

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

SPIRITUAL VISION

Let us devote a moment here to the nature of spiritual vision. Spiritual vision is actually FAITH! That is the Scriptural word for it. "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Faith is actually a persuasion, whereby the spirit of man has impressed upon it the reality of the Kingdom of God and the things pertaining to it. It cannot be facilitated by sight, but is imprinted upon our spirits by the Spirit of our God. Although many people do assert that their faith has been strengthened by what they have seen, the Scriptures categorically assert that "faith cometh by HEARING" — not seeing (Rom. 10:17). Thus we read the "HEARING of faith" — not the seeing of faith. The things of God — the truth and verities of the Kingdom — are related to us in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13). As these things are related to us, the Holy Spirit plants the persuasion of their reality upon our hearts. We become convinced of them, persuaded of their reality to the extent that we thoroughly mould our lives about them and abandon the values and teachings of this present evil world. When that happens, we have seen — we have received faith!

Faith purifies the heart in order that the vision or impression of spiritual realities may not be obscured by earth. That is what the Word says, "Having purified their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9). The vision of heavenly things tears away from the heart that foreskin which obscures glory! Praise God for that — the purifying effects of spiritual vision! Is it any wonder that Jesus said; "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall SEE God" (Matt. 5:8).

Our faith, or spiritual vision, governs our activity. Our whole manner of life is effected by what we see. Once things are focused properly in our hearts, we live differently. This experience of life is simply described as "walking by faith" (II Cor. 5:7); i.e., what we see by faith governs how we live, where we go, what we do! We are no longer deluded by the course of this world — that certain "fashion" which "passeth away" (1 Cor. 7:31). We are said to "live by faith" (Rom. 1:17) and "stand by faith" (Rom. 11:20). Why do believers "abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11) — it is because of what they have seen! Why do they "confess" themselves to be "strangers and pilgrims" in this world, all the while seeking a country that is "better, that is an heavenly" (Heb. 11:16)? It is because of what they have beheld by faith! Why have they pledged willingly to live "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" while "denying worldly lusts" (Tit. 2:11)? It is because of the spiritual vision which they have received by grace! They have seen something! They have beheld reality! Actually, the very alteration of the conduct of men which have embraced the Lord Jesus Christ ought to provoke inquiry among the ungodly! They ought to realize that it takes more than a mere philosophy to constrain men to willingly, joyfully, eagerly, "count all things but loss that they might win Christ, and be found in Him not having a righteousness of their own" (Phil. 3:9ff).

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by Bro. Richard Ebler

The Word of Truth

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Spiritual Vision

(From page 1)

God will test or try your spiritual vision! The Scriptures speak of the "trying of your faith" (I Pet. 1:6-7; James 1:3). There is no specific pattern that this testing takes, but every believer knows that such trial is a reality. Often it is perceived **after** having passed through it — but rest assured, the people of God are aware of this Kingdom phenomenon of the "trying of your faith." It actually is an eye-test for the soul; a testing of your ability to perceive spiritual things. It is an evaluation of your spiritual peripheral vision — how far can you really see? How wide is your vision? How broad your perception of reality? How deep your understanding of the things of God. **It is easy to boast of great learning in the Kingdom, but not so easy to pass the tests of faith.** The Lord has called upon such notables as Abraham to sacrifice the one son that was promised to him. He has called upon men that were perfect in their own generation, such as Job, to pass through a season without any sensitivity of the Lord's presence or approval. He has sent young boys into foreign lands (Joseph to Egypt), and permitted fathers to think for years — even decades — that their favorite son was dead (Jacob remorseful over Joseph.) He has let His disciples attempt to row across a lake alone, and in a fierce and devastating storm. He has let His close friends die without coming to them to raise them from sick beds — only to raise them from a stinking and loathsome tomb (Lazarus). He has led people through a desolate desert without a natural source of food, water, clothing, or any form of sustenance known to the natural man! He has brought men up against large and fenced cities, and asked them to walk about the walls, and then to shout and watch them fall down! He has had holy men raise their hands while battles were being fought, and as long — and only as long — as those hands were raised, the people of God prevailed! He has called men to be apostles, and then had them incarcerated in prisons and dungeons, bound with chains and fetters of iron. He has anointed young men to be kings, and then sent them back to keep

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"THE REMNANT OF HER SEED"

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" — Revelation 12:17

In the book of the Revelation, Satan is graphically pictured as assaulting the church of the living God; seeking to wash her away with floods of delusion from that secret place prepared for her, where she is nourished by the Lord Himself from the face of that old Deceiver (Rev. 12:6). His attack is deliberate, malicious, concentrated, and zealously executed — and yet, praise God, it falls completely short of his evil objective! The church lives on! From this perspective, all of history is but the attempt of Satan to dislodge the church: an attempt that is met by the overcoming power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The twelfth chapter of the Revelation introduces the origin of the saints opposition — it is completely instigated by Satan; it is fierce, and it is executed with tremendous zeal, because the Devil knows all too well that "the time is short" (Rev. 12:12).

To be sure, Satan's attempts are gloriously frustrated — **but his zeal does not abate!** The chapter with which we now concern ourselves repeatedly declares the overthrow of Satan's wicked work: ". . . and her child was **caught up unto God, and to His throne**", it is written concerning the frustration of Satan's attempt to devour the manchild (v. 5). Again, we see Satan focus his attention on "the woman", which is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, only to find that she flees "into the wilderness, where **she hath a place prepared of God**" (v. 6). When the old serpent "persecuted the woman", she was "given two wings of a great eagle, that she might **fly into the wilderness**, into her place, where **she is nourished** for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (v. 14). When our adversary cast out a flood to devour the woman, it is recorded that "**the earth helped the woman**, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (v. 16). And what is his response to all of this? Is he discouraged so as to let up on his pressing attack? Does he steal away and weep in utter frustration? No! Those are attributes that might well characterize a man, but not the Devil. It is written that "**the dragon was wroth with the woman**"! Her resorting to the secret feeding place has made him angry! Her manchild being caught up to God and to His Throne has made him angry! The wings that enabled her to fly away from his evil intents have made him angry! The demonstration of the truth that all things are working together for her good (as seen in the earth helping her) has made him angry! He does not slink away in cowardice, as many would have us believe he does! An evil, wicked, perverse spirit he is — a coward he is not! He has been known to fight against princely angels and their armies, and even attack with malicious intent the very heel of our Lord — which he bruised! Do not think of him as a sniveling child of some sort — as one that will back away from your presence as though plagued with fear. You will not overcome

this arch foe with boldness! Your religious brashness will not put him to flight, nor your ability to glow with a smile! **It is faith that overcomes him**; that real substance and evidence of spiritual things which resides in the breast of every believer. It is **faith** that brings the wings with which we take flight; it is **faith** that discovers the place of nourishment; it is **faith** that sees the earth as helping the woman, and gloriously gives thanks!

The relentless attack of Satan has not diminished. While believers have often squabbled among themselves, and even become overtaken with the cares of this world, Satan has ever pressed to persecute and make war with the people of God. They do well to arm themselves with the "whole armour of God", that "having done all" they may be able to stand (Eph. 6:10ff). Let none persuade you that Satan is lightly to be considered, or that he is not thoroughly devoted to your destruction! On the other hand, let none cause your heart to be filled with fear because of him — fear God! But without further burdening you with introductory remarks, let us get into this text.

It is written that "the dragon WENT to make war with the remnant of her seed"! That tells us that **Satan is on the initiative in this matter**; he is not complacent about his evil work and purpose! In the words of Peter the Apostle; "**your** adversary the Devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, **SEEKING** whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). He is meticulous in his search of evil intent, and whenever the Lord lets a hedge down, he never fails to rush into it to the hurt and testing of the believer! His present wrath exceeds the fierceness with which he attacked Job of old (Job 1 and 2). By saying that our adversary is "wroth", the Scriptures do not mean to imply that he has never before been angry. It rather is demonstrating to us that following his absolute defeat at the cross (Col. 2:14-15), his activities have increased in number and ferocity. This is because he knows that the "time is short". He has been openly displayed as the wicked one; his power has been demonstrated as inferior to that of our wonderful Lord, and he bears in his head the mark of destruction delivered to him by the Lord of lords and King of kings! And yet, with that bruise; with that defeat; with that display of defeat stamped indelibly upon his character and person, he goes out maliciously, zealously, almost indefatigably, to make war with the remnant of the woman's seed — with the church of the Lord Jesus Christ! We ought to learn somewhat here of the wickedness of the old serpent. He cannot repent; he cannot be illuminated; he cannot be brought to a state of discouragement; his evil intents cannot have their energies blunted. That is how wicked, how utterly perverse our enemy is! It is worthy of note here that his children bear the same mark: we ought not to be overly surprised when they appear so dull and insensitive to what appears the evident hand of God.

But who are the woman's "seed"? It is written that they are the "**remnant**"; i.e., those that have **not** been carried away with the flood of Satan's mouth! These are those who were not escorted from this life through bloody persecutions instigated by Satan. **These are they which**

weathered the assaults of the serpent, who did not yield to his wit and craftiness. The word "**remnant**" is a familiar one to students of the Scripture (Isa. 11:11; 37:31; Ezek. 6:8; Amos 5:15; Rom. 9:27; 11:5). The establishment of a remnant does not prove Satan's success, but his **lack** of success! It graphically portrays to us the truth that Satan **CANNOT** remove the church from this world. It proves that delusion **cannot** undue the wonderful work of our Lord Jesus Christ. It shows us that faith really does **overcome** the world (I Jno. 4:4ff) — it did in the remnant, as well as in those that "loved not their lives unto the death". It teaches us that as long as there is a world, God will not leave Himself without a witness! It instructs us in the truth that Satan does, in fact, possess very definite limitation. We learn from the very concept of a "**remnant**" that **spiritual nourishment is effective**; that it does preserve the saints even in the midst of the most ferocious attack of the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). We gather from these things that after the very worst attack of Satan; the most malicious wars having been fought zealously, that God still reserves for Himself a remnant which have not bowed the knee to Baal; a remnant upon whose clothes the smell of smoke cannot be found, in whose heart the joy of the Lord is found, and who remain "strong in faith, giving glory to God." But, precisely who is this remnant?

Those "which keep the commandments of God"! It seems to me that amidst all the proclaimed revival going on in the world, there remains that essential need for a revival of keeping the commandments of God! There has not been an awakening like that in many a year! **There is a need for a great awakening of interest in, concern for, and allegiance to, the "commandments of God"**! Religion has become so refined, so cultured, that the "commandments of God" are of very little interest to many. There is an admitted departure from "doctrines", and a so-called glorying in the love of God. But our Lord is devoted to no one quite as much as those that "**keep**" His commandments! True believers do, indeed, entertain a very vital interest in the commandments — these dictums of the Lord which touch upon living in this "present evil world"! Such are addressed in Scripture in this fashion; "Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that **delighteth greatly in His commandments**" (Psa. 112:1). They are declared as saying such as this; "**And I will delight myself in Thy commandments, which I have loved**" (Psa. 119:47); and again, ". . . **Thy commandments are my delight**" (Psa. 119:143).

Be assured in your heart that those that delight and find pleasure in the commandments of the Lord have little difficulty in their fervent **desire** to keep them — and against these Satan fights with tremendous zeal and energy! Believers do embrace the commandments; they are persuaded of their reality, and do not question them or argue against them; "**I have believed Thy commandments**", declared the Psalmist (Psa. 119:66). The saints of the most High God — those that keep the commandments of God — "**love**" the

AN EXAMPLE ILLUSTRATING HOW FAR OUR SOCIETY HAS SUNKEN

The following "order" was issued by General George Washington in July of 1775.

"The General is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice heretofore little known in an American army, is growing into fashion. He hopes the officers will, by example as well as by influence, endeavor to check it, and that both they and the men will reflect that we can have little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our arms if we insult it by our impiety and folly. Added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense and character detests and despises it."

—selected—

NOTE: While we do not all concur with the idea of God blessing "arms", it is of note to us that the general social climate of years back certainly supercedes our present one! — We are living in a day when presidents are noted at times for their profanity and attendance at belly dancing debutes, while president's wives have been publicly placed on record as condoning fornication and the smoking of pot. Certainly what Solomon said is ever true: "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: folly is set in great dignity" — Eccl. 10:5.

commandments (Psa. 119:127), long for the commandments with fervent desire (Psa. 119:131), remember the commandments with faithfulness (Psa. 103:18), not forgetting them, even though pressed by many foes (Psa. 119:176). They seek to not wander from His commandments (Psa. 119:10), and walk joyfully in the pathway of those commandments (Psa. 119:35). A notable example of such individuals are Zecharias and Elizabeth — parents of John the Baptist. It is said of them that they walked in "all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). Against such, Satan's attack is particularly directed; and, we ought to say, to such, the Lord has pledged His strength, grace, and succour!

But, for those that are hesitant to refer to the prophets of old for evidence of the truth, be it known that we are not limited to ante-apostolic writings for such instruction. Our Lord Jesus Himself spoke much of the commandments. He knew nothing of the religion that has no commandments, no discipline, no boundaries, no prohibitions, no sign of authority over the heart. Did He not say; "If ye love me, keep my COMMANDMENTS" (Jno. 14:15); "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them he is it that loveth me . . ." (Jno. 14:21); "If ye keep my COMMANDMENTS, ye shall abide in my love . . ." (Jno. 15:10). Those that set themselves against the commandments of God must reckon with the Lord Jesus! The Father and the Son have never placed their stamp of approval upon a religion that left men free from the dominion — the absolute dominion — of their Maker! Whether we speak of religion at its twilight time in Eden's garden, or

of the full orb'd sunlight of Pentecost, there have always been commandments: commandments of God which are to be obeyed; commandments which bring blessing to the obedient and cursing to the disobedient!

These commandments are to be kept "without spot" (I Tim. 6:14). There are no provisions made for the expression of the flesh; no tolerance of a rebellious or alienated heart! Further, they prompt much confidence in the hearts of those that keep them in truth: "And hereby we do know that we know Him, IF WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS" (I Jno. 2:3, 4). It is the keeping of them that often makes the difference between answered and unanswered petitions (I Jno. 3:22). If there is some question about loving the Lord, or what it really means to love God, the Holy Spirit witnesses; "And this is the love of God, that we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS" (I Jno. 5:2, 3). In fact, if we keep His commandments, He dwells in us, and we dwell in Him (I Jno. 3:24). Far, then, from being delivered from the commandments, we have had them delivered to us in a new and revitalizing way, together with the inclination to obey them, and the grace and strength to retain them in our hearts!

Actually, in Christ Jesus "Neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS" (I Cor. 7:19). Let none boast, then, in their heritage, or in the hoary tradition of Judaism or some form of Gentilism! It is the keeping of the commandments which marks you — not your allegiance to an organization! It is not how long you have run the race; it is not how influential you have been; it is not whether or not you have been circumcised — it is whether or not you keep the commandments. Tell us not of your love for the Lord, the change in your life, or the joy and peace you supposedly have experienced, unless you are keeping the commandments of God — that is what really counts! That is the consistent ear-mark of the disciples of the Lord — and it is against these obedient ones that Satan directs his ancient attack! "And have the testimony of Jesus." This does not speak of a mere "personal testimony"! Not all "personal testimonies" are REAL testimonies of Jesus! This speaks of those to whom the Lord Jesus has testified, and who have retained that testimony, having been "taught by Him" (Eph. 4:24ff). They have valued that testimony of the Lord Jesus (elsewhere called an "understanding" I Jno. 5:20), and have altered their lives to comport with that testimony of truth!

The Word of God speaks of those that have received this testimony; "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you" (I Cor. 1:6); "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (II Thess. 1:10); "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord . . ." (II Tim. 1:8); "Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ. . . ." (Rev. 1:2); "I John, who am also your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and

for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9); **"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"** (Rev. 19:10). Even when the Lord was with us, He TESTIFIED (Jno. 3:11; 7:7). He testified to the world of its sin, of His Father, of the world to come, of the flesh, and of the devil.

Now those that have the **"testimony of Jesus"** are those that have heard what the Lord has declared about the Father, about sin, about the world, about Satan, about the flesh, etc., and they have believed that testimony with all of their heart. In short, their values, their judgements, and their way of life has been thoroughly altered and moulded by what the Lord has said. He has lifted the veil of mystery from life, interpreted the providences of the Lord, and opened up the glories of the world to come. They see the world according to His testimony! They see the church according to His testimony! They see riches according to His testimony! They are no longer deceived by the prince of this world; their sense of values is such as constrains them lay up for themselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust doth not corrupt and thieves do not break through and steal! They are in the process of putting off the old man and putting on the new man, according to the instructions of their Lord and Savior (Eph. 4:20-25).

Now, against such as this, Satan attacks are directed. He is wroth with THEM — **not** with those that keep **not** the commandments and have **not** the testimony of Jesus. Those that push the commandments from them, live contrary to them, and have no affinity with them in their hearts are no enemies of Satan — **they are his friends: yea, they are his children!** Those that hear the testimony of Jesus and do **not** keep it; that do **not** store it up in their hearts and fashion their lives deliberately according to that counsel — **these are the cohorts of Satan.** He is not wroth with them, though he does not treat even them with goodness.

But let us observe at this point that **war waged is not necessarily war won!** Satan goes, it is true, to make war with the remnant of the seed of the woman which have the testimony of Jesus and keep His commandments; but **he will realize final and complete defeat before this war is over.** The saints are not to be alarmed at his attack, but sober, alert, confident, and faithful! Satan hates the commandments; he hates the testimony of Jesus. He hates them so much that he makes relentless war against all that hold them, that love them, that retain them in their hearts and consciences. **Our safety, however, lies in cleaving to the very things that Satan hates — the very things that provoke him to anger against us.** We will make no peace with him or his ways. His anger and malicious attack will not dissuade us from the commandments and the testimony of Jesus. We see them as a refuge from his devices; an illumination to his crafty delusions; an ointment for the weary soul! Let him rage; let him war — we shall overcome: overcome because these testimonies are true, the commandments are pure and in harmony with the nature of God!

A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE

By Richard Ebler

"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42).

These words were spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ concerning Himself as being greater than Solomon and therefore worthy of a closer and more reverent attention.

The Greatness of Solomon. When the Scripture says that Christ is greater than Solomon, this is not to disparage Solomon, but rather it is to glorify Christ. Indeed Solomon was a very great man.

God appeared to Solomon in a dream and gave him the opportunity to ask whatever he wanted to receive. Solomon did not choose to ask for long life or riches, but rather for wisdom to be a good ruler over God's people. The Lord replied, "Behold, I have done according to thy words; lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee" (I Kings 3:12).

His wisdom is further described in chapter four: "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom" (I Kings 4:29-34).

It is worth noting that Solomon's knowledge was **encyclopedic** in nature, as indicated by the above passage. It is interesting to compare him with Aristotle, that famous ancient Greek thinker who wrote a complete set of encyclopedias which became the standard reference work in the west for 2,000 years.

Aristotle was the private tutor of Alexander the Great when the latter was a young lad. Consequently, when Alexander had grown to manhood and was in the process of conquering the known world, he gave a gift of approximately \$2,000,000.00 to Aristotle to further his research.

It is this writer's firm conviction that Solomon was wiser and more knowledgeable than Aristotle. Certainly he preceded Aristotle by some six centuries and could not be said to have borrowed any wisdom from him. Although the world today generally applauds Aristotle and neglects Solomon, eternity will probably make it evident that Solomon was far superior to Aristotle in knowledge as well as wisdom.

CORRECTION IN OCTOBER, 1975 ISSUE

In the October, 1975, issue of THE WORD OF TRUTH, the cover article HEBREW NAMES OF GOD was contributed by our good brother Richard Ebler. The first paragraph of that fine article contained two typographical errors which greatly altered the truths which brother Ebler meant to convey. Those errors are corrected below.

AS WRITTEN IN OCTOBER ISSUE:

"We who are Gentiles must never keep in mind that the Bible was inspired by God through the instrumentality of Hebrews writers. Therefore, if we want proper concepts of God we can look closely at the Hebrew names of God found in the Biblical account."

CORRECTED PARAGRAPH READS:

"We who are Gentiles must ever keep in mind that the Bible was inspired by God through the instrumentality of Hebrews writers. Therefore, if we want proper concepts of God we can look closely at the Hebrew names of God found in the Biblical account."

The Book of Ecclesiastes. One of Solomon's most famous pieces of writing is the book of Ecclesiastes. There are two very common expressions in this book: "under the sun" and "vanity". The former expression occurs twenty-nine times and the latter expression occurs twenty-seven times. The general conclusion seems to be that everything under the sun is vanity, i.e., empty, meaningless, profitless, pointless, worthless, fruitless, foolish, having no real value or significance, and therefore ultimately unsatisfying. But keep in mind that he is only speaking of that view of things that is "under the sun", i.e., the earthly view of things, not the heavenly view. He is speaking from the standpoint of the law dispensation, not of gospel revelation. He is speaking of the light of nature and not the light of grace.

It is worth noting that all through this book, the Hebrew name "Elohim" is the exclusive name used of God. This word refers to God as Creator of the natural order and therefore we infer that the book is viewing man's relationship to him in that capacity rather than as Jehovah (God's redemptive name).

When Christ came He brought us into a new heavenly view of things "above the sun" (so to speak), rather than "under the sun." Our citizenship is now in heaven and we are "come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. . . ." (Heb. 12:22). CHRIST MADE IT POSSIBLE TO LIVE IN A HEAVENLY VIEW OF OPTIMISM AND FAITH SO THAT THE THINGS OF EARTH WHICH APPEAR TO BE ALTOGETHER PESSIMISTIC AND VAIN IN THEMSELVES ARE ACTUALLY ENDUED WITH AN ETERNAL WORTH AS WE LIVE BY FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES.

With this thesis in mind, we will now produce some quotations from both Christ and Solomon to give a few cases in point:

1. Solomon: ". . . the eye is **not satisfied** with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing" (Ecclesi-

astes 1:8). This shows the insatiableness of human appetites and faculties.

Christ: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall **never thirst**; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13, 14).

2. Solomon: "**All is vanity**" (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

Christ's apostle: ". . . **all** things work together for **good** to them that love God . . ." (Romans 8:28).

3. Solomon: "Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun: **because I should leave it** unto the man that should come after me" (Ecclesiastes 2:18).

Christ: "Labor not for that meat which perisheth, but for that meat which **endureth** unto everlasting life . . ." (John 6:27).

4. Solomon: "**What profit** hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?"

5. Christ's apostle: "Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh . . . knowing that of the Lord ye **shall** receive the **reward** of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:22-24).

6. Solomon: "Wherefore I perceive that there is **nothing better**, than that a man should **rejoice** in his **own works** . . ." (Ecclesiastes 3:22).

Christ's apostle: "**Rejoice** in the **Lord** alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).

A Greater Than Solomon. From these passages we can see that Solomon may well have been one of those righteous men who desired to hear the things spoken by Christ and did not hear them (Matt. 13:17). Certainly the things that vexed Solomon are answered in Christ. In Ecclesiastes we hear a cry for a Savior. We see an accurate account of the vanity of life apart from the eternal salvation in Christ. In the writings of Christ and His apostles we find an answer to this need.

Spiritual Vision

(From page 2)

sheep for a long season while another king flourished. O, our God does try faith — the Scriptures are filled with the record of these trials, and we will not be exempt from them — not at all!

Well, reader, how well can you really see? How clear is your spiritual vision? How strong is your faith? How well are you persuaded of spiritual realities? Are there doubts lurking in the recesses of your heart? Do you marvel at the proclamations of heaven, hell, Christ, Satan, the forgiveness of sins, etc., through unbelief? Do the things of this present world impress you more than the truths of Scripture? Precisely where have your affections been set? Remember, "where there is no vision, the people perish"! That means you personally. If you are not persuaded — really persuaded — of the truths of Scripture, you shall surely perish. But if, on the other hand, your heart has been convinced, and you are rejoicing in these things, there is a place in glory for you — your faith is not in vain. Praise God for that and praise Him now!

SOME OF THE MIRACLES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Our Lord's miracles were signs — signs pointing to His Divine Sonship and heavenly mission! In them is seen His own nature and His own work. They are not to be viewed as mere abstract demonstrations of Divine power — they are not feats of strength performed for the awe of a captured audience! They have meaning which opens up to us the ministry of our Lord "usward". He turned water into wine, for instance, demonstrating that He does possess, and is inclined, to alter and change nature — not mere appearance (Jno. 2: 1-11). He directed a miraculous catch of fish to illustrate how aptly He directs His followers in the matter of catching men (Lk. 5:1-11). A demonic was healed in a synagogue, thus portraying the Lord's unique ministry in the very area where worship is ordained (Mk. 1:23-26). The healing of lepers aptly illustrated how our Lord can arrest the malignant growth and spread of sin (Matt. 8:1-4). He healed a paralytic, revealing to our hearts how He can activate and bring healthful movement where paralysis has set in upon the soul (Matt. 9:1-8). A withered hand was restored by our Savior, teaching us that things that we are not able to grasp may soon be grasped by the heart and mind when once the power of Christ comes within (Matt. 12:9-13). The countless demonics that were healed by our Lord unveiled for us the truth that Jesus can undo the greatest bindings and oppressions of the Evil One (Matt. 12:22-37). The stilling of a tempest by Jesus Christ brought home to our hearts His ability and willingness to calm the seas of life so that our hearts and consciences are not tossed to and fro at such rapid rates (Matt. 8:23-27). A woman with an issue of blood was cured by the Lord, thereby graphically illustrating that those things that tend to weaken and wear us out can be arrested and brought to an end by the mighty power of Christ (Mk. 5:25-34). He opened the mouths of dumb men, teaching us that He can bring stammering lips to speak praise to His Holy Name (Matt. 9:32, 33). He fed thousands with a boy's small lunch to teach us that He can feed us when it seems there is no food; nourish us when we falsely assume that there is no food. Indeed, He can prepare us a table in the desert itself (Matt. 14: 15-21). He opened the ears of the deaf to convince us that He can truly enable us to hear the very voice of God, where once we were deaf to that still small voice (Mark 7:31-37). The healing of the blind revealed to our hearts that our Lord Jesus entertains the blessed ministry of enabling us to behold heavenly realities (Mark 8: 22-36).

Now you may keep these things in mind as you peruse the wonderful miracles of our Lord that have been recorded for our learning, that we might believe upon Him! Think of the times that He raised a widow's son (Lk. 7:11-16), raised Jairus' daughter (Matt. 9:18-19), walked on the sea (Matt. 14:22-33), healed the lame, blind, dumb, and maimed (Matt. 15:30), healed a lunatic child (Matt. 17:14-21), paid tax with a coin taken from an obedient fish's mouth (Matt. 17: 24-27), cured a woman with a spirit of infirmity (Lk. 13:10-17), healed a man with dropsy (Lk. 14:

1-6), blighted a fig tree (Matt. 21:17-22), restored an ear to a man after it had been cut off by Peter (Lk. 22:49-51), etc. As you read them, as you study them, remember that they are infinitely more than mere historical accounts. They were not recorded to cause you to marvel at Jesus like you would at some super-man. They have a direct relationship to the Lord Jesus' ministry to you! They speak positively of what He is doing now. **It is your responsibility to perceive it, to rejoice in it, to believe on the Name of the Lord Jesus because of them** (Jno. 20:30-31). I would venture to say this: there was at least a two-fold reason for our Lord working such great wonders upon the needy: 1. Because of His wonderful compassion and desire to do good. He did not come into the world to condemn the world — and how that was revealed in His miracles. 2. Because His ministry from the Right Hand of God was so great that it demanded graphic demonstration and illustration before the sons of men.

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PUNGENT POINTS

Believers must not permit the cares of this world to overturn their faith. The current social crises which are rising with such remarkable rapidity are especially designed to try our faith; to tell whether our confidence is strong; to determine the real fibre of our character! Rest assured that in the very midst of the trial there are resources of strength that transcend the fondest imagination. Once this is seen by faith, and seen aright, one can clearly see that especially critical times and circumstances are only discovered to uncover for us greater sources, richer treasures, sweeter consolations!

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"Love not the world" is not a mere legal prohibition, it is a loving appraisal of things as they are! "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof", we are told (I Jno. 2:15-17); therefore, it is the height of folly to love it, to cherish it, or to form an alliance with it. Once the heart grasps this truth, thanksgiving is rendered to the Father for His tender warning and instruction. We shrink from the world in horror when we see it for what it is. And when we do not so see it, the Lord awakens our heart with a shout; "LOVE NOT THE WORLD" — it is given to rescue us from destruction, not to make us miserable!

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A religion organized after the patterns of the world calls for a professional clergy, an specially trained set of administrators, and a league of trained specialists in the wisdom of this world. The world must be consulted to learn of man — psychology. The world must be consulted to learn of the art of speech — homiletics. The world must be consulted to learn of mass effects and trends — sociology. But all of this is only necessary because it aids in producing a system that the world will applaud and recognize as a valid one. As believers we do not subscribe to such philosophies of success and approbation. Into such systems a John the Baptist, Elijah, Elisha, or Peter or Paul would not fit. As for that, the Lord Jesus Himself would be tacitly rejected by our contemporary professional religionists. His credentials were from God, not from earth. He had no "letters",

as men count things. It appears passingly strange to some of us that those that profess to be His followers would embrace a religion that actually makes no room for the Savior Himself.

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Those that seek the Creator in the days of their youth (Eccl. 12:1) will provide for their future by: 1. Training their memory in the truth of God for sacred recall in times of crisis and trial. 2. Developing a spiritual vocabulary in which to express themselves to the edification of the church. 3. Keeping themselves from sinful snares which cause grief and sorrow when recalled in later years. 4. Being a source of great joy to their parents, both in their youth and in their mature years. 5. Culturing an acquaintance with the Lord that will bring frequent and pleasant insights into life, the Word of God, the nature of God, and the redemption of Christ. 6. The development of a particularly sound and capable mind, for the truth of God brings the mental capacities to their highest point, and issue forth in the most beneficial fruition.

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The followers of Christ are at liberty to despise no man! In fact, they are enjoined "honor ALL men" (I Pet. 2:17). They are ever to remember that men "are made after the similitude of God" (Js. 3:9), and thus are not to be cursed. It is well for believers to keep this in mind lest malice, envy, contempt, and other fleshly reactions creep into their souls and place them at enmity with God. If you are prone to hate a mortal, remember that Christ died for sinners, and learn to pray for them that spitefully use you (Matt. 5:44). It is enough that judgement awaits them in the world to come.

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There is, these days, a neo-religion with which many of us do not choose to become familiar. It boasts of intimacy with the Lord, the knowledge of sins forgiven, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and a general peace and joy in the Lord — and yet those that have embraced this "wonderful" faith are slothful towards the Lord, disobedient in the most elementary duties of the Kingdom, and generally satisfied with their lack of understanding concerning the things of God. In this camp there reside **some** Hollywood stars, athletic stars, and mighty men of the earth. We do want it to be quite clear that we are against — totally against — any form of religion that "denies the power thereof", that permits its constituents to

maintain a sloppy spiritual attitude, that does not insist upon meticulous obedience, or that settles for a shallow and surface view of the Scriptures. Whatever the source of this religion be, we do not know; but we do know that it is not of God.

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The Holy Spirit "searches all things, yea the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10). A person, then, that is "filled with the Spirit" will have some degree of understanding concerning those matters that are beyond mere juvenility and some fellowship in the "mysteries of the kingdom". Shallowness, infantile attitudes, ignorance of the things of God — these are not traits of the Spirit-filled person. One may have joy; one may have peace — but if wisdom and understanding are not characteristic of his heart, it is to be questioned whether or not he is, in fact, "filled with the Spirit". Being filled with the Spirit is not a mere state of exhilaration, it is a state of absorption into the Godhead, a condition of spiritual fellowship with the Lord, where His thoughts and purposes **consciously** become a part of us. We then, "have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16).

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Christ is so grand, so multi-faceted, so resplendent with glory, that no single name — no solitary appellation can identify Him fully. God has given Him to us as Adam (I Cor. 15:45), Emmanuel (Matt. 1:23), "Jesus" (Matt. 1:21), and "Christ" (Matt. 1:16). In respect to His **work**, or His **ministry**, He is our Apostle (Heb. 3:1), Bishop (I Pet. 2:25), Captain (Heb. 2:10), Counsellor (Isa. 9:6), Deliverer (Rom. 11:26), Faithful Witness (Rev. 1:5), Feeder (Isa. 40:11), Governor (Matt. 2:6), High Priest (Heb. 7:1), Judge (Acts 10:42), King (Matt. 21:5), Lord (Rom. 1:3), Mediator (I Tim. 2:5), Prophet (Acts 3:22), Redeemer (Isa. 60:16), Shepherd (John 10:11), Sower (Matt. 13:3), Teacher (John 3:2), and Testator (Heb. 9:16, 17). In regards to His **NATURE** He is Beloved (Eph. 1:6), The Bright and Morning Star (Rev. 22:16), Brightness of the Father's Glory (Heb. 1:3), Consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25), Desire of all nations (Hag. 2:7), Gracious (I Pet. 2:3), Harmless (Heb. 7:26), Immortal (I Tim. 1:17), Invisible (I Tim. 1:17), Lamb (Jno. 1:29), Light (Jno. 1:9), Life (Jno. 14:6), Man (Acts 17:31), Merciful (Heb. 2:17), Power of God (I Cor. 1:24), Truth (Jno. 14:6), and Wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:24). Men have prefigured Him (Adam—I Cor. 15:45, David—Jer. 30:9, and Abraham—Gal. 3:29). Even the brute creation was set before us with some of His characteristics (Eagle—Deut. 32:11, Lamb—Rev. 5:6, Lion—Rev. 5:5). The leaders of men have pictured Him for us in respect to their office (Bishop—I Pet. 2:25, Captain—Heb. 2:10, Governor—Matt. 2:6, Judge—Acts 10:42, King—Matt. 21:5, Leader—Isa. 55:4, Potentate—I Tim. 6:5, Prince—Acts 3:15, and Ruler—Mi. 5:2). How wonderful is our Lord — so wonderful, indeed, that the very word "Wonderful" is the unique appellation ascribed to Him. His character, His work, His heart, His desires, His accomplishments, His purposes — all are Wonderful beyond description. Thank God for this "unspeakable Gift" (II Cor. 9:15).