

THE DIVINE NATURE

THE DIVINE NATURE

STRIVING FOR THE MARK OF THE PRIZE OF
THE HIGH CALLING IN CHRIST JESUS

TERRY SMITH

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INTRODUCTION

STRIVING FOR THE MARK OF THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING IN CHRIST JESUS

Seeking to be imbued spiritually with the Divine Nature is the most direct way of gaining the approval of God. God came and died for us so that we could become like Him. Receiving Jesus as our mentor and leader in all things is the most certain way for us to pursue that quest when he said to us, “Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” This is not convenient for us but it is the best way to pursue the highest mark and to win the greatest prize which is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Yes doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do

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count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

TERRY SMITH

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

Philippians 3:8-17

It is now time that we continue our Journey to Bredship by examining the rarified realm of the Spirit where the believer can be delivered from their own carnal degradation and be changed in their core being by becoming a true partaker of God's perfect Divine Nature. The prospect of having our very nature changed is, of course, impossible by the reckoning of every philosopher, psychologist and sociologist who has ever picked hypothesized on the lofty subject. It is an impossibility for any living thing whether mineral plant or animal to change what it is in essence for it would become something other by its very nature when that would occur. It is unimaginable, that is, except for those who believe in the miraculous power of the Grace of the Almighty Creator, who by His Will and through His ingenious love for us can not only deliver us from ourselves, but can change our very nature, the very essence of what we are by nature. The only other living force that has such a power is that which is called sin. Sin produces evil, evil is anything that is in opposition to God's pure will – anything that God wishes or wants.

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God is good, opposition to God is the creator of evil; it generates sin and sin is what changes the godly essence of which we are created and born. The incorrect and pervasive teaching that has saturated all denominations called universally the doctrine of 'original sin' has obscured and nullified the truth that human nature can be changed, both for better and worse. The scripture of Ecclesiastes 11:29 tells the truth directly: "*Lo, this only have I found, that God has made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*" These inventions of course are none other than the productions of evil which are called in general terms 'sin'. Once they wheedle their way in they take hold and have sway; they morph our soul and spirit, our very nature into one that is intrinsically different from God's nature which is good, or to use God's language which is upright. This is why it takes being born-again to become converted, to have our nature changed, to be changed into one that is a new creature. "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" 2 Cor. 5:17 This is the only sort of nature that can even begin to house the divine nature that is the very definition of uprightness, righteousness, love; of good itself.

Good is merely an expression of God's nature, all

that is good is nothing more than a definition of who and what God is. God does not have to look for good or try to conform to good as we do, God does not have to study it, feel it, strive for it or learn it. Good is merely the expression, a perfect and utterly consistent expression of God and His nature. It is written, *“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”* God is what He is and He exudes good by nature, good is defined by His nature and all that He is. Whatever he says, does, thinks, hopes, believes, decides, judges and promises is good. He is never not good because good only exists because of what He is and does. Therefore anything – ultimately – that opposes Him opposes good and is therefore by definition evil in some degree.

But God in His goodness is also magnanimous and merciful. His working of salvation (which is a greek word meaning health (implying perfection, among other good distinctions) is a part of the essence of goodness. Health is the fundamental goodness by which God wants to cure us from death and illness which is the product of sin, which we have brought upon ourselves through allowing inventions we have contrived in our own soul, which in turn lead us into opposition to good, which is the sole province and invention of Providence

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itself. Herein lies what the Scripture from the epistle of Peter reveals as: The Divine Nature.

It takes a yielded believer to be delivered from bondage to sin. It is the Holy Ghost that leads one into the glorious light of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. This can only be accomplished for us by the wise working of the Holy Spirit. This avenue of power was earned for Man by Christ's death on the cross. This is the first of all great mysteries of the Gospel, and we are informed by the Bible's wisdom that all those who have ears to hear can know and partake of the mysteries of God's realities. These mysteries are kept hidden from those who believe and reside as part of the faithless world, but will be given to those only who yearn to have them become a part of their innermost character.

It is not God's intent that people should just be born-again and remain infantile living only for themselves. Let it be realized however, that just doing 'good works', though expected, is not the end all, either. Too often good works are a thinly veiled bribe to pay God off, to gain a reprieve from one's own sins, or to impress other people by covering over one's selfishness, maybe even to flaunt an erroneous righteousness, or to pad one's own insecurity about their sense of worth. Nevertheless, the rewards of heaven cannot be purchased even

with an abundance of good works. The rewards may be won, though never earned; by receiving the Spirit of God and adhering to His voice the rewards of God are bestowed as characteristics of honor. Man must receive the Christ, the one and only who can endow us with God's Nature – that only loving, righteous, merciful and good spirit that is able to rule our entire being, body, soul and spirit.

All those who claim to love God with their whole being should strive for the highest things of godliness and love. What could be higher than to take God up on His offer to be freed from ourselves, to pick up our cross daily, walk with the Spirit and believe God for His promises of a life in the kingdom to come? What could be greater than His offer to allow us to be partakers of His Divine Nature? What is more promising, more worthy of a life's pursuit, than Jesus's encouragement to "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*". Matt. 5:48

Then we can understand why the three essentials of what the EOE calls the "wheel of perfection" – 1. *The Cross* 2. *The Spirit* and 3. *Belief in the Rapture* – are indeed essential to our becoming perfected by way of being a partaker of *The Divine Nature*.

The greatest proof of our adherence to the demands of 'perfection' will be our ability to enter

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into the exceeding great promises which allow us to shed the influence of our human nature, enabling us to become regular partakers of the Divine Nature of God itself. This of course, is a miracle of miracles for it is not possible to have our nature changed in any other way, but in Christ it is more than a possibility, it is an offer no serious, sober minded believer could reasonably refuse. It is an offer that God hopes will excite the soul of a person more than life itself.

Granted, the transforming of our nature is a momentous and humanly impossible thing. It surely requires a moment to moment vigil, a recognition and awareness of 'living in the now', where yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery but today, yes today, is as the scripture says, the day of salvation. It demands a vitality that lives in the dynamics of daily life. The transformation is coaxed and generated only when we yield to faith and let the Holy Spirit direct the Divine Nature so that it will trump our own frail and carnal, but wispy nature. The rigors of 1. Denying of self 2. Walking in the Spirit, and 3. Believing God for all His personal promises, especially for the Rapture; are the focal points of the spiritual person's daily life and they lead to *The Divine Nature* which can dominate the human heart and soul.

A person can actually have *The Divine Nature*

override their grossly distorted human nature which naturally opposes that of God. Point by point, a section of this writing entitled *Partakers of the Divine Nature* attempts to convey and instruct the believer in the finer points of the divine nature as stated in brief outline in 2 Peter chapter 1.

Christ resuscitates, invigorates and feeds His children with truth and faith, with the good things of God, so that He can build the child of God into a disciple of His; one that is mature, spiritually strong in knowledge, with understanding and wisdom that is able to grasp the real difference between spiritual and carnal matters. Christ will fully equip any faithful believer with all the means to walk freely and humbly in this life, as long as that believer consents to cleaving to Christ and departing from their personal iniquity; not casually and thoughtlessly falling back into old natural ways, but walking upright in newness of life as befits the new creation that he has become.

We have begun our new life and its ways by being born again. The believer, if paying due attention, will be introduced to the basic building blocks (the proteins of spiritual life if you will) that are given us in the Word of God. Included in these building blocks of the divine are: the nature and truth of Church and the relationship to Man of the inner

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workings of the Trinity (Godhead) which is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. These three essentials, The Word, The Church and The Trinity serve as the platform upon which the foundational and fundamental things of godly growth are built. Once a person becomes born-again (and we teach, not until then) the maturing process can begin in earnest.

The Bible itself has given us an outline of six fundamental spiritual truths, or requirements, to which the believer must conform if that believer is to move on to higher states of freedom and spirituality in Christ. These foundational principles are depicted in Hebrews 6:1-3:

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;

Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment..

And this will we do, if God permit.”

We have striven in the first section of the Invitation to go into detail describing the ‘nuts and bolts’ operation of each one of these six principle and foundational essentials with a handful of pages and

articles on each to increase believer's knowledge and wisdom. The seven great areas where God has pleaded with Christians not to be ignorant have also been elaborated on so that the student of God's Word can consider them in deeper private study as they peruse the Bible's depths for themselves. We have described how these essentials come to be a part of the believer to aid in true discipleship and various ways in which they come alive in the believer, so that a person can be led out of darkness and brought into the marvelous light of Christ, so that their walk to Brideship may be hastened along. It is now that we begin to move beyond the fundamental matters of Christ and in faith we ask God to permit us and "let us go on unto perfection" – a purified/perfection.

The following pamphlet is composed of articles written by various EOE/Christian Spirit Christians, who over the years wrote on subjects relevant to one of the seven aspects of The Divine Nature.

The first article in *The Divine Nature* pamphlet is somewhat of an introductory article itself and is entitled: *Deliver Us From Ourselves*. In it the author calls attention to one of the most critical mistakes that the children of Israel ever made when they rejected God's leadership and demanded a king to rule over them, so they could be like the other

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nations. It brings home the point that the perfection of being purified in our very nature must begin by being delivered from self and accepting God's sovereign leadership and authority over the whole of one's being: body, soul and spirit. This concession to God to take charge of our whole character is the starting place for a higher perfection, where love, the pinnacle of those supreme qualities of the nature of God, is the ultimate result of those things of character that are added one upon another until the whole nature of God is built within us. The groundwork of the building of The Divine Nature begins with a newness. It is the greater effervescence of God's power to reign within a believer's nature to subdue his carnal character and bring it under the sway of spiritual things with power. It is accomplished only when we have been willing to merge fully into what we have termed the 'wheel of perfection'.

It is in the second letter of the apostle Peter where the "exceeding great promises" of divinity are enumerated as a seven tiered tower of love. The tried and true way of being divested of the fleshly earthbound nature to become partakers of The Divine. Peter declares this great mystical promise:

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus

Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

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Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:1-11

This is the course that the promise of perfection must take, the process it needs to undergo. By all diligence, by believing in these “*exceeding great promises*” we can become partakers of The Divine Nature, but it is done by faith in the power of the Holy Ghost to transform the human nature, to turn it back into the nature of God Himself. For we are made in his image, each and every person, but that original nature we were created in was corrupted by our own sin which crept in unawares, which was nothing less than opposition to our maker and His Will. Its defeat by faith and the liveliness of God’s nature in us make, as Peter wrote, “*our calling and election sure*”.

Primary to making these things our innate nature, to realizing these “*exceeding great promises*” are ‘taking up our cross’, denying self, living and walking in the Holy Spirit, and having our hope pinned exclusively in the world to come, rather than lodging in this world in which we now live.

The following seven sections discuss these high and wonderful promises beginning with virtue, then, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and finally the capstone of all, the essence of God, love.

How awesome a promise is this, given to those who strive to have their human nature capitulate to the Divine Nature! How awesome that we can partake of the Divine in our soul and spirit by striving to have built in us the quintessential tower of Love; God patiently allowing us to have each added to us in His time until it is built by trial and experience by faith through His power to do a master work in us. God will work to add to our faith – virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and finally, even love if we will be diligent to believe and make honest concession to His Spirit.

What a declaration of the Good News!

Divine love is not remotely acquainted with the ideas and fanciful conceptions of what we humans have of love – far from it. In a similar vein this holds true for the subordinate attributes of virtue, knowledge, patience... and the rest.

The exploration of God's divinity is an inexhaustible mine of eternal wealth, deeper than the universes themselves. Who can know the depths

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of the beauty and majestic glory of God; pursuing their endless perfection is an exciting journey that is new every day, His mercies are new each morning. They are applied in the daily toils and victories, conflicts and adventures of everyday life. Partaking of The Divine Nature demands regular and spontaneous prayer which is learned by the intensity of the single eagle eye. Those who enter into the belief that they can become partakers of God's Nature will experience a death of self and an enlightenment through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ Himself.

But there can be no resurrection vision without first there being a death.

We must have our nature die so that God may find the way to liberate us, to release us through our denial of self and the world. The believer must become a continuing fertile field for the Divine Nature to have a place to spring to life. This is the field we must first till.

PART I

1ST PART-
VIRTUE

VIRTUE,

Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godliness,
Brotherly Kindness, Love

DELIVER US FROM OURSELVES

LEROY GARDENIER

In 1 Samuel 8 we read about a very significant event in the history of Israel. A delegation of elders comes to the aging Samuel to complain about the unjust rule of his two sons and to demand an unheard of thing: an earthly king to rule over them in order that their nation might become like the other nations. Samuel is upset by this request and seeks the Lord on the matter. God assured his faithful servant: *“Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them”*. 1 Samuel 8:7-9

Slowly, clearly, carefully Samuel spells out the situation and all the unfavorable implications of their request. He uses the very words that God has given him. He shows the people that their desire for a king involves a decided change of heart and spells out all the disadvantages of seeking an earthly king to replace God as their Ruler. God does not batter down the locked doors of hearts that are closed, but if the people hardened their hearts in this matter, things would never really be the same again for them as a nation.

God had led His people out of bondage of the oppressive Egyptian government, had guided them firmly but tenderly throughout the difficult wilderness years, had shown them, step by step how to defeat their enemies and how to secure the land He had prepared for them. As their sovereign King, the Lord was fulfilling in detail every aspect of the covenant that He had made with HIS Chosen Ones. But now the people as a nation were again not satisfied. Now they were demanding of God, through Samuel, something that God had never promised them – the hope of becoming a people who are like the other nations. This demand would cause the people to lose their uniqueness and to fall into a more subtle type of bondage.

God knew that His people wanted and needed

human leadership as well as His own Divine Guidance and He had made adequate provision for this. But God also knew that His chosen people, His elect, His called out ones, did not need to be “*like all the nations*” (1 Samuel 8:5). Israel was insisting upon a change in their position that would irrevocably alter their relationship with the Lord. But God remains faithful; He does not change. Men and nations do! They want deliverance – for a while; but then, it seems they want deliverance from deliverance which adds up to saying that, in some instances, humans really prefer bondage!

In Jeremiah 17:9-10 we read:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

I the Lord search the heart; I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings”

Bearing in mind the foregoing incident in Israel’s history, I think we can draw a meaningful parallel in reference to some trends and teachings prevalent in the Church today. In inviting Jesus into our life as Saviour and Lord we accept Him as our King. Jesus is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and wanting all that God has to offer us, we allow ourselves to be

immersed in Divine Love and begin to experience what it means to be led by the Spirit of God. We exult in the reality of true freedom, “*the liberty of the children of God*” Romans 8:21. Under the Lordship of Jesus we become spiritual and take God’s commandment seriously: “*Make not provision for the flesh*” Romans 13:14. We submit to God’s direct guidance and begin to be disciplined by God Himself. Like the Israelites of old, we keep our eyes on the cloud and the pillar, as God Himself leads us out of bondage, through the wilderness, into the land that He must conquer and continually secure for us.

When we have yielded to the Holy Ghost we are given the understanding that God uses all kinds and conditions of men and all manner of circumstances and situations to keep us out of bondage and enable us to experience the imperturbable rest that Jesus has secured for us in spite of and in the midst of the tribulation (pressure) of the world.

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

Praise God! Jesus has overcome the world and in Him we have peace; in Him we have security; in Him

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we have confidence; in Him we have everything! The wise people of the world will always try to explain just exactly how God operates, but those who are directly submitted to God alone, their confidence, their assurance is not contingent upon the clearest explanations or the most clever systems devised by the most eminent and wisest of humans, for:

“The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

Therefore let no man glory in men.

For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” 1

Corinthians 3:20-23

It is so wonderful and exciting to lead a spiritual life! What a glorious adventure; what a magnificent challenge; what a beautiful relationship! God, our loving Father, knows just what we need and graciously supplies it. Usually, we ourselves only know what we want. By the living example of His life, death and resurrection, Jesus lovingly teaches us the truth about the two worlds that we continually experience and reassures us that His world is the real world. The Holy Ghost quickens the Word to our

spirit, builds us up *“into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”*. Ephesians 4:15, reminding us that *“without faith it is impossible to please Him.”* Hebrews 11:6

Satan, the enemy of our souls, the great deceiver, is determined that we will not become and remain spiritual. The devil is not at all disturbed about our becoming religious. We can become Baptists, Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, etc. without phasing him one bit. I'm sure he's not overly disturbed if we become Pentecostal, evangelical or even Charismatic. And you can be doubly sure that our ancient adversary is working overtime to make certain that spiritual people fall into the trap of over-emphasizing some aspect of their spiritual walk. If Satan can get us tangled up in one or more doctrinal-moral disputes or side issues so that our eyes are more on human ideas rather than on Jesus, then he has caused us to fall back into a type of bondage more subtle than the kind from which we were delivered.

Satan would have us become more concerned about the idea that we've been baptized in the name of Jesus only, or that we have absolutely infallible knowledge about how and when to keep the Sabbath, or that we're a bona fide, card-carrying Child of God person, or that we're a sheep

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submitted to shepherd X who in turn is submitted to pastor Y, who is being disciplined by Mr. Big Evangelist, etc. etc. ... Satan would much rather have us involved in this type of thing than to have us keep our eyes on Jesus as our King and our mind on the mammoth truth so simply stated in Psalm 23:1; *“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”*

Our common enemy wants to do a number on us as he did upon our forefathers in the faith making us believe that there is something lacking in our walk with God. If he can't intimidate us in this area, the devil will try to make us strive for something that God has never promised us simply because we, like our predecessors, have an innate desire to be like the other nations. We thrill to the challenge of coming out from among them and being separate (2 Cor 6:17 & 18); yet, at the same time we still want to be like the rest of men in that we long to be assured that we belong to or are intimately associated with someone or some group closely connected with, yet distinct from, God. Herein lays the danger: the wrong desire to be like the other nations; the distorted determination to have a king other than God Himself. I believe that this is a rather subtle, but a very real temptation. The Israelites succumbed to it. I'm convinced it involves a failing of faith. God's

Word tells us it involves a rejection of God. I'm certain that this temptation is prevalent today.

"Make us a king to judge us" 1 Samuel 8:5 is an imperious demand. I feel that this command can issue from the heart of any Christian at any time, no matter what the circumstances or the duration of his walk with the Lord. God is always faithful, but there is always the possibility of our becoming unfaithful, or at least less faithful. I know that this particular temptation is currently more acute owing to an inordinate amount of emphasis on submission and discipleship which sprang up in the Church in the early 70's. Having a king must have seemed like a good thing to the leaders of Israel. Being a disciple of this particular teacher, having pastor X for a shepherd must seem exceedingly good to many Christians, especially to new Christians, and particularly to Christians, who have recently been led out of some form of bondage, who are very eager to know and to do the perfect will of God, and who are longing for direction as to how to handle their new-found freedom in the Spirit.

I feel that those who are in authority in the Church today must make good and true use of God's Holy Word which does, indeed, contain a history of the human heart. Like Samuel of old, we must be upset at anything that could lead to a

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rejection of God. Like God's faithful servants throughout the ages we must seek the Lord about the validity of any teachings no matter what the source. Should we see any inherent danger in any teaching, then, under the Spirit's firm guidance, we must "protest solemnly" as well as lovingly pose the questioning plea:

"Before you Gentiles knew God you were slaves to so-called gods that did not even exist.

And now that you have found God (or I should say, now that God has found you) how can it be that you want to go back again and become slaves once more to another poor, weak, useless RELIGION of trying to get to heaven by God's laws!

You are trying to find favor with God by what you do or don't do on certain days or months or seasons or years.

I fear for you, I am afraid that all my hard work for you was worth nothing." Galatians 4:8-II, Living Bible

GIFTS PRODUCE VIRTUOUS FRUITS

ELOISE GARDENIER

The purpose here is to show that the Gifts of the Spirit are indeed for today and are valuable tools for the maturing of the Church when properly used; and that they are meant to aid in the growth of the Fruits of the Spirit, leading to the ultimate of all fruits: love. Let us start with a scripture from 1 Corinthians.

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren; I would not have you ignorant! Now there are diversities of the gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of operations but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” Vs.12:1, 4-12 & 31

In this passage there are three particularly meaningful words.

- 1) Diversities – meaning variety and differences, showing us what the gifts are for and how they fulfill the various and complex needs of the body of Christ.
- 2) Administrations – meaning servants, aids, officials, ministrations, ministries. We can assume that the gifts of the Spirit are administered by different servants, officials, ministries, etc.
- 3) Operations – effects and workings. The gifts take place in different ways with different effects and their operation can occur in diverse ways, even novel, or unconventional ways. To cite a few of the diverse ways the gifts are administered: dreams, through the word, by a prophet, visions, similitudes, miracles, a still small voice, teachings, testimony or direct revelation. Yet they must be a manifestation of the working Trinity; One Spirit, One Lord, the One and same God that works all in all. Father, Son and Holy Ghost always in harmony.

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal”. The gifts are for everyone, so that all may profit from their flow among the saints.

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The gifts of the Spirit are: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healings, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues. Verses 11 and 12 say; *“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members of that one body, so also is Christ.”* The last half of v.31 reads: *“But covet earnestly the best gifts”*.

Paul exhorts us that we should not be ignorant of the gifts of the Spirit, that we should know what they are, and should understand what they are for. There are a variety of gifts, they are administered by many different servants and ministries, and happen or are manifested in a multitude of effects, operations and workings. In this day of the restored Church, the gifts have become available for every person regardless of education or sophistication. The prophet Joel 2:28 promised that in the last days God would restore all things to the Church: *“And it will come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also upon the servants and the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”* Over the past hundred to one-hundred and fifty years this promise has come to pass in the Church at large. All

people of every age and persuasion, of both genders and every class of society, have become partakers of the unction and power provided by the gifts of the Spirit of God.

What else for, but to profit all of the body of Christ. When the verse saying, "*But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will*" is understood we should know that it is not by our will, but by the Spirit's will that we are given and receive the various gifts. He gives to those of us as He chooses. "*For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body so also is Christ.*" Even though the body has many members it is meant to make up one unit, with Christ as its head. In vs. 31 Paul tells us to "*covet earnestly the best gifts*". The word, covet means here: to have warmth of feeling for, earnestly have desire, move with envy, be jealous over, be zealous. So we are being told to earnestly desire these gifts, to even be jealous about obtaining them, and to be zealous in our search for them, in our willingness to receive them. In 1 Corinthians 14:38-40, Paul cautions us that "*If any man be ignorant concerning these matters, let him be.*" If someone wants to be ignorant of what the gifts of the Spirit are, what they are for, or that they are even for us today, let him be ignorant. But let it not hinder us, nor be a

stumbling block to us. *“Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.”* Once more the word covet is used. We should desire, covet, look for, hope for, search for the gifts of prophecy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Most of us have encountered those who would like to argue with us about whether the gifts really are for today and are not used any longer, but I tell you saints – the gifts are for today! Naturally, it would be rude to reject a gift from a friend or family member at, say Christmas time. Why is it not rude and insulting to reject or disregard the gifts of the Holy Ghost?

Gifts of the Spirit are for Growing Fruits of the Spirit

Faith is the soil in which the fruits grow. The gifts are like the water, food and light that give growth to the fruits. The ministers of the offices of the Church, such as pastors, teachers, prophets, apostles and evangelists are the ones who are supposed to do the tending, the watering, the fertilizing, weeding and such so that the fruits may grow to maturity. We believe that the gifts of the Spirit are given to edify, encourage, and build up the body in Christ, but also to help us mature. When Jesus went away He left them as precious aids for us, through the working of the Holy Spirit. They are there so that we might

grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ and, most importantly, to nourish and grow the fruits of the Spirit. It is not an overstatement to say that the gifts are given almost exclusively for our protection and for the growth of mature fruit in us, that we can render unto God what is his. Jesus told us at the last supper that the one thing will glorify our Father in heaven; fruit that he is able to grow in us.

Nine fruits of the spirit are enumerated in Gal 5:22-26; *“But the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”*. Only faith is both a gift and a fruit! I suspect this is because faith enables us to receive gifts and grow fruits. *“And they that are Christ’s; have crucified the flesh with the affection and lusts.”* *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit!* If we desire and exercise the gifts of the Spirit and lay hold of the fruits, it helps us to shed the works of the flesh which are found in Gal 5:19-21. (Look them up!) Those who do the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God! So it is that with the help of the gifts of the Spirit we are able to put aside the works of the flesh and have our lives more and more ruled by the fruits of the Spirit. Why do we want the fruits of the Spirit? I believe we find the answer in Eph. 4:11-16; *“And he gave some*

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apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Isn’t it wonderful to know what our ministers are for – 1.) the perfecting of the saints, 2.) the work of the ministry and 3.) for the edifying of the body of Christ! “*Until we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man*”. What a promise! It is possible for us to be perfect day by day according to how well we hear God’s voice and do it.

What will that do for us? “*We will henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrineBut speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things which is the head even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*” Love is the ultimate goal.

The second part of 1 Cor. 12:31 says; “*Yet show I unto you a more excellent way*”. Chapter 13, also known as the “love chapter”, follows. Here we are taught that if we have all the gifts and have not charity (love) then we are just a noise-maker – big talker – and nothing more. This chapter describes what love is and how it behaves. We are informed that when that

which is perfect (Jesus) is come; we will no longer need the gifts of the Spirit for we shall see Him face to face as He is. We are also exhorted to grow up and put away childish things. We are told that we shall always have faith, hope, and charity (love); but the greatest of these is love. In John 13:34 we are reminded that Jesus commands us to love one another as He has loved us. What a difficult but desirable end to reach for, saints. The ultimate fruit rendered unto God by His disciple, servant, friend and child – heir to all things.

TAKE COURAGE AND STAND

T MYERS SMITH

*“Joshua ‘fit’ the battle of Jer-i-cho.
And the walls came tumbling down.”*

– Old Black Spiritual

These lines from the old slave spiritual are about all I knew of Joshua while growing up. I was aware that he had led the army of God against the city of Jericho and at his trumpet blast the walls which secured the wicked city came tumbling down and Israel’s army came pouring over the rubble.

Now, I know this – Dear Christian! Be of good courage and you will see the works of the Lord as you enter into his promises.

The story of Joshua was a neat story to a little kid, even though I could not identify completely with the

story's champion. It was nothing more than a neat story about a legendary guy who did an incredible thing. But the Old Testament figure, Joshua, like so much of the Old Testament, is a shadow of spiritual reality which comes bubbling alive when we come to know Jesus. The Book of Joshua summarizes the story of Israel and how they took possession of the Promised Land. The book opens with Joshua, who has just been anointed as successor to Moses, receiving reassurance from God that he will be with Joshua the same as he was with Moses.

Every Christian can take heart in the exhortation which God personally makes to Joshua as Joshua prepares to embark on his mission of faith. God's exhortation is about the kind of faith which needs to be bolstered by the kind of courage which must throw caution and worry to the wind. Four times in the first chapter alone, Joshua is exhorted by God and Man to be of good courage. Here is a man renowned in history for courage, whose fame as a mighty and courageous man of God has stood for thousands of years, and yet he had to be not only encouraged and reminded, but he had to be preached to and directed, even commanded, by God to be of good courage.

Each one of us can identify with Joshua because no matter how brave we seem to be, or how much we

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want to be brave, we need to be spurred on by God to gather ourselves, and become determined to be courageous, even in the face of danger. Just as Joshua did, we can find courage in God's comforting words and the promises that God personally makes to us.

Learning to exercise faith creates a courageous heart. Just as Joshua had to be courageous enough to trust God, so it is that faith is built in us when we muster the courage to trust the Lord. Joshua oversaw the great miracle of Israel entering into the Promised Land and in the process saw many wonderful miracles. He saw the sun stop; the Jordan River dry up; the walls of Jericho fall; hailstones from heaven fall on the Amorite army, and more; but through it all Joshua had to trust God and be of good courage.

Dear Christian – Be of good courage and you to will see the works of the Lord as you enter into his promises.

PART II

2ND PART-
KNOWLEDGE

Virtue, KNOWLEDGE, Temperance, Patience,
Godliness, Brotherly Kindness, Love

PETER'S EPISTLE
EDUCATES IN
DIVINE NATURE
OF KNOWLEDGE

T MYERS SMITH

*Enter by the exceeding great promises
God has made to us so we may be
partakers of the Divine Nature ...*

The Divine Nature is built in us through trials and experiences of our faith. Its builder is the Holy Spirit, who as the master of our experience builds this tower of spiritual maturity in any devoted and diligent believer who is willing to concede and yield to His gentle hand. It is a building project not within the scope or power of man's intelligence, religion

or philosophies. God is its architect, Christ is the supervisor, just as he is the author and finisher of our faith.

Through experience, both bitter and sweet, we learn to bow to His guidance and Nature and allow the Spirit to nurture it into godliness and true holiness so that it rules over the will of our own soul and spirit. Our unholy and weak nature can be refurbished when we, with patience, allow God's makeover to transform us into a completely new creation. It is when we submit ourselves to this rebuilding and renewal process, so finely detailed in the apostle Peter's second letter, that the promise of "*old things are passed away, all things are become new*" 2 Cor 5:17 is formed and actualized in a believer's life, even in this world.

The pinnacle, the ultimate, the bell tower if you will, of this spiritual house is divine love. Each layer, each course and block is laid with the mortar of God's grace, each facet of its construction stands in contrast, for all the angels and all spiritually perceptible people, against Nimrod's Tower of Confusion (Babel), as a tower of love and holiness. Each level of 'perfection' rests squarely upon the succeeding attributes of divine nature one after the other, until the perfect nature of God becomes a solid living part of the 'inner man'. By faith we have

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them added; they are living because we have believed in that 'exceeding great promise' that God can embed Divine love within our soul when we are ready and willing to receive the Holy Ghost, deny ourselves and yield to The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost and their glorious, miraculous powers of conversion. Who can deny that the word in 1 Peter is an exceeding great promise, one to excite us into higher faith, and that God wants the faithful believer to be 'perfected' in love?

BIBLICAL TWIN PEAKS

LEROY GARDENIER

MOUNT OF BEATITUDES | MOUNT OF
OLIVES

*“There’s just something about a mountain
that reaches to the sky,
That speaks of things eternal;
of hope that never dies...”*

A quick glance at the index of any biblical map will indicate at least twenty different mountains named in the Old Testament. A total tally of significant spiritual experiences associated with geographical high places would probably exceed the most careful count. Mount Sinai is, of course, the

most outstanding eminence of ancient times, but mounts Ebal and Gerizim, though lesser known, were remarkably meaningful in their own right. In chapters 27-28 of Deuteronomy, Moses and the elders of Israel publicly proclaimed what could be called their last will and testament. Knowing that they had forfeited the right to enter the Promised Land, these aged leaders commanded Joshua and all their spiritual heirs to assemble before mounts Ebal and Gerizim soon after they had entered Canaan.

Half of the twelve tribes were to gather over against Mount Ebal where an altar had been built and the commands of the Law were graven on white-washed stones. On Mount Ebal the lengthy list of curses connected with disobedience were ominously announced.

The other group of six tribes stood before Mount Gerizim where the many blessings attached to obedience and faithfulness to God were joyfully proclaimed.

The dozen or so blessings are contrasted with twice as many curses provoked by persistent lack of gratitude and non-appreciation. As Deut. 28:47 puts it: *“Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things.”* If we get nothing else from reading the two chapters of Deuteronomy and their fulfillment

in Joshua chapter 8, we should ask the Lord for a spirit of appreciation for the abundance of specific, generous provisions He has already supplied for us. Thus, the idea of twin peaks of God's knowledge where His Word came forth for His people was established.

CALVARY'S CURSE TURNS INTO SPIRITUAL BLESSING

The most meaningful mount associated with God's New Covenant is Calvary. It was there that: "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*" Galatians 3:13 and made it possible for us to become knowledgeable in the mysteries of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When we are living and walking in Christ our spiritual lives are freed from the curses and blessings of Ebal and Gerizim under the law and we are free to range the breadth of the hallowed way between two sacred spiritual mounts: the first of Salvation and the second of Christ's promised return. Symbolically the children's route now follows the broad and vast plain of Redemption freely won on Calvary's pinnacle. Our way begins at the Mount of Beatitudes somewhere in Galilee and ends at the well-known Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Both mounts are stations of blessing connected by the path of the spiritual life. The nine beatitudes taught on the

mount by our Blessed Savior in Matthew 5:3-12 are clearly explained and carefully elaborated on in chapters 5-7 of that same gospel. These “Principles of Kingdom Living,” as they are referred to, are so contrary and opposed to all personal and public programs for happiness and success that only the Holy Ghost can make them real and meaningful in our supernatural lives. They must be comprehended only by spiritual knowledge, a knowledge that is acquired by only those who are willing to first admit that they do not know, cannot know them by earthly knowledge. If the pupil will allow God’s Spirit to work these precepts into our daily routine we are assured of salvific results: we become the salt of the earth and lights to the world see Matt. 5:13-16

TWIN PEAKS MARK SPIRITUAL BLESSING

We should know that the Second Coming of Christ comprises two distinct parts: His coming FOR His saints and His coming WITH His saints. The former event is called The Rapture, or the great catching up of both the living and the dead IN CHRIST (see I Thess 4:13-18). The latter aspect of His coming is clearly forecast in Zechariah 14: 4, “*And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley;*

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and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” So, we have the twin peaks of the fullness of salvation in the Beatitudes and the glorious Second Coming as the sure promise of Jesus’ soon return as shining beacons and prominent landmarks bracketing both the start and the goal of our spiritual walk. Lengthy discourses and profound supernatural truths are associated with each earthly location. We need to linger long at the Mount of Beatitudes. Sitting at the feet of Jesus and communing with the Holy Ghost, we learn to understand and apply the accomplishments of Calvary and the realities of “Resurrection” life. Through our salvation we are given ...“*exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.*” 2 Peter 1:4 Appreciating the Sermon on the Mount and applying its precepts of salvation to our workaday lives, we add to our faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness and brotherly kindness with the guarantee of living gracious and fruitful lives see 2 Pet 1:5-8

Many notable events of our Lord’s earthly life are associated with the Mount of Olives. The details of His second advent are paramount to the concept and reality of brideship. If we are “born in Zion,” as the psalmist tells us, we have the right and duty to dwell in Zion with our eyes fixed on the eastern sky; that is,

looking for His sudden appearance and soon return. That eastward perspective from Mount Zion necessarily takes in the Mount of Olives which, in its spiritual symbolism, involves all commands and warnings about the end times given in Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21!

VALLEY OF GOSPEL BLESSINGS

Besides the two lofty heights represented by The Sermon on the Mount and The Olivet Discourse, the Lord Jesus has given us the narrow, but secure, path of continued care and assured kindness. In between the essential teachings concerning salvation and the certain signs of His coming again, the Gospels reveal a corridor of blessings that are seven fold. Starting with the proper personal attitude we should take towards the Savior recorded in Matt 11:6 and His closing warning to be watchful servants in Lk 12:37, our Lord mentions five other sources of special benediction. In Mt 16:17 Jesus tells Peter how incredibly beneficial it has been for him to have been given revelation knowledge. A study of these first three “blesseds” should help us all appreciate more deeply our intimate relationship with God through a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. The final four citations confirm the importance of our continuing concern about His impending apocalypse. Mt 24:46 contains the

promise of universal rulership given to faithful and wise servants who feed His flock with the meat of His Word. Mt 25:34 contains the blessing of Kingdom inheritance to be given at the judgment of the nations. Lk 11:28 reminds us of the superiority of spiritual kinship over even the deepest, most intimate and fondly cherished human ties.

The songwriter I quoted at the head of this article – I believe Bill Gaither was the composer – concludes the first verse by saying: So I'll look unto the mountains, and put my faith in Him.

The anointed psalmist asks and replies: *"Shall I lift up mine eyes unto the hills? Whence should my help come? My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth."* Ps 121:1-2 As we look unto the mountains where our loving Lord first revealed the awesome realities of His redemption plan, the availability of salvation and the assurance of His earthly return, we should pray for increased faith to follow the path of personal blessing so clearly outlined in the Gospels. We should not misunderstand or be offended in any way by the Person of the Savior; appreciating the exciting spiritual era in which we now live (great prophets and many saints of old have longed to see and hear about the prophetic fulfillments that have already been shown to us). But we should have gratitude for the grace of revelation knowledge and

TERRY SMITH

the gifts of the Spirit; a fervent desire to share the good things of God with His household; anticipation of and longing for the eternal inheritance prepared for us at His coming; the determination to carefully hear and steadfastly keep the Word of God; and, an upward, vigilant vision should keep us on the royal road of satisfied living through His personal presence and Scriptural promises!

PART III

3RD PART-
TEMPERANCE

Virtue, Knowledge, TEMPERANCE, Patience,
Godliness, Brotherly Kindness, Love

6

THE DIVINE
TEMPERATE
SPIRIT:
BALANCE
BETWEEN TRUTH
& MERCY

T MYERS SMITH

14 Times in Psalms, plus 3 Proverbs:

So it is, truth and mercy appear in tandem

A great part of our Christian life should be spent praying and waiting so that the Lord can bring out the truth about our own condition, our relationship with God, our relationships with others and our

place in God's overall plan of salvation. Jesus declared himself that being led into all truth is a principle work of the Holy Ghost, and though it is promised that the truth will set us free, it is also equally certain that a good deal of personal truth about ourselves is usually difficult to swallow and hardly ever flattering. When confronted with the truth Man is wise if he leans on God's forbearing arms.

Fortunately, the Lord does not require his people to deal with the plain, unvarnished truth without comfort and hope. God's wonderful mercy, which keeps those who seek Christ's righteousness from being crushed by despair and guilt, is always there to save us from truth's uncompromising and otherwise deadly weight. God's love is weighed out on a heavenly scale with the counterweights of truth and mercy balanced so precisely and perfectly that it creates a unique and fearless kind of love that can only come from an all knowing and perfect God.

We cannot ever duplicate pure love we can only hope to be obedient to its direction and sensitive to its operation in all that we do. For example we could never find the delicate balance of truth and mercy that can enable us to unequivocally love our enemies. Mercy and truth can be so delicately and exactly balanced that it can not only save the

repentant man from sin and death, but it can deliver him from every temptation and evil in his life and lead him to victory after victory so as to make his life pleasing to God. Psalm 85 says, "*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*" Truth and mercy are love's two pillars which Christians must rely on, and heartily seek, if they want to experience the peace that comes with entering into the righteousness of Christ.

Do not settle for cheap imitations. Regardless of accepted definitions of love which include "tough love" and "never having to say you are sorry", and every imaginable bit of hogwash in between, the one and only true definition of love appears in 1 John 4:16 "*God is love.*"

Humanly speaking it is impossible for Man to love as God; we simply do not have the knowledge of the truth nor do we have the grace to be patient and merciful as necessary. And since God is love then an important part of repenting and conceding to God is admitting that we have fallen short of God (love). Only by accepting the truth that we are sinners and incapable of love, and accepting his mercy, that his Son died in our place, can we enter into the love God has prepared for us. Every born-again Christian has personally experienced that wonderful miracle of God's truth and mercy that was so perfectly

balanced out to save them. Unfortunately, many Christians lose sight of the continuing importance of the truth and mercy that combined to bring them salvation. Quickly they cast off truth and mercy in favor of religious systems, self righteousness, or legalism. The Church at Corinth and the believers of Galatia are two Biblical examples of born-again Christians who were in danger of falling prey to religion and legalism.

The Christian ought to be on the alert so he is certain to establish the desire for truth and mercy as pillars of his daily faith. It is no coincidence that truth and mercy, the two counter balances of God's love, appear side by side in 15 places in the Psalms and three places in Proverbs. And those are just the places it expressly uses the words truth and mercy. In a dozen or more places it uses similar phrases or words to express the same thing.

An example of the partnership of truth and mercy in the Psalms is in the simple, but beautiful and profound, Psalm 117. Just 33 words long, the Psalm declares that we should praise God for his love. "*O Praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.*" Only God can balance the heavy gold of pure truth with the light and silky forgiving touch of his perfect

mercy in just the right proportion so Man can be saved from his fallen condition. “By *mercy and truth iniquity is purged*”, says Proverbs 16:6. This is the wonderful touch of deliverance by the Master’s soothing touch. This balance of truth and mercy is God’s exclusive, “peculiar”, heavenly kind of love that no man can duplicate, but Christians can allow it to flow through them if they have yielded to Christ and are walking, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. (Romans 8)

Do not be deceived by the gospel of the world. Humanists and lovers of the flesh would have us believe that Love is God. Whatever the antichrist spirit defines as “love” is able to fill the bill as God they say, but no matter how “loving” such philosophies and religions sound they are spiritual nonsense. Those who believe such things might just as well be worshipping the dumb idols of ancient Philistine.

God is love. Everything God thinks, says, initiates, and does is love, no matter what Man’s definition or opinion may be; and God is the only living being who can be merciful without compromising an inch on the truth. God does not have to go out and get some love, or find love, or learn love. Let’s not be ridiculous. Love is because God is. Whatever God is defines what love is.

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Because God is love and love is whatever God is like. God combines truth with mercy in a wholly unique way, which only he is able to do. It is a combination of his temperate, wise, knowledgeable, kind, forgiving and perfectly holy nature. That's why nothing or no one in the universe can produce or reproduce it on its own, only God has the attributes and power to do so. We must get it from God and have it housed in us by the power of the Holy Ghost and the blood of the Lamb.

Truth and mercy. Mercy and truth. The two measures of God's love that he balances in an infallible and masterful way to add-up, if you will, unselfish love. Agape, as my generation of Christians were wont to announce about love, meaning God's love as opposed to man's love. As if there were two kinds of love, or that man could love rightly on his own. As if there was any other kind of love than God's? Without truth there is no love. Without mercy, there is no love. Without the two in balance there is no salvation, no deliverance, no maturity – ultimately, where could there be any victory in Christ. Though the moon, sun, stars and earth may pass away, as the Scriptures assure us they shall – God's truth and mercy, in perfect balance, will endure forever.

List of Truth and Mercy together in a single scripture:

Psalms: 25:10, 31:6-7, 40:10-11, 57:3&10, 61:7, 69:13, 85:10, 86:15, 89:14, 98:3, 100:5, 108:4, 117, 138:2.
Proverbs: 3:3, 16:6, 20:28.

Temperance: Love's Enabler

Temperance blends and molds joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness and meekness with the right proportions of faith and belief in the goodness of God and God alone.

Temperance is the balance of all the fruits together so that nothing but love dominates. Just as the fruit of Love is needed as a nutrient for all the other fruits, temperance is an aggregate of all the fruits combined.

Temperance is more than just abstaining from lusts and carnal appetites, though it is certainly that. We should be filled with the Spirit rather than wine.

The essence of temperance is the combining of Mercy with Truth that goes such a long way to producing the distilled blend that makes up love. Temperance sees to it that the fruits are put at God's disposal according to His timing and His need. Temperance is an enabler of love.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the

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power of the Holy Ghost.

And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

Rom.15:13-14

Joy, peace, goodness and faith, along with the other fruits, when evident in the personal and orderly routine of daily life in Christ provide the fertile ground in which love can flourish, grow and become fruitful.

Dear Christian – Seek balance so that truth and mercy can be kneaded together by the artful hand of the Spirit of God where it can change the stony heart into one of pulsating love.

PART IV

4TH PART-
PATIENCE

Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance,
PATIENCE, Godliness, Brotherly Kindness, Love

PATIENCE: THAT
BITTERSWEET
THING

ELOISE GARDENIER

*“The full soul loatheth an honeycomb;
but to the hungry soul
every bitter thing is sweet.” Prov. 27:7*

Each and every Thanksgiving and Christmas for 22 years now I have gathered bittersweet that has grown on our property. I knew little or nothing about it, just that it seemed to be a nice natural, decoration for the fall holidays. In prior years I have always had to search for it as it grew in small amounts. This year I could not believe my eyes! It started with an unknown vine touching our sitting

room window which began to develop little round, flesh colored berries. I was going to gather some of those but never found the time. Shortly after that, they began to open up and I realized that this process had been a two part symbolism of God's creation – our flesh, and Jesus' blood. He showed me that the flesh colored berry I had noticed symbolized the flesh of man, and the next thing to appear was the blood of Jesus which split open the flesh and take charge of our hearts, converting them. That hidden berry is on the inside, not to be seen until the cover is split open exposing the real treasure, then eventually falling off or away. Yet one thing I have always noticed over the years is that those berries/ hearts will still be there as long as I kept the arrangement. Just as Jesus will remain with us as long as we cling to the arrangements He has made for us.

I began this by saying I had never seen anything like the crop of bittersweet this year. Our property and surrounding town almost looks like it is being taken over by the vine, which I believe to be a symbolic plant of the Lord Himself. Many tree tops are covered with their brilliance. I am completely certain this is yet another sign we are in the last days. It is a message from the Lord that prophecy is being fulfilled more rapidly day by day. Of course, if we know prophecy and its meaning, we know that just

by watching the nightly news. However, the Lord has provoked me and shown me more reasons to use this plant as an example for me, personally, and also to share with our readers at this special time of year.

The dictionary describes bittersweet like this; “the woody night shade climbing, trailing plant with scarlet berries, with orange capsules opening to expose red-coated seeds. Both are bitter and sweet to the taste, both pleasant and painful.” This is also a description of our lives in the flesh. The Scriptures point out that life on this earth is one of both “bitter and sweet.” We can all tell of times in our lives when we suffered “bitterness” and sorrow, as well as other times when life was as “sweet as honey.”

As we give thanks for the birth of our Saviour, let us focus on the life of his mother at that time. Ponder what it must have been like for her, knowing his birth was at hand, with no place to even lie down. She had already been accused of being a loose woman, carrying someone else’s child. If there was a midwife present to help her, we have never heard of that. Ponder also the fear Joseph must have felt for both himself and his wife. Let us imagine the “sweetness” of the safe delivery of this beautiful child who was placed in their care. How incredibly sweet the visit of the “Wise Men,” traveling so far and bearing precious gifts, giving them faith that

this calling was indeed from God Himself, must have been. How bitter and grievous it must have been to receive word that they must leave their homeland and go to what was probably for them like a foreign land, to save their precious young child from being murdered. It was far beyond anything we can even imagine! Then, once again, the sweet relief came when news of the death of Herod reached them. At last they could return to their homeland, family and friends.

The next incident recorded in Christ's life is of one when bitterness struck again. When in Jerusalem, Jesus' parents suddenly realized the youth Jesus was nowhere to be found. They probably felt anguishing guilty for letting it happen. The sweet relief when they found Him in, of all places, the Temple! The bitterness that came their way once again when, at thirty, His ministry began. Even though both of them had heard from God personally, Mary and Joseph didn't understand what he would have to go through as the Son of God. At times I'm sure Mary felt baffled about His actions when he traveled to other places giving her the bitterness of worry. Mary may have felt abandoned and deeply and bitterly hurt. But that was only the beginning of the bitterness that was yet to come before His mission here on earth was finished and

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she could realize the sweetness of the victory He had won for her and all of mankind. Just imagine his mother's bitter sorrow as He hung there on the cross, and as He gave her to His beloved disciple John. And how about her heartache when Jesus refused to drop what he was doing in ministering to the crowd and seemed to say unfeeling: "*Who is my mother, and who is my brother, but those who hear the Word of God and do it.*" Matt 12:48,50 But oh, the sweetness when He rose from the dead on Easter morn! The sweetness when his brothers Jude and James repented and they accepted Him as the Savior.

Throughout the Bible there are heroes and examples of those who lived bittersweet lives, symbolized by the plant created by God himself to show to those who can receive it; this life here on earth will always be bittersweet. We need patience in the spirit. God will turn our bitterness in to sweetness in time. The bible says he will wipe away all tears from our eyes when we are residing in glory land.

Remember Elijah? Running from Jezebel in fear of his life as he bitterly cried out to God; "*...and I, even I only am left and they seek my life, to take it away.*" 1 Ki 19:10 God's sweet reply was; "*Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.*"

1 Ki 19:18 And David, whom God Himself called “A man after His own heart,” Acts 13:22 could not escape the bitterness and sweetness of life here on earth. In 2 Samuel 18:33 we find that at the death of his son Absalom who had turned against his father even trying to have him killed, David “*the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*” How bitterly David was hurt. Yet in Psalm 119:103-104 David proclaims: “*How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.*” In Psalm 104:33 & 34 we find David singing to the Lord: “*I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.*” Here we see the spirit of a man who believes that life’s beauty and sweetness is not about Him, does not flow because he alone is happy, but that it is about the good of others, especially the Lord’s happiness from whom all happiness must ultimately flow.

And take our brother, Paul. Who could have had more than this man to feel bitter about? In 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 we read this list: “*Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors*

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more abundant in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren: In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, and cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?" It was not about himself, but about others. He was able to summon up the fruit of patience because he had the sentence of death working in him.

Paul rarely allowed Satan to rob him by bitterness (and that for only a brief moment here and there. Paul never allowed bitterness to grow in him against God. In fact, he goes on in the next chapter to focus on the sweetness of service to God. Though he does not expressly say so His being transported up to heaven for a vision probably happened during the dramatic and frightening incident in which he was stoned and left for dead, but remarkably raised up after his lifeless corpse was tossed outside the city. He says, *"I will come to visions and revelations of the*

Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third heaven. How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” 2 Cor 12:2-4 Also we might imagine how sweet the last two years of Paul’s life must have been. “*And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him. Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*” This sweet thing happened while he was under the bitter duress of imperial house arrest in Rome. How bittersweet even the end of Paul’s career! Acts 28:30 & 31

Think also of the bittersweet life of Jacob the one who had seized the ‘blessing’ and prevailed with God. The betrayal of his sons, the rape of his only daughter, the murder by his sons of an entire town, the infidelity, lies, envy and hatred within his own household caused him the most bitter of grief. One final aspect of his testimony on earth was how difficult and evil had been his days, how much he had suffered. But how sweet was the blessing and the Lord’s love at the same time. Imagine the unimaginable sweetness when he was restore to his favorite son after thinking for so many years that

he had been dead. Jacob would not have traded the bittersweet for any candy-coated life that was without the blessing.

During any holiday (if we choose to celebrate it in God's name) let us take care to examine our lives. How do we handle the bitter, how do we revel in the sweet things of love and grace? With so many of us, I for one, if it had not been for the bitter in my life I would never have admitted that I needed the help, the salvation of my Saviour, Jesus Christ? Would I still be trying to be my own saviour, or make some man my saviour? I thank our God He allowed me to go on until I came to the end of myself where I had to call out to the only place left – up to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. The “sweetest” thing for me that I ever did!!!

Now I look forward to “The Sweet Bye and Bye” because God sent His only Son to be born of woman (flesh, just like us) that he might take our place on that cross once and for all! And all who can receive Him as their Saviour and be born-again can look forward to the Sweet Bye and Bye as the song goes:

*There's a land that is fairer than day, And by
faith we can see it afar;*

*For the Father waits over the way, to prepare us a
dwelling place there.*

In the sweet bye and bye, We shall meet on that

beautiful shore.

In the sweet bye and bye, We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

We shall sing on that beautiful shore the melodious songs of the blest,

And our spirits shall sorrow no more, Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.

In the sweet bye and bye, We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

In the sweet bye and bye, We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

Let the Lord fill your hungry soul with the sweet things of Christ and accept the bitter truth of your sin and your desperate need for a Savior and you will be blessed with the gift of everlasting life. And if God permits you may even go on unto perfection as Hebrews 6 suggests. You may enter into the reality that your happiness does not depend on everything going according to your good pleasure, but happiness depends on the welfare and blessedness of the one you love.

WE'RE ALWAYS
THE LAST TO
KNOW!

*A Testimony - Deliverance From Demanding
My Own Way*

T MYERS SMITH

God wants His children to be free. This is one of the first dreams of true Fatherhood: freedom for the children.

This is a testimony about the sort of freedom God is most interested in giving us – freedom from the weight of that personal sin which “so easily besets us.” It is a testimony about hearing God’s voice of

deliverance and rejoicing in its truth, even if it is not too flattering when it is first heard in the heart.

I was not a novice Christian when this deliverance took place. I had already been a Christian for more than four years. I had already been delivered, by the grace of Jesus Christ, from many of the usual lusts that plague a young man early in his life. I had been an alcoholic, a drug addict and all-around renegade. I had chased after “youthful lusts” as the Scripture so discreetly puts it, and had suffered the repercussions that go along with such imprudence, foolishness, and gross conduct. God had shown me that these things were not so much the sin themselves, but more a symptom of sin in me. I drank and did drugs because I liked the false sense of power, the loss of inhibitions, the pathetic courage, and the spirit that they excited in my soul. The real sin in me was things like; fear, selfishness, envy, hatred and rebellion. In the four years that I had been a Christian, God had shown me a great deal about these destructive forces dwelling within my flesh. Like Paul I had been convinced by God’s gentle criticism to the point where I could definitely say, “*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.*” Romans 7:18

But I was by no means completely delivered or perfect. By my zest for sin I had piled up a wide

range of beliefs and actions contrary to God's nature and way of doing and thinking. My wife has stated from time to time that I am the most confrontational person she has ever met. Though I think that is a slight exaggeration, it is part of *my* character. I like to try and sort things out at the moment of the controversy, rather than, to paraphrase the Bible, letting the "sun go down on my wrath." When we do that in the right spirit for the right reason, to try and get at a beneficial conclusion or understanding for everyone we are peacemakers. When we intimidate people to get our own way we are merely bullies.

I had always hated bullies. Maybe I had been bullied as a youngster. I don't know. I know I really cared about my peers and what they thought about me, so I know I was 'bullied' in that way into doing many things to people that were regrettable and worse. As a child I had moved from one neighborhood to another. I became an experienced hand at dealing with bullies and trying to handle intimidating situations. In this I was not unusual. The world is an intimidating place. I had felt the cruel hand of a bully more than once. I had seen the effects on unfortunate others and despised it.

When I became a Christian, I understood quickly that intimidation was one of the greatest weapons Satan uses to rob people of all sorts of good things

in the spirit. He robs us of truth, health, love and righteousness by bullying tactics if he cannot do it by stealth. He can rob us even of joy, even salvation if we allow him to. Intimidation and bullying is among the stock-in-trade of Satan and his minions, and, of course, the spirit of the world, and wherever false religion is to be found. How unfitting it must be when we find it in the brethren. But sadly, it can be found even in the pious and devoted follower of Christ without one even being aware that it is hanging on grimly to the soul.

I had no trouble seeing that Satan is the bully of all bullies. I already knew that bullies only went away when confronted. As long as they were given free reign they would steal, rob and terrorize. I hated bullies and was on a mission- self appointed, not God appointed- to erase their influence anywhere I found it. I was sort of a spiritual Wyatt Earp deputized by God for cleaning up Dodge City. Or, so I thought.

Alas, what do we know about the depths of our own sin? Sin is a great deceiver and I couldn't have been more deceived about myself and my "mission" against bullies. Only Christ can show us the real truth and deliver the "bad news" to us in such a way that we are not condemned by it, but excited and happy about it instead. Our spirit leaps within us

because it is the truth and we sense that the truth will set us free. This particular moment of freedom, brought by the truth of Jesus' word spoken in my heart came as many powerful moments of deliverance come. It came unexpected, with no public display and no supernatural manifestation of a spiritual gift. It came in a private moment with no one around to talk me out of it, explain it, or convince me otherwise.

I had argued over finances with my wife earlier that afternoon. It was nothing too violent, just another controversy in what seemed to be a growing series of arguments about who would control the bank account. It was the same series of debates and arguments that had taken place in thousands upon thousands of homes of young married couples across America that very day. In most cases this jockeying for financial control is brought on by fear, greed, or control issues, maybe some kind of lack of trust, or some other unworthiness by one or both parties. In Christ this series of debates is often what is needed for things to be sorted out so they can be done the Lord's way. I don't remember the details of the fight but I do remember it was over the checkbook and who would be in charge of "keeping" it.

I remember that nothing had been resolved by the

time I was forced to leave to keep an engagement. I don't know what I thought about on the 45 minute ride there. I was probably asking the Lord to enlighten my wife so she would be reasonable and see things my way. I was probably fuming about not having things done the way they ought to be done – the Terry Smith way. That is as good a guess as I can make but I honestly don't recall anything about the ride down. I don't even remember who I was going to see, or the reason for my visit. But I do remember with absolute clarity a specific moment on the ride back.

Somehow, as I drove along the Lord had managed to calm me down and bring me to my senses. There was no radio going, just the steady hum of the van tires on the black pavement. I was enjoying the peace and quiet of being alone with the Lord. The Lord and I were conversing about this and that, probably about my wife's problems and how I could help her – I don't really remember the topic, just that the Lord and I were communing and my heart was growing with the sound of the Master's loving voice in my heart. Then suddenly, out of nowhere, the Lord changed the subject. It was an interjection that seemed to have nothing to do with the subject at first, but actually had everything to do with it.

He said to me, "You know, you're a bully."

Instantly, I thought to myself “I couldn’t have heard that right. The Lord cannot possibly be talking about me. I hate bullies. I have always hated bullies. Bullies are just about the worst thing there is.” I was caught completely off guard. If the Lord had said I was crazy, or reckless, or weak, or too loud, I could have readily believed it. If He had told me I was too uncaring or selfish, or egotistical, it might have figured. These flaws I knew were part of my “fallen” character. But BULLY? A BULLY, Lord?

”Not me? Lord. How can I be a bully? I hate bullies” I said. The Lord simply answered softly. ”No, you’re a bully”.

Just as instantly as I had thought I could not have heard correctly, I knew in my heart it was true. I was a bully and had been all my life. I had used intimidation to get my way and had preyed on anyone who would submit to my tactics. I had learned it the way a person learns any trade secret of sin, by experience, example and trial and error. I’m sure demonic spirits had helped me along and I know my hatred of bullies fueled my obsession. The irony of sin often is that the very thing we hate, because we are hateful of it and not forgiving, is the very thing we turn into ourselves. Sin is a deceiver in this way. The sin of being a bully, intimidating people and feeding on their fears to get what one

wants, had come in the back door and lodged in my flesh. My own blindness and form of self righteousness had kept it under wraps. I truly had no clue I was a bully. But I was. When I heard this news from the Lord, as shocking as it was, I was excited and thrilled. The Lord had said it to me in such a compassionate way that I knew He would help me dispose of this sin in my life. He would give me the grace, if I wanted Him to, to resist the temptation to prey on the weakness of a person just to get my way.

He would increase my faith to trust Him to work things out. I could lay down my weapons of intimidation. Getting people to do things the godly way was His problem and responsibility, not mine. I was so ecstatic about the prospect of being delivered from this flaw in my character that I wanted even more deliverance right then and there. I asked the Lord, "Is there anything else in my life that I need deliverance from?"

I believe, if the Lord can be astounded He was astounded by me in that moment. His Spirit replied, "Yes, Terry, but I won't tell you now because you would not be able to comprehend it." Let's just take care of the bullying for now. I laughed a little at my own foolishness for asking such a dumb question and went back to gliding happily home on the belief that my bullying days were numbered. When I got

home I went straight in the house and was greeted in the kitchen (that place were so much spiritual discussion seems to take place in our house) by my wife and parents. They may have still been concerned about the argument and the stewing problem of unresolved financial conflict in our home. I don't know. They weren't overly concerned, or stressed out about it, but it was still hovering in the air when I greeted them. Excitedly, I began telling them about my exchange with the Lord. I told them I had some news for them. I said God had showed me I was a bully. They didn't say it, they were too polite, but I saw it in their eyes – they had known I was a bully. This was not news – except to me. Just as no one has to tell a person who gets stung by a wasp that they feel pain, and no one has to inform the guy who slams his thumb with a hammer that he just got hurt, no one has to tell the victims of a bully that they have been bullied.

Inside I had to laugh. I was the last to know. Isn't that always the way. We're the last to know. Our sins are often so apparent to others and we are blinded by our own self righteousness. But Christ came to give us light. When that light shines into the dark recesses of our heart we become enlightened and then we are freed. Then the shackles of sin are broken and we are free to take another step toward

walking even as the Master walked when He humbly strode among men. We talked at length about bullies and how contrary it is to God's ways and the fruits of the Spirit. We talked about Christ's walk and His meekness. We talked about the glee of knowing the truth about ourselves and the promise of having the old man peeled away to reveal the new man like a worm that has burst forth from its cocoon as a beautiful soaring butterfly. Man, was I excited with anticipation. Another change in me was in the works.

A by-product of the revelation about my sin was that I gave the keeping of the checkbook over to my wife. That was many years ago and she's been its "keeper" ever since. Though it was not the way my father ran his household, it was the way the Lord wanted our household to operate. I can't tell you the number of times over the years that I have thanked God for working it out that I did not have the additional burden of doing the finances. It's a tremendously hard job. My wife had the time and was far better equipped to do it than I ever would have been. Fortunately, God knows what He is doing, because we certainly do not.

The revelation of my bullying tendencies did not mean I would never again encounter the problem or have to fend off its influences on my soul. I stay on

my guard not to slip back into the “old man”. That is always a possibility and as soon as I am alerted to its presence in my behavior I have to be willing to repent of it and turn back to trusting God. When I fall I need forgiveness, have to ask for forgiveness. I have learned that if I want God’s will to be done, as it says in the Lord’s prayer, then I can trust Him that it shall be done. What God asks of His people is not bullying, or hounding, or hoarding, or harassing people into doing His will, but faith in him and trying to be like him, hoping to be like him, to be a true partaker of the Divine Nature. God does not bully people into doing the right thing, He convinces them by the power of the sweet Holy Spirit to do the right thing. What He asks of me is prayer and trust and obedience.

I thank God that He showed me I was a bully. I never liked bullies and I know that if I had come to the conclusion of my life and found out the truth, that I had been a bully, I certainly would not have liked myself at all. Jesus, by His God’s honest truth, has freed me from recklessly and selfishly hurting others, but He has also freed me from being extremely disappointed in myself, from hurting myself. How kind God is to us all.

PART V

5TH PART-
GODLINESS

Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience,
GODLINESS, Brotherly Kindness, Love

THE SPIRITUAL DNA OF GODLINESS

T MYERS SMITH

*“And without controversy great is the mystery of
godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in
the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the
Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into
glory.”*

Among the dozen mysteries relayed to us in the New Testament two are called great. One is about the Bride of Christ, the second concerns the mystery of godliness as described in the first letter to Timothy

by the apostle Paul. We are told that this mystery of godliness is held without controversy. No debate, no argument or need for discussion is necessary as to whether this mystery is anything else than what follows in this verse. *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”* One can take note that there are six elements which comprise the mystery of Godliness to make it whole.

Central to the call to be partaker of the Divine Nature is a call to enter into godliness, which is designated in scripture as one of the great mysteries of all the gospel. There are literally more than a dozen mysteries identified and enumerated in the New Testament. They are mysteries not because they cannot be known or because they are mysterious or incomprehensible magical things, but because they are mysterious to the nature of Man, that is, until they are revealed by the Savior, who among all that He is, is also the personification of Truth, Wisdom and Godliness. He is able to impart knowledge and wisdom to all those who come to Him with true and inquiring hearts; those who want not only to know the truth but live it in truth. Jesus is the essence of godliness. He and He alone. He

is the harbinger of the Divine and living reality of those heavenly truths concerning God's nature.

"God was manifest in the flesh."

God came into this world to, among other things, manifest godliness in all its perfection. God became man in the person Jesus. All things that Christ did and said were an act of Godliness, for it was God's Will that it be accomplished on earth by a man on earth, accomplished before all eyes to see and all ears to hear. Godliness had to be actualized on earth and it was deemed part of the mission of the Christ to prove that the person who is entirely submitted to God in any situation can be godly in the decisions made and the conduct of their actions.

It is imperative that the disciple (i.e. follower of Christ) be true and honest, without hypocrisy or deception. Jesus came to prove and show for all time that godliness could be performed, that this is the form of perfection of which the Scriptures so vehemently speak. The righteousness of God should not be left to speculation of preachers and conjectures of the proud. The righteousness of God is exhibited in Jesus for the clear understanding of Man so that we on this temporary earth would be instructed in the way of right and wrong, good and bad, holy and unholy doings. Jesus not only taught us the Ten Commandments and some of their finer

nuances, he showed us how to live them. He walked the walked before all eyes to see. He walked among us so He could show us the perfect way in which to walk, including what to believe and why we should believe it.

His primary mission, His greatest joy was to simply do the will of His Father in heaven. This pure uncomplicated love Jesus exhibited in many ways throughout His days of ministry, thereby putting on full display the purposes and essence of godliness according to God. Godliness cries out for expression and opportunity to help the needy and to set the course for what is good and true. Wherever it is called for to resolve or settle public matters of controversy Jesus was there. It is not simply a matter of Law; it is a matter of spirit in the highest realm of rightness. It is the sum and substance of the so-called fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. As the scripture declares – against such there is no law.

“Justified In The Spirit.”

The manifesting of godliness cannot be accomplished in terms of Man’s ideas of what may be correct or anything that has been devised as acceptable behavior by our laws and regulations. Not in the least. Godliness is, therefore, held to the

standards of the Spirit of God only. It is His declaration of what is righteousness, what is true, good and pure. The philosopher David Hume, though wrong on many spiritual accounts, was right on this matter when he said, "That which is perfect is that which conforms perfectly to its own standards." So the Spirit of God sets the standards of godliness by His own perfect knowledge of goodness and truth. Godliness is in no wise subject to Man's limited and corrupt vision. Godliness exists merely because it is an expression of God. It is identified and justified only by what God is by nature and it is the definition and perfect expression of godly, declaring what is godly in every given situation down to the minutest degree of thought and life.

Jesus was declared *just*, or to put it another way, blameless and upright before God the Father, according to the Spirit of God, not by men or any other imperfect standard, godliness exists because God is godliness and it is nothing more than what He does, acts and walks.

When as a 12-year-old child he left Joseph and his mother without telling them and went to talk to the religious leaders at the temple in Jerusalem he was justified by the Spirit. No court of law, no social-worker, no neighbor or acquaintance would

justify such a thing as Jesus did that day. Mary was frightened and indignant, but Jesus was justified by the Spirit. The tone of Scripture tells us something contrary to our sense of right. We are informed by Holy Scripture that The Spirit of God in Jesus calmly said to Mary, almost chidingly, “You should have known I would be about my father’s business.” This was no smart-aleck remark, Mary of all people should have been trusting and not fearful, fine with Jesus’ addressing His Father’s business at any time in His life. She was the only one who knew who He was. She was not justified; being out of line, not trusting God who had always taken care of her against the ungodly self-righteousness of those who thought Joseph should not have married her. She had been saved from the self-righteousness of the attempt on Jesus’ life when two-years-old; her and Joseph having to flee to, of all places, Egypt to escape the king’s sword wielding merchants of death.

Mary was afraid. We are bound by fear, often it keeps us from understanding godliness and its unbound actions of faith. The manifestation of what is truly justified by heavenly province can only be allowed when it engages in a violent face-off with Man’s concepts of godliness and the true righteousness that is the sole province of the timeless wisdom of The Spirit of God overcomes

what the flesh is trying to impose upon the spirit of Truth. Godliness must be manifested so that all can have a chance to understand it. It takes a battle in the spirit to allow it to be performed in those who can be used by God to perform the good works of spiritual salvation. It is justified because it is carried out in the light, imparted to our spirit by actual works in this world. Jesus became man to showcase the power of the Holy Spirit, to convert us from sinful ignorant creatures into those who conform to Christ through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

The process that must take place to enter into godliness is three-fold. One must first be *reformed*. That is to say, reformed in Christ, reformed from our old sinful ways and life to wanting to be like Jesus. Second; one must be transformed, conceding to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit by partaking of a new spirit to replace our old spirit, that spirit is the justifying Spirit of God. And third; we must be conformed to the Divine Nature that is Christ. We must conform to Christ's godliness through the unction and power that can be infused into our being by the presence of the justifying Holy Spirit. – Reformed, Transformed, Conformed – Here is the transition path to the whole godly being. This is the means by which the Spirit manifests the change in a human from ungodliness to godliness.

This is the justification of faith. It is not only our beliefs and actions on earth that are changed; but by reforming, transforming and conforming, our very nature is changed to the likeness of the Divine. This can never be done according to the genius, laws, wisdom or discretion of Man, but according to the life and actions of the living Christ who walked among us in this life. By this godliness is justified by the Spirit exclusively.

“Seen Of Angels.”

Jesus acted and spoke in the open so that all of creation could witness the manifestation of godliness on earth. This open show included all the angels, as well as those fallen with Lucifer. When it was done it was recorded in plain and universal language by simple and plain unrefined people, in the center of the earth so that north, south, east and west could digest the reality of godliness to understand that it was available to any who would listen and believe and enter into its perfect ways by allowing the Divine Nature to trump their own corrupted nature.

It is by no means acceptable that actual godliness should have been witnessed by a mere handful of people in a single moment of time. All of heaven must be made aware of godliness, that it is within the province of any creature through Jesus Christ

whether in heaven or on earth. It must not remain theoretical, it must be seen, observed and realized by seeing and experiencing its behavior in the individual soul the way Man's behavioral sciences observe and study the human condition in its carnal laboratory experiments. The reality of godliness and its behavior has been defined in Holy Scripture through the history of God's relationship with Man, in particular Israel and the Church. Godliness had to be put on open display and it was the task given to Jesus by the Father to that He might establish godliness so that it might be imbedded in the believer. This is why he was crucified in the 'center of the earth' openly before all men, Jew and Gentile alike. This is why Jesus preached while dying on the cross.

"Preached Unto The Gentiles."

Christ was the first to preach godliness to the Gentiles while He hung on the cross in agony, saying: "Forgive them Father for they know not what they do." This message from the cross was the start of a two thousand year effort by the Spirit of God to preach the observations and teachings of true godliness throughout the whole world. All methods have been employed by God: by pen, with voice, by martyrs, by governments, kings and presidents, by internet, by satellite, by events, by disasters, by

prophecy being fulfilled and literally every conceivable means. The truth about the existence of godliness and its infusion into submissive followers of faith is proof that God's message has filled heaven and earth. It has not been accomplished by Man teachings his ideas of rightness or our example of what is fair or good and charitable works, or by our achievements in science, religion or social science or medicine; but it has been done solely by what God has promised as salvation and by his ability to actually change the nature of human beings into the Divine; which includes godliness as one of His most remarkable, even miraculous works within the soul of any malleable spirit of Man. It points to the future heavenly utopia that man can never achieve himself here on earth, in spite of all our efforts and naïve hopes to achieve the perfect society, either with or apart from God. Only those who concede to what God has revealed as justifiable godly behavior, only those who accept that there is only one path, that is, through Christ and His Spirit to gaining it, only those who concede to God can obtain to godliness. Therefore it has to be preached to unbelievers so they may come to believe.

Not only did Jesus come to fulfill what the Jewish prophets of God had foretold but He also came that all men might be saved, including the pagan and

heathen ones called Gentiles. In fact (another mystery) God has blinded the Jews for the sake of the Gentiles that they might inherit with the Jews the promises God has made to mankind.

“Believed On In The World.”

Believing is thought to be simple and axiomatic; but it is an amazing miracle when a person believes God. That any mortal man in this life and in this un-Godly world would trust in, rely on and adhere to Jesus and his gospel of reconciliation to our Creator is the beginning of wisdom, the start of salvation.

It is not enough that we should see and be told about godliness, for there are many who have seen and heard but have not believed. That godliness can saturate the spirit of Man must, in the end, be believed so that it become part of the comprehensive Divine Nature living within our soul and spirit. It must, in the words of the Bible, bear fruit within us so that it has a dominating effect upon our thoughts and actions.

The living essence of godliness in a soul, as all things, is subservient to what one actually believes. For what a person believes will dominate and direct their behavior in any given circumstance subject. Belief persuades the Will and commands the decisions which are the cause by which one acts. They are the cause of our fears, true or otherwise.

They coach our apprehensions which act automatically upon us to act ‘instinctively’.

Godliness must be worked within Man because our actions are subject to instinct, coached within us by what we believe. Godliness is proven by our actions, godliness is accomplished by deed not word alone; this is so that it may be “believed on in the world.” Believing that godliness is the way to live is necessary, for godliness in ungodly humans is unbelievable. Therefore it must be proven so that the miracle of godliness in us can be believed. It must be manifest by sight so that it can become manifest in the observers life for one has to believe that it is possible.

“Jesus said... If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes”. Mk 9:23 This principle applies to godliness which abiding in the soul of the individual by faith becomes acceptable to God as true godliness. It is not justified in its working by Man, but by the discretion of the Holy Spirit only.

Each of the seven parts of the Divine Nature are added together as single blocks one at a time being connected as one, by as it were, the enzyme of faith. Faith is that spiritual protein by which this new DNA of godliness is built and becomes alive in the individual believer. It is faith which allows the personal elements of Divine Nature to be made

accessible to the person who desires God's nature rather than their old nature to live. It is that 'tower" of a new nature, God's Nature, which can grow into a real, but godly tower of divine character which has been so wonderfully described for our faith in the letter written by the hand of God through the ministry of the Apostle Peter.

"Received Up Into Glory"

Just as Christ's death would have been in vain had He not been resurrected and received into glory, so all acts of godliness are validated when God receives them thereby confirming them as godly. After Jesus was crucified God raised him from the dead which is the eternal validation before all creation that Jesus is the Christ and the very Son of God; the one who left heaven, became a human and by a perfect godly life paid the price for our sin when he became sin in our stead, thereby paying its price. God is just. The debt of sin must be paid. This is the law of godliness by which the angels, both loyal and fallen live according to God's stated Will and His declared godliness. Christ paid the price and was taken up not by rumor or suggested trust, or spiritual analogy, but in the flesh, in all actuality, before the eyes of men and angels, in a glorified state into Heaven where He now waits at his Father's right hand for the command to come and gather up the first fruit

of resurrected saints. This is why there were both men and angels at Christ's ascension into heaven and why it was recorded in the Scriptures. It was dutifully recorded.

The first fruits of harvest of persons godly are otherwise known in Bible prophesy as 'The Bride'. She shall someday soon be received into heaven in that electrifying moment euphemistically called the Rapture. Those who are godly, for the Bride is godly, will be "received up into glory". The mystery of godliness will have been performed in humans within the infusion of the Divine Nature through faith by the process declared in Peter's epistle. Its final validation is the receiving of it in heaven's domains. Those that are partakers of divine godliness, having expressed and realized them in actuality in their lives shall find that they fit in with the spirit and society of heaven; and therefore they rightly belong in heaven and have an eternal home in paradise.

This composite work of God; that godliness be first manifested, then all its performance and acts be justified solely by the Spirit Himself, that it should be on open display for the eyes of the whole of creation, that it would be preached the world over, that it would be believed by humans and finally received into heaven's realms as a finished reality,

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this is the mystery of godliness accomplished by the marvelous gospel of truth through the triune workings of the Godhead of The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father commanded that godliness should reign in heaven, Jesus brought it to heaven by His obedience to the Father's will, the Holy Spirit as the judge and justifier of all things godly validated the work of salvation so that it could be received through the gates into paradise.

THE MYSTERIES OF HEAVEN

AIDS TO PERFECTION OF THE BRIDE
- enumerated with brief discussion

INTRODUCTION

Some of the mysteries come forth in parables, symbolically as metaphors. Others are more directly referred to and require an understanding of spiritual things revealed only to the primary initiate (born-again) Christian. The *Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven* are mysteries veiled, only the pure of heart can have them uncovered for it takes the understanding of the Holy Spirit. The symbolic ones require knowledge of God's Word revealed also by none other than the Holy Spirit and His interpretive

powers. Some of the mysteries need only be received by faith, their knowledge acquired by believing that they are not natural things of Man's wisdom, but truths never before revealed to the heart of Man until the advent of the all-wise Savior, Jesus Christ.

Two of the Gospel's mysteries are designated as "great", therefore they have to be given a special place, an even higher significance in the mind and heart of the disciples of Christ. Both of these mysteries appear in the New Testament: the first appears in the Book of Ephesians chapter five where *Christ and His Church* is revealed as husband and wife (which is the subject of the extensive chapter of mystery under #9 below); the second "great" mystery of God is in association with the *Mystery of Godliness* which was written by Paul in one of his letters to his young helper, Timothy. This great mystery is complex having six dynamic components. Each of the components were analyzed in the previous article/chapter in this pamphlet under the title: "*The Spiritual DNA of Godliness*".

The other mysteries, amounting to twelve, plus some general remarks about mysteries of the Gospel, are discussed below in this chapter and should be helpful for those who want to more than whet their appetite on this engrossing subject of Scripture. Those intrigued by the notion that the mysteries are

important to anyone interested in being closer to God and having their nature miraculously transformed into one like the Divine will find this article more than helpful for understanding the Will of God.

In the New Testament there are many mysteries for the Christian to discover. They cover Christ Himself, the Bride of Christ, Satanic things, the spirits of false religion, the mysteries of heaven, paradise and godliness, what paradise will be like, the gift of speaking tongues, and so much more. They are free for the taking of every believer to help build faith and make them wise according to godly wisdom. God recommends that every disciple of Jesus dig them out of the Word and investigate them wholeheartedly. Even though it is to the great advantage of every saint to do so, very few believers actually do dig to uncover the mysteries of the faith.

If one does however search them out, that person's walk will be enriched beyond a king's ransom. Their knowledge will help to guide them on their way past pitfalls that often become a snare to health, and even a place of abiding faith. Any snare can enslave a believer in the chains of ignorance. It can blind faith, bruise hope and imprison the soul. God would like to build in each maturing believer a

knowledge and faith for the secret things of truth, the mysteries of God and Christ.

Through the understanding of these mysteries one may understand and believe in the calling of the Bride of Christ. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, Christ holds out to his Church great wisdom by disclosing the mysteries. Any believer is freely offered the understanding of these just for the asking. Seek and you shall find as the scripture advises. Understanding the mysteries, hoping to have them incorporated into one's faith will strengthen the relationship with the Trinity and make more certain our ability to serve and please God with our whole body, mind and heart.

The mysteries are first broached in the teachings of Jesus Himself. Jesus teaches that the mysteries were 'hidden from the foundation of the world' only to be revealed by Him at His first coming. Jesus taught in parables so that those of pure hearts who hungered for deeper understanding could learn about the riches of the Gospel and so that those of dubious contriving type faith would not understand. This was to exclude the unrepentant heart from the knowledge and understanding of sacred things. The mysteries are sacred. They are the true 'sacraments' of the Church (not the ones devised by orthodox Christianity) and should be

seen and received as such. As the apostle Paul clearly stated the case for true reverence of the sacred, it is not touch not, handle not, taste not, the sacraments are not a date on a calendar, a wafer, the cup, the marriage ring or the baptismal fount, or repetitive cardboard prayers. Christ handled the mysteries as the high priest of the gospel truth. We ought to receive them as such. The believer must handle sacred things with reverence and discretion according to the will of the Father. He distributed the sacred mysteries with devout reverence. Christ declared that heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's Word shall last forever. What could be more sacred than His Word? He, therefore, with reverence for the Truth and the mysteries of the Gospel, imparted them carefully and did not cast them as pearls before swine, but moved by wisdom, wanted to keep them from men of the wrong selfish spirit who could not help but ultimately use them for their own ill purposes.

This therefore is the reason why Jesus taught in parables:

“And Jesus said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

TERRY SMITH

That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.” AND

“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.” Mk 4:11-12; Matt 13:34-35

Further on in the New Testament, we discover that the apostle Paul mentions mysteries many times and tells about the importance of their careful stewardship. In the book of Revelation there are mysteries that Jesus himself speaks of and some are shown to the apostle John, which are expounded upon by angels. They all amount to great wisdom when considered with the heart. In these last days their consideration is imperative. We hope you will consider them with your whole heart and mind and incorporate their faith into your own.

The following report is compiled by an EOE writer citing the mysteries of Christ in the order in which they

appear in scripture. Each being worthy of further study by the individual believer in Christ

#1 – Twelve Parables that are The Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven

Jesus taught in parables to his disciples and after one such teaching “...*the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*” Mat.13:10-11 So it is shown to us in the Gospels that Jesus taught almost exclusively in parables, each one revealing some aspect of God’s kingdom. The Bride will inherit all things with Christ and here within the mysteries lie the treasures of Godly wisdom to enhance the beauty of Christ’s loving Bride who wants to know everything she can about her husband’s kingdom and the life He lives.

The following 12 scriptures, all from the Book of Matthew are where the curious believer can find the parables related to Jesus’ teaching about the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Each mystery is identified by Christ so the faithful might know, understand and gain wisdom about the realities of the mysteries (or secrets) concerning the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. Mat.13:(3-9)(18-23) Parable of Sower of the

Seeds

2. Mat.13:(24-30)(36-43) Tares Among the Wheat
3. Mat.13:31-32 Parable of a Grain of Mustard Seed
4. Mat.13:33 The Hidden Leaven
5. Mat.13:44 Parable of Treasure Hid in a Field
6. Mat.13:45-46 Parable of The Pearl of Great Price
7. Mat.13:47-50 Parable of a Net Cast into the Sea
8. Mat.18:23-35 Parable of the Unforgiving Servant
9. Mat.20:1-16 Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard
10. Mat.22:2-14 Parable of the Wedding Feast
11. Mat.25:1-13 Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins
12. Mat.25:14-30 Parable of the Five Talents

#2 – Mystery of Jews Blinded by God Romans 11:25
“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”

Seven times in the New Testament there is a plea that we not be ignorant of certain knowledge the

Spirit would like to furnish to the saint. On this occasion in Romans, we are shown a mystery that God wishes all Christians to understand and not be ignorant. The fact that the Jews are not cast off by God but rather have been made blind (for a season) for our sake has been grossly ignored by Christians who think they are wise, but are not. Men and Christians sadly, have been more wise in the own conceits and high-minded rather than attentive to God's voice and have done terrible atrocities against the apple of God's eye through their support and encouragement of wrong teaching, and their obstinate ignorance of this mystery of faith.

Read Romans 10:18 through 11:36 and learn a mystery that has been shown to those who want to know the truth about God's people. Then one can knowledgeably heed the warning of God to "*...Be not high-minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.*" Rom.11:20-21 Christ's Bride will be made up of both Jew and Gentile. (This is evident by the disclosure of another mystery.) A day is coming when the blindness of the Jews will be lifted and many will be received into the arms of Jesus and will be given a place in the New Jerusalem, that heavenly city prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. The prophets have eluded to this truth and some like

Zechariah have directly stated it as a prophetic truth. We know there will be no imperfect separation within the Bride but rather a perfectly completed blended and unified body, a commonwealth of Jew and Gentile, as evident in these words: *“And [The Bride] had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel...And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”* Rev. 21:12,14

#3 Mystery of the Gospel of Salvation
Rom.16:25-27

“Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.”

Here is the mention of a mystery, kept secret since the world began, but now has been made known according to God’s command which was first revealed by the preaching of the Christ. For his own good pleasure God has had a plan to bring to himself mortal men who have been perfected through

Christ in holiness and all purity, now able to abide with Him for all eternity. When God and Jesus created man Satan knew God's good intentions for mankind and has been hell-bent in his efforts to try and prevent this Godly relationship from ever happening to any soul. The mystery of the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ has been unknown even to Satan. Satan had no idea of how God would defeat him when He prophesied in the Garden of Eden, of the seed of the woman crushing the serpent's head. Even though the scriptures have been filled with prophecies, the Way of this mystery would be kept from being fully revealed according to God's will in his perfect timing. This mystery, now fully revealed, is the birthplace of the Church and Bride; for every saint is brought into the presence of God's Kingdom through the obedience of faith and belief of this mystery; that Jesus Christ is the Way.

This mystery of spiritual salvation and eternal life is shown in the parable type teaching that Jesus gave to the religious leader, Nicodemus, who came to Him stealthily and mysteriously by night and Jesus told Him that he must be born-again. Every person is born of water but you must be born of the spirit if you will see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus was befuddled at the declaration of this mystery, until He seemed to come to an understanding of it upon

Christ's death and resurrection. It often takes that sort of dramatic experience that leads to revelation and understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. 1Cor.2:7-9, Eph.3:1-11, Eph.6:19, Col.1:26, Col.4:3

#4 Stewards of the Mysteries of God 1 Cor.4:1-2

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Peter exhorts *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”* 1 Peter 4:10

We are told here that it is by the abundance of undeserving favor from God that he has given gifts to us. Receiving the understanding of his mysteries can be looked at in this fashion. As good stewards we are expected to minister what we have received to one another. The Church should not be in competition with one another but rather should be in agreement with Christ who is working to present to himself a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; holy and without blemish. This picture of the Bride of Christ should cause us to want to offer in many ways the understanding of mysteries and all gifts we have received to our brothers and sisters for the sake of Christ building his Bride church. Of course, for the

sake of doing this work in love, it is necessary that everything be distributed according to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Paul writes *“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and **understand all mysteries**, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.”* 1 Cor.13:2 It is in the spirit of God’s love and for the purposes of truly loving one another that we should be found good **stewards of the mysteries.**

In Luke 12:42-43 *Jesus said “...Who then is that **faithful and wise steward**, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”*

So as “stewards of the mysteries of God” we ought to embrace, as a duty to our Lord, being faithful and wise, loving and generous, the dispensing of knowledge and understanding of these mysteries within the Church. Always faithful, because God wants us to invest the gifts he has given to us and be ever wise, seeking discernment by the Spirit that we invest in hearts that are true, wanting to understand God’s word. We must be good stewards of sacred things and dispense them with reverence and care.

#5 Mystery of Tongues 1 Cor. 14:2

“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not

unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaks mysteries.”

Here is mention of a mystery that within the Church is commonly called speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is taught by scriptures as being evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6 Paul has instructed in his writings that, unless God gives interpretation, when one speaks in tongues he is speaking things unknown; they remain a mystery to us. Many in the Church today have had some sort of experience with witnessing tongues and much of it has been in the form of abuse and disorderly; because of this a part of the Church has labeled tongues as evil and from Satan. This is not new.

In the infancy of the Church, Paul had to go to great lengths to teach the Corinthians about the proper use of this gift. The Bride, who like the five wise virgins has her lamp trimmed and filled with oil, has properly received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and exercises the appropriate use and purpose of tongues in connection to prayer and prophesying.

#6 The Mystery of the Rapture I Cor. 15:49-58

“... know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

This is not merely about the resurrection of the dead, but it is a mystery that some who are actually

alive shall also be made immortal. But it is for every man to die once, the mystery is that can and will reckon those who have died to self in this life as having died and therefore eligible to be ‘raptured’ alive. This a mystery indeed. But it is declared that we must labor to enter His rest; we must labor to die to self and if we do, our labor shall not be in vain.

Dying to self is a mysterious process and wins us the reward of the mystery of the rapture. In the “twinkling of an eye” we shall cast off this corruptible flesh and put on incorruptible, which is a new spiritual body. Death shall no longer possess any sting; it will have been swallowed up in the victory of Jesus Christ for those who have followed hard after him. A day is coming when this mortal being will become immortal. That day will soon come for the Bride at the time of the Rapture. This is a mystery about the Rapture that the world does not believe and the Church has greatly misunderstood through much presumption. To those who aspire to be a part of Christ’s’ Bride however, it is a mystery to be wisely understood and hoped for, a mystery that the Bride has set the eyes of her heart upon as she waits for the sudden appearance of her Bridegroom.

*“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep,
but we shall all be changed,*

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Cor 15:51-58

#7 The Mystery of God’s Will Eph. 1:8-10

*“Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the **mystery of his will**, according to his good **pleasure** which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the*

fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:"

The mystery of God's will is that whatever He decides or wants because of His own purposes is to be accepted as perfect, no matter what we may think or what we may regard. Those who have been brought into the sheepfold of Jesus through faith in Him alone as the straight and narrow gate, will be found by God to be in Christ according to the way He has ordained it. Beyond this initial embrace of our savior, if you who have heard the call by the Spirit to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus and you aspire to have the same faith as the Philadelphia church spoken of in the book of Revelation, then you are likely to be among those whom God has willed to be part of the call to Brideship in Jesus Christ. The Bible says many are called but few are chosen, this holds especially true to the ones who are of the Bride, for it is said of them on the day that they return to earth with Christ's army that these are they who are called, chosen and faithful. This gathering together in one, all things that are in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth is going to be a wonderful event; how much more wondrous will it

be for those who are chosen as Jesus' Bride and her bridal party?

#8 The Mystery of Christ Eph. 3:3-12

Mysteries must be learned and absorbed by revelation, none more than the mystery of Christ. The mysteries come only to those who seek them by the teaching of God which is the true meaning of revelation. *“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”*

God once spoke to man by the fathers and the prophets but now He has spoken to us by His dear Son. We are introduced to the teaching of the mystery of Christ here in Ephesians:

“That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world

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hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.”

The purpose of God designed in the Christ was to make us fellow-heirs and of the same body and to have fellowship in the mystery of this ultimate purpose brought about by the Christ. The mystery of Christ also includes and begins with the understanding of who and what the Christ really is. Christ is Savior. Christ must be man. Jesus called Himself the Son of Man because only a man could save mankind, be the pardon for their sin. The word Christ both implies and demands a Man. The mystery of Christ is that He be Man the Redeemer of Man. Man should not be alone. Even Redeemer Man must have a spouse or be relegated to eternal loneliness. Thus he must have fellow heirs, we must be one in the same body with Christ. We need to see the mystery of the Son of Man, the Christ, that we

may see what is the fellowship of this mystery of the Christ.

#9 THE MYSTERY CALLED 'GREAT': CHRIST AND THE CHURCH Eph 5:21-33

The Faithful Bride Hidden Within Christ and The Church

The following is the mystery of marvel which must be studied and investigated with the focus and determination applied by a master sleuth.

It is the mystery of Christ and His Church; the mystery dearest to the Lord Almighty's heart, for it is about His Son and Christ's espoused helpmate and wife. Details about her character and destiny are found scattered throughout the pages of the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible. It is our favorite theme because it is our fondest hope that we may become Christ's bride and wife.

The *EOE* web-pages are specially devoted to the 'Bride' section which traverses them so as to identify her with careful consideration, even lending a spiritual eye toward the detail of her life and the rarity of her character and disposition. Though the apostle Paul's letters come late in the order of inspired scripture, the place best to begin is with Paul's teaching on marriage to the believers of the city of Ephesus in modern day Turkey. Ephesus was that city where the wonder of the world, the temple

to Diana, the Roman goddess of women, motherhood and fertility was located. Where better to dispel ignorance about the meaning of marriage and deliver the profound truth about marriage and the real Bride of God?

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the apostle begins a dialogue about husbands and wives and the necessity of love and reciprocal submission in the matrimonial relationship. He speaks of submitting one to another in the fear of God as he gives directives for wives and husbands and how the husband is particularly responsible to love the wife and the woman is obligated to submit to the man. This was news to those who were steeped in the worship of a goddess. And so Paul's teaching was received primarily in this light, and has continued down two thousand years in this fashion to be learned by the bulk of bible believers. When read superficially, this is marriage counseling 101. He has talked about being wise and staying away from fornication (that one thing Christ has said is a permissible reason to divorce). Avoid also those who commit such sinful acts without regard for God or Man. Then Paul tells directly, in the simplest terms what husbands and wives ought to do in the matrimonial relationship –

Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands,
as unto the Lord.*

*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as
Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour
of the body.*

*Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so
let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

Eph 5:21-24

Simple and clear. Only the worshipper of Diana or Mary, or the modernist or the unbeliever without reverence for God could or can argue with this simple advice, this sound counsel of God. Do the right thing. The advancement of the idea of the full commitment of the man to so love his wife as Christ perfectly loves the church, serves as a hedge against the man abusing his position and lauding it over the 'weaker vessel'. Both husband and wife are urged, expected, to be wise concerning the dynamics of this spiritual rule for successful marriage. And so, it seems this is the high point made by God in this counsel to the Ephesians.

Then we find out that Paul is talking about a much higher matter, a marriage but one of God and Man, a mystery of Christ and the Church and using the

earthly matrimonial relationship to set up His higher point and reveal what is identified as the 'great' mystery. Curiously, out of the blue, midway through the dialogue, Paul interjects some specific aims of Christ for His Church and promises that Christ will be the one to fulfill His personal ambitions for the church. He says,

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Eph 5:25-27

Paul had already declared His mission among the believers of Corinth: "*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*" 2 Cor 11:2 Of course, it is understood, since he was talking to the city of believers of every age and gender, that the chaste virgin was a spiritual allusion, not literal. He considered Himself a match-maker in the traditional Jewish sense. He was urging the Corinthians (as he did with the Ephesians and all

other saints he disciplined) to become Christ's fiancée and to purify themselves in that hope that they are Christ's espoused, someday to be His beautifully adorned Bride and wife.

Paul explained to the Ephesians what being this espoused and chaste virgin entails, more specifically what Christ and The Father have in mind. Christ gave Himself for the Church to set it apart and make it clean. He will do the purifying work and present it to Himself. It is a church from among the churches which He will perfect and make glorious. Take note, it is not the church but a church. The letters to the churches in Revelation, the epistles addressed to separate churches and two thousand years of history tell us that the church is comprised of church-es, plural. The Bride will be a church from among the church-es. Christ will be able to perfect her by using his ministers, such as Paul and by the guidance and gifts of the Holy Spirit and by washing her in the water of the Word. Christ will do her laundry, iron out her wrinkles by washing her in water by the Word. Her garments are clean and white, the linen of righteousness. (The Washed Bride) It is Christ's Bride about which Paul is now talking. Christ is her beautician removing all blemishes. He is her high priest to teach her holiness. His shed blood has won her pardon, paid for her forgiveness. She can now

stand before God relieved of her sin by grace. The blood gives her authority over spiritual enemies and has ordained her as a royal priest. The Word is what washes her clean, takes out the wrinkles in her garments as they may become wrinkled by daily business and use. He washes her with the Word to clean off the dirt of the world. The water of the Word is the spa that heals her of blemishes and chaffing from the elements of the world. The washing of the Word is the true holy water. When we dunk under it and are bathed in it we are cleaned and holy by its power, even in proportion to our obedience to the Word. Jesus does this work with patience and love so he may present unto himself a glorious and perfected wife because she is the apple of His eye and the love of His life. As the Son of Man, he does not wish to be alone, but wants a wife, and she must be perfect, as only befits the Bride of Christ.

Paul then relates this prophecy of Christ and the Church back to our current temporary living situation. Since ‘marriage’ in its ultimate form is between God and Man and will be perfect, Paul tells us to emulate the real form;

*“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.
He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*

TERRY SMITH

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church:

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” Eph 5:28-30

In so relating this to earthly matrimony, Paul once again uses it to make a greater point about Christ and His wife. Christ and the church (that is His wife) through submission to His love are destined to be **ONE**. They are members of His body, His flesh and His bones. No one can do this for anyone else. No coercion can make bride-ship come to pass. They must desire to be with Christ and the two shall become one – this is done all by themselves. Their parents cannot help, no one can do it for them. Christ will do it for them. The prospective Bride must allow Him to work. Paul quotes the Word to make the point;

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” Eph 5:31

Then, near the end of his dialogue, Paul startles us by openly speaking of the mystery of which he had really been talking about all along. It was not so

much the matrimonial obligations of husband and wives that he was teaching, but the relationship between Christ and his wife, a church living in this perfect order of love and the espoused wife reciprocating (by submission) that love to Christ. He directly and freely states this is a great mystery, this marriage between Christ and church. The word for church used here, as everywhere in the New Testament is Ekklesia: literally, called out ones. Ekklesia was a gathering in the Greek world that represented a gathering of important people where decisions were made and handed down. It often implied a completion through decisive action. This well represents the church Paul identified as the church of the mystery of Christ and the espoused wife. In this ekklesia (church) of separated ones a matter of the utmost importance was to be brought to perfect completion. The Bride was to be made holy and without spot, wrinkle, blemish or any such thing. She will be completed – perfected and purified. Christ will be married to those truly separated unto Him and who are fully extricated from the world's grip. It is about Christ's love for his own Bride and the greater purpose and intent Christ would have for the Church. This great mystery is revealed not just as a benefit that is to be followed after marriage but even more important each

believer in the Church ought to behave as the “submitted wife” to Jesus with full understanding of the elevated intent in his heart toward all those He would call into brideship with Himself. He delivers the point to which he has been heading; *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”* Eph 5:32

Here in review is what Paul said about Christ and the church;

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

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So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church:

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” Eph 5:21-33

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” 2 Cor 11:2

“[Christ] Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Col 1:28

We hope you will read through the section of our website (elishasoutcasteagles.com) called The Invitation dedicated to the Bride, we hope to present Scriptural evidence of the origin of God’s plan to

provide His Son with a Bride and how it evolved in His Word and dealings with His people. It has been devised so that as the Christ, Jesus the Man would not have to be 'alone' through eternity; but that he would have a perfect Bride, one without spot or wrinkle, that would be holy and without blemish, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. That through obedient submission she would be faithful, devoted, unquestioningly trusting and forever His loving helpmate. We hope those who have ears to hear will gain faith for it, – regardless of the skill *THE OUTCAST EAGLES* give or do this great mystery of the ages, and give it the justice it deserves.

#10 Christ in you, the hope of Glory Col. 1:27

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

This is a mystery that can only be understood by pure experience. How can God live in us? This, however, is the real hope of glory. If that which is perfect can live in us and prevail in us, then we may be perfect if we live in His life. This is the essence of the Bride's perfection, that the Bride would be perfectly submitted to her husband. There is no excuse because He loves her perfectly. She can rely on Him totally without reservation. Christ in you means we are told that we are one together with

Him. Purely one. This is why Paul can declare that he sees his duty as presenting every man perfect before God:

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Col 1:27-28

He saw it as His duty to strive in behalf of each one of the sheep in his care to be presented perfect before God, as one with Christ. This ought to be the ultimate aim of every worthy pastor, especially in these last days when the pastor worth his salt will be trying to make each saint rapture ready and perfect in the sight of God as a candidate for the Bride of Christ.

#11 The Mystery of Iniquity 2 Thes. 2:7-8

It is a mystery that God would allow iniquity (the perversion of the truth that works unto sin) to find its way into the Church. *“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit*

of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" read 2 Thes. 2:1-12

For God's purposes of fulfilling all prophecy and the trying of men's hearts within the Church, He has not completely blocked the spirit of antichrist from entering in. A day of judgement is coming when God will separate within the Church the wheat from the chaff. Satan, the father of all lies, and the men who have followed after his subtleties against the anointed Messiah will one day suffer at God's hands. Satan is always frantically at work trying to take as many of the souls of men with him into the pit that he knows awaits him. Yes, there are men within the Church that will perish. Men, that were deceived by their own unrighteousness because they did not receive the love of the truth, will perish.

At the birth of the Church Satan stood by ready to spin iniquitous works at his first opportunity. God has allowed the spirit of antichrist that prevails within the Church and the world to work toward His fulfillment of all things. It is wisdom for us to know that this is so and to not be shaken off balance or thrown off the course of our disciplined walk with Jesus when we encounter this mystery of iniquity at work within the kingdom of heaven. Paul warned the church many times, and history has proven that evil doctrines, false prophecies and many other

things antichrist have come forth from the Church. It is for each one of us to walk wisely in this understanding and to stay on the path which the Holy Spirit will lead us along. We are told this mystery by God when it was written in Prov 30:18-19, “*things which are too wonderful for me*” and pointed out “*the way of a serpent upon a rock.*” This alludes to the wonder of how Satan is allowed by God to tread upon the holy things of Christ. But God who sees all and knows all things will use even Satan to bring about his will.

God did not invent or create evil, evil is simply the work of iniquity, the refusal to follow or concede to the Will of God. This is the truth of the mystery of iniquity, the evil that reaches out and touches people through the force of sin. The day is coming when God will put an end to all sin, transgression and iniquity, but this will not come until the end of the Tribulation when Christ comes with a sword in His hand to impose righteousness on the earth. See dialogue on Imposed Righteousness.

#12 The Mystery of The Faith I Tim. 3:9

This mystery is closely connected with the before mentioned “Mystery of the Gospel of Salvation through Jesus Christ.” Paul wrote to Timothy that those appointed in the Church should be found “*Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*”

This “mystery of the faith” is the confident belief in the whole gospel of Jesus Christ. It is belief bolstered by the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. (See: Living by Faith & Section on: FAITH TOWARDS GOD on our website) True belief in this gospel does not come simply by the will of heart and mind but by the Spirit of God. Believing (Greek word *pisteuo*; trusting in, adhering to and relying on) the whole gospel is far beyond the capacity of any man to do on his own. This requires the support of faith from God himself.

The Word teaches faith is both a gift and a fruit of the Holy Spirit, “*without faith it is impossible to please God and faith comes to us by hearing and hearing comes by the word of God*”. Heb 11:6 All of this requires a deep operation of the Holy Spirit. So, for one to know all about the message of salvation, the mystery of the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ and yet not have *pisteuo* belief supported by God given faith, it will bear no good fruit in the kingdom of heaven. It is both empty and meaningless to God, a vanity of vanities.

Like a trusting wife and one that has thrown aside all of her own selfish desires, the Bride of Christ will turn to Him for her every need. He is the author and finisher of her faith that she will hold in pureness, an unadulterated conscience, one that is not corrupted

with the ideas and moral standards set by the teachers of this world but by the loving and righteous voice of her husband, Jesus himself.

#13 The Mystery of Godliness 1 Tim. 3:16

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

Paul writes that this is a great mystery. This mystery is also held without controversy. No debate, no argument or need for discussion is necessary as to whether this mystery is anything else than what follows in this verse. Six elements make this mystery of Godliness whole.

“God was manifest in the flesh.” God came to men of this world in the same flesh and blood that you and I behold. God became man in the person, Jesus.

“Justified in the Spirit.” Jesus was declared just or in another way, blameless and upright before God the Father, according to the Spirit of God, not by men or any other imperfect standard.

“Seen of angels.” All of heaven witnessed this incredible act of God. Jesus said and did everything in the open for all of creation to witness, including all the angels, those in heaven at God’s throne and those fallen with Lucifer too.

“Preached unto the Gentiles.” Not only did Jesus

come to fulfill what the Jewish prophets of God had foretold but He also came that all men might be saved, including the pagan and heathen ones called Gentiles. In fact (**another mystery**) God has blinded the Jews for the sake of the Gentiles that they might inherit with the Jews the promises God has made.

“Believed on in the world.” This is an amazing miracle; that any mortal man in this life and in this ungodly world would trust in, rely on and adhere to Jesus and his gospel of reconciliation to our Creator.

“Received up into Glory” After Jesus was crucified God raised him from the dead. He was taken up before the eyes of men in his glorified state into Heaven where he is now waiting at his Father’s right hand for the command to come and gather up the first fruits resurrected ones, The Bride. These also will be received up into glory.

All of these works of God through Jesus are the most magnificent show of His own Godliness. Godliness with fact in the flesh with honor.

#14 Mystery of the Seven Stars and Seven Candlesticks Rev.1:20

“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

Jesus himself reveals the mystery here. The

mystery of the **seven stars** that Jesus holds in his right hand reveals there are angels of the seven churches. These angels are assigned by Jesus to stand over and be messengers. They existed two millennia ago and still they stand waiting as watchful guardians to each church. They minister good news and encouragement and firm warnings and harsh rebukes; whatever Jesus tells them.

The mystery of the **candlesticks** is that they are the seven churches that Jesus still inhabits today. He stands in the midst of these candlesticks with the hope that any who hear his Spirit might overcome. These churches to which he wrote letters can be viewed in three ways.

First, actual churches that existed in the days when John wrote down the vision as it was shown to him and the letters were sent to these churches of Asia-Minor.

Second, church history reveals a progression in the church that took on these faiths as it grew and developed over the last 2000 years and none of them have disappeared but still remain today.

Third, they can each be view at a personal level by all saints to see where each may stand today in their faith and let the admonishing words of Jesus speak to their hearts.

Amongst these candlesticks is the place where the

Bride of Christ can be found in all her beauty before Jesus. She is one among the churches who is found listening to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. In contrast to her are churches who have no need of Jesus, who have forgotten their first love, who have known the depths of Satan and who eat things sacrificed to idols and commit spiritual fornication.

*** The Mystery of God Will Be Finished Rev. 10:7**

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”

When the seventh angel begins to sound, then the mystery of God will be finished. What is the mystery of God that will finish at this time? A look ahead to Revelation 11:15 says *“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”* From this verse we see that the allowance by God of letting the kingdoms of this world be ruled and reigned over by foreign authorities other than his sovereign rule is what will come to an end.

That God would allow something like this to go on for so long is a mystery and one of the things

that puts on trial the faith and patience of the Bride of Christ. This is all part of God's providential plan of the ages. It is a plan for saving those who believe in His Son and are willing to follow after Him to the very end. It is a mystery that God would shadow His own glory but it is revealed to the prophet John that after the seventh trumpet sounds the glory of God, Jesus, will shine forth, all judgement will be pronounced; reward given to the prophets and saints, destruction to them which destroy the earth, opening of the Temple of God in Heaven and the revealing of the ark of his testimonies. Rev. 11:15-19 God, by his own incredible love that is long-suffering and patient, is holding back His wondrous glory. His holding back and waiting to let all things prove themselves as righteous and holy or unjust and filthy is mysterious but it testifies to his desire of having with himself those who love him freely.

α Lastly: The Mysteries that Wreak Havoc on the Church α

The Mysteries of The Woman and The Beast That Carries Her

In Revelation chapter 17 we see the revealing of the mystery of who the Beast and The Woman are.

*“And upon her forehead was a name written,
MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT. THE
MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND*

ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.” Rev. 17:5-7

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth

And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive

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power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” (vss. 17:8-18)

The final mention of mysteries in the Bible concern false mysteries which wreak havoc in the Church. God’s consternation and disgust are revealed, their ultimate judgment and dismissal are prophesied.

Here are a few notes to help in understanding the revealing of these mysteries.

The scripture above shows us that the Beast is a vehicle upon which the Woman/Whore is carried throughout the entire earth. The two use each other to further their agendas, but ultimately they are against their will, fulfill God's Will. The Beast is shown that it personifies the antichrist spirit. That he was, is not and yet is, alludes to a very long spiritual existence. Satan and his spiritual cohorts have ascended from the very pits of Hell and will certainly return there one day to be imprisoned for all eternity. They have influenced the hearts of evil men in the world for thousands of years and one day soon the spirit of antichrist will be embodied in a person that is 'the' actual Antichrist.

This antichrist spirit has built kingdoms and empires and in the last days the Antichrist person will sit among ten kingdoms of this world. During his short reign the Antichrist, Satan and the False Prophet will use all their power and influence to control men, kingdoms, as well as the 'Woman' as he reaches for his ultimate goal of being worshipped as God himself.

The Woman, ancient in time, has always been used by the antichrist spirit. Mystery Babylon is written upon her in this vision which points to her

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connection with the ancient gods, even the first humanism trinity born in Babylon and worshipped as gods: Nimrod, Semiramis and Tammuz. She is the epitome of false religion. She is the height of spiritual adultery and idolatry against God. She is shown as a great city, reigning over the kings of the earth among peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues and her position of sitting upon seven hills connects her to Rome and the religion that is seated there. From Babylon to Rome she has trafficked in the souls of men and made herself drunk on their blood. She is a stark contrast to that holy city we see later in Revelation who is the Bride of Christ. She is today – Rome.

Seek the Spirit to teach you more concerning the mysteries of the faith.

PART VI

6TH PART-
BROTHERLY
KINDNESS

Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience,
Godliness, BROTHERLY KINDNESS, Love

BROTHERLY
KINDNESS:
DIVINE
FRIENDSHIP
WITH BOWELS
OF MERCY

T MYERS SMITH

The word “bowels” is an ancient word with its Hebrew root meaning *softness*. It has to do with feelings, even compassion. Here, in this symbolic inner place of our being, God has used the expression ‘bowels of mercies’ to tell us that this is where we may contact, discern our gut feeling, even in our womb (where we give birth to emotions and

feelings) the attributes we carry for true friendship. If we have feelings and mercies of pity and compassion within us to befriend in truth this is the seat of those feelings of compassion and the deep place in which the capability of housing the true spirit of friendship exists by the grace of God in each person. *Brotherly kindness* such as is used in describing the character of the Divine Nature is an expression signifying this true spirit of friendship. Brotherly kindness and friend are synonymous. Brotherly kindness is the highest degree of valor and truth; subservient only to pure love itself. But it is a component part of high, pure love. If we are incapable of befriending, we certainly cannot love because friendship is an integral part of love itself, just as all other parts of the Divine nature are integral and component answering in the end to love's active existence in us. This is why it is rare for a man to have a friend at all; true love is rare. It is fair to venture to say that pure love only exists in this life through Jesus Christ, including his mercy upon us that we actually might experience the benefit and peace of having true friends who love us in this life. It is, next to salvation and the relationship with the Triune God, the finest gift we can have in this life. "*But a man that hath friends must first show himself friendly.*" Prov 18:24, which means he must prove

himself trustworthy and capable of friendship if he is to have them.

We are warned, no! counseled by Scriptural example and proverb, that friendship must be built, earned and proven, that it can never be accomplished by mere show of words or grandstanding deeds and flimsy promises untested. "*A man void of understanding strikes hands, and becomes surety in the presence of his Friend.*" Prov 17:18 People shake hands often enough and make deals like they were rock solid friends, but they can't keep their word about them, cannot be honest, forthright and true-blue. Time and truth prove they are not real friends at all, only great pretenders wearing the hip-hop garb of mutuality which should never be mistaken for an act of friendship consistent with the Divine Nature. For friendship, which is brotherly love, is not realized through mutual or common interests, though this is the card-board cutout of friendship that the world offers to us. Friendship will have mutuality but it must also have difference and diversity of opinion and taste if it is to be tested and cinched up. In 16th Century England, The Quakers, formed their sect around this high notion of loving friendship and its importance in the higher degree of personal Christian character, calling themselves 'The Society of Friends'. It was a noble venture and,

at least in its early decades, even in America in Pennsylvania was guarded and staunchly adhered to. Treatises and testimonies abound in Quaker books and lore witnessing to their devotion to 'Brotherly Kindness' toward one another and their fellow man. For this reason Quakers were generally, pacifists and conscientious objectors. It was their connection with trade and commerce and banking, their success in the world, that did so much damage to their calling of faith and eventually corrupted their great ideals of the higher calling of love, but that is another story, not pertinent to our treatise. Brotherly kindness was expressed by that name with which the noble Quakers had christened their religion: 'Friendship'. From the outset their founder, George Fox, rather than believing in the cultivation of the soil of the earth as fulfillment of the law of God's love and peace, believed wholeheartedly in cultivation of the inner man toward true friendship toward God and in the body of Christ among its believers. In this hope, Fox rejected religion per se' with its good works and hypocrisy, in preference to the religion of the individual priesthood and the sainthood of every humble believer. There was to be equality; no male or female, no rich or poor, no black or white. The 'Brotherly kindness' of true friendship among a clergy-less body of believers was the

presumed devotion of every Quaker among its early generations in the formative years. And an admirable society it was, if for nothing else than its dedication to 'friendship', and resultant love in Christ Jesus. They choose the name 'friend' and attached to it, 'society', because friendship is the fundamental and first real act of true 'community' that can come from a person's heart. It is the first and most primitive and essential act of being 'one body' a member together in one accord. Friendship is that 'action of relationship' that makes the saint one with another in Christ. There can be no community or society in the spirit, members of the same body, without truly becoming one in brotherly kindness (friendship). By this definition, if there are no friends there is no working body of true believers, no communion of the saints. On this point of true friendship we are exhorted to examine ourselves because it is the basis upon we should eat of the body of Christ together; and drink his blood. Not as acquaintances sharing things in common because we have common interests like baseball, tea sets, workout programs, favorite movies, stand-up comics, or flower shows. But because we hold that one thing in common that binds us together and teaches us about the real dictates of true friendship: Christ, our brother – even Christ who called his

disciples at the Last Supper, no longer servants, but friends.

Friendship is an act of Community, communion, of being one accord

I do not know if friendship among believers should be considered a sacred thing, other than it is sacred because God seems to hold it sacred, because it is part of His Divine character which he hopes, and expects, we should diligently seek after. The Bible says that there is a friend who is greater even than a brother. That, greater brother/friend, of course, is Jesus Christ, the one who came in the flesh so that he might stand by us and be the one who can come to us in 'brotherly kindness' no matter what our trial or problem, or offense to the Father, may be, obtain forgiveness for us and freedom. He can identify with our humanity because he is our human brother. He will never shrink away from us, or cease battling with us to deliver us from evil and the temptation of sin which causes us so much shame and steals our liberty. God is also interested in teaching us about true friendship and what it entails in the inner man and how "the bowels of mercies" are actualized in our life. The first declaration of friendship that God presents to us in Scripture is when he spoke face-to-face with Moses *as a friend*. Of other true friends God says they spoke friendly,

or as if they were of the same soul. Friends, I say true friends, really friends, must have this oneness of accord. They may not have all the same regards or interests, may not share the same avocation or be on the same social level or of the same education or degree of sophistication in matters of this life, but they will share the state of heart and love of God and Jesus Christ. This will be the wellspring of their on-going life and the strength that binds their relationship firmly and tightly together as a three-fold cord. All tendencies to condescend are dropped, dismissed as the sure road of mere acquaintance and roadblocks of friendship.

In this common place, this community of body, this 'society of friends' (and this complies with Christ's statement that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name there he will be also) there is communion, or real ingestion of community and togetherness, that real benefit of friendship. Friend and actual community are one. Friendship begins to afford us the great opportunity to love, and without friends love is not proven to exist. We cannot love if we are alone; we can only theorize and conjecture and pontificate in our minds, but we can never love in all its tests and trials and challenging labors if we stay aloof and without friends. We may see why it is such a tragedy for the individual

members of a body of believers not to be friends, why the Quakers esteemed friendship so highly. Friends speak face-to-face, they are privy to one another's most secret thoughts. They are just in that they never will deceive, but they are-what-they-are to one another and they resist the natural inclination to flash off images at their friend to flatter or deceive for personal gain. A friend is not on the defensive, because true friends are forth coming. A true friend does not send a friend away in need by giving false hope or deceptive fibs just to stave off anguish or avoid the inconvenience of shouldering a problem. Friends will learn to strive to love at all times as the Bible urges people to do; if they don't they have ceased to be *really* communing in *brotherly kindness*.

The Scriptural example of friendship as brotherly kindness is accentuated best in the well documented love between David and his enemy's son, Jonathan. This relationship was not at all confined or imprisoned by the family ties of flesh or any worldly love. They lived out the truth that there is in this life friendship that bonds two together closer than brother or sisterhood, but only when it is molded by the Spirit of God into that 'brotherly kindness' called friendship. Of the hundreds of testimonies in the Scripture this relationship is one of the most

touching because it shows the high emotion of holy affection that can be in a relationship of the most profound friendship. There is no greater love that a person can have than to give his life for his *friends*, that's what Jesus declared to his friends, the disciples at the Last Supper. Jonathan was such a friend, dying as it were, a kind of martyrs' death, when he knew he was giving up his future to save his friend, David from being murdered by his very own father, Saul. Jonathan could not resist the affection of love that he felt for his 'brother' David though he knew it meant being separated from him. Proverbs 17:17 says; "*Friends love at all times; and a brother is born for adversity.*" Jonathan is a living example of this kind of undying friendship which God holds dear.

Because of this, a failure to have brotherly kindness and its bowels of mercies prevail causes a betrayal. Betrayal is the failure of a friend. There is no such thing as betrayal by any other than a friend. And it is the worst kind of injury because true friendship is the highest relationship, the most trusted relationship. Gossip, or as Proverbs puts it "whisperers" separate chief friends. But faithful are the words of a friend, never to hurt, generally to edify and help. There is a good reason why God despises the works of gossip and slander and why words in friendship should be faithful, because

betrayal can devastate our womb of kindness and a cancer of bitterness can dry up our brotherly kindness. Only God can help us walk graciously away from a shipwrecked relationship in which friendship has ended. And we must allow him to comfort us, and send god-given friends to our aid, to comfort us, when necessary. It is so important that we must find comfort from Christ and hope in restoration, as long as there is any to be had. If not we must find the way to put it to rest and not let it affect our other relationships of living brotherly kindness.

Friends will give us good counsel not bad press. *“Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so does the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel.”* Prov 27:9 Friends will be an agent of peace in our life through good counsel and gentle, calm resolve. Collusion is a worldly sign of friendship joined together by anger and not peacefulness. So friendship ought to increase our peace, be an addition to it. This does not mean there will not be some friction in a relationship, but it will be reciprocal friction that produces a sharpening of compassion, affection and an increase in love and general goodness in the character of each. The Bible makes the point this way: *“As Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”* Prov 27:17 Friends are

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forged in this fashion in the furnace by desiring it and hoping for real friendship. This also means that friends are connected by judgment just as the sharpening friction can and is a form of judgment being called into action. They put one another to the test, require improvement and growth in the knowledge of relationship and understanding of requirement for friendship, without apology, without demanding apology. Friends are honest and hopeful for the other. They do not put undue demands on their friend, and certainly never anything they would not demand of themselves. All this, true friends will learn and become wise about. For it is the privilege of a friend to be a source of refreshment. Jesus offers this image of himself in the Song of Solomon 5:1.

“I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O Friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”

Friends are not bound together by anger but by the refreshing power of peacefulness and kindness. This is why in the above passage Jesus can call his most beloved one, his sister his spouse, one among his

friends. This is the significance of that great moment when God first revealed in his relationship with Abraham that man could be friend to God. *“Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.”* Ja 2:23 Jesus said at his last intimate moment with his disciples that if they did whatsoever he commanded of them, (proving they believed in him, as Abraham had believed God) they would be his friends. *“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”* John 15:15 By calling them friends he has lifted his disciples to an equal level on par with him by making them privy to his most deepest knowledge. They are not below him in a relationship he has bestowed the equality of knowledge of his personal life. Friends trust one another with knowing things about one another in the most profound matters. How appropriate that the last remark in the Bible using the term “friend” would be by that apostle of love, John and apply the same concept “speaking face-to-face” as God had used when describing his friendly relationship with Moses, ending his letter to the brethren in this friendly manner. *“But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to thee. The friends salute thee. Greet the friends*

by name." 3 John 1:14 Biblically, knowing ones name was a sign of significant personal knowledge. Often friends have affectionate names or personal nicknames by which they share their intimacy in gesture or as token of friendship, to greet by name is an act of brotherly kindness reaching to the soft spot of one's friend, opening that inner place for reception of further relationship. Jesus knew his friends by name. He later promises to give them a new name in that glory land, which no man but he himself knows. This amounts to a promise of even greater intimacy of friendship in ages to come for every individual friend of Jesus, the living ideal of 'brotherly kindness'. It gives even further weight to the premium that God holds on friendship in his eternal plan for man and his salvation.

How shall we act upon this hope and promise of friendship, but by believing and obeying Christ to the very best of our capability, even to perfection, so that we may first be accounted a 'friend' of God. This can only be accomplished by loving our fellows and especially "*those of the household of God*", Eph 2:19 as we are told. We must prove that we love God by proving we love our neighbor. But to have friends we must first show ourselves friendly, in other words, compatible with friendship, capable of friendliness. For this the bowels of mercy are a sure way to

institute and keep fresh in our inner man the desire and fires of a friendly nature, for this is the essence of Divine Friendly Nature, or Brotherly Kindness. I have taken the liberty to make a suggestive list of attitudes and challenges of compassion, forgiveness and pity that might be offered as a salute or right hand of fellowship to one's potential or actual friend – this kind of kindness, is a remedy for what ails a friendship and often help to cover even a multitude of sins, as the scripture puts it. Here are some useful things for friends to dispense to one another as they walk together in true communion in the body of Christ as they gain the calling of recognition as being, “The Friends of God”.

1. An understanding Glance
2. An arm when the ground is slippery
3. An encouraging & enthusiastic, “How do you do”
4. Solace when one is confused
5. Companionship along THE WAY to the destination
6. Someone to cover their back when they are in peril (they'll take a hit for you)
7. Sincere petitions AND INTERCEDING for their good
8. Honest posture in everything (Standing before the other without malice or deceit)

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9. Loyal friendship (Get out of Jail free card), never lying
10. Always offering the benefit of the doubt

Do not friends deserve all this and more? *“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, BOWELS of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.”* Col 3:12 When friendship is gained, it can only be preserved by having it tested in the furnace of true brotherly kindness. *“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his BOWELS of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”* 1 John 3:17

Where to begin? I don’t know! Print out a bunch of get out of jail free cards for any friend you are lucky enough to have. Don’t think evil about your friend first, but give your friend the benefit of the doubt for love thinks no evil.

Act 1:18 – *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his BOWELS gushed out.*

2 Corinthians 6:12 – *Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own BOWELS.*

Philippians 1:8 – *For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the BOWELS of Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 2:1 – *If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the*

Spirit, if any BOWELS and mercies,

Colossians 3:12 – *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

Philemon 1:7 – *For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the BOWELS of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.*

Philemon 1:12 – *Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own BOWELS:*

Philemon 1:20 – *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my BOWELS in the Lord.*

1 John 3:17 – *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

PART VII

7TH PART-
LOVE

Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience,
Godliness, Brotherly Kindness, LOVE

MAN OR GOD?
WHO SETS THE
CONDITIONS!

T MYERS SMITH

Jesus said,

“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink.

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those

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things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke 17:7-10

It should be patently obvious by this parable that there are not only conditions to be met in our ongoing relationship with God and in 'working out our salvation with fear and trembling' but also who it is that sets all the conditions in our walk with the Lord. It is too bad, particularly among our fellow countrymen in America, that conceding to conditional requirements is often considered submission to bondage and runs counter-intuitive to the very ideal inherent in the exalted American character. So spiritually perverse is our idea of freedom and how to carry it out, that when it comes down to it, we are more a nation of spiritual insurgents saturated with a misconception of liberty and freedom, taught from our earliest beginnings, which says that to be free we must be rebellious, stubborn individualists. This, of course, runs counter to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the most fundamental of ways and is never what God expects or wills for us, but he expects a life of submission; submission to the Godhead, submission to the Word, and submission to one another.

America's brand of Evangelicalism has settled

into a false notion of spiritual freedom. While Christ came to set us free; he did not come to make us free to do whatever we want or to have us be free so that we may lead others into bondage; or that we should be 'freed' from doing the Father's Will, which is to say, 'freed' from meeting the conditions of His righteousness. These conditions include hearing and doing His will. And there are, of course, conditions established for hearing God's Word in our heart. We must listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd spoken by the Spirit to us. We must be born-again if we are to see the kingdom of God. That is born of the Spirit by the Spirit. The conditions of a righteous life which we must not resist, but must wholly submit to, are too numerous to list here. We would turn this writing into something other than what it is intended to teach. God sets parameters and conditions upon the existence and quality of our relationship with Him. The bible points out that spiritual rebellion and stubbornness is like the sin witchcraft and idolatry. And we all know how God feels about those two diabolical iniquities.

There was a man once in our fellowship, with whom we thought we had fellowship; but he was with us for many years in a stolid spiritually rebellious state, but subtle about it. Finally, after

many crises and personal problems the man's rebellion and stubborn resistance toward the body and the true submissive fellowship of God came to a head. Many of us had had enough. I was required to set some conditions upon the spirit and mind of his fellowship with us. Among the conditions of further fellowship was that he put away his lone-wolf mentality and lay down his bogus spirit of ideas of personal freedom and his resistance toward submitting one to another in love. Upon these conditions and others, which included restrictions (which is consistent with some of the Lord's conditions whereby he restricts sin and idolatry among His people, for example), he walked out of my presence and, to my heartache, never returned. The Lord had no option with this man for his spirit of stubborn resistance, his misguided determination at free-wheeling to do whatever he wanted or thought was best, for he thought himself a righteous man, was like the leavening that Jesus spoke of concerning the Sadducees and the Pharisees. A little leavening leavens the whole lump. I anguished over his departure for we had been friends – or so I thought.

Years later I found myself directly behind the man standing in line at a store. He did not wish to talk to me or even acknowledge me, but I buttonholed him anyway. I asked quite honestly if he thought it

was possible that I had failed him in love. This is always an extreme possibility. I told him I wondered about that, but he said, quite frankly, “No, it’s not that simple”. I believe he was correct, because I then reminded him that I never said to him he was cast out, or no longer welcome in the fellowship. He nodded, and said, “But you set conditions”. It was then that a light went on for me. After so many years I knew where the rub really was. He would have no longer been free to do whatever he wanted with total impunity. I had known this fact at the time, but now I knew that he knew it and that was the real problem which existed in his fellowship with me and the others all along. He does not want to be issued ultimatums, or directives, or orders from anyone, not even God.

Today’s American Evangelical experience has fallen into one of the oldest traps of religion, thinking that God’s mercy allows them to do whatsoever they please. It is the trap of Aaron’s two sons who burnt ‘strange’ incense on the altar and were consumed in an instant by fire from heaven, in fact, so severe was the crime of thinking they were free to offer anything they wished to God, that God forbade Aaron to cry over his sons’ deaths. It is why God rejected Cain’s sacrifice, stopped the world at the Tower of Babel and confused their language,

dethroned Saul, judged Israel, struck Ananias and Sapphira dead. Their names mean Protected and Beautiful respectively, because there are conditions set even upon our protection and beauty in the eyes of God; one condition being that we must not ‘lie to the Holy Ghost’ which was their deadly mistake.

When the Lord had the children of Israel pass between the two mountains he proclaimed “*if you will do this and this, you will be blessed; if you do not do these things I will curse you and drive you from your home and your families will suffer*”. If this isn’t an ultimatum I don’t know what is. God was setting conditions upon all his blessings, some conditions were commands to do, some restrictions on behavior and self-will. We are to serve the Lord with gladness, not hide our god-given gifts in a napkin and bury them but invest them in the labors of the kingdom of God. There is a condition with God concerning receiving – we must not hoard His gifts, but return them to Him in the form of giving to others. We must love one another. This is not optional in the eyes of God but a condition. John said do not tell me you love God while you hate your neighbor. And I repeat, loving God is not optional, it is the first and greatest commandment, a condition of having a right relationship with God. John said, I will prove my love for God by loving my neighbor. “*If a man*

says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" 1 John 4:20 You see, there is a condition even attached to loving God; we must love one another as a proof that we love God according to His conditions set upon loving Him.

There are conditions to all that God wills. For instance, we must believe in our heart and confess with our mouth if we want to live a 'saved' life here on this earth. We are urged to flee youthful lusts and follow after righteousness. We are advised to pray so we can receive gifts – That is a condition. We are warned to be ready, not found partying and committing unrighteousness, if we are to be Raptured – a big condition. Even love carries with it conditions. True, repentance does demand forgiveness; but forgiveness is conditional upon repentance of the offender. Lk 17:3 I had argued many times with the man cited in the example above about the expression 'God's unconditional love'. He used it to mean God would never stop loving us and protecting us no matter what we did. That kind of loose theology gave him license to do 'his own thing'. I countered that there was no such license intended in God's expression of love, but that love was highly conditional in that the Bible says we must love not only in word, but in deed also.

But I have promised in this writing that I would not make an itemized list of godly 'conditional' imperatives duly registered and recorded in the Holy Bible. But please consider this: if we are weighed and found wanting in the scales (of the biblical conditions) what kind of judgment awaits us? I leave you with the parable cited above, giving God the final word in our instruction.

“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do’”. Lk 17:7-10

13

PERFECT LOVE
CASTS OUT ALL
FEAR

LEROY GARDENIER

**THE WORST THINGS WE FEAR ARE
SPIRITUAL**

I once wrote an article entitled *O Ye of Little Faith* discussing the five separate occasions when our Lord reprimanded His closest followers. I mentioned the incident when, crossing the Sea of Galilee, He twice rebuked them for being fearful (see Matt 8:23;27/Mk 4:37;41). At another time when Jesus is summing up the horrors of The Great Tribulation, He speaks of “*Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after (expecting) those things which are coming on the earth*”

Luke 21:26. According to His inerrant Word things are going to get that bad as a consequence of intensified, widespread evil in this world. Even now, humanistic plans and purposes are building toward that unbelievable, unbearable era. Contrasting the dreadful fate of the wicked with the glorious destiny of the righteous, the prophet Isaiah reveals: *“The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come”* Is 57:1. Either through the sleep of merciful death or by means of sudden, thrilling translation by rapture, watching, praying, obedient servants of the Savior will be accounted worthy to escape all those things that are coming upon the earth to swiftly stand before His heavenly presence (see Luke 21:36).

In the synoptic gospels of both Matthew and Luke as well as in the special gospel of John the awesome, incisive and reassuring command, “Fear ... not” is issued seven times. In view of current millennial madness; the destructive practices of many false cults, the epidemic increase of phobias and family disintegration, the fear of sudden obliteration (by errant asteroids or through unmanageable nuclear stockpiles), plagues, ecological disasters, financial chaos, unreliable and corrupt government, moral decay – you name it, the list seems endless – let’s just

say, any of the revolving threats, real and imagined which terrorize us from day to day, we at the EOE thought it good and helpful to touch upon these seven gospel imperatives. Hopefully our readers can glean from them some insights that will aid not only in blocking or alleviating the paralyzing effects of alarming fright, but might give them cause for happiness in Christ. Here goes. Enjoy and be edified

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Fear Not Rejection

In Matthew 10:26 the Lord Jesus admonishes His followers not to fear the sickening sadness of rejection nor even the continuing threat of persecution.

If we compare this verse with its counterpart in Luke 12:1-2 we see that our Lord was referring to the hatred and violence spawned by man-made religion. The latter citation shows that Jesus was alluding to the leaven (the corrupting teachings) of the Pharisees. In both Gospels, the bottom line reassurance is that “the truth will come out” and that we need not fear boldly witnessing to and for Him, regardless of adverse reactions!

Fear Not Man

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” Matthew 10:28.

At most, man can only cause the loss of life but he lacks the power to destroy life. God alone can do that. For those who walk in closeness to their Creator this should be a most heartening command. And the solemn circumstances of facing death itself can be assuaged by the confirming, consoling words of God spoken through His ancient prophet: *“I, even I, am He that comforteth you, who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?”* Isaiah 51:12.

Fear Not, You Are of Value to God

The third “Fear not” citation is more a reassuring assertion than an imperious command. Verse 31 of this same chapter in Matt states: *“Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows”*. The Lord Jesus encourages us to believe that *“His eye is on the sparrow”* and that nothing, absolutely nothing happens in this life without the knowledge or will of our heavenly Father. In fact, we are reminded that the very hairs of our head are all numbered. Interestingly enough, the Aramaic word use here for “numbered” is the exact same one that appeared mysteriously on the wall of Belshazzar’s palace when this word “mene” signified that God had numbered the Babylonian dynasty, found it wanting, and finished it (see Daniel 5:25). The same God who surveys and controls the movements in the mightiest

worldly kingdoms also regards in detail the minutest aspects of our personal lives. As the Psalmist puts it: “*My times (i.e., all my affairs) are in Thy hands*” (31:15).

Verses 37:39 of Matthew’s chapter 10 summarize the very real death experienced by all true Christians as they obediently serve and follow the One they love most. These words of the Lord Jesus speak of that genuine separation so beautifully symbolized by Christian baptism but profoundly actualized only by relinquishing all that we hold dear in this life: worldly relations, comforts, security; even oneself: our own personal purposes, plans and preferences, even up to and including the very separation of soul from spirit (see Hebrews 4:12).

Fear Not, You Will Find Work in The Kingdom Of God

The three references to the command, “Fear not” are more widely distributed in the Gospel of Luke. First to be indicated is: “*Fear not; from henceforth, thou shalt catch men*” Luke 5:10. The special context surrounding this command should be most encouraging to every Christian disciple. Sitting in Simon Peter’s boat, Jesus had spoken to the crowd assembled along the lake shore. When He had finished His talk He ordered his men to launch out into the deep to lower their nets for an expected catch. Peter and his companions obeyed Jesus, but

did so with great reluctance, deep misgivings and, most likely, fear for their reputations.

These were experienced fishermen. They had worked all night without results. They well knew from years of trial and error that it was a complete waste of time to fish during the daylight hours. Against their better judgment they did what the Lord commanded. The result of their obedience was an astonishingly abundant harvest. Setting aside their own ideas, plans and purposes, these disciples acted out the foundational spiritual truths we earlier referred to in Matthew 10:37-39. *“He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.”* It was only a beginning but on that eventful day the newly called disciples of Jesus began to die to themselves. They allowed the Word of God (Jesus’ command) to divide asunder the soul (their own good judgment) from the spirit (their intuitive sense of and trust in Divine authority). When our Lord assured Peter and the others that from then on they would become fishers of men *“... they forsook all and followed him.”* Luke 5:11.

Fear Not, But Believe

A man named Jairus was the leader of his synagogue. When his twelve year old daughter was dying Jairus came to Jesus begging Him to come and heal her. Before reaching his house the ruler received word that the little girl had died. Jesus' unexpected reaction was, "*Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole.*" Luke 8:50. Jesus rebuked the professional mourners stating that the child was not dead but only sleeping. To unbelievers death is final and, most likely, permanent. In this poignant account we are given God's viewpoint on death. Our Lord's presence and power transcend despair and death. It is left to us to "...*believe only.*"

Fear Not, God Wants to Bless You

The reference in Luke 12:7 is identical to the situation already treated in Matthew 10:31. In Luke 12:32 our Savior assures us: "*Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*" Just as many are ignorant of the true nature of death, likewise mention of God's Kingdom or the Kingdom of Heaven are frequently misunderstood. As one writer has accurately put it: As the word 'kingdom' has regard to sovereignty rather than territory, and to the sphere of its exercise rather than to its extent? At the Messiah's baptism in the Jordan River the Father spoke, the Holy Ghost descended and the heavens were opened. In a very real sense that door

to heaven remains ajar all during this glorious, merciful dispensation of grace. The Lord Jesus Christ was the first human to allow God's Spirit to possess Him fully. The Holy Ghost descended upon Him to guide and assist Him in fulfilling perfectly the will of the Father. The living Lord Jesus was, and still is, God's Person, in God's place, doing God's will to perfection. That total subjection to the sovereignty of God constitutes the kingdom of God. That is why the Lord Jesus alone is the Door (see John 10:7-10). Believers who obey His command to "Follow Me" (see Matt. 9:9 and Jn. 12:26) enter into the salvation security of His sheepfold (the true Church), stand before the presence and operate in the power of the Trinity. These spend their earthly lives preparing to enter the open door of full redemption, attuning themselves to respond to the final summons of the Rapture! (see Rev. 3:8-13)

Fear Not, The King Is Coming!

The final "fear not" gospel citation is found in John 12:15. It refers to our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This scripture is the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy found in Zechariah 9:9. The New Testament version says: "*Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass colt.*" Just as we assuredly know that Jesus' first coming to suffer and to die for us perfectly came to pass, so we

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can be equally certain of and take great comfort and encouragement in the certainty of this scene from Revelation 19:11-16.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

KEEP TWO
COMMANDMENTS
AND
THE LAW WILL BE
FULFILLED

“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?”

Jesus said unto Him, ‘thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy

neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matt 22: 35-40

Again, the written word shows an attempt of Satan to trap Jesus. The Pharisaical lawyer was used by Satan to see if Jesus, who came to set men free from the law, could indeed pin-point the greatest commandment in the law. Jesus, undaunted by this irreverent question, took the opportunity to reveal what is the greatest commandment, and one more that is like it. If we keep them we will find that we are obeying all that is in the Law and told us by the prophets. These words were given by Christ for the Church, and we, being a part of that body, should examine ourselves to be sure we are upholding this greatest of the commandments.

How, then, can we be sure we are loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind? The heart is the innermost part of our being. It is known completely by God because He is the searcher of men's hearts. Sometimes there is something hidden deep within our heart that is hidden even from our conscience. This is made evident when the Lord works true deliverance in our lives and sets us free from things within us which we may have never dreamed had been rooted within our heart. Our heart should be a resting place, a dwelling place for

God. When we have asked for and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we open our innermost selves to God, His Son, and His Holy Spirit and allow them to dwell within our heart. By allowing ourselves to be this open to God we are, for sure, on the right track to loving the Lord our God with all our heart.

And what about our soul? What part of us does our soul belong to and how can we love the Lord with all our soul. In a number of places in the Scriptures the soul and spirit are mentioned separately from one another. I believe, in this passage from Matthew, the word “soul” has much more to do with our carnal side than our spiritual side which has been made alive to God through the cleansing blood of Christ. The soul, which Jesus instructs us to love the Lord so much with, is very much a part of our emotions. Our soul is the gathering place of so many of our feelings. The Lord our God wants us to love Him with deep affection, with a great desire to please and serve Him. He wants our souls to get excited about knowing Him. He wants joy to spring up inside us when our thoughts are about loving Him. He wants us to love Him without inhibitions. He wants us to rejoice in Him and be free to praise Him in an emotional way with passion. He wants us to love Him with all our soul.

I believe when Jesus said that he wanted us to love the Lord with all of our mind he was speaking about our thoughts, our intellect. He wants our minds to be full of the spiritual things of God. Paul wrote this to the Romans, *“that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”* Rom 8:4-6

The Lord does not want us to have our minds full of the things of this world, He would rather have us cast our cares before Him and seek his Spirit. We need to read the Word in order to have our minds cleansed, as the Bible puts it: *“by the washing of the water of the Word”*. Eph 5:26 We ought to have our minds filled with the Holy Ghost’s teachings that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God that we might have the mind of Christ which is spoken of by Paul in the second chapter of 1 Corinthians. If we seek and possess these things then we will begin to love the Lord our God with all of our mind.

Jesus came not to do away with the law and God’s commandments but to fulfill them, and only He was able to accomplish this. We know that the time is past when men had to strive to live up to the law,

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yet obeying God's commandments are still very important. The great commandment that Christ gave for the Church, the commandment to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind, and the other commandment to love our neighbor, give us a clear and simple way to know how to serve our God. In Hebrews 10:16 the Lord says, "*this is the covenant I will make with them after those days, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.*" Therefore, let us pray that the first step we take in making certain we uphold the laws that have been put into our hearts and written upon each of our minds, is seeking to keep God's greatest commandment and the other which is like it; to love one another.