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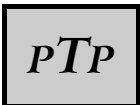
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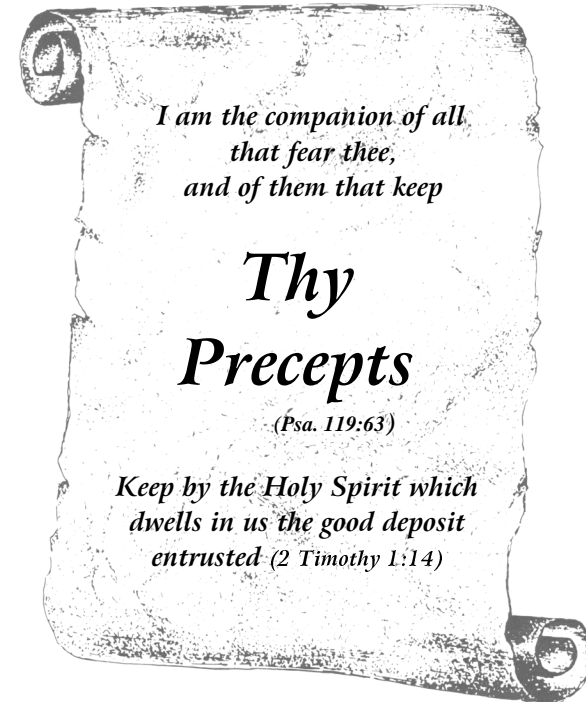
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Vol. 21, #2

CONTENTS

The Mystery . . . Ch. 4.3: The Fall of Adam - Continued	41
The Christian's Heavenly Place and . . . Messianic Judaism, Ch. 10: The Practice of Our Circumcision in Christ	52
Judah and Jerusalem: God's Voice to Ourselves A. C. Brown	61
Forgiveness: Is It Conditional or Unconditional? T. J. Knapp	75
"Worship Always Supposes the Will Broken" J. N. Darby	78

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Chapter 4.3

Genesis 3:8-13

The New State of the Man and the Woman Manifested

(8) And they heard the voice of Jehovah Elohim, walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah Elohim, in the midst of the trees of the garden. (9) And Jehovah Elohim called to Man, and said to him, Where art thou? (10) And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I feared, because I am naked; and I hid myself. (11) And he said, Who told thee that thou art naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee not to eat? (12) And Man said, The woman, whom thou hast given [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. (13) And Jehovah Elohim said to the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate.

Hiding From God

If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom . . . (Job 31:33).

Even darkness hideth not from thee, and the night shineth as the day: the darkness is as the light (Pas 139:12).

OCUPIED MORE WITH THE SHAME OF SIN, THAN THE GUILT

Jehovah Elohim came in the cool of the day to visit Adam and Eve. He did not dwell there. He visited various ones at various times but did not dwell. When redemption *in type* was accomplished, Jehovah dwelt among His people, giving the visible sign of the Shekinah, the cloud that marked His presence. God now dwells in the holy temple, a habitation of God in [the] Spirit (Eph. 2:21, 22). This will be distinctive of the assembly eternally (Eph. 3:21). Concerning the

eternal state, the assembly, the tabernacle of God will be with men and so God will be with them (Rev. 21:2, 3).

With the knowledge of good and evil came a conscience, and they knew that communion with God was broken and that they were naked. So here we have another “first,” an attempt to hide from God. This is characteristic of all their descendants, and calls forth such Scriptures as Heb. 4:12, 13. In their case it took the form of hiding among natural things that God had created. Yes, even “in the midst” of it. We cannot hide from God in nature nor is God found in nature though nature is evidence of

his eternal power and divinity, so as to render them inexcusable (Rom. 1:20).

In Cain’s case hiding was in the form of the false offering he brought (Gen. 4:3), called in Jude 11 “the way of Cain.” “Cain was of the wicked one” -- seed of the serpent -- and his offering? -- “his works were wicked.” Such are all religions of works; and such hate the grace of God’s sovereign acceptance of the substitutionary sacrifice that accounts the offerer’s works of substitutionary offerings *righteous* as Abel’s was (see 1 John 3:12). Cain’s religion is a form of approach to God while hiding oneself from Him; a refusal to acknowledge the naked position. The lost will spend eternity in nakedness as well as in much else. How good it is to be clothed with the garments of salvation (Isa. 63:10) and to have the best robe (Luke 15:22). Think of that one who came to the wedding without a wedding garment (Matt. 22:12) -- provided by the One Who provides the wedding feast. Awful end -- horrible!

God has said:

. . . there is no one that seeks after God (Rom. 3:11).

This began with the first sinners in the earth. The fact is that it is God who seeks the sinner and we find the first seeking by God in Eden.

Regarding shame, guilt, and bad conscience:

Here we find conscience at work, not conscience towards God, but that of shame, the conscience that drove out the accusers of the adulterous woman (John 8). The guilty pair have the sense of the shame of their nakedness, and they seek to hide it the one from the other. The divine work in enlightening the conscience gives a man to see the guilt of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of sin; but sin has its shame as well as its guilt, and the natural conscience always seeks to hide the shame of its sin with some fig-leaf covering.

This is no proof of conversion; it is only the main proof that man has got into a bad conscience, and cannot get out of it. Adam and Eve dare not look at each other, nor yet to God. They cannot bear the condition they have got into, and they cannot change it, therefore they hide it. But do not mistake this for repentance. Shame merely drives them to hide from, and

excuse themselves to, God. And so with ourselves: as long as the shame of sin continues, we try to hide it, to get away from it; but it only drives us farther and farther from God. It is not a divinely-taught conscience, because we are more concerned about the shame before men than the sinfulness before God. Until God has the place which man now occupies in our hearts, there is no conversion: the soul is not looking to God. We may be able to reason about the tender love and grace of God, but our sense of the guilt of sin should ever be deeper than that of its shame. When the conscience is before God, guilt brings sorrow; and yet we can as sinners reckon upon the love and the kindness of God.¹

Two Questions That Expose the State

Of the two questions that God asked Adam, the deeper question has to do with the new state of Adam as a result of the fall. We certainly are not meant to assume that because God called to Adam asking where He was that God did not know where he was. We need to look at the two questions as morally directed to the soul. Certainly it is true that the question, "Where art thou?" teaches us that there is no hiding place from God that the workers of unrighteousness can find, neither in location -- behind the trees, behind things that God Himself has created -- nor under aprons of fig leaves -- inventions of men to cover themselves from being viewed by man or by God.² "Thou God seest me" (Gen. 16:13). All is naked and opened before Him with Whom we have to do (Heb. 4:13). J. N. Darby pressed the moral import of the question concerning where Adam was:

. . . I have sometimes said, when they have talked about the race damned for eating of the tree, that it is not God shutting man out for an apple {a fruit}, but that man shut out God for an apple. His heart was separated from God, and then he got lusts and self-will instead of subjection. Then follows the judicial part, "Where art thou?" -- where? that is, as to my state (not what? a question of my deeds), though men are judged according to their works {Rev. 20:12}. When there is spiritual intelligence in me, the first thing that strikes my conscience is my deeds. Ordinary evangelization takes up what man has done; but this alone never sets one clear with God. A soul still has to learn another thing, and that is where he is; that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing {Rom. XXX}. But the preacher who dwells on this does not reach the consciences of people. If I take the "What hast thou done?" and the "Where art thou?" then I have

1. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 12:311.

2. All of man's righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Here is the source of works-religion; and it was expressed in Cain's offering of the fruit of the cursed ground (Gen. 4:3-7). Cain slew Abel because his works were evil (1 John 3:12). Works-religion is evil because it is the expression of sin, of rebellion against God.

all. From this point of view men as men are alike bad, and the prodigal son was as great a sinner when he just crossed his father's threshold as when he was eating the swine's husks, because he had from the first turned his back upon his father. Nor is the work done in a soul, until it finds out how bad it is in itself, the tree bad, the root bad, itself away from God. My works refer on to the day of judgment; but by what I am I am lost already.

Both are perfectly true of every man. It is works rather in Adam's breaking the law, and still more distinctly in Cain, in whom it is sin against a neighbor or a brother. Adam sins against God. Cain's terrible act brings the inquiry, "What hast thou done?" But the what or where we are is a great deal deeper in the testimony of the thing than what we have done.

Nothing is more important than to have these two clear before the mind. "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." This is not what I have done. "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin" {Rom. 5:19}: this, too, is not what we have done; but we "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" {Rom. 3:23}, this is what we have done, that is, it is sins.

The right translation of Rom. 5:12 is, "for that all have sinned," not "in whom."³

Before passing on, we should note another recorded 'first' in Scripture. Adam said, "I feared." This is the first fright -- and was brought in through sin.

Passing the Blame Began in the Garden of Eden

SELF-JUSTIFICATION BEGINS

W. Kelly remarked:

They had believed Satan, they had forgotten and rebelled against God. In both the sin was aggravated. The man was bound to lead the woman aright, not to follow her in disobedience; the woman was not to direct but obey her husband, instead of inducing him from natural affection to join her transgression against the Lord God Who had blessed and warned them. Nor as yet was there repentance toward God. They were convicted and compelled to own their respective acts of sin; but there was no true self-judgment, no grief at their dishonor of God, no horror at the evil and their own guilt. On the contrary, there was the self-justification that proves the spirit unbroken, and the shiftings of the blame one on another, and even on God Himself.

Indeed the man was bold, instead of abasing himself as inexcusably wrong; for he not only put forward the woman as his excuse, but dared

3. *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 19:70, 71.

virtually to upbraid Him Who had in His goodness given her to be his counterpart. “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” And when Jehovah Elohim asked the woman, What is this thou hast done? her answer was, Not I have sinned, or I am guilty but “The serpent deceived me, and I did eat.” Thus our excuses only make bad worse, and God cannot but righteously deal with pleas so vain and unworthy, which show that unrepented sin is apt to eat as doth a gangrene, and is truly ungodliness.⁴

At bottom, the words “I did eat” confesses the guilt, and that was all they really needed to say. But ‘extenuating circumstances’ are brought forward to mitigate the guilt. How like that we are.

ADAM BLAMED GOD

Our hearts are quite capable of giving voice to the brazen effrontery that Adam showed when he said:

The woman whom thou hast given [to be] with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate (Gen. 3:12).

Why did he not merely say, ‘The woman gave me of the tree, and I ate’? Did he think Jehovah Elohim forgot that He gave the woman to be with him? No, rather: ‘You, Jehovah Elohim, are to blame for this because you are the One that gave that woman to be with me. Why, if You had not done so, I would not have sinned. It is your fault.’ The craftiness of the serpent is evident in this reply! How politic. Wonder what Eve thought as she heard her husband speak this way about Jehovah Elohim and about herself?

But it is contempt of his Creator to so speak! -- making it appear as if the Creator was the sinner -- or, at least a mitigating circumstance, whereas it was rebellion against the Word of God. The essence of sin is in moral departure from obedience. It is to have a will of one’s own. First and foremost, an offense against God, its fruit is seen in social conflicts of every kind.

Moreover, it is distrust of God for the future, for Adam knew that his wife had disobeyed, and she would die, and he would lose her. What then?

Oh, the wickedness of fallen man. We had better be aware of our own propensities. This sinful blaming is rampant everywhere. Why, the guilty charge others with their very own sin. They reverse the matter. No, it is not I, but the other person. And if blaming others is not sufficient, blame God!⁵ It was really sinful for Adam to blame God. It is from this fountain that there has issued such a question during World War Two as: if there is a God, why does He not stop

4. *The Bible Treasury* 19:194.

5. See also *The Bible Treasury* 8:274.

the war? or, if there is a God, why is the world in such a mess? And so some men seeking to escape the reality of their own sinful condition will say that since evil exists (not referring to their own evil), if God is love then He cannot be omnipotent, because otherwise He would stop the evil. If He is omnipotent, and He does not stop the evil, then He cannot be love. It is not in their mind that if God acted against evil, He would begin with them! At bottom, they want to do away with God and be autonomous.

Under Psychology, however, the effort is to get rid of guilt feelings, and changing sin into ‘normalcy.’ See Rom. 1:21-32. Into this condition came the light of the gospel and Christianity spread. Today we live at the other end of the Christian epoch and the condition of 2 Tim. 3:1-9 prevails. As Satan had his way with Eve, so in Christendom he has transformed himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), while the haters of Christianity work in parallel. Moral darkness is loved rather than light because men’s works are evil (John 3:19).

The many ways in which sin is excused and covered up have their origin in Adam. They are varied manifestations of what he did.

ADAM’S EXCUSES, AND DISCIPLINE

From *The Girdle of Truth* 2:46-64.⁶

. . . Adam was not deceived, but he was influenced. He early discovers the propensities of nature (no doubt in their best estate) which eventually led to his fall. Neither the world, nor its glory, nor any class of the inferior creatures, supply the craving of the sociable heart of Adam: for him there was not found an help meet for him, and it was not good for him to be alone. The instincts of his nature must be satisfied; but still more, when his wife was deceived, he yields to her influence, as he himself admits, “she gave unto me, and I did eat.” The first man disclosed this secret of his heart, that he was dependent on another; so that when Satan would not venture to beguile *him*, the object of his affections successfully tempted him. Now they are both naked, and both estranged from God, and hiding themselves from His presence, the first lessons of His grace are propounded to them. In discipline there is properly *conviction* of sin, as well as correction of it. With a saint it is never penance or compensation for wrong-doing. Chastening or correction is to make me a partaker of holiness, not a sufferer for sin. It is not to improve my nature, but to so convince me of its utter helplessness that I may be devoted unto God, which is the true and distinct meaning of Sanctification, and without which no man shall see the Lord. There is exceeding

6. The reader would be profited by reading W. Kelly’s remarks on Gen. 3:10-13 in *The Bible Treasury* 19:193-194; Gen. 3:14-15 in 19:209-211;

pain in being convicted of sin; and if there be not a strong sense of the grace of God when we are convicted, there will be great depression, and a tendency to give up all in despair. Hence the exhortation, “faint not when thou art *convicted* [Greek] of him.” God does not convict hastily. He likes that our cogitations on our own acts should convict ourselves. It is very little use to tell a vain man of his faults; it generally only urges him the better to conceal or extenuate them. It is very hard to induce a person in ill health and unconvinced of it, to adopt the necessary regimen; the more you remonstrate with such an one, the more strenuously will he endeavor to prove you mistaken, and you exasperate the malady you would assuage, while the really sin-convicted soul, like the patient tremblingly alive to his danger, is ready to receive every true palliative and remedy offered. When Adam had *perfected* the devices of his now estranged and corrupted heart, when the aprons are on and he behind the trees, the voice of God searches him. We are continually allowed to run to the end of our own plans, and thus to learn how futile they are. Many a weary hour and long day is squandered in the execution of plans which, when tested by the searching word of God, must be entirely abandoned. What is the nature of your plans? are they to distance and conceal you from God, or are they to bring you nigh unto Him, and to unfold to Him the minutest secrets of your heart? You may thus test your plans. Adam’s were to cloak him and to escape the eye of God, and God allowed him to complete his schemes. Oh, how well each of us knows what this is! The poor prodigal tries the far country, but returns to his father’s house a really humbled man. The many inventions are all tested and found to be as husks, and then the soul listens to the gracious tones of that voice it would fain escape from. It is a terrible question to answer, “Where art thou?” when you find out the insufficiency of all expedients to screen your conscience from the action of God’s word. Did the prodigal like to answer it when feeding the swine? Did Peter like to answer it when enjoying the cheer of his Master’s foes, when warming himself at their fire? Did Adam like it when he remembered the position which he occupied in contrast with the one he had forfeited? The answer to that question tells his state. The voice of God searches the conscience, and if it has not learned that it is with God it has to do, the history of it must be, “I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” Concealment is the first effort of a suffering conscience. You, neither like to see yourself, nor that any one else should see you, as you are; and when *God’s* voice reaches you, you hide yourself; while concealment betrays distance as well as evasion. There must be some activity in the conscience when concealment is resorted to, especially when no penalty (but the fact of your guilt being known) is attached to it. The babe who breaks a toy conceals it! Concealment is, in fact, resorted to in order that we may appear better than we are. If we were willing that every one should see us as we are, there would be no concealment. A disguise was never yet adopted but for self-exaltation. A lie was never maintained but to give us credit we did not deserve. When God deals with us we learn that “all things are

naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom *we have to do*.” The word (see Heb. 4) acts on our conscience, “piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”; but it conducts us to God. It is with Him, and not the word merely, “we have to do.” The voice of the Lord penetrated the soul of Adam; and though girdled with fig-leaves, which satisfied his own standard of morality, yet when the word came it tried him, and he was afraid because he was naked (naked before God), and he hid himself. It is important to study those two actions of the conscience. They give rise to much exercise and trouble in the soul, because they are confounded; that is when one has satisfied his own conscience, has adopted some system which conceals from himself and others the real state of his soul, he floats for awhile on peaceful waters; but no sooner is the voice of the Lord heard, but all the elements seem to him involved in a mighty tornado. His sleep is broken; he is another Philippian jailor, “he is afraid.” The fact that he is naked and opened before God flashes fearfully before him, and so much the worse because he had deceived himself, and his reputation with others had helped it on. The action of the word of God would be desperate and overwhelming to the soul if we had not a “great high priest passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.” His sympathy, on the ground of His atonement, in full effect before God, sets the convicted conscience at rest, and at the throne of grace, *too*, to receive the grace and the mercy it needs. This is just what Adam had to learn; consequently the voice pursues him to his hiding-place. It is in vain that one seeks to escape the eye of God. When He determines that it shall search you, if you take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there He will reach you! Oh, how the conscience that seeks escape from God overshadows itself within the foliage of this world! It engrosses itself with man’s leading and most ambitious pursuits, but in vain. The “watchers” will cry aloud, “Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves.” The refuge of lies shall be exposed, and the soul must have its account with God. It must answer, “WHERE ART THOU?” and all the answer needed is the tale of the plain and simple facts, “I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself!” The moment the soul of the saint is in full confession, he is in the region of forgiveness and restoration, and the Spirit expostulates with it as man would with his fellow. Adam tried his own expedients, and they were vain and profitless; now he will be a listener to the grace that tells of the sure and perfect remedy. But mark, he first discloses the true and full tale of the condition of his soul; he confesses his fear -- his nakedness -- his *effort* to hide himself! Discipline had effected this. Now God instructs him. Adam is “meek,” and God will teach him His way. He has learned that innocence was no protection against an undue influence, and that the absence of evil motive is no guarantee for true moral action. He, of all men, knew what this was preeminently; and yet it was no safeguard. He was tempted, and he yielded to it. Conscious, indeed, that innocence was gone, and evil motive could rule, he still trusts to

himself to screen and rectify his disgrace. The expedient he adopted satisfied his own moral sense, and, what was infinitely more delusive, the moral sense of the one whose good opinion he loved to secure, and whose satisfaction was a bulwark to his own. This is a snare that few, even godly men, escape. It is, in other words, the reputation with one's friends; pressed on the conscience as the verdict of the last court of appeal, and conclusive to it on any recurrence of anxious enquiry. There is a reciprocity in this kind of reputation. What you admit to me, I in return admit for you. If a girdle of fig-leaves measures the demands of *your* moral sense, and *you* accept it as sufficient for *me*, I in return do the same for *you*. This is the essence and true character of all human and religious reputation. But the voice of God sounds, and Adam is troubled in his deceitfully serene and false position. That voice probes the entire condition, and at last he finds himself "naked and opened before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." He confesses all, and he is on the uppermost form for instruction with an humble and a contrite spirit. To the divine challenge he admits (though with an excuse and mitigation) that he was tempted and had eaten. His justification lowers him morally more than the charge he seeks to justify. Yet it is a confession, and it is accepted as such; and our God enters on the gracious work of unfolding His counsels. To each actor in this wondrous scene is now meted the judgment due to the part he has played in it. *Satan's* sentence is first pronounced, and while *his* doom is fixed, the deliverance from his power and the eternal remedy of the gospel is declared to the listening and convicted Adam. It is the divine way, in restoring a soul, to establish it *first* in the power of God, and in His grace. The draft, the fishes, and the words of Jesus brought this to Peter. It is the ground work for all godly improvement. When the heart is established, as David's was ("the Lord has taken away thy sin"), then it can bear to hear what is the discipline necessary to correct that in him which sin could act on. It is important to carry with us the process by which the Lord reveals to the soul the discipline which He will impose. Whatever has provoked our failure is denounced, not in general terms, but in the proportion, and in the order too, of its guilt; at the same time commanding and promising the true mode of deliverance. Satan is not only sentenced, but the effect of his malice on man will be his own irremediable retribution. Man shall be avenged of his enemy. The serpent is not only assigned, as a signal judgment, to crawl and to eat dust, in perpetual hostility to the lord of the creation, but its "violent dealing shall come down on its own pate"; its head shall be bruised. The next brought up for judgment is the *woman*. She was the proximate cause of Adam's failure; but as the principal had received his sentence, she must now hear hers. She is condemned to times of great sorrow on every addition to the human family which she has been instrumental in subjecting to the power of death; with unconditional subjection to her husband, the want of which bore its first-fruits in her own fall, and led to Adam's also. Each transgressor is not only sentenced to a penalty corresponding to his guilt, but the relation in which that guilt has affected Adam is also markedly

repaired. God's servant must not be touched with impunity, but he must not err himself. The righteous God will avenge his cause, but only in *righteousness*. He cannot overlook the frailty of His servant, though He will rescue him when the unmitigated sentence is executed. When God enters into judgment, even-handed justice is dispensed. But acts are criminal in a greater or less degree: that which implicates God's witness in distance from Him being more so than the failure which that witness evinces by being drawn into distance. The one who misleads another comes under a severer penalty than he who is misled; though he is not exempted because he discovers moral feebleness. The infliction of penalties are not necessarily for correction, nor is the discipline. There was no hope of amending Satan, but yet severe penalties are inflicted on him because Adam had suffered from him. Man was God's representative on earth; injury to him was treason against God. Hence in divine discipline there is always a correction of the evil principle of nature, and also correction for the trespass we may have committed on our fellow-man. This is exemplified in the sentence on Adam. His sin was yielding to his wife's request in opposition to the word of God. Probably he did not do so with intent; that is, not after weighing both he decided in favor of the former. But the word was not hid in his heart, and did not control him; for if it had been he would not have hearkened to the voice of his wife. But having surrendered his place, he is to bear the penalty of it, and become the great slave and laborer on the earth, of which he was the ruler and prince. Everything on it would bear indications of insubjection to its rightful master. To assuage the evil, he should spend his life and live thereby; but in the end return to dust, as dust he was. There is deeply instructive teaching in all this; even that if we surrender the position in which God places us in any relation, the one we retire to will inevitably notify to us, in fearful reminiscences, what has been our forfeiture. The smallest thorn and briar reminded Adam that he had surrendered his lordship in hearkening to the voice of his wife. If David retires from the duties of the king, he must surrender, in a painful way, the honors of one. He is reminded how lightly he regarded them by the successful rebellion of his own son. "Cursed be he who doeth the work of the Lord negligently." All the influence of Barnabas would not induce Paul to take Mark who had returned from Pamphylia. The refusal of the apostle reminded him how he trifled with and abandoned the post once his, but easier lost than regained. This is the nature of Adam's discipline. He is reminded by everything of what he surrendered, and the less carefully and diligently he labored to subdue the numerous reminiscences of his failure, the more they increased, and the less able was he to sustain himself against them. By the sweat of his brow he regained his position for his own need. David returned, after a severe campaign, to the throne. Mark was profitable for the ministry after the discipline had produced its effect. Faith always walks above discipline, though walking under it. Adam hears the sentence on all, and, in faith consenting to it, rises above it, and calls his wife's name Eve, because she is "the mother of all

living.” Faith reaches unto God, therefore it can submit to the position which judicially and correctively falls to an erring soul, and looks to God for His own time and mode of deliverance. It accepts the punishment of its iniquity, not as retribution for it, but as correction. Discipline has in fact produced its greatest effect where the soul submits to it as trusting in God. Adam shows this in making amends to his wife (in thus naming her) for his former reproaches; and what was, in unsubdued nature, the agent of harm to him is now, in the eye of faith, the channel of life. Adam, disciplined in faith, God clothes him, yet discipline must not be arrested nor reprieved. God drives out the man, and sends him to till the ground from whence he is taken, to find out what sort of a man he was, and to learn how his faith would sustain him.

It is in our immediate relations of life, in the innermost circle, where there is least reserve, we most truly disclose ourselves. A man who cannot rule his *own house* how shall he take care of the Church of God? {1 Tim. 3}. Power is more effective applied immediately than at a distance. If Adam is learning from his discipline, it ought to be seen in his power to avoid the evil for which he was suffering. It does not appear that he does; for *Eve* assumes the a place of naming his eldest son, again losing sight of her own place, and again, beyond doubt, filling her first-born (which his name alone would suggest) with aspirations which led to his fearful contradiction of it, as well as the painful evidence of her own misapprehension of God’s promise. The introduction of death where life was expected; the fact that one child was murdered and the other the murderer; the one in whom their hopes centered must have been a trial to Adam that we can little conceive -- a discipline which had its effects -- for though it is said that *Eve* named Seth in the first instance, yet it is also written that *Adam* called his name Seth, showing, as it appears to me, that he at length had learned what the discipline was sent to teach him, namely, to act for God, above all influence, and not to allow any influence to distract him from the path of faith. He appears to have learned this in the last recorded act of his life, a very pleasing consummation, showing the effect of discipline; and a very fit and happy finale to his history. To sum up, we learn from this history that innocence or absence of evil motive is no safeguard *against* influence. That satisfying our own moral sense, or the moral sense of any one else, is no proof that we can answer, or have answered, to God’s claim on us. That if we cease to maintain our divinely appointed place, we are sure to fall, and the word of God, which would have preserved us in our place, does not act on the heart outside that place. But that learning to follow our own inclinations, our discipline will always be of a character to correct our failure, and to remind us, in very minute ways (as did the thorns to Adam), what our frailty has reduced us to.

Lastly, when discipline has effected its object, our history closes. ❖

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

*The Christian’s Heavenly Place and
Calling Eviscerated by Messianic Judaism*

Chapter 10

The Practice of Our Circumcision in Christ *Answering in Practice* *to Positional Circumcision* *Col. 3:5-11*

It has been said that we spare the flesh in others because we spare the flesh in ourselves. This is true; and to this may be added that those who spare the flesh are likely to turn on those who would judge the flesh.

Following is an extract from an Address on Josh. 5 by W. T. Turpin. ⁷

* * * * *

. . . We read that “the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal” -- the spot which got all its characteristic and definiteness from this -- “and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.” Now that is beautiful. When they were in the full results of redemption, in God’s own land, the territory that God had purposed in His own heart for them -- He had brought them out of Egypt through the Red Sea and brought them into Canaan through the open waters of the Jordan -- and when they were there, circumcised, they sit down to celebrate the Passover. See what a wonderful thing this is. They kept the Passover on the fourteenth day at even in the plains of Jericho. They celebrated redemption when they were in God’s own land. I know nothing more touching than that. What a different sort of celebration that was from the night of the Passover in Egypt, and from the time when they kept

7. *Collected Writings of W. T. Turpin*, pp. 93-95, Present Truth Publishers, 1999. See also, “This Side the Jordan and Beyond,” *ibid.*, pp. 242-244.

it in the wilderness. On the night of the Passover itself, in Ex. 12, there was the terror, and fear, and anguish that connected itself with Egypt attaching to them. When they kept it in the desert, as we know they did {Num. 9}, there were the circumstances of the wilderness attaching to them.⁸ But when they kept it in Canaan, in the plains of Jericho, I believe it answers exactly to God's normal thought to us in the Lord's supper. It is a heavenly remembrance of the once crucified Jesus, whose blood has settled everything for God and for us. That is what that keeping of the Passover here answered to, not the Passover in Egypt, not the Passover in the desert, very blessed, though they were in their place, but the Passover now, when they were in the full results of the redemption which God had accomplished, by His own power, and were brought into the land which His own heart had designed and purposed for them. Circumcision first, the celebration of the Passover next.

Then there is one thing more, and that is, that now God feeds them, the circumcision knife is most important, but it is not food. The knife will remove the excrescences and the practical manifestations of all that God has really got rid of before Himself, and I believe in my soul what Christians want is this knife. That is to say, it is this practical abnegation to death of all that judicially has been condemned. It is a grand thing to keep that clear in our souls, that God has got rid of it, and does not see one bit of it before Himself. But then, on that ground God says, I will not permit you to allow a bit of it. And therefore the apostle says, "Our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin," that is, the principle of sin, "might be annulled, that henceforth we should not be the servants of sin." We were sin's slaves before, we are not to be sin's slaves now, we are free. "Free" in scripture never means that the thing is not there, but that we are not under its dominion. There is the great mistake that many beloved people have made with regard to it; when they talk of being free from sin, they think that sin is not there. No; the meaning of it is I am no longer under its dominion: I have got the flesh in me, and always shall until I drop this poor vile body, but God has got rid of the whole principle of that as standing before Himself, He has judicially condemned and put it in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ out of His sight; and He says to me, as it were, "The flesh is in you, but I do not want you to allow one motion of it; on the contrary I insist on your practically accepting what is true really of you." And this is where the sharp knife comes in. There would be no force in circumcision if the flesh was not there. If God says to me, "You must take a sharp knife and circumcise," it

8. {For the occasions in Scripture where the observation of the passover is recorded, and the meaning of those occasions, see *The Seven Set Feasts of Jehovah*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

is as much as to say the flesh is there. And if people say they have got rid of it they are denying the word of God. You do not want a sharp knife if it is not there or if it is changed; it is there unaltered, and therefore you want the sharp knife to reduce it practically to silence as God has judicially condemned it. Now that is most important, and I believe in this lies the secret of the weakness in Christians, that they are not using the circumcision knife. Thank God, every Christian is in a sense circumcised, but they do not practically circumcise; the knife has got blunt somehow or other, they do not use the sharp knife in faith and liberty. There are those who try to bring the law in, but instead of the law it should be the knife. Beloved brother or sister, if you are trying the law, try the knife instead. Never forget this -- the law allows the flesh; it is the flesh it puts under restriction. I suppose no one here to-night would say you would put the new life under restriction. You would not say to the new life, -- Do not touch this, or that, or the other thing. But then, if you say that to the flesh, you are giving the flesh a position, allowing it as a living thing, giving it a status. You see restriction is quite a different thing from the knife; the knife is that which disallows the thing, the law is that which allows it. The law allows it, but says, "I will not let you move"; but still there it is. I will tell you what it is -- handcuffs; I will allow you, but I will handcuff you. But the knife says, I disallow you, I abnegate you to death, I totally and completely refuse you; I do not put you under any restriction, but I totally disallow you. "Mortify your members"; putting them under restriction is the very opposite to "mortify," it is really giving them a life.

Now I want you to look at this a little further. That is the negative side of the truth -- the getting rid of practically all that God in His infinite wonderful grace has got rid of judicially. But now we come to what is positive. God says, as it were, "To fight you must be fed, and I have got food for you." And therefore we read,

And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

Now that was the food that was suited to the new position God had brought them into. It has been said, and I have no doubt truly, that the meaning of the old corn of the land was -- it was the food that grew there -- Christ in the new heavenly blessed place and circumstances He has gone into, a heavenly, victorious, triumphant Christ, who passed through everything and has gone into heaven; that is the old corn of the land, food suited to Canaan. It is very beautiful to see all these little points in the types of scripture with regard to the different ways in which the Lord Jesus Christ is set before us.

And now mark this -- the manna ceased. But then it is interesting to see that they had manna into Canaan, at any rate. I suppose that is the reason why some

people think we do not want manna now, because it says here the manna ceased; indeed, that passage was brought up to me as supporting that objection. But it is a very stupid objection, because you know very well the people of Israel were not in the wilderness and in Canaan at the same period of their life as we are. They were in the wilderness one part of their life, and they were in Canaan another part of their life; whereas we Christians are passing through the desert and yet at the same time seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus during the same term of our natural life down here though the experiences of the two are distinct, and do not go on at the same moment. Our position is that we are seated together in heavenly places in Christ, and yet we are down here in this world, and if we are according to God's mind it is a desert to us, and therefore we want manna. But the children of Israel did eat manna after they went into Canaan; no doubt it ceased, *but still they had it in the land*. And you will find, as a matter of fact, if it is a question of our heavenly joys, or conflict, or place, if it is a question of what we have to meet in heaven, we want the heavenly food for that; nothing will nourish our souls but that; we want the heavenly Christ to sustain us, we want the heavenly food to strengthen our hearts. If I have to contend against this awful foe, this wily enemy, I want the heavenly food. And therefore God says, you cannot fight if you are not fed; you must have the knife to take away the power from the enemy, you must have food to strengthen yourselves to fight the foe. The circumcision knife disallows what the enemy would profit by; the food is the strength of the new life to enable me to meet the foe. But then I am going through this world here, and I find sorrows in it and trials -- I have got a sick wife, or a sick child, or a weak body, or trying circumstances, do not I want manna for that? I have got the lowly Christ for the circumstances here, that lowly sweetness and gentleness that characterized Him, that manna, like the small hoar-frost, that was, as has been beautifully said, on every rose and every thorn, and they gathered it, and it was sweet, and they fed on it. You and I want that as we pass through this desert scene. I say, thank God I have got Christ in both, I have got Him in Canaan and I have got Him in the desert; I want manna as my food as I go through the desert of this world; I want the old corn of the land to sustain me in my true position in heaven. ❖

{The following is an address by W. T. Turpin.}

Across the Jordan

Notes of an Address

Everything we find in Joshua is on the other side of Jordan. The different

accounts the Spirit gives are connected with the other side. Numbers speaks of the wanderings of the children of Israel on *this* side, Joshua of the possessions God had given them, and of the conflict in connection with taking possession on the other side. Jordan represents not Christ dying for our sins, but Christ putting an end to us, as to our history connected with the flesh, and introducing us into another place. In the Red Sea we have a type of Christ dying for our sins. Jordan is *our dying with Christ*, having passed in spirit out of this world as quickened, raised, and seated together in Him. In the truth of Jordan we get two different aspects of Christianity; first, the standing of the believer in Christ: in this sense, every believer has passed over, in the other very few have; i.e. *practically* and consciously passed over. As to standing, if you are a Christian at all, you've passed Jordan, you have died with Christ. Of how many of us is it true as to our state? How can it be, when there is such self-seeking, worldliness, ease, slothfulness, such want of devotedness and affection towards Christ among us? If we have not *taken possession* of Canaan, Jordan is still rolling *practically* between *us* and the land of promise. It is terrible to boast of our *standing* if our *state* is low. There is not that conservative power among us, so that it should be said, "I cannot bring in the world there." I do not wish to depress any true heart. If we condemn ourselves, we have exercised consciences about it; the truth has reached us. There is so little divine energy to lay hold of what is ours! Joshua tells us what God has given us; but *our feet must tread it*, or we have not practically got hold of it. The very fact that it is yours in Christ gives energy and power to take possession, otherwise you are taking something you have no right to. The moment you begin to tread it you will find conflict every step of the way, but the whole power of God is pledged in order to maintain you in the place you have put your foot on. On every side of us Christians are settling down *this* side Jordan. Take care you do not lower the truth of God to suit yourself. Perhaps you say, "I shall never reach up to it"; then *self* is before you. If you have communion with God about heavenly things which are yours, you must give up things here. What are you going in for? If for this world and heaven, you will get neither. It is for us *to take* possession of what God has *given us in Christ*; then we must turn our back on things here, and *seek -- set our "mind* on things above." Are *these* the things that command you? I am amazed when I observe how we allow our minds to be occupied with such trifles, and to be troubled about such worthless things as depress many of us, when such a wonderful place and portion is opened out before us. The two and a half tribes did *not* go over; and in 1 Kings 22 we see the very country they settled in was the very spot that first fell into the hands of the enemy, so they lost everything; and we see the same thing in the history of God's people when it is a question of heavenly things. God never *forces* any one into them. He, as it were, lets us take our choice. If we go in for them, we shall find they

richly compensate for all we may have to abandon.

Observe vv 3 and 4. Knowledge of the boundary is not possession of the territory practically. We have it all in Christ; but it must be made good to us. Nothing is more terrible than trading on heavenly truth. God has given us *all* on the other side; He has opened it all out to us. Have we practically taken possession of it? There must be energy, dependence, obedience, purpose of heart; not slothfulness, indifference, self-seeking. We shall find we never enter into or enjoy these things except when we begin to practice them. Whatever my circumstances or position, I am to be the exposition of one who has everything in heaven in Christ. The reason why we do not realize it is, because the sole of our foot has not trodden it. If I think of myself when I was a sinner, I remember how I received everything without money and without price; all was free -- no toil or labor or tears on my part. But as a *saint*, I get nothing as to *realization* or *communion* without trouble and practical possession, because heaven is in contrast to everything here; the Father is against the world, and the Holy Ghost against the flesh. If you are thrown *that* side, you will find all against you this side. Christ is here by the power of the Spirit to lead His people on to victory. This is our encouragement; for the moment you go in for heavenly things you will find opposition from every quarter, not a feeling of your nature but will oppose itself, as well as everything outside. It will be conflict every step. We often get weary of it. When a person sets out to be practically what is true of them in Christ, all are against them; like the blind man in John 9, Pharisees, parents, neighbors, &c., all were opposed to him.

People are more perverted from God through their friends and relations than almost anything. Relationships are God-given relationships; but when they take the place of Christ and Christ's things, nothing is a greater hindrance; the truth of God is often compromised to please them. We see it in Scripture. John Mark left Paul and went to Cyprus, his native place. Jacob's wife and mother were his snare. Those nearest and dearest in the flesh are those we suffer most from; if we are not on our watch, they well know, and best know, where our weak points are, and where to touch us. If the heart be simply set on pleasing Christ, His things and His interests will be before us -- everything will be in reference to Christ, and everything will have the mark of Christ upon it. He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to His parents; but when it was a question of interference with the rights of His Father, it is, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The enjoyment of heavenly things is hindered when our relationships are not taken up in a divine manner.

Verse 5. The assurance God gave to Moses, He renews to Joshua. Christ puts Himself at our head to lead us on. This is a great cheer; none ought to be disheartened with such a Captain and Guide, such an arm to lean on. Before the

first conflict He appears as Captain of the Lord's host. What an honor to be following Him. What is wanted is a true heart and a single eye -- the single eye which takes in only one object; if you have two objects before you, you have not a single eye. It is gazing only on our mighty, heavenly Joshua, who fills the vision of the soul that we are strong and courageous. In vv. 7 and 8 we see what gives strength and courage -- we are well commanded, so that we are entitled to have full confidence. What gives confidence to an army is knowing the ability of its general. His skill and power inspires courage and confidence. Obedience follows courage; the reason we do not obey is because we are cowardly; this is the secret of disobedience. Though all were against him, the sense of Who he was come out to, gave the blind man courage, and he says, "Will ye also be His disciples?" Will you throw your lot in with Him? He was not thinking of the relief there was to be got from Him, but will you give yourself to Him? This is one reason of so much weakness among us, the testimony that goes out is so much more on the side of *relief*, than the Person in whom it is found.

Verse 7. There is nothing so important as simple allegiance to the word of God. The tendency of the day is to *judge* the word of God, instead of letting it judge *you*. People have their own thoughts and are opinionated; it is not what we *think*, but what *God says*. Has God been at pains to give a revelation, and am I not to be obedient to it? Every one is ready to give their opinion in the present day. What is wanted is the *word of God*. "Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left." We need to have it more distinctly under our feet, to have divine sanction for everything we do, and put our hand to. *Conscience* is no *guide*, but if it is enlightened it is a good witness. Paul could say, "I have lived before God in all good conscience," &c.; if it is not informed by the word of God, it gives a false witness. If every man's conscience is his guide, it will be chaos over again; it is sure to mislead if it is not guided by the word of God. Conscience is the avenue through which God reaches the soul. The word of Christ rings on the woman's conscience in John 4, "Thou art a prophet"; a prophet is one who brings the soul into the presence of God, the effect of the word is to bring the conscience into the light of God's presence; it is the avenue through which God lets His light into the soul.

Verse 8. Implicit obedience leads to prosperity (Psa. 1:1, 2). How do you read Scripture? Do you meditate? It furnishes us with the mind of God; we need to get the habit of thinking of things as God thinks of them. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water," &c. No sign of autumn's tint, but ever fresh. Of course Psa. 1 speaks of Christ in His perfection as man down here; we are to *follow Him*. "Have not I commanded thee?" This imparts courage. If we are not certain that we are doing the will of God, we are like reeds shaken with the wind. It imparts a quiet, steady dignity. I am not to be moved by what people say. I have only to place my character in the right hand of God, and go

on in endurance. We must hold the truth in communion with the Father and the Son. Christ is the truth. All radiates and flows out from Him.

Verse 9. I will be with you, you shall have my presence. Many seem not to know what the presence of God is. We have His *word*, and we have *Himself*, the two things we get in 2 Tim. 3 and 4.

The Lord lead our hearts into the full and conscious blessedness of our place in Christ in heaven at the other side of Jordan, in God's own land, on which His eyes continually rest. ⁹ ❖

Morality, Self-judgment, Conflict, Religious Practices, Etc.

We may thank God that we are delivered -- we are not going to be cast into hell. But is that enough? It is not. If we stop short there, if we do not enter further into our blessings, Satan will be sure, at one time or another, to gain a complete victory over us, as he did over the Israelites. For instead of their conquering and driving out their enemies, we read of Canaanites, Perizzites, Jebusites, &c., who kept their possessions in peace, in spite of Israel. And so it is with many a child of God. They are kept in evil that does not appear to be such, and is not considered so, because it is not moral evil. For even a mere man is bound not to sin morally. But a Christian is a person who has his eyes upon the Lord. Any one can judge an outwardly immoral thing, but very few know that what even godly people are doing, is entirely contrary to the Holy Ghost and to God Himself. There are many so-called religious practices that are sins, and these are sins that the Christian ought to have his eyes open to. The Lord works this in us by giving us to know that we have got a heavenly inheritance. The Lord Jesus, by His death and resurrection, not only has brought us out of Egypt and into the wilderness, but into heaven itself in spirit. We are even now seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus {Eph. 2:6}. We have got now the stamp of heaven upon us, and God is looking that we may walk in the sense of this great privilege, making advances, gaining victories, and wresting what Christ has given us out of the hands of the enemy. Supposing a person truly converted to God, and made happy in the knowledge of his sin being for ever put away, the next thing is -- he does not know what to do to please God, or how to worship God. If he simply goes on as he was before, assuming that what he did when he was unconverted as to these things, is what he is to do now (save only, of course, with a new aim and power), he cannot make any progress; and it is thus that the devil keeps possession of the place of blessing, and shuts out the heir of glory from his calling and inheritance. Of

9. In *The Christian's Friend*, 1877, pp. 15-21.

course, I only speak of the matter of practical enjoyment. The enemies are still undisturbed in the land. But we ought to be seeing what the inheritance is that the Lord has assigned to us, and whether our worship and our walk are really according to God, and suitable to the place in which He has set us. If you make morality your standard, you will be sure to fall below what you propose. Whatever we put before us as our criterion, there will always be a falling short. If we have Christ risen and Christ in heaven as our object we shall prove the power of His resurrection, not only in lifting us up when we are conscious of our exceeding shortcoming, but in strengthening us "to press forward towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

In the beautiful scene before us, we find that the people passed dry-shod over Jordan. And what made it so remarkable was, its being the very time when the river was overflowing its banks; it was fuller then than at any other season. So in the death of Christ there was the fullest possible outpouring of God's wrath; and upon His beloved Son, sin -- our sin -- has been judged to the uttermost. And, as in the type, they passed over as if there had been no Jordan at all, so, in the reality for us, there remains no judgment, but fulness of blessing. We are passed from death unto life, and are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

And now, when they have entered the land, what do we find? The manna ceases -- they must eat of the old corn of the land. The food that had sustained them in the wilderness does not any longer suffice {i.e., for the heavenlies}. And what is the old corn of the land? It is Christ, as the manna also was; but Christ in another way: it is the food of resurrection. The corn of the land was the fruit of the seed that had been sown in the land, and that had died and sprung up again. It was Christ in resurrection. The Lord grant that our souls may feed upon Him thus! To say that Christ thus known is too high for us, -- to be content without enjoying Him thus, is thus far to be content without Christ. ¹⁰

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Ed.

10. *The Bible Treasury* 3:218-219.

Judah and Jerusalem: God's Voice to Ourselves

(by A. C. Brown -- 1972)

Introduction

Lullaby ministry, sweet sounding to the carnal ear, while being popular, is deceiving and it defeats *that which is most needful, the humbling of ourselves* under the mighty hand of God. "Saying Peace, Peace, when there is no peace," "people love to have it so."

Although we know that God's grace in Christ guarantees us eternal glory with Him, we should also know that every dispensation ends in ignominious failure: -- expulsion, flood, Babel, captivity, "curse" (Mal. 4:6), Laodicea, and "fire" (2 Pet. 3:7). Where are we? We are in "the last days," "the end of the time" (Jude 18 NT, JND). Yes, the very end of this age.

As apostasy ripens the most needed truth is least wanted. How sad! It is unwanted, unpalatable, unwelcome, unpopular, unbearable! "Smooth things" (Isa. 30:10) are preferred rather than faithful conscience-convicting and humbling ministry. No doubt our hearts ARE warmed by ministry which directs us to Christ, to our many wonderful privileges, our perfect standing in Christ, our being gathered to His name and the hope of His coming. Nevertheless such edification should not be unaccompanied by faithful conscience-searching reproof as to our low practices. It surely does not help us to humble ourselves and judge ourselves for His glory. "Nothing can be more offensive to the Lord than that . . . His people should clothe themselves with the privilege of His presence, and use this pretension to honor self and justify evil, or maintain a divine claim in spite of it." (*Synopsis of the Bible*, J. N. Darby, 2:516, Morrish ed.)

Our present danger is to remain insensible to a Laodicean STATE, and derive complacency from knowing that the position occupied elicits divine sanction (Jer. 7:4-7). It ill becomes us to make high pretensions to Philadelphian POSITION when our STATE displays so many of the characteristics of Laodicea. It is high time for us to wake up and "consider our ways." A century ago Mr. Darby sensed the danger when he said, "Brethren are in a critical moment." Although Philadelphia does not become Laodicea, Laodicea springs out of Philadelphia, and so "We are peculiarly in danger. If we have shared in any way in the blessings of Philadelphia, we share in the dangers of Laodicea" (F. C. J.)

Undoubtedly Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea do run through to the end of this church age, and each represents distinct *positions* as well as their own peculiar *characteristics*. POSITIONALLY there is but ONE PLACE, (Deut. 12:5,11,13-14, 18,21,26; 16:5-7; 26:2; 31:11; 1 Chron. 22:1; Psa. 78:67-72; 2 Chron. 30:1,11; Matt.18:20; 1 Cor.10:16-22; Eph. 4:4a) owned of God as eliciting divine sanction. What should characterize those who through grace occupy that place is what characterized Philadelphia -- hearts and lives devoted to Christ, His word, His interests, and His coming for them. They overcame by cleaving to HIM and all He had revealed of His grace and truth and His presence. Alas, how little our own state comports with the position we, through grace, have been brought to occupy. Instead the CHARACTERISTICS of Laodiceanism are all too evident among us. Can we honestly say that we have held fast to that which has been committed to us? Some have gone off in division; others remain in the place of His appointment, but appear to be merely NOMINALLY gathered. They seem to have no conception of overcoming worldliness that so dishonors Christ (Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:1,2; 1 John 2:15). It is this and our own comparative lack of power that is now embarrassing us. We speak of humbling ourselves in the dust, but how little we do it!

Unless we live in the power of devotedness to Christ, we will be found as to our STATE, Laodicean (though we may outwardly occupy the position owned by God -- see Neh. 3:20, 21; 13:4, 7). Our best teachers have held various views as to Laodicea. One taught that Sardis becomes Laodicea. Another held that liberalism is Laodicea. Others believe that the various divisions which have left the divine center are represented by Laodicea. One is content to leave this with the Lord and agree with men of God who have given us ample warning of the danger of PLUMING OURSELVES as to *place and privilege*, while being complacent as to our *state*. Setting up to be Philadelphia, while having so much of the characteristics of Laodicea about us, -- such presumption savors of Laodicean pride and poverty (Rev. 3:17). We should remember that the Philadelphian STATE included divine POSITION, but divine POSITION does not insure a Philadelphian STATE.

Saints make the path at this time one of sorrow . . . the tendency of the day is to adopt an advanced form of expression of the truth, but walk as worldly as ever . . . the object of all such being the best way to get along in this scene . . . deepening their interest in this world . . . How can we expect a saint who is ministering to self to have any conception of what is due to Christ? . . . a condition incapable of grasping the mind of God and to which He does not communicate His thoughts. ¹

1. From *Laodicean Lukewarmness* -- J.B S.

When the heart, eyes and ears are so filled with everything that shuts out Christ, are we not displaying the world and self instead of Christ?

The Christian must ever be in one of two places -- either separated from the world and suffering, or associated with it and unfaithful. . . . I would rather see her (i.e., the church) dwelling in the catacombs, than in the emperor's palace (Andrew Miller).

Before leaving the subject of Philadelphia and Laodicea there is another very important danger which calls for faithful warning. If we lack overcoming power to suffer for the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:7, 8) we resemble mere professors that "have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5). When the church had lost its first love the Lord allowed the Smyrnans to suffer at the hands of the "synagogue of Satan" -- the Jews. The same term "the synagogue of Satan" is used in the message to the Philadelphians. We believe it refers to the religious establishments that are now forming the ecumenical combine, soon to become "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots," "bundles to burn" (Matt. 13:30; Rev. 17:16; 18:9, 8, 18). Satan's preparation toward "one world religion," "one world government" with "Common market control" is rapidly ripening . . .

It is this prosperity and luxury that is benumbing spirituality and perception. The result is spineless neutrality, tolerant and even resigned to everything -- unconcerned even when the Lord is being dishonored!

Daring, glaring, shameful abominations unblushingly display themselves. Total lack of modesty and conscience, conformed to the world's vulgar styles! Glamorous lashes, claws, trinkets, shocking attire, mannish pants, granny garb and vain insignificant pretention to a head covering, advertise the state of soul. "The things sought after disclose the state of the heart." "If I deck my person, it is the flesh and folly, not Christ." See 1 Tim. 2:9.

Lot's soul was vexed day by day because of what he saw in Sodom; and godly ones in Ezekiel's day "sighed and cried" because of the abominations they beheld in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. How about ourselves! To be blind or indifferent is further proof of our low state.

Most commendable are the expressions in a letter just received: --

I have had the overpowering sense of the sifting of God coming on us, individually and collectively . . . I feel with all my heart we are all a part of the failure . . . My personal judgment of some of our leaders leaves me trembling . . . Do not allow sweet-sounding words from sweet-sounding brethren to take you off guard.

"The hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass" (Ezra 9:2). "Princes of the people . . . these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel" (Ezek. 11:1, 2). "The leaders of this people cause them

to err" (Isa. 9:16). "The prophets that cause My people to err" (Micah 3:5). Influentials with their coterie and "the elite" may develop a hierarchy. Too much getting "heads" together is a sign of weakness and "not HOLDING THE HEAD" (Col. 2:18).

Isaiah prophesied for sixty years, and Jeremiah for forty-one years. If any of us has given considerable attention to these prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem for sixty or forty-one months, is it too much for our readers to devote forty-one or sixty minutes to this most needed and most searching truth? It will surely test just how much our heart is concerned.

Judah and Jerusalem

Of the twelve patriarchal tribes that God delivered out of Egypt, Judah became the most privileged in the land of Canaan; God's chosen center, Jerusalem, where He placed His throne, temple and name, was there. Could anything be more clearly written for our admonition, *we who are the most privileged people as gathered together to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ?* {but are we, really?} Beloved brethren, we should pause and consider this.

Jerusalem was the place where King Solomon reigned until God was displeased with his divided heart and rent the ten tribes from him. Judah was the particular tribe reserved (1 Kings 11:11; 12:31; 12:15, 24; 14:8; 2 Kings 17:21), all of which agrees in principle with 1 Cor. 11:19:

For there must also be sects among you, that the approved may become manifest among you (NT, JND).

Have we weighed this and seen why it becomes necessary in God's governmental dealings with His people? When Satan succeeds to get our hearts away from Christ, he may be used also to divide the saints! Should we not learn from the past?

Thereafter various kings reigned over declining Judah until "that king Ahaz" "made Judah naked," "for the Lord brought Judah low," and classed him as a "king of Israel" (2 Chron. 28:19).

Hezekiah and Isaiah

However, strange as it may seem, the son of Ahaz that reigned over Judah in his stead was good king Hezekiah. Only twenty-five years of age, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and had them "carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place." He lamented that the doors had been shut, the lamps had been put out, incense had not been burned and burnt offerings had not been offered to God. How needful for ourselves are his faithful words: --

My sons, be not now negligent: for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that ye should minister unto Him, and burn incense.

In this twenty-ninth chapter {of 2 Chron.} the burnt offering is mentioned twelve times, because it is the offering that speaks of God's portion, and His portion is Christ in all His perfections, excellencies and loveliness, the One who glorified God by offering Himself up without spot.

Notwithstanding all the commendable *outward* order of Hezekiah's reign, the prophet Isaiah exposes the *internal moral and corrupt state* of the people as God saw it. They had "a form of godliness" like many in our day.

Isaiah writes "concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah," "How is the faithful city become an harlot! *It was . . . but now . . .*" (Isa. 1:1, 21).

"Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen . . . as Sodom . . . the daughters are haughty, and walk with stretched forth neck and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go" (Isa. 3:8, 9, 16). Thus glorifying themselves with glamour to allure! Such is so disgusting in our day. Have they no conscience?

"That call evil good, and good evil . . . because they have . . . despised the word of the Holy One" (Isa. 5:20, 24).

"A snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Many among them shall . . . be snared" (Isa. 8:14, 15).

"For the people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them" (Isa. 9:13). (Amos 4:6-11; Micah 6:9; Hag. 1:10,11; 2:16,17 amplify the same truth.) Is not God speaking loudly to us now?

"*The leaders of this people cause them to err*" (Isa. 9:16). Then we should be diligently proving all things.

"The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of *deep sleep* . . . Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do they honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me" (29:10,13). *Such* will not be aroused!

"Woe to the rebellious children . . . that walk to go down to Egypt . . . This is a rebellious people . . . that will not hear . . . which say . . . *Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things*" (Isa. 30:1, 2, 9, 10). How characteristic of our day! How very characteristic of our day!

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word" (Isa. 66:2). For such there is the brightest prospect when Christ will fill the earth with abundance of blessings of righteousness, peace and plenty. Christ is knocking loudly at the door of Laodicea, if

perchance any will hear.

Josiah and Jeremiah

During eighteen years of king Josiah's illustrious reign the prophet Jeremiah revealed the *shocking internal corruption* and rebellion that God saw in Judah and Jerusalem. Who of all the prophets wept and lamented and was despised more than Jeremiah? With fearless Phinehas' faithfulness he declares to their faces their deplorably low state. It is easy enough for us to point our finger at Christendom, but such is unfaithful evasion and deception. It is not our wish to be invidious, but we do want to be upright and face *the very truth we most need*. Who needs unsparing humbling and confession of failure more than ourselves? Surely it is this that would be for His glory and our blessing. Dan. 9, Ezra 9, Neh. 9 and Lam. 3 teach us the same.

A few figures may be profitable as well as surprising in showing some of the characteristics of *Jeremiah's unwanted ministry*.

- "Judah" is mentioned 183 times.
- "Jerusalem" 112 times, besides many times "this city," "this place," and "this people."
- "not hearkened" 49-54 times! It may try our patience to review them.
- "Abominations" 12 times.
- "Stubbornness of heart" 9 times (JND trans.). What shame!
- "Rebellious" 7 times.
- Jeremiah's "eyes with tears" 9 times.

No wonder such truths are evaded!

"LIKE THE DEAF ADDER THAT STOPPETH HER EAR"

"Jeremiah . . . in the days of Josiah" (Jer. 1:1, 2). (Josiah was the king of Judah in Jerusalem.)

"The Lord said unto me . . . thou shalt go . . . thou shalt speak . . . be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee . . . I have put My words in thy mouth . . . arise and speak . . . be not dismayed at their faces . . . *They shall fight against thee*" (Jer.1). What an unpleasant mission!

"Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me" (Jer. 2:1).

"For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

“In vain have I smitten . . . they received no correction” (Jer.2:30).

“Ye have not hearkened to My voice . . . have not hearkened to the voice of the Lord” (Jer. 3:13, 25; NT, JND, which we may frequently use). These are the first three of over fifty “not hearkening”!

“Declare ye in Judah and publish in Jerusalem” (Jer. 4:5).

“Thou hast stricken them, but . . . they have refused to receive correction . . . Declare . . . publish it in Judah . . . O foolish and *heartless people* . . . have ears, and hear not . . . this people hath a stubborn and rebellious heart . . . The prophets prophesy falsely, and *My people love to have it so*” (Jer. 5:3, 20, 21, 23, 31). “Having itching ears”; “smooth things” do not disturb their consciences.

“The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it . . . saying peace, peace, when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abominations? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither know they what it is to blush . . . they said, We will not hearken . . . they have not hearkened unto My words . . . My people . . . are the most rebellious of rebels” (Jer. 6:10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 27, 28).

“Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house and proclaim . . . Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah . . . Amend your ways . . . The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord . . . Will ye . . . come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations. . . I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not . . . Hearken to My voice . . . that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart . . . Yet they hearkened not . . . Speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken . . . hath not hearkened to the Lord their God, nor received correction . . . they have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name” (Jer. 7). Boasting in their correct position while dishonoring the Lord by their daring abominations!

“They have rejected the word of the Lord” (Jer. 8:9).

“Jerusalem . . . Judah . . . have not hearkened unto My voice, neither walked therein; but have walked after the stubbornness of their own heart . . . Hear the word of the Lord, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of His mouth, and teach your daughters wailing . . . lamentation” (Jer. 9:11, 13, 14, 20). How scarce the evidence that this is being done! (Titus 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:3-5; 1 Tim. 2:9). Neither do they blush.

“Speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye . . . Hearken to My voice, but they have not hearkened, nor

inclined their ear, but walked everyone in the stubbornness of their evil heart . . . which refused to hear My words . . . that seek thy life, saying *Prophesy not*” (Jer. 11:2, 6, 8, 10, 21). What could be worse?

“The pride of Judah, and the pride of Jerusalem. This people which refuse to hear My words, walk in the stubbornness of their heart . . . they might be unto Me for a people . . . for a praise . . . *but they would not hear*” (Jer. 13:9-11). How sad!

“Ye walk every one after the stubbornness of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto Me” (Jer. 16:12). This is only the twenty-second time they are reproved for not hearkening. Considerably more times than this remain to be quoted. It may weary the reader and few may profit by it.

“Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in . . . in all the gates of Jerusalem; and say unto them, Hear ye the word of the Lord . . . but they hearkened not . . . ye will not hearken” (Jer. 17:19, 20, 23, 27).

“Go to speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . There is no hope for we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do (according to) the stubbornness of his evil heart . . . Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah . . . Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words . . . Thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me” (Jer. 18:11, 12, 18, 23).

“Because they have hardened their neck, that they might not hear My words” (Jer. 19:15).

“I spake unto thee in thy *prosperity*; but thou saidst, I will not hear . . . thou hearkenest not to My voice” (Jer. 22:21). Prosperity generally produces dullness of hearing and spiritual poverty.

“The prophets of Jerusalem . . . make you vain . . . They say . . . Ye shall have peace, and they say unto every one that walketh after the stubbornness of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you . . . *He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully*” (Jer. 23:15-17, 28). How very needful just now!

“Jeremiah . . . spake unto all the people of Judah, and . . . Jerusalem, saying, From the thirteenth year of Josiah . . . even unto this day, these *three and twenty years*, the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened . . . but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear . . . ye have not hearkened unto Me . . . ye have not listened to My words” (Jer. 25:2-4, 7, 8). It has only taken about twenty-three minutes to read this far.

“Stand in the court of the Lord’s house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord’s house, all the words that I

command thee to speak unto them, diminish not a word, if so be they will hearken . . . but ye have not hearkened . . . Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die . . . And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord . . . Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, *This man is worthy to die* . . . the king sought to put him to death” (Jer. 26:2, 5, 8, 9, 11, 21). Such was the animosity against Christ, Stephen, the apostle Paul and unnumbered faithful martyrs.

“They have not hearkened to My words . . . Ye would not hear” (Jer. 29:19).

“Princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . though I taught them, rising early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened . . . but they set their abominations in the house, which is called by My name” (Jer. 32:33, 34).

“Hearkened not unto Me, neither inclined their ear . . . Ye have not hearkened unto Me” (Jer. 34:14, 17).

“Ye hearkened not unto Me . . . not hearkened unto me . . . not hearkened unto Me . . . they have not hearkened” (Jer. 35:14-17). Here in this chapter God presents the obedience of the nomadic Rechabites to their father to put to shame His disobedient inhabitants of Jerusalem!

“But he would not hear . . . but they hearkened not” (Jer. 36:25, 31).

As to willful refusal to hearken, this is the forty-sixth time!

“But neither . . . the people . . . did hearken unto the words of the Lord . . . the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him and put him in prison” (Jer. 37:2, 15).

“The princes said, *Let this man be put to death* . . . for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people . . . Then took they Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon” (Jer. 38:4, 6).

“Have not hearkened to His voice” (Jer.40:3). “They departed . . . to go to enter into Egypt” (Jer. 41:17). Egypt is a type of the world.

“Now therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of Judah . . . If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt . . . there ye shall die . . . O ye remnant of Judah; go ye not into Egypt . . . I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God . . . ye shall die . . . in the place whither ye desire to go” (Jer. 42:15, 16, 19, 21, 22).

“All the people hearkened not to the voice of the Lord . . . So they came

into the land of Egypt: for they hearkened not to the voice of the Lord” (Jer. 43:4, 7).

“They have not hearkened nor inclined their ear . . . They are not humbled unto this day, neither have they feared . . . the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt . . . shall all be consumed . . . in the land of Egypt” (Jer. 44:5, 10, 12).

“All answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, *we will not hearken* unto thee, but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our mouth . . . have not hearkened to the voice of the Lord” (Jer. 44:15, 16, 17, 23). This is the fifty-fourth time “not hearkened” is said! They were hopeless, because “the carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7).

“Jerusalem hath grievously sinned . . . they have seen her nakedness . . . Her filthiness is in her skirts” (Lam. 1:8, 9).

“How is the gold become dim! . . . the daughter of My people is become . . . *like ostriches* . . . would not have believed that the *adversary* and the enemy should *have entered* into the gates of Jerusalem . . . the Lord hath divided them” (Lam. 4:1, 3, 12, 16).

It was the deplorably low state of Judah and Jerusalem that warranted the faithful prophet’s scathing rebukes. And are we not disinclined to think that we could be like them? Why has not this truth been ministered unto us?

Ezekiel

Here our prophet is made a watchman to warn, and mourn as he laments, sighs and cries over the hopeless state of God’s people.

- He mentions Judah 15 times,
- Jerusalem 26 times,
- “Rebellious” 21 times,
- Abominations 49 times! (“detestable things” Jer. 5:11; 7:20; 11:18, 21).

In chapter 8 he shows us the worm-eaten core (as it were) in the heart of the temple where were “wicked abominations,” and in chapter 14 the idols in their heart that displace God! “And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the *men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations* that be done in the midst thereof” (Ezek. 9:4). Mark and spare the mourners.

- “Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations” (16:2).

- “Cause them to know the abominations” (20:4).
- “Cause her to know all her abominations” (22:2).
- “*Princes of the people . . . these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel*” (Ezek. 11:1, 2). Yes, the princes, the influential leaders, become the sources of mischief!

“They have seduced My people, saying Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar” (Ezek. 13:10). (The word ‘untempered’ in the Hebrew also means ‘insipid’ which suggests ‘lukewarm.’)

“How weak is thine heart” (Ezek. 16:30).

The Minor Prophets

Hosea also tells that “*The Lord hath a controversy with Judah*” (Hos. 12:2). Could this ever be a voice for us?

Micah enjoins Judah and Jerusalem to “Roll thyself in the dust . . . this time is evil . . . Prophesy ye not, say they” (Mic. 1:5, 10; 2:3, 6).

“Prophets that make My people err . . . cry, Peace . . . yet say, Is not the Lord among us?” (Micah 3 :5, 11).

“*The Lord hath a controversy with His people . . . The Lord’s voice crieth unto the city . . . hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it*” (Mic. 6:2, 9). It is wisdom to hear, tremble, and to humbly bow.

“The godly man hath perished out of the earth: and there is none upright” (Micah 7:2). Sad!

Daniel

Faithful Daniel of the tribe of Judah, while in exile, understood by Jeremiah’s prophecy that the duration of the captivity was to be seventy years (Dan. 9:2 and Jer. 25:11). It was in such humiliating circumstances he set a splendid example for us. “I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession . . . for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem” (Dan. 9:3, 12). “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!”

Ezra

Even though God restored a small remnant to Jerusalem after the seventy years’ captivity, Ezra records “the priests . . . have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations . . . so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of the lands: yea, the hand of the *princes and rulers hath been chief* in this trespass . . . I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of *my head*” (Ezra 9:1-3) He also made “confession, weeping, and casting *himself* down” (Ezra 10:1).

Nehemiah

In the book of Nehemiah it is shocking to see some of Judah deliberately discouraging the building of the wall of separation from their enemies. “Nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord.” Others of Judah were identifying themselves with their adversaries who endeavored “ten times to persuade them to unite with them”! (Neh. 3:5; 4:10-12). Also “there were many in Judah sworn unto” Tobiah! (Neh. 6:18). This traitorous mischief reminds us of the 3000 of Judah who went down to bind their deliverer, Sampson, in Judg. 15. What are these wretched hearts not capable of in these days when Laodicean heartlessness for Christ is infecting so many of us?

In Neh. 9 we see that which is so commendable. There they assembled “fasting, and with sackclothes . . . separated . . . and confessed their sins.” They rehearse God’s abounding goodness to them, but their own shameful response. “Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy law behind their backs, and slew Thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to Thee . . . Thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for Thou hast done right but we have done wickedly” (Neh. 9:1, 2, 26, 33). Beautiful example for us!

Haggai

In those days of Ezra and Nehemiah, Haggai gave a searching word, *such as we are apt to lack courage to give*, in this land of prosperity. “Is it time for you, O ye to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord . . . Consider your ways . . . He that earneth wages, earneth wages to put into a bag with holes” (Hag. 1:4-6). Stewardship was ignored, reminding us of “Mr. Myself and Company.”

The carnal Corinthians, being worldly minded, reigned as kings (1 Cor. 4:8). “All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” (Phil. 2:21). How characteristic of ourselves!

“I smote you . . . yet ye turned not to Me” (Hag. 2:17).

Malachi

Malachi is more severe than Jeremiah to the insensibility and impudence of apostate Judah. It makes us think of Matt. 23, Jude, and Laodicea.

“O priests that despise My name . . . ye say The table of the Lord is contemptible . . . ye say The table of the Lord is polluted . . . ye say also, Behold, what a weariness is it!” (Mal. 1:6, 7, 12, 13).

“Ye have caused many to stumble . . . Judah hath dealt treacherously and an abomination is committed . . . in Jerusalem, for Judah hath profaned the sanctuary of the Lord . . . ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord” (Mal. 2:8, 11, 17).

“All these things . . . have been written for our admonition” (1 Cor. 10:11). “Written for our instruction” (Rom. 15:4). Good it is for the soul that has an ear to hear, that hearkens in the fear of the Lord.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matt. 23:37). “There they crucified Him.”

NOTE: There is a very large and lovely subject relating to Jerusalem’s, Judah’s, and Israel’s coming day when their Messiah-King will regather His godly ones and abundantly bless them in His glorious reign. Such precious truth is much more frequently ministered and is acceptable because it so often leaves the conscience untouched.

The Church

From our glorified Head in heaven the church has been called with a holy and heavenly calling, baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body, and has the responsibility to keep the unity of the Spirit until we are called on high. Beautiful was its beginning. “All that believed were together, . . . with one accord . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul . . . and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 2:44, 46; 4:31-33).

But this “first love” did not last long. Then as the heart grew careless, association with the world contributed to its further downfall. Deeper it sank in the papal dark ages. Even the reformation soon became productive of sects and

formality.

In the late 1820's the Spirit of God opened simple obedient hearts to gather {be gathered together} only to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, outside the camp. They had “a little power” of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ. There was a fragrance to their lives as the Word was precious, and faithfulness in *that* preserved them. But gradually the enemy, the world and the flesh deprived them of this lovely state. Do we feel it? “Our coldness might fill us with grief and with shame.”

The highest privilege of nearness to Him in the midst of His redeemed (2 Chron. 29:11; Psa. 65:4; Ezek. 44:15-16; Matt. 18:20) is losing its hold, while our walk so much denies our heavenly calling. How then can we fail to see that it is our unfaithfulness that is incurring the Lord’s speaking to us by these many afflictions, distressing strife and disruption of the manifestation of the unity of the Spirit!

How sorrowful is the present spectacle!

Only that which honours Christ has value.

The remedy is to be found nowhere but in His heart. “The love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.” “The love of Christ constraineth us” to live unto Him instead of ourselves.

Self-judgment, dreading to do our own will, an eye single for His glory, and welcoming correction, and unfeigned uprightness, alone honors Him, to Whom be glory.

No good in creatures can be found;

All, all is found in Thee.

We must have all things and abound

Through Thy sufficiency.

A Few Closing Remarks

Dear Brother Annas, when returning from Ecuador, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic, often reminded us of their primitive poverty and how accustomed we are to our luxury and prosperity. Others returning from these and other countries say the same. We are not only spoiled but we are much like the chameleon, conformed to the modern world. We need to read *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* and *Martyrs of the Catacombs*.

If we but glance at the present state of the world and the apostasy of Christendom, it makes us shudder. All is on the brink of a smoldering volcano. We can hear its loud rumblings and smell its deadly gases.

“The whole world lieth in wickedness,” violence and corruption. Witness

the devoting the Lord's day to shopping and pleasure, the inflation bubble, the inroads of communism, smoking, drinking, dope addiction, increasing Hippy dissoluteness, sex indulgence, the Jezebel ecumenical snare, occultism and the diabolical worship of Satan! How much blacker can it get? The Book of Revelation gives the answer.

And the most shameful indication of the nearness of the coming of the Lord is the blindness and deafness of many nominally gathered to His holy Name!

"Because thou art lukewarm . . . I will spue thee out of My mouth . . . and knowest not that thou art blind and naked . . . thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear . . . Be zealous therefore and repent . . . If any one hear My voice . . . He that overcomes."

Mr. Darby said, "This ought to come home with more sorrow in our hearts than the judgment of the world.

"It is high time to awake out of sleep."

C. H. Macintosh's vigorous "Letters to a Friend" (1874) is highly recommended reading for exercised souls. (Available from Present Truth Publishers.)

A. C. Brown, 1972

Forgiveness: Is it Conditional or Unconditional?

There is an idea abroad today among men in general, and among God's people too, that forgiveness is granted de-facto automatically in grace. But is it? We shall look at some Scriptures that say "no" to the claim.

I. Firstly, we take God's actions toward man who has sinned or trespassed and will go to Leviticus where the five offerings are presented as the way of approach to God in the sanctuary. Lev. 1-7 is divided into two major groups, i.e., sweet savor offerings (Lev. 1-3) and non-sweet (Lev. 4-6:7). Our subject being forgiveness we will be looking at the latter group of offerings specifically for sin done in "ignorance" (i.e., not with intentional purpose) and secondly a subgroup called "trespass," whether against God Himself or against our fellow men, with reference to the New Testament application. The sin offering has to do with the "guilt" of the deed of sin whereas the trespass offering has more the question of the "effect" of the sin in losses of goods or fellowship relations. Interesting it is to note that under the Law economy of Moses, there was no provision for willful sin, i.e., done intentionally. See Num. 15:30, 31 where we read,

But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken His commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.

By reading the previous verses, this question of ignorance is clarified (vv. 22-29) where the words occur over and over again, "And it shall be forgiven him" (vv. 25, 26, 28). Thank God we can say that by the cross He now is able to forgive all trespasses (Col. 2:13, 14).

Coming back to Lev. 4, in the sin offering there are four subjects of it mentioned: v. 3, the priest (worshiper); v. 13, the congregation (collective sin); v. 22, a ruler; and, v. 27, one of the common people. Four times over we read, "it shall be forgiven him" (them also) (vv. 20, 26, 31, 35) following the prescribed means used -- in other words, when the price has been met in a substitute. Thus sin is not unconditionally forgiven. Following in Lev. 5:5,

he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing and he shall bring his trespass offering

and (again) "it shall be forgiven him" (vv. 10, 13), conditional, note, again, on his confession.

Passing on to the trespass aspect where the result, or harm, rather than the act itself is before us, following the order commanded and carried out, the same forgiveness follows (Lev. 5:16, 18; 6:7). The Lord is teaching Israel that a price has to be paid for sin and wrongs done before forgiveness can follow. Prov. 28:13 says,

he that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Here is a condition for mercy, plainly. David in the Psalm of his penitence (Psa. 32:5) comes to grips over his double sin saying,

I acknowledged my sin unto Thee and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord: and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

Here is a classic statement of a conditional forgiveness by one who knew the mercies of a forgiving God yet groaned within until the sin was out and acknowledged (vv. 3, 4) and not hidden any longer.

II. Coming now to the New Testament, we think of the wonderful story of the returning prodigal son in Luke 15. Twice we read of repentance and the joy connected with the recovery of the lost sheep and lost coin (Luke 15:7, 10), then the son on returning back comes with confession of heart,

I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him "father I have sinned against heaven and before thee . . ."

Here is a practical illustration of what true repentance consists of, i.e., acknowledgment of the wrong done, wasting of substance, and shameful living. Indeed the father is waiting and looking for the event to take place and meets him when coming, in forgiving love.

In Matt. 5:23, 24, a question of reconciling with an offended brother is raised and the Lord presents a case of making things right (confession) to the offended before offering one's gift to God,

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

See the whole content. Now compare along with this, Matt. 18:15-17 where the other side of the question is presented, i.e., the offended one going to the offender and pointing out his trespass for eventual recovery.

If he shall hear thee (i.e., he confesses his wrong) thou hast gained thy brother.

So a desire of recovery in a forgiving spirit is had on the part of the offended. But recovery and forgiveness is based on the acknowledgment of wrong by the offender. From Matt. 18:21-35 of the same chapter, consider the Lord's answer to Peter's question

. . . how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him, untill seven times?

No, the Lord says 70 times 7, meaning that a forgiving spirit must govern our attitude according as ourselves forgiven by God a greater debt. Now this may seem to indicate an unconditional forgiveness read in itself but the rest of the illustration vv. 23-35 indicates He brings before us an attitude, not the actual act of forgiveness. So the servant's unwillingness to forgive his fellow man's debt, when he was willing to make restitution in time, makes it plain the Lord is revealing a hidden spirit of unwillingness to forgive, not the actual act of forgiving. So also in Matt. 6:12, 14, a conditional forgiveness by the Father is based on our own spirit of forgiveness. Note this is not a case of the sinner's forgiveness by God but a son's forgiveness by the Father; so this has nothing to do with our relationship being formed by anything of our doing, but of a relationship already established but conditionally enjoyed by a proper state of soul. Again, Matt. 18:35 points to the same practical enjoyment of communion conditional on a forgiving attitude,

. . . if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Now turning to Luke 17:3, 4, read in connection with the same parallel passage of Matt. 18:21, 22, we have a condition placed upon the actual act of

forgiveness of the offender, "If he turn again to thee saying, 'I repent', thou shalt forgive him" (7 times so repenting, so forgiving seven times). Note the Lord does not here add the 70 times 7 because the issue is the act forgiven, not the spirit of forgiveness as in Matt. 18. Thus the Lord Himself qualifies the act of forgiving by the repentance of the offender. So even the sinner is called to repentance toward an offended God as well as faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). In John the baptizer's message it was ". . . Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance," because there were pretenders present who wished a good appearance rather than a true heart recovery. So there was a confessing of sins on the part of the true in heart. Here again the ground of forgiveness is emphasized (see v. 8 of Matt. 3:2-8).

In 1 John 1:9 we read:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Notice again the conditional forgiveness, i.e., when we confess our sins. Note we don't have to ask for forgiveness as sometimes thought. It is automatically done by the Father when a turning is seen. He is a merciful and gracious God and Father Who delights to forgive, and mercy rejoices over judgment, which judgment is His strange but necessary work where repentance is refused (Micah 7:9, 18; Isa. 28:21 with James 2:13; 5:16).

There are verses to consider, such as Eph. 4:32 and Col. 3:13, where we are given the grounds of our forgiving, i.e., His own character of a ready, forgiving God because of the cross, and now we are children born from above.

When we do not bow to God's order thus expressed in His holy word, we dishonor Him by disobedience and so doing damage to our brethren, for whom Christ died, who need to repent of something before forgiveness is given.

T. J. Knapp

“Worship Always Supposes the Will Broken”

J. N. Darby wrote:

WORSHIP always supposes the will broken.

In the preceding chapters we have seen Abraham in Egypt, and we have remarked, that so long as he was there he built no altar; but he came out of it, and then, having abandoned Egypt, he could build an altar to the Lord.

David sees the child sick who is dear to him; then he fasts and prays,

but he wrestles with God; his will was not submissive. When the child was dead, David changed his apparel, ate, drank, and could come to worship before the Lord, because the struggle that existed in his heart had ceased, and his will was broken.

Job, after those heavy afflictions, which are set before us in the first chapter, the loss of his substance and of his family, rends his mantle; it is true (Job 1:20), he did not sin in that, the Word tells us. His grief was lawful -- he was permitted to grieve for the loss of his children, but he arises and worships before God; he can worship Him, because his will is broken, and he can say: "Jehovah gave and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah."

But in the chapter we have just read, We find something far above what we have in Job and David. They acquiesced in God's will, but their submission was passive; it required of them no act. Not so in Gen. 22. Not only must Abraham accept God's will, but, moreover, he must act against himself; he must, so to speak, sacrifice himself, for the sacrifice of his son was nothing short of that. God says to him, Offer up to me *thy* son, thine only son. The name of an individual contains in it for us all that concerns him and all our relations with him. "*Thy son*" -- this word kindled in Abraham the tenderest of feelings, and he had to sacrifice that son! Nay, more; this name recalled to him the promises of God, and it was in this son they were to be fulfilled, for God had positively told him, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

But he whose will is subjected to God, is satisfied of these two things. God will provide for it, and, I am with God. Every look to the flesh in the way of expectation, for the fulfilment of the promises, must be turned away, and God alone remain as the source of the life, the blessings, and the promise; as the One who never comes to the end of His resources, even in the very failure of all the means He Himself might have pointed out for the accomplishment of His promises . . . ² ❖

{In an article, "Devotedness: What Is It?," C. H. Mackintosh wrote:}

"And it came to pass that God did tempt Abraham." Why is it we never read such words as these, "It came to pass that God did tempt Lot?" Alas! Lot was never in a moral condition to warrant his being so highly honored. Sodom tempted Lot; but it was no temptation at all to Abraham. What a contrast between Lot in the cave, and Abraham on Mount Moriah! And yet they were both saved. But, ah! what a poor thing to be content to be saved! Ought we not to sigh after those spiritual heights which lie beyond? Should we not long to give expression to a more ardent devotedness? Oh! that our houses and our hearts

were in a moral condition acceptable in the sight of God, so that we might enjoy habitual nearness to Himself, and unbroken communion with Him. This is our privilege, and we should never be satisfied with anything less.

It was a high honor conferred upon Abraham when God called him into the place of trial -- when He asked him for "his son, his only son Isaac." It was an elevated point in the patriarch's career, and that he felt it to be such we may judge from the spirit in which he responded to the divine call, and in which he repaired to the scene of sacrifice. "I and the lad will go yonder and WORSHIP." Here the true spirit of devotedness most blessedly unfolds itself. To give up his only son -- the object of his affections -- the channel of all God's promises -- to lay this one as a victim on the altar -- to see him consumed to ashes -- what was it all? Just an act of worship. This was real work indeed. It was no empty lip profession -- no saying, "I go, sir," and yet not going at all. "Abraham believed God." Here lay the secret of it all. He had learned to yield an unquestioning credence and an implicit obedience to the word of the Lord, and therefore when called to lay his Isaac upon the altar -- that Isaac for whom he had longed and waited and trusted -- when called to yield him as a sacrifice, he bows his head, and says, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship."

Thank God, that there ever lived such a man as Abraham -- that there was ever enacted such a scene as that upon Mount Moriah -- and that we have so vividly and forcibly presented to our hearts, the ground and the spirit of true devotedness! ³ ❖

* * * * *

Yet the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal,

[The] Lord knows those that are his;

and,

*Let every one who names the name of the Lord
withdraw from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19).*

**And why call ye me Lord, Lord,
and do not the things that I say? (Luke 6:46).**