

Commentary — From the Margins *Faith via the Power of God*

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and ***my speech and my message were not in plausible wisdom, but in demonstration of spirit [pneumatōs] and of power, that your faith might not rest in wisdom of men but in power of God.*** Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,

what God has prepared for those who love him—

these things God has revealed to us through the spirit [pneumatōs]. For the spirit [pneuma] searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit [pneuma] of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the spirit [spirit] of the God. Now we have received not the spirit [pneuma] of the world, but the spirit [pneuma] [that] is from the God, that we might understand the things freely given us by the God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by spirit [pneumatōs], [with] spiritual truths [pneumatikōis] spiritual things [pneumatika] matching [sugkrinontes]. The natural person does not accept the things of the spirit [pneumatōs] of the God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand because spiritually [pneumatikōs] they are discerned. The spiritual-man [pneumatikōs] judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

For who [knew] the mind of the Lord;
Who will instruct Him?

But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2:1–16 double emphasis added, and in places the Greek has been translated literally)

Elsewhere, Paul wrote, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for / “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, / and their words to the ends of the world.” / But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, / “I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; / with a foolish nation I will make you angry.” / Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, / “I have been found by those who did not seek me; / I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.” (Rom 10:17–20).

What Paul wrote in his treatise to the holy ones at Rome contradicts what he wrote to the holy ones at Corinth, where faith did not come through “hearing,” with “hearing” itself coming through the inscribed words of Moses; for at Corinth, faith came through what eyes saw, through “seeing” demonstrations of the power of God ...

My faith came through seeing demonstrations of the power of God. My faith did not come via hearing the word of God expounded by either Seventh Day Adventist pastors or by Worldwide Church of God pastors or by a pastor of any other denomination ... when twelve, I began to reluctantly attend Adventist services after Mom married my stepfather, a Seventh Day Adventist. I quit attending after Mom committed suicide in October 1963, when I was sixteen and a freshman at Willamette University, Salem, Oregon.

I willingly attended Worldwide Church of God services from December 1972 until the demise of the organization following the death of Herbert Armstrong in January 1986; however, after the initial contact and attending for a few months, I cannot say that I learned anything except patience. The same message was repeated in most every possible way: disciples were to keep the Commandments and the High Sabbaths; they were to abstain from unclean meats, from fornication; they were to be holy as God is holy (1 Pet 1:15–16), for if the righteous are scarcely saved, what will be the fate of the ungodly and the sinner (1 Pet 4:18), the sinner being someone who transgresses the Commandments (1 John 3;4) because of the person’s unbelief (Rom 14:23).

Worldwide’s preaching of a physical place of safety was a joke laughed-at throughout Alaskan fellowships, where it was commonly accepted that *Palmer was the place of safety for the wind [pneuma] blew there all the time*. I jest, but not really.

Yet a reality exists: in spring 1974, the trailer court and mobile home sales office on the northeast side of the bridge across the Kenai River at Soldotna had a message-board reading, *You Have to Live Somewhere: You Pay for Where You Live*, the phrase suggesting that purchase of a mobile home would make good sense. The phrase also revealed a truth about genuine sons of God: these sons, taught by God, have to be warehoused somewhere until their change comes. They are, when called and for quite a while afterwards, spiritual milk drinkers: they are too easily picked off by the Adversary if they are not temporarily warehoused in a “Christian” fellowship. But if they stay long in the fellowship, their beliefs fossilize and they become unable to learn spiritual things ... if they ever had the mind of Christ, they lose it. They become true Lutherans or Catholics or Methodists or Baptists or Mormons or Jehovah Witnesses (the latter two being neo-Arian sects, one reason why they are vigorously opposed by Trinitarian sects).

I have recently written that if you “support” a ministry (if you *receive* a ministry), you will receive the reward of that ministry: for nineteen years, I received ministers of the ministry of Herbert Armstrong, and for this I will receive the reward of that

ministry, with this reward being a call to destroy [to end] the last Elijah's second attempt to "breathe" life into the dead Corpse of Christ. Armstrong's ministry was tested, tried by fire, and was burned to a crisp. Yet as Paul wrote,

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (1 Cor 3:10–15)

when a ministry is tested by fire and is burned-up, the one who built the ministry will suffer loss as will those who received this ministry, but the one who conducted the ministry "will be saved, but only as through fire," words that do not bode well for Armstrong who spent more time and more resources building himself a "house" than building on the foundation Paul laid. However, when a person is called to end a spiritual work mired in physicality and then not given instructions on how to kill the work, I suspect the most plausible way is to divert converts, making converts for the person rather than for Christ Jesus. As such, Armstrong was successful: he did the job for which he was called, that of ending *Elijah's* second attempt to return life to the lad ... the Church was still a spiritual lad when it died seventy years after Calvary, visibly died with the physical death of John the Elder. The Christian Church of the 2nd-Century CE was a collection of apostate assemblies that formed the roots from which greater Christendom in the modern era grew.

Concerning his people, Paul wrote,

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. (Rom 11:1–5)

A remnant of Israel chosen by grace—this remnant forms the left hand enantiomer (the dark shadow) of the right hand endtime Remnant who keep the Commandments and have the testimony of Christ (Rev 12:17), with the testimony of Christ being the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10). And I will be so bold as to declare that unless a Sabbatarian Christian "reads" prophecy as I, who was called to reread prophecy, read prophecy, the Sabbatarian Christian will perish physically in the Affliction (the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years) which doesn't mean that the Christian will not be saved, but does mean that this Sabbatarian will not be permitted to teach or speak in the Endurance of Jesus, when all who endure to the end shall be saved (Matt 10:22; 24:13)

because all will have the mind of Christ through the spirit being poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28), thereby changing even the predatory natures of the great predators (see Isa 11:6–9).

In the *Hebrew style* narrative that is the story of divine procreation—the story of the *pneuma* of God the Father entering into His Beloved (Mark 1:10), a life-giving *pneuma* (from 1 Cor 15:45)—the Apostle Paul wrote the left hand enantiomer. Paul did not write the right hand enantiomer of this chiral narrative. Thus, the remnant of Israel saved by grace is of darkness; is of the night; is the last Eve analogous to the first woman created from the first Adam. However, day follows night; light follows darkness. And a man leaves his wife after procreating with her in the darkness—and the beloved of the man in whom procreation occurred brings a son into the light, with human birth forming the shadow and type of spiritual birth.

Two sequential metaphors are at work, with the Son doing what He sees the Father do. Thus, as the Father enters the Son, the Beloved, in the form of His spirit/*pneuma* entering the Son, the spirit/*pneuma* of the Son enters His beloved in the form of His indwelling in the person.

Paul wrote,

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Rom 1:16–20)

Faith comes how? Faith came to the holy ones at Corinth through demonstrations of the power of God; through demonstrations of the gospel Paul taught, with the visible demonstrations at Corinth forming the left hand enantiomer of equally visible but mostly private demonstrations in the Bitterroots, on the Kenai, and in the Aleutians, the number of these demonstrations being too many to here detail. One demonstration about which I have previously written and of which an Unbeliever witnessed will have to suffice:

THAT SNAG—

not much was happening in Alaska
so I loaded my wife & kids
her sewing machine & five chainsaws
into a decade old pickup
& headed down the Highway
to look for a cutting job

stayed with my sister a couple of days
found a job falling for a gyppo

a white pine selective cut
near the Divide
all good sticks
two bushel a tree or more

my saws were a little small
my bars a little short
for timber so large
I'd never fallen trees
five, six, seven feet in diameter
but I needed work
so *sure I can do it*
but I must confess
I prayed
before I started
chips flying
skiptooth chain gnawing
centuries of growing—
when Lewis & Clark passed by
these pines were already tall

a week became a month
I still knelt
a moment or two each morning
but I'd become comfortable
tipping over giants
so my concern was where would we spend winter
once snows came; we were then tent camping

the gyppo skidded with D-6s
skidded tree-length
a faller & a buckler with each Cat
the buckler on the landing
the faller setting chokers
so when I tipped over a pine the Cat couldn't budge
I went to put in a Russian coupling at 66 feet—
for fellows who don't understand
a Russian coupling's where a suspended
log is cut half in-two
then ringed
so it breaks when jerked—
there was twelve feet under this pine
still more than four feet across at 66 feet

I cut
when ringing that pine
a bit too deep
heard the crack
& threw my saw

& it threw me
I landed on my saw dogs
they sorta impaled my left thigh
but what I didn't see was the pine
had snapped off a red fir snag
three feet or so across
the catskiner hollered, *LOOK OUT*
but I couldn't get up
felt like I was being held down
no matter how much I fought

I rolled over
rolled a couple of times
& looked up to see the snag
falling across me—
flat on my back
nowhere to go
I put up my hands as if to catch it

it bounced up maybe twenty feet
fell across me a second time
then took off
hurled out over the canyon
two hundred yards or more
rising & falling
in the same arc
I would've given a broomhandle

I stood
a little blood coming from my thigh
both wrists badly sprained
the catskiner was ashen
looked as if he died
but after a minute
he said
You've got somebody looking out for you.

I wanted to tell all
that had happened to me
wanted to tell of miracles
but the only words
that came were
You're right.

Actually, I said, *You're right, I do ...* that 120 foot long, three foot diameter red fir [Douglas fir] snag was unmistakably “hurled” out across the flat bench and out over the canyon. The catskiner (Ernie Flodeen – the last name phonetically spelled) saw the snag twice fall across the top of me on relatively flat ground and then hurled out of sight, so great was the distance it was thrown, and he couldn't believe that I was alive let alone

unhurt except for where the saw dogs stabbed the outside of my left thigh, leaving about a four inch scar.

In the left hand or dark side of the story about divine procreation that has the spirit of the Father in the spirit of Christ to give birth to a living spirit in man, a *spirit* that gives life to the soul [*psuche*] that is in man, a remnant of Israel was chosen by grace, with this remnant by culture and habit being Sabbath-keepers. The non-symmetrical mirror image of a remnant chosen by grace is not another *remnant chosen by grace*, but rather a Remnant that keeps the Commandments and has the testimony of Jesus — and why does this Remnant keep the Commandments? Because this Remnant believes God, the reality of faith. This Remnant is chosen because it believes God and acts upon that belief. This Remnant is chosen by faith [*pisteos*], not grace.

Faith is belief of God as the person acts upon the person's belief. *Faith* is personified in the deeds of the person, and without faith, no one can please God.

If a person has faith that God will heal the person, the person doesn't buy *just in case* health insurance—and the person willingly accepts whatever outcome may occur from an illness.

Paul laid the foundation for the temple of God, but a foundation is just that, the below ground foundation. *Philadelphia* will be pillars of the temple built on the foundation Paul laid, and a pillar stands on the foundation and reaches upward to support ceiling joist and roof and capstone. A pillar spans the entirety of the distance from foundation to roof, but pillars are usually constructed not from one stone but from many stone discs placed one atop the other, aligned perfectly, with no joints between the discs showing.

In truth, Herbert Armstrong never found the foundation that Paul laid in heavenly Jerusalem; Ellen G. White never found spiritual Jerusalem. And Martin Luther never crossed the spiritual River Jordan—

The physical journey of faith that Abraham took from Ur of the Chaldeans [Babylon] to Haran, then down to the Promised Land with a detour to Egypt and back, forms the dark shadow of the journey of faith that endtime disciples have to take from spiritual Babylon into the land of death (represented by baptism) and then into the Promised Land represented by Sabbath observance. Figuratively, Ellen G. White (now commonly known as E.G. White) crossed the spiritual River Jordan but she got bogged down in the same way that ancient King Saul did when he went to see the “ventriloquist at Aendor” (from the Septuagint 1 Reigns 28:7–9): she spoke the words of demons, the words of familiar spirits, as she apparently channeled spirits ... Saul campaigned in the land across the River [in greater Judea], and Saul “expelled the ventriloquists and *those in the know from the land*” (1 Reigns 28:3) from Israel; yet Saul did what he knew was wrong for he lacked faith, lacked courage, and knew that the spirit of the Lord had left him when the Lord refused to answer him.

But how do those “Christians” not yet born of spirit know that they do not now have the spirit and never have had the spirit? Again, Saul knew because when he was afraid and inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him by dreams or by *explaining devices* [*Urim*] or by prophet (1 Reigns 28:5–6) ... when a Christian prays for God's intervention in a matter, any matter, and the prayer goes unanswered week after week, month after month, even year after year, did God truly “hear” the prayer and simply

choose not to answer the person? Does a situation analogous to Israel's situation in Babylon exist:

In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of [YHWH], and sat before me [the prophet Ezekiel]. And the word of [YHWH] came to me: "Son of man [adam], speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, Thus says the Lord [YHWH], Is it to inquire of me that you come? As I live, declares the Lord [YHWH], I will not be inquired of by you. ... Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]: Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and go whoring after their detestable things? When you present your gifts and offer up your children in fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, declares the Lord [YHWH], I will not be inquired of by you. (Ezek 20:1–3, 30–31)

God will not hear the prayer of a person who willfully transgresses the Commandments, the outward manifestation of having love for God, neighbor, and brother.

Keeping the Commandments is not an end in itself, the mistake that 1st-Century Pharisees made before making the greater mistake of rebelling against Rome. Keeping the Commandments is meaningless unless the person keeps the Commandments out of the person's sincere love for God and neighbor; out of the person's belief of God. Keeping the Commandments should not become another *just in case* insurance policy, a policy written for an unfocused concept of an afterlife. For there is no rigidly defined criteria that if fulfilled will insure that the person lives after death: getting into heaven is not like starting first grade or ninth grade or even the local community college. Good works in this world don't earn a person a diploma that allows the soul of the person to enter heaven. The Russian Orthodox practice of giving to the dead passports into heaven is hokum.

Yet the Russian Orthodox priest, the Roman Catholic priest, even Herbert Armstrong—all are or were presumptive enough to speak in the name of Christ Jesus as if they are/were ventriloquists.

The Father does not answer His sons by dreams or explaining devices or even by prophets, but answers directly through the *Parakletos*, the spirit of truth, thereby inserting knowledge directly into the subconscious mind of the disciple; hence, the endtime Christian who receives dreams does not receive these dreams from the Father. Dreams could come from the Son as John the Revelator's vision came, but usually disciples genuinely born of spirit receive no dreams, no answers from God via dreams. Divine dreams are reserved for those who have not been truly born of God and who do not yet have the indwelling mind of Christ and are therefore unable to receive knowledge from the *Parakletos*. And all other dreams come from the imaginations of the person's mind, or from familiar spirits.

Familiar spirits are, in the translation of a translation, ventriloquizing spirits, speaking in the name of God and in the voice of the Lord but not speaking the words of God. These familiar spirits speak through servants of the Adversary, disguised as ministers of righteousness. Paul wrote,

And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds. (2 Cor 11:12–15)

If a minister or a ministry asks for support, the minister or ministry does not work on the same terms as Paul worked, but is false, deceitful, disguised as a servant or servants of righteousness. This is not to say that the minister or ministry is not eligible to receive support, but supporting a minister or ministry is a matter for the disciple to decide. The extent to which a disciple supports a ministry is a matter between the disciple and God; for the disciple doesn't answer to the minister or ministry but answers to God. And how the disciple answers God will, in the disciple's end, correspond to the disciple's deeds.

There are many, many ministries and ministers who claim to speak the words of God as they throw their voices into Scripture, trying their best to convince parishioners that what they say is God speaking through them: the words they speak are familiar—*Christians are not under the Law but under grace*—and seem to be spiritual, but if you watch these ministers, their lips move. They are really mediocre ventriloquists. They are like Shari Lewis and her puppet *Lamb Chop* only in that they, themselves, are wolves in sheep's clothing.

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