

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

WHO IS GOD?

Job testified, "I would seek God, and unto Him would I commit my cause" (Job 5:8). Those that have been given to see the inability of mortal man to supply what is sorely needed within, have often said the same thing. God is to be sought because He IS existent, and stands ready to reward any who diligently seek Him (Heb.11:6). To ask who God is might seem very trite at first; but really, do you know who He is? This is not a mere theological question, it is something upon which hangs all of your life. WHO IS GOD?

He Is The Creator

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1); ". . . the Lord made the heavens" (1 Chron. 16:26); "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psa.33:6); "God who made the heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is" (Psa.146: 5,6); "I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by My outstretched Arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me" (Jer.27:5). This means that *you are living in God's world*; His by right of creation! Such knowledge is designed to cause us to tremble before Him; "Will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it" (Jer. 5:22). His word brought all that is material about you into existence. Therefore, it is His desire that He be seen in His creation. He has stamped a portion of His Image on the creation, which testifies of His power and Divinity. The universe with its millions of intricacies testifies of Omniscience and Eternal wisdom. The mighty heavens portrays invincible power, which cannot be shackled by mortal man; that power is of God, and we are to see Him in it. The testimony of God is, then, to be seen all about you in the things that He has made. Man, in assuming ownership of these things, is actually trespassing; "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (Psa.24:1). Let us bow before the God of heaven who created "all things for His own pleasure" (Rev.4:11).

The Absolute Ruler

The Lord God governs the affairs of earth in accordance with His own good pleasure; "For I know that our God is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Psa.135:5,6). He is the Most High over all the earth" (Psa. 83:18). Here unregenerate men find a quarrel with God, for they do not wish to admit that "all things are of God" (II Cor.5:18). Many are the arguments fostered by gross ignorance of this matter. "Why wars, why troubles, why starvation, why abused children?" asks the sophist. "If there is a God, then why does He allow these things to happen"? And we reply in words of Scripture; "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God" (Rom.9:20). God is God —

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The Word of Truth

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man is not! Because man cannot see the secret councils of God by no means indicates that God does not rule. **To question God's rulership and authority because things do not conform to our way of thinking is a sin of the worst character.** It is true, as it is written; "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich: He bringeth low and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar out of the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He hath made the world upon them" (I Sam. 2:6-8). What is it to you that God does what He does? Is it not His right to do with His own whatsoever He desires? To argue with God is to demonstrate a state of rebellion against Him! "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth" (Psa. 96:10). Whether His reign is seen by men or not has no bearing on the case. He is still "above all and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6). "For of Him and through Him, and to Him, are all things" (Rom. 11:36). Do not measure the rule of God by your own understanding for God has said; "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8, 9). God stands in a position where He may snuff out your life as quickly as a dimly burning candle, or give to you abundant life. You are presently in His net; His hook is in your jaw. Rebel against the Lord, and He shall deal hardly with you; submit to Him and He will bless you! His rule and authority are absolute; there are no competitors! Because this is the case, however, we are not to conclude that God is a tyrant! Verily,

He Is A Righteous God

What God does is right! It need not measure up to our minds, for we are wrong. It is just that simple; "Let God be found true, and every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). The work of God is "honorable and glorious, and His righteous-

ness endureth forever" (Psa. 111:3). The prophet Hosea declared; "The ways of the Lord are right" (Hosea 14:9), and such is to be the view that you are to entertain! This "righteousness" is to be the subject of intensive seeking! Obscured from the "natural man", His uprightness is something that has to be revealed; therefore, our Lord admonished; "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Matt. 6:33). God wants you to know about His own uprightness! He stands ready to reveal to you a thousand mysteries, hidden from the course of this world, that speak of His Rule and Sovereignty. Once within His will, you will see the propriety of His moves. His mind will be revealed to you, thus enabling you to rejoice in His works. You will say with Jeremiah; "Righteous art Thou, O Lord" (Jer. 12:1). Truly, we say unto the Lord, "Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord: neither are there any works like unto Thy works" (Psa. 86:8)

Not Just Another God

Our God is not just another god; one of many! We know that "there be that are called gods, as there be gods many and lords many, but unto us there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things" (I Cor. 8:5, 6). He made all things, maintains all things—and maintains them right. His judgements are true and righteous altogether! You stand before Him now, and are seen of Him, He knows your thoughts, your evil proclivities, your earnest desires! He stands able to save or to destroy, all power belonging to Him. You need to know Him, and to love Him; to be conscious of His creation, His rule, and His uprightness! Are you?

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God Centered Preaching

"All things are of God"

II Cor. 5:18

There is an "only true God", Whom to know is "eternal life" (John 17:3). The "knowledge of God" is of such pre-eminence in the Scriptures, that one can scarcely absorb them without being struck with the eternal priority of this commodity of the soul; "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you THROUGH the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (II Pet. 1:2); "Casting down imaginations, and everything that exalteth itself against THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD" (II Cor. 10:5); "For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6).

By nature, no man knows God; "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11). Yet, there must of necessity come a change in this condition, for when the Lord comes, all that "know not God" will suffer the vengeance of the Almighty (II Thess. 1:8). Further, in this life, those that know not God are carried away of their own lusts (I Thess. 4:5), thus indicating the spiritual preservative that lies within that much coveted knowledge.

To know the Lord is primarily an experience of the spirit of man; it comes by becoming one with the Lord, for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). It is in this very union that we become "partakers of the Divine Nature" (II Pet. 1:4) and "partakers of Christ" (Heb. 3:14). In this partakement, we obtain a spiritual familiarity with Deity which is referred to as "the knowledge of God." His thoughts become our thoughts, His purposes displace our own earthly purposes, His love becomes our love, His hate becomes our hate; in short, we are "changed into the same Image, as by the Spirit" (II Cor. 3:18). This is that glorious transformation of mind of which the Apostle spoke in Romans 12:2; "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye might prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God".

The entire economy of redemption is centered in this grand objective; to bring man into the knowledge of God; i.e. to bring man into an actual experimental acquaintance with the Living God; to put man into a place where He can appreciate the Lord in His glory, and joyfully partake of His attributes. In our salvation, the primary objective is not to create neighborly people, patch up home relationships, make good citizens and proficient workmen—although all of these things are effectual by-products of salvation. The great purpose was to "bring us to God"—that is why Christ died (I Pet. 3:18). See how often this is repeated by the Holy Spirit, thus emphasizing its priority; "By Whom (Christ Jesus) we have access by faith into this grace wherein ye stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD" (Rom. 5:2); "For through Him (Jesus Christ) we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit UNTO THE FATHER" (Eph. 2:18); "In Whom we have holiness and ACCESS with confidence by the faith of (from) Him" (Eph. 3:12); "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which WE DRAW NIGH UNTO GOD" (Heb. 7:19); "Draw nigh UNTO God" (Js. 4:8), etc.

God—The Center of Preaching

The very center and heart of our preaching is also to be God the Father. This too is demonstrated by holy men of God who wrote as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:20-21); "... we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful WORKS OF GOD" (Acts 2:11); "The word which GOD SENT unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; (He is Lord of all)" (Acts 10:36); "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, GOD HATH FULFILLED THE SAME unto us their children, in that HE HATH RAISED UP JESUS AGAIN . . ." (Acts 13:32-33); "... the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the GRACE OF GOD" (Acts 20:24); "And now, brethren, I commend you to GOD, and to the word of HIS grace. . ." (Acts 20:32); "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is THE POWER OF GOD unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16); "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolish-

ness; but unto us which are saved, it is THE POWER OF GOD" (I Cor. 1:18); "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering THE GOSPEL OF GOD" (Rom. 15:16); "According to the glorious gospel of the BLESSED GOD, which was committed unto my trust" (I Tim. 1:11).

You see, then, how that God the Father is the Originator of all things; everything is traced back to Him, whether it be the Gospel, the promises, or Divine works—all goes back to God. This is the Apostolic emphasis, and we do well to (as the early church did) "continue stedfastly in the Apostle's doctrine" (Acts 2:42). This emphasis is not creedal, nor was it ever; it is rather the proclamation of reality, as revealed in Christ Jesus. The grand objective of our preaching is to make people God-conscious; to wrest their minds from the course of this world in order that it might be captivated with the magnitude of God.

If we speak of preaching Christ (Acts 8:5;8:35; 9:20), we must understand that Christ Jesus is pre-eminently a revelation of God the Father, Who would be otherwise unknown to mortals. We do not need to rest upon conjecture here, the Holy Spirit has spoken with clarity to the heart of faith. "For GOD, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST" (II Cor. 4:6); "His Dear Son . . . Who is the IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD; the Firstborn of every creature . . . for it pleased THE FATHER that in Him (Christ Jesus) should all FULNESS dwell . . . for in Him dwelleth all the FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY" (Col. 1:15, 19; 2:9); "Who being the BRIGHTNESS OF HIS (God's) GLORY, AND THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON. . ." (Heb. 1:3); "... he that hath (really) seen Me, hath seen THE FATHER" (John 14:9). You see, therefore, how that Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of the Father; He is the express and precise picture of the Father's Person. Suffice it to say that this very fact places before our minds the absolute essentiality of knowing God. If the Father has invested His only begotten Son with all of His fulness, and then charged Him with revealing the person of God to us, we must be brought to no other conclusion than that men have greatly neglected the principal thing in traditional christendom.

The Imperative Of God-Centered Preaching

We have, of course, the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; and that is sufficient without any other arguments. "Jesus said, my meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (Jno. 4:34); "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth THE FATHER DO; for whatsoever things HE doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (Jno. 5:19); "And Jesus answered them, My doctrine is not Mine, but HIS THAT SENT ME" (Jno. 7:16); "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of MY FATHER I have made known

unto you" (Jno. 15:15). Our Lord Jesus referred to His "Father" no less than 150 times in the Gospels—He spoke always of the Father; "All things are delivered to me OF MY FATHER" (Lk. 10:22); ". . . their angels do always behold the face of MY FATHER. . . ." (Matt. 18:10); ". . . come, ye blessed OF MY FATHER. . . ." (Matt. 25:34); "I must be about MY FATHER'S BUSINESS" (Lk. 2:49); "I come in MY FATHER'S NAME" (Jno. 5:43); "MY FATHER giveth you the True Bread" (Jno. 6:32); "no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him OF MY FATHER" (Jno. 6:65); "As MY FATHER hath taught me, I speak" (Jno. 8:28).

The Apostles took up the refrain, centering on the Father in their preaching and writing; showing that the Lord Jesus was GOD'S Son, and that He was the only means of access to the FATHER. Our reconciliation was unto GOD "HIMSELF" (II Cor. 5:18ff) through the Lord Jesus. Our peace is with THE FATHER (Rom. 5:1). Jesus taught us to pray, "OUR FATHER" (Matt. 6:9). The Apostles greeted the saints with such things as "Grace to you and peace FROM GOD THE FATHER. . ." (Rom. 1:7) I Cor. 1:3; II Cor. 1:2; II Thess. 1:2; I Tim. 1:2). The great proclamation of the death of Christ was meticulously set forth as a deliverance "from this present evil world, according to the will of God and OUR FATHER" (Gal. 1:4). Great affirmations of faith and insight continually sprang forth, such as; "Now unto GOD AND OUR FATHER be glory forever and ever. . ." (Phil. 4:20), while affirming that the labor of the saints was in the Lord Jesus and "in the sight of GOD AND OUR FATHER" (I Thess. 1:3).

That this truth is vital to the development of a well-pleasing spirit, is seen in the Savior's very molding of our thinking—always pointing us to the Father; "Let your light so shine. . . that they may see your good works and GLORIFY YOUR FATHER. . ." (Matt. 5:16); "Love your enemies. . . that ye may be the children OF YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN" (Matt. 5:45); "Be ye perfect, even as YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN is perfect" (Matt. 5:48); "YOUR FATHER knoweth what things ye have need of" (Matt. 6:8, 32); "It is not the will of YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. 18:14); "Fear not, little flock, for it is YOUR FATHER'S good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). When Christ Jesus was asked concerning the placement of favored parties at His right and left hands in the kingdom, He replied that this was not for Him to give, but was the exclusive right of His Father (Matt. 20:23). How often did He say such soul-awakening truths as; THY FATHER which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18); "I ascend unto my Father, and YOUR FATHER" (Jno. 20:17).

I suggest to you that any other emphasis or direction will consummate in something that is "short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). If we, for instance, make the Holy Spirit the center of our preaching, as the custom of many is, we will lead people into subjectivism. Such an empha-

sis limits knowledge to the conscious states and elements, and brings people to lean upon their states of exhilaration rather than upon the Lord. Supreme good is seen, under such preaching, to be the realization of some subjective experience (which experiences do occur to those who seek the Lord)—but they are not the supreme good—GOD IS THAT! The sensitivity and experience of a believer becomes the ultimate criterion of his spirituality—truth becomes secondary; There is no cognizance of an ever-reigning God in heaven that works ALL THINGS after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11). He is seen to work in fits and starts, and men are down-hearted when they are not experiencing the extraordinary, and uplifted alone when they are. **Such religion is to be denounced—it is not a Godly religion, but one that borrows cups of truth to sweeten the barrel of human conceptions.**

If our preaching is Jesus-centered, it can lead to humanism. . . I speak of an emphasis of "the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 5:6). When addressing the saints of the most High, the role of our wonderful Savior in meditating for us, in securing the covenant, and in bringing us to God is to be realized in its fulness—or at least, a good measure of its fulness. It is not sufficient to dwell upon His earthly ministry, or upon His earthly attributes and accomplishments, wonderful though they be. **They are to persuade us that He is the Christ, the son of GOD (Jno. 20:31), and if they do not eventuate in this glorious knowledge, they have borne no eternal fruit within us! Our preaching must not center upon distinctively human interests and ideals; my earthly existence is not the primary existence; relevancy to me is primary in humanism, but is to be crucified in the life of faith! Christ is, in this emphasis, seen to be a super-human rather than a humbled God. The true perspective of our Lord is that of humiliation in order to be an earthly tenure, His departure from that humiliation constituting a true exaltation. To truly preach Jesus is to declare Him to be the "Way, the Truth, and the Life", that "no man COMETH TO THE FATHER but by" Him (Jno. 14:6). His eternal roles as "Way", "Truth", and "Life" all have direct connection with God the Father. He is the Way to the Father; the Truth (or true revelation) of the Father, and the Life (or effectual communication and revelation) of the Father. Take away the Father, and He is neither Way, Truth, nor Life; there is no redemption, no atonement, no reconciliation, no salvation! Everything is centered in the Father—and so must our preaching be centered!**

God's Centrality Proclaimed In Scripture

As to the Father's activity, we have proclaimed over and over His wonderful works. It is the Father that puts us into Christ; "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus" (I Cor. 1:30). If we desire to speak of our anointing—i.e., of our becoming "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1:5)—it is God that hath anointed us (II Cor. 1:21). When we peruse all things, and begin to wonder at their complexity—both visible and invisible things—then we hear the words; "He that built

all things is **God**" (Heb. 3:4). If we feel that we are wavering in the faith, and begin to fear; or if our searching eyes come across a weary pilgrim, or a weak brother that we feel sure is unable to stand amidst the attacks of the Temptor; "**God** is able to make Him stand" (Rom. 14:4). Our wonderful new life began when **God** "called us into the fellowship of His Dear Son" (I Cor. 1:9). If we have peace, we must know that "**God** is the Author of peace." (I Cor. 14:33; II Tim. 1:2). If we need grace, it is **God** Himself that make "all grace to abound" toward us (II Cor. 9:8). Our very faith issued from **God** (Eph. 6:23), and "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above, from the **Father** of lights, with Whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning" (Js. 1:17). It was the **Father** that elected the saints (I Pet. 1:2), and then bestowed His love upon them, so that they might be called "the sons of **God**" (I Jno. 3:1). The **Father** sanctified us (Jude 1), and "shined into our hearts with the light of the glory of **God** in the face of Christ Jesus" (II Cor. 4:6).

Because we are sons, **God** sends forth His Holy Spirit into our hearts; and when He does, the Spirit does not move us to cry out "Jesus", nor "Holy Spirit", but "ABBA, FATHER" (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15). We are "kings and priests to **God**" (Rev. 1:6), and our "Advocate is with the **Father**" (I Jno. 2:1-2). When we bow our knees, we bow them "to the **Father**" (Eph. 3:14), "giving thanks unto the **Father**" (Col. 1:3, 12).

We are taught to reason back to **God**—to see Him as the Fountainhead of all true beginnings. Let us remember that "our sufficiency is of **God**" (II Cor. 3:5), as well as our righteousness" (Phil. 3:9). In temptation, we rely upon the wisdom and prudence of our **Father**, who "will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). The promises, we must remember, are "the promises of **God**" (II Cor. 1:20), and are given to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is Himself "the **Lord's** Christ".

Our activity is to be Godward through the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit. Is it not witnessed that our fruit is "to **God**" (Rom. 7:4); that we "live unto **God**" (Rom. 6:11). If we speak of submission, we are commanded to "yield" our bodies a "living sacrifice to **God**" (Rom. 12:1-2), submitting to **God** (Js. 4:7). We shall give an account of ourselves to **God** (Rom. 14:12) and are therefore to "yield ourselves unto **God** as those that are alive" (Rom. 6:13). In other words, our attention is to be captured by **God**; we are to behold His glory "in the face of Christ Jesus"—if we miss the **Father** while gazing at Christ, we have really missed Christ Jesus, for those that have really seen Jesus, have seen **THE FATHER**" (Jno. 14:9). The contemporary church is in the same position as was Thomas of old; they have looked upon Christ, but have really never seen Him, and have consequently remained ignorant of **God**. Our Savior, if He can be heard, still speaks to those who confess His Name; "If ye had known Me, ye should have known my Father also. . . . Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not

known me?" (Jno. 14:7ff). The fact that the great truths of election, **God's** manipulation of men as clay, the turning of men's hearts as the rivers of waters, the government of the world amidst seeming chaos, etc.—the fact that these things are not only obscured to the vast majority of professing Christendom, but are also repugnant to it, demonstrates that **God** is not known; and where **God** is not known, the true Christ Jesus has not been seen.

Ephesians One and Two

In few places is the truth that I have just proclaimed as evident as it is in the first two chapters of Ephesians. Here we behold with open face the absolute centrality of the **Father**; we see the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who brings us to **God**, according to His own will. Note these singular statements of power; 1. Paul was an Apostle according to **God's** will (1:1). 2. Grace and peace come from **God the Father** (1:2). 3. A blessing is pronounced upon the **God and Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:3). 4. It is **God** that hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (1:3). 5. **God the Father** chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (1:4). 6. **God** determined that before Him we would be holy and without blame (1:4). 7. **God** predestinated us to be His adopted children (1:5). 8. His determination was made according to His own will (1:5). 9. The purpose of our redemption is that His grace might be praised (1:6). 10. **God** hath made us accepted in the Beloved (Christ) —(1:6). 11. The forgiveness of our sins through Christ's blood, is according to the riches of **God's** grace (1:7). 12. **God** Himself has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence (1:8). 13. It is the will of **God** that has been made known to us (1:9). 14. The revelation of His will was made according to His own pleasure, which was purposed in Himself (1:9). 15. In the dispensation of the fulness of times, it is **God** that shall gather together all things into one in Christ Jesus (1:10). 16. It is **God** that works all things after the counsel of His own will, our own predestination unto inheritance being determined by the same (1:11). 17. We shall, in Christ Jesus, accrue to the praise of **God's** glory (1:12). 18. It is **God** that opens the eyes of our understanding (1:18ff). 19. It is **God's** calling (1:18). 20. It is **God's** inheritance in the saints (1:18). 21. It is **God's** power that is toward we that believe (1:19). 22. It was **God's** power that raised Christ from the dead (1:20). 23. It was **God's** power that set Christ at His own right hand in the heavenly places (1:20). 24. **God** Himself placed all things under Christ's feet, and gave Him to the church in the capacity as Head over them all (1:22). 25. **God** has quickened (raised) us (2:1). 26. It was **God**, rich in mercy, that loved us with a great love (2:4). 27. It is **God** that hath raised us up together with Christ and made us sit together with Him in the heavenly places (2:6). 28. It is **God** Who, in the ages to come, will demonstrate through us the exceeding riches of His grace (2:7). 29. It is the kindness of **God** that is toward us in Christ Jesus (2:7). Our faith, and salvation itself, is the gift of **God** (2:8). 30. We

Commentary On Philippians

By Richard Ebler

are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus 2:10). 31. God ordained before the works in which we walk in Christ Jesus (2:10). 32. We are made nigh to God in the blood of Christ 2:13). 33. We have been, together with the Jews, reconciled in one body unto God (2:16). 34. Now we have access to God through Christ and by the Holy Spirit (2:18). 35. We are the household of God (2:19). 36. We are fitly framed together, and grow into a habitation for God through the Spirit (2:21-22).

Upon these things, let the people of God muse; there is abundant truth here—no shortage; no necessity to tie passages together or skip through the Word to develop a questionable system. Turn anywhere in the Word, and you will find the same emphasis; the same general direction of instruction. **Let the contemporary church abandon all of its religious activities until they have become familiar with this God.** Let the missionaries come home from abroad; let the witnesses and supposed soul-winners come off the streets and really "learn Christ" (Eph. 4:20-24). Then, with the true knowledge of God within their hearts, they shall be able to "teach all nations."

A Personal Word To You

I trust that these things have not sounded strange to your ears; that they have, rather, been familiar and musical to your spirit. If such is the case with you, then your heart is glad, for the implications are registering upon your spirit. However, if these things are not melodious to your ears; if you cannot seem to take them in; if they are unlike anything that you have ever heard before—let me counsel you Throw away your religion; all of it: it is no good! You must begin again; start afresh with the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus." **A religion that consummates in an ignorance of the God it professes to worship is from Satan, not from God, and hence is to be shunned with holy vigor.** Do not be ashamed to do it; your faith demands it!

If there is a small spark within you that says "yes" to these affirmations of Scripture, that is what you must nurture. You must set yourself to do battle with anything and everything that militates against or quenches that spark. It must grow into a flame, and consume your whole person. **Retreat from everything that is not in the interest of this knowledge.** Refrain from anything that discourages the increase of this awareness! Make no friends with those who object to these things, and keep yourselves close to all who love such proclamations. **There is no friendship, no religious organization, no social tranquility or peace, no ease or church office, that is worth maintaining if it means the loss of the knowledge of God.** If God Himself is obscured, what else matters? **And, you had just as well reconcile yourself to these things, that if what God does in our redemption is unknown and unappreciated, then God is not known—there is no real fellowship with Him, no real depth of spiritual life. Your accomplishments all go for naught if God is not known.** Though

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Chapter Three (cont.)

v. 9 "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Paul has just said that he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. The next words we read are these: "and be found in him." Calvin translates it "and may find them in him." The sense of the text in that case would be that Paul gave up all things that he might gain them all back in Christ. The things that men foolishly imagine they possess apart from Christ will soon be lost eternally. But all things possessed in Him are truly possessed forever, for the Spirit declares that Christ is appointed "heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2), and if we are children then we are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). All things in this present life work together for the eternal good of "them that love God" (Rom. 8:28) so that they are presently possessed. "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 are yours" (I Cor. 3:21, 22). "He that overcometh shall inherit all things" (Rev. 21:7); yea, "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5) and "dwell therein forever" (Psa. 37:29). It will of course, be a glorious earth, purified by fire at the coming of our Lord (II Peter 3:10-13).

If this be true (and it is), then how utterly foolish to squander this life trying to heap up riches, only to pass them on to another at death, and then be eternally miserable! How wise to fear God, love, trust, and obey Him in this life, then to inherit all things with Him for all eternity!

The other view of this verse is that one which follows the King James Version: "And be found in him." Then the sense would be that Paul wanted to be found in Christ at His coming. "Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Peter 3:14). To be found "in him" would be the same as being found "in the faith" Col. 1:23, Titus 1:13, Heb. 11:13, I Tim. 1:2). It means to be found in experiential union with Christ, as the branch abides in the vine (John 15:1-7), as a member of His body (Eph. 5:30). One person has said "in Him as the fish is in the sea; in Him as the element of my life."

At the end of the world all men shall be found either in Adam or else in Christ, bearing Adam's likeness or else Christ's. Furthermore, everyone's spiritual state will be fixated at that time (Rev. 22:11). It will be a universal spiritual "wage freeze." Therefore, it behooves us to develop a big appetite for heavenly things. So shall we have treasure in heaven.

Paul next gives us a lesson in the possessive power of faith. We "have" (possess) whatever we have faith in. If we have faith in ourselves we shall stand before God alone and miserably deficient on the Day of Judgment. If we have faith

in Christ, we shall possess His perfect righteousness on the Day of Judgment. This will be infinitely better.

"Paul compares two kinds of righteousness. The one he says belongs to man, i.e., the righteousness of the law; the other comes from God and consists of faith in Christ. These are so directly opposed that they cannot stand together. The righteousness of the law must be renounced in order to obtain the righteousness of faith."

There are two basic ways of approaching God. One way is to try to approach God on the basis of personal merit, trusting in one's own good works for acceptance. This is the righteousness which is of the law. However, due to man's fallen state his best works are corrupted. All of his righteousnesses are as "filthy rags" in God's sight (Isa. 64:6). We learn this especially when we discern the spiritual nature of the law (Rom. 7:14), how it reaches in to our very heart to condemn lust (Matt. 5:28) as well as outward transgressions. Even "the thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24:9). Furthermore, if we decide to approach God through the law, then we are debtor to keep the **whole law perfectly at all times**. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10). The law then becomes a mirror to show us our sin (Jas. 1:23). When we take the law seriously it becomes our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). It shows us that we are sinners in need of a Savior.

Christ is just the kind of Savior we need. He perfectly kept the law by leading a sinless life. He fulfilled the law for us and became a spotless sacrifice for our sins that his righteousness might be imputed to us who trust in his blood. Thus, then, is the second way to approach God: renouncing our own righteousness we trust completely in Christ's great work of atonement as fully sufficient to satisfy God and to save us from the wrath to come (Rom. 10:4, 5; 4: 3-6). Then the law becomes a rule to live by out of sheer love for God our Savior. Our works become an **evidence** of salvation, not a **condition** of salvation. Christ gets all the glory this way. Let us be found in Him!

SPECIAL PRAYER SESSIONS HELD

Each Tuesday evening, several like-minded brethren from the church at 78th and Independence Sts., gather together for intercessory prayer. The Lord has richly blessed these sessions of late. The participants have experienced hearts of concern, lips of sound expression, and faith to wait upon the Lord. We solicit the requests of our readers for these gatherings. It may be that you have a personal matter concerning which you desire prayer. We want you to know that we will fellowship with you in your heart's desire and burden. It is not necessary to specify exact circumstances if you do not desire.

Send your correspondence to:

PRAYER BAND
7903 Hendricks Place
Merrillville, Ind. 46410

What Is The New Testament?

“. . . the new testament”

II Cor. 3:6

I suppose that there are no words so misunderstood as these—"the New Testament"; no concept concerning which men are so ignorant; no truth that has been so greatly obscured by the Evil One. Here we stand at the threshold of an "exceeding large room" (Psa. 31:8; 118:5). It is here that great bodies of truth are unfolded, that true liberty of spirit is experienced; that fellowship with the Beloved is known in a deeper sense; that peace of heart is wonderfully ministered; a place where the Lord Jesus in His awfulness is made known. Do not turn away from this—see to it that you learn what these words mean—"the New Testament." Do not misuse them or let the unlearned and ignorant mold your thinking concerning them.

You will learn several elementary things from these words; first, that it speaks of something "new"—i.e., new in **order** and **type**; **totally** new; unlike anything else that **ever** was! **When God makes something "new" there has never been anything like it before—never!** It is "new" because something else is "old" (Heb. 8:13). This means that it has **supplanted** something, and therefore stands upon its own merits, so to speak. You will also learn that it involves the disposition of the goods and property of God. **It is a provision whereby the nature of God and the benefits of God are dispensed to certain ones.** It involves an agreement of some sort; a new kind of agreement—new by its **nature**, not because of the time of its announcement or beginning.

What The New Testament Is Not!

It is not a book. It is not a group of books. It is not the Bible. It is not a segment of the Bible! It is not a particular set of dogmas; it is not an orderly arrangement of commandments. It is not the writing of men; it is not the presentation of conditions to be met. It is not an agreement between God and men; it is not a set of ordinances that will qualify us for heaven, upon obedience to them. That part of your Bible headed "The New Testament", is really **not** the New Testament, and nowhere in all of the text does it even intimate that it is. It is important, you see, to know what the New Testament is not: important, because our vocabulary becomes the basis for the formation of our conceptions; and our conceptions become the foundation for our teaching and our manner of living. Do not, therefore, glibly sweep away from your mind these things; they are vital to the formation of proper character, as well as wholesome instruction and teaching.

What The New Testament Is

It is an accomplishment of the Lord God of heaven and earth. **It is a covenant of blessing contingent upon the behavior and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Father's promise to do good to those that are undeserving of good.** The basic proclamation of the New Testament is found in prophecy, and later amplified by the Apostles. Jeremiah first declared it in the ful-

ness of its scope; "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I WILL put my law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:31-34).

It will, no doubt, be at once retorted by the sophist, "But that is from the Old Testament"! And right there is where I take issue; I completely disagree with that usage of the term "Old Testament"—it is not so used by the Holy Spirit! That it is from the segment of the Scriptures that was written exclusively to the Jewish people, I cannot deny. Is it not declared that the "promises" and the "covenants" pertained unto Israel after the flesh? As it is written; "... Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9:4-5). The truth is that everything pertained to Israel—nothing belonged to the Gentiles. As the Holy Spirit poignantly states concerning the Gentiles; "... without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:11-12). As Gentiles, our only way to have access to anything from God is to be grafted into Israel, that we might become partakers of the "root and fatness of the olive tree" (Rom. 11:17). **Only as we are brought into the stock of Abraham do we receive any spiritual blessings from the Lord, for it is in ABRAHAM that the world is blessed** (Gen. 12:1-3). The New Testament, then, is actually God's "promise" to Israel for good. We, as Gentiles, are graciously made partakers of it through the Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath "broken down the middle wall of partition between us (Jews and Gentiles) . . . that He might reconcile BOTH unto God in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:14-16). Now, this is a very basic postulate of Scripture, and without some measure of comprehension concerning it, there can be no true understanding of the New Testament!

God, The Pre-eminent Figure In The New Testament

That the passage in Jeremiah to which I have referred is actually the New Testament may be verified to the doubter in Hebrews 8 and 10. In chapter eight of that wonderful book, the

Spirit testifies of a "first covenant" that, because of faultiness, was displaced by a "second" (v. 7). This "covenant" is administered by the Lord Jesus Christ Who has "obtained a more excellent ministry" in that He is "Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (v. 6). Immediately after this proclamation, Jeremiah 31:31-34 is declared, and expressly called "A New Covenant", the first having been made "old" (v. 13). This should suffice to establish the truth that Jeremiah did declare the very nature of the New Testament, and that the New Testament or "covenant", while promised to the Jewish brethren, is also the basis for the acceptance of the Gentiles.

The New Testament is precisely that—a NEW Testament; a NEW covenant. It is new in respect to the results accomplished (the first covenant being weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). **Its accomplishments were effectual because the Almighty God performed them Personally.** Observe the emphasis of this wonderfully new testament; "I will make a New covenant" . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God. . . . I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:31-34). You will at once observe that this is a unilateral covenant—strictly one sided. **Israel has no side; God holds all of the sides!** There is no "If thou shalt, I will." That is after the order of the first testament or covenant, and God expressly declares that the new testament is "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers. . . ." (Jer. 31:32) The "church" is not central in this covenant; the "preacher" is not the center of this covenant; the "Bible" is not the focal point! **God is the center-point; the sum and substance of the new covenant.** If God Himself does not perform all of His word, then there is no covenant, no fulfilling of its wonderful promises. Its fulfillment is not contingent upon the works of man, the promises of man, conditions met by man, desires of men, or the resolves of men. It is ALL contingent upon the Lord God Almighty. He has made the unprovoked promises; "I will . . . I will. . . ." He alone is the Accomplisher of the covenant.

The Essential Elements Of The New Testament

Being a unilateral covenant, all of the elements, of course, are but the result of the work of the Almighty. There are those that suppose that the New Testament consists of "facts to be declared, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed." But while these elements are all found within the network of pure religion, they are not ingredients of the New Testament itself. There are at least six wonderful elements in the New Testament; elements that rejoice the heart of all who have experienced them in Christ Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit. (1. The putting of the law **into** the heart. (2. The writing of the law **upon** the heart. (3. God Himself becoming **their** God. (4. The recipients of the New Testament becoming the peculiar **people** of God. (5. The personal **knowledge** of the Lord—"they shall all know me." (6. The **remission** of sin—"I will forgive their iniquity,

and I will remember their sin no more." Now, each one of these matters can be realized only through the working of the Omnipotent God. They are all transcendent to the ability of mortal man—he is totally and thoroughly incapable of their accomplishment. See just how wonderful they are.

"I will put my law in their inward parts". This speaks of a work in man that results in an unavoidable confrontation with the precepts of the Lord. It speaks of man's inability to be ignorant of the will of the Lord, which is our "sanctification" (I Thess. 4:3-4). This speaks of a consciousness of God Almighty, of the ability to "walk before Him." The Law, once inscribed upon tables of stone, is now written upon the hearts of men with the Spirit of the Living God (II Cor. 3:3). **Man's nature is, in this case, restructured; he is made in the image of God in a new and vitalizing way.** Within—beyond the external nature, beneath mere appearance, and more deeply imbedded than his very breath, God has placed His Law—yea, His Holy Law. This is the same Law that was once written upon tables of stone. But now it is within us, not external to us. In Christ the Law is not afar off, our awareness of it does not depend upon coming to a "mount that can be touched" (Heb. 12:22-26). There is granted to man a real sensitivity of the good pleasure of the Lord. Under the Mosaic economy, the Law was written without, and was to be a constant object of the Israelites' gaze—pictured as "frontlets before their eyes" (Duet. 6:8); everywhere they looked they were to confront the words of the Law. This confrontation, in turn, was to produce a consciousness of good and evil—from the outside to the inside. However, the New Testament is not after that order. Something is wrought within man; a mighty work of God whereby the confrontation of God's holy commandments is brought to pass within the inward parts. Glory to God for this transforming work.

"And (I will) write it upon their hearts" This goes beyond an inner awareness of the commands of the Lord. It is higher than the great work of the enlightenment of the Spirit so that "we have no need that any man teach us" (I Jno. 2:27). While it is inescapably wonderful that God has so created us in Christ Jesus that we are aware of His commandments, it is more wonderful still that they are written in our hearts. **This speaks of an affinity or agreement with the commandments. It is one thing to be confronted with the Lord's declaration of right and wrong; it is quite another to stand in perfect agreement and compliance with that declaration.** And yet, this is precisely what happens in the New Testament. Man is brought into a veritable agreement with the Lord. He does not contest the Law of God, but rather takes great delight in it, meditating in it night and day (Psa. 1:1-2). The renewed person confesses with David; "O how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day" (Psa. 119:97). This actuality of agreement was experienced by David for our learning; "When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I

seek" (Psa. 27:8). In a day that is marked by infinite rebellion against the Word of the Lord, it is imperative that every professed believer know this: **If there is no BASIC agreement in your heart with the commandments of the Lord, then you are surely "dead in trespasses and sins".** No work has been wrought within you to the saving of the soul; you are no Christian or follower of the Lamb; His law is not written in your heart, and you are without hope in this present world. If that seems strong to you, know that it is the truth. That is the New Testament—a very fundamental aspect of it, and if that is missing, then you are "none of His". How this needs to be urged upon the churches of our day—churches that are not only ignorant of what the Lord commands, but are also out of harmony with those commandments within the recesses of their own hearts.

"And (I will) be their God". This speaks of the constituents of the covenant and their personal attitude toward God. He becomes the **object** of their worship; the "End of their conversation", the Desire of their hearts, the Joy of their lives. Their one aim is to please Him who hath called them out of darkness "into His marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9). They hold no countenance for the gods that are in the world (I Cor. 8:5); they "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:13). With them, this is no idle fancy, no old wives tale. **They have so been enraptured by His presence, so transformed by His Spirit, that He is all to them!** "God" is a term that speaks of one that's Supreme, Infinite, Creator, Giver, Life. **For Jehovah to be an individual's God, therefore, means that He consciously becomes the Supreme One in the life; He is altogether infinite and beyond understanding—by confession.** All things are now attributed to Him Who hath "made all things." Everything is sought from Him, for He alone is properly termed the "Giver of every good and perfect gift" (Js. 1:17). Life is sought alone from Him with Whom we have to do. There is an overthrow of the "Prince of this world" (Jno. 14:30) in the life; a displacement of his purposes, and an all consuming desire to appropriate the one thing that is "needful" (Lk. 10:42). Now, where this is not experienced to some decided measure, there has been no participation in the New Testament; and if there has been no such participation, there has been no new birth, no faith, no regeneration. Hence, only damnation awaits. O, that this could be wedged into the minds of those benighted professors of religion that have a "form of godliness, but deny the power thereof" (II Tim. 3:5),

"And they shall be My people". This speaks of the Heavenly Father's attitude toward these people. It is not with them as it is with the wicked. Of the wicked it is said; "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psa. 7:11). Again, it is written; "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Psa. 5:5). Repeatedly in the Scripture we are told of the Father's attitude toward those that love sin. He has pledged Himself to destroy all such from His presence with everlasting fire. He is longsuffering toward them, but

not because of sympathy for them. He is ready to "whet His sword" against them, as it is written; "God judgeth the righteous, and is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, He will whet His sword; He hath bent His bow, and made it ready" (Psa. 7:11-12). But it is not so with the righteous—i.e., with those that are in the New Testament; in whose inward parts the Law has been written, and in whose heart that same Law has been inscribed; those that count Jehovah God as their God, and beside Him recognize none other!

These are God's people, and He has a very special heart of tenderness for them. They are the "apple (pupil) of His eye" (Psa. 17:8), "the flock of God" (Acts 20:28), the "beloved of God" (Psa. 60:5), and the "family of God" (Eph. 3:15). Because He dwells happily among them, they are called "the city of God" Heb. 12:22). Because He has placed His own nature within them, they are called "the sons of God" (I Jno. 8:14). Because He loves them so, and has promised to give them His own blessed fulness, they are called "heirs of God" (Rom. 8:17). God now devotes Himself to their eternal welfare. Their enemies become His enemies; their friends become His friends. Like He did with ancient Abraham, He blesses those that bless them, and curses those that curse them (Gen. 12:1-3). He devotes Himself to none but them. All others are "not a people" in His eyes. He fights their battles, consoles their hearts, and will bring them to glory to ever dwell in His presence. That is something of what it means to be the people of God; and in the New Testament, there is an actual fulfillment of that blessed reality.

"They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." This speaks of the experiential part of this covenant. Such a work is wrought within man that he becomes familiar with, and knowledgeable of, the Infinite mysterious God. He actually entertains the Lord Himself, and not merely thoughts about the Lord. There is a communion between his spirit and the Spirit of the Almighty. There is a wonderful spiritual intimacy that knows no parallel; an involvement with He that is "above all and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6). This is not an exclusive experience of only a segment of the redeemed; they all partake of this. They may not all possess the same measure of the knowledge of God, but they all possess a personal and wonderful measure of it! Because God makes His "abode" with him (Jno. 14:23), the "new creature" (II Cor. 5:17) comes into a familiarity with the Lord God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The saved soon begin to know how the Lord works; they recognize His hand and His ways are pleasant to behold. They live unto Him, and not "afar off". They relish His presence, and confess that a "day in the courts of the Lord is better than a thousand" (Psa. 84:10). They know Him in their spirits like a husband knows his wife in the flesh. Yet, they really become "one Spirit" with the Lord (II Cor. 6:17). Unless there has been, therefore, this experience of the knowledge of God (which dissi-

pates the possibility of prolonged deception), no new birth has taken place. This wonderful provision seals off the purposes of the Devil and frustrates his efforts. As we grow in this knowledge of God, we not only become familiar with the Father of all mercies, but we also come to a place where we are "not ignorant of Satan's devices" (II Cor. 2:11).

"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Here is the wonderful spring from which the knowledge of God springs. "They shall all know me, FOR I will forgive their iniquity." Do not turn the truth around here; it does not say that He will forgive their sins because they know Him, but that they will know Him because He shall forgive their sins. He does not blot their iniquities from His memory because of what they have done; or because of what they want to do, but because He "will have compassion upon whom He will have compassion" (Rom. 9:15). The basis for this remission is the "blood of the New Testament" (Luke 22:20) which was supplied by "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). To forgive sins is synonymous with blotting them out (Isa. 43:25), casting them behind His back (Isa. 38:17), though sin is like scarlet, making it white as snow (Isa. 1:18). **It is the righteous removal of sins from the consciousness of God.** So thorough is this removal that God may say; "I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither have I seen perverseness in Israel" (Numbers 23:21). Such as have their sins forgiven are pure, clean, holy, and spotless before the Father. Their sins have been "laid" upon the Lamb of God, and His righteousness has been imputed unto them through faith (Isa. 53; Rom. 5). So real was this transaction, that it is written; "He was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21). I realize that many declare that this is not a proper translation, that it should read that Jesus was made a "sin offering for us"; but their presumption only manifests their basic ignorance of God. **Before we could be made really righteous, Christ had to be made real sin.** When that feat was accomplished by Omnipotence, sin was done away, cast behind the back of God, and the "transgression finished."

What Shall We Say To These Things?

There are those that love to speak about the New Testament; "New Testament Church"; "New Testament eldership", "New Testament believers", etc. Their language is as mere prattle to those that know the truth. **A New Testament church is one that has the Law of God in the inward parts of its members; it is one that has the Law of God written upon the hearts of its constituents; it is one that holds the True and Living God as pre-eminent in daily life; it is one that has the protecting and merciful hand of God upon it; it is one that needs not have its members exhorted to "Know the Lord", for they all know Him, from the least to the greatest; it is one that has experienced the cleansing of the heart from sin.** Now, no church that lacks

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“Unskillful In The Word of Righteousness”

“For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe”—
Hebrews 5:13

“For everyone who continues to feed on milk is obviously **inexperienced** and **unskilled** in the doctrines of righteousness, (that is, of conformity to the Divine will in purpose, thought and action), for he is a mere infant—not able to talk yet” (Amplified New Testament). “For everyone who lives on milk is **unskilled** in the word of righteousness, for he is a child” (Revised Standard Version). “For anyone who is limited to milk is **unacquainted** with Christian truth, for he is only an infant” (Goodspeed). “For anyone who continues to love on “milk” is obviously **immature**—he simply has not grown up” (Letters to young churches). “When a person is still living on milk it shows he **isn’t very far along in the Christian life, and doesn’t know much** about the difference between right and wrong. He is still a baby Christian” (Living Letters). “For everyone who is fed on milk is **unskilled** in the word of justice; he is but a child” (Confraternity—Douay Version). “For everyone that partaketh of milk is **without experience** of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe” (American Standard Revised).

The text set before us signifies a truth that serves to awaken us to the pathetic spiritual conditions about us. To those enlightened souls, there is an acute awareness during these times that we are living in the midst of a spiritual famine of the hearing of the Word of the Lord. As Amos testified; “Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, **but of hearing the words of the Lord:** and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from North even to the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and **shall not find it**” (Amos 8:11-12). It was further testified that this spiritual famine would be so intense, so demanding upon the hearts of men, that even the “fair virgins and young men” would “faint for thirst” (verse 13). Now, it is acknowledged that there is a spiritual awakening abroad in the land today—a fresh and vitalizing, pulsating, interest in those things that wane not with age. God is working in the midst of the earth, creating situations that shall eventuate in His own glory and praise. But we are not speaking here of interest; we are not referring to intense searching or scanning of the horizon for a word from the Lord. **We are speaking of a condition that finds the true word of the living God scarcely being sounded; of a situation so perverse and an age so dark, that to find the word of the Lord is well nigh impossible.** Deep in obscurity under the rubble of “vain tradition” (I Pet. 1:18), the Word of the Lord lies buried. The Bible has become a denominational handbook, with various texts arbitrarily chosen and propounded for the express purpose of building a humanistic organization and institution. Men scarcely know what

it is to simply be “in Christ.” The Bible does not stand as a veritable testimony from God to the hearts of men, but is rather held forth as a mysterious book that may only be interpreted by means of the denominational handbook or commentary. The sound of the “everlasting Gospel” (Rev. 14:6) is so strange that, once heard, men stagger in unbelief or marvel at its diverseness from the common religious message of the day. That is the situation which confronts us, and it is in the background of such a lamentable condition that this text is set forth to our hearts today.

The world does not lack for religion, even though there is a famine of hearing the word of the Lord. There is still a lot of Bible being sent out, preached, taught, and heralded. Teeming activity marks many circles, and learned discourses on Scriptural texts are not altogether uncommon. But this condition intensifies the problem, because it tends to catch the saints “unawares”, a most favorite tactic of our adversary, the Devil (Gal. 2:4; Jude 4). It is much the same condition that existed among the Hebrews to whom the Holy Spirit witnessed in our text. There was much religion, much Scripture, much knowledge of the surface matters, and of the statements of the revelation of God. Yet, there was almost a total ignorance of the significance of those things, and of the bearing that they have upon the life of faith. To all such, our Father addresses Himself through the Holy Spirit.

What Is “milk”?

Almost universally, I believe, men are disposed to think of “milk” as lesser or more discernible doctrines, while “meat” (Heb. 5:14) refers to the more profound teachings of the Word. Thus the teaching of the cross, of salvation, living, etc., are treated as “milk”, while matters concerning the Godhead, election, and God’s love are considered to be “meat.” But is this what is in the mind of the Apostle? Does “milk” and “meat” refer to different segments of the written word of God (II Tim. 3:16)? The fact that the very epistle containing these statements is confessed to be profound and beyond the comprehension of the average churchmen ought to indicate to our hearts that this is not the meaning of the writer. If it were, then, indeed the writer did not feed his readers with “milk”, as he declared, but with “meat.”

“Milk” refers to the **words** of the Scripture themselves—**all of them.** It is the “Word” that is considered “milk”, as it is written; “As newborn babes, desire the sincere MILK OF THE WORD that ye may grow thereby” (I Pet. 2:2). **The text itself is the food for the babe in Christ—not interpretations, nor great dissertations on its meaning—but the Word itself!** That is our nourishment, the means whereby we are developed and advanced from childhood to adulthood in Jesus Christ. As it is written; “From a child thou hast known the Scriptures, which are able to make thee WISE unto salvation” (II Tim. 3:15); i.e., they are able to bring thee into a state of spiritual maturity and adulthood. **Because man “lives by every word that proceedeth out**

of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4), there is no real development of spirit, no actual growth of the inner man, until the raw and unmixed word of the Lord begins to course through the mind and heart of the child of God. All other growth is only imagined, and is not real at all!

Like the Bereans, those that feed upon the milk "search the Scriptures to see whether those things be so" (Acts 17:11). Not being aware of the true nature of the Kingdom of God, they are in a manner of speaking, strict legalists. They must have a "thus saith the Lord", else they cannot comprehend the sense of the teaching. Everyone begins here, and there is no shame in being here for a reasonable period of time. But we are not to remain in this state. We must grow in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), growing in the "grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18) until we "have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16) and are able to "discern good and evil." **There is to be developed in the child of God a sensitivity to things about him—such a sensitivity, indeed, that does not require meticulous instruction in all matters.** His own personal discernment is to be so developed, because of his union with His Beloved, that "righteous judgement" (Jno. 7:24) is wrought through him. It is not that this judgement is in divorcement from the Word of God—God forbid! Rather, it flows out from a spiritual familiarity with it. By "spiritual familiarity", I refer to that blessed experience of being guided into the Truth by the Holy Spirit of truth (Jno. 16:13). **In short, the milk of the word is what it says, the "meat" is what it means, or the significance of it, and the bearing that it has upon our lives.** Those that use "meat" are able to apply the Word of God to their own lives and circumstances, thereby bringing glory to God. Those that use "milk" are those who, as yet have seen no relationship between the statements of the Lord and the sphere of life which they occupy.

The Alarming Condition

The alarming condition before us is that myriads, if not the majority, of churchmen and churchwomen, are in total spiritual paralytic condition, so that they are unable to associate the words of the Scripture with their own individual calling in life. How many wives, for instance, have associated the Word of the Lord with their domestic roles? How many husbands? How many children? How many servants? How many masters? How many constituents of political kingdoms? If you do not know what the Lord says on these things, then, indeed, you must "desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby." You must get into the Word with an "open face" and an honest heart, and discover how alienated you really are from the God you profess to follow! I am, indeed, persuaded, that were the early brethren of our Lord to visit the churches of our day—the most orthodox and strict, they would consider them as heathen. The mini-skirted brigade, the dominating wives, timorous husbands, disobedient children, idle housewives, griping tax-payers, murmuring laborers—all of these declare openly a state of

enmity against the Lord. And yet, tragic as it may appear, most of these same people consider themselves to be Christians; some think themselves to be quite advanced in the things of the Lord. But they have not yet come from childhood, and are even worse than babes, because they do not even thrive on a diet of the "milk of the word", to say nothing of meat.

The Spirit witnesses; "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). The fact is that **God has spoken in His word on every situation and condition of life—clearly and concisely.** He has revealed His mind, and His mind is decisive concerning right and wrong. If God declares a thing to be an abomination or displeasing to Himself, it is wrong, regardless of the mores of the society in which one lives. If the Lord puts His stamp of good pleasure upon a thing, it is good, whether it is popular or not. Now, the babe may well know what the Lord has said, but he is unable to associate it with himself. **The one that is of "full age" not only knows what the Lord says, but he is able to adapt it to his life; he is able to translate it into living, because his "senses", or capacities of expression and perception, have been trained through the Word to spot what is right and wrong.**

Some Modern Examples

How many husbands are there that declare they are growing Christians that are irresponsible and "care not for their own, especially those of their own house" (I Tim. 5:8), or who are "bitter against" their wives, in spite of the declaration of the Lord (Col. 3:19). Are there not many wives that confess to be followers of Christ that find it to be distasteful to "love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, obedient to their own husbands" (Tit. 2:4-5). How many children balk at being obedient, "honoring" and "obeying their father and mother" (Eph. 6:1-2), even though they claim to be believers in Jesus? We could go on and on in these examples, but this should suffice to reveal one glaring truth to your heart—the modern church is impotent when it comes to applying the truth of Scripture to their lives, thus indicating that they are babes—no matter how much Scripture they know; no matter how pious they sound or sacrificial they appear. Their "senses" have not been exercised to discern good and evil", that is plain. The current dress styles of this age, it appears to me, have been permitted of our heavenly Father, to demonstrate the actual state of rebellion and ignorance that exists in the professed church. Babyhood is all about us as young women openly acknowledge that they are unable to discern what is "modest apparel" (I Tim. 2:9).

Now, these things have not been cited as mere hobby-horses. They are rather illustrative of the very thing of which we are speaking. We do not condemn those that believe in Christ that have these uncomely traits. Rather, we dearly treasure many of them for their interest in the Beloved Savior of the world. Notwithstanding,

they are immature and infants in Christ, and they must be received as such. No indication must be given them that they are mature until they are able to "discern good and evil"; until they have acquired some degree of proficiency in "casting off the sin and weight which doth so easily beset them" (Heb. 12:1-2). Until such time as that, they are to acquiesce to a diet of the word of God, feeding upon it, letting it find its way into their hearts, in order that they might grow into mature spirits.

Other Implications Of This Truth

If those that "use milk" are "unskillful in the word of righteousness", what must be said of those that do not even use milk; of those that are not even acquainted, or attempting to become acquainted with the Word of life? **Every believer must acquaint himself with the word of God, else he cannot and will not grow.** One may be brought to believe that mere abstract experience will make one a spiritual adult; but that is not the case. **Unless the Scriptures are regularly consulted, there is no means of discerning the evil.** Here is where the mind of the Lord is made known, where expression is given to experience. Our experiences of life are quite mysterious until they are expressed by the Word of the Lord. For every experience of life, there is an expression in the Bible. Some saint before you walked the same valley, and was inspired to express it in words that the Holy Ghost taught, in Scripture. This is one of the rich aspects of the Psalms; the man of God inscribes in words his own experiences of heart and spirit, so that those of us that followed him would be able to understand the wonderful maneuvers of the Lord. Therefore, let us continually resort to the Word for regular and life-giving instruction. The "Word of His grace" is truly able "to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). If we "receive with meekness the engrafted word", we must do so with the Knowledge that it is "able to save the soul" (Js. 1:21). The Scriptures are good and profitable for "doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17). Whatever you think of supplemental books, and whatever good may come from them, they are always to be considered **AFTER** the Word. You do not cook and then read the recipe; the reading comes before the cooking. So it is with the Word of God and books that comment upon it. The Bible is the recipe, the books are the cooking—some good, and some bad. **Growth, then, is first of all conditioned upon your subjectivity to the Word of God.** If you are not familiar with the Biblical text—then get familiar with it. You are only alive as you have this word in you. You live by every word of it; devour it!

Another aspect of this text is to be found in the examination of profitable teachers and instructors. Those preachers and teachers that are never available to get beneath the paper in the Bible are truly "unskillful in the word of righteousness", for they are limited to "milk". Many a preacher knows the text of the Bible, but is

thoroughly unable to see the evil of spiritual Babylon, the decadence in the professed church. They are unable to decipher great and popular heresies that have infiltrated the church. They may be able to tie Scripture verses together, but they cannot tie life and Truth together. They are impotent when it comes to translating the Scriptures into a "living epistle, written of God and read of all men" (II Cor. 3:1ff). Beware of all such men, for they will not be able to bring you beyond the point which they themselves have reached.

Conclusion

It may appear to some that we are being a bit pessimistic, and some have even charged us with being hateful. But these varied responses only come because of the famine of the hearing of the word that is in the land. There is not an intimate knowledge of the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 4:20)—at least, such knowledge is not common. When an apostate church can be settled in the midst of devoutly (I suppose, devoutly) religious men, and scarcely a word be spoken about it, there is no "discernment of good and evil." And where that does not exist, men are "unskillful in the word of righteousness". We lament this sad state—a state that finds those that lead the professed church "unskillful"—often, by their own confession. Surely it is a time to pray to the Lord of the harvest; a time to pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Let those that see the case speak; let all others devote themselves to "desiring the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby." It may be, by the grace of God, that soon the sense of the Word will burst upon their hearts. Praise God!

A Justified Spirit Of Indignation

Recently we heard from one of our precious sisters, Beverly Brunner, of Oakley, Illinois.

She had been upbraided for quoting from the Prophets. The objectors declared that such Scripture was from the "Old Testament", further stating in pious and self-illuminating tones; "You can read the Old Testament, but you shouldn't quote from it." The thought occurred to me that it is too bad our Lord and the Apostles were not cognizant of this principle of interpretation. Indeed, a goodly part of what men call the New Testament would be removed if such a bigoted rule were employed. Notwithstanding, however, my own observations of the case, it was delightful to my spirit to behold the righteous indignation of our sister Brunner. Rising in defence of the Lord, and siding with the truth, she wrote the following. If there be any of our readers that fall into the woeful category mentioned above, let them see to it that they take heed to these words.

"When someone says that I should not quote from the Old Testament, then my spirit rises in rebellion against such unrighteousness. Since when can I not quote and believe what the Living God has said, and I say quote **and** believe; for if I am not supposed to quote what the Lord has said, then this must mean that I also cannot

believe all of His words. O, what a lie is this that Satan has sent forth in the world today.

"Ye people, why believe ye a lie; is it because your father is Satan? Christ hath said, 'For he (Satan) is a liar, and the father of it.' Ye who claim to be 'of the New Testament order', have you truly read what Christ and the Apostles have said? I believe a great deal of what they say is quoted from the Prophets of old. If Christ and the Apostles (our forefathers) can quote from the prophets of old, who also by faith in Christ Jesus are our forefathers, then why can't we quote from them likewise—since I believe what they say to be the Word of God?"

In the Scripture it says "the Lord liveth, and blessed by my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted" (Psa. 18:46). Now, according to those 'of the New Testament order', I am not supposed to quote this verse. However, since I know that 'the Lord liveth, and that He is my Rock and the God of my salvation', I will quote it and shout it from the highest mountain. This is only one verse; there are hundreds more. I don't know what kind of God you have that you cannot quote what He has to say. It will do no good to use the excuse, or rather lie, that all that is in the Old Testament has been fulfilled, as the Lord has said, 'for he (Satan) is a liar, and the father of it.'

"The word of God came unto Zechariah the prophet of old; 'Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings' (Zech. 1:4). The Lord's word has not been changed. He is still telling us this same message today! Do not tell me that I cannot quote it, for I believe what it says, and I will proclaim it whenever the need arises. 'How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep' (Prov. 6:9); 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light' (Eph. 5:14).

"I do not claim to know all of the mind of God; but one thing I know: that God through the Holy Spirit gave us the Scripture, and as long as the Lord gives me breath to breathe, and it be His will, I shall proclaim and quote His word from Genesis to Revelation. Praise God!

"How long, O foolish man, wilt thou shun the Word of God shouting all has been fulfilled of old, and that it pertained only to the Jews? But know ye not that God is the God of all the earth, the stars, and the moon above, the angels, and the universe, the Jew and the Gentile. All of these are the work of His hands; all belong to Him!

"So tell me not that His words are not meant for me to hear. Deny this, and ye deny God; what a dreadful state you are in! Praise God through faith in Jesus Christ, a child of Abraham am I, a Jew! You see, O foolish one, you through faith must see that the things of God pertain today both to you and me. O turn ye from your evil ways."

Sister Beverly Brunner
Oakley, Illinois

It is refreshing to my spirit to find God's children speaking in the behalf of the God of

truth. There can be no doubt that such is comely, and appears a worthy endeavor before the God of heaven, together with all of His holy angels. Perhaps we should take this opportunity to exhort all of the people of God to be equally as defiant in the face of the enemy. Many of you attend churches where restraint is placed upon your tongues—refuse to submit to it. Speak the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, whether authorized by the institution or not. When the Apostles were threatened and commanded not to preach in the Name of Jesus anymore, they answered; "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). Shortly thereafter, they were arrested once again, and after submitting to a beating were "commanded that they should not speak in the Name of Jesus." No sooner had the Apostles left the prison-hold, than it was written; "And they departed from the presence of the counsel, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name. AND DAILY IN THE TEMPLE, AND IN EVERY HOUSE, THEY CEASED NOT TO TEACH AND PREACH JESUS CHRIST" (Acts 5:40-42).

Some of you readers hold prominent positions in dead churches—and you do so largely because you have subdued your own witness and mitigated the testimony of the Lord which you have within. Think not to yourselves that this will gain the confidence of the congregation or its leaders. You do greatly sin against the Living God in stopping your mouths, and Satan has won a decided victory in your case. Open your mouths—let the Gospel out; tell what great things that the Lord hath done. If they cast you out, rejoice! If they receive your testimony, rejoice! But do not acquiesce to their judgment; do not permit the carnal to dictate your course of action. You are pre-eminently a representative of the King, and as such, you must speak in the face of certain jeopardy, if need be. See that you quench not the Spirit, but become a yokefellow with such as this beloved sister. Bear the standard high—God shall be your exceeding great Reward!

Who Is God?

(From page 6)

you prophesy, and cast out devils, and do many wonderful works in His Name, if He declares; "I never knew you", all is lost. Those words; "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23) signify; "I never had fellowship with you"; "I did not realize your presence with me"; "You were not of one mind with me"; "You never really saw Me as I am"; "You expended your energy for nothing, because I was not with you"; "You did not have a realization of my greatness that comes by illumination; you were only cognizant of things, of times, of places, of works—therefore, you cannot live with me; you are forever to be banished from my presence because you chose things and works above Me, and I am above all."

What Does "One" Really Mean?

Numerous religious controversies have raged in the world over the term "one"—particularly in reference to the "Godhead" (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col.2:9). With tenacious dogmatism denominationalists of particular ranks insist that there is one personality in the Godhead. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, being but different appellations and offices held by the same Person. Most of these people claim that "Jesus is the name of that One Person. Numerous doctrines, then, are developed around this hypothesis, and proclaimed with vigorous boldness and assurance.

Now we do not propose to answer all of the theories and suppositions that have evolved in the defence of the proposition mentioned above. The sole purpose of this article is to uncover the malicious use of the Scripture that is prevalent in those "Jesus only" circles, and those that claim to be "unitarians"; in short, all who defend the statement that there is only "one" Person in the Godhead. **The Word of the King is never to be used for the perpetration of anything but the truth—that is axiomatic. Its primary purpose is the conveyance of the mind of God, not the establishment of dogmas that are appealing to eager institutionalists.** I do understand that there are many people in the camp of sophists to which I refer that appear quite sincere; men whose hearts are thoroughly wrapped up in what they believe, and who are persuaded that their embracement has come from God Almighty. But these suppositions in no way enhance the thing embraced; they do not fortify what they have to say. If it can be shown correctly that the foundation upon which they have built is false, then their entire proposition and superstructure of dogma will fall to the ground. The pieces, then, may be easily swept away.

The Passages Used By The Dogmatists

It would not be fair to uproot the building without first exposing the pillars upon which it rests. At this point, I shall deal only with those passages wherein the word "one" is mentioned. "The Lord our God is ONE Lord" (Deut. 6:4); "The first of all commandments is; Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE Lord. . . ." (Mark 12:29); "Seeing it is ONE God, which shall justify the heathen. . . ." (Rom. 3:30); "I and my Father are ONE" (Jno. 10:30). There are other related passages employed, but these will suffice to show the general trend of the thinking against which I now direct my remarks.

The False Supposition

The false supposition at this point is that the term "one" is always used in a numerical sense. Also, it is incorrect to suppose that all singularity necessarily rules out multiple components. That these views are clearly false may be evidenced by the Holy Spirit's use of the word "one". In these cases, we will find that numerical significance is not the point, thus establishing the latitude of terminology used by the Lord God Himself. Note, that our unitarian friends state that if the Lord is "one", there is only one person; there cannot be two or three, for that would make "two or

three Gods", they say. "If the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are all God, then we have three Gods. Rather, God is all three."

The Express Language of The Spirit

"For this cause shall a man cleave unto his wife, and they shall be ONE flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5); "The prophets declare good things to the king with ONE mouth" (II Chron. 18:12); ". . . keep through thine own Name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be ONE as we are" (Jno. 17:11); "that they all may be ONE; as Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be ONE in us. . . . And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be ONE, even as we are one" (Jno. 17:21, 22); ". . . that they may be made perfect in ONE." (Jno. 17:23); "And the multitude of them that believed were of ONE heart and ONE soul" (Acts 4:32); "For we being many are ONE bread, and ONE body" (I Cor. 10:17); "Ye are all ONE in Christ." (Gal. 3:28); "Who (God) hath made both (Jew and Gentile) ONE." Eph. 2:14. "He that is joined to the Lord is ONE spirit" (I Cor. 6:17); "As the body is ONE and hath many members." (I Cor. 12:12), etc.

Observe the usage of that word by the Holy Spirit, and see to it that your own mind learns what that meaneth. We have two individuals—man and wife—being ONE flesh. Does that mean that there is a fusion of their biological consistency? Does it mean that they are no longer two individuals? Does it mean there is only one person, one body, one person? That is how sophists reason concerning the Godhead—why not here also? Again, we have the prophets speaking with ONE mouth. Does that indicate that only one individual did the speaking? Does it mean that the prophets were not really **prophets**, but rather a **prophet**? Are we to look for one person because it says "One mouth"? That, again, is the reasoning of the unitarians concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Again, we have our own blessed Lord praying that His disciples, as well as all that were to believe on Him through their word, may be ONE, even as He and the Father are ONE. Is He praying for the dissolution of their individuality? Will that prayer be answered when there remains but one person? Is it possible for there to be many, yet one? If we are many different personalities, many different individuals, and yet ONE, why must bigots insist that God must be one individual person if He is one? Did not our Lord pray that our oneness might be even as His own Oneness with the Father? Again, the early church is described as having ONE heart and ONE soul? Did they cease to possess individual identity? Will they no longer be judged as individuals? Was it not also true of them that "every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:5)? Or, is it true that while they were many ("a multitude"), yet they were one? Again, we are expressly told that we are "MANY . . . yet ONE"; is that not plain enough? He is speaking of algebraic equations, or numerical identity! Away with that sophistry—it has no place in the Kingdom of God. Let foolishness be the appellation

over the world, but let none that take the Name of the Lord bear that characteristic! Again, we are expressly told that whoever is joined to the Lord is ONE spirit. Does that indicate that the Lord is no longer his lord, but that they are now equals? Are they one person? Is there no longer two, numerically speaking? Again, it is wonderfully true that the body possessed by each man is one in unity, yet many in constitution—this is the word of the Lord. The body of Christ, Paul asserts, is the same way—ONE, yet many. Does that seem to be an incongruity to some of our fellows? Then your unlearned heart is betrayed! You must realize that God is wiser than you, and if He declares many, yet one, it is the truth—a true representation of reality!

The Sense of The Word "One"

In saying that man and wife are become "one flesh", the Lord was speaking of the unity of their persons, the conjunction of their bodies, the community of their interests, and the reciprocity of their affections. In a sense their individuality was lost, in that selfishness was gloriously dissolved in **common interest and desires**. That is being ONE! In stating that the prophets spoke with one mouth, the Lord referred to the **unanimity** of their message; there was no variance or variety in their proclamations. They all spoke the truth, the precise truth, uncontradicted, and united. Their message was a common message, just as though only one individual had spoken it. In praying for the unity of believers, our Lord was speaking of their common goal, their common aspirations and desires. He was beseeching the Father for their joint-involvement with Himself and the Father. He sought for the **destruction of self-interests and absorption into the purpose and will of God**. That is, too, what it means to be ONE. When it was said that the whole multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul, it spoke of their **joint participation** in the joy of the Holy Ghost; of their **common enrapturement** with the Lord Himself. There, in that early band of believers, **the individuality of interests was wonderfully merged into a common purpose and interest**. Their oneness of soul was reflected in their enthusiasm for the same thing, their invigoration by the Truth and the God of Truth. With them, there was no variance in their hearts; no difference in their faith, so to speak. It was as though there was only one person, and yet there was a multitude. That is what it means to be ONE. In declaring that the body of Christ is many, yet ONE, the Lord is pointing out the actual **divergency of oneness**. **Oneness possesses many**

components, all perfectly joined together. There is no warring among these components—different though they may be. They all flow together, fit together, work together, compliment one another. That is something of what seems to be ONE. By saying that the Jew and Gentile has been made ONE, the Lord is lifting our vision to behold His own wondrous works. He has taken two bodies of people; separate in every sense but that of their derived manhood—and He has so united them together that they do not hate one another anymore; they do not fight one another any longer. They possess a common purpose, common worship, common love. The same glorious Lord delights them both. That, too, is somewhat of what it means to be ONE. When our Lord states that he that is joined to the Lord is ONE spirit, He is referring us to the new birth wherein we become partakers of the Divine Nature (II Pet. 1:4). It is now that the thoughts and purposes of the Lord course through our own minds and hearts. We now seek His interest, and not our own—yea we crucify the flesh, together with the affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24). In a sense, our individuality has been brought to an end, in that we no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him gave Himself for us (II Cor. 5:16).

Now this should serve to suffice the honest inquirer, though there is much more to be said.

The Holy Spirit has so used this word as to mould our thinking, and those that give an ear to what the Spirit saith to the churches will find their thinking correctly altered. "ONE" speaks of community of interests, common desires, lack of variance, absence of selfishness, common purposes, identical enthusiasm and motivation, perfect unity of thought, aim, and words. That is what it means for the Father and the Son to be ONE! It speaks not of their numerical significance, but of their essence; of their essential natures, of their word and work.

To me, it is far more profound to so behold God; this calls for faith, for there is nothing in all of creation that perfectly parallels it. The Father, who purposes all things; the Son by Whom the Father created all things, and for Whom they were created; the Holy Spirit, Who conveys the reality of things to the hearts of men—that these three could so perfectly be One is a staggering thing to the carnal mind. Yet, it is a great delight to those that have heard the voice of the All Wise, All Sufficient God!

What Is The New Testament?

(From page 10)

these things is a New Testament church, but is rather a "synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9).

Further, let those that use the words "New Testament" learn to use it correctly, for our speech becomes the basis for the formation of our concepts, and our concepts become the foundation for the formation of our lives. Too, let all those that know in their hearts that carnality and disagreement with God marks their assembly, confess that it is not a New Testament church, and come out from it, as the Lord commands (Rev. 18).