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UNFAITHFUL PRINCES

Between the shortest and the longest Psalms we have the middle verse of the Bible: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man", Psa. 118:8. Then follows: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes," thus amplifying the wisdom and importance of trusting the Lord only. Again Psalm 146:3 warns us, "Put not your trust in princes." Such clear warning is intended to guard us lest we be carried away by pleasing personalities and accomplished influentials.

One, and One only, is far above all others who is worthy of our entire confidence, God's Perfect and Faithful Servant, Prophet, Priest, Prince, Captain, Head, Chief, Shepherd and Leader. All glory to Him "the Faithful and True Witness."

The divine record shows that *all* others are liable to failure. Every dispensation is a witness to this -- and increasingly so in their extended course until God can no longer forbear (Gen. 6; 2 Chron. 36, etc.). Furthermore, yet awful to contemplate, the greater the privileges the more ignominious becomes the failure! Whenever man is placed in responsibility he ever proves his shameful inability. Malachi and Laodicea are loud witnesses to this.

Our own lamentable lack of devotedness to Christ, our indolence in searching His holy Word and our lack of applying it to our daily walk, is the root cause of our leanness of soul.

Some of us can recall when most of those who ministered did so out of full hearts for the glory of Christ with liberty to minister to both heart and conscience, and we relished their faithful word. Fellowship in the Spirit was sweet, and was enjoyed by most. Prosperity, luxury and class distinction were things which the saints set little value on then, and those who were "well off" used it for the Lord and His work, rather than for their own pleasure and indulgence.

But what a change we now see! "How is the gold become dim!" Faithful conscience-searching ministry is no longer regarded as "Christ-exalting" by many. Where it is most needed, it is frowned upon, resisted and called LEGAL, with the intention of muzzling the speaker. They use such clever expressions as, "such ministry is only fault-finding, as it only occupies us with self instead of with Christ." Worldly abominations are thus tolerated that dishonor Christ. How applicable are the words, "What do thine eyes wink at?" (Job 15:12). Instead of faithful reproof, muteness prevails because of fear of giving offence (Prov. 29:25)! Correction, admonition, warning, reproof and rebuke are avoided where most needed. Smooth, ear-tickling words are given because they are preferred and considered to be more edifying! Courageous faithfulness is becoming rare!

It is because of this very state of things in these last declining days that the apostle urges us to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus . . . Commit thou to faithful men . . . Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth" (2 Tim. 2 and 4). "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things" (Isa. 30:10). "They abhor him that speaketh uprightly" (Amos 5:10). John Wesley said,

"Shall I, to soothe the unholy throng
Soften Thy truth,
Or smooth my tongue?"

"O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err" (Isa. 3:12); and again (9:16), "The leaders of this people cause them to err." How solemn to think that it was *the leaders* that were charged with the decline and departure of the people! Is not this a voice to us today?

When faithful Jeremiah cried out against the abominations in the Lord's house, it was the princes who saw to it that the man who was disturbing their "peace" was effectively stopped. "The princes were **wroth with Jeremiah** and smote him and put him in prison" (Jer. 37:15). **The princes** said unto the king, we beseech thee, let this man be put to death for speaking such words . . . for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people . . . Then took they Jeremiah and cast him

into the dungeon" (Jer. 38:4).

Later on, with the remnant brought back in Ezra's day, not all was as it should have been; for we are told (Ezra 9:1,2) that "the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations . . . the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the land: yea, the hand of the *princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.*"

The prophet Micah also had to rebuke the heads and princes (Micah 3), and the Lord in verse 5 says, "The prophets that make my people err . . . cry, Peace." Micah further declares that "the heads and princes . . . abhor judgment, and pervert all equity . . . (in) Jerusalem . . . The heads thereof judge for reward . . . yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us?" Such did the "heads" and "princes."

Regarding this, Mr. Darby wrote that "Nothing can be more offensive to Jehovah than that . . . His people should clothe themselves with the privilege of His presence, and use this pretension to honor self and justify evil, or maintain a divine claim in spite of it" (Synopsis). It is the same in Jeremiah 7; "saying The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord . . . and come and stand before Me . . . and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations"! How boldly the enemy has intruded and *leaders remain mute!*

Some boldly declare that ministry which exposes evil will only cause divisions. They fail to recognize that the Lord's hand is upon us even though the mischief of the enemy is at work.

WHEN DIVISION DIVISION THREATENS, THE FIRST CAUSE IS OUR LOW STATE

There may be a number of causes for this low state, but primarily it is the heart leaving first love -- an abiding sense of His great love. Satan, the enemy of our souls, operates on our fallen nature by presenting no end of lustful attractions, until the Lord's hand and rod make us agonize because of our departure, unfaithfulness, disregard of the Word of God, worldliness and strife.

When division has threatened, as it has a number of times in the past century, godly men have been used of God to lay bare the evil. Both the state and the overt evil needed to be judged. The overt evil must be purged (as did Phinehas in Numbers 25); and where the state is not judged too, the hand of God will be felt again and again But, alas, besides the godly exposure of evil and low state by faithful leaders deserving respect, factions develop (because of the low state) and bombard one another. Vain human efforts are used to bring about peace at the expense of separation from evil to the Lord. Instead of judging ourselves in deep humility and repentance before God, we blame Satan and his devices. (But see I Kings 12:24).

THE SECOND STEP AND CAUSE OF DIVISIONS

We have just seen that the first main cause is our low state, which state Satan has succeeded in producing. It is then that "the wolf . . . scattereth the sheep" (John 10:12). "We are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor.2:11). At Corinth it was carnality and the worldly-mindedness of the saints who failed to judge themselves that produced schism (1 Cor. 11:18). They followed their favorite leaders, reigned as kings, walked like other men of the world and the lusts common to the men of the world became rampant among themselves! (1 Cor. 5:1, 2; 2 Cor.12:20,21). Therefore because of their shameful low state they were warned that "there must be also divisions (sects) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor.11:19). Thus a complete rupture would become necessary.

It was this same principle that was at the bottom of the first division of Israel. Through neglect of God's word and disobedience, "King Solomon loved many strange women" who stole his heart from the Lord to their heathen gods. Satan had accomplished that, through Solomon's lusts. Therefore, the Lord rent the kingdom (1 Kings 11:11,12,31; 12:15,24; 14:8; 2 Kings 17:21; 2 Chron.10:15; 11:4). So many overlook this, but it shows how the Lord must discipline by sloughing off that which He can no longer tolerate. It may be kings, princes or influential leaders who become the instruments, gaining sympathizers and followers.

We have called attention to all this to show the vanity of so many vain efforts to thwart division under the pious plea for producing "peace." Such is untempered mortar -- insipid. Human

effort is folly.

We should contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3), and hold fast the truth as to the "one body", "the one place", our "acceptance in the Beloved", "the blessed hope." But have we held that fast which has been committed to us? (Rev. 3:11). Perhaps we have in a considerable measure outwardly, but how about our really giving Christ the first place in all our ways? If this is lacking, then something more than talking about humbling ourselves and judging ourselves is our only hope (Lam. 3:18-29). I must get at the root of the matter by beginning with and thoroughly judging myself. Nothing less will honor God.

SELF-CONFIDENT MEN DEVISE MISCHIEF

"Jaazaniah . . . Pelotiah . . . princes of the people . . . These are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel" (Ezek. 11:1,2). "They have seduced My people, saying Peace . . . and built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar" (Ezek. 13:10). In the Hebrew this word 'untempered' has also another meaning, which is 'insipid'. Does it not suggest "lukewarm" Laodicea? "Her princes. . . and her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity" (Ezek. 22:28).

In Numbers 16 we see imposing human energy at work. Presumptuous ones "who seemed to be somewhat." "Kohath . . . Dathan . . . Abiram and On . . . *rose up* . . . with two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous . . . men of renown . . . against Moses, and against Aaron." "The earth opened and swallowed them . . . and . . . fire from the Lord consumed the two hundred and fifty" princes. Neither their *numbers* nor their *importance* made a wrong thing right. Influential leaders may have many followers of the same mind who might belittle those who are otherwise minded. Disparaging remarks, sowing discord, increase estrangement, and factions form. Far better to "*rise up*" in holy energy like that faithful and courageous leader, Phinehas (Num. 25). We are to "mark those who cause divisions . . . and avoid them . . . By good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple . . . I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Rom. 16:17-19). But how do they *cause* divisions? The very verse which tells us to avoid them tells us how they cause them, -- *contrary to the doctrine*.

We should deplore leaders who commend neutrality when the truth is being sacrificed, for the sake of peace. Such is spineless unfaithfulness. Silence and muzzling at such a time suits the enemy. God's voice must be declared for His glory. Here is where the fear of man, or of even our kindred, bringeth a snare.

Well may they fear exposure who depend upon getting their heads together as a coterie of policy leaders, instead of being led wholly by the Word and Spirit of the Lord. These human arrangements are not the way of the Spirit of Christ. It is human energy "that causeth sweat" (Ezek. 44:18). It can "make a fair show in the flesh" (Gal. 6:12), but nothing more.

"David consulted with the captains. . .and with every leader." He said, "If it seem good unto you. . .let us bring again the ark of our God unto us . . . for the thing was right in the eyes of the people . . . They carried the ark of God in a new cart" (1 Chron. 13). But they had to humbly learn the vanity of their own device which had disregarded God's explicit word. Therefore David confessed that "the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for we sought Him not after the due order . . . according to the word of the Lord" (1 Chron. 15). David thoroughly humbled himself on this, the occasion of bringing back the ark in God's way, for David said, "I will yet be more vile . . . and will be base in mine own sight" (2 Sam. 6:22).

Job was another unusual servant of the Lord of whom the Lord said, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God." Nevertheless God saw the needs-be of riffling his nest, and stripping him of his good opinion of himself until he, too, discovered and confessed, "I am vile," "I abhor myself" (Job 40:4 and 42:6). Is not this the most important and humbling lesson we now need? In the school of God, isolation in the backside of the desert is where God's most exemplary servants have been brought to know their own nothingness. Self-esteem, self-confidence, ambitious-self and self-importance must be thoroughly abhorred as being hindrances to manifesting Christ.

The popularity of leaders is a real danger, and Oh! how the flesh likes it. Demas' name means 'popular'. No doubt he got along well with his worldly brethren (2 Tim. 4:10). Ishmael "dwelt before the face of his brethren." But what a contrast we see in the utterance of Christ in the sixteenth Psalm, "I have set the Lord

always before Me." For us the exhortation is, "Not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ . . . doing service, as to the Lord and not to men" (Eph. 6:6,7).

Through grace all His redeemed are regarded as faithful (Eph. 1:1 and Col. 1:2) in maintaining the faith; but some are raised up and enabled to be in practice faithful above prevailing unfaithfulness. Hebrews 11 tells of many Old Testament worthies. Besides the New Testament apostles, some are named as being particularly faithful, such as Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17), Tychicus (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7), Epaphras (Col. 1:7), Onesimus (Col. 4:9), Silvanus (1 Pet. 5:12), Antipas (Rev. 2:13), and Onesiphorus during declension (2 Tim. 1:16-18).

DILIGENTLY MAKING OUR STEWARDSHIP OUR CHIEF BUSINESS

We are all stewards, whether faithful or slothful, of our time, talents, possessions and the use we make of the truth. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: (Luke 12:48). "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" 1 Cor. 4:2). "As good stewards of the manifold grace of God" 1 Pet. 4:10). "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price" 1 Cor. 6:19,20). "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's" (Luke 16:12). "He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully" (Jer. 23:28). For these last, difficult times we have the apostle's second letter to Timothy, "Commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2:2), "for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (4:3).

CHIEF MEN AMONG BRETHREN

"Leading men" (J.N.D. transl.) of unquestionable report were the two chosen to accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 15:22). Surely we are not to regard them as being the most popular or ambitious to be prominent, or for having superior personality, or even possessing special gift, or that they had made a name for themselves by outstanding exploits in the Lord's service. Nor were they dictators. It is very unlikely that they were of the wealthy elite.

"The best are those who most know their own nothingness." They do know the loveliness of Christ. As such, their lives were fragrant with the humbleness and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

They had an eye single for His glory and walked in communion with Him. This delivered them from ostentation. Their hearts were warm with unfeigned love for their brethren and true concern for their welfare.

Their names are given in Acts 15:22 and 32; "Judas and Silas, being prophets." They were valued so that the Holy Spirit speaks of them as being "leading" and "prophets." The same Holy Spirit ranks prophets next to the apostles in 1 Cor.12 and in Eph.4. Also we may see that in 1 Cor 14 where "edification" is mentioned seven times, "prophecy" is spoken of fourteen times. 1 Cor.14:1 exhorts us to desire the function of gifts, but especially that of prophesying. Its importance is to be noticed because it brings God before the conscience and His mind to bear upon our ways. Thus it is the gateway to the soul when God's love and faithfulness are made to be felt. Do we value the voice of the prophet? or, do we do unto them as was done to Jeremiah? "Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words" (Jer. 18:18).

A.C.B -- 1974

THE NEW JERUSALEM

(Continued from v. 2 # 6)

The River of Life

Q: Is there any break in the subject at the end of chapter 21?

W. Kelly: The first five verses of chapter 22 are necessary to complete the vision.

F. G. Patterson: In chapter 22, you find the city in her relative, as in the previous chapter you had her personal, character.

Rev. 22:1 "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

W. Kelly: God has linked together, in a very remarkable manner, the last book of the Scripture and the very first. For example, here we fall upon images which the Holy Ghost uses to describe the blessedness of the heavenly city in its relation to the earth during the Millennium; and whence are these images derived? I must go to Genesis. There I find a tree of life, rivers, etc.; to which evidently the Holy Ghost refers in the passage before us.

Q: The language is still symbolical, I suppose?

W. Kelly: Of course. There will be no mere literal tree or river; but as a river of life's water symbolizes the abundant life and blessing which will flow through the city (that is, the Bride, the Lamb's wife), so here follows the benignant provision for healing the nations.

W. Scott: The river of life will flow uninterruptedly; *now* the waters should flow freely from us (John 7:38). Alas! that their course should be so often checked and hindered by the working of the flesh.

F. G. Patterson: The river is the symbol of blessing flowing out. The Lord Himself is its source. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink". The one who drank would be the channel for the river to flow into others.

J. N. Darby: We have not only the life in us, but we are drinking for ever of that life which proceeds from the throne of God, and flows in abundance through the city.

Q: Why is the throne mentioned here?

J. N. Darby: That throne, which was acting in judgment to bring about blessing, was now fixed in the heavenly city; but it is not the seat of judgment now. The river ;of water of life flows out of it -- divine, life-giving blessing.

W. Scott: That throne of God and the throne of the Lamb, but it is *one* throne; majesty and meekness combined maintain the blessing for ever; grace through righteousness then and now.

J. N. Darby: Now for the first time it is called the throne of the Lamb. We had the throne of God, and the Lamb in the midst of it, but the throne distinct from the Lamb. In chapter 21:1-8, God is all

in all. But here we have the Lamb's throne as well as God's and the time and the character of the time distinctly marked.

The Tree of Life

Rev. 22:2 "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

W. Kelly: Here it is evident that we have pure grace reigning through righteousness, as far as the tree and the river are concerned. There is nothing liable to be corrupted by the power of Satan.

J. N. Darby: We have the tree of life, the constant supply in the street, and on either side the river, ready for all to enjoy, ever fresh, the full ripe fruit of life as Christ has displayed it.

Q: Will the nations partake of this fruit?

W. Kelly: There is a reserve as to the twelve fruits, which may set forth a far higher and more various supply for the constant refreshment of the heavenly saints; but the leaves are expressly said to be for the healing of the nations.

J. N. Darby: Only the glorified ever ate the fruit of constant growth; but what was manifested and displayed without, as the leaves of a tree, was blessing to those on earth.

Q: Why *twelve* manner of fruits?

W. Kelly: The twelve gates, twelve foundations, etc., which we saw in chapter 21, set forth the aspect of this city toward man. It is viewed in its public governmental character. So in the tree too. By its bearing twelve manner of fruits, and yielding its fruit *every month* is shown the aspect of it towards man.

Q: Will the nations need "healing" during the Millennium?

J. A. Trench: The church will be still in Millennial glory the witness of *grace* to the nations, in marked contrast with Millennial Jerusalem, which preserves its character too as connected with, and the earthly

center of, God's ways in *government*.

J. N. Darby: Evil will not absolutely be gone below, though its power will, but remedy will be there. Not merely can the innocent eat and live, but there is remedial blessing for those on earth.

Q: Is there any reference to the tree of life in Gen. 2:9?

W. Kelly: There were two trees in the garden of Eden, one of the knowledge of good and evil, and the other of life. Now whatever might have been blessing vouchsafed to man in the tree of life, it was wholly useless to him, because the other tree put him to a test which man could not stand. He became rebellious. The consequence was that the tree of life was no longer available for his use. It would only have perpetuated a life of sin and misery. God had reserved for man a better thing -- the tree of grace, if I may so say.

J. N. Darby: One might have eaten in Eden of the tree of life, but in that tree there was no principle of healing. Here this is not the case.

W. Kelly: Neither is there anything like the cherubim, jealous in keeping away man. Quite the contrary.

J. N. Darby: We see grace characterizing the assembly in glory. The nation and kingdom that will not serve the earthly Jerusalem shall utterly perish -- it preserves its earthly royal character; the assembly its own; the leaves of the tree it feeds on are for healing.

Q: Is not the earthly Jerusalem typical of the heavenly?

J. N. Darby: The earthly Jerusalem has almost all the characters of the celestial one. Yet there is an essential difference. It is in the heavenly Jerusalem that the glory is, and it is from thence that it shines upon the earthly Jerusalem.

Rev. 22:3 "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and His servants shall serve Him."

J. A. Trench: Here the Jerusalem of that day, that has supplied us with many a figure of a glory beyond hers or Israel's, gives us a contrast, for there the curse still lingers, if only upon the sinner.

"The sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa. 65:20).

F. G. Patterson: Sin's curse has been everywhere in this scene, but there will be no trace of it there.

J. N. Darby: The throne of God and the Lamb! This is the source of blessing, not of curse. Note again here how God and the Lamb are spoke of as one, as constantly in John's writings.

Q: The service rendered by God's servants will not be inconsistent with a scene of perfect rest, of course.

J. N. Darby: The rest there will not be a rest of idleness.

F. G. Patterson: Service will be the joyous liberty of the heavenly glory. It is the happy rest of active joy.

J. A. Trench: How sweet the assurance for any who have sought to serve Him now ever so feebly, and who know the grace that makes so much of the least done truly for Him! It shall be theirs to serve Him without hindrance or ceasing for ever.

Face to Face

Rev. 22:4 "And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."

W. Scott: We serve Him in weakness and imperfection now; then we shall serve Him in strength, perfectly, and for ever.

J. N. Darby: Nothing shall separate us from God, and we shall see His face. The pure in heart shall see God.

F. G. Patterson: Not now as in a glass darkly, but face to face.

J. N. Darby: His servants shall have the fullest privilege of His constant presence, shall see His face.

W. Scott: That is a blessing beyond harp or crown or robe or glory. The best wine is here poured out. We shall see the face of Him Who died.

J. A. Trench: Thus the Lord meets the longing He has Himself created in our hearts, as He knew nothing else could meet it. We shall reign, and that for ever; but more blessed still, a witness of all that is deeper and more intimate in our association with Him is preserved in simple words (but how full for hearts that know Him!): "They shall see His face."

Q: What is the thought of His name being on our foreheads?

J. N. Darby: On our foreheads nothing will be seen that is not the expression of God. All that God is, His name shall be manifested in us in a most visible manner.

Q: Is there any reference to our belonging to Him?

J. N. Darby: Slaves had the name of their master marked in their foreheads. The whole world shall see that we are the servants of God.

Q: Is this connected with our seeing His face?

J. N. Darby: These are the three characteristics of the waiting people in glory: they serve Him directly and perfectly; they see His face directly and fully; their connections with, and confession of, His name are complete and evident. Their belonging to Him as His own shall be evident to all.

W. Scott: Like Rebekah, when she lifted up her eyes and beheld Isaac, she veiled her face that she might shine in his likeness; so in that day His name on our foreheads will be the public bearing of His likeness.

J. A. Trench: Surely there ought to be the moral imprint of Christ, left by the glory in which we behold Him, on our hearts and lives now; but how marred, how dimly seen, is His image in any of us -- bearing His name too often to His dishonor. Then we shall bear it before every eye, no more to fail to represent or glorify Him in anything.

Q: Is it God or Christ that is meant in this verse?

J. N. Darby: Doubtless this is God, but we cannot at all separate the Lamb, for when it is said "His name", it is God, so known as revealed in Him.

Rev. 22:5 "And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

J. N. Darby: All that is here is an eternal state for the church. Night or obscurity there is none there, nor need of artificial or even created light. Jehovah-Elohim gives them light.

Q: Is this the difference between the candle and the sun?

W. Kelly: The one represents the light of man's making and the other of God; but all that suited this world is part for the city.

The Eternal Reign

J. N. Darby: It is not now merely "the Lord shall reign for ever and ever," but "they shall reign for ever and ever". This is not, I apprehend, their reign with Christ, but the statement of their story and joy which will never cease. "Ye have reigned as kings without us", says the apostle. This was false. That will be true and eternal.

Q: Then it is not Millennial reign of the saint in this verse?

J. N. Darby: They reign, not for the thousand years, as they do over the earth, but for ever and ever.

W. Scott: The Millennium and eternity are here embraced, both our service and reign are eternal, and our joys as well. Thus closes this truly marvelous and magnificent description of the church in the glory with a statement that reaches far beyond the Millennial age. In the eternity of God the church reigns in a glory that shall never go down.

Q: "For ever and ever" is literally "to the ages of the ages". Does this convey the thought of eternity?

W. Kelly: The expression "to the ages", I apprehend, must be taken in the strongest sense here. It does not refer only to what is called "the kingdom" though of course the reigning begins then. It will be

true throughout eternity. These words seem here to be used without restriction. All the account from chapter 21:9 to 22:5, inclusively, presents the relation of the heavenly city to the earth during the Millennium. But there are certain features in it which are true everlastingly. One of these characteristics, besides its unchangeable intrinsic glory is, that the service of the saints will be for ever and ever. So as to the reigning.

Q: What is the practical value to us now of this description of the New Jerusalem?

F. G. Patterson: God reveals to us this scene where the Lamb's glories dwell, to cheer and fill our hearts with its present sanctifying power, and to give us a truer estimate of what the height of our calling is, as we see all that it is now made good to faith, and in the power of the holy Christ carried out to its full result in glory then. May He Who is the center and brightness of all that scene of glory fill our hearts displacing all that is unsuited to it more and more!

(Concluded)

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS

Having thus wrought this work, which gives us identity of terms with Himself as to acceptance; and having already entered by the same title which is made ours, He leaves us here, between the cross and the glories, to be witnesses of His victories, and of a power not possessed by us, but exercised by Him for us, even as we would have it. But He leaves us here not at our own charges: and He would have us know that we are not only qualified for heaven, but for earth also. Shall I startle you if I say that to be qualified for this world is an advance upon being qualified for heaven?

Paul puts it in Colossians: "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour according to his working which worketh in me mightily." He labored that the saints might have the full sense, and the enjoyment in their own souls, of what they were as to standing in Christ before God; that their sensible state might be in harmony with what the word calls "accepted in the beloved;" that their state and their standing might be twin

sisters, and on terms of the very closest intimacy.

A "beloved physician" once expressed it when prescribing for a patient, as follows: "Remember, in order to have a man in Christ, it was necessary that Christ should be broken; but in order to have Christ seen in a man, the vessel must be broken."

As a man in Christ you are qualified for heaven; every believer is that. But in order to be qualified for earth, Christ should be seen in the vessel; and this is done by bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. The dying, or the putting to death, of the Lord Jesus, applied to the flesh, keeps it under; when the cross is thus applied to every fibre of the old Adam nature, will has no place, and the life of Christ works from you; then others see Him in you. You never see Him in yourself, else you might be pleased with yourself, and that would never do. But for this there must be active power, power of the Holy Ghost of course, acting in a dependent vessel.

The difference of the way in which the "Son of man" was sealed -- "Him hath God the Father sealed" -- and a saint is sealed, will help us to understand this; for it is thus that the Lord qualifies us for this world, and sends us into it as He was sent into it.

But let me first remark that the Holy Ghost is far more tender and full of love than many give Him credit for. For instance, He never seals people in sin; that would be to sanction it; nor does He seal people in doubts and fears; that would be to sanction them. Your seal, faith in the blood, and God's seal, the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost, are not identical. Let Scripture speak as to both. John 3:33. "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Thus, in receiving His testimony you are setting your seal to the truth of the testimony, to the work. You deliver as your act and deed -- according to lawyers' language -- that God was true to His own heart in giving His beloved Son to die a wretched death for such as we. Did you never see a person unable to write signing for his name? One who can write, having done all that is necessary, holds the pen, and the person unable to write just touches the top of the pen whilst his mark is being affixed to the document. Now you are the person unable to write; but you just touch the pen, so to speak, which God holds; and He affixes your mark to the document. That is setting your seal to the truth of the testimony to

the work.

Then in Eph. 1:13,14. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Thus the Holy Ghost becomes the witness in you to the value of that work, the truth of the testimony to which you have already accredited. He does not become your title to the glory; there is no need of that. Indeed, it would be saying something else was needed for title besides the bloodshedding of Jesus. On the contrary, His blessed work is to enable you to read your title in it clearly, and exclusively. He comes as the witness of God's estimate to its value, and takes up His dwelling in your body, which thus becomes "the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 6:19). So that you are not only made a partaker of the divine nature, with new tastes and new desires, but the Holy Ghost, who is no less God than the Father or the Son, dwells in your body, working in that nature, giving you power to accomplish those new desires, as well as to delight in conscious relationship. "Because ye are sons" -- not to make you sons -- "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father" -- now a **conscious** son.

Scripture marks the distinction between the actings of a divine Person, and the dwelling of a divine Person. In the case of the Son of God, He always acted in Old Testament times; but He is never said to have taken up His dwelling in people then. When He took the "prepared body", that was altogether another thing. So also, in reference to the Holy Ghost: His actings were in conjunction with the Son at all times; but He is never said to dwell in anyone until "that holy thing" was found by Him a suited habitation. And He is never said to dwell in people until Jesus is glorified. "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). His quickening sinners is one thing; His coming Himself to dwell in those who are quickened is quite another thing. The sons of Aaron had to be sprinkled with blood before the holy oil, type of the Holy Ghost, could be applied to them.

Now let us turn to the type which throws much light on this subject, and gives us beautiful figures of Christ and the church, with regard to the way of the Holy Ghost coming to dwell in each case.

In the ordination of the priesthood, Leviticus 8 and Exodus 29, Aaron alone is anointed without blood; honors and dignities are heaped upon him; the holy anointing oil, figure of the energy of the Holy Ghost, becomes the witness to his claims and excellencies. What answers to this in the New Testament is, Jesus alone anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power (Acts 10:38), seal to His own personal purity, His righteousness, and His Sonship.

But when Aaron is anointed in connection with his sons, blood has to be put upon him first, then upon his sons; and afterwards the oil is put on the blood which had been previously sprinkled upon them. What answers to this in the New Testament is, Christ receiving the Holy Ghost a second time, but now for us, after the blood had been shed which makes such poor things suited vessels for the Spirit of God to find a dwelling place for Himself in. We get the Scripture for this in Acts 2:33. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

There is another distinction noticed in Scripture which exalts the Lord before our delighted hearts, without putting us at an inch of distance from His.

The Holy Ghost came upon Him in the form of a dove. The dove sent forth by Noah, to see if the waters were abated, finds no rest for the sole of her foot, the waters of judgment being still there. Scripture also uses the dove to signify that which is "harmless," "undefiled," and clean for offering to God, as also to express a capacity for "mourning" or sorrow. Such was the form the Spirit of God was pleased to assume as, descending and lighting upon Jesus, He finds perfect complacency in the "holy, harmless and undefiled" One, upon whom no judgment could have come, except as He voluntarily gave Himself to bear what was due to others; and who had capacity for sorrow occasioned by sufferings which no mere creature could have endured.

But in regard to us, the Holy Ghost came in the form of tongues of fire, figures of the word and of judgment. The same word which had pronounced judgment on the sinner now says, "Clean every whit" - clean not by modifying or qualifying the original sentence of God against sin, but through a work which gives Him the place of "Justifier". The Holy Ghost has come as the seal and verifier of this,

and thus gives liberty, and produces power in us, to put to death the members of the flesh, on the ground of the old man in us having been crucified when Christ was crucified. The word is: "Ye are dead." How? By the judgment having been executed, and having for ever judicially extinguished the first man for the Christian. But you never have been, nor ever can be, a participator with God and Christ in doing it. The thing has been done between God and Christ; not between God, Christ and you. Hence there is no union in death; such a thought is monstrous; and it savors something of, "Why can I not follow thee now?"

When you are converted and set in liberty -- "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" -- you wake up to the fact that everything judicial which happened to Christ happened to you when it happened to Him; because now, ever since Christ is your life -- not before -- His judgment, His death, and His burial are as much behind you as they are behind Him.

Baptism is the symbol of this, only it has two aspects, according to Scripture; the Red Sea aspect, as an initiatory rite, and the Jordan aspect, which fully unfolds all that of which baptism is but a figure.

We have thus a suited vessel formed by God's special grace for His Spirit to find a dwelling place in, in this world, so that whilst Christ is still refused a place in it, He might have avenues kept open in the hearts of His beloved people for His love to flow through. When the world got rid of Him they thought a triumph had been gained; but He had said: "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." Surely it was a wonderful thing for Him to come into this world at all; but when once in it, He could do no less than express what He was. But now that He has submitted to be rejected, is it not a greater thing for Him to pick up those who were the slaves of sin and Satan and make such the suited vessels for the Holy Ghost to inhabit, that He might give them to delight in the same resources, and to exercise the same kind of dependence and obedience, which were fully displayed when Jesus met the enemy in his crafty subtleties and his unbroken power?

It is thus that we are sent into this world, as Christ was sent into it, to walk as He walked, and meet Satan with the same weapons, "sanctified to the obedience" -- no less than His -- "and to the sprinkling of the blood," which never loses its value and makes us

quite clear before God.

I have heard people say, this is too high truth for them. What they mean is, that difficulties suit them better than impossibilities; for in the one there is no room for other power than that of the Spirit of God, whereas in the other there is a lingering desire to give flesh something to do; and this makes self of some importance. Whenever you hear people plead difficulties as an excuse, be assured there is always a thought of their own resources or their own worthiness in reserve. Substitute the word "impossibilities" for "difficulties" and then you are thrown on invisible power; for if you are thinking of **your** difficulties you will be but as a grasshopper before **them**; but impossibilities for **you** are only grasshoppers before **God**. This is what constituted the difference between the ten spies on the one hand and Caleb and Joshua on the other.

"Greater works than these shall ye do." It is wonderful the way in which the Lord wins our hearts, causes us to delight in exercising dependence upon Himself, and then gives us credit for doing the greater works which He Himself accomplishes as He handles empty vessels thus fitted for His use. Again, is it not now a greater work if He should use a poor thing like you to be "light in the Lord" and to "walk in love," than to have been light and love Himself in the midst of darkness and hatred? Why, He never could have been less; and He could not make you more.

Where do people see the moral impress of God now? Not in the fruits, flowers, valleys, mountains, rivers or oceans, neither in astronomy nor geology. In all these they see but the skill of His hand stained with the trail of the serpent; and even if the serpent's poison were not there, the throbbings of His heart were unknown. Neither was it always seen in tongues, nor in the exercise of miraculous power. Where then, I ask, is the love of God seen? I gaze at it in a living Christ, the purger of our sins, "set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." I read it in a written Christ in print in my own hand. And I am cheered by it in a reflected Christ, as a dependent saint who lies close to the bosom of Jesus shows to others "what great things the Lord has done for him," and how He has had compassion on him.

But who is sufficient for these things? Let us glory in our weakness, give up talking of difficulties, and count upon Him to bring

about impossibilities for mere creatures to accomplish; never forgetting that it is only as odious self is turned away from in calm disgust we can be trusted by the Father to exhibit the meekness and lowliness of His precious Christ, so that He may still be seen in us by a world that would reject Him a second time if it had opportunity.

Heaven was opened upon Him, as we were seeing; but then it was that heaven might be occupied with God on earth. Let me tell you that heaven is now opened in a double way: not only for you to gaze at Him where the Father's heart has seated Him, but that the heavenly intelligences might see in His beloved people the "greater things" now in accomplishment. "In order that now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the assembly the all-various wisdom of God."

Let us never accept a standard that would suit the morality of the first man. God never gave a standard which the first man could reach. Adam in innocency had to reach nothing, but to enjoy what God had done and given him. You and I have to reach Christ in the glory, and never to cease reaching until then; and, in the interval, to find God our sufficiency in a place where the flesh, the world and the devil are sworn friends. But He says, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome."

"Be careful for nothing." "For nothing" is God's word. Therefore as you put all your cares in God's hand, He will put His peace into your heart. This gives relief from aught that could perturb. What next? You are free to be occupied with the "whatsoever things are true" and "lovely" -- free to gratify your new tastes -- thus fulfilling His word "that your joy may be full."

Now remember, that which the Holy Ghost gives He never takes back; but you must put what He gives into practice in order to get more. What next? "The God of peace shall be with you." Hence the apostle says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Will, which never abdicates, being broken, is kept in abeyance; and "giving thanks always for all things" is not only the language of the word, but of faith also; because God just suits a crippled, clinging pilgrim, and a crippled, clinging pilgrim just suits God.

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

THE LORD'S WARNINGS

2

When we consider the warnings which the Lord gave to His disciples we are not taking account of them as only applicable to them, but rather that what our blessed Lord said then was intended for our safeguard also. How ready we are to take notice of what men say today by way of warning us yet do not deeply consider those of the One Who knows all things. Have we become negligent in our attitude and lulled into a false sense of security? In presenting this series of warnings by the Lord it is with the desire that we shall all take real and immediate heed to our own dangers today, which increase with the passing of time.

"BEWARE OF MEN" (Matt 10:17)

Time has the subtle effect of causing us to forget the events of the past, even though the most awful atrocities have been involved. The carnage of the last world war has become mainly a matter of history. The indescribable expression of men's hatred of God in their treatment of the blessed Son of God as a perfect Man here is to the most of the world either not known or forgotten. Does this mean that man has so improved that such happenings would not take place again? Under Satanic delusion man tries to convince himself that it would not. But, the continuing slaughter of man by man which is currently going on throughout the world, and, in several cases, involving those of the same country such as Ireland, African nations, middle American countries and Iran -- to name a few -- is indisputably a display that man is still man and will remain such in sin (under the leadership of Satan) until the Lord deals finally with man, to his eternal doom.

In regard to the Lord's warning to His own as quoted above, it was concerning that which has not yet taken place. It will be the sorrowful experience of the godly remnant in a day to come after the Assembly has been taken up to glory with the Lord. In so-called western countries we are blessed of God in having good government which does not repress us for confessing the precious and adorable Name of Jesus as Lord, although this is not the case in those countries where Christianity has been rejected. Does this mean, then,

that this particular warning has no application to us today? No! far from it. The veneer of social conduct with much that is of the religious type is but a mask which can and will be instantly dropped when the Holy Spirit with the Assembly is taken out of this scene. Simply because of the present outward appearance does this mean that we should allow any closer link with man than that which should mark us as not belonging to this world but to heaven? Satan is still a serpent and knows when to smooth things over as he realizes that we are so easily deceived. Let us then recall the Lord's warning for it is still needful.

What is there in man that can be trusted? Nothing! Can we, as belonging to the Lord, find companionship with those of the world, or make relationships with them in any way? If we do there can be only two reasons for it. Either we do not really belong to Him (and may this search us out as to the fact that we do have our personal faith and trust in Him), or, that we have lost the sense of what man did to our glorious Saviour when He was on earth, and what they are still doing to Him as He patiently waits for them to turn to Him and live.

By no means does this imply that we should shun man as if he does not exist. Not at all, for this would be denying the very purpose for which we are left here and that is to maintain a testimony to man that we are the Lord's and that He loves them. The apostle Paul wrote, "yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim.3:12). There is no doubt at all that if we really lived here as we should for the Lord's glory then we should find out how true this is. Persecution is not necessarily of a physical nature, and indeed probably will not be. Satan has learnt his lesson that this tactic failed when he applied it in the days of the persecutions of the saints as indicated by the Lord's words to the Assembly in Smyrna--and which took place in the latter part of the second century. Likewise, the vile and evil persecution of the saints under the Roman Catholic Inquisition, in the dark ages, was a failure in terms of what Satan wanted to accomplish. A large part of the awful civil strife and warfare in the so-called Christian countries is actively supported by the same false church today.

It has been well expressed that the measure of our persecution is the measure of our godliness. May we recognize that while we have responsibilities in this world as to our living here and earning what is needful to maintain us in food etc., we should always view man, as of

the race of Adam, as a rejecter of our Lord Jesus Christ, and remember what James wrote, as inspired by the Spirit of God, "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

A true confession of our Lord Jesus and a faithful walk before men to glorify Him will soon reveal whether man has changed since the days of the Lord on earth. The Psalmist could rightly say, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes" (Ps.118:8).

When man makes an appeal to us, in any of the many ways in which philanthropy is involved, let us remember what man did to the blessed eternal Son of God when He was here on earth. Let us also remember that man has not repented of the wicked deed perpetrated on the glorious Son of Man when they nailed Him to a cross. May our hearts and lives be entirely dedicated to Him until we see Him face to face in His glory.

Man the cross to Him awarded;
 Man the Saviour crucified;
 This world's judgement stands recorded,
 God's own justice satisfied!
 By the glory
 Christ was claimed on earth who died.

Son of Man, His incarnation
 Opened first the tale of grace;
 Son of Man, in new creation
 Leader of a chosen race!
 Well may glory
 Crown Him, in the ordered place!

Little Flock Hymn No. 39

J. Pascoe

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

(Continued from v. 2, # 6)

DELIVERANCE: ROM. 7

INTRODUCTION

Sorrowfully, as with most truths, there is a great variety of judgments concerning the status of the man of Rom. 7. Arminians view him as an unregenerate man. Calvinists regard the state described as the *normal* Christian state, i.e., the state of one sealed with the Spirit, and one should not look for deliverance from this state in the present life. Others agree that it describes the state of a person who is sealed with the Spirit but is seeking, and can obtain, deliverance from the state described. It is a saint seeking holiness. Well, certainly it is a saint, a regenerate soul, seeking practical holiness, but it is not one sealed with the Spirit, for all sealed saints are delivered from captivity to the law of sin, as I hope to make clear.

Part of the immense recovery of Christian truth during the 19th century involved the truth of deliverance and the Christian position and state. While J.N. Darby was the chief instrument in the hand of God concerning this, these truths taken up by writers and preachers and teachers of the Word brought many souls into the liberty and joy of Rom. 8. They taught that the man of Rom. 7 was quickened (cp. Rom. 7:22) but not sealed with the Spirit. The reason that the man of Rom. 7 needs deliverance (Rom. 7:24) is because he is a *captive* to the law of sin (Rom. 7:23). If he had the Spirit he would be *free* from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2) and thus in Christian *liberty* (2 Cor. 3:17). One who is in liberty is not a captive.

J.N. Darby's teaching regarding Rom. 7, is, I believe, what the Scripture teaches. What he taught was held by him from virtually the

beginning of his ministry. The following quotation makes this definite as well as stating succinctly his view of it.

You know that I reject the thought (I have done so for five and forty years) of the experience of Romans 7 being a Christian state. It is the state of a regenerate soul under law, under the "first husband" of the chapter; not the delivered soul under the second husband, that is, Christ risen. ¹

It is clear from Rom. 7:24 that the man is regenerate; he has the "inward man." And it is also clear that the man is "wretched" and is undelivered (Rom. 7:24), whatever that means. He needs deliverance. Regarding deliverance, J.N. Darby wrote, ". . . indeed it is one special ministry in which I have been blessed, and on that deliverance I should insist." ² What this deliverance entails is the subject of the articles that follow. First we will have a summary of the teaching.

SUMMARY OF THE TEACHING OF ROMANS 7

How to Interpret Rom. 7

There are those who realize they are indwelt of the Spirit who experience something of Rom. 7 and judge that the man of Rom. 7 is sealed with the Spirit. Someone commented on this thus:

Now there is no doubt that many who are sealed are in a measure *experimentally* in the state described in the seventh of Romans, but this experience by no means proves that the Spirit of God is describing in this chapter one who is sealed. I believe that the error into which some who are sealed have fallen, is that they do not sufficiently distinguish between experience and doctrine, and when they find that their own experience in measure agrees with the state described in this chapter, they conclude that the

¹. *Collected Writings* 23:184.

². *Collected Writings* 33:74.

chapter itself describes the experience of one who has been sealed

It has been truly remarked by another, that the seventh of Romans describes a state in which no one ever really was, viz., with the will always right and the action always wrong, and it is, therefore, only in a measure that any person's experience is described in this chapter; and though there is no doubt that the experience of the seventh of Romans is in measure gone through by one who is sealed, yet this fact does not warrant anyone in interpreting the *doctrine* of the seventh of Romans by his experience, nor to conclude because his experience answers in measure to that which is described in this chapter, that therefore the Spirit of God, through the apostle, speaks in this chapter of one who is sealed.

Scripture is consistent in all its parts, and in no portion of it, where the Spirit of God addresses the saints, are they addressed as being in the state described in verse 7 to end of Rom. 7, but, on the contrary, they are always addressed as being in a state the exact opposite to that described in the latter part of this chapter, and are thus addressed not in one or two details only, but in every one of the several details mentioned in that chapter and above referred to.³

Quickened, Though Undelivered

There are a number of things that are true of the man in Rom. 7 before the deliverance is experienced and these show that the person is quickened (made alive -- born again).

1. He has a changed understanding (Rom. 7:24,14).
2. He has a changed will (Rom. 7:18).
3. He has a changed heart (Rom. 7:22).

It is clear that this person has two natures and a struggle is going on. He has the old nature inherited from fallen Adam and he

³. A. B. P. "Remarks on Romans VII," pp. 2,4.

has the "inward man" (Rom. 7:22), a new nature from God. However, he has a problem.

His Problem is That He is a Captive.

"But I see another law in my members, warring in opposition to the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which exists in my members" (v. 23). It is most important to allow this scripture to have its weight with us. That he is captive to the law of sin is the direct statement of Scripture.

A law is a "fixed principle." A law denotes the uniform acting of something. Captivity to the law of sin is captivity to the uniform operation of the old, evil nature that man acquired in the fall. "Sin" here is the internal enemy from which sins (sinful conduct) spring. "Sin" is the spring, the root. Furthermore, he is captive to the law of death. What uniformly tends to death has him in captivity. He cannot be free and in slavery at the same time. In *conscience* he is under the principle of law in his relationship with God and *this writes the sentence of death in the conscience*, for that is the meaning of the reference to death and dying in vv. 7-13.

The Cause of the Problem

The man of Rom. 7 is in a captive state. He seeks power to overcome indwelling sin (the root principle, the evil nature from which sinful acts spring). He looks within himself for power. His resource, he thinks, is within himself. He is going to please God and thus God will be favorable to him. He is before God, concerning his conscience, on the principle of law. I did not say *the* law, but it may well take the form of the law of Moses. He is before God, in conscience, on a legal basis. The legal basis is thinking that God is disposed toward me as I am toward him. Such do not have settled peace and do not have the knowledge of being in the forgiven position before God. The legal principle cannot give scriptural peace and such a soul does not know what it means to have no more conscience of sins (Heb. 10:2) as standing against himself. Rather, such have the sentence of death written in their conscience (cp. Rom. 7:11), for literal death is not meant. How can such a soul be sure of eternal salvation?

Rom. 6 shows that the Christian is free from one master and now serves another. The man of Rom. 7 is captive to the wrong master

(cp. Rom. 6:18). Rom. 5 shows that the Christian has changed heads. There are two headships spoken of -- Adam's and Christ's. The man in Rom. 7, so far as his conscious standing is concerned, is in Adam, and "in the flesh" (Rom. 7:5,6). As Jews under law, whether born of God or not, were addressed by the law as in the Adam standing and responsibility, and in the flesh, so the man under law in conscience, in Rom. 7, is "in the flesh."

He is under law as a principle (Rom. 7:9-13). Rom. 6:14 shows that one who is in the Christian position is under grace -- and also that sin does not have dominion over him, yet the man of Rom. 7 is under the dominion of the law of sin. In this condition, "this body of death" (Rom. 7:24) is very much active; but concerning one in the Christian position it is said, "the body is dead on account of sin, but the Spirit is life on account of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10).

The man of Rom. 7 is, according to the illustration in Rom. 7:1-4, not dead to law -- for in conscience he is under law (Rom. 7:7-13). Thus he is not in the good of true circumcision (Phil 3:3) for such a one does not trust in himself -- which is exactly what the man of Rom. 7 is trusting in, for power over indwelling sin.

Thus there is the struggle to gain the victory, on the legal basis, to be acceptable to God; in effect, to warrant His favor. There is a sort of looking to Christ and recognizing that when first turned toward Christ, one's past sins were forgiven. But future ones? Such are not resting on the finished work of Christ for the knowledge of their sins forgiven and that they are in a forgiven position before God. Hence, the man must struggle until he recognizes the hopelessness of obtaining victory and power over indwelling sin and experiences deliverance from the law of sin which exists in his members and holds him captive. Step by step he gains experimental knowledge and learns to distinguish two forces at war in his members. Finally, he faces up to the fact of his wretchedness, which consists of the frustration of his godly desires by the dominating law of sin, and cries out, "who shall deliver me. . . ." Thus he turns from looking for power within himself to a Deliverer, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Deliverance

Turning to Christ, resting on His Person and work for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, knowing that he stands before God as one forgiven, he is sealed with the Spirit. He believes the gospel of his salvation and is sealed (Eph. 1:13). The gospel of our salvation is not that our past sins were forgiven when we believed and thereafter we might be lost again. No, no. We are forgiven, resting on that work we are delivered from the law of sin. We receive the Spirit as power over indwelling sin. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:2.) The man in the condition described in Rom. 7 was not free from the law of sin. He says he was a captive to it (Rom. 7:23). The deliverance is thus deliverance from this captivity. This is experimentally realized in the soul. The Spirit indwelt person now has operative in him a new law. This new law is called: "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This new law "has set me free from the law of sin and death." It is clear that this law was not operative in the man of Rom. 7 else he would not have been a captive. But now, having the Spirit and this new law operative in him, he is free. Being free, he is not a captive any longer, but stands in liberty. "Where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

When Israel was sheltered by the blood on passover night, they were safe from the judgment. Were they delivered from the power of the taskmaster? No. They feared until they were safe on the other side of the Red Sea. Compare Exodus 14 with 15. The patent fact is that they were not saved until they were through the Red Sea. If they had experienced salvation, why Ex. 14:13? "And Moses said to the people, Fear not: stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah..." Salvation from what? From the power of the taskmaster! They needed *deliverance* from the power of the taskmaster. A work began on passover that was now to be completed. And when they were over the Red Sea and it closed on the power of the taskmaster, the first recorded song in Scripture commenced. When redemption in type was completed, then singing began. They sang: "My strength and my song is Jah, and he is become my salvation " (Ex. 15:2). There is a new vocabulary in Ex. 15. Read it carefully and prayerfully. Compare Ex. 14 with Rom. 7 and Ex. 15 with Rom. 8. Observe the great change. Ex. 15 and Rom. 8 are about liberty, salvation and deliverance. In Exodus it is typical and in Rom. 7 and 8 it is the experience of the soul. Afterward, just as Israel in the wilderness typifies, there is

more to learn, but one is not subsequently undelivered. More will be said on this at the end of this series, Lord willing.

The Red Sea typifies the death and resurrection of Christ for us. When the bearing of that is apprehended by the soul, there is deliverance from captivity to the taskmaster. And it is death to the power of the taskmaster, hence the sea closed upon Pharaoh's forces. The word *salvation/saved* in the N.T. is a large, comprehensive word. It means more than being safe for the glory. It includes being safe; but more, being saved from the power of indwelling sin. It includes deliverance. Christ saves from the penalty of sin and from the power of sin *now* -- and soon He will come and save us from the presence of sin. This is part of the glad tidings of our salvation and we are sealed with the Spirit forever; sealed now as a consequence of that deliverance. And we can rightly sing the song of salvation.

We have been brought into the merry place as was the prodigal son. When he came to himself (Luke 15), that is like the new birth. He started going to the father's house and made up a speech suitable for a servant, not a son. Yes, he expected something from his father, that is true. But notice that he was going to request a servant's place. He was going to be there on the basis of working. This is the legal basis. This is the spirit of Rom. 7. The man in Rom. 7 has the spirit of a hired servant. The law of Moses certainly did not put the Israelite in the place of sons. So the prodigal was not going to take a son's place but he would work for what he would get. He had the **spirit of a hired servant**. Oh yes, it would be grace that the father would show in allowing him to be as a hired servant, but after that point, well, he would have to work to earn his father's favor. Such was the state of the prodigal, such is the state of the man of Rom. 7 and such is the state of many souls today. *That*, if it were truthfully articulated, is their thought of God. The father kissed that notion away. He fell upon his neck in compassion "and covered him with kisses." The son confessed that he had sinned and that he was "no longer worthy to be called thy son." How true this is, yet the father then and there attired him for the son's place and they enjoyed sweet communion eating the fatted calf (signifying the Person and work of Christ), "And they began to make merry" -- never to end.

He now had the **spirit of a son** -- and this is seen in Rom. 8 where the delivered one has the Spirit of adoption, i.e., the Spirit of sonship. "For ye have not received a spirit of bondage again for fear

[Ex. 14 and Rom. 7], but ye have received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

Cornelius was a man whose prayers God heard (Acts 10:1-4, 35). He was a born again soul. Cornelius was told by the Lord to send for Peter, "who shall speak words to thee whereby *thou* shalt be saved..." (Acts 11:14). Here we see a distinction between new birth and being saved. Why not learn from this? Of course Cornelius was safe for the glory, but the word saved, while including that, includes more. Cornelius was not resting on the finished work of Christ for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins; i.e., he didn't know what it was to be in a forgiven position before God.

Peter declared unto him the resurrection (Act 10:40,41), the seal of Christ's work, and "that everyone that believes on him will receive through his name remission [forgiveness] of sins" (Acts 10:43). Thus the Person and work of Christ was preached and that he could have the forgiveness of sins. The listeners believed and the Holy Spirit fell on them. Now the word "saved" properly applied to Cornelius. He believed the gospel of his salvation, trusted in Christ and His work, and was sealed (Eph. 1:12,13) with the Spirit. Receiving forgiveness of sins does not mean that merely the past sins to that point are forgiven (which is true in itself but hardly the whole truth), but that the person is in a forgiven position before God (though governmental consequences of a previous life may remain).

Before I close I would add that it is not to be supposed that O.T. saints were all in the condition described in Rom. 7. This is a state in which God allows souls to be learning something about the powerlessness of self in view of the position in Christ into which He brings souls in this dispensation. Yes, Cornelius lived in a transition period, but that does not annul what we learn from his case concerning new birth and salvation. I would add that difficulties will be considered at the end of this series, Lord willing, keeping in mind the statement of J.N.D. that once a teaching of Scripture is established no amount of difficulties can overthrow it.

ed.

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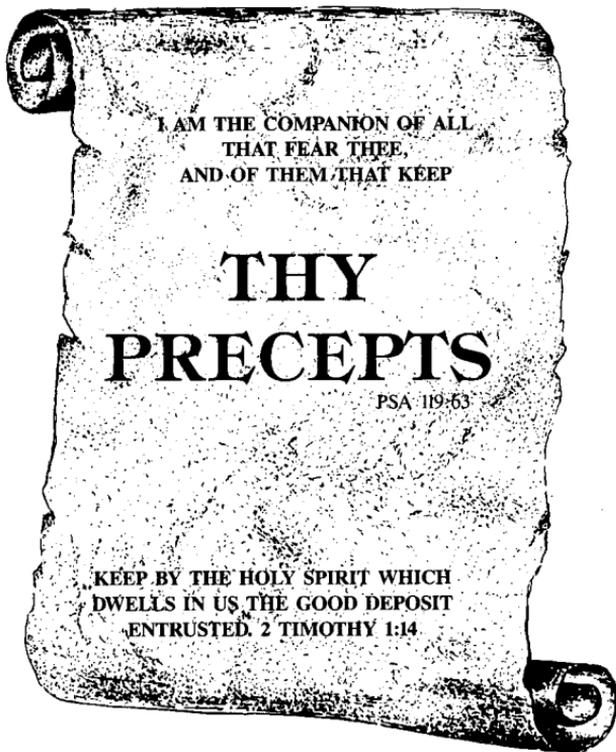
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JOASH OF ABIEZER

If we could only make up our minds to follow the opinions of those around us in regard to matters of religion, what trouble it would prevent, to be sure! But then it might in possible cases lead us, as it led Joash, into building an altar to Baal, and worshipping a god with an ass' head and a fiend's heart. That would be hardly a safe principle then. Let us try again:

Suppose the governmental ruler of the country -- king, kaiser, president or parliament -- would appoint a national religion and all submit, how much inconvenience that would save! If all *would* only submit, there would be no schisms, no contentions nor persecutions, no stakes nor racks nor torture-boots, not other appliances of that sort, with which men have sought to modify the religious convictions of their neighbors. We should not require these Wycliffes and Luthers either. We could even -- in a way -- get on without such men as Paul and his coadjutors.

Yet somehow when this method has been tried, it has not turned out to be such a complete success as might have been expected. Some rulers take to promulgating such *very* peculiar doctrines-- Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Fetichism even, -- and sometimes a new ruler, by "divine right" or "infallible," comes forth and upsets all that his divine right and infallible predecessor taught, without even giving us the little time to turn round that decency requires to prevent an appearance of inconsistency. Sometimes even the same ruler will change about in such a most inconvenient and embarrassing way that one can hardly keep pace with him; and that for reasons, too, which do not always seem adequate to the ordinary mind. John III of Sweden would change his religion when he wanted a new wife; Henry VIII of England when he wanted to get rid of an old one. . . Fuller says that when the notable Symon Symonds was "first a papist (under Henry VIII), then a protestant (under Edward VI), then a papist again

(in Mary's reign), then a protestant again (in Elizabeth's) -- when he was taunted with lack of principle, he replied that it was not so; for he always kept to his principle, which was to retain his own position secure and undisturbed.

Joash evidently reasoned in this way. He had, as was customary in his time and neighborhood, an altar to Baal on his estate. It was fashionable and general, and saved him from being the object of invidious comparisons on the part of his neighbors; but there is nothing to show that he had the slightest belief in Baal or any other god. He was a latitudinarian, and, being surrounded by bigots, he for the sake of ease fell in with their methods. Why should he trouble himself and subject himself to persecutions simply to protest against a false system that may after all have some elements of truth in it? He would be only one against the multitude.

His son Gideon also was only one; but he broke down the idolatrous altar and destroyed the whole system one night in a most effective way; and when the people saw the ruins next day, there was considerable excitement. All the bigots were there with that deliberate and deadly animosity which still characterizes their descendants. They said to Joash, "Bring out thy son that he may die"; and they meant it too. But the old man seems to have loved his son passing well, and moreover found him very useful about the farm, so that he views matters in a different light, though doubtless extremely annoyed about the altar, or rather the commotion which has been caused. He replies with cynical bluntness to the effect that, if his son had done Baal any injury and if Baal be a god, let him avenge it himself. He, Joash, would not; and if any of them touched his son, it would be the worse for them. "Let Baal plead for himself," he roughly concludes. He was evidently a man of such position and with such assistance at his command as to be able to overawe the bigots; and the affair passed off for the time. It was probably from this passage that the story of the boy Abram's smashing his father's idols found its way into the Talmud, for some of the circumstances are very similar.

The Latitudinarian is very "good natured" and honest (negatively); he is a much more agreeable neighbor than the bigot at any time. Occasionally he is a Nothingarian and does not profess to care anything for or against any phase of religion, like Gallio or Meroz; and occasionally he is an Everythingarian -- generally an Arian of

some sort, whether avowed or not, in these times; and then he can see so much to be said for all sides of a question, that like Chunder Sen he can construct a brand new religion from selected parts of all the others; or still more probably, like Reuben he will sit on the fence with "heartsearching" introspection, and leave the others to do the fighting. Why should he fight? He sees with calm and comprehensive sight that Black is not all Black, nor White so very White. Thus he sits impartially until the contending parties decide which theory is by survival the fittest for popular acceptance, when he gets down quietly and joins the victorious party; but he maintains his reputation for sagacity and impartiality by representing their opponents' side of the contention in the role of a "candid friend." He has often a large and capacious intellect and makes an excellent judge to sum up the evidence pro and con, like Francis Bacon; But a bribe or a threat may lead him, as it led Bacon, to pervert judgment. He is not deliberately wicked, for he neither hates nor loves any one strongly enough for that; yet his selfishness and weakness may wreck the best cause and betray his dearest friend, as Bacon's led Essex to the scaffold. He lacks one thing needful; he is heartless, and consequently weak of purpose and afraid to be in a minority: like those lukewarm Laodiceans who, because they were neither cold nor hot, were cast out of the mouth of One Who had stood alone thorn-crowned and ridiculed against the whole world.

The Bible Treasury 20:184,185

OBEDIENCE AND DEPENDENCE

I will now say a word as to the present expectation of the Lord's coming at any moment. People who attempt to fix time are wholly mistaken. The Father has kept that in His own power. Not that we may not discern the times; the Lord says, "How is it that ye do not discern this time?"

There are moral elements around us that a spiritual mind discerns at once; but the fixing of dates is a mistake. It is no mistake to be always expecting the Lord to return.

The object of the conversion of the Thessalonians was to wait for God's Son from heaven. People fancy that the truth of the Lord's return is a bit of knowledge at the top of the tree; but instead of that, it is what the Thessalonians were converted for, and meanwhile they are to serve God.

People say Paul made a mistake, but I can tell you he is going to get precious fruit from it when Christ comes again. He has to wait meanwhile, but that is no great loss, for "to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Yet the apostle himself did not know how to choose between the two, because if he went up there, he could not work for Christ down here.

The present constant expectation of Christ stamps its own character on the Christian: "Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding."

It is by this that the Christian, in his mind and thoughts, becomes associated with Christ Himself. You find this specially in the letter to the church at Philadelphia, for there, besides keeping His word, and not denying His name, you read, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience." Whose patience? Christ's. Christ is waiting; and He is waiting a great deal more truly and earnestly than we are.

We are waiting for Him, and He is waiting for us, with all the love that the Bridegroom bears to the bride. True, He is waiting until His enemies be made His footstool; but, for His friends, He has perfected His work; and He sits expecting as to His enemies, and then He will rise up to judgment. He does not know the time in that sense (of course, as God, He does) but it is not a revealed thing yet.

He is waiting, and we wait for Him, but so complete is the association, now in spirit, and then in glory, that save His personal glory, He cannot take any glory until He has us with Him, for we are joint heirs with Him.

It is blessed association with Himself that we find in Revelation 3:8-11.

J. N. Darby, *Notes and Jottings*, pp. 84,85.

"HIS WILL" -- "HIS WORK"

My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work (John 4:34).

There are two points to be observed in the reading of the Old Testament, without which it cannot rightly be understood. The first is, that the gap or interval in time, from the ascension of Christ to heaven till the taking up, or rapture of His own, is never contemplated in its Scriptures; nor is it ever computed as time at all. And the second is, that what is said of the Lord in many cases in these Scriptures, is similar in language to what is said of the Church -- His body, in the New Testament. Thus it is that Paul, speaking of the mystery of Christ and the Church, calls these truths, with all collateral ones, "The unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. 3:8.)

The searchable things were all there: Incarnation, Life of suffering, Atoning death, Resurrection, Ascension to heaven, Receiving gifts in the man, Coming again in glory, His glorious reign or Kingdom. All these were to be found in the Old Testament. But the interval in time from the ascension -- characterized by the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the Church -- as an habitation of God, His abiding with her during her earthly sojourn while Christ is hidden in the heavens, and His coming forth to receive her to Himself when caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air; these things were not in the Scriptures of the Old Testament; they were "hid in God," "according to the purpose of the ages." Nor are they spoken of by any of the apostles or teachers of the New but Paul. Old Testament Scriptures are silent as to them; so are New Testament apostles and prophets -- with the exception of him.

I mention one Scripture out of many as to the interval, or gap, of the New Testament times being unnoticed in the Old. The well-known passage from Isaiah 61:1,2, first clause, cited by the Lord in the opening of His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:18,19), as far as the middle of a sentence, when He closed the book and sat down, causing all in the synagogue to fasten their eyes upon Him. The parenthesis of grace thus falling between that moment and

the fulfillment of the next clause -- "And the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." Yet when He foretells the long centuries of judgment which ensued upon His rejection, during which "Jerusalem [would] be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24), He touches upon His second coming in glory, according to Isaiah 63:1-4, connecting with that "day of vengeance" the words -- "For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (Isaiah 63:4); also, "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:23); and again these -- "Then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (v. 28.)

The parenthesis of *grace* thus lying between that day in Nazareth, and the day of His coming in power and great glory. The parenthesis of *glory* of which Paul treats, lying again *within* the other parenthesis of *grace* of Luke, from His ascension to the rapture of the saints on high, while the "unsearchable riches of Christ," "the manifold wisdom of God" -- in Christ and the Church, are unfolded. These come forth when Christ is in the glory and the Holy Ghost here.

We see this, too, in the portion of the passages of Isaiah 49:6-8, cited by Paul in the New Testament, which apply to Christ Himself in the Old, and to the Church, His body, in the New. "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." This the prophet speaks of *Christ*. And Paul at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:47), "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Again, "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time I have heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." (Isaiah 49:8.) This of *Christ*. While Paul, of the Church, in 2 Cor. 6, "We then, as workers together, beseech also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." In Rom. 8 also, speaking of the security of the believer, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" While Isaiah, of *Christ*, in chap. 50, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that pluck off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting He is near that justifieth me who is he that shall condemn me?"

Now while all this is true, and the general matter of the Old Testament is silent as to these things, when it deals with the world and Israel, and Jehovah Messiah's connection with them; there are two Scriptures in the Old Testament which touch upon the counsels of God outside the earth, the line of His eternal thoughts, at which I would now look for a little. I speak of His eternal counsels as those connected with things which are outside all His dispensational dealings with the world. Prophecy connects itself with "times and seasons, and days and years," which belong to the world, and exist while it exists, ending when it ends; then the eternal counsels of God have their fruition, and time has passed away.

1. In Proverbs 8:23-36, where Christ is seen as the Eternal One, the "wisdom of God." He is there seen in two ways. First, as the *resource* of God; and second, as His *delight*, the One in whom all the good pleasure of the Eternal was. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Then follows a lovely description of the priority of Him on whom all depended, before the mountains, or hills, or oceans, or clouds were. "Then," says the Eternal One, "I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth" (before it was formed); "and my delights were with the sons of men."

2. Psalm 40 gives us the other; and while Prov. 8 unfolds to us those thoughts before the earth was, in Psalm 40 the silence of eternity is broken by the words here spoken by the Lord. Time and earth had intervened; sin had entered the fair scene, and man fell; Israel had been redeemed, and had been tried under law; prophets, priests, and kings had been there, and His people all had failed. These blessed words are then heard, and connected with the lowly path of faithfulness of Christ: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

In the epistle to the Hebrews we find the establishment of this "will." The sacrifices proved wanting, and only recalled sin to remembrance -- not putting it away; they are set aside by His one perfect blessed work, and the will of God is done. "He taketh away the first," even these sacrifices, "that He may establish the second," God's eternal will. This had been outraged through man, under the enemy's power; but could not be turned aside or disannulled (Heb. 10).

Thus we have in Psalm 40 the "*will*" of God to be made good in His cross on earth; and in Prov. 8 the "*good pleasure*" in the sons of men" revealed. In Hebrews we have the eternal *will* established; while in the Ephesians we find the "*good pleasure of His will*" brought forth from the secrets of eternity, when He is gone on high; and this to the "*sons of men*, in whom His "good pleasure," or "delights," ever were. "If ye have heard of the administration of the grace of God, which is given me to youward"; and that "Ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the *sons of men*, as it is now revealed," &c. (Eph. 3.)

From creation until He came to the earth, Jesus, the eternal Son, the wisdom of God, was ever "by Him" -- His resource, and His delight.

Did the counsels of the Godhead resolve to create the universe, or to frame the world out of the chaos which is found in Gen. 1:2? The Son was the actor, for "by *Him* were all things created." "Without Him nothing came into being that did exist."

Did man in innocence succumb to the temptations of the enemy, the old serpent, the devil? Did *sin* and *disobedience* thus enter into the world? The seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head; and in the foretold "bruising of his heel," and in the death which Adam's coats of skins required, ere he could walk forth from the garden consciously and manifestly clothed of God -- Jesus was again before the mind of the Father. How sweet to see that because of Him, in this first scene of the world's youthful history, God was the first to move in approaching the sinful pair!

Again, when *violence* entered in, and Cain slew His brother, it was because Abel, finding himself "born in sin," outside of paradise, his state as a sinner pressing upon his soul, and recognizing what a Righteous Being required to meet His nature and His claims, he brings "the firstlings of his flock and the at thereof." He came with the pure and sinless life of another, but displaying in death the excellency of life. In all this he confessed that he could not provide that which God in His nature demanded, and he as a sinner needed; and God, as it were, seeing that faith apprehended something of His resource and His delight, pronounced him a righteous man.

Did Noah's sacrifice ascend as a sweet savor in the sight of the Lord, after His judgment of the waters of the deluge, because of the earth's *corruption*? He turns at once to His resource, His delight; and says in His heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; because (***) the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done." (Gen. 8:21.)

Again, *idolatry* enters the scene; and all the world was worshipping demons rather than God. He calls Abram out, and "preaches the gospel" in him. (Gal. 3:8.) "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3.) And when Abraham ascends the mount Moriah, in company with his only son Isaac, his faith entered upon the thoughts of God Himself in Jesus, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb." The risen Isaac, "received from the dead in a figure," speaks in the sight of divine omniscience, of that scene yet to be enacted between the Father and the One then "by Him," "His delight." And God, "because He could swear by no greater, swore by Himself," to fill with "strong consolation" the feeblest heart that flees for refuge to Jesus. (Heb. 6:16- 18.)

Mark the delight, the suddenness (Exodus 40) with which in after years, when Moses had reared the tabernacle, after the people had made the golden calf, and failed in their obedience to law, God enters, and fills the whole scene so fully, that even Moses himself could not but be an intruder -- none could share His company in that tabernacle, which was the pattern of things in the heavenlies reared up in the obedience of faith, but He of whom every cord and pillar, board and altar, curtain and hanging testified.

Thus and thus was Jesus, God's resource, always "by Him," "His delight," "rejoicing always before Him."

But I need not go further. Step by step, Christ, in type and figure, in parable and shadow, kept God's heart reminded of plans that never could be frustrated; but while hindered by Satan, and man, and sin, only disclosed the inexhaustible resource that Jesus was ever before Him.

F. G. P., *The Christian Friend*, 1880

(To be continued, Lord willing.)

THE LORD'S WARNINGS

3

If the first two warnings involve what are external influences upon a believer in this scene then, perhaps the following ones can be viewed as internal in their insidious effects. The inward motions of the heart are far more dangerous than what is outside of us, even though the outward things find a response in us.

"BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS"

Beware of covetousness for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Luke 12:15).

This is an evil weed in the human heart and who of us can deny that we have it too? Covetousness is commonly thought of as having a desire to possess what we do not have. Not only is this so but also it is equally covetousness to retain what is already possessed simply to enjoy it for its own sake. We believe that we can see this brought out by the Lord in this passage in Luke.

What gave rise to the Lord giving His warning in the 15th verse was the expressed desire of the one who said to Him, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." This person evidently wanted a share of that to which he was not entitled. This is the first aspect of this common disease. It is not so plainly stated as this person did, for it is more common that the desire is within the heart, but this does not lessen the effect of it nor the responsibility as the Lord knows of it. How wondrous an example do we find in the apostle Paul who said, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel" (Acts 20:33). Further, he could say, "for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Phil.4:11-12).

What a happy state of soul to be in that we can trust the Lord

for all circumstances and remain in them with Him, as knowing that all that affects us is known to Him and allowed by Him for His glory and our blessing -- and to seek otherwise is independency. Then, the Lord follows His warning with the parable which clearly shows the selfish enjoyment of what is in one's possession with only oneself in mind. The apostle foretold to Timothy as to the last days that, "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous . . . (2 Tim.3:2). Is this not evident around us today, and has afflicted the saints to a great extent? Do we find the spirit which prevailed in the initial state of the Assembly marking us today? Then it is recorded, "neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common . . . and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:32-33). The general cry, today, is that this is now impractical. If this is so, what has made it so? It can only be that we have failed in the realization of the spirit which should activate us as built together by the Holy Spirit into 'one Body' -- that is, love for one another as the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom.5:5). It is not so much the way in which this matter can be carried out today but rather that the desire to do so has disappeared. It is a test of our hearts, as it was a test of the young man's heart when the Lord said, "go, sell that thou hast and give to the poor" (Matt.19:21).

Beloved saints, we know the One Who sold all that He had in order to buy us. Should we not be prepared to render all back to Him for His glory? David provided a magnificent quantity of material for the building of the House of God, and he said, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chron.29:14). Paul could say, "For God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor.9:7). In the Body of Christ it is clearly the proper relationship to share in what each can provide, for we learn from the apostle Paul that some contributed of their material things while others contributed in spiritual things.

We so easily gloss over this subject but there is a surprising amount of instruction in the epistles of Paul, particularly, as to the evil of "covetousness" which we ought to pay attention to since, surely, there cannot be true fellowship with one another if this sin is lurking in our hearts.

J. Pascoe

NEW CREATION, ETC.

(Continued from v. 3, # 1)

DELIVERANCE: ROM. 7

THE PLACE OF ROM. 7 IN THE BOOK

In order to understand the teaching of Rom. 7 and why the things spoken of in the chapter appear at that place in the book of Romans, it is instructive to see that Rom. 1-8 divides into two main sections:

Rom. 1 - 5:11. This section deals with sins -- what we have done -- justification by blood. It is about the person's guilt and the grace of God that meets it. We are brought "from conscious guilt into divine favour and knowledge of divine love, as justified by Christ's work The doctrine of sealing is not found here; but the person is sealed the first part is complete in itself; the man is a pardoned, justified man, enjoying God's favour, His love in his heart by the Holy Ghost given to him, and rejoicing in the hope of glory."

Rom. 5:12 - 8 This section deals with sin -- what we are, what our state was -- and justification of life. It deals with deliverance, the new power, state and standing. It has to do with our state that resulted from the sin of Adam. It is not dealing with what I have done but with what I am as connected with sin in the flesh. In this section we are brought "into the knowledge of ourselves as having died with Christ to our old state, and being in Him before God."

Now, while these two divisions in the book treat these several subjects, it would be a mistake to read these two divisions as if a continuous process in the soul were involved proceeding from ch. 3 through ch. 8. Rom. 3 - 5:11 is contemporaneous in the soul with Rom. 5:12 - 8. Thus the matter of deliverance from the law of sin and death (Rom. 7:24; Rom. 8:2) is settled when the matter of justification is.

Now, while that is also true, it does not follow that the man of Rom. 7 is sealed and is before God, in conscience, on the ground of justification. Rom. 5:12 - 6 describes a person who is delivered. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). "But thanks [be] to God, that ye were bondmen of sin, but have obeyed . . . (Rom. 6:14). "For when ye were bondmen of sin . . . (Rom. 6:20). Observe carefully that Rom. 7:7-23 describes a person who is *not delivered from the law of sin*. So Rom. 6 teaches that the Christian is not under the law of sin, while Rom. 7 describes one who has the inward man (Rom. 7:22) but is "*captive to the law of sin*" (Rom. 7:23). If Rom. 6 necessarily describes all born again souls, then it would follow, since Rom. 7 describes the state and position of some born again souls, that there are born again souls who are delivered (Rom. 6) and fall from this into an undelivered state and position (Rom. 7) -- which would be like the undoing of Israel's crossing the Red Sea. This can not be the case.

Rom. 8:2 says that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death." The person described in Rom. 6 is one that is free from the law of sin and death because "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is operative within him. If this is necessarily true of every quickened soul from the first moment, what is that law doing when that soul is in the state and position of Rom. 7? He is captive to the law of sin (Rom. 7:23) and is set free from the law of sin (Rom. 8:2) and thus is not captive to the law of sin (Rom. 6:14), 17 and 20) all at the same time -- an impossible situation. And this really is the result of asserting that the man of Rom. 7 is sealed. **He is not sealed.**

So, while Rom. 3 - 5:11 is indeed contemporaneous with Rom. 5:12-8, Rom. 7:7 - 25 is a parentheses; it is parenthetical and describes the deliverance of an unsealed, quickened soul, under law in conscience, seeking power over indwelling sin on the legal principle. That is, he is before God, in conscience, on the basis of his performance for acceptance. When the lesson that self cannot accomplish this is learned, the soul looks away from the legal principle to Christ, is delivered and sealed with the Spirit and has a new law operative within him (Rom. 8:2); and thus delivered from the law of sin and death, is in liberty. "Where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

Rom. 7:7-23 cannot be contemporaneous with, or sequential to, Rom. 6. The fact is that the quickened soul's experience of deliverance is what brings it into the good of Rom. 6. Rom. 7:7-23, then, precedes Rom. 6 and also, of course, Rom. 8. We do not mean by "experience" that no act of God is involved. Of course there is. When the soul, by faith, turns from the legal principle to Christ's work alone as the basis for its continuing place before God, that is to believe the gospel of its salvation and God seals that soul. The soul is then in Rom. 6 and 8, whatever subsequent experience there may be concerning the flesh -- as was the case with Israel in the wilderness after their deliverance from the power of the taskmaster.

We have not examined the place of death in this matter and this will be done when considering Rom. 7:1-6, which will follow this part of our enquiry.

We may conclude this section with a few general comments. At the end of ch. 5 we learn about two heads and in ch. 6 about two masters. The sealed saint is under a new head. There has been a change in head. Under one head we are constituted sinners (nature), under the other, righteous. But there is a change in master also (Rom. 6). Sin shall not have dominion. We had been servants to that taskmaster sin -- sin referring to a power in our members (and this indwelling sin produces sinful acts). How has God dealt with this taskmaster within? How is its dominion broken? How do we learn about it practically in our souls? We have also changed husbands, according to the figure in Rom. 7:1-6. Not that the first husband died, but we have died (v. 6) and are to another, even Christ. Also, in ch. 7 there is knowledge acquired about two natures within. These are not the subjects of ch. 1 - 5:11.

In connection with state, Rom. 7 speaks of the acquisition of some self-knowledge. This is gained through the soul being before God, in conscience, on the legal principle. The experience of the consciousness of lust teaches the person what he is as a sinner (constitutionally); teaches what the root of the problem is. The man must learn something of what sin in the flesh is and that the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7). The man is learning that there is an absence of power. The process causes the desire to have Christ instead of self for the

basis of one's acceptance. And this leads to deliverance and sealing with the Spirit. The soul finds out what it is to be in a forgiven position before God.

THE ROLE OF LAW

The word "law" appears often in Rom. 7, sometimes without the word "the" and sometimes with it. If we speak of *the* law, reference is to the Mosaic law. The word law, without a preceding "the," refers to the principle of law; i.e., the legal principle considered abstractly. A person may, in conscience, be before God on the principle of law without it taking the form of the Mosaic law, although it certainly may take that form.

The law cursed (Gal. 3:10), killed (Rom. 7:9,11) and was a ministry of Death (2 Cor. 3:7,9). It did not communicate righteousness (Gal. 3:21) nor eternal life. It made the offense abound (Rom. 5:20) and sin, by the commandment, became exceedingly sinful (Rom. 7:13).

The law did not distinguish the children of God from those who were not children of God. It was not given to Israel as a company of children of God, nor could it be so given, for they were not that. It was given to a mixed people and addressed them in responsibility--Adam responsibility. It addressed man in his fallen, responsible position -- but in the person of the favored Israelite (and only Israelites). Thus, it addressed man in the flesh in the person of the Israelite.¹ This was the position of one under the law as to standing -- in the flesh. The fact that some were children of God does not change the fact that the way the law addressed the Israelites was as standing in Adamic responsibility -- in the flesh. I urge reflection on this point: those of Israel who were actually quickened souls were, as to their standing before God under the law, in Adamic responsibility; i.e., in the flesh, though, of course, safe for the glory since they were

¹. We are not discussing here another side of the law, namely, that it was also a covenant with the nation. It was never given to Gentiles, theology notwithstanding. None-the-less, it was a test of the condition of man, but the test was confined to a special, favored people. The result of this test case (not to teach Him Who knows all, but to demonstrate to man) is that all are proved lost, etc.

actually children of God.

The children of God put under the law were like children in their minority (not 'come of age') until God's appointed time (Gal. 4:2,3). The Christian is not under it. He is looked at as in the position of sonship ('come of age'). Those who were born of God and were under the law could walk before the Lord in integrity (Psa. 26:1; cp. Isa. 38:3 and Luke 1:6). This is not true of the man described in Rom. 7. It is not true of a born-again person now who, having heard the gospel, is before God, in conscience, on the legal basis.

The fact is that there are born again souls who are before God, in conscience, on the legal principle, and such are not in the Christian state and position. Rom. 7 addresses this matter and shows in vv. 1-6 how freedom is obtained from law and vv. 7-23 show that one in this state is not in the Christian state and position and cannot answer to this state and position. Rom. 7:1-6 shows that it is by death that freedom from this condition is experienced.

I want once more to direct attention to the fact that the man of Rom. 7 is *alive under law*. It is not merely that he does not know better, and needs to be taught that he is not really alive but is dead with Christ. The Word of God says he is alive and that the Christian is dead. If a soul receives all at new birth then he is dead with Christ. How comes it about, then, that the one described in Rom. 7 is alive? Why, it is false that the soul receives all at the moment of quickening. At quickening, the soul receives divine life from being dead in trespasses and sins. But he may be, for a shorter or longer time, in a state of being alive under law -- and that is not being dead with Christ, which becomes true of the person when delivered from the law of sin, which has power over a born-again soul while alive under law. According to the figures used in Rom. 7:1-6, the person is married to the law and is in need of a change of husband. This results from the person's death ("made dead to the law by the body of Christ") and being, then, to the second husband. Let us look at these verses next.

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THE FATHER'S GOVERNMENT OF HIS CHILDREN

If God has His family He must of necessity order it, according to His own mind, for His own glory, and for the blessing of every one of its members. Having committed to each child the honor and privilege of being His representative before men, it is impossible that He can permit them to continue in self-will or self-pleasing. He has therefore instituted a holy government over them -- a government which carries with it, as all governments must, provision for chastisement in case of insubjection and disobedience, and rewards for those who acknowledge and submit themselves to it. It is well that every child of God should understand this; for nothing is more alarming than the wide-prevailing claim on the part of many of the people of God to be a law unto themselves. No; if by grace I am a member of God's family, the Father's will must be my only law; His authority must be very zealously maintained. The honor of God as our Father is concerned in it, and my own happiness, and the happiness of all the children of God, is dependent on it. If but one child in a family refuses the parental control, he brings discord and unhappiness into the midst of the household. All are affected by it. So is it likewise in God's family. All His children are so linked up together that they must be affected, consciously or unconsciously, by one another's conduct. All alike therefore are concerned in upholding the Father's authority.

If we now turn to a passage in 1 Peter, we shall find the principle of this government clearly stated. He says, "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Peter 1:17). This scripture, from the want of careful consideration, has been the subject of much misconception. It has sometimes been spoken of as referring to the future judgment -- to our manifestation before the judgment-seat of Christ. But this is impossible; for the Lord Himself expressly tells us that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). It cannot then be the judgment in the future, whether before the judgment-seat of Christ, or the great white throne; from both these alike it is the Son who will pronounce the award. What, then, is the judgment to which Peter refers? It is the judgment which the Father carries on daily in the midst of His family -- a present judgment therefore, and not a

future one. And nothing can be more solemn than the way in which it is here stated. In human families the parental government is often very remiss and uncertain. Through the weakness of the parents' hearts many offenses are unnoticed, and the greatest transgressor oftentimes escapes. Partiality or favoritism too frequently destroys the peace and comfort of many a home. It is not so in the family of God. Though He loves, or rather *because* He loves, all His children with a perfect love, there is no respect of persons with Him, no indulgence shown to one more than another; but He deals with all alike in maintaining His authority and government for the welfare and blessing of all.

And the judgment is according to every man's work. By Him actions are weighed with unerring accuracy; for He seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. Only thus is it possible to discover the true character of our works. Outwardly they may often seem good and beautiful, but the revelation of the motive from whence they sprung would perhaps entirely change our estimate. The Father's eye rests upon the inmost springs of our conduct, and He therefore is never deceived. The nature of every word we speak, and every act we do, is at once apparent to Him, and upon this knowledge this righteous, yet tender and loving, judgment is based.

It would make an immense difference if we live in the recollection that we are thus before the Father's eye, and under His government. Hence indeed the exhortation which the Spirit of God gives us through Peter. If this be so, pass the time of sojourning here in fear; that is, a gracious fear of grieving the Father's heart, the fear which springs from the sense of the holiness of His character. The apostle Paul, after bringing in the truth of our future manifestation before the judgment-seat of Christ, says, "Knowing the terror" (fear) "of the Lord, we persuade men." It is well, indeed, for our hearts to remember that while we are brought into the most tender and intimate relationships with God as our Father, He is ever the Holy One, and that His government of His family is also holy. Confidence in His grace and love, and the full enjoyment of liberty in His absence, which He in grace has accorded to us, should never prevent, but rather lead to, our cherishing the most reverential fear. It is true that perfect love casteth out fear -- all fear of God as a Judge; but it brings with it and intensifies the holy fear of which Peter speaks.

This will be further seen if we notice the grounds on which he urges the exhortation -- "Forasmuch as ye know," he proceeds, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." He thus reminds us that God has absolute claims upon His children as founded upon redemption. These two things are always connected. In Exodus 12 God spares the Israelites (their first-born) in consequence of the sprinkled blood of the passover lamb; and in chap. 13 the feast of unleavened bread is instituted, whereby the children of Israel are taught that the whole period of their lives, typified by the seven days, must be consecrated to God. The apostle alludes to this when he says, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 7:7,8). Or, as he says in another place, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:19,20).

But Peter seeks to enhance the character of God's claims by pointing out the cost of our redemption. There were two symbols of redemption in the Old Testament. Whenever the children of Israel were numbered God required that each man should give a ransom for his soul. This ransom money was expressed by half of a silver shekel, and this was "to make an atonement for their souls" (Exod. 30:11-16). On one occasion, in token of their gratitude for a remarkable preservation in the war against the Midianites, they offered gold instead of silver (See Num. 31). Both silver and gold, as the two most precious metals, were thus used as a figure of redemption. Peter alludes to this when he writes to the Hebrew believers and says; "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." He thus contrasts the value of the blood of Christ, its infinite value in the eyes of God -- derived as it is from the whole truth of the person of Christ -- with that silver and gold; and the point to which he would call our attention is, that God's claim upon His children are according to the preciousness of the blood by which they have been redeemed.

It was so typically in the case of the priests. At their consecration the blood of the ram was sprinkled on their right ears, right thumbs, and right toes -- signifying that henceforward they were, according to the value of the blood, not their own, but Jehovah's; that they were to hear, to act, and to walk for Him. So with ourselves. It is a simple but most blessed truth, that we belong to Him who has redeemed us. This settles every difficulty in our daily lives. It is now not our own will and pleasure, but God's. We are turned to Him from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. We can therefore now readily understand this apostolic precept -- "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

He even supplies an additional motive. This Lamb -- the Lamb of God -- has been entirely of God's providing. He was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. God had thought of His people from all eternity, and had told out all His heart for them in the gift of His beloved Son; and when He who had died to redeem us lay in His grave, God came in and raised Him up out of death, and gave Him glory, that those who believe might have their faith and hope in God. Surely a God of perfect love and grace! He has redeemed us by the precious blood of Christ, He has made us His children, so that we address Him as our God and Father; and it is He who, in His government, judges according to every man's work. Who should govern us if not God? Yea, the pillars of the government of His family are His love and grace as exhibited in the gift of His only-begotten Son, and they rest upon that eternal redemption which was accomplished by the precious blood of Christ.

If we turn now to the epistle of the Hebrews, we shall find the character and object of the Father's government more fully unfolded. There we read, in connection with the trials through which these saints were passing, "It is for chastening ye endure,² God dealth with you as sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. 12:7,8). Now chastening

². This is generally accepted as the better reading.

belongs to government, and it springs from the very relationship, as the writer of this epistle shows, between the father and the son. But the whole subject, as introduced here, is so interesting and profitable that it will be helpful if we examine it in its context.

In chapter 11 the subject of faith -- faith as seen in its action and power -- is dealt with, and numerous illustrations of it are adduced, as seen in the saints of old. But all these illustrious examples are but preparatory to, and as it were shadows of, the one perfect example of Christ. He alone, whatever the excellency and the devotedness of those who had gone before, He alone, is the leader and completer of faith, the only perfect exhibition of it from the commencement to the end of His course. "Wherefore," says the writer of this epistle, "seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking" (looking off, away from all these witnesses) "unto Jesus, the Author" (Leader) "and Finisher of faith." There the character of His life of faith is indicated in a few words. The joy set before Him is the encouragement and sustaining power; but His path itself is summed up briefly in these significant words, He "endured the cross, despising the shame." Ah, what a life indeed was His!

"A mourner all His life was He,
A dying Lamb at last."

Yes; the cross is the characteristic of the life of faith; but faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, gives the power to despise its shame, and then at length, even as the Lord Himself is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, there will be the entrance upon the enjoyment of its fruition in His presence, where there is fullness of joy, and at His right hand (though this place belongs alone to Christ), where there are pleasures for evermore.

Now we have the object of the presentation of the perfect example of our blessed Lord. In the path of faith all must endure the cross. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." The cross cannot be avoided. Self must be refused, and the cross taken up -- death accepted. But God brings this in upon us frequently by the action of adversaries--

persecutors. Hence the apostle says, "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood" (died a martyr's death) "striving against sin." He would thus encourage and console these believers by pointing them to the surpassing sufferings which Christ endured -- sufferings which had their termination in a martyr's death. His death was much more than this; for He was at the same time the sacrifice for sin; but here the question is simply of what He met with in the pathway of faith.

Having thus encouraged the fainting hearts of the saints by the example of Christ, the apostle now adduces another thing, and this it is that belongs especially to our subject of God's government of His children. He proceeds, "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." The especial thing to be noted, as unfolding the ways of God with His children, is that He takes up "the contradiction of sinners," the opposition and persecution we may meet with in the path of faith, and uses them as needed chastisement. For in this scripture it is not the direct dealing of God's hand that is alluded to, but the trials and difficulties attendant upon the path of the believer through this world, which God nevertheless uses as instruments for our needed chastisement and blessing.

And nothing can be more blessed than this when understood. And how quietly will our souls then repose upon God; for we learn that all these things are under His control, and that He uses them for our blessing. We have a beautiful illustration in the life of our Lord of the action of faith in the presence of the power of the enemy. In the garden of Gethsemane, when, under the guidance of Judas, a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees came to apprehend our Lord, Peter, with impetuous zeal and fleshly energy, drew his sword, "and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear . . . Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:3-11). It was Satan who was leading on these evil men, stirring up "the contradiction of sinners" against our blessed Lord. Their thoughts and actions were wholly evil. But our Lord, in the perfection of His confidence and faith, was above these instruments of

the Wicked One, and in communion with His Father, and He would thus receive the cup, not from Satan, but from the hands of the Father. He was therefore in perfect peace and calm, undisturbed by the malice and enmity of His adversaries, knowing that, though they were led captive by the devil at his will, there was a greater One behind the scene, using the wrath of Satan for the accomplishment of His blessed purposes of grace and love. Far be the thought that the Lord needed this contradiction of sinners against Himself. He did learn obedience by the things which He suffered; and all these persecutions and sorrows lay in the path on which He had entered for the accomplishment of the will of God. As the Captain of our salvation He was made perfect through sufferings. And just because of this it is so infinitely precious to look away from everything to Him -- to Him who endured the cross and despised the shame.

Applying all this to ourselves in view of our subject, we may gather some most profitable lessons. We learn, first, to connect all that may befall us in our path, coming upon us however it may, through the injustice and wickedness of man, or through our circumstances, with our Father's hand. Doing this we shall never be disturbed or disquieted, or be tempted to resent the action of others; but we shall quietly rest in the hands of our Father, in the spirit of David who said, when Shimei was cursing him, "the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who then shall say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" Yes, it will still every rebellious thought, and pacify our rising indignation under the sense of injustice or persecution from others, if we can but in lowly humility and confidence say with our blessed Lord, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Secondly, we gather from the scripture in Hebrews that all these things are but the expressions of the Father's love. It is, "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." And again, "God dealeth with you as with sons." It is therefore in Fatherly affection, watching over us in His tenderness, noting our need of correction and discipline, and permitting the very thing to come upon us which will accomplish the desired end. Earthly parents will too often overlook the failings of their children: they spare the rod because of their children's crying, and thus in their fond partiality or weak indulgence allow the bad habit or evil tendency to go uncorrected. Not so with God. He loves us too well, and never spares His rod if thereby He can bless His children. But

"He lifts it up on high,
 With pity in His heart,
 That every stroke His children feel
 May peace and joy impart."

To enter into this will make an immense change in our experience. Meeting with trials and difficulties, we shall instantly ask, "What has the Father to say to us through these things?" In this way we shall receive nothing but blessing through the most adverse circumstances.

The third lesson has been anticipated, but may yet be stated in a distinct form. It is that God never chastens or scourges us unless there is something in us to require it. Having this truth in our minds, instead of complaining of our sorrows and trials, we shall at once seek, in the presence of God, to discover what secret sin or evil habit it is that has been suffered to pass unjudged, and has made it necessary for God to come in with His rod. For we must not forget that it is for chastening we endure, and that God dealeth with us as sons. Then, moreover, we shall not despise the chastening of the Lord, inasmuch as we shall have learned that He has a motive and a cause for it; nor shall we faint when we are rebuked of Him, assured as we shall be of His love in His action towards us.

There is also the solemn reminder that if we are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. Old Bishop Fuller has illustrated this truth by an incident. Walking down the street one day, he saw two boys quarrelling, and watching them he perceived that one of the two was chiefly in fault. Presently a man came running out of a house, and seizing the lad who was least to blame, he began to chastise him. The bishop interposing said, "Why do you beat that boy? It is the other who deserves it most." "That may be," replied the man; "but this is my son." So it is; God chastises His children. "To be without chastisement therefore," says the Spirit, "is a sign that you are bastards and not sons." Asaph did not understand this truth, and therefore says, "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men." But of himself he says, "All the day long have I been plagued, and

chastened every morning." (Psalm 123:3-14.) His difficulty was removed when he went into the sanctuary of God, and it is also met and explained by the Holy Spirit in this scripture. (Heb. 12:8.)

The apostle now proceeds to enforce his instruction, first, by a parallel, and then by a contrast. He reminds us that we gave the fathers of our flesh reverence when they corrected us. Subjection to and reverence for them belong to the relationship of children to their parents. It is this which is taken up and urged as a ground of submission to God in His chastening. "Shall we not," he adds, "much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?" The term "Father of spirits" is used in contrast with the "fathers of our flesh;" and the argument is, if we gave the latter reverence, much more should we do so to the Former. This, moreover, is the path of life. As one of old said, "God often shakes His rod that He may not strike, and He strikes that He may not kill." In this He manifests His love -- seeking to preserve His children from every false way -- the way that seemeth right to a man, but the end of which is death.

The object of the chastening is now fully stated, and this as contrasted with the discipline to which we were subjected by the fathers of our flesh. These chastened us for a few days after their own pleasure, according as it seemed good to them, wisely or unwisely, and often, alas! from mere caprice or a passing feeling. Not so with God. He always has in view our profit, and the object that we might be partakers of His holiness. Such is the great end God ever proposes -- our sanctification, conformity to the image of Christ. He seeks this by all the chastenings which we are called upon to endure. Like vines, our poor hearts send out tendrils in all directions, winding themselves around this and that object; and then it is that the Father permits trials or persecutions, or it may be sickness, to come in to snap these ties to objects other than Christ, and by the discovery of Himself and His love to us in these chastenings of His hand, He seeks to wean us from everything that might hinder our progress, and to attract us more fully to Himself.

It may be profitable to point out that there are differing causes of our chastening. In 2 Cor. 12 we find that the object of the thorn in the flesh was to prevent the apostle from spiritual pride on account of the wondrous revelations made to him when he was caught up into Paradise. In 1 Cor. 11 the Lord chastened His people for levity of

conduct at His table. In John 15 the branch that beareth fruit is purged that it may bring forth more fruit. But whatever the cause, whatever it may be in us that makes the discipline necessary, the end proposed, in the unspeakable love of our God and Father, is our truest blessing.³

What a view this subject gives us of the Father's watchful care and love. His eye is ever upon us, noting our state and condition, and He adapts His dealings with us, and the character of His dealings, sending persecution or trials in our circumstances, or sicknesses, as may be most calculated to effect the desired end. He knows, and He alone, what will most quickly touch us, now hot the fire must be to purge away our dross, and He orders all accordingly; but He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it. Yes, "He stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind." Blessed be His name!

But the Spirit of God reminds us that the process will not be pleasant. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." God would have us feel the chastening. Indeed, His desire is to produce in us self-judgment and humiliation before Him; hence the blessed result is connected with our being exercised thereby. If there be no exercises of soul produced by His hand upon us, there will be no blessing. Whenever therefore He begins to deal with us, our first thought should be, "There is a cause for it," and this should lead us into the presence of God, as it did David when the pressure of famine was upon the land, to enquire of the Lord (See 2 Sam. 21). He will then reveal to us wherefore He has been compelled to use His rod, and thus humbling ourselves under His mighty hand, He will give us in due time the enjoyment of the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

³. We have not distinguished here the different characters of the chastening. In 1 Cor. 11 it proceeds from the Lord, because it is for sins at His table, and so the thorn in the flesh is under His permission, because it is in connection with Paul as His servant. The reader will find it most profitable to note these distinctions.

Having this end of God's ways with us revealed, the apostle might well exhort us to courage and confidence. "Wherefore," he says, "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." Faltering with distrust under chastisement may have the most disastrous effect upon feeble believers; whereas, on the other hand, God is glorified abundantly, and souls are blessed when a saint, passing through deep waters, leans with unshaken trust on the arm and heart of Him who is thus dealing with Him. We cannot therefore too often assure ourselves of God's end in our chastisement, nor can we count too confidently upon His love to sustain us under it. Being our Father in His grace, He must govern us, according to His own will; but the end of His government is our most perfect blessing.

From E. Dennett, *The Children of God*.

REMARKS ON "SHOWERS" AT A WEDDING SHOWER

A wedding shower is an opportunity to open the Scriptures and read a few verses together. Today, let us read a part of Psalm 72, which is a psalm "for Solomon." Solomon also wrote about the course of true love in the Song of Songs, so perhaps we may claim a little connection between this Psalm and our happy occasion today.

O God, give the king thy judgments, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. . . . He shall come down like rain on the mown grass, as showers that water the earth (Ps. 72:1,6).

When I woke up this morning, I looked out the window and it was raining, and perhaps you noticed that too. And here we are at a "shower". And, you know, it is a happy thing to be at a shower, especially with a view towards a wedding, a marriage. And here is a verse about a shower (v. 6). The verse is about the Millennial Kingdom; it is about the Lord Jesus in the day of His glory. And it says that *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass as showers that water the earth*. The point of the psalm is that there is

nothing so important for the Millennial Kingdom as the Lord Jesus: **He** shall come down like showers.

Now a wedding shower is also the occasion for a few public words of private advice to a couple who intend shortly to be married. That may sound a little contradictory but here is the preeminent lesson for today: **The most important thing in a Christian marriage is that the Lord Jesus should get His portion first.** He is the blessed Object of a Christian marriage. The purpose of a Christian is not to have a multitude of children, or to found a dynasty, or to raise a great house with brick and mortar. The purpose of a Christian marriage is that the Lord Jesus should be exalted. So the apostle Paul, when he was speaking of husbands and wives, said, "I speak as to Christ, and as to the assembly" (Eph. 5:32). It was, no doubt, difficult for him to speak to husbands and wives without being reminded of the glory of the Lord Jesus.

Many years ago there was a brother whose name was Mr. Checkley of California and who wrote a little poem about marriage. In this poem he addressed first his wife, and then the Lord.

Your love, dear, and my love
The Savior would possess.
Neither He nor we
Could be satisfied with less.

Lord, Thy love and our love
Most sweetly do combine
To satisfy forever
Both our hearts and Thine.

This sweet thought means that the love and affection that we find here in marriage between husband and wife is not to leave the Lord out, but to draw our hearts closer to Himself that we might love Him more. And so the Scripture says, "Husbands, love your own wives." And it has never, never been God's purpose that a husband's love would interfere a particle with the love that you two dear ones have to the Lord Jesus. And again, that "even as the assembly is subjected to the Christ, so also wives to their own husbands in everything." And it has never, never been God's purpose that the subjection of wife to husband should interfere with the love that you

have to the Lord Jesus. He Who has drawn you together desires to draw you *together* closer to Himself.

So that is the BEST shower in all the Scriptures: it is the Lord Himself. But there are other showers in the Bible that have to do with marriage also. Let us look at another one in Matthew 7:24-27.

Whoever therefore hears these my words and does them, I will liken him to a prudent man, who built his house upon the rock; and the rain came down, and the streams came, and the winds blew and fell upon that house, and it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And every one who hears these my words and does not do them, he shall be likened to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain came down, and the streams came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and its fall was great (Matt. 7:24-27).

When He says, "The rain came down," these are not "showers of blessings"; there is a verse about that too, but I thought that would be a little obvious to read today because we hope you know that "showers of blessings" are what we desire and pray for you. But there come into our lives also "showers of circumstances." Here, we have read of a most vehement rain, and the house in v. 25 fell not--for it was founded on a rock. The lesson is that your house will take its character from its foundation. So probably I have the kind of responsibility that you do: in my youth I heard much good ministry, and read some more like *Light in Our Dwellings* by J. A. von Poseck. But a good foundation will only come if we actually *do* it. How often we have difficulty doing and practicing the truth we have heard and learned! But it will make a house for you that will be solid and secure even in showers of circumstances.

Let us look now at a third "shower" in Prov. 27. I did not read this one first, nor do I read it now, because it may appear the least bit humorous: it *really* is not. It is really one of the most distressing and terrible showers that you will find in all the Book.

A continual dropping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike: whosoever will restrain her restraineth the wind, and his right hand encountereth oil (Prov. 27:16).

The shower of contention is a very sad shower. The showers of circumstances come into our lives and this is one way to respond to those showers of circumstances. It is like a "Chinese water torture." Do not think for a moment that this is a one-sided verse, condemning the poor contentious woman. If her husband had shown her the love and affection that he ought to have shown her, perhaps she would not have developed all the contentions that she did. Preventive medicine for this shower of contentions is found in Eph. 5:22-33. I wanted very much to read these Scriptures and was not sure at first how to work them into the topic of showers, but we may take them as the remedy for showers of contentions.

Husbands, love your own wives, even as the Christ also loved the assembly, and has delivered himself up for it, in order that he might sanctify it, purifying [it] by the washing of water by [the] word, that *he* might present the assembly to himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things; but that it might be holy and blameless. So ought men also to love their own wives as their own bodies (Eph. 5:25-28).

One of the things I wanted to say today was to pass on a piece of advice that has been very helpful to me over the years: **READ YOUR OWN MAIL!** That is to say, though you may both be aware of all that is written in the chapter, you will do well to pay diligent heed to that which is particularly addressed to yourself.

Here it says, "Husbands, love your own wives." This is preventive medicine to avoid ever having practical experience with those showers of contentions that we were reading about. We would not get that instruction as husbands if the Lord did not know that we needed it. I remember thinking shortly before I was married, in pretty much these words, "One thing is sure, I am certainly in love." God grant that you too may live to see your love grow deeper than you can now imagine possible, to realize that you never did love her the way you will in time to come. Because love is meant to grow, and in a properly ordered Christian marriage, it does. You may shake your head in time to come and say, "How could it have been? Did I ever really love her then compared to how I love her now?" A dear brother told me before I was married that I would someday say such

words, and I didn't believe it. So I don't suppose it will be more believed today, but you should remember that love is supposed to grow. You just heard that before you were married, and when you have learned the truth of it in your lives maybe you can pass it on to someone else. The growth of love is a marvelous thing!

Did you notice that in reading Eph. 5, I began at "my own mail," the portion addressed to husbands? Let us go back to read the portion addressed particularly to the wife.

Wives, [submit yourselves] to your own husbands, as to the Lord, for a husband is head of the wife, as also the Christ [is] head of the assembly. *He* [is] Saviour of the body. But even as the assembly is subjected to the Christ, so also wives to their own husbands in everything (Eph. 5:22-24).

This too is preventive medicine for those terrible showers of Prov. 27 just as much as is the husband's love for his wife. We could not wish you two anything better than that you would have these two things *alive* and *active* and *practiced daily* all your married life. I received some good advice once from a brother before I was married, and I confess that I have not taken his advice as much as I should have, but it is good advice all the same. He said, "EVERY DAY, tell her that you love her!" That helps. Most wives appreciate hearing that. And an elderly sister gave my own dear wife some good advice once too. She said, "Obey your husband. I did not do so in my own case and the result was only sorrow."

So the most important shower is the Lord Himself. Then there are showers of circumstances, showers of contention, and lastly let us consider some showers in Deut. 11.

And it shall come to pass, if ye hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love Jehovah your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give rain to your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain; and thou shalt gather in thy corn, and thy new wine, and thine oil; and I will give grass in thy field for thy cattle; and thou shalt eat and be full (Deut. 11:13-15).

I direct your attention especially to the showers here that are called "the latter rain". There is a first rain, and a *latter* rain. If the Lord tarry and leave us here a little while after this wedding shower, we will look for *latter rain*. That is, not just a little blessing now, but more also later on. So here, we can take a lesson about the latter rain from verse 18.

And ye shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them unto your children . . . (Deut. 11:18-19).

The best piece of advice I ever received for a Christian marriage was from an aged brother who said, "On the first night of your honeymoon, be sure to read a chapter together, and pray, get down on your knees together the first night of your honeymoon." That was good, good advice. I heard that years ago. It is just excellent! Do you know why it is such good advice? Because on the second night, it is a habit that you will have had *all your married life*. Imagine that! Something that has been unbroken and uninterrupted *all* the way from the first night to the second one. And by the third night, it will be *ingrained* in you and it is *good* for you. And the consequence for you will be "the latter rain." It will be the channel of God's blessing upon your latter end. Because the Scripture says, "Unless Jehovah build the house, in vain do its builders labour in it" (Ps. 127:1). So here in Deut. 11 the Lord has given us His recipe for the latter rain. In verse 19, He mentions the children. The presence of children is no reason to stop reading God's word in the family. Though written to Israel of old, we who know the Lord Jesus as Savior will find the same blessing in our lives in the reading of God's word in our families.

So we have read several Scriptures that have to do with showers and with marriage. We wish the two of you "showers of blessings". The Scriptures will provide you with remedies for any showers of contentions that may follow the showers of circumstances. We can't avoid the showers of circumstances but if you have the Lord Jesus as your Savior, and if you have His word and are obedient to it, He will provide you with a sure foundation through all the pathway that lies before you.

D. Ryan, 1987

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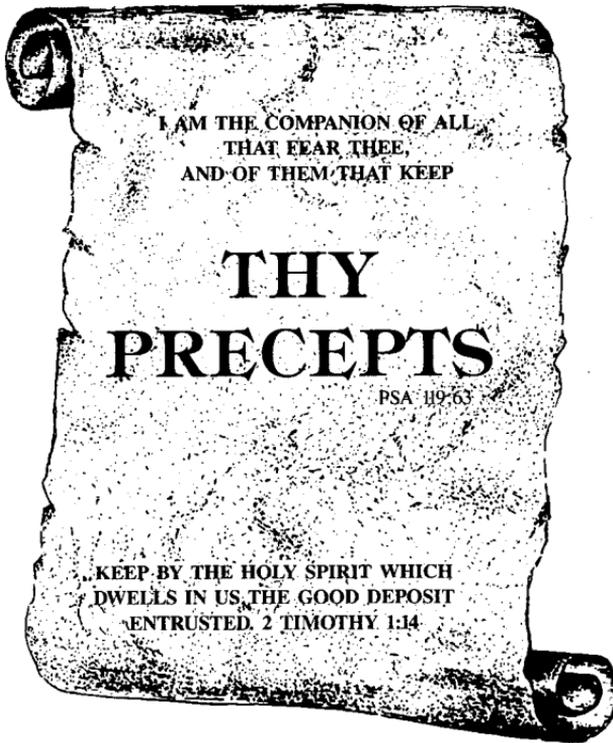
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LET THE DEAD BURY THEIR DEAD

It is in details, even as with the extremities of the body, that the energy of life is tested and proved. If the hands and feet be cold there is evidently a deficiency of vital power in the system; and though in other respects there may be good health, the coldness of the extremities is evidence that there is not much energy of life.

It is in the way we deal with those related to us naturally that we shew the force and measure of divine power in us. There can be action, and action sufficient to testify of the existence of life; and yet not enough to enable us to act in quite a new and independent way towards our relatives. Abram, with his father Terah, may remove from Mesopotamia, but until his father is dead, he does not come into the land. When grace takes possession of the soul and a new man is formed, there will be, for a long time -- unless there is much exercise of conscience -- occupation with it as an object, a seeking to obtain light and instruction for it, rather than to avoid the influence of those to whom we are naturally attached and related. The world, and general society, will be easily refused and separated from; but from those to whom our hearts cling -- to whom the tie of nature gives a claim -- there will not be separation until the strength of Christ makes their society insupportable. Any one at all spiritual feels that he must get away from the society of the world; he is miserable if he does not, but it is often long and tedious before any one obeys the Master's word: "Let the dead bury their dead." Saints, who would not listen to the world's conversation and comments, feeling how irksome and injurious it would be, submit to it from their relations and often even from their fellow Christians. They seem unable to distinguish between the world in those who are not related to them, and in those who are. They turn away from the world on one hand, and bear with it on another. And thus a man's foes are the men of

his own house. The world is not only as bad in one's own family as in those not related to us, but it is far more injurious just because it is less feared and less distant. The fact is, the heart blinds or clouds the conscience. If there were no tie, no affection, the conscience of the saint would soon wince because of the worldly influence that the natural man always exerts by his very presence; and once his company is accepted, many worldly things then must be suffered in order not to offend him. Things and habits are retained or excused in order to be more agreeable to this or that worldly relative; and thus, not only is the society borne with, but worldly habits and dress are retained in order to accommodate oneself, not to the world, but to the worldly relation. Saints have little idea of how much of the world they retain, in order to suit their relatives; they fear to make themselves entirely repugnant to them. If you go into any one's house, or observe any one's habits, and challenge anything which is worldly, you will find that the ground on which it will be defended is either that one must not do away with everything belonging to position, or one must not make one's house unattractive or unsuitable to one's worldly relations. No doubt there is often much of the world still attaching even to some who are zealously and conscientiously seeking to be outside of it; but such an one would soon get extricated if this other and less feared influence were not brought to bear on him: namely, must he not keep up things to please, or if not so much as that, to avoid offending a worldly son, or a worldly daughter, or as is still oftener the case, a more distant relative? I believe if a devoted saint had no position to keep up, or no family influence, he would soon be simple and unworldly enough.

Now the influence which is most difficult to escape from must be the most dangerous. A man must be quite dead as to his nature who can be quite independent of the influence of his relations, and who is in no way affected by their progress or prosperity in the world. It is far easier to break with the unrelated of the world and therefore sooner effected. *That* tie is over and broken, but it is right and of God that the tie with one's own relations should continue; and hence the problem is, how to be no longer susceptible to their influence. If the tie did not exist, the matter would be simply solved; but the admitted tie as ordered of God, becomes a plea for the undue acknowledgment of it. The point is to own implicitly the tie; but to

refuse the influence which that tie would exert over one naturally, and in order to do this, one must adhere simply and implicitly to the Lord's mind, or the claim of the relation will be too easily yielded to, and then the dead do not bury their dead. It is not enough for one to have broken with the world and distanced oneself from the world's society, for then one might be like a family in exile, separate indeed from all those who are their aliens in blood and religion, and yet as full of natural tastes and feelings in the circle of their own near relations as ever. Therefore this kind of separation from the world often deceives, for such an one has only reduced the circumference of his world, to find it in the smaller circle in a concentrated form and force. It is in figure like one ascending in a balloon and by degrees finding that the higher he goes the smaller is his boundary, but he is in heart as worldly and carnal as ever. Limited circles do not diminish the strength of nature; on the contrary, the more the sphere is limited to one's grasp, the greater is the tenacity with which it is held. A man dying always clings to those dearest to him: the nearest circle to him is the last which he surrenders -- the linen cloth girt about his naked body (see Mark 14:51,52) -- and hence the most difficult. All the top branches to the very stem of a tree may die, and yet the tree remain alive; and if there is poison in its sap, it will be as strong as if the top branches had not faded away. The fact is, in order that I should be able to let the dead bury their dead, I must be completely dead in myself. I can die a great way -- break with all the outside circle, but to break entirely with the circle that comes nearest to me, and leave the dead father to be buried by the dead, requires that I should be completely free from any natural influence, and that I can simply and entirely follow the Lord. I must let the dead bury their dead, before I am fully able to follow Him. It is not breaking with all relations like a monastic recluse, but to break from their influence in order to be quite free and unimpeded in following the Lord.

In our onward course it is the one nearest to us in nature that generally hinders most, and simply for this reason -- that the natural affection makes such an one consider for us naturally, and therefore he attempts to hinder what seems opposed to our present advantage. Abram's father stands in his way. Jacob's mother because of her affection involves him in much sorrow, and the last link to her we

may conclude was broken at Beth-el, when the nurse died (Gen. 35) and the place was called Allon-bachuth. Job is hindered by his wife (Job 2:9). Peter attempts to counsel Christ according to his natural affection, and it is denounced by the Lord as of *Satan* (Matt. 16). The one we might expect most from naturally is the one to hinder and embarrass us most, if his natural affection has its way. David is driven from Jerusalem by his son whom he had illegally spared. The priesthood is lost to Eli's family because he failed to rule his sons. Natural affection had intervened and there was failure in following the Lord. And surely if it can so markedly hinder, how great and insinuating must be its influence, when there is no aim or effort to let the dead bury their dead.

Many parents can deny the world for themselves, who cannot do so for their children, and many ran well until their families grew up. If one were exiled to a distant quarter of the globe, it is plain that whatever the means, the order and the arrangements would wear another aspect when the heart was simply seeking the Lord. And why? Because there would be then no natural or family influence of any kind. Everything on our own level affects us peculiarly. A child is affected by a child of its own age coming into the room, as a dog is by the encounter of a dog, and thus in every stage and order of life.

Now, the more I have been mixed up with the world in departing from God, the more distinctly and openly (and this especially with regard to my own relations) am I required to prove my separation; even as Moses, who, when arresting the idolatry of Israel, directs all who are on the Lord's side to take every man his sword, and consecrate himself every man on his son, and on his brother.

The mixture into which they had previously fallen demanded the more manifest separation. It is often deemed sufficient to separate from the world in its organized idolatry, and seldom thought necessary that every man should put his sword by his side and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor (Exodus 32:27). The greater the ecclesiastical corruption, the more distinct must be the repudiation of it, and separation from it; and if

this separation be genuine, it necessarily must be seen where nature touches us most. It is not only the outer branches which are to be broken off, but the very rind and bark that comes nearest to us is to be stripped off and disowned if it compromises our separation. There could not be real consecration to God otherwise. How can there be a true estimate of the dishonor to God that we in nature have fallen into, if I can spare my own, and those near and dear to me at the expense of His name and truth? whereas, if on the other hand I have consecrated myself by cutting off that which is nearest and dearest to me, I prove beyond any question the enormity of the evil, and my entire repudiation of it. It is vain for a man to speak of following the Lord while the innermost and strongest chain is still unbroken. It is useless for a man to suppose that he has surrendered the stronghold (in other words that he is devoted), while he reserves the citadel where the main force is quartered. Give up the citadel and all the rest is easy enough. Prove that you are really free to follow the Lord; that there is nothing to stand between you and Him; that where there was a tie, the dearest to nature, you waived it, disowned its influence, in order to be clear of everything which could mar your faithfulness. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, and this surely is enough. John 17 fully sets before us -- the twelve disciples first, then those who believe in Him through their word -- in our relationship to the Father, then in our place in the world. There are four different ways in which the practical path of a Christian is presented in scripture. First, in Phil.3: "This one thing I do," the object, a glorified Christ, giving energy and character to the Christian's race. Second, in Phil.2: the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, the pattern and character of the mind of a Christian, always going down, even to the cross. Third, in Ephesians: being brought to God, being seated in heavenly places in Christ, I am sent out to give testimony of Him in the world. Fourth, in John 17: here the point is to put them into relationship with the Father, into the Son's place; then, the Son being glorified, the disciples are left here to glorify Him, carrying the Father's word as He carried it. They were not of the world as Christ was not of the world.

A Voice to the Faithful, vol. 5.

"HIS WILL" -- "HIS WORK"

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34).

The day came when Jesus, though always "by Him," the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, was to divest Himself of the glory He had there, before the world was; and taking manhood in the womb of the virgin, was to be "Emmanuel, God with us;" yet ever His delight, His good pleasure. In the lowly manger in Bethlehem, the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, was laid; and the anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure (His delights) in men," is sung.

Thirty years elapse, and Jesus appears amongst the crowd who were confessing their sins in Jordan. The wandering sheep were in the waters, and the Shepherd would go there too. Grace was at work in their hearts, and Jesus would go with the grace; they were confessing their sins through grace, and Jesus would be with that grace, as He, in the Godhead, had produced its fruits. At once we hear the voice of the Father, as we had heard that of the angels at His birth, proclaiming, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I have good pleasure." And the Spirit, in bodily shape, as a dove, alights upon Him. Father, Son, and Spirit, seen and heard, for the first time on earth, when He stood in the waters of Jordan, charged with the bringing forth of God's "good pleasure in the sons of men," and establishing on a revolted earth His *will!*

In a few short years we find Him on the mount of transfiguration when about to be received up. His own had not received Him; the world, though made by Him, knew Him not. A momentary glimpse of His true glory evokes the words from a bystander, "Master, it is good for us to be here," and the Father's voice again is heard owning His earth-rejected, though heaven-honored Son, as "my beloved Son, in whom I have good pleasure; hear ye Him" (Matt. 17:5). He then returns to the scene of His sorrows, and steadfastly set His face to go

to Jerusalem. The seventy disciples return (Luke 10). He had not given them power over unclean spirits when sending them forth. But faith in Him had caused them to use the value of His name, and to their joy they were answered. They return to Him and say, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name" (v. 17). How joy fills His heart, too, as they tell the tale, in the thought of the day of glory, when Satan will fall as lightning from heaven; and even the earth will yield no place for him, while he is chained in the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

But hearken now to what He says in their hearing: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it was thy good pleasure" (Luke 10:21).

And, lastly, in the gospels, when Jesus would cast the light of God on all of man's present ways (Luke 12), between His leaving them and His return, He speaks of His people as a little flock; but even so they were not to fear, "for it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

But to recall what we have touched upon, we have:

1. Before the world was, this "good pleasure" filled the heart of Jesus, "in the sons of men" (Prov. 8).

2. At the birth of Jesus it was shared by unjealous angels, and the heavenly hosts proclaimed from the excellent glory (Luke 2), "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men."

3. When He came up out of the Jordan the Father's voice again proclaims, "In thee I have good pleasure" (Matt. 3, Luke 3).

4. The same words are heard from the excellent glory, on the holy mount, "For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I have good pleasure" (Matt. 17, Luke 9, 2 Peter 1.)

5. And as He descends to His path of service, and sends forth the "seventy," and receives them as they return, He tells of His Father's "good pleasure" to reveal these heavenly secrets, not to wise and prudent, but even to babes, whose names were written in heaven.

6. And as He instructs them for their pathway (Luke 12) in this world of sin, He adds His "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." His "delights were with the sons of men."

At last the hour was come, "Your hour, and the power of darkness," when all was arrayed against Him, to stay the eternal Will being done on earth, as counselled in the heavens. If in the gospel of Luke we found the "good pleasure" so often expressed, as Luke presents Him a Man, in whom all was centered, it is in the gospel of John we find His heart set, who was presented there as the Eternal Son, to do this Will of God. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work" (John 4). "I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 5). "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 6:38). "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39).

He who expressed His own perfect will but *twice* in all His earthly path, was now to do His God's. Once in Gethsemane He expressed it, to lay it down in blessed submission to the Father, "Not my will, but thine be done;" and once again in John 17:24, for the eternal blessing of those whom His Father had given Him, "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." "Before the mountains were settled . . . Then I was by Him, one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (Prov. 8). This hour then came, and Jesus in that hour could repeat, as it were, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of me, I

delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40). And closing in the cross that work, and establishing that will, He cries, "It is finished." His will is done, and "He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost."

He died and lived again: He ascended on high in glory, and all now was removed which could frustrate that "will" of God. All was settled for ever that established it. The "good pleasure" of the "will" could now be made known to the "sons of men." We hear the exponent of it, now by the Spirit, unfold it in our calling on high of God. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:3-5). How sweet those words, "accepted," "taken into divine favor," "in the beloved." "Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord" (Prov. 8).

Now the Ephesian Epistle unfolds these eternal thoughts and counsels of our God. In it we find (as in Christ and by the Spirit) God most fully revealed and seen. His Church displays Him in these two ways:

1. God Himself to man, to the universe, as God now fully known.

2. Man before Him, displayed according to His counsels, as seen in Christ. His Church, Christ's body, in union with her Head, by the Spirit, now in mystery, and in full display in the day of glory. The Spirit too now gathering to the confession of His name on earth those who are His own, until the day when He with His Church becoming [sic] manifestly the center of an ordered universe. As we read that, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He will gather together in one all things in heaven and earth, in Christ; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

What a calling: God displayed in Christ, for "in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell" (Col. 1:19). Christ displayed in the Church His body, His bride, "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22), the ordered center of a reconciled universe, the helpmeet, the Eve of the second Adam, in the day of power.

How then is all this to be realized in the soul? How are we to walk in the power of this calling of God? We must be strengthened with all might, according to the riches of the glory of the Father, by *His* Spirit in the inner man. But for what? What need of such blessed living action of God in us? It is that this Christ, this center of all things, to whom heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings must bow the knee (Phil 2:10), "may dwell in our hearts by faith!" That the soul's affections may center in Him, surround Him, entwine themselves in Him; that being rooted and grounded in love, no Satan's power can disturb this planting of our souls in the soil of love! Down deeply have struck the roots there, though this will be tried and tested; far and wide the soul has spread its branches. Sorrows but unfold it, and want but finds in it its rich supply. Temptations to disturb it are met by the power of it ministered to the soul. The coldness of our brethren deepens the joy of its being ours. The world's sneer and scorn turn the heart more distinctly to Him who loves. The entranced soul rises to the deeper contemplation of that central Sun, and looks out from Him to the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, which center in Him, and is lost in the fields of illimitable glory. Yet it finds itself at home there, recalled by the well-known love which, as a sinner once it tasted, and found itself at peace with God; as a saint too who failed along the way, and who found its never-dying power humbling to the dust the soul with its unchangeableness; or as a chosen one of the Father before the world was -- the gift of His heart to the Son, one "whom thou hast given me." How deep the wellspring of that love must be to one who was the object of His eternal choice, whose delights were in the sons of men!

Yet this love of Christ is that which touches the heart, and makes it feel itself at home in those fields of glory. Yet while known and tasted, "it passeth knowledge." Too great for finite hearts to grasp, yet, like the babe which knows its mother's love, unable though it is to explain its power, it is the link of heart with Him whom not

having seen, even now we love.

The finite vessel is thus launched upon the infinite sea of light, and love, and God -- filled into all His fullness! "Unto Him be glory by the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all generations of the ages of ages [see Greek]. Amen" (Eph. 3:21).

The more one enters upon and realizes what the Church of God is, and, connected with His counsels for Christ's glory, what a place she holds in God's plans for the ordered manifestation of His glory, the more one feels how hopeless is the ruin which lies far and wide around our path. How false is everything which pretends to be His Church on earth! How Satan has succeeded in destroying outwardly all that bears Christ's name! How feebly do those, whose spiritual vision is opened to know somewhat of her blessing, grasp the thought of her place and calling in connection with her Head on high in glory! How few there are who care for more than that which speaks of their own blessing! How few even that have realized their personal blessing at all! How little is the voice of the Spirit heard in the bride, calling on the "bright and morning star" to "come!" How His people may say, even at their best, "My leanness, my leanness; woe is me!"

Yet God would gather a people in these days to the confession of the name of Jesus, and the truth of His body -- His bride. He would awaken bridal affections which Jesus looks for in His Church, for which He gave Himself. He has brought forth in living power these long-buried truths. He would awaken His people, and recall them to the state of those who at first looked for and awaited God's Son from heaven. He would form a heavenly company of true wholehearted souls, whose aims, and life, and work, are for the glory of His Son. Are there not those who would respond to those Spirit-wrought desires? who long to answer in all things to the heart of Christ? Surely there are. Surely when God has again brought these things to light, He will find a people who will value them, and answer to His heart's desire.

F. G. P., *The Christian Friend*, 1880 -- concluded.

THE LORD'S WARNINGS

4

The word in Hebrews 4:13 is, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." The Lord was constantly the object of attack from the ones against whom He warned when he said,

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16:6).

How easy and commonplace it is to give an outward appearance to others of piety and religious correctness, yet within there is no reality of anything for the Lord. While we readily own that there are many of the Lord's dear saints in all the systems of men which take the name of Christ, there are also far more in them who are not real believers. Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to warn Timothy, and ourselves particularly as living in the days to which he referred, that there would be those who have "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:5).

The Lord knew the hypocritical pretensions of the Pharisees and exposed their inward corruption. The apostle Paul tells us that he was, "a Pharisee, son of Pharisees" (Acts 23:6, JND translation), but his high status religiously by birth, and which was gain to him in the flesh, he learned to count as dung that he might win Christ (Phil. 3:8). It was not a matter that Paul (as Saul) was not zealous in his beliefs and actions. Many a dear deluded soul today is in this position, of being persuaded that zeal in that which is believed will be accredited for good by God. Paul said that he was "zealous toward God" (Acts 22:3) and, "being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14). It is not sufficient to be a zealous 'church goer', or even 'meeting goer'. Unless we are really the Lord's through simple faith and trust in Him we are really hypocrites equally as much as the Pharisees. It is not necessarily the case that a person is actively antagonistic to the Lord as were the Pharisees, and Saul of

Tarsus, but lacking reality and pretending to be really His is a very sad state of hypocrisy. A case was reported a few years back of one who had been breaking bread for many, many years and who confessed to the gospel preacher one evening that she had not been really saved until that night. It is very dangerous to be in such a position as some, of attending the meetings for years and hearing the glad tidings of the love of God for sinners, and taste of the good word of God and enjoy the environment of christian company without accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, for if such turn away from all that they have heard and enjoyed then there is nothing more to be offered them and there is no salvation (read the passage in Hebrews 6:4-6). We trust and pray that if there are any who read these words and are in this category, they will not hesitate another moment to own to God their simple faith in Him and trust in His shed blood which alone can cleanse us from all sin. Still, it is a word to each of our hearts as believers, that we can be hypocrites too, if we profess the truth and do not walk in it. How solemn a condemnation was the Lord's rebuke when He said to some, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Regarding the Sadducees -- these were really enemies of the Pharisees yet they allied themselves with the Pharisees when it suited them in their attempts against the glorious Son of God, as Son of Man on this earth. We find such an alliance in the case of Pilate and Herod who were enemies and yet became friends when the Lord was brought before them for the most unjust and unrighteous trial in the history of man. This religious sect was governed by rationalistic and materialistic beliefs. When Paul was brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin it is recorded in Acts 23:8 that "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both."

The Sadducees are like many today who are prepared to live a morally upright life, although despising the display in any of qualities which can only have their source in God, and limiting their beliefs to this scene with nothing existent outside or beyond it. While we would not suggest that a believer is of this order, yet we can be still marked by those things in our lives that indicate that we place more value on the things of this life than we do the "things that are not

seen" (2 Cor. 4:18). There is ample evidence that Christians today avail themselves of all the material benefits that can be obtained, in a similar manner to that of the unbelievers who have nothing else. We do easily forget the words of the Lord, "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is there will your hearts be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). There is no more certain fact than that the Lord gave us perfect advice and directs our thoughts and desires to the glory where He is now, and where we shall derive the best that He has for us to enjoy, while at the same time giving us the assurance that, "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (verse 32). How sadly we have failed to maintain the practical realization that, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14-16).

May we be occupied, in the fullness of the liberty afforded us, with our blessed Saviour in the power of the Spirit in accord with 2 Cor. 3:18, "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit."

J. Pascoe

EXTRACT

Is it nothing to have God working in us now, to will and to do of His good pleasure? Nothing that He should want to see the expression of the life of Christ in us, so as to have fellowship with the life of Christ down here? Think what it will be to have the life of Christ filling the body, in a scene where the whole will harmonize! We begin in the wilderness to end in the glory.

G. V. Wigram

PROPHETIC FALLACIES

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

Here is wisdom. He that has understanding let him count the number of the beast: for it is a man's number; and its number [is] six hundred [and] sixty-six (Rev. 13:18).

Speculations and false prophecies concerning the number 666, the number of the first beast of Rev. 13, have had a very long history. But there is always another person who hopes to be the one to 'solve' the meaning of the number. Let us examine the foolishness of this and be warned to stay away from such activities.

THE PRACTICE OF GEMATRIA

Numbers in Scripture do not appear in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts in the form of the Arabic 666 or the Roman numerals XII. The numbers are spelled out as six hundred and sixty-six or twelve, for example. The Greeks and Hebrews also used letters of their alphabets to stand for numbers -- as if we today would say, a = 1, b = 2, k = 10, j = 100, etc.¹ So, one can take a word or sentence and assign numerical values to it using the numerical values for the letters. Gematria is the interpretation of words and sentences according to their numerical value. Practitioners of Gematria seek hidden or mystical meanings of words and phrases by "counting" their numerical values. This is an old practice and it appears that the Babylonians and Greeks (especially Pythagoras and his disciples) engaged in it to gain hidden knowledge.² The practice was taken up by both Jews and Christians.

¹. See J. J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968, pp. 35,39,40,45.

². *Ibid.*, p. 126 ff.

Those who use Gematria seem to do so because they believe that God's greatness in the inspiration of Scripture is magnified by an alleged numerical scheme hidden in the letters used to write the words of the whole Bible. This mistaken belief has led to an extraordinary waste of energy and time.

W. Kelly says Gematria is not the way of the Spirit:

Some of the early Christians, especially the pious Bishop of Lyons, Irenaeus, supposed that it [the number of the beast] was "the Latin man". Others have found various names, in accordance with their polemics and prejudices. Romanists discovered in it the enigma of Luther, Protestants, the name of more than one Pope. Mahomet in ancient, and Napoleon in modern times, have been imagined. But are such notions better than conundrums? It is not the way of the Spirit to occupy God's people with reckoning letters or numbers after this value fashion. May we not be satisfied that this is one of the points of detail left for "the wise" of the latter day, and that when the time comes the clue will be given, and all the light that may be required? ³

J. N. Darby labeled Gematria "speculations of men":

As regards the number of the beast, I have no doubt that it will be very simple to the godly, when the beast is there, and the time of spiritually judging it comes, and that name will practically guide those who have to do with him. Till then, the speculations of men are not of much value. ⁴

³. *The Revelation*, pp. 308,309. See also his *Lectures Introductory to the New Testament*, pp. 504,505; and *The Revelation Expounded*, pp. 163,164.

⁴. *Synopsis*, vol.5, p. 407.

E. Dennett agrees:

The attempt has often been made to unravel the mystery of the number 666 by "calculations according to the Greek value of the constituent letters" of the supposed name of antichrist. This has opened the door, as will readily be perceived, to endless speculations. One of the earliest solutions offered was "Lateinos"; and a current one is "Napoleon", the letters in both cases, when taken according to their Greek numerical values, making up the required 666. But, as observed in the text, the solution of the number will never be reached until the actual appearance of antichrist. Then, and not till then, his correspondence with the prediction will be easily detected by God's people on the earth.⁵

G. Salmon's rules for Gematria of the number 666:

. . . It seems to me, on the contrary, that a man must know very little of the history of the interpretations of this number if he can flatter himself that because he has found a word the numerical value of whose letters makes the required sum he is sure of having the true solution. Pages might be filled with a list of persons whose names have been proposed as solutions of the problem. . . . There are three rules by the help of which I believe an ingenious man could find the required sum in any given name. First, if the proper name by itself will not yield it, add a title; secondly, if the sum cannot be found in Greek, try Hebrew, or even Latin; thirdly, do not be too particular about the spelling. The use of a language different from that to which the name properly belongs allows a good deal of latitude in the transliteration.⁶

⁵. *The Vision of John in Patmos*, London: Morrish, p. 192.

⁶. *Introduction to the New Testament*, 1904, pp. 230,231.

The first beast of Rev. 13 is the coming Roman prince of Dan. 9. Interestingly, many have sought some non-Italian name to answer to the number of the beast. At any rate, that the number points to a name is only an assumption.

SIX HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SIX OR 666?

Are the numerals 666 as opposed to the words "six hundred and sixty-six" important to this matter? Some select the number 666 as the true reading of Rev. 13:18 because that suits Gematria.

It is not likely that in some Greek manuscripts the words "six hundred and sixty-six" were substituted for the numeral. It would likely be the other way around, keeping in mind the ancient speculations about the number in post-apostolic days. The number 666 might be taken as authorizing Gematria, whereas that would hardly be the case with the words "six hundred and sixty-six".

The "666" reading seems to be a Textus Receptus reading. *The Majority Text*, by Z. Hodges and A. Farstad, may be consulted for this. The critical text published by the United Bible Societies has a long footnote showing manuscript and "church fathers" support for "six hundred and sixty-six." J. N. Darby, W. Kelly (in his last version of 1901) and F. W. Grant use "six hundred and sixty-six" in their translations. I might add here that their understanding of certain numbers being used in a *symbolic* sense has nothing to do with *Gematria*.

DOES GEMATRIA PROVE INSPIRATION?

Ivan Panin is well known for his Gematria. He even did textual criticism on this basis! J. J. Davis remarked,

The real fallacies of this system of exegesis become evident when some of the methods of calculation are examined. In many parts of the Bible important passages of Scripture do not exhibit any observable numerical phenomena. When this occurs an appeal is made to "neighboring numbers." For example, in Panin's treatment of Genesis 1:1, he discovered that the "place value" of the verse was only

298 and, therefore, not a multiple of either 7, 11 or 13. His treatment of this embarrassing problem is as follows:

The bracketed item 298, though not a perfect multiple of either eleven or thirteen, has been given to show a frequent phenomenon in Bible numerics: where now and then a number shows no numerics of itself, it is very likely within just one (and only one) of showing most striking numerics. So that though 298 is of itself no numeric number, it is within one of a multiple of both eleven and thirteen, by which numbers the schemes are already marked. That is to say: supposing a caviller should say to the Great Numberer, "How is this? Your 298 is neither a multiple of seven, nor of eleven, nor of thirteen. Do not numerics break down here?" The answer is: Not so fast, Mr. Caviller, it is neither an eleven, nor a thirteen, but it has both of them at each side; one at the right thereof, the other at the left thereof! . . . It is within one and only one, of a multiple of eleven, and within one, and only one, of a thirteen. The eleven and the thirteen thus stand guard at each side thereof, to protect it, as it were, from the slur that it shows no numerics after all!

Such reasoning hardly needs criticism, for it will fall under its own weight. According to this argument a miss is not as good as a mile or, in other words, a small miss is as good as a hit! Such logic has no place in a serious consideration of Biblical hermeneutics.⁷

Numeric Structures in Non-Scripture Documents.

The same writer quoted above said,

Gematria can be applied to non-Biblical documents. With

⁷ J. J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968, pp. 139,140. Used by permission.

a little ingenuity and patience one can find multiples of seven or any other number in any document. This summer, for example, while working on the translation of a fifth century B.C. Aramaic document it was discovered that a number of sevens and its multiples were present. The opening sentence reads as follows:

בְּכֹן לְכַסְלוֹ הוּ יוֹם | לְמִסְרָע שְׁנַת \ // \ //
 אֲרֵתְחַשְׁשׁ מְלָכָא אֲמַר מַחְסִיָּהּ.

"On the 21st of Chisleu, that is the 1st day of Mesore, the 6th year of Artaxerxes, [the] king, said Mahseiah." Careful analysis brought the following numerical data to light. The sentence contained 49 letters and signs, which is 7 sevens (Feature 1). The first numerical sign in the verse was | 3 or 21. This is the same as 7x3 (Feature 2). The dateline of the letter includes three numbers and the smallest time unit (day) and the largest time unit (year) are 1 and 6 respectively. The total is seven (Feature 3). When all the numerals of the sentence are added together the total is 28 or 4 sevens (Feature 4). The sentence contains only 7 sibilants (ם and ש) (Feature 5), etc.

If the reasoning of the advocates of mystical numerology is correct, then we should regard the *Conveyance Document* of 460 B.C. as divinely inspired.⁸

O. T. Allis wrote,

Symmetrical designs can be found in nature or constructed by art which have beautiful and wonderful numerical values. Snow crystals are a remarkable example of this. It is no wonder that the Pythagoreans, centuries before our era, attached especial importance to the study of numbers and sought to determine their deeper meanings and harmonies, or that the Jewish Rabbis display in Talmud and

⁸. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Kabbala a similar interest in Numerics (Gematria).

Numbers, like names, acquire significance because of what they represent. 1776 is such a number. I mention it because of its sevens. It is the year of the Declaration of Independence, a memorable event to every patriotic American. So those who are interested in Numerics as well as in history may be disposed to seek a reason that the date was 1776 and not 1775 or 1777. The number 1776 has two 7's in it. Add the first and the last figures together (1+6) and the result is a third 7. 777 is 7×111 . Subtract 777 from 1776 and the remainder is 999. 777 and 999 in connection with 1776 look mysterious and significant. Other remarkable things can easily be discovered. 1776 is 4×444 . So 444, 777, 999 are all concealed in it. Independence Day is the 4th of July. This accounts for the 4. 4 is also $1 + 3$. 1 and 3 are the figures which compose 13. So each of the 4's in 4×444 may be regarded as a cryptic reminder of the 13 colony-states that ratified the Declaration. The reverse of 13 is 31. The Declaration was signed in July which has 31 days. If 444 is subtracted from 1776, the remainder is 1332 from which 333 can be formed just as 777 is formed from 1776. These three 3's in 333 and the 3 identical numbers in 999, 777, 444, 333, all serve to remind us that the monarch of whose misrule the Declaration was an indictment was George the Third. And so on *ad infinitum*. All of which "facts" lead inevitably to the conclusion that 1776 is a very remarkable number. Q.E.D.

Finally, since the claim is made by the advocates of Bible Numerics that the numerical features they have discovered are distinctive and found only in the Bible, it may be well to point out that similar phenomena can be found elsewhere, if we have only the patience and perseverance to seek them. We shall confine ourselves to a single pattern of alleged numerical structure. Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," having 7 words and 28 (7×4) letters is regarded as a striking example of heptadic structure. Since this discussion was begun with an examination of the date number 1776, we will

turn first to the Declaration of Independence. The opening words of this famous document are, "When in the course of human events" (probably relatively few Americans can repeat it *verbatim* much farther than this). Here we have 7 words and 28 letters! We turn next to the Constitution of the United States. It begins with the words "We the people of the United States" -- also 7 words and 28 letters! This may seem striking and significant, as if intended to indicate at the very outset the great importance of these documents. But let us look a little further. In Bancroft's *History* we run across these words: "Such was the counsel of John Adams" (Vol. 8, p. 37). This sentence is not written in italics. It is not especially emphatic. But it likewise has 7 words and 28 letters!

Let us now turn to every-day life. Such sentences as the following are not at all extraordinary. We have all used them or sentences very like them. "We had tea and toast for breakfast;" "They have not had their dinner yet;" "They had bread and milk for supper;" "Will you please pass me the butter?" "I would like another cup of coffee;" "Hurry, girls, or we'll miss the train;" "The train started as we got aboard;" "Their silly talk bored me to death;" "I enjoyed every minute of the time." And so on. Every one of these sentences has 7 words and 28 letters! Does that fact have the slightest significance? Does it add anything to their meaning? Does it account in any way for their use? Did anyone, unless he was playing a game of logomachy or working out a problem in gematria, ever count them to determine their numerical structure? Such questions answer themselves. The solemnity of the words, "We the people of the United States," is not increased one iota by the fact that the phrase has 7 words and 28 letters. The words, "I would like another cup of coffee," do not acquire added point and urgency because of this same fact.

...⁹ Ed.

⁹. O. T. Allis, *Bible Numerics*, Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, pp. 1,2,21-24. Used by permission.

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

(Continued from v. 3, # 2)

DELIVERANCE: ROM. 7

1. ROM. 7:1-4: A NEW HUSBAND

Verses 1 & 2

Are you ignorant, brethren, (for I speak to those knowing law,) ¹⁰ that law [or, the law] rules [‘As ‘have dominion,’ ch. 6:9,14”] over a man as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband so long as he is alive; but if the husband should die, she is clear from the law of the husband (Rom. 7:1,2).

As a matter of fact there *is* much ignorance concerning this matter of law and its function, but it is explained in Rom. 7, a chapter misunderstood by the vast majority of Christians. The statement made in Rom. 6:14 is explained here -- for the subject of Rom. 7 is how freedom may be obtained from the dominion of sin and how that dominion is connected with law; i.e., with being before God

¹⁰. These words in parenthesis do not say "*the* law" as if Paul is here singling out Jewish believers (as is claimed by H. A. Ironside and A. Pridham). "Brethren" here does not mean Jewish believers. Gentile believers knew something about "law" also. Some attention is required concerning when the word "law" is preceded by the article "the" and when it is not.

on a legal basis. We shall consider this fully as we go on with this chapter.

Verse 1 speaks of a person under law. It is clear that the law rules over a living person, not a dead one. So v. 1 speaks of a person *alive* under law. Also, observe that the man of Rom. 7:7-23 is under law *in his conscience*. Pay careful attention, therefore, to the fact that **the man of Rom. 7:7-23 is alive under law**. He is before God, in his conscience, on a legal basis. It is most important to see what this means. It means that he is not before God, in his conscience, on the basis of what Christ is for him, but on the basis of what he is for God. This legal basis may, in practice, take the form of the law of Moses or it may not take that form.

Being alive under law (vv. 7,8,9,10,11,13) is his *state*. A person in this state is before God on the ground, or basis, of Adam responsibility and not on the ground of being dead with Christ. The death of Christ terminated the trial of the first man. The man of Rom. 7 does not apprehend, in conscience, that the first man, tested by law, has no standing in that way since the cross. True, he may not consciously realize that he is taking up Adamic responsibility, but that is just what it is. He does not realize what Paul really meant by "I am crucified with Christ," else he would realize that the legal basis is not the Christian standing.

Being alive under law is a state from which he needs deliverance in order to be in the state described in Rom. 8 as being led of the Spirit. Rom. 6:14, speaking of one in the state described in Rom. 8, says, "For sin shall not have dominion over *you*, for ye are not under law but under grace." Gal. 5:18 says, "but if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under law." So one that is alive under law (that means that in his conscience he is not dead with Christ) is not regarded as led by the Spirit; and if Scripture is to be believed, is not under grace.¹¹ Moreover, one that is in the state and standing described

¹¹ C. Crain, *Readings on Romans*, New York: Loizeaux, p. 73, n.d., says, "He is a man indwelt by the Spirit. While he is not walking *according* to the Spirit, yet the indwelling Spirit is leading

in Rom. 8 has died with Christ: "Now if we have died with Christ . . ." (Rom. 6:8). The man in Rom. 7:7-23 is not regarded as having *died* with Christ, but rather he is *alive* under law.

In v. 2, the apostle used an illustration from marriage that shows that clearance from the law of a woman's husband is by his death [divorce is *not* the subject or the point here]. He will use this point later except he will change the matter around. Here, his point is that **death is the instrument of change**. There are two husbands: the law and Christ. We shall see that the first husband, the law, does not die, but the one who is to this first husband (the one who is under law) needs to die in order to be free of the first husband. The point is that *death* effects release from the position of being *alive* under law, which rules over a man as long as he lives.

Verse 3

So then, the husband being alive, she shall be called an adulteress if she be to another man; but if the husband should die, she is free from the law, so as not to be an adulteress, though she be to another man (Rom. 7:3).

Here it is pointed out that a woman would be an adulteress if she is to another man while her husband is living. Of course, it is physically possible to be to two men: but that is not the point. It is beside the point. The illustration is meant to bear on the position of the man of Rom. 7. The law is the first husband: and clearance from it is only by death -- that is the point. **It is not a question of making progress.** Such a notion falsifies the passage. It is not a matter of making progress in a process of dying. The point is that the soul is connected with one or the other of the two husbands and

Him." I suggest that this is in flat contradiction of the express statement of Scripture. The man in Rom. 7 is under law and Scripture says, "but if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under law." The statement by C. Crain is part of, and necessitated by, a system of doctrine that says that all belongs to the new-born soul at the moment of quickening.

the change comes about through death. It is not a matter of slowly becoming detached from one and being attached to the other. The great point to the illustration is clearance from law by death in order to be to another. To be connected to both at the same time is compared to the sin of adultery. But let us come to how the change is effected.

Verse 4

So that, my brethren, ye also have been made dead to the law by the body of Christ, to be to another, who has been raised up from among [the] dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God (Rom. 7:4).

Here is the application of the illustration -- but with the change mentioned above. The law answers to the first husband and Christ crucified and raised from the dead answers to the second husband. Note well that the first husband did not die. The law is not dead. So the person is cleared from the law, not by its dying, but by the person dying (not physically, of course). This means that the person appropriates the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ sufficiently to realize that he is dead with Christ -- that His work has dealt with what he is, and Christ has been raised for him. He then knows that he is in a forgiven position before God.

Concerning one who is in the state and standing described in Rom. 6 & 8, it can be said of him that the ground he is on before God, in conscience, is what Christ is for him -- and not what he is for God. He is, in conscience, dead with Christ. He is transferred from being alive under law to being dead with Christ and connected with Him as living. How so? We "have been made dead to the law by the body of Christ." Yes, His very body was given in death for us. And why so? "to be to another, who has been raised up from among [the] dead." Rom. 7:7-23 describes the experimental (experiential) process through which the soul is passed by God in order to reach the end of the soul's being before Him, in conscience, on the legal basis. And so the soul, alive under the law, cries out to One for deliverance; and through the appropriation of His finished work for the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, thus becomes, in conscience, dead to the

law -- having appropriated for himself what Christ is for him, as the Christian position before God.

It is death with Christ that effects this. We are connected with One Who is raised from the dead. We are to another Who is on the other side of death; the corn of wheat Who died and then stood forth in resurrection-life and power -- Who thus risen breathed on those who had already been quickened, connecting the life they already had with Himself in resurrection, so that it could rightly be said that they had resurrection-life. This was abundant life, life in resurrection power. They were thus one plant with Him, the risen stalk, identified in life with Him. That had never been true before that wonderful moment when He communicated the Spirit, not as the Pentecostal gift of union with a glorified head, but as power of life. This is life in the Son.

But though the man of Rom. 7 is quickened, the above is not true of him until deliverance from law occurs. He is not dead and risen with Christ, as to his standing: he is alive under law, having the penalty of death by the law written in his conscience (Rom. 7:9). He has not the Spirit, for if he did, he would be under law and dead to the law, under grace and under the law, in bondage and in liberty, at the same time, a thing rejected by Rom. 7:1-4.

J. N. Darby remarked,

In Rom. 7 the experience is that of a man quickened but not dead. In the early part of the chapter we have the doctrine that we have died, and so we cannot have the two husbands; and the law cannot have power over us, because we have died. It will be seen therefore that chapter 7 is the application of the doctrine of chapter 6 to the question of the law, and there the experience is given of a man that is under law who cannot say that he is dead. There it is not "risen with Christ," but married to another who has risen. You cannot have law and Christ together. Then the figure is changed; for it is we that have died, though it is the same in principle. And in the end of the chapter we have the experience of a man that is under law, and is not

delivered; he has the life given [is regenerate], but he is not dead and risen. It is the fullest expression of a man under law, and having life. And as such we are delivered by finding out, not merely that Christ died for our sins, but also that we have died with Christ. And this is the doctrine of chapter 6.¹²

We have been made dead to the law to be to another "in order that we might bear fruit to God" (cp. Phil. 1:11; Gal. 5:22). The man of Rom. 7 is not looked at as bearing fruit. Rom. 6:22 says, "ye have your fruit unto holiness." How is this if a quickened soul necessarily has all from the first moment of quickening?

There is always a time interval between quickening and sealing with the Spirit, though it might be so small as not to be noticeable to others. A soul that hears a full, delivering gospel is fruitful at once (Col. 1:5,6), of course. None-the-less, each soul must learn something of self; and such will experience something of Rom. 7, but in a modified form. This will be considered later in this series.

Ed.

CARD PLAYING

Travelling in a railway train with some men who were playing a game of cards, a christian man was asked to have a hand.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but I do not have my hands with me."

"What do you mean?" they asked, pointing to his hands.

"These are not mine," he said. "They belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. When they were mine I used to play cards. But since I yielded them to Christ, they are never employed in that way, for He has filled them for His service" (Rom. 6:13." -- Copied.

¹². *Collected Writings* 26: 411,412.

TO A SAINT AT MARAH

BELOVED IN THE LORD, -- And so you have come to Marah, and found the waters thereof bitter. You had learnt already that the world was now but a wilderness -- a dry and thirsty land, with a "mighty famine," and "no water." But it seemed as if the Lord was leading you beside some desert stream, and you longed more than ever to drink. As you followed the pillar of cloud, it glistened before you, and, I trust, awakened gratitude to Him who "turneth the wilderness into a standing water." But now you taste its waters, and find them bitter; you cannot drink of them, and you cry unto the Lord. Moses did so in Ex.15, and allow me to remind you how the Lord answered his cry. "The Lord *shewed* him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." He did not create some fresh thing for the occasion, meeting the new difficulty by some new interposition of miraculous power; but He directed the eye of Moses to something *there already*, on the banks of the very waters of Marah, which had the property of making the bitter sweet.

Now, my beloved fellow-pilgrim, what do *you* ask the Lord to do for you in this new trial? To create some new thing in the earth to meet your case? To bring back the darling object of which He has bereaved you, or remove at once, in some other way, the heavy trial that burdens your spirit and weighs you down? Is this *His way*? For "the Lord hath *His way* in the whirlwind and in the storm" (Nahum 1:4). No, I will ask the Lord for you, that if they be bitter waters to which He leads you (Ex.13:2), He will "show" you the Blessed One, whose presence in love and sympathy can sweeten every bitter cup and gild the bed of death with light. No new Saviour, but "Him that is from the beginning" -- the "same" to-day as He was yesterday, and will be for ever. As no new thing came down from heaven, or grew up from earth, to sweeten Marah's waters for the poor thirsty wanderers, but a tree, there before the waters were tasted, which, in answer to his cry, the Lord *shewed* unto Moses, so may the Holy Ghost, who *is* with you and in you, magnify His blessed office, by taking of the things of the Lord Jesus and showing them to you (John 16:14, 15), leading you to see and enjoy what *He* is to you; so that, instead of Naomi becoming Marah (Ruth 1:20), Marah may become

Naomi -- that is, "pleasant."

Remember for your joy, "it is the Lord" who has led you beside the bitter waters -- the same Shepherd who has led you, in the person of your Substitute, the Lord Jesus, clean through the *Red Sea* waters of death and judgment, now behind you for ever -- the same One who, when He sees fit, will lead you beside the still, sweet waters of *Elim* -- an oasis in the desert, and precious foretaste of the promised rest; and if He guides you now to *Marah*, He has gone before you there, and planted a sweetening tree within easy reach. The world may have tasted something of the bitterness of the water, and given it a name: no name is given to the healing tree -- for its value *they* have not discovered -- but the Spirit of the Lord is with *you*, to show you not only "things to come," but also the present sufficiency and preciousness of the Lord Jesus, more than equal to your deepest need. To bring to your remembrance all things whatsoever He has said unto you, how He foretold you of Marah -- "*in the world* ye shall have tribulation," but is Himself ever near and available as the great soother of sorrow, saying, "That *in Me* ye might have peace." Do not, then, dear ---, be looking for some new token or revelation from the Lord, but that He may, by His Spirit, "shew" you more of Him who is "*with* you alway, even unto the end." -- Ever yours in Him,

W.T.

HINDRANCES -- NOT OPEN SIN BUT "DUTIES"

Occupation in present things (though needful more or less for every one) tends to draw the heart away from Christ. . . . We must remember that Christ is not here, and it is unnecessary to add that the things through which we have to move every day are.

It is often said -- "It is not sin that hinders me, but my 'duties.'" This is allowed to pass unchallenged. The one who made it is supposed to be beyond all help -- either human or divine! I should challenge this remark and the quiescent, and too oft *complacent*, state of him who made it, and would ask him, What do you mean by your

"duties"? If I understand my Christian calling aright, my great *duty* is to live for Christ and His interests. And if Christianity is anything, this *duty* comes before every other. I do not live for my own interests. Every other claim (rightly or wrongly denominated a *duty*) is subservient to this. This one claim *alone* is greater than all others *combined*. Beware of duties shutting out Christ.

But if the excuse (duties) be made in order to palliate a low spirituality and a continual absence from the gathering together of the saints; that is, if my "duties" as a Christian do not drive me to Christ, and to the company of His people, it is a question whether I am not astray in calling these things my duties. Did the Lord or self give me these? Can I suppose for a moment that "the Lord has so ordered in my earthly path that I am driven farther and farther from Him, and that this is all the more so the more strictly and conscientiously I try to perform my 'duties'," for I find these, alas! begin to absorb ALL my time, and require ALL my thoughts?

No, I cannot think so, and the way out is clear. Satan has many snares, but he does not care by what name you choose to call that which robs your soul, *as long as you will go on allowing it to be robbed*. You may defy a keen observer to charge you with any *open sin*. You may insist that the saints shall rather explain your absence from the meetings and[/or] your low spiritual tone by your "duties." It is all one to him -- your enemy, and Christ's enemy, will not trouble about the *name*; but God is robbed (Mal. 3:8), you are robbed, and the saints are robbed nonetheless.

Satan has many devices today. One, which is by no means small or useless but a very large and successful one with him, is to try to make saints satisfied with a "Sunday" Christianity -- to insinuate that "duties" form one set of things, and Christ and His people and His interests another. We must steadily refuse such heterodoxy. I reject, and I trust the saints will always have grace to reject, those "duties" which cannot tolerate nor allow them to live *every day* a Christian life in *present, actual display*, till [the Lord] Jesus comes. Theoretical Christianity -- the union of truth with worldly principles -- is, I think, the bane of this day in which we live.

H. C. A.

REPROBATE STATE?

Q. -- 1 John 5:18. Here is a man who, born again, has gone on rejoicing in the knowledge of all his sins forgiven, yet at length gives himself up to evil (say, drunkenness), and dies in this reprobate state. Does scripture give us light on such a case?

J.H.

A. -- Surely it does. He is one of the many who deceive themselves, and say that they have fellowship with God while walking in darkness; whereas they lie and do not the truth (1 John 1:6). It is easy for unconverted souls, especially when emotional excitement prevails, to think themselves born of God when they are not, and never realized either their utter guilt and ruin, or God's grace in life eternal and remission. High pressure in appeal to feeling as in reasoning, on "the plan of salvation" tends to this imagination that all is right, which may carry souls along for no short time, and in zealous efforts to win others; though the conscience has never been before God either in true self-judgment or in submitting to His righteousness in Christ. There never was a seed of God remaining in such souls. It was but flesh, which perishes in the wilderness. It is too much to assume that they were born of God. They may have had joy in the thought of plenary forgiveness but not abiding peace with God, and so become castaway or reprobate. Heb. 6:4-8 is as strikingly solemn to show how far flesh can go in appropriating Christian privilege, *short of life eternal or the new birth*; as vers. 17-20 give strong consolation to the weakest believer, however tried. For it would be hard to find in the N.T. true faith set out in terms less bold than "having fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." Yet is it all-sufficient. Never does Scripture suppose one born anew perishing in his sins. But we may easily be mistaken in counting souls renewed who are not.

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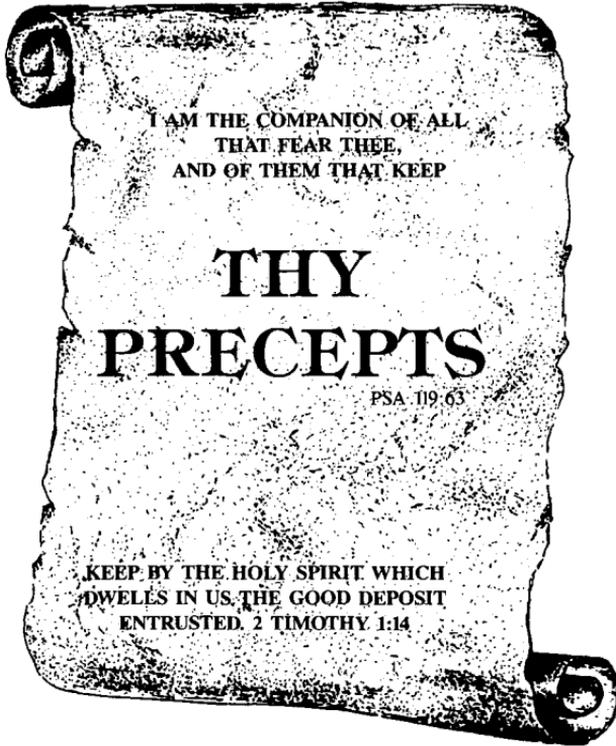
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NATURAL RELATIONSHIPS

A reader sent something to the editor written by J.N.D., I suppose in response to the article, "Let The Dead Bury Their Dead," found in the last issue. J.N.D. wrote:

I have written because the idea of not owning the relationships is monstrous. You will find it a difficult task [owning the natural relationships], because I greatly dread any diminution of the feeling that we are dead and risen with Christ

The absence of natural affection is an evil sign of the last days; but we have to live in natural ties as those who are not in them, to act for God in them. What God established of natural relationships He always owns, carefully so; but a power has come in, which, as sin has ruined all, overrules or makes independent of them.

Letters of J. N. Darby 3:35.

The article said: ". . . it is right and of God that the tie with one's own relations should continue; and hence the problem is, how to be no longer susceptible to their influence." The two are in agreement; and the article spoke at length, as I see it, of what J.N.D. meant. Ed.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FAITHFUL IN THE LAST DAYS

(2 Tim.3)

There is such a thing as the truth. This has to be held at all cost. The Lord tells us, "the truth shall make you free"; "sanctify

them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." So here silly women cannot come to the knowledge of the truth; deceivers resist the truth; men would soon turn their ears from the truth. Timothy was to teach meekly in hope that God would give repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. Thus *direct* apostolic authority (which no tradition can give, for I cannot say from whom I learned it, so that it should have the apostle's authority), truth in the form of words given by the apostle, the Scriptures as known truth, and the holding them fast, characterize the approved disciple, when decline and unfaithfulness had come in.

Again, enduring, faithfulness, persecution, as contrasted with ease and profession, practically mark the divine path; not uncertainty as to salvation, and a laborious procuring of it: we are saved and called with a holy calling, according to God's purpose before the world began. Death is abolished, so that we are not under its fear; life and incorruptibility are brought to light. We are in the bright and blessed liberty of saved ones, for whom the whole power of death is destroyed. On the other hand, the gospel brought afflictions: Timothy was to be partaker of them according to the power of God; Paul was suffering for it. Timothy was to endure hardness as a good soldier, and to be disentangled from the world. Paul was enduring all things for the elect's sakes.

But it was not merely those ministerially active who would suffer: there was another source of persecution, not Christianity now in itself, but seeking to live godly in Christ Jesus. The form of piety with abounding evil would prevail; but piety, the seeking to live godly, not joining the current of religious profession, would be persecuted. The professing church being in this state, the assembly in general would be a great house, and vessels to dishonor allowed in it.

This leads to ecclesiastical direction, so to speak. Carelessness as to doctrine, departure from the truth, and a worldly carnal state of the professing church prevailing, in which was lost the sense that we, risen already in Christ, are looking for resurrection to take us out of this whole state, and what called itself Christian settled into a recognition of man on this side death; what was the Christian to do? To purge himself from these so as to be a vessel meet for the Master's use. He could not leave the profession of Christianity, corrupted as it had become -- that is clear; nor was he to sanction

the corruption; nor could he correct it as regards the public profession. Nay, evil remained; seducers would wax worse and worse. He was to "purge himself from" them. But his practice was to be equally exact. Avoiding lusts, he was to follow righteousness, faith, love, peace.

Was he then to isolate himself in his walk because of the evil, in thus pursuing godliness and grace? He was not. He was to recognize and distinguish those who called on the Lord out of a pure heart. If it be asked, How is he to do this? my answer is, The apostle tells us to do it; he does not suppose we cannot. I may not be able to distinguish a person to be such: that is possible; I am not his judge. But he is not one of those who are pointed out as those with whom I should walk. The distinction is very simple. The professing church is characterized as a great house containing vessels to dishonor. In that state of things I am not to rest satisfied with the dishonor; nor to think of mending the house; nor of leaving it. I am to purge myself from those who are such vessels, and to recognize those who call on the name of the Lord -- own and worship Him -- out of a pure heart: with them I am to walk.

J. N. Darby, *The Bible Treasury* 15:220.

LIVING BEYOND ONE'S INCOME

In a letter, Wm. Kelly wrote,

Of one practical matter be sure, that no Christian should live a penny beyond his income, but enough within to help the poor. If he have debts before conversion, this may burden him, and he should strive gradually to pay off, never adding to them. I know what it is to have been cut down; but never was better, than when compelled to rigid self-denial for years, and yet enabled to do a little for others. This was since I had wife and children.

PROPHETIC FALLACIES: FALSE PROPHETS WHO SET DATES

There is nothing new about date setting. It has a long, long history. There was much of it in the 19th century based on the year-day theory of prophecy and seems to have been given impetus by the French revolution. But let us look at some of the more recent attempts.

J. B. Dimbleby, member of the British Chronological and Astronomical Association, in his *The Appointed Time*, claimed that the end of the Gentile times would occur in 1898 1/4.

N. Noel remarked,

. . . in 1914 Caleb J. Baker of Kansas City, Mo., set as a movable date 1915, 1916, 1917; 1922, 1923, 1924; 1929, 1930, 1931; 1936, etc.

Well, movable dating is the flexible way to do it; that is the way for a mind bent on this nonsense to get the most out of it while minimizing disappointment when one date passes.

In 1935, W. M. Smith wrote:

. . . even among some of the sanest Bible students today, there is appearing a recurrence of this dangerous and always disappointing effort to devise from certain prophetic passages in the Bible a chronological scheme whereby the next major divine event in the world can be definitely ascertained. A great gathering in Albert Hall, London, March 1, 1927, attended by many devout Christians, was told that the Battle of Armageddon would be fought on the 28th day of May, 1928. At Queen's Hall, London, May 2nd, 1933, Mr. A. E. Ware, an earnest Christian, with a well-worn Bible in his hand, dared to announce: "I do at this point declare that this present year 1933, being seven years from 1940, is going to witness the opening of the end of the age with all

that that means. The God Who mocks no man has caused me to come and stand before you positively to affirm and declare that in about 40 days from this May 2nd, 1933--that is, not on June 12th, but at some time just before or just after June 12th, our Lord Jesus Christ shall rise up from the right hand of God," et cetera. "For this first time in history," he said in the same address, "every fact here presented is reconciled with the actual letter of Scripture."

Of all the years of this generation that have been determined upon as marking the time when some great event related to Biblical prophecy will occur, 1934 has been given most recognition. In 1927 was published a volume carrying the significant title, "Last Hour Reflections", in which it was stated that the Rapture of the Church would occur in that same year¹

Let us come closer to our own time. H. Lindsey, in *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), p. 54, said that a generation is about 40 years, and went on to say that within 40 years of 1948 (when the nation of Israel was established) the end would come (1988). This means that the rapture would have to take place by about 1981 (=1988-7). It turns out that time, the great tester of theories and date-setters, has shown him to be another false prophet.

C. R. Taylor, another false prophet, in "Bible Prophecy News", Oct., Nov., Dec., 1981, p.10, wrote,

Yes, I do expect the rapture by the Feast of Trumpets of 1982. All prophecy fulfillment points to it.

And then there is T. L. Mather, who published a book, *The Second Coming of Antichrist*, using a form of Gematria and a special code that he allegedly discovered in Scripture (integrated with the prophecies of Nostradamus and Mother Shipton) which he named DANTL. He allegedly showed that Hitler answered to 666 and Hitler would be raised from the dead in 1984 and the Lord would come

¹. "The Time Periods of Prophecy" (Philadelphia: American Bible Conference Association, Inc., 1935), pp. 8,9.

preceding that. Another false prophet!

"MILLENNIAL WEEK" THEORIES

As the year 2000 approaches, "Millennial Week" theories are being revived, claiming that the 1000 year reign will be the 7th millennium, i.e. the 1000 year reign of Christ will begin at 6000 years from Adam's creation. Thus Christ will come in the year 2000. Since some advocates of these theories believe that Christ was born about 4 B.C., compensation must be made for this and for the fact that there is only one year from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D. The result is this:

From 4 BC to 1 BC is 3 years. There is only 1 year from 1 BC to 1 AD. To make the matter more simple, regard 1 BC as the zero point. We need to reach the end of 1999 years. $1999 - 3 = 1996$. Subtract 7 for Daniel's 70th week and the result is 1989 (or 1990, if you use 2000) -- assuming the Lord was born in 4 BC, and assuming that the birth is the correct starting point, and assuming there is no space of time between the rapture and the opening of Daniel's 70th week.

There was a scheme to add the date of the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) to the number of the beast (666) and the 1260 days counted as 1260 years. This results in 1996. If you subtract 7 you obtain 1989.

There is also a system built on the Jewish Jubilees and cycles of 490 years (7×70), starting from the beginning of Christ's ministry, taken as 29 AD. You can obtain 1989 that way.

Then because in the N.T. there are four watches in the night you can assign 500 years to each, and starting from the Lord's birth, arrive at something near 1989.

Goliath of Gath defied the armies of the living God for 40 days, and perhaps this does picture the power of the Enemy for 40 centuries. David struck Goliath in the head with one smooth stone from the brook. He had four more, all told, -- like the five books of Moses: smooth, even, inspired by the Holy Spirit. In the temptation in the wilderness the great Son of David was tested and struck the

Enemy with quotations from the fifth book of Moses, Deuteronomy; the book of obedience. David then ran upon him and slew him with Goliath's own sword. Now, that points to Christ's death -- He used death (Goliath's sword) to annul the power of Satan (Heb. 2:14).

Adam was the first man and our Lord was the second man. The disciples became associated with Christ in resurrection-life when He breathed on them (John 20:22). When He rose from the dead the new creation began. When was the standing of the first man ended? Not when Christ was born into the world. His entry into the world did not change the standing of the first man before God. There remained for the first man the test concerning what he would do with the Son come into the world in holy manhood in the Father's name. The first man nailed Him to the cross and on that very cross the first man was judged, and ended, and cut off from before God as having any standing. Amazing, yet how fitting and consonant with God's moral ways, that the most audacious act of the first man resulted in his judicial end. The testing and standing of the first man ended in the death of Christ. The believer does not say 'I am born with Christ.' He says, "I am crucified with Christ." What I was in Adam is gone before God and now I am before Him "in Christ." So I live, yet not I (not the old), but Christ lives in me. This is New Creation. We live between the resurrection and the rapture. The first man was judged on the cross. There it was that he was cut off -- by death.

If there is something to the idea of 4000 years of probationary history of the first man, I could suggest they ran from the fall of the first man until the first man was set aside in the death of Christ; i.e. the time would thus run from the fall of Adam to the cross. Having rejected the second Man, soon the first man will be given over to receive him who comes in his own name; for if they have done such things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

The idea in the 2000 years theory is to correlate the second appearing of Christ with His first appearing, his birth. If there really was something to the 2000 years theory, the 2000 years could be from the death of Christ. Well, that would put the rapture off another 33 years. Also, if the Lord does not come in the next several years, that could provide a way of trying again! If the past God-dishonoring history of date-setting is any indication, there will not be wanting more would-be prophets. Oh, but they are so sure of *their* particular

scheme!

The idea in the 2000 years theory seems to be part of an idea supposedly derived from the seven days of Genesis 1.² Using 1000 years for a day, the millennial week theory says there will be 1000 years of history. This makes the seventh day (the sabbath) answer to the millennium. Rather, the seventh day of Genesis 1 points to the eternal state. The sixth day, wherein the man and the woman were given dominion over all, points to the reign of Christ. The days of Genesis one are graphically depicted in a well-known chart by A. E. Booth. That chart is based on a book by F. W. Grant, *The Lessons of the Ages*. That book is based on an article, "The Typical Character of Gen. 1, 2:3," found in G. V. Wigram's magazine, *The Present Testimony*, v. 13, pp. 456-459 (1864?). The days of Gen. 1 are taken as pointing to epochs, be they very short (as Daniel's 70th week) or very long. I would suggest that this is the correct view -- but that excludes the 'millennial week of man' view of Gen. 1.

We ought to be expecting Him every moment. That is the posture in which the N.T. places the believer.

Christian, let me ask you: what have you learned from the above survey of date-setting notions? And now, oh Lord, what wait I for? To see Thy face -- and Thy hands and feet and side!

Ed.

². I am aware, and sorry to say, that Sir E. Denney held an unfounded scheme, "The Great Week of Time." It was supported by assertions about missing time, the LXX chronology instead of the Hebrew Text, suppositions, rhetorical questions, and finally this: "The above observations, the reader will see, are altogether confined to *the moral view of the question*." These seem to me to be of a rather 'mystical' nature. Well, at least he did not set any date. Very few took up his theory -- and obviously the book, *The Dates and Chronology of Scripture*, published by G. Morrish, did not.

WHAT SHOULD I READ? A QUESTION FOR THE TIMES

The question which forms the heading of this paper is one of real weight and practical importance. There is much more involved in it than we might perhaps be disposed to admit. It is a common saying, "Shew me your company, and I will tell you what you are." It may, with equal truth, be said, "Shew me your library and I will tell you where you are." Our reading may be taken, as a rule, as the great indicator of our moral, intellectual, and spiritual condition. Our books are our mental and spiritual *pabulum*, the material on which the inner man feeds. Hence the seriousness of the entire question of christian reading. Indeed we may freely own to the reader of these lines that this subject has engrossed us much of late; and we feel constrained, in faithfulness to the Lord and to the souls of our readers, to offer a few words of admonition in reference to what we cannot but regard as a matter of real moment to all Christians.

We observe, with deep concern, a growing distaste for solid reading, specially amongst young Christians -- though alas! it is not confined to them. Newspapers, religious novels, sensational tales, all sorts of poisonous and trashy literature are eagerly devoured, while volumes of most weighty and precious truth lie uncut and neglected on the bookshelf.

All this we consider most deplorable. We look upon it as a most alarming indication of a low spiritual condition. Indeed it is difficult to conceive how any one possessing a single spark of divine life can find pleasure in such defiling rubbish as one sees now-a-days, in the hands of many who occupy the very highest ground of christian profession. The inspired apostle exhorts all Christians, "As new-born babes, to desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." How can we grow if we neglect the word of God, and devour newspapers and light worthless books? How is it possible for any Christian to be in a healthy condition of soul who can barely find a few hasty moments to run his eye over a verse or two of scripture, but can give hours to light and desultory reading? We may depend upon it our reading proves, beyond question, what we are, and where we are. If our reading is light and frivolous, our state is the same.

If our Christianity is of a solid and earnest type, it will be distinctly evidenced by our *habitual* and *voluntary* reading -- the reading to which we turn for our recreation and refreshment.

Some, perhaps, may say, "We cannot be always reading the Bible and good books." We reply, and that with plain decision and emphasis, the new nature would never care to read anything else. Now the question is, whether do we wish to minister to the old nature or the new? If the latter, we may rest assured that newspapers and light literature are not the means to be used. It is utterly impossible that a truly spiritual, earnest Christian can find any enjoyment in such reading. It may be that a Christian engaged in business or in public official life, will have occasion, in connection with his business or his official duty, to refer to a newspaper; but this is another thing altogether from finding his actual enjoyment and recreation in such reading. He will not find the hidden manna or the old corn of the land of Canaan in the newspaper. He will not find Christ in the sensational novel.

It is a poor low thing to hear a Christian say, "How can we be always reading the Bible?" or, "What harm is there in reading a story book?" All such questions afford melancholy evidence of the fact that the soul has got far away from Christ. This is what makes it so very serious. Spiritual decline must have set in and made alarming progress, ere a Christian could think of asking such questions. And hence there is little use in arguing about the right or the wrong of things. There is no ability to argue aright, no capacity to weigh evidence. The whole spiritual and moral condition is wrong. "There is death in the pot." What is really needed is thorough restoration of soul. You must "*bring meal*," or in other words, apply a diving remedy to meet the diseased state of the constitution.

We feel pressed in spirit to call the serious attention of the christian reader to this great practical question. We deem it to be one of deepest seriousness. We cannot doubt but that the extremely low spiritual tone of Christianity amongst us, is owing, in many cases, to the reading of light and worthless literature. The moral effect of all such is most pernicious. How can a soul prosper, how can there be growth in the divine life where there is no real love for the Bible, or for books which unfold the precious contents of the Bible to our souls? Is it possible that a Christian can be in a healthy condition of

soul who really prefers some light work to a volume designed for true spiritual edification? We do not and cannot believe it. We are persuaded that all true-hearted, earnest Christians -- all who truly desire to get on in divine things -- all who really love Christ, and are breathing after heaven and heavenly things -- all such will be found diligently reading the holy scriptures and thankfully availing themselves of any good, helpful books which may come within their reach. They will have neither time nor taste for newspapers or light literature. With them it will not be a question as to the right or the wrong of such reading, they simply have no desire for it, they do not want it, would not have it. They have something far better. "With ashes who would grudge to part, when called on angels' bread to feast?"

We trust our readers will bear with us in writing thus plainly and pointedly. We feel constrained as in view of the judgment-seat of Christ, to do so. And we can only say, Would that we could write as earnestly as we feel on the subject. We consider it one of the weightiest and most practical questions which can engage our attention. We entreat the christian reader to shun and discountenance all light reading. Let us each ask the question, when about to take up a book or a paper, "Should I like my Lord to come and find this in my hand? or can I take this into the presence of God, and ask His blessing upon the reading of it? Can I read it to the glory of the name of Jesus?" If we cannot say "Yes" to these questions, then by the grace of God let us fling the paper or the book away, and devote our spare moments to the blessed word of God, or to some spiritual volume written thereon. Then shall our souls be nourished and strengthened; we shall grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and the fruits of righteousness shall abound in our practical life, to the glory of God.

It may be, however, that some of our friends would repudiate altogether the habit of reading human writings. Some there are who take the ground of reading nothing but the Bible. They tell us they find all they want in that peerless volume, and that human writings are rather a hindrance than a help.

Well, as to this, each one must judge for himself. No one can be a rule for another. We certainly cannot take this high ground. We bless the Lord, each day, more and more, for all the gracious helps

vouchsafed to us by means of the writings of His beloved servants. We look upon them as a most precious stream of refreshment and spiritual blessing, flowing down from our glorified Head in the heavens, for which we can never praise Him enough. We should just as soon think of refusing to hear a brother speak in the assembly, as of refusing to read his writings, for what is either but a branch of ministry given of God for our profit and edification?

No doubt we have to exercise a jealous care lest we make too much of ministry, whether oral or written; but the possible abuse of a thing is no valid argument against the use of it. There is danger on every side; and most surely it is a very dangerous thing to despise ministry. We are, none of us, self-sufficient. It is the divine purpose that we should be helpful one to another. We cannot do without "that which every joint supplieth." How many will have to praise God throughout eternity for blessing received through tracts and books. How many there are who never get an atom of spiritual ministry save what the Lord sends them through the press. It will be said, "They have the Bible." True, but all have not the same ability to fathom the living depths, or seize the moral glories, of the Bible. No doubt, if we cannot have either oral or written ministry, the Spirit of God can feed us directly in the green pastures of holy scripture. But who will deny that the writings of God's servants are used by the Holy Ghost as a most powerful agency in building up the Lord's people in their most holy faith? It is our firm conviction that God has made more use of such agency during the last forty years than ever before in the entire history of the church.

And cannot we praise Him for it? Truly so. We should praise with full and glowing hearts; and we should earnestly pray Him to grant still further blessing on the writings of His servants -- to deepen their tone, increase their power, and widen their sphere. Human writings if not clothed with the power of the Holy Ghost, are just so much waste paper. And in like manner, the voice of the public preacher or teacher, if not the living vehicle of the Holy Ghost, is but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. But the Holy Ghost does make use of both agencies for the blessing of souls, and the spread of the truth; and we deem it a serious mistake for any one to despise an agency which God is pleased to adopt. Indeed we must confess we have rarely met any one who refused the help of human writings who did not prove exceedingly narrow, crude, and one-sided. This is only what we might expect, inasmuch as it is the diving

method to make us mutually helpful one to another; and hence, if any one affects to be independent or self-sufficient, he must sooner or later find out his mistake.

C.H.M.

A MAN OF GOD

2 Tim.3:17

In the new testament "the man of God" supposes one faithful in the service of souls; but the term is by no means confined to Christianity, being rather in itself a familiar Old Testament expression. By it we may understand a believer who has the moral courage and the spiritual power to identify himself with the Lord's interests, and to maintain the good fight of faith in the midst of perils and obstacles of every sort. Such a testimony is incompatible with yielding to human principles and the spirit of the age.

We must not suppose however that fidelity in such a day as ours wears an imposing garb. An appearance of strength is out of course when declension has come in and judgment is approaching. God will have a state of ruin felt, and His testimony must be in keeping. When He calls to sackcloth and ashes, He does not give such a character of power as has price in the world's eyes. Thus one of the truest signs of practical communion with the Lord is that at such a moment one is heartily content to be little. This is reality, but it is only a little strength. It is according to the mind of God. But that which attracts the world must please and pander to the selfimportance of man. The world itself is a vain show, and likes its own. Consequently there is nothing which so carries the mass of men along with it as that which flatters the vanity of the human mind. It may assume the lowliest air, but sinful man seeks his own honor and present exaltation. But when a servant of God is thus drawn into the spirit of men, he naturally shrinks back from fairly facing the solemn call of God addressed to His own, loses his bright confidence, and gets either hardened or stands in dread of the judgment of God. When Christians lose the power and reproach of the cross, philanthropy has

been taken up, which gives influence among men, and general activity in what men call doing good replaces the life of faith with the vain hope of staving off the evil day in their time at any rate. One need not deny zeal and earnest pursuit of what is good morally; self-denial too one sees in spending for purposes religious or benevolent; but the man of God, now that ruin has entered the field of Christ's confession, is more urgently than ever called to be true to a crucified Christ. And as surely as He is soon coming to take us on high, He will in due time appear for the judgment of every high thought and the fairest looking enterprises of men which will all be swallowed up in the yawning gulf of the apostasy.

W. K., The Bible Treasury, New Series 6:79

EXTRACT

"He then that hath my commandments and keepeth the, he it is that loveth me." Many Christians have not His commandments. Why? Because they have something else. If they were walking like Christ they would have the ear opened, and have the communication of His mind and wish. But it is attentiveness of heart that gets this; where there is this, Christ is faithful to show what He wishes, and if we are walking in relationship with Him we shall know it. The spirit that wants His will listens for it; but I must want that first of all, and **only** that, if I would please Him.

J. N. Darby

THE LORD'S WARNINGS

#5

Very closely in keeping with previous warnings by our blessed Lord is the next one which we shall consider, which says:

"BEWARE . . . OF THE LEAVEN OF HEROD" (Mark 8:15)

This danger might not be as evident as the others which we have looked at, but it is probably more destructive of spiritual reality and power among the saints than all of the others. The Herodians do not represent any religious aspects, as do the Pharisees and Sadducees, and they were antagonists of the Pharisees especially. Yet we read in Mark 3:6, "And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him." And again, "And they send unto Him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch Him in His words" (Mark 12:13).

All human differences and oppositions will instantly be reconciled when there is any question of the glorious Person of our Lord Jesus Christ involved. Man will devise any evil idea or combine in any evil association to rid themselves of the only One Who truly loves them and seeks, in patience, to save them. The Herodians were those who sided with the Roman authorities to undermine the religious adherence of the Jews to what was, at least outwardly, the only true expression of religion in the world at that time. It has remained the subtle tactic of Satan ever since that if he cannot destroy fidelity to Christ in any other way he will achieve his greatest success by the method of the Herodians. How often is the question asked today by believers, "What is wrong with ?" and then the subject involves what appears to be quite an innocent thing. Oh, the subtlety of the arch deceiver! He knows that the minute he can get a believer to raise the question he has achieved his objective. The very fact of asking the question immediately shows that the one asking it is not in communion with the Lord. The most successful accomplishment in the downfall of mankind took place in the most beautiful setting in creation where everything that was for the good of man was freely given by God for man to enjoy. When Satan posed the question, "Hath God said ...?", an evil response showed itself. Had Eve been in

communion with Adam she would have immediately flown to him for protection from the insinuation of the devil. If we have occasion to ask whether a thing is right or wrong, then it is evident that we are not in close touch with our adorable Savior and Lord -- for to a Spirit-taught saint there would be no difficulty in such issues, because anything that would interfere with occupation with the Lord would be rejected immediately.

The "innocent" thing that the Herodians introduced to the Jews was "sport". Yes, the presentation of the Roman and Grecian sports gave an occupation pleasurable to the flesh which would rapidly isolate the Jew from his (even nominal) following of the requirements of the ceremonial law of Moses. Do we not see the same effect through the same cause today? It is an obvious fact that in Christendom today there is a tremendous decline in the attendance at so-called church services. And where are the mass of the people? Why, doing the same thing as they did in Herod's day -- engaged in their favorite sport. We have to own with shame that this has also, to some extent, crept in among those professedly outside of the systems of men.

We have failed to learn our lesson -- to the sad and dishonoring downfall of any testimony by us that we are "strangers and pilgrims" in this world and are those who have their citizenship in heaven. From the seemingly innocuous things it is only a small but rapid decline into the successive stages which land us into being "worldly". May we search out our own hearts as to this in the Lord's presence, and own our failure and return to the path in which He first set our feet to walk after Him.

As we survey the believers generally, we see the slavish following of the clothing and hairstyle fashions, in all their frivolity and immodesty; the pursuit of all the pleasures (except the evidently evil ones) as they seasonally change; the struggling after success in the world professionally, and academically, and materially, and socially. Is it any wonder that the world has turned against Christianity when they see such behavior? -- yet the same believers will try to tell them that they (the unbelievers) are going to hell while they (the believers) are going to heaven! Our profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ to the world means nothing more to them than that we have taken out an insurance policy against going to hell, while they have taken out an insurance policy against having their house burn down. What a

shame and dishonor to our blessed Lord!

My heart goes out to you, dear fellow saints, that we might shun every appearance of evil and be found as those that are "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life ..." (Phil. 2:15-16). Also, that we might not be as those who are "the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18). Then the word to Titus should have its effect in our lives, "Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke ..." (Titus 2:12-15). What has been written above has been written in love to those who read it and are the Lord's; for there is no greater occupation down here for the believer than the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will be the eternal occupation of our whole being when He takes us to Himself, at any moment.

While the term "worldliness" is commonly used when we mean to indicate what is opposite to "godliness", the English word "worldliness" is not to be found in the King James translation. The nearest to it is "worldly" and this is found only twice -- in Titus 2:12 and Heb. 9:1. The above quotation from Titus gives the context of its use there, and in Hebrews it simply means that the tabernacle was a material one on this earth. In Titus it means lusts which belong to this world. However, we do well to get our thoughts formed by Scripture, which plainly speaks of the condition to which we refer when we say "worldliness". The plainest and most comprehensive portion in relation to this matter is found in 1 John 2:15-17. If we meditate on this passage which says, "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. For 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" -- then we shall get a real understanding of what is involved.

We are made up in our natural constitution as a tripartite being,

i.e. we have three components in our human form. We are physical in the visible body; we are moral in our responses through the soul in all that relates to our existence in this scene; we are spiritual in our human spirit and able to enter into relationship with God our Creator. Now it is not intended to limit, by definition, the scope of our existence as totally responsible to God for all that we are and do. If we consider the passage in John's epistle in the light of Genesis 3:6, we shall see the import of what John instructs us in, so that we shall be here as totally subject to God our Father and doing His will. Eve did not do God's will and so the relationship which previously existed, though a very limited one, was immediately broken. She found in the fruit of the tree that which her flesh desired (and this is simply what "lust" refers to in the New Testament -- i.e. a desire, whether vile or refined). There was also that which appealed to her sight (and the word "pleasant" means "desire"), and surely this would indicate to us that it appealed to her moral values. Then, the desire to be wise (in Eve's case, to know good and evil) had the spiritual element for Satan had enticed her with the desire to be "as gods, knowing good and evil". Just a simple act of eating of fruit from a tree brought to light that she was not satisfied with God and what He had provided for her well-being. But in getting what she wanted she, along with Adam (for he did likewise), lost all their previously enjoyed relationship with God and also the perfect setting in which He had placed them for their physical blessing. There are deep, deep lessons in all this, not only for sinners but for saints; yet how reluctant we are to learn them. The same desires are resident in our natural hearts as they were in Adam's and Eve's. We find the same responses to those things that satisfy the physical flesh, feed the inward desires of the heart and make us independent of God. The danger is the greater when the temptation is the simpler and outwardly "nothing wrong in it". The greatest evil yet produced by Satan which has captivated man generally, and sadly ensnared many of the dear saints of God, is the television -- what an abomination that such a thing should be found in the home of any believer! for to have it is to show just where the heart is, and the sad results are inevitable in the starvation of the soul and the deadening of the spirit, with solemn grieving of the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us. Awake, dear fellow saint, to realize that even to have such an instrument in the home is an unholy thing, which can only produce an unholy condition which is incompatible with God Himself and the holiness of His house. To absorb what it gives to you when viewing it is not only contamination in the extreme, but

it is Satan's opiate to ruin your response to the Lord and to dishonor Him while He leaves us here. It is a very solemn thing that there is a Greek word used in the New Testament and translated "sorceries" in Rev. 18:23 (and chap. 9:21; see also chaps. 21:8 and 22:15) and "witchcraft" in Gal. 5:20. This word is the one from which the English word "pharmacy" is derived, and we know the connotation this has with "drugs". May we all give heed to the precious Word of God which alone is "able to make us wise unto salvation." Is there a more potent drug affecting mankind today than that of the television? Yet, we must not ignore the innumerable lesser drugs such as fashions, sports, ambitions, social status and "getting on in this world".

The outcome of looking at such things as presented above would be very depressing; but, praise God, we have One to Whom we are encouraged to look, "steadfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith" (Heb. 12:2 N.T.). Also, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). Again, "For our conversation [or, commonwealth] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). Again, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (1 Thess. 4:1).

Let us then remember that our blessed Saviour called us to follow after Him, and "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4). He has also brought us under His "yoke" which is easy, but have we placed ourselves under other "yokes" which are not His but of the world? It is grievously dishonoring, but a fact, that some of the Lord's dear saints have become part with lawlessness in being members of trade unions, professional associations, worldly clubs, and most evil of all, some are in Masonic lodges who profess the holy and precious Name of Christ. To any so involved, the Lord says, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14,16). To answer the questions posed by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians will lead to the action needed to comply with the final word of Paul in regard to the matter, as found in 2 Cor. 6:14-18. If we desire to walk with the Lord in the wondrous communion with Him which is open to all believers, and may this be the desire of all who read these words, then it can be realized only as we are found in accord with Him in all His glorious holiness. In the epistle to the

Hebrews, where very much of the walk of the saint in this wilderness scene is taken up, we learn in chapter 12 verse 14, "Follow peace with all, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." The apostle Peter reiterates the requirement of God as found in Leviticus 11, when he says, "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."

In Luke 14 the father having received the younger son then suitably clothes him to be in his presence, then he provides the special repast to satisfy his hunger -- and the result had no ending, for v.24 says, "And they **began** to be merry." May we know the joy and satisfaction as expressed in the Song of Solomon, on the part of the bride, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love" (chap. 2:3-4).

J. Pascoe

"THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM"

What a glorious Person is the One to whom Peter refers in the above Scripture (1 Peter 2:9)! He is incomparably and infinitely above all mankind, both in His Person and in all that He manifested while on this earth.

But while our hearts meditate on His personal beauty, both physical and moral, we must bear the words of Peter in mind -- that He displayed everything as a perfect Man not only to glorify God, but to establish for us the standard to which we should seek in His grace to attain (though never reaching it) in order to "glorify God in our body which is His" (1 Cor. 6:20). It is evident that believers generally have assimilated the features of this world, rather than showing "forth the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness to His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9 NT).

It is one thing to know, and profess, the wondrous truth that we "are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17), but if our conduct does not agree with our profession then we are self-condemned, and dishonor, rather than glorify, our blessed Lord who died to "deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4). It is abundantly clear from Scripture that believers are taken out from the world, morally and spiritually, while left here physically, in order to "bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain" (John 15:16). We are not left here to establish, or develop, our own ideas as to what glorifies God -- we find it all in the glorious demonstration in the "Son of His love" as a Man walking in this scene. What God now looks for is the portrayal of the excellencies of that precious Man in His saints still on the earth, by our conduct as a "kingly priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9 NT).

The world would be astonished if this were to be seen in all believers. Just consider the effect that would be produced if every one of the unknown numbers of believers throughout the world, of all nationalities and colors, were to be a living reflection of the glorious Man, who walked His path with God and as separate from the world which hated Him.

What then are the excellencies which should mark us as following "in His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21)? Only from the Scriptures can we gather up the facts, and only in dependence on the Spirit of Truth can we assimilate them and be found walking in the good of them, for the Lord's glory and honor and the Father's pleasure.

The characters in our blessed Lord Jesus were all perfectly balanced and blended as becoming to Deity -- not as they are found in man, in whom they are distorted and eccentric, and only contribute to the pride or shame of man.

In considering the excellencies of the Son of Man, the beloved Son of the Father, it is not to give precedence to any one of them, but rather to be brought more intelligently into the state of worship as our hearts overflow to Him in increased realization of His perfections.

"The glories of His work we bring -
Thee glorified we see;
His deep perfections gladly sing
And tell them forth to Thee.

He fills Thy presence, fully known
To Thee alone His worth;
But in our hearts Thy light hath shone
As sons of heavenly birth."

Our first impression is that DEVOTEDNESS marked our blessed Lord perfectly in His personal relationship eternally to the Father, as in display down here as the "Sent One of the Father." To be "devoted" to another is to give oneself entirely to serve the interests of another. This we see in perfection in the Son who said, "I do always those things that please Him" [the Father] (John 8:29). There was never an occasion on which He did not please the Father. Before time began this was true of Him as the beautiful words in Proverbs 8 declare: "I was daily His delight." The original might be rendered, "I paid daily attention to Him," then in v.31 where the plural is used, "and I paid attention to the sons of men." What devotedness! Firstly, eternally attentive to the Father and all that pleases Him, then in time attentive to all the Father's interest in man on the earth. Well

may our hearts bow before Him in worship, praise and adoration for His entire devotion to the Father.

This, of course, must not leave any thought of subordination, as we understand the relation of son to a father down here. No, in the relationships in Deity there is equality and reciprocity, co-equal to each in the mystery of divine relationships between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This eternal relationship, in absolute accord with the eternal unity, becomes known to us in time by the display in the perfect Man, the Son of God, of the One who said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work," and who declared, "I and My Father are One."

The Father's acknowledgment of Him is of beautiful tenderness, "This is My beloved Son in whom I have found My delight" (Matt. 3:17 NT). Not only at that moment, but eternally so in the past and eternally so in the future.

"The Father's full delight
Is centered in the Son,
And countless tongues in heaven unite
To tell what He hath done."

"To Him Thy voice from out the cloud
Once spake Thy deep, Thy full delight,
And now without a veil to shroud
In Him shines forth Thy glory bright."

Oh! may our hearts, minds and lives be devoted to Him who loves us, and gave Himself for us, that He may have an increasing response from us in worship, praise and thanksgiving, to delight His tender heart of love, while He waits the Father's time to have us all with Himself in the Father's house.

"There with unwearied gaze
Our eyes on Him we'll rest,
And satisfy with endless praise
Our hearts supremely blest.

The Lamb is there, my soul,
There, God Himself doth rest,

In love divine diffuse through all
With Him supremely blest."

From DEVOTEDNESS flows out OBEDIENCE, as perfect and complete as the devotedness that energized Him in love to please the Father. As the Father was seeking worshippers, then the Son in His perfection was obedient to the Father's will in order that worshippers should be procured, to "worship in Spirit and in truth." As this necessitated the salvation of man to fit him to be a worshipper, then the Son in total obedience undertook the work which was essential for man to be received by God. The scope of this subject of divine glory centered in the Son of the Father's love is such that eternity will be required to contemplate all that is contained in it. We cannot understand the occurrence of a divine council when, before time began, all was settled in absolute unity of thought, desire and purpose between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And, all this stood in relation to man, as being the center of God's interest in His created realm. Devotion is an eternal attitude implicit in Godhead relationships, but obedience was that which was undertaken by the Son in order to achieve the end for which man was created.

What a glorious manifestation is found in the holy, blessed, eternal Son of all that is required to glorify God, satisfy the Father and bless man! Our finite minds cannot comprehend it, nor can our finite hearts apprehend it, but we are enabled by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to assimilate as much of the glories inherent in, and displayed by, the Son of Man as our hearts desire to acquire.

We do not read of obedience in connection with any but the Son. The glory accruing to the Son, in this matter, is due to His absolute devotion to the Father, which was shown in His perfect willingness to be obedient, in view of taking upon Himself the form of man as required to carry out the work necessary to effect the end desired by God.

We read of the submission of the Lord to the Father's will so beautifully expressed in His own words, "For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6:38). He also said, "I seek not Mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (John 5:30). However, to safeguard the equality with the Father which the Son shared with both Him and

the Holy Spirit, as being God, we remember that the Lord said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Then too in John 16:28 the Lord said, "I came forth from with the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." There is never any independency the One from the Other, but a divine unity in the Triune God with each divine Person fulfilling the needed activity in relation to man from beginning to end, until all culminates in the eternal glory of God, with sin eradicated and His creatures blessed, both in heaven and on earth. So we learn, with adoring hearts and minds controlled by the Holy Spirit, that in taking the subject place as Man in His obedience to the Father's will, He then learned in His experiences here as Man on earth what that obedience entailed in suffering. Our hearts profit, inestimably, by meditating on the precious Son of the Father's love learning "by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8). Suffering often has to be imposed on us in order to make us obedient, but for the only Perfect Man who has, or ever will have, been found in this scene He, being obedient, learned the consequences of it as suffering as a Man down here, where He was "hated without a cause" (Psalm 69:4). Because of who He is He received "the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me" (Psalm 69:9). And He declared, "but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15:24). What an inextricable intricacy of Persons -- for having seen the Son they had also seen the Father; and having hated the Son they also hated the Father!

Let us remember too that He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." Beloved, do we not feel the deep shame attaching to us as we learn through His example that love to and shown for God as it should be brings the activity of the world's hatred upon those who manifest the love of God? Our blessed Savior did not attempt to avoid the hatred directed against Him, but rather the more brightly showed out the Father's love, and His own love for the Father.

J. Pascoe

(To be continued, Lord willing)

DELIVERANCE: ROMANS 7

(continued from v. 3, #3)

2. ROM. 7:5,6: CONTRAST OF THE NEW WITH THE OLD

Verse 5.

For when we were in the flesh the passions of sins, which [were] by the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit to death.

The expression "in the flesh" may mean in the body, but that is not its meaning here. The state described as "in the flesh" (the standing, or position is "in Adam") is the result of the fall and is connected with Adamic responsibility. Thus, it describes a natural man's state before God. We saw, in a previous article, that it also describes a person under the law. You will recall that the law made no distinction between one who was quickened and one who was not. Thus, under law, a child of God was not addressed as a child of God, but as standing in Adamic responsibility -- hence in the flesh-- though in the purpose of God he was otherwise. "In the flesh" in Rom. 7 describes one who is alive under the law now. Some of our readers may be startled by this as if this was some novel point with the writer. The case is far otherwise. W. Kelly wrote,

It is impossible rightly to understand the passage if applied either to a natural man or to a Christian. There may be, there is, a transitional state constantly found in souls when they are born again, but not yet in conscious deliverance; and this is the precise state here in question. Paul may have passed as most do through this experience more or less during the three days, when without sight he neither ate nor drank. He was converted then, no longer therefore a natural man, but not yet filled with the Holy Ghost. Certainly he personates the case and reasons it out fully from verse 7 to the end of the chapter. It is the case of one quickened, but not yet submitting to the

righteousness of God. Hence, being jealous for God but ignorant of the full place in which redemption sets the believer, such a soul places itself under law; and the operation of the law is therefore exhibited to us. There is an awakened conscience, but no power. If the new nature were not there, such experience could not be: if the Holy Ghost were there, power would follow, as we see in chapter 8, where we have the proper normal state of the Christian. The state described, however, is in no case I believe final, but transitional, though bad and legal teaching may keep a soul in it till grace acts fully, it may be, on a deathbed, or what is equivalent.³

J. A. Trench wrote,

It is a quickened soul as we have seen, one truly born of God, but who, as to the ground upon which the soul actually is, is still in the flesh, under law that *applies* to that condition and that condition only. "If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:13). A soul under the law is in the flesh, according to the clear force of the expression in Romans 7, a state fully developed there, and with which that of Romans 8 is directly contrasted (Compare 7:5, 8:9).⁴

C. Wolston said,

This chapter gives us the way in which the believer is delivered from the law, and from the state, as in the flesh, to which the law applies⁵

J. N. Darby remarked,

A regenerate man may be in the flesh, as to the

³. *Notes on . . . Romans*, London: Morrish (1873), pp. 102,103.

⁴. Trench, *An Answer to Life and the Spirit*, p. 10.

⁵. *Words of Faith*, p. 25 (1884).

condition and standing of his own soul, though he be not so in God's sight; nay, this is the very case supposed in Romans 7, because he looks at himself as standing before God on the ground of his own responsibility, on which ground he never can (in virtue of being regenerate) meet the requirements of God, attain to His righteousness. Perhaps, finding this out, he has recourse to the blood of Christ to quiet his uneasy conscience, and repeated recurrence to it, as a Jew would to a sacrifice, a superstitious man to absolution. But he has no idea that he has been cleansed and perfected. . . .⁶

W. Story pointed out that:

To be under sin's law is to be still in the flesh, *i.e.* seeking a standing for flesh before God on that ground, if it be put in the sense of the 7th of Romans. . . .⁷

. . . it is a man who may be quickened, but who is not delivered, in fact is not *saved*, has not yet believed the gospel of salvation, and consequently has not the Spirit of God, and so cannot be in the Spirit, for the Spirit dwelling in us is what constitutes being in the Spirit and not being born again.⁸

⁶. *Collected Writings* 7:372.

See also Letters of J. N. Darby 1:481; 3:120,142;
Collected Writings 31:260,269,270; 26:241 (old ed.);
Words of Truth, New Series 1:210,211;

A. C. Ord, *The Teaching of Scripture on the Subject of Spiritual Life*, p. 49;

Things New and Old 33:170,171, and H. H. Snell, *ibid.*, 26:256;

C. Stanley, *On the Epistle to the Romans*, London: Morrish, p. 84, n.d.

⁷. W. Story, "A Brief Review of a Book Entitled 'Life in Christ and Sealing With the Holy Ghost,'" p. 22.

⁸. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

The trouble, said J. N. Darby, is:

What he is, not what Christ is, is the ground on which he judges of his state before God. As to his conscious standing, he is in the flesh.⁹

Again,

In this sense, What is it to be in the flesh? It is to be in relationship with God on the ground of our natural responsibility as men, as children of fallen Adam. It is, as to our moral state -- which in itself is true -- making the disposition of God towards us to depend on what we are towards Him. Of this the law is the perfect rule. It says, if conscience is awakened, I am such and such: God will be so and so towards me. Grace is on the opposite ground: God has been, and is, through Christ such and such, and I shall be so and so, as the fruit of it. But this changes everything.

Take the parable of the prodigal son. When he came to himself, you hear much about him; he owns his sin, that he is perishing, and sets out to his father, for confidence (not peace) always accompanies divine awakening, but he says as a consequence, Make me as one of thy hired servants. Arrived, with his father all this disappears, and he with it, and his place is wholly what his father is to him and does for him. When converted and in the right road, he had not yet the best robe, nor his father on his neck, to make him in his own consciousness and actual place what the father's thoughts were towards him.¹⁰

"When we were in the flesh" in this context does not mean

⁹. *Collected Writings* 26:161. See also J. A. Trench, *op. cit.*, 1:12,13.

¹⁰. *Collected Writings* 31:260,261.

before a person was quickened.¹¹ Gentiles, before quickening, were sinners of the Gentiles, "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). The nations were not under the law (Rom. 2:14). To say that this phrase refers, in this context, to a person's unregenerate state is to set aside the true meaning of Romans 7. This person, when in the flesh, is quickened and is pictured as under law; and needs deliverance from *that* state.

The reason why some persons who believe the man of Rom. 7:7-23 is sealed will not have it that he is "in the flesh" is because Rom. 8:9 says, "But ye are not in flesh but in Spirit, if indeed God's Spirit dwell in you. . . ." To admit that the man in Romans 7 is "in the flesh" is to admit that he is not sealed.

So the man in Romans 7 is in the flesh because quickened, but in conscience, as to position before God, is under law. Such was the position of Old Testament saints under the law. Not that they knew about what it was to be in the flesh. "The distinction of flesh and Spirit is founded on the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and the possession of the Spirit promised by Christ, and the present fruit of His redemption work."¹²

The law aroused and brought to light "passions of sins". Sins are committed; passions lie within us and give rise to actions. The penalty of the law is death and so what was "wrought in our members" does the opposite of bearing "fruit to God" (v. 4); rather, there is "fruit to death" (v. 5). The first husband, the law, said, "Don't do it." The controlling passions of sins prevail and she does it. Sin was there and the law could not control it. The law gives nothing. It demands, and curses disobedience with death. However, when the new nature stands in relationship with the second husband, the Spirit is there as power.

¹¹ W. R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse*, p. 253, would have it that this phrase refers to Jewish believers, "otherwise verse 5 becomes unintelligible." I do not think it does so in the least.

¹² *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:394.

Verse 5, then, speaks of four things that are connected:

- in the flesh
- passions of sins
- by the law
- fruit to death

Verse 6.

But now we are clear from the law, having died in that in which we were held, so that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter.

Notice that the law has not died. The Christian has died in that in which he was held. We have died to the former state of being alive under law and are thus clear from the law (Rom. 7:1). One not under law is under grace (Rom. 6:14), free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2). Of such a one it can be rightly said, "But ye are not in flesh but in Spirit . . ." (Rom. 8:9).

The last half of v. 6 tells us the object of being "clear from the law" is "so that we serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter." Obviously, "the letter" is the law.¹³ There is an outward thing that speaks of death and that is baptism (Rom. 6:4) and that has in view a walk in newness of life; i.e. "life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). Here, clearance from the law is with a view to service in newness of spirit. The man in Romans 7 has the spirit of a hired servant (Luke 15:19) and serves, under the legal principle, in that spirit. Service in newness of spirit is to serve in loving and responsive sonship, led of the Spirit.

¹³ "For the letter kills, but the Spirit quickens" (2 Cor. 3:6). It is sad to see Christians virtually make "the letter" to mean the text of Scripture -- particularly the text of the New Testament, when Scripture is brought to bear on their willful and disobedient behavior. They want the *spirit* of the word; i.e., liberty -- meaning freedom to serve self, actually. Do we really need to point out that "the letter" in 2 Cor. 3:6 as well as in Rom. 7:6 means *the law*? See "Thy Precepts," v.1, #2, p. 61.

In summary, Rom. 7:1-6 describes two states and positions:

- (1) Alive under law (v. 1) and in the flesh (v. 5) as to state and standing; with passions of sins bringing forth fruit to death. Such a person, as to headship, is in Adam.
- (2) Dead to the law by the body of Christ (as having died and being free of the first husband, to be to the second husband); and bearing fruit to God (v. 4), serving in newness of spirit (v. 6). Such a person, as to headship, is in Christ.

Romans 8 gives us the state and standing of the second case (Romans 6 gives the doctrine of it); while Rom. 7:7-23 speaks of the first case -- to which we turn in detail in the next article, Lord willing.

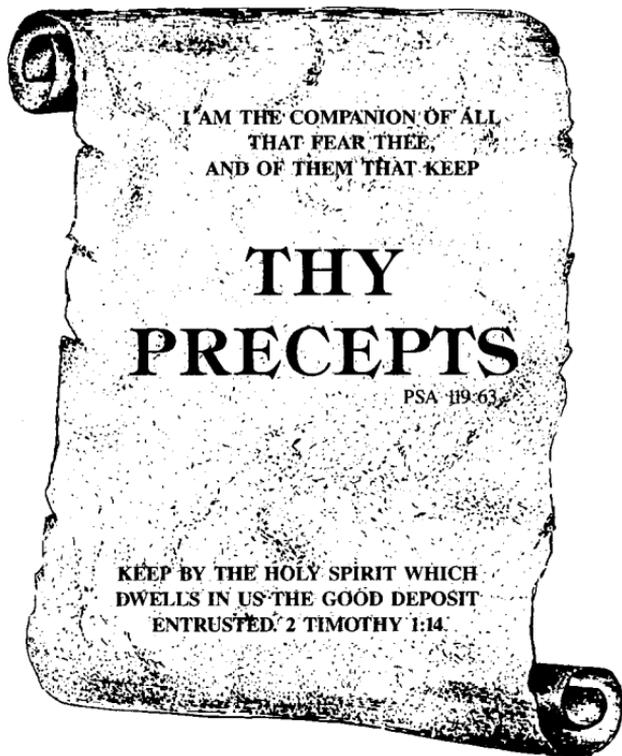
Ed.

(to be continued, Lord willing)

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DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

Every truth has its doctrine, that is what it teaches, and there is a knowledge of the truth according as the doctrine is apprehended. But on divine subjects the truth is addressed to the conscience, and as it is truly adopted there is practice, or the effect produced on the person by the truth which he has accepted. Now it is evident if the doctrine of any truth be imperfect, there cannot be, even with a good conscience, anything but an imperfect practice, characteristic of the form in which the truth has been received. Hence when any doctrine is propounded the true heart examines first, whether it be according to the word of God, and having received it as His word, he then seeks to conform to it, or otherwise he will not be able to preserve a good conscience. There are thus the two exercises -- one, to ascertain that the doctrine presented is from the word of God; and next, to be conformed to the truth it teaches. If there be an imperfect apprehension of the truth -- if the theory has been incorrectly accepted, there must, however faithful the conscience, be an imperfect practice. God communicates the truth perfectly, and if man were simply obedient he would follow it; and this is practice. But we have to contend with a will which is opposed to God, and we have, as I have said, first to be like the Bereans, who received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so; and next, like the Thessalonians, to whom "our gospel came, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, so that ye became followers of us and of the Lord." There is first the readiness of mind to receive the word, and then the practical effect -- "followers of us, and of the Lord" -- when the word is in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. [1] The first must not be mistaken for the second, though the second cannot be without the first. What hinders the second is the subject I would consider in this paper.

Every portion of truth, every revelation of God, instead of finding a ready acceptance from man, calls forth an opposition, varying according to the nature of the truth given; so that the more perfectly anyone has adopted a truth, the more his own will or flesh has been resisted, the more, like a pent up stream it opposes, because resisted, so that the

1. "Much assurance." used only four times in the New Testament. means **full bearing**, same as "**full assurance**" in Col. 2:2.

effort and triumph of the flesh would be to annul that which resists it; and hence, if the flesh gains an ascendancy, it is sure to exhibit its success in carrying one away from the truth; so that the practice is the true criterion of how much any one is governed by the truth. The doctrine must be received or there cannot be any practical conformity to it; and if there has been an error in the terms of it, there must be a corresponding defect in practice, made more manifest as the zeal to maintain it is great and unyielding. A wrong doctrine can only produce a wrong practice, but a right one might be held and still there might be an imperfect practice. Practice simply means carrying out to the letter the doctrine. Hence, to know the truth is the first thing, and the second is to be personally the exponent of it.

My present inquiry is, how souls, having received the true doctrine, fail in expressing it practically. Take for example Abram and Lot. Lot accompanies Abram, accepts the word of God to come into the land. It may be alleged that Lot did not get the word in the same way as Abram did. That will be admitted, and it is quite possible; but he acted on it, and they came into the land of Canaan together.

Now Abram finds before long that he is not able to maintain his ground there. When there is a famine in the land he goes down to Egypt. It is not that he has not received the truth; he has not only received it, but he has acted on it; but he fails to be practically the exponent of it: he yields to nature and there is no practice. By and by he is restored, and then he exhibits a moral superiority to Lot. Abram proves that the truth governs his heart, even though when tried he had failed. Failure has only taught him to value the truth the more. But it had not this effect on Lot, for he shows that the truth that he had accepted had not sufficient value in his eyes; for he departs from it, not like Abram under pressure, but in order to grasp *present advantages*; and there he is snared and taken. The truth is God's mind for man, and man is not of God if he be not a transcript of it; and to be so he must surrender his own will; and hence often where the heart is truest, there is a breakdown of the man in nature before he is sufficiently docile or tractable to express God's mind in his walk; in other words to be practical. If the truth has been received in the love of it, though there be failure in the practice, there will be a return again to the claims of it; and there will be a success which was not known before. This was remarkably the case with Abraham and David, Samson and Peter. They failed where they would least like to have failed, but failure only taught them to be more devoted to the truth which they had received; whereas the first failure with a Lot, or a Jonathan, or a Demas, seems never to have been recovered.

Many again, like Moses, receive a truth which they try first to bring themselves into conformity with; and failing therein, like him, are slow and fearful to answer to the desire of their hearts (compare Exodus 2:11-14, 4:1-13); but they are sure to be led on and helped by God. I think it will be seen that there is a marked difference between the failure of one whose heart is set on the truth and that of the one who, though he has received it, has not entered into the value of it.

Job is an example of another class, even that in which God breaks down the will through circumstances, ill health, etc., in order that the saint may be practically according to His mind. Every faithful saint is subject to Job's discipline in one form or another. It is not as in Abram's case or Moses', suffering because of the acting of the will against the truth of God; but in Job it is God dealing with him in order to set aside that which hinders the truth having its full power and sway. In him is exemplified that word, "They who live are always delivered unto death." The loss and deprivation of everything here effected for him that twofold condition of soul which only ensures true practice. He is brought to abhor himself in the light of God's presence, and at the same moment he depends so fully on God that he prays for his friends. Blessed combination! To lose all dependence on, and respect for myself, and at the same moment to have all my dependence and rest in God.

The simple problem before us is, how we personally may express the truth of God. The truth is supposed to have been adopted in its integrity; but there being in us a mind that is essentially at enmity with God, the inquiry is, What is the mode and process which is used to counteract this hostility, and to render us obedient to the mind of God? First, it is, as we have seen in Abram, there is a trial of the flesh in the very point which at once tests the whole power of the truth; and where there is yielding, there is a surrender of it in toto. This trial exposes the weakness of flesh beyond any question, and in the true soul teaches him never to trust in himself. Secondly, with Lot and his class, it is not pressure from which one sees no way of escape; but it is, while avowedly accepting the truth, and acting on it, looking for a *carinal addition*, which will entirely neutralize it. From this there is no recovery.

The third class is that of Moses attempting to carry out the truth in the flesh, and when failing, slipping into the other extreme, afraid to attempt anything at all. Here God manifestly helps.

The fourth, of which Job is the type, is where God so disciplines the soul, through temporal and bodily suffering, that even the good man finds that he has nothing in himself to esteem in the present of God.

Nay, he is so utterly stripped of all respect of himself that, like Peter, he can leave all to follow Him; or, like Saul of Tarsus, he is blind as to everything here: the glory of that light throws everything here in the shade.

The external is the index of the power and influence of the internal. The external is the practice, and according to the measure and extent of the soul's dependence on God (dependence increases as I am nearer to God) so is there external evidence of it. The practice cannot be but as there is power within. It is the power within which determines the practice. If the hands of Moses are held up on the mount, Amalek is worsted (see Exodus 17), there is good practice. The trying to be practical is only an evidence of how little one knows from where it springs. It is simply affectation to attempt to be what one is not genuinely. If I am occupied with what I do, it is affectation. If I am possessed by a moral power, I am subject to that which controls me, and there is practice. It is not a question of what I am trying to be, but of what that power makes me. Hence, the extent of practical correspondence to the truth is the real measure of the power of that truth in one; and hence too the unceasing urging in Scripture that souls should obey the truth, and the unceasing efforts of Satan -- not only to prevent practice, but to subvert or qualify the truth -- so that there may be bad practice with an unaccusing conscience.

In fine, there is no blessing apart from obedience. "If a man love me he will keep my words." "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, that man shall be blessed in his deed."

A Voice to the Faithful, vol. 5.

THE DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN

PROJECTS

Christian knowledge teaches a husband that his wife and children are more important than the various projects that men like to have in their lives. Hiel the Bethelite had such a project, but it was under a curse:

In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its

foundation in Abiram his first-born, and set up its gates in Segub his youngest (1 Kings 16:34).

If we turned to the book of Joshua, we would see that Joshua pronounced a curse on whoever would rebuild Jericho, on his firstborn, on the last, and (by implication) on all in between. Many projects in this world are similarly under a curse. This man did not care about what Joshua had said concerning what would happen to his children. When his firstborn died, he kept building. He was more interested in his project than he was in his family. And they all died. But he did finish his project. How proud he must have been to have accomplished what he had set out to do! He was a man of success! It cost him his entire family and he did not seem to care. Fathers, let us beware. It is possible to undertake some kind of a project that so absorbs us that we can lose all our children. Fathers, our children need to learn what love is by watching us.

THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN

What can be done so as not to have our children go into paths of self-pleasing? Manoah was concerned even before their baby was born. So he asked the angel, "What shall be the child's manner and his doing?" (Judges 13:12). The amazing thing is that the angel of the Lord never answered that question with a list of rules on child rearing. Instead, Manoah's wife was to refrain from wine and strong drink -- i.e., to be a Nazarite. What does that mean? She was to be completely separated unto the Lord. **THAT** ought to have been enough. Sadly, they did not act in accordance with the truth of separation. They reared Samson as a Nazarite outwardly only. Let us beware of a mere external conformity to the Word of God when the heart is not in it. She asked the right question and received the right answer: there has to be Nazarite separation unto the Lord in the home. There has to be that devotion to the Lord, that submission of will to Him. To be taken up with the joys of this world will prevent the kind of submission to the Lord that was shown in the long hair of the Nazarite. And he was not to touch those seven parts of the grape, from the pits to the skin, to water that grapes were in; namely, to leave this world and its joys to other people. (They are ephemeral anyway). Therefore, we indeed need to ask the Lord what the manner should be for our children. And the answer is that **you parents have to be for the Lord!** That is how the children are going to be for the Lord! Don't ask for a magic formula for the children while you disobey God's prescribed way of submission and love.

Self-discipline on the part of the parents the entire life through is absolutely necessary. How can parents bring up a disciplined child if they themselves are not self-disciplined? The reason there are so many undisciplined children is because the parents are undisciplined. Do we understand that? Discipline embraces a godly, orderly life that has the Lord as the motive for all things that are done. Our children are watching the 'role model' set by the parents in the home. When they look into the Word of God, they should recognize the same pattern that they have seen in their home.

It requires much self-discipline to make a child obey the first time it is told to do something or stop something. This is training, too, in obeying God. On the other hand, obeying the second, third or fourth time after being told, when the voice is raised or 'threats' become loud, is hardly the prompt, loving obedience that ought to characterize children. And how often the tendency is to just let them have their own way. That is training also; in how to get away with as much as possible. It is training them into the expression of as much self-will that they can get away with. Where does this tendency ultimately lead? Yes, it requires work and self-discipline to train a child in the kind of obedience that Scripture indicates.

Children will say that they did not hear you. When you know they did, and you properly, consistently correct them for what is not only disobedience but lying also, it is truly wonderful how the hearing improves! It helps much to start from the beginning and be consistent.

How quickly children spot inconsistencies! When they find that we have allowed something that we know is not really pleasing to the Lord, they remember it for later use: "But on such an occasion you allowed such a thing." What is the proper answer to such memories? "I was *wrong* when I said it then, and I have confessed it so to the Lord." And that is the end of the discussion right there. When you honestly own up to it, what can they say? We must not be afraid to say, "I'm sorry -- I was wrong," even to our children. Sometimes even we may punish them when we should not have done so. Or, perhaps we did it when we were really angry. Oh, they did something wrong, but we were exercising vengeance on them and God does not deal that way with us.

Train up the child according to the tenor of his way, and when he is old he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6).

A distraught mother once told me that she had brought up all her children in the same way. Now, I am sure that it was not so. However,

in her mind, she thought that she had brought up all her children in the same way. Yet, that is still a wrong notion because each child is an individual and has its own peculiar need of attention and training. Part of a parent's responsibility is to be adaptable, to go into God's presence to obtain the needed flexibility to train each child up according to the tenor of each child's way. They are not all the same. We ought not to have in our homes a set of rules that we think will take care of this matter. Of, course there will be some rules, but we must not trust in them.

Instead, parents should recognize that "the way he should go" may vary from child to child because the "tenor" of them is different. It is when a child is young and tender that it is the wise time for the pruning that is needed. A growing child may be shaped. If the desired basic shape is not given to a sapling before it becomes large and mighty, then even with a chain saw you have an terrible task on your hands. Similarly, a young child may be gently led whereas a great ordeal may be involved later -- if indeed it is not too late for any change at all. Even gentle reproofs may have more impact when the child is tender than when it has been long set in its self-willed ways, into which you have trained it; when a severe hand has to be taken to it and may never be successful.

An important part of the training of children is found in the life of Timothy: "from a child thou hast known the sacred letters" (2 Timothy 3:15). It takes much labor to teach your children the holy Scriptures. For years and years, they need to be taught as they are able to take it in. They take it in by precept and by practice -- your practice first and then leading them into it through your example. The parent must adapt and get down on the level that the children can understand in presenting to them the Scriptures. This is not easy to do and can be a learning experience for the parents' hearts also. God's plan for parents includes that they should learn from their children: when we see the flesh coming out in our children, we can recognize how the flesh operates in ourselves. If we are alert to it, we can see ourselves thus in our children and can humble ourselves before Him to be before God about those things in our own lives. In any case, how good it is to teach our children the stories in the Bible, and to go beyond the telling of stories to instruct them in the precepts and principles of morality that we learn in the Word of God. We need to be learning the Word of God for ourselves so that we can practice it and pass it on to our children and when they are old, they will not depart from it.

Also necessary is "the rod," mentioned many times in the book of

Proverbs.

The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame (Prov. 29:15).

"Wounding stripes purge away evil." "He that spareth his rod hateth his son." I once met a person who said, "I love my child too much to spank it." No, he didn't. He was indulging self. Solomon wrote by inspiration that such a person *hates* his own son. But the rod **and reproof** are here joined together. To give the rod and nothing but the rod (and temper) is not proper discipline. Discipline includes disciplining them, training them, correcting and chastening (as in Prov. 29:17).

But let us consider the rod: sometimes God brings the rod down upon His people. Micah said, "Hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it" (Micah 6:9). To *feel* it is not the same as to **hear** it. Children can be beaten so much that after a while they feel it but do not hear it. The reason is that their parents never said anything. They just beat them in temper over and over again. So the children learn just to live with it. But the rod *and reproof* give wisdom. Both are needed. Reproof means that we have to talk to the child. Not in temper. God does not chasten us in temper. Is it an angry Father that so deals with us? No, He has a firm hand attached to a loving heart.

So the mother and the father should share in this discipline or the child may conclude, "The one who spanks me is the one who does not love me." No doubt the father will take in hand the lead in this since he is the head and held answerable to God; and certainly deal with the more weighty matters; although disobedience in howsoever "small" a matter it may be is not to be tolerated. On the other hand, it is a grave mistake to allow a child to learn that only one of its parents loves it enough to give it the rod and reproof that God expects of parents.

To give them the reproof, we have to bring them into the presence of God so that they may know that what they have done is *wrong*, a sin. It was not merely a sin against man but an offense against the Lord as well (Ps. 51:4). We need to pray with them. If we require the obedience spoken of above, talk with them about the Word of God and pray with them in joys and sorrows as well as disciplinary matters, the number of required chastisements will doubtless decrease. But we have to take the time to do it, even though the family is large. And it will have a softening effect upon the child's heart. The rod beats on the body but we want it to have an effect upon the soul. How can it change the soul unless that soul is brought into the presence of God?

And the child has to be given to understand that the reason we are using the rod is because we have to do it because God says so: God's will is expressed in such chastening. Thus, the child is taught another practical example of obedience to God in the life of the parents. And *that* is just what the child needs to see; for children learn by objective demonstrations of principles.

A father, perhaps more than a mother, could be arbitrary. A mother might be inclined to be overindulgent. So we read, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger" (Col. 3:21). You can just cut your children off. "No, no, you can't, (I have a project in hand), no, no." What does the child learn? It gets angry. And only the rod, only anger, only loss of temper, never any *winning* of that little heart, never cultivating understanding in that little heart that discipline comes in love and for its good -- and the little heart learns that Dad is just arbitrary. When it says in Hebrews that God chastens us, it says that "our fathers chastened us according to their pleasure," a statement of fact, not necessarily of approval. It is a shame if they did not chasten us for the pleasure of God. Then it adds, "but he for our profit." When the rod and reproof go together, they are meant for the profit of the children. The parent is occupied with the child's good, not just in anger because the child interrupted a conversation or embarrassed the parent in public ("Wait till I get my hands on you!"). How could an angry parent go into the presence of God during the chastening?

Similarly, favoritism can ruin a family. It is said that someone once asked Mr. Darby if he loved all his brethren alike. "Oh, yes," he said, "but I take more pleasure in some than in others." God takes pleasure in obedient children but He loves them all equally. Beware that we love and value all our children equally and not play favorites! Of course, an obedient child may give us pleasure. But favoritism leads to resentment in all the siblings, often breaking out years later; and even after the parents have died. Favoritism is indulging the parents' own pleasure instead of being here for the Lord. By not disciplining oneself, the parent chooses one of the children to be a favorite.

The natural tendency to favor a particularly good-looking child or grandchild is a very sad kind of favoritism. Could you imagine a professed Christian woman entering her child in a beauty contest? I have known it done. And what is that but pride at root? "What hast thou but what thou hast received?" A good mind comes from the Lord. Or if born with "a silver spoon in your mouth", who put it there? If you have ability, where did you get it from? If according to the particular standards of the U. S. you are good-looking (it is differ-

ent among some South American indians, who put increasingly larger disks in their lips), where did you get it from? So human beauty is a thing to beware of. "Worship God in the beauty of holiness." What is beautiful in God's sight is holiness. He is holy and He dwells in holiness and that is beautiful. Several of David's sons were handsome. But the sad root of their bad ends lay in David's never putting a check on them.

NEGLECTING OUR CHILDREN

"A child left to itself" is such a common thing today! Dear king David did that: he was not a good father though he was an amazing king and a man after God's own heart. If he had lived in our age, he could never have been an elder because his house was not in order. David was told that he would have to give up four lambs for the one that he took from Urijah: the baby of Bathsheba (or perhaps Chileab the firstborn), then Amnon (slain by Absalom), then Absalom (slain by Joab), then Adonijah. In these sons of David, we parents may learn the folly of neglecting and/or indulging our children when the rod and reproof are needed.

Amnon was David's second son and he sinned against his half sister (a full sister to Absalom). "When David heard all these things he was very wroth." And what did he do about it? Exactly zero, as they say. The fact that he had compromised himself with Bathsheba may have had something to do with it. In 2 Sam. 13, we read how the third son slew the second one and fled to the home of his mother who was from another kingdom. "And while he was there, David mourned for his son every day." "The soul of King David longed to go forth unto Absalom." Now it is all right to have a longing for a son that goes into sin. But was David's longing a right one, a right kind? Look at the sequel. I have a inkling that Absalom was favorite number one.

Now, Joab was a foxy man, not a man of God at all. Amazingly, he did not fall away with Absalom although he had virtually set him up. (But he did fall away with Adonijah.) And here he discerned that David had a weak heart towards his children. He could tell that David did not really want to do anything against Absalom. So in order to ingratiate himself with David, he prompted the woman of Tekoa to say a parable in order to play upon David's disposition. On Absalom's return David confined him to his house, until finally "the king kissed Absalom" (2 Sam. 14:33). Was there anything righteous in that? Had anything changed? Does the mere passage of time change the character of a moral action? Was Absalom repentant? Not at all. But this is the

result of favoritism and unrighteousness in the family. The moral consequence was seen in Absalom's rebellion. The moral order is this: David was angry, then he showed favoritism, then he kissed unrighteously, then he fled from him, then he was put to shame by his son sinning in the sight of all Israel. This progression illustrates the truth that whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. Mercy *can* come in, but there is such a thing as really falling down before God in repentance, pleading with Him on the basis of His mercies. David knew how to do that: see Ps. 51. But he did not do so in the case of Absalom (compare Ps. 3 with Ps. 51). The end of Absalom came in chapter 18. Then David had to weep again (2 Sam. 18:33, 19:4). Where was Absalom? He was dead, **on his way to the pit**. How solemn! And David knew it. Absalom was in Sheol, waiting for the great white throne judgment -- not in paradise. It was too late, too late, too late. This is the end of favoritism. This is the end of never displeasing your child, of never saying, "why do you do this?" -- though even that is insufficient.

The words of Adonijah, "I will be king," had their moral origin in the words his father never said to him. "*And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, why hast thou done so?*" (1 Kings 1:6). His father did not question anything about him, he just left him to himself. So Adonijah brought his mother to shame. Why does it say so of the mother especially? Does not the father feel the shame, too? Yes, but a devoted mother lavishes much care upon her child and has a profound effect upon it to rear it for God, forming its character. Yet the father is ultimately responsible as David was in the case of Adonijah. David was in this case something like Eli, whose sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not. Eli said, "Why do you do that?" and that was some reproof. But *the rod and reproof* were not in the house of Eli. Just reproof is not enough. You ought not just apply the rod to children, and on the other hand, you ought not merely talk to them either. We must do both; and we **must lovingly** pray and read with them, bring them into the presence of God so that they may learn what sins and sin are in His presence. They must be brought to repentance.

Now, a practical point. In administering the rod, with patience, prayer and for the child's good, be aware that the Creator has provided a suitable place, somewhat low and to the rear, where this can be administered. Be aware also that marks elsewhere may be seen and that then you may find yourself being investigated by a Human Services Department for possible child abuse. Exercise Godly concern and care. But before we conclude, consider the following case.

Mr. J. D., who drove to work with several others and myself, had bought a new automobile, his wife having *dictated* the make and model. One rider begged him to let us ride to work in that car just one time so we could see how it performed. "She won't let me have it," he invariably replied. One morning Mrs. D. dropped him off for the car pool and that rider called out the window, "Mrs. D., please let J. use the car for a day." J. D.'s 16 year old daughter, who was in the car with her mother, put her head out of the window, thrust her lower lip forward, and sneeringly shouted, "He can't have it." In our car, J. D. said to that rider, "I told you." Shortly after, I lost track of J. D. for several years when, behold, one of my fellow workers had a New York newspaper open to the center and there was a full page picture of J. D. sitting down and his wife standing on his right, with her hand on his left shoulder. That daughter had a test performed on a lump on her neck several weeks previously and before a report came back saying she had cancer, she ran off -- to the hippies in New York, they thought. Hence, an appeal was made in the newspaper for her to return. And, oh, how pathetic -- under the parents' picture was a quotation, a question they asked: **"WHERE DID WE GO WRONG?"** I wonder how often that daughter shot out that lip when she was small -- "how cute" they say -- how many tantrums she threw (one is too many) -- how many times she back-talked, etc. Imagine! People laugh at pouting and tantrums.

Yes, these people were not the Lord's; but God will require much more of His own, as in David's case. To presume upon His grace to keep your children from paths of self-pleasing, while ignoring those moral ways through which He works, as He has directed us in His word, is presumption and superstition.

CONCLUSION

We parents have to be before the Lord to know how to live in our family relationships because we are not sufficient for them. But we have the Lord, we have His Word, we have the Holy Spirit within us, and He is for us. He wants us to listen to His Word. God is our Father and we dwell in His family and He has a firm hand attached to a loving heart. And He wants us to know that He loves us. He may pass us through a chastening but we know that what was in His heart was our good that we might come into a deeper fellowship with Him. He is seeking that we might be more like the Lord Jesus. That is an example for us as parents. Do we desire that for our children? It will cost the flesh something. We have to be exercised before the Lord that we should be disciplined mothers, fathers, husbands and wives ourselves

in the family of God in order that we may be able to exercise this same discipline towards those whom He has put in our trust.

Lastly we may note that many people do not want children at all because children would spoil their pleasures and the doing of "their own thing." But,

Lo, children are an inheritance from Jehovah (Ps. 127:3).

There is an inheritance that the Lord gives us, and it is our children. The Lord looks at them as a blessing that He gives us. They are not to be despised. Their little souls are to be brought up for Him. It may be that no one around us in the world is ever saved through our testimony, but the Lord wants to save every one of the souls of our children in our households. "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." Has your soul, by faith, laid hold of that? God delights to bless in households. If someone else does not have the faith for it, I can't help it, though I sorrow for them. But I am convinced from God's Word that He delights to bless households. However, there are moral ways by which God brings His purposes to pass. He wants us to so love our children and to so let go of the world and all its projects that our families should be brought to the Lord. Let us have faith, then, to appropriate God's blessings in accordance with His moral ways with us.

Ed.

THE LORD'S WARNINGS

#6

The last one of the Lord's warnings to be considered is really the seventh distinct thing against which we should be on our guard. One feels that the Lord covered the full scope of moral and spiritual dangers to which we are subject while remaining in this scene from which He has been cast out. This last class is aptly described in the name given them.

"BEWARE OF THE SCRIBES" (Mark 12:38)

In this chapter of Mark we find the Lord was first approached by "the Pharisees and Herodians" (v. 13), then "the Sadducees" (v. 18), followed by "one of the scribes" (v. 28). However, in the case of the scribe the Lord detected a genuine spirit of enquiry and said to him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (v. 34). As a class the scribes were in league with the others in scheming against the Lord, and they came under the Lord's scathing expressions as to being "hypocrites", "blind guides" and "fools", the same as the Pharisees.

In the case of Ezra, who is called "a ready scribe in the law of Moses" (Ezra 7:6), he was also a priest (v. 11). From the record and description of Ezra in both the books Ezra and Nehemiah, we learn just what a true scribe is. In the days of the Lord on earth, however, this class of Jews had far departed from the standard of Ezra. Where it says of Ezra that he "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments," the Lord said of the scribes in His day, "for they say and do not" (Matt. 23:3).

A scribe was one who wrote and taught the Scriptures but, while this is honorable in itself, it is a condemnation to the one who knows to do good and doeth it not. The word of Paul in 1 Cor. 8:1 is "knowledge puffeth up." What a danger this is to our souls when what we obtain from the Scriptures only remains in our heads and does not affect our hearts and walk. This was the trouble with the Corinthians, to a large extent, that they relied upon human wisdom instead of the "wisdom from God", Who is our Lord Jesus Christ. Mere eloquence in speaking from the Scriptures, right as the words might be, is of no value, and in fact leads to an increasing inconsistency with the truth. Furthermore, it feeds our pride and the result of this is just what the scribes were guilty of -- "and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts" (Mark 12:38-39). Do we not find this in the case of Diotrephes in the third epistle of John, "who loveth to have the preeminence among them"? This is an element that has come in among the saints over the centuries to an increasing and frightening degree. It is this spirit which started the elevation of those who were once properly local "overseers" among the local saints but who, very soon after the apostles had left this scene, became the forerunners of the modern ecclesiastical system of "episcopacy", that is, a clergy with a subordinate laity. While it has reached its full blown scale in our day in those systems from which we have separated, let us be reminded that it is still needful to heed the warning of our blessed

Lord Himself, Who knows our hearts better than we do.

What is involved in this unscriptural practice has a twofold aspect. While, on the one hand, the seeking a position among the saints is what is condemned by the Lord, there is also the fault on the part of the others who accord such position to them. No one can occupy a position unless the others accept such doing so. Even an officially appointed elder, that is as appointed by an apostle, was warned through the apostle Peter, "Taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2-3). May we learn from the only perfect Example, in our Lord Jesus Christ, Who humbled Himself, became a Servant to all and always did those things that pleased His Father in glorifying Him. How wondrously could God call attention to His own beloved Son, through the word of Isaiah (chap. 42:1), " Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth."

Paul instructs us, "Let no one seek his own advantage, but that of the other" (1 Cor. 10:24 N.T.), and let us not be like those of whom he says, "For all seek their own things, not the things of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 2:21).

There is also the criticism by James of those who did not have the right attitude in respect of persons. He exposes the giving preferential treatment to the rich and relegating the poor to the low place (see James 2:1-9). This has been observed, in its principles, over the years among those who profess to be members one of another. Shame on us, beloved, if we are guilty of such behavior either in lording it over the saints or in making distinctions based on natural advantages. Remember, God is no respecter of persons: we are either on equal footing as dead in sins or on equal standing before Him as "accepted in the Beloved One."

In bringing these various needful warnings before our hearts may we turn increasingly more to the Lord Who gave them to us, that He will preserve us from them all. A highly regarded gift to the assembly in the last century said (quoting from memory), "The truth will not keep us; only a close walk with Christ will."

O Lamb of God, still keep us
Close to Thy pierced side;
'Tis only there in safety
And peace we can abide;

With foes and snares around us,
 And lusts and fears within,
 The grace that sought and found us
 Alone can keep us clean.

'Tis only in Thee hiding
 We feel ourselves secure;
 Only in Thee abiding
 The conflict can endure.
 Thine arm the victory gaineth
 O'er every hateful foe;
 Thy love our hearts sustaineth
 In all their cares and woe.

Soon shall our eyes behold Thee
 With rapture face to face,
 And, resting there in glory,
 We'll sing Thy power and grace.
 Thy beauty, Lord, and glory,
 The wonders of Thy love,
 Shall be the endless story
 Of all Thy saints above.

THE LORD'S WARNINGS -- IN VERSE

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS! -- says He to His own.
 Among us false teachers, whom we should disown.
 Beware! they are wolves who do feign themselves sheep.
 They'll soon be detected if by Him we keep.

BEWARE OF MEN! -- too, as in Adam we find
 Those hearts that remain since beginning of time;
 Their hatred expressed to our adorable Lord
 Will fall to our lot, if to Him we accord.

BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS! -- still in our hearts,
 For in the old nature we still have our part.
 But if we are walking in Spirit alone,
 We'll desire only Him, till He call us home.

BEWARE OF THE LEAV'N OF THE PHARISEES! -- They
 Who say what is right, and self-righteously pray.
 Oh! may we be found in the steps of our Lord,

In the wealth of His love, which He doth afford.

BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF SADDUCEES! -- here,
To whom the intangible's something to fear;
For them there is nothing outside of this scene.
But faith gives us evidence of Him, though unseen.

BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF HEROD! -- the one
Who gave to the Jews all his sports for their fun,
Who weaned them away from the One Who is True.
May we be preserved having Him in full view.

BEWARE OF THE SCRIBES! -- those who think they know all,
Whose wisdom's so great, yet to God is so small.
But we know the One Who now sits on the throne,
Who'll soon take us there as the trophies He's won.

All these solemn warnings He gives to His own,
To keep us from dangers to which we are prone.
It will not be long ere He'll call us above
To dwell there forever, in His matchless love.

May all that He says sink deep into our heart,
To keep us from sin and this world set apart,
To glorify Him in the path which He trod,
To praise Him, and honor Him here as our God.

J. Pascoe

THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM

(Continued)

When the moment came that He faced the last attack of the enemy He readily went forward and said, "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence" (John 14:31). And where did He go? Directly to the cross in the final act of obedience here on earth, where He laid down His life in accord with the authority given Him by the Father. Marvelous, glorious Savior and Lord --

"Our hearts in meekness train
 To bear Thy yoke and learn of Thee,
 That we may rest obtain."

Did the world distract Him from His purpose in coming here? Did the world frustrate Him in accomplishing the will of Him who had sent Him? Did the world interfere between, and spoil, the holy and divine love that ever flowed between the Father and the Son? Oh! may our hearts learn to imitate Him in following in His steps and not be ashamed of Him or His precious Name, or His holy Word as His commandments to us, by which we can show our love for Him in keeping them. Oh! that a searching word from Him should penetrate our hearts even as it was a searching look that entered, and broke, Peter's heart as he realized that he had failed the One who had prayed for him that his faith would not fail. "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). Let us not be deceived that we can enjoy the love of the Father or the Son if we fail in keeping His commandments, for He said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). What a precious, precious promise which can only be realized by those who are obedient!

From the obedience of the Son, even unto the death of the cross, there flows out in enlargement of Himself in His glories the fruits of that obedience. He was here, as a Man, as "God manifest in flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16), but a Man infinitely above those of Adam's race, yet infinitely more humble than any of that race. So, we find -- HUMILITY perfectly displayed in Him, with DEPENDENCE perfectly practiced by Him. MEEKNESS and GENTLENESS are perfectly exhibited in Him. GRACIOUSNESS and TRUTHFULNESS have their source in Him, seen in the perfection of His own conduct.

SERVICE was His perfect occupation as Jehovah's SERVANT (Isa. 42:1), in the interests of both God and man. He always ministered to both, to the total and eternal satisfaction of God and the eternal blessing of man, both of sinner and saint.

These EXCELLENCIES only reside in and emanate from our blessed, adorable Savior and Lord as the Man who fills the scene of God's glory at His right hand, and who will soon fill the earth with His glory as the waters cover the sea.

There are no doubt further excellencies which shall be revealed to our hearts as we meditate upon Him now, and which our eyes shall

soon see, as we behold Him face to face in all His beauty, and see Him in His actions as Man both in the world to come, and everlastingly beyond in the Father's house. "Come, Lord Jesus."

The Person of the Son of God,
As to the Father known,
Is hidden from the mind of man,
Preserved for Him alone.

The glories of the Father, now
In Son of Man made known,
Are seen in Him, displayed down here,
To those who are His own.

To hearts that love Him can be seen
The excellencies in Son,
Portraying to adoring eyes
The Father's glorious One.

The glories that are seen in Him
As Man upon this earth,
Should mark us now as kingly priests
And sons by heavenly birth.

The Son's devotedness to God
The Father, sent by Him,
And come from Him, to do His will,
Should in us not be dim.

The Son's obedience to the One,
Co-equal -- as above,
Was manifest in all He did
Down here, in perfect love.

The further excellencies shine out
The more we're occupied
With Him, who called us out of dark
To light which He supplied.

Then let us shine for Him down here,
While He is there on high,
Reflections of His excellencies,
Whose coming is so nigh.

The Father's full delight in Him,
 The Son of His own love,
 Will then be known to us as well
 As we see Him above.

(J. J. Penstone)

J. Pascoe

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

DELIVERANCE: ROMANS 7

(continued from v. 3, #4)

3. ROM. 7:7-20: THE STATE UNDER THE FIRST (HUSBAND) MANIFESTED

Introduction

We now enter upon an account of the experience of an undelivered man by one who is delivered.

Before entering into the details of this portion of Scripture, some introductory remarks are in order. Rom. 7:7-23 describes a regenerate person:

1. He has the "inward man" (Rom. 7:22).
2. He has a changed understanding (Rom. 7:17).
3. He has a changed will (Rom. 7:19).

But concerning his state, he is captive to the law of sin (Rom. 7:23). In view of this, A. C. Ord asked,

Can any reasonable person accept the statement that the believer here is

not only sealed, but "in the enjoyment of a liberty of which he knows not the first terms." [2]

It seems to me that the result of such teaching that all is possessed from the first moment of quickening leads to this. The reader will have to judge of this in the light of the following Scriptures:

But where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty (2 Cor. 3:17).

For sin shall not have dominion over *you*, for ye are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14).

Now, having got your freedom from sin . . . (Rom. 6:18)

Rom. 7:4 spoke of bearing fruit to God. However, it must not be supposed that Rom. 7:7-23 is merely about fruitfulness. Rom. 7:4 itself pointed out that fruitfulness is the result of death coming in. Story remarked,

Is not death the end of man in the flesh? and the man is dead in the 6th chapter -- **not only dead but buried**. How then can he be made alive in the 7th chapter 7-24? He is not made alive, it is the state of a man, seeking his standing on the ground of the first man, a living man, not a dead man at all. The law is the measure for that man. He is not under grace, he is earnestly seeking to maintain his cause on the ground of law. He finds no fruit, no life, no deliverance. It is not a question of seeking fruit only, it is also the fullness of life and deliverance. If this is seen it will be clear that it cannot be the orderly sequence in experience of the man in the 6th chapter. There the man has eternal life in Christ, has "fruit unto holiness," is made free from sin (deliverance), not sins forgiven, but made FREE FROM SIN (chap. 6:22).

Now we will look at Colossians 1:5:6: "The word of the truth of the Gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." And thus we see that fruitfulness is there **at once**, when the Gospel comes in power to the soul, and the **grace of God** is known in truth. [3]

The fact is that Rom. 7:7-23 is not about a saint seeking fruitfulness. It concerns the seeking of power over indwelling sin. The matter of fruitfulness arises when deliverance has been realized.

2. **The teaching of Scripture . . . on Spiritual Life and the Sealing of the Holy Ghost.** p. 48.

3. Story, W., "A Brief Review of a Book Entitled 'Life in Christ and Sealing With the Holy Ghost.'" p. 28.

Notice also that the chapter involves more than a conflict between the old and new natures. It is indeed a conflict, but a conflict of two natures **when the conscience is under law as its standing before God** - the person being alive under law. The chapter describes the experimental process that brings the soul to identification with Christ in His death -- and into the state and standing to which the above cited Scriptures apply.

No one who speaks of law and being under it has ever known the wickedness of his own heart. [4]

Since Galatian legalism is sometimes confounded with Romans 7, let me say that the Galatians began in the Spirit and wanted to be made perfect by the law -- foolishness indeed. But we must not confuse wilderness behavior with the subject of deliverance.

In Romans 7 it is a question of *acceptance*, not knowing oneself accepted before God as in a forgiven position. After deliverance, a question of *acceptableness*, or agreeableness of behavior, may arise, but that is altogether a different matter.

(1) Rom. 7:7-11: The Sentence of Death Written in the Conscience.

Verse 7.

What shall we say then? [is] the law sin? Far be the thought. But I had not known sin, unless by law: for I had not had conscience also of lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust;

Since v. 6 had stated that we who are in the Christian position "are clear from the law," the question might be raised, 'Is the law sin?' No. That is not the trouble. Rather, the law brings home to the soul that sin dwells within. What is meant by sin dwelling within? **Sin** refers to that disposition acquired in the fall that renders a person unsubject to the will of God. It is the root principle of evil denoting an incorrigible nature within. Thus one sins (commits sinful acts) because he has a sin nature that loves to sin. "But I had not known sin, unless by law." The law is here regarded as the detector of sin within. The natural man does not take cognizance of lust working within because of this

disposition here called sin. How sin is known by the law is this: "I had not had conscience also of lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust" (Rom. 7:7; Ex. 20:17).

"Sin" utilizes the law's prohibition and provokes the will into lust. Lust, "the will in evil," is the first movement of this disposition called sin. It is having a desire without reference to the will of God. The law, by saying "thou shalt not lust," causes the conscience to take cognizance of lust, which leads to taking cognizance of the disposition from which it springs -- namely, sin. That is, lust being forbidden causes one to consider where the lust comes from, namely the sin-nature.

Sin as a nature was, of course, in the world before the law of Moses, but souls did not take account of it: "for by law [is] knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20).

Verse 8

But sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, wrought in me every lust; for without law sin [was] dead.

This explains that the commandment serves to manifest sin to the conscience (mentioned in v. 7). The prohibition provokes the will of the flesh, or sin, and stirs up lust -- in opposition to the commandment; and thus the conscience becomes active with respect to these lusts.

"Without law sin [was] dead" does not mean that sin was inactive, or dormant, or non-existent. Keep in mind that v. 7 has brought the conscience before us in this matter. Sin was dead, without law, with respect to the conscience. The conscience took no cognizance of sin or lust until the commandment came, and in this sense sin was dead. It means that sin was unstirred into activity by lack of a prohibition.

Verses 9 - 11

But *I* was alive without law once; but the commandment having come, sin revived, but *I* died. And the commandment, which [was] for life, was found, [as] to me, itself [to be] unto death: for sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, deceived me, and by it shew [me].

Obviously the person does not literally die. The explanation is that *the sentence of death is written in the conscience*. So, without the law he was alive; i.e., the sentence of death was not written in the con-

science. "I was alive" as a child of Adam without the consciousness of indwelling sin. When the commandment came, sin revived; i.e., sin was provoked into activity, producing lust. The law discovered to me the evil nature because of the imposed restraint. Thus the sentence of death was written in the conscience by the law which said, 'Do this, and thou shalt live.' (This did not refer to eternal life, but to continuous living in the world as not earning the wages of sin.) The man, believing he had power to obey God (like advocates of moral free-will) was deceived. Sin, using the commandment, slew him. J.N.D. remarked that "sin is personified as someone who seeks to kill the soul." Sin, then, by the instrumentality of the commandment, slew him, wrote the sentence of death in the conscience. This raises a question about the law itself, to which we now turn.

We must not confuse v. 9 with v. 1. "But *I* was alive once" means that the sentence of death was not written in the conscience in his unregenerate days. He was alive under law, in Adamic responsibility, nonetheless, as we have seen previously.

(2) Rom. 7:12-13: Law and Sin Contrasted

Verse 12

So that the law indeed [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Verse 12 indicates that the person has learned that the law is the expression of what is right conduct for the creature. The commandment is:

1. **Holy.** We have seen that the law forbids lust. However, it brings nothing, but requires something of the creature. It cannot make the creature holy.
2. **Just.** This refers to its requirement of consistency in responsibility towards God and man.
3. **Good.** The source of the law is God.

Thus the soul may be on the ground of law in principle, in conscience, seeking self-power to carry out God's will.

I repeat, as it is important, wherever we reason from our state to what God's acceptance of us may be, that is, in principle, law, just as the prodigal

son between his conversion and meeting his father. It calls itself holiness, will insist that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, which is necessarily and eternally true, but mixes it with God's acceptance of us, connecting this and our state, so that it is really righteousness, not holiness, that the mind is occupied with: for in holiness we hate evil because it is unholy, not because we are out of divine favour by it; but, whatever shape it takes, it is always really law, a question of evil that makes us unacceptable to God. [5]

Verse 13

Did then that which is good become death to me? Far be the thought. But sin, that it might appear sin, working [or, 'working out'] death to me by that which is good; in order that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

The words, "in order that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful," means that sin was always there, but the law discovered it to the conscience and showed how heinous it is. It was sin that brought death (i.e., the sentence of death) to the conscience by the instrumentality of the law. The law, then, exposed sin and its working to the conscience, that sin might appear in its true character. Keep in mind that sin is referring to the nature, not the acts.

If a child were commanded not to go near a precipice, but it goes, falls over and is killed, it was not the commandment that killed the child. The child had a disposition to disobey. That evil disposition, sin, worked death to the child by that which was a good command. This somewhat illustrates v. 13 concerning what it is that works death. Also, it illustrates how the evil disposition becomes "exceeding sinful" by wanting its way in direct defiance of the commandment.

(3) Rom. 7:14-17: The Natures Manifested

Verse 14

For we know that the law is spiritual: but *I* am fleshly, sold under sin.

"For we know that the law is spiritual" indicates that one who has been delivered and is in the characteristic Christian position is speaking. "We know" indicates Christian knowledge (cp. 1 Cor. 8). The delivered man is recounting the experience of the soul prior to receiving the

deliverance. He tells us, too, that the law is spiritual.

Here also the spirituality of the law is seen, for it detects and judges sin in the nature, the principle of lust, which the law cannot but condemn
[6]

But while it is thus spiritual, there is no power in it for victory.

The struggle of the natures is very intense. Notice the change in verbs to the present tense in vv. 14-17.

"But *I* am fleshly" is the state of a child of Adam. (The "I" is here identified with, and characterized by, the sin nature.) Here is the trouble. The law can only condemn such a one. He is "sold under sin." This is an admission that sin does have dominion over him, but Rom. 6:14 says, "sin shall not have dominion over *you*." This is true of the delivered soul, whose state and standing is seen in Romans 8. We also read, in Rom. 6:22, "But *now*, having got your freedom from sin . . ." Of whom is the apostle speaking? Why, those at Rome who were Christians -- enjoying liberty. The man of Rom. 7:14 is not in liberty; he is sold under sin and has not obtained freedom from sin. He is not in the Christian standing and state. He has not the Spirit indwelling (Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17).

The Corinthians were carnal (1 Cor. 3:1), but it is a mistake to confound that with Rom. 7:14. 1 Cor. 3:1 is like Israel in the wilderness (fleshly walk as men), whereas Rom. 7:14 answers to Israel undelivered, before they crossed the Red Sea. The subjects are quite different.

Verse 15

Next, he sees that he has a new will, but no power.

For that which I do, I do not own: for not what I will, this I do; but what I hate, this I practice. (v. 15)

To be sure, in this state he desires victory, but, alas, in order to be satisfied with himself. He would like to have self-power, but finds that he is mastered.

6. Ord, A. C., *The Teaching of Scripture . . . on Spiritual Life and the Sealing of the Holy Ghost*, p. 47

Verses 16, 17

But if what I do not will, this I practice, I consent to the law that [it is] right. (v. 16)

His new will would do what God requires, but his practice is otherwise. Yet, the new will consents to the rightness of the law.

Next he learns to distinguish "I" from the indwelling sin.

Now then [it is] no longer *I* [that] do it, but the sin that dwells in me (v. 17).

There is an "I" of identity. There was a man named Adam before the fall, and a man named Adam after the fall. There was the "Adam" of identity, but after the fall he had in addition an evil disposition besides the Adam of identity. The man in Romans 7 has made some such distinction between his inmost being and the evil disposition called sin.

(4) Rom. 7:18-20: Experience of Helplessness**Verse 18**

To learn that we are without strength (Rom. 5:6) is much harder to learn than that we are sinners and are ungodly. Arminianism thrives on finding something in the natural man upon which God can work. The quickened soul, however, must needs learn this, rather:

For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell: for to will is there with me, but to do right [I find] not (v. 18).

The difference in vv. 14-17 compared with 18-20 is that in the former the point is that it was learned that he is "sold under sin", while here the **helplessness** is more stressed: "but to do right [I find] not." There is in his body a new will and understanding and also the inward man. But these are not in his flesh. Thus, he does not mean his body here when speaking of his flesh. "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be" (Rom. 8:7).

Verses 19, 20

For I do not practice the good that I will; but the evil I do not will, that I do. But if what I do not will, this I practice, [it is] no longer I [that] do it, but the sin that dwells in me.

Verse 20 ends with the same statement as v. 17. In vv. 14-17 he learned that he is "sold under sin." It is one thing to recognize the fact; it is another to confess and own the helplessness experienced by that fact, as we have in vv. 18-20. He did not practice the good that his new will wanted to do. Rather, the evil that his new will rejected was the thing he did. So that the "I", the "I" as identified with the new nature, was not the source of the evil done; it was indwelling sin operative within that dominated.

Note that no one with a new nature ever did only evil and never good. No one with a new will had ever only the will perfectly right and the conduct ever only evil. Verse 19 is abstract.

Ed.

EXTRACT

Indeed, to say the truth, I often think that we sin against souls when we lend encouragement for them to go on working obviously beyond the measure of the Spirit's power with them.

G. V. Wigram, *Ministry*, vol. II/III. p. 244.

THERE ARE TWO SPECIAL EVILS

There are two special evils which we have to guard against. We must beware of ecclesiastical pretension or mere boasting in church position, without an exercised conscience and the holy fear of God. This is a terrible evil, against which every beloved child of God should most sedulously watch. We must never forget that the professing church is a hopeless wreck, and that any human effort to restore it is a delusion. We are not called, hence not qualified to organize a body.

The Holy Ghost is organizing the body of Christ.

But, on the other hand, we are not to draw a plea from the ruin of the church for laxity as to truth, or sluggishness in our personal walk. We are in great danger of this. There is no reason whatever why any child of God or servant of Christ should do or sanction what is wrong, or continue for an hour in association with aught that has not for its authority, "Thus saith the Lord." "Let *every one* that nameth the name of the Lord *depart* from iniquity."

C.H.M. in "The Remnant: Past and Present."

A MAN OF GOD

2 Tim. 3:17

In the new testament "the man of God" supposes one faithful in the service of souls; but the term is by no means confined to Christianity, being rather in itself a familiar Old Testament expression. By it we may understand a believer who has the moral courage and the spiritual power to identify himself with the Lord's interests, and to maintain the good fight of faith in the midst of perils and obstacles of every sort. Such a testimony is incompatible with yielding to human principles and the spirit of the age.

We must not suppose however that fidelity in such a day as ours wears an imposing garb. An appearance of strength is out of course when declension has come in and judgment is approaching. God will have a state of ruin felt, and His testimony must be in keeping. When He calls to sackcloth and ashes, He does not give such a character of power as has price in the world's eyes. Thus one of the truest signs of practical communion with the Lord is that at such a moment one is heartily content to be little. This is reality, but it is only a little strength. It is according to the mind of God. But that which attracts the world must please and pander to the self-importance of man. The world itself is a vain show, and likes its own. Consequently there is nothing which so carries the mass of men along with it as that which flatters the vanity of the human mind. It may assume the lowliest air, but sinful man seeks his own honor and present exaltation. But when a servant of God is thus drawn into the spirit of men, he naturally shrinks back from fairly facing the solemn call of God addressed to His

own, loses his bright confidence, and gets either hardened or stands in dread of the judgment of God. When Christians lose the power and reproach of the cross, philanthropy has been taken up, which gives influence among men, and general activity in what men call doing good replaces the life of faith with the vain hope of staving off the evil day in their time at any rate. One need not deny zeal and earnest pursuit of what is good morally; self-denial too one sees in spending for purposes religious or benevolent; but the man of God, now that ruin has entered the field of Christ's confession, is more urgently than ever called to be true to a crucified Christ. And as surely as He is soon coming to take us on high, He will in due time appear for the judgment of every high thought and the fairest looking enterprises of men which will all be swallowed up in the yawning gulf of the apostasy.

W. K., *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 6:79

WORSHIP AND SINGING

So in the peace-offering; they were iniquities if they [the eating of them] went beyond the second or third day, because they were not connected with the sacrifice ([Lev.] chap. 7:15-18). If the sacrifice were a vow, it might be eaten on the next day as well as the first day. If there be more energy in the worship, you may carry it on longer (as here two days instead of one); but if it is practically separated from the victim on the altar, it is unclean altogether and is rejected. You cannot separate praise or worship from the offering of Christ: without this it becomes a positive abomination. A man may be singing a sweet hymn with a thought of Christ in it; but being disconnected from Christ Himself, it is a mere piece of music and offensive to God. It is possible to make requests that the Holy Ghost gives to be asked, and to find that you are losing the sense of the Person to whom you are speaking. Worship must be in spirit and in truth. It is solemn to give out a hymn. Take hymn 151: are you speaking truthfully in singing it? 'Each thought of Thee doth constant yield, Unchanging fresh delight'? Perhaps *you* may be able to go up to it. Suppose I sing "O teach me more of thy blest ways," this is very different: what are these "blest ways," and am I learning them? Then again take "O Lord, how blest our journey": I may ask, Is this true of myself? I do not say, Is it true? but, Is it true to *me*?

Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 19:215.

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. . . . 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 in 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.

EXTRACT

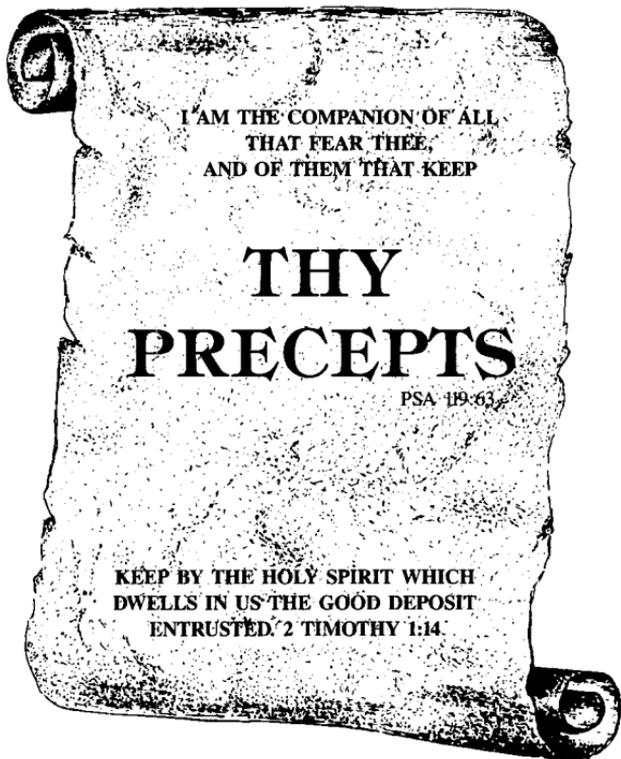
But for the incarnation of the Son of God, I should be ashamed to be a man.

. . . a man upon the throne of God. Is it possible?

G. V. Wigram

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THE OLD PROPHET OF BETHEL

1 Kings 13:1-32

The effect of sin was to separate the heart from God; so the conduct of sinners (Rom. 3:18); "There is none that seeketh after God." The natural heart is opposed to God; and the enmity already there is increased by the subtlety of Satan, in order that he may keep it from Him, whom to know is life and peace. When, in His grace, the soul is quickened and brought nigh by the blood of Christ, the hostility of Satan ceases not. A present God is present power. *The enemy of souls seeks to undermine our dependence upon God, and thus separate us from Him.* In the former case, security is pledged; in the later, endangered. And if life ("because he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself") is certain, yet fruit-bearing ceases, and the Lord is not honored. Whilst rejoicing in the salvation provided for us in the gospel, we must remember the object of it, in that God may be glorified in us. And to this object Satan is opposed. Many are the ways by which he succeeds. Oftentimes by exciting to evil, for the chaff is still in us and needs but the fuel to ignite. But the believer escapes to his hiding-place (Psalm 32:7). He knows the enemy in this form and avoids him. Or if taken unawares, yet the source of the evil is detected, confessed and forgiven (1 John 1:9). But the enemy is not put down or turned from his purpose. If he cannot work to our injury by things which are evil, he will strive to do it by that which is good. The good which flows from God shall be presented as food for the soul, instead of the God who supplied it. The fruits of faith in God, instead of the God of the fruits. And it is just here where his success has been most eminent. If the bait, in the form of gross evil, is not taken, and his presence detected, yet, transformed into an angel of light, he succeeds. The world and its allurements may be overcome; but that which is good being perverted to raise a reputation for ourselves, instead of bringing glory to God, by that we fall. The precept being regarded - - "When ye have done all, say ye are unprofitable servants" -- is the state of heart which preserves. But, alas! who is sufficient for these things!

We have, in the subject before us; an instructive lesson. Judgment pronounced upon evil by the prophet of the Lord, and the reception he met with. The opposition of the king, and the power of God supporting His servant. The servant's faithfulness in obeying the commandment and in refusing a reward; closing with his fall and the occasion of it. He is proof against temptation when presented in the form of evil, and he falls when tempted by apparent good. The voice of a brother, his standing and reputation, are honored above the word of God. He disobeys the former

and accredits a lie in the latter.

The Holy Ghost is silent as to the sin of the old prophet of Bethel. The sin of the one against his neighbor is clear; but the sin against God in the other's disobedience is clearer. We are often taken up with that which is an injury to many, regardless of that which is done against God. Many can contend earnestly for love to the brethren, and warmly resent failure in this respect, yet remain unmoved when the truth of God, on which it is based, is sought to be undermined. We cannot hold the truth without love to the brethren being a consequence. The fruit-bearing which flows from communion with God is the evidence of it. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all things else shall be added unto you."

The communion of saints did not spring from their agreement with one another, but their union of heart about God. Taught by His Spirit the virtue and value of the Lord Jesus for them, they rolled themselves in the confidence of love upon His care. That they enjoyed His presence was manifest, in that "great grace was upon them all." In beholding the love of God, they became vessels for transmitting it. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord they were changed!" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." He bestows His gifts on those who love Himself. There is positive declension in the soul when the gifts are spoken more about than the Giver -- when saints can be grieved for the lack of right deportment to themselves from their brethren, yet indifferent as to right thoughts about God in Christ. Dishonor to the Lord is less thought about than disrespect to one another. But so it is under every trial: man has proved himself untrue to God, God, in His covenant with Christ, true to man. "He abideth faithful." Blessed that it is so! Most blessed! Because He changes not, we have confidence and hope. We must cease from man. We must trust in God.

The subject before us so graphically portrayed is not novel in its occurrence. A saint today and a prophet then have features in common. Seeing the one, you recognize the other. The servant of God subduing every outward opposition, and himself subdued by that which was within.

Very weak ones have got the victory over the world outside the church, have overcome its threats, and despised its rewards. Very strong ones have fallen from troubles within. Ostensible evil is easily resisted; when disguised as good, it subdues. Hence the need of constant dependence upon God and right thoughts about Him, that He may give us the spirit of dependence upon Him. There was a bond between Job and God, as related in chap.42:8. "Ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job." Job had his failings and many of them. But Job had right thoughts of God. We have our failings and many of them, so that no less a Christ than the Christ of God can meet our need. Let us beware of dishonoring Him, and of that which is as bad, if not

worse, assuming a neutral attitude. Judging the wrong ways of many who are contending for the right, instead of identifying ourselves with those on the Lord's side.

The sin of Jeroboam provoked the judgment of God, and in the chapter before us is given the prophet's denunciation against the altar. The course of the prophet to the close of the tenth verse is marked by steadfastness in the service of his Master. He set out on his errand by the word of the Lord. He delivers his message. The king is provoked to wrath, and commands the prophet to be seized. "He put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold of him, and his hand which he put forth against him dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him." The word of the Lord is adhered to, and His strength goes along with it. He identifies Himself with His testimony. The king, smitten, becomes a suppliant. He who stretched out his hand against God cannot draw it back again. And he entreats of the prophet to pray for him. What instruction is here!

The servant, whilst witnessing for God, is supported by Him; and the power of the world is humbled at his feet. And so it should be with the church. Not because she is called of God, but for His sake who called her. Alas, she has used the grace God has bestowed for her own exaltation, forgetful of His glory. "And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before." And the man of God said unto the king, "If thou wilt give me half thine house I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel."

Thus far the word of the Lord is obeyed -- the testimony against the altar delivered. Outward opposition was overcome, and the gifts of the ungodly king rejected. The prophet was not afraid of his threats, and was proof against his rewards. His separateness as God's witness against ungodliness was maintained. Yet, "let not him that putteth on his armor boast as he that taketh it off." Many trials await us in the wilderness. We cannot so much as raise our helmet (Eph. 6:17), but we are open to the darts of the foe. The sense of danger should keep us on the alert. It was "whilst men slept that the enemy sowed tares." That which is most apparent is the least dangerous. The history of the church elucidates this. Open opposition to God's people drove them to Him for protection. "When Peter saw the wind was boisterous, he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me!"

The greatest danger to the Lord's people is from one another. Paul, speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus, warns them that grievous

wolves should enter in among them -- "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." "Looking diligently, lest any man fall from the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Such portions of the Word healthily digested in the soul would work wonders in the way of keeping down self-sufficiency amongst saints. None ever wandered so far from the truth but any of us may go further; none ever dishonored God by sin, however hateful, but we may do worse. We cannot depend upon one another. We cannot confide in one another; and the communion of saints did not consist in leaning upon one another; but each individual trusted in God and, according to His faith, was in a position to assist his neighbor. If brotherly love could be sustained apart from God, then in just such proportion could we do without God. But "of Him, and to Him, and through Him, are all things." He gives the blessing, and His is the power to sustain it. In honoring Him we are taught to honor one another. When His glory is our aim, our happiness is His. Exalted conception of the majesty and dignity of the Lord Jesus . . . and God the Father delights to shower down blessing on His people. *His* happiness is in them, and they find their happiness in Him. Let us beware of unhallowed thoughts of the Son of God. Let us eschew curious disquisition about His Person. His name is Wonderful; no man can unravel the mystery. He is presented to us as the object of adoration, not as a subject for inspection. "He smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord."

But again to our narrative. We read in verses 11 to 19, " Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the word which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? for his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? and he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water." Paul, writing to the Galatians in chap. 1:8 says, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you

than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." The prophet of Judah had delivered his testimony upon the express revelation of God to himself, and it was not said to him. "Go to such a person, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." We have a standard in the written Word, and the Spirit of God also to enable us to apprehend it. A revelation discordant with it could not be accredited. The New Testament unfolding the purpose of grace in the Gospel was but the fulfillment of the promises recorded in the Old.

The prophet of Bethel might have much to recommend him to notice. His years would add weight to his words. He came as a brother, and put in his claim to be so regarded because of his brotherhood. The temptation was strong, and succeeds. We shall do well to take heed in our days. A man, in the grace of God, may understand and clearly put forth the grace of the Gospel. A man, in the strength of the Lord, may manifest much of the savor of Christ in his life. God may put honor upon him, and he may deserve to be honored; but God allows no man to usurp His place.

Those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, and the man "in labors more abundant," are alike debtors to grace. What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Who maketh thee to differ from another? Eminent gifts for the edification of the body, or shining faith for the example of the body, give no preeminence over it. God gave them for the service of the church and their service is real only as it leads the soul to rely on God. The servant should serve for the Lord's sake, and the body be grateful for the Lord's sake. The servant should wait on the body because it is the Lord's; and the body should cherish the servant, for the Master's sake. And when this is the principle of service, it carries over every difficulty, even as with Paul, "The less he was loved the more he loved." They were dear to the Lord, though unfaithful to him; and the single eye as to whose they were strengthened his purpose in ministry. How full of instruction is the life and career of Paul! How true to his Master; and, *therefore*, how true to His members! How dear to him the honor of Jesus; and, *therefore*, the welfare of His church! He would not have them regard him, but Christ in him, and follow him only as he followed Christ. How this shines forth in his parting scene with the elders at Ephesus! He "commends them to God and the word of His grace."

Fatal delusion, if the servant of Christ allows the maintenance of his own credit and character to occupy the place of the Lord's glory and honor! Sad folly, if his own wounded feelings distress him more than the Lord being wounded afresh "in the house of His friends"! Our own happiness is secured just so far as the Lord's glory is our aim. Faithfulness to Him secures devoted love to His people. God in Christ must be the spring of every right action for Him. Diversity of judgment in minor

matters will not disturb the peace of a community where conscience towards God is respected. Whilst praying that we may see eye to eye, we can give God thanks that the eye is directed to Him. The commandment, "This is my beloved Son, hear him!" effectually closes the door to any one less than Him. True teaching sets Christ before the taught. The subject matter conveyed will occupy the heart more than the person who imparts instruction. The object is to bring the soul into obedience to God. The instrument can never take His place, so John in his Epistle writes, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God."

The prophet of Judah failed in this. "I am a prophet as well as thou art," said the old prophet of Bethel. God, who gave the calling to both, is displaced. Their character and standing is before them, responsibility to God forgotten. No uncommon occurrence in another light in our day. Brethren in Christ may dispute about their relative qualifications, whilst God, the Giver of them, is little thought of. And this is Satan's object. We can be jealous for fruits, and not care about the tree, until the blossom is nipped and blighting winter comes over the soul. Added to this, disobedience to God brings down His judgments. And these things are written for our admonition. The manner of the punishment also is characteristic of the offense. If man's word is regarded before God, then by man shall the sentence of condemnation be inflicted. If saints care more for their own credit with brethren than obedience to God in His word, and prefer quiet at the sacrifice of a good conscience, they may yet learn, as did the prophet of Judah, that the very parties for whom they have made shipwreck of faith will be instruments in God's hands for their chastisement.

"And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back: and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord: Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and has eaten bread and drunk water in the place of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come into the sepulchre of thy fathers." And so it fell out unto him. And in verses 23, 24, 25 we have the judgment recorded.

The prophet was sent to Jeroboam because the latter had disobeyed the Lord and departed from Him. Now the servant falls himself into the sin of hearkening to man and neglecting God. As was before remarked, he triumphed over the opposition of the world without, and is seduced into unfaithfulness by a brother within. Communion with God is the basis of fellowship with one another. Love to God, from the knowledge of His love to us, produces love to one another. The thoughts of God

concerning His people, communicated by His Spirit, form affection towards them. But He is the source of it (Psalm 87:7): "All my springs are in Thee."

Thus John, writing to Gaius, addresses him "whom I love in the truth." Harmony and peace flow from Him. They have no existence apart from Him. Hence, statements of truth propounded for our reception must be weighed in the sanctuary before Him. No instrumentality, however eminent, releases the saint from responsibility to God. If God, by His Spirit through the Word, sets seal to the communication that it is true, we honor the instrument because God has so used him.

To accredit the vessel for transmitting the truth, without inquiring of God as to its being truth, is to honor the creature in the place of the Creator, and set man in the place of God. Thus the prophet of Judah falls a victim to his folly. It may be he was weary with his work, for he was "found sitting under an oak." It may be the weakness of his flesh sorely tried him. The Apostle warns against such a condition in Heb. 12:2, when exhorting believers to consider Jesus, "Lest ye be weary and faint in your minds." Again, "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."

It is manifestly possible for such lassitude, from continued trial, to overpower the believer, that he becomes an easy prey to the devices of the enemy; forgetting that "God giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (Isa. 40:29).

Rest was presented to the eye of the prophet, and his heart already longed for it. The bait is gilded over by a brother's reputation; he takes it, and falls. Sad consequences for him, yet full of instruction to us. It surely was a time of general apostasy and grievous departure from God when the circumstances detailed in our narrative occurred. Yet, so much the more culpable was the disobedience of the prophet of Judah. Just as in our day to acknowledge the ruined condition of the church involves responsibility to God not incurred by those who do not recognize it. In the days of the prophet Micah how lamentable the evil by which he was surrounded, how dark the picture: yet how blessed the conclusion to which he was brought! "He could not trust in a friend, or put confidence in a guide." "Therefore [he says] I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." And so in Mal. 3:16: "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it." The prophet of Bethel, who thus led his brother astray, he too has his hour of sorrow. Perhaps he was jealous of the testimony God had confided to the prophet of Judah, as also of the honor put upon him in the work the Lord had done by him that day in Bethel.

Be this as it might, there was a spark in his heart which needed but the enemy to fan into a flame, and he became a fit instrument for his

brother's destruction. Not that he foresaw the consequences, though he was the tool to bring them about. Nor did his sin in tempting excuse the other in yielding to the temptation. His soul, out of communion with God, devised a lie to deceive; and the soul of the other, out of communion, was easily betrayed. Sad was the fate of the victim, and sorrowful the lamentation of the old prophet of Bethel (verses 26, 27, 29). "And the old prophet came to the city to mourn and to bury him. And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones: for the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass."

Sorrowful picture of human frailty and its consequences. He mourns the dead he betrayed when living, and accredits the testimony borne by his brother as according to God: seeking consolation for his grief, saying, "When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones."

"The Lord give *us* understanding in all things" (2 Tim. 2:7).

L.

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

(Rom. 8:28)

God's great object with regard to the church is that it is to be associated with His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The saints who compose it are to be conformed to His image, and their privilege and responsibility is to be associated with His path of humiliation through this world. They **know** that all things work together for good, because God is engaged to bless. He alone can stand by and cause everything to work for good, and if led of the Spirit we can stand calmly by and see that all things work together for good. Man is set in circumstances, but God is above circumstances. The secret is that God who gave His Son will with Him also freely give us all things. What I desire for the saints is that they may see that the God who gave His Son is standing by them, and making all things work for their good. This is a blessed experience for them, not only knowing that God is for them, but that He never forgets them. He has traced out a path for them in the path of His Son. Of old He not

only brought Israel out of Egypt, but He led them through the trials of the wilderness, making all things work for their **good**.

Now see our responsibility as to this; whatever the trouble or trial, can we say as the Lord said, "I thank thee, Father"? It is ours as standing in the place where God has set us to say all is working together for good - to say in affliction or distress, I thank Thee. Look at the experience of Paul when he had a thorn in the flesh; the messenger of Satan was very bitter to him; but when he got to the Lord about it, it was not with him merely, I thank Thee, but "I **glory** in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me, therefore I **take pleasure** in infirmities . . . for **Christ's sake**." Again, we read in the Epistle to the Philippians of things that took place which, as an apostle, Paul did not desire. He was in bonds, some were preaching Christ of contention, there was a want of oneness of mind; he seemed to fear lest different points of knowledge should be so pressed as to give a disproportionate view of the truth; yet in chapter 1:18 we see how the apostle was practically in the power of the truth that all things work together for good, while in chapter 3:14-17 he would have the saints walk as he did, and in chapter 4:6 he casts them upon God, who is above all circumstances.

We have to do with the God of resurrection who can work all the good for us out of death. All we have to do is to stand quietly by, and see how God will work out this evil or that trouble for good. It was thus with the Lord Himself, He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, then came in the power of God. It is God's way of working blessing, taking His Son out of death; He was crucified through weakness, but He lives by the power of God. Resurrection is God's way of opening to us the fountain of blessing. We have to go down under the sentence of death, and leave God to work in His own way. **God** gave His Son to die and **God** raised Him from the dead, and **God** is now ministering blessing to us. It is **God** who has given to us His Spirit. Come what may, we can stand still and see God work in the matter whatever it be, it **must** work for good. It is an unspeakable privilege, bringing with it the responsibility of being wholly separated to **God**. I cannot form plans for the morrow; if God is thus working for good, I must commit things to Him. The reason that there is so little power for practical lowliness, so little walking with God, is that there is so little bowing to God's will, so little of the mind of Christ Jesus, "I thank thee, Father." Jesus had no plans of His own, **God's** will was His only plan. We are to do God's will, His plan is to be our plan. In ourselves we may be poor and wretched, but we have got life in Christ, the risen Christ; in the place where God has put us, we need to realize that it is God who works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, as those who have association in life with Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost.

G. V. W.

GOD'S PRESENT CENTER OF INTEREST ON THE EARTH

GOD'S PRESENT CENTER OF INTEREST ON THE EARTH

PART 1

INTRODUCTION

God has always had His interest centered on this earth, and it was to this end that the universe was created. At first that interest was centered in Adam, but His joy in him was of short duration and was spoiled by sin coming into this world through him. Consequent on the failure of Adam, God continued His purpose, finding His joy and pleasure in man on a different principle than at the first. Then we find in Noah the man of God's choice out of all the world to bless him in an earthly sphere -- as cleansed by God's judgment. Failure again resulted through man, but God continued with His objective and made His choice in Abram; not this time to limit it to one to continue His pleasure subjectively, but having in view Abraham's seed -- the Lord Jesus Christ -- the Man of His ultimate satisfaction universally and eternally. In following the continuation of God's choice in Abram down through Isaac and Jacob and his 12 sons we find the ones of whom Moses spoke in Deut. 7:6, "a people for a possession". Alas, after persevering with them for centuries God had to say finally, through Hosea, "ye are not My people". Yet He left them a promise in Hosea 1:10, "it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Sons of the living God." God will yet have His desire, as to the earth, fulfilled through His special choice in Abram -- but only on the ground of the completed work of His dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who effected all through His death and resurrection.

Subsequent to the failure of Israel, God transferred authority in the earth to the Gentiles, by whom that authority was successively abused; God then "sent His Son" who "came to His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). Then we find God's interest on the earth totally centered in His beloved Son of whom He declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight" (Matt. 3:17). Glorious Center and Object of the Father's love and pleasure and full satisfaction -- eternally so! May we continuously find our delight in Him also, in sitting at His

feet and learning of Him and being occupied with "no man save Jesus only". Although the immediate approach by the Lord was to the remnant of Israel, whom if they had received Him as Messiah He would have established His kingdom on the earth, yet in the knowledge and purpose of God there was to be the bringing in of the Gentiles: firstly, those elect from both Jews and Gentiles to form a new thing altogether as one body in Christ, and to be His bride; then, the blessing on the earth of Israel restored as a nation, through whom blessing will be administered throughout the Gentile world.

The Lord Jesus is now sitting alongside His Father on His throne waiting to claim His bride, but, meanwhile, until God's interest on earth is re-established in Israel the saints of the present day of grace form His center of interest down here, where His beloved One was and is still rejected. It is with a view to considering God's present interest that the following is offered for the enlargement of our thoughts as to this matter, and for the greater response in faithfulness to God as the result of realizing the fullness of what God has centered in His own. It is perhaps little realized by some the extent of God's interest in them and that the saints today are being formed into one universal company for the present pleasure and glory of God. It is purposed, Lord willing, to take up this subject, then, in looking at the several spiritual concepts which are true of *all* saints today down here, as distinct to anything ever seen or known in this world before, nor will be after we are all taken to glory at the call of our blessed Saviour.

God has not called each one as an isolated individual and thereafter left each to his own resources and existence while waiting for the Lord out of heaven. No, no, He has formed us together as a corporate entity of His own who are no longer of this world, even as the Lord is not of this world (John 17:14 and 16). And, according to the Lord's own expressed desire in that same chapter of John, "that they also may be sanctified (or, set apart) by truth . . . that they may be all one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." To begin with, then, we shall consider the saints as *the House of God*. This is a most delightful expression as it conveys God's personal desire to dwell with His people, whether they be in Israel or the saints of the present day of grace. Together with this precious aspect as now seen in the saints, there are the associated thoughts contained in the expressions: the Habitation of God -- Eph. 2:22; the Household of God -- Eph. 2:19; the children of God -- 1 John 3:12; the Sons of God -- Rom. 8:14; the Father's House -- John 2:16 and 14:2; Families -- Eph. 3:15. The parent idea of the House embraces the other thoughts in a way that only God could establish in the love and intimacy of relationship to Himself which He has brought us into through His acceptance of us in His Beloved One.

THE HOUSE OF GOD

The thoughts contained in the house are primarily: dwelling, enjoyment, and order.

Meeting God's desires in this regard differs according to the dispensation of God and His prerogative to change. Once having declared His desire it is not that God forgoes the satisfaction He seeks, but He transfers His mode of achieving it from time to time. So, we find the first setting in the Tabernacle, then in the Temple that Solomon built, followed by the glorious adorable Person of His own eternal Son, as a Man on earth. After the Lord's ascension the company of called out ones (the saints) formed God's center of interest on earth. Finally, after the departure of the saints from this earth at the Rapture, the new Temple which will be built in Jerusalem will be God's dwelling during the Kingdom reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. This all relates to time, for in the eternal state God will dwell with men with no distinctions as there are at the present. Concurrently with the last Temple abode for God on the earth there will be the continuation of the present satisfaction which He finds in the saints transferred to the heavenly scene in the "Father's House". So there will be a terrestrial and a celestial abode for the glory and joy of our God and Father.

The special term "My Father's House" was only used by the Lord, and that twice as recorded in John's gospel, chaps. 2 and 14. On the first occasion He referred to the temple on earth, but on the second time He referred to the heavenly scene where He was going "to prepare a place for you". It would seem that the Lord spoke to the Jews, in partly quoting from Isa. 56:7, as taking them up on their responsibility since they claimed the building erected by Herod was the temple of God. In a similar way do we find the Lord addressing the assemblies in Rev. 2 and 3, as judging them according to their profession of His Name and therefore, they were responsible for their conduct. However, the Lord made a clear distinction in His use of words, for in addressing the Jews He used the word for the general buildings and not the House itself; whereas, when He addressed His own He used the word that relates to the House in which God actually abides. This gives a precious intimacy to there being many "abodes" for those who will be with Him in His glory in the Father's House. This close association is not to be found in the earthly aspect, for the "side-chambers . . . round about the House on every side" were external to the building whereas in the heavenly one they are "in" the House, a wonderful privileged difference for the heavenly saints.

The desire to dwell with man was only revealed, in a definite way, when God said to Moses, "And they shall make me a sanctuary, that I

may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8). That desire however was intimated by God in the song of Moses in Ex. 15:17. Moses' song contained the truth as to God's purpose when they were settled in the land of Canaan, whereas in Ex. 25 it was God's desire when they were in the wilderness. Ex. 15 is connected with God's purpose, but Ex. 25 as to His ways in arriving at His purpose.

It is always an added conviction as to the scriptures being the inspired Word of God to find the exactness with which the Holy Spirit chooses each word to suit perfectly the use He makes of it. We lose much in this matter because of having a translation (in the King James version) which, excellent and sound as it is, cannot convey the precision contained in the original. As with the different words used for Temple, as given earlier, so there are different words used for "dwell" and "dwelling". In Ex. 15 the word used indicated a place "to sit, dwell or abide"; but in Ex. 25 the word is "to rest or inhabit". Are these not absolutely suited to the difference between what is for the permanent satisfaction of God and that which is for the time being? While God's people are in a world of adversity and trial He has His place in which He can "rest" by "inhabiting" that company which He has formed for Himself in the midst of all that is contrary to Himself -- blessed and wondrous thought. When, however, He has accomplished His purposes of grace, in love, toward man, then there is that continuity of state suitable for our holy and merciful God to continue to "sit, dwell and abide" in the total complacency of His love satisfied in the adorable, eternal Son of His love, and all who are His through the redemption wrought through His most precious blood. Yes! He has brought us into His House now to mutually share in all that delights His own heart in the Person of His beloved, and that we might respond to Him in love and rejoicing for all that we learn in the divine circle. May our hearts enter more fully and more responsively into the declared love of the Father and Son, mutually for us, that we may render to Them the reciprocal love in our hearts (shed abroad by the Holy Ghost -- Rom. 5:5). Also, that we may remember our subordinate place as children, yet at the same time increase in our responsible appreciation of the will and purpose of God in the position as Sons by adoption, according to Eph.1. We must ever remember too that in this glorious sphere we have intelligence as to it all entirely through the Holy Spirit's conveying it to us.

Oh what a home! But such His love
 That He must bring us there,
 To fill that home, to be with Him,
 And all His glory share.
 The Father's house, the Father's heart,
 All that the Son is given
 Made ours -- the objects of His love,

And He, our joy in heaven.

Mrs. J. A. Trench

Though the fullness of our portion in Christ, who is the "nursling of His love" (Prov. 8:30, JND footnote), is still future, surely it is God's desire that we should enter into and enjoy some measure of it now. However, though the beauty and joy of this wondrous sphere of God the Father's present interest in this particular way is our portion, if we but realize it, yet there are conditions attaching to it, though in a much higher way, as there was for Israel and any human family. As in any happy home among men, despite their limitations, there must be several things maintained in order that the family can be in undisturbed enjoyment of that home circle. There must be the exclusion of all who do not belong to it; there must be the exclusion of all that would intrude and occupy any of the family with anything which is not contributory to the joy and oneness of the parents (for the parents are viewed in God's sight as one and their children as His blessing bestowed on them for their joy); there must be absolute obedience to the will of the parents, else there is immediately a reserve introduced into the home with its resultant restraint upon all; there must be a free and full response on the part of the children to every expression of mutual love between the parents and to themselves. The above forms an exclusive scene as described, but it is but a feeble display of what is true in God's family. Any intrusion by an unbeliever, any introduction and attention given to anything other than what God provides for the participation of all in His House, any slightest hint of disobedience, and any holding back on our part in appreciation of what God provides in forming such a House for Himself to dwell in by the Spirit, would entirely spoil His intention and what He should derive from us.

We know that God has chosen "families". In Eph. 3:15 we learn of "every family in the heavens and on earth". We do not know just how many families there are, or will be, but we do know that there are distinctly those in "the heavens" and those "on earth".

As to how many families there will be on earth we do not really know, but we do know that the main one will be composed of His chosen ones in Israel. There are only a few references to distinguish some of the families that will be recognized by God in a coming day. Jer.31:1 speaks of "all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people." Then Amos 3:1 says, "the whole family that I brought up from Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Zech. 12:12-14 identifies several families within Israel, and also of families of the earth and the family of Egypt. From these we can only gather that God recognizes 12 families in the nation of Israel, then all the families of the earth

would be the Gentile nations (but which? -- we do not know, except for Egypt). So, we can but leave this interesting subject for further enlightenment, but from Ephesians we do know that every family acknowledged by God in the world to come is so recognized in the glorious Person of the Son of His love. We should rejoice to realize that we are included in one of the families in the heavens, and that in the highest place in intimate association with the Son Himself. Because there was a building on earth, materially, which outwardly was the profession of God's House, it was not always that God actually occupied it. It is specifically recorded that God took occupancy of the Tabernacle and the Temple which Solomon built. In Ex. 40:35 it says, "and the glory of Jehovah filled the Tabernacle"; and in 1 Kings 8:11 "for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of Jehovah." Also, as to the Temple to be built in the land in the Kingdom reign of Christ, as seen by Ezekiel in vision, it says in Ezek. 44:4, "the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah." However, in connection with both the rebuilt Temple of Ezra's day and the one built by Herod, in neither case is it recorded that God's glory filled the building. But, both were recognized by God as bearing His Name, and outwardly they were both professedly His House. Is there not a solemn lesson in this for us? While God does have a present dwelling place on earth for His glory and joy in the saints, yet there is also that which professes to be His building but which He cannot own except hold it responsible for the profession made and the conduct of those making such profession. Would this not be involved in the Spirit's making a clear distinction in 1 Tim. 3:15 in stating, "in God's house" -- where only true believers are contemplated, and the term in 2 Tim. 2:20, "in a great house," where mere profession is addressed, and that in an awful state? It is striking that the Spirit does not attach God's Name to the house in the 2nd epistle to Timothy, and this must have a very important bearing on the subject. If it is truly God's House then there can be no question as to whether a believer departs or not, for the true House of God in the saints is built up by God Himself and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who is God, and so it is the divinely appointed place of all believers. But, when it comes to mere profession true believers are not to be identified with it at all, but to be distinctly separate and holy. It surely is the case that God does not, nor cannot, now dwell in any material building (which if He did must be exclusively centered among His people Israel); and while the administration of God's will on the earth is in the hands of the Gentile, then God is not found in Jerusalem in His House, and will not be "until He come whose right it is" and is manifested and rules on David's throne. However, to faith God has always kept open the view of His purpose, and in this there was provision made for a continuation of some evidence for faith to lay hold on in both buildings being visible reminders of this purpose, and to faith forming the center of God's interest until it is finally achieved in full accord with

God's glory and presence being once again manifest on the earth. Do we not see this beautifully upheld by the remnant who returned in Ezra's day, Nehemiah's day and in those godly ones waiting in Jerusalem for the promised Messiah recorded for us in the second chapter of Luke? The visible presence of God was to be seen in the Person of His dear Son when here, but only the "opened" eye could see this in Him. Similarly, the current place of God's Habitation on earth is in the saints, but only faith can apprehend it -- but we sadly fail in our measure of apprehension, for it if were more real in our hearts we would be more in accord with God's thoughts and desires, and respond more truly to His love and joy.

The House of God will continue through the world to come, and the eternal state. On the earth there will be the new Temple in Jerusalem for the duration of the Kingdom reign of Christ. Afterwards, in the "new earth" (the eternal state), God will tabernacle with men -- see Rev. 21:3. This blessed scene is identified with "a bride adorned for her husband" - - may we revel in the portion that is ours now as the House of God and then to be taken up to the heavenly sphere to be in the Father's House with the Son, and forming that structure for the eternal pleasure of God to be found among men on earth as His Tabernacle -- but we shall be for ever in the eternal and indescribable love and joy, as the "bride adorned for her Husband", of the glorious Son of God, our precious Saviour and adorable Lord, to Whom we owe everything now and for ever.

Having occupied our hearts with something of the unseen glory we must not neglect to recognize that we are in a present state very far removed from what will be our portion soon, and, more important than this, we deny God His portion at the present time.

So, due to our conduct we find ourselves subject to the discipline of God which is necessary in order to maintain what is both suitable to Himself in His House and what is needful for us to contribute to and receive from Him, who is not only our God but also our Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The scriptures contain for us the needed instruction and correction to meet all God's requirements of us. In Heb. 3:6 we learn that Christ is "Son over His (i.e. God's) house, Whose house are we . . ." -- should we not be deeply conscious of this in our souls so that we do not displease Him so as to give cause that He has to discipline us? In Heb. 12:5 we learn of the "chastening of the Lord" and in that chapter we also learn that the "Father of spirits" requires subjection on our part - - should we not be more watchful that we are in the right attitude toward our God and Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, such that the Father needs not to chasten us nor the Lord either? But we know from that passage that both deal with us in love for our good, "in order to the partaking of His holiness." May the Holy Spirit bring these matters

consciously upon our hearts that we may be found in the state of liberty to participate in the House of God as His dear children. The further word through Peter is needful, 1 Pet. 1:14-17, "as children of obedience, not conformed to your former lusts in your ignorance; but as he who has called you is holy, be ye holy in all your conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And if ye invoke as Father him who, without regard of persons, judges according to the work of each, pass your time of sojourn in fear, knowing that ye have been redeemed, . . ." Then the word through Paul, 2 Cor. 6:14 - 7:1, is also a necessity for us to obey. Verse 17 says, "and touch not what is unclean, and I will receive you; and I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us purify ourselves . . . perfecting holiness in God's fear." To Timothy Paul said in 1 Tim. 3:15, "in order that thou mayest know how one ought to conduct oneself in God's House." The instruction through the honored gift of the Lord, Mr. J. N. Darby, teaches us in connection with the 1st Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (see Notes of Readings) that "the epistle is addressed to the church of God with all that call, etc., that is, generally, till chapter 10, to the house of God; after that to the body specifically." We do well to consider this for the needful correction of our behavior in God's House in relation to all our intellectual and moral conduct such that we are in the right state to be participants at the most precious activity available to us while waiting for our Lord from heaven -- at His Table partaking of His Supper.

There is not only the "fatted calf" provided by God our Father for us to "make merry" with Him, but it can only be as we are rightly clothed and maintaining the requirement that "holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah, for ever."

Having considered in a small way the subject of God's House, it is purposed to continue in later articles with further aspects of God's present center of interest on the earth, as seen in the Temple of God -- an holy Temple in the Lord and a Spiritual House.

J. Pascoe

What a happy people we should be if we were mirrors reflecting Christ, in the perfect consciousness of our weakness, but looking at Christ in heaven, bearing up amidst all the evil that is coming in like a flood, because He is up there.

G. V. Wigram

DELIVERANCE: ROMANS 7

(Continued from v. 3, # 5)

4. (7:21-23) EXPERIENCE OF CAPTIVITY UNDER THE OLD IS ACKNOWLEDGED AND SUMMARIZED

These three verses begin with three I's: I find, I delight, I see.

Verse 21

I find then the law upon *me* who will to practice what is right, that with *me* evil is there.

There is a powerful enemy within. There is within me a law in operation. A law is a fixed, a uniform, principle of operation. This is the law of sin.

Verse 22

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

Here we see that the person has "the inward man", hardly a description of an unregenerate person, as Arminians claim him to be. The unregenerate does not delight in the law of God though he may take it up as a religion, as did unregenerate Israelites in Moses' day. It is utterly contrary to all of Scripture to suppose an unregenerate person delights in God's law. To stay within Romans, see Rom. 3:9-19. An unregenerate person has the carnal mind (Rom. 8:7) and has no new nature that delights in God's law. Delight in God's law is according to what? the carnal nature? No, the inward man. Yet, we learn that even this being so, *the new nature in itself is not power for the Christian*. It gives capacity for divine things and a love of God's will, but not power over the taskmaster, as we learn in Romans 7. Such struggles are not there where there is no inward man.

Verse 23

But I see another law in my members, warring in opposition to the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which exists in my members.

"The law of my mind" is here mentioned for the first time. In Rom. 8:7 we read of "the mind of the flesh." That stands in contrast to "the

law of my mind" here. Rom. 8:7 refers to the will and desire of the flesh, the operation of the law of sin. That is "another law in my members." The other, and opposite one, is "the law of my mind." This refers to the will and desire of the new nature seen in moral character as subject to God's will. There are two opposites in the person and clearly he is not an unregenerate person. To say that he is unregenerate is to say that the first man is not entirely lost; that the first man has within him godly desires. It falsifies Christian truth and the first man's true state before God.

The force of the evil law in our members directs the person into captivity to the law of sin. The law of sin holds the person captive. Now, this is not the Christian state and we have the explicit testimony of God's word that the person in the Christian state and standing, sealed by the Spirit, is free from this dominion (Rom. 6:14,22; Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17).

5. DELIVERANCE THROUGH ANOTHER

Verses 24, 25

O wretched man that I [am]! who shall deliver me out of this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then *I myself* with the mind serve God's law; but with the flesh sin's law.

It is indeed a wretched condition that is described, because it is self-occupation -- looking to self for power over sin. "Who shall deliver me" is the looking away from self to another for power to be delivered from this state.

In the notes on Rom. 7:5 we observed a statement by J. N. Darby:

What he is, not what Christ is, is the ground on which he judges of his state before God. [1]

The person now looks away from what he is; and rests upon the Person and finished work of Christ for the knowledge of forgiveness of sins (recognizes the forgiven position) as the true basis of what he is before God. He believes the gospel of his salvation as Paul preached it. He recognizes that it is not merely forgiveness of past sins (Jewish, administrative forgiveness), but that God has provided a forgiven position.

And so he is sealed with the Spirit and delivered. **"Deliverance is**

1. *Collected Writings* 7:244.

known by sealing, as being in Christ." [2] "Where the Spirit of [the] Lord [is, there is] liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). "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 belief in the gospel of salvation (Eph. 1:12,13) is what brings deliverance and sealing and the assurance of salvation. W. Kelly remarked,

Salvation always means a great deal more than that my sins are judged in the death of Christ. Salvation means that I am brought consciously to know God in the triumph of redemption by Christ for me. Hence it will be found that in the doctrine of the New Testament there is never the allowance of such a thought as that salvation is only the beginning of the blessing. People not imbued with scriptural truth are often apt to talk of salvation in a slighting or at least superficial way. They speak of a person perhaps as "not happy; but at any rate he is saved." Never do we meet with language like this in the New Testament. Salvation means known conscious deliverance. It is not merely a good hope of being delivered, but that the person himself by grace has no doubt about it. Of this people often lose the true force by an unscriptural phraseology. Indeed the denial of salvation as a present status is part of the current coin of Christendom, and the truth is opposed in one way or another by the parties who otherwise oppose each other. Arminianism naturally resists it, as its doctrine causes salvation to turn largely on man's deserts; while Calvinism would consent to salvation in "the purpose of God" or some jargon of the kind, while meanwhile the object of it may have no comfort, nor solid footing whatever for his soul. Far removed from both is the truth and language of Scripture; and to Scripture we must hold. [3]

Also, the quickened soul, while having divine life, but being undelivered and unsealed, does not have that life in connection with the risen corn of wheat. In sealing with the Spirit, that life is brought into a new association, with Christ risen, and that divine life may then be rightly called resurrection-life, even life in the Son, *which we have in connection with His risen manhood.*

Not only are the words "salvation" and "saved" used loosely, so is the word "believer". A believer is one who has believed the gospel of salvation. The quickened but undelivered soul is not resting on the

2. *Letters of J. N. Darby* 3:120.

3. *Lectures Introductory to ... the Pentateuch*, pp. 163,164.

Person and work of Christ for the knowledge of forgiveness of sins, having no more conscience of sins -- he is quite conscious of sins as possibly hindering his acceptance. His thoughts and conscience are concerned about self before God, as to standing, and not what Christ is before God for him. And so while he believes in Christ he is not, properly speaking, a believer, i.e. one who believes on the work of Christ for him as the basis of his position before God. The following answer to a question will clarify this further.

"A.N.L." -- Does sealing take place immediately on believing; or, is it possible for a person to be a believer and not be sealed *in this dispensation*?

A. Sealing takes place at once on believing. Eph. 1:13 is plain on the subject: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed (or 'having believed') ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The Apostle connects sealing with "the gospel of *your salvation*." God's salvation is announced by the gospel; I have believed in the gospel of *my* salvation, and forthwith I am sealed by the Spirit. A saved man is one who has no doubts. [4] Scripture never speaks of a man being "*saved*" who has any. We must not confound the state of many *quickened* souls with those who have *believed*. The action of God in quickening and in sealing are as distinct as possible. He quickens a sinner who wants life; He does not seal a sinner as such, surely; that were to seal him in his sins; nor does He seal a quickened soul in his misery. He does not seal Peter when he cried out "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5); or when the soul is crying out "O wretched man that I am." He seals a believer; and "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" not doubts, and bondage, and fears.

These two actions of the Holy Ghost are never, as far as I

4. [Notice this. "A saved man is one who has no doubts." That is, a person who has doubts is not sealed. We are not speaking, observe, about a person who was sealed and because of the character of his walk loses the joy of his salvation as a governmental consequence.

J. N. Darby remarked: "Those who speak of the sixth and tenth ... [of] Hebrews certainly are not delivered." What this means is that those who speak of these chapters as if they show a person can be lost again are not delivered (and so, not sealed). I had long since come to this conclusion before finding these comments. R.A.H.]

know, synchronous -- they do not happen at the same moment; while on God's part there is of course no reason why it should not be so. Many cases testify as to this in Scripture.

The disciples were quickened before the day of Pentecost, yet they were not sealed till then. The Samaritans received the gospel and were quickened before Peter and John came down, and they were not sealed till then; ("as yet he was fallen upon none of them." See Acts 8:5-17.) "There was great joy" we read, and there is often this without *peace* with God. Peace is a full and perfect word; it is far more than joy. A soul that has peace with God has been sealed by the Spirit. Paul was quickened by a voice from heaven (Acts 9:4), and yet he did not receive the Holy Ghost till the third day after, when he had gone through all the deep work in his soul for the three days. (See v.17.) Cornelius was a devout man, one that feared God, and prayed to God always -- a *quickened* soul. He is told to send for Peter to hear words of him, whereby he and all his house would be *saved* (Acts 11:14). God does not call him a *saved* man, as merely quickened. When Peter comes he does not tell him he must be born again, which as a sinner he needed and had been, but he points him to Christ, and they accept the message, and the Holy Ghost fell on them. You get the same thing in Acts 19; those at Ephesus who were quickened souls had not as yet received the Holy Ghost.

It is not possible for a person to be a *believer* in the present dispensation without being sealed. There are many *quickened* souls who are not sealed, but no Christian ever *dies* and passes away from this scene, where as to personal place the Holy Ghost is since Pentecost, without being sealed. This is why you see cases in which there was no liberty, or peace with God, enjoyed during the lifetime, with occasional gleams of joy; and yet when on a death-bed they have got perfect peace with God, and are sealed.

I think we use the word "believer" too indiscriminately, for every state of soul in which God is working. A believer in Scripture language is one who is sealed. Scripture allows but one basis, or normal condition, for Christians. When we come to look at the condition of souls we find that in many cases they are not there; while there is no reason on God's part why they should not be. [5]

5. *Words of Truth* 3:137-139.

Until the soul is delivered from captivity to the law of sin there is not the peace of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Certainly the man of Romans 7 does not have settled peace! To have the peace of which Scripture speaks the soul needs to know forgiveness for what it has done *and* deliverance from captivity to the law of sin.

J. N. Darby remarked,

Peace through forgiveness is, as to Christ's work, the evidence of faith in Christ's work, and that work received by faith is the ground of sealing: then one is delivered. . . . The intelligence of sealing is the consequence of sealing. [6]

This brings up a point. Perhaps you have heard that (1) Christ has delivered us from the guilt of sin; (2) He is delivering us from the power of sin; and (3) He will deliver us from the presence of sin. No.2 is false. The sealed saint is not *being delivered* from, but *has been delivered* from the law of sin (Rom. 8:2). This deliverance enables a Christian to apply the death of Christ practically in his walk.

The cry was for deliverance "out of this body of death" (Rom. 7:24). It also involves "the body of sin" (Rom. 6:6). Another explained "the body of sin", that it

signifies the whole condition of the natural man as fully subjected to sin and its dominion. [7]

The result of this is death and so deliverance is sought from this result; deliverance "out of this body of death."

So then *I myself* with the mind serve God's law; but with the flesh sin's law (Rom. 7:25b).

This does not describe the state of the undelivered soul. It tells us that the two natures subsist in their respective disposition and character after the deliverance is experienced. "The law of my mind" (v. 23) is still the same; so is the flesh -- which desires to serve the law of sin. The character and disposition of the two natures does not change as a result of deliverance, but the person has now a new power within -- the Spirit of God.

Speaking in the language of the type at the Exodus, we may say that deliverance brings us into the wilderness journey. Israel sang the song of salvation (the first recorded song in Scripture) when redemption in type

6. *Letters* 2:351.

7. *Words of Truth*, New Series 2:227.

was accomplished, having been delivered from the power of the taskmaster. But then came the wilderness experience. So we learn that the flesh never changes. We learn more about self and also what God is for us in spite of what we are in ourselves. And as we think of Israel in the wilderness, we realize that they never again were in the position they were in before they crossed the Red Sea. A soul never again is in Romans 7 though he may approximate it when he allows the flesh power over him. Still, he is in the wilderness, so to speak, as Israel was. The wilderness brings out the working of the flesh after deliverance. Numbers in particular records their fleshly conduct, but the wilderness is not Exodus 14.

One source of help on the subject of deliverance is the *Letters of J. N. Darby*, which every home ought to have. Here are the volumes and page numbers where comments may be found:

1:500.

2:351, 165, 147.

2:417-420, 431, 404-407.

2:452, 453, 351.

3:90, 91, 120, 169, 13.

3:147, 148, 368-369

3:155, 156, 434-436, 394.

3:506

See also his *Collected Writings* 31:265-270.

I purpose next, Lord willing, to comment on some difficulties and questions regarding deliverance and sealing.

Ed.

Ought I to mind being left down here in the wilderness, in the midst of all that tries me in every way, when I can taste His love here equally in it all? It would certainly be a much happier thing to be present with Him and absent from this poor body: but if it is the will of Him who loves me with a love that wills I should stay down here, the sweetness of His will is enough.

G. V. Wigram

ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps you have not heretofore thought about what it is that makes the Word one harmonious whole. It is not the salvation of the elect; rather, it is the manifestation of the glory of God in Christ. In 1836 J. N. Darby pointed that out:

If some, attaching everything to the final salvation of the elect, say, if this be not effected by it all the rest is immaterial and curious, and they do not know anything about dispensations; I answer, that the salvation of the elect is not the great end of any Christian's thoughts, but the divine glory; and that God has been pleased to glorify Himself and display His character in these dispensations for the instruction of the church; and that if the church casts it aside, they are casting aside the instruction which God has afforded of His ways. They are making themselves wise without God, and wiser than He, for He has thought fit for His glory to instruct us in these things. [1]

It is a sad commentary on a certain state of mind to read statements by opposers of dispensational truth to the effect that they learned it in Sunday School but when they came to maturity they cast it off. Others might have attended a seminary or other school where (some) dispensational truth was taught, but their teachers could not answer all their questions; and leaving the school they faced up to "the reformed faith"! We wonder who the audience, and what its caliber, for whom such slurs against those who hold dispensational truth are intended.

J. N. Darby, for example, did not believe dispensational truth because he was an ignorant man, or because he was ignorant of "the reformed faith" or "covenant theology". The erudite W. Kelly said (letter dated Feb. 22, 1901):

The late Mr. Darby was a highly educated as he was an extremely able man, of rare attainments in almost all branches of knowledge, of pre-eminent logical power, of moral and

1. *Collected Writings* 1:116.

metaphysical analysts hard to match, to say nothing of his linguistic skill ancient and modern. . . . But what characterized our honored brother as a saint and servant was a deeper insight into God's mind in Scripture than any other I ever knew or heard of in any age since the apostles, approached: such was his spiritual power of bringing in Christ to decide questions great or small. None of his works are or were popular.

At any rate dispensational truth is opposed by covenant theology. This system teaches that there is an eternal covenant of grace and all other covenants are the unfolding or expression of it. The church is seen as under the new covenant of Jer. 31. Thus Scripture is unified under the idea of covenant. The system, therefore, centers upon the salvation of the elect. This, it is thought, is what binds all of Scripture into a harmonious whole.

The charge made against dispensational truth is that it fragments the unfolding of redemption (because of the nature of the distinction made between Israel and the church) and it makes the Bible a prophetic jigsaw puzzle. On the contrary, instead of the objectors' mythical "covenant of grace" being the unifying truth, dispensational truth shows that what unifies Scripture is the unfolding of the nature and glory of God in Christ, manifested in two spheres, the earthly and the heavenly. That is, the cross being the moral foundation of all, where God's nature was vindicated so that blessing could reach man, God's glory in Christ will be manifested in government in the earthly sphere, with Israel as its center; and God's glory in Christ is, and will be, manifested in blessing in the heavenly sphere with the church as its center. Ephesians 1:9,10 tells us that the mystery of God's will is that in the dispensation of the fullness of times (i.e. the Millennium) Christ will head up both the heavenly and earthly spheres. He will unite all things under one headship, for God's glory. His exaltation must include universal acknowledgment in the place where He humbled Himself to the lowest. This is the divine order (Matt. 23:12; Phil. 2:5-11).

The Assyrian of the prophets represents the opposition to the blessing of God's earthly people in 'earthly places', so to speak, and thus to the manifestation of His glory in Christ manifested in government in the earth. The putting down of this opposing policy, as embodied in the Assyrian (and in Gog who shares it) with the resultant establishment of Zion and Messiah's reign before His ancients in glory, is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth. Who shall turn back God's hand from exalting His Christ in the very place He humbled Himself? The prophets foretold the sway of Christ under the heavens. That He should have the heavenly also under His headship is revealed in the New Testament only. Thus, the heading up of ALL is called the "mystery of

His will", a secret now disclosed to the saints who are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, yea, seated with Him there (Eph. 1:20; 2:6).

The system of covenant theology incorporates a way of understanding the Old Testament prophets which results in those prophets speaking about the church. This is usually called "spiritual" interpretation. This stands in contrast to "literal" interpretation -- which indicates a future for Israel under the reign of Christ, the Millennium. "Spiritual" interpretation transmutes what the Old Testament prophets have said about Israel's future glories into church blessings now.

"Spiritual" interpretation, or "spiritualization", is not spiritual in the sense of 1 Cor. 2:13. Moreover, it may not be the best term to describe the process. But what should the process be called? -- figurative interpretation? That does not help, but might add to the confusion since literal interpretation recognizes figures of speech and symbols used by the Old Testament prophets.

Let us consider the case of "Hymenaeus and Philetus; [men] who as to the truth have gone astray, saying that the resurrection has taken place already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:17,18). They evidently applied a non-literal view to the resurrection. Perhaps they used truth we find in Eph. 2 -- our being raised up together with Christ. What would you call their view? They must have given a figurative meaning to the resurrection, spiritualizing it. Of course, they did this regarding a foundation, or fundamental, truth. We do not say that spiritualizing the Old Testament prophets overthrows the faith, but it is serious, affecting the truths that rest upon the foundation. At any rate, it is instructive that we have this example of a 'spiritual' interpretation in the Word.

Those we shall examine, who spiritualize the prophets, do not believe that the Christian is under the law for justification, but place the Christian under the (moral) law as the rule of life. Since Saturday is the Jewish sabbath, you will understand why they transmute Sunday (the Lord's day) into being the sabbath -- to be consistent with the keeping of the ten commandments which require the keeping of the sabbath. Not only is this an unacceptable alchemy in divine matters, it is doubtful that they keep it as Moses commanded. Such view the law as a transcript of the mind of God and Christ's righteous law-keeping is the righteousness which Christians are made. Of course Christ kept the law, but this system lowers His walk to that. It lowers what God is. It lowers the Christian's position. Actually it Judaizes. The end of "the first man" (1 Cor. 15:47) is not rightly apprehended, seeing that the law addressed man, in the persons of the favored people, in their Adamic responsibility. It is not

surprising then that such regard the Christian as "a true Jew" [2] and as "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), which last is, really, the believing Jewish remnant. And so they regard the church as the spiritual continuator of Israel, transmuting the promises to Israel into spiritual blessings for the church (the spiritual Israel), while, interestingly, leaving the curses for the natural Israel.

Another introductory matter which should be noticed is that these articles will adhere to dispensational truth recovered through J. N. Darby. Thus, C. I. Scofield will not be followed. [3] He, of course, supported clerisy and would not accept the doctrine of the ruin of the church and the consequences of that. In our view, one must do just the opposite (among other beliefs) to hold dispensational truth truly and to understand the church. [4]

For example, neither J. N. Darby or W. Kelly regarded "Innocency" and "Conscience" as dispensations. That should immediately alert you to the fact that they would have rejected the C. I. Scofield definition of a dispensation, which begins, "A dispensation is a period of time during which . . ." A dispensation is **not** a period of time. Of course, there are time periods that Christians commonly call dispensations which Scripture designates rather as ages (*aion*). [5] It is not purposed to make a man

2. A true Jew is one who is a Jew racially but whose heart is circumcised also (Rom. 2:28,29). Both Jewish believers and Gentile believers answer to the meaning of circumcision (Phil. 3:3), but that does not transmute a Gentile believer into a "true Jew".

3. L. V. Crutchfield, *The Doctrine of Ages and Dispensations as Found in the Published Works of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)*, PH.D. dissertation, 1985, Drew University, has rightly contrasted the dispensational views of J. N. Darby and C. I. Scofield, while opting for C. I. Scofield. It seems to me that it was part of his agenda to put some distance between the two men's views of dispensational truth -- and he is quite correct in this.

4. It is likely that only those labeled "exclusive brethren" accept the teaching about the ruin of the church. See Ruin in the index to the *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* and in the index of *The Bible Treasury*. (They are called "exclusives" because they used to exclude evil and also those associated with evil (some still do so). This association is a matter presently under discussion among some fundamentalists under the name "secondary separation".)

5. See *Collected Writings* 13:154,155.

an offender for a word. But we want to seek understanding because:

The life and spiritual energy of a saint depends on his faith in what is proper to His own dispensation. [6]

Concerning the meaning of *oikonomia*, another remarked:

Let us now speak of the term "the dispensation or economy" in which some find a difficulty. The word is simple enough, and signifies, in the original, *the administration of a house*; by extension, it designates the entire order of anything arranged by God, as when we say "animal economy", "vegetable economy". The two words of which it is compounded are *oikos* house, and *nemo* to distribute, feed, etc.; and thus, in a house, there was an *economos* (steward) and an *economy*, *the administration* of the house. Thus, when God has established a certain order of things on the earth, one is wont to call it, accurately enough as it seems to me, an economy. In Eph. 1 the Spirit Himself uses it. It is possible that there is a slight shade between the Scripture and the conventional uses of this word; in general, the use of the word in Scripture is more closely connected with its original sense, and contains more the idea of an active administration. The word *dispensation* is often enough used in this sense, and has the same etymological signification; God *dispenses* His gifts. [7]

A few words about dispensational schemes may also be in order here. There was a scheme of eight dispensations which appeared in *The Present Testimony*, vol. 6 (1854):

THE DISPENSATIONS

Genesis informs us that *Creation* was completed in *six* days, and that God rested on the *seventh*. This corresponds with the dispensations: the millennium forming the *seventh* period. The *eighth* day, in scripture, always has reference to the resurrection, or *new state*: so with the *eighth* or *eternal* period.

Observe this: we have

1. The *Adamic* dispensation. Man in *innocency*.
2. Man *fallen*. God's grace in giving *promise*.

6. *The Prospect* 2:89 (1850).

7. *The Present Testimony* 4:68 (1853). The reader might want to look under Dispensation . . . in the index to the *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* for more on this.

3. Noahic. Government after the judgment of the flood.
4. Abrahamic or Patriarchal. Separation from idolatry.
5. Mosaic. The *Law*.
6. The Gospel. *Heaven opened to faith*. Heb.10:19-25.
7. The Millennial. *Heaven opened to sight*. John 1:51.
8. The *Eternal*. The New Heavens and New Earth. Rev.21:1-5.

W. C. B.

This is cited because of the many years by which it preceded C. I. Scofield, whose scheme embraces seven: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace and Kingdom. (H. A. Ironside followed this scheme.) Concerning relating the ages to the seven days of Genesis 1, the chart by A. E. Booth, "A Chart on the Course of Time from Eternity to Eternity," is very good (mistaken, I suggest, in labeling Adam to Noah a dispensation, for example.) This chart was based upon a book by F. W. Grant, *The Lessons of the Ages*, which in turn appears to me to be an expansion of an article in *The Present Testimony* 13:456-459 (1864).

We shall begin, God willing, with showing that the Old Testament prophets did not speak about the mystery of Christ and the church. If that is true, covenant theology is false. If the Old Testament prophets did not speak of this, then also the issue of "literal" versus "spiritual" interpretation is settled. Then we shall take up the expectation of the kingdom by the remnant and our Lord. Following that we shall consider various matters that bear on dispensational truth.

Ed.

NOURISHING THE FLESH

That which nourishes the flesh and self-love is the great system which is called the world. Man wishes to be something in his own eyes; he would like to forget God, and make himself happy, if possible, without Him. Thus Cain, when he was driven out from God's presence, after Abel's death, went away from before His face, judged in such a manner by God that he could not hope to be admitted again into His presence to enjoy communion with Him; for God had made him to be a vagabond and a wanderer on the earth (a striking type of the Jews at this time, after having put to death the Lord Jesus, who had become, so to speak,

their brother). But Cain was not willing to remain a poor vagabond; at all events he did not wish to leave his family in such a state; he wished it to escape his own proper lot; and to this end he built a city in the land of Nod ("Nod" is the Hebrew word translated vagabond in the first instance); he desired that his family should be established in the country where God had made him a vagabond. He names the city after his son, as do the great people of this world. There is to be found the father (that is, the inventor) of music, the father of them that work in brass and iron; there the riches of this present age were heaped together, much cattle. This is the world!

Man's heart, alienated from God, tries to make the earth, where he was set at a distance from God, as pleasing to himself as possible; and, in order to accomplish this, he uses God's gifts and creatures to be able to do without Him. It is said that there is no harm in these things: - this is true, but this is not the question. They are good as being created things; it is said (as a figure) that there will be music in heaven also; but in heaven it will not be employed in order to divert the mind without God. It is a question of the use we make of these things. For instance, there is no harm in strength, but in the manner of employing it; with it one does harm to one's neighbor. Is it not true that the world which knows not God uses all kinds of pleasures to enjoy itself without Him? The heart which has not God in it endeavors to amuse itself, and for this it employs all the things which are seen, heard, and invented; as for instance, the theatre, music, and every kind of thing, because it is empty and sad and cannot satisfy itself; and after a few years, during which it has kept up its natural spirits, it finds itself tired and weary, even of trying everything, and says with Solomon after having essayed all, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." God is neglected, and the soul lost.

For the Christian too, amusements only lead him away to a distance from God, and destroy his communion with Him. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world. The world and its lust pass away, but he that does the will of God abides for ever. The prince of this world is Satan, who seduced Eve with these things, having first of all destroyed her confidence in God; and it was with these things that he tried to seduce the Lord also, although, thank God, in vain. But with little trouble he succeeds but too often to seduce the hearts of men and of Christians; and to cause the pleasures of the world to have more power upon the soul than Christ Himself, than the love of a dying Saviour.

J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings* 24:271,272.

EXTRACT ON LEVITY

Frequently persons apparently delivered from legality [8] run into the opposite evil of levity. This may arise from the fact that the doctrines of grace are only taken up intellectually instead of being wrought into the soul by the power of the Spirit of God. There will be a very wide margin allowed for worldliness of various kinds -- a liberty wholly incompatible with practical Christianity. In addition to these things, there will be exhibited a very deplorable want of conscience in the practical details of daily life -- duties neglected, work badly done, engagements not faithfully observed, sacred obligations trifled with, debts contracted, extravagant habits indulged. All these things we place under the head of levity. They are too common among professors of what is termed evangelical truth.

We would desire to have our own souls as well as the souls of our readers really exercised before God about this. We fear there is a great deal of hollow profession among us, a great want of earnestness, truthfulness, and reality in our ways. We are not sufficiently permeated by the spirit of genuine Christianity, or governed in all things by the Word of God. In this way the soul gets into a very bad state indeed: conscience does not act. The moral sensibilities become blunted. The claims of truth are not duly responded to. Positive evil is trifled with. Moral relaxation is allowed. Rather than the constraining power of the love of Christ leading forth in the activities of goodness, there is not even the restraining power of the fear of God keeping back from the activities of evil.

C. H. Mackintosh

But for the incarnation of the Son of God, I should be ashamed to be a man.

. . . a Man upon the throne of God. Is it possible?

Where are our hearts, Oh! Where are they? Are they occupied with this world, or are we quietly passing on to heaven, taken up with that which love cannot lose sight of -- a living Christ in heaven?

G. V. Wigram

8. [C. H. M. elsewhere said that 'legality is the flesh attempting to carry out the precepts of God'. Often, either willfully or ignorantly, a person who is separated from the world is called legal by those who wish to have the world and not much separation from it.]

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