stand with the Lord Jesus against these trends, refusing to participate or sympathize with the turn of ungodliness that is enveloping our nation!

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A book of popularity in our day is THE LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH by Hal Lindsey. The very fact that such a book is popular gives credence to the claim that we are living in a day of spiritual decline. Only a few years ago this man would have been ostracized from the religious community because of his heresies, and yet he is now a popular so-called theologian. The good things that he may have to say are something like a jewel in a swine's snout (Prov. 11:22). His theology roots in this present world, and offers hope in this world. While we certainly do not recommend the reading of his book (albeit, we do recommend its burning), here are two quotations which illustrate the case in point: "Jesus will return to earth and end the Battle of Armageddon. He will arrive precisely on the Mount of Olives and the mount will split at the touch of His foot" (p. 174, 175); "The temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. Bible characters will be there and worship of God will center there" (p. 54-57).

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The wisdom of this world teaches men that mystery is cause for suspicion, but the Kingdom of God declares that mystery is not only a reality in the Kingdom of God, but cause for worship and admission to the superiority of our Lord God. (Matt. 11:25; 13:11; Rom. 16:25, 26; I Cor. 2:7-10; Eph. 1:9-10; 3:3-9, 18-19; 6:19; Col. 1:25-27; 22; 4:3; I Tim. 3:9). The point of declaring these things to be mysteries is not that they cannot be known, but that they cannot be known save by the revelation of the Almighty God. They are such as cannot be fathomed without Divine aid. The finite mind is simply not capable of discovering the mysteries of God—they are discoverable only by faith! Thus what occasions consternation in the world (i.e., the inability of

one to discern a matter), becomes not only the occasion for worship in the heart of the believer, but also opens the door to the revelation of God whereby things beyond the scope of mortal understanding may actually be understood. Glorious truth, and wonderfully refreshing!

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Ignoring spiritual truths will not make them go away—and yet the fleshly heart believes that to be so! Someday we shall all face the words that have been given to mankind by the Lord God of heaven. We cannot escape them—only prolong their revelation. If, in this life, we accept the revelation of the truth, and receive a love of the truth, we shall be saved; but if we choose to ignore the truth, it shall not pass away, it shall be revealed in the “day of Christ” to our eternal condemnation. Oh, that this truth was registered more thoroughly upon men’s hearts. We all are too prone—**too prone**—to forget this truth and count it unprecious!

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Is the punishment of the ungodly eternal—forever? “He shall burn up the chaff with **unquenchable** fire” (Matt. 3:12); “Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into **everlasting** fire . . .” (Matt. 25:41); “. . . **eternal** judgement” (Heb. 6:2); “. . . and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up **forever and ever**; and they have no rest day or night . . .” (Rev. 14:10-11); “. . . and shall be tormented day and night for **ever and ever**” (Rev. 20:10). It truly is “a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God” (Heb. 10:31). The exactness, duration, and magnitude of the punishment of the wicked cannot possibly be overstated. No mortal mind is capable of grasping what is prepared for the ungodly, anymore than what is prepared for those that love the Lord!

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The truth of the Gospel is simple concerning proclamation, profound concerning reason, immutable concerning purpose, and renovative concerning power. The Gospel is **truth** regardless of man’s reaction to it, but it is “**the power of God** to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). Simply stated, the Gospel is this: that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (II Cor. 5:19). It is that God “hath made Him to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Cor. 5:21); that “though He was rich, yet He became poor; that ye through His poverty might be rich” (II Cor. 8:9). That truth, when believed, transforms the character of men; it causes obedience to be rendered joyfully and expectantly. To be persuaded of the truth of the Gospel is the secret; not to be able to fathom the cause or reason for it. To marvel at the love of God is the reaction of faith; not to probe into the logic of redemption. **It is the magnitude of God’s mercy that is the point, not merely the need of man.** The sacrifice of Christ is what illuminates the sinfulness of man; not the sinfulness of man that illuminates the sacrifice. Men are to stand in wonder at God, not marvel at the iniquity of man! Now, it is certainly not that we are to ignore the sinfulness of the crea-

ture—God forbid. What we are saying is that the Gospel, when believed, brings all of these things into proper focus, and therefore, it and it alone, is to be the centerpoint of preaching!

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Who are the truly great men of the faith? Simply stated, they are the ones that have made the greatest contribution to our faith, and to our apprehension of the nature of the Kingdom of God. Those that have brought to our ears the truths of the Gospel, and who have given us the “sense” of their meaning (Neh. 8:8). Men of note are not necessarily men of God; famous religious personalities are not necessarily great men! O, how we need to learn these things. We think that glory will find many that are first upon earth to be last; and many that are last in this realm to be first in that one! It is the truth that many religious men that are lauded as great men—achievers of great things—have “added nothing” to believers. They bring us not one whit closer to God; they increase not our grasp upon eternal things. They may boast many great things: large churches, successful “Sunday Schools”, etc.—but if they have not brought the people of God closer to God, made the things of the Kingdom plainer, and increased the longing for glory and the appetite for spirituals, then they are not great, but small in the Kingdom of God. Generally speaking, you may be suspicious of those that speak highly of their own work. They are probably not near as great as they suppose!

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The people of God are to be encouraged to express themselves concerning the Kingdom of God. Our own voices and expressions have a particular edifying quality and character about them, when uttered in faith. The discussion of the things of the Spirit of God makes them plainer to those that discuss them. It is as though we try and walk on the water when we attempt to express our faith—and such attempts are always met with the merciful goodness of our Lord. Do not suppose that you cannot speak in behalf of the Lord, or that you cannot join in spiritual discussions. It is to your own advantage that you do so according to your own ability. Both yourself and them that hear you will benefit from such involvement.

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It is important not to read the Bible with **church** tradition in our minds. All too often (and which of us has not fallen into this snare) we have learned what the “church” taught before we knew what the Lord taught. Then we went to the Bible to verify what the church taught us. There are, I fear, too many authorities on church tradition, and too few on what thus saith the Lord. Let us go “to the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). While it may seem elementary, it is needful to say it: **if what we believe does not comport with the Scriptures we ought to abandon our old beliefs for new ones—our old convictions for proper ones!** Do not think for one moment that this will not call for courage and boldness. It will bring down the anathemas of organized religion upon your head—but care nothing for it: your Father in heaven will reward you!

It is being declared by some today that there is a great national revival going on in this country. If this is so, then it is interesting that for the first time in history, spiritual awakening has had absolutely no inhibitive power on the open spread of ungodliness. Immorality of the worst sort flourishes. Sodomy, adultery, incest, murder, etc., flout themselves without shame and without restraint all about us. Were there a great spiritual awakening going on, the darkness—yea the “gross darkness” which is covering the people—would be diminished in the power of that light. In the flush of great revival, the powers of wickedness are less. That has always been the case.

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## Emulations

(From page 6)

to be known as something that they were not. Granted, there was a degree of liberality within them—they did give part of the price that they had received. However, by retaining part of it, they appeared to be decidedly more liberal than they actually were. It would have been better to declare to the Apostles that they were giving but a **portion** of the price of the land—that their hearts were **not** as liberal as their brethren. But they did not do this; **they sought to emulate**—to be classed along with such liberal hearts as that of Barnabas. Well, the whole incident eventuated in the loss of their lives, a classic lesson to the church that the Lord will not permit such fleshly notions to run rampant, and a graphic example that emulation is really a work of the flesh, and, as such, is detested, repudiated, and cursed, by the Living God.

### The Danger Of An Experienced Religion In This Matter

The matter of emulation introduces to us the eminent danger of embracing an experience-centered religion; i.e., a religion that is subjective rather than one that is objective. **The center of the world is not man, and experience is not the ultimate in the Kingdom of God!** Some of the great soldiers of the faith “were tortured, not accepting deliverance . . . had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented . . .” (Heb. 11: 36-37). Now, that concept of religion simply does not comport with an experience-centered doctrine. Theirs was not a “happy” lot, in the commonly accepted use of the term! In fact, great effort is being expended to avoid that type of life—yet we read that these “**obtained a good report through faith**” (Heb. 11:39). Are there any that are seeking to emulate such saints as we have here mentioned? Is there a quest for emulation here? Why not? Simply because this is not at all appealing to the flesh. Also, because it is at once evident that the Lord is the One that directs such courses—it would be sinful to seek to emulate those ancient warriors; our faith might not be sufficient for such trials.

Now, the same principle is to be applied to those with more pleasant lots of life; to those with ministries that are more evident; which seem to be more successful. We do greatly error in seeking to emulate others, striving to be something that God has not made us! **The fundamental thing is not your experience, it is your faithfulness;** “It is required in stewards that a man be found **faithful**” (I Cor. 4:2). There may, quite frankly, be times when I will have **no** glowing testimony; **nothing** outstanding to relate that has happened to me in the ordinary course of life. But let us never forget that when the Apostle Paul arrived at the terminal point of his life, he did not say what had happened to him, or what great benefits he had received (although he had received more than others). Rather, he spoke on this wise; “I have **fought** a good fight, I have **finished** my course, I have **kept** the faith” (II Tim. 4:7). It makes little difference what great deliverances one may have experienced, whether it be the crossing of the Red Sea, drinking water out of a rock, eating miraculous bread from heaven, or being brought out of Egypt with a high hand: if one is not found faithful, keeping the faith, and finishing the course set before him, all else is of little avail! O, that this truth were discerned more fully by the religious multitudes! So many are in quest of this blessing or that blessing—simply because others that they esteem have purportedly received it: **EMULATION!** But we would set forth the example of Abraham, as did Paul; an example of being “strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom. 4:20). There is something to be followed, not the works of Samson the mighty man of Dan.

Can we forget that when the Lord would impress upon us a man blessed indeed of God He sets such as Job before us; one that endured what appeared to be curses. His was certainly not an experience-centered religion! None crave to emulate Job, do they? and yet he is set forth as one of the mighty men of Scripture. Men that lived by faith under great handicaps are set before us as examples: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Moses, Job, the Apostles. They declare loudly to our hearts that **what happens to us is not the most important thing, but what our reaction is to life**—whether of faith or of unbelief; whether we are faithful or unfaithful.

Those that continually speak of what has happened to them, in this perspective, really do us little favor. They only stir within us tendencies to emulation. What we need to hear is a word from God; the message of God; the proclamation of the truth of God. All of the testimonies in the world will not offset the power of the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus. We do not suppress telling what great things the Lord has done for us—God forbid! But that is secondary, not primary. It is the preaching of the cross that God has chosen as the means to salvation, not the rehearsal of Divine benefits and experiences. Were we to learn this more fully, more perfectly, and with greater understanding we would be instrumental in stemming the current tide of emulation that is sweeping the country. May the Lord help us!



## Faithfulness

(From page 8)

of Christ constrained him (II Cor. 5:14), thrusting him into a lively involvement in his stewardship. He determined to be able to give a **good** account to the Lord, "knowing the terror of the Lord"; i.e., **our Lord Jesus is not at all kindly disposed towards those that treat neglectfully that which He has distributed to them.** In fact, His indignation is called here "terror", and you may rest assured that it will "devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:27).

The concept of "deeds" and "works" which form the basis of judgement, is founded upon the principle of stewardship. **Were there no stewardship, then there should be no judgement.** But the fact that we stand in possession of another's goods makes us accountable for the handling of them—and we shall give an account of our stewardship. Hear the word of the Lord; "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (I Cor. 3:8); "Every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:5); "All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (Rev. 2:23); "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (I Pet. 1:17).

Men do have their ways of assessing the labors of God's servants—but those ways shall not be employed by the Lord in that great and dreadful day! One great burning issue will confront us—one which we shall in no wise be able to escape, and one which shall ultimately accrue to the glory of God and His Son Christ Jesus; What have we done with our stewardship? How faithful have we been? Have we buried our talent, or have we gained usury with it through good handling? None shall be exempt from this principle; it ranges from the stewardship of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matt. 10:42; I Cor. 9:27). The point, then, in serving the Lord, is not to achieve a name that is recognized by our peers; nor to make a living; nor, indeed, to achieve a sense of personal satisfaction—however important these things may seem to us. It is, rather, **to please the Lord**, and to please Him well, by being **good and faithful** stewards: to handle our stewardship in the express interest of our Master, seeing to it that His good Name is honored, that His glory is furthered, and that His "eternal purpose" is implemented to the best of our ability.

### The True Means of Assessment

How is it that we are to assess our faithfulness; our handling of our stewardship. Firstly, we are not to run to mere men and obtain the consensus of their judgement. Whatever our stewardship, whatever our lot in life; whatever the dispensation of grace that has been given to us, there is something in the Word of the Lord that describes the proper functioning of that ministry. We are to take our lives, our involvement in the work of the Lord, and place it along side of the Scriptural appraisal of that particular station of life. Permit me to illustrate. Say, for instance, that I am a husband and a father (which I am). What does the Word of the King say about fathers and husbands? I am to lay my life along side of that yard-

stick. My comportment with those statements determine the degree of my faithfulness. A wife is to deliberately lay her life up against the statements of Scripture concerning wives—that will define in particular her measure of faithfulness. The child is to measure his or her faithfulness by their harmony with the proclamations of the Word concerning children. Servants measure themselves by Scriptural concepts of servants, masters by the declaration of truth concerning masters. Evangelists are to measure themselves by what the Lord says about evangelists, and so it is also with elders, deacons, widows, those with the gift of giving, the gift of mercy, prophecy, etc. The revelation which the Living God has given concerning these roles in His Kingdom will become the **basis** for the judgement of those ministries.

No amount of schooling or educational refinement can of itself make a good husband, a good wife, a good child, servant, master, teacher, evangelist, preacher, elder, deacon, etc. Men may build their schools and garnish them with all sorts of scholastic refinements that are recognized by the world—but the individual's perception of the truth of God by faith, and his hearty involvement, from the heart, in God's eternal purpose, is what will make faithful servants. All other methods are only distractions and hinderances, and contribute to self delusion.

Let all of the people of God thrust themselves into the work of the Lord with all of their heart, "studying to show themselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (II Tim. 2:15). We are speaking of **eternal** reward, and having praise of God (I Cor. 4:5); and we emphatically declare that there is nothing in earth beneath, or in heaven itself that is comparable to that! To have the Living God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ say, "Well done good and faithful servant" will more than repay the outward inconvenience suffered because of faithfulness, the abuse of undiscerning men, the apparent inequities that result from being a good steward, and the desire to be recognized and approved openly!

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### PUNGENT POINTS

Some poignant statements that have been made by the brethren meeting at 78th and Independence Streets, Merrillville, Indiana; brethren to whom I have been privileged to minister for over seventeen blessed years . . .

Brother Given O. Blakely, Editor.

"When we find out that our own wisdom is not sufficient, we have come a long way" —Brother Harold Lohse.

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"It was Jesus' insight into His own death that made Him tremble at the brink" —Brother Richard Ebler.

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"If God makes war with the Canaanites, let not Israel make peace with them" —Brother Richard Ebler.

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"God is not in the selling business, He is disposed to give" —Brother Harold Lohse.

"Wisdom is the knowledge that governs behavior" —Brother Al Stoner.

\* \* \*

"Like the early disciples, sometimes it takes us more than one sitting to perceive a matter!" —Brother Danny Powers.

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"A religion that depends upon sight is not equal to the task of the disciple" —Brother Danny Powers.

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"Christ's work cancels the bond of sin" —Brother George Brewer (son-in-law of the editor).

\* \* \*

"The thief on the cross ministered to Christ by reminding Him that: 1. He was the Lord. 2. He had a kingdom. 3. That He was coming into His kingdom". 4. By providing Him an opportunity to forgive." —Brother Kirk Kravig.

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"We have to keep our bodies healthy, but that doesn't mean that we have to rejoice in what we are" —Brother George Brewer.

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"Under the Law God was developing a **concept** of atonement rather than making an atonement" —Brother Richard Ebler.

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"Everyone that breathes God's gift of life has a 'best' to give" —Brother Harold Lohse.

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"Fear and unbelief are carnal foes that run hand in hand" —Brother Danny Powers.

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"The commandments are the boundary lines of our agreement with God" —Brother Al Stoner.

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"The church is infinitely more than a fellowship" —Sister Betty Cobb.

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"God has a storehouse for all of His attributes" —Brother Chuck Eaton.

\* \* \*

"I want to be able to rise early in the morning and present myself unto the Lord" —Brother George Brewer.

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"We are brothers and sisters because Christ has reconciled us to God and is our Brother" —Brother Michael Paul Blakely (14 year old son of the editor).

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"I have observed that letters written to well founded churches do not have as many questions as those written to churches that are less stable" —Brother Kirk Kravig.

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"Men can only have enough of God's attributes to understand they have come from Him" —Brother Dan Stoner.

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"When we wait upon the Lord, renewal of strength is our reward" —Brother Michael Paul Blakely.

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"No man without the Spirit could come to the conclusions the writers of Scripture came to" —Brother Michael Paul Blakely.

"The earth cannot quake unless God shakes it" —Brother Al Stoner.

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"Melody is the vehicle that carries the song" —Brother Al Stoner.

\* \* \*

"False doctrines beget idolatry" —Brother Richard Ebler.

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"There can be no permanent walk with God until we let go of our will" —Brother Harold Lohse.

\* \* \*

"When you feel God's presence the closest, press your most urgent request" —Brother Richard Ebler.

\* \* \*

"Humility is keeping ones self in the proper position before the Lord" —Brother Harold Lohse.

\* \* \*

"Tribulation is special trouble" —Brother Al Stoner.

\* \* \*

"Wisdom energizes understanding" —Brother Harold Lohse.

\* \* \*

"In any area where the Lord has given a commandment or an example, we should make diligent effort to be like-minded" —Brother Danny Powers.

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"It seems that God does something real big about every 2,000 years" —Brother Richard Ebler.

\* \* \*

"A stiff neck connects a hard heart and a hard head" —Brother Danny Powers.

\* \* \*

"Only the wisdom that we have in Christ will define the proper path for us to take" —Brother Harold Lohse.

\* \* \*

"Should a king weep because a beggar reviles him?" —Brother Richard Ebler.

\* \* \*

"God didn't permit man to be immortalized in a sinful state—cutting off access to the tree of life" —Brother Dan Stoner.

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"Sometimes we praise wood as though it were gold, and speak of gold as though it were wood" —Brother Harold Lohse.

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"God's peace makes our heavenly thoughts outweigh our earthly concerns" —Brother Dan Stoner.

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"A covetous man is an outlaw in the kingdom of God" —Brother Al Stoner.

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"It will be difficult for those who corrupt the doctrine of Christ to be saved" —Brother Harold Lohse.

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"Let us remember our sanctified state and not be burdened by our circumstances" —Brother Al Stoner.

\* \* \*

"Hell doesn't have its full occupancy yet" —Brother George Brewer.

\* \* \*

"Death hit the Savior — only the shadow of death hits us" —Brother Richard Ebler.

"Without doctrine, there is no real basis for loving one another" —Brother Richard Sankowski.

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"The Law is a brittle system — it shatters easily" —Brother Richard Ebler.

\* \* \*

"We take a step in the right direction when we realize that idols are nothing. They are, at the least, examples of man's sculptural talents" —Brother Harold Lohse.

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"Profound things can be summarized" —Brother Richard Ebler.

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"Satan sought to have Christ verify His sonship by performance" —Brother Kirk Kravig.

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"Sanctification is taking justification seriously" —Brother Richard Ebler.

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"Carnal people do get their priorities out of alignment" —Brother Harold Lohse.

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"The world's strength is in power and might, but ours is in quietness and confidence" —Brother George Brewer.

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"Moses lost some of his leadership when he said he couldn't speak and was not eloquent" —Brother George Brewer.

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"Those who make great strides in the kingdom are 'receivers'" —Brother Harold Lohse.

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"If you can't go through the strait and narrow it is because of an abundance of flesh" —Brother George Brewer.

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**Editor's Note:** The above quotations are shared with our readers as an encouragement to their own involvement with the Lord and His wonderful grace. They represent thoughts that have been developed in male and female, young and old, elder and novice. The people of God are to be encouraged to think profound; to meditate; to seek to comprehend with their whole hearts and minds the depths and magnitude of the mind of the Lord. This sort of encouragement can only be properly developed in an atmosphere where the Word of God is absolutely pre-eminent. There can be no displacement of the Word with the schemes of men, or with methods and techniques that are designed to swell the numbers of the fellowship. The experience of this editor has confirmed over the years that any believer that is sincere and earnest before the Lord; that engages in a fervent quest to know the mind of the Lord; that strives to become familiar with the Word of God; and that makes a habit of being around spiritual people is capable of speaking profound and stabilizing truths; indeed, he shall do precisely that. The culture of the saints is to provide that sort of environment, and all will benefit from it. It is, therefore, with joy that I confess these to be my close brethren, and examples of such believers.

## GOD'S WILL—INCONTROVERTIBLE

The will of God—a haven safe  
in which the saved may hide  
There nothing found subversive  
so there will I abide.

Some foolish sophists dare to raise  
some questions of His will.  
In speculative cavillings  
pride grand their mind doth fill.

"And why doth God exact this thing"  
"Why does He move this way?"  
"It does not seem in fairness"  
I hear them blandly say.

But while they prate on endlessly  
the will of God prevails  
Trampling down great obstacles  
on providence it sails.

None can resist effectively  
impede its forward thrust  
Fulfilling God's good pleasure  
hindrance ground to dust.

But why is His will far beyond  
mortal controversy  
Why stands it there impregnable  
so indestructibly.

Why doth a man so sorely err  
when questioning God's will  
Why must the earth keep silence  
while God's in heaven still?

First, God declares He always moves  
according to HIS will  
HIS will doth regulate His work  
see Him as Sovereign still.

Not answerable to any man  
He will have mercy grand  
He hardens hard, or doth reach out  
with compassionate hand.

Then man, the lowly creature  
disqualified to sound  
Objections to the Creator  
not on an equal ground.

How dare a man look up at God  
and shout defiantly  
"Why hast Thou made me thus"  
he's treading dangerously.

Too, God's authority and pow'r  
demands His will remain  
Pre-eminent in everything  
let no man Him disdain.

He makes the vessels as He wills  
for mercy or for wrath  
Prerogatives belong to Him.  
the Sovereignty He hath.

And here's a precious thought to me  
God's purpose being wrought  
His will facilitating it  
within us, we are taught.

His will incontrovertible  
because His purpose stands  
Eternal in its essence  
His will doth WORK—not man's.

Because God wills a thing to be  
 surpassing man's insight  
 Because He has the right to work  
 because His will is right.  
 This means no man may controvert  
 mere creature yet is he  
 God is God in majesty  
 it's Him, not you or me.  
 Now let me draw a thought from this  
 that gives me confidence  
 Concerning my salvation  
 fetched by my Christ from thence.  
 God stands my willing Savior  
 determinate to save  
 Declaring peace through Jesus Christ  
 amidst the treacherous wave.  
 "I WILL! Be thou made whole!"  
 the Savior said to me  
 And after He had wrought the work  
 He let me His will see.  
 His will no man can frustrate  
 and none its course impede  
 So if He wills to save me  
 then faithfully He'll lead.  
 So I will trust implicitly  
 my all to Jesus Christ  
 For God hath willed to save all those  
 who take His sacrifice.

Given O. Blakely

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## "THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S GLORY"

II Cor. 4:6

God's glory summarizes  
 His righteous character  
 In manifold displayals  
 magnanimous and pure.  
 His love, His mercy, His patience  
 His wrath, His faithfulness  
 Doth emanate in glory  
 as we are given grace.  
 The knowledge of that glory  
 transcendent to our mind  
 It must be burst upon us  
 man's reason cannot find.  
 God beams in pow'r His glory  
 into our renewed hearts  
 A knowledge of Jehovah  
 He then in love imparts.  
 The knowledge of God's glory  
 is simply to know Him  
 To have revealed His Person  
 amidst the natural dim.  
 No virtue in the carnal mind  
 doth merit such a Light  
 God commands this knowledge  
 and His Word is with might.

In natural creation, God  
 commanded light to shine  
 And now He orders spirit-light  
 into this heart of mine.

He gives deliverance to me  
 He brings me to the land  
 He chastens me in loving care  
 and holds me by the hand.

In all of this the center is  
 Jesus Christ the Lord  
 Attention fixed upon His face  
 the knowledge then is poured.

In the face of Jesus Christ  
 God's glory then is seen  
 Awareness giv'n through His grace  
 so on Him I may lean.

Sufficiency this brings to me  
 to see His glory shine  
 And thus possesses the knowledge that  
 I'm His and He is mine.

To see God as He really is  
 means implicitly I'll trust  
 Unto His Sovereign Person  
 humility, a must.

It means possessing qualities  
 of Majestic Deity  
 It means that I'm transported  
 by faith where I can see.

An arbitrary shining  
 this knowledge truly is  
 The prerogatives for granting it  
 are strictly only His.

He need not confer with anyone  
 but only with His will  
 His good pleasure dictates the course  
 'til He wills it, light is nil.

"Let there be light"  
 the Lord Jehovah says  
 And at that word into our hearts  
 knowledge beams its rays.

A realization of the Lord  
 doth stamp itself on us  
 And so illumination is  
 appropriated thus.

I praise the Lord of heaven  
 who shined in unto me  
 With knowledge of His glory  
 that Himself I might see.

Since e'er the knowledge came to me  
 I have not been the same  
 It strengthened with Omnipotence  
 the feet and hands, so lame.

I cannot claim a searching pow'r  
 no merit is my lot  
 Praise God, He beamed the knowledge  
 of glory in my heart.

He gave me Christ, His only Son  
 the hope of glory, He  
 And in His face, God's Person  
 I fully clear may see.

Given O. Blakely