

THE WORD OF TRUTH

Published Monthly

"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

27 Duties of Ministers of God

True ministers of God are required to perform functions that are necessary to the development of the saints (Eph. 11-12). Any ministry that does not issue forth in the "perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ", is spurious, and not from God. All men engaged in what is commonly called "the ministry", need to evaluate their contribution to the "faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1-2), for that is what the ministry of the Lord is all about. I have listed here twenty-seven ministries that are required of pastors and feeders of the flock. Consider them carefully, and if you be a "minister", see to it that they are being fulfilled heartily by you. If you are one that is "ministered to", see to it that these things are ministered to you in the Name of the Lord.

1. Teach the *statutes* of the Lord - Leviticus 10:11
2. Teach the *manner* of God in the land - II Kings 17:27-28
3. Be *not negligent* in their duties - II Chronicles 29:11
4. *Comfort* God's people - Isaiah 40:1-2
5. Be *clean* - Isaiah 52:11
6. *Take away* the stumbling block - Isaiah 57:14
7. *Cry aloud*; do not spare; show Israel (God's people) their sin - Isaiah 58:1
8. Be *not afraid* - Jeremiah 1:7-8; Ezekiel 2:6-8
9. *Feed* the sheep - Jeremiah 23:4
10. Speak the Word that you possess *faithfully* - Jeremiah 23:28; 26:2; I Corinthians 4:1-2
11. In regards to the enemy and sin, he is to *smite* with the hand, and *stamp* with the foot - Ezekiel 6:11
12. *Teach the difference* between the holy and the profane - Ezekiel 44:23
13. *Weep* before the Lord - Joel 2:17
14. Make it *plain* - Habakkuk 2:2
15. His lips are to *keep knowledge* - Malachi 2:7
16. He is to *speak* God's words - Jno. 3:34
17. *Witness* what he has seen and heard - Acts 22:15
18. Be a *helper* of the saint's joy - II Corinthians 1:24
19. *Renounce* the hidden things of dishonesty - II Corinthians 4:1-2
20. Preach *not* themselves - II Corinthians 4:5
21. Giving *no offense* in anything - II Cor. 6:3-10
22. Spend and be *spent* - II Corinthians 12:15
23. *Allowed of God* to be put in trust with the Gospel - I Thessalonians 2:4
24. To *establish* the saints - I Thessalonians 3:2

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The Word of Truth

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27 DUTIES OF MINISTERS OF GOD (From page 1)

25. To admonish - I Thessalonians 5:12
26. To put the brethren in remembrance of holy things - I Timothy 4:6; II Peter 1:12
27. Preach the Word - II Timothy 4:1-2

You will at once observe the nature of these duties; that they have to do with being a servant of the Lord; ministering to His people those things which will prepare them for eternity. There are no administrative, or purely social duties mentioned; such things are all of human origin. Were the "minister" of today to confine himself to these ministries, he would at once become as "loggerheads" with the religious world. Such duties are not at all conducive to the building of a system or an organization! They build up the unseen and eternal Kingdom of God, which is not of this world order! Much of the seminary training, which is so highly esteemed today, is made obsolete by a real devotion to the work of the Lord. They should not long have their doors open were men only to minister, for example, those things which they had "both seen and heard." Careers, plush organizational positions, and names in lights and letters would not long be popular were all purporting "ministers" to suddenly devote themselves to the true ministry as the Lord has ordained it.

It is quite evident that the great majority of "ministers" are not engaged in this most holy work of the dissemination of God's Word, of edifying the people of God, and teaching the manner of God in the land. Yet, there is no need to despair. There are two things which we may do to alleviate this situation. (1. First, those that feel the call of God upon their life; who feel constrained to minister the truth of God - do so as one that has "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty." Live with a pure conscience before the Lord, knowing that you are serving Him, and not men. (2. Those that remain, "pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He may send forth laborers into the harvest." Let us all in our prayers, in our words, and in our deeds so labor as to make ready the land for a flood of new, spiritually invigorated ministers; men that "preach the Word" and are "instant in season and out of season."

It is imperative to fortify the mind with prayer and the Word of God. Satan's fiery darts break through our minds very easily when the shield of faith is not lifted up by prayer and the Word. These are Divine supports for the shield, and are able to hold it very high - to the path of the highest dart. Neglect them, and a dart shall find you, and bring a burning of anxiety and fear into the heart. So devote yourself to prayer and the Word; see the rich and unspeakable rewards of diligence in these areas.

POSSESSION IN POVERTY

"... as having nothing, yet possessing all things"

II Corinthians 6:10

It is a fundamental tenet of "the faith of God's elect" (Tit. 1:1) that **relinquishment precedes acquirement**; forfeiture comes before possession. In the Kingdom of God riches are to be found in poverty, wisdom in lack of self-knowledge, strength in weakness, and boldness in trembling. The Kingdom of our Lord is "not of this world" (John 18:36), and hence is not analyzed or explained by the standards of this world. Attainments in the heavenly Kingdom do not come by earthly culture or wisdom. Status before the Throne of God is not accomplished by earthly procurement and prosperity. Because a person possesses much of earth does not qualify him for much of heaven! **The Things of the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:14) are of another order — a higher order — and consequently may be appropriated only by those who have a higher source of life within them.** Exaltation comes by humiliation, self attainment by self-abandonment, living by dying. In the subject before us, this principle is set forth with great clarity; though we have nothing, yet we possess all things; **so that our spiritual abundance is highlighted by our carnal poverty.** Before the rich young ruler of Matthew 19 could have "treasure in heaven" he was commanded to "sell what thou hast" (Matt. 19:21). Before Abraham could possess the promised land, he had to leave his "country", and "kindred", and "father's house" (Gen. 12:1). Paul counted those things "loss" that were of personal gain to him, in order that he might "win Christ" (Phil. 3:7).

Our Precious Lord Jesus, Himself, in order that He might claim the "heathen" for an "inheritance", according to the promise (Psa. 2:8), "made Himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:7). Job, in order to gain twice what he had before possessed (and he was the richest before), was called upon to forfeit all that he had (Job 42:12). A seed, before it can bring forth fruit, must fall into the ground and die (John 12:24). Before a new day can come, the first must die and pass away. **If you would truly possess the Kingdom of God, you must first become "poor in spirit", for it is written: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (Matt. 5:3).**

Jesus evaluated the Kingdom of God by saying that it was like a treasure that was hidden in a field, which was worthy of the loss of all else beside it (Matt. 13:44). Have you, beloved reader, learned this truth? Have you suffered the loss of all things in order that YOU might win Christ? Have you become detached from the world (I John 2:15-17) in order that you might gloriously appropriate the benefits of faith? Are you living and walking by faith or by sight? Are your treasures in earth or in heaven? Are you rich alone in body, or in soul? Are you familiar with the Kingdom of God, or is it merely a theological term, empty of meaning to you? Have you "won" Christ, or are you yet abiding alone? What do you consider the tokens of your wealth, your prosperity, your possessions? Do you know that a "man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the

THINGS which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15)? Do you possess "all things" by faith in Christ? These are questions with which you should counsel and examine your own soul.

The secret of contentment is the spiritual ability to "have nothing", yet "possess all things." It means that so far as the earth is concerned, our names are not permanently inscribed on its possessions; we are definitely detached from them! **Though we may possess much of the world's goods, yet they are not to possess us!** Knowing that "the fashion of this world passeth away" we do not "abuse" the world, but rather "buy as though we possessed not" (I Cor. 7:30-31). How glorious it is to lightly hold this world's wealth while embracing without any reservations or compunctions the eternal verities of the Kingdom! Our true treasures are in heaven "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal" (Matt. 6:20).

While we are "strangers and pilgrims" in the earth (I Pet. 2:11), our real citizenship ("conversation") is in heaven "from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20-21), and thus all of our possessions are there. All else is temporary and transient, and we are but custodians of it for a while — stewards required to "be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:3). The mint of our country has its name stamped upon it — "The United States of America"; and therefore, it is their's, and shall last as long as the country lasts. But my inheritance in glory has my name upon it, by grace, and shall last "world without end"; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His ABUNDANT MERCY hath begotten us AGAIN unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, TO AN INHERITANCE INCORRUPTIBLE, AND UNDEFILED, AND THAT FADEETH NOT AWAY, RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR YOU" (I Pet. 1:3-4). Though, by providential grace, we are entrusted with lands and houses in this life, yet there is a very real sense in which we are separate from them. We own them not, but only borrow them for a season, until our warfare is accomplished. In this sense we truly "possess nothing"! **You cannot touch our spirits or our real beings by extracting from us earthly things!** We do not possess them! Our souls are not involved with them! Our lives are "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3), and there no mortal has access, praise the Lord! **These things are eternal, and are possessed for eternity!**

However, our poverty touches far more than earthly goods! There is a spiritual poverty which we are to possess if we would attain unto the riches of heaven. Jesus taught us concerning the poverty of the spirit; it is a realization by faith that of ourselves we are totally and completely destitute of anything that is pleasing unto the Lord. It must be admitted that there are relatively few that possess this knowledge, which is an indication to us of the present minority of the real people of God; **for no person that does not realize his personal spiritual poverty has been born again!** It was David that cried out; "I am poor" (Psa. 40:17; 69:29; 70:5; 86:1; 109:22). In speaking of his experiences of answered prayer, he declared; "This

poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all of his troubles" (Psa. 34:6). He was not speaking of financial or physical poverty, for he was blessed of the Lord in possessing an abundance. He was rather speaking of his poverty of spirit; **his inability to supply the inner needs of wisdom, strength, love, joy, peace, understanding, confidence, and assurance.** With the foes pressing upon him, striving to place fear within him, mocking his relationship to the Lord, threatening and not forbearing; David was made to realize, with all saints, that there is a certain inner destitution in us all. **We are not at all able to meet the trials of sainthood on our own.** True, indeed, that some who have not tasted of the Lord believe that they can stand against any obstacle, no matter how formidable it is. But their's is a delusive imagination. They neither know the nature of the opposition of all flesh, nor do they understand the real tenor of defeat.

They have become so accustomed to living in degradation that they verily believe that it can be no other way than is evidenced in their case. If they are able to subdue their inward feelings of fear and despondency with a hypocritical smile, then they believe that they are victors. But, for the redeemed, such is not the case at all. They have come to realize by faith the immensity of the foe; the terrible power of the evil one, and the grievous effects that his assaults can have upon the soul. They are not interested in ability to cover up their inner emotions nearly as much as they are in correcting, by faith, their inward man in order that they might live in true patience and longsuffering with joyfulness (Col. 1:11). We want nothing of fear, **seen or unseen.** We had rather be endowed with the spirit of boldness in Christ Jesus, having been made to realize that "If God be for us, who then can be against us" (Rom. 8:31). In the Spirit we are given to apprehend the true nature of the situation, and see the victory in Christ Jesus. We know that any seeming defeat in Christ is not really defeat; that we are caused by God Himself to "always triumph in Christ Jesus" (II Cor. 2:14). **Our strength is not our own, but is the Lord's, and is perfected and demonstrated in our personal weakness;** "My strength (God's strength) is made perfect in (my personal) weakness" (II Cor. 12:9); "out of weakness were made strong" (Hebrews 11:34). Men of faith learn that when they are made to appreciate their inabilities and thrust out in faith believing, and relying on the free mercy of the Lord, that then alone are victories made a reality, and peace, joy, and assurance flood the soul. **You see, it is by relinquishment that we come to possess all things.** Praise the Lord.

Now, it is literally true that we must come to possess "all things" **IN Christ Jesus and OUTSIDE of ourselves.** This is not merely a metaphor of speech; not just a rhetorical statement. Oh, that more believers were given a fuller awareness of this! How glorious would be their happiness in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit testifies; "Therefore, let no man glory in men, for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; **ALL THINGS ARE YOURS;** and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's" (I Cor. 3:21-23).

What a glorious promise is this; something, indeed, that hope may be built upon, and the "full assurance of understanding." Observe the various categories of things that became ours by faith in Christ; All men who minister the Word; even to Paul and Apollos and Cephas. This represents the chief and most wise apostle to the Gentiles, Paul; the eloquent Apollos, and the forceful and bold leader of the Twelve, Peter. All noble men in the Spirit, highly blessed of the Lord for His work; **yet they belong to the saints; they are OURS!** Praise the Lord. What meaneth this? **It means that these men have been given for our benefit; for our edification and strength.** We are not to give them honor above what is written, or above their work. They are sent to us by the Lord, and are to be highly esteemed for their works' sake (I Thess. 5:13). However, we do not belong to them! **Great men of faith do not own the saints; they do not, in the words of the beloved Apostle Paul, have "dominion over our faith", but rather, are "helpers of our joy" (II Cor. 1:24).**

It seems fitting here to speak to all who bestow excessive amounts of honor upon men. While we ought not to neglect giving them due honor who labor in the word and in the doctrine (I Tim. 5:17-18), yet are we not to worship them, and hold them as our masters, and we as their slaves. Often do I see men and women who hold such an inordinate respect for their pastors and ministers of the Word that it causes them to sift all Scripture, and all experience and brotherly affiliation through the conceptions and dictates of their leaders. They do not live unto the Lord, but unto the pastor; and this is spiritually abominable, for ministers and pastors are OURS, and we are all CHRIST'S. We belong to no man; we receive dictation from no mere man; **our steps are not ordered by men, but by the Lord (Psa. 37:23).** Ministers are not exclusive; they are **"given to every man"** (I Cor. 3:5), and while we honor them for their work, and love them for their contributions to our faith, yet we consider them gifts from the Lord, sent for our edification and building up (Eph. 4:11-15). Let those who have failed to give them their due honor, do so as unto the Lord; and those that have honored them above that which is written (I Cor. 4:6), let them see to it that they stay within the confines of their faith, and give the glory to the Lord for any contribution made to them by **God's men.**

The Holy Spirit, however, enumerates other things that belong to us; things that we may, by faith, **possess;** praise the Lord. **"THE WORLD"**! What a thought; are we not told that "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). The world belongs to us; not to presently be loved, however (I John 5:15-17), nor, indeed for friendship (James 4:4), **It belongs to us in the sense that it is not capable of separating us from God. We are well able to overcome it by faith (I John 5:4-5).** The world, while a great tug upon the soul, and the sphere of our battle in the faith, does not constitute an formidable foe! It is OUR'S by faith; let us treat it as such, and gain the victory over it, not permitting it to gain the mastery over us, and cause us to serve and worship it and the tensil which it has to offer. **"LIFE"**! Here is another thing that belongs to us! It is our possession. If

we choose to speak of eternal life, then that is our's through the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:24; John 17:3). We have as a possession fellowship with the Lord, whom to know is life! Hallelujah for that! But, even if we speak of our temporal life; that is our's also; our's to give unto the Lord as a sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2); our's to use for the glory of the Lord. If we live, we live "unto the Lord" (Phil. 1-21). The 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters of Romans speaks to us of the use of our lives for the Lord's glory, testifying to us that we ought not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness, but rather as servants unto the Lord God. **We are not, then, to consider that our lives are divorced from the area of faith.** They belong to us, and we are to captivate them by faith, and bring them to a yieldedness unto the Lord.

"DEATH"! How glorious that this grim reaper belongs to us. No longer does it hold the fear over us that it once did (Heb. 2:14-15). Jesus has delivered us from death, and now it belongs to us, not being able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:33-39). Let us take it captive by faith, and let it serve us rather than us serve it! Whether "we live or we die, we are the Lord's" (Phil. 1:21), praise the Lord! **"THINGS PRESENT OR THINGS TO COME"**! They belong to us! This covers all that now is, and all that is to come! It is our inheritance; our treasures — therefore, they cannot be used against us! What spiritually sound person is there among us who would not gladly forfeit all the transient things of this life in order to gain all things in Christ Jesus! These **"ALL THINGS"** are for our benefit! It means that **"ALL THINGS work together for our good"** (Rom. 8:28). **They are never divorced from our blessing; from our benefit; from our good!** The Lord is ordering everything, whether men, life, death, things present or things to come, for our personal betterment in the Spirit; these all contribute toward the necessary preparation for eternity with the Lord Jesus. Claim these things by faith; give thanks for **"ALL THINGS"** (Eph. 5:20) because they belong to you.

This truth, however, even goes beyond these things. It deals directly with the faith-life itself, for "the just (justified ones) shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). Did not the Lord speak on this wise; **"AND ALL THINGS whatsoever ye ask in prayer BELIEVING, ye shall receive"** (Matt. 21:22). How wonderfully does this promise depict the truth that we, though poor are **"possessing ALL THINGS."** See what benefits are potentially our's! **The only thing that is required to bring them to you is believing prayer!** It is to be understood that this sort of prayer is not developed by human resources, but rather is a gift from God, developed under the wise instruction of the Holy Spirit within! **Prayer is the means of appropriating these "all things", faith is the hand of obtaining!** These "all things" are given to us "freely" by the Father through the Son; "He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us ALL THINGS" (Rom. 8:32).

Little wonder that we sing; "Oh, the children of the King have a right to shout and sing . . ." Who has been so blessed? "Freely", in this text, means

"abundantly"; not "without cost", for the benefits of the Lord were procured for us at great cost; the very life of God's Son! When, therefore, the Lord declares that we have "freely received", He means that we have **ABUNDANTLY RECEIVED!** As the Psalmist declares; "Blessed be the Lord, who daily **LOADETH US WITH BENEFITS**" (Psa. 68:19). Not only, then, do we possess "all things", but we may, by faith, **ABUNDANTLY** possess "all things." Praise the Lord for His mercy. **Our possession of all things is also accompanied by a sufficiency which makes for joy and peace with righteousness;** "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always **HAVING ALL SUFFICIENCY IN ALL THINGS,** may abound in every good work" (II Cor. 9:8). Our possessing is not merely passive; it is active. It enables us to perform every good work. This deals with the matter of pride, and self-sufficiency! **God's blessings are in order to the accomplishment of His will and purposes, and they cannot be enjoyed apart from this!** When God, therefore, grants us "all things", He also gives us "all sufficiency" that we may be able to utilize all things for His glory. Therefore we declare with Paul; "I can **DO ALL THINGS** through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

Now, all of these benefits may truly be enjoyed and experienced only as you are, by faith, persuaded of your own weakness, inability, and poverty!

All who trust in their own ability, or refuse to acknowledge that their sufficiency can only be in the Lord, are unwise and ignorant, and shall not have access to the immutable riches of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are, by nature, as naked spiritually as was Adam and Eve in the garden! We have nothing that God wants! Our desires, aspirations, works, words, imaginations, and loves and hates, are all wrong! They are all contrary to the Lord! We are entirely destitute of wisdom, power, and strength, and are totally dependent upon the Lord. Now, some have accepted this truth theologically, but not within the inner parts; therefore, to this day, they do not truly possess all things. They are brought low by life, death, things present, and thoughts of things to come! **But for those who are willing to live by faith; who will believe the Lord, and trust Him with all of their heart, while leaning not to their own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6), there comes a glorious sufficiency, and a spiritual insight into the truth that all things are their's in Christ!** Therefore they glory in their personal weakness, because that only makes the power and strength of the Omnipotent God accessible to them. They do not despair in the time of trial because they are aware of their possession; they do not become lifted up with pride during prosperity, because they are cognizant of the fact that all they possess is their's by the **grace of God.**

Finally, if you are among those who feel deeply your own inability and depravity, then you are available for the strength of Jehovah God! Your extremity is God's opportunity; your weakness becomes a channel for the Lord's strength! **This is something apprehended by faith alone!** It is not automatic, it is appreciated **only** by a lively sense of the reality of the Word of the Lord generally,

and the Lord Himself specifically! It is quite true that Satan will use your weakness against you, causing discouragement and despair; but his delusions may be overcome by faith (I John 5:4-5). When Satan assaults us with the feelings of natural depravity and poverty, we may shout back at him, "True, Satan, true! I do not have anything of myself; and without Jesus I can do nothing! I know nothing, and am nothing; am poor, destitute and naked! But Jesus, blessed Savior, hath changed my wretched state, and hath given me all things. Though I may not seem to have apprehended them all, yet are they mine, sealed to my account through the sacrifice of the Lord. I will believe the Lord, not thee, thou prince of demons! Thou art a deceiver, but Jesus ever speaketh the truth! He tells me that all things are mine, and His holy prophets and apostles hath declared through the Holy Spirit that I can do all things through Christ that strengthened me. If therefore, I am faced with the choice of believing the accusations that you bring, or believing my Lord, I shall call thee the liar that thou art, and embrace the Word of my Master." Thus shall Satan feel defeat, and you the victory!

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PUNGENT POINTS

Evil thoughts are like a viper that gnaws at the vitals of the mind until all sense of reasoning is dulled, and one is consumed of passion. We do well to "cast down" these "evil imaginations" that militate against the personal knowledge of God, and bring our thoughts into "captivity unto the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-7).

* * *

A life that lacks discipline and order is liable to greater and more frequent moods and cares. The buffeting of the body, and discipline of the soul are necessary to a proper walk in the light. We are neither wise enough nor strong enough to face our daily course in a slipshod manner.

* * *

It is imperative to fortify the mind with prayer and the Word of God. Satan's fiery darts break through our minds very easily when the shield of faith is not lifted up by prayer and the Word. Men fall into the most grievous sins and temptations, many times, simply because they have neglected this area of life — **FORTIFICATION OF THE SOUL!**

* * *

Man men philosophize about the Bible; they subject it to their reasoning and view it as though their analyses of its truths were virtuous. The Scriptures are to be believed and received, not philosophized upon. Your job is not to find the "whys" and the "hows", but rather the "whats" the "wheres" and the "whos". **We are seeking INFORMATION in the Scriptures concerning spiritual reality.** We are not to seek justification of our preconceived dogmas and creeds. Let us approach the Scriptures as totally ignorant beings, and rely upon the Lord to speak to us as we simply receive by faith what they say — not questioning them, but seeking to "receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able also to save the soul."

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

It is of late questioned among ultra-modern theologians whether or not Jesus actually did ascend into heaven. Of course, they are thus evidencing dramatically the truth that "all men have not faith" (II Thess. 3:2). **The scholastic levels to which these sophists have attained do not fortify their prattlings. Error still remains error, even though the most learned propound it; and truth remains truth, even though the most "ignorant and unlearned" declare it (Acts 4:13).** It is of recent that a young aspiring theologian, apparently quite sincere in his assertion, declared that "God is dead." This little phrase rocked the religious world, and sent forth a wave of varied responses in sundry church circles. Upon the adverse response that he encountered, the young theologian immediately clarified his statement by saying he did not mean to say that God was extinct, or that He had succumbed, but rather that He had never actually ascended into heaven again through Jesus Christ after the crucifixion. His position was that Deity was presently disseminating itself into the entire creation, and that its base of operation was now upon the earth. He acknowledged that the incarnation was true, and that Christ did actually live a life among men, and that He was crucified, buried, and risen. He did not, however, actually ascend up into the heavens, but rather, remaining upon the earth, began to work Himself into the entire creation; the objective being, that when all creation is filled, then shall we have heaven upon earth, and God's great purpose shall be fulfilled.

Of course, this is nothing more than a somewhat modified version of pantheism, which asserts that everything is God, and that God is everything.

It is remarkable to me how that Satan is constantly reviving in our nation old heathen Grecian philosophies and religions. It seems to be a token of our times that we are becoming more pagan in our culture, and yet the professing church seems to think little or nothing about it, but sends forth its members into this "hodge-podge" of pseudo-intellectualism to examine it carefully, and see if it be the truth. It is most lamentable that several men in very conservative religious circles displayed a willingness to examine this heterogenous doctrine objectively, declining to assert firmly that it was a lie and detrimental to the faith. To call the ascension of our Lord into question is to demonstrate a remarkable ignorance of spiritual things. To us who worship the Lord "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24-26), who "rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3), the Lord's ascension is not only imperative; it is precious. We enjoy its benefits through faith, and call it not into question because **we have experienced the truth of it within our spirits.** When the wise men of the earth attempt to argue against the "faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1-2), they do greatly err, for they take not into account the reality within our hearts, nor the experience indelibly marked upon our lives. You just as well attempt to convince a seeing man that he has no eyes, or the breathing man that he has no breath, or the speaking man that he has no mouth as to convince the believer that Jesus has not arisen

and ascended on high! A man that has experienced pain cannot be philosophized out of the knowledge of its reality — **nor can those in whose hearts that ascended Christ hath come to reign be finally robbed of their faith in a risen Christ!** We know of what we speak, praise the Lord!

However, I do not write on the ascension of Christ merely to counteract the heresy that this stupid man has brought to bear upon men's minds; Nor, indeed, do I write from a merely personal viewpoint! **This is immutable truth, and my acceptance or rejection of it has no bearing upon its reality.** I have mentioned this damnable heresy to show at what levels Satan is attacking the church of the living God. If he can subtly and effectively call into question the ascension of Christ, then he can uproot the confidence of God's people; for all of their hope and joy flows forth from this! The Devil does not want men to have any form of true religion; but if they insist upon having one, he will rob it of its vitality and personal empowerment to them, thus making it useless and an abomination to God. Thus does he try to bring doubts into men's minds concerning our precious Lord's ascension. But Jesus **did** actually return to glory in order that He might "fill all things" (Eph. 4:10), and by faith we know it to be true and appreciate its efficacy.

In the acceptance of this truth I find great benefit to the soul with joy, peace, and understanding. **But, whether or not I benefit from this truth, it is yet truth, and cannot be changed to fit the beliefs and moods of mere men.** The Holy Spirit testifies the truth to us, that the Lord truly is ascended — gone up into heaven, from whence He shall again come, to take unto Himself, and to change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20-21).

First, there is the fact of Christ's ascension, and then there is the reason for His ascension. **In the Kingdom of God, reasons are always established upon facts; facts of the highest and eternal order!** We have the testimony of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:9; "When He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was **TAKEN UP; AND A CLOUD RECEIVED HIM OUT OF THEIR SIGHT.**" Also, "Which He (God, the Father) wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead **AND set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places**" (Eph. 1:20). Again, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, **RECEIVED UP INTO GLORY**" (I Tim. 3:16); and again, "We have a great High Priest, **THAT IS PASSED INTO THE HEAVENS, Jesus, the Son of God**" (Heb. 4:14); and again, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; **BUT INTO HEAVEN ITSELF. . .**" (Heb. 9:24).

Jesus declared Himself that He would ascend, and His word was truth; "What and if ye shall see the Son of man **ascend up** where He was before?" (John 6:62); "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2); "I go unto my Father" (John 14:12); "Now I go my way unto Him that sent me" (John 16:5). Jesus is not presently upon the earth in a bodily form as He was in Judea of old! He is

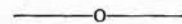
not in the sepulchre as is the body of David! Jesus Christ has bodily, literally, and spiritually ascended up into the heavens; that is the fact in the case. He is living, active, powerful, all-seeing, and all wise at this very moment! Nothing escapes His vision; no word escapes His hearing; no thoughts or imaginations His scrutiny! While some may let their minds end with a perusal of His glorious earthly life, we shall continue to appreciate by faith His heavenly ministries, which were enabled by the ascension from Olivet to glory!

However, there are reasons for our Lord's ascension! He did not merely ascend into the heavens without purpose or reason! Our Lord never acts without immutable reason! One of the primary reasons for His ascension was that He might "fill all things"; "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that He might FILL ALL THINGS (Eph. 4:10). Jesus, in His earthly ministry, was restricted and restrained (Luke 12:50). The "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3) constituted a drag upon His spirit, and a restraint to Omnipotence. This is why Christ's incarnation and humiliation is referred to as "counting Himself of no reputation", or "humbling Himself" (Phil. 2:3-5). He made Himself a subject, became "obedient", and suffered the deprivations of hunger, thirst, weariness, tears, sorrows, and other inhibitions common to flesh and blood. In that condition He could not, and did not "fill all things." His ministry, to be fully implemented, called for Him to ascend back into heaven, that He might fill every believer, indwell the church of the living God, and become accessible to all by faith. Without Jesus in glory at this present time, none could enjoy the personal communion with Him that we so cherish. All would be empty and void, for without the filling of Christ, there is no substance, no reality, no hope, no life, no joy or peace. The mercy of our Lord, then, is wondrously seen in His ascension, for therein did He provide that which we so sorely needed — the daily presence of Deity within the hearts of believers, strengthening, comforting, instructing, and upholding! Jesus could not fill all things upon earth, as the heresy referred to earlier so blatantly asserted! To fill He must ascend; and to be filled, we must accept by faith an ascended and glorified Christ! Hallelujah!

Another reason for our Lord's ascension is that He desired to make intercession for us; "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, NOW to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9:24). Oh, how we stood in need of this. So sinful are we and wretched within our own persons that we can never stand before God Almighty: He would expel us from His presence immediately, for we are sinful! Yet, we need to be before Him; before His very face, procuring His favor and blessing, His strength and mercy, His peace and joy! Praise the Lord, His "own right arm" hath gotten Him the victory, and hath made for us a place, in the Son, before Him in glorious fellowship and spiritual affinity. How I love this ascended Christ, "made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26), and "exalted above every name that is named", "angels and authori-

ties and powers being made subject to Him" (I Pet. 3:22). Let us daily stand before Him and render all power and blessing and honor and glory to the Lamb that was slain, and who hath prevailed! Ascended He is, and that assures us of a place in glory! It is true that "God is gone up with a shout" (Psa. 47:5), the angelic hosts accompanying our Lord as He gloriously and triumphantly swept into the Holiest of all, having made atonement for sin! As He entered in, there was great festivity among the heavenly beings, as is depicted in the 24th Psalm and ought not there to be spiritual rejoicing and festivity among we who have reaped the benefits of His ascension? He has broken through the hosts of "spiritual wickedness in high places", and has defeated them all, "making a show of them openly." He has truly "led captivity captive", having subjected all that is against us, in order that we might be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

And now I ask you, dear reader: are you familiar with the ascended Christ? Have you seen Him by faith, and received Him of His redemption, power, wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification (I Cor. 1:30)? I bid you to leave off serving a traditional Savior, and serve a living One, if such an admonition fit your case. You do not need to live in doubt — Jesus is alive, high and exalted, on the Throne of glory. He is there for you, Christian brother; will you not seek to enjoy His presence within, by letting Him "dwell in your heart by faith"? May God strengthen you with might "by His Spirit in the inner man in order that this very thing may be accomplished" (Eph. 3:16-19).



PUNGENT POINTS

God is not interested in WHY we sin — we are mistaken when we attempt to explain our sin; there is no acceptable explanation. Sin is sin, and no explanation will diminish the fact of guilt. He is, however, interested in seeing that sin is put out of our lives, and to this end has given His Son as a Propitiation.

* * *

Prayer is not meant to be a substitute for repentance or obedience. To obey is better than to sacrifice; and it is better, many times, than supplication. A man prays out of season when he refuses to face the reality of personal sin and abandon it while crucifying the flesh. This is called "regarding iniquity in the heart", and will make our prayers as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal (Psalms 66:18).

* * *

"Can God do this"? is NOT a question; it is an assertion of unbelief! The point is not "Can God do this"? Rather, the issue is "WILL I BELIEVE!" "All things ARE possible to him that believeth," and woe be to that man that obscures that truth with doubts concerning God's ability! We cannot blame God for our failings or bring Him into question. If there are any questions, we are always the variables, not the Lord God of all! There is "no variableness nor shadow of turning with Him!" Praise the Lord,

GOD'S RIGHT

With so much emphasis being placed upon human rights, it is refreshing to my soul to meditate upon my Lord's right. So often is the right of the Lord impugned and disputed among the "grasshoppers" of the earth (Isa. 40:22), that it moves one to marvel at the "longsuffering" of Jehovah God. As in the days of old, when the "earth that then was perished, being overflowed with water", God's longsuffering still "waits" (I Pet. 3:20). Surely He is "rich" in forbearance as He does not consume man in his sin and effrontery, and remove this blotch from His "footstool", the earth (Isa. 66:1). Of our Lord, it is said; "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). **Consequently, our Lord does as He pleases in all things** (Eph. 1, 5, 9, 11). **His will is always the determining factor, and it is right that it is so.** He is God, not man or men! This is His world, His universe, and He has not abdicated the Throne of it to let human usurpers handle His affairs.

Is it not expressly declared; "For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. **Whatever** the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Psa. 135:5-6). It is acknowledged that the vast majority of devout churchmen cannot confess this as a part of their knowledge! They cannot precede this confession with, "I KNOW"! This is foreign to them, and their conception of God is one that finds Him restrained, held back, idle, and away on a far journey. It is a most despicable situation, but I confess that it reminds me of the God Baal, and of Elijah's mockings to his prophets concerning him on Mount Carmel; "And . . . Elijah mocked them, and said; Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened" (I Kings 18:27). Is it not true that this characterizes the god of the masses? He is basically inactive. The days in which he worked are confessed to be past; now nature and a carnal conception of providence are all that govern the world. **However, a ruling, reigning God; that is to my liking; but more than that — that is the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus."** If anything needs to be stressed in Zion it is this old message; "THY GOD REIGNETH" (Isa. 52:7).

The modern church is suffering from the concept of a pygmy God; he is too small! too restrained! too limited! Let us see to it that the Lord is "magnified" (Psa. 35:27; 40:16; 70:4; Mal. 1:5; 34:3; 69:30). Our God is great and needs to be spoken of as great. In attempts to justify doctrinal and traditional views, many people have been guilty of attempting to present God as possessing great limitations — by His own will, of course! **But, rather than setting forth a limited God, we must needs set forth an unlimited one,** for that is precisely what He is, and to do otherwise is blasphemy!

The greatness of our God is seen in His revelation; "All souls are mine" (Ezek. 18:4). This reveals His greatness so far as men are concerned. God is the Sovereign Creator and Owner of all souls! As such, He possesses power over men, and is able to turn them and use them at His Divine

discretion. It is God's right to make men in any way that He sees fit, and though it may tend to contradict the theological views of many sophists, yet it is asserted by the Holy Spirit; "Nay, but oh man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power (authority) over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor"? (Rom. 9:20-21). Man is the "**thing FORMED**", and the Lord God is "Him that formed it"!

Is there any question here as to right? Who possesses the authority? Come now, those of you that insist upon relegating to man the prerogatives that belong alone to God — who has the authority, man or God? Who does the forming, man or God? Who is the clay, man or God? May not the Lord do what He pleases? In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, we receive some insight into the Lord's feelings on the matter. Jesus, speaking of the owner of the vineyard, quotes him as saying to the displeased workers; "**Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good**" (Matt. 20:15). Whence come all of the objections to God's Sovereignty? Why do men insist upon robbing the Lord of His right, and taking it unto themselves? Why are such subjects as election, predestination, Sovereignty, providence, and other like subjects held in question by so many? **It is because they refuse to accept the position of "clay"!** They desire to usurp the Lord's Throne. Now, with some, this is an unconscious thing — that is, they do not actually desire to replace the Lord upon the Throne. They only mean to justify the Lord — to make it clear that He will not do anything "**unfair.**" But, whose definition of right and wrong are they using? What is the standard of right that they employ, if it be not their own human conceptions. **God has no need of their lies!** The Lord does not need to be justified by men!

If the Lord declares that all souls are His, and that He has made some for honor, and some for dishonor — what is that to us? Ought we not to stand in fear and awe at such an One as the Lord God, rather than questioning Him and prattling our foolishness before Him? Will not the Lord requite with fierce judgement all who have denied His Lordship? May we all humbly bow before Him, acknowledging that He is "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). Let us "acknowledge the Lord in all of our ways" (Prov. 3:5-6), and cease in all of our rebellion against Him as Lord of all! Praise the Lord He is our Savior, Helper, Mediator, and Lover — but He is also Lord, and must be accepted as such! To do so is to receive the truth of God's right! The question is, have you done this!