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CONTENTS

The Spirit of the World	
Has Invaded Us	1
The Reward of Separation	10
New Creation, etc.	15
The Personal Interest of	
Christ in His Saints	23
Prophetic Fallacies: The So-called	
"Battle of Armageddon"	27
Three Questions Regarding Children	30

THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD HAS INVADED US

PREFACE

The "Two Letters on Worldliness" were printed in Ed. Dennett's magazine, The Christian Friend, 1886, pp. 206, 230. They touch on both principles and specific items (which need to exercise us afresh) as well as giving us some insight into the condition at that time. Some years before, in 1879, J.N. Darby had sounded a warning that "the spirit of the world has invaded us." The two letters indicate that the warning was ignored, and even in the face of the severe falling of the rod of God (Micah 5:1) numerous times. J.N. Darby's had mentioned severe testing also, and those in that day knew what he had in mind. His purpose in writing that letter was, obviously, to awaken the conscience of the saints preserved through that trial, in order that the root cause of God's chastisement (ecclesiastical pride and worldliness) might be judged. At the bottom of this was worldly ways of thinking, worldly ways of acting and worldly pleasures. So, while the trial of which he speaks is past, the letter, with its principles, is as timely today as it was then. Our faithful God still chastens us with trials: and the root cause is still unjudged:

THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD HAS INVADED US!

TWO LETTERS ON WORLDLINESS (From the Italian)

FIRST LETTER

DEAR BROTHER, — I should like to say a few words on the tendency which there is in these days to worldliness, and more especially on the means employed by the enemy to divert Christians from the path which leads to the glory (Phil. 3).

The subject is of so much importance that many will immediately say: "While we are down here we have occupations which bring us into direct contact with the world, either in our daily avocations, or in our individual relationships, and consequently it is impossible to fulfill our duties without more or less participating in the principles which govern it." This I totally deny, and I think the Word shows us clearly that there is in us a power great enough to keep us unspotted from the world, and capable of resisting it unto the end. The Word does not admit the possibility of our living out of the world; on the contrary, it teaches us that we are left in it, but that we are kept from the evil (John 17:15, 1 Cor. 5:10), and in order to encourage us in our warfare with the prince of this world, it tells us that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). What then is lacking? God has put at our disposal all the weapons necessary to meet the assaults of the enemy, and if, instead of defending, we allow ourselves to be beaten, it is either that we fail to employ the weapons with which God has furnished us, or that we misuse them. A true Christian pursues his trade honestly to gain his bread, but his real aim is to obtain everlasting glory with Christ; and this is a normal Christian according to the Word.

I come now to the means employed by Satan for turning us aside, if the heart be not truly attached to the person of Christ. It is astonishing how many Christians, while avoiding serious falls and flagrant sins, allow themselves to be overcome, little by little, by worldly ways, by the claims of society, by old friends; while they fail to see that the divine life in them loses its energy, that it is choked and enfeebled, and that gradually "old things" take possession of their hearts. At first they suffer, and make almost a sacrifice to please the world in things that are not evil in themselves; but they end by having a taste for the "old wine" (Luke 5:39), and forget that the new is much better.

We have a picture of these Christians in the history of Solomon. He never had such a serious fall as David, he never committed so great a sin as his father; but an attentive examination of the conduct of this illustrious man will reveal to us a gradual return to the world. His reign opened amidst the glory of a little millennium, his golden sceptre was resplendent at the dedication of the temple, around him all was joy and peace; but unhappily it was of short duration. As we advance in the examination of his conduct, it is easy to see

that his pristine glory fades, the monarch's heart turns to the world, the world becomes his master; and the reign which had been inaugurated by peace and glory, and the knowledge of God, is terminated amidst idols and strange women. What a difference between the beginning and the end! And how had this decadence begun? Note, dear brother, it did not happen all at once, but gradually; insensibly the things of the world gained access to his heart, and he went from bad to worse till he became an idolater.

This may be a wholesome warning to us, dear brother, and certainly shows us with what reason John said to the young men who were already strong in Christian life, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world." (1 John 2:15). We are in the truth, but we are not out of danger, and the Lord alone can keep us faithful.

Amongst Satan's many fruitful devices for lowering the saints is that of subtly introducing the world without their being aware of it; on this account it is well not to be ignorant of his weapons, so as to be able to turn them aside. I will try and indicate some of them, with the hope that we may profit by the experience of other Christians who have preceded us on this difficult road. In the foremost rank may be placed old acquaintances, just because we have been on intimate terms with them, and to them our weaknesses are known. There are but two ways of avoiding this danger — either to break off all connection with them, or to proclaim the truth to them, by showing them that we have found an object worthy of our affections — an object which has taken possession of our heart, which has given a new direction to our life, and which is jealous of any friendship which is not based on the work of redemption. I admit a priori the difficulty of turning our back on an old friend, who has perhaps been of service to us, and the enemy takes occasion by all this to keep us in slavery, and to allure us into an atmosphere very unhealthy for those whose senses are fitted for a heavenly one. It may happen, for instance, that a worldly acquaintance of former days comes in and expresses a wish to pass an evening with us. What should be done under such circumstances? If we are not careful, it may become the means of making us miss a meeting, or a projected study of the Word with others; so what is the right path? I think the best service we can render to a worldly friend, who persists in seeking our friendship, is to speak to him faithfully of the Saviour's work, and the result will be generally one of two — if he listen, so much the better, the

Lord can work and help us to win a soul; if he do not listen, he will probably complain that we are changed, have new ideas, and are less amiable than formerly, but meanwhile we shall be left free to follow the Lord. This may appear a hard thing, as truly it is to the flesh, and it would be an ignoble action if the motive were not the Lord's; but we ought not to forget what Peter said to his contemporaries -- "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4:1). And then there is the exhortation which Paul addressed to the Corinthians -- "Wherefore come out from among them, and separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17,18).

Next to former friends, our greatest danger lies in old habits, tastes of the first Adam, which are so easily re-awakened in us. What a sad thing to be a Christian, and yet to go on with the ways that we allowed before knowing the Lord! The Cretians by nature were liars, and they remained so although converted (Titus 1:12,13); but they were to be rebuked sharply, because they were not walking according to the new man, or in dependence on the Spirit of God.

There are many of our brethren who, without falling into open sin, allow old things, already judged as hurtful, to take possession of the heart, and here is a principal cause of the weakness they often lament. I admit that our characters are different, and that tastes differ according to temperments; but these are the things inherent in the first man, and if we follow our individual tastes, we shall get out of the sphere of Christian communion, where a taste for the Lord Jesus is the only thing. If, for instance, an amateur of music take up his old flute or violin to please the flesh for a few hours, if the reader of novels hunt up some old story to pass the time, and thus if each of us turn back to some occupation which we loved in days before the light reached us, who will be occupied with Jesus of Nazareth? who will proclaim His virtues? who will exalt Him in a song of praise? Remember Elisha, who, before putting on Elijah's mantle, rent his own garments.

I must not omit to mention another weapon which Satan uses successfully in his ceaseless work of drawing back into the world those whom God has set apart for Himself; it is, **present things** -- the very air which surrounds us. It is quite true that

the majority of Christians do not care for the world in its most ostensible forms; they do not go to balls, do not play cards &c., but is that enough? The Word says to us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world;" and it is patent that many, without loving the world in its most popular garb, love certain things which are in the world. It is very easy to be led away by an object which in itself is not evil; but if our hearts be ensnared by things which are seen, we lose the taste for things which are not seen, and thus unwittingly we find ourselves in a world atmosphere.

The other day I received a letter from a brother, which I hoped might contain some word of edification; on the contrary, I found it full of a great industrial and artistic exhibition which was on hand in a European city. You can conceive, dear brother, my astonishment. But that is what we have come to. In the meetings we say we are heavenly, we read and print good books, we publish excellent periodicals, and then, from the practices of many amongst us, we see that hearts are full of wordly things, and insensible to the glory of Jesus, which we shall so soon inherit. I do not say that art and science are bad things, but I would remind you, nevertheless, that Adam made a very wrong use of the trees in the garden of Eden, which in themselves were not bad things, when he used them to hide from God.

Farewell, dear brother, I have perhaps written sufficiently; but if the Lord permit, I will on a future occasion add a few more thoughts to my letter.

Your affectionate fellow-labourer,
E. L. B.

SECOND LETTER

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD, — It has been on my heart for some time to add to my first letter on worldliness, and more especially because several brethren have communicated with me on the subject.

To some of these I appear hard and narrow-minded. Others, on the contrary, believe that such exhortations in these days are both useful and necessary, and have pointed out certain things which, with the Lord's help, I hope to notice. With the first class I have little to do, for if my first letter

was stigmatized by them as severe and narrow, they will have occasion to do so still more with the second, since the greater our knowledge of the world, the less possible shall we find it to make a truce with it.

Two points in particular have been put before me — the politics of this world, and the way in which the families of believers are so often a means of opening the door to the world.

On the first subject, *i.e.*, the world's politics — I think two observations will not be out of place. Many Christians, whose conversion no one doubts, have hitherto failed to comprehend that the calling of the church is purely heavenly; that is to say, they have not grasped this sufficiently clearly to deliver them from an interest in politics. It is not theory that is lacking. What we want is to put in practice the marvelous truth that we are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are consequently entirely strangers to the way of the inhabitants of the earth.

But some will object: "Ought we then to take no interest in events which warn us that the end of all things is at hand? We admit that the world is to be judged, and we approve in no wise its principles; but we have always felt free to follow the course of politics in order to see what things have come to." To such I would say, "If you must study politics, study Daniel and Revelation for a few days, and you will learn God's thoughts thereon." I think this is the only satisfactory way of quenching the thirst for tracing the progress of events; and I have often said that the most simple Christian is better acquainted with this world's fate — with the Eastern question, and with the last phase which the European Powers will assume — than the cleverest politician of this world. "Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book," says the Revelation (22:10). That is to say, that the Church can always know the thoughts of God on such questions, without the need of consulting newspapers to see if God has told us the truth. After all, this shows a want of faith in the Creator of all things, and a lack of reverence for the authority of His eternal Word. Newspapers only confuse the mind of the reader, because they alter their standpoint with every new aspect of the political world, and know no other basis than the vacillating ideas of men. It has been rightly said, that from a mountain-top the course of a river is better seen than in the plain, where the river-fogs impede the view. In like manner

we Christians, who by grace occupy a higher place than the world, can peacefully speak with God, as did Abraham on the mountain-top, and study His thoughts on prophecy without consulting the mists of the valley. Had there been newspapers in Abraham's time, I do not think he would have read them. [We recognize that there are legal announcements, etc. that may be necessary to know, or of use to a Christian, in a newspaper — ed]. Or Lot perhaps might have been betrayed into so doing, because he had accustomed himself to living in the atmosphere of Sodom. But it is evident that he had not a very clear insight into true politics, or he would not have lost all his goods by staying in a town about to be destroyed. How indeed could he see clearly in Sodom?

Here then is my answer to those who under pretext of seeing how far things have gone, interest themselves in the world. Although prophecy ought not to be our chief study it would nevertheless be well that all the saints should understand the books of Daniel and Revelation, wherein is presented the judgment of all human power; and Christ, in His great majesty, is seen taking possession of the whole world, to the praise and glory of God. This would, it seems to me, be the best preservative against the tendency which there is amongst Christians to the study of this world's politics.

And now, dear brother, I want to touch on the second subject which I mentioned at the beginning of my letter; viz., worldliness in the children of believers. And I hope, at the same time, you will understand that I do not allude exclusively to "they of Italy," but also to those who live where Christianity is supposed to be carried out better.

Alas! how many sincere Christians allow in their children that which they themselves have given up for ever! I do not say this in a critical spirit, but simply by way of drawing attention to several called-for remarks which have been made to me of late. The subject is a delicate one, because we know what difficulties there are in bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but we ought to be acquainted with the means which Satan has at his disposal for alluring the saints of God into the world. Godly fathers of families are to be found, who are weak enough to permit their children to be dressed in a manner not in keeping with their godliness. It may seem a very small thing, that the children of Christians should be dressed like those of the world; but the fact is forgotten perhaps, that as they grow

older something more must be allowed, and something more again — things, it may be, innocent in themselves, but which insensibly bring the world into the house; and once within it is not easy to turn it out. I would not have it thought that I mean in anywise to make hard-and-fast rules for Christian fathers; but I desire to press the fact, that the houses of such ought to be wholly for the Lord, and that if they have His glory at heart, they must not allow for their children what they do not allow for themselves.

The history of the sons of Eli ought to be a salutary warning to every Christian father (1 Sam. 2). I do not think that they became so wicked all at once -- probably the starting-point was the over-indulgent heart of their father; then they went further and further into the world, until the whole house was swamped by it. How much grief would have been spared to poor Eli, had he known how to bring up his children in the fear of the Lord! And are not Elis to be found in our day? May God grant grace to His saints, to keep their families set apart for Him, and free from the spirit of this world. The days are evil; false principles easily take possession of youthful minds, and if fathers are not watchful, they will have, later on, to mourn over the infidelity of their children.

Before closing my letter, I must reply to one more observation which has been made to me. It is said that circumstances vary with different countries, and that in my first letter I referred only to music, novels, &c., while I ought also to have specified the worldly attractions peculiar to countries differently placed. I am sure it is useless to do so, because one would never have done signaling the examples and the dangers. Every true Christian will easily discern the spirit at work in the world, and will avoid whatever seeks to come between him and the Father.

An old servant of the Lord being asked one day by a banker's clerk if shoveling gold all day was likely to make him worldly, replied "I don't see any more harm in a shovelful of sovereigns than in one full of sand, provided my heart be not in it." This example might serve, I think, for all the circumstances in which the saints of God may find themselves. So long as our hearts are not engrossed with our employments, our workshops, our fields, or any other means of subsistence, each one of us may use what God has put before him, and

administer it with the knowledge that all belongs to our God and Father.

My desire is, that each may search his own heart, to find out the worldly element which has a hiding place there, and, when discovered, that he may judge it, and dethrone the idol that contaminates him.

Your affectionate companion in service,
E. L. B.

EXTRACT

As the whole mind of Christ, when down here, was set on showing His delight in the Father, so now in heaven it is the whole pleasure of God's mind to show out His delight in that Christ, seated at His own right hand, as the accepted sacrifice. He wants our hearts to be filled with nothing else, and when occupied with that, no question can come in as to our perfect acceptance.

To meet the Lord in the air -- What a volume in those words! Nothing can give cheerfulness in the thought of treading a path never trod before, but the Lord Himself being there -- meeting Him there.

G.V.W.

THE REWARD OF SEPARATION

It has been often said, God is both love and light. Because of His love we are born of God; and we are children of the light. As God is love He never fails in love to His children, whom of His own will He has begotten unto Himself; nay, His tender lovingkindness is renewed to them every morning, and they can count mercies and expressions of His thoughtful love by the hour; but if the love remains true to its nature, which it assuredly does, so does the light remain true to itself. It could not deny itself. Every saint tastes of the love of God. It was the love of God which led Him to send His Son; it was the love of the Father that made Him kiss the prodigal; that assured my poor heart that there was love in the heart of God for me. There can be no doubt of the love if we have to do with God. But light is as much His nature as love; and this the prodigal felt even after he had received the kiss; that he was not worthy — that the light checked him, while the love surprised and gratified him.

The light reproves me; it detects and discloses what I am: "that is light which doth make manifest;" but it maintains itself, for God is light. In His grace He makes me suited for it. The servants are directed to bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and then he is fit for the light, and when fit for it, he enjoys the presence of the Father; he knows for the first time what it is to be inside, and that "in thy presence is fulness of joy;" and he feasts — "they began to be merry."

The love first meets me, but the more truly I taste of the love, the more consciously am I in the light, for God is both love and light; and the more I am in the light, the more am I filled with, and convinced of the love, so that there is a great reward in the separation which the light enjoins. What we have to insist on is, that we cannot enjoy the depths of the love apart from the demands of the light, for it is impossible to separate these two great qualities of the nature of God.

There is however a snare into which souls have very commonly fallen; and that is, to think that because God shows His care and watchful interest for them in the details of life, He therefore approves of them, though they are not separated from unhallowed associations; and thus while they are more or less mixed up with the world, they can assure themselves that they have tasted of His grace -- that they have been washed from their sins in the blood of Christ; and that in the things of everyday life He orders and provides for them.

Now the love and tender care with which the blessed God watches over all His children cannot be too distinctly admitted; nay more, the particular way in which He attends to their wants and prayers; but on the other hand it cannot be denied that all through scripture it is pressed, that there are special blessings, which are only given to those who are separate from the ways of men, and of their own hearts -- and this the light, the nature of God, makes necessary.

Every true parent cherishes, loves, and cares for his children, but he cannot show the same confidence in a foolish child as he can in a wise one. He would lower himself were he to do so, and betray that he could not appreciate what was good; and the child who would assume, because his father provided him with everything needful, and often indulged him, that therefore he sanctioned his course, would only betray that he had a very imperfect idea both of his father, and of the wishes of his father's heart concerning him. Even naturally there is a reward for separation from the follies of youth, for then a wise father can in a special way uphold his son.

In scripture this twofold line is very fully insisted on, and with this remarkable peculiarity, that the foolish child seems to command the greatest attention, so that if one were to judge by the natural eye, one would say that he was the favoured one, while the holy and separate one is not so visibly cared for, but receives for his separate walk a reward which is quite beyond the thought of man. In judging of a saint's blessing, everything depends on the light in which we view it. If I look at Abram and Lot in a natural way, I should certainly say that Lot was more favoured than Abram. He gets the best of the land, and though he is not separate, but mixed up with the people of Sodom, who vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds, yet when he is taken captive and his goods, Abram has to suffer in order to effect their restoration, so that Lot seems to be the one who commands

most attention, speaking naturally; but yet scripture is careful to show the special reward which is vouchsafed to Abram for his faithful and separate course. Melchisedec, the Priest of the most high God, meets him with bread and wine, and blesses him; and thus renders him superior to all the offers and gifts of the king of Sodom. Ostensibly, and in natural things, Lot is favoured; but Abram is favoured par excellence in a spiritual way. Temporal things are vouchsafed to one child, but the Lord's presence to another. What a contrast! and yet often the Lots can parade their earthly favours, and evoke acknowledgment from natural spectators, who cannot, because not spiritual enough, see the peculiar favours vouchsafed to the Abrams.

God can and does bestow gifts on His children though they are not separate, but He does not reward them with His presence except as they are separate. We read of Isaac (Gen. 26) that when he dwelt in Gerar the Lord blessed him; he had things in abundance, he was thriving, as men speak; but the Philistines envied him, and eventually he separated from them, and then the greatest favour is conferred on him; "the Lord appeared unto him the same night." I have no doubt the blessed God will hear the prayers and vouchsafe mercies to a saint in Sodom, or in Gerar, but as far as I can gather from scripture I believe He will not vouchsafe His presence to anyone who is not separate. I admit fully that the light of His presence is not the same thing as His presence. "In thy presence is fulness of joy;" and in His presence there is no self-condemnation nor exercise, because I lose sight of myself altogether, and am only occupied with Him. As I enter into His presence there is exercise, but that is produced by the light of His presence, and before I am really in it.

In 2 Corinthians 6 we read, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." This was said to saints on whom the greatest spiritual gifts had been bestowed, a church most highly favoured, if one were to judge by what was visible; but there was something greater than that they had received, and this they could not attain to but by separation; they were the temple of the living God, and they are enjoined to be separate and touch not the unclean thing, in order that they might enjoy the highest favour, even that of being received by Him. From this it is evident that there is a special blessing consequent

on separation, and not to be procured otherwise. This refers to the congregation, though the principle may guide in our relations with men.

It will not do to argue that because God in His mercy does not withdraw the general or foundation principles of His grace from His people, that they are approved of by Him. When Israel forfeited by unbelief the sabbatical year, the greatest expression of His favour, He did not withdraw the shelter of His wing; their kings reigned and were upheld by the Lord for 490 years. The Corinthian church was the temple of the living God, but unless they were separate from unhallowed associates they would not enjoy the greatest favour of being received by God and enjoying Him. It is the NIKONTES (Greek) -- the overcomers, who are thus rewarded. "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." What is true congregationally is also true individually; and "without holiness or sanctification no man shall see the Lord." A servant is not fit for the Master's use in the day of the greatest decline, unless he purges himself from the vessels to dishonour in the great house. Where do we find in scripture anyone favoured with the presence of the Lord, or personal communication from Him, without separation being insisted on? If Moses would turn aside to see the bush burning with fire, yet not consumed, he is warned of God, "Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." There cannot be distinct nearness to God but apart from everythig of man. "To God (Paul says) I am beside myself;" that is, he is literally outside of himself, or as when in the third heaven, "whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell."

There is no real entrance into the holiest of all, but as I am outside and apart from everything of the flesh; and consequently the joys of that scene cannot be known without separation. If one were not separate, and could at the same time encounter the presence of the Lord, it would be so dreadful that one would be overwhelmed by fear, and therefore is it that really earnest souls who are not separate, when they approach the Lord, instead of being made happier, they become more distressed, because the light of His presence, the nearer they come to it, rebukes them the more, and they are rebuked instead of welcomed. Rebuke must come first when saints are not separate, "as many as I love I rebuke and chasten."

All saints are holy in Christ before God, and holiness by faith is the simple acceptance of the truth, but besides this I am for Christ on the earth. He is for me before God, and congregationally and individually, I have to come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Before God I have nothing to separate from, I am in Christ and of Christ there; but here on the earth I have to be for Christ, and God favours me in a special way — a way peculiar to separation, as I am practically separate from everything that is of the world, either in the church or in my own person; and while He as a Father always pitieth His children, and attends to their supplications and wants, doing more apparently for the Lots than for the Abrams, yet Abram's blessings were much higher and greater, and the reward of separation unto God.

Every saint who is subject to the word has his feet washed, but the Lord does not manifest Himself to anyone who does not keep His word; and certainly he must be separated, or washed by His word first, before he can keep it; and when we keep it, and are walking in the holy path which it defines, then our reward is the manifestation of Christ, and the abiding presence of Him and of the Father.

Voice to the Faithful, vol. 9.

EXTRACT

The doctrine of the gospel as in the person of Christ is a lost thing in the present day, because it is always presented on the side that meets man, and not God's side.

G.V.W.

Why was He to leave heaven and come down here -- this perfect, matchless, peerless God-man? What was this world to Him? people might say. Ah! God had his plans centered in that One. From [before] the foundation of the world it was ordained that He should take up the question of sin; and whatsoever the ruin and the misery brought in by it, Christ was perfectly equal to turning all the ruin to His own glory.

G.V.W.

NEW CREATION, LIFE IN THE SON AND DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW OF SIN & DEATH

(CONTINUED FROM V.1, P. 148)

THE GRAIN OF WHEAT BEARING MUCH FRUIT

The Lord Jesus said, "Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).

We must understand that what the writers cited previously mean by **"UNION"** is the believer's being united to the Head of the body, as members of that body; and this took place at Pentecost (1 Cor. 12:13 tells what resulted). Union, as used in these papers, means **THAT** very joining to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). John's writings do not speak of that union, as such. They speak of identification of life, or oneness (John 17 for example).

"ONENESS" has to do with identification of life. "Union" is connection with the Head as members of one body. Oneness is identification of life **IN** the Son and oneness with the redeemed family of God, in Him. Of course, this is empowered by the Spirit and could not be until the grain of wheat had died. The text (John 12:24) is explicit. There exists some kind of connection with the grain of wheat which could not exist before before our Saviour died.

It is most important to understanding these subjects that this fact be not thoughtlessly passed by. The Scripture is explicit: before His death He abode alone. While He uttered those words (John 12:24) He abode alone. His disciples who

were born again at the time He uttered these words were not connected with Him as they were after His death and resurrection. **HE ABODE ALONE!**

Afterwards He did not abide alone. He was then connected with them in a way that He was not, and could not be, before He died. And this connection, we shall see, is identification, or oneness, of eternal life **IN** the Son, called in John 10:10 "abundant life", and elsewhere "eternal life". Eternal life as spoken of in John's writings is life in the Son, having certain characteristics and associations of life. We will treat of Old Testament saints in regard to this subject later. Here I wish to press the force of our Lord's statement in John 12:24 and provide help in understanding the following quotations. Our Lord's statement means that **before death He abode alone** and so those born of God were not one with Him.

Based on our Lord's statement in John 12:24 illustrating the results of His death with the necessity of a grain of wheat dying in order to multiply itself, A. C. Ord made the following helpful comments.

The important subject of the life of God in the soul remains to be examined. That life, coming from God as it does, has certain invariable characteristics, which mark its divine origin. Faith, repentance, desire after God, obedience and dependence always accompany it; yet these spiritual effects of it are, in their manifestation, modified by the nature of the revelation God makes of Himself, and by His dispensational dealings. If God revealed Himself as a Moral Governor [Jehovah], in covenant relation with a people on earth, giving them also the law, they were then servants, not sons (see Gal. 4:15-17) and apprehended not eternal salvation, but His favour on earth; and as His earthly people representing His rights in government they had enemies to fight with, and could even rejoice in their overthrow, and be used in their extermination. Earthly blessings also were their portion, from the hand of Jehovah. Through fear of death, from which they were not delivered, they were all their lifetime subject to bondage; for death had not been conquered, and though sometimes they had glimpses of things beyond death, the heavenly things had not been declared (John 3:12,13,31,32); though the glory of the millennial

kingdom had been foretold by the prophets.

While our blessed Lord was upon earth, the disciples owned Him as the Messiah, the Heir of the promises, by virtue of the divine life which they had received; yet they had their thoughts all connected with the earthly kingdom, and the fulfilment of the promise made to the nation as God's chosen people, trusting that Christ was He who should have redeemed Israel. Indeed, when sent forth by the Lord Himself, they are directed not to go in the way of the Gentiles, nor into any city of the Samaritans; and they were to own the scribes and Pharisees, as sitting in Moses' seat. They could not even understand His death, it seemed to contradict all their hopes. John the Baptist, so far from apprehending heavenly things, though he might allude to them prophetically, says that he is of the earth, earthy, and speaketh of the earth. Indeed he was stumbled at the Lord's rejection and his own, so that he sent the well-known message to Him, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:31) and the Lord tells us that, great as John's position as His forerunner was, and faithful as he had been in it, "the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he."

The inconsistency of all this, with saints being in the Son and in the Father, is evident; and still more the whole character of life in the millennium; yet in His conversation with Nicodemus the Lord says that regeneration, or the new birth, is absolutely needful to the enjoyment of the earthly kingdom. "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" We see again in the Psalms and in the Revelation, life in connection with Christ's earthly kingdom and government, so that vengeance is sought on His enemies and their own by Jewish believers; for without judgment that kingdom cannot be established, and the Jewish saints are themselves employed, subsequently to Christ's manifestation in glory, to cut off His enemies. (Zech 9:13-15; 10:5.) The knowledge of the Father and the Son implies grace and its divine manifestation (John 1:14), and an order of life entirely heavenly. When the Gentiles, who have the blessings of the

earthly kingdom and a place in eternal life, are addressed by the Lord, He does not speak of God as their Father, but says, "Come, ye blessed of MY FATHER"; though He owns the Jews who have been rejected and persecuted as His messengers, as His brethren. For the distinction of Jew and Gentile reappears in the millennial kingdom, when there is no entrance within the veil as now (Psalm 149).

Mr. Grant objects to the idea that saints of old were as plants, having each a distinct life of its own, but this alone is consistent with a national unity, not characterised by life, but by ordinances in the flesh, which excluded the Gentile, even though converted, as profane and not to be eaten with. This divine life is always spoken of in scripture, not as an emanation of deity, but as derived FROM God through the action of the word, by the power of the Spirit on man. "Born of water [that is, the word, compare John 15:3] and of the Spirit." "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life;" that is, spiritual in their nature and the means of life when so used by the Spirit of God. The word is invariably the effectual instrument which the Holy Ghost employs. No doubt, coming from God, it has the moral characteristics of the divine nature, hence it is called by the apostle John "the seed of God". "The seed of God abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," that is, it carries with it the stamp and character of its divine origin.

Again, the apostle Peter says, "There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by **these** ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). It has been observed this is not THEOTES or essential Deity, as in Col. 2:9, but THEIOTES, that is, divine quality; exceedingly blessed, because expressive of what God is, as the word of man expresses what he is, his ways, character, and mind, and much more so with God; but this is not the communication of "the essential life" of God before incarnation or redemption, which, if true, as asserted by Mr. G., would be simply deifying saints. Even in the Old Testament, where this life as we have seen

took an earthly form or mould, it is spoken of as produced by the reception of the word in the soul. "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me;" and again, "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me" (Psalm 119:50,93).

The Gospels give the same testimony, that the word is the means always employed by God in quickening. "The sower soweth the word," "The seed is the word of God;" nor can any other construction be put upon the language used; in every case it is scripture, or the word spoken by prophets, or by Christ Himself and His apostles that is referred to: **"The words that I speak unto you,"** says the Lord in John 6; "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. ... And **this is the word** which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:23-25); and so in James (chap. 1:18) it is **"the word of truth,"** by which we are begotten. (Compare Eph. 1:13.)

Sometimes the Spirit is spoken of as the Quickener, as we have seen, sometimes the Father, sometimes the Son (John 5:21-25); but until after the death and resurrection of Christ life is stated in scripture to be only FROM the Son, never IN or WITH Him. It is hearing His word or His voice that can minister life (John 5); and this life is only spoken of as "eternal life" after the incarnation or the manifestation of the Son, or subsequent to His death with the revelation of the Father. "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee;" and this is explained to be by His giving eternal life, which is through the knowledge of the "Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ **as sent**" by Him. No one who now knows what spiritual life is, doubts that it was abiding in its nature, but it was reserved as a distinction in which the glory of the Person and work of the Son should be seen, that it should only come out as "life," eternal life, through Him. Like silver, which is precious in itself as everyone knows, it is only when it has gone through the process of stamping in the royal mint with the queen's head and the royal arms, that it becomes current coin of the realm, or of recognized value as a

legal tender. Indeed, it is first spoken of in John 3 in connection with, **not** the new birth or the work of the Spirit, but with the Son of man being lifted up, and the gift of God's Son, the fruit of His love to the world, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." So the Lord, even when speaking of Himself as the living bread which came down from heaven (that is, His incarnation), and "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever," adds, to give effect to this for souls, "The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." To shew that it is needful there should be the apprehension of the meaning and value of His death by the believer, He continues, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6). Only after His death could the streams of life and love that were in His heart flow freely forth. "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." It is undeniable that in the Old Testament life is not thus spoken of. For life and incorruptibility have only been brought to light by the gospel, so that it was not known as life before, still less as eternal life.

But the question has also arisen, whether we do not enjoy life in an altogether new way since Christ arose, and in a way which gives a nearness to Himself and the Father never known before, and of which we find no trace either in millennial times. The Lord says, He is come that we may have life, and have it more abundantly; if it is to be possessed in special connection with Himself, and in a new position taken by Him, this is easily understood.

In John 12 we have the distinct statement of our Lord, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." This product of the corn of wheat does not refer to the mere bestowment of life **by** Him, either before or after His incarnation, which life existed in those who surrounded Him at that very moment; but it is an express declaration that there could be no association or identification in life with Him before His death, for until then He abode absolutely **alone**. The spiritual instinct of any saint

ought to tell him that until the flesh was judicially put an end to, any such connection with Him could not exist. In the cross also, man as such is judged and set aside before God, and the world likewise. (1)

The old creation must be brought to its true issue in death and judgment, before the foundation of the new could be laid in Him, who is the beginning, the First-born from the dead. When once the point of death has been reached, and expiation made, we can be said to be "quickened **together** with Christ, raised **together**, and made to sit **together** in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." But to return to the passage before us. "If it [the corn of wheat] die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It is as rising from the ground that it is multiplied, and bears within itself all the fruit, and yet is but one plant; and the whole shares in the same air, the same sunshine, the same showers, as well as having the same life. Hence the Lord, referring to this, says (John 14:19), "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me, **because I live**, ye shall live also." This was after His death, when the world saw Him no more; then the disciples could not only have life, but have it in connection with Himself as risen; and hence it would be in and **with** Himself, as a consequence of, and in continuance with, His own, because beyond the reach of the effects of sin, death and judgment. This life would be indissoluble and eternal, and He adds, "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20); that is, after this life was given, which he then distinctly speaks of as in the future. This accords fully with the message the Lord sends to His disciples after His resurrection (John 20:17): "Go, tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God;" and then, standing in the midst of them, "He breathed on them," and says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." He had indeed revealed

1. Those who have sought to make out union of saints with Christ, previous to death and resurrection, have either destroyed the possibility of atonement, by making Christ part of fallen, ruined humanity, or as in the present case, deifying saints by bringing them into what is essentially divine.

the Father in all His character and ways, but never before does He call them His brethren, for He is "the first-born among many brethren;" never before does He link them with Himself in these blessed words-- mine and yours. It is His life, His position, His nearness of relationship, in which they are called to participate. He had taken this new place as the risen Man before God, Head, or beginning, of the new creation, victorious over death, the grave, and Satan's power, and for the first time these words, marking association, are used -- mine and yours -- and His own life is given with the Holy Ghost as the power to enjoy it. (2)

Among other truths brought out here is that we are one plant with Christ. What a lovely illustration of our oneness with Him in life -- identification of life as risen from among the dead!

The "abundant life" the risen grain of wheat communicated, consequent upon shedding His blood, is not a peppy life as some seem to think; nor is it a busy, active life. It bespeaks a fulness of source of life and character of life in all its blessed associations, oneness, and the place before the Father in His redeemed family that is now our portion. It is identification in life -- oneness -- life in the Son.

We see also from this truth that the idea of union with Christ in incarnation is utterly false. There is no connection with Him apart from His death and resurrection. This sets aside the first man as judged in the cross, while the notion of union in incarnation gives a standing to the first man and in result sets aside Christianity.

ed.

THE PERSONAL INTEREST OF CHRIST IN HIS SAINTS

It is a happy and an encouraging thing for the soul to be habitually impressed with the every-day interest which our beloved Lord takes in His own while here in the world. Probably nothing is more conducive to the deepening and unfolding of our affection to Himself, and to consistency in our walk, and to diligence in His service, than the discovery of what an object we are to Him all along the road to the Father's house, and how He loves to disclose to us the sweetness, the reality and the constancy of His personal interest, notwithstanding that He is the glorified One at the right hand of God!

In the days of His flesh "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." This we find at the very opening of John's gospel, which starts with His rejection by those whose privileges are significantly indicated in those two little words, "His own," henceforth no longer thus used because inapplicable to the reprobate nation. But in chapter 13:1, this affecting term is transferred to His beloved disciples -- "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end;" i.e. not merely to the end of His sojourn below, nor as to time in any sense, but right through to the uttermost. Thus we have present title to this endearing expression from the lips of our blessed Lord, and not only so, but, as the chapter delineates, to the unmeasured love and faithfulness, and the unwearied service, which He connects with it for the gratification of His devoted affection for His object. For we rejoice in the thought that not only has He graciously so wrought in us by the Holy Ghost as to win our confidence for ever, and make Himself an object of eternal rest and joy to the hearts of His own, but He has, on the other hand, permitted us to regard Him as the eternal Lover of His saints, whose interest in us never needs to be re-awakened, but continues unflagging, if not ever deepening, as the consummation in glory draws nigh!

We are then, each in his own measure, no less truly an object to Him than He is an absorbing and satisfying one to us.

And even as when a poor sinner it was my first duty to let Him have His own way according to all the service He had rendered me on the cross, so now as a believer is it equally my first and my abiding obligation (oh, what a privilege too!) to allow Him to fulfil His cherished service from the glory, after a fashion suited to the delight of His heart in enriching and adorning me with His own graces, as well as in removing hindrances to that moral transformation He is effecting. Every child of God being a distinct individual object to Him, has his personal history disclosed, in its out-working every day, to the eyes of that blessed Man in the glory. And whether we be regarded as pupils under tuition, or as patients under treatment (alas! the more frequent case), it is He alone who can discern, and discerning can by the Holy Ghost supply, what is needed for each saint's daily path and progress. Thus apart from those so frequent occasions, alas! in which our failures bring His blessed advocacy into active exercise, if it have not indeed anticipated them, each day has the weft of its own distinctive coloring interwoven with the warp of our lives; and well will it be if, weaving deftly and dexterously, we produce so beautiful and so durable a texture that, like the fabled fabric of fibrous asbestos, the action of the fire so far from consuming will only whiten it into a thing of lustrous purity and beauty for ever (1 Cor. 3:13); for indeed of such a character, surely, are those practical righteousnesses which constitute the fine linen of the saints! (Rev. 19:8).

Can He whose glory we shall be the medium of displaying, and towards which all is so rapidly and definitely tending, be otherwise than intensely interested both in that which is now being woven in the loom by His saints, and in the work of His Spirit in them, to make them, as it were, His garments of glory and beauty for that day of manifestation? For if we survey the interests of Christ, we have to remember their present two-fold character; first, the evangelizing in the world which has to be completed that the rapture may be effected; and second, the transformation going on in the saints in view of the "revelation of the sons of God" with the Lord Jesus in glory; the latter being that which is due to Himself, and which will be effectively displayed then, according to what has been our spiritual grasp and growth in these days of our pupilage. The two lines on which the Spirit of God is thus working run side by side according to their distinctiveness of character, and terminate synchronously at the word of the Father to the Son. If every soul that is saved hastens the rapture, equally so does every little bit more of Christ wrought

in a saint as fruit of the Spirit add a further ray of beauty to the glories of Christ in the day of His manifestation! Thus the quantitative and the qualitative work of the Spirit of God--the one in the world, and the other in the Church--synchronize in their course, and close simultaneously at the coming of the Lord. Whether then we look at the world as to evangelization, or the saints as to transformation, what a field is presented for the tender and assiduous interest of Christ in the service of His saints, and of the Holy Ghost in His saints! Nor can we too closely connect either the one or the other with Himself, with the person of that glorified Man upon the throne of the Father: for to deny or to doubt the intensity of His present personal interest in His saints would be seriously to impair the comprehensiveness and continuity of His service to His own, and to cast a slur upon the deep perfections of His character and of His ways of love!

The current period of His session at the right hand of God is as clearly marked by the activity of His tender affection and devoted service, though made good in another way, as ever were the days of His self-denying ministry on earth. If we glance through the gospel of Mark, where He is before us as emphatically the girded servant of Him who sent Him, how beautiful are the touches with which the Spirit of God has adorned the record of His lowly, lovely service among men. The assiduosity with which He engaged in it meets us at the outset. On the morrow following a long day of varied and arduous toil, protracted into night, we find Him rising up a great while before dawn, for prayer in the solitude of some secluded spot, only to have his privacy speedily invaded, eliciting however, His readiness to resume at once in other towns His diligent labors (1:35-38). Yet when His apostles returned from their little "two and two" mission, His prompt and tender solicitude for them finds expression in words which bespeak His interest in the clearest way, "Come ye yourselves apart into the desert place, and rest awhile" (6:31), indicating to the Lord's laborers that rest and retirement in the secret of the Lord's presence is as essential after, as His own example shows that prayer is before, any public testimony for God. And how His heart went along with all His service is in like manner, and just as clearly, indicated by many a delicate touch in the cases of the "leper" (1:41), the "much people" of 6:34, and the rich young man of 10:21. And if further, we bring home His service to ourselves, has He not, as it were, taken us by the hand and lifted us up? (1:31; 9:27). Has He not nestled us in His arms? (9:36; 10:16). Does not His eye survey the

whole scene in which we are moving? Is anything lost upon Him? (3:34; 8:33; 10:21-23). Is not His ear open to the harrowing tidings which sometimes wring a human heart, and does He not delight to speak an instant word of succor and of cheer, that our faith may be in Him? (5:36). And if He open His mouth, as it were, to minister in word and doctrine, is it not as we are "able to hear it"? (4:33). And if He send a message to His disciples, His words "and Peter" shall tenderly indicate how peculiarly interested He is in His poor heart-broken servant (16:7). Is there one whit of this loving, devoted service, taking account of everything, and adapting itself in its exquisitely tender human way to every human circumstance and feeling, which is not equally, yea, in a heightened way, made good to us now by the Holy Ghost, and which shall not be even more perfectly, because unhinderedly, displayed and enjoyed in the glory?

These are some of the special features of the Lord's ministry, found only in that gospel which has His service as the subject of the Holy Ghost's peculiar testimony, His spending and being spent for His own. It is our privilege to read between the lines, that "this same Jesus," though made "Lord and Christ," is as approachable, as attentive, as unwearied, as considerate, as loving, as compassionate, as observant, as tender, as in the days of His flesh, being in a word, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

And if He be thus interested in the progress and result of His own work by and in His saints, is there not even a deeper joy to Him in recognizing every little stirring of love to Himself which He delights to inspire in our hearts by the Holy Ghost's presenting to us the attractiveness of His blessed and adorable person? For this see Canticles. How beautifully does 4:9 to 5:1 illustrate and unfold the interest which He takes in the affection of His saints to Himself! and how calculated is the disclosure there of His appreciation of that love ("poor and feeble, Lord, we own it") to produce and to deepen it more and more, as He ever longs and loves to do. "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!" (Cant. 4:10). "Neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon" (2 Chron. 9:9).

W.R.Din The Christian Friend, 1880.

PROPHETIC FALLACIES: THE SO-CALLED "BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON"

The phrase, "the battle of Armageddon" is not found in Scripture, nor is it a scriptural thought. Christians have imagined that Christ will destroy all his enemies in one single blow, these hosts being drawn to the plain of Esdraelon by Megiddo. Some seem to think that this will take place on the 1260th day from the middle of Daniel's 70th week. The Scripture designation of the final conflict that precedes the establishment of the 1000 year reign is: "The war of the great day of God the almighty."

Rev. 16:16 says that the enemies will be "gathered" at Armageddon. Joel 3:2 refers to this war and says that Jehovah will enter into judgment with the nations in "the valley of Jehoshaphat." Armageddon, or Harmageddon as many understand it, means "hill of slaughter." So we have hill and valley (and plain of Esdraelon). And where is the valley of Jehoshaphat? We are told that it was not until the 4th century A.D. that it was claimed that this valley was the Kidron (1). Well, that is some distance from Migiddo and spoils the notion of having all the enemies in the plain of Esdraelon. The truth seems to be that no one knows where the valley of Jehoshaphat is and it does not seem correct to think of it as Armageddon, i.e., the "hill of slaughter." Additionally, one of the prophets sees the Victor coming from Bozrah (in Edom) with His garments dyed red (blood); etc. There is no one "battle of Armageddon" but rather a sequence of battles called in Scripture "The war of the great day of God, the Almighty." There will be 75 days from the 1260th day (from the middle of the week) until the 1335th day when the blessing is realized (Dan. 12). During some period in this 75 days this war will be carried on.

Armageddon is a figurative word for the gathering of the enemies for slaughter during this war. Jehoshaphat means "Jehovah judges" and we need not look for one valley in Israel but rather see that the point is in the meaning of the name.

1. "Jehoshaphat, Valley of, in Unger's Bible Dictionary.

So Joel 3 speaks of "the valley of decision." God is going to judge and decide!

Perhaps the reference to the Hebrew tongue in Rev. 16:16 is meant to draw our thoughts back to Judges 5. At the waters of Megiddo the Canaanites were defeated by Barak. The valley of Berachah was the place of blessing and joy resulting from Jehovah's defeat of Jehoshaphat's enemies (2 Chron. 20). So will the enemies of Christ be defeated and Israel joyful and blessed as a result.

This war commences with the taking of the first beast of Rev. 13 (who is the little horn of Dan. 7 and Lucifer of Isa. 14) and the false prophet (who is the Lawless One of 2 Thess. 2, the second beast of Rev. 13, the willful king of Dan. 11:36, the Antichrist). Rev. 19 shows the taking of these two quite directly upon Christ's sudden revelation from heaven. The war ends after Israel has been regathered and is in the land (though the 1000 year reign has not quite commenced). The confederacy from the "uttermost north" will swoop down, but Gog will not know that Jehovah is waiting to destroy them and make of Gog a resource for His people whom He will defend by the saving power of His right arm. Then will come the 1335th day, that greatest celebration of the feast of tabernacles (2). Between these battles there will be others, for example, the destruction of the king of the north and the kings of the east, etc. The description, "The war of the great day of God the Almighty leaves room for these sequential battles. The following Scriptures refer to this war:

Isa. 34:1-8

Zeph. 3:8

Zech. 14:2

Joel 3:2

Obad. 1

Ezek. 38,39

Rev. 16:12-16

Rev. 14:17-20

Rev. 19:11-21

Rev. 17:14

2 Thess. 1,2

Etc.

ed.

2. I believe Israel will be regathered on the 1320th day, the first of the month (the blowing of trumpets -- see Lev. 23), and on the 1330th day (the 10th of the month) the day of atonement will take place. Then on the 15th of the month (the 1335th day) Israel will celebrate the feast of Tabernacles.

EXTRACTS

None can overcome the world and self, save by something divine and unworldly being shown them. Christ always puts some personal glory to draw hearts out of the world. If He looks at you, wanting to remove all that hinders your soul, He never tells you to look inside, but puts something outside as a lever to raise you out of it. If I want to get out of Laodicea, what is my lever? Why, that I have got to share the throne of Christ. Is He not on the Father's throne now? And does He not tell me to lay hold of that thought? If I am in deep miry clay, He says, "Why be cast down? I can give you power to overcome and to sit down with me on my throne." And I know He will rise up from His seat and take me to Himself; that thought gives the heart present power over all circumstances.

G.V.W.

If I am a saved soul walking round the wilderness, that heavenly man on the throne of God is with me, His eye watching me. If I am out of my place He sees it in an instant. When one thinks of Christ looking at us down here to see if we are in our proper place, the heart goes forth at once to God, saying, "It is His work from first to last." He brought us out of death into life, translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, because He wanted us there. If God takes me up to glory, I shall say, All is of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

G.V.W.

I have felt much lately about the want of power in saints to be the exhibitors of Christ. I feel we want exceedingly to have our hearts more occupied with Him up there. What would give such brightness of heart as the being able to say, "To me to live is Christ"? Are our eyes fixed on the risen Christ, and our hearts set on being with Him in glory? Are we holding fast what He has given, keeping His works unto the end?

G.V.W.

THREE QUESTIONS REGARDING CHILDREN

My dear brother, - As long as a child is of the household, actually in relationship with its parents, the duty of obedience remains. If a man is married, he begins a new house, and is the head of it, leaves his father and mother. But as long as he or she is of the house, obedience is the duty, as the relationship remains. "In the Lord" is the limit and character of the obedience. If I had a Jewish or heathen parent who commanded me to deny Christ, I could not do it. It is not "in the Lord." If the parent be merely unjust in ways, and no duty be compromised, I believe the part of children to be patience and casting themselves on the Lord. I can suppose a child engaged in a positive duty, which the parents in such case would have no right to cause the child to break through. "In the Lord" has nothing to do with the character of the parents, but the conduct of the child; otherwise it would absolve from all obedience the child of heathen or Jewish parents. The obedience is "in the Lord."

Letters of J.N.D., vol. 2, p. 123.

Q. What is the duty of a surviving Christian parent or guardian, or child, if the law of the country decide that the child is to be brought up after a religious sort opposed to the faith of both parent and child?

A. In my judgment, no Christian, whether child or parent, can relinquish that which they are assured is the word of God. A court may rule otherwise, and may punish the infraction of its decrees; but the Christian is bound, at all cost, to cleave to the Lord's will. It is likely that, under such circumstances, the court would deprive a refractory parent or guardian of the charge of the child, giving it over to the co-guardian (if any) who would conform, or appointing a compliant guardian. In such a case the parent and child must be prepared, if so God permit, to endure the deep distress of severance. But if the child have a conscience clear and firm before God, what has

the court gained toward the end in view? The christian child, though separated from its parent, insists on being faithful to the Lord and the truth, and utterly refuses the religious services which it believes to be unscriptural: is the child to be forced against its conscience? Is it to be reduced to the desired submission by brute force? If so compelled to go, is it to be locked in or chained down during the religious rites which it eschews as sinful? It seems evident, that, without appealing to courts of law, which in these things will surely be on the side of the world, the path of faith is clear and simple; and that a child guided in the way of Christ will be proved to have a power superior to all the resources of the mightiest empire on earth. They may inflict pain or loss; they may insult and condemn or imprison, as they have hanged or burnt in times gone by; but "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

The Bible Treasury, vol. 3, p. 48.

Q. Would Colossians 2:20, justify a child absenting himself from the Lord's table because of his parents' orders not to go there, and would the same scripture justify him, in obedience to their orders, in going where evil doctrine was held or taught? Would doing things like these, feeling they were wrong, be loving father or mother more than Christ? W.Y.H.

A. The form of the exhortation as given in Ephesians 6:1, has an important addition, qualifying the scope of it; we read there: "Children obey your parents in the Lord," which makes it plain that, while the subjection of the child to the parent, as set by God in the place of authority, is to be thorough ("in all things," Col.3:20), the claims of God are above those of the parent; and, therefore, that when the parent desires the child to do things contrary to His revealed will - according to scripture, the Lord has to be obeyed and not the parent. Where the claims of the Lord and those of the parent clash, those of the Lord are absolutely paramount: and hence to disobey the Lord in order to please the parent, would be "loving father and mother more than Christ." But, as our hearts are very subtle, there is a danger lest our own wills or desires are acting, and thus leading into disobedience to parents, rather than simple conscience toward the Lord in subjection to His word. In the instance cited, supposing that conscience towards God is really the only motive, the path is plain, and the parents must be—

disobeyed in order to obey and please the Lord; as Peter says in Acts 5:29, where disobedience to divinely constituted authority was really in question, "We ought to obey God rather than men." We must add, that in the cases we are supposing, the way in which the child carries out the will of God in opposition to the parent is of all importance; it should be done in meekness and lowliness, and the conduct in all other respects, when it is simply a question of the will and pleasure of the parents as opposed to the will and pleasure of the child, one of respectful obedience "in all things; for this is pleasing to the Lord."

Words of Faith, 1884, pp. 251,252.

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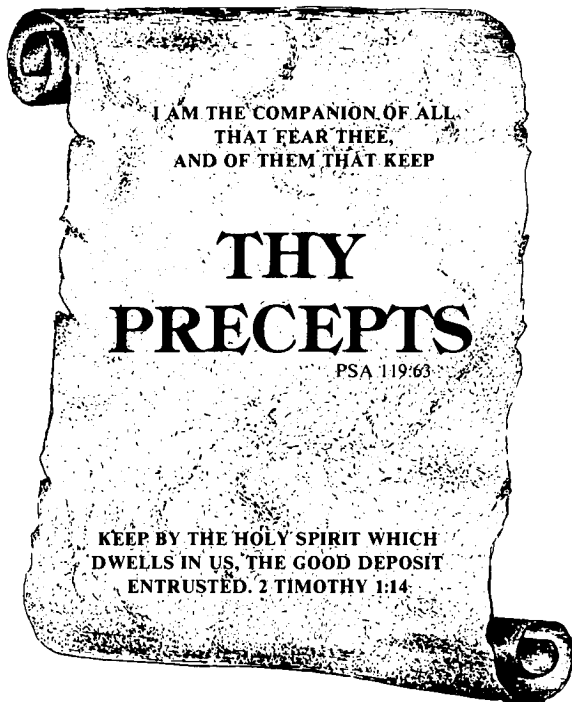
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CONTENTS

Scripture Condiments #1: Honey	33
Practice Expounds a Truth	42
New Creation, etc.	47
The Sin of Zipporah	58
"As Obedient Children"	62

SCRIPTURE CONDIMENTS #1

HONEY

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF HONEY IN SCRIPTURE?

As a symbol, honey represents what is sweet in nature. And, contrary to the notions of ascetics, what is sweet in nature is good for a man. "Eat honey, my son, for it is good; and a honeycomb is sweet to thy taste: so consider wisdom for thy soul; if thou hast found it, there shall be a result, and thine expectation shall not be cut off" (Prov. 24:13). Honey is good, and the Bible says so in this verse. It was found in the land of Palestine in such abundance that the land of Israel was called a land of milk and honey. And it was good for the people of God to eat the honey of the land that God had given them.

But what does it mean to say that honey represents what is sweet in nature? The things that are found naturally in this world are often bitter, but some are sweet to the soul. For example, pleasant words are sometimes found amidst all the bitter and angry curses that fill the world. They might be the words of a compliment, a simple "thank you" or other courtesy, or they might be soothing words, comforting words, "a lovely song, a pleasant voice" (Ezek. 33:32). In any case, they are as sweet to the ears to hear as honey is to the tongue. "Pleasant words are [as] a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health for the bones" (Prov. 16:24). This verse allows us to conclude that honey is used in the Scriptures in a non-literal sense.

Honey represents much more than pleasant words. Many other natural things in the world are sweet like honey too and should not be excluded from what honey represents. There are pleasant sights to see, the pleasant sounds of some sorts of music, pleasant pastimes to enjoy, etc. In part, what is called sweet depends on the person in question. To some, physical exercise and games are a sweet part of their lives. To others, quiet rest and repose. The sole qualifier is that the sweet

thing should be natural.

Not all natural thing are evil although the effects of sin have spread through all the earth. The world system, however, is a work of man that has been imposed upon what is natural in the world. The world system is NOT sweet to anyone that sees things as God sees them. But the world that God created bears witness still to the hand of its Creator in the many sweet things that abound in it. May God give us wisdom to discern between the sweet things of nature and the artificial sweeteners of man's world system.

Wisdom is also needed to discern between the sweet things of nature and the things which are above nature. In Lev. 2:11, the Israelites were instructed that "no honey shall ye burn [in] any fire-offering to Jehovah." Jehovah would smell a sweet odor without the addition of natural sweetness of honey. The work of Christ is sweet to the heart of God without the addition of anything that is sweet to man naturally. Honey, therefore, was excluded from the offerings made by fire in Israel. Honey, therefore, represents those sweet things that would spoil the worship of God if used wrongfully. "God [is] a spirit; and they who worship him must worship [him] in spirit and truth" (John 4:24), but the addition of what appeals to our nature in worship spoils the worship as much as honey would have spoiled an offering in Israel.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HONEY AND A HONEYCOMB?

There is a real difference between honey and a honeycomb. The comb is the collection of little sacks or cells that the bees have made to contain the honey in their hives. The bees have a God-given instinct to construct the intricate and orderly array of the honey sacks which constitutes the comb out of which the fluid honey can be pressed. The comb then is the physical expression of the **ordered structure** that God has taught the bees. And God has likewise ordained **ordered structures** to give form to every kind of natural sweetness in human life. For example, God has ordained that many of the sweetest natural joys should be connected with the family. In the family, God's order is seen in the headship of the husband (Eph. 5:23) and the submission of the wife to her own husband (Eph 5:22). The children are to be obedient to their parents in the Lord (Eph. 6:1), and the household

servants to their masters (Eph 6:5). The parents are to be faithful to their children to discipline and admonish them in the Lord (Eph. 6:4), and in like manner the masters are to deal faithfully with the servants (Eph. 6:9). This sixfold set of interlocking relationships comprises an **ordered structure** for the family. Where this God-given order is carried out, there will be abundant natural joys of every sort just as the hexagonal cells of the honeycomb are filled to bursting with the sweetness of the honey. No part of this **order** tends to the spoiling or diminishing of any true joy although the wisdom of this world that rejects God's will may tell us otherwise.

Moreover, eating liquid honey presents a different problem from eating a piece of a honeycomb. When you eat honey, it often drips all over and makes a mess. Did you ever see three or four small children and a jar of honey at the table without a real mess? A honeycomb, however, is constrained by its inner **orderliness** and is designed to be eaten without the sweetness getting where it does not belong. So the Lord Jesus once ate a piece of a honeycomb after He had risen from among the dead (Luke 24:42). Perhaps indeed, His disciples knew that the expression of **order** in the honeycomb would be welcome to Him when they brought it to Him. After all, they were present when the Lord Jesus said to His mother, "What have I to do with thee, woman?" (John 2:4). She was seeking from Him then a little help with the natural joys of the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee. It was not, however, **His** hour and though He could turn the water to wine in grace to meet the need of the feast, there could not be joy for Mary's heart from the natural relationship she had towards Him. When **His** hour comes, He will have by right the highest place at the feast, being both feast-master and bridegroom. On the other hand, at the cross, He commended her to the beloved apostle John for there was nothing out of place in His so acting when about to depart out of the world to the Father (John 19:26-7). Thus, perfectly, inner **orderliness** constrained all the joys of the natural relationship to what was proper for each time and season.

WHAT KINDS OF FOOD ARE GOOD TO EAT WITH HONEY?

In the Scriptures, honey is almost always mentioned in connection with some other item of food. So the sweet things of nature are always best when coupled with self-judgment and the doing of the will of God from the heart. Let us look at

several examples of this.

God fed Jerusalem with "fine flour, and honey, and oil" (Ezek. 16:13). When Jehovah chose Jerusalem to place His name there, it was not a pretty city. But the fine flour speaks of the even purity of the life of Christ and the oil speaks of the power of the Holy Spirit. When fed on these together, Jerusalem became "exceedingly beautiful" (v. 13). Just honey was not enough. The even purity of the life of Christ came from the fact that He came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father in all things. And the Holy Spirit is the power to walk for the glory of God down here. The result of this diet is exceeding beauty. Such moral beauty is far more valuable than the mere physical beauty that the world seeks after with its cosmetics and so-called beauty parlors.

John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey (Matt. 3:4). The word "wild" means that this honey came from the wilderness, not from the hives of a honey farmer. It does not connote wildness or rebellion, but that there was no connection with the world's agricultural systems (Cain was an agribusinessman). It was good to eat with locusts, because locusts are not sweet to eat. Locusts are often found in the Scriptures as the agents of God's judgment. Lives that are spent apart from God are full of "the years that the locust hath eaten" (Joel 2:25). A plague of locusts came upon Egypt when Pharaoh refused to let the people of Israel go (Ex. 10:14). God has a horde of locusts to unleash on the earth in the future too (Rev. 9:3). John the Baptist took in all that the locusts mean as his daily food. He knew the judgment of God and so preached repentance: "Offspring of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath?" (Matt. 3:7) At the same time, John knew a great natural joy for he was "the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him" and "rejoices in heart because of the voice of the bridegroom" (John 3:29). Because there was no danger that sweetness in words and testimony would become unbalanced in him, it was suited and safe for him to eat his honey with his locusts.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the virgin birth of Christ in Isaiah 7, and said of Christ, "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good" (v. 15). Just honey would not do (or just butter either) if the end in view is holiness. Butter is the product of the process of **separation** applied to whole milk: the butter is separated

from the whey in the churn. To recognize evil or to judge that something is evil without **separating** from it (refusing the evil) is unholy. To recognize good or to judge that something is good without **separating** unto it (choosing the good) is unholy also. The principle of **separation from evil unto the good** is the practical root of holiness. And this is just what is needed to go with natural sweetness. Dear reader, if we take heed to the need for separation from evil, God will not fail to send us the sweet in its season, even "streams, rivers, brooks of honey and butter" (Job 20:17)!

The Lord Jesus in resurrection ate "part of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb" (Luke 24:42). The word "broiled" means that the fish had passed through the fire, a well known figure for the judgment of God. On the cross the Lord Jesus Christ suffered under the fiery judgment of God in the three hours of darkness (Lam. 1:13). As the fulfillment of the burnt offering, "the Christ loved us, and delivered himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." (Eph. 5:2) Having first satisfied the claims of the holiness of the Godhead, He is worthy of every honor and blessing - yea, every sweet and pleasant thing. And what does He esteem sweet? Even every response of love in your heart and mine, dear reader. Have we not heard Him saying, "Thy lips, [my] spouse, drop [as] the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue" (S. of S. 4:11). Our lips are full of ordered sweetness when filled with words of praise to Him Who died for us. May our hearts respond as the heart of the bride until His heart is so full that He can truly say, "I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk" (S. of S. 5:1).

In each case, then, honey is eaten with that which speaks of putting the claims of holiness first. The order is striking, is it not? Honey is always put in the second place.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH EATING HONEY BY ITSELF?

In all the Bible there are only two men who ate honey by itself. No locusts, no butter, no wine or flour or oil, no broiled fish. Just honey, so sweet and syrupy. Neither one cared to think about a balanced diet at the time. The honey was there and they were there, so they ate. Many times in our lives we are surprised by the natural sweetness. How we respond to the unexpected compliment, the unanticipated gift,

or the unforeseen gratification that comes out of the blue betrays our state of soul.

When Samson went down to the Philistines to get a wicked woman for his wife, he found bees and honey in the carcass of the lion he had killed (Judges 14:6-9). The Philistines portray the intrusion of man in the flesh into the things of God because they sought to dwell in the land without coming by way of the wilderness, the Jordan or Gilgal. The moral lesson of the lion slain when "nothing was in his hand" was that no unholy alliance with a Philistine woman was needed in order to get the victory over the enemy. Alas, Samson was blind to this lesson and to the moral character of his Nazariteship. He took the sweetness in his hands, greedily, and ate as he went. Because his hands were full, he was not prepared for any good work (cf. 2 Tim. 2:21). There was no moral distance between him and the honey and it became a part of his disorderly life (no mention is made here of the comb). How easy it is to develop a sweet tooth until the enjoyment of natural pleasures becomes the object of our lives! How easy it is to be influenced by sweet talk or sweet ways or sweet brethren until the truth is abandoned for sweetness' sake! So Samson took the honey to his parents: how could his father not help get a bride for a son who so lovingly brings the honey home? (Judges 14:10) Yet let no one think that there is evil in the honey: natural sweetness is a blessing from God to be enjoyed, but not abused.

How different is the attitude towards honey of Jonathan! He had gone to fight the Philistines with the staff of pilgrim character in his hand (1 Sam. 14:27). This emblem of pilgrim character gave orderliness to his life. As he pursued the enemy in the forest, he came upon honey on the ground (v.25), no doubt shaken from the hives in the trees by the earthquake of v. 15. Some, no doubt, flowed out in a broad and liberal way over the dirt and filth of the ground. The rest remained within the orderly restriction of the comb. Now if he takes some of the honey in his hands, how will he stand for God and fight against the enemy? Instead, see him take the staff of a pilgrim and place its tip, not in a puddle of honey, but in the orderly honeycomb. The staff made a moral distance between him and the honey. Receiving the honey in his mouth, his eyes are brightened. How much did he eat? "I tasted a little of this honey", he said (v. 29). And that little was enough to strengthen his heart for the battle. May it be ever so with us

that the natural joys of this life are used to invigorate us in the spiritual battle against the intrusion of man in the flesh into the things of God! If it were always so, would there not now have been a much greater victory and a much smaller number of the saints of God who are very faint in the day of battle?

HOW MUCH HONEY IS ENOUGH HONEY?

"Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be surfeited therewith, and vomit it." (Prov. 25:16) Too much honey can make you sick. Paul did not at all say that Demas, who had forsaken the apostle Paul, had been snared by the wicked things in this world. Thus, Demas should be a warning to us all that the things of this present age, no matter how pleasant they may seem, can draw our hearts away from their proper object (2 Tim. 4:10). Jonathan, as we have seen, ate only a little honey. This is much better than the case of Demas. But what is a little? And what is too much? How can we tell if natural sweetness is taking too large a place in our lives?

The prevailing tendency is for sweet things to take an ever larger place in our hearts and lives. Sugar is addictive too. The fact is that whenever our hearts are occupied with the sweetness at the expense of doing the will of God, **that is too much honey.**

An example of a man who used too much honey is found in 1 Kings 14. Jeroboam the son of Nebat caused Israel to sin when he set up two golden calves for Israel to worship. Yet the prophet Ahijah had torn his new garment into twelve pieces, giving ten to Jeroboam in token of his becoming ruler over ten of the tribes of Israel (1 Kings 11:30-31). So Jeroboam knew the prophet. Moreover, Abijah the king of Judah had stood on the top of Mount Zemaraim and proclaimed that the priests of the house of Aaron still set out the loaves "in order upon the pure table" (2 Chron. 13:11). Jeroboam heard these words and understood them: the twelve loaves on the pure table were in order for God had made Israel a twelve-tribed nation. Thus, the wicked Jeroboam's kingdom was a kingdom of rebellion against what God had instituted. Now, years later, his son is sick (1 Kings 14). So Jeroboam remembers the prophet and sends his wife in a disguise with a present to ask what will happen to his son. The present was

ten (!) loaves of bread and cakes and a cruse of **honey**. What did this mean? Would the prophet accept a memorial of ten tribes from the rebel who ruled them? Could he be tricked into swallowing something that countenanced even in a symbolical way the heretical kingdom of the golden calves? Then send a little honey to him to sweeten the deal! Now that is too much honey! Today, the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church for which He died and that church is ONE BODY (Eph. 4:4). But it is in ruins, divided and split into many ecclesiastical fragments. Could we or should we or would we accept that state as a right or normal one? Could we swallow teachings that legitimize the separation of what God has made one? If it seems hard to any to do so, there are not wanting the men who will gladly add a little honey to sweeten the deal. Any natural sweetness used to promote the dividing into parties those whom God has made one in Christ is **too much honey**! When we have spent so many years seeking the sweet, it is difficult to discern when the sweet is misused in the way that Jeroboam misused it, isn't it?

WHAT IS SWEETER THAN HONEY?

This is the question that Samson's Philistine companions proposed in answer to Samson's riddle (Judges 14:18). And it is a good question to think about. Is there anything more sweet than honey? Do all the warnings against excessive use of honey mean that we should feed on bitter herbs only? Does God withhold from us the good when He teaches us moderation in the use of natural sweetness? Or does He have for us something that is sweeter than honey?

"Now the light is sweet" (Eccl. 11:7) and it may not be altogether fair to make comparisons between things that differ so much in character, but some things really are sweeter than honey. The Word of God is "sweeter than honey and the dropping of the honeycomb" (Ps. 19:10). And the sweetest thing in the Word of God is its testimony to the Person of Christ. "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely" (S. of S. 5:16). May our hearts take warning from the passages on honey that we have meditated upon lest we get so full of natural sweetness that we have little room for the loveliness of Christ. Samuel Rutherford once wrote:

Look into those depths (without a bottom) of loveliness, sweetness, beauty, excellency, glory,

goodness, grace, and mercy, that are in Christ; and ye shall then cry down the whole world, and all the glory of it, even when it is come to the summer-bloom; and ye shall cry, "Up with Christ, up with Christ's Father, up with eternity of glory!

Again,

Oh, but heaven casteth a sweet smell afar off to those who have spiritual smelling! . . . God send me no more, for my part of paradise, but Christ: and surely I were rich enough, and as well heavened as the best of them, if Christ were my heaven.

And again,

Running-over love (that vast, huge, boundless love of Christ) is the only thing I most fain would be in hands with. He knoweth . . . that I shall be happy, suppose I never get another heaven but only an eternal, lasting feast of that love. But suppose my wishes were poor, He is not poor: Christ, all the seasons of the year, is dropping sweetness.

D. Ryan
1986

EXTRACT

There is something inexpressibly sweet in that promise, "I will confess his name before my Father." Christ will call **you** by name then. Displayed in all that glory, He the One on whom every eye is turned, and you, perhaps for the first time in your being, lost to all sense of your own individuality, and wakened to think of it by hearing the Lord name you by name to His Father as one who walked with Him down here; as one who held up a little bit of light in an evil day, though perhaps frightened at the effect of it when you did it.

G.V.W.

PRACTICE EXPOUNDS A TRUTH

The difference between human knowledge and divine, is that the former is merely information, the latter is formative. Human knowledge does not alter me, but develops my natural state. The word of God forms me anew. I am born again of incorruptible seed, even the word of God. It is a new existence, entirely superior to the old existence, and receiving no help or countenance from it; on the contrary, it is hindered and checked by the old, and from the very start it assumes an independent course and derives all its strength from the Spirit of God. "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." It is only as I practically accept and live in what the word communicates, that I can know what it confers, because I have no idea of the order or nature of the new creation, but as I am consciously in it. I have natural instincts as to that which I am naturally fitted for; be it to walk, or read, or sing. There must be natural ability; human teaching cannot impart the ability though it can cultivate, increase, and develop it. But the word of God by the Spirit forms an entirely new creature, and this is as distinct in its new order from the old one, as the butterfly is from the caterpillar. In the new creation everything is conferred according to the measure of grace; and hence, no idea can be known but as an action is produced.

There is no convincing a person born blind of the nature of light, because the power of sight is unknown to him, and no reasoning or description can explain it to him; but the moment he sees, all the mystery is solved, and the difficulty is at an end.

It is useless to reason with an unconverted person. All seems an impracticable theory until the light has broken in on him and he believes; then he understands what before was wholly beyond him. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Faith not only admits the truth but it sees -- there is power to produce a practical acknowledgment of it, and the faith is certified by this acknowledgment. God in grace sends the word; the moment it is through the Spirit

accepted, there is an act, and the act of faith makes what was before incomprehensible simple and clear. When you act as one really believing, you not only confirm your faith, but you are assured of the simplicity and reality of the truth you have believed, because it is the truth. The woman in Luke 7 believes the report (ver. 16,17), and in acting on it -- in following the Lord into the Pharisee's house -- it becomes plain and intelligible to herself, that Jesus was her Saviour; the practice which followed the faith, explained and confirmed the truth to her. Faith without works is dead. The real cause of our lack of intelligence and power is, that there is so little acting in answer to our faith. Had this woman (Luke 7) contented herself with believing that Jesus was her Saviour, how great would have been her loss both as to the confirmation of grace to herself, and the testimony to the fact to others. Her boldness in braving the Pharisee's taunts, not only obtained for her an interview with the Saviour in whom she believed, but ensured her confirmation of His grace from His own lips, while the devotedness of her acts established in her own heart the full confidence of faith. She was convinced of the beauty and value of the One in whom she believed.

Many in the present day believe that the blood of Christ, like the blood on the lintel in Egypt, is the only shelter from the judgment of God. But there is neither confirmation of this truth to their own souls, nor open testimony to the fact, because there is no feeding on the lamb - on Christ in secret; no outward manner and bearing, with loins girt, shoes on their feet, and staff in their hand, proclaiming that they are not only safe in the place of judgment, but that they are openly and avowedly going away from it (Ex. 12).

The rescued mariner, although transferred from the wreck to the life-boat, must sigh for shore, and the more so the more perilous his position has been. It is not possible to convey to a soul the blessedness of leaving the world until he has acted on his faith, and sought the Lord within closed doors, having openly packed up and prepared to journey away from all here. Who could explain to another what walking on the water means who had never tried to do so? and even in natural things it is so; no one can swim who will not venture into the water. Now if the loss from not acting in faith be so palpable in the very infancy of the new life, how much more must it be so in the higher truths. The real cause of dulness of apprehension of truth, and consequently of the frequent opposition to it is, that

the truth presented has never been reduced to practice. Sometimes it has been listened to and discarded as impracticable, because it has not been subjected to the test of practice; and sometimes, even when the truth is accepted, the acceptance merely amounts to an acquiescence as to its being true, instead of a conviction that it is a truth which is materially to affect one's whole state; and when this last is not the result, there is an indifference to it in the heart.

It is at once fearful and surprising the amount of truth which lies inactive without budding in our hearts, and that even in what is really admitted, admired, and prized, because there has not been any attempt to shape oneself to it. This is the real cause of the weakness in the conversions in the present day. Never was there a day since the apostle's time when so much truth was in circulation, and yet never a day when conversions were of so feeble a type. When there was less truth every convert impressed his companions with at least the deep work in his soul by his retirement from worldly pleasures and his strict observance of duties; but now with the clearer knowledge of grace there seems to be no apprehension of higher responsibilities, and the idea is, that as it is all of grace, there need be no works at all. There is the admission of being rescued from judgment without any sense of having received a new nature, to discharge higher functions and to express greater sentiments than could be known to the old one. There is the sense of being delivered from a penal death, but no sense of the fact that an entirely new condition of life is conferred, more different from the old than that of the butterfly from that of the caterpillar. Possibly the preachers fail in pressing home the utter and deplorable ruin of the old state, and consequently do not insist in spiritual earnestness on the great, distinct, and marvelous qualities of the new. However that may be, it is evident, that though faith may accept the means of salvation, there is no real knowledge of what salvation is, but as there is taken a step or steps which confirm or corroborate the faith. And if this be the case with elementary truth, how much more must a saint be hindered by not attempting to practice the higher truths which he does not deny.

I have already noted that some escape the edge of this remark, by at once refusing the truth as impossible. In their ignorant prudence they are like a man refusing to enter until he can swim. As to this class I will only add, may the Lord in

His mercy open their ears to hear.

But I will suppose, for example's sake, those who have accepted the truth, that we are seated in heavenly places in Christ. Now this class I divide into four varieties. The first - which are the least enlightened - meet you with this difficulty: "I see what is presented in scripture that heaven in our present portion; but I do not feel that it imparts anything to me, I wish it did; on the contrary, while I admit the truth, I find I can enjoy the earth in many ways." It is evident by their own showing that those who comprise this section have never by faith entered on this new ground. Their faith is dead. They have not gone in and set their foot on the place given to them. Practice would soon clear away this difficulty, and the delight of possession would disabuse their minds of the impracticability of the heavenly truth, but there is not purpose of heart to practice, because of the attractions here. Now the second class accept the truth as orthodox, and are not diverted from it by unwillingness to give up enjoyments here. On the contrary, they maintain, and that with great truthfulness, that all real solace must come from the Lord; but instead of taking the actual position of being dwellers in heaven, and coming from there to earth, they only look up to heaven for help as to their walk on earth; and their thoughts and labours are always influenced and dictated by the state and order of things on earth; and instead of pressing upon man the mind of the Lord as learned in heaven, they are occupied with the blessing of man on earth.

The difficulty of exposing this state is great, because with the acceptance of heavenly truth, there is genuine zeal and devoted service for man's blessing on earth, but only as a pilgrim going on to heaven, and no real practical consciousness of being as a heavenly man at home in heaven now. Hence the idea is avowed that there would not be the same extent of practice if the higher truth were adopted. It is true that the heavenly truth does not produce a practice as visible or as easily discerned, as the doctrine which makes man very prominently the object; and what commends itself to the mind of man is preferred to the heavenly, and declared to be the better, and thus the "testimony of the Lord and of me, his prisoner" (Paul), is practically neglected.

The third variety are those who have seen and admired heavenly truth, but fearing the narrow path and circumscribed

service and fellowship in labor to which it would reduce them, have verged away in order to be more visibly and extensively useful, and with a larger circle of companions; but they never progress, and they suffer in their souls as well as hinder the testimony.

The fourth are those who not only accept the truth and adhere to it, but study to be practically in it; and as they do, every difficulty is perfectly solved, and the path, because divine, becomes clearer every day. They go from strength to strength, empowered for still greater advance, because of the very power which has enabled them to make so much progress. I may illustrate these four states by four conditions of a bird's life. The first resembles a bird in the nest, but in opposition to its own nature wishing to prolong its stay there. The second is like a bird in a cage, never exerting itself to fly except from perch to perch within the sphere of its dwelling, as if its only mission were to cheer the forlorn here with its song. The third is like a bird with a broken wing, which can only move on the earth. The fourth alone enjoys in the wide expanse the wondrous abilities with which it has been endowed, and simply because it uses the power that has been conferred on it.

Thus practice explains to oneself in one's own soul, and to others in testimony, the nature and qualities of the power of grace, otherwise inexplicable, and never comprehended until one acts as one believes; for this is the work of faith with power, and faith is thus made perfect.

A Voice to the Faithful, vol. 7.

NEW CREATION, LIFE IN THE SON AND DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAWS OF SIN & DEATH

(continued from v.2, p. 22)

THE GRAIN OF WHEAT BEARING MUCH FRUIT

"RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST"

We turn now to the first communication of "abundant life," i.e., life in the Son. This is not a second quickening in the sense of "double quickening," a charge of some who reason that all is ours from the first moment of quickening. And as the result of such erroneous reasoning, it follows that when our Lord breathed on His own (John 20:22) nothing happened. But a wonderful thing did indeed happen.

The grain of wheat had died; and now on the very day of resurrection He breathes upon them and says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This is not the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit's indwelling to form one body united to the Head, for that awaited ascension and glorification (John 7:39; Acts 2:32,33). Rather, this was the beginning of bringing forth much fruit like the grain of wheat that had died. This was the communication of His "resurrection life" (an expression 'coined' last century). His own had already been quickened with divine life, were born anew, but there was as yet no identification of life with Him because before death He abode alone (John 12:24). But now they were brought into association with Himself in **oneness** with Him -- i.e., identification of life with Him. Wm. Kelly wrote,

Here the risen Lord Jesus stands before us He is man, and now He is the risen man; but He is also the Lord God, even as Thomas immediately after says, "My Lord and my God." He is One who, in His own person, united both divine nature and proper manhood. He stands, the risen man, "the second man," on the first day of the week, and as the quickening or

life-giving Spirit He breathes into the disciples. That is, it is the Spirit of Christ Jesus risen from the dead. It is the Holy Ghost accompanying this resurrection-life, and the power of it which the Lord, as the Head of the new family, conferred on the members of that family. They had believed on Him and had life eternal. Now they had life abundantly (John 10:10).

Accordingly such is the all-important change which came in with the action of our Lord Jesus Christ. One can conceive a person reasoning on this subject and saying, "If people get eternal life, I do not see what great difference it makes that it should be risen life -- that this life in resurrection together with Christ should so signally mark it." Very possibly you do not; but allow me to say that full victory already achieved and made ours in Christ widely differs from life struggling with death; life with the handwriting uneffaced and contrary to us in ordinances; life not yet delivered from the power of the evil that surrounds it; life seeking after what is good though failing; life striving to avoid what is bad, yet constantly drawn somehow or other into it. This is precisely the state of man where the delivering power is unknown. But it was closed for the believer, as far, at any rate, as showing the new place into which the believer is put by the death and resurrection of our Lord. The life that one receives now in the Lord Jesus is life not under the law -- life not having to do with the earth or its ordinances. It is the life of One who has brought me into perfect peace with God. It is the life of One who has put me in possession of His own relationship with God. Accordingly, it is as giving this in its most intrinsic form and its fullest power that our Lord Jesus Christ thus breathed to show the new character of life, so to speak, that was given them -- that the life that they lived in the flesh was really by the faith of the Son Himself: "Not I, but Christ that liveth in me." This, then, was given by the notable fact that He thus breathed upon them. It was a partaking of Himself as He then stood -- a participation in what He was, specially in the life that was in Him, after all questions of good and evil were settled, and perfect deliverance from sin and death was

won by Him and given to them.

Hence it is that the apostle Paul, referring to this says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."* Why? "For," says he, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "The law of the Spirit of life" is the phrase of the apostle Paul. This is the very life, as John tells us, that was here given. If in being born again (John 3) one was born of water and Spirit, much more was it here the Holy Ghost received; but it was the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Life. It was not the Spirit of external power working miracles, or any such energies - things which to men might appear to be far greater. Much less was it anything so wanton as men taking the place of God, and professing to forgive sins on the earth; to this no apostle ever pretended. Nevertheless it is a real privilege, and as true now as on the day when Jesus rose from the dead. What the Holy Ghost then did was simply communicating life according to its resurrection power and character through Jesus Christ, the Second man risen from the dead and withal the Divine Person, the Son, giving life no less than the Father [1].

* The latter clause in the Received Text, represented in the Authorised Version, has no sufficient authority. It hinders the immediate connection with the reasons given, first in verse 2, next in verse 3; and it undermines the assurance of verse 1 by turning into a condition what rightly follows as the consequence in verse 4.

All saints that ever lived, or will live, had, or will have, life from the Son, but only believers now (I use the word "believers" carefully as noted before to designate those who believe the gospel of their salvation and thus know they are in a forgiven position before God) have life in the Son. Observe three things:

1. "In the Son" denotes relationship and character of the life with knowledge of the Father.
2. "In Christ" denotes place and standing.
3. "In the Spirit" denotes the characterizing power to express the life in the place and standing.

Those three things are among the characteristic truths of Christianity.

In its essence divine life communicated is always the same. But the breath of the last Adam did effect a mighty change. J. A. Trench wrote,

Taken historically, when the truth is known from other parts of the word, it [John 20:22] helps to illustrate the difference, between the Spirit as the power of life in Christ Jesus (the last Adam breathing upon them, as God once breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, would suggest strongly this connection with life) -- of life now theirs (the same life as before, but) in a wholly new position in a risen Christ -- and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; though one could not be without the other now [2].

Mr. Trench adds at once his judgment that it is an "absurdity" to suggest that this teaching means that now "people in fact receive the Spirit as life before they receive it as the indwelling Spirit of sonship." Since pentecost the two go together.

The following comments by Ed. Dennett further explain the relationship between John 20:22,23 and the coming and indwelling of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2):

There is a great difference between these two scriptures. It is clear from John 7:39, that the Holy Ghost was not bestowed upon believers, did not come to dwell in them in the sense of Acts 2, until after that Jesus was glorified. It is also seen from the

2. "An Answer to Life and the Spirit," p.19.

words of the Lord Himself that He did not regard the action in John 20 as in any way anticipating the special blessing of Pentecost. (See Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5.) Distinctly understanding this will prepare us to consider the meaning of the Lord's words in John -- "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," etc. It is, in fact, the fulfilment of chap. 10:10: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Before the cross, during His earthly sojourn, His disciples, who really believed on Him, had life; but it was only from Him in resurrection that they could receive it "more abundantly." But the fact that they did so receive it involves the new place taken by the Lord as risen from among the dead. He was the Second Man in incarnation; but He did not take His place as such, and indeed was not in the condition of the Second Man, until after the resurrection. It is this fact which imparts to the scene in John 20 all its significance. Jesus had already revealed to the disciples, through Mary, that His Father was now their Father, and His God their God. He had thus associated them with Himself in His own relationships; and thenceforward He was the Head of a new race. When therefore He came into their midst, where they were assembled, after that He had spoken peace unto them, shown them His hands and His side, commanded them to go forth in the power of the peace He had bestowed, He communicated the life more abundantly to enable them to enter upon their new place and relationships: a life, the full issue of which would be conformity to His own condition in glory. It should also be remarked that the very form in which He communicated the Holy Ghost, as the power of life, explains its meaning. "He breathed on them;" and, turning back to Genesis, we read that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (chap. 2:7). The first man was quickened by a divine communication of breath, was then "made a living soul;" "the last Adam," as a quickening Spirit, breathed of His own life in resurrection upon His disciples, and they lived in its power through the Holy Spirit. This contrast, moreover, involves undoubtedly the truth of the person of the Lord; but into this we

do not here enter.

Such then is, we apprehend, the truth of this scene and action. What the disciples received in this way was the Holy Spirit as the power of life, corresponding with what we find in Romans 8:1-11; to receive the indwelling Spirit as power, as the anointing, as well as the earnest, the seal, and the Spirit of adoption, they had yet to wait until the day of Pentecost. And hence it was not until Pentecost that they were brought into the full Christian position [3].

To this we add some comments by J. N. Darby:

The truth of risen life in Christ and the coming of the Holy Ghost are distinct; but now that both are fulfilled the divine order is the knowledge of the remission of sins and receiving the Holy Ghost, and thus the two are inseparable. Then I know, or may know, that I am in Christ; whereas the forgiveness known before by the gospel is of past sins -- what my conscience needed. The life we receive is in Christ risen, but I am not consciously -- much more than knowledge -- in John 20:22, now that the Holy Ghost is come, till I receive the Holy Ghost. Romans 8 puts them inseparably together [4].

RESURRECTION LIFE

The expression, "resurrection life" was 'coined' to designate the character and associations of life, the oneness of life with Himself, resulting from our Lord breathing on His own as recorded in John 20. When He rose from the dead, He was the Head of the new creation. Note well that the new creation (which will be considered further in another article) began when Christ rose as its head. His breathing on them was the giving of the Spirit (not as the Pentecostal gift for union with

3. The Christian Friend, 1888, pp. 49,50.

4. Letters JND 3:436.

the Head of the body in Heaven, but) as the power of oneness of life with Himself in the new creation. This oneness of life with Himself has been designated as resurrection life.

W. J. Lowe remarked,

As the Head of the new creation, and the source of life as risen from the dead, He breathes on them the breath of resurrection-life, and states at the very moment what is the characteristic of the life, namely, "[the] Holy Ghost." (In a similar sense we read of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," Rom. 8:2). No one, I suppose, thinks of denying that this "looks forward" to the coming of the Spirit,* in the sense that, as we have seen, the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer was what determined the blessed position of those whom the Lord was leaving, and to whom He said in view of this, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you" (Chap. 7:7). The believer was to receive the Holy Ghost (7:39). But it was of the breath of this new resurrection-life that the Lord used the words, "Holy Ghost," as John 20:22 states; and that is a different thing from the presence of the Holy Ghost with, and testifying personally in, the believer - "with his spirit." So that to confound this passage with the coming of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost would only obscure the truth in both cases. We have here the new life in the full power and efficacy of the Holy Ghost, as acting in, and forming that life; and not the Spirit personally, with that life, as dwelling in the believer. (As has often been noticed, both these things are seen in Romans 8). And this new life, as revealed, is "in the Son;" not said to be "in us," as if it could be apart from Him; much less be possessed independently of His accomplished work, testified of by the water and the blood which flowed from Him when "already dead" (John 19:33-55) [5].

* [A similar expression could be misleading if coupled with an erroneous explanation. The words

"must look forward to Pentecost" with] the added words "and cannot be before" are wholly unacceptable, and only suit a methodical system of reasoning. It is said "John 20:22, must look forward," and this means that what the Lord did in breathing on the disciples was only the sign of what was to come in at Pentecost, that is, the gift of the Holy Ghost; and not that in the act of breathing He actually communicated at the moment anything they had not possessed before. This is the reasoned out force of this positive act of the Lord, which we are asked to accept as the truth! Shall "must" and "cannot be" settle the matter for us?

Consider also this letter from J. N. Darby:

-- forgets that 'resurrection-life' is a term (as a short statement suitable enough) invented by Christians to express the state in which we are, not a scriptural one. In essence divine life is always the same: only that now Christ, who becomes our life, being not only a quickening Spirit, but also Himself raised from the dead, we have this life as ours according to the condition into which He is entered as man. In one aspect He quickens whom He will (John 5); in another He is raised from the dead, we are quickened together with Him; and though all this is life in divine power -- Christ our life -- yet the difference is important, and involves a great deal. It is not only being born, but born as dead to all that is passed as Christ was -- death, sin, Satan's power, and judgment passed, forgiveness and justification possessed (Colossians 2:13, and so Ephesians). It leads to, though it be not in itself, the unity of all saints in the body of Christ. Hence the connection of life with resurrection with Christ is of all importance, because it is consequent on the death of Christ, and seals on God's part the efficacy of this work, and leads us (the question of sin, and judgment, and the power of flesh and Satan settled) into the new place or sphere to which it belongs. But the life is always essentially the same, or it could not enjoy God. But the state of that life is modified by the consciousness of that place into which it is, in all its relationships, brought -- where Christ is, which affects it in all its thoughts and affections,

according to the power of the Holy Ghost which is in and with it. "It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This affects its whole state and condition, in fellowship with God and with Christ; for morally the life lives in that in which it is. "He that hath the Son hath life," and that Son is the risen Man.

Now, as to life, this is always the state of him who is a Christian, that is, who has the Spirit. (See Rom. 8*). But he may not have realised what it really means, though all be his; and in Romans 7 we get one quickened so as to delight in God's law, but not delivered so as to have the place that belongs to one who knows the power of Christ's resurrection, and having not the Spirit. This last state is developed in chapter 8. No one in the christian state but has this life; and all this belongs to whomsoever is quickened now; but till he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, his state and condition, as alive in Christ, is not known to him, he has not got into that state in relationship with God. It is his, no doubt, but he has not got it. Resurrection-life is life in another condition, the only one now owned by God, but not another kind of life in itself. Charcoal and diamond are exactly the same thing chemically, but they are very different actually. But the only state owned of God now is life connected with Christ risen [6].

* So Christ, after His resurrection, breathed on them, as God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life; but this is not the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Among other things, we should note his remark that "In essence divine life is always the same: only that now" This means he held that O. T. saints had eternal life in its ESSENCE, but not with its present associations and oneness with Christ in resurrection. They had not what is meant by the description "resurrection-life," i.e., life in the Son.

RESURRECTION-LIFE ONLY SINCE CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

The way in which the believer has part in what is divine is

... through the risen manhood of Christ, and what we can partake of in that manhood, a ground easily intelligible to a spiritual mind, and which preserves from what would take us out of our proper place of lowly dependence, though bringing us into infinite blessing [7].

Our Lord said, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him" (John 6:56), a thing impossible until redemption was accomplished in fact.

Thus they should live, not of their own life, but by Christ, through feeding on Him. Here He returns to His own Person, faith in His death being established. Moreover, they should dwell in Him (v. 56) - should be in Him before God, according to all His acceptance before God, all the efficacy of His work in dying. And Christ should dwell in them according to the power and grace of that life in which He had gained the victory over death, and in which, having gained it, He now lives. As the living Father had sent Him, and He lived, not by an independent life which had not the Father for its object or source, but by reason of the Father, so he that thus ate Him should live because of Him [8].

Mr. Darby also remarked that "Christ introduces us into the enjoyment of that which is His own -- of His own position before the Father." He refers to this in connection with the Son in manhood.

This is blessedly true in every respect, except of course essential Godhead and oneness with the Father: in this He remains divinely alone. But all He has as

7. A. C. Ord, "The Teaching of Scripture on the Subject of Spiritual Life . . . ," p.53.

8. J. N. Darby, Synopsis 3:329,330 (Stow Hill ed.).

man, and as Son in manhood, He introduces into, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." His peace, His joy, the words the Father gave to Him, He has given to us; the glory given to Him He has given to us; with the love wherewith the Father has loved Him we are loved. The counsels of God were not merely to meet our responsibility as children of Adam, but before the world to put us into the same position with the second Adam, His own Son. And Christ's work has made that to be righteousness [9].

These are some of the characteristics of life in the Son:

"Because I live, ye shall live also." We see Him, because we have life, and this life is in Him, and He in this life. "This life is in the Son." It is as sure as His duration. It is derived from Him. Because He lives, we shall live. Our life is, in everything, the manifestation of Himself who is our life. Even as the apostle expresses it, "That the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies." Alas! the flesh resists; but this is our life in Christ.

But this is not all. The Holy Ghost dwelling in us, we know that we are in Christ.*

* Note, this in individual, not the union of the members of the body with Christ; nor is union indeed an exact term for it. We are in Him. This is more than union, but not the same thing. It is nature and life, and position in it, our place in that nature and life. When He was on earth, and they had not the Holy Ghost, they should have known that He was in the Father and the Father in Him. When He was in heaven, and they had the Holy Ghost, they would know they were in Him and He in them [10].

ed.

9. Synopsis 3:371 (Stow Hill ed.).

10. Ibid., p.367.

THE SIN OF ZIPPORAH

"A bloody husband art thou to me ... because of the circumcision" (Ex. 4:25,26)

When the man by whose hand God would deliver Israel out of the land of Egypt had received his authority and commission for that great work, and was on his way from the land of Midian where he had been a stranger we are told, he took with him his wife and his sons. An incidental occurrence during the journey gives us an insight into the condition of the family - its responsibility before God, and the light in which that painful rite which God had imposed as the outward mark of His relationship with the seed of Abraham was viewed by its different members.

Circumcision had not been performed upon Gershon their firstborn, though years had elapsed since the reception of Moses into this Gentile family and the birth of the child who is mentioned in a previous chapter (Ex. 2). Zipporah it seems had long been averse to it; it was a painful, if not a dangerous operation, and distressing to her feelings as a mother. Why should her husband require that which was so severe and bloody? Nothing of the kind was thought necessary in her own family - it was quite contrary to the universal practice around her, and had better at the least be deferred to the time when Moses should again rejoin his own nation. Thus would human nature reason. Moses apparently had yielded, and God was forgotten, and the mother pacified at the expense of obedience to Him.

Such was her foolish tenderness towards her child, which well nigh became, as is here related to us, the destruction of Moses, her husband. "And it came to pass, by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him." The Lord did not hold him guiltless for his negligence of His word, and foolish compliance with the wishes of his wife. And Zipporah having quitted her own country to accompany him, was on the point of being left desolate by the loss of her protector, for the anger of the Lord was kindled against him. "Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody

husband^a art thou to me." The rite she so much disliked, and in which she saw so much cruelty, she has herself to perform, at a time and under circumstances which must greatly have added to the distress she felt, and increased the suffering of her son. And with a heart still inexperienced in and rebellious against the dealings and requirements of the Lord toward those whom He has set apart as His own, she vents her indignation against her husband in language and in an action such as this. The circumcision was compelled at last, she was forced to it by the hand of God, but Moses was "a bloody husband"!!!

Thus he escapes we are told. "So He let him [Moses] go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision." Her heart is untouched, though the trial is over; and she cannot restrain her anger from breaking forth against the most apparent author of this grievance. As yet there is no feeling of what was due to the Lord, who had imposed this as a sign of separation to Himself. And though she is forced by the threatening attitude which the Lord had assumed to perform the rite, and that even with her own hand, she has not learnt the meaning of it, nor ceased to dislike it. In the end she has to return to her own country, sent back by Moses (Ex. 18:2). Her self-will and ignorance of the ways of the Lord made her ill-suited to be his companion, while accomplishing under the hand of God the rescue of His people out of the land of Egypt.

Such was her sin and folly; and such has been our own. God has been dealing with us that He may separate us to Himself. He has found fleshly evils allowed among us - subtle and refined errors of the human mind, leading us in the end to heresy, sectarianism, and clericalism - a turning back to establish and to lean upon what He had shown to us as evil, and called us out from - desiring somewhat of that position and respectability which natural men can look upon and value. As Israel with the nations of old, we have too much learned the ways of those around us. If our unbelief has not gone so far as theirs when they desired a king, there has been much of a similar character in our want of practical confidence in the

(a) ---The meaning of the Hebrew word, which is disputed, will not affect the use here made of the passage. Psa. 19:5 and Isa. 62:5, as well as verse 20, seem to bear out the ordinary translation.

presence, power and guidance of the Spirit of God, and the distribution of His gifts. We have failed individually and collectively in condemning the world as that which crucified the Lord of Glory, - we have not been as those who are crucified to it, and know nothing but Christ risen and in heaven, and who, united to Him, have done with all that is properly earthly. Thus Satan has found principles to act on among us, the means to introduce leaven which might corrupt in different ways. As in the instance before us, the hand of God has been raised against this fleshly evil, this unheavenly condition, so unsuitable for Himself, into which we have relapsed. And have WE been ready to act in purging it out when discovered? Have we not rather, in foolish tenderness, shrunk back, thinking more of the pain we should inflict than the honour of our God, or of His jealousy, which required this prompt and decisive action? Surely God is to be thought of first, and what He looks for, however dear (and justly so) the object may be on whom the suffering has to be inflicted. When God came out to meet Moses there was no alternative then. It was to ask why HE had been slighted, why HIS word had been neglected, HIS wishes and feelings disregarded? Is not God making this demand of us now, if we are inclined to tolerate what He has openly showed His judgment of, and what we found so corrupting in its nature, will not that provoke Him? Shall we stir Him to jealousy, are we stronger than He? Are we to tamper with evil when God has made manifest its true character, and when His hand has been stretched out against us all on account of it? Surely it must be clean cut off and rejected, whatever suffering we cause ourselves in the act. Those most dear and favoured must be sacrificed, and sacrificed to the Lord at such a time. Had the circumcision been performed at an earlier period, and under other circumstances, it might not have been felt so severely, for this had to be done on a journey by the way side. So we may have felt the manner of excision of evil to be rough and severe, and by such materials as were at hand or presented themselves on the emergency; but what of that, if we have been saved by it and our common blessing recovered? Shall we, with Zipporah, resent what we now own to have been necessary, and what others saw the honour of God required when we were unwilling to admit it, yea, opposed it, shall we utter our reproaches against them? Is this the season for such words from our lips? It is written, "Others save with fear plucking them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh," - we have been thus rescued from the fire, and instead of looking up and

owning God in our deliverance, we are occupied in seeing whether the plucking out was gentle enough! Is this God's estimate of the matter? Have we understood His ways, and appreciated His goodness, that we can indulge in such trivial complaints, but not the less dishonouring to Him for their unsuitableness.

If the usage has been rough in putting away evil, we may attribute much of that to ourselves, and humble ourselves in that we have allowed it to go on so long unchecked. We have to thank God that there are some to consider what is due to Him, when we ourselves have forgotten it, and to act upon that, even though it be distressing to those dear to us, and to ourselves at the same time. There are times when we may have to lay aside the ties which otherwise most rightly bind us (Ex. 32:25-29). And faithfulness to God contains often more true love than the outcry sometimes so loudly raised concerning charity.^b No doubt the child who suffers by the infliction will cry out, and the mother's heart is tender and may be pained by it; but so it is with all parental discipline, and it may be, as it often is, real kindness to disregard that.

Let us not imitate the conduct of Zipporah, and upbraid those who have been bold of God against evil, when others kept aloof through want of faith, and faithfulness, and left them to fight the battles of the Lord alone. Let us not say to them, "A bloody husband art thou to me ... because of the circumcision:" they have been acting for God toward us in what they have done, and it ill becomes us to adopt this evil tone and bearing.

The Present Testimony, Vol. 1

(b) ---It is worthy of notice that some of those who cry loudest utterly fail in charity towards their brethren both in evil insinuations and direct censures. Nor should we be surprised if flesh repeats, "I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thy heart," or with loud indignation repeats, "a bloody husband art thou to me." After all, it only shows itself in its true colours, and will be judged by the Spirit of God dwelling in the saints.

"AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN"

I Peter 1:14-21

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy."

But for simple faith in God and the consciousness that the Spirit of God is still Guardian in the church, one would not know how or what to speak in these days. If you speak of grace, and dwell upon the fulness and freeness of it, there are so many hearts that will delight in it after a carnal manner, and use it for a cloak for evil; not merely those who do, as Jude says, "turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness," but who will cover over a deep spirit of worldliness, excusing themselves much obedience on the ground of grace. Indeed, this is the prevailing leaven of these days. It is the root of that latitudinarian spirit which is tolerant of many evils and much disobedience. On the other hand, if you speak of holiness of walk, many souls put themselves under legal bondage, which robs them of their joy, mars their peace, or at the best makes them the slaves of their own frames and feelings, or promotes that self-righteous spirit which fills the heart with intolerant pride.

Still the truth must be told; and it will have its fruit in some hearts. In the passage above we see the most touching appeal to the heart of a saint; and these two principles, grace and holiness, exactly in unison. The appeal is not to bondmen or servants, but to children: "As obedient children:" and it is from "Him which hath called you." Grace has brightly shone in these two facts, "He hath called us," and "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). That is, He hath called us, and has made us His children. The appeal is this, seeing He who has thus acted in such grace, and brought us into such relationship, is Himself holy, so should we be holy. And there is grace in this

appeal, for He desires that we should be before Him in joy and love; which could not be without holiness. This our God has secured to us in Jesus, "having chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1:4). But God has now separated us, not only from an evil world and from our own evil too but, unto Himself; hence the present appeal to be "as obedient children." The principle is this, the children should be as the Parent. God is holy: hence His children are to be holy. As holiness is a characteristic of the Father, it should also be a characteristic of the children. (See Matt. 5:45 and 48.)

Now, if this principle had more weight in our minds, our chastenings would be found much more fruitful; for surely that soul that longs after holiness will profit more than the careless soul, by the varied chastenings of the Father's hand: "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:10).

Many are apt to contrast grace and holiness, but there can be no contrast between any of the attributes of God. All His attributes express Himself, and He is One. Grace, indeed, shines most in this, that we sinners of the Gentiles should be reconciled unto God, and built up with the Jews a holy temple in the Lord, etc. (see Eph. 2:11-22; see also same chapter all through, especially verses 4, 7, 10). "Grace reigns through righteousness" (Rom. 5:21).

I am sure of this, if we would serve the Lord, we must be walking in holiness (see Isa. 52:11); not in self-righteousness, but "as obedient children;" as those who wish to be as He is. Every exhortation to His children, and every recognition of them is full of this principle - holiness. As, "To the saints," "holy brethren," "redeemed from all iniquity, to be a peculiar people," etc.

One could dwell very much upon this subject, important at all times, but especially so in these last evil days in which we are enjoined to "turn away from those having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5). I trust the Lord may lead our souls more into it. For it is evident, from the word of God, and from past experience, that God's work is accomplished by means of a holy and godly people. A true ecclesiastical position and clear knowledge of truth will not suffice: holiness is what God looks for. The reason is evident, since to do God's work He must have the soul walking

with Himself in communion with His mind. Witness the contrast between Abraham and Lot.

Let brethren in Christ everywhere look well to this, for there is lack of power: much truth abroad, but it seems to have little power in separating souls from evil. For when we see light spreading, if that "light in them be darkness, how great is that darkness." There seems to be lack of power for obedience to the truth when it is seen. Why is this? 2 Tim. 2:21 implies there is such a thing as meetness for the Master's use. And this is the meetness, "being purged from these" (vessels of dishonour) - NOT, having knowledge.

Let us remember this, "the Lord knoweth them that are His; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." I doubt not the Lord is doing a work among souls; and if we would share the rewards of such a work, we must see to it that we are found "in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God." "As workers together with Him, giving no offence in anything." (See 2 Cor. 6.)

From The Remembrancer, Vol.16 (1907)

EXTRACT

Nothing can be more offensive to Jehovah than that those who have the name of his people should clothe themselves with the privilege of his presence, and use this pretension to honour self and justify evil, or maintain a divine claim in spite of it. Therefore should Zion be plowed as a field

J.N. Darby, Synopsis on Micah 3.

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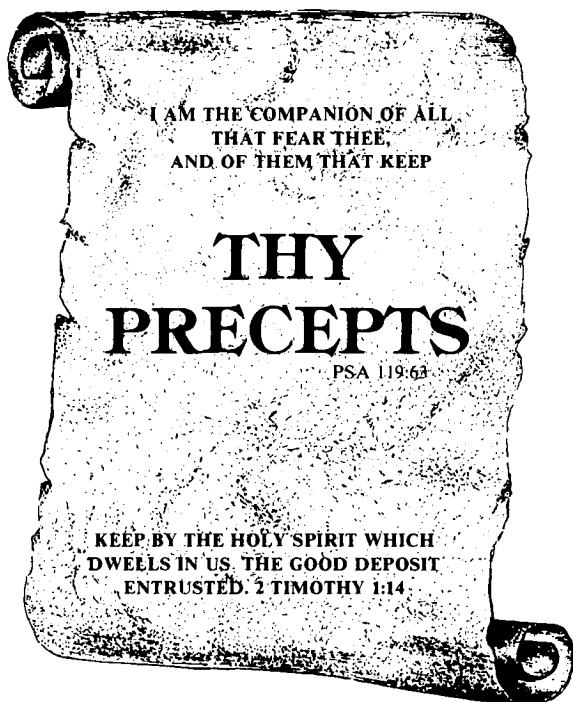
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CONTENTS

Ministry to Heart & Conscience	65
Finding the Root Sin	73
The Power of Truth in Days of Weakness	74
New Creation, etc.	79
"Without Blemish and Without Spot"	88
Parents and Children	94
Music	95
Making the Innocent Guilty	96

A FEW EXTRACTS AND SOME COMMENTS ON MINISTRY TO THE CONSCIENCE AND HEART

This article is mainly a collection of extracts from helpful writings of the 1800's showing a uniform teaching concerning ministry to the conscience and heart. This order has largely been lost sight of, ignored, and resisted in this our day of Laodicean lukewarmness, self-satisfaction and willfulness to bend the Word of God to our ways. We desire, therefore, to direct attention to this most important matter. If it is indeed true that conscience is the inlet of truth (and as a man thinketh in his heart so is he); if indeed conscience is the avenue to the affections; then it is of paramount importance that this be recognized by the ministers of God's Word and that saints accept this as God's perfect way with us. Let us begin by looking at two weighty extracts.

The truth is authority. But men want something that will save them the exercise of their hearts and consciences before God. In human authority the conscience is not with God, and man would be independent of God. Now this degrades man beneath what he was intended to be, for his true position is to be dependent on God. This is man's true glory. The conscience must be brought into contact with God, into the presence of God, and that which accomplishes this is true ministry. Whatever ministry fails to do this, or has not this for its object, is not of God; because it is putting something between the soul and God. If ministry be real, it brings God directly to the conscience through the word; whereas that which is false, stands between God and the conscience; and this will enable us to detect the difference, and to discern at once whether ministry be false or true.

God has promised to guide the humble, and He

will secure the humble soul against false prophets [1].

W.T. Turpin wrote,

We often say to one another that there is a want of more devotedness to Christ. You will never find it where conscience is not reached; because conscience is the avenue to the affections, and the true way by which an opening is made to the soul, and it is in that way that the depths of the affections and the soul are acted upon [2].

"Conscience is the avenue to the affections." The affections are seated in the soul and when we speak of the heart we are thinking of the soul's affections.

The soul is the dwelling place of truth. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The truth dwelling in our soul forms our conduct and desires. The truth enters the soul through a door, an inlet, a window, and that inlet is the conscience. I suggest that Hebrews 10:22 indicates that the conscience is located in the soul, not in the spirit of man. And so if ministry is to be effective, the truth of God, which forms conduct, must enter the soul via the conscience in order to have formative power.

As state has been declining, concern has been felt by some for the need of ministry to address that state. Some concerned in this way have expressed themselves that "the heart must be won first." It is very true that our hearts need to be "won." But we must consider God's way with our hearts in order to meet the need. If God has a moral way and order in dealing with souls, then should not the instruments He uses in ministry to souls follow His way? Otherwise we would fall short of His object in ministry and do damage to souls.

So I would earnestly ask that attention be given to the above extracts and what follows in order that both "conscience searching ministry" and "heart warming ministry" be given

1. "Try the Spirits ..." in The Girdle of Truth, 2:260, 261. (Emphasis is the author's).

2. "The Revelation of God and From God," p. 15 in All Things Are of God.

their right place and that we carefully consider the relationship between the conscience and the heart. This we must do in order that ministry of the Word be according to His mind and secure His object.

J.N. Darby wrote,

I do not believe that a single thought of God ever enters into man's mind by intellect. It is always by conscience, not by intellect. There is faith, and there is love; but conscience is the topknot, as you call it. And in that way all the philosophy of man goes at once. The fact is, God is not in His place at all if my mind sets to work to judge about Him. It is when I say, "I am a poor sinner, and I believe in God," that God has His right place, even if my heart is wrong; still the conscience is that which directly owns the claims of God [3].

J.N. Darby often referred to John 4 in order to illustrate that conscience is the inlet of truth to the soul.

How the Lord shews in John 4 that conscience is the inlet to intelligence in divine things! and thus the heart becomes engaged [4].

Conscience as to the faculty is the inlet to light, and none else, save that love draws; for God is love as well as light, and reveals Himself in Christ. If we see Him we see what we are, but we see goodness before us — where but in Him save dimly in those whose life He is? (See John 3:19) [5].

The fact is that we need Christ for the conscience and we need Christ for the heart. There is not only such a thing as balance, but there is a divine order also. If we change God's order, we end up not merely reversing it; we begin to omit something — the very thing needed.

3. Collected Writings 26:204.

4. Collected Writings 9:242.

5. Letters of J.N. Darby 1:190.

H.F. Witherby referred to the conscience as the window of the soul.

Such clearness of conscience in the presence of our holy and gracious God surely leads to increased consciousness of every kind of evil thing. The window of the Christian's soul is unshuttered; he wishes the light to shine in, and his earnest desire is to keep every speck and spot from off the glass of that window; therein doth he exercise himself [6].

In regard to the conscience being the window of the soul, the following is helpful.

I passed by a dirty window, so grimed and dark that I think I never saw its fellow; indeed, at first I thought it was merely a painting of a window — a sham, and not glass at all! But that dusty window gave me a lesson. The large mass of dirt upon it had accumulated gradually, grain by grain, from moment to moment, from day to day, from month to month. It was so dark within the room to which this window belonged that nothing could be plainly discerned, and when in the room, so difficult was it to see through the dirty window, that the objects without were quite obscured from sight.

Now, you and I have each a window to our souls, which goes by the name of conscience. Take heed to this window, for it requires, as do windows in busy, narrow streets, continual cleaning. If you do not give it continual heed there will be a gradual accumulation of darkening particles upon it — here one, and there one -- but the many grains of dust at length will form a dark mass, keeping the light from entering into the soul.

A little sin indulged in to-day will be a grain of dust upon the window, to which another such grain will gather to-morrow, and the accumulation will be hastened by the dust already there. If this be allowed to go on, the once-hated sins will not be regarded at all: the light will not enter into your soul — darkness

will be there; and the outlook will be obscured — you will not see the light.

The apostle Paul said, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." (Acts 24:16.) "Always," remark. Now, too often, we find that even devout persons do not keep the whole of the window of their conscience clean. They may be very particular over one pane of it, but at the same time very neglectful of another pane. The apostle exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence — toward God and toward men.

And again, sometimes, while there is a zeal to keep one part of the pane clean, still there is carelessness about another part of it. Thus, a christian may be very precise in going to his place of worship. He would be grieved if guilty of the offence of staying at home because the weather was wet, or because he was a little unwell, but he does not exercise himself to equal diligence in private prayer and reading the scriptures. Hence his whole man is not full of light, and there is only for him a partial outlook to the things of God.

So, too, with the "toward men" pane. Mark that christian, how particular he is to pay his debts; he would not have the spot of an unpaid bill upon his conscience for any consideration. But note the spots upon that window, and they have been there some time! What are they caused by? They are particles of evil speakings, which need cleaning off. Morally, it is no worse to rob a man of his money than it is to rob him of his character. They are blots upon the conscience, and hinder the light shining in.

Let us be sure of this, that the window, which we term our conscience, requires constant attention, and that it is at our peril if we neglect it. Let us remember, too, that windows in dirty streets and dusty weather require more care than those in more favoured spots and climates; and who shall deny that this world

in which we live is anything but a clean place [7].

Here is another citation concerning the relationship of conscience to the heart.

Christianity alone could give great force to individuality and to conscience and at the same time unite men under the direction of Christ, towards one centre, which is Christ. This could only be possible by the Holy Spirit, who takes away selfishness, while it gives power to the conscience; giving by faith an object to the heart outside of itself — an object which acts on the individual conscience, and unites us all, through one predominant affection, to one centre of affection, by one life, and one only power of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit acts as the Spirit of union of the children of God; but conscience cannot be in society, and reject its own individual responsibility. It is individual, otherwise God could not be the master of conscience.

If we will avoid the principles of evil, it must be through conscience; there is no other way.

The Christian who acts from conscience will avoid a thousand snares, of which he is not at all aware [8].

This order is warp and woof of the structure of scripture. This, too, is the order of His dealing with conscience and heart. If this fact of the revelation of Himself and His moral ways is to form our conduct, this truth must dwell in our souls and must enter there through the conscience; and then form the character of ministry of the Word.

W.T. Turpin wrote,

And then let me say one word further as to this; it is of great importance to note it, that when the conscience, thus illuminated by light (for I have only

7. Faithful Words for Old & Young 12:69,70

8. "Aphorisms'..." in The Girdle of Truth 2:216,217.

spoken of light as yet), when the conscience bears its witness as the result of the light and truth of God acting upon it, when it gives its verdict, its testimony, and if there has been departure, as light would measure and mark it — "for God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" -- it matters not in how small a measure the departure may be, departure is departure, failure is failure, turning aside is turning aside; granted, it may be but in the measure of a hair's breadth; still, let us ever hold fast it is a hair's breadth of turning aside; there is on our side but one way back, beloved friends, and that is by confession; only one way of restoration, really and happily, and that is by confession — a thing that is greatly dreaded in these days, greatly shunned, and greatly avoided. Oh, what a comfort for the soul that loves light! Suppose I have missed the heavenly road; it matters not, as I have said, how little it is, still I have missed it. Well, who could over-estimate the blessed comfort for the soul, to be able, with the light shining upon the conscience, to go right to God, and to have the whole thing out with Him. It is the true way of getting back — in fact there is no other way. And it is what we shall find increasingly in our own souls, that the way of getting back is by that path which makes little of us, and that is the very thing we do not like, that is what we try to avoid, that is what we, alas! dread. It reminds us of the word of Saul to Samuel, "Honour me now before my people." Alas! poor wretched, small man. It is the littleness of our nature that is humiliating, and it is the littleness of these wretched hearts of ours: "Honour me now before my people." Oh, how often have these words been repeated in our ways! Be assured, it is only true greatness, the effect of the light of God upon the soul, that can afford to go down, and take its true place before God or man: Saul could not. And that is exactly what we may often observe. And I cannot believe that any person that has ever missed any part of the path — I care not what it is — I am assured that man never can be happy in his own soul and conscience, until he owns the thing before God. I could not be persuaded

to the contrary [9].

This order is warp and woof of the structure of scripture. This, too, is the order of His dealing with conscience and heart. If this fact of the revelation of Himself and His moral ways is to form our conduct, this truth must dwell in our souls and must enter there through the conscience; and then form the character of ministry of the Word.

Sometimes one may see a danger, a tendency, and the engagement with the Object is sufficient to turn from the danger. Departure, however, is not danger. J.N. Darby said,

There are things all around us which come in in an ensnaring way. They do not come and say, 'I am the devil, will you have me?' If we see the danger of the world creeping in amongst those where these truths are held, it is important then to give them an object in heaven. Sometimes they may want a good rap on their consciences, that will be a question for spiritual wisdom; but where we see the danger, we must present to them an object in heaven. It is of moment to remember that, as a matter of fact, we are living in the world, and only faith it is that lifts us up out of it.

Ques. It is not so much, 'this is wrong,' and 'that is right,' as 'this is not Christ,' and 'that is Christ'?

Yes; it is put simply enough for us, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." When one comes to the ordinary run of everyday life, such as buying and selling, etc., if a Christian be honest, and cannot buy and sell in the name of the Lord Jesus, he will not do it at all; that is, where there is any conscience.

God has called us to His own kingdom and glory, and if I lose the thought of that, I lose my standard. But if a Christian is growing careless, we may perhaps have to use a hammer to get at his

9. *ibid.*, pp. 22,23.

conscience [10].

We need a ministry of Christ; Christ for the conscience and Christ for the heart; Christ, and what is due to Christ - for surely what is due Him calls us to walk in His ways and is part of Christ, His people's portion.

We have not spoken of ministry for the understanding; i.e., teaching. This also will not have its place and effect where the heart is put before the conscience. Invert God's order and all will be out of order. May He give us to seek His way with us — for His glory and for our blessing.

ed.

10. Notes and Jottings, pp. 419,420.

FINDING THE ROOT SIN

In rebuke or putting away, I do not get rest or feel I see the whole case until three things are clear. 1st, the root sin; 2nd, the occasion; 3rd, the overt display of sin. 1st, David knew how to climb, using God, from the sheepfold to the throne; but knew not aright God's relative position to himself; 2nd, at rest on the throne, not going out to war when the kings go out, he saw, in his idleness, Bathsheba; 3rd, though on God's throne he defiled himself and dishonored God by adultery, corruption, and murder. Thus he learnt David's self, and afterwards God (Ps.32). So in Solomon's case, in Job's, in Peter's. This is important, because, until the root sin is judged, there is no real healing; and the overt sin is very unlike the root sin; not it at all, generally.

Ministry of G.V.Wigram 2:63.

THE POWER OF TRUTH IN DAYS OF WEAKNESS

No one who is exercised as to the present condition of the saints of God can doubt the low and feeble state presented practically on every side, and for those who have hearts to feel, the present distress affords abundant cause for sorrow and humiliation. But it is not true that this state of things is indicated merely or mostly by spiritual boast, and the assumption of a divine standing, with a very low spiritual state. Alas! there are other causes, and in an opposite direction too, more fertile and prolific, and exhibiting open departure from the truth. For example, who can deny the amount of open worldliness and earthly-mindedness amongst the saints? and that too not only allowed, but contended for. The families, houses, appearance, of too many of the Lord's people at the present time tell a mournful tale as to this. Where this is the case, it is vain to look for heavenly ways; indeed, such are the strongest opponents of the truth that our "commonwealth has its existence in the heavens." Now when I use the term world, or worldliness, it is in no sense in the limited construction assigned to it by many. In this way there is a very insidious and convenient method of retaining that element of the world which suits us; namely, by contracting the area to which the scripture phraseology applies, and branding as legal and morbid those who, in some feeble measure at least, perceive that there is "a manner of life" suitable to, and flowing out of, what the apostle calls "my doctrine". No doubt legal effort and spiritual pride are not the fruits of the Spirit of God; yet neither is the minding earthly things, which is enmity to the cross of Christ; nor worldliness, and the friendship of the world, which is enmity against God. When I speak of the world, it is what the world is according to the sanctuary. It is very significant and painful, the desire on the part of many to disparage and cry down that character of divine teaching and truth which as a spring and motive can alone give tone and direction to a walk and way suitable as well as pleasing to the Lord. Indeed, it may be safely asserted that if the truth be refused, the power for practice and walk is gone. But it is said, "Are not the ways of those who hold these truths, in many instances, sorrowful to contemplate?" Alas! this is not denied; but what then? If I suffer my soul to depreciate in the slightest degree the truth in consequence, Satan has gained his point. Denounce the false practice and unseemly ways as strongly as we may, I

believe a more excellent course is to cherish in our own souls more deeply that which the enemy has assailed, and show by our ways and our walk, by our unworldliness and self-denying devotedness to Christ and His interests, a true specimen of those united by the Holy Ghost to Christ glorified at the right hand of God.

Now it may be confidently maintained that there cannot be practice suitable to the mind of our Lord if the doctrine be defective, though it is fully admitted it is quite possible to have correct doctrine and be defective in practice; still, it would be a false line of action altogether to disparage, at least in appearance, the truth of God in our earnest zeal to expose defective practice; and yet who that looks beyond the mere surface of things at the present moment can fail to perceive the consequences and effects upon many of this mode of treating failure? There are many of the saints of God at present who are cheated of their privileges and blessing, not only by reason of the deplorable low condition of the soul and unholy ways of those who doctrinally have accepted the believer's place in Christ in heaven, but quite as much by reason of the unwise, however well-intentioned, effort made to expose and correct such evil practice. Now in looking at scripture we shall never find practices or ways of saints treated in such a manner as to weaken the truth of God. Take the saints of God at Corinth for example. What could be more deplorable than their state as an assembly? There was not only evil, but known evil, in their midst, and they were "puffed up," and had not "mourned". They were, in the words of the Holy Ghost, "carnal"; they had among them "envying, and strife, and divisions." There were "contentions" among them - "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ;" yet of these very saints, in that state, and before he speaks of it or deals with it, the apostle says, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:4-9).

We have like testimony to this way of the Spirit in chapter 5:7: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened;" as if he had said,

Preserve that purity in practice which is yours in principle. We shall find the same thing in the second epistle, tried though the apostle was in spirit and heart, almost supplanted in their affections by one who sought by natural means to set aside God's apostle. Still, ere he meets it all, observe how fully he accredits them, notwithstanding all his sorrow on account of their ways. Take for example 2 Cor. 3:3. They were in fact "the epistle of Christ;" and may I ask, What more could be said of any individual saint than is here affirmed of a company gathered to His name? Think of being Christ's letter of commendation! That epistle might be soiled and blotted, yet it was none the less for that the epistle of Christ. And so it is true now, that a Christian is in standing and destiny heavenly; for he is united to Christ in heaven, and hence he ought to be in practice and ways on earth what he is by sovereign grace in Christ before God; and the surest way to secure the practice desired is to insist upon the truth as to our place in Christ which produces it, and maintains it. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen," and "remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent," are words which very vividly convey the mind of the Lord as to His ways of dealing with a state of decline or declining.

The same truth underlies all the teaching to the assemblies of Galatia, and I refer to it because there we find how Satan was seeking to intrude false doctrine, as at Corinth it was bad practice or morals. In the face of it all observe how strongly the apostle insists upon their true standing - "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." And this, moreover, to those who practically were tempted to deny the standing to which these words refer. It is said that there are those who have now their eyes opened to the believer's heavenly standing, and because they know the standing they imagine themselves practically heavenly. This to me is strange: that being ignorant of it should produce such a state I can well understand; but not surely where the eyes are opened to it. I believe the soul that knows its union with a risen and glorified Christ will feel, and increasingly, how feeble is the expression of Him in its ways and walk. Its language surely will be, "Not that I had already attained, either were already perfect;" but, nevertheless in lowly, humble, earnest faith it would also say, "But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus;" for nothing is more certain than that the position in which sovereign grace

has set us in Christ in heaven, uniting us to Him there by the Holy Ghost who has come down, when divinely known and enjoyed not only judges all that is contrary to it in our ways, but also measures our littleness of divine stature in such a way as not to lead us to despair, but humbly to use the power which God has given in the Christ in whom we are before Him. A man cannot carry himself as a prince if he be not a prince; it is vain to insist upon princely ways without princely position. If a man think himself to be what he is not, he is either deluded or deranged; if he be careful to be what he is, it is the path of consistency and wisdom. The truth is that God in sovereign goodness has been pleased to take up poor, vile creatures - "sinners of the Gentiles" - to magnify in them the riches and glory of His grace; such He has cleansed from all their sins, washed them white as snow, and brought by divine power into an entirely new position in Christ, the last Adam, at God's right hand, and united them to Him there by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." And this observe not at all in respect of the future, for that is treated of in the next verse, but the present position of those who, though once vile and wretched, have been visited in delivering grace. If then God has so wrought for His own glory, are we to resist? Is it too much to say that a Christian is a heavenly person? Is it too much to expect a manner of life expressive of our heavenly origin and destiny? And is not the objective side of this grace of God the true motive and spring of what is subjective, the Holy Ghost being the power for a walk in keeping with Him in whom we are, and by whom all has been made good? Again, who can limit the enjoyment of the spiritual man in communion with the mind and thoughts of the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ? Surely when an apostle by the Spirit could say, "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God" (2 Cor. 5:13), it is evident there is a sphere and condition of communion and satisfaction open to all His saints; as has been blessedly said, "His ecstasy was not excitement or folly; but if out of himself it was with God; if sober, it was the calculation of love for their good." And we find the same person, as regards the unreconciled, persuasive even in these words, "We entreat for Christ, be reconciled to God."

I would add one word in respect of the place which death practically has in relation to this; and here, I believe, lies the secret of our low walk. The reckoning of faith and the realization of faith are not sufficiently prominent in our thoughts; the bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord

Jesus is the only way to express practically what we are in Christ in heaven; and this must be "always", even as of old the camp of Israel was at Gilgal. Circumcision is both positional and practical: Col. 2:11 is the former, Col. 3:5 the latter. Finally, as to service it has been said that certain parts of it are considered "unsuited to the heavenly atmosphere". Some foolish person may have said so whose word would not weigh on any other subject. Alas that the spirit of opposition should be so manifested! yet it is undeniable that none would be more fitted or ready to serve in any practical act of Christianity than those whose souls were consciously in possession of their place in Christ in heaven; others might excel in quantity, but quality could alone be found with those. The church of Ephesus is not refused of the Lord Jesus its full roll of laborious service, yet it did not meet His heart for all that. Surely this is not without its warning for us today as to how possible it is to do works excellent in themselves yet valueless in Christ's eyes. To the church of Philadelphia, on the other hand, He says, "I know thy works." He does not enumerate them as He did those of Ephesus. It is not improbable that in the eyes of others they were insignificant, and those who did them but as men asleep and inactive; yet they possessed the quality which His heart values - "thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Verily, the one who knows what it is to be in Christ in heaven, and is seeking to express it practically on earth, will be ready for any service to which the Lord may call; but they will seek His sending and His glory as well as His mind in regard to it; for while deeply touched by the misery of man, or the sorrows of His saints, the object, motive, spring, must be Christ Himself, and thus man is best ministered to and served. And I will add that such an one will not use any power for Christ on earth other than the Holy Ghost. In fine, no one would be more self-denying, earnest, laborious; but the same acts have a very different meaning when viewed from the standpoint of the mind and pleasure of our Lord. The Lord grant to His beloved saints in these last days more real true apprehension by the Spirit of their real origin and destiny, so as to present it more practically in their ways, walk and service on earth, knowing that "our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour."

W. T. Turpin; From The Christian Friend, 1879

NEW CREATION, LIFE IN THE SON AND DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW OF SIN & DEATH

THE GRAIN OF WHEAT BEARING MUCH FRUIT

(Continued from v. 2, p. 57)

THE NEW CREATION

The formation of the New Creation when Christ rose from the dead, and how the disciples were brought into it on that very day, was discussed in v. 2, p. 47 ff. The present article supposes that the reader has familiarized himself with that article.

In John 3, our Lord had spoken to Nicodemus about the new birth. Because he had difficulties in apprehension, our Lord asked him how he would understand heavenly things if he had difficulty with earthly things. So by "heavenly things" our Lord meant something more than new birth. Subsequently He spoke of abundant life and what was connected therewith. So the new birth is not the new creation wherein we enjoy abundant life, i.e., life in the Son.

There is, then, a heavenly order of things; this is called in Scripture the "new creation." Christ is the beginning of it (Rev. 3:14). In resurrection, in resurrection-life, He rose as Head of the new creation [1]; and on that very day He brought those upon whom He breathed the breath of the new-creation-life into that new creation. There are two Adams. Christ is called "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), "last" indicating there will not be another. Christ as the last Adam is a quickening spirit -- and Head of the New Creation. When Christ breathed on the disciples, it could then be said they were quickened together with Him. One might think from

1. Cp. Justification and Acceptance with God, (London: G. Morrish) p. 58, n.d.

Ephesians 2 that in our day quickening together with Christ takes place at the first moment of quickening, because Eph. 2 does not appear to allow for a possible time between quickening and quickening together with Christ. The following quotation may be helpful in this regard:

Remark, too, in the details of God's working with souls, that a point here (largely developed in Epistle to the Romans, chapter 7, which comes in between the quickening of the dead soul and union with Christ by the Spirit), which does not appear in Ephesians. I refer to the exercises passed through after the soul is quickened and converted to God, but before union takes place. This experience is needed, because of our state. Life is in the soul long, it may be, before the Holy Ghost dwells in us, thus uniting us to Christ. This is because Ephesians only treats of God's operations in chapter 2, in carrying out the counsels of chapter 1; not that of the soul's history when under these operations, which we find in Romans doctrinally, and in Acts historically. Hence all experiences of the soul (as Rom. 7) are omitted.

Then again, time not being counted now, since Christ went on high (it has to do with the Jew and the earth), we can say, "When Christ died I died," &c., &c. His quickening and that of individuals who compose the Church, now going on, happens in what does not count as time at all. It is a timeless interval since the Cross, and the counting of 'times and seasons' will commence at the taking up of the saints to heaven, and God's fresh operations with the Jew and Israel. Hence Christ's ascension and that of the Church is all looked upon as one thing. This is an interesting point, and worthy of some more special development [2].

We might notice from John 20 that the disciples, after receiving abundant life, i.e., life in the Son, i.e., resur-

2. Words of truth, New Series 1:210,211. See also J.A. Trench, An Answer to "Life and the Spirit", p. 15. This may, perhaps, be better understood after considering Romans 7.

rection-life, were not yet united to the Head in heaven as members of one body -- since the Head of the body was not yet ascended, and since the baptism in the Spirit, which formed that body (cp. Acts 2:32,33 and 1 Cor. 12:13) had not yet taken place. That would take place 50 days later. This illustrates the difference between identification of life or oneness (John's writings) and union -- by which those who properly distinguish things that differ mean connection of the members of one body with the Head of the body in heaven. There is indeed a distinction between oneness and union. This is not hair-splitting, as the spiritually slothful may say, but a key to understanding the inspired writings of John and Paul. It is a blessedness to the soul to contemplate the vast array of blessings that we have in Christ, light and blessing radiating from each facet of the truth, Christ's work being the foundation of all, and the glory of God the result.

The believer is in the new creation and this fact ought to give character to his conduct. Some extracts from a letter written last century might help us to understand this:

One of the principal keys to the Scriptures is to perceive that, before God, all is resolved into two men, heads of two distinct creations. They are the two Adams, the first and the last -- Adam and Christ. Each of these is head not simply of a family, but of a creation. The first man fell, and dragged with him into ruin and death the entire creation at whose head he stood. (Rom. 5:12; 8:20; 1 Cor. 15:22, &c.) The second man, passing by means of death out of this first creation, rose again as head of a new creation, formed on new principles; and carried with Him on to this new ground, those whom He redeemed by His death (Eph. 2:6), who being in Him ("in Christ") are of the new creation, (kaine ktisis -- 2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15,) for them "old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new." Into this new position they have individually passed by faith, accepting thereby identification with Christ in His death, and thus bowing to the sentence of death denounced by God on the entire old creation in Adam, and on themselves as pertaining to it; consenting to pass thus by death out of the old state, in order to enter by resurrection into a new state -- to die to Adam, that they might rise in Christ. Passing thus by

faith out of the old creation, through the same door by which Christ literally passed out, they also enter by faith, through the medium of resurrection and the new birth, into the new creation, as head of which He actually lives as risen (Rom. 6:3,4,11; Col. 2:12; 3:1, &c). This truth then, of their being in the reckoning of God dead and risen, so that old things have for them passed away, and all things become new, and all of God, (not of Adam,) they endeavour to apply practically at every point. By faith they reckon themselves dead to sin and alive to God; (Rom. 6:11,) dead to the law, that they may live to Christ; (Rom. 7:4,) dead to the world and to its rudiments, (Gal. 2:20; 6:14; Col. 2:20,) in such wise that they are no longer, as though living in the world, subject to ordinances, proper to the old creation, but only sojourn in the midst of it as pilgrims and strangers -- a heavenly people, citizens of a heavenly country (1 Peter 2:11; 1 Cor. 15:48; Phil. 3:20).

The separation is absolute and complete between the old and the new, between the Adamic and the Christian; as complete as if death had been literally realized. The relations of the man to God in the old creation have been totally and absolutely wound up, and have been re-established on entirely new ground, under new auspices, and on new principles. For the man in Christ there subsists not a single one of his old relationships, whether with God or with men, that subsisted on the old ground, to be filled or fulfilled as of the old obligations. All, absolutely all, have become new!

It is true that the man in Christ finds himself placed in many relationships, identical with those in which he stood as a man in Adam, and in so far as the relationships are identical, in the same proportion are the obligations growing out of them identical also; but nothing of this sort constitutes an exception to the fact that all things have become new for him; the principle on which he fulfils them now is altogether diverse from the old, and when he only complies with such duties as pertaining to the old creation, (as of the law,) he shows that he is lacking in Christian intelligence, and that his faith is not yet up to the

height of Christian truth.

If the believer, in the hour of his conversion to God, had fallen dead on the ground -- literally dead -- and his spirit, departing to be with Christ, had, like Paul, penetrated to the third heaven, what would have been the effect of that death on his relations to the terrestrial creation to which he had lately belonged? Would there not have been an end to all of them? Would he be still bound to his wife so as to owe to her the duties of a husband, or to his parents so as to owe to them the honour and obedience of a son? Rom. 7:2 solves the question as to the first point, and in solving that solves every other that stands on the same footing.

Thus is the man then completely loosed from all the relationships, with their respective obligations, which belonged to him as a man among men and towards them.

And how would it be as to his relations to God? It would be exactly the same. He would have entered on new relationships towards Him, in the new sphere of existence. Some of these would be identical with some of those of the old sphere -- God would still be his Creator, benefactor, &c., and thence he would owe to Him in these characters duties as aforetime, but it would no longer be as an earthly man, but as a heavenly man he would have to fill these relationships, and to fulfil their duties. Even the relationships which corresponded to the old would be on a new footing, and he would stand in other relationships entirely unknown to his earthly state.

Very well, let us now suppose that this new heavenly person, after a brief sojourn in the heavenly places, were told by his Lord to return again to earth, (John 20:21,) and to take up once more the body in which he had formerly lived there as a man in the flesh -- a man in Adam, and in the old creation -- but that he should now take it up in his new and proper character of a man in Christ -- a heavenly man (1 Cor. 15:48) -- and as such should employ its members, which aforetime he had used as instruments of sin, as

instruments thenceforth of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6:13). That at the same time, while maintaining his relations with God at the full height of his new position and character, so that he should no more return to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, (Gal. 4:3,9; Col. 2:8,20) he should place himself withal under certain of the old relationships of life on earth -- such as might comport with his character and mission -- in order to live in them now as a heavenly man, representative of Christ; that he might manifest the life of Jesus in his mortal body, (2 Cor. 4:10) and show forth the virtues of Him who had called him out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9). In obedience to this, the man resumes his relationship to his wife, and to his parents, &c., and fulfills now the duties proper to these relationships, not with reference to the law, to which as a man in Christ he is no longer subject (the law pertaining to the old creation), but as subject to Christ, (~~ennomos~~ Cristu, 1 Cor. 9:21,) formed on His model, and led by His Spirit. So walking -- not after the flesh, but after the Spirit -- the result would be that the righteousness of the law (that which the law demanded in vain of him as a man in the flesh) would be fulfilled in him now in a manner and upon a principle altogether new and different. The Spirit would produce in him as fruit in the new creation that which the law in vain sought to obtain from him by pressure in the old. Led by the Spirit, he would not be under the law, (Gal. 5:18,) and yet he would do of his free will and as by nature (as a tree produces fruit) the moral works which the law claims from those under it.

Such is precisely the position which the believer occupies, save that not having literally died in his own person, but (in God's reckoning) with Christ in His death, he is called to realize it by faith, proceeding in all things on this principle of death and resurrection, and making it all as real to faith as though it had been made good to actual experience.

The two creations being so completely distinct and diverse one from another, it follows, that the rule of life or conduct, that was suitable under the first, will not suffice under the other. In the new creation

new relationships toward God are met with, on the ground of redemption, and in the character of Father, in which He has now revealed Himself; relationships also towards the Lord Jesus Christ as Redeemer, Mediator, Lord, &c., all of them unknown to the old creation; relations towards the brethren in Christ -- a new bond which had no existence under the old order of things; so that to teach believers to adopt as their rule of life the law, which was the rule for a Jew (a man in the flesh) in the old creation, is a complete mistake; is to drag him back from his legitimate position, to a scale of duties incalculably inferior to what is really incumbent on him; is to degrade Christianity into a species of half-caste Judaism that is neither one thing nor the other.

Jesus said to His own, "A new commandment give I unto you that ye should love one another, as I have loved you;" and John makes on this precept the practical comment, "He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." If this commandment is new, then it cannot be part of the law, which already was old; and if this commandment, which is new, makes part of the Christian's rule of life, and at the same time does not make part of the law, it follows, beyond all controversy, that the law is not the rule of life for believers. And the reason is easy to understand. This new commandment of the Lord regulates the duties of a relationship of which the law knew nothing, and could know nothing -- brotherhood in Christ. The law only bade to love one's neighbour as one's self; but here is a precept that bids to love the brethren in Christ more than oneself; for it requires one to love as Christ has loved us, and He loved us more than Himself when He sacrificed Himself for us, laying down His life

In Christ, in whom the new creation is complete and perfect (Col. 2:9,10,) from the beginning to the end, God has found His eternal rest, and the believer his -- a rest of which the Sabbath was but the shadow (Col. 2:16,17). With the commemoration, therefore, of a creation ruined by the fall of man -- and so ruined that he had to accept of death in order

to be able to get out from it and its condemnation-- the Christian has nothing to do. Another thing, however, he has true reason to commemorate; namely, the day on which the new creation, in Christ its head, came forth complete and perfect from the sepulchre of the old, a triumph of the grace, the power, and the wisdom of God! This day indeed, not the seventh of the week of the old creation, but the first day of a creation altogether new, the Christian has every motive for turning into a day of rejoicing, and to thank God and the Lord for the holy privilege of being permitted, and by the Spirit led to the desire, of consecrating it to the memory and to the worship of Him who rose from among the dead, bearing him along with Him. The heart that appreciates the place it occupies in the presence of God in Jesus Christ, and the love, the grace, and the work which brought him there, the soul which by the Holy Ghost has learned to love the person of Him who died for him and rose again, needs no law to oblige him to this; and for this reason its observance is never set in Scripture on the ground of duty, nor is it ever sought in any part of it to enforce it by commands or penalties; it is only made plain that it is pleasing to the Lord that the day should be observed, and that He has honoured it by giving it His name. For the heart that is led by the Holy Ghost, this is enough; and as to the soul which does not appreciate these things, that he should keep the day ostensibly and corporeally, drawing nigh to God with the mouth and honouring Him with the lip, while the heart is far from Him, this is worthless for the Lord. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." This is the motto of Christianity; all else is worthless. The Lord's day is not for the world, but only for the Church. That the world should make it a resting-day or not is no matter to God. Before the world can keep the Lord's day, it must first be converted -- die, be born again, and be raised from the dead. For men in the flesh -- the world -- in the old creation, He made rudimentary rules and ordinances -- "Touch not, taste not, handle not," work not; and these were fulfilled in the letter by corporeal abstention from the prohibited things. All these were of the "old things" that have passed away.

Now, that which has value for Him is only that which bears the stamp of "spirit and truth;" and where this is, there is no need of penalties and enforcements, whether ecclesiastic or other; where this is not, neither penalties nor commandments can create it; and for any Christian assembly to undertake to compel any one to keep the Lord's day under pain of excommunication, would be a proof that they were as deficient in Christian intelligence as he. It is a legitimate case for the efforts of pastoral care and instruction; and when these do not succeed in correcting the error, a little patience and waiting, with much prayer to the Lord, will leave occasion to the Holy Spirit either to lead the erring one to better thoughts, or else to leave him to fall into some offence which will expose him in his true character, and render him amenable to discipline; but in any case the assembly has no right to exceed the limits the Lord has set. He has given no orders to put away for such a motive, and the assembly ought not. Let believers be taught the true import of their "heavenly calling," and as risen with Christ, they will seek those things which are above, not those which are on the earth, (Heb. 3:1; Col. 3:1 &c.) and this will free them from that spirit of "filthy lucre" which leads to the preferring an open shop on the Lord's day, to the worship and service in spiritual things, of Him by whose cross the world is crucified to them and they to the world.

I remain, your brother in Christ,
R.H.

If what our brother has stated in his last sentence is true, how is it that believers have been so taught and yet their lives have evidenced a heart not set on seeking those things above? And, alas, some who may have no "open shop on the Lord's day" nonetheless have "filthy lucre" (or position, etc.) as their object. But the import of these teachings ought to cause us to seek those things above. The conscience, not merely the heart, must be engaged with the truth.

CONSCIENCE IS THE INLET OF TRUTH;
THE SOUL IS ITS DWELLING PLACE.

ed.

“WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT”

(Luke 4:1-13)

Last week, in speaking of sanctification, we noted that one revelation of the truth which sanctifies is, that the Lord Jesus, by taking in grace His people's place, has **made** their place in righteousness, and that the place they have, and the blessing they enjoy, is the fruit to them of all that the Lord in grace accomplished at the cross for God's glory, and His people's blessing -- the fruit so far of the travail of His soul. I propose tonight to look at the fitness of the Lord Jesus to take His people's place; for, if one have to stand in the place of others, he must have in himself the fitness which renders him competent to do so.

Here an indispensable necessity meets us with regard to the one who would take the place of others in order to glorify God about sin, and bear their sins: he must combine in his own person that which is essentially divine and that which is essentially human. That which is divine, because He who had been sinned against was the divine Being, who must have satisfaction; the one to satisfy Him must therefore be divine. That which is human, because, sin having entered, the God against whom that sin had been committed must maintain His character, and manifest His righteousness with regard to it, by executing judgment against it. This entails suffering; one who was in himself only divine could not suffer; it needed one who was human to do so. The indispensable necessity therefore in one who takes this place before God is, that he should combine in his own person a nature which, being divine, could satisfy, and a nature which, being human, could suffer.

Such a one was not to be found among men; all were but **men**, and moreover sinful, guilty men. God Himself alone could provide one in whom such a wonderful combination could exist, and such a one He has provided and presented to us in Him who bears the name of "The Lamb of God." In Him we shall find, as I hope to show, a Being essentially divine, and at the same time essentially human.

On turning to John 1 we find the glory of the eternal Son of God unfolded: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." Here the glory of the Lord Jesus is spoken of. First of all, we find presented to us what He is, namely, the Word; this as being the expression of the mind, thought, and power of God Himself. Then another truth in connection with His existence: "In the beginning **was** the word." That is to say, His existence is an eternal existence. Then another truth in connection with His person: "The word was **with** God." That is to say, He is a **distinct** person. And then a further development of truth as to His nature: "He was **God**." That is to say, He is, as to His nature, **divine**. Thus we have described in this wonderfully comprehensive verse One who in the beginning **was**; who was **with** God; who **was** God; One **eternal** as to His existence, **distinct** as to His person, and **divine** as to His nature.

Then in the second verse is another truth, one that bears on the distinct personality of the Lord Jesus. Some might think that He was a distinct person only when He came down to this world; but this verse proves His distinct personality through all eternity. "The same was in the **beginning with** God." It was not only after that time began that this one came forth as Son of God, a distinct person, but when time had its commencement the eternally distinct Son of God **was there**. Here then we have the **divine** glory of the eternal Son of God set before us.

In verse 14 a further truth concerning Him is brought out, not what He ever was and is, but what He **became**. "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Note that the coming down of the eternal Son of God, and His taking humanity into association with Himself, in no wise affected the divine glory that was His own from all eternity; it only placed a veil round that which, had it not been so veiled, must have shone to our destruction; yet the divine glory of that blessed One "could not be hid," could not but come forth through the beautiful veil of that humanity in which it was shrouded; it was the same glory that belonged to Him who was the only begotten of the Father through the countless ages of eternity, but seen in the person of Him who had now in grace become a man. Thus we have a divine Being here below as a man.

There is, however, another thing to be considered, namely, the character of the humanity the Lord assumed when He came as a man to the earth. There had already been two samples of humanity seen there, one passed away for ever, the other still present: the one, that of the first man in Eden, a humanity that was characterized by innocence, that is, ignorance of evil. We know what became of it: Adam fell, and innocence was gone forever. Since then, another phase of humanity has been present, and that is fallen or sinful humanity. Now the moment the heart gets through grace the smallest insight into the glory of the person of Him who bears the name of "the Lamb of God," it recognizes that there **must** be some other character of humanity, for it is impossible that a divine person could be here as innocent, for His divine nature makes Him omniscient, while, on the other hand, it is impossible that one who is divine could take a fallen, sinful nature into association with Himself; so that the glory of the person of the Lord Jesus precludes the thought that it could be either innocent or fallen humanity that He assumed; it must be another kind of humanity altogether, and so we shall see it to be.

Let us turn to Luke 1:35, where we find Mary bowing with beautiful lowliness of heart to the message of the angel, waiting only to know how the purposes of God are to be carried out. The angel says to her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, that **holy** thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Here we have presented the true character of the Lord's humanity: His was not innocent, not fallen, but **holy** humanity. He was "that **holy** thing which shall be born of thee" (a woman -- hence absolutely a man) "shall be called the Son of God" (hence essentially divine).

In Luke 3 the genealogy of the Lord is traced back to Adam in order to exhibit the true Son of God a man on earth. In this character the Father's voice is heard owning the relationship and perfect acceptability in which that Man stood to Him, the Father: "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The requirement therefore -- the combination of the divine and the human in one person -- is met in the person of the Lord Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God; and in this respect His personal fitness to take His people's place is seen. May our hearts enter more and more into the excellencies of that blessed One. We shall never get to the end of those excellencies; but God has in His grace given those who believe, in

some little measure, to behold them; and He whose excellencies they are is the Son of God's love -- perfect God, perfect man -- Jesus Christ our Saviour and our Lord.

In the word of God we have the history of two men: Adam, the first man, the man of responsibility; and the Lord Jesus, the second man, the man of purpose, the man who answers to the heart of God, and who laid the foundation for the accomplishment in righteousness of the thought of God's heart. The first we find in Eden, with the principle that was to guide his conduct, namely, obedience -- not obedience in order to **attain** a position, but obedience in order to **maintain** the position in which God his Creator had placed him. Satan comes against this man; and we find him using one of the weapons with which he always attacks man: of these he has two, the one is allurements, the other terror. In Eden it was the former weapon that he brought to bear. It was all allurements that he presented to the eye of Eve -- "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"-- and, as we know, his end was accomplished but too well. With allurements he utterly overthrew the man of responsibility, who in his fall dragged into ruin with himself the whole of that creation in headship of which God had placed him, a ruin which is irremediable, for there is no reformation of the first creation. We know that Christ will bring this world into blessing when He comes to reign, but it will be by righteousness reigning in **power**; then He will thoroughly suppress evil: if it do raise its head, He will crush it. But evil will not even then be **taken out** of the world; not until the eternal state will righteousness **dwell**, though in the millennium it will **reign**.

In Luke 4 we find the Lord Jesus, the second man, the last Adam, taking His place as man before, and subjected to the attack of, that enemy under whose wiles the first man, Adam, fell. His position when thus attacked was exactly the opposite to that of Adam. In Eden there was everything to hold the heart true to the center of its blessing, and yet in the midst of it all Adam fell. How was it here with the Lord Jesus Christ? He was in the midst of a scene in which was nothing to sustain Him: He was in the "wilderness", a word that is used in Scripture to signify a place in which are no springs of God. There was a blessed river of grace flowing through it when He was there, but in itself no springs. It is not as exercising divine power that the Lord is here presented, but as a man acting in obedience and dependence.

This too is all mercy and grace for us, when we come to look at it. Supposing He had stood there and exercised divine power, it would have been simply a divine person overcoming the enemy by His own power. In such case, though blessed for us to see it, it would not furnish us with an example for our own pathway; but when we see Him there as a man, obedient and dependent, meeting the power of the enemy with a weapon that is through grace within our reach, and in this position with this weapon thoroughly defeating the foe, then indeed we have got a perfect example, in whose steps we are to follow.

On Satan's side it is the same weapon that he used against Adam in Eden that he uses here -- his weapon of allurement. Three of the temptations which Satan presents to the Lord Jesus Christ are recorded. The first is, if I may say so, a natural temptation: it applies to the human nature of the Lord. The second is a worldly temptation: it applies to His rights as the Son of man. The third is a religious temptation: it applies to Him as the Messiah, according to what we find written in the 91st Psalm. The Lord is tried as a man by adversity, by prosperity, and by religious deceits.

"The devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." Let me observe that it does not at all seem to be with a view to cast a doubt upon the relationship of the Lord Jesus with His Father that the devil says "if"; such a thing he well knew would be in vain. It was with a more subtle end in view he made use of it. He tried, by presenting to the Lord that which was really true of Him -- He was the Son of God -- tried to make Him act in divine power, and so deny the character and the position He had taken, and in which He at that moment stood -- that of a dependent, obedient man. But the Lord was not to be taken so. He was blessedly perfect; He will not act as a divine being, however truly divine; as a man He acts. And note the weapon with which He meets the enemy: the word of God. "Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." We may notice that the Lord's quotations are all out of Deuteronomy, the book in which obedience is so pressed on Israel as they were about to enter the land. The enemy, met at each point by the word, is powerless against obedience, and has to change his ground at once. He does not, however, change his tactics; his weapon is still the same.

He takes the Lord up into a high mountain, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world, and says, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine." Here it is a temptation of a worldly character that is presented; and mark the subtlety of it. He to whom it is presented is the very one who, in the purposes of God, is to have it all, but who, according to that purpose, was to take it through a pathway of intense suffering. Again the Lord has recourse to the word, and answers, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

The thought here presented to the Lord seems to be similar in character to that presented in Peter's words to Him, when announcing His death: "That be far from thee, Lord;" to which the Lord replies, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Why? Because the tendency of his words would have been to turn the Lord aside from the path of obedience, of suffering, and of death. Here the underlying thought would seem the same: Save yourself the suffering, throw yourself down and accredit me, and you shall have all without cost. This the Lord meets with the word: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The words "Get thee behind me, Satan," should not be read here.

Again Satan is foiled through the word, again he is compelled to change his ground; but he still tries the same tactics -- allurement is still his weapon.

J.L. Food for the Flock 4:135-145.

(To be continued, Lord Willing)

cannot go really together, save as water may take away the taste of wine.

It is a wholly false principle that natural gifts are a reason for using them. I may have amazing strength, or speed in running; I knock a man down with one, and win a prize with another. Music may be a more refined thing; but the principle is the same.

This point I believe to be now of all importance. Christians have lost peace and moral influence by bringing in nature and the world as harmless. All things are lawful to me. But, as I said, you cannot mix flesh and Spirit. We need all our energies under grace to walk in the latter, "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies." Let Christ be all, and the eye is single and the "whole body is full of light." The converse is, if our eye be evil because it shuts out Christ, our affections are not set on things above where Christ sits at God's right hand. This is the point for us: happy affections there, and steadfastly, not being distracted.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. N. Darby in The Bible Treasury, 1885

MAKING THE INNOCENT GUILTY

Awful as it is, I have known persons looked up to, constitute themselves pleaders against others and judges in cases, and the judgment, ostensibly by the assembly, given against one that was innocent, and who was excommunicated for that which the pleader and judge had himself committed; and the same sort of thing is oftener still the case in domestic regulations of the assembly. Lord, what is man when left to himself? What are we when we play with thy name, and at making, maintaining, and governing in (so-called) churches?

Ministry of G.V. Wigram 2:62.

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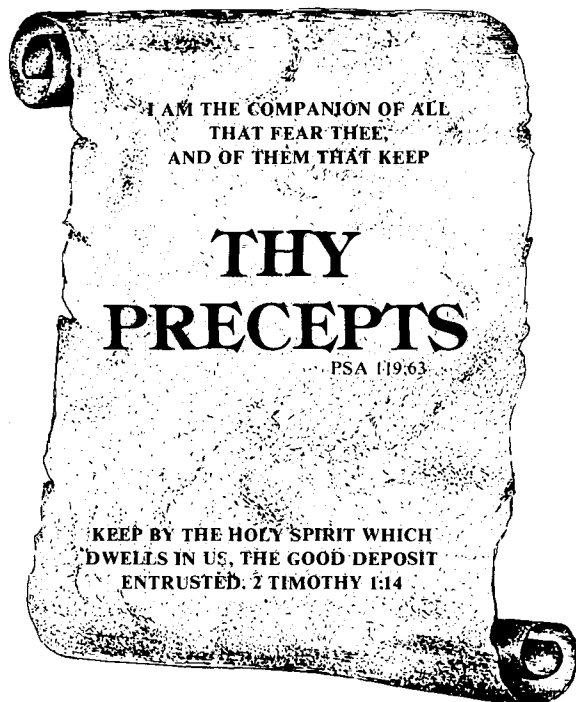
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CONTENTS

“Faithful Men” (2 Timothy 2:2)	97
Fleshly Hearing	100
“Without Blemish and Without Spot”	101
Extract on Concessions	108
Children and Obedience	111
New Creation, etc.	112
The Family Vault	117
The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9-20)	119
Sanctification	124

“FAITHFUL MEN”

(2 TIMOTHY 2:2)

"Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). Israel had been the unrighteous steward of God on the earth (Luke 16). Paul in his last writing before his departure, his heart broken with the failure he beheld, and the desertion he experienced, specially charged his beloved Timothy in view of these last days, that the truth he had heard of him should be committed to faithful men, who should be able to teach other faithful men also.

Thus the Spirit of God had in view a line of witnesses possessing moral and spiritual qualifications for maintaining the testimony of God. As we read in Heb. 13:7, "Remember your leaders who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith [or fidelity] follow." So Paul could say (1 Cor. 7:25), "I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." Timothy himself had this qualification, as we shall find, and the Spirit of God signified in the apostolic charge he received, that the Lord would have a chain of "faithful men" who should be both depositaries and expositors of Paul's doctrine, the faith of God's elect and the truth according to godliness.

There are two characteristic epithets which we meet with frequently in Paul's writings, and which when connected, as now and again they are, speak volumes for those whom they distinguish. They are the terms "faithful" and "beloved". These two words, like two competent witnesses to character, establish a solid title for those to whom the Holy Ghost has attached them.

Comparing 1 Cor. 7:25, and 1 Tim. 1:12, with 2 Peter 3:15, we see them to have been Paul's distinction. And from other scriptures (1 Cor. 4:17; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7, 4; 7,9; and 2 Tim. 1:2), we find they also distinguished respectively Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras and Onesimus; four Gentile believers whom Paul associated with himself in his service to the assembly of God. There are others whose fidelity is recorded, as Silvanus and Antipas, but of whom the word "beloved" is not used; while on the other hand, significantly enough, Barnabas

is "beloved", but nowhere termed "faithful". Surely this is pregnant with instruction for our souls. "Beloved" marks the place those servants of the Lord enjoyed in the affections of the saints while the other word is more distinctly Godward, though also bringing in their relations to their brethren.

Coming down to our own day and the present experiences of the assembly of God, may we not ask whether what has grieved the Spirit of God all along the church's history, and which every true heart finds occasion to mourn over this moment, has not been mainly due to the forfeiture of the epithet of "faithful" by those leaders whom God would otherwise have used in maintenance of the truth which is according to godliness, all that pertains to Christ and the church, and which constitutes the present testimony of God upon earth?

That coincident with this there has always been a lamentable degree of general failure among the saints, he that runs may read, and every godly one will confess it for himself. And because this ought to be far more widely accepted than it is, we need to be reminded of the prevalent unheavenliness and unsteadfastness, and of the many cases in which the houses or families, or businesses, or certain habits, of believers bring a reproach upon the testimony they have professed and the position they have accepted.

But this being admitted, yet it must be acknowledged that what has wrought the greatest havoc in the assembly of God is that those who have long and deservedly been addressed as "Beloved" have, as to faithfulness, made shipwreck; and, alas! may we not add? have in some cases intrrenched upon that place which is only rightly filled by the person of the Holy Ghost, present in the name and authority of Christ. Be it that such may rightly be beloved still, yet who does not see that outward demonstrations of affection in such a case would indicate that faithfulness to God and to His testimony, and the "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace", were of no sort of consequence? Surely it is not only to disturb the well-ordered balance of scripture, but actually to provoke the Lord to jealousy! And in all solemnity it becomes us to ask ourselves, "Are we stronger than he?" (1 Cor. 10:22)

Must we not all, on reflection, confess that there has been grievous and general default in giving Christ His place in the assembly "as a Son over his own house"? - so little sense

prevailing generally of what a magnificent and matchless reality that presence is, maintained in the power and plenitude of the Holy Ghost here in His own person, and what an absolute subjection the Lord's authority claims from us. How deplorably have we all failed in this! And the Lord has permitted us to prove that "confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint" (Prov. 25:19). Nor can any remedy be found but in a real and intensely practical turning afresh to Him with fidelity of heart, and in holy and unfeigned allegiance to His blessed name and person! If ardent adulation given where faithfulness has become wanting only tempts us to return acrimony and acerbity, we have need to call to mind the word, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." And again, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God!" Let it be observed too that neither in the assertion of dogmatic truths nor in the pressing of abstract principles will any recovery be found, but in the getting back to the Master's feet!

It should be the comfort of each of us to remember that He who loved the church and gave Himself for it can never fail in that ever faithful, changeless love to every member of His body; that He delights to touch our hearts with a renewed sense of it; and loves to make known His mind to those who really look to Him! Certain leaders may fail us, as when did they not? but "the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." We can never hope to be relieved of the necessity for trying the spirits, but the Lord will ever have His "faithful men" to whom His saints can look up (1 Thess. 5:12,13). We can never hope to be relieved from proving all things, that we may "hold fast that which is good;" but the unimpaired word of God in all its priceless value the Holy Ghost will never cease to minister in every opened ear for the glory of Christ. Exercise of conscience and heart by the saints generally, with diligent feeding upon the rich pastures of the word, and not less real subjection to the Lord's authority in the assembly, will quicken the judgment and discernment of the saints as to who are and who are not "faithful men", for "them that honour me I will honour," saith the Lord. It is our business to know them and to esteem them, and to be at peace among ourselves (1 Thess. 5:12,13).

If divided judgment should lead to deeper reverence for the word, and the failure of shepherds should cast the sheep more upon the Lord Himself owning the common sin; and if the

general declension should humble us in self-judgment so that unworldliness be revived and devotedness to Christ become more marked, then shall also the bonds of unity be drawn closer, and the corporate testimony be a fitter answer to the deep desire of His heart. But if He have not His place and authority restored and recognized, shall He not be as One whose words are, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me"? Failure there is and there will be (both the widespread and increasing laxity that is, alas, so marked, and the specific unfaithfulness alluded to), for the shadows are lengthening to their extreme declension; and true testimony may in consequence become more and more individual in its character, but wherever there be found those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, and who are really turning to Him with what scripture calls **purpose of heart**, His faithful love, changeless as Himself, will richly requite those who think upon His name! Whatever the declension, and how general-soever the failure, those who are "faithful", and go on with Him who is "THE faithful and the true", will still occupy themselves with the church because so much of the affections of His blessed heart, being His body, His bride! And the aggravated failure of the testimony will only bring out into brighter and more beauteous relief in such a day of unreality the persevering devotedness of those whose sole desire is to spend and be spent for that which is supremely dear to Him. Thus, happily, will the Spirit of God ever find both a path and a province for God's "faithful men".

W. R.

**"FLESHLY HEARING DRAWS OUT FLESHLY SPEAKING,
AND
FLESHLY SPEAKING IS NOT OF THE HOLY GHOST."**

We believe that this has been stated in the correct order and accounts for why fleshly speaking is tolerated. Sadly, many do not recognize fleshly speaking. Their fleshly hearing is not of the Holy Ghost, but of the flesh. Consequently, they are upset with those who reject fleshly speaking.

It was also said that "We do not judge the flesh in others because we do not judge it in ourselves." So Saul spared Agag (an Amalekite) -- and fell by the hand of an Amalekite (2 Sam. 1); i.e., the flesh. The Lord help us to judge the flesh.

e d.

“WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT”

(LUKE 4:1-13)

(Continued from v.2, p.93)

He brings the Lord to Jerusalem and sets Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and says to Him, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Mark here again the subtlety of the temptation. Satan, discerning that the Lord takes His stand on the word, says, as it were, I will give you the word of God for what I ask; on that you can depend. Cast yourself down; has He not said "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee, etc." Mark how the Lord meets this. The word is His weapon. He says, as it were, God never contradicts Himself, and God has said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." He had a word that met all the subtlety of the enemy, and what was the effect? Though the devil may transform himself into an angel of light, and quote Scripture, the word will detect him. To do what he asked -- and apparently advanced Scripture in support of -- would have been contrary to a direct word of God. He left out in his quotation the very few words that would have entirely defeated his purpose in quoting it-- the words "in all thy ways." Why did he omit these words? Because it would not have been the **way** of a dependent man-- the character in which the Lord then stood -- to tempt God.

This principle of strict adherence to the word of God is of deep importance in a day of infidelity like the present -- a day in which you will find Scripture quoted for all sorts of ends-- the Bible brought forward for all sorts of purposes; but you will invariably find that what is so quoted, so brought forward, would lead to that which would be in direct contradiction to some positive word of God. Let me say, if you have got the substance -- the positive word -- do not let it go to grasp the shadow -- the infidel deduction -- though there may appear to be Scripture in support of it. The effect of grasping after the shadows that infidelity presents, seems to me to be illustrated by the fable of the dog of old, who, when passing over a

stream by a plank, with a piece of meat in his mouth, saw the reflection of the meat in the water below, grasped at it, and in so doing lost the substance. That is just what infidelity would have you do. It would, by presenting to you a shadow, cause you to let go the substance. You may not be able to at once detect the counterfeit, but you know that you have, in the word, got that on which your soul can rest -- you have got the substance. Keep firm hold of that, and any difficulty man may put before you will be made clear to you in God's time; He will expose the counterfeit. God has given us the substance -- His word. Our place is through grace to hold it fast, not grasping at shadows -- the speculations of vain men.

To return. Here then we see the Lord taking His stand as man in dependence and obedience, the weapon wherewith He meets the enemy being the word; it is the only weapon that He uses. But what is the result? The enemy, completely foiled by it when so used, has to leave Him: "The devil departed from him for a season." The whole scene furnishes us with a practical illustration of the words in Psalm 17, "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;" and of those in 1 John 5, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." The Lord, as man, overcomes the enemy by simple adherence to the word of God, as He stands in His place of dependence on God.

The first man, Adam, fell before the foe through disobedience and independence; but here we find the second man, the last Adam, victorious over the enemy through obedience and dependence.

So far then as the wiles of the enemy in allurements go, the Lord's fitness to take His people's place is fully demonstrated. The foe has brought his weapon fully to bear, and has failed to accomplish his end -- the turning aside of the obedient man.

That we may gather up through grace the practical lessons the Spirit would teach us, let us turn for a moment to the first epistle of John. We have seen that there are three temptations of the Lord recorded in the gospels. He may have been tempted all through the forty days (Mark 1:13), but three only are recorded; and God has in His grace taken care that the three which are recorded are the very ones whereby the enemy seeks to seduce souls in the present day -- the tempta-

tions common to ourselves. The devil always uses weapons adapted to the people he is attacking. He will use them in one way against one person, and in another way against another person. I doubt if he have more than two -- the two we have spoken of, namely allurement and terror -- but he is a perfect adept in the use of them; just as I may have but one sword, but I know how to use it in many ways. A thrust that would reach one might not be calculated to reach another; therefore a different thrust would be made at that other, but the weapon wherewith it is made would be the same.

In 1 John 2:12 we find the aged apostle addressing believers generally as "children;" but in verses 13-27 he distinguishes different degrees of maturity amongst them; he notes the features which characterize each degree, the dangers that beset each respectively, and also the safeguard that God gives to keep them from the snares by which the enemy seeks to seduce or entrap them. The degrees are fathers, young men, and babes. What characterizes the babes is the knowledge of relationship -- they know the Father. That which characterizes the young men is the energy of faith, and victory over the foe through obedience and dependence. That which characterizes the fathers is the knowledge of Christ. Now let us look at the dangers that beset them.

The trial peculiarly adapted to tell on a babe, and either hinder his entrance into, or turn him aside from, the path of obedience, would be adversity. And here we find the enemy, well knowing which trial to bring to bear on each, at work to turn the babes aside by adversity.

"Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Seeing those who had taken up the profession of Christianity going out from their midst would be likely to stumble the babes; and again there were some **among** them endeavouring to seduce them into doubting as to the possession of eternal life. Thus the enemy is seen pressing trial by adversity upon the babes. It was a temptation similar in character to that which he first tried upon the Lord Jesus.

A trial by adversity would not be so suitable for the accomplishment of the enemy's ends with a young man; it would be calculated rather to stir up all the energy that was in him. The enemy therefore has another character of trial for him, namely, prosperity. He presents to him the world. "Love not the world; neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Here we see the way the enemy deals with the young man. He does not try by adversity to **drive** him from the path of obedience, but endeavors by prosperity to **seduce** him from it. It is a bait, if I may say so; it is not adversity, but prosperity, that he presents to the young man.

Do we not need to have the enemy's wiles thus laid bare? Do we not need the warning God in His word so graciously gives us? We are passing through the world, and the word that is here used for world does not signify the material earth on which we walk, but an organized system, and in this case a system organized by Satan, designed to minister to the natural man, and thus to keep him from God. It is by this that the enemy seeks to seduce the young man from the path of obedience -- to withdraw him from the place of dependence. This trial answers in character to that presented in the second place to the Lord -- trial by prosperity.

Neither of these trials would be so likely to tell on a father in Christ. The snare from which he would be more in danger would be some religious deceit; Satan will not, therefore, try either adversity or prosperity with him, but will try him by religious deceptions.

And now, what are the safeguards that God has provided for each in order to preserve them from the danger and through the trial? Let us look at the 20th verse. There we find the safeguard for the babes: they have "the unction from the Holy One," and in verse 24, the word that they had heard from the beginning: "Let that, therefore, abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." These are the two things which, combined, God presents as the safeguard to preserve the babe in Christ from falling a prey to the dangers of the way -- to the wiles of the enemy.

To the young man, whose danger is being seduced by the world, God in His word unfolds the true character of the world, its source, and its end: "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." And to the young man, as to the babe, God presents a double safeguard: the love of the Father and the word which reveals His will; these are what God has provided to keep him from falling a prey to, from being seduced by, the bait of the foe.

How far can each of us say that the love of the Father **does** exclude the world? Do we know anything of this practically? The reason that saints are too often found dabbling in the world is because they have **not** the love of the Father in them; if they had, and enjoyed that love, how could a system set up in direct opposition to Him whose love they enjoyed attract them? Satan has formed a world that is in direct opposition to the Father; but when the Father's love is known and enjoyed, therein is found a safeguard that excludes the world.

And now as to the father in Christ: what is his safeguard? Religious deceits are brought to try him; his safeguard is Christ. The father has known "Him that is from the beginning" -- Christ the living Word. Thus, in the case of the father as of the young man and as of the babe, the word of God is the safeguard, and obedience thereto the path of safety from all the power of the foe, who is powerless against obedience.

Paul, in speaking to Timothy, his son in the faith, of the last days, tells him the features that will characterize them, and amongst others is found religious deceit: "A form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." Also a resistance of the truth by imitation of it. Do you know anything of this form of godliness, but denying the power thereof? You say, I mourn over it. Why then do you not turn away from it? You have not got to attack it; you have only got to turn away from it. The word itself is your authority to do so: "**from such turn away;**" and on this each child of God is not only authorized, but **responsible**, to act. At such a time, and in such a state of things, Paul commends to Timothy three things; "My doctrine," the holy Scriptures,

and the person of Christ.

Thus God has provided for His people in everything. Though the enemy may press us hard, and be an expert in the use of his weapons, God has provided a perfect safeguard for us in His word. May the Lord give us to gather up and lay to heart the practical lessons that He would teach us from these portions of His word, and that, having that word, we may in dependence on Him recognize and fulfil, through grace, our responsibility of acting in obedience thereto. Is it not true that what we need in the present day is not so much the knowledge of additional truth -- not that we do not **need** truth -- but rather to be in the power of the truth that is known? -- so to be in the power of it that it should **command** us. We need to be obedient ones, following in the steps of Him who has gone before us -- that blessed One who, in His pathway on earth, met and defeated all the power of the enemy by simple obedience, simple dependence. May each one indeed follow Him, remembering that, if believers at all, they are set apart (sanctified) to His obedience -- that is, to obey on the same principle on which He obeyed who could say, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

We observed, in opening, that the enemy had two weapons whereby he sought to accomplish his ends on man. In Luke 4 we saw the attack of the foe by means of his weapon of allurement on the second man, and his utter failure in that attack. This being so, "he departed from him for a season;" but only for a season, as the time would come when he would again attack Him, and that with the second weapon -- terror -- with a view to driving Him from the path of obedience, having before failed to seduce Him therefrom. The time, place and mode of this second attack we have, I believe, presented to us in Luke 22, where the Lord is seen in the garden of Gethsemane. He there, as a man, meets the enemy who is armed with his weapon of terror.

This scene is at the end of the Lord's ministry. At the commencement we found Him taking His stand upon obedience and dependence, and afterwards all through His course see Him spoiling the enemy and victorious over him, but never, as is too often the case with us, does victory take Him out of the place of dependence. Victorious all through, on what ground do we find Him here at the close? "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed." He

still occupied in His perfection the very ground on which He stood at the beginning -- that of dependence and obedience. He thus meets the foe, when wielding his weapon of terror, on exactly the same ground and principle as those on which He met him when wielding his weapon of allurement. The enemy approaches and presses on His soul the terror of that which He would have to undergo. The Lord, in His perfection, shrinks from the fearful ordeal; He prays: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," but goes on to add: "**Nevertheless**, not my will but thine be done." He is the obedient, dependent man; the Father's will He will do at all cost.

Notice that in the wilderness Satan three distinct times pressed the Lord with the weapon of allurement; here in the garden he three distinct times presses Him with the weapon of terror; and three times the Lord presents all to the Father. From His hand He will take all -- from the **Father's** hand He will take the cup. It was on the cross only that He drank that cup; but here He was gazing in spirit into its depths, estimating those depths as one only could who was Himself absolutely perfect; but, estimating it fully as He does, He presents it to the Father, and in obedience bows to receive it from His hand.

What can the enemy do? He has brought his second weapon to bear with all its power, seeking to drive the Lord thereby from the path of obedience, only to find that he can do nothing, for he has met an obedient, dependent man. He is utterly defeated after having used both his weapons to the utmost of his power; the effect of the pressure that he brought to bear serving only to bring out more brightly and fully the perfection of the blessed Man who was subjected to it, and to manifest His perfect fitness to take His people's place. In all the testing of the enemy in which the first man fell, the blessed perfection of the Christ of God shines out in all its glory: He is victorious as man in obedience and dependence over the power of the enemy in allurement; He is victorious over the power of the enemy in terror, and then he goes on to overcome him finally in the death of the cross, and thus "destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage."

May we derive true blessing to our souls from meditating on the person of the Lord, both as a divine Being and as the perfect Man, and also on the perfection of His ways as He

walked a man here on earth, remembering that, in so walking, He has left us an example that we should follow His steps, that we are sanctified to His obedience, and that our responsibility is to walk as He walked.

(J.L., Food for the Flock, vol.4)

EXTRACT ON CONCESSIONS

The first point with which I shall occupy my reader, is that of the idea of union on the principle of mutual concession with respect to the divers views which are found among Christians, and of conciliation by these means. This principle has a great repute and a very fair appearance; but it is profoundly evil and presumptuous. **It supposes that the truth is at our disposal.** Philippians 3 teaches quite a different principle: there is no idea of concession nor of any arrangement in expressing the truth so as to reconcile different views. It is said, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." It is not, Let us lower down the truth to the measure of him who has not come up to it; it is not two persons ignoring which of the two has the truth, or content to suppose the possibility of error in giving up more or less what they hold, in order to express themselves so as to be agreed: all that is an infringement upon the authority of the truth on us. "And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." There is no question here of concessions, but of the revelation from God to enlighten him who is not perfect in the truth. "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." There is no question here of concessions, but of walking together in the things we possess, with regard to which, because recognized as being the truth of God, there is no giving up anything, all being subject to it. In that case, there is no concession, either on one side or on the other, for all possess the same truth, having already attained to it in a measure, and they walk together minding the same thing. The remedy for the diversity of mind which may remain is not to make concessions (how deal thus with the truth?) but the revelation from God in favour of him who is ignorant, as

we are all of us on divers points.

But I shall be told, On that footing, one will never come to an agreement. Where will you find in the word such a thing as coming to an agreement? To come to an agreement is not the unity of the Church of God. The truth is not to be modified, and we are not called to force our imperfect views on anyone. I must have faith, and one must have the same faith, to walk together; but in the things received as the truth of God by faith, I can make no concession; I may bear with ignorance, but I cannot arrange the truth to please another. You will tell me, In that case, how walk together? Why lay down grounds of unity which require either unity of views, or so evil a thing as concession on such or such a truth? As to the things on which we possess the truth, and with regard to which we have faith, we have the same mind, we walk in them together. If I acquire some knowledge more I bear with the ignorance of my brother, until God reveals the thing to him. Our unity is in Christ Himself. If unity depends on concessions, it is only a sect founded on human opinions, because the principle of the absolute authority of the truth is lost. They will tell me, that true Christians will never yield on fundamental points. I was going to say "I understand"; but it is not so. There are many who are agreed in spite of the errors which affect the foundations; I know that others would not; but this does not prevent the fact that the principle of concessions is in nowise authorized in the word, denies the authority of the truth on us, and pretends to be able to dispose of it for the sake of peace [1]. The word supposes the

1. Here is the thing better expressed than I could do it myself: "There is something which is more compromised among us than the truth; it is its value and its claims. We are less far from finding the same dogmas in the scriptures, than from giving them the same authority over us; and we may be allowed to affirm that the questions on which Christians are divided would soon be settled, if they drew near to the Bible with the intention of taking seriously all the truths it proclaims. Alas! while we read, the devil murmurs in our ear, All that is not equally pressing, equally obligatory; we are commanded to bear with the weak; Paul made himself all things to all; he consented to offer sacrifice and to circumcise Timothy: on the other hand, edification goes before dogma; the principal dogma itself goes before the

bearing with ignorance, but never concessions, because it does not suppose that men could make a rule different from itself, in order to come to an agreement. I receive a man "weak in the faith"; but I do not yield anything to him as to the truth, even on such a point as eating herbs; I might perhaps deny essential truths by so doing. Such a case may happen, where to observe days might lead to doubt of the Christianity of him who does it. (See Galatians 4:9-11). There might be another case where I could only say, On this very point, "let every man be fully persuaded," Rom. 14:5,6, etc. Sometimes the whole of Christianity depends upon something which can be borne with in other points of view; Gal. 2:1-4. I repeat, there is no trace in the word of a system which suppresses a part of the truth so as to have a common confession, but the contrary. There was the perfect truth, and God revealed what was wanting, when it was otherwise. They were of one mind and they walked together, and there was no need of concessions. One did not pretend to such things as required them; that is, the Bible does not suppose what one has the pretension to do. It is to mutilate the truth that it may be adopted by many. The word, therefore, and especially Philippians 3, condemns this arrangement of mutilated truth, with a view to get them to be adopted by everyone; for this is to dishonor God and His truth. These are means for forming a sect, composed of those who are agreed on the points laid down as grounds of union. It is never the unity of the Church of God; it will be an orthodox sect, if they are agreed on fundamental points, yet always a sect, even if it should take in a greater part of a nation, because it is a body formed on the agreement to which men have come on certain truths; but it is not the unity of the Church of God. In a confession of faith there is no question of bearing with individuals who are ignorant on certain points, nor of acknowledging together that one is lacking as to the knowledge thereof, nor of enlightening those

secondary dogmas, etc. One voluntarily opens the ear to a language which appears plausible and prudent; which appears not to attack a single truth, but which is only the more calculated to render them all powerless. From afar, one bows before each truth, but if it comes near to us, if it requires us to act, to sacrifice anything, at once the present truth is ranked among the truths that are out of season."--Archives, Sept 22, 1849.

who are so; but of declaring the truth one possesses, that others may, by agreeing with that declaration, join themselves to such as have adopted it as a ground of union. That all may adopt it, the profession of the truth must be reduced to the measure of ignorance of all those who come in, if they are sincere in that profession; but that is not bearing with others, but persons, as I have said, who dispose of the truth of God by a human compromise. Is that the unity of the Spirit?

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby 4:233-236.

CHILDREN AND OBEDIENCE

We judge that carelessness in parents as to where their children go, is a sign of a bad state of soul. If the Israelites were to instruct their children so carefully, both as to their redemption from Egypt, and the passage of the Jordan into the land, how much more diligent ought we to be in instructing our children in the eternal realities of redemption, and our present entrance by faith into the heavenlies in Christ! What grace is needed for this! But to allow our children, whilst they are at home and under our care, to go where the eternal character of redemption is set aside, and thus expose them to unbelief and confusion, is the very opposite of the teaching of the word of God. "And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." We must, however, be very careful that the obedience we inculcate should be in the Lord, truly according to His mind. The word to them is, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." Just as it would be wrong to obey, if a heathen parent commanded a child to go and worship idols.

In these matters, then, it is all-important that parents are assured that the obedience they require is in the Lord, especially in this day of increasing infidelity and superstition. We feel we have all much cause for humiliation in these matters.

Things New and Old 26:250,251

NEW CREATION, LIFE IN THE SON AND DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

(Continued from v.2, p.87)

LIFE IN THE SON

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF LIFE IN THE SON

We have been considering the fact that quickening, i.e., the impartation of life, experienced in the new birth, is in itself not the full Christian position. Quickening is not the same as oneness of life with our Savior, life in the Son. Before His death and resurrection, He abode alone (John 12:24) but on the day that he rose from among the dead, Head of the New Creation, He (as the last Adam and life-giving Spirit) breathed upon His disciples (John 20:22) and brought them into oneness with Himself as the stalk of wheat in resurrection. The New Creation began on that resurrection day and He, in resurrection, was its beginning (cp. Rev. 3:14). He connected them to Himself in resurrection and, thus, we can say that the divine life that they already had could now be characterized as resurrection-life. He no longer abode alone. They now had the divine life in a new way; i.e., as life in the Son. Now, eternal life, as spoken of the believer, means all of this. This is more than speaking of possessing eternal life in its essence. The believer now has not only life in its essence, but also with the associations with which Christ, as a result of death and resurrection, has endowed it. Eternal life, as spoken of concerning the believer, is life in oneness with the stalk of wheat in resurrection. It is life in the Son and not only from the Son.

Old Testament saints had life from (not in) the Son, though He was, of course, hidden in deity. To establish the full Christian position, it was necessary for Him to come in manhood and die and rise again, as we saw in previous articles,

for we have life in Him as in One risen from among the dead.

The distinction between the new birth, which applied to all Old Testament saints (and will to Millennial saints also), and eternal life as presented in John is also borne out in John 3, where our Lord distinguishes between the earthly and the heavenly. Eternal life is a heavenly truth and its communication is first spoken of in John 3 in connection with the necessity of the cross (see John 3:14).

It is true that the Spirit as the power of eternal life was breathed upon the disciples while the Lord was still here. And so historically life in the Son was communicated before the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, which coming effected union with the glorified Head in heaven. Now, however, the believer receives these two things together when sealed with the Spirit. Consequent upon sealing, the person is in Christ, a new position; and is a member of Christ (1 Cor 12). But also he is delivered (Rom. 7:24-25) from the law of sin and death. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). The Spirit is here characterized as "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"; Christ Jesus, the One Who rose from among the dead is now glorified above, and the Holy Spirit has been sent down during this present period. These are characteristic truths of this dispensation.

W. J. Lowe remarked,

We have seen too, that the effective communication of "the eternal life," the life that is characterized by the "Holy Ghost" (John 4,7), presupposes in principle the Lord's death, and His actual place in glory, as Son of man in heaven, "ascended up where He was before." His first message to the disciples (conveyed by Mary Magdalene, after His resurrection, when for the first time He calls them "brethren," and brings them into the double relationship in which He stood as Son of God and Son of man), begins with the words, "I GO UP." Then follows the full statement of the relationship which is seen in Him, and revealed to faith by the Spirit: "to MY Father and YOUR Father, and to MY God and YOUR God." That is, the present realization for us of "eternal life," flows from the fact of the Son being with the Father. Life, as described

in 1 John 1:2 ("that eternal life which was with the Father"), and seen in Him, when He was here on earth, is now, as the result of redemption, and by the witness of the Spirit, true in us (1 John 2:8; 5:6-11). His words to Mary, who wanted Him with her on earth, were, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." John 17 is based upon this. And we have seen the same . . . as to chapters 13, 14, which open with the statement: "When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father;" and (ver.3), "Knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands (cf. chap. 3:35), and that he was come from God, and went to God." Again, we find the two sides of His personal glory as Son of God and Son of man, as in chapter 3:14-16. The revelation of divine righteousness is based upon the same fact in chapter 16. If the Holy Spirit's presence upon earth is the demonstration of it before the world (ver. 8), the special reason attached to it by the Lord, in verse 10, is, "Because I go to my Father and ye see me no more." The "must be" of chapter 3 is, so to speak, transferred for us now from the cross to the glory, where it is seen in righteousness in the Person of the Son, with a yet fuller divine meaning, as we learn what were "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." The Lord says too in Luke 24: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" In this point of view, and actually in His Person, the cross and the glory are inseparable. This fully appears in John 17. To Him, as the Son "glorified" (consequent upon His work of glorifying the Father on earth), all power is given, that thus exalted "he should give eternal life" to as many as the Father has given Him.

How unspeakably blessed! And how we find in the scriptures the eternal life, as communicated, so bound up with what is now seen by faith in the Lord's Person and place, that a soul which simply receives the truth finds itself placed upon a rock that nothing can touch, and nothing can shake. It has not merely received a doctrine: it finds itself in presence of a divine fact in all its length and breadth, and height and depth, and eternal meaning, and a divine PERSON in whom it is all realized. And it is thus brought into

the same relationship as the Son, with His God and Father: "Mine," He says, "and yours." And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. "He that hath the Son hath life God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" [1].

There are indeed dispensational distinctions concerning the position in which the saints of God stand. Saints now, in virtue of possession of life in the Son and having the Spirit, know the Father; Abba Father. The revealed ground of relationship in which we stand has a bearing on the affections and spiritual exercises of the soul. The following citation from W. J. Lowe concerning this is dealing with the false notion that Old Testament saints had life in the Son.

If the saint's life were "in the Son" in Old Testament times, or even under the new covenant, then the Psalms are the expression of the exercises of heart which correspond to it. But the knowledge of the Father is not in the Psalms [2], nor does it form a part of the blessings promised under the new covenant (Jer. 31 &c.; quoted at length in Heb. 8). It is not even in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which treats of another line of truth. So what becomes, in the experiences of the soul, of our highest christian

1. Life and Propitiation, pp. 73-75.

2. That is, of course, in the sense in which we are now speaking of it. The word is found, as expressing tender governmental care: "a father of the fatherless" (Ps. 68:5); or again, as a simile ("a father," Ps. 103:13), just as we meet with it also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in connection with the "Father of spirits;" but it is said, "GOD dealeth with us as with sons" (chap. 12:5-11). It is Jehovah God in wise and perfect government. Again, we have Psalm 89:26, "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation:" this is spoken of David (cf. Ps. 18:1-2), and the sense accords with that of Deuteronomy 32:4-6; God is seen as the Redeemer of His people, the Author of their being. (Compare Isa. 43:21.)

privileges? They are lost practically for one who adopts this system. The writings of John, Gospel and Epistle, are drowned, so to speak, in the Old Testament; and we are reduced for all dispensational advantage to the fact that life now is "in Christ" . . . [3], and the essential glory of the Person of the Son, who was not then manifested, is represented as characterizing the life the Old Testament saints had. Or else -- and this is the other horn of the dilemma -- you may have life in the Son, you may "be identified with the Son in life and nature," and yet not know the Father at all; . . . not even know that it is possible that such a relationship could ever exist for mortal man! But that is just this system; which boldly asserts that the fact of even the Spirit's presence in man does not "of necessity infer their freedom from the law of sin and death" . . . ! [Cp. Rom. 8:2]. It divorces the truth presented from the experience of it in the soul, reducing it to a lifeless dogma; and this is excused by complaining that "experiences are brought in to supplement Christ "in a legal way," and by saying that "having Christ you have all."

This theory, in giving "Life in the Son" an anticipative value in a way scripture does not, separates the knowledge of the Father from it; so that we have it presented to us shorn of its relationship, affections, knowledge, and responsibility; and based upon no revelation of God. Consequently, it is

3. This is sought to be commended by insisting upon Christ's actual place in glory as characterizing it. . . . But is it not strange that though, according to the author's own reasoning, life in Christ risen (that is, after His completed work), as distinguished from life in the Son, is what characterizes Christianity -- yet when he comes to speak of "sealing," he connects it with faith in His Person risen and glorified, not His work? So that the characteristic of Christianity is, so far, set aside in the sealing! So much for a system which methodically separates the truth from the experience in the soul of him to whom it is presented.

not a life of faith at all; for it can exist -- did exist according to this system -- for four thousand years without these things. Faith too, practically separated from it, is reduced to believing something about man, professedly suited to his misery no doubt, so as to bring him out of that, but into what? -- A life, which for his soul has no reality at all, so far as relationship with God and responsibility are concerned. The effort to apply to Abraham what he had not, just results in keeping out of sight what he had -- what is indeed the point of all his history, as divinely given in the scriptures; for he was called "the friend of GOD" [4].

(To be continued, Lord willing)

THE FAMILY VAULT

It was sometime after I had been born of God that I learned to draw the line between confessing my sins and reckoning myself dead. I used to search and search my own heart in the presence of the Lord, and bring to light everything that I could think of that I had thought, or said, or done amiss; own it all to Him, and rest upon His promise -- "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Had I stopped there all would have been well, but still feeling the root of evil within, though I could remember no more offences, I used to own it too before the Lord in all its vileness; and a sad trouble and constant source of annoyance it was to me, seeing that it never changed, and therefore always

4. Life and Propitiation, pp. 78-80.

kept me on my knees confessing it.

At length the truth dawned on me that I was dead: that I had died at the cross (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:20), and that therefore all I had got to do was to think God's thoughts about myself, and hold, reckon, or account myself to be dead before Him.

Oh! what rest this was to my soul! Instead of probing and probing at this vile, this incorrigible heart, this fruitful source of iniquity, to look upon it as a dead thing that had no existence before God, and therefore no existence before me.

I remembered that the Israelites "saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore," but I could not recollect that they ever even turned the bodies over to make assurance doubly sure; so I determined to follow their example, and to look upon myself as one that had died at the cross with Jesus, and had been consigned with Him to the tomb, where I was resolved I would lie in faith until the Lord Himself should come to change my vile body into the likeness of His glorious body.

The tomb of Jesus, then, is my Family Vault. -- There I, as I am by nature, repose, and the key is turned in the lock! I grant you that ever and anon (for "we all often offend") there arises a fetid odour, telling of corruption within, and reminding me that faith must not go to sleep, but ever be on the watch lest the walls of this family vault should become impaired, and let still fouler vapours out; but I have a precious corrective for this -- my new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness, "not I, but Christ," who liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20), in whom I stand before God, and walk before the world, with its sweet breath soon purifies the tainted atmosphere, telling out to the Lord, to whom the effluvia has been more offensive than to any, the failure; and then rejoicing in the fact that He has been faithful to His word, forgiven the sin, and cleansed away the unrighteousness. This is not realization but reckoning; but, precisely in proportion as I reckon, realization follows.

What a place we have, to be sure! To walk through the world yielding ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Words of Truth, vol.6, p.51.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

(REV. 21:9-20)

NOTES OF A BIBLE READING FROM THE 1800's

Q: Why commence our study of this subject at verse 9 instead of at the beginning of the chapter?

W. Kelly: The first eight verses refer to a totally different time from what follows. From chapter 21:9 we have to go back again to the Millennium; whereas the previous verses are the fullest account that the Word of God furnishes of the new heavens and the new earth, in the proper sense of the words.

Q: How do you prove that?

W. Kelly: In the eternal state, all time distinctions are at an end. There is no such thing then as kings and nations. Whereas if we look at the latter part of the chapter we have nations and earthly kings. Consequently, it is not the eternal condition which we have, but a previous state.

Q: Is the bride here Israel or the church?

J. A. Trench: If the bride of the Lamb be Israel in chapter 21, it must be Israel in chapter 19. Now the terms of the description in the latter preclude the possibility of it. The heavenly glory of the nuptials settles in itself who is the subject of them. It is the church thus publicly owned in suited heavenly glory.

THE INTRODUCTION

W. Kelly: There is a striking analogy in the way in which Babylon (Rev. 17:1) and the heavenly Jerusalem are introduced, and though, of course, there is the strongest and most marked difference between the two objects themselves, still there is enough to make it manifest that the Holy Ghost had them

together in His mind.

J. A. Trench: Then it was to see the unholy alliance of the apostate church with the world. And do we not enter in some little measure into the wisdom and preciousness of the grace that does not give us the glorious espousal of the church, as in chapter 19, until the overthrow in judgment of that which has held the place and profession of the bride in the awful Satanic counterfeit, nor finally close the Revelation without bringing out her true and recognized place in the kingdom?

Rev. 21:10 "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

Q: Is the city the bride, or is it the place where the bride dwells -- her home?

W. Kelly: The scripture itself most positively says that it is (not the dwelling place of the redeemed, but) the bride herself described as a city.

J. N. Darby: It is the bride; not in its Pauline character, the one body, but in its governmental. It is a city, not a body.

Q: Why the great and high mountain? Has this any significance?

A: In the beginning of chapter 17, it says: "He carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness". John was carried into the wilderness to be shown the "whore". Now he is taken to a "great and high mountain". That means that you must get very much above the earth if you are to understand about the bride. You can understand the great whore in the wilderness.

J. A. Trench: How suited the wilderness, from which John looks out on the moral chaos, where no trait of the life of Christ was found, to be fruit for God!

THE POSITION OF THE CITY

Q: Do the words "descending out of heaven" seem to imply that the city comes to the earth, and is here during the Millennium?

J. N. Darby: She is not found on the earth; there is no thought even of her there.

J. A. Trench: Take a parallel case in 1 Thess. 4:15, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven". Must we adopt the conclusion that He comes to earth? We know that He does not.

F. G. Patterson: She does not come to the earth, but is let down that the earth may see her glory, the glory of God displayed in her.

J. N. Darby: It may be manifested to the earth, but in its origin it is heavenly, also in its character; and its nature also.

Q: Besides saying that the city descends from heaven, it says that she comes from God. Is there anything to remark as to this?

J. N. Darby: This was its double character: from God, divine in its origin, and also heavenly. It might be of God, and earthly. It might be heavenly and angelic. It was neither: it was divine in origin and heavenly in nature and character.

W. Scott: Her state is holy, her home is heaven, and her source is God Himself.

Rev. 21:11 "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

J. N. Darby: It was the glory of God: immense truth! "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God"; its display and its dwelling-place shall be in us. God is glorified there; all shines with His glory; all relates to it, bears witness to it, and is clothed with it.

F. G. Patterson: She has the glory of God, and yet it is called "her light". Why is this? God has produced the graces of Christ in the saints here; pure grace has done so, yet He has counted it to them. So here; if the church has the glory of God, yet it is her light, by His grace.

Q: Of what is the jasper in this verse a symbol?

W. Kelly: It appears to me that this account of the city's bright lustre like a jasper has a very close connection with what has just before been said of it, as "having the glory of God". For when God Himself was seen on the throne in chapter 4, He was in appearance like a jasper and sardis. But this is not all. We are told in the 18th verse that "the building of the wall of it was of jasper". Hence it is plain that this is peculiarly the stone which is used to describe the glory of God, as far as it can be seen by a creature.

J. A. Trench: "Her shining" is like jasper. The word for "light" is, more fully, "shining". The force of this is at once seen by the only previous use of jasper in this book. It is the symbol of the glory of God. In Phil. 2:15, where the very word (shining) is found, we are set to be the display of the glory in its moral characteristics, in the world. This is just what Christ was. The only difference is that now we possess the treasure in an earthen vessel that too often obscures the manifestation of it. But in the new Jerusalem the vessel is suited to the glory it contains, and there is the perfect shining of it.

THE WALL

Rev. 21:12 "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates, twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."

Q: What does the wall signify?

W. Scott: Strength and security; everything unsuited to the glory of God can find no admittance to that holy place. All within are safe, and divinely guarded.

J. A. Trench: The heavenly city is enclosed and shut in thus, against all that is unsuited to the glory of God, of which it is the dwelling-place.

J. N. Darby: It is secure, having a wall great and high.

W. Kelly: Besides this, we are told that it had "twelve gates". God is pleased to remember that He is dealing with people on the earth, and the new Jerusalem has a very special relation to

men during the Millennium. Accordingly there are twelve gates.

J. A. Trench: The gate is the place where rule is administered in the East.

Q: The number twelve is prominent here. Why?

J. N. Darby: The twelve gates are full human perfectness of governmental administrative power. Twelve notes perfection and governmental power. There is the perfection of administrative order and power.

F. W. Grant: Twelve is the number of manifest sovereignty, as it was exercised in Israel by the Lord in the midst of them.

Q: Why are angels introduced, as standing at the gates?

J. N. Darby: Angels are become the willing doorkeepers of the great city, the fruit of Christ's redemption-work in glory. This marked the possession too by man thus brought in the assembly to glory, of the highest place in the creation and providential order of God, of which angels had previously been the administrators.

W. Kelly: In this day of glory the angel is happy to be a porter at the gate of the heavenly city -- happy, if he do not enter, to have his work and mission outside.

W. Scott: Angels never rise above the position of servants; we are children and sons. Angels wait at the gates, to obey.

(To be continued, Lord willing)

SANCTIFICATION

(John 17:17-19)

That of which I desire to speak to you is the distinctive place into which God has called His people in the present day, whether in relation to Himself, in relation to Satan, or in relation to the world in either or both of its aspects, whether worldly or religious; and also the cost at which this place has been acquired for the believer; and, in doing so, I would speak on some truths that connect themselves with this.

There are two things that God has done with equal distinctness: He has defined the relationship in which each believer stands towards Himself, GOD, namely, that of a child to a father; and He has marked out the path in which He would have His children walk. As to the relationship, God Himself it is who has defined it, marked it out, and established it. There is not a believer who is not entitled to take up that word, "**children of God** by faith in Christ Jesus." This the Spirit of God proclaims without a question.

In fact, there is now no such thing as an open question in the matter of either condemnation or salvation; God has made an end of all such. If the side of condemnation be taken up, God proclaims man to be a guilty, ruined, lost sinner; no man could deliver his fellow, for all were alike, not only ungodly, but without strength. On the side of condemnation, therefore, there is no open question: the unbeliever is condemned--condemned already.

But we find that, when such was the state of things--such the case of man -- the Son of God Himself became a man -- came down into this world, where God had been dishonored by sin; came with the purpose in His heart of glorifying God with regard to this very question of sin and saving poor sinners, and that by offering an atonement to God. In His life here below He perfectly glorified God, but in and by death alone could atonement be accomplished, could God be fully glorified as to sin. To death, the death of the cross, the Lord Jesus went in His grace. There He offered Himself as an

atoning sacrifice to God, shedding His blood. There He bore the sins of every soul that, through grace, believes on Him. But in so doing He died.

Then, during the time that the Lord Jesus was in the tomb, there might have appeared to be an open question, namely, will God accept or will He not accept that which has been presented to Him by Christ? He cannot accept the work and still retain that on account of which the work has been presented to Him. But God on the third day raised from the dead the Lord Jesus, the One who had presented atonement to Him, the One "who was delivered for our offenses," thereby signifying His perfect acceptance, and satisfaction, and glory in the work which Christ had accomplished in death. Thus God has closed every question; for faith and for God not one remains open. The unbeliever is condemned already, but God has been glorified by His Son, and the believer is saved. God be praised, the question is closed for ever; and the believer has everlasting life, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life, and is set in the relationship of child to God, revealed as Father -- a definite relationship which God Himself has established. There is no such thing as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ out of relationship; he may be out of communion; but "ye are all the **children of God** by faith in Christ Jesus."

As regards the second thing, namely, the path in which God would have His children walk, God has marked it out with a distinctness and clearness quite equal to that with which He has defined their relationship: He would have them **sanctified**. The question then arises, what is sanctification? -- We will first see what it is not.

Sanctification is sometimes thought to mean an improving or making holy of the old nature, but it is clear from Scripture that such is not a correct thought, that it cannot mean the amelioration or making holy of an old nature. One word in John 12 will settle this question: "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world," etc. Here the term is applied to the Lord Jesus, and such application entirely precludes the thought of amelioration or making holy. Again, what we have read in chapter 17: "For their sakes I sanctify myself." Impossible that the thought of mending a fallen nature could be introduced there. Therefore, sanctification is not a reforming, an amelioration, or a making holy of a fallen

nature. God never reforms that: He has got another way of dealing with it, and that is **condemning** it.

What then is sanctification? -- It is the setting apart of the soul to God. It is thus Scripture presents it to us.

There are two aspects of sanctification: one is, that it is a complete thing, done once and for ever; in this respect it is absolute. The other is, that it is a continuous, a practical thing, which goes on from day to day. In this aspect it is progressive, or practical. Let us look at each for a moment.

Sanctification in its absolute character is the setting apart for God of a soul from the very first motion of life therein. It is the hewing of the stone out of the quarry of nature and the world for God. Man is by nature dead in trespasses and sin, following his own lusts, but no life Godward. The Holy Ghost comes and breaks out from that quarry a stone -- a soul -- about which God has purposes of grace; He communicates to that soul a life which has its own tastes, desires and objects, and by this communication of a divine life He sets it apart for God. This is absolute sanctification. It can be done once only, and that for ever; once the stone is hewn out of the quarry, it is hewn out of it for ever. Neither Satan's malice nor man's badness can thwart God in the purposes of His love. He deals with that dead mass, and, by the action of His Spirit, separates souls therefrom, and sets them apart to Himself. This being done once, is done for ever; and the recognition of this by the soul acts as a great lever power with it; for you may notice that, all through Scripture, the Spirit does not present to souls the practical in order that they may attain to the absolute, but He does present the absolute in order to produce the practical: that is, He does not say to a believer, you ought to do so and so, in order to be so and so, but He presents to the believer what he is (the absolute) in order to produce a practice consistent therewith (the practical). If I am conscious that God has come in by His mighty power and set me apart from all here to Himself, the effect on me will surely be that I shall walk apart; my walk will be according to that which God has revealed as His will, and will be consistent with the life that He has given me, and the separation to Himself in which He has set me.

The stone then has been hewn out of the quarry by the Spirit of God, and that is absolute sanctification. But there

are a great many angles and corners about it; and so the Spirit begins to dress it, and He works on till it is like the polished stones of the temple. And this goes on continually. Most know how many things there were about them when first brought to God that were not consistent with the character of Him to whom they had been brought, and how little by little God graciously led them on, knocking off an angle here, getting rid of a roughness there. This is **practical** sanctification. If you mix up these two aspects of sanctification, you never know where you are; you must hold them both fast: the absolute, that is done once for ever, and the practical, which is never ended as long as we are here below, but which goes on day by day.

Another thing which does much harm to souls is mixing together sanctification and justification. Sanctification is a work done **IN** the believer, and is connected with the condition of his soul and the Spirit's work in it; but justification is a work done **FOR** his soul, and is connected with its place or position -- its standing before God, and the work of Christ **FOR** it. Thus sanctification has to do with **moral condition**; while justification has to do with **judicial standing**. The not discerning the difference between these things -- the work that goes on in the soul, and the work that has been done for the soul -- is often the cause of lack of peace. The work done in the soul is absolutely necessary, but it is the work done **FOR** the soul that is the basis of its salvation.

We will now look at two or three passages of Scripture as to sanctification, taking it in its absolute character first.

1 Cor. 6:11. Here we read: "Ye **are** washed, ye **are** sanctified, ye **are** justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." And it is even more forcible than we have it in the text, for literally it is "ye **have been** washed, ye **have been** sanctified," etc. Nothing can be more definite.

2 Thess. 2:13. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Here we again find this absolute sanctification spoken of; it is the most absolute statement.

Heb. 10:10. In the same absolute way: "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." This does not mean once for everybody,

but that He is never going to suffer again. He has offered Himself once, and has not to do it again.

Then again, in 1 Peter 1:2, the same truth is set forth. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Peter was writing to those who as to nationality were Jews, but who had embraced Christianity, and he was leading them into the fuller knowledge of what they had embraced. They had known what it was to be a nation elected by Jehovah, but never what it was to be "elect according to the foreknowledge of God **the Father**." They had been set apart to the obedience of the law, but now to the obedience of Christ. They **had** had to do with the blood of bulls and of goats, which was ineffectual to purge the conscience, but now with the precious blood of the Lamb without blemish and without spot, by which the conscience is for ever purged.

The mode of address in Paul's epistles demonstrates the truth of sanctification in its absolute aspect. He always addresses those to whom he writes as saints -- sanctified ones, those set apart to God. To two assemblies only is this omitted -- to the Galatians and to the Thessalonians. The reason for this may be that he stood in doubt of them in Galatia; they were going back to the law for justification. Whilst in the epistle to the Thessalonians those written to are addressed as "in God the Father"; they could not be there without being set apart. But in his other epistles you will find the address is always to sanctified ones. He addresses them as those who were set apart absolutely to God. These passages go to show that sanctification is presented in Scripture as absolute: God has set the believer apart absolutely unto Himself.

J.L. in Food for the Flock 4:117-128.

(To be continued, Lord willing)

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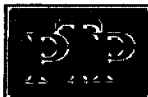
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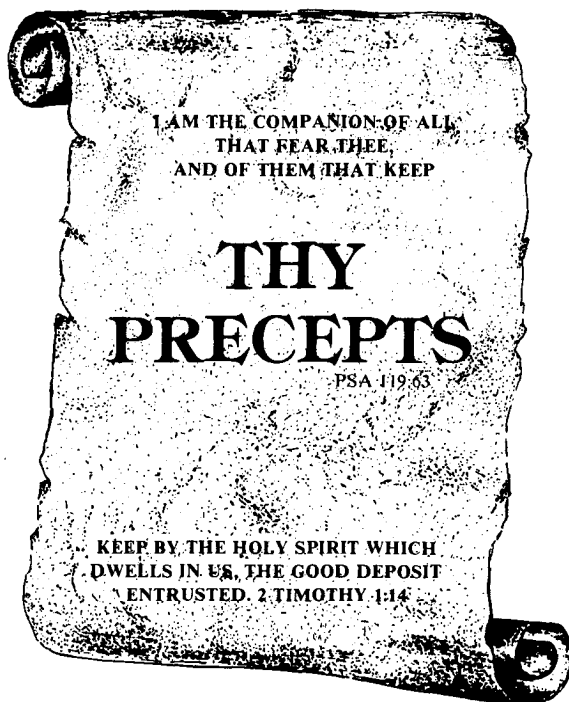
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CONTENTS

Compromise	129
The Characters Christ Takes	132
The New Jerusalem	133
Sanctification	140
New Creation	145
Go In and Out	152
The Impeccable Savior	154
The Year 2000	158
Leave Laodicea?	160

COMPROMISE

In divine truth compromise has no place. It would be the surrender of God's authority and manifest rebellion. We are sanctified by the Spirit to the obedience of Jesus Christ, not more surely than to the sprinkling of His blood. We are not left to our desires after good or our devices to give it effect. He that hath Christ's commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Him. Nor is this all. The new life is exercised; the love that is of God grows. And it is not only His "injunction" that governs the heart: His "word" forms it in obedience and is a deeper test of it. Therefore the Lord adds (John 14), "If anyone love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me."

In matters of outward arrangement, or of moral indifference such as questions of time and place, there is ample room for grace in mutual consideration and in special care of the poor, the weak, and the suffering. Here the principle applies, though in another sense, that the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves: rather, that everyone of us please his neighbor for good to edification. The strong may well afford to seek unselfishness and make it sweeter for all. And here Christ is our blessed pattern, Who in glorifying His Father never sought His own will, though it was all untainted and holy, and pleased not Himself, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me.

But where the will of God is expressed, there is no option for ought else. Our duty then is clear and unqualified: we have only to obey Him. Of His own purpose did He beget us by the word of truth that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures (James 1). All else are under sin and ruin, under death and judgment. This new and divine nature, of which His grace has made us partakers (2 Peter 1:4), rejects all filthiness and superfluity of malice, receiving with meekness the implanted word which has the power of saving our souls, assuredly not in mere hearing but in practising the word. Thus it becomes the perfect law of liberty; for as the new life craves the revealed word, so the word exactly suits the life one has in Christ; not the old I, each believer can say, but Christ living in me. Undoubtedly this life

is not independent of its source, but lives in dependence on Him. For what I live now in flesh, I live in faith that is in the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me. All is the grace of God, whether it be Christ's death or life thus given.

What shall we say then? should we continue in sin that grace may abound? Far be it from us! We who died in sin, how shall we live longer therein? Or know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Christ Jesus were baptized unto His death? Therefore were we buried with Him by baptism unto death, that even as Christ was raised out of the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we were identified with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in [that] of resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin. For he who died has been justified from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, being raised out of the dead, dies no more: death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died to sin once for all; and in that He lives, He lives to God. So do ye also reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body unto obeying it in your lusts, nor render your members to sin instruments of iniquity; but render yourselves to God as alive out of the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace.

Such is the apostle Paul's handling of this great matter in Romans 6; and he is as far as possible from compromise as to either the principle or the power. We are baptized to Christ's death as the principle; we are not under law but grace as the power. In both, sin is triumphed over and wholly disallowed. Delivered from sin but enslaved to righteousness, enslaved to God, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end life eternal. Our condition is mixed no doubt, which indeed is to say but little of the sad reality; but this is not to enfeeble the absolute truth of our deliverance on the one hand, or of our responsibility on the other. Compromise is excluded; and no wonder, for Christ is dead and risen. Further, the Holy Spirit is given to us.

So in 1 Cor. 3 we are no longer to walk as men, but as sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints called. Once we were all "the unrighteous," some this horror, some that; but receiving Christ, we were washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. For know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy

Spirit that is in you, which ye had from God, and ye are not your own? For ye were bought with a price. Glorify then God in your body (1 Cor. 6). There is no compromise here.

As it is in these two great Epistles, the one very markedly individual, while the other is also ecclesiastical or corporate, so it is in every other part of the Christian deposit we are bound to keep. There is no sanction of laxity; grace condemns sin more solemnly and profoundly than law. We are Christ's epistle, responsible to be so known and read of all men. Consistency with Christ, with the truth, with holiness, is obligatory on all saints even the weakest. Compromise here is altogether a sin and nothing but shame.

Is there, again, any latitude allowed in the ministry of the Spirit? Is there licence of unfaithfulness in those that preach or teach Christ? May we in the Lord's work associate with known inconsistency, with deliberate playing fast and loose, with divine ways openly set at naught? So the Corinthians thought, and for a while rose up rebelliously against the apostle whom God had blessed to their souls. For awhile they were haughty and alienated from the true, abjectly listening to the false teachers who brought them into bondage with their own objects. Was it not a grief and scandal that such things should be done by such as claimed to be the Lord's servants? for what can one think of any professing fidelity joining hands with unrepented evil ways? what of the deplorable and unholy scheme of fancying that such union is of God to get wrong-doers right? Can the simplest believer fail to see that it is doing evil that good may come? whose judgment is just.

But may not the object be good? So say all religious guides, and many of them sincerely, however differing or even opposed. It would be uncharitable to doubt of many that they are each in earnest with their methods, and more or less satisfied with the cause they plead. But this only makes evident that an apparently good object is not the least guarantee of either truth or holiness. Were the aim ever so excellent, it is essential that it be prosecuted according to the Lord's mind; and this can only be in obedience to His word. To oppose it is courting destruction, to do without it is self-will. In His work compromise is evil. The Lord is jealous that the known walk be consistent with His testimony. His servant is bound to have clean hands, and not to partake of other men's sins.

How contrasted is God's way for His servants! "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in

craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God"; and again, "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." Indeed all of 2 Cor. 6 is worthy of the consideration of all God's servants and His saints. But this may suffice to point out what His word enjoins to the total uprooting of that compromise which is man's device in His work, as offensive to His Spirit as it is defiant of His Word.

The Bible Treasury, New Series, v. 1.

THE CHARACTERS CHRIST TAKES

The characters that Christ takes in connection with these last days, are these: "The holy, the true." Yes, that is the character He takes; that which He desires in His own, in their walk, when He is about to come. We have to watch over ourselves and over our brethren, that it may be so. I feel, for my part, that we have, in these days, to watch very specially as to this holiness, though it is always an essential thing for the children of God.

Letters of J. N. D. 2:139.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

(continued from v. 2:4)

The Names of the Gates

Q: How is it that the names on the gates are not those of Christians, but of the tribes of Israel?

J. A. Trench: The order of government on earth was ever connected with Israel and its twelve tribes as the center of it. But now that which is thus the fitting symbol of rule and government is found connected with the heavenly city, in the names of the tribes inscribed on the gates. To us, the heavenly saints, the church, under Christ is entrusted the judicial administration of the world to come.

Rev. 21:14 "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

Q: What is the connection between the foundations of the wall and the apostles?

J. N. Darby: They were, in their work, the foundation of the heavenly city. It is the assembly as founded at Jerusalem under the twelve -- the organized seat of heavenly power, and the new and now heavenly capital of God's government. They had suffered and served the Lamb in the earthly, and under Him founded the heavenly.

W. Kelly: Eph. 2:20 gives us, I think, the force of the symbol: "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets". God has brought out His full mind as a foundation of truth. Upon this broad and deep foundation -- where all that can be known of God by the creature has been revealed in His Son -- upon this foundation the church is built. "The twelve apostles of the Lamb" were instruments of this revelation.

F. G. Patterson: The twelve apostles have a double place: in relation to the kingdom below, as in the church on high. The Lord promised them: "ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (See Matt. 19:28.)

J. A. Trench: Their promised place in the kingdom would not in any way interfere with their being in the body of Christ when it was formed at Pentecost, for the church was also to have intimate connections with the kingdom.

The Measurement of the City

Rev. 21:15 "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof."

Q: What is the significance of the golden reed?

J. N. Darby: The golden reed, the exact righteousness of God, measures all and judges all.

F. G. Patterson: If you look at the earthly Jerusalem in Ezekiel, He measures it with a line of flax (40:3) as His possession. But this will not suffice to measure that which is the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul.

Rev. 21:16 "And the city lieth foursquare and the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

J. N. Darby: We get now its proper perfection. It has not divine perfectness (that could not be), but it has divinely given perfectness. It is a cube, equal on every side, finite perfection. It was twelve thousand furlongs, the number twelve again marking the administrative perfection in man, only largely multiplied in fact.

Q: Of course there is no thought of literal measurements of a material city.

J. A. Trench: I will ask any simple Christian to read again the description of the glorious city in Revelation 21:22, and tell me if it conveys in his mind the idea of what is material!

W. Kelly: When we read of the city forming a quadrangle of equal length, breadth, and height, it is simply to be understood as figurative of its perfectness. At the same time these symbols must not be run into one another. First we have a general idea of a city which is in every way square, a cube in fact; then, when we come to the details of the wall, a height is given which shows that we are not to look for

mere literal consistence as if it were a portrait.

Q: What does the measuring mean?

A. I believe it is the demonstration that every demand of divine righteousness is answered. You get the whole thing completed and displayed; that is the measure of the city.

Rev. 21:17 "And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel."

J. N. Darby: The wall has its perfection, 12 by 12. It is not divine in its nature -- it is the measure of a man, though God measures it by the angel.

W. Scott: Instead of the "equal" and amazing size of the city, the wall is but 144 cubits; the former measurement expresses the church's perfection in the glory according to men and angels.

Rev. 21:18 "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass."

Q: What does the "clear glass" symbolize?

W. Kelly: Holiness, now fixed and without flaw. With regard to our need of holiness, the means of it are represented under the figure of water, because it is a question of cleansing from defilement in a practical way. In the Revelation this is not the case; for from the fourth chapter the saints who are put in connection with holiness are risen saints, and consequently are beyond the means of cleansing. They are therefore represented, as also in the case of that body of saints mentioned in chapter 15, as on a sea of glass, because it is purity, and this in a fixed unalterable condition. Their state is no longer that which might need to be cleansed. It is holiness that repels everything defiling. So here, the city is of pure gold, like unto clear glass. Divine righteousness has its full way now, and holiness that nothing can touch.

W. Scott: The building of the wall was of jasper, that is, the glory of God will be our defense and security, while the city itself was pure gold, like clear glass. As to the gold, we are made the righteousness of God in Christ even now; then it will be displayed -- the purity will be transparent.

The Precious Stones

Rev. 21:19 "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; and the second, sapphire;" etc.

J. N. Darby: Besides the general idea of every character of beauty, there is the special character of the stones -- the variegated display of colors into which light transforms itself, when seen through a medium, when God is revealed in and by the creature, or in connection with his state, in creation, intercessional representation, and here in glory.

Q: Is there anything to be learned from the actual stones?

J. N. Darby: The difference of the stones contains details which are above my knowledge. It is said of Satan that before his fall he walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire -- that every precious stone was his covering (Ezek. 28:14). The precious stones were on the breastplate of the high priest. These stones are not pure light, but the reflection of the divine glory, where the most elevated creature walked before its fall. It is in that position that Christ places the church on His heart, as high priest, and in the full manifestation of which He places her in the glory.

J. A. Trench: As the prism catches the ray that falls upon it, and breaking it up into its several colors, reflects it thus in its varied beauty and perfection, so will the church be to Christ in the coming day of Millennial glory.

W. Kelly: Without pretending to give the spiritual meaning of the various precious stones, we may learn thence that in every variety of beauty will God array His people in that day of glory. There will be different rays of His glory reflected through them, set forth by these different precious stones.

R: The idea which it conveys to me is, that it is the precious result of the formative work of God individually in the saints. No precious stone gives light, but refracts light. But then each is the result of the work of the lapidary, everything that would obstruct light has been removed.

Rev. 21:21 "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold as it

were transparent glass."

J. A. Trench: That which first meets the eye as a walled city is approached is its gate. Thus, at every approach there shines out amid the surrounding wall of the divine glory, the pearl -- the chosen symbol of what the church was to Christ, of His own special delight in it as He saw it in eternity, in His own thoughts about it.

W. Scott: Israel, angels, and men will then learn, as they look upon the gates of pearl, that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it -- the one pearl of priceless value to Him.

W. Kelly: If the Lord saw any beauty in the church, it was all derived from Himself. He saw the church as she was in the mind and purpose of God, and sold all that He might purchase this pearl of great price, which after all is but the reflection of His own beauty. So here, the spotless pearl, the perfection of moral beauty that had been so precious in the eyes of Christ, is the figure of what, even at the entrance, will appear in the eyes of men and angels.

The Street of the City

J. N. Darby: The street of the city is of pure gold, as it were transparent glass; no defilement is any longer possible. Jesus will no more have to wash our feet in order that we may enter into the presence of God for our worship. In the glory we shall be standing on purity. The more we walk there, the more we shall get into purity, without having the need of conscience to be on our guard. This is a great rest to him who loves holiness.

Q: Does gold here, as elsewhere, stand for divine righteousness?

J. N. Darby: Righteousness is the very walking place of the saints there. Instead of its defiling us, as the world does now, the very place on which they walk will be the righteousness of God. "Transparent glass" denotes true holiness.

F. G. Patterson: If the heart does not "watch and pray" now, how the soil is contracted, and the heart defiled! The heart rests in the thought of a scene where it may let itself go. There Christ alone will fill the soul. There the very street we shall walk on suits the nature of God. There we may ungird our loins, for all only reflects His glory.

W. Scott: The golden and transparent street of the city tells us that the walks of the wilderness are over. The sand of the desert exchanged for the golden street. No more defilement, no more feet-washing. We shall walk on that which cannot possibly defile or be defiled.

Rev. 21:22 "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

J. A. Trench: All that marked the distance of Israel's relationships is unknown. The Millennial Jerusalem on earth will have its temple, but not so the heavenly city. The whole city will be a sanctuary. The unveiled presence of God is there, where we have been brought even now by faith.

R: I doubt if there ever was a city without a temple, but the heavenly city has no temple, because the city itself is really the church, and is composed entirely of living stones; profession has no place. Where God dwells and is approached without a veil, a temple would be out of place.

W. Scott: There will be no "holy" and "most holy"; no curtains and veils; no temple confirming the glory of God to a favored few. All shall see Him alike. The feeblest believer shall see Jesus equally with Paul. God and the Lamb make themselves known equally to all in the city of gold.

J. N. Darby: There is nothing that contains and hides the glory of God. God is the temple. He receives and encloses His people. We shall be shut up in God. He is the intimate center of everything, as also the circumference of our happiness.

W. Kelly: This also is a truth applicable now (Heb. 10). We stand, as to our faith, in the immediate presence of God, with His perfect favor shining on us.

F. G. Patterson: It is humbling to discover how little concentration of heart there is with us now for worship. Worship is the character of the place to which we are going; there it goes on for ever.

Q: In John 4 we find worship connected with the name of Father. Why, instead of this, do we have "Lord God Almighty" in this verse?

J. N. Darby: It is the revealed dispensational Ruler, the True God, and the Lamb Who has made good His glory. When the glory comes,

there will be full perfection of everything; the Lord God Almighty as concerns the glory, and the Lamb as having brought us into security through His sufferings, are united.

Rev. 21:23 "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

J. A. Trench: The Lamb is the light (or lamp). It is the light that has made all so bright for our hearts already. It is the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

W. Kelly: The Lamb is not merely the light, but the vessel of it, or lightbearer. We may consider the light diffused, as it is said, "the glory of God did lighten it"; but if we want to see the light concentrated, where are we to look? The Lamb is that light. Thus does God make Himself to shine through all the glorious city. The Lamb is the great concentrating object.

(to be continued, Lord willing)

EXTRACT

Nothing can be more offensive to Jehovah than that those who have the name of His people should clothe themselves with the privilege of His presence, and use this pretension to honour self and justify evil, or maintain a divine claim in spite of it. Therefore should Zion be plowed as a field, and the mountains, now ornamented with palaces, should be made like the heights of a forest (v. 9-12).

Synopsis, on Micah 3.

SANCTIFICATION

John 17:17-19

(continued from v. 2:4)

But there is the other side of this truth, namely, that God would have the believer set apart **practically** for Himself. This aspect of sanctification we find presented in what we have read in John 17: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;" also, "For their sakes I sanctify myself [1], that they also might be sanctified through the truth." In both these verses the sanctification is **practical**, not absolute; it is what goes on day by day.

Also in 1 Thess. 5:23: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here too it is the practical side, that which goes on continuously.

And once more, for there are but three passages in the New Testament which present sanctification in a progressive or practical aspect, Heb. 12:14: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness (sanctification it ought to be), without which no man shall see the Lord."

Thus Scripture presents the twofold aspect of sanctification--absolute on the one hand, and practical on the other.

Let us now see the persons to whom this work of sanctification is attributed. In Heb. 10:10 it is ascribed to God the Father: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God, ... by the which will we are sanctified." Here we learn that God the Father **wills** it. In the last clause of the same verse, we learn that it is the work of God the Son--the One who came to do the will of God the Father--that is the foundation of it. And lastly, in Rom. 15:16; 2 Thess. 2:13; and 1 Peter 1:2, we learn

1. [By "I sanctify myself" the Lord Jesus meant that He set Himself apart in heaven. It does not mean that He sanctified Himself in a moral sense. -- ed.]

that it is the Holy Ghost whose power effects it.

It is blessed for our souls thus to find God -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost -- Three in One, working for us, dealing with us that we may answer to His own heart. When we speak of the Person of the Godhead who immediately acts, it is always the Holy Ghost; the Father wills; the Son has in His work laid the righteous foundation for the accomplishment of the Father's will; and the Holy Ghost it is who acts and carries out the Father's will on the basis of the work of the Son.

In John 17:17-19, we find the means used to carry out this blessed work, namely, the word of the Father and the person of the Son.

In passing, let us notice how the two things that were and are ever present to the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ are brought out in this chapter: first, His care for the glory of His Father; second, His care for the blessing of His people. What brought Him down from the bright scene that was His own? It was caring for the Father's glory; this it was that brought Him down from the place He had had from all eternity. But there was, besides, His desire to save us.

In the first five verses of this chapter we find Him caring for the Father's glory. He is the blessed Man glorifying God in all His ways, ever well pleasing to the heart of that God and Father. He glorified Him in His walk here on the earth. This, I believe, we find expressed in the words, "I have glorified thee on the earth." But He put the top stone to it all, He glorified God about sin, in His death on the cross. This, I believe, we find expressed in the words, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." This is what the first five verses present, while from the sixth verse onward, right through the chapter, we find His care for His people's blessing. In verses 6-13, He presents His disciples to the Father; He says, I hand them over to thee that thou mayest keep them. And why? For two reasons: because "they are **Thine**," and because "I am glorified in them." And on this ground He commits them to the care of the "**holy** Father." The very epithet used by the Lord in connection with the name of the Father to whom He commits us ought to bring to our minds what the character of our walk should be. If we are kept by a **holy** Father we ought to be holy (that is, separate from evil) in our walk. Adam was innocent before the fall, but the moment he fell, innocence was gone, and **gone for ever**. Now, in a scene where all is evil, we are kept from the evil by the "holy Father": and we are to walk as He walked who was holy indeed, not alone in practice (which we ought always to be), but in Himself (which we can never be so

long as we are here below. 1 John 1:8). From the 14th verse on He puts them in the place of testimony before the world--in His own place, and in care for them asks the Father to sanctify them through His (the Father's) word; and for their sakes sets Himself apart on high, that, by having Him, their treasure, there, their hearts may be drawn out of this world to Himself on high. Thus far it is care for their present blessing. From verse 22 onward we find Him caring for their future blessing. He gives them the glory the Father had given Him, that, being displayed with Him in that glory, the world might know that the Father had sent Him, and had loved them as He had loved Him, the Son. And lastly, we find this same care for their future blessing expressed in the desire of His heart to the Father: "I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." What a blessed thing, beloved! Why are we going to be with Him where He is? Why are our eyes going to behold His glory up there? Because of the "I will" of Christ!

But to return. The means of sanctification are, as already stated, the word and the Person. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." "**Thy**," mark you, not "the"; it is the Father's word, it is all the Father here: it is the Father to whom He presents them, it is the Father's word He gives them, and it is the Father's word He says is truth.

What then is the Father's word? It is, I believe, that which reveals Himself, the New Testament especially, for it is there that we have the Father revealed. In the Old Testament we find the Almighty God revealed to a patriarch, and the Jehovah God revealed to a nation, but none ever knew God as the Father till the Son came and revealed Him. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him." The Son, in speaking to Philip (John 14:9), says: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The Lord Jesus while here below declared what God the Father was as light and love, and in His own pathway through this world presented that which was according to the will of the Father and pleasing to Him: "I do always those things that please him." He has thus revealed the Father, and been the exponent to us of the Father's will.

And what is it all for? It is for our practical sanctification: He reveals God the Father's mind, He reveals His will, in order that we may "be imitators of God as dear children." Let us ask ourselves, is it so with us? Do we know anything of this? Are we answering in any measure to it? If our hearts know what it is to be subject to

that will, then our walk will be the expression of it.

But there is, beside the Father's word, yet another means of practical sanctification. That word maps out the way through the scene, and dealing with the **conscience** sets the believer apart from all in it that is contrary to the Father; but we want something **beyond** this scene, something outside it, something to deal with our **hearts**, and the Lord says, as it were, You shall have it. He goes on: "For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through **the truth**." And what is this? It is the blessed Lord setting Himself apart on high, in order that we might have something to deal with our hearts. He has gone on high to the Father's throne, that we might have an object there to draw our hearts outside this scene.

But how is "the truth" of this setting apart of Christ in glory to be known? The third Person of the Trinity--God the Holy Ghost--has come down to tell us of it. He has come down purposely to tell us where Christ is now, and of His glory there, and to cultivate the affections of our hearts for, and draw them out after, the One who is there outside the scene altogether, that finding our treasure there our hearts may be there also. So the Lord Himself tells us it would be, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be." He says: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." How were they to believe in Him as they did in God? They could not see God, and now they would not be able to see Him as hitherto they had seen Him, but they were to believe in Him without seeing Him, and there would be a divine Being here below acting in power to engage their hearts fully with Himself whilst He would be away, and by thus carrying their hearts outside the scene, set them apart practically while in it. The Lord give us to know what it is to have our treasure there, and then we shall have our hearts there. You will never get your hearts there by trying to get them out of the world; the only way is by knowing Him there as your treasure. Thus He ministers to the hearts of His people; He would draw out their affections to Himself, and, in order to do it, He has set Himself apart at the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost has come down to tell us of His presence and place in glory, that we might be sanctified practically by "**the truth**" thus made known.

Such then is the truth of sanctification in its twofold aspect, absolute and practical. You first get the distinct act of God in setting the soul apart absolutely for Himself; and then there is the dealing with it, the education of it, the pointing out to it that in its ways which is inconsistent with the Father, that it may be separate from such. Where the heart is in communion it bows to this dealing--

it wishes it; and so it grows in sanctification day by day, the means being the Father's word and the person of the Lord Jesus setting Himself apart from this scene, in order that our hearts may dwell in that scene where He is.

If we look at what the Father's word, which sanctifies, reveals in connection with the subject of which I hope to speak--the distinctive character of the place into which God has called the believer--we shall find the truth: namely, that the Lord Jesus has come down into this world and has, by taking in grace His people's place, made their place in righteousness, whether as regards God, as regards Satan, or as regards the world, viewed either in its worldly or in its religious aspect.

It reveals moreover that this place, and the distinctiveness of this place, in whatever relation it may be, is the fruit to the believer of the travail of the soul of His Lord, of the agony, death and bloodshedding of the Son of God. It was at the cost of **Himself** the Lord made this place of distinctiveness for His people. Ordinarily we hold things dear on account of the one who has given them to us; and if the **least** of the blessings that we enjoy--if we may speak of the **least** where all are so great--has been won for us at the cost of the suffering in death of the Son of God, surely this should cause us to hold with tenacity those blessings, and conform our practice to them.

We separate too much the blessing and the blessing, and thus we lose power. We are blessed assuredly, but how came we to be blessed? Were there no depths to be gone down to, that we might be raised to these heights? There were. The eternal Son of God became a man--Son of God born in time--and went into those depths, to which the heights of glory are but the corresponding answer. We need to be assured of our blessings, but we need to associate them with Him who, at the cost of Himself, acquired them for us, our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ.

... may the Lord lead our souls into the power of His truth, may we esteem the privilege, and at the same time remember the responsibility of possessing it. If we have been absolutely set apart by God, it is to the end that we may be practically set apart to Him, and what is the place for us to take that it may be worked out in us? It is that of **subjection**--the very hardest thing for us naturally, but, blessed be God, what the new nature delights in. God does not look for power in us--**that** He ministers to us--His Spirit; but He does look for obedience. May He work it in us all for His name's sake.

NEW CREATION, LIFE IN THE SON AND DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

LIFE IN THE SON

(continued from v. 2, p. 123)

ETERNAL LIFE AS PRESENTED IN JOHN WAS NOT POSSESSED BY O.T. SAINTS

Previous articles in this series have, no doubt, led us to conclude that O. T. saints did not have eternal life in the way that eternal life is presented in John's gospel and epistle. The N.T. presentation of eternal life is connected with the fact that the new birth **must** precede sealing with the Spirit, be it only by a 'hair's breadth' of time. God does not seal an unclean vessel and so the seal follows after the new birth. We are called upon to distinguish [1] these two events in time even though in a given case we may not be able to discern that time period.

One of the efforts to establish the mistaken thought that "all is our from the first moment of quickening" involves the idea that O. T. saints had life in the Son. The reasoning process is this:

1. It cannot be denied that from the beginning life was in the Son.
2. O. T. saints were quickened by the Son with the life in Him.
3. Therefore, O. T. saints had life in the Son (to this it is added that Christ having come, this life in the Son is now necessarily life in Christ also).

1. This has nothing to do with Pentecostalist type doctrines.
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4. Then it follows that all that is comprehended in the words "life in the Son" comes at the moment of quickening; both for Old and New Testament saints.

Of course, point 3 is false, setting aside the necessity of His coming in manhood, dying and rising again as Head of a new creation in order for us to have life in the character of life in the Son. We have previously considered that we have life in Him in connection with His manhood, He having died and risen, a thing impossible for the O. T. saints. Our purpose now is to examine the true portion and standing of the O. T. saints.

We have seen that Scripture calls O. T. saints children of God (John 11:52; Rom. 9:7,8; Gal. 4:1-3) but that they could not form a visible, manifested community of children. Indeed, while called children of God, we must not suppose that all that characterizes a child of God now, as indwelt by the Spirit, was true of them. Concerning the new nature, they were children -- born of God, having divine life from the Son.

Of course, O. T. saints had external life in its essence, from the Son, which is to say something far different than that they had eternal life in the Son, eternal life as spoken of in John and in the epistles. Those who intelligently oppose the idea that O. T. saints had life in the Son did not, and do not, deny that they had eternal life in its essence. Bear with a number of citations on this point. J. N. Darby wrote,

That God forgave Adam's sin downward in respect of the cross is plain, and stated in Rom. 3:25; and that He communicated life to the old saints I do not doubt -- eternal life. It is too clear to me to reason on it here, for without it none shall see nor enter the kingdom of God [2].

You cannot separate eternal life and new birth; but though the essence of divine life is there, yet eternal life in Christ as man and finally in glory does go further -- man being quickened as accomplished in Christ glorified [3].

2. Collected Writings of J. N. D. 8:30.

3. Letters of J. N. D. 3:140.

In essence divine life is always the same: only that now Christ, who becomes our life, being not only a quickening Spirit, but also Himself raised from the dead, we have this life as ours according to the condition into which He is entered as man [4].

J. A. Trench wrote:

We are first asked to identify "eternal life" with quickening as "ours from the first moment of it" . . . Of course it is in fact: there is not -- there never was -- any other outside the forfeited life of the fallen man save life as flowing from the Son of God, who, in His own Person, is "that eternal life which was with the Father." But I earnestly press, that it is not so that scripture speaks of eternal life [5].

A. C. Ord cites part of J. A. Trench's remarks above and implies the same teaching throughout his book on this subject [6]. He indicates the same view in 1888 [7] and later stated this:

For though He quickened souls with eternal life as the Son of God (by virtue of the life that dwelt in Himself, and of which He was the embodiment and expression, as having come from the Father), yet there was no association in it with others at that time. Nor could it be said to be continuous with, and in this way, inseparable from, His own life; as the words "Because I live ye shall live also," imply. It was indeed from Him by the power of His living voice and word; but it was not enjoyed with Him, nor in Him, till the resurrection, when (seen as the corn of wheat with its much fruit risen out of the ground, bearing the multiplied grain) it exists as one whole plant (John 12:24). He comes back to His disciples after His resurrection, and for the first time breathes into (en) them; not only that this life may be realized abundantly

4. Letters of J. N. D. 2:405-406.

5. "An Answer to 'Life and the Spirit,'" p. 6. See also pp. 7, 17.

6. The Teaching of Scripture on the Subject of Eternal Life . . . , p. 39.

7. The Christian Friend, 1888, pp. 253-256.

in the power of the Holy Ghost, but that it may be in inseparable association with Himself -- dwelling in Him and He in us. As He says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." How are we to enjoy all the sweetness of the Father's love, as He enjoys it, and the depth of the relationship -- His relationship -- with the Father; save as having His risen life, and His Spirit? Thus only can He dwell in us Himself, as He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and in them. And, these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." This is not exactly union, though we dwell in God, and God in us, by His Spirit, yet we are never said to be united to God, as some have erroneously taught [8].

It would seem that if a saint could have life in the Son before Christ took manhood, etc., it would involve being in deity; since life in the Son means "ye in me, and I in you." This could only be so in connection with His risen manhood. See reference 2, above. But let us return to our point.

A. P. Cecil held the same teaching:

Now as to eternal life in one sense, they do have it, for no doubt quickening is from the Son, who was the eternal life with the Father from all eternity. The Son quickens whom He will! (John 5:21). But this is not eternal life in the full Christian sense of it [9].

One more extract will suffice:

8. The Glory of the Person of the Son of God, p. 13.

9. "Remarks on a Paper Called 'Life and the Spirit'", p. 2. See also Things New and Old 28: 137 (1885). See also A. H. Rule, cited in B. F. Pinkerton, "Letters on Relationship with God and Corporate Responsibility," p. 30. I regret to have to point out that W. Kelly later in his life asserted that O. T. saints had "life in the Son" though they knew it not as we do, or ought to do. See The Bible Treasury New Series 5:61.

But though Jehovah's righteousness has ever been that in virtue of which sinners have been saved . . . and the subsisting justification which depends on and follows it, none could derive the benefit, as a known state and standing, till it became and was proclaimed as an existent fact. . . . It was spoken of, and trusted in, from of old, but not "revealed," nor could the Spirit consequently be given as the seal of accomplished righteousness (John 7:39), till the Lord Jesus died, rose, and was glorified in ascension. Paul however, formally dwells upon it as accomplished and revealed (Rom. 1:17, 3:26-26); and the whole teaching of the New Testament as to christianity, and even as to eternity, is based on it. Vain is the attempt, then, to obliterate distinctions God Himself has made, and to reduce all His dealings to one common level. The wisdom of God's ways, as displayed in the successive dispensations, will remain for ever marked, like the rings which mark the growth of a tree, or the successive accretions, the age of a stone.

The glory of God, and blessing of man, have all and completely depended on Christ as Mediator. Through Him only have men ever been saved. But this does not mean that, in the administration of divine grace to men through Him, there have been neither degrees of spiritual intelligence nor diversities of spiritual privilege. An infant has not the intelligence of a full-grown man, and what is in this true in the case of individuals is true of dispensations. The spiritual status granted to saints of previous economies was wholly and in all cases inferior to the christian status, as is very clearly stated in Luke 7:28; and consequently the spiritual capacity and intelligence were also very different. It is fallacious to say that because Old Testament saints were born of God, and are now in heaven, that therefore what is known by the christian, such as remission of sins, justification of life, peace, the heavenly calling, &c. were known to them as to us. They had simple childlike faith in God, and in His word, -- a faith given by God in the coming Messiah, sustained by Him, and which God did not disappoint, for He uses this resource in this world, and afterwards took them to heaven. But to apply to them, either as regards spiritual intelligence, state, or condition, truth, which for its revelation and subjective realization depended on the accomplishment of atonement, and on the descent of the Holy Ghost, is altogether a mistake, and (though unintentionally) disparages virtually the work and person of our Lord. The Epistle to the

Romans, for example, is written from a christian stand-point: the spiritual experience and privileges, therein spoken of, must be taken as in the light of christianity, and can be understood only from the christian position, and by the christian sense. The sins of the Old Testament saints are said simply to have been "passed over," or pretermitted (Rom. 3:25). In fact the value and effect of the work of Christ could be known, in the intelligence and power of the Spirit, only after Christ had suffered, been raised, and was glorified. And the personal and practical state is necessarily and at all times contingent on, the revelation which God gives, varying in degree with it in such a way that whilst in each dispensation, individual and personal faith and apprehension varied, yet dispensational light, state, standing and privilege vary also, as a whole and as a system, -- the christian economy being the climax and perfection of all, and justification of life, and life in resurrection, being characteristically christian privilege. In Rom. 7:14-24, the man spoken of has light beyond that of an Old Testament saint, but not up to the full christian standard. As to the divine nature there was that in the saints of Old Testament times, which through grace enabled them to please God up to the light He gave them. They were born of God, and therefore feared, trusted, and obeyed God. But we must distinguish between the quickening grace of the Spirit, and the Spirit as indwelling and so the seal of accomplished righteousness. "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," could not have been said till the Spirit was given. It is a test now, but would have been no test then, because, though born of God and by the Spirit, they had not the gift of the Spirit. Nor in their case was the distinction brought to light between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit, because flesh and Spirit were not then known to be irreconcilable. Without this profound and Spirit-taught knowledge, they simply walked in the fear of God, and with the sense of His mercy which enabled them to say, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no flesh be justified;" whereas the christian knows that he will never come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life [10].

10. J. B. P., The Bible Treasury 15:198-199.

I add a word here on Millennial saints. It is true that the Spirit ever was here (cp. Gen. 1:2, etc.); yet He came (John 14-16; Acts 2)! The point is that He came in a special capacity. He indwells the believer (1 Cor. 6:19, etc.) and the church (1 Cor. 3:16, etc.). When the saints are caught up, the Spirit will be gone (2 Thess. 2:7) in **that special capacity** as indweller of the individual and the church. He will still be here to deal with individual's as He did in O.T. times, i.e., to quicken souls by the new birth. The dispensation will change. Christ will no longer be hidden in heaven, with the Holy Spirit on earth, in that special capacity, but will be revealed from heaven. This change involves the fact that Millennial saints will not have the same position as those do who are alive during the time of Christ's rejection and who are indwelt by the Spirit. However, under the new covenant, their position will be much greater than that of the O. T. saints. The Christian is heavenly and not part of the earthly purposes of God in government in the earth. Scriptures that speak of access to God provide an interesting illustration of this. Except for the high priest once a year and not without blood, Israel of old had no access because of the unrent veil. The veil is now rent and we have boldness by His blood to go in. Is this true of Millennial saints? No. The Millennial temple will not have a veil but it will have two-leaved doors (Ezek. 41:24). This signifies a greater degree of access than an unrent veil, yet not the unhindered access we enjoy. Thus, as we consider the purpose of God and the development of His ways in earthly places, we see a progression in this. However, the church is a parenthesis, a heavenly people, and not an earthly company. God has one purpose, but it is manifested in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly. Our place is in the heavenly sphere and Israel's place is in the earthly sphere. God's one purpose is to glorify Himself in Christ, in both spheres, with Christ as head over the heavenly and the earthly (Eph. 1:10). But our portion is the highest and so is the character and associations of our life: life in the Son.

Life in the Son means to have Christ's risen life by Himself being our life. "He that hath the Son hath life." Life in the Son is to have life in oneness with Him, being one plant with Him as the resurrected stalk (John 12:24), a thing impossible before His resurrection. We have life in the Son by He being in us and we in Him -- "ye in me, and I in you" -- "Christ in you, the hope of glory" -- "when Christ who is our life is manifested" This is the abundant life of which John speaks. What an unspeakable blessedness it is to have Himself as our life -- and eternally so. May He, by the Spirit, cause us to understand ever more deeply the reality of this relationship.

(to be continued, Lord willing)

ed.

GO IN AND OUT AND FIND PASTURE

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture (John 10:9).

There is a fourfold aspect to this verse often used in the gospel, which is:

salvation to any who enter in through the door;

the blessedness of sins forgiven;

salvation by faith through the precious blood of Christ;

the soul enters in for peace with God and rest for eternity.

Thus the question of the believer's sins will never be brought up against his soul forever (John 10:27-29).

This verse has something for the enjoyment of every believer, from the youngest to the oldest. Notice the last part of the verse--not the part about entering in the door, but a new and deeper enjoyment: "and shall go in and out and find pasture.

We would like to use some Scripture characters as to those who went in. Moses went in to hear and learn and to get himself acquainted for the steps of the journey (Ex. 24:18). Consider Daniel (Dan. 6:10). He went into his house and kneeled upon His knees owning his dependence on the Lord and to be strengthened by the God of Heaven. Now see 1 Sam. 1:10,11 concerning the godly Hannah. What a dark day it was in which she lived, with sin on every hand. She prayed (v. 13) but only her lips moved. How she poured out her soul to the Lord. And she was not disappointed (v. 18) and her countenance was no longer sad. Next, look at Stephen (Acts 6:8) full of faith, going in to the presence of the Lord with the apostles. He was full of grace and power (v. 8). See how he was out for testimony and how he could bring the Word to bear on consciences in Acts 7 and give his life for the Lord Jesus. In 2 Tim 1:5 we read of Timothy's grandmother Lois and mother Eunice. They brought up Timothy so that from childhood he knew the Scriptures which made

him wise unto salvation.

The above persons knew what it was to go **in**. We can never go **out** to be a testimony unless we take the time to go **in**; going in not in a rushed way, but spending time and getting our souls acquainted with the Lord Jesus, and having an exercise before Him for testimony, with the complete Scriptures to give light and food for the journey. Child of God, were there not times when you went in and enjoyed the presence and Person of the Lord Jesus? Did not your heart burn within you? Were you not able to say to yourself, "I'd like to be a better testimony and a brighter light for the Lord Jesus? Then go **in**, for without going **in**, you will not get the enjoyment of going **out**."

Christians are priests by calling, as being raised together with Christ, and have access to God, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 5:9). It is our privilege to go **in**. How much the soul can be blessed by going **in**, and only by going **in** can we get the pattern, the blessing and the sure Word for our hearts. How quickly doubts, fears and cares vanish when we know He cares. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us (Eph. 3:20).

In Matt. 6:6 we read, But thou, when thou prayest, enter **into** thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is **in secret** and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. And in Matt. 7:7 we read, Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall **find**, knock and it shall be opened unto you. These verses show us the going in and the coming out; and the pasture, too, in reward in answered prayer: and ye shall find -- shall be given -- and opened to your view.

Consider Rev. 1:10 where we see John, a prisoner on the isle of Patmos, for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" -- His visage like unto the Son of Man -- and John falling at His feet! And John heard encouraging words, "Fear not." What times of communion we can have with our Lord Jesus, to hear from Him and to act in the light of His countenance. What a privilege we have! When we turn our hearts to Him we can see what praise, worship and thanksgiving can flow from going in; and our coming **out** will show that as with Peter and John, others could testify that they had been with Jesus. Do not our hearts aspire after these moments and blessings? We trust so for our deeper appreciation of the grace of God.

N. Dalfino

THE IMPECCABLE SAVIOR

"The Son can do nothing of Himself but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19).

The word "impeccable" as applied to our Savior is most applicable, as we plan to show. As so applied, it means that He was **not capable of sinning**. He was not capable of being morally soiled with the minutest spot or defilement.

It is insufficient merely to say that "He was able not to sin." Likely, such a sentence means that He also was able to sin. The idea that He Who is God and man united in one Person was able to sin is an outrage against Him, for such a notion regarding that Holy One divides His Person as God and man. That is, the tendency and result of such a teaching is to divide the Godhood and manhood in Him. This is most serious; and just why it divides His Person will be taken up after some comments on our Lord's impeccability.

Scripture says of Him:

Who did no sin (1 Peter 2:22)

He knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21)

In him was no sin (1 John 3:4)

Which of you convinceth me of sin? (John 8:46)

But those who contend that He could have sinned say that Scripture does not say "He could not sin." Such are demanding a particular way of stating truth; just as one might deny the truth of the trinity on the basis that Scripture does not use the word trinity. However, the teaching that is meant by the word trinity is in Scripture and so is the Lord's impeccability.

Possibly, such persons do not see any real difference in the state of Adam's humanity as 'innocent' before the fall (i.e., ignorant of evil,

and subsequently acquiring the knowledge of good and evil in the fall, along with a nature that loves evil) and the state of the Lord's humanity as "holy" humanity (Luke 1:35) -- Who as holy, was not ignorant of good and evil, but repulsed evil and cleaved to the good as One impeccable. Christ was not innocent; He was holy.

Also it is likely that many who reject the truth of the impeccability of Christ would not suggest that He could sin now as a isen and glorified man. Do they think He is not man now? He has humanity now, not only in a holy state, but also in a glorified state. We too shall have humanity in a glorified state. Will we not be human then? What is the point, you ask? Just this: there are states of humanity in which one cannot sin. Pause and consider it well. This means that capability of sinning is not a necessary constituent of humanity; else the Lord must be capable of sinning in glory and so with the glorified saints -- an evident absurdity. Therefore, in order to be human, it was not a requirement that the Lord Jesus be capable of sinning. The real reason, perhaps subtly buried in the soul, that persons deny His impeccability is because they want a Christ more like themselves and look for sympathy from Him for their sinful tendencies, which they wrongly equate with "infirmities". Surely He has sympathy with our infirmities -- never with our sinful tendencies. But infirmities and sinful tendencies are not our subject.

This article is not a detailed treatment of the subject of Christ's impeccability, and so having made these introductory remarks I desire just to bring before our consciences and hearts John 5:19 as it relates to our subject.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself" What wonderful words! They are in accord with the MUTUAL INTER-DEPENDENCY of the Father and the Son. Not merely does the Son not act "of", or from, Himself: He can not. To not act of, or from, Himself means that He cannot act as an independent source. The Son, that Person who was here in Holy manhood, could not act apart from the Father. To sin would have been to act apart from the Father, a thing impossible. Do we see that the teaching that the Lord could have sinned implicates the Father also?

"The Son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the Father do." Oh precious words from God! This speaks of the Son's CONSTANT, UNINTERRUPTABLE COMMUNION with the Father. He could do nothing of Himself; and what He did was what He saw the Father do. He came to reveal the Father and He did so in all His ways and words and works. Every bit was expressive of the Father. It

could not be otherwise. "The Son can do nothing of himself." My soul rests upon such a Person and the work which His Father gave Him to do. The glory of His Person imparted infinite value to that work. This work was accomplished by Him, God and man in one Person. The value of the work is commensurate with the value of His person. This is beautifully typified by the **cloud** of the incense that covered the mercy-seat and met the **cloud** (the shekinah) that dwelt between the cherubim (Lev. 16). One cloud met the other cloud. It was glory meeting glory! This is glory facing glory. It is the glory of His Person that met the glory of God. (He met the claims of righteousness also, but that is another matter.) The cloud of incense bespeaks the glory of His Person as imparting value to the work; for the blood of the sin offering was brought in also before the cloud upon the mercy-seat [1]. And the cloud of the incense speaks of His glory and fragrance as One Who gave Himself in holy manhood (cp. Ex. 31:34-38).

Such is our Beloved: God and man united in one Person.
 " . . . for whatsoever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." Whatever the Father does the Son does likewise. This speaks of COMMUNITY OF WORKS AND WORDS. It tells out the Son's competency. Who but One Who is God could do whatever the Father does, and did it, and did it in holy manhood? Thus He could say "he that has seen me has seen the Father." And again, "but the Father that dwells in me, he doeth the works" (John 14).

What a slur on Him to say that He could have sinned! Think of a professed Christian, who says that Christ is his Savior, uttering such a thing! What an affront against Himself! May God preserve our minds!

Let us now consider how the denial of His impeccability divides the Person. Those who say "His humanity could have sinned" are, though they may not realize it, giving expression to a subtle attack upon the union of the deity and the humanity in Him. The consequential inference is that had His humanity sinned, that humanity would have to be eternally punished. This means that the humanity could have been split off, somehow, from the deity, since it does not appear to be part of this scheme that the deity should undergo eternal punishment. This is what is meant when we say that this teaching

1. Cp. 1 John 2:2. "He is the propitiation for our sins" is stated in this way to indicate this very truth, that His Person imparts value to the work.

divides the Person. The truth of the union of the two natures, God and man, is not rightly held by such persons. Oh yes, such will affirm that they believe that He is both God and man. Are we to rest satisfied with a show of words when in reality His Person is attacked? The apostle charged the Corinthians with the **consequently inferred error** of their teaching that the dead rise not; for he says, if the dead rise not, then Christ is not raised, ye are yet in your sins (1 Cor. 15:16,17).

When the incarnation took place (at the conception in the womb of Mary) the Son did not unite with a person who was here on earth, else the incarnation would have resulted in there being two persons. The orthodox confession of 'one Person -- two natures' is scriptural. His humanity came from Mary and the Spirit wrought miraculously to bring forth the Son, God incarnate. We do not know how this union of the two natures was effected, nor how that union is sustained; nor is it our business to attempt to look into the Ark as did the men of Bethshemesh, who suffered the pangs of God's displeasure for their impious curiosity. We do know that our Lord's humanity never had an independent existence apart from the incarnation, else there had been two persons. This union is indissoluble. The humanity cannot be severed from the deity. It never had, nor can have, an independent existence!

If we understand that there are not, nor could be, two persons, but rather that the Person of the Son took up holy manhood in union with His Person, we shall be helped to appreciate another blessed truth. It has been pointed out that **every act of His had a divine spring in it**. Oh, how this bows our souls in adoration and praise! There was no honey [2] or leaven in Him and salt was not lacking (Lev. 2). There was but one Person and two natures. And His acts, though it might on one occasion be more characteristically human and on another occasion more characteristically divine, had one and all, without exception, a divine spring in them. Had He sinned, there would have been a divine spring in that act as well, a thing impossible.

2. What some might think was honey (mere human kindliness and sweetness) was really "divine kindness" (as J. N. Darby put it) expressed in manhood. What is meant is that the kindness had a divine spring in it.

We must not in our thoughts separate the human from the divine as if there were a separate human person and a separate divine person. His humanity had no existence apart from the incarnation. The idea that He could have sinned does lead to some such notion that divides the Person so that the humanity could be separated from the divine in order to suffer the penalty of sin. This is a pseudo incarnation, a phantom of man's devising, necessitated by the denial of the Savior's impeccability, which in turn is an effort to make Him more like us, so as to have Him sympathize with our sinful tendencies -- which are erroneously equated with our infirmities.

The Son became man that He might be able to die. In death the spirit and soul leave the body. In His death, the spirit and soul remained united to the deity. Though His body lay in death the incarnation subsisted. Loving hands came forward to lay His body, which would experience no corruption, in a clean place (John 19:28-42). He rose by the Father's glory (Rom. 6:4) and His own authority (John 10:18), and was marked out Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4). All the divine Persons are seen active in this. They have one will, though distinct in Person. The Son rose not without the Father; for "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

ed.

OUR JUDGMENTS

I cannot doubt that differences of judgment among Christians tell much more about the difference of state and position in which they are, individually, at the time of forming their judgments, than of any variety or uncertainty in the truth before them. For, in fact, truth judges us; and our judgments contain, at least, the coloring medium of our own state and condition, and they tell it out.

The Present Testimony 12:148.

THE YEAR 2000

As the year 2000 draws closer, prognosticators, Christian and non-Christian, we believe, will ply their predictions and chronological calculations. Sad to say, some Christians will use the Scripture to speculate when the rapture might occur. The scheme involves 2 Peter 3:8 -- as if God intended that Scripture to give the clue. Then, find some twos, equate them with 2000 years, and there you have a skeleton on which to hang speculative flesh. Present Truth Publishers has a pamphlet available by the title of "Will the Dispensation of Grace be 2000 Years Long?" I cite here two extracts from it. The first case seems to be a favorite.

The first one is the parable of the Samaritan who brought the wounded man to an inn and gave the innkeeper two pence (denarii) for care of the man. The Samaritan said to the innkeeper, "Take care of him, and whatsoever thou shalt spend more, I will render to thee on my coming back" (Luke 10:35). It is true that Matt. 20:2 indicates that one denarius was one day's wages. The conclusion drawn is that the Samaritan will return at the end of "two days" and that this is a figure of our Lord's return after 2000 years. However, the Samaritan said that if the expense was more, he would pay it when he came back. There is the distinct possibility in this that the bill might be three, four or more denarii; and thus if one denarius equates to one day, by use of 2 Peter 3:8 we see that our Lord might return after 3000, 4000 or more years. Of course, this is not the desired conclusion.

I am reminded of a few lines a brother in Christ taught me:

Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
Things put there by you and by me.

Well, we need to beware of doing this. Now we will look at one more extract. It refers to Hosea 6:1-3, which, it is alleged, refers to 2000 years hardening of Israel. The paper cited discusses the difficulty of finding a starting point to synchronize with other speculations but I will not cite that discussion since the pamphlet is

available from the publisher.

If we start the two days from when Israel became Lo Ammi, i.e., not my people, or if we date it from when the Shekinah left Solomon's temple (Ezekiel 10:11), the two days alleged by some to represent 2000 years would have been long over already and that will not do. Once we reject the idea of 2000 years we can see the appropriateness of W. Kelly's thought that the "two days" signify a sufficient witness to God's judgment on His people. The third day points to their national resurrection.

The Lord would have us in an attitude of instant expectancy, as Luke puts it, with our hand on the doorlatch so that as soon as He knocks we may open the door. Even so, come Lord Jesus!

e d .

LEAVE LAODICEA?

I have no doubt that in Thyatira is the Spirit's picture of popery. Do you think people should continue in that? I do not enter into the Seven Churches, because adducing such passages of obscure interpretation to judge the path of plain separation from plain iniquity, is at once condemnation of those who do so, but as you do, I ask you this: do you think you should remain in Laodicea to be spued out of Christ's mouth? It proves too much and therefore nothing. You must not be surprised if others decline principles which lead to such a course.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby 20:208.

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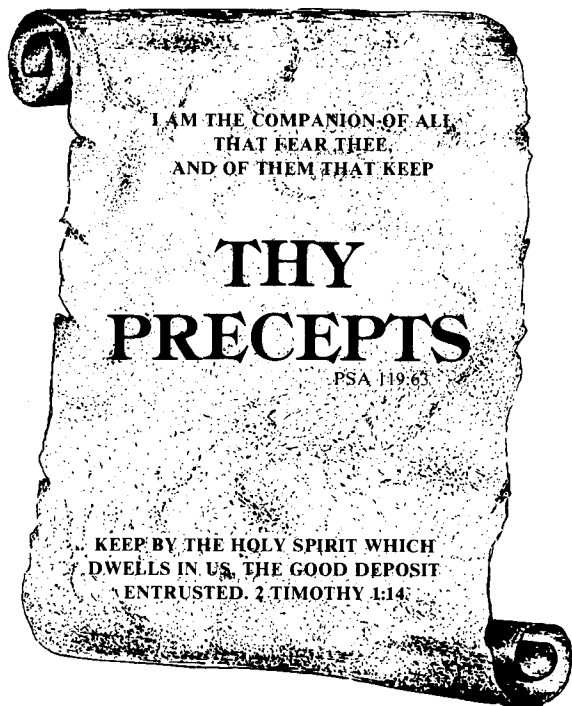
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CONTENTS

Divisions Among the People of God	161
The New Jerusalem	167
Public Rebuke	170
New Creation	171
Our Judgments	176
Jesus in the Wilderness	177
The Lord's Warnings: #1	183
Delivery Unto Satan	188
Colossians 3	190
Extract on Walk	191

DIVISIONS AMONG THE PEOPLE OF GOD:

Their Cause, Course and Cure

THE CAUSE OF DIVISION

In taking up this subject let us consider the Scripture's account of Solomon and Rehoboam in 1 Kings 11 and 12 with some subsequent references to the reigns of Asa and Hezekiah.

Of the beginning of Solomon's reign over Israel we have only good recorded, which is summed up very nicely by the statement: "And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father . . ." (1 Kings 3:3). A true spirit of dependence was later expressed when he requested of the Lord wisdom likening himself to a little child among so great a people as Israel. "And the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing" (v. 10), and He granted his request with much more besides (v.13). Further, Solomon built the temple of the Lord as instructed by Jehovah and had an extensive dominion and prosperity of which we read in 1 Kings 4 and 6. The queen of Sheba exclaimed that "the half was not told me. Thy wisdom and prosperity excelleth the fame which I heard," (10:7). All this took place during his first twenty years (9:10) and suggests in every way the fullness that was his and in type looks on to the final reign of great David's greater Son, even our Lord Jesus Christ. However, in a general way it pictures any time of prosperity from the Lord under obedience to Him; for we read, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people", Prov. 14:34. Solomon is thus a type of Christ, the "Prince of peace" which his name means ("peace").

But coming now to chapter 11 we have dark clouds overshadowing all this glory of his first twenty years: "But king Solomon loved many strange women together with . . ." Here a divided heart takes the place of an earlier one of single devotion and love to the Lord. These women and their gods -- of what do they speak? A woman in Scripture imagery is a double type of both subjection and affection. It is in the latter sense that we see these women and they stand for those things of earth upon which the affections of men are set. They can be innocent in themselves and legitimate, but through inordinate desire by us they become snares, bonds and gods of adoration insofar as they

engage the heart away from the true God, even our Lord Jesus Whom we know as The Beloved One. Col. 3:1,2 exhorts us, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Enjoyment of material things as given to us from God may easily and naturally degenerate into mere lust of things which then become linked with idolatry which is called covetousness (lust) in Scripture. See 1 Cor. 10:7,14 ("covetousness which is idolatry") and Col. 3:5. Covetousness is simply strong desire to have and obtain unlawfully against His will, engaging the hearts devotion and displacing God's rightful place therein as supreme. It may develop into a servitude; and if unjudged, even to worship according to its hold on life and heart. We can see its seriousness in its beginnings when we are warned to take the "little foxes" that may spoil the vine of its tender grapes -- that speaks of the allowances of the flesh that may spoil the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of His own people (Song of Solomon 2:15). These early beginnings of something other than Christ in the heart can be disastrous in the end result as we shall see in Solomon's history. We read accordingly, "... and his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father" (11:4). This is the root cause of departure from the Lord and consequent division resulting as seen in the days of Solomon's son as a discipline from God, Whom Solomon had forsaken in his old age.

God, Who is jealous, will not allow a divided heart for long without repentance and recovery and so He sends a time of vexation and unrest in the intrigues of Jeroboam, a servant; an adversary together with other marauders of the nations around. "And God stirred him up another adversary (Satan, literally) . . . and he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon" (vv. 23,25). Also, God had faithfully admonished and warned Solomon of his departure. "Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, forasmuch as this is done of thee and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded thee I will surely rend the kingdom from thee and will give it to thy servant" (v. 11). Later, in the days of his son Rehoboam when he went out to fight to bring back the rebel ten tribes, he was told, "return every man to his house for this thing is from Me . . ." (12:24). To see God's hand in any governmental dealing with us is very important, and He allows the breaches to remain.

Lest it be a temptation to blame all on leadership's failure, Scripture states that the condition of the people is seen in the sin of Solomon. As is the king so the people: "because that **THEY** have forsaken **ME** and have worshipped (gods) . . . and have not walked in

My ways, to do that which is right in Mine eyes . . . as did David his father" (11:33). Notice it is said "they", the people, as reflected in the leader.

Thus we see that God afflicts us with troubles when we depart in heart from Him, and divisions among the saints are one of these evil effects of previous departure and carnality. In 1 Cor. 11:19 the manifestation of that which is approved is declared too: "For there must be also heresies (schools of opinion/sects) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." This is solemn and lets us know that God allows it for the manifestation of our state. So also note in this connection Lev. 14:34, ". . . when I put the plague of leprosy in a house." God here does it for testing the state of the house (representing the collective responsible testimony of the House of God). He never stated that He put the plague of leprosy in the individual person or garment; only in the house (collective). So we conclude that the cause of division among the people of God is a bad state developed previously in departure in heart from the Lord. Division is the sure outcome if unrepented of (see 1 Cor. 3:3). Are we divided today? Surely we are bound to confess it so. What is the cause but our low, worldly and indifferent state whatever correctness of our position outwardly as with Solomon in his day. God will have reality of condition to answer to the position professed (see Jer. 7:1-15 as an illustration).

THE COURSE OF DIVISION

Having considered briefly the cause of divisions among the people of God (departure in heart from God) we turn to 1 Kings 12 and 2 Chron. 11. Rehoboam is the son referred to, no doubt, in Eccl. 2:18,19; the wise or foolish son stands up in the room of his father. He turned out, at the beginning, a foolish one as we see him taking the counsel of the young men over the elderly (1 Kings 12:6-11). It was of God in government to fulfil His chastening on the people in sin by the resulting division of the kingdom into two parts; the ten tribes and the two (Judah and Benjamin). Also, the Levites cast their lot with David's house as chosen of God and were rejected from the priesthood of Jeroboam who installed priests of His own choosing. Rehoboam's pride being hurt, he went out to bring back by force the rebellious ten, only to be told, "**this thing is from Me**" by the Lord through His prophet (1 Kings 12:24). This is to be carefully noted as so often we hear of divisions being of men and so able to be remedied by man's efforts and engineering. Let us bow under His divine hand as they did in returning every man to his house in peace rather than being brought to shame in defeat by a battle of selfwill against the

Lord's revealed mind.

The account in 2 Chron 11 reveals that grace wrought in the hearts of a number of individuals out of the ten tribes. First the priests and Levites resorted to Rehoboam out of their cities as rejected from the office of priests by apostate Jeroboam (v. 13,14). We then read, "And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers (v. 16). Here is an exercise produced by God in the hearts of individuals among the ten departed tribes. Notice too, the same grace worked mightily twice again: in the days of Asa. "... he gathered all Judah and Benjamin and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon for there fell to him out of Israel in abundance when they saw that the Lord his God was with him" (2 Chron. 15:9). Linking this up with verses 12 and 15 we have the united heart restoration in one purpose to seek the Lord with their whole heart's desire. Again under Hezekiah in 2 Chron. 30:5-11, a remnant responded in grace to the invitation to come up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. Some mocked but "nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes by the word of the Lord" (v. 11,15). It is a divine work of the Lord in individual hearts out of several tribes again, although fewer this time as declension had increased, as it does in our own times nearing the End.

Is this not enough to show the manner of God's working in restoration after division? There was a working in divine power in individual hearts exercising them (cf. Zech. 12:10-13:1 for individual exercise) to return to the point of departure and to give up the wrong position, and coming back to Jerusalem and David (which two things speak of the Divine center and Name of authority represented in the city and house). This ought to govern our present exercises as to fellowship of separated brethren. God does not work by mass movements or amalgamations. This latter is re-union and man-made, savoring of Rehoboam's mistake to bring back by force (though it may take a democratic form in our day of human rights and freedom) but against the government of God. It is not meant by this that exercise may not extend to a number of saints, embracing even whole assemblies of God's people. Bless God if it should! But the attempt to bypass the painstaking efforts of soul searching by each always savors of fleshly purpose and will bring but human results in the end. We want divine healing for a little reviving ere the End comes. The last word to the seven prophetic assemblies of Rev. 2 and 3 is, "As many as I love I

rebuke and discipline, therefore repent." This is the call to the individual for recovery collectively. No church position in the past will immunize one from this needed exercise. See also 2 Chron. 12:7,8 and Ezra 9:8,9.

THE CURE OF DIVISION

Exercises often arise for the godly when they view the effects of sin in the scattering (Ezek. 11:16) [1] of God's people, especially when a new generation arises which have not immediately participated in the cause of their condition but are only heirs of its results. We have seen that during the division's course in Israel a remnant came back to God in heart as moved by Him but that no wholesale collective result is ever seen by Scripture. The fact that some recovery is made is a cheering observation but it must not lead us to make a 'getting together' to remove our reproach the goal. Divine government remains to the end as witnessed by the continued separation of the ten tribes from the two to this very day among Israel. So likewise Christendom as a whole is a witness to its own ruin and even those sections called fundamental or evangelical partake of the same. But when will there be an end of all this confusion?

Let us turn to Ezekiel 37:11-22 where we have the well known vision of the valley of dry bones come to life -- which is the whole house of Israel whose hope was lost, they say (v. 11). This evidently, then, looks on to the last day when Jehovah shall restore them to life again at the time of His coming again (compare Rom. 11:15,23,26). But then they had been divided and what of this condition? The next prophecy of two sticks gives its cure -- one "for Judah and for the children of Israel his companions", the other "for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions" are joined to one another in the prophet's hand (vv. 16,17). It is interpreted as the doing of the Lord in the day when "one king shall be king to them all" gathered and reunited at last and forever (vv. 21-24). The grand result will be that "the nations shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel." Compare this with what we read in John 17:22,23 where a unity of glory is spoken of by our Lord, "that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." A unity of grace is spoken of in the previous verse 21, "that the world may

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1. Division is of the flesh -- 1 Cor. 3:3,4.
 Scattering is of God -- Ezek. 11:16.
 Separation from iniquity is of faith in obedience -- 2 Tim. 2:21.

believe that Thou hast sent Me." This has in some measure failed in our lack of laying hold of grace so fully provided and so the world does not believe through our unbelief in coming short of the grace by allowance of false doctrine, immoral practice and the flesh generally among the people of God to His dishonor and our division and shame (see Heb. 12:15; 2 Tim. 2:1). So the world is hindered in believing by our sad condition; not only by division but by its root cause: departure from the Lord in heart and ways of worldliness and carnality. Apostolic unity was preserved by God in view of the Scripture (John 17:11) though apart from this there was failure personally as we witness in Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14), correction of which he gratefully acknowledges in grace (2 Pet. 3:15,16). This is an illustration of God's overruling in goodness and an encouragement to us as to restoration which can extend to any number of individuals as 1 Sam. 7:3-6 takes in. In Isa. 52:8 we have another reference to the coming end recovery, "when the Lord shall bring again Zion," Then the watchman shall lift up the voice together as seeing "eye to eye" once again in perfect accord with His will. What a day, what a prospect! Are we willing to wait His best time? The forcing of such a purpose can only work mischief and further worldliness, declension and spread of false and evil doctrine as opposing His governmental ways in which we find our lot. Our state witnesses against us that we are not better than our fathers, yet still objects of His pity to the end (see 2 Kings 13:4,5; 14:25-27 with Psalm 103:11, 13, 14, 17). He is merciful and gracious, a Saviour God and His coming will bring this mercy and deliverance indeed! 1 Peter 1:13 and Jude 21). While we await His coming, may we have learned from this short study in order to preserve us from the snare of religious movements apart from individual exercise of conscience in the presence of God.

Thomas J. Knapp (1973); slightly revised.

FLATTERY

He that accepts flattery becomes in the same
measure the slave of the slave that offers it.

The Bible Treasury 14:375.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

(Continued from 2:139)

The City and the Nations

Rev. 21:24 "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it."

Q: Is this verse rightly translated?

J. A. Trench: "Of them that are saved," as is well known, has no authority; and it is "by" or "by means of" rather than "in".

W. Kelly: Kings bring their glory to it. Not into, but unto.

Q: How then does the verse read?

W. Kelly: "And the nations shall walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory unto it."

J. N. Darby: The city enjoys the direct light within; the world, transmitted light of glory.

Q: Who are the nations referred to here?

J. N. Darby: The nations spared in the judgments on earth.

W. Scott: What we ought to be now, the light of the world (Matt. 5:14), we shall be then. The Lamb shall light the city within; and we shall reflect the light without.

J. A. Trench: The world should have been able to walk by the light of the church now. In a sense it is so, in spite of all the church's failure, for apart from the revelation of God in Christ possessed by it, there is nothing but darkness in the world. But when the Lamb is the lamp, the faithful and true witness if all else has failed, the church will fulfill its function to the nations according to the mind of God (having) become in glory the perfect vessel of the display of the light

by which they walk.

F. G. Patterson: If there is worship filling the scene, there is testimony, for the spared nations walk by the light of that heavenly city. The worship is feeble now, so is the testimony -- a poor gleam of light in a dark world. Still, the gleam is there, in Christianity, poor though it may be. And in that measure the nations of the earth walk; other light there is none.

W. Kelly: The nations shall walk, not in the light of the Lamb immediately, but by means of the light of the heavenly city: precisely what we find in John 17, "that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me". There is, I apprehend, what answers to the nations walking by means of the light of the city.

J. N. Darby: It is not merely "nations shall come to the brightness of its rising" (Isaiah 60:3) -- the acknowledgment of a new and dominant power owned of God and glorified in the earth; it is proper blessing. The church, which is the manifestation of the goodness and of the glory of God, shall be the light of the world. When the world shall see us there, it will then understand that God has loved us as He has loved Jesus. The church shall be in the glory, the testimony rendered to grace; and the earthly Jerusalem shall exercise the severity of justice against sin. God is now rejected and despised in us; He shall then be glorified in us.

The City and the Kings

Q: Why are kings mentioned as bringing their glory to the heavenly city?

J. A. Trench: Owning it in its due place as the heavenly metropolis of the throne of God and of the Lamb -- so verse 26.

F. G. Patterson: They own that the heavens do rule.

W. Scott: The seat of universal government is the heavenly city.

W. Kelly: Its glory is over the earth; accordingly the kings and the nations bring their glory and honor unto it, in the way of homage, I suppose, to Him Who dwells there.

J. N. Darby: They own the heavens and the heavenly kingdom to be the source of all, and bring there the homage of their power.

Rev. 21:25 "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there."

J. N. Darby: No defence against evil is needed, though divine security leaves no approach to evil.

W. Kelly: No danger threatens the city.

J. A. Trench: The light of an endless and unclouded day is the sure and sufficient protection of the entrance to the city, even as it is given us already as the Christian's armor, "the armor of light" (Rom. 13:12). For "that which doth make manifest is light". It detects and exposes all that is unsuited to itself, and thus guards the avenues of the heart against everything incompatible with the enjoyment of His presence Who is light.

F. G. Patterson: Darkness is ignorance of God, with John. Where does doubting come from? From ignorance of God. All is gone now, and "there is no night there".

W. Scott: Absolute security; the open gates tell the certainty of perfect rest and quiet; but will they not be closed as the shades of evening draw their curtains over the face of creation? No, no; "for there shall be no night there". Blessed and everlasting day! No night with its weird shadows, with its fears and terrors. No night with its troubled dreams. All is light, all everlasting sunshine.

Rev. 21:26 "And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations unto it."

J. N. Darby: Heaven is seen as the source of all the glory and honor of this world.

Rev. 21:27 "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abominations, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

J. A. Trench: Here, for the first time, we have the thought of inhabitants of the city. Up to this it has been the church corporate, in its relation to the Millennial earth, expressed by the symbol of a city.

W. Scott: It is the home of the holy and glorified; no plea or title of any sort will admit any save those washed by blood, and whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life.

J. N. Darby: Nothing defiled enters there, nor what introduces idols and falsehood. Neither man's evil nor Satan's deceit can exist or produce any corruption there. How often, when anything good is set up now, the considerate heart knows that evil will enter, and Satan deceive and corrupt! There we have the certainty that this can never be. It was not merely the absence of evil, but the impossibility of its entrance, which characterized the holy city.

(To be continued, Lord willing)

PUBLIC REBUKE

It is easy to understand when leaven is not working, and a case does not come under 1 Cor. 5:11,13, that a Christian might be severely rebuked before all with the fellowship of the assembly, as a warning to others; but the whole force of the warning would surely be destroyed by the substitution of mere forgiveness for rebuke, besides the objection to the saints being put in an elevated instead of a low place, in reference to sins dishonoring to Christ's name committed in their midst.

The Christian Friend 1882, p.187

NEW CREATION, LIFE IN THE SON AND DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

LIFE IN THE SON

(Continued from 2:151)

DOES IT MEAN DOUBLE QUICKENING?

Does the teaching about "life in the Son" as set forth in this series of papers imply an experience of "double quickening" in the life of a believer as alleged by some? Perhaps the way of stating the truth, as in the following extract, could lend support to such a charge.

In my own case of salvation, God certainly applied Ps. 71:20, not when I was born again, but when after repentance I was led to rest on the finished work of Christ, which the Holy Ghost made me see from that verse. It was after the great troubles, that Christ was quickened again, in resurrection power. It was after God made me understand these troubles, He quickened me again, and I was sealed with the Holy Ghost [1].

More careful statements, however, clearly exclude the idea of "double quickening". For example, J. N. Darby said this:

There is no life but the life of Christ, in one sense never was; only now that He is risen He gives it according to the power and in the relationship into which He is entered. But life is not what is preached but Christ -- repentance and remission of sins: the state of our relationship with God in ourselves or in Christ. "Ye must be born again" -- however true is not gospel. The display of life in us will be according to what faith holds as to these relationships. The ordinary

1. A. P. Cecil, "A Sequel in Answer to a the Tract on 'Life in Christ and Sealing with the Spirit,'" pp. 14,15.
www.presenttruthpublishers.com

scriptural order was, when convicted, remission of sins, and thereon receiving the Holy Ghost. This gives not a new life, but a life in the relationships into which such an one was entered; and this gave not only liberty before God in the knowledge of forgiveness, but freedom from the law of sin and death. I then know not merely that Christ died and delivered me, put me in a new place relating to what was past (then does not go any further), but as in this new place that it is identified with power of life and death to sin, as Romans 8:2,3 [2].

When the last Adam breathed upon His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," the life they already had was brought into identification with Him, the risen "corn of wheat". It was life in a new relationship -- even His resurrection-life -- and so they could be looked upon as quickened together with Him. This is not what took place on the day of Pentecost when it was the Holy Spirit coming down here in the special capacity to form into one body (1 Cor. 12:13) those who had believed and were waiting at Jerusalem (Acts 1:4,5).

Differentiating between "quickened" and "quickened together with Christ", J.N. Darby remarked on Col. 2:13:

I get now, not merely "quickened," but "quickened together with him" (ver. 13); because, supposing I am alive, I may be spiritually alive, or I may be in Romans 7. Any one there says, "I think Christ is precious to me, and I love His word and His people," but he is examining himself to find out if he is in the new creation. Like the prodigal, he has not met the father; but this is not quickened together with Christ -- quickened, no doubt, and when I speak of being quickened in that way, it is the divine operation of a new life in my soul. But quickened together with Christ is different. . . . Christ as man has been raised from the dead. He died under our sins -- for them; He went on unto death for us, and God has raised Him up, and, supposing I am a believer, I am raised up with Him. . . It is not merely the fact that I have life; I have life in a new condition where Christ is. I have got into a new place before God -- Christ's place -- and all my sins are left on the other side of Christ's grave. I do not own the old man, it is the horrid thing that has been deceiving me

2. Letters of J.N. Darby, 3:435.

[3].

For some, however, a difficulty arises because they wonder when they were quickened together with Christ: when they believed on Christ or at some other time? If at some later time, then is not this a second quickening? The answer appears at first to be found in Eph. 2:5. The question of time ("when") is not, however, the thrust of that verse. Eph. 2 presents the purpose of God in reaching out in sovereign grace to ruined, helpless sinners, and effecting a work of grace in their souls; quickening them from a state of death to the position of being seated together in Christ in the heavenlies. Eph. 2 does not develop the details of God's working with souls and the exercises they pass through as we see in Rom. 7. There, the exercises a soul may pass through until the soul is **delivered** (Rom. 7:24) and **set free** (Rom. 8:2) are detailed [4]. Eph. 2 treats of God's sovereign operations whereas Rom. 7 treats of the soul's experiences, in the ways of God, in time. Eph. 2:5 therefore does not, in fact, answer the question posed at the beginning of this paragraph.

The answer to the question regarding the time when we were quickened together with Christ really lies in the fact that since Christ went on high, we can say, "when Christ died I died". Indeed, we were quickened together with Him and raised up and seated together. None of this speaks of God's ways with us in time but rather of His mighty operation respecting Christ and ourselves as associated with Him.

In commenting on Col. 2:13, J. A. Trench has made some helpful remarks, an extract from which follows.

From the moment that we are united to Christ, we are taught in His blessed grace to look back and see all as one complete act of divine power when Christ was raised; but, of course, it is another question altogether when we were individually brought into it. Of the quickening of the Spirit, or of being born of God, the passage says nothing; but of our being quickened together with Christ, which is a wholly distinct thought, as any one must see who will read the verses for himself. The mighty power of God expressed in the

3. Collected Writings of J. N. D. 31:344-345 (Morrish ed.).

4. See also Word's of Truth, New Series 1:210-212.

resurrection of Christ, has come in and taken us out of all we were in Adam, and put us into the whole of the position of Christ founded upon the finished work of the cross, and made good to us individually when we believe the glad tidings of our salvation, by the Holy Ghost who takes up His place in us [5].

He further remarks upon the mistake to which bringing in the question of time leads.

So that if time is taken into account here, we were both quickened and forgiven before ever we were born! The truth is, the passage teaches nothing as to the time of either [6].

Lastly, let us look again at the words of the first quotation we cited above: "God . . . quickened me again." In misguided zeal against a non-existent doctrine of "double quickening", some have judged that such statements are "grotesque folly". A. C. Ord has responded to this charge as follows:

But the soul who reveres the word of God will not be affected by all this mere storm of words. The fact is, it is a question of the use of terms, and whether scripture applies the term, quickening, to a fresh accession of life. In the Psalms we have it constantly so presented, and those who have been already quickened by the word, say, 'Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name' (Ps. 80:18). And again, 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word' (Ps. 119:25,40). Even naturally there is a distinction between quickening and birth, though the operations of nature are hidden and mysterious in their origin. The apostle, however, goes further than . . . , when he says to the Galatians, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you' (Gal. 4:19). Had [he who used the words "grotesque folly"] been one of the apostle's Galatian opposers, how would he have scorned this as a burlesque extravagance, 'but natural things, though they may illustrate,

5. An Answer to "Life and the Spirit," p.15.

6. Ibid.

are not meant to govern the spiritual mysteries which the word of God unfolds, still less to override what it positively teaches [7].

When the risen "corn of wheat" breathed upon his disciples (John 20:22), he breathed upon those who already were born of God, having divine life. He said "Receive ye the holy Ghost." This was not a statement merely anticipating the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. That would make of our Lord's act nothing more than a symbolic act. But they did receive the Spirit, but not as at Pentecost when He came personally as indweller to unite to a Head in heaven. They received Him as the power of this fresh accession of life, life in resurrection, the resurrection-life of the risen One. At Pentecost He came as the personal indweller to effect union with the Head in heaven, thus forming the body of Christ. **Now**, since Pentecost, both things become true of the saint when he is sealed with the Spirit: i.e., He receives the Spirit as the power of life in the Son and as the personal indweller uniting Him to the Head in Heaven. **Historically, God chose to separate these two things in time (i.e., John 20 and Acts 2), which helps us to learn and understand these things according to our measure.**

John speaks of life in the Son and Paul of life in Christ. One is the character of the life and the other is the place, or position, where we have that life. Rom. 8:2 says, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death." It is blessed to rightly understand this Scripture. To that end we will turn to the subject of deliverance (cp. Rom. 7:24), Lord willing, in the next article. Meanwhile, I would note two ways of reading Rom. 8:2:

The law of -- the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; (Correct)
 The law of the Spirit -- of life in Christ Jesus. (Incorrect)
 ed.

7. "The Teaching of Scripture ... on Life and the Sealing of the Holy Ghost," p. 42.

OUR JUDGMENTS

The secret of all practical holiness in a believer is found in this individual walk with God -- a walk which, as it keeps him in the light, where Christ is at the right hand of God, keeps him in humble self-judgment, because he sees the contrasts between Christ and himself -- yet in firmness, because he has to do with God, and acts for and from God.

Directly I can say, God's word proclaims a thing to be unholy, I am to cease from it at once. It is unholy to me at least, and to tamper with it would be defilement. Every godly soul (that knows even Rom.14) would assent to this: every godly soul must say, "Obey God rather than man; obey God according to your light, and do not go beyond it."

I have been asked (alas for the askers!) when so acting, "Are you infallible? Are you going to lord it over the conscience of others?" My answer is simple: "I walk with God, and judge myself; not an inch for me on the road God's word seems to me to prohibit; right onward where the word enjoins me to go forward."

'Tis replied, "How do you know you are right?" I answer, "While walking in dependence upon God alone to lead me to see His mind, that I may do it -- do you think He'll not be faithful to Himself? (John 7:17). And, as to the consciences of others, I lord it over no soul. Let each walk with God; but only let each remember, that if my walk is with God, alas! for him whose walk is not in the same pathway: be he before me or behind."

There is no holiness in communion -- no "communion of saints," apart from this solitary walk with God -- of the saints as individuals.

The restless disquietude of many around, convinces me they are not walking with God.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS

Before entering upon this subject, let us love to be reminded of the manner of reverence due to the Lord Jesus. It is as we contemplate His greatness, His majesty, and His Godhead that we are quite at home with Him; for it is only as we have communion--common thoughts -- with the Father about the magnitude of His work, and the wonders of His humiliation, that we get a commensurate estimate of our fitness for the glory.

We cannot, therefore, think right thoughts of the scene in the wilderness, where the Lord Jesus, a perfectly dependent man, and Satan confront each other, until after we have had communion with Him in His death. The cross comes before the wilderness for us; but in both, the power of the enemy has been completely broken. In the Lord's case, He had met him in the wilderness before commencing His public ministry, when He refused all he could offer; and in the end of His course He had to meet him again in a very special manner in the garden, when He endured all he could bring against Him. Afterwards, on the cross, He broke his power completely by turning the throne of God from a judgment seat against us into a government seat for us.

Let us contemplate the occasion which led to the wilderness scene; Matthew 3 and 4. The voice of God, through the greatest prophet that had yet arisen, compels those of Jerusalem and Judea, etc. to turn their backs on that which had been unfaithful to God, and to go out to John to be "baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." The Lord, seeing this movement, practically says to those upon whom the word of God had thus acted: You are going the right way, and I will go with you. He comes to John to be baptized, and thus identifies Himself with people "confessing their sins", at the same time graciously identifying John with Himself in His work of fulfilling "all righteousness". Observe, He does not identify Himself with their sins, but with their excellency; for the first bit of excellency in a sinner is the confession of having none.

His bearing sin is exclusively confined to the cross: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" -- not in the garden. Again, when the apostle speaks of the curse, he fixes it to the tree: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a

curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." And again, after His wondrous course through such a sinful scene, instead of contracting a single stain, it could be written of Him: "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." He offered to the righteousness of God a spotless victim, and the righteousness of God dealt with Him according to the deserts of sin. Who can measure it! "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." So that now, dear fellow believer, the righteousness of God is God's judgment in your favour, according to His estimate of Christ's blood.

But in the scene we are now considering, I repeat, He does not identify Himself with their badness but with their goodness. If you turn to John 3:20,21 you will see this principle unfolded. It is written: "He that doeth **truth** cometh to the light." Had it been written, He that doeth **good**, you and I might well despair, for it would have set us on our own efforts to do our best. But, instead of being cast upon our own resources, we have all that is in God's heart for us, when we do truth, for He desires "truth in the inward parts" (Psalm 51:6), and finds it in one who truthfully confesses, "In me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing."

It is to this circumstance that Psalm 16:2,3 points: "My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight." Might we not say that His goodness is such that it takes another direction than a mere vertical one in this scene? At any time the personal excellency of that holy Man qualified Him as much for the glory which He had with the Father before creation, as He was qualified when in it before He had left it. But now His goodness was expressing itself in identifying Himself with those who, through grace, recognized the corruption within as well as the ruin around; a goodness too that had the cross in view, which makes them as fit for the glory as He is Himself.

It is on this occasion that the heavens are opened, and the first revelation of the Trinity is given. There was always the sense of distance when God was revealed in unity. In truth He never had been, nor could be, fully revealed as **One**. But now He has become a man for the purpose of revealing Himself perfectly, and of entering that glory again as the Purger of our sins, so that we might measure our fitness for God's eye, and nearness to the Father's heart, by the Son already there, who once measured our distance from God in His agonies on the cross.

The heavens are opened; the Father's voice expresses His delight in the One who had just been saying of poor sinners confessing their

sins, "In whom is all my delight;" and the Holy Spirit verifies the expression, becoming the seal of it in that self-humbled One. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Or, as it is rendered elsewhere, "is my delight."

How wondrous is the sight! Man in his ruins, the perfect Man confessing it, and God coming out in His glories in Trinity and approving of the act of Jesus!

But is it not the same to this day? Wherever there is found a conscience-convicted sinner, or a saint broken-hearted on account of failure, confessing sins, there is "truth in the inward parts;" and "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever," is still saying, You are doing the right thing and I must be with you; to show to the former the efficacy of the blood, once shed, which gives a conscience without a quiver in the presence of God; and to apply to the latter the basin of water and the towel, with all its deep and blessed meaning, for perfect restoration to communion with the Father, and joy in His presence.

Our blessed Lord is now "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness." And being forty days and forty nights without food, with wild beasts, He afterwards hungered.

This affords Satan an occasion to exercise his deceit and his ability in practicing it, by which man innocent and man fallen had before been taken in.

We have been considering man fallen, confessing it, and thus doing truth. But Satan and his emissaries do the exact opposite. Instead of confessing badness, they assume goodness, as Scripture says: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." He thus presents himself to the Lord with these last three temptations, which are recorded for us.

Now the first word he utters discovers to any in communion with God that he starts with a lie; and then he calls upon the Lord to prove the truth, by a miracle, to one who had neither heart nor conscience. I ask you if the infidelity of our day, if the unbelieving heart of man, is not well tutored in similar practices? And I ask also if there is not a danger of saints becoming infected with that which is

abroad?

I was recently hearing of a society formed for the purpose of defending the Bible; and it brought to my mind an old legend about a court fool who suggested to the king, when going to battle at the head of his army, that it would be prudent for his majesty to take him in order to protect them when fighting against their enemies. Such people forget it is the word which defends God's saints; and when we retreat under His care, and recognize its ability to protect us, then others take knowledge of us that we keep company with the Lord Jesus, and that we are handled by His word instead of pretending to handle it.

I know nothing which gives the word of God a more important place than the reply of the Lord to the enemy's suggestion, "Command." The Lord says, as it were: I have no command to act. How fully He rested in the Father's acquaintance with His need, so that nothing but the word could set His will in motion! Thus confronted by Satan, and occupying the ground to which the saints had been driven as a hitherto defeated people, instead of using His Godhead power, which would have been neither example nor encouragement for us, He retires as a dependent obedient man into the sufficiency of the word for protection. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

He had no word to act, and therefore waited, a hungry Man, to be fed by His Father, retreating, as it were, into the book of Deuteronomy to occupy the defeated ground of the people of God, and prove the sufficiency of the word to keep a saint, even there, if dependent "invulnerable, and therefore invincible."

The enemy is defeated; and he would at all times be equally defeated by us, were we equally dependent.

Alas! that we should ever have recourse to resources of our own; for it is then that he triumphs, no matter what the efforts may be, whether intentions, resolutions, sincerity, or devotedness; he will always overcome a saint on any or all of these grounds merely; but he never has been, nor ever will be, able to grapple with obedience to the word of God.

In Satan's next attack he quotes a promise from Scripture applicable to the Lord Himself, and suggests that He should act in faith on this promise. What subtlety, what refinement of deceit! Is it not Scripture? and is it not applicable to, and written expressly for the Messiah? Is it not a sure promise? All quite true: but all the

promises had been forfeited by a failing people, with whom the Lord had identified Himself. Lo-ammi had been pronounced on their then estate, and He refuses the promises incapable of being applied to it. He replies therefore again from Deuteronomy, the book which recorded their broken responsibilities, and their consequent forfeiture of everything: "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Thou shalt not put God to the proof. He, who knew His Father well, needed not to try if He would be as good as His word. If you had a servant whom you suspected of want of faithfulness, you might be disposed to test him; but to test a trustworthy man would be to suspect him.

How wonderful to see the Lord retire into the word for self-defence from this well put thrust! He gives, "It is written," as His authority not to put God to the proof; and thus He finds perfect liberty in obedience to the word, which He uses for His own protection against the foe. What an example for us!

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." And again the Lord falls back upon the same book which records how God's people forsook Him, provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, and "sacrificed unto devils and not to God." He answers from this book: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." He proves its sufficiency for an obedient dependent man, and thus uses it for liberty to act according to the dictates of His own heart, and deliverance from other than divine authority.

How wonderful to contemplate Him, who never was less than "God over all, blessed for evermore," condescending thus to act, and refusing to make use of His divine power as God, or His rights as man! This is what gives Him to us as an example, with like resources, to meet, not a hitherto triumphant but a defeated foe, whose power has been broken. What encouragement!

Well, we have seen heaven opened; we have seen Satan foiled; and now angels come and minister to a Man, to Him who is their Creator. Does it not send a thrill of delight through you, that you are a man, not an angel? Will that little tiny heart of yours -- you who once excelled in wickedness -- serve Him less than "His angels that excel in strength"? No, but the more; for those unjealous beings never had, nor ever will have, capacity like yours to appreciate such love as His. They never caused Him a pang; but you and I cost Him the bitter

agony of the cross. Does it not make one ashamed of oneself? yet not ashamed of being a man, because it is written of a man in Christ - which every believer is -- "Of such an one will I glory."

One word more, ere leaving this last temptation. As Son of God born into this world, as Messiah and King of Israel, He was entitled to all that Satan had shown Him, although the enemy had it in his possession by usurpation, and through the faithlessness of man. Nevertheless it was all the Lord's; but He refused to take it under any of those titles. Had He done so, you and I were not His fellow-heirs. By the judgment of God, Satan had acquired power over all men, except the perfect Servant, who might have gone out free. But the Servant plainly says: "I love my master" -- He had voluntarily taken the place of servant; "I love my wife" -- "The bride the Lamb's wife;" "I love my children" -- "Behold I and the children whom God has given me;" "I will not go out free." And so, instead of taking His own rightful dominion, He takes the place of the suffering Son of man, according to Psalm 8, steadily purposing to go on to the cross, where He breaks the whole power which the enemy had acquired over us; and thus all power reverts to Him who has freed us by **Himself** bearing the judgment of God, which gave death its terror and Satan his power over man.

H.H.M. in Food for the Flock, vol.2.

(to be continued, Lord willing)

THE LORD'S WARNINGS #1:

INTRODUCTION

As believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, and saints by the wondrous calling of God, we have the most precious One in the whole universe, and the One Who is infinitely above all else, as our Saviour, Companion and Guide. He is also the One Who maintains us before the presence of our holy God in all the fullness of His eternal work and infinite value of His own Person.

He pleads our cause when needful, and how often we know this to be so, with His Father and ours, in order to restore communion which we spoil through our sins. He is patiently waiting to claim us for Himself as His Bride, and to be forever with Him wherever He is, in the unhindered and unspoiled outflow of His love, to which we shall eternally respond. Indeed, it is impossible to adequately present our adorable Lord and Saviour in human language to express the expansive glories which are only to be found in Him -- this will fill the eternity to come when we shall all, in the true unity of divine love acclaim the alone worthy One.

Does this not thrill our hearts in anticipation? Shame on us if we do not find the energy of our hearts and minds all concentrating on our precious, blessed Saviour every minute we are here, with the result that we are, "hastening the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3:12. N.Tr.), when all shall own His rightful sway.

Now consider the wondrous fact that God, in the Person of the beloved Son of the Father, came into this world and as a Man actually walked here among sinners! In the midst of the sin all around Him He glorified God in every step, action, thought, word and deed. Did He ever go in any direction, or into any place without having the Father's glory as the object? Did He ever conduct Himself in His own behavior other than to present God to mankind? Did He ever think anything except pure, holy and divine thoughts in absolute unity with the Father? Did He ever express in His words anything but those words which were given Him, as perfect Man, to utter as received from the Father? Did He ever do unto others, or in evidence before others any act or work but those which were for the blessing of sinners, and to present the Father's love? The resounding answer to all such questions is, **No!** a thousand times, **No!** (John 5:19)

He is leading many sons to glory, and He does so in all the completeness of His own experiences down here, which far exceeded anything which we shall ever be called upon to endure. Can we grasp the reality of the statement of scripture that, "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8)? And, again, "for it became Him . . . to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10).

We know that the sufferings which these scriptures refer to are not the dreadful, indescribable sufferings which He endured on the cross at the hands of a holy, righteous, sin hating God when He (God) dealt with Him (our blessed Saviour) there instead of us. May we never forget the sufferings for righteousness sake which He went through in His perfectly consistent walk as a glorious Man amidst sinful men. May our hearts and voices rise to Him in praise and thanksgiving, and bow before Him in adoration and worship.

He was better able than any to forewarn us as to the dangers which we should meet on the road to the glory where He is, and we shall soon be. He, knowing the end from the beginning, prepared for everything which we need to ensure that we shall walk here in the closeness of communion with Himself, that the unbeliever knows nothing about and only those who learn from Him can enjoy. It is with a deep sense of the neglect in noticing, for so many years, the Lord's personal warnings which He spoke in order to safeguard us, that it is desired to place these warnings before you, that we shall all be drawn to Him more closely, and to follow in His steps more faithfully -- until we see His beautiful face and hear His loving voice speaking to us in His immediate presence in His eternal glory.

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In the Old Testament God constantly warned His people in Israel as to the consequences which would result from any disobedience to His word -- whether on the part of an individual or the nation as a whole. It is not the intention to take up this portion of God's word but simply to remind ourselves that God was with them until finally He pronounced upon them, "Lo-Ammi" ("not My People") Hosea 1:9. We know that He will take them up again in a coming day and establish them as His people on earth in accord with His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Our object, now, is to bring forward the various warnings contained in the New Testament such that we shall be exercised before the Lord as to them, and be alerted to the need of greater dependence

upon Him to be preserved in His power and grace, until He come--
 meanwhile, being found faithful to Him down here, both individually and
 collectively. We stand in the greatest danger as to the welfare of our
 souls, and as to the maintenance of the truth, as seeking to walk in it,
 if we become careless to the imminence and reality and ceaseless design
 by Satan to cause us to dishonor our blessed Lord and Saviour. We
 can do no better than refer to the Lord's own warnings when He was
 here and prepared His own for the time when He would not be present
 with them on earth in visible form.. The Lord knew what was in man
 and did not commit Himself to man (John 2:24-25). We understand that
 this would involve that He had no confidence in man and placed no
 trust in him. Well may we take His perfect example and "refrain thy
 foot from their path" (Prov. 1:15) for, in the fear of the Lord is strong
 confidence" (Prov. 14:26). May we ever be found walking in close
 communion with our faithful Lord, to hear His voice and keep His
 commandments. In view of the danger in our individual walk as to
 being deceived and affected by subtle, persuasive arguments emanating
 from the agnostics, the rationalists and the religionists of our day we
 should, in the first place, not give our ears to them nor think that we
 can combat them and win them over to our thoughts. Satan is far
 more skilled than we are when "reasoning" is the means used for
 persuasion, which can only affect the mind, and we must remember that
 Satan has blinded the minds of them which believe not (2 Cor. 4:4). Of
 this be assured, "neither will they be persuaded though one rose from
 the dead" (Luke 16:31). Let us be fully persuaded in our own minds
 and be firm in faith as Paul could say, "for I know Whom I have
 believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep . . ." (2 Tim. 1:12).

Let us follow the Lord's warnings as a present need and not just
 an historical record of what He said whilst on earth.

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS

**"Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing,
 but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15).**

This is more needful now than in the day the Lord uttered the
 words. We have the re-emphasis of them in Peter's epistle, "but there
 were false prophets also among the people even as there shall be false
 teachers among you" (2 Pet. 2:1). Peter does not say they will be
 among you if you are not careful. No! the Spirit of God knew at the
 time He inspired Peter to state this that such would be found among
 the Lord's own in our day. The subtleness that marks these false
 prophets is "feigned words" (verse 3). How much havoc has been

wrought among the saints through such, who have been deceived and followed their pernicious ways. There is a similar warning in the instruction of Paul to the Romans, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them . . ." (chap. 16:17-18). The same subtle character marks these, as in Peter, "good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (or, unsuspecting). The word in Rom. 16:17 -- "avoid them" is the same as in Titus 3:10 regarding the heretic whom we are told to "reject".

It is a sad fact that through assuming that everyone with whom we walk is genuinely the Lord's has proven, in years gone by, to have severely shaken brethren who generally are unsuspecting. We are by no means immune to the intrusion by evil doers who, as to be expected, will present themselves in "sheep's clothing", but who will work at their destructive work, oftentimes for a long time undetected, and when exposed will have overthrown the faith of some. Hymenaeus and Philetus in 2 Tim. 2:17 are two of such. We are assured that the Lord will preserve His own for His coming day of glory and subsequent eternal blessing with Him but we can suffer deep and sorrowful times while in this scene if we are not constantly on the alert for such deceivers. The warning of Peter is so needful today and may we never forget it for a moment, -- "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things before, take care lest, being led away along with the error of the wicked, ye shall fall from your own steadfastness but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (2 Pet. 3:17-18 N.T.).

What a wondrous security to our souls and hearts is the secret given us as to the antidote to the evil of deception -- "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ". If we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, "though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9), we shall most certainly grow in the knowledge of Him in all the truth centered in Him. Well might we challenge our hearts as to how much we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is infinitely greater than we can lay hold of. There is a vast difference between knowing about it as a fact stated in the Word of God, and knowing the reality of the downstooping from glory's heights to the lowest depths of the cross and the grave. The more we learn of this truth, the more sensitive shall we be to detect any who 'love not the Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. 16:22) even though their manner may be the gentlest and their words of the highest, in form only.

Finally, following this warning by the Lord there is the clear and precise warning of Paul to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20:29-31 (N.Tr.), "there will come in amongst you . . . grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall rise up men speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them . . ." There was no doubt as to this happening for history has substantiated the truth of the Spirit's word through Paul.

Beloved saints and sheep of the Shepherd's flock -- beware of the "thieves and robbers" (John 10:1) and, "strangers" (verse 5). Let us be on our guard with an increasing vigilance that Satan's time is short and he will not cease to infiltrate his agents in the guise of being one of ourselves. There were some of whom Jude wrote likewise, "certain men have got in unnoticed . . . ungodly persons" (verse 4), and, "they have gone in the way of Cain, and given themselves up to the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core" (verse 11 N.Tr.). John refers to such at a later date, "many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Do not think that those described in these ways are any who display an evident spirit of an antichrist, or a manner that would make us suspect their genuineness. If one comes in the obvious behavior of a 'wolf' there would be no danger. It is because the approach and subsequent conduct, for a while, is that of a 'sheep' that we are in danger. Such have one object in doing Satan's work, and that is to dishonor Christ and ruin the joy of the saints by leading them astray.

May we be preserved in the Lord's mercy and grace from complacency as to this solemn warning of the Lord, and to test all that we see and hear amongst ourselves by the "Word of Truth", in dependence on the "Spirit of Truth" Who will always safeguard the interests and glories of Him Who is "The Truth". Let us also be faithful "doorkeepers" in regard to the holiness of God's House to be careful as to any who approach seeking fellowship as to, "What think ye of Christ". One sound in scriptural thoughts as to our precious Saviour and moral in walk and associations as in keeping with the confession of His precious Name is to be welcomed with open hearts, but others are to be refused no matter how amiable they may be.

It is purposed, if the Lord tarry, to continue with further needful warnings from Him Who loves us and has given Himself for us, for His desire is that we should be kept from evil and in His wondrous prayer to His Father He expressed it as that the Father would keep us from the evil in the world.

J. Pascoe

MISUNDERSTOOD/MISUSED TEXTS

DELIVERY TO SATAN

It is ignorance at best for any Christians now to claim power to deliver unto Satan, but it may very well be indicative of a state of presumption and self-satisfaction. Such a company arrogates to itself apostolic power, for none but an apostle could deliver a person unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh. 1 Tim. 1:20 records a case where Paul did it, as does 1 Cor. 5:4,5, where he coupled his apostolic power with the purging of the heaven. G.V. Wigram remarked,

Paul and John and Peter, etc., had the power requisite for the equally awful act of judgment in the form referred to (v. 5), the delivering to Satan. The assembly has it not, ... [1].

J.N.Darby commented,

The first thing we may note is the apostolic power of delivering to Satan. He had judged that, because he could bind on earth: it was apostolic power. Its object, he states, was for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Properly there is no such thing now. If a person is now put out from fellowship, he is not delivered to Satan, though in result he might possibly come under Satan. I know nothing that is a denial of this, though there be no gift of such power. If a person is excluded, it is not delivery to Satan. That made me say he might come under Satan; he is liable to it. To be thrown out into Satan's world is not delivering him or committing him to it. I know of nobody but the apostle who had the power. If there is anybody now to do it, all well; but I do not know how. The church is not commanded to do it here. He says, I have judged already -- to deliver such an one to Satan. This was his own act; he did not tell

1. Ministry of G.V. Wigram 2:11.

them to do so. He does tell them to put such an one out [2].

W. Kelly remarked,

In short, then, delivery to Satan was not a form of excommunication from the church, but an effect of apostolic power, which might or might not accompany the act of putting out, and which manifested its effect in bodily pains or even death itself [3].

ed.

EXTRACT

There is something inexpressibly sweet in that promise, "I will confess his name before my Father." Christ will call **you** by name then. Displayed in all that glory, He the One on whom every eye is turned, and you, perhaps for the first time in your being, lost to all sense of your own individuality, and wakened to think of it by hearing the Lord name you by name to His Father as one who walked with Him down here; as one who held up a little bit of light in an evil day, though perhaps frightened at the effect of it when you did it.

G.V.W., Food for the Flock, vol. 2.

2. Collected Writings, vol. 26.

3. An Exposition of Timothy, p. 28, 1948 ed.

FRAGMENT - COLOSSIANS 3

In order to be able practically to exhibit risen life down here, we have to see that the life itself is not here, though we have to exhibit it here -- that Christ was down in our circumstances till the cross, but that now He has taken us into His, and has gone entirely out of ours -- has left them altogether behind Him -- bad and good both. He has gone entirely out of them, and we are risen with Him.

This then defines our position as to life: that it is out of everything here, because Christ is, and not because we are; and that we have to express that life where we are, and not where He is.

Now this risen life we are to practically bring out here in two ways. First, as to our members; second, as to our relationships. We have His death to set aside our members; His life to fulfil our relationships.

How am I to mortify my members? -- **By the death of Christ.** It is not **my** death; it is **Christ's** death, which I am to bring in on myself. The death of Christ is my weapon, and my only one. And can this weapon ever be anything but perfect and complete in its action? The only thing is that it be **brought to bear**. The weapon itself cannot be improved. It is there as perfect for the babe that is born today as it is for the saint at any age. The weapon cannot be sharper, though you may get sharper in using it. Its action is perfect every time it is used, only you do not use it continuously.

And, as to my relationships, I have His risen life. It is not whether I am a good husband; I may not be a good one; but am I seeking to **please Christ**? As a father is it to please **Christ** I seek? How shall I stand with respect to these relationships in a scene where they will have all passed away? If I have sought only to please my wife, there will be nothing of it left; but all wherein as a husband I seek to please Christ will stand for eternity.

As a servant too. How everything depends on the object. I may do the highest service with the lowest object, or I may do the lowest with the highest. A servant sweeping a room, and seeking therein to "serve the Lord Christ" has as high an object in doing it as the apostle

Paul had when preaching the most wonderful truths. It is the object that is everything.

But, in thus seeking to walk, we must remember that it is only as we have divine power for it that we can fulfil these relationships. It is only as I walk in the power of a scene where they are not, that I can please Christ in them here where they are. The Lord grant us to know what it is in divine power to bring in thus His death to mortify our members, and His risen life to fulfil our relationships.

(C.E.SH., Food for the Flock, vol.2)

EXTRACT ON WALK

I have spoken simply of death, and resurrection, and being seated in Christ in heavenly places; but now what is my responsibility down here as to walk, because of the place and the standing I have in Him? To give the answer, first, in the most general form, let us turn to 1 John 2:6. This is not connected with standing, but it brings out the thought I want to express. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." And so it is then that I am in Christ where He is; and also the converse of that, Christ is in me down here. "He that saith he abideth in Him" -- that is communion -- "ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." Thus the general responsibility is to walk as Christ walked. How was that? Turn to John 3:13: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." So that even when He was here on the earth, Jesus was able to say, "in heaven;" or, putting it in other words, He walked as the Heavenly One upon the earth, as being in heaven while upon the earth. A model for us! We then have to walk, not as belonging to this scene, but to that place in which we are seated in Christ; so that it may be true in spirit of us as it was true of Christ -- in heaven while upon the earth. And oh, what a different character it would give to our lives if this were the case! An expression of Christ, not simply in words, but --

acts; yea, in all things, the life of Christ expressed in us and by us, in our walk and conversation.

We may get more distinct forms of this expression; for instance, Eph. 5:2. This is based upon the fact of our being children of God; and we get a characteristic of walk, and a very important one, brought out. The apostle says, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, even as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." In this respect also I have to walk as Christ did-- "in love, even as He hath loved us." Turn also to John 13:14: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you;" also verse 17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." But what I want to bring before you specially is in Eph. 5:2. We are to imitate Christ, then, simply because of what we are, and the place we occupy. And then we have this example set before us here; and it is wonderful the terms in which we have it described. He "hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." The apostle John also brings this out in his first epistle. I will read it just in passing. Chap.3:16: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." And what else? "And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." So that the love of Christ ought to be our model in this expression of it -- love even to death. But in the verse I read out of Ephesians, we have the important truth, that while Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us, it was "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." The expression of our love, therefore, must not have the saints for its object, but it must be God Himself; and this love can only be expressed in obedience, not otherwise. It is exceedingly important to remember this. We might be tempted -- many are -- to think that we must exhibit love under all circumstances. Not so; the expression of the love must be governed by the word of God; and so the glory of God is to be the first thing. "He gave Himself for us." Yes; but it is "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." I suppose there is no snare so great as that which pleads for charity towards all, in the sense that we must not exclude any from the Lord's table, which is quite true so far as it goes; but we must except those whom God's word excludes. The love must be expressed in obedience to God. It must have God for its object; and therefore, if I go outside of His word, I am making my fellow-believer the object, and not God. We thus get the true character of love; unless it has God for its object, it is not the love that Christ exhibited when He gave Himself for us. We have to imitate Christ; that is our responsibility.

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