

March 2018

Dear Brethren:

We offer and extend another warm greeting from Minnesota, the land of ten thousand lakes, the land where "many are cold but few are frozen" in winter. This will be a meat-in-due-season letter for the Days of Unleavened Bread. We hope this letter finds you keeping yourself in good physical and spiritual condition, as we continue to be in subjection to the God of reproof and correction.

Most of modern Christianity today teaches that there is nothing more for us to do but believe in Christ's sacrifice for our sins. He is portrayed by them as a dead Savior hanging on a cross! Christ's death, pictured by the Passover, was necessary to pay the penalty of our past sins—to reconcile us to the Father. Through the keeping of the Passover each year, we renew our commitment to recognize Christ as the only standard of Truth—that singular yardstick by which we must measure true righteousness. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). Through the sacrifice of Christ, our past sins are atoned for and God's wrath is appeased. Thus, a relationship of hostility and alienation is changed into one of peace and fellowship.

God Himself "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ [His sacrifice], and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18). Reconciliation is the process by which God and His called-out ones are brought together again after an estrangement. But His death alone will not save us! Think for a moment: if Jesus Christ had died but NOT been resurrected, would His death ALONE make eternal life possible? Of course not! Accepting Christ's sacrifice is only the first step in God's Master Plan for bringing many human beings into His divine Family.

Question: What should we do once our PAST sins have been covered by the shed blood of Christ?

Shall we continue in sin [which is the transgression of God's Law], that grace [unmerited pardon] may abound? God forbid [which means to perish the thought]. How shall we, that are dead to sin [dead to the works of the flesh], live any longer therein? (Romans 6:1–2)

Sin defines the level at which people live in violation of God's laws. Grace defines the level at which we have been forgiven. If there is NO SIN or NO LAW, there is no need for grace. "Shall we sin, because we are not under [the penalty of] the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Romans 6:15).

For by grace are ye saved through faith [in the doctrine once delivered]; and that not of yourselves: it [faith in the doctrine] is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

Most falsely assume that grace means "saved." We are saved by grace, but grace does not mean "saved." We are saved through faith—living faith. Faith is a gift (a fruit) of God's Holy Spirit. It comes to us when we fulfill the salvation process. We are saved through faith in living the doctrine.

Do we then make void the law [Ten Commandments] through faith [a professing dead faith]? God forbid: yea, we establish the law (Romans 3:31).

We make God's law active and operative in our lives. Only "the doers of the law shall be justified [in God's sight]" (Romans 2:13).

God is now in the process of creating holy, perfect, righteous, spiritual character in those whom He has called to fulfill the salvation process. The called of God are now only clay models, to be created in the character-image of God Himself. God's character-image is based on the Ten Commandments. Keeping His law is absolutely necessary for spiritual character growth. We must therefore obey our Master Potter, allowing Him through the power of His Spirit to mold His character-image in us while we are still flesh and blood.

Our acceptance of Christ's dual sacrifice in payment for the penalty of our physical and spiritual sins is only the first step in God's salvation process. Once we have repented of living the works of the flesh and have been forgiven by God, He wants us to begin the second step—to forsake sin! How do we do that, brethren? God commands us to come OUT of this world's sinful ways—just as ancient Israel left EGYPT, a symbol for sin (Hebrews 11:25–26). God wants us striving to come all the way out of Egypt—all the way out of sin. To keep us in the knowledge of the second step in God's Master Plan, the God of the second part who became Christ, the God of the Old Testament, instituted the second annual observance—the Feast of Unleavened Bread. God wants the observance of this Feast to impress upon us our part in God's salvation process. God wants us to forsake from now on the sins Jesus covered with His shed blood.

Leaven is also a symbol for sin (1 Corinthians 5:8). God of the second part commanded the ancient Israelites to put all leaven out of their homes and off their properties, and to eat unleavened bread during this seven-day festival. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is to remind God's people every year that they are to strive to put sin completely out of their lives! Why? It is because Christ is not a "minister of sin" (Galatians 2:17). God wants us to completely forsake sin!

Question: How do we do that, brethren? We must ask God daily to CORRECT us. God has a big job on His hands. He has committed Himself to the task and the effort of transforming you and me from dirt into God. Dirt is what we are—God is what we are destined to become. You can be sure this transformation will require intensive correction.

God's apostate people today do not like to think about a God of correction. They like a God of peace and joy. They refuse to face the fact that God is not only a God of mercy and kindness, He also is a God of correction. Let us be honest with ourselves. By nature we hate correction. But receiving godly correction in a right orientation of mind is the Bride's most important responsibility. The Bride of Christ should welcome correction. It helps her to grow to spiritual adulthood.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth [by afflictions] every son [every begotten son] whom he receiveth [has called] (Hebrews 12:6).

Correction in our lives is one of the greatest blessings the Bride of Christ can receive. It is an act of love designed to educate and train us for life in God's Family. Love and chastisement are not inharmonious; they are two complimentary and necessary aspects of corrective training. God's ultimate purpose is to reproduce Himself by creating first a wife for His Son, from which then will come billions upon billions of spiritually begotten children who shall be born as God Beings—members of the God Family. Thus, the whole purpose of life is spiritual growth and inward change (Matthew 5:48; Hebrews 6:1). It is impossible to develop holy, perfect, righteous character without plenty of reproof and correction.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [teaching], for reproof, for correction, for instruction [training] in righteousness: That the man of God [the called of God] may be perfect [spiritually mature in what God has originally revealed], thoroughly furnished [properly equipped] unto all good works [needed—as Christ's future wife—to make herself ready] (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

What is reproof? What is correction? These words should have clear, specific meaning to us. If they do not, it behooves us to check a Bible dictionary and *Strong's Concordance* and learn their definitions, because both are necessary for our "instruction in righteousness." God says:

He [the called of God] is in the way of life that keepeth instruction [the original revelation of doctrine we received from Jesus Christ through His chosen servant of the last days]: but he that refuseth reproof [to come out of adulterated truth] erreth [goes astray] (Proverbs 10:17).

Most of God's apostate people have gone astray in these last days because they refuse reproof in the faith (doctrine) once delivered. Conversion requires inward change through reproof and correction. The more converted we are, the more we will welcome reproof and correction—no matter how it comes to us! Jesus Christ said that unless we become like little children, we will not enter God's Kingdom. Why? What childlike qualities does Christ desire in adults? Jesus Christ drew attention to little children to exemplify the preparation and instruction required for any of us to enter into His Family Kingdom and to receive eternal salvation. That does not mean little children have "good character" that we should emulate. On the contrary! They are all born with rebellious, carnal, selfish natures, and that carnal nature becomes apparent and evident very quickly in all little children. So that is not what Christ is talking about. But what little children have that adults do not is a more teachable attitude, adapting better to change. They put their trust in those who care for them, and they usually (if taught properly) do what they are told. When corrected in love, a little child will respond positively, unlike most stiff-necked, proud adults. This is the element that is required in any of us who truly desire to inherit God's Kingdom.

The Bride of Christ must be this way. The degree of our conversion can be determined by how teachable we are and how well we respond to reproof and correction. "For one is your Master, even Christ" (Matthew 23:8, 10). As the Bride of Christ, we must beware of talking back or "answering again" when we are corrected (Titus 2:9). God wants the Bride of Christ not to talk back to Him arrogantly, overconfident in the voice of scholars. As the Bride of Christ, God wants us to come to Him for reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness—not contradicting the faith (doctrine) once delivered.

There are many benefits to receiving disciplinary correction:

Now no chastening [punishment] for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward [if we learn by it] it yieldeth the peaceable

fruit of righteousness [being in subjection to the will and law of God] unto them which are exercised [trained] thereby (Hebrews 12:11).

Many other scriptures affirm the value of reproof and correction: Psalm 141:5; Proverbs 15:5; 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; 29:15; Ecclesiastes 7:5 and Hebrews 12:5.

The prophet Habakkuk understood the importance of seeking reproof and correction. He actually went to God in a humble attitude and patiently waited to be reproved.

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he [God] will say unto me [with respect to my complaint against Him], and what I shall answer when I am reproved (Habakkuk 2:1).

Habakkuk went to his tower to see what God would say. He wanted to be reproved by God! His complaint was that God had decreed to raise up the Chaldeans to chasten and correct Israel for their awful sins. Israel was wicked, but the Chaldeans were far more wicked. "Should you (God) be silent while the wicked Chaldeans destroy Israel who are better than they?" In a military context, "stand" specifically indicates a respectful posture. Habakkuk went to God in a respectful posture, with a very submissive, childlike attitude. He sought God's correction. That is why God spoke to him and revealed His prophecy.

Each individual has the responsibility to prepare himself for God's instructive correction, as Habakkuk did. It is a rare person who will receive and love God's Truth as it was originally revealed. God wants people like Habakkuk who will not talk back to Him through the voice of scholars. God wants the Bride of Christ to seek correction. God is no respecter of persons, but He does respect the attitude of those who obey Him and yield to Him in a contrite manner as Habakkuk did (Romans 2:11; Isaiah 66:2).

Ancient Israel did not like correction and neither do God's apostate people today. They wanted change, of course, but only in their own concepts of mind—not God's. They did not like God's top-down government or His law. They wanted freedom without the law even though it meant suffering and death. They rejected reproof and correction from God and sassed back through scholarship. They refused to acknowledge that there truly is no freedom without law.

Today God the Father speaks to us in this remnant body through His Son Jesus Christ, via the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27), and teaches us what truth was originally delivered by His end-time servant. If we truly want to hear what God's Spirit is

saying to His Church (Revelation 3:13), we must continually stir up the gift of God in our lives. The Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to "stir up the gift of God" so that he could boldly and confidently partake of the "afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (2 Timothy 1:6–8). Stirring up the Holy Spirit in our lives involves, first of all, being receptive to correction. The degree of our conversion can be determined by how well we respond to correction. The Holy Spirit only flows freely and abundantly through a correctable, teachable mind. Acts 2:38 tells us that repentance—admitting that we are wrong when we are wrong and then changing—is a prerequisite for the initial arrival of the Holy Spirit into our minds at baptism. But daily repentance is also necessary for the continual, daily renewal of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in order to increase the influence of the Spirit of God in our lives, and to allow Christ to "come into the flesh" of the Bride of Christ, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us (Philippians 2:5; 1 John 3:24; 4:2), we must become, and remain, sensitive to sin and the weaknesses of our carnal natures. In other words, in order to expedite the free movement of God's Spirit into our minds, we must continually be willing to admit error when we are wrong. When we refuse to admit that we have been deceived—when we refuse to be reproofed and corrected by God—we lose our sensitivity to sin and what we are by nature, and subsequently block the Spirit of God from coming into our minds.

Paul admonishes us to "grieve not the holy Spirit of God" (Ephesians 4:30). We do that when we are not receptive to reproof and correction. Similarly, Paul warns: "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19). To quench means to stifle or suppress. When we are not repentant and correctable, the invisible flow of God's Spirit into our minds is restricted. It ceases from having a dynamic, powerful impact in our lives. God's apostate people do not allow His Holy Spirit to powerfully impact them as it should. Why? It is because they refuse to worship the true God of instructive correction! Instead of yielding to reproof and correction and hearing what God is speaking to His True Church, they are essentially putting their trust in a teacher of lies—the voice of scholars.

Christ is correcting and measuring His Church through the faith (doctrine) once delivered. God grants the Bride of Christ the ability to repent and subsequently to grow in holy, perfect, righteous character as the Truth of Christ was originally revealed. Conversely, He also allows us to quench the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is not static; it is either increasing or decreasing in terms of its effect upon us. And our actions and attitudes regulate the flow of God's Spirit. God's Holy Spirit must be flowing in our lives. We must learn to fear God through corrective obedience, otherwise the Holy Spirit will not flow. Mr. Armstrong taught that there must be a flow of God's Holy Spirit in our lives—even if it is just a trickle or a drop. Our level of understanding of God's Truth will depend upon how much we fear God and humble ourselves before Him like little children.

To receive correction in the right spirit, one must be willing to admit he is wrong and that is impossible for the carnal mind to do unless "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4). Before looking in the spiritual "mirror" of God's Word and searching the scriptures for correction, it is advisable to kneel down and beseech God to correct us in measure and in mercy. God will not deliberately test us beyond what He knows we can endure (1 Corinthians 10:13).

It is a good idea to pray as Jeremiah did:

O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O LORD, correct me, but with judgment [justice]; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing (Jeremiah 10:23–24).

We should regularly ask God to give us spiritual insight and to correct us in this manner, showing us through His Word where we are in error. The Bride of Christ must have the humility and the courage to pray this way.

Notice how David prayed in Psalm 51. He first asked for God's mercy and acknowledged his own guilt.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 51:1–2).

But how did he expect to be washed and cleansed by God? By reproof and correction—and chastisement if necessary.

Behold, thou desirest truth [faithful law-keeping] in the inward parts [of the inner man]: and in the hidden part [of the inner man] thou shalt make me to know wisdom [that is from above] . . . Create in me a clean heart [mind], O God; and renew [restore] a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me (Psalm 51:6, 10–11).

Looking back, David realized that the trouble all started in his mind. His thought-life was corrupt. He entertained wrong thoughts until at last he committed the sins. But now David wanted to be reproved and corrected, even though it meant making a concerted effort to stay close to God and to undergo personal sore trials and suffering. He was ready and willing to accept God's reproof and correction, no matter how it came and

however unpleasant. David was asking God that his mind be renewed, restored and transformed in his thinking. God's Holy Spirit is the only source of such a renewal. That is why David besought God not to take His Holy Spirit from him. When God corrects us, do we expect it to come only from Him directly and never from a human being? If so, we are deceived. David was corrected by Nathan the prophet. The dangers of not hearing correction—even if from another faulty human being—are strongly worded.

He, that being often reprov'd [resisting reproof] hardeneth his neck [against persuasion or influence of "The Truth"], shall suddenly be destroyed [as a potter's vessel], and that without remedy [broken beyond repair] (Proverbs 29:1).

"Hardens his neck" is an expression of self-willed stubbornness, like that of an animal who tries to toss off the yoke and will not be turned (Isaiah 48:4; Jeremiah 7:24, 26). "Shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy"—without hope of any further opportunity—is the ultimate in God's chastening (1 John 5:16; Matthew 12:31). When we continually resist reproof and correction, it "is a sin unto death."

Today, God's apostate people are obstinate—stubbornly addicted to the concepts of their own minds—stubbornly addicted to scholarly reasoning with a neck as unbending (Acts 7:51) as iron and a forehead as hard as brass. They are in an increasing state of stubborn rebellion against the faith (doctrine) once delivered (Jeremiah 6:28), along with an unteachable attitude. When we resist the influence of God's Holy Spirit to reprove and correct us, it is a sin unto death—eternal death.

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise [their stern warning concerning NOT being receptive to reproof and correction], than for a man to hear the song of fools (Ecclesiastes 7:5).

The voice of scholars along with God's apostate ministry are singing the song of fools today. They reject the faith once delivered through their scholarly reasoning. Even if the correction we receive is unjustified, and even if we are falsely accused, we should take it patiently and accept it (1 Peter 2:20). Notice Jesus Christ's example when He was falsely accused while standing trial: "And he answered him [Pilate] to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly" (Matthew 27:14). Whether or not we have asked for it, when we are corrected we should be grateful. We should accept reproof with humility and make the necessary changes inwardly. Afterward, we should not dwell on the mistakes God has forgiven. We should not burden ourselves with a guilt complex, which will only impede our spiritual growth. God is always willing to forgive us if we accept reproof, correction and are willing to change.

God's True Church is the Bride of Christ. We must accept the correction that comes to us, whether directly or indirectly, from the God of judgment. No one else in the World Tomorrow will have what God is offering to the firstfruits. Jesus Christ and His Bride will become a Husband/Wife dominion (a ruling government) that God will use to expand His Family. Billion upon billions of spiritual children will come into the God Family through that Husband/Wife dominion. How much time do you spend thinking about all those spiritual children that will be produced by Christ and His Helpmate? How much do you yearn for sons and daughters in the Family of God? By nature, we do not desire spiritual children. That is an unnatural desire. Yet the Bride of Christ must build a natural yearning, a natural desire, to have spiritual children.

Only the Holy Spirit can give us that yearning and desire. Of course, we will have to qualify to receive that position in the God Family by being receptive to God's reproof and correction today. "He that hateth reproof shall die," says God. "The ear that heareth the reproof of life [with the intent to submit] abideth among the wise" (Proverbs 15:10, 31). Those who heed reproof will be a part of the Bride. The wise are those who listen to God's counsel, submit themselves to His authority, accept reproof and correction and live by it.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness [to law-keeping] as the stars for ever and ever (Daniel 12:3).

These are God's words, and they cannot be broken. If we hate reproof by the God of correction, we will die for all eternity. But if we love correction today, we will live forever in the God Family tomorrow. The choice is up to us!

Your committed servant to the faith once delivered,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert J. Litz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the typed name.

Robert J. Litz