

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

IN THIS WORLD, WE EXPERIENCE SUFFERINGS: BUT GLORY IS COMING

SECOND CORINTHIANS

✠ II CORINTHIANS

An overview of the Book of Second Corinthians, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson #22

COMMENTARY ON: 5:6-10

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

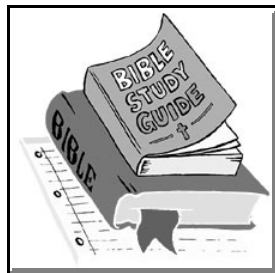
"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

MINISTERING IN CONFIDENCE

One of the curses of a merely academic approach to preaching and teaching, is that it does not gender the full assurance of faith. However, such confidence is needed if the work of the Lord is to be done. In this passage, Paul testifies to the possession of such confidence. That assurance relates to the experience that is common to all who are in Christ Jesus – the possession of the treasure of the knowledge of the glory of God in an earthen vessel. What appears to the flesh to be a source of doubt and fear is actually the very basis for a strong and stable confidence.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-2

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Epistle of Second Corinthians

Lesson Number 23



TRANSLATION LEGEND: AMPLIFIED or AMP = Amplified Bible, (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), IE = International English, ISV = International Standard Version (1967), KJV=King James Version (1611), LIVING = Living Bible (1971), MONTGOMERY = Montgomery's New Testament (2001), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS = J B Phillips New Testament (1962), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS = William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE= Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE= Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG=Friberg Lexicon, UBS=UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA=Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT=Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER=Thayer's Greek Lexicon

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

KNOWING AND PERSUADING

“^{5:11} Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.¹² For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.¹³ For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.” (2 Cor 5:11-13)

INTRODUCTION

Our text is an example of extended spiritual reasoning. **In this case, the Spirit is moving Paul to reason concerning the implications and influence of the New Covenant.** It is unfortunate that the contemporary Christian community has not provided men with a clear view of the New Covenant. This is, in my judgment, one of the great transgressions of our time. Many, if not all, of the flawed theology extant within the church can be traced to the misapprehension of the nature and effectiveness of this covenant – the covenant that is altogether new.

This New Covenant has been ratified by the blood of Christ (Heb 10:29), put into place by God the Father (Heb 8:8), and is being administered by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:8). This is also a covenant that is presently being mediated by the glorified and enthroned Christ – “*the Man Christ Jesus*” (1 Tim 2:5).

At the foundational level, the provisions of this covenant include (1) God's laws are put into the mind and written upon the heart, (2) God is intimately identified with the people, (3) the people willingly embrace God as their

God, (4) all of the constituents of the covenant know God, (5) God is merciful to their unrighteousness, and (6) God remembers their sins and iniquities no more (Heb 8:10-12). **It is difficult to conceive of anything, other than the Persons of the Father and the Son, being more pivotal to sound thought and Divine acceptance than an understanding of this covenant.**

I know of nothing in all of Scripture that suggests that a persistent ignorance of this covenant is in any way acceptable. The third chapter of Second

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- WE PERSUADE MEN (5:11b)
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- SOMEWHAT TO ANSWER (5:12c)
- NOT IN HEART (5:12d)
- IT IS TO GOD (5:13a)
- IT IS FOR YOUR CAUSE (5:13b)
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Corinthians is an extensive exposition of the **implications** of this covenant. The third chapter of Galatians provides a unique proclamation of the **priority** of the New Covenant, as well as its **antiquity**. The eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters of Hebrews expounds the **effectiveness** of this covenant, announcing that it has reduced the Old Covenant to a state of obsolescence (Heb 8:13), and thus is it passing away.

This is a covenant – the **only** covenant – that deals effectively with sin (Heb 10:17). It is the **only** one in which justification, or the imputation of righteousness, is realized (2 Cor 3:9). **No** other covenant provides for peace with God (Heb 13:20), drawing near to God (Heb 10:22), and having free access to His marvelous grace (Rom 5:2). There has **never** been another covenant with a heavenly Mediator, as this one has (Heb 8:6). This is the **only** covenant in which people are made “*dead to sin*” and “*alive unto God*” (Rom 6:11). Jesus associated His blood with this covenant (Heb 11:25). It is referred to as a “*better covenant which was established upon better promises*” (Heb 8:6). It is further affirmed that those in Christ Jesus “*are come*” to this very covenant (Heb 12:24). **That is, they have come within the**

circumference of its benefits, and become recipients of its blessings.

One would think that such a marvelous covenant would be gladly embraced by the people, and that all confusion concerning it would be eradicated from among the people. However, this is not at all the case. **From the very beginning, the church has had trouble comprehending the New Covenant.** Early on there were teachers who tried to mingle it with circumcision (Acts 15:1). Some perceived it as being associated with procedures and human disciplines (Col 2:19-22). There were even notions that this covenant somehow condoned sin (Rom 6:1-3). Some thought it was a mere revision of the Old Covenant, with some additional laws being placed upon men (Heb 7:19-28).

In our time, the waters have been muddied even more with massive amounts of religious tradition and a heavy sprinkling of the wisdom of **men. There is hardly a body of people identified as a “church” that has been provided with some sound teaching on this subject.** For this reason, life is lived just as though there was no New Covenant at all. Men are being subjected to a deluge of rules and regulations that are presented as the secret to living acceptable lives before God – and they have all come from the well of human wisdom.

This is precisely the situation that Paul found at Corinth. The church was dominated with the spirit of carnality. This situation was so deplorable that Paul, after spending more than eighteen months among the people wrote, “*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*” (1 Cor 3:1-3). What a pitiful condition for a people who had been subjected to such an abundance of truth! They “*came behind in no gift*” (1 Cor 1:7), but they also led the way in being judged and chastened of the Lord (1 Cor 11:30-31). Their assemblies were characterized by confusion (1 Cor 14:33), inconsideration (1 Cor 11:21), and

inappropriate expressions (1 Cor 14:28, 34). There were some who denied that there was a resurrection (1 Cor 15:12).

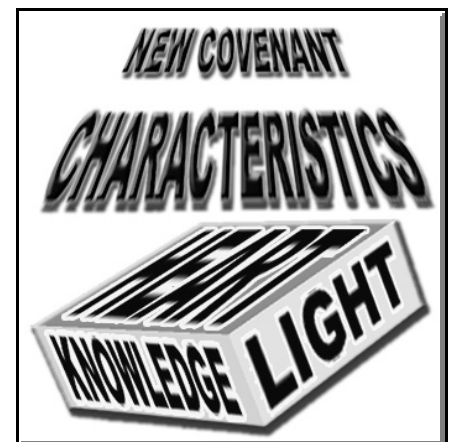
What was the root of these deplorable conditions? Why did they exist? Paul is coming to grips with this in Second Corinthians. **He is showing the people that they were living in contradiction of the New Covenant which they professed to have embraced.**

In the third and fourth chapters of this book, Paul shows some of the characteristics of the New Covenant. It is a covenant of spiritual knowledge, spiritual life, and the involvement of the heart. These are not areas in which men are to establish goals. They are not the presentation of holy ideals. Rather, Paul presents things the way they **ARE** in Christ Jesus, and within the framework of the New Covenant. **While we do not intend to sit in judgment upon people who make a profession of faith, where the evidences of New Covenant life are not found, we cannot accept the claim that it is possessed.**

THE HEART

New Covenant life is one of the heart. Believers themselves are described as the epistles of Christ, written “*in fleshly tables of the heart*” (2 Cor 3:3). The obscuring veil that was once over their heart has now been removed, so that **their heart is unobstructed.** Now, the sanctifying truth of God can be comprehended (2 Cor 3:15-16).

Regeneration itself is described in terms of the heart. “*For God, who*



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commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6). The Holy Spirit is also described as an “earnest,” or “pledge,” that has been put into our hearts: “Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor 1:22).

What marvelous involvements of the heart are realized within the New Covenant!

- ☛ In Christ, our “hearts” are “purified by faith” (Acts 15:9), so that our thoughts and motives are made acceptable to God.
- ☛ When a person responds favorably to the Word of God, it is said that their “heart” has been “opened” by God (Acts 16:14).
- ☛ True circumcision is “of the heart,” where the callous created by sin is removed (Rom 2:29).
- ☛ The “love of God is shed abroad in our hearts” by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5).
- ☛ True obedience is “from the heart” (Rom 6:17).
- ☛ It is “with the heart” that men believe (Rom 10:10).
- ☛ God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son “into our hearts, crying ‘Abba, Father’” (Gal 4:6).
- ☛ Christ dwells “in” our “hearts by faith” (Eph 3:17).
- ☛ The will of God is done “from the heart” (Eph 6:6).
- ☛ Spiritual maturity is described as the “Day Star” rising in our “hearts” (2 Pet 1:19).

The New Covenant is unquestionably one of the heart. It impacts upon the character of men, constraining them to think differently, and engage themselves in the good work of the Lord. Because of the “new heart” (Ezek 36:26), things that require the heart abound in those who are in Christ

Jesus. These include love (1 Cor 13:4-8), joy (Rom 5:11; 14:17), peace (Rom 14:17; 15:13; Phil 4:7), boldness (Eph 3:12; Heb 10:19), confidence (Eph 3:12; Heb 3:6,14; 10:35), assurance (Col 2:2; Heb 6:11; 10:22), hope (Rom 5:2; Rom 8:24-25; Gal 5:5; Heb 3:6), fervency (Rom 12:11; James 5:16; 1 Pet 1:22), zeal (Tit 2:14), comprehension (Eph 3:18), and much more. All of these are traits of the renewed heart.

KNOWLEDGE

The New Covenant is also an economy of knowledge – spiritual knowledge. At the foundational level, all of the people, from the least to the greatest, “know” God. As it is written, “And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest” (Heb 8:11). Because of this circumstance, wherever God is not known among professing believers – or where He is not to some degree understood – a shameful condition exists. Thus Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Awake to righteousness,

☛ “For we **know** that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor 5:1).

☛ “Therefore we are always confident, **knowing** that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord” (2 Cor 5:6).

☛ “**Knowing** therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences” (2 Cor 5:11).

By virtue of “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God,” every facet of life has been clarified. This allows the believer to live confidently, and not in a constant state of fear.

LIGHT

Although “light” is closely associated with knowledge, it places the accent more upon the Source of knowledge and understanding. No

Those who are part of the New Covenant are noted for what they “know,” not for what they do not know! The new birth itself is described as the experience of “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God”

and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor 15:34).

Those who are part of the New Covenant are noted for what they “know,” not for what they do not know! The new birth itself is described as the experience of “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (2 Cor 4:6). In the fourth and fifth chapters of Second Corinthians the survival of the saints, together with the maintenance of sound objectives, it traced back to what they know.

☛ “**Knowing** that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (2 Cor 4:14).

man can generate spiritual light. That is the exclusive prerogative of God Himself. In the New Covenant, this is precisely what He does – **shine the light into our hearts.** “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6).

For this reason, the beginning of the “newness of life” is referred to as the time when we were **illuminated.** “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were **illuminated**, ye endured a great fight of afflictions” (Heb 10:32). This is why we also read of the eyes of our understanding being enlightened. “The eyes of your understanding being **enlightened**; that

ye may **know** what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph 1:18). Our new birth is the time when we were first **enlightened**: “For it is impossible for those who were once **enlightened**...” (Heb 6:4).

The possession of spiritual light produces an understanding, discernment, and comprehension within the believer (Eph 1:18; 3:18; 5:17; Col 1:9; Heb 5:14; 1 John 5:20).

Those within the New Covenant have been removed from the darkness in which they once walked, and have been called into the light. “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His **marvelous light**” (1 Pet 2:9). How often this light is mentioned.

- ☛ “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of **light**” (Rom 13:12).
- ☛ “For ye were sometimes darkness,

but now are ye **light** in the Lord: walk as children of **light**” (Eph 5:8).

- ☛ “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in **light**” (Col 1:12).
- ☛ “Ye are all the children of **light**, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1 Thess 5:5)
- ☛ “But if we walk in the **light**, as he is in the **light**, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Ignorance, or a state of not knowing, is contrary to the very nature of the New Covenant. By “ignorance,” I mean a lack of knowledge of the things that have been revealed in Christ Jesus.

Now, with the “heart,” **“knowledge,” and “light” in mind, we will proceed with the exposition**

of our text. Paul will write from an **illuminated** point of view to a people who have had the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God” shined into their hearts. He will not speak of strange things, but of things that are known – things within the grasp of our understanding.



If these things sound strange, it is only because of the clouds of ignorance that emit from modern religion. **While, in Christ, God has placed us within the context of light, the devil has moved upon insensitive and unbelieving men to wrap religion in the cloth of mystery, and immerse it in the dark waters of tradition.** The present penchant for entertainment and popularity has also caused the proliferation of darkness, for that is not the context in which God speaks to His children. Let each soul, with the determination that springs from faith, walk in the light where God has placed them. They, and only then, they will reap the benefit of spiritual understanding and full assurance.

KNOWING THE TERROR OF THE LORD

“5:11a **Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord . . .**”

The apostle is continuing to account for his ministry – both his message and his manner of delivering it. This has been an extended defense because of the circumstances at Corinth. The following conditions required that Paul write in this way.

- ☛ Some in Corinth had doubted that Paul was an apostle.
- ☛ His message was one that conflicted with preaching that was saturated with the wisdom of men.
- ☛ His apostolic credentials could not be confirmed after the manner of men.
- ☛ His personal experiences, resulting

from his ministry, appeared to contradict man’s idea of “good news.”

- ☛ The views of his person, message, and ministry that were extant among the people were imaginations that had to be cast down.

Thus Paul has engaged in an extensive explanation and defense of his ministry. **Because this approach is so strange in our religious culture, it is worthy of a brief review.** My purpose here is to confirm how a spiritual mind establishes the validity of one’s ministry. These references are all found in Second Corinthians.

- ☛ Paul was afflicted for the consolation of the brethren (1:6).
- ☛ He had the sentence of death in

himself that he should not trust in himself, but in God who raises the dead (1:9).

- ☛ In view of past deliverance, he was trusting that God would deliver him in the future (1:10).
- ☛ He rejoiced in the testimony of his conscience (1:12).
- ☛ His life was lived in simplicity (singleness of mind), godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, and by the grace of God (1:12).
- ☛ He wrote nothing the people could not understand (1:13).
- ☛ He did not make his plans lightly, or in a state of vacillation (1:17a).

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None of these things can be learned in the classrooms of men! None of them can be experienced through the wisdom of men. There is no school or seminary that can graduate people with these experiences by means of an established curriculum. None of them can be initiated or maintained by means of worldly wisdom or the human will.

them can be experienced through the wisdom of men. There is no school or seminary that can graduate people with these experiences by means of an established curriculum. None of them can be initiated or maintained by means of worldly wisdom or the human will.

The three abiding qualities of faith, hope, and love (1 Cor 13:13) are woven like three golden threads throughout all of these experiences. They also reflect the manner of the New Covenant and the nature of *"newness of life."*

It ought to be noted that no valid ministry can be driven by rules, procedures, or any other principle in which God and Christ are not prominent and active. Also, no work purporting to be *"of God"* that lacks the characteristics of the New Covenant [as affirmed in Hebrews 8:10-13] can possibly be valid.

- His preaching was not *"yes"* and *"no,"* but consistently was *"yes,"* focusing on unwavering and faithful the promises of God, erected for our hope (1:17-20).
- He did not seek dominion over their faith, but chose to be a helper of their joy (1:23-24).
- He determined not to come to them if it would bring disadvantage to them (2:2).
- When dealing with the sin of the Corinthians, he did so with *"anguish of heart"* and *"many tears"* (2:4).
- He did not corrupt the Word of God, but spoke sincerely before God (2:17).
- He had confidence concerning the Corinthians through Christ and toward God (3:4).
- His sufficiency was of God (3:5).
- He was made an able minister of the Spirit, not of the letter (3:6).
- Because he had hope, he spoke plainly and boldly, not concealing his message, but opening it up (3:12-13).
- Having received mercy from the Lord, he did not faint, or give up (4:1).
- He had renounced the hidden things of dishonesty (4:2a).
- He did not walk in craftiness, speaking subtly, and seeking to snare the people (4:2b).
- He did not handle the Word of God deceitfully (4:2c).

- He made the truth known, commending himself to every man's conscience (4:3d).
- He did not preach himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord (4:5a).
- He was their servant for Jesus' sake (4:5b).
- He experienced trouble on every side, perplexity, persecution, and being cast down (4:8-9).
- He also experienced not being distressed, not being in despair, not being forsaken, and not being destroyed (4:8-9).
- Both the dying of Jesus and the life of Jesus were made known in his body (4:10-11).
- He spoke because he believed (4:13).
- He did not faint because, although his outward man was perishing, his inward man was being renewed day by day (4:16).
- He did not look at the things that are seen, but at those that are not seen (4:18).
- He was always confident, and willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (5:6).
- He walked by faith, and not by sight (5:7).
- He labored to be accepted by God, whether present in or absent from the body (5:9).

None of these things can be learned in the classrooms of men! None of

- **The laws of God written on the heart and put into the mind.** A ministry is valid only to the extent that the one who is ministering has *"the mind of Christ,"* and is in agreement with His Word.

- **A personal identity of God with the people, and the people with God.** In the New Covenant there is a very real association of God with the people. This is confirmed in such things as enlightenment (Eph 1:15-19), spiritual strength (Eph 3:16-17), and *"all joy and peace in believing"* (Rom 15:13). Where these, and similar things, are absent, no work for God is really being done.

- **A personal knowledge of and acquaintance with God.** Eternal life is, in fact, knowing God, or being acquainted with Him and His ways (John 17:3). Where the individual is fundamentally unacquainted with the Lord and His ways, or acts in contradiction of those ways, no valid ministry is being performed.

- **The remission of sins and the consequent liberty from its dominion.** The consequence of the

forgiveness of sin is freedom from its dominion (Rom 6:11-20). Where enslavement to sin continues, or moral lapses occur, God is not at work. The holy God does not work with those who remain in the power of the sin from which His Son delivers. That ought to be evident.

I have taken the time to say these things lest we be tempted to view this text as uniquely descriptive of Paul. While there are different functions in the body of Christ, with the apostles being "first" (1 Cor 12:28), **all of these ministries operate within the circumference of the New Covenant.** All of them are driven by faith and characterized by spiritual insight. Although differences may exist in the measure of these things, there is no difference in their substance.

KNOWING

"Knowing therefore . . ." Other versions read, "Since, then, we know,"^{NIV} "Having in mind, then,"^{BBE} "Therefore, since we know,"^{NAB} "And so it is . . . always in mind,"^{NJB} "And it is because we know,"^{NLT} "Having known, therefore,"^{NLT} "Therefore, because we realize,"^{WEYMOUTH} "Therefore, being conscious of,"^{AMPLIFIED} and "with this . . . in our minds."^{PHILIPS}

Once again, we see the role of knowledge in kingdom activities. Thus far, Paul has made much of this (1:7; 2:4,9,14; 4:6,14; 5:1,6,11). This is not a mere academic knowledge, or an intellectual recollection of certain facts. The kind of "knowing" to which this refers includes persuasion, confidence, perception, and insight. **There is a compelling nature to this kind of knowledge that forbids the entrance of indifference.** It will not allow for inconsistency, nor will it permit its possessor to live in disregard of what is known. In this kind of knowledge there is a consideration of the Lord Jesus, the day of judgment, and our inevitable accountability to Him. No one is under any obligation to submit to the preaching or teaching of anyone who obviously lacks these qualities.

THE TERROR OF THE LORD

" . . . the terror of the Lord . . ." Other versions read, "the fear of the Lord,"^{NASB} "what it is to fear the Lord,"^{NIV} "with the fear of the Lord,"^{NJB} "this

solemn fear of the Lord,"^{NLT} "how greatly the Lord is to be feared,"^{WEYMOUTH} and "fearing the Lord with respect and reverence."^{AMPLIFIED}

In this expression Paul is particularly speaking of himself. Even so, the experience of reference is not confined to him. **He is a representative something that is common to all who work together with God** (1 Cor 3:9). This is an important thing to consider. **No person employed by the Lord is above the things common to all believers.** There is a sense in which the greatest among us is our brother. Thus Jesus said to His disciples, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Mat 23:8). All who are living by faith know this to be the case. However, this fact has been greatly obscured by the dominance

against me" (Job 6:4).

- "For destruction from God was a **terror to me**, and by reason of His highness I could not endure" (Job 31:23).
- "Thou, even Thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in Thy sight when **once Thou art angry?**" (Psa 76:7).
- "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather **fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell**" (Mat 10:28).

This is a terror that Paul himself knew, and it was a powerful motivation in his ministry. Consider that this is the man who spoke so powerfully of the love of God, and the

This is the awareness of terror, and not its ultimate experience. That is, when God is seen as He is, the very thought of offending Him, or being unable to give an acceptable account to Him, strikes fear into the heart.

of religious institutionalism. Therefore, it is imperative that the following words be perceived as the **standard** for kingdom laborers, and not a unique quality of special workers.

What is the "Terror of the Lord?"

This is the awareness of terror, and not its ultimate experience. **That is, when God is seen as He is, the very thought of offending Him, or being unable to give an acceptable account to Him, strikes fear into the heart.** Examples of this kind of "terror" are provided in Scripture.

- "And they journeyed: and **the terror of God** was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob" (Gen 35:5).
- "For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: **the terrors of God** do set themselves in array

inability of any external influence to separate us from it (Rom 8:35-39). This is the man who so marvelously set the grace of God before the people (Rom 3:24; 4:16; 5:15; Eph 1:6-7; 3:5-8; Tit 2:11; 3:5). Justification and the imputation of righteousness were matters that he taught with remarkable power and clarity (Rom 3:24,28; 4:22-25; 5:1,9). **Yet, Paul did not have such a familiarity with God that he was not stricken with terror at the thought of standing before Christ unable to give a glorifying account of his stewardship.**

We are plagued today with sundry and voluminous declarations of anemic gospels that have no power, and greatly misrepresent the God of heaven. References are being made to "the love of God," and God's love of the people, that do not have a particle of truth in them. In Scripture, we have very few references to any words spoken to sinners after Jesus was enthroned in glory. Some of them

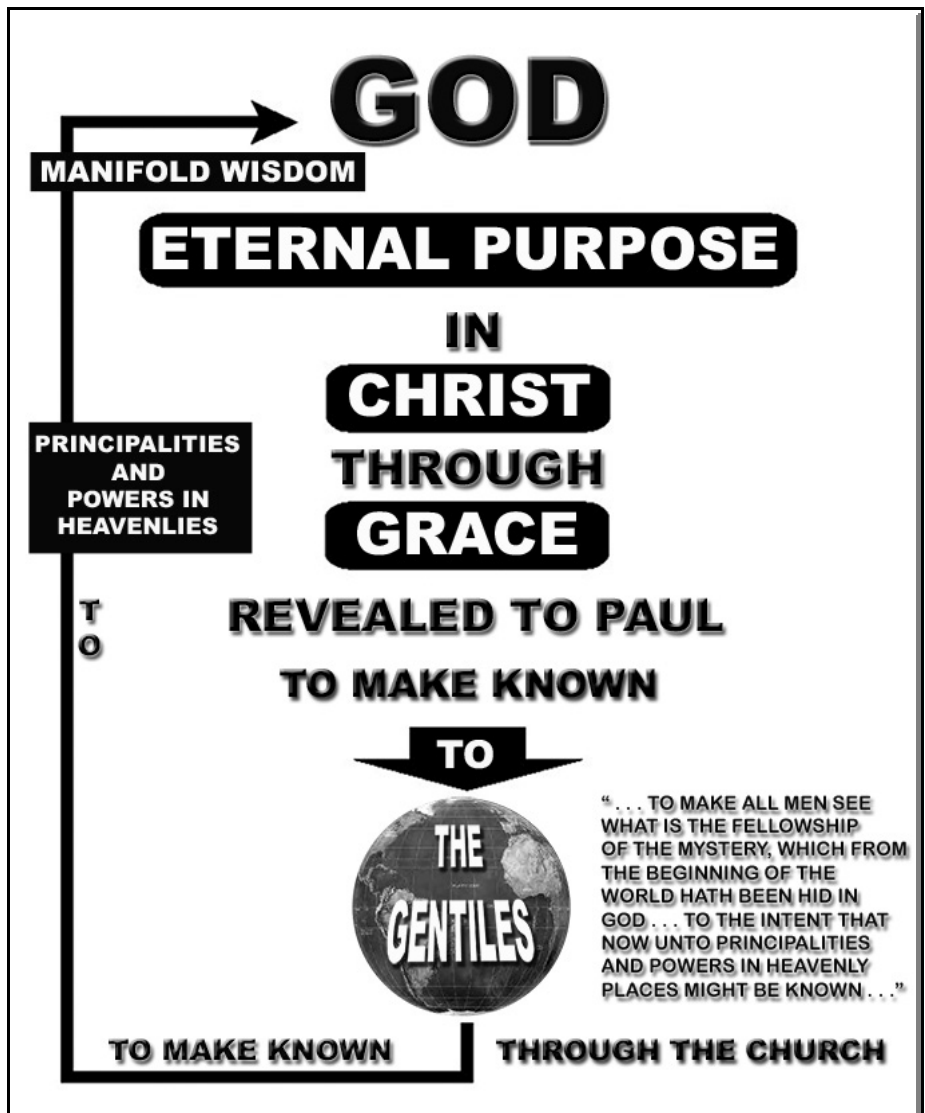
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include the following.

- Peter’s word on Pentecost (Acts 14-40).
- Peter’s words in the Temple following the healing of the lame man (Acts 3:12-26).
- Peter’s word to the Jewish leaders (Acts 4:8-12).
- Stephen’s defense before the Jewish council (Acts 7:2-56).
- Peter’s word to the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-43).
- Paul speaking in a Jewish synagogue (Acts 13:16-41).
- Barnabas and Paul preaching in Lystra (Acts 14:14-17).
- Paul speaking in Athens (Acts 17:22-31).
- Paul speaks briefly to certain disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:2-4).
- Paul before his accusers (Acts 22:1-21).
- Paul before the Jewish council (Acts 23:1-7).
- Paul before Felix (Acts 24:10-21,25).
- Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26:2-29).
- Paul to the chief men of the Jews (Acts 28:17-28).

This may not be absolutely complete, but it is as thorough as I am able to determine. There are some observations that will buttress the point I am making – **namely that a spurious gospel has been let loose in the Christian community.**

- There is not one solitary reference in all of the book of Acts to “love” – not a single one – not in any form. The Greek word ἀγάπη (a-ga-pa) is not used in any of its forms in Acts. The Greek word φιλέω (phil-e-o) – which is sometimes translated “love,” [in the sense of kindness and taking delight in] is used once in the book of Acts to



depict **kindness**. Acts 28:2 uses a form of this word to describe the “*kindness*” a “*barbarous people*” showed to Paul and those with him who suffered shipwreck.

- Following Christ’s ascension, there is no record of any sinner (or person outside of Christ) ever being told that God loved him, that Jesus loved him, or that he was in any sense “*loved*.”

I do not wish to press this matter beyond simply making this observation, or to draw any foolish conclusions from it. **I am simply making the point that the kind of preaching that has become common in our day is not founded upon Scripture, nor do we have an example of it anywhere** – not in the

preaching of John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, or the Apostles. Further, I am not referring to occasional references to the love of God, but to the general preaching of Christ to sinners.

Every single proclamation and exposition of the love of God and the love of Christ is delivered to those who are in Christ. This by no means suggests that it is sinful or wrong to tell sinners about the love of God, or the great love of Christ. It does mean that this is not the revealed **thrust** of the message to sinners. There is a prevailing notion that the phrase “*preach the Gospel to every creature*” is somehow limited to those who are alienated from God, and dead in trespasses and sins. Suffice it to say, this cannot be substantiated by a

single word of Scripture. The vast majority of Scriptural references to the Gospel are delivered to the saints.

The Relation of this to Our Text

How does all of this relate to our text? This text sheds light on WHY Paul ministered so consistently and powerfully. His many epistles and prodigious travels are accounted for in this expression.

voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. Concerning this “necessity,” or “compulsion,” other versions read, “I am compelled to preach,”^{NIV} “an obligation is laid upon me,”^{NRSV} “I am forced to do so,”^{BBE} “for I feel compelled of necessity to do it,”^{AMPLIFIED} and “the necessity is imposed upon me.”^{WEYMOUTH}

purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him” (Eph 3:7-12).

Here, several key points bring out the magnitude and seriousness of the commission delivered to Paul.

- Paul was “made” a minister by Christ.
- Through grace and the effective power of God, he was given a message to deliver.
- He was given insight into the truth that God wanted proclaimed.
- He was to make known among the Gentiles the “unsearchable riches of Christ.”
- He was to make plain the plan, or purpose, of God that had been hidden from all previous ages.
- The objective of men receiving this insight was that principalities and powers in heavenly realms might see the manifold wisdom of God.
- This was according to God’s “eternal purpose,” which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What is the greater incentive – the understanding that all men are lost, **or that we are responsible to God for what He has revealed to us and required of us?** What is the greater responsibility – meeting human need or **fulfilling a God-given stewardship?** What is a more profound consideration, that men stand in need of what God has provided, or **that Jesus has delivered His goods to us, and holds us responsible for handling them faithfully?**

Has not Jesus and the apostles spoken to the matter of unfaithful stewards and servants? Is there any informed soul that remains unaware of what He has said?

- **The Parable of the talents.** “Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed . . . And cast ye the

He was not to go because the Gentiles were lost and would judged if they did not hear the Gospel. Rather, he was to go because Jesus had sent him with a message – a message that Jesus personally opened to him.

The knowledge of “*the terror of the Lord*” is here depicted as motivating Paul. This is within the context of him standing before “*the judgment seat of Christ*,” as declared in verse ten. Here, Paul is **not** compelled by a sense of people being in a condemned state – although those who do not believe are “*condemned already*” (John 3:18). He does **not** carry the message throughout the world because all men are lost – although outside of Christ they are. It is some law concerning the necessity of “*evangelism*” that drives him. It is not even the so-called “*great commission*” that moves him to such powerful and faithful preaching. It is, rather, because he knows “*the terror of the Lord*.”

Paul knows that he has been “*given much*,” and that “*much*” is required of him (Lk 12:48). Elsewhere Paul speaks of his stewardship as a “*dispensation of the Gospel*,” and affirms that he must carry it out “*willingly*” in order to receive a reward. “*For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me*” (1 Cor 9:16-17). The NASB reads, “. . . for **I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. For if I do this**

Paul is driven from within – by “*the spirit of faith*” (2 Cor 4:13) – **because of the commission Christ delivered to him.** Jesus said, “*Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me*” (Acts 26:17-18). **He was not to go because the Gentiles were lost and would judged if they did not hear the Gospel. Rather, he was to go because Jesus had sent him with a message – a message that Jesus personally opened to him.**

When Paul wrote or spoke, it was, as he himself said, “*through the grace given unto me*” (Rom 12:3). When he built as a “*wise masterbuilder*,” it was “*according to the grace of God*” that was given to him (1 Cor 3:10). In a statement concerning this grace he wrote, “*Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal*

unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mat 25:26,30).

- **The removal of the stewardship from Israel because of their unfaithfulness.** *“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt 21:43).*
- **Defiling the temple of God.** *“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor 3:17).*
- **The unwavering requirement of a steward.** *“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor 4:2).*
- **The parable of the rich man’s steward.** *“And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward” (Luke 16:2).*

This casts a different light on “the ministry,” than is ordinarily perceived. Contrary to current trends, Jesus did not sent out ministers, preachers, or teachers to start churches, build big congregations, or establish neighborhood ministries. He has no interest in building visible institutions. He did that in the nation of Israel, giving them a good law, impressive ceremonies, illustrious kings, and their own land. **Within the framework of the covenant given to Israel God confirmed that no person can be changed, or made acceptable to God, through such an arrangement.** Instead of progression there was only degradation. Instead of conformity to God’s thoughts and ways taking place, a larger gap was formed between man’s thoughts and ways and those of God. Jesus did not come to patch up that system, but to usher in the true covenant through which the purpose of God could be realized.

Paul knew what God is doing in Christ Jesus, and of the higher order of intelligences that are being instructed of God’s manifold wisdom *“through the church.”* **He also was keenly aware of the response of the One who commissioned him to unfaithfulness.** He had no interest in human institutions,

for he knew they all would be ground to powder by the kingdom of Christ – religious or not. He knew that the Divine agenda remains the same as the one introduced by John the Baptist: *“to make*



ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk 1:17).

And what if this does not happen? **What if there is a minister who, standing before the Lord with those to whom he has ministered, finds that they are not “prepared for the Lord?”** Will such a man be applauded by the Lord? Is there a person of sound mind in all of the world who would concede to such a possibility? With that scenario in mind, read again the words of the apostle: ***“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.”***

All of this presumes that faithful ministers have something to say – and it is primarily the Gospel of Christ, which is God’s *“power unto salvation”* – salvation in **all** of its various facets and implications (Rom 1:16). At some point, every other valid word dovetails with that Gospel. Such men, when they consider the time that *“we all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ,”* will experience being motivated by *“the terror of the Lord.”* **Because it is actually the truth that all men will give an account of their stewardship, the remembrance of this will produce a sober mind and the fear of the Lord.** This is owing to the working of the Holy Spirit, who uses

the truth to produce proper motivations, good character, and strong confidence.

It is the Spirit Himself that, using the declaration of truth, causes *“the terror of the Lord”* to come upon us – the fear of not pleasing the Lord, or coming short of His expectations. This is not a cringing fear that causes us to cease to work, but a **cleansing fear** (Psa 19:9) which moves us to labor acceptably.

In view of these things, several considerations are in order.

- The person who labors for the Lord must not let his eyes rest upon the people to whom he ministers. He must minister with the Lord in view.
- The practice of preaching “canned sermons,” borrowing from other preachers who have been effective, must be mingled with insight and the fear of the Lord, else it is wrong.
- Once a person has been given to see any aspect of the truth, he is under solemn obligation to declare it – just as surely as Paul was responsible to declare the extensive visions and revelations that he received.
- If those to whom a person speaks refuse to hear the things he has been given to see and hear, the time has come for that person to leave.
- It is a sin of great magnitude to modify your message to suit the interests of unspiritual people.
- If we will be held accountable for properly handling what God has given us to see, then **how** we declare it, and the people to whom it is declared, become critical factors.
- If the individual has not received something from the Lord, it is out of order to attempt to labor in His vineyard.
- There is no form of worldly wisdom, religious or otherwise, that can cause a person to comprehend the Word of God. That is something that comes from God alone.
- Spiritual comprehension, or

understanding, has remarkable personal benefits. We will, however, be held accountable for how we **used** that understanding.

While they are only introductory, these few observations help to clarify why Paul was motivated by *“the terror of the Lord.”* When a person is brought into the *“heavenly places”* (Eph 2:6), made a *“partaker of the Divine nature”* (2 Pet 1:4), and given *“spiritual understanding”* (Col 1:9), **he has entered the domain of ultimate accountability.** All of these experiences are matters of stewardship – things that have, by the grace of God, been given to us. The preeminent requirement of a steward is to be faithful (1 Cor 4:2). The *“terror of the Lord”* will contribute **significantly to causing that faithfulness to be realized.**

ONE FINAL WORD

One of the evidences of the spiritually depraved times in which we live is found in the area of, what is called, *“evangelism.”* **While it has a holy sound, it is presented in a manner that conflicts with the tenure of Scripture and the nature of the New Covenant.** Because this view is so cherished, I approach it with caution.

The scenario goes something like this.

- ☛ The whole world is lost.
- ☛ Most of the world has never heard about Jesus.
- ☛ If we do not take the Gospel to them, the people will die and go to hell.
- ☛ The blood of these people will be upon our hands.
- ☛ Jesus commanded us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel.
- ☛ If we do not do so, they will be lost, and we will be judged.
- ☛ Evangelism and missions is the most important work of the church, and we had better be doing it.

To be sure, there is truth in most all of these statements. However, the question I am raising is whether or not this is the proper way to motivate the people of God. **Is there a solitary place in all of Scripture where the saints were addressed in such a manner?** Is there any place where the church was ever addressed on the subject of *“evangelism”* and their obligation to get the job done? If such a text or word exists, then we need to hear it, and do away with the reasoning of mere men.

Yet, I show unto you a more excellent way – a way that has been revealed. It is in our text, and tells of a

higher motive to faithfulness – a motive that honors God and edifies saints.

- ☛ God has shined light into the hearts of His people.
- ☛ He has distributed to each of them grace and gifts that are appropriate to their calling and position in the body of Christ.
- ☛ Each person is responsible to handle what God has given him as a faithful steward *“of the grace of God”* (1 Pet 4:10).
- ☛ We are not responsible for the world, but for our stewardship.
- ☛ We will not give an account for the world, but for our stewardship.
- ☛ Duly considered, that time of accountability will cause a certain *“terror”* to come upon us – a dread of not being found faithful.
- ☛ That *“terror”* will powerfully motivate us to engage in sanctified efforts, using the truth we have been given to see.
- ☛ God will work through such efforts to accomplish *“His will”* – which is the preeminent *“will”* throughout the whole of His work and kingdom.

WE PERSUADE MEN

^{11b} *... we persuade men ...* ”

Other versions read, *“we try to persuade men,”*^{NIV} *“we try to persuade others,”*^{NRSV} *“we put these things before men,”*^{BBE} *“we use persuasion to men,”*^{DOUAY} *“we try to win people over,”*^{NJB} *“we work so hard to persuade others,”*^{NLT} and *“we are endeavoring to win people over,”*^{WEYMOUTH} *“we seek to win people over [to persuade them].”*^{AMPLIFIED}

The word *“persuade”* comes from the Greek word *πειθομεν* (pie-tho-men), which means *“to persuade, to induce one by words to believe, to cause belief in a thing, move or induce one by persuasion to do something,”*^{THAYER} *“to convince,”*^{FRIBERG} *“to convince someone to believe something and*

to act on the basis of what is recommended,”^{LOUW-NIDA} and *“to prevail upon, to win over.”*^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

Here is an aggressive word – *“persuaded men.”* It does not say *“teach men,”* but *“persuade men.”* It does not refer to *“preaching to men,”* but *“persuading men.”* **Persuading involves convincing, moving men into ordained action, pleading, and urging.** Persuasion includes compelling people, prevailing upon them, and bringing them around to the Divine way of thinking.

This is something that cannot be

achieved mechanically, or by means or a certain intellectual regimen. **The person who is doing the persuading must have something more than a routine in his teaching arsenal.** He must have some spiritual insight, full assurance, and a holy boldness. The persuader cannot be unsure of himself, or uncertain of the facts. His aim cannot be to merely perpetuate a certain sect, or a certain kind of theological thought. He can have no mind to simply promote a movement, or enlarge a body of people. **He must be motivated from within, being convinced of the realities of which he speaks.** The Lord works within the sphere of discernment.

In the work of persuading of men, the knowledge of the terror of the Lord is essential– by Given O. Blakely

In addition to these obvious requirements, the one who persuades must have a sense of the Source of his message, and of his accountability to that Source. This awareness will relieve him of all casualness, which is the dreaded twin of erudition.

Examples of Persuading

The manner and fervency of godly persuasion is seen in Paul’s reasoning with Festus in the presence of Agrippa. *“And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art*

bonds” (Acts 26:29).

Again, when Paul and Barnabas spoke to some inquiring Gentiles, it is written, *“Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God”* (Acts 13:43).

When Paul *“reasoned”* in the synagogue in Corinth, it is written, *“And he reasoned in the synagogue every*

invited declined the invitation, saying they had other more pressing needs to fulfill. The report of their refusal to come angered the lord of that servant. He commanded his servant, “Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.” Having done this, the servant reported, *“Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.”* The Lord then said to that servant, *“Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled”* (Luke 14:23). That “compelling” was another view of persuasion (Luke 14:16-23).

REASONING

Persuasion involves reasoning, and reasoning – spiritual reasoning – requires both understanding and personal incentive. No person can reason on *“the things of the Spirit of God”* (Rom 8:5) who does not believe and comprehend them. Neither, indeed, can valid reasoning be based upon a sectarian theology, the wisdom of men, or an historical theological position.

Reasoning is not an end of itself. **It must lead to a sound and sustained conclusion.** Prior to Christ’s enthronement, there were times when the disciples’ reasoning was not proper (Matt 16:7-8; Luke 9:46). Christ’s enemies were also noted for erroneous reasoning (Matt 21:25; Mk 2:6-8). **In order for reasoning to be sound, it must be based upon the entire spectrum of truth.** By way of example, *“truth”* includes Divine affirmations – i.e. The Gospel of Christ, and reality of sin, and other Kingdom realities. It also includes **the promises of God** – unalterable Divine commitments. There is also the **coming judgment** of all men, and appointment that cannot possibly be avoided.

Faith produces a certain confident understanding of these things, so that they are not doubted. That understanding is confirmed in the deliberate shaping of a person’s life around these things.

Once understood, or comprehended, the implication of the truth is seen. That is, we are able to draw logical and proper conclusions from them. For example, if the Gospel is believed, it

KNOWING THE TERROR OF THE LORD WE PERSUADE MEN

AFFIRMATIONS

PROMISES

THE JUDGMENT

UNDERSTANDING

IMPLICATIONS

REASONING

PERSUASION

Truth, when believed and understood, has a powerful constraining effect upon the human spirit. It moves men to reason in a compelling and persuasive manner.

The Gospel of Christ, the affirmation of Kingdom realities, and the fact of coming judgment are discerned, and their implications comprehended.

Men are thus moved by the truth to forsake their former manner of thinking, believe with their hearts, and lay hold on eternal life.

*beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, **Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.** And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these*

*sabbath, and **persuaded the Jews and the Greeks”*** (Acts 18:4).

In Ephesus, Paul *“went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and **persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God”*** (Acts 19:8).

Compelling People

In a parable of God’s provision of salvation, Jesus spoke of a *“certain man”* who *“made a great supper and bade many.”* When the supper was fully prepared, the man sent a servant to say to those who were invited, *“Come; for all things are now ready.”* Those who were

at once becomes apparent that it ought to be obeyed. If the promises are believed, it becomes clear that they must be embraced, and any conditions attached to them satisfied. If the judgment is comprehended, it is clear that we ought to prepare for it. These are examples of the “implications” of the truth.

Armed with this kind of mind, good and sound reasoning can be employed. **In reasoning, the truth is pressed upon the human spirit, moving the hearer to do something – to do what the truth demands must be done by men.** In a manner of speaking, the hearer is forced to think upon the truth. In that process, the Holy Spirit begins to exert a convicting influence upon the hearer as Jesus said He would (John 16:8-11).

There are examples of reasoning in Scripture that confirm this is the manner of the kingdom.

- It is said of Paul, “*And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures*” (Acts 17:2).
- Again it is said of Paul in Corinth, “*And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks*” (Acts 18:4).
- In Ephesus, Paul did the same. “*And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews*” (Acts 18:19).
- When Paul spoke to Felix, he did so with reasoning. “*And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a*

Anyone and everyone, of even the smallest degree of understanding, knows that the number of people within the church who are woefully deficient is staggering in size.

convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25).

Thus men were not “persuaded” with mere threats, but with reasoning – sound spiritual reasoning.

Persuasion is not a sales technique, or a soul-winning or counseling procedure. The persuasion of our text requires that the things affirmed by the Lord in Scripture put before men by someone who comprehends them. Again this persuasion is not based upon the threat of being sent to hell if the person does not respond to the message of the Gospel – although that assessment is altogether a proper one. **Here, the persuasion is the result of the preacher’s fear of standing empty-handed and unfaithful before the Lord.**

It is no wonder that those who labor in the kingdom are solemnly told, “*But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon*” (1 Cor 3:10). And again, “*If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are*” (1 Cor 3:17).

Today we are faced with an amazingly large “Christian” community that is sorely lacking in understanding, persuasion, and commitment. Anyone and everyone, of even the smallest degree of

understanding, knows that the number of people within the church who are woefully deficient is staggering in size. Multitudes of programs, workshops, conventions, and the likes have proliferated throughout the church world in an effort to supposedly retrieve these poor souls, or induce some kind of recovery. While we are by no means set to oppose such efforts, there are some questions that need to be asked.

“How is it that this mass of people were produced?” “What kind of “*gospel*” did they embrace?” “What miserable “*worker*” put them on the foundation of the holy and consistent Christ?” “What schools trained these preachers and teachers.” “What literature was their source of information?” “Who authored the programs that they promoted?” “What kind of reasoning was set before them?” “What was the food with which they were fed, and why was it given to them?” It is in order for the people of God to demand an answer to questions of this order.

Bad fruit always comes from a bad tree for, as Jesus said, “*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit*” (Matt 7:18). **It is time for the professing church to purge itself of preachers and teachers under which spiritual stability and persuasion are not being realized.** We cannot be blessed and, in our ministries, fall short of His objectives.

MADE MANIFEST UNTO GOD

“^{11c} . . . **but we are made manifest unto God . . .**”

Paul has testified concerning his

motivation – what **compelled** him to “*persuade men.*” Being a man of truth, he is not willing to let the matter rest with his own testimony. **True hearts are**

confirmed by their message and manner. He will therefore affirm that both God and man bear witness to the truth of his testimony. Concerning valid

In the work of persuading of men, the knowledge of the terror of the Lord is essential– by Given O. Blakely

kingdom labors it is written, “For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men” (Rom 14:18). Again it is written, “But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor 4:2). Again, this two-sided view of the labor of love is described: “Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (2 Cor 8:21).

The particular focus here will be how Paul appears before God Himself. It is an elaboration “the terror of the Lord” – i.e. Paul has considered his own appearance before the Lord, and it has moved him to so labor as to gain God’s approval before that day comes.

BUT WE

“ . . . but we . . . ” Other versions

“what our motives are,” WEYMOUTH “are perfectly known,” ISV “my inner self is perfectly known,” WILLIAMS “what sort of persons we are is plainly recognized and thoroughly understood,” AMPLIFIED and “utterly plain.” PHILLIPS

This is not theological jargon, or the spouting of a tenet of some sectarian dogma. Paul speaks of himself without any cultural or scholastic veneer – “my inner self.” WILLIAMS He has even been speaking about what prompts him – “what our motives are.” WEYMOUTH What he preaches is clear – without guile, pretension, or a secret agenda. **What he says is clear, and why he says it is unvarnished.**

Now he says that he himself is “manifest,” which means his message and the manner in which it was delivered were in perfect comportment with who he was. **He did not depart from his character when he preached.** Here, however, he takes this manifestation

☛ “. . . for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts . . . ” (1 Chron 28:9).

☛ “Then hear Thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart Thou knowest; (for Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men)” (2 Chr 6:30).

☛ “. . . for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins” (Psa 7:9).

☛ “Shall not God search this out? for He knoweth the secrets of the heart” (Psa 44:21).

☛ “Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance” (Psa 90:8).

☛ “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov 15:3).

☛ “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl 12:14).

☛ “I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jer 17:10).

☛ “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb 4:13).

☛ “. . . I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works” (Rev 2:23).

It is one thing to know the truth. It is quite another thing to consistently live, think, and work with it in view. All who have a working acquaintance with Scripture know that it affirms God’s constant and penetrating awareness about man, and everything within him. There can be no question about this.

In this text Paul is unveiling

The particular focus here will be how Paul appears before God Himself. It is an elaboration “the terror of the Lord” – i.e. Paul has considered his own appearance before the Lord, and it has moved him to so labor as to gain God’s approval before that day comes.

read, “What we are,” NIV “but we ourselves,” NRSV “but have been,” DARBY “and we,” GENEVA “what I am,” MONTGOMERY and “but what sort of persons we are.” AMPLIFIED

The word “but” is not one of contrast, but of confirmation. Paul is saying that what he has said of himself is validated before others. The expression “but we” means the real “us” – “we ourselves.” Thus the AMPLIFIED BIBLE reads, “But what sort of persons we are.”

ARE MADE MANIFEST

“ . . . are made manifest . . . ”

Other versions read, “are well known,” NKJV “is plain,” NIV “sees our hearts,” BBE “are clearly apparent,” NAB “knows our hearts,” LIVING “knows all about us,” IE

down to its very root. He moved beyond himself, and beyond those to whom, he writes.

UNTO GOD

“ . . . unto God . . . ” Other versions read, “God sees,” BBE “But God sees us,” NJB “God knows we are sincere,” NLT and “God recognizes.” WEYMOUTH

It is easy enough to establish that God sees everything, and knows all about us. In fact, this is a frequent emphasis of the Holy Spirit.

☛ “. . . for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Sam 16:7).

how the newness of life impacts upon preaching and teaching. What he preaches, and why he preaches it, is consciously within an acute awareness of the perusing eye of God Himself. While he speaks to men, Paul also speaks before God. While he seeks to influence men, he also seeks to please God. He never takes the Word of God further than it is intended to go, and never comes short of delivering what God intends for it to say.

Paul not only knows that everything is manifest, or made known to God, he deliberately

structures his life around that knowledge.

This is not a posture that can be taught by men. It is the result having a love of the truth (2 Thess 2:10), walking in the truth (3 John 1:4), and personally seeking to have “*the truth itself*” speak well of the individual (3 John 1:12). One must be in “*fellowship*” with Christ (1 Cor 1:9) in order to be conscious of His all-seeing eye. It is imperative that we “*walk in the light*” if we are to be advantaged by it (1 John 1:7). **In order for a valid ministry to be carried out, it must be**

motivated by this perception and conviction: “*Therefore, being conscious of fearing the Lord with respect and reverence, we seek to win people over [to persuade them]. But what sort of persons we are is plainly recognized and thoroughly understood by God.*”^{AMPLIFIED} God does, in fact, know “*what sort of persons we are.*”

A pure heart reckons on that fact, and seeks to persuade men within the framework of that motivating awareness. This brings a power to preaching that is unique.

ALSO MANIFEST IN YOUR CONSCIENCES

“^{11d} . . . and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

The manner in which Paul is speaking has a strange sound to it. That strangeness, however, is not owing to the nature or spirit of his words. Rather, it is the religious environment in which we are living that causes such words to appear foreign. **They just do not fit into the Christian culture of our day.**

This circumstance has been created by an institutional thrust, as contrasted with a spiritual one. For example, a career oriented minister could never speak as Paul does in our text. The knowledge that God knows everything about us has no bearing whatsoever upon a religious career. In fact, it can even interfere with such an objective. Also, when a person is attempting to build an institution, strengthen a religious movement, or bring a mega-church into being, what God thinks about it all will not be a constant consideration. **There is something inherent in the human nature that senses God is not that interested in advancing careers and institutions.** That kind of intuition is precisely what has driven men to create special “*career paths*,” and ways in which a “*successful church*” can be built. Those who create these means to the realization of purely human goals are never noted for their handling of the Scripture. **Their insights into the person of Christ and His great salvation are never – I**

say NEVER – their strong point. The Gospel of Christ is not made clear by such individuals, nor matters that pertain to life after death – like the resurrection, eternal judgment, the punishment of the wicked, the rewarding of the righteous, reigning with Christ, etc. These conditions exist because **the truth of God cannot be poured into institutional wineskins.** They cannot contain it. It will break them all apart, creating institutional confusion. Mere human organization and the truth of God cannot be tied together.

versions read, “*and I hope that,*”^{NASB} “*and I hope that,*”^{NRSV} “*it is my hope that,*”^{BBE} “*And I trust also that,*”^{DOUAY} and “*I hope we are also.*”^{NAU}

Notice the unguarded way in which the Apostle speaks. He is opening his heart to the people, and in a very apparent manner. **He tells them what he is desiring within.** Here, the word “*trust*” means “*in the sense of counting on something.*”^{FRIBERG} We might say the following is something that Paul was banking on, or counting on taking place.

These conditions exist because the truth of God cannot be poured into institutional wineskins. They cannot contain it. It will break them all apart, creating institutional confusion. Mere human organization and the truth of God cannot be tied together.

These circumstances, and more, account for the strange sound that is found in these words. Notwithstanding, those who have “*received the love of the truth*” (2 Thess 2:10) will be drawn to them. If they maintain that “*love*,” these matters will become plain to them.

I TRUST ALSO

“ . . . and I trust also . . . ” Other

The subject under consideration is the integrity of his ministry.

MADE MANIFEST IN YOUR CONSCIENCES

“ . . . are made manifest in your consciences.” Other versions read, “*well known in your consciences,*”^{NKJV} “*also plain to your conscience,*”^{NIV} “*seem right in your eye,*”^{BBE} “*you know this, too,*”^{NLT}

In the work of persuading of men, the knowledge of the terror of the Lord is essential– by Given O. Blakely

“that deep within, you know it too,”^{LIVING}
“your consciences know us, too,”^{IE} *“in your hearts, recognize them too,”*^{WEYMOUTH}
“really known to your consciences,”^{ISV}
and “that it is plainly recognized and thoroughly understood also by your consciences (your inborn discernment).”
AMPLIFIED

Here we will see that a fervent desire to please the Lord cannot be accompanied by a sloppy and misdirected ministry. Knowing the “terror of the Lord” cannot possibly cause men to teach incorrectly and live wrongly. It is quite true that an honest person can be wrong – **but not because of their awareness of God!** All error and improper motives come because of areas of darkness within, for spiritual light cannot produce or maintain what is fundamentally wrong – whether it is a teaching, of the manner in which it is done.

This same “trust” was expressed earlier, substantiating that Paul was counting on his faith, integrity, and motives, being **very apparent**. *“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God”* (2 Cor 4:2). It was very obvious that Paul had separated himself from lifeless and erroneous religion. Just as surely as it was apparent that Jesus did not teach as “the scribes” (Matt 7:29), so it was evident that Paul was driven by higher motives, and sought to obtain superior results.

The Contrast of Modern Christendom

Here again, the modern church falls far short of Divine objectives. **A superior message and higher motives are not readily apparent in the average “pulpit,” or popular religious writings of the day.** Integrity is not unquestionably plain. What is compelling the preacher or teacher is often shrouded in mystery. Oh, they may tell us they have a burden for the people, or have a desire to save the lost, etc. **However, if they did not tell us these things, we would never entertain such a notion.** They leave us too empty, too devoid of the truth. We

become too emaciated when we listen to their paltry sectarian offerings. Our minds are not stimulated. Our hearts are not warmed. We are not comforted, or moved into a more fervent quest to “know” the Lord. Their messages are too easy to forget. In fact, there is no driving compulsion for us to hear them. We do not look forward to hearing their expositions – if, indeed, they offer any.

How is it that ministers of the day can get so embroiled in politics, social issues, domestic problem resolutions, and the likes? Why do they allow the young people’s ministry to upstage the edification of the saints, or frothy so-called “praise” services to dominate their gatherings? Why are their messages so shallow? Why is there no substance to them? How is it that they are so enamored of the latest offerings at the religious book stores? I will tell you why. **It is because the terror of the Lord is not upon them.** It is because they are not ministering with a keen consciousness of the Lord knowing all about them. That is why they cannot commend themselves to our conscience. That is why they do not intentionally bear their hearts to us.

The Openness of Real Faith

Real faith produces refreshing openness. Paul does not hide his motives. He does not cover up his message. He does not deliver intellectual innuendos, or leave those who hear him with a thousand questions. **He rather tells the people he is counting on the result of their assessment of himself.**

There were those who did not agree with Paul. They even were offended by what he said, and repelled by his presence. Yet, they did not question the weightiness of what he said. **“For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible”** (2 Cor 10:10). No one heard Paul and concluded that he was not a thinker. When you heard or read what he said, it was not easy to forget it. No one charged him with a lack of seriousness. They knew that what he said and what he did were perfectly harmonious. Paul reminded the Corinthians, *“Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present”* (2

Cor 10:11).



No one viewed him as promoting an institutional agenda. Not a single person concluded that he was really promoting himself, or finding a way to obtain personal wealth. Thus he said, *“I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:33-35).

You may recall that Moses also spoke in this manner: *“I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them”* (Num 16:15). Samuel did the same: *“Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you”* (1 Sam 12:3).

Again Paul said, *“Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man”* (2 Cor 7:2). He also wrote to the Corinthians, *“And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I*

keep myself” (2 Cor 11:9).

Not a single Corinthian could charge Paul with exploitation, or say that he had been dishonest with them, taken advantage of them, or gained wealth from them. His integrity was unquestionable.

Thus Paul possesses confidence before God **and** before men. It is because he has maintained “*the terror of the Lord,*” and an overriding interest in the building up of His people. He has labored to be accepted by a holy God, and approved by a godly people – and he is quite willing to rely upon the proper

assessment of both!

This two-fold witness, and the awareness of it – the acceptance of God, and the approval of godly consciences – is imperative if we are to work acceptably in the Lord’s field.

WE DO NOT COMMEND OURSELVES

“^{12a} *For we commend not ourselves again unto you . . .*”

Where the flesh has dictated the manner of human thought, extensive explanations are generally required. Godly minds do not necessitate such construal. Therefore, because of the false charges made against him, Paul will further declare that he is **not** seeking to promote himself or his own selfish-interests.

WE COMMEND NOT OURSELVES AGAIN UNTO YOU

“*For we commend not ourselves again unto you . . .*” Other versions read, “*We are not trying to commend ourselves*

to you again,” ^{NIV} “*requesting . . . approval, again requesting your approval*” ^{BEBE} “*Again, we are saying this not to commend,*” ^{NJB} “*Are we trying to pat ourselves on the back,*” ^{NLT} and “*we are not recommending ourselves.*” ^{ISV}

Earlier, the apostle also made this observation: “*Do we begin again to commend ourselves?*” (2 Cor 3:1). Paul is not **promoting** himself. He is not boasting of his own character, affirming that he can appeal to God and their own conscience as a witness to his integrity. This is not an effort to set himself apart from other men. As he has before affirmed, the Corinthians themselves were his recommendation. He had no

need to promote himself. “*Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart*” (2 Cor 3:3).

He is not calling upon the Corinthians to give themselves to approving of him, as though he required such approval. In him the saying is fulfilled, love “*seeketh not her own*” (1 Cor 13:5). It is a blessed condition, indeed, when the soul is liberated from the dreadful tendency of promoting itself. Such promotion is of the flesh.

OCCASION TO GLORY

“^{12b} *. . . but give you occasion to glory on our behalf . . .*”

Here Paul mounts up on eagles’ wings, soaring out of reach of the flesh. There is reason for speaking as he does, but it not found in carnal reasoning. Paul knows that he has been criticized by those who objected to his message and manner. “*his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible*” (2 Cor 10:10). “*And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just*” (Rom 3:8). Others conceded the things he wrote were difficult, but chose to corrupt what he said rather than believe it. “. . . *even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles,*

speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Pet 3:15-16).

Paul now appeals to the conscience of those who themselves are testimonies to the truth of his message and the integrity of his person. **God does not, and cannot, produce a justified people with a flawed message and an unspiritual person.** This is frequently denied by those who have fallen into immorality, or otherwise proved themselves to be unspiritual. They boast that they have said the truth, even though they have not lived it. But all of their boasting in an exercise in vanity. This is simply not the manner of the Kingdom. If

God could not have an unholy Savior, He surely will not employ unholy men to proclaim Him!

BUT GIVE YOU OCCASION

“. . . *but give you occasion . . .*” Other versions read, “*but to give you an opportunity,*” ^{NKJV} “*but giving you cause,*” ^{RSV} “*but are giving you a chance,*” ^{BEBE} “*I am giving you some ammunition,*” ^{LIVING} “*giving you a good reason,*” ^{IE} “*but furnishing you with a ground,*” ^{WEYMOUTH} “*I am giving you ground for,*” ^{WILLIAMS} “*but we are providing you with an occasion and incentive,*” ^{AMPLIFIED} and “*but we can give you grounds.*” ^{PHILLIPS}

Rather than seeking to defend himself before his critics, Paul is suggesting some things – obvious things – that the Corinthians themselves may

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Those who speak well of the servants of the Lord should do so out of a thankful heart, and a perception of the things of God that have been brought to them by their ministry.

use in his defense. He is providing them with information to which their own conscience will attest. He is reminding them of what he is within – of his heart, his motives, his fears, and his objectives. These are the things that properly qualify a man, not mere appearance.

TO GLORY

“... to glory...” Other versions read, “to boast,”^{NKJV} “to be proud,”^{NASB} “to take pride,”^{NIV} “to rejoice of us,”^{GENEVA} “of glorying,”^{YLT} “for speaking well of,”^{WILLIAMS} and “to be rightfully proud.”^{PHILLIPS}

If the Corinthians are to speak well of Paul, he wants them to do it properly. **The man of God is not promoted by fleshly accolades.** Further, if the Corinthians are to rejoice in Paul, he wants it to be for the right reasons. These are the same reasons that commend him to God, and to the Christ who sent him. **Those who speak well of the servants of the Lord should do so out of a thankful heart, and a**

perception of the things of God that have been brought to them by their ministry.

Notice that he seeks for **them** to glory, not himself. He desires that **they** perceive what the Lord has done through him, and not merely what he himself has done. They must be able to associate his words and labors with the God of heaven. Thus Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thess 2:13). He wrote something similar to the Galatians. “And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus” (Gal 4:14).

Proper glorying does not focus on the change that has been wrought in us, but on the CAUSE of

that change. This is why Paul is speaking in this manner. He is confirming that his labors were all accomplished with “the terror of the Lord” upon him. That is, he was acutely conscious of the fact that he would appear before “the judgment seat of Christ” to account for all of his labors. This moved him to preach a proper message in the proper way. The Corinthians were themselves proof of the effectiveness of this approach.

Corrupt motives will produce corrupt fruit, for they are like a bad tree that can bear nothing but bad fruit.

ON OUR BEHALF

“... on our behalf...” Other versions read, “of us,”^{NASB} “in us,”^{NIV} and “about us.”^{NRSV}

The idea is that the Corinthians can be motivated to speak commendably of him – not because of any need that he had for their commendation. Rather, working through his message, they had actually become “the epistle of Christ,” ministered by Paul, and “written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God” (2 Cor 3:3).

Paul has not given them a lot of details, or provided an impressive list of credentials. Rather, he has given them a starting point for properly assessing his ministry among them, and giving due glory to the Lord for it.

SOMEWHAT TO ANSWER

“^{12c} . . . that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance . . .”

Paul is not content to have the Corinthians ignore what his enemies say about him. He wants the Corinthians to give an intelligent answer to those who cast aspersions on his ministry among the Corinthians.

There is a principle of the Kingdom made known here that is worthy of note. **There are occasions when the people of God must be willing to**

defend what they have said – to stand before their critics and give a spiritual assessment of the manners being criticized. Some examples will suffice to buttress this point.

- Peter made a defense concerning the good deed he did in raising up a man lame from his mother’s womb (Acts 3:12-26). And again he did so in Acts 4:9-12, 19-20).
- Stephen defended himself against the charges made against him (Acts 7:1-53).

- Paul presented a stirring defense of the Gospel and the unreasonableness of the Jews rejection of it (Acts 13:16-41).
- Paul made a defense of his faith to the Jews in Ephesus (Acts 21:40-21).
- Paul defended his person and preaching before king Agrippa (Acts 26:1-31).

Thus, according to his manner, Paul is providing the Corinthians with

information that will assist them in answering those who have criticized him.

THAT YE MAY HAVE SOMEWHAT TO ANSWER

“... that ye may have somewhat to answer...” Other versions read, “that you may have an answer for,” ^{NKJV} “so that you can answer,” ^{NIV} “so that you may be able to answer,” ^{NRSV} “that ye may have wherewith to answer,” ^{ASV} “so that you may be able to answer,” ^{BBE} “You can use this on,” ^{LIVING} “Then you will have something to say,” ^{IE} “so that you may have a reply ready,” ^{WEYMOUTH} and “if that is what you need to meet.” ^{PHILLIPS}

It is quite possible for those whose integrity is attacked, or whose message is criticized, to given an answer to their critics.

- Thus Paul wrote, “*Mine answer to them that do examine me is this . . .*” (1 Cor 9:3).
- We are also taught, “*Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man*” (Col 4:6).
- On one occasion, all of Paul’s colleagues forsook him when he was giving an answer for himself. “*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge*” (2 Tim 4:16).
- Peter admonishes us to be read to given an answer. “*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready alway to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*” (1 Pet 3:15).

There is room for some decided improvement in this area of spiritual life. **God’s people need to be able to frame their words properly so as to shine more light on holy causes, the Gospel, and those who have delivered it to them.** That is precisely why Paul is speaking in this manner.

This is not speaking of mere argumentation, where one human opinion is pitted against another. Rather, this is a means of bringing ultimate glory to God,

who is both the Architect and Objective of this “*great salvation.*”

THEM WHICH GLORY IN APPEARANCE

“... them which glory in appearance...” Other versions read, “*who boast in appearance,*” ^{NKJV} “*take pride in appearance,*” ^{NASB} “*take pride in what is seen,*” ^{NIV} “*boast in outward appearance,*” ^{NRSV} “*pride themselves on a man’s position,*” ^{RSV} “*who boast in external appearance,*” ^{NAB} “*who brag about having a spectacular ministry,*” ^{NLT} “*those with whom superficial appearances are everything,*” ^{WEYMOUTH} “*those who are constantly prating about external privileges,*” ^{WILLIAMS} and “*those who pride themselves on surface*

appears is of itself wrong, and no one should arrive at such a foolish conclusion. The Temple was seen – it was in the classification of things that “*appear.*” For some, that was a stumbling block – but not for Jesus. He looked at the same structure and referred to His “*Father’s house*” (John 2:16), and “*The house of prayer*” (Matt 21:13). Although He made those holy associations, Jesus did not “*glory in appearance.*” That is why He could speak so freely of the Temple and its destruction: “*There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*” (Matt 24:2).

It should not surprise us that this is a most serious matter, as the language before us makes quite clear. Right here we

And who is it that Paul is equipping the Corinthians to “answer?” What kind of critics does he have? How do you describe those who are actually set against the proclamation of the truth? It is those who “glory in appearance.”

appearances [on the virtues they only appear to have].” ^{AMPLIFIED}

And who is it that Paul is equipping the Corinthians to “*answer?*” What kind of critics does he have? **How do you describe those who are actually set against the proclamation of the truth?** It is those who “*glory in appearance.*” These boast in something that unregenerate men, and the devil himself, can see. They brag about **surface** matters, **outward appearance**, and **external** privileges. Their religion is **superficial**, and they love to have it so. The domain in which they look for religious significance is the **realm of the seen.** Their perceptions and values to not extend beyond the domain that can be accessed by flesh and blood.

In this case, “appearance” is nothing more than a disguise of inward corruption. It is a cover-up for spiritual poverty, else men would not glory in it. It is not that everything that

striking at the very root of contemporary Christianity. While religious men have always struggled with the value of “*appearance,*” the matter has now reached a crescendo. Men, messages, and even groups are now being judged on the basis of “*appearance.*” If the visual aspect of religion does not measure up to the criterion developed by the charlatans of the day, **it is considered worthless, and is even shunned as though it was contaminated.**

Ponder some of the things the Scriptures say about “*appearance.*” the seriousness of surface religion is clear.

- “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity*” (Mat 23:27-28).

There is a basic thought here that must be seen. Glorifying in appearance makes glorifying in proper things impossible. The “flesh” and the “Spirit” cannot express themselves simultaneously. That would be like bitter and sweet water flowing from the same fountain

- “Judge not according to the **appearance**, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24).
- “While we look not at **the things which are seen**, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor 4:18).
- “Do ye look on things after the outward **appearance**? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ’s, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ’s, even so are we Christ’s” (2 Cor 10:7).

When the church has nothing more to display than things that “appear,” it has fallen on hard times. When its ministers are evaluated by things relating to this world, a serious deficiency is found. When the success of a

congregation is measured by things that can be reported by the worldly-minded, something is fundamentally wrong. Once again, this does not mean that everything that is seen is sinful. However, because everything that is seen **IS** “temporal,” it **does mean that such things are unsuitable as an emphasis, or a means of determining the validity and value of the work of the Lord.**

The fact that this statement is made – those who “glory in appearance” – means that **there is some sense in which a fundamental conflict exists between things that appear and things that do not appear.** One class of things is passing away, and one is not. One is transitory and the other stable.

A “Show in the Flesh”

There is a type of religious leader that is very impressive to the sight. Paul spoke those who “desire to make a fair

show in the flesh.” The Galatians were being submitted to such people who were constraining them “to be circumcised” (Gal 6:12). These are the kind of people that have an inordinate emphasis on numbers. **How many people are with them is more important than what they hear.** Where they meet is of more significance than what goes on in that place. Identity with a certain movement is held in higher regard than an unseen identity with Jesus Christ.

These people, Paul said, “glory in your flesh” (Gal 6:12b). Such seek “popularity” ^{LIVING} with men, not acceptance by God. Their “real object is simply to escape being persecuted for the Cross of Christ.” ^{WEYMOUTH} **Therefore, they involve themselves in things that are more readily approved by men.** Perhaps they are community involvements, entertaining the youth, providing facilities for the gamers and athletes, etc. These are not mere additions to their agenda, they **ARE** their agenda.

Their “show” is all in the flesh, which confirms that they have “loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:43). **They really cannot see beyond the visible** (Heb 11:27), **and therefore confine the source of the glory to the realm of the seen.** Paul sees that such people must be “answered.”

NOT IN HEART

“^{12d} . . . and not in heart.”

The Spirit now contrasts an invalid focus with what is valid. If men are not to “glory in appearance,” what, then, ought to cause them to boast? It might seem as though the proper contrast would be with “things which are not seen” (2 Cor 4:18). It is true, that this comparison is made elsewhere. However, here an even finer focus is developed.

AND NOT

“ . . . and not . . . ” Other versions read, “than in what is,” ^{NIV} “and not about what is,” ^{ESV} “rather than,” ^{NAB} “but don’t have,” ^{LIVING} “not proud of what is,” ^{IE} and

“not concerned about the state of.” WILLIAMS

There is a basic thought here that must be seen. **Glorifying in appearance makes glorifying in proper things impossible.** The “flesh” and the “Spirit” cannot express themselves simultaneously. That would be like bitter and sweet water flowing from the same fountain (James 3:11).

Contrary natures cannot be joined. This is made clear in the Apostolic doctrine. “ . . . what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ

with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God . . . ” (2 Cor 6:14-16). This means there no such thing as a “carnal Christian.” You just as well reason that it is also possible to have a “godly demon.” It is not possible to “love God with all your heart,” and yet be immersed in iniquity, or living in sin – even though we hear such claims quite frequently.

This is not an exhortation that allows for men to glory in appearance **while, at the same time,** maintaining an interest in the counterpart of

appearance. Therefore, those whom Paul is equipping the Corinthians to answer, are **not** simply misdirected Christians. They are **not** church members who have not seen the light, so to speak. He has stated that this people “*glory in appearance.*” As the direct consequence of that kind of glorying, the following is that in which they do NOT glory. It is what means nothing to them. That is why they do not glory in it.

IN HEART

“ . . . *in heart.*” Other versions read, “*in the heart,*”^{NIV} “*on his heart,*”^{RSV} “*what is in the heart,*”^{ESV} “*of the heart,*”^{NAB} “*not inner reality,*”^{NJB} “*a sincere heart before God,*”^{NLT} “*true and honest hearts,*”^{LIVING} “*what is in the heart,*”^{IE} “*sincerity of heart,*”^{WEYMOUTH} “*inward character,*”^{ISV} and “*although their heart is devoid of them.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

Some versions read, “*in the heart.*”^{NIV/ESV} However, this is not a proper representation of the text. The article “the” is not in the text, either the original Greek or the older English versions. The Greek word that precedes “heart” is slightly different in the received Greek texts. The “majority” text uses “*οὐ,*” and Westcott-Hort and similar versions use “*ἐν.*” There is no critical difference between the two words. The first means something contrasted with what has gone before: i.e. “*NOT heart.*” The second means “*in,*” with the heart being the domain IN WHICH the realities of reference are found. While this may appear nothing more than a technical point, this is, in a sense, a critical matter.

There are things that are **in** the realm of “*appearance.*” There are also things that are **within** the “*heart.*” **The point of emphasis is not on the realm, but what is in the realm.** The arena of “*appearance*” is thus contrasted with the arena of the “*heart.*” The contrast is being made between the “*things*” that appear, and the “*things*” found within the heart – not the heart itself, but what is IN the heart.

☛ Take, for example, the “*word*” that brings justification and the imputation of righteousness. Where is that powerful word? “*The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith,*

which we preach” (Rom 10:8).

- ☛ Where is it that Christ Himself dwells? “*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love*” (Eph 3:17).
- ☛ Where does acceptable melody occur? “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” (Eph 5:19).
- ☛ Where can “*the peace of God*” be found, and where does it rule? “*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful*” (Col 3:15).
- ☛ Where is it that “*the Lord God*” is to be sanctified, or set apart? “*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*” (1 Pet 3:15).
- ☛ When spiritual maturity comes, where is it that the “*day dawns,*” and where does “*the Day Star*” arise? “*We*

- ☛ Where do we receive “*the earnest,*” or pledge, of the Holy Spirit? “*Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts*” (2 Cor 1:22).
- ☛ Where is “*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God*” beamed? Into what personal region does it come? “*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (2 Cor 4:6).
- ☛ Where has God sent His Holy Spirit. From what region does He cry out “*Abba Father?*” “*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father*” (Gal 4:6).

What may be said of the person or group of persons who do not glory “*in heart?*” What is their view of the things that are associated with the heart? Remember what marvelous things they are!

- ☛ “*The word*” by which we are made righteous.
- ☛ Melody that is heard by God.

There are things that are in the realm of “appearance.” There are also things that are within the “heart.” The point of emphasis is not on the realm, but what is in the realm. The arena of “appearance” is thus contrasted with the arena of the “heart.” The contrast is being made between the “things” that appear, and the “things” found within the heart – not the heart itself, but what is IN the heart.

have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Pet 1:19).

☛ Where is it that the Holy Spirit sheds, or pours out, the love of God? “*And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*” (Rom 5:5).

- ☛ Peace that rules.
- ☛ Where God is set apart.
- ☛ Where the day dawns, and the Day Star rises.
- ☛ Where God’s love is poured out.
- ☛ Where we have received the Holy Spirit.
- ☛ Where the knowledge of God is

realized.

- ☛ The region from which our filial relationship with God is articulated.

None of these things are of any value to an institution-centered religion. That is because flesh cannot capitalize upon them. They are not things that can be seen with the eye. They do not rank high in worldly values. In our country, a person can be a church member in good standing, and not possess a single one of them. They are not apparent in the attitudes, lives, or actions of multitudes of highly regarded congregational members.

Let me be clear about this matter.

There is not so much as a single person who lacks these things, yet is acceptable to God. There is no promise for good to those in whom, these things are not found – not a single one. Further, there is no religious achievement, however great it may appear, that can compensate for their lack.

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What Can Be Done?

When those who lack these things stand in criticism by their peers, who point to their smallness of number, or their lack of impressive religious statistics, what can the objects of such criticism do? How can they respond to those who *“glory in appearance, and not in heart?”*

Paul is opening the door to a treasure house filled with answers – with *“reasons”* for the hope that is within us. What marvelous things we have experienced, and what powerful testimonies can shout to our critics!

- ☛ We are comforted in all of our tribulations (2 Cor 1:4a).
- ☛ We can comfort those who are in any tribulation (2 Cor 1:4b).
- ☛ Christ causes our consolation to abound (2 Cor 1:5).
- ☛ Our hope is steadfast (2 Cor 1:7).
- ☛ When we are troubled on every side, and even despair of all hope, God raises us up (2 Cor 1:8-10).
- ☛ We know that He will also deliver us in the future (2 Cor 1:10b).
- ☛ Our conscience testifies good things

to us (2 Cor 1:12a).

- ☛ We know that our manner of life in this world is by the grace of God (2 Cor 1:12b).
- ☛ To us, all of the promises of God are YES, and we shout out the AMEN to the glory of God (2 Cor 1:20).
- ☛ God has established and anointed us (2 Cor 1:21).
- ☛ God has sealed us with the pledge of His Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:22).
- ☛ We are standing against impossible odds by faith (2 Cor 1:24).
- ☛ We are not ignorant of Satan’s devices (2 Cor 2:11).
- ☛ God always causes us to triumph in Christ, making His savor manifest in us (2 Cor 2:14).

- ☛ We are a sweet savor of Christ unto God (2 Cor 2:15).
- ☛ We are letters of Christ, written with the Spirit of the living God (2 Cor 3:3).
- ☛ Our sufficiency is of God (2 Cor 3:5).
- ☛ We have a strong and sustaining hope (2 Cor 3:12).
- ☛ The Holy Spirit is changing us from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18).
- ☛ God has commanded the light to shine into our hearts (2 Cor 4:6).
- ☛ We are troubled, but not distressed (2 Cor 4:8a).
- ☛ We are perplexed, but not in despair (2 Cor 4:8b).
- ☛ We are persecuted, but not forsaken (2 Cor 4:9a).
- ☛ We are cast down, but not destroyed (2 Cor 4:9b).
- ☛ We are bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor 4:11a).
- ☛ The life also of Jesus is being made known in our mortal flesh (2 Cor 4:11b).
- ☛ We have the *“spirit of faith”* which moves us to speak confidently (2 Cor 4:13).
- ☛ Even though our outward man is perishing, our inward man is being renewed day by day (2 Cor 4:16).
- ☛ Our afflictions are perceived as light, and are our employees, working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Cor 4:17-18).
- ☛ We presently have *“a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”* (2 Cor 5:1).
- ☛ We are anticipating mortality being swallowed up of life (2 Cor 5:4).
- ☛ We know why God has wrought us – to inhabit an immortal body (2 Cor

5:5).

- We are walking by faith, and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7).
- We are willing to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8).
- We are willingly laboring to be accepted by God (2 Cor 5:9).

There are thirty-five things that have to do with the heart, and not appearance. They are things the world cannot give. Further, praise God, neither can the world take them away! What is a large church attendance compared to these things? Mind you, we would take great delight in multitudes drinking the water of life. But even then, our delight would not be in appearance, but in things relating to the heart. If you were to be offered a cluster of magnificent buildings, all dedicated to religious purposes, which one of the above

We refuse to shrink back in shame before those who have nothing more in which to boast than what the eye can see and the hand touch.

blessings would you be willing to forfeit in order to participate in such things?

When we walk in the light, we have testimonies to give, of which institutional people know nothing! **We refuse to shrink back in shame before those who have nothing more in which to boast than what the eye can see and the hand touch.** There are “*better things*” to be possessed (Heb 6:9), “*better promises*” (Heb 8:6) a “*better hope*” (Heb 7:19), a “*better testament*” (Heb 7:22), “*better sacrifices*” (Heb 9:23), a “*better and enduring substance*” (Heb 10:34), a “*better country*” (Heb 11:16), a “*better resurrection*” (Heb 11:35), and a

“*blood that speaks better things*” (Heb 12:24).

And, how do these things compare with the things that appear? **Dear child of God, be bold to testify of these things to those who glory in appearance.** Perhaps God will work through your “*answer*” to provoke a quest for things that not only satisfy, but bring glory to the God who gives them.

It ought to be said that wherever there are empty show and glorying in appearance, nothing of any spiritual substance can be found. All such religion is nothing more than pretense.

IT IS TO GOD

^{13a} **For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God . . .**”

Paul knows very well that “*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*” (1 Cor 2:14). **Such a person – the person dominated by “the flesh” – cannot handle the things of the Spirit. They do not have an appetite for the things of God, but prefer things relating to this world.** Thus it is written, “*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit*” (Rom 8:5). The AMPLIFIED BIBLE reads, “*For those who are according to the flesh and are **controlled by its unholy desires** set their minds on and **pursue those things which gratify the flesh**, but those who are according to the Spirit and are controlled by the desires of the Spirit set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the [Holy] Spirit.*”

The attitude that Paul has just described will be viewed as insane by those who live in the flesh. It makes no sense to them to move through life, motivated by “*the terror of the Lord*,” before whom they will stand to give an account. Paul therefore speaks from their perspective, speaking from a sarcastic viewpoint to draw their attention to the folly of such people.

FOR WHETHER

“*For whether we be . . .*” Other versions read, “*For if we are,*”^{NKJV} “*If we are,*”^{NIV} “*If we have been,*”^{NJB} “*If it seems that we are,*”^{NLT} “*Are we,*”^{LIVING} and “*So if.*”^{ISV}

This phrase supposes that Paul’s critics are right in their assessment, knowing full well that they are not. However, he will interpret his life through their eyes, then give an account of it. What follows is not the reality of the situation, but only what seems to be. Those who glory in appearance will view Paul, and those who think like him, in the

following manner.

WE BE BESIDE OURSELVES

“*. . . beside ourselves . . .*” Other versions read, “*out of our mind,*”^{NIV} “*are foolish,*”^{BBE} “*transported in mind,*”^{DOUAY} “*out of our wit,*”^{GENEVA} “*been unreasonable,*”^{NJB} “*are crazy,*”^{NLT} “*insane to say such things about ourselves,*”^{LIVING} and “*beside ourselves [mad, as some say].*”^{AMPLIFIED}

The expression “*beside ourselves*,” means to be out of our right mind, foolish, or idiotic. Once, when Jesus had ordained twelve “*that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach,*” His friends, or “*own people,*”^{NASB} heard about it and went out to “*lay hold on Him,*” or “*take custody of Him.*”^{NASB} Their reasoning was, “*He is beside Himself*” (Mk 3:21).

When Jesus spoke of being “*the Good Shepherd*,” laying down His life for His sheep, and taking up His life again, many who heard Him said, “*He hath a*

In the work of persuading of men, the knowledge of the terror of the Lord is essential– by Given O. Blakely

devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?" (John 10:20).

When Felix heard Paul speak powerfully concerning Christ's death and resurrection he said, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (Acts 26:24).

In this text, Paul concedes that his way of thinking appears to be nothing more than madness to his opponents. Yet, he has chosen to think in this way, and now he will tell them why.

IT IS TO GOD

" . . . it is to God . . . " Other versions read, "It is for God,"^{NKJV} "it is for the sake of God,"^{NIV} "it was for God,"^{NJB} "it is to bring glory to God,"^{NLT} "then we

are crazy for God,"^{IE} and "it is for God and concerns Him."^{AMPLIFIED}

What the world considered madness and being out of his right mind, was actually "for the sake of God."^{NIV} **That is, if God was going to get any glory at all from Paul and his labors, he had to think in this manner.** If Paul was to realize Divine acceptance, he had to adopt this mind-set.

It is necessary to abandon the world's way of thinking if we are to appropriate the mind of Christ or in any way come to God. Those who insist upon gaining the Lord's approval and being used by Him in His vineyard **must** forsake the carnal mind-set. If they insist on thinking like the world, they will, by

that very decision, forfeit all Divine benefits, and God's approval as well!

Paul wrote something similar to the Corinthians in his First Epistle. "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised" (1 Cor 4:10). In this way he contrasted what they were seeking, versus what he was pursuing. It looked as though their pursuit was more effective, for they were being honored, and he was being despised. **However, Paul was willing to appear to be nothing more than a fool for Christ's sake.** He knew that the fellowship He had with Christ, the approbation of the Father, and the rich ministry of the Holy Spirit, more than compensated for these conditions.

IT IS FOR YOUR CAUSE

" 13b . . . or whether we be sober, it is for your cause."

Now Paul views things from the real perspective, not the imaginary one.

OR WHETHER WE BE SOBER

" . . . or whether we be sober . . . " Other versions read, "or if we are of sound mind,"^{NKJV} "if we are in our right mind,"^{NIV} "whether we are of sober mind,"^{ASV} "or if we are serious,"^{BBE} "or are sober,"^{DARBY} "if we are rational,"^{NAB} "if reasonable,"^{NJB} "if we are now in our right senses,"^{WEYMOUTH} "if we are sane,"^{ISV} and "and if I am keeping my head cool."^{WILLIAMS}

It is interesting that a proper frame of mind is here described as being "sober." This word means "to be of sound mind," or "be in one's right mind,"^{THAYER} "think straight;"^{FRIEBERG} "think sensibly, be sensible and

serious;"^{UBS} "to be able to reason and think properly and in a sane manner."^{LOUW-NIDA}

There is, then, a right way to think – a proper mode of thought. If this were not the case, there could be no such thing as a "sober" or "serious" mind.

Such a mind sees the things of God clearly, and perceives the world as it really is as well. Someone who is "sober" sees Jesus as He really is, and perceives God in truth. The Scripture are rightly discerned, and the real issues of life of properly identified.

The saints of God are admonished, "be sober" (1 Thess 5:6,8). Those who are leaders of God's people are especially admonished to "be sober" (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8; 2:2). Women are exhorted to "be sober" (1 Tim 3:11; Tit 2:4). Young men

are urged to "be sober" (Tit 2:6). All believers are told to "be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:13). Because "the end of all things is at hand," those in Christ are told, "be sober, and watch unto prayer" (1 Pet 4:7). Considering the stalking adversary with which we contend, the Spirit says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8).

When folly, all manners of jesting, and light-heartedness prevail within the church, we have fallen upon hard times! Men may shout "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Prov 17:22), but how does that compare with soberness? Solomon did not compare merriment with being sober, but with having a "broken spirit" – a "crushed spirit,"^{NIV} or a "downcast spirit."^{NRSV} Solomon makes the same comparison elsewhere (Prov 15:13,15). He was not advocating the pursuit of pleasure, or a quest to be "merry" – and neither should we.

Being sober is to the mind what clear vision is to the eye. It is what clarity

There is, then, a right way to think – a proper mode of thought. If this were not the case, there could be no such thing as a "sober" or "serious" mind.

of hearing is to the ear, and strength is to the hand. **Just as a feeble hand cannot take hold of anything of substance, so the mind that is not serious cannot take hold of the things of God.**

Paul knows that spiritual reasoning is imbecilic to the flesh. Why, then is he sober? What is the purpose of his soundness of mind, clarity of thought, and precision of perception?

IT IS FOR YOUR CAUSE

“ . . . *it is for your cause.*” Other versions read, “*it is for you,*”^{NKJV} “*we are it unto you,*”^{GENEVA} “*it is for your benefit,*”^{NLT} “*{it is} for your cause,*”^{RWB} “*then it is for your sake,*”^{IE} “*it is order to be of service to you,*”^{WEYMOUTH} and “*it is for your good.*”^{WILLIAMS}

Paul maintained a clear, serious, and sober mind **for the sake of those to whom, he spoke and wrote.** He

No true benefit comes from an unsound mind! If our thoughts are muddled, God will not be in them, for that is not the way He is. The work of God can only be done in the arena of sober and sound thought. The seeds of eternal life are not sown by the comedian – regardless of claims of men.

knew that spiritual benefit requires lucidity, or clearness in one’s thinking. As soon as the mind becomes diverted or clouded, the benefits of the Lord are thrust beyond our reach. Experience will confirm the truth of this to your heart.

No true benefit comes from an unsound mind! If our thoughts are muddled, God will not be in them, for that is not the way He is. The work of God can

only be done in the arena of sober and sound thought. The seeds of eternal life are not sown by the comedian – regardless of claims of men. Entertainment is not the proper media for edification. I am quite aware that there are people who will fiercely object to such statements. To them we simply say, “*If we are rational, it is for you.*”^{NAB} **A sober mind is like a solid container for the thoughts of God.**

CONCLUSION

We have been exposed to sanctified motivation – **why** faithful laborers expend their energies in the vineyard of the Lord. It is important to have proper reasons for, and incentives that support, our endeavors. We are living in a time when a remarkable level of corruption has crept into this facet of Christian work. The institution has, for the most part, upstaged Jesus, and personal gain has supplanted sacrificial service. **It ought to be noted that Jesus will not work in a defiled environment – and where flesh is**

dominate, the environment has been corrupted. This problem is further complicated when men invent unto themselves methods and techniques to make up for the absence of the power of God. Although whole education and promotional organizations are built upon these humanly conceived procedures, they will **never** prove a means to the appropriation of Divine power. Such efforts will **not** be blessed. If the blessing of God appears to be upon them, it is only because of appearance. The real fruit of the Spirit will be sparse, if present at all.

Those who would work for the Lord, whether in some official capacity, or that of a helper, must have the proper motivation. Our text has set that matter before us, and with great power. The fact of the matter is that we all will “*stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for the deeds done in the body.*” There is no possible way for this to be obviated, changed, or become inconsequential.

That appearance is not a mere formality, or something that will have no bearing on our eternal destiny. In order to prepare for it, we must be willing to look like fools before the world. When we are properly motivated, we will appear to be beside ourselves, and out of synch with sound thinking. However, the sober minded person is only out of synch with corrupt and condemned thinking.

If you are laboring for the Lord, do so with a right motive. If you are being tempted to modify your message to accommodate carnal minds, do not even consider it! Be faithful, and be sober!

It ought to be noted that Jesus will not work in a defiled environment – and where flesh is dominate, the environment has been corrupted. This problem is further complicated when men invent unto themselves methods and techniques to make up for the absence of the power of God.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 4/1/2005. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the Epistle of Second Corinthians. The twenty-fourth lesson will cover verses fourteen through seventeen of the fifth chapter: **“PROPER CONSTRAINT.”** In Christ, the “end” does not always justify “the means.” Proper results can only be produced by proper causes. This is particularly true in the area of motivation – what compels an individual to engage in living or working for the Lord. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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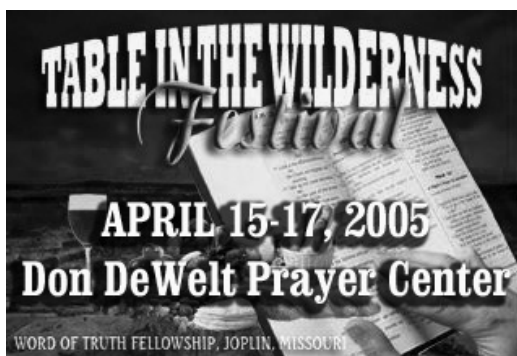
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**PLAN TO
ATTEND
THESE
TIMES OF
REFRESHING**

