

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

OUR LORD'S RETURN TO GLORY

There is, for the believer, no substitute for the blessed hope of the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-12). This is appropriately called the "BLESSED hope"; i.e., the hope that sets the heart to singing; that rejoices the spirit of the child of God, and makes him live in joyful anticipation; "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pet. 1:8). The early believers had a word that they sounded to one another; and which the Holy Spirit gave us through our beloved brother Paul. It was "MARANATHA"; "The Lord is coming" (I Cor. 16:22). It was a gladsome shout, and not meant to frighten the hearts of God's people. Rather, it was designed to put them in remembrance that their king would soon return, and that then, as the song puts it, "we'll be done with troubles and trials." Jesus has presently went "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, AND TO RETURN" (Luke 19:12). We who have been left behind "with the stuff" (I Sam. 23:15; 30:24) are "looking for Him" to appear to us "without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:27), praise the Lord! It is then that we shall be "glad with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:13), and thus do we anticipate His return in great faith.

The subject of the coming of the Lord is a dominant one in the Scriptures. It is tragic that it is not proclaimed more today than it is! Many men that do preach the coming of the Lord do greatly error in approaching it from a time-table standpoint, and thus they rob the saints of the joy and anticipation that they are meant to receive from its contemplation. It might be well to say here that the point of EMPHASIS in the Scriptures is NOT the TIME of Christ's return! Yet, this is almost the only vein in which it is delivered in many circles today. Jesus Himself declared that the "times and the seasons" were in the hand of the Father, and that they were none of our business or affair (Acts 1:7) - these things are "not for us to know," and great humility of spirit is required for us to receive that word "with meekness" (Js. 1:21). While it is to be understood that the Lord spoke of many things that must needs be fulfilled before He comes, He generally spoke of them in a very veiled way, so as to purposely obscure from men's wicked curiosity things that did not concern them. One cannot read that twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew without being stricken with a sense of this. Jesus so interwove the subjects of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world that they are scarcely distinguishable. Ah, great wisdom of the Lord, to hide from us those things that would lend them-

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The Word of Truth

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selves to puffing up, slothfulness, foolishness, and inordinate quests for knowledge. Let those that have experienced the presence of the Lord acknowledge that these things are true.

Let us no longer linger on this matter of the abuse of a proclamation of the coming of the Lord. Suffice it to say that far too much of the preaching that concerns this subject is characterized by intellectuality of this world, an evil curiosity, and an emphasis that was never made by the Holy Spirit. It ought to serve to awaken us to the true intent of the knowledge of the Lord's return. **Let us give no heed to teachings that leave questionings in our minds, that tend to remove our hearts from the blessedness of the hope that awaits us in the Lord's return.**

This is that for which the child of God patiently waits; the return of His Lord. Does not the Holy Spirit witness to the Corinthian brethren; "So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:7). The gifts that are here referred to are the supernatural bestowments of the Holy Spirit, called by theologians "charismata graces." Some of them are enumerated in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of First Corinthians. The purpose of these gifts was to aid them in "waiting for the coming of the Lord." They were not to draw attention to themselves, or to be construed as an end of themselves; but they were fitted in with their "patient waiting for Christ." With the fierce adversity that confronted these early believers and the novicehood of their faith, the adverse wickedness out of which they were lifted, and the pressing weight of beginning ignorance, the external operations of the Holy Spirit proved of great benefit in bringing them forward in faith to the appearing of the Lord. Too, we would not fail to make mention to those who are enamored with the external operations of the Spirit today, that they are to use these means as profitable to the production of patient endurance until the Lord comes. This is the characteristic of true believers, that are waiting for and longing for the return of their King (Rom. 8:19-25; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:20; I Thess. 1:10; Col. 3:4; Titus 2:13). **Let all graces be received as encouragements to continue looking for the appearing of the Lord, not being too much**

burdened by the circumstances and hardships that are associated with this life. They are not meant to foster pride, or to produce self-confidence, or boasting above the graces received by other brethren; nor are they to be construed as tokens of blessing that supercede and overshadow all other blessings. **They are a type of spiritual encouragement; a provision by grace for those whose lives are marked with temptation and hardships which tend, apart from Divine grace, to draw away the eyes from the prospect of the Lord's return.**

Another point made of the Lord's return pertains to our hearts. At this present time, the hearts of God's people have been renewed, and have the law of God written upon them (Heb. 8:9-13); they have been "purified by faith" (Acts 15:8), and have been "circumcised" of the sins that lay there (Col. 2:11-12). Yet, these truths are hidden to those about the saints, and sometimes even to the saints themselves. Many a believer there is who is not as aware as he could be of the wonderful grace that has been wrought within his own heart. Heckled by the great Adversary, Satan, poor believers sometimes spend a good part of their life bemoaning that they are without grace, when, in reality, they are gloriously sustained by grace with blameless hearts. To these, we speak of the coming of the Lord in this way; "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: **TO THE END HE MAY ESTABLISH YOUR HEARTS UNBLAMEABLE IN HOLINESS BEFORE GOD, EVEN OUR FATHER, AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH ALL HIS SAINTS**" (I Thess. 3:12-13). Praise the Lord for that prospect.

In other words, we are being admonished to expend our labors in spiritual living, and the maintaining of a life characterized by good relationships with God's people, and with all men - **leaving the matter of the establishment of our hearts in blamelessness to the Lord Himself.** The revelation in truth of that establishment shall take place at the coming of the Lord. Until then, we may see through glasses darkly, but then, praise the Lord, "face to face." This certainly ought to encourage the saints who so ardently long for a heart without any offense toward the Lord; a heart that is marked by absolute purity. By saying that it will be blameless at the coming of the Lord, the Lord is emphasizing that **this is the end for which the Lord Jesus has labored and tread the winepress alone in our behalf;** that we might stand "faultless before the Throne with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). When Jesus comes, it is the purpose of the Father to vindicate all of His people; to reveal them as gloriously purged from every vestige of guilt and sin, by His grace; to hold them up before the heavenly hosts, and the assembled universe as tokens of the power and glory of His grace. That is the Father's delight, and it is ours also, and we love to think of our Lord's return with this in mind. Hallelujah!

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory is also a basis for sound exhortation; "Now we beseech you by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together with Him" (II Thess. 2:1). By this the Holy Spirit means to inform us that a sound contemplation of the Lord's

appearing, as guided from the Throne, will go a long way to settling our hearts and moving upon us to live and move wisely in this world. Much of the hardship that is so characteristic of some brothers could be alleviated if only they would live in the prospect of the glorious return of our Lord. Does not the thought of His coming again speak warnings to the soul to resist sin and the devil, to cleanse your hands, and to purify your hearts? Too, doesn't it lend itself to encouragement to fulfill your duties before the Lord, knowing that Christ shall bring His reward with Him when He comes (Rev. 22:12)? To the slothful, the thought of the Lord's coming will provide a stimulus to diligence; to the diligent, it will provide encouragement that "labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58); to the sorrowing, the thought of second coming of our Lord brings joy; and to the struggling, hope. More exhortations ought to be made upon the basis of the Lord's appearing, for that is the time of the end, of the rewards, of the accounting of our lives, of the end of temptation, of the end of trial, of the glorious fruition of our faith. Praise the Lord for this powerful foundation of true exhortation.

There are many other uses of this doctrine; uses which touch upon the very life-cord of every believer. There is the subjects of **rejoicing** (I Thess. 2:19), and the matter of **the revelation of the heart** (I Cor. 4:15) grafted into this great theme. We are called upon to consider the subject of **patience** in association with our Lord's return (James 5:7-8), as if to say; "At that time you shall have no further need of patience. Run swiftly, trust well during this time of your sojourn, and wait patiently for the Lord, for when He comes, your liberation shall be so great that patience shall no longer be required in the way that it is here." Thus do we "look" and "hasten" unto the day of the Lord (II Pet. 3:12), as though we were stretching every fiber of our souls in the direction of heaven, anxious to see Him "as He is" (I John 3:1-3). Is it not then that we shall "be like Him" (I John 3:2)? That is what we have been chosen and fashioned for, to be "conformed to the image of His (God's) Son" (Rom. 8:29-30). It is then, when the Lord is "revealed from heaven" (II Thess. 1:7) that we shall come into the possession of a "body like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:20-21), and shall "appear in glory with Him" (Col. 3:4). Let those, who will, think upon this most sacred theme in terms of chronology, if they will; but I much prefer these truths relative to liberation, the beholding of the Lord, hope, and patience - for these are the matters that concern me as I wrestle against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, together with the rulers of the darkness of this world (Eph. 6:12). Salvation will be consummated then, experienced in its fulness (Heb. 9:28), and in this hope we live. Too, it is then that the evil one shall be destroyed with all of his cohorts (II Thess. 2:8), and thus do we with great joy anticipate the "day of the Lord" - "Maranatha."

And now, be encouraged, brethren, for the Lord shall come "in like manner" as He went (Acts 1:7-12). He has testified, "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. 22:20). With patience wait for that day, ordering your life accordingly.

WORSHIPPING THE LORD

There are two philosophies of religion; the one is true, and the other is false. One centers around **labor expended for God**; the other centers around the **apprehension and comprehension of the Lord God**. The latter is the true concept. The first is taken up with beholding man, while the latter is occupied with beholding the Lord. How glorious it is to be possessed of that "faith once delivered to the saints" which enables one to behold the Lord in His Holiness, to worship and adore Him because of Who He is! Oh, to stand in the courts of the Lord is rewarding; "one day" in His presence is as a "thousand" anywhere else! Is it not so that the true child of God had rather be a "doorkeeper in the House of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psa. 84:10). Laboring for the Lord is a wonderful thing, and thereunto have we devoted our lives and the members of our persons. **Yet, it is greater still to behold the Lord and to inquire within His temple; to be absorbed with the vision of the Lord "high and lifted up, and His train filling all the Temple" (Isa. 6:1-6). True worship will compel us to serve the Lord; but all of the service in the world will never compel us to worship the Lord. Worship absolves delusion, and when performed in the Spirit is mighty in instructing us in the mind of the Lord.** It is not possible to worship the Lord too much; for He is worthy of all worship and praise! Is not it lamentable that myriads of churchmen have never really worshipped the Lord; have never actually been caught up in the Spirit beholding the Lord, revelling in His goodness, and drinking into their hearts the love and mercy and majesty of the Holy one of Israel. I say, is that not a lamentable thing? Yet, it prevails all about us. Worship services are announced, yet no genuine worship appears to take place. There is no awe at the presence of the Lord; no reverence for the Monarch of creation; no adoration for the Savior of the world. Ought we not to think of this most noble theme, and summon up the resources of our mind to meditate upon the Lord Himself; to seek grace to sit at His footstool in awe and reverence, and be changed from glory unto glory?

In heaven, there is continual worship! Now, the thought of this is apt to frighten many a benighted soul that is honest enough to admit that it has never worshipped the Lord, or even had a relish and desire to do so. But, nevertheless, it is so. Do you not hear the word of the Lord; "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God" (Rev. 19:1); "And a voice came out of the Throne, saying: "Praise our God all ye His servants and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:5-6). Are not the words of the six winged seraphim: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." And do not the four and twenty elders around the Throne cry out: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou hast created all things,

and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:8-11). **The secret to real worship is a vision of the Lord; insight of the soul into His Person, granted by free grace through the power of the Holy Spirit!**

Worship is not an action, it is an attitude of the heart; a condition of the spirit of man that is in him. The word signifies "homage, adoration, honor", and has to do with the "inner man." **True worship can only be accomplished through an illumination of the understanding.** There must be an abolition of ignorance. The reason why there is so little worship in the pseudo-churches around us, is simply because there is "no knowledge of God in the land" (Hosea 4:1). In Scripture, when anyone worshipped the Lord, it generally followed a revelation of the Lord (Gen. 24:26, 48; Ex. 34:8; Judges 7:15; I Sam. 1:19; 1:28, etc.) **A life of worship is the result of a continual viewing of the Lord High and lifted up! Without the knowledge of the Lord, and some insight into His Person, one might as well attempt to climb up into heaven as to worship the Lord.** Through the Scriptures, through prayer and supplication, through mediation, and other ordained means, we are to seek the face of the Lord, which view will compel us to worship Him truly. The hour has come, my reader, when the true worshippers worship the Lord in spirit and in truth; i.e., **inwardly and in reality!** Their worship is not feigned; it is not fabricated by carnal minds! Within the deep recesses of their hearts they truly adore the Lord; He is to them the "Bright and morning Star, and the Fairest of ten thousand." Their worship is real; it is not simulated. It is the real outreach of the soul; the actual rejoicing of the heart in reality! Did not Jesus speak of this sort of worship; "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the TRUE WORSHIPPERS shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: FOR THE FATHER SEEKETH SUCH TO WORSHIP HIM" (John 4:23). **Our Lord is not so interested in the forms of worship which many have adopted; with appearances, exercises, and mere overt expressions, as He is in the inward adoration and reverence of His Person by the saints.** In Israel He had much form, but little content. As it is written: "They honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:8). Let this not be the case with you! Fabricate no worship before the Lord; it is only an abomination unto Him" (Isa. 1:13).

The Lord Is To Be Worshipped In The Beauty Of Holiness

"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness"; that is the injunction of Holy Writ (I Chron. 16:29; Psa. 29:2; 66:4; 96:9). This speaks of the beauty of **spiritual worship**; of that adoration and homage which proceeds from an **enlightened and quickened heart** - how beautiful it is! Speaking for all of the "household of faith", our beloved brother Paul declared: "We are the circumcision that **worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh**" (Phil. 3:3). There is a description of spiritual worship - of worshipping in the beauty of holiness. It is a condition which finds Christ not merely adored with the lips, or with a group of simulated actions, but **within - in the "inner man."** This adoration has been produced because the heart

has been "circumcised" of all the sin and evil that was in it by nature (Col. 2:10-12). The flesh (that which was by nature) is seen for what it is, and has been abandoned so far as hope and faith is concerned. Those that have participated in these things truly do worship the Lord "in the beauty of holiness". **Without our sinful nature being cut off, and the "new man" (Eph. 4:20-24) being implanted by the power of the Holy Spirit; without a firm faith in the Lord Jesus, and a rejoicing in Him, together with a spiritual disdain for the flesh and its lusts - there can be no true worship.**

Churches of today are plagued with people that worship not the Lord simply because they have neither been forgiven of their sins, nor have they seen the Lord by faith. Their worship is according to ignorance, like the philosophers of old. They differ very little from the gross heathen that worship the animals and brute creation, together with the work of their own hands, simply because they grope **blindly** for reality. **Worship is not a blind reaching forth for reality; a clumsy stretching of the soul forward in hopes that something Divine may be found! Worship is the response of the soul to reality; the uplifting of the soul toward the Lord God, Whom it loves and adores wholly because of renewal within and vision without.** The "beauty of holiness", or spiritual worship proceeds from a nature that has been created in Christ's own image. The "new man" is renewed in knowledge "after the image of Him who created him in all righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). There is, within the believer, a genuine love for righteousness, and a real disdain and hate for unrighteousness and evil. There is a discontent with the world, a longing for heaven; a contempt held for the all that would hide and obscure the face of the Lord Jesus, and a wholesome relish for all that brings His Person into the view of the heart. In short, the one that has been "born again" ("from above", ASV--John 3:3-5) has the same mind toward righteousness and evil as the Father Himself. With his own sin, the believer is discontent, humbled, and ashamed. He admits, when sin is found in his life (if he truly be the child of God) that he has done "that which he would not" (Rom. 7:15); i.e., his heart and mind have not consented to sin. He has, as it were, been snared by the cunning of the Devil against his own will, and thus is he beaten to the dust of the earth, acknowledging with bitter tears and repentance his own despicable filthiness before the Lord. How he cries out: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me" (Psa. 51:2-3).

He makes no attempt to hide his sin under the rock of alibis, or remove it from sight by calling attention to the misdemeanors of others! No! He has sinned, much to his own dismay, he is ashamed of it, and is confessing his sin that the faithful and just Lord may forgive it (I Jno. 1:19). This is the characteristic of his life - the believer is noted in heaven for such an attitude as he walks by faith, and not by sight. **Now, those who have experienced this know what it means to worship the Lord - for that is "the beauty of holiness" which assists, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in keeping our hearts detached from sin, and thus**

keeps us from persistent overt sin. Those that have no fellowship in this sort of thing know nothing of worship, for they have no lively sense of the holiness of the Lord God of heaven and earth - hence they cannot worship him. **Actually, a fellowship, where worship is not experienced privately and publically is one where sin has been swept under the rug, so to speak. When sin is dealt within the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, and cleansing takes place in the blood of Jesus, there shall issue forth a beautiful worship unto the Lord. Praise the Lord.**

Worship Involves A Humility Before the Lord

Because of our "frame" (Psa. 103:14), we find our souls in a prone condition when the Lord is seen. We bow down before Him in deep contrition, and acknowledge our grossness, our cleavage to the earth, our diverseness from the Lord Himself. **We begin, in true worship, to realize that the Lord is above us in every way - out of sight of human comprehension!** As the Scriptures saith: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9). Thus do we admonish one another; "O come, let us worship and BOW DOWN: let us KNEEL before the Lord our Maker" (Psa. 95:6). Our worship is viewed as being "at His footstool" (Psa. 132:7), for we realize that we are under His feet. **Our God towers above us in every respect; He is equal to us in none!** Did not this truth revolutionize the life of Isaiah, as he saw the Lord "High and lifted up, and his train filling all of the temple" (Isa. 6:1-6).

It was during this time that Isaiah acknowledged: "Woe is me, for I am a man of sinful lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of sinful lips." That is an example of spiritual humility; it proceeds from a genuine faith-view of the Lord God of heaven and earth, in the "face of Christ Jesus" (II Cor. 4:6). As John the Beloved was on the Isle of Patmos, for to receive a revelation from the Lord, he saw visions of heaven. While being permitted to, with strong faith, see the throne-room of the Lord, John saw twenty-four elders seating upon seats about the Throne. Yet, when they worshipped, he recorded: "And the four and twenty elders which sat before the Lord on their seats, **fell upon their faces and worshipped God**" (Rev. 11:16); and again: "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts **fell down and worshipped God** that sat upon the Throne" (Rev. 19:4); and again, "And all the angels stood round about the Throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and **fell before the Throne on their faces, and worshipped God**" (Rev. 7:11). If this be true of the higher order of creation, how much truer will it be of those who were made "a little lower than the angels." Such humility cannot be avoided when you receive a view of the Lord. **Oh, let prayers fervently rise by the chosen for these myriads of churches where no worship ever takes place; where no hearts are ever enraptured with a vision of the Lord, and the constituents are never found on their faces before the Lord.**

There is an element of fear in humility; wholesome and proper fear! So, in true spiritual worship, there is that portion of **ordinate fear** which

constrains the worshipper to fall down before the Lord. "But as for me, I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy, and in Thy fear will I worship toward the Holy Temple" (Psa. 5:7). Though this be mingled with a cognizance of the "lovingkindness of the Lord" (Psa. 48:9), yet the fear is very real. **There are dreadful thoughts entertained of offending the Lord, of self strength, pride, and arrogance before the Throne.** Thus are the people of God encouraged to tremble before the Lord, to let their flesh shake, so to speak, until its pride is all lost: "The Lord reigneth in righteousness, let all the people TREMBLE" (Psa. 99:1); "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in trembling" (Psa. 2:11); "My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee" (Psa. 119:120). Yet does our heavenly Father promise: "But to this man will I look (bestow my grace and mercy), even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2).

All Saints Are Enjoined To Worship The Lord

The angel told John on the Isle of Patmos: "WORSHIP GOD" (Rev. 19:10) and thus are the people of God admonished today! The angelic hosts cry back from the Throne-room: "Fear God and give glory to Him" (Rev. 14:7), and thus do we admonish you, oh saint of God. **Let your vision be lifted from the earth; lift up your eyes, and seek after the Lord in renewed vigor. "He is not far from every one of us"** (Acts 17:27). I quite well acknowledge that I do not understand nor comprehend my God; "His ways are past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). I know that many religious circles have a God that they thoroughly comprehend, and for whom they may consistently speak with great discernment; but it is not so with my God. **I could worship no god that was comprehensible!** He would be my equal were that the case. But the Lord is high and lifted up; His thoughts and ways transcend my own; His will is known only by revelation; His ways are perceived only as I am lifted up in the Spirit and made to see beyond the scope of mortal vision. Oh, how I worship and adore Him, and praise His Name for revealing Himself to me.

When we are called upon to worship the Lord, we are being admonished to strip the earth from our affection in order that we might the more clearly see the Lord; for once He is beheld by saints, He shall be worshipped. Let your "affection be set on things above, and not on things on the earth", as we are admonished by the Holy Spirit in Col. 3:1-3. **See that our hearts are detached from earthly affection; that there are no relationships cultured upon this earth which detract from the Lord; which hinder us in seeing Him fully.** Sanctify your endeavors by putting the Lord in the midst of them. Your jobs, homes, and various associations are to be characterized by an intense fellowship with the Lord; one in which He is often seen by faith, and glorified in your spirit. Have no confidence in the flesh, but rather seek that blessed rejoicing in the Spirit which gives such freedom and liberation from the vexing cares of this life. **Think often of heaven as home, and earth as bondage!**

When you see the Lord, and worship Him in Spirit and in truth, you shall find such exercises and expressions as singing, praying, speaking, and

“THE WHOLE WORLD”

(Concluded from March Issue)

For many, this is a hard saying! They “stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto they were appointed” (I Pet. 2:8). Because their minds are filled with earthiness, they are constrained to highly evaluate the segments of the world which they receive as beneficial. But, what is their insipid wisdom to that of God? Has not the Lord declared that the wisdom of the world is foolishness to Him (I Cor. 1:17-20)? Thus, all who embrace it are fools of the highest order, because they shape their lives by that which is condemned and cursed with a great curse. Poor benighted souls are they! And you, if you accept the philosophy that there is some good in the world, what shall you do when the Lord destroys the earth with fire, and all the “works that are therein” (II Pet. 3:10-12). What shall you embrace then? What of the “good” that you supposed was here, after the earth shall have been baptized with fire? You that have most foolishly embraced the earth, and heaped to yourselves lusts and ambitions which tie you to the earth, shall not the Lord come as a thief in the night to you, and take all of your possessions. Then you shall be naked, and without the robe of righteousness. Oh, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. Develop by grace an appetite for spiritual things; culture a longing for heaven; come to appreciate eternal things that shall never pass away. Renounce the world and all of its vain wisdom; seek no career in it apart from that which is service to God? Come up into the Spirit where you too may be empowered to say: “We know that we are of God, and the WHOLE WORLD lieth in wickedness.” That is the truth of things; this is **where** the world lies—ALL of the world. As you, by faith, are given to see it and embrace it, you shall become a partaker of the Divine nature, and be given that fellowship with the Lord which far transcends anything that the world has to offer, and which bears with it the seeds of glory, which shall be made manifest in all of their fullness at the appearing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Pungent Points

God’s eternal purpose is manifested in the conforming of those whom He has predestinated unto the image of His Son (Rom. 8:20-29). We must, then, look for Christ-like qualities to be developed in our own character and lives, for these are tokens of our election (II Pet. 1:5-11).

witnessing spring forth with renewed vitality. No more shall they be difficult exercises, but they shall become joyous indulgences to the glory of God.

And now, **let every saint praise the Lord**, for great things hath He done. See that your hearts are pure from sin, and your affection uprooted from the earth, your eyes lifted up, and your head bowed down--thus shall you be blessed.

TRADITIONAL COMMANDMENTS

By “Traditional Commandments”, I mean commandments that do not find their origin in God’s Word; for their source, they have mere human tradition. These are requirements placed upon men that God has not enjoined, and upon which fellowships and disfellowships are based. Great bodies of church doctrines today are built around just such commandments, aptly called in Scripture, “the commandments of men” (Col. 2:22). Although there may seem sound basis for such commandments, a good reason for them, and experiential evidence for them, yet, **if God has not spoken, the matter cannot be bound upon another!** Jesus, in warning us of tradition said: “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9); and again: “Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered and many such things do ye” (Mark 7:13); and again: “Full well do ye reject the Word of God that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:9); and again: “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” (Matt. 15:3). There are four things which mark the tradition of which we speak, and thus warn us of being caught up in it: (1. It creates vain worship. (2. It makes the Word of God of none effect. (3. It causes a rejection of the Word of God. (4. It causes one to transgress the commandments of God. Tradition, then, is not something to be taken lightly! In effect, it drives a wedge between men and God, which nothing but the blood of Jesus can erase; “With the precious blood of Christ . . . redeemed . . . from your vain conversation, received BY TRADITION from your fathers” (I Pet. 1:19, 18). Those myriads of people that are fervently serving what they suppose to be the Lord God of heaven and earth, who possess no true knowledge of the Lord, but only a traditional conception of something they call truth - were they to be fully aware of the precarious position they were in, they would come out from such environs immediately, and begin to serve the Lord in spirit and in truth, as the Lord requires (John 4:23-24). It is very difficult to teach upon a subject like this without offending anyone, for most of the religion embraced by conscientious people today is purely traditional; by that I mean they have no evidence of its truth apart from the official position of their church, or the word of their “pastor.” Yet, “in many things we offend all”, even as James (Js. 3:1-3), and we but trust the Lord to outweigh offense with meekness, and tradition with truth. I bid you to examine carefully the Scriptures to see whether these things be so; and to be courageous enough to acknowledge before God and His people the truth of your acceptance of truth or tradition, and to follow whatever path is commanded of the Lord.

I am increasingly alarmed with the professed ignorance of churchmen concerning the truths of Scripture. Most are ready to acknowledge that they know very little about the Word of God. Yet, they claim to be avid worshippers and servants of the Lord and “His Christ.” It is, however, due to their basic ignorance of the Word of God, that they have become subject to traditionalism - systems and commandments that have had their

origin with men, not with God. Their views of such great themes as the new birth, the second coming of Christ, grace, falling from grace, confession, instruction, repentance, and Christian fellowship, are merely projections of what their church teaches. They have not conscientiously examined the Scriptures to see if these things are so, as did the Bereans (Acts 17:11), and thereby evidence their utter lack of spiritual nobility. Thus do they make void the commandment of God; it means nothing to them; they are unable to discern it, unable to appreciate it, and unable to keep it. **The Word of God has not its effectual work within their soul because they are seeking approach to God through the avenue of tradition, rather than by hearing the Word of the Lord** (Rom. 10:17). As Jesus well put it in Mark 7:9, the acceptance of tradition moves them to "reject" the Word of God in order that they might keep their own tradition. In such assemblies (and legion is their name) there are numerous texts of Scripture that are not accepted, not preached, not proclaimed, in the power of the Holy Spirit, simply because they do not confirm and support the denominational dogma that has been therein embraced. **If the Word of God, however, must be given with "tongue-in-cheek", and minimized in order to keep tradition, then there is a woeful lack of love for the Lord and an evident presence of the love of men and their praises. If your theology constrains you to withdraw from any portion of Scripture; from any declaration of truth by the Holy Spirit, then away with your theology, and begin to possess a love for the truth** (II Thess. 2:10).

I would not fail to give some examples of tradition that are held by churches today, which will serve to illustrate the absolute power of traditionalism. How many have been taken in by it, and how it ought to be avoided with great zeal. In some congregations (as a matter of fact, in most) there is a standing rule that anyone who desires to enter, what men call, "the ministry" must go to seminary, or to a Bible college, or to some religious school that is fitted to train ministers of the Gospel. While this may sound noble on the surface, merely a casual perusal of the requirement will at once show that our Lord Jesus, Peter, John, James, and even Paul, would have been excluded from all such churches. Such a requirement is not found in all of Holy Writ! Yet, one would find it exceedingly difficult, yea, virtually impossible, to gain entrance into any major denomination without the possession of some sort of diploma from a religious institution.

To mention a few more traditions that have for their substantiation absolutely no commandment of God; the seeking of overt spiritual gifts (nowhere is this set forth as a commandment of God - it is suggested by Paul to the Corinthians, but not as a rule of the Kingdom); denominational affiliation; and missionary support. Now, it may come as a surprise to many that I have mentioned these things; but I do so to highlight the power that tradition has had upon people's lives! **Without any direct command of God, they have set up these matters as commandments to be observed in the name of Jesus, and fellowship or disfellowship is based upon the acceptance or rejection of these commandments.** What would happen if one were

to announce in the average evangelical church that soul-winning was not a commandment of the Lord? That the word was not even mentioned in Scripture? Would he not be considered an heretic of the first order? The text of Scripture that is used to undergird this particular dogma is Matthew 28:18-20 which teaches us that we are to "TEACH", "MAKE DISCIPLES", and "TEACH" - yet, this is not what is urged at all! Oh, the bane of tradition, and how it robs men of the blessings of the Lord. **Tradition hides the commandment of the Lord, and offers in its place allegiance to the programs and interpretations of men.** What a miserable substitute is this for the child of the King who's only sustenance is the Word of the Lord as it proceeds out of His mouth!

One of the most remarkable of all traditions is the distinction drawn between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Almost universally, it is agreed that the first thirty-nine books of the Bible are the Old Testament, and the last twenty-seven are the New Testament. Yet, this sort of definition is never offered by the Holy Spirit. **This distinction has driven a wedge in the Scriptures for many traditional students.** They, claiming to be of the New Testament church and order, have virtually shut the first two-thirds of their Bibles, believing that it holds nothing pertinent to them, but is merely filled with a few historical facts which may or may not be beneficial. Yet, Jesus and the Apostles delivered their messages and sermons from this segment of the Scriptures as we know them, referring to them as "The Scriptures", "The Holy Scriptures", and "Moses and the Prophets." As a matter of fact, Paul went so far as to say that he preached absolutely nothing else, other than "that which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22). **Nowhere were men urged to refrain from the writings of Moses and the prophets, nor was a lack of familiarity with them ever commended or condoned.**

Further, when the Holy Spirit spoke of the New Testament, or of the Old Testament, He made no reference to a number of books which belonged to one "dispensation." The New Testament is categorically outlined by the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 8, and therein is the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah quoted: "For this is the covenant (testament) that I will make with Israel after those days sayeth the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be unto them a God, and they shall be unto me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquity will I remember no more. In that He saith, A NEW COVENANT (Testament), He hath made the first old . . ." (Heb. 8:10-13). There is no confusing this with a number of books commonly referred to as The New Testament. **The actual New Testament is the agreement that God has made with Christ Jesus Himself to bless His people with justification and fellowship upon the basis of His vicarious sacrifice. It is the placing of the law, which once was enmity against us, within the heart and mind, so that there is an inward sympathy for, and a joyful submission to it. There is wrought within the heart by grace, a whole-hearted agreement and consent with the**

decrees of the Lord - That is the New Testament. The Old Testament is the covenant that man would live by the Law if he kept the law (Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12). The difference between the two testaments is simply this: **in the first, now the old, testament, the blessing was contingent upon the accomplishment of man. In the second, or the new testament, the blessing is confirmed unmeritoriously, and entirely apart from personal accomplishment in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.** All who have experienced such transformation and blessing are in the New Testament church; all who have not received real remission of sins, and the law written upon their hearts and consciences are aliens from the New Testament, even though they may profess outward allegiance to it.

This single traditional view has caused more spiritual retardation, I suppose, than any other. Because of it, the religious masses are basically and fundamentally ignorant of the nature and purposes and workings of the Lord. **The prophets unfold for us the workings of the Lord; how He moves; how His ways are immutable, how He thinks, reacts, blesses, and curses.** Those who are ignorant of their writings, are generally ignorant of God Himself. Thus do they stumble at great doctrines of Scripture which they are unable to receive because their minds have not been cultured at the hands of the Prophets as ministered by the Holy Ghost. God's immutable counsel, predestination, providence, unmerited favor - all of these are illustrated and expounded by the prophets at great length. Were professed disciples of the Lord more familiar with these holy men of old, they would find themselves more in agreement with the Lord, and experience less of that reaction called "stumbling at the Word" (I Pet. 2:8).

What may we do to rid ourselves of the grip of traditionalism? There actually is no formula; it is a matter of the heart, of the desires and affections of the believer. If there is a real hunger and thirst for righteousness, there is the promise of filling. Within the mind, there must not only be a thorough repudiation of the authority of mere men, but there must be a fervent desire for the mind of the Lord. **All of God's Word must be received as profitable;** "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:16-17). That must be received as **truth**, for that is precisely what it is. **There is nothing that God has uttered that is pointless, or restricted to one era.** Every Word of God is profitable, and has the ministry of equipping the child of God for the "good works" which we have been destined to walk in (Eph. 2:10). Once settle your mind, by grace, on this matter, and you shall find your heart more receptive to the teaching of the Holy Spirit. **I have found that the best interpreter of the mind of the Lord is the Law; the interpreters of my experience are David and the prophets; the expounder of life as it is in the flesh is Solomon; the unfolders of the truth is Jesus; and the unfolders of the Christ are the Apostles and kindred writers.** I would not be so foolish as to set that forth as a dogma; I merely say that this has ministered to me, and I pass it on to you for what it is worth. **I have also found that those**

who find great difficulty in interpreting their own experiences, and expressing in suitable words their trials and blessings, are almost invariably those who are not familiar with the mind of the prophets. Equally true, I have found that those unable to understand the mind of the Lord and His attitudes towards moral and civil matters, are ignorant of the Law of God. It is my understanding that **the Law is a verbal or word picture of the nature of God.** Thus, it is good that we all become familiar with it, for thus shall it also "lead us to Christ" (Gal. 3).

Now, forget not the blood of Christ; it is powerful to deliver you from the vain tradition received from your fathers. Tradition possesses a powerful grip - make no mistake about that. Play not with it, for it shall outwrestle you, and bring you into captivity. But, it is no match for the blood of Christ (I Pet. 1:18-20). Avail yourself of the blood, by faith, and you shall find the grip of tradition loosening, and your hold upon truth tightening. Now, may the Lord guide you into the truth of this matter.

PUNGENT POINTS

To "set your affection (not affections) on things above, and not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1, 2) is to have an appetite for things that pertain to the Lord Jesus Christ; to possess an all-consuming desire to be with the Lord; to be such as can **only** be satisfied with Jesus.

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If I meditate not upon God's love for me as seen in Christ Jesus, I cannot hope to love Him with all of my heart, soul, mind, and strength.

* * *

God is not so disposed to ask us for our hearts, as He is toward us asking Him to place His heart within us.

* * *

There are not two or three gospels, but only one gospel. It was preached "before" to Abraham (Gal. 3:8), and proclaimed by the holy prophets as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost." There shall never be "another gospel" - there is just ONE, and it is that blessed "everlasting Gospel" (Rev. 14:6) which proclaims that God Himself hath brought salvation by His "own right arm." It has been heralded in dim light, and in the fuller light of the day of grace - yet it is still, and has always been, but ONE GOSPEL.

* * *

The world is at war with God, and whosoever is its friend is God's enemy (James 4:4). It is inevitable that the children of God feel this enmity and warfare. **They must make no attempts to diminish this enmity, or make themselves tolerable to the world, for to do such a thing is to become the enemy of God also.**