

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.

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"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

"The Unity of the Faith"

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith" - Eph. 4:13

All unity is not unity! There is what APPEARS to be unity, and there is actual unity. The Lord has, in His Infinite Wisdom, made full provision for lasting and effectual unity among His people. He has given "gifts to men" through our ascended Christ (Eph. 4:8-11) - "Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers" (4:11). Their various ministries are determined by the Lord, who both raises them up, and empowers them by His Spirit to make this initial contribution to His own "eternal purpose" (Eph. 3:11). These cannot be produced by the efforts of mortal men, however keen their efforts may be. The current attempt to manufacture teachers wholesale is only another vicious subterfuge of Satan, whereby his own kingdom is being knit together for war against the Lamb that was slain! When we speak of unity, we are not speaking of the result of concentrated efforts on the part of mere man. Unity, in this case, will result from the ministry of God-sent instructors and leaders, who will hearken us back to the Throne, to the Lord upon it, and to the work He has performed in mercy and truth. The body of Christ has not been placed in the world to make an impression upon society; it is here in order that it might be oriented for heaven. It is true that the vast majority of church programs today are pitched toward Sodom, and the impression of a carnal world; building of careers, and constructing vast monuments in honor of mortal man, and not God. The church today is known by its appearance. It meets in a certain kind of structure at a certain time on a certain day. It is characterized by refined and skilled men of the world, schooled in its wisdom, suave, easy communicants who smile well, and meet people graciously. Activities are built around the institution and the promulgation of its historical name and work. Currently, there are concentrated efforts being made to unite these churches into one. This is good, and will eliminate a lot of confusion. They have not "the faith" (for the most part, anyway) and are hence "one" already in the eyes of God. It would be just as well if they joined hands formally, and called themselves by the same name. They could better further their despicable carnal program that way also. The very fact that they have to meet at counsel tables, and hold long conferences to decide whether or not they ought to unite is indication of itself that they have neither true ministers of God nor the "faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

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The Word of Truth

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Author and Editor: Given O. Blakely
Circulation Manager: Kenneth R. Smith

Publication Office: 26th and Colfax St., Gary, Indiana.

Mailing Address: Box 1684, Highland, Indiana.

Business Offices: 7903 Hendricks Place,
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"The Unity of Faith"

(From page 1)

I do not know that we have evidence in the Scriptures of any one group of brethren meeting to see if it was proper to unite with another group of brethren. Unity was in that day, and in ours also, more spontaneous than resultant of the efforts of men. The Lord, working through His Holy Spirit within His ministers and leaders, does assemble His people together, and make them to be one with one another. True men of God speak as did John the Beloved; "What we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3). It has always been the case with God's true people that "they that feared the Lord spake often one with another" (Mal. 3:16). Their effectual unity with the Lord formed the basis of their unity with one another. There is so much superficial unity today, built upon mere assumption. Because one claims or even practices affiliation with a religious institution or organization, does by no means offer adequate proof that he is a child of God. His confession of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God come in the flesh, evidences his real relationship to the Lord (I John 5:1-5). Too, it is important to realize that this is a unity "of the faith", not of the mere external person. It is not just learning to get along with one another, and to tolerate one another's faults and weaknesses. This is a unity whereby our mutual faith is found centering in the person of Christ, growing exceedingly. *Unity is the result of the true growth and maturity of faith. Where there is a slow progression of faith, there is a slow progression of unity. Where faith "groweth exceedingly" (II Thess. 3:1), there is a bond of unity that cements the more firmly with each meeting.*

The "faith" of which we speak is not a mere doctrinal statement or form of sectarian dogma. *It is the conviction of the reality and work of the Lord Jesus Christ which compels us to count "all things but loss" for Him, that we might gain the knowledge of Christ, and be counted worthy of the resurrection (Phil. 3:7-14). It is that blessed gift of God which enables men to cut the connection with this earth, and soar into the heavenlies with wings like an eagle (Isa. 40:29-31). This is that "like precious faith" which we have "obtained" through the "righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:1). It was "once (for all) delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), and is referred to as "the faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1). This is the reality that unites the children of God; their "mutual faith" in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:12). They trust in the same*

Savior; lean upon the same Staff and Shield; are sustained by the same Life; lifted up by the same Comforter; maintained by the same Mediator. Christ "dwells within their hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:17), and is the "Finisher" as well as the "Author" of their faith (Heb. 12:2). Whatever difference there may lie in their knowledge of things, concerning the Lord "they ALL know Him from the least to the greatest" (Heb. 8:11). The joy of their heart, the brightness of their countenance, their life, strength, and hope is He. What further thing is needed to unite the brethren? Does it require more than life? more than Christ? more than faith? "Well," says the sophist, "I know a lot of people that believe in Christ with whom I cannot unite." But, thou simple one that doth love simplicity, does not faith unite us to Jesus Christ? (Gal. 3:26). And if we have been united to Christ, what is to warrant a separation among one another? The truth of the matter is that these religious pretenders who speak so blandly about the insufficiency of faith, actually do not know what faith is; else they would not fly into the very face of God with their rebellious conclusions. By faith, you see, we are brought into a realm where Christ filleth all in all, and there can be nothing but unity here! Christ will not dwell in a realm where there is disorder and variance. *Faith, therefore, puts us into Jesus Christ, where hearts are fused together in oneness not merely with one another, but with God; for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). This means that faith is not only the thing upon which we unite, but it is that glorious possession that actually unites us. The objective of the ministry of God is to bring faith to the people of God that they might truly be one in Christ. Until vital faith floods the soul, unity is only pretense and based upon carnality and wickedness. Like Paul, representatives of the Lord are not meant to have "dominion" over faith, but to be "helpers of our joy" (II Cor. 1:24). Continually let the Word of this Gospel be preached; the blessed truths of the reconciliation of man to God by the accomplished death of Jesus Christ; the presence of the Lord in the hearts of His people; the intercessory work of our Lord; the redemption that has been paid; the atonement which has been received; the middle wall of partition that has been removed; the peace that has been made - then you shall see faith flourish in the hearts of the saints, and unity shall be a necessary and blessed consequence of that faith. Let us once and for all have done with these vain attempts to unite the children of God with the children of Belial. Those that possess faith cannot be united with those that possess it not. The objective is to facilitate faith by the ministration of the Word (Rom. 10:14-17). Faith will then make true unity possible. I have no desire to be at unity with those who are faithless - as a matter of fact, it is an impossibility. But I do desire and crave the fellowship of those of "like precious faith."*

Each of God's children have faith - and that faith is the basis of their unity with the household, called "the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

The closer we draw to the Lord, the further we get from the world and the things of the world.

Spirituality is the result of the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Secular education does not magically endow a person with the ability to discern the truth of God. The Lord's Truth (which is the only truth) is even for wayfaring men, though they be fools (Isa. 35:8).

"HIS COMING"

"And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" — I John 2:28

The people of God stand in constant need of encouragement and comfort. The mission ordained of God, and urged upon His prophets is "Comfort ye, comfort ye, comfort ye My people" (Isaiah 40:1). From time to time, the child of God finds great weights of soul pressing upon him; sometimes so greatly that he "cast down", though "not destroyed" (II Cor. 4:9). The enemy does "come in like a flood"; but, Praise God, the "Spirit of the Lord then lifts up a standard" by which the enemy is put to flight and the hearts of the redeemed are lifted up and the countenance made glad (Isaiah 59:19). Despondency is a common lot to these people of the "way" (John 14:6; Acts 19:9). Often do they say with David; "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes. . ." (Psa. 31:22); "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will He be favorable no more?" (Psa. 77:7). It is true that "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Prov. 13:12). The world about us constitutes a constant tug and pull at our spirit, continually besieging us with things that are seen, and calling our attention away from our Beloved. The "flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh", is the pronouncement of the Lord (Gal. 5:17), and we are admonished to "abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11). We have been called to a citizenship that is "in heaven" (Phil. 3:20), and are constituted "strangers and pilgrims in the earth" (I Pet. 2:11; Heb. 11-13). Our "hope" is laid up for us in heaven, and shall remain there until we are fitted in immortality to possess it. How we do "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to-wit, the redemption of the body" (Rom. 8:23).

The subject of John's epistle is meant to spur the child of God toward the end; that "Blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13). He writes to them that they "sin not" (I John 2:1-2), and that they might know that "they have eternal life" (I John 5:13). He rejoices their hearts with the prospect of "being like Him", when we shall see Him at His appearing (I John 3:1), and further instructs them that the possession of this hope is sufficient incentive to compel one to "purify himself even as He (Jesus) is pure" (I John 3:3). The intent of the Beloved John, like that of the Apostle Paul, was to "present" his students "perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). He gives them admonitions conducive to such a presentation; "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (I John 2; 5-17); "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits to see if they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:11); "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21).

In our text, John makes a similar appeal; "Little children, abide in Him". If any ponder the time during which this course is to be followed; John precludes it with "AND NOW . . ." (I

John 2:28), John refers to them as "little children", not because they are of a tender young age, or because they have just come to know the Lord, but because of their endearment to his heart. How he loved them — as a mother loves her little child. He is beseeching them as one who desires their perfection, and eternal glory. Oh, that we had knowledge of more ministers today with this burning desire; that their followers might be perfect in Christ Jesus, and not ashamed at His coming. I fear that the majority of ministers could never refer to their respective congregations as "little children". They have not the capacity for spiritual love that John had. They rather are inclined to "make merchandise" of the sheep than to feed them, succour them, and prepare them for glory. The Lord shall requite such evil shepherds according to His word (Ezek. 24), and crown with an unfading wreath of glory those that have faithfully tended the flock, and cared for the sheep (I Peter 5:1-5). John does not here speak as an "hireling" (John 10:12-13), but as a good undershepherd that has "entered" in "by the Door" of the sheepfold (John 10:1-2). He bids his hearers to "abide" in Christ!

A more sound admonition could not be given to the sheep. **This is the only proper preparation for the coming of the Lord; a constant abiding in Him.** The Lord Himself admonished us; "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me, ye can do nothing" (John 15:4-5). To "abide" signifies a strong faith, whereby you continue to "Look unto Jesus, the author and Finisher of your faith" (Heb. 12:1-2). It is to continue to "Put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22), and to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). This is that act whereby we continue to "cast off the sin and weight which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us" (Heb. 12:1). It is permitting Christ's mind to be in us (Phil. 2:5; I Cor. 2:16), and thus "abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11). This is "walking in the light as He is in the light" (I John 1:7), "walking as He walked" (I John 2:6), and possessing confidence, as well as actual participation, that "as He is, so are we in this world" (I John 4:17). This is no idle admonition, or a throwing of words into the air. **Here is the crucial part of the new born babe's life; he is to abide in Christ!** He is not to begin in the Spirit, and attempt to find perfection in the flesh (Gal. 3:3). Jesus is a Savior from past sin and from the power and dominion of sin (Romans 6). **As we abide in Him, the enemy shall have no power over us, but we shall be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).** Activity is not to be the objective of the child of God — **ABIDING IS!** As we abide in Christ, activity is lifted from the realm of the vain (Eccl. 1) to the classification of

“much fruit” unto God; so spoke our Lord in John 15!

Now, John gives a reason for abiding in Christ — that we may not be ashamed at His coming. **It is the purpose of life in Christ to prepare us for the coming of the Lord, at which time we shall be ushered into that eternal “rest” that yet remaineth to the people of God** (Heb. 4:9). This is why the coming of our Lord is called that “blessed hope and glorious appearing” (Titus 2:13). It is at that time that our hope shall be seen, and we shall be gloriously transformed into the likeness of our blessed Lord (I John 3:1-2); blessed contemplation!

Oh, how runs my mind in channels deep
when on Christ's coming set
I see the clouds enfolding Him
my hope unto Him knit
With all the holy angels come
to gather out the grain
To purge His floor of all the chaff
the wheat He will retain
What lure hath earth with all its vice
when here my mind doth rest
This blessed contemplation now
compels me give my best!

It is understood that every true child of God (and there is no other kind) is yearning for that day of the Lord, hastening unto it (II Pet. 3:12). This is the day that marks the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is “our life” (Col. 3: 3-4), and then shall we also appear with Him. The real crown of rejoicing to the servant of God is to have those who have given heed to his message “in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming” (I Thess. 2:19). It is then that He shall appear “without sin unto salvation” unto them that “look for Him” (Heb. 9:28). Glorious day!

Our faith, tried by the unsearchable wisdom of God, shall then be found “unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (I Pet. 1:7). Glad fruition, when that solid Rock upon which has been built the sacrificial life, shall appear, “bringing grace” in manifold measure at His “revelation” (I Pet. 1:13).

John urges the sort of diligence and perseverance in Christ that will remove shame at His appearing. **Brethren, that shall be no time to be ashamed!** Then is when our confidence shall truly be made manifest! Those who glibly speak of their confidence, while refusing obstinately to abide in Christ, shall have their despicable hypocrisy unveiled at that day! The word “shame” or “ashamed” is not a light word; i.e., it is not a word signifying a mere red face, or slight embarrassment. This is a strong word that reminds us of Adam's reaction to the presence of God after that he and his deceived wife had partaken of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:8-11). This type of shame causes the offender to shrink back, to draw back, to seek to hide amidst the filth and contamination of the world. The wretched fig aprons of self-righteousness shall be revealed as totally inadequate at the coming of our Lord — God hasten the day! This realm of earth cannot now hide your rebellious nature and filthy morality from God — much less in that great day of the Lord, when the “heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent

heat” (II Pet. 3:12). The literal translation of I John 2:28 might read; “that we may not shrink in shame from Him at His coming.” To contemplate, therefore, the enormity of Christ's glory at His coming, and its total incompatibility with the slothful life, is designed to awaken us from sin to do righteousness and sin not. When our blessed Lord appears, all who have been slothful and have neglected to recline in His bosom and abide in Him, shall shrink back from Him in shame and horror, running to hide amid the rocks and the hills, crying for the mountains to fall upon them. God has already declared that His soul will have no pleasure in him that draws back; they “draw back to perdition (damnation)” — Heb. 10:38-39.

A heart that recoils either now or then at the thought of the appearance of the Lord evidences a state of enmity against the God of heaven. Regardless of the multiplicity of religious duties which have been undertaken, if there has not been a faithful abiding in Jesus, then there shall be shame and consequent damnation at His appearing!

Their shame is an “evident token of perdition” (Phil. 1:28). I remember some seven or eight years ago that I was in the state of Ohio for a time. While there a friend of mine was engaged in an evangelistic meeting in one of the local churches. The speaker of the evening was proclaiming the second coming of the Lord, and was determined to impress upon the people the reality of Christ's appearing. Behind some curtains on the stage he had placed a trumpet player, who, at a given signal, would begin to play loudly, so illustrating the “last trump” which shall usher in the Lord's appearing. At the prescribed time, the man blew the trumpet, and several (yea, almost all) within the congregation were filled with fear. After the meeting, there was much hilarity and jesting over the occasion between my acquaintance, the evangelist, and several of the congregation. Jokingly, they sloughed off the despicable display of faithlessness by remarking; “Brother, we thought the end was here.” I have often thought of that occasion, and of the truth that it displayed. It unveiled a hypocritical church, and an abominable congregation, whose hearts were at enmity with God, and who were set at variance with the Lord's Christ; yet none were wise enough to see it. Brethren, the coming of the Lord is precious to the saved; to all others it is a fearful thing because it shall unveil wretched hearts and carnal desires. If you cannot say with John, “Amen, even so come quickly Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20), then it is time to “examine yourself to see if ye be in the faith; prove your own self; know ye not that Christ is in you except ye be reprobate (rejected of God) — II Cor. 13:5). **This is not a subject that is met to frighten the church, but rather to comfort it with the prospect that her warfare will soon be accomplished** (Isa. 40:2), and that God will “bruise Satan under our feet shortly” (Rom. 16:20).

It speaks to us of the deliverance from the “bondage of corruption” and from the “earthly house of this tabernacle”; of being delivered from the “body of this death” (Rom. 8:21-23; II Cor. 5:1; Rom. 7:24-25). All of this body's lusts, proclivities and inclinations toward the earth will be finally put away. Ought not I to rejoice over that?

Aye, and rejoice I will! The possession of this body makes me a "wretched man", and how I long for deliverance from it (Rom. 7:24). The coming of the Lord speaks comfort to my heart in this regard. We are told of the Lord's coming in such words as build us up in the faith, and increase our expectation of glory: "For our conversation (manner of living) is in heaven; from whence we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body . . ." (Phil. 3: 20-21); and again; ". . . but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2). Sweet expectation! The body shall not be able to endure the glory of the Lord at His appearing; we shall be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (I Cor. 15:51-52).

It is tragic that such a precious teaching as the coming of our Lord has been so corrupted by the dogmatism and self-revealed teachings and pratings of men. Many have been deluded into viewing the Lord's appearance as a mere fleshly and earthly event which shall feed their lust for tangibles. It is not uncommon to hear of two future comings of the Lord, or at least a "first and a second phase" of His future coming. Traditional concepts have been so embraced by weak minds toward God, that the Scriptures have been jammed and pushed into narrow moulds fit for the propagating of denominational dogma. Very little of the current teaching on Christ's coming can actually be substantiated by sound Scriptural observation. It is not, however, my intention here to deal with their altogether rudimentary teachings, but rather to establish a single thought to the comfort of God's people; that the Lord is coming. I seek for you to observe the way that the Apostles speak of this grand event without the spectacles of tradition upon your soul. This event is called in various places "the coming" or "His coming," and is held forth as a single event bringing joy to the elect, and sorrow and shame to the reprobate. Hear the Word of the Lord; "I thank my God always on your behalf . . . so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for THE COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:7); "For as in Adam all die, even so, in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at HIS COMING" (I Cor. 15:22-23); "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at HIS COMING" (I Thess. 2:19); "And the Lord make you to increase and abound . . . to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at THE COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (I Thess. 3:13); "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto THE COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ", (I Thess. 5:23); "Now we beseech you brethren, by THE COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him" (II Thess. 2:1); "And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of HIS COMING" (II Thess. 2:8); "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto THE COMING of the Lord" (James 5:7); "For we have not followed

cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:16).

This coming is described elsewhere as "THE DAY OF THE LORD" (II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15; I Thess. 5:1-2). Until that great "day", the Lord has been "received up into heaven", angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him (I Pet. 3:22), and shall remain there, "until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of ALL His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). The current emphasis on our Lord's coming that teaches things shall continue upon earth, with flesh and blood, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, is not of God! The Word of the Lord testifies that the heavens and the earth will not be able to abide His presence, but that they shall "flee away" from before His face, and there shall be found no place for them (Rev. 20:11). The Lord has been glorified, and invested with "eternal glory". He once stripped Himself of that glory, and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto the death (Phil. 2: 5-9), coming in the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), being "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). **But this shall not happen again!** He appeared to the world in that humiliated state ONCE — that is all! Narrow students of the Scriptures today, who are "straitened by their own affections" (II Cor. 6:12) have not been convinced of the magnitude of Christ's glory — and I do not suppose for a moment that I possess the wisdom of words or the eloquence to perform such an arduous task. Christ's coming is spoken of as being in glory — **that same glory that He possesses now**; "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father . . ." (Matt. 16:27); ". . . they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30); Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, WHEN He shall come in HIS GLORY, and IN HIS FATHER'S, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26); "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27).

This glory is so transcendent to this natural order that the mundane sphere cannot abide its presence. **Were Jesus to appear glorified before us now, the whole natural order would instantaneously collapse. Our Savior is too magnificent, too exalted to again fit into THIS order of things.** If the children of Israel could not bear to look at the face of Moses, who but saw a limited view of the "hinder parts" of God's glory (Exodus 34:33-35), what shall be said of the effects of the appearing of our Lord in "ALL" the glory of His Father" (Matt. 16:27; Mk. 8:38); Matt. 24: 30; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27).

It is at His coming that Jesus will "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart" (I Cor. 4:5). What a glorious prospect for the child of God. His heart is saturated with the love of God (Rom. 5:5), and He is satisfied with nothing but His Lord. He knows that without Him he can do nothing, and with Him he can do all things. Yet, he is not known of the world; "the world knoweth us not" (I John 3:1). They cannot "judge" (interpret) our hearts (I Cor. 2:14-16), and so impugn our motives, and adjudge us to be hypocrites, making

The Commandments

The commandments of God are meant to convey to man the mind of the Lord. They actually represent the image of God in word form. Understood in this vein, they become food for the child of God, by which he receives the likeness of the Lord impressed upon his own being. To the saint, the commandments of the Lord "are not grievous" (I John 5:3). I seek in this short treatise to compare the commandments addressed to those un-regenerate Jews at Sinai with those addressed to the redeemed. There is an observation here that may be made which will substantially contribute to your faith.

The ten commandments are listed as follows:

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."
2. "Thou shalt not make any graven image; thou shalt not bow thyself down to worship them."
3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."
4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."
5. "Honour thy father and thy mother."
6. "Thou shalt not kill."
7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."
8. "Thou shalt not steal."
9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness."
10. "Thou shalt not covet."

—Exodus 20:3-17.

You will observe that all but two of these great commandments were negative in nature; placing restrictions and restraints upon man. The only positive commands were to keep the Sabbath day, and to honor their father and mother that their days might be long upon the earth. Both of these commands could be externally observed, and were thus perverted, it is true. This obscured the real meaning of them, which was to pay due and lasting honor to the Lord who is above all, and to the parents which God has given to us, as a wise and faithful Creator. It must be understood that unregenerate man is at war with God and with His will. He is a friend of the world, and is therefore constituted an "enemy of God" (James 4:4). He is an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel, without Christ, and a stranger from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:11-12). In this state, the objective of the Lord is to convict him of "sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin,

mere pretense. How we yearn for our hearts to be made known, that they are pure, and made free from sin and the desire to sin, by the blood of the Lamb. Hearts "purified by faith", and consciences "purged from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). Now, "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1), I bid you to be "patient unto the coming of the Lord". **He shall righteously unveil the devotedness of your heart, the longing of your soul to be in the presence of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. It is not necessary that you convince the world of the sincerity of your heart. It is enough to the Lord that you actually do "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth" (Eph. 6:24).** Let Him be the one that unveils your heart

because they believe not on Me (Christ), of righteousness because I ascend unto my Father, and of judgment because the Prince of this world is judged" (John 16:7-11). The ten Commandments were addressed to a covenanted people, by the Providence of the Lord, yet to a people that were actually enemies of the Lord within their own hearts. It is true that they drew near to the Lord with their mouths, but within their hearts they were "far from Him" (Isa. 29:13). They were possessed of an old nature, carnal and subject to earthly lusts and ambitions. At no time were they painted as a heavenly minded or spiritual people. The promise was always toward them in this wise; "I will give them a new heart"; "I will take away the stony heart"; "I will put my Spirit within them", etc.

The commandments were to them a form of restraint, as well as a revelation of their own rebellious nature (Romans 7:). The "old man" (Eph. 4:24), "corrupt according to deceitful lusts" was continually reminded by the word of the Lord that his actions, ways, and thoughts were contrary to the will and law of God. **Thus did the Law seek to point out the obstinacy of man's heart by placing holy restrictions upon his activity which he so dearly loved.** It is tragic that much of today's religion is of the same order; that of restraint. **A religion that is fundamentally a restraining one is a religion for rebellious people, whose hearts are set at enmity against God.**

The heart must be changed, wrought anew so that it may receive the ministration of the Spirit in writing the Law upon it indelibly (Heb. 8:8-11; II Cor. 3:1-3). This is that "new covenant" which was promised of the Lord, not "according to the covenant which I made with their (Israel's) fathers, in the day that I led them by the hand out of Egypt, which my covenant they brake" (Jer. 31:31-34). **This covenant is based upon the blessed work of Jesus Christ, whose very blood is the token and ratification of the covenant (Matt. 26:28; 9: 7:22), and contains commands and ordinances which are designed to stimulate and activate the "new man" (Col. 3:9-10) toward God and His will.** This is achieved, for the most part, by the declaration of positive statements of truth. Permit me to cite a few of these for you from I Thess. 5:14-22:

1. "Warn them that are unruly."
2. "Comfort the feeble minded."
3. "Support the weak."
4. "Be patient toward all men."

to those who harrass you! Look toward His coming, at which time the counsels shall certainly be made manifest. This is, of course, also meant to convict those whose hearts are filled with wretched rebellion against the Lord, whose affections are set on things of this earth, and whose devotion is mingled with idolatrousness.

It shall not be long, brethren, as faith sees it; "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37). Until that time, I bid you to "abide in Him, that ye be not shamed at His coming," but rather that you shall have "boldness in the day of judgment" (I John 4:17). Now, "May the Lord direct your hearts into . . . the patient waiting for Christ" (II Thess. 3:5) is my prayer for you!

5. "See that none render evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and unto all men."
6. "Rejoice evermore."
7. "Pray without ceasing."
8. "In everything give thanks."
9. "Quench not the Spirit."
10. "Despise not prophesyings."
11. "Prove all things."
12. "Hold fast to that which is good."
13. "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

You will at once observe the trend of these words; they are positive, and are urging the children of God to engage in holy activity. The negative commands are characterized by words which indicate diligence and perseverance; "Quench not"; "Despise not"; "Abstain from." **These indicate positive action away from evil, and are not to be construed as a mere prohibition. They exhort more than just a refraining from the performance of evil. They call for an actual departure from the very course of sin, from the very attitude of evil.** How different from the Law of commandments and ordinances which were basically "carnal" (that is, addressed to the outward man) — Heb. 7:15, 9:10.

The great Magna Charta of the faith is the Lord's address upon the mountain, commonly referred to as "The Sermon on the Mount." There He gave some positive requirements for the man of God. It might be of worth to observe a few of them and catch a glimpse of the nature of them. They are found in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew's Gospel.

1. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad" (5:12).
2. "Let your light so shine" (5:16).
3. ". . . be reconciled unto your brother" (5:23-24).
4. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out . . . etc." (5:29-30).
5. "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (5:39).
6. "If any man sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" (5:40).
7. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (5:41).
8. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (5:42).
9. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you" (5:44).
10. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (5:48).
11. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (6:33).
12. "Enter in at the strait gate . . ." (7:13-14).
13. "Beware of false prophets" (7:15).
14. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them" (7:24).

Examples could be further put forth from the Scriptures illustrating the type of commandment that is addressed to the one that has been "born from above." Jesus, speaking of this new order,

said; "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12, 17). The Apostles also spoke in this way; "Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king" (I Pet. 2:17); "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16).

There is a reason for the difference in the type of commands and admonitions that have been observed. The commands of the old Scriptures were mostly negative in nature, and were accompanied with various curses and threats of Divine anger. Under the Lord Jesus Christ, the commands are, for the most part, positive, and are attended by promises great and exceeding precious, which tell of an "eternal inheritance", and a "crown that fadeth not away." Why is this? Under the law, man was (and those still under the Law still are) possessed of a heart hard as adamant stone, and set against the God of heaven; a heart that loved sin and hated righteousness, which sought not God, and spoke evil (Rom. 3). **The negative commands were given in order to stimulate that heart, and to bring out its wickedness, which otherwise would have been effectually concealed.** This is what Paul alludes to in Romans 7; "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence" (7:8); "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment deceived me and by it slew me" (7:11); "But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" (7:13). That sinful wretched heart could not remain concealed under the enticement, as it were, of the Law. **The ministration of those commandments was to bring out what man was by nature; "a child of wrath" (Eph. 2:1-3).**

Now, the commands that were given after the Lord had revealed the will of God, and had wrought a work whereby man might become a new creation in Christ Jesus (II Cor. 5:17), have a similar ministry. **Their aim too, is to bring out what is actually in the redeemed man.** God has put within him a new nature, conformable to the Divine image. He has become a "partaker of holiness", and of "the Divine nature" (Heb. 12:10; II Pet. 1:4). Within is Divine life; yea, Christ Himself is their life (Col. 3:4). **This life is to be made known in "good works which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Having placed within them faith, which lays hold of the Word of God, and clings to the promises, God now speaks to their hearts in the commandments, and draws out of them such activity as demonstrates their Sonship, and brings glory to His own name.** "Do this", says He; "Do that"; and the heart responds immediately. The commands are not now grievous, but the very desire of the heart. The Law becomes the object of the most intense search; "Oh how love I Thy Law, it is my meditation night and day", cries the heart of the redeemed.

"Thy Law have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee" is the joyous response to the message from the Throne to the heart! What, then, is the ministry of the commandments to the redeemed, and why are they positive in nature, for the most part? **The ministry is a means of confirming our Sonship. If we are of God, then let us do what He says. If we find that we are**

unable to perform His will, unable to keep His words, then any assumption that we are His child is unwarranted, and we are called upon to "examine ourselves to see if we be in the faith" (II Cor. 3:5). They draw out of you the Divine life, and make it manifest unto you, those about you, and unto principalities and powers in high places. They are positive in nature because the child of God possesses the actual life of God. He has been regenerated to walk within good works, and to fulfill the good pleasure of the Lord. It is true that he refrains from unholy activity; but not merely because he is enjoined to do so, but because he is inclined by the mind of God away from evil. The command merely becomes an alert to the will of the Lord, and response is immediate and joyful. Within the heart, there is an eagerness to please the Lord in all things, and therefore, when the commandment is registered upon the heart by the ministration of the Holy Spirit, there is an immediate affirmative response to the honor and glory of God. **The difference in the nature of the commands evidences that a mighty change has been wrought within the child of God.** He has been reborn, renewed, vitalized with the breath of God.

May you examine your own heart in connection with the commands of God. How is it that you regard them? How do they work upon your own heart and will? What is evidenced in your response to them? Sonship or damnation? I bid you to spend time in prayer and study with these facts before you. **Right here, within the confines the commandments may be evidenced in a measure the fact of your own relationship to the Lord.** Will you not search it out, seeking wisdom of the Lord?

The Strange Absence

Some years ago the Lord moved upon my heart to search the Scriptures with a mind to find only the truth; which searching, by His grace, has never ceased. I find an exceeding rich fellowship with the Lord here as He opens to the understanding those truths which are given for the comfort and edification of God's people. Upon my searching of the Scriptures, I was at once impressed with a truth that does not cease to amaze me. I was taught in the schools of men (religious), and had been subjected to much teaching that I had reluctantly, but partially, received as true. However, upon a spiritual perusal of the Word of God I found a strange absence of almost every religious **emphasis** that I had ever heard. The Holy Spirit just did not seem to emphasize what I had been taught were the most important things. I found that on every page there was illusion to and

instruction of the person of Jesus Christ; that He was verily "the spirit of prophecy." It also impressed me throughout the Scripture that man was pictured in need of something which he could not under his own strength grasp. But those things which were considered to be of great importance in religious circles, and over which religious debates and discussions had raged, I did not find at all mentioned there, and if they were, it was but incidental! I cannot but feel that I am not the first one that has been impressed with this truth, and so would urge all of like mind to seek earnestly to "learn what that meaneth." Do not give yourself or your time to the propagation of human emphasis and teachings. Be eager for the Lord and the glory of God. Let your stand be for the Lord and the Lord alone, and let His own person dictate to you the sphere of fellowship that you are to entertain. I have found this the only satisfactory way.

It appears that the nature of the human mind is to be curious concerning secret things. In the realm of the Spirit, we must, however, remember that the "secret things belong unto the Lord." To look for reasons where none are given, and to attempt to explain what is not explained, is to make a dangerous mistake. Let men learn to accept in faith the work of God when it is declared, not questioning it because it doesn't conform to their small mold comprehension. If God did it, it is right; and to question that comes close to blasphemy!

What Goes Up Must *Not* Come Down

"What goes up must come down" is expressive of the scientific law of gravitation as seen in the terrestrial sphere. There is also, however, a principal of gravitation in the spiritual sphere, which finds us being pulled down frequently to the earthly level. This law is operative through the "sinful flesh" which we all possess. Those who do not subjugate the flesh under the powerful administration of the Holy Spirit shall find themselves in this gigantic pull earthward. The life of the elect is to be one of spiritual vitality and strength which manifests itself in the crucifixion of the flesh, together with its lusts. He who performs this by the grace of God shall find that, spiritually speaking, what goes up need not come down. Having been lifted up to sit with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6) we may, by grace, maintain that position. To live continually in this sphere ought to be the aspiration of all of God's children — yea, it is!

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