

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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

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

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

The Apprehension of Truth

Truth, or REALITY, is something that may not be apprehended only intellectually. It must be so indelibly impressed upon your person that it actually becomes an integral part of you. Satan has spread across the religious world a great veil of spiritual ignorance, and called it truth. Intellectuality is the very basis of most religion (or loose emotionalism), and so we hear such questions as "What do you believe"? "How do you feel about this"? "What does your church teach"? etc. Each religious sect has its private schools where their ministers receive specialized training. The accepted dogmas of the given group are conveyed to them through positive beliefs and interpretations; all propounded by able exponents of the system involved. Much of what is said is actually true in its form, although virtually devoid of content; "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:5). *Truth is not mere fact, and therefore cannot be conveyed through mere mental processes.* Truth is reality, and is received experientially; i.e., by means of you becoming a participant in it. For instance, to understand the truth of the new birth, "ye must be born again" (John 3:3-5), or else you cannot "see" (perceive) "the kingdom of God." *When the thing of which God speaks has been the experience of your soul in some measure, you "know the truth" (John 8:32) on that matter.* The memorization of factual evidence is wholly insufficient to, of itself, meet this end. You must personally enter into this matter by PERFORMING the will of God. Jesus put it this way: "If any man will DO His will, he shall KNOW of the doctrine; whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:17). *Until such time as you are actually found engaged in the will of God, there is a positive ignorance of the reality of Christ's doctrine.* You may have taken hold of some very sound words, and through a process of reasoning and a sort of self-hypnosis, made yourself believe that it is true (called in Scripture "deceiving their own selves" (James 1:21-22). Through faith, the child of God thrusts out upon the Word of God, thus "proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

The fact that myriads of churchmen have never really done this, is alarming to me. Their consciences are becoming seared as with a "hot iron" as they become religious "parrots" for their sectarian dogmas. It is not "for the truths sake" that they speak, but rather for the sake of their religious clique. At one point their speech is sound - at another point, quite faulty. The reason is that they have failed to grasp reality within. Christ is not

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PEACE IN HEAVEN

The Word of Truth

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THE APPREHENSION OF TRUTH

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"formed" in them (Gal. 4:19). "All things" have not become "new" (II Cor. 5:17), but only a few new facts have come to their attention. Like the Athenians and Stoics together with their philosophers, they "delight to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21). Now, the truth must be effectually conveyed to your being, so that you "become a partaker of the Divine Nature" (II Pet. 1:4). Jesus comes to "give us an understanding, that we might know Him that is true" (I Jno. 5:20); and again, He Himself teaches us "the truth as it is in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-21). You "learn" this by being "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:28-30). Now you "speak truth" (Eph. 4:15) because it is actually part of you, and is in total agreement with your own being. *This is no longer a "position", but a declaration of him who "hath the Witness in Himself" (I Jno. 5:10).* Truth is in him (II Jno. 2), and he "walks in the truth" (III Jno. 3); i.e., he is fused together with truth in perfect oneness. Praise the Lord! His entire being is effected: "body, soul and spirit" (I Thess. 5:23-24). In his intellect, emotion, and will, there is CONCORD with and PARTICIPATION in the Truth! Hallelujah for such a marvelous transaction.

It is evident that this condition requires a very definite work of God. When it comes to the affectation of man's nature, there must be a Divine fiat, and indeed there is. We well remember the words of the prophet Jeremiah who said: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 5:23). The Lord has taken upon Himself, however, the task of making man a participant in the Truth. This is His covenant: "I will write my Law upon THEIR hearts, and put it in THEIR minds" (Jer. 31:31-35; Heb. 8:8-13). Wonderful truth. *Here God is seen granting man a glorious reciprocity to Deity.* Think of it! You now "speak as one having authority", because "God is in you OF A TRUTH", i.e., in reality. You have been effectually instructed from within by the process of renewal. You cannot gain this knowledge of the truth by intellectual development alone, or by merely observing factual evidence. However valuable these may be, they are not the real means to the end. You must be "in Christ", and "taste of

The Sacred Cow

India has its sacred cow, and America has its own version of the same. Obeisance is continually being rendered to "science", and the tendency is becoming increasingly evident in religious realms. I am often confronted by some enthusiastic sophist that has been assured of the truth of Scripture because of the discoveries of science. At last they seem able to believe the Word of God on certain matters, without compunction or reservation. I find such an attitude to be utterly obnoxious to my soul. It evidences a faith in science, not in God. We are taught to "avoid the oppositions of science falsely so called" (I Tim. 6:20). While this is not meant to convey to us that science is worthless, it is a solemn warning that men are prone to extend human conceptions into this realm, wresting facts, and bending them to support their own theories. It can become a tool for the lusts of men, if not carefully dealt with. **A reliance upon the findings of men is actually trusting in man himself, which is expressly forbidden from the viewpoint of law, and is utterly ridiculous to the mind of the Spirit (Psa. 118: 8, 9).**

To attempt to support the word of God by scientific findings (in many cases a mere assumption rather than a "finding") is nothing more than an admission of unbelief! The immutable Word of the living God is not set upon the foundation of science and reason. It is "forever settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89), and shall "never pass away" (Mark 13:31; Lk. 21:33). The Infinite cannot be finally substantiated by the finite anymore than a tinker-toy foundation could hold the Empire State Building. Jesus has testified, and His testimony is true, that the only way to "know of the doctrine" is to "do the will of Him" that sent Him (John 7:17). And again, unless a man is "born again, he cannot see (perceive, discern) the kingdom of God" (John 3:3-5).

Archeological and scientific discoveries, however weighty and conclusive they may appear, add not one whit to the surety or truth of the Scriptures. The Word which has been given to us is "a more sure word of prophecy" (II Pet. 1:19), not because it has been undergirded by scientific discoveries, but because it was confirmed by the "Voice out of the holy mount" (II Pet. 1:18). **God's word is true because its Author is true,** and possesses no "variableness nor shadow of turning" (James 1:17). It is not subject to the analysis and scrutiny of unbelief — it stands, praise God, whether proven or supposedly disproven by mortal men.

Some, bowing the knee to the "sacred cow" of science, have asserted that their faith has been

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the Lord, that He is gracious." It is intimate communion and fellowship with Jesus that brings this state about. If you have not yet found this sort of a relationship to be a reality in your life, I exhort you to call upon the Lord, while He is near. Seek grace and mercy to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16), and plead with Him for the sort of life that finds you "walking in the light as He is in the light." (I John 1:7). Then you will know the truth in such a way as to bring rejoicing, peace, and righteousness (Rom. 14:17) into your heart! That is apprehension!

A Bottle in the Smoke

"For I am become as a bottle in the smoke; yet I do not forget Thy statutes"

— Psalms 119:83

God has dealt with us "in all wisdom and prudence" (Eph. 1:8), and well may we thank Him for it. This is a certain manifestation of His grace, that He so deals with His sons as to make them "partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:10). **There are times when God wisely permits all of our strength to expire, and our vitality to virtually cease in order that we might be made to realize our absolute and utter dependence upon Him.**

Such times are by no means pleasant, but afterward they do yield "the peaceful fruits of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11). We always joy in Christ Jesus as we are given to see in truth that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). David, in our text, is speaking of a trying time to his faith, a period when the Lord was "proving Him, to know whether he loved the Lord his God with all of his heart and with all of his soul" (Duet. 13:3). The child of God may speak with David when he declared: "Thou hast proved my heart" (Psa. 17:3), and therein is both our weakness and God's strength made manifest. There is, however, that blessed "Word of truth" (James 1:18) by which the Lord "begat us of His own will" which may be of much consolation even during these times. You will observe that David, though a "bottle in the smoke" did not lose his grasp upon the Word of God. How thankful ought we to be for that Word, which is given that we might find "comfort and patience" through it (Rom. 15:4). Take heed, then, to your own case, and benefit from it. Do not despair when you stand in the "smoke", but rather cling unto that blessed Word by which we are "clean" (John 15:3).

This is a strange phrase — "I am as a bottle in the smoke." It, in more contemporary language means; "I am like a wineskin that is being dried up by the smoke." The AMPLIFIED OLD TESTAMENT renders it properly when it gives this sense of reading; "For I am become like a bottle (a wineskin blackened and shriveled) in the smoke in which it hangs". There in the smoke the wineskin gets tough; tough so that it can contain the wine that will be placed into it. **The excess elasticity is taken out; the colour is darkened, and it is rendered fit for lasting use.** How much is this like our own case. Placed in the "thick smoke" we are made to shrivel up, so to speak; we lose our strength, our spiritual elasticity.

Our fair baby-like colour is made darker, and we become men, "who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12). Aye, and it is good to be shrunk, for we too often find a sort of spiritual bloating setting in; a state wherein our own pride and trust in self begins to puff itself out, and to draw attention to our ability rather than the strength of the Lord. When this begins to happen, we are placed into the "smoke." Again, there are times when there seems to be no reason apparent to us for such a "smoking" — and yet it comes. Job

stands as an example of this. Hear his words as he stands in the curling smoke and heat of trial; "My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented (went before) me. I went mourning without the sun: I stood up and cried in the congregation. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep" (Job 30:26-31). Here was a man that had a deep sensitivity to his condition of soul. He was a "perfect and upright" man who "feared God and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1). There was no mere pretense with him; he had the mind of God toward evil, and thus gave himself to righteousness. When there came calamity upon him, he did not look to the earth, but rather saw immediately that there was a loss of communion with the Lord.

He did not blame his state upon the actions of others, but rather saw it as coming **directly from the Lord**; "Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me" (Job 9:34). Oh, that more men had this sort of insight into their own souls. Myriads are lost in the labyrinth of activity, and never really come to a state where they know their own soul. When the Lord departs from them, they "wist not that the Lord hath departed from them" (Judges 16:20), like foolish Samson of old. Job knew, like David, when he was "in the smoke". How about you? Have you come to the point, by grace, where you know when you are in the light, and when you are in the smoke? When your spirit is "broken" and the experience "dries your bones" (Psa. 17:22); when your "strength is dried up" (Psa. 22:15), and your "throat is dry" (Psa. 69:3), do you comprehend what the situation is; or do you "run to and fro", seeking answers where there are none.

What of the times when "our bones are dried and our hope is lost" (Ezek. 37:11) — do you have an adequate grasp of the situation? I am confounded that with so much religion prevalent in our day there is found very few people who have an acquaintance with their own self. In such times as these, I fear the vast majority of professed believers are given to murmuring rather than prayer, as was David (Psa. 119:83-84). They tend to forget the word of the Lord, rather than "forget it not". This is only another evidence of the "superfluity of naughtiness" (James 1:17) that is pawned off to people in the name of the Lord. Rather than a rich and vital communication with the Lord being established, there is a miserable connection with a merely external institution which can neither nourish the soul nor provide "grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). Thus, when times of trial and smoke are brought upon them **by the Lord** to try their hearts, as the Lord is wont to do, they are quite ignorant of the situation. Oh, how we need ministers today to be sent of the Lord to the sheep — to give them the "sense, and cause them to understand" (Neh. 8:8).

Father High, upon the Throne
look now upon Thy sons
See many languish in despair
because of what's **not** done
Send forth according to Thy choice,

men who know the case
Endowed with wisdom from above
who speak words out with grace.

These times of spiritual "smoking" are times of seasoning in which self is boiled out; the carnality is brought forth. Before we can truly become "partakers of the Divine nature" (II Pet. 1:1-3), we must first have self extracted. There's nothing like spiritual heat to perform this task, and often it is employed; yea, if one be "without chastisement, he is not a son", but rather a "bastard" (Heb. 12:5-11). **The "smoke" of affliction will extract self and implant Christ; or at least give you the blessed awareness of this transaction when it is finished.**

Man is very weak and frail; how necessary it is for him to know it. How often does the saint speak thusly; "My strength faileth because of mine iniquity" (Psa. 31:10); "My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me" (Psa. 38:10); "... I am not able to look up" (Psa. 40:12); "My flesh and my heart faileth" (Psa. 73:26); "My spirit faileth" (Psa. 143:7); "I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God"; "Mine eyes fail for Thy Word" (Psa. 119:82); "Mine eyes fail for Thy salvation" (Psa. 119:123). **These are not just rhetorical phrases; they are expressions of a heart that has been made dependent upon the Lord.** It thrives upon the word of the Lord which is its food, yea, the child of God desires the Word of the Lord "more than his necessary food" (Job 23:12); he lives by it, and has found Christ's words to be "spirit and life" (John 6:63). Once let them become obscure to him, and he is "in the smoke". He can thrive only when he is in communion with the Lord. Let that communion become obscure, and he begins to languish in despair; he is "in the smoke." **God has made us dependent upon Himself,** and how we are rejoicing that He has. How fully sufficient He is to satisfy all of our needs. Praise the Lord!

Oh, my God, I pant for Thee
as for my "All in all"
How doth my heart grow weary still
while I upon Thee call
Thou hast surely made me need
Thy presence for to live
What wonder that I now rejoice
that Thou **Thyself** doth give.

These times of "smoke" — oh, how they speak to our hearts of our new life; how the "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4) is manifested to us **then.** See **how we languish and boil within when we have nothing but self.** Our own strength appears as it is in truth, "**nothing**" (John 15:5). Then the greatness of God stands out clear, and how we seek it. This is not a bad experience, unpleasant though it may be; but rather a gracious one brought on by the Lord whereby we are made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). **Let the bottle hang in the smoke; let it shrink; let the dropsy of flesh evaporate from your soul, that it might be strong and able to withstand the assaults of the "evil one."** Regret not that God has so dealt with you as to hang you in the smoke of affliction; see rather His mercy in this. He is "chastening" you, "that you be not condemned with

the world" (Heb. 12:5-11; I Cor. 11:32). And, see the heart of David; that the same victory may be yours in Christ Jesus; "**YET I DO NOT FORGET THY STATUTES**".

Oh, here is a realm where few are really "more than conquerors". This matter of forgetting the statutes of the Lord plagues many; and the tragedy is that they seem little concerned about it. **The mind, by nature, is like a sieve in relation to the things of God.** Though they be poured in in copious quantities, yet they seem to run out upon the ground of fret and care. Miserable creatures that we are! Who shall deliver us from the body of this death. Praise God — we thank God (that He shall) through the Lord Jesus Christ. So then, there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 7:24-8:1) What does it take for you to forget the words of the Lord; His decrees, immutable in nature, truth in content, mighty in power? How strong is your hold upon the Word of the Lord. Can you say with David; "Oh, how love I Thy law; it is my meditation all the day" (Psa. 119:97). This is the part of the "new covenant" that is so wonderful; when God "writes His laws upon our minds and puts them into our hearts" (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-13; 10:16-21). **We have been brought into agreement with the mind of God;** have been given to see things as He sees them. This is the secret to "not forgetting His statutes".

It does not take us mortals long to forget what we are at variance with. If our minds are not in accord with a thing or a statement, we find it very easy to forget and remove from our minds during times of adversity. But, when we have been given to understand the things of the Spirit of God, then even in trial they become exceedingly precious. They speak to us of the immutability of God, with whom is no "variableness nor shadow of turning" (James 1:17). His Word shall stand forever; what better thing to cling to and be mindful of than that! No! **Let adversity come; let trial, affliction, tribulation, assault and vexation come — but lay hold of the Word of God; His statutes. Cling to them. Contemplate what He has declared and let it soothe your buffeted soul!** Retain His words — adversity or no — and Jesus will "reveal" Himself to you (John 14:21-23). This is the "wisdom of God", and how counter does it run to "the mind of the flesh." **In the very center of the experiences that most of us shun is to be found a great revelation of the Person of Christ to our hearts.**

Though there be "smoke", yet the sight is not totally obscured. If you can but perceive it, God has given you eyes that can see, though partially and dim at times, through the "smoke" of affliction. I exhort you to not kick against the strivings of God with your Spirit, for "His Spirit will not always strive with men" (Gen. 6:3). Do not question God or "find fault" with Him because things appear to be confusing and vexatious at times. **If you be hung in the smoke, hang!** Do not forget His statutes though you fail to see them clearly. **Cling to what you have!** Do not "forget the works of God" (Psa. 78:7), nor His many "benefits" (Psa. 103:2). Affirm with the saints of old; "I WILL NOT FORGET THY WORD" (Psa.

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The Place Where Jesus Was Crucified

"For the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh unto the city" — Luke 19:20

The city was Jerusalem, ante-Pentecostal dwelling place of God. The residents were themselves the "people of God", to whom pertained the "adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9:4-5). They had rejected the "Lord's Christ" and had "gathered together against the Lord's anointed" (Psa. 2:1-3). They have thrust the Son of God from them, crucifying Him "through the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:23). They now crucify Him "near", but "outside" that great city. How ironical! How prophetic! Here were those professing to be the "children of Abraham" (Matt. 3:9; John 8:37-39), casting out from their presence the very "Seed of Abraham" (Gal. 3:19-20).

"Nigh unto the city" — an everlasting epitaph to demonstrate that "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). A fulfillment of the prophetic utterance that "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country" (Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:4; John 4:44). "Nigh unto the city" — in thunderous demonstration that men, though they be counted "the princes of this world" were so desperately ignorant of the things of God, that they crucified the very "Lord of glory", for which they professed to wait (I Cor. 2:7-8). He was "refuse" and the "offscouring of the world" to them, so they took Him "without the gate" (Heb. 13:12); out where the carcasses and the dung was carried; that is what they thought of Him, whom to know is life! A terrible commentary on the wretchedness of mankind! He truly "suffered without the gate"; He was despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3).

Observe the place of Christ's crucifixion again; it was "nigh unto the city", yet "without". No — God will not permit the Eternal "Scape goat" to succumb inside those walls. The city shall not be defiled by the death of "God manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16). What grace! Jerusalem shall yet "be a praise in the earth" (Isa. 62:7). Jesus shall not die within her walls; He shall be taken without, yet "nigh", to die in the place of the dead sacrificial beasts. No! Even now, he that would "crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame" (Heb. 10:26) must go "without" to do it! Keep Jesus inside of the city, and He lives, attempt to take Him outside, and He shall wane from your heart and life.

Mark that well, and forget it not! You cannot tread outside the walls of this "heavenly Jerusalem" which is the "mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26) and expect to possess a living Christ! He dies outside the wall, and if you ever step outside, it is to "go unto Him, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13); i.e., we are to die to self, the world, and all systems of religion that are based upon works! But, once identified with the death of Christ, we are to rise to "walk in newness of life", within that "city that is set upon a hill", which is the "city of the living God", the church (Heb. 12:22-23).

Too, the garden of Gethsemane, the cross, the tomb — all are "nigh unto the city." Come now — approach the "city" of the Lord. See on yonder hill the garden wherein our Savior "sweat as great drops of blood" (Luke 22:44); see "the place of the skull" where our Lord was "crucified" (Matt. 27:33; Mark 15:22; John 19:17); the "tree" upon which He hung, and was made a "curse" for us; for it is written "cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree" (Gal. 3:13); the tomb with gaping mouth and blank emptiness! You cannot skirt these places if you would enter this grand city, for they are all "nigh unto the city". You must confront them; see them; be touched by them! And, oh, they will draw you into the city where now new life is manifest in the risen Lord. It is true, as the hymn writer said, "The way of the cross leads home."

See yonder Garden, hill, and cross
see open, empty tomb
Declare they not thy victory
though veiled in mysterious womb?
Behold, the city's gate now looms
within her walls I feign
To enter — then behold the veil
now riv'n clean in twain.

Oh, but you who dwell within this city — would you dare to venture outside its high walls? Would you thus "neglect so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3)? and blindly stumble in the night? Would you, having "begun in the Spirit" now seek to find perfection "in the flesh" (Gal. 3:3)? Would you "make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof?" (Rom. 13:14)? Then you must venture past the crucified Christ and there harden your heart; you must see Him "in an agony" in the Garden, and thus come to disdain His sufferings for you; you must see the open tomb and come to treat with contempt the very Lord that "rose from the dead for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). The place where Jesus was crucified was "nigh unto the city". I ask you, oh pilgrim — what think you of the sight? Do you see it as you approach the city? or are you passing it in a retreat from the city?

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Flesh continually tries to justify spiritual indolence and lethargy. The child of God must be acutely sensitive to this lest he be caught unawares, and quench the Spirit while pacifying the flesh.

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There is no substitute for a study of the Word. Therein is found the transcript of God's providential working and purpose as settled in the heavens. Here is what feeds and nurtures the souls of the elect and causes them to live. Neglect a study of the Scriptures, and life will wane.

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The fruit of the Spirit is but the projection of the life of God. It does not consist of doing, but in being. These are not areas to try and develop or perfect (Gal. 5:22-23); they cannot be produced, improved upon, or polished by self-effort. They are the Spirit's fruit. A living person possesses them. He who does not is without the Spirit and dead.

Serving God in Newness of Spirit

"But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in the newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" — Romans 7:6

Attempted observance of a religious code is not a valid substitute for the possession of a new heart. God is not worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything (Acts 17:25), and religious codes and regulatory restrictions are all in this direction. **A dog that must be tied cannot be trusted when free, and a person that must have restrictions of law placed all about him has an acknowledged love for sin.** "The law", writes Paul, "is for the lawless" (I Tim. 1:9), thereby indicating its role in God's economy. It is designed to "make sin exceedingly sinful" (Rom. 7:13), i.e., to alert the conscience of the sinner as to his rebellion against God and his uncomely proclivity toward evil. **Where law reigns sin reigns** — and there are no exceptions, for the "strength of sin is the law" (I Cor. 15:56). **Hence, God cannot be served under a system of law; i.e., through the regulation of the flesh.** While this type of service may indeed "have a show of wisdom" (Col. 2:19-22), it does not remove the inward inclination toward sin. This inner state is what naturally disqualifies a man for fellowship with God, and consequently equips him for alienation from God in the pit that burneth with fire and brimstone. **An overt deed need never be openly wrought contrary to God's law; yet if the heart is unrenewed, service to God is utterly impossible.** We "worship God in the spirit" (Phil. 3:3), and it is axiomatic to say that the spirit must be "renewed" before such worship is possible. Before we can "prove (find out for ourselves) what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God", the mind must, by "renewal" be "transformed" (Rom. 12:1-2).

Our Lord Himself introduced this truth to the woman from Samaria when He spoke of the "true worshippers" worshipping God in spirit and in truth (reality) — (John 4:23-24). **God is a Spirit and can really be worshipped only spiritually i.e., within the spirit or "inner man"** (II Cor. 4:6). The heart of the "true worshipper" reaches out for God, "hungering and thirsting for righteousness" (Matt. 5:6), loving and adoring God for who He is; "My heart panteth after Thee" (Psa. 38:10), asserted David, and so spoke for all who truly worship God in spirit and in truth. Outward actions are not worship, as some vainly assert! **They are, in the true believer expressions of worship, but they fall far short of the full expression that is desired because of the renewed heart.** We have, praise God, been freed from the Law in order that we might truly worship God in the spirit, and service Him in this manner.

Blessed Father, Thou art worthy
of worship plenteous
Wilt Thou receive this meager praise
from such renewed as us.
We love Thee for Thyself, Oh God
because You've made us new
With hearts that Thou hast circumcised
we lift our praise to You!

The Righteousness of Faith

Righteousness is a glorious reality in Christ; out of Christ it cannot possibly be appropriated. **The conception of righteousness that we entertain reflects our apprehension of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, which is that we "put off the old man (nature) . . . and put on the new man which is renewed . . . in righteousness"** (Eph. 4:20-24).

Man is inherently unrighteous (Rom. 3:10), and at his best is "altogether vanity" (Psa. 39:5). His most upright accomplishments of themselves are but "filthy rags" before the Lord of righteousness (Isa. 64:6), worthy only of disregarding or "casting off" (Heb. 12:2). When we speak of inherent righteousness, we speak of God, whose righteousness has now been "declared" (Rom. 3:24-26) in the Person of Jesus Christ. Our righteousness is not in reality our own, but rather that of another — "the Lord OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS", is His name to us (Jer. 23:6; 33:17). Rather than being developed by us, it is imputed to us (Rom. 4). Its possession is not evidenced by mere moral regulation, but by possession of faith and the forgiveness of sins (Rom. 4:1-6). A joyful blessedness, therefore, comes to those pronounced "righteous", because the Lord has not imputed sin to them (Rom. 4:4). **Where, therefore, sin dominates, there can neither be faith nor righteousness.** Little wonder, therefore, that it is said that he is "BLESSED" indeed whose "iniquities are forgiven." **The foundation of righteousness is obedience of Christ.** "By one man's obedience, were many made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). May we not, then, rejoice in the blessed provision of righteousness afforded us through faith in Jesus Christ. Yea, and that we shall!

Why Men Do Evil

The economy of God is so arranged as to make evil and sin inevitable to all men. **It can by no means be averted in fleshly strength and wisdom.** "All have sinned" of a truth (Rom. 3:23), and God Himself hath "concluded ALL in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32). By nature man is set against God, and therefore all he does is evil; for "whatsoever is not of faith (is not motivated by faith in God) is sin" (Rom. 14:23). There must be a change wrought in man through grace whereby he will be made acceptable before God. Until that time of appointment, man, like Rehoboam, "does evil BECAUSE HE PREPARES NOT HIS HEART TO SEEK THE LORD" (II Chron. 12:1). One of the positive ways of overcoming evil is simply seeking the Lord; and where evil dominates, we can only surmise that **God has not been sought. A mind taken up with the contemplation of the Lord will not be taken up with evil. An earnest quest for God will end a dominion of sin, for it places Him on the working end by faith.** Our hearts, by nature "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9) must always be prepared to "seek the Lord", else we shall find ourselves committing evil. Too, it is edifying to remember that the "preparations of the heart. . . are of the Lord" (Prov. 16:1). **Thus, God Himself graciously provides the means of overcoming evil. To spurn this work is to make sin inevitable, and damnation sure!**

Peace in Heaven

"Peace in heaven" — Luke 19:38

Jesus has come to His "hour." He shall be glorified! He rides into Jerusalem with multitudes thronging the way. People "spread their clothes in the way" (Lk. 19:36) in honor and homage to the Lord Jesus Christ. Joyful people began to chant and shout — excitement rises to a high pitch. **THE KING IS HERE**, "meek and lowly, and riding on an ass" (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5). Prophetically, they may speak, unaware of what they have said, as was Peter in Matthew 16:13-20. Great things had been witnessed; people healed, dead raised, lame cured; the blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, the palsied leaped and ran. Now the "whole multitude of disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen" (verse 37). No stilted anthems here! No pious vanities displayed. The people had seen, and they rejoiced. "PEACE IN HEAVEN", they shouted, and thus illuded to a truth scarcely any of them had perceived.

When this One was born, and thus manifested in a new sense to the heavenly hierarchies, the angels heralded that coming with "peace on earth". Now, that He was known on the earth, men declared "peace in heaven." Glory to God — here is truth saturated with food for the heart. Can you see it?

"PEACE IN HEAVEN" — had there been tumult? Was there war? Man was at enmity with God! A "friend of the world", he was constituted an "enemy of God" (James 4:4). He was at variance with all of heaven, and there was "no peace." But, ah, the Savior has come! "In the fulness of time, God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4:4-5). He was given the work of reconciliation, and it is proclaimed that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:18-19). Now God's wrath and indignation would be "past" and an "atonement" would be made.

A "propitiation" or covering, through Jesus is provided that we might have "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1). There is every indication in Scripture that the heart of God (I speak after the manner of men) was at unrest as long as His people were estranged and alienated from Him through sin. Jesus had come to, through death, "perfect forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). **Until the accomplishment of that work in verity, God could not fellowship with this "chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world"** (Eph. 1:4-5). "Peace in heaven" — a tranquil union with the Lord declared to be a reality! Who can fathom it? Jesus "made peace through the blood of the cross" (Col. 1:20); then "came and preached peace to them that were afar off" (Eph. 2:17). **This was the provision made by Christ for God!** It must be remembered that not only were we enemies to God, but God was an enemy to us. We were "by nature children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3). God was set against us, and His indignation threatened to destroy us. The "wrath of God" abode on us (John 3:36), after a definite sense, and how dreadful was the contemplation of it once it was registered upon our conscience by the Holy Spirit.

That wrath had to be appeased! God had to be thoroughly satisfied. There had to be "peace in heaven"; and indeed, Jesus was sent forth to bring it to pass, Praise His Holy name! God "saw the travail of His soul, and was satisfied" (Isa. 53:10-11). The "glorious Gospel of the Blessed God" (I Tim. 1:11) may now be proclaimed; i.e., the illuminating glad tidings of the God who has been made happy, joyful and jubilant, through the sacrifice of His "well Beloved Son" (Matt. 3:16-17; 17:1-7). **He has been thoroughly appeased; completely satisfied for the sins of men through the Lord Jesus Christ.** In Him, now, "there is no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1).

The "heavenly things themselves" have now been made pure by the blood "that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 9:23; 12:24). Oh, blessed work of Jesus, which has brought us to the Father, who now, without reservation may have intimate concourse with us. Praise His Name!

Oh, contemplation, bless'd art thou
for eyes thou hast to see

The wondrous work of peace wrought out
by Jesus Christ for me

At peace with God — oh can it be
that such a worm as I

Can be by grace no enemy
and fellowship so high?

"Therefore, we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 8:1), and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). Peace has verily been made in heaven — "all for sin could not atone; Christ must die, and Christ alone." No amount of effort, works, or debasement can further appease God. Peace has been "MADE!" Do you seek it? Then you must come to the Son — "no man cometh to the Father but by" Him (John 14:6). He made peace; you receive it in His name. It will "flow as a river" (Isa. 66:12) through you, cleansing and purifying your heart from the fear of variance with God. Flow on, thou blessed peace! Cleanse hearts! Saturate minds! Keep hearts and minds! Show man that Jesus hath verily procured "everlasting peace" through the "sacrifice of Himself." Unveil, oh Lord, to benighted minds the blessed truth of atonement; of peace "made", "preached" and "had". Then may we well thank Thee, oh Righteous Father, that Thou hast made Thyself accessible to us through Jesus' blood. Let us not forget Thy great benefit, nor this unspeakable gift! We look to Thee, Holy Father, for men who shall stir up our pure minds by way of remembrance to these things; for they are a precious ointment of grace to our hearts. Amen.

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An increase in the knowledge of God is imperative to an acceptable walk with God. He desires the knowledge of God more than whole burnt offerings (Hosea 6:6), and to fail to know Him is a token of shame (I Cor. 15:34). This is the means whereby grace and peace are multiplied (II Pet. 1:2). To fail, therefore, to grow in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:9) is to thwart the means of perfection (grace) and the provision for the heart (peace).

A Bottle in the Smoke

(From page 4)

119:16), nor His "statutes" (Psa. 119:89, 109, 141). Can you say, "I will never forget Thy statutes" (Psa. 119:93), or "I do not forget Thy law" (Psa. 119:153), or "I do not forget Thy commandments" (Psa. 119:176). Hear God speak to you; "My son, forget not my law" (Prov. 3:1), and answer that though there be smoke and trial, yet "I will not forget Thy law." What blessed assurance there is in the heart of one who is so established. Let the fear of the Lord strike into your benighted heart, if so be that you are prone to minimize what I speak to you; for the Word of the Lord speaks to the slothful on this wise; "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest unto Me: seeing THOU HAST FORGOTTEN THE LAW OF THY GOD, I WILL ALSO FORGET THY CHILDREN" (Hosea 4:6).

We are often prone to treat with virtual contempt the pleas of the Lord to do His will; and when we do, there are warnings from the Lord which are designed to quicken our carnal hearts, and prick them with an awareness of the finality of the Word of the Lord. Think not that this matter of hanging in the smoke of affliction and yet forgetting not the statutes of the Lord, is an optional matter; a matter where only the advanced are so privileged. This is the children's bread; they are to all partake of this benefit, and if they are hesitant to do so, then they shall bear the indignation of the Lord; and it "is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). Here we have a portion of our "great salvation", which we ought not to "neglect" (Heb. 2:3). Neglect of this phase of sanctification is attendant with much grief of soul; avoid such neglect!

Lastly, I would admonish those of you that speak the Word of the Lord. How often do we need this sort of instruction, for "in many things we offend all" (James 3:2), as did the apostles of old, and our Lord Himself. The rebuffs that we encounter are many times like a thick smoke that seethes out of us the dross of self and pride. How we ought to esteem highly such "smoking", though it seem grievous for the moment. Be prepared to stand in smoke, if you are to speak the word of the Lord. Many times your own person will be assailed so heavily as to bring anguish of soul that seems to almost separate you from communion with the Lord. **During such times, you are to hold on to the Word of God, and not forget His benefits.** The Lord is faithful, and will not suffer anyone to be tempted above what they are able to bear; but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (I Cor. 10:13). I suggest to you that at least one avenue of escape from the grievousness of the whole matter is that of contemplating and feeding upon that portion of the Word which has been applied to your heart and life. Oh, gain the victory here, for it is there **for you.** The man that stands before the people many times needs more sifting than others, because he is in the limelight. He will have more trials than some others who operate quietly and obscurely within the framework of the body of Christ. **Yet, he is not to disdain such experiences, but rather to use them as**

The Sacred Cow

(From page 2)

strengthened by the recent discoveries confirming the truth of the Scriptures — "Why science has now proved beyond a doubt that 'this or that' is true," they say. But, what sort of faith is this that has been strengthened? It is not that "faith once (for all) delivered to the saints" (Jude 3-5), **for that faith is not strengthened by the uncovering of externals by men.** This is the faith that "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). **It is the proclamation of the message of God by a man of God that is used to stimulate, produce, and increase faith — not things mundane, uncovered by mundane men.** True faith is fed from the fountain of God's Word, and not from skeptical pits of science. Our faith and hope are "in God" (I Cor. 2:5; I Pet. 1:21), and there they shall reside. Hallelujah! If science presents oppositions, they are wrong, and have judged the case improperly, as is the nature with the carnal man (I Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:1-8). If they present proofs, they really comprehend not what they have found unless faith is given to them. **Let the promises, the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and the declaration of the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus" (I Cor. 2:2; Eph. 4:20-21) cause an increase in your faith.** Bow the knee to Jesus, not to science!

Depend not upon that "sacred cow", which myriads now worship and adore, to fortify your faith, and establish you in the truth. Make no appeals to men, preacher, through that avenue. See that you trust God with all of your heart! **The Spirit is called the "Spirit of Truth" (Jno. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13), and is the heavenly Witness to the reality of these things.** He alone can "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13)! He alone can "teach" you, so that you may "abide in Him" (I John 2:27). He alone "searcheth the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10-12).

Prayer and Praise

Prayer and praise are like a two-winged bird; the bird itself is faith; the wings, prayer and praise. An attempt to use just one of them will prove to be most tiring and ineffective. The providential use of prayer and praise, however, will bring great victory in your life, and flight to heights hitherto unknown.

times of contemplation and remembrance of the Statutes of the Lord.

May you personally be given "great grace" in this area, that "having done all" you may continue to hang victoriously, even "in the smoke."