Called to Account

A good sister asked me for more specific detail of some of the things I said in my last letter concerning certain portions of our New Testaments. She was intrigued, not argumentative. However, I realized that it was right for me to pull the books off the shelf, do the specific research, and give an account of the things I said.

One problem I have is that I never really “learned” to read. When I was five, they showed me a book, explained the letters, and I haven’t much stopped reading since. I have been reading adult level works since elementary school; I read voraciously in many directions, and I remember the things that interest me. Sometimes I remember where I read something, and sometimes I don’t. Sometimes I pull something out of my hat that I read 30 or 40 years ago, but can’t quite place the source. Other times I know the source, but don’t own it now.

As I have shared, I no longer “believe” anything about this world, anything that I read or hear. Rather I study, comparing new information with facts I already am aware of, comparing what I read from one source with what I read from another. The internet is real knowledge, everybody saying something different, a place where you must weigh and sift. School textbooks are utterly fake knowledge, a place where “the truth” is laid out in order and lies “must be” absent (so they assume to their hurt), a place where you simply trust what you are told. Most people who live in the fake textbook world have a dim view of “what you read on the Internet.” Learning by textbook never taught them how to think.

I weigh and sort facts and claims by my own internal rating. Over time, certain frameworks for understanding reality have come into my thinking. Interestingly, some of the stronger frameworks come from CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien, but elsewhere as well. All through my articles, I intersperse links to certain books I have read over the course of my life that are very much those frameworks of thinking. The Annie visions and Hind’s Feet on High Places are two of those that without my conscious thought, shape my judgment and understanding of many things.

I know God by story.

I find it pointless, however, to talk about “the Bible” from a knowledge point of view unless we are looking at it out from the present knowing of God that He is imparting to us.

I want to share here some musings I typed out on a Facebook discussion thread this morning. They don’t have anything to do with the reason for this letter, except that I don’t want to look at anything except out from this One I have only begun to know.

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I know that God is abundance.

But knowing God as the One who fills me full, who shares heart with me, knowing Him as meek and lowly of heart – though capable of everything, beginning, just a bit, to see out from His eyes, I know He is quite different from how we used to define Him.

There is an idea, with the image of the “God up there,” that He sits in judgment, hears requests, and dispenses answers according to some superior plan. And I realize that sometimes, when people speak against some things I say, they are looking at the outward appearance of a God they know some things about.

The God up there looks very much like man in his ambition and pretending. The God who fills our hearts looks very like the human heart, real and true, simple and kind.

God doesn’t “dispense” in that way. I think that when we know Him, we walk in a place of peace and quiet out of which flows all that we need as we need it.

You see, its very scary for me to walk forward without knowing where the money’s coming from. I think in terms
“Well, Lord, if you would just put a million bucks into my hand, then we could start going around the world ministering to people as we desire.” Now, if I were single, I would move out without knowing where provision comes from without a care. But being responsible for my family changes all that. That is what Paul meant, but I still don’t think he was right. Marriage and family changed me inside like being single never would have.

Anyway, people think that God dispenses or doesn’t dispense things. That is, if someone is sick, the framework by which people think is – God didn’t send that, the devil did.

I really don’t think either one. If someone is sick, they likely received a virus. Cancer is caused to a large extent by nuclear radiation from all the nuclear bombs tested since 1945. In other words, cancer patients are people gunned down by the US, Russian, British, and French militaries. A bullet is a bullet, no matter its size.

All demons can do is speak contrary to Christ, “Did God really say that,” that is, scare and deceive.

God doesn’t "intend" or not "intend" the difficulties. But He does intend us in the midst of those difficulties, carrying us, living as us in the middle of them and through them. If we go through any difficulty or any blessing and do not know God in the midst of it, then it all is a big waste of time. Most people will find that their lives on this earth were pretty much a waste of time. Here is where we know God, in these bodies of mortal flesh - that’s what they are for. Heaven is waiting for us to know God so that we can show Him to them as well.

I think of the end of my letter, “The Altar of Incense,” when I was grappling with the issues (raised on this FB thread), that God is not in child abuse, but He is in the child being abused. That was God shivering in fear through the long cold hours of the night in that outhouse.

I said that the altar of incense is not suffering, it is a place inside of God inside of suffering. Abundance is the same. It is not abundance, it is a place inside of God inside of abundance.

I’m just musing here, this early Sunday morning. God is so different from how most define Him, looking at an image from the outside.

And so healing and abundance have nothing to do with "getting" God to heal, or "getting" Him to dispense with the cash. That image just has nothing to do with the One I am just beginning to know. He is a river, and we live in that river. He is a breath, and we live in that breath.

I think when we really know God, we will simply do all that is in our heart to do and all the provision we need will simply flow into every step forward that we take.

And it's not a matter of saying, "If I just had more faith." It is impossible to "have faith" in an image, in Someone we don't know. And we have not begun to know Him until we know that He is the One who fills us full with Himself, who shares heart with us, and who flows out from us all the time in all directions as rivers. As rivers, yes, but never as superman.

I know this, when I used to see any part of myself, especially my difficulty as a "curse" that showed that I was somehow "not right with God," I lived in hell, not God. By the incredible wonder that I can boldly keep every part of myself, especially my difficulties, inside this One who carries all of me, I live in heaven. I will never look at the other again.

"I have found for Myself a man after My heart who will do all My will." I tell you what, there is so much depth in these words.

David made more mistakes than all other men in the Bible put together. He was always getting into trouble with God because he paid no attention to Moses. And when he was caught in one of the most despicable sins recorded in the Bible he ran straight into the Holy of Holies where he had no "right" to be, placing himself, regardless of his folly, right in the middle of God.

"I have found a man after My own heart."
David knew God. He had no desire to "get away with" anything, he was just real.

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I do not “deify” the Bible. I do not see God with some “master plan” sitting above dispensing how things will be.

God does not dispense, He carries, working together with us to make all things good.

God spoke His word through men. Silly, weak, vacillating human beings. The Bible is much more cobbled together than most Christians will allow.

Just look at Paul. Paul did what I do (say too much), only far more so. I have the chance to go back and change things I said five years ago to fit my present understanding; Paul did not. Paul says one thing in one place that is the complete opposite of what he claims in another place. Just like me, he assumes that his readers know exactly what he's thinking about when he switches topic without realizing that they are all going off in a different direction with his next words. Paul wrote from the hip, addressing differing issues in differing places. He fired off letters to his secretary who wrote down what he thought he heard Paul say. It never entered Paul's mind once that he was “writing the Bible.”

John was a far more thoughtful writer than Paul. His gospel is a carefully brought forth work of high literary quality. It opens in the form of the great Greek philosophical treatises, in a way all Greeks would know and nod their heads.

God is so different from how Christianity has known Him. The image they hold of “God” is far more the desire of human ambition and lust empty of God then any reality of God Himself. Those who see God as “above” cannot know Him. Knowing Him begins with seeing Him as the One beneath, the servant of all, the lowly-hearted One, the One who is always coming up from beneath of all that we are, catching us up in Himself, carrying us, becoming us, arising on high and we in Him, working together with us to make all things good.

And when we know Him thus, we are no longer driven to treat “the Bible” as a demi-god. At the same time, we honor His Word, I think, more than most Christians I know.

Here is something I noticed. In 2001 I believed, sincerely and without much thinking about it, that the lost were tormented forever in the hellfires of damnation. That was an idea I held in my mind inside my deep and real knowing of the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and Friend. In 2005 I believed, sincerely and without much thinking about it, that there is no “eternal hell,” but that in the end, the Lord Jesus restores all the creation back to the Father. That is an idea I have in my mind inside my deep and real knowing of the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and Friend.

What I mean is that surface “ideas” have nothing to do with the knowing of God and of Salvation.

Yet, even though my knowing of Jesus as Savior was not affected in any way by the change of my thinking concerning certain things external and disconnected from me, yet millions of Christians would define me as “lost” because of that fairly inconsequential change of thinking. What I mean to say is that so much of “Christianity” has to do with a desperate, desperate holding onto human ideas and not God Himself.

**HOWEVER!!!!!!**

Here is something awful I see happening in every direction. When people discover that the Greek word “aeon” is badly translated in their Bibles and that the wrongful translation of that word by a particular man in church history is responsible for the strength of a particularly obnoxious Christian “doctrine” that has nothing to do with the reality of God Himself, they seem to go hog wild. Pretty soon you see them hacking and slashing at the Bible in every direction, cutting out anything and everything they don't like.

You know well that I reject that whole way of doing.

Yet I have come to know God, not as one who plans, but as One who purposes, not as one who dispenses, but as
One who, together with us, works all things, good, bad, and indifferent, into His goodness. The perfection of God is NOT human “perfection,” something that exists only as a false image.

God speaks as a heart word through bumbling and silly humans to bumbling and silly humans whom He carries with the deepest and tenderest of loves.

So, from that perspective, let’s talk about the particular and isolated references I made in my last letter.

First, let’s look at 2 Peter and Jude.

Think of a letter written in English by an educated, fairly well-to-do person to a friend in the year 1913. Then, think of a letter written in English by a very similar sort of person to a very similar friend in the year 2013. There would be a significant difference, wouldn’t there? And I’m not speaking, here, in the difference in content, but in the difference in words chosen and the phraseology and structure of the words and sentences. Someone from 2013, reading the letter written in 1913, would have the advantage of understanding everything, though calling it, “quaint.” But the person in 1913, being handed the letter written in 2013, would have a hard time trying to figure out what on earth the person is saying or talking about. They would recognize it as English, yes, but it would be a puzzle.

All languages change over time. Calling the dialect spoken by people in past generations “godly” and the dialect spoken by this group or that group today “ungodly,” is one of the most absurd pieces of blatant nonsense I have heard in my years in Christendom. Yet some people hold to such a distinction as “the gospel truth,” especially those who have deified the King James English Bible.

The lingo, the words chosen, the phraseology found in 2 Peter and Jude are identical to that dialect of Greek spoken around AD 150, almost 100 years after all the disciples but John were killed. Those two letters did not gain much traction among Christians as they were circulated along with the primary letters of the New Testament.

Contrary to popular modern belief, there was never a set “canon” of which books were “of God,” and which were “heretical.” One church leader embraced some and rejected others and vice versa. The books in our New Testament were chosen entirely by Martin Luther. He made executive decisions by perusing the Latin Vulgate cobbled together by Jerome and translating the books he liked into his German Bible and axing the books he didn’t like. We tend to call the books Luther chose as “inspired,” and most of us are unaware of the books he didn’t like. He came close to axing both Revelation and James. Some think he should have axed Revelation.

But 2 Peter and Jude were not accepted by most as “canonical” Scripture. Jerome, in translating the Greek New Testament into Latin, decided to include them against the protests of many, because they seemed to fit his take on things. Even Augustine, who was a true man of God in spite of his effect on Christianity, wrote Jerome a strong letter urging him not to include 2 Peter and Jude in the Latin Vulgate.

Now, I first read this information in a book I purchased just a few years ago titled, The Jerome Conspiracy by Michael Wood, certainly an interesting book. However, in recent months, I decided to research that bit of information concerning 2 Peter and Jude on the Internet and found no contest, just simple and similar explanations of these same facts.

What does all that mean?

Not much. The point is God from heart to heart. God speaks to us through anything at hand.

You see, many who are hostile to Jerome’s great crime against God (ultimate reconciliation people) believe that it is necessary to strike 2 Peter and Jude out of their Bibles. But as I weighed things over time, I no longer see that. You see, knowing God and knowing His word are not founded on isolated and poorly understood “Bible” phrases. The truths that I teach come to us strongly through both Paul and John, back and forth, sounding as confirmation one to the other, and added to and strengthened by the other New Testament writers. In fact, the book of Revelation is intrinsically tied into the gospel and epistles of John. If anything in 2 Peter and Jude agrees and flows with that
revelation of Christ our life, then it is God speaking to us. The odd things in both those books (quoting from the “Book of Enoch,” discussing Jesus in Hades) we simply set on the shelf. No big deal. We don't have to dismiss them out of hand, but we don't have to build citadels of essential Christian doctrine on top of them either.

Christ is our life, not human ideas about a God who is not known.

Now let’s come to the line Paul used in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

Now, without going into where these lines might have come from or why on earth Paul stuck them into this passage, I will say categorically that this line as it appears here is not God speaking to anyone. It has nothing to do with God's order for His church. If anything, it is out of the curse against sin and not out of Christ. Paul never spoke shame into anyone. In Christ there is neither male nor female. Rather, obnoxious and religious men who love to pretend use this line to make themselves feel superior in an ungodly way over the women in their lives.

Most legalism in Christianity is a bunch of pretending men beating up on the women; I guess it makes them feel important. From the time I was a little boy such a stance always made me sick inside. Look at most “holiness” doctrine: men telling the ladies what they must look like on the outside. Thank God, this attitude is declining in the church of Jesus Christ.

I am convinced, personally and from many other things Paul said about women ministries with whom he related, that he did not think at all the way too many have taken these lines. Rather, that way of thinking comes out of prevailing human prejudice.

Now, having blasted my heavy guns, let’s go back to what I said in the last letter about these lines.

The first indication that these were words spoken by characters created by Sophocles came to me through a tract I read many years ago by Jesse Penn-Lewis. Jesse Penn-Lewis was the most anointed and from-the-throne-of-God teacher during the Welsh Revival. But she was not allowed to preach to “men,” so she preached to a tent full of women. The problem, of course, was that all the men surrounded the tent on the outside because they could not keep away from God speaking to His people. She explained how this line in 1 Corinthians 14 was badly translated and that Paul meant the very opposite, that he was mocking the Greek prejudice of the Christians at Corinth, attempting to jar them out of their holding onto nonsense by lines from Sophocles.

Again, there is nothing in the Old Testament similar to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. It could be that the Jews treated women in this way, but they did not hear it from God.

Here are the lines I found from Sophocles, the first in Antigone, the second from Ajax. Sophocles lived through the 400’s BC and wrote these two plays right around the same time that Nehemiah and Ezra stood before the people in the restoration of Jerusalem.

Antigone is a play depicting the struggle between freedom of conscience and the claims of the state for power. The exact same arguments for government power that we hear today are spoken in this play by Creon, king of Thebes. Since his opponent, standing for freedom of conscience, happens to be a woman, Antigone, Creon expresses his contempt for women as part of his argument for state power.

Here are his words: “Therefore we must support the cause of order, and in no wise suffer a woman to worst us. Better to fall from power, if we must, by a man’s hand; then we should not be called weaker than a woman.”

Then, Ajax is a play contrasting madness with honor. Ajax is not treated well by the other Greeks in the Battle for Troy. He becomes angry and decides to go out and butcher his fellow Greeks. His wife attempts to stop him. He says “Woman, silence graces women.” In other words “Shut up and get out of my way.” He went out, but the goddess
Athena turned his madness to the slaughter of herds of cattle and sheep, all the time imagining he was killing the men he hated. The problem is this quote is thrown around as something Sophocles believed and is worded in this way: “Silence gives the proper grace to women.” Thus the quote is taken entirely out of context – something we humans tend to do.

Now, this is what I found by present searching. And I do think Jesse Penn-Lewis was right, that Paul was trying to jolt the Corinthians away from their prejudice against women by using Sophocles’ portrayal of the abuse of women, words well-known in their original context to the Greeks. The abuse of women comes from paganism and male ego (the absence of God), not from anything God says in the Old Testament.

Finally we come to Aristotle and 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. First make note of verse 16. Let me paraphrase it.

“We don’t do any of this I just said and neither does any church I know about.”

Hello?

I am reading from Aristotle’s *Politics: Book 1.* Aristotle argues for a controlled society ruled by “the state.”

Consider these words in 1 Corinthians 11: “Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?” Aristotle bases his argument for “the state” on nature, as in “Mother Nature.” I don’t know of anything else written in the Bible basing an argument on “nature.” Earlier Paul said that the natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit. Aristotle says, “The state is the creation of nature…”

Aristotle then proceeds to dissect the “household” which includes the Master, the man of the house, the slaves, the wife, and the children. He argues that what we would call “violently subjecting people to slavery” is just a part of nature, since the master cannot live comfortably without slaves.

Let me quote him directly.

“But is there any one thus intended by nature to be a slave, and for whom such a condition is expedient and right, or rather is not all slavery a violation of nature? There is no difficulty in answering this question, on grounds both of reason and of fact. For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.”

Note that this is the argument of all tyranny and all aristocracy in all history. It is the contention of the beast.

Then he says this; “Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind.” Then, “The courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying. . . All classes must be deemed to have their special attributes; as the poet (Sophocles) says of women. “Silence is a woman’s glory,” but this is not equally the glory of man.”

So, even Aristotle, writing a hundred years after Sophocles, takes his quote completely out of context.

Basically, what we see in Aristotle’s *Politics* is the “natural” hierarchy of the creation, the subordination of women, and the idea that glory for the man is different from glory for the woman.

I’m sorry, but the more I look at 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 the more it seems to me complete gobbledygook and in no way in keeping with anything else in the Bible. And so I continue with the contention that we CANNOT know what Paul really wrote or intended.

How do we approach something like this in what to many is supposed to be a “perfect” Bible according to human imagination?

Here is a good example: 1 Corinthians 15:29 Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?

All Bible teachers, except the Mormons, are agreed on how to approach this business of being “baptized for the dead.” We simply ignore it because we cannot know what Paul meant. It has no bearing on the gospel, to attempt it
as some sort of “ritual” is to become ridiculous. In some Mormon practice, people get baptized over and over in order to “save” dead people.

I would contend that our treatment of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 should be the same. Much hurt has come all down through the history of the church through attempting to turn these things into some sort of “Christian” ritual or practice. Nothing could possibly be lost by ignoring what we cannot understand.

Now, I must confess that I have not “proven” in full some of my strong wording in “Turning the Church Right-Side Up.” So I will thank the sister who asked, eat humble pie, and go back and alter the wording just a bit as I turn that chapter into its final book form. My underlying argument will remain the same, but I must change the wording to what I can say with present evidence. I will do that by merging some of what I write here into that chapter.

But I don’t want to close this letter without coming back into the seeing and knowing of God.

First, what about the concept of the wife/woman “submitting” to her husband?

In Christ there is neither male nor female. Outside of Christ there is every form of nonsense the absence of God in the imagination of the mind can invent. All godly relationships are a mutual submitting one to the other in love and honor. On the one hand, a heart filled with God will always place itself under, never over. On the other hand, a heart filled with God never becomes subservient to manipulation and control.

How does this work with a woman married to a man not walking with God as she desires to walk with God? Yes, outwardly a godly wife will yield to such a man in joy and peace in what is right. But inwardly, she is absolutely in charge. That is, she takes all of her husband into her heart in Love upon the Mercy Seat where all that is offense ceases and where he is caught up in the Fire of which she is the tip point.

There is a dear sister who reads this letter who did just that. I will not describe her years of wrenching human difficulty, only that as she saw the Lord fulfilling His revelation in her life, she also saw her husband surrender his heart to the Lord two weeks before he passed on. That time with her husband in this life ended in complete freedom and joy; all rebellion had vanished from her heart equal with all subservience.

God is the One who serves, but there is never a shadow of subservience in God or in those who live in Him.

And if a man is married to an unbelieving wife, there is no difference. The One who is filled with God will yield, not command – outwardly. But inwardly he or she will exercise the authority of God, causing the offense to cease and the other person to walk free of all things.

To know God is to be His authority in all gentleness and lowliness, inwardly commanding life by the power by which He subdues all things to Himself, and outwardly yielding to others in tender graciousness, from the deepest respect, and by acts of service.

Setting all creation free into the glorious liberty of the children of God.